

Institution: St. Mary's University,
San Antonio, TX

Title of QEP: *Written Communication Excellence*

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QEP Goals:

The goal of the St. Mary's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Written Communication Excellence*, is to improve our students' written communication skills by enhancing the learning environment in our St. Mary's Core (SMC) courses. By providing St. Mary's faculty professional development and training through an annual *Writing Excellence Institute (WEI)*, the QEP will change the learning environment to foster better student writing.

QEP Program Activities:

Each May from 2016 through 2019, selected faculty members who teach SMC courses will be taught instructional design and methods by experts in written communication pedagogy. The goal of the *WEI* is for faculty members to know and implement best practices that develop students' written communication skills. A one-day assessment workshop in January of each year will provide feedback to faculty and reinforce best practices. Faculty members will use knowledge and skills gained from the *WEI* to develop written communication activities in SMC courses taught during the fall and spring semesters, thus changing the learning environment.

QEP Assessment:

The QEP assessment involves three major areas: a) the faculty professional development activities in the *Written Excellence Institute*; b) the changes to the learning environment in the selected St. Mary's Core courses; and c) improvement in student writing in the Core.

Faculty members in each *WEI* will be assessed on knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding effective writing assignments, effective rubrics, effective student feedback, and value of written communication in a liberal arts education.

The change in the learning environment will be assessed by determining the extent to which members who participate in the *WEI* have: incorporated knowledge and skills gained in the *WEI* into their courses through designing assignments that meet course objectives and student learning outcomes; incorporated best practices for the teaching of writing; provided appropriate evaluation of assignments.

Impact on student writing will be assessed using students' written artifacts from SMC courses taught by faculty members who participated in the *WEI*.

Written Communication Excellence will achieve a lasting impact on student learning through its faculty and the continued presence of the *WEI*.