

**QEP Executive Summary  
Blue Ridge Community College**

**Quality Enhancement Plan: Be Ready for Online Classes**

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In 1998, Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) offered its first Internet course to 14 students. By Spring 2008, the course offerings had increased to 51 and enrollment was 816. That increase in courses and students has been accompanied with a mixture of success and frustration. While some students are successfully completing their online courses, many faculty have seen other students struggle with the technical competencies and course demands of an online format. Student surveys and focus groups have corroborated the need for students to possess both computer literacy and accurate information about the unique demands of an online course. In addition, faculty advisors who have never taught online are unfamiliar with the rigor of an online course. Even those who have taught online are often uninformed of the specific requirements of a course outside their discipline. Therefore, academic advising may be inaccurate or incomplete.

To this end, the BRCC QEP proposes to ensure that no student will enroll in an online course who does not possess the basic computer skills deemed necessary for learning to occur in that course. Additionally, students and faculty will be provided general information regarding the requirements and capabilities necessary for success in an online format and will receive detailed information regarding the technical and time requirements of every online course being offered in a given semester.

To achieve these goals, several strategies will be used. First, BRCC will require incoming students to take a placement test in computer and technical skills. Those students who do not demonstrate competency will be required to complete a developmental computer skills course for remediation. Upon completion the students will be retested. Once a student has demonstrated the requisite skills, he/she will be allowed to register for online courses. Second, a detailed information sheet will be developed for every online course. This sheet will provide both students and faculty advisors the necessary information to determine whether a student is a good candidate to take a specific online course. Additionally, ACA 115, the basic study skills course required for all incoming students, will be redesigned to include a section orienting students to the personal characteristics as well as the technical competencies and requirements needed for success in an online learning format.

The effectiveness of these strategies will be measured by comparing pre-test and post-test data as well as student learning outcome data. Indirect measures of effectiveness will include survey data, retention data, and student grades. The College's plan will be evaluated every semester and will be revised, if needed.