Quality Enhancement Plan (2023-2028):

Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, Engagement

Dalton State College

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Section One: Executive Summary

After extensive research into data, stakeholder concerns, and institutional trends, the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Planning Committee of Dalton State College chose student success for first-year students as its general focus and identified strategies for intervention in four primary areas: Perspectives, our seminar for first-year students, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement (*PACE*). **To enhance student success for first-year degree seeking students by the end of their first full year of enrollment, *PACE* activities will focus on improving two Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that are components of first-year student success.**

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills that develop their academic perseverance.

SLO 2: Students will describe an enhanced sense of belonging within the College.

Competencies aligning with student learning outcomes have also been established to guide assessment. The Committee also planned three transformations to support each student learning outcome:

SLO 1: (1) Require Perspectives, a first-year seminar course, for all first-year, degree-seeking students, enrolled in A.A., A.S. and bachelor's degree programs; (2) Develop and implement common Perspectives activities pertaining to advising and campus resources, with reflections; and (3) Expand outreach from the Center of Advising and Student Success.

SLO 2: (1) Establish and sustain campus traditions for first-year students; (2) Design interactions for students to understand available engagement opportunities; and (3) Develop and implement common Perspectives activities related to engagement and service learning, with reflections.

A broad student base will be reached through *PACE* by using the first-year seminar course, Perspectives, to connect students with resources and reflective opportunities that provide the knowledge, skills, and experiences for developing academic perseverance and a sense of belonging. To accomplish this, we will embed common elements in the Perspectives course that also features associated labs and reflective assignments related to advising, campus resources, and engagement opportunities across all course themes. SLOs will be addressed by direct and indirect measures, including rubrics for evaluating student reflections and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Dalton State College is committed to supporting QEP activities by allocating resources that support key transformations and actions among the four primary pillars of *PACE*: Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement.

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Section Two: Institutional Processes and Alignment

According to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 7.2, the Quality Enhancement Plan topic should be selected through ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. Hence, Dalton State College relied on the College's institutional processes and evaluation data to identify elements for continuously improving student learning outcomes, resulting in its QEP, *PACE*.

College Overview

As an institution in the State College sector of the University System of Georgia (USG), Dalton State College "offer[s] general education courses, a balanced number of associate and bachelor's degree programs that are focused on demonstrated local need, and no graduate programs. Teaching and service are emphasized with a limited focus on research" ("Regents Policy," 2013). In the case of Dalton State, bachelor's programs constitute most of the curriculum and student enrollment (64%).

The institution enrolls approximately 4,500 students and was designated Georgia's first Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in 2018. While the College's students primarily reside in Georgia (96%) and are non-residential (94%), the student population represents 21 states and 34 nations.

Dalton State College comprises a significant, historically underrepresented minoritized student population, with the percentage of students indicating that they are of Hispanic origin increasing from 21% in Fall 2014 to 35% in Fall 2021. The next largest minoritized racial/ethnic group represented in our student population is our Black students, comprising 4.9% of the student population in Fall 2014 and 3.4% in Fall 2021. Dalton State College also has a high number of first-generation (51%) and Pell-eligible students (50% student population; 61% first-time, full-time students), but it has been ranked in the top 10% of most affordable public four-year colleges in the nation (U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center, 2022). In terms of employment, 73% work for pay (on-campus and off) 16 or more hours per week, and 19% work full-time (40 hours or more) ("Facts and Figures," 2021; Diverse Learning Environments Study, 2021).

College Mission

Dalton State College's mission statement demonstrates a commitment to providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills that impact degree attainment and goal accomplishment: "Dalton State College provides a diverse student population with opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to attain affordable baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, and certificates and to reach their personal and professional goals." Furthermore, the mission indicates that "through challenging academics and rich collegiate experiences, we promote lifelong learning, active leadership, and positive contributions in Northwest Georgia and beyond."

College Vision

Dalton State College aspires to "deliver a transformational education by engaging the unique perspectives of a diverse student population to create sustainable solutions that improve our community and world," thereby positioning the institution to begin this work in the first-year seminar course, Perspectives, and strategic alignment of first-year engagement opportunities.

2020-2024 College Strategic Plan

Every four years, Dalton State College engages in a review process of institutional goals, strategic initiatives, and outcomes aligning with its mission and stakeholder needs. The current four-year strategic plan identifies the following focus areas: (a) student success; (b) responsible stewardship; (c) academic excellence; and (d) community engagement.

Our most recent strategic planning process was led by a broad-based committee, including fourteen members from the following constituencies: (a) faculty of all ranks; (b) the Faculty Senate; (c) the Staff Council; and (d) the Student Government Association. The committee collected stakeholder input from the broader faculty, staff, student body, and external constituents.

While *PACE* supports various initiatives aligning with Dalton State College's strategic plan, the QEP Planning Committee devised an initiative with intended transformations that holistically advance the first goal of the strategic plan.

> Goal One: "We will increase student success through excellent teaching and developmental opportunities both inside and outside the classroom."

PACE will advance goal one of the strategic plan with the established SLOs and associated competencies relating to equipping students with knowledge and skills that develop their academic perseverance and sense of belonging. Scholarly research points to a relationship between these attributes and student success.

Key Issues from Institutional Assessment

In addition to aligning the QEP with the institutional mission, vision, and strategic plan, the following data sources informed the crafting of this plan:

1. Ruffalo Noel Levitz conducted the comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan and its accompanying student engagement study in 2020 for the Office of Enrollment Services and Office of Student Life. In conjunction with the College's strategic plan, this 100-page report served as a document to help align the QEP with other College initiatives.

2. Advising satisfaction surveys were administered to students through the College's SmartEvals platform, and these data indicated that students struggle with complexities regarding academic advising

processes at the institution. These complexities are related partially to changes in the last several years to the advising model (decentralized to centrally coordinated to centralized). Secondly, budget cuts have limited the number of professional academic advisors in the Advising Center, such that each advisor serves a number of advisees in excess of best professional practice (Robbins, 2013). Dalton State College's median caseload for professional advisors (350 advisees) exceeds national figures in public, four-year colleges, with a 34% higher caseload.

3. The University System of Georgia sponsored participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), providing historical (2014, 2017, 2020) engagement data. The results provided insights compared to other Georgia institutions and peer institutions. The data will be used to generate target goals at or above peer institutions and recover to pre-pandemic engagement levels and reported sense of belonging.

4. The Perspectives (first-year seminar) course data were examined, and it was concluded that the course was not rising to meet its full potential for student impact. The faculty received relatively high evaluations on a five-point scale (Fall 2020, 4.6; Fall 2021, 4.3). Likewise, the class engaged students in many ways that appeared to improve retention (e.g., 64% of all first-time, full-time students in Fall 2020 were retained, but 67% of those who took the course were retained). However, various aspects required revitalization for the course to reach its full potential, such as policies requiring the course and enforcement of penalties for students withdrawing and failing the course. Additionally, significant inconsistencies across course sections and faculty expectations were noted. Components requiring revitalization are further outlined in section three.

5. General Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), institutional, and University System of Georgia data regarding student retention first to second year, graduation rates, populations, use and loss of financial aid, and grades were examined. These data helped the Committee understand the overall experience of Dalton State's first-year population. Compared to other institutions in the University System, Dalton State ranks higher than most state colleges and several regional universities on several first-year measures. The following two charts indicate general improvement in six-year graduation rates of first-time, full-time baccalaureate-seeking students. However, the data also demonstrate first-year retention rate declines for more recent beginning cohorts. For first-time, full-time degree seeking students, the retention rates decreased from 66.5% to 61.3% among non-Hispanic students and from 85.6% to 68% among Hispanic students. The all-time institutional-high baccalaureate graduation rate for the Fall 2014 cohort coincided with the highest one-year retention rate in recent years.

Figure 1: *2007-2015 Cohort Six-year Graduation Rates*

Six-Year Graduation for First-Time Full-Time Baccalaureate-Seeking Students
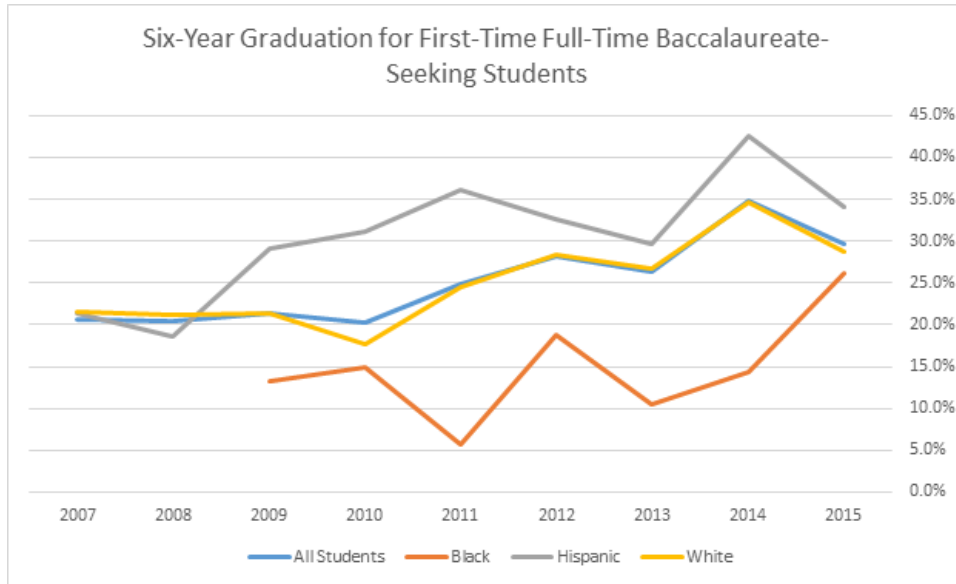
Figure 2: *First-year Retention Rates by Cohort*

One-Year Retention for all First-Time Full-Time Degree-Seeking Students
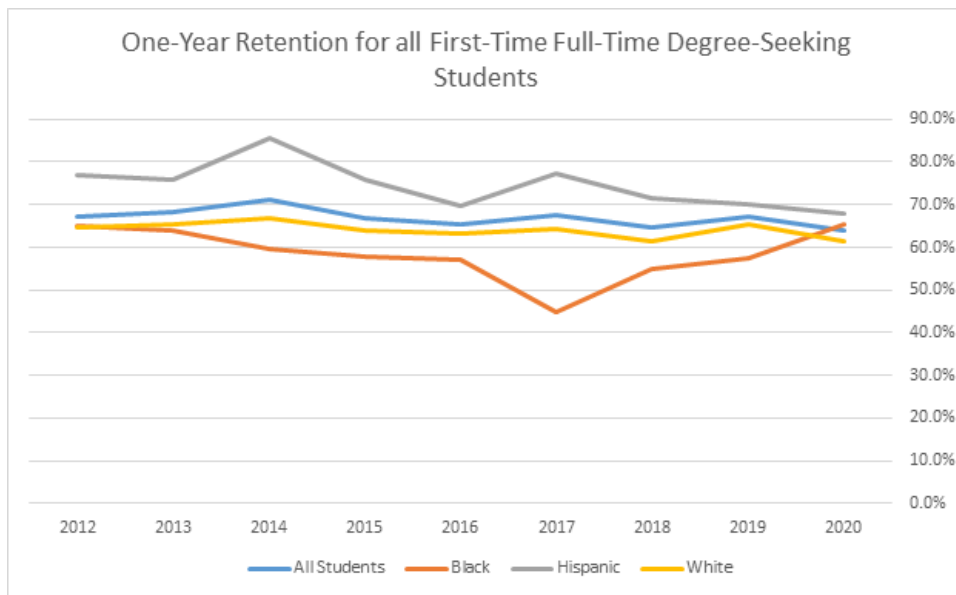
6. Institutional data provided by the Office of Financial Aid indicate that many students lose their financial aid (Pell, Georgia HOPE scholarship, or both) due to a low GPA and/or a lack of success in 33% or more of attempted hours. Of the 287 first-time students who started in Fall 2019 with a HOPE/Zell Miller Scholarship, 111 (39%) forfeited it by the end of Spring 2020. Of the 291 starting in Fall 2020 with

this funding, 113 (39%) lost the scholarship by the end of Spring 2021. Consider the following figures regarding GPA related to Pell funding:

- Fall 2018 first-time freshmen GPA at the end of the first year, the 114 at or below 1.99 GPA (20%)
- Fall 2019 first-time freshmen at the end of the first year, 89 at or below 1.99 GPA (17%)
- Fall 2020 first-time freshmen at the end of first year, 109 at or below 1.99 GPA (23%)

Additionally, the Office of Computing & Information Sytems provided student count data. Table 1 shows the decline in fall-to-spring first-year enrollment counts over the last four years.

Table 1: *Fall-to-Spring First-Time Student Retention Rate*

Enrolled	Fall Student Count	Returned	Spring Student Count	Percentage
Fall 2018	1,130	Spring 2019	973	86%
Fall 2019	1,041	Spring 2020	872	84%
Fall 2020	939	Spring 2021	726	77%
Fall 2021	993	Spring 2022	779	78%

7. Data were also examined concerning developmental education. In Fall 2021, 755 students took ENGL 1101, and 221 (29%) were also in the co-requisite learning support class. In the same term, 894 students took MATH 1101/1111, and 488 (54%) were also in co-requisite learning support. To exit learning support requirements, students must complete the curricular English general education course with a grade of C or higher and the curricular mathematics course with a grade of D or higher. Among the 221 students in English learning support, only 99 (45%) exited; of the 488 in math learning support, 311 (64%) exited. These figures are lower than in previous years and are not conducive to student success.

8. Data from Dean of Students Office annual reports related to student involvement in activities, organizations, leadership, and civic engagement were examined. Of 427 students responding to the survey, 37.7% rated themselves as highly involved or moderately involved in campus activities, as reflected in Figure 3.

Figure 3: *Self-Reports of Student Involvement, 2019*

How would you classify your involvement in campus life at Dalton State?

427 responses

- Not Involved
- Minimally Involved
- Moderately Involved
- Highly Involved

6.8%
16.0%
30.9%
45.7%
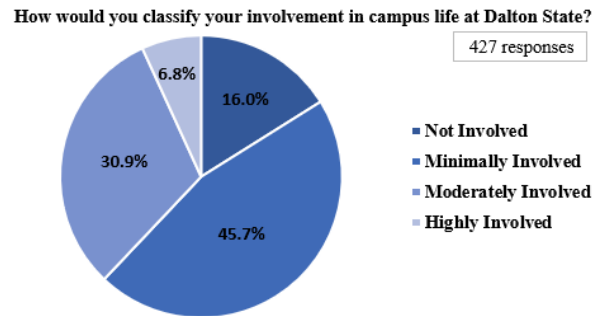
Other data from the Dean of Students Office Annual Reports reflect a decrease in student involvement in the last two years, as displayed in Table 2. Committee discussion centered around the impact of the pandemic on engagement, and the Committee's desire to reengage with students became clear.

Table 2: *Student Engagement (duplicated headcount)*

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Civic Engagement	1,981	556	414
Volunteer Hours	5,573	5,331	1,743
Leadership	178	333	181
Programs	3,686	5,380	1,338
RSO/Greek Life	762	1,795	455
Student Government	275	214	190
Civic Learning	497	179	336

However, data from the Dean of Students Office reflect a consistent increase in resource usage (duplicated) for Peer Education (AY 2018-2019, 3,320; AY 2019-2020, 8,554; AY 2020-2021, 9,847). Peer education is peer-led academic support that includes one-on-one tutoring, supplemental instruction, the math and science learning center, and a study skill development series. However, resource usage trends upward in the student's second year and beyond. Resource usage also becomes more prevalent after midterms instead of at the beginning of the semester when the services can be more impactful regarding students' academic perseverance.

9. Survey data about Basic Students Needs during the pandemic, conducted by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, were also assessed. These data highlight that our students face insecurities that impact academic performance and persistence. The College offers a food pantry, but as noted earlier, students are often unaware of the resource or fail to utilize it to the extent that they could. Despite 33% of respondents indicating food insecurity in the last thirty days, the number of unique users of the Food Pantry in FY2021 was 209, a 59% decrease from the previous year.

10. Results from surveys regarding mindset, sense of purpose, and sense of belonging at Dalton State conducted by the University System of Georgia were considered by the Committee. These data were gathered in English 1101 classes at the beginning and end of Fall 2020. Data give a snapshot of many first-year students at the beginning (English 1101 being a required course), a way to see if there was a change by the end of the semester, and a way to compare with other System institutions. For example, the mean for "I belong at this college or university" was 4.67 out of 6, and the mean for "Being a student at this college/university is an important part of my identity" was 4.45 out of 6 (n=507). Any improvements in the scores from the beginning to the end of the semester were not statistically significant, but there were slight decreases in some cases.

Throughout the Committee's review of institutional data, various student demographic groups were disaggregated for analysis. At this time, the Committee has decided to maintain its focus on the entire first-year student population, with a possibility that data will lead to further discussion and institutionally aligned initiatives for sub-populations in the future.

Section Three: QEP Topic Selection and Development

According to SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 7.2, the Quality Enhancement Plan topic and development must encompass "broad-based support of institutional constituencies." As Dalton State College seeks to fulfill and advance its mission, vision, and strategic initiatives, the QEP Planning Committee encompassed diverse campus representation that examined the input of various constituencies, existing data the College collects through Institutional Research and Effectiveness processes, and corresponding scholarly literature.

The Office of Academic Affairs formed the following broad-based QEP Planning Committee:

Table 3: QEP *Planning Committee Members*

Name	Title
Dr. Jenny Crisp	Professor of English, Chair of QEP 2012-2018, Compliance Report Editor
Dr. Cecile de Rocher	Assistant Professor of English, Co-Editor of QEP (beginning summer 2021)
Dr. Nicholas Gewecke	Associate Professor of Mathematics (Dr. Gewecke accepted the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment role beginning January 1, 2022, and remained on the Planning Committee.)
Ms. Jennifer Granados*	Student Government Representative, Business Major
Ms. Brooklyn Herrera	Assistant Director for Peer Education
Mr. Matthew Hipps	Associate Professor of Political Science, Chair of Committee on Student Transitions
Dr. Leah Howell	Assistant Professor of Biology
Ms. Elizabeth Hubbs	Assistant Professor of Social Work and Director of Field Education
Ms. Katelyn Humphrey*	Assistant Director of Recruitment and Orientation
Dr. Elizabeth Hutchins	Executive Director of Advising and Student Success
Dr. Amber Lesicko	Associate Director for Student Life
Mr. William Mast	Assistant Director for Student Conduct and Case Management and Manager for Fraternity and Sorority Life
Dr. Sarah Mergel	Associate Professor of History, Co-Editor of QEP
Ms. Ana Rodriguez*	Student Government Representative, Biology Major
Dr. Barbara Tucker	Chair of the Department of Communication, Performing Arts, and Foreign Languages, Chair of the QEP Planning Committee
Dr. Megan Vallowe	Assistant Professor of English, Co-Editor of QEP (through summer 2021)

Note: An asterisk indicates committee member added in October 2021 at the Committee's recommendation.

QEP Topic Selection

The QEP topic, which evolved into *PACE*, was selected through an extensive and comprehensive process involving stakeholder input and a planning committee that presented diverse perspectives. The Committee (Table 3) included personnel from various functional areas across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs as well as student representation. Table 4 displays the timeline of the topic selection process.

Table 4: *Timeline of the QEP Topic Selection Process*

Date	Activity
March 2021	• A call for topics produced fifty-four unique QEP ideas. • The Planning Committee formed.
April 2021	• The Planning Committee's charge was delivered, and the first meeting occurred. • The Planning Committee analyzed proposed topics and determined that the QEP should address curricular and co-curricular student needs.
May 2021 through August 2021	• The Planning committee considered institutional data, alignment, and scholarly literature concerning proposed topics. • A preliminary topic was identified.
August 2021 through September 2021	• Topic selection executive summary drafted. • The topic was shared, and feedback was elicited from the Administrative Cabinet and at campus assembly.
October 2021	• Based on the topic, additions were made to complete the Planning Committee.

Campus-Wide Survey

Before the formation of the Planning Committee and its first meeting, the Office of Academic Affairs surveyed faculty, staff, students, and administration to gather a culmination of QEP topic ideas. Survey efforts produced fifty-four unique topics, as evidenced in Appendix A. The most frequently cited suggestions focused on advising, first-year student experience, services for student success, and student engagement opportunities. The QEP Planning Committee analyzed all proposed topics and unanimously felt that the QEP should address curricular and co-curricular student needs.

Topic Alignment

After reviewing all proposed topics, the QEP Planning Committee proceeded by meeting biweekly to discuss topics and ideas and their intersections with institutional data, alignment of institutional initiatives, and related scholarly literature.

Committee efforts led to conversations centered around Dalton State College's first-year students. Although we proclaim that all our students *can* succeed, not all our students *are* succeeding. The consensus was that, as an institution, we believe students can reach their full potential. However, many do not finish their first year or even return after their first semester. We recognized early on that our students' success and academic perseverance is not simply dependent on their desire to succeed, their academic preparedness factors, or what happens inside the classroom. Whether a student is successful is attributed to cultural, economic, and environmental factors in the lives of our diverse student population. Therefore, the Committee sought to develop a plan to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to persevere in their education and feel as if they belong. Consequently, the QEP needed to approach curricular and co-curricular student needs aligned with the attainment of knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging.

The Committee proposed that the QEP could address these student needs with the following focus areas that were later refined after eliciting feedback from the Administrative Cabinet and the campus as a whole: (a) Perspectives, the first-year seminar course; (b) advising; (c) campus resources; and (d) engagement.

Perspectives. Significant effort was expended toward analyzing data and engaging in discussion related to the College's key effort in addressing first-year student needs, the Perspectives course. The Committee examined data, surveys, evaluations, and the institutional evolution associated with the course.

In selecting this focus, we acknowledge that the College's efforts in first-year teaching, programming, advising, and engagement have seen challenges throughout its history, specifically in the last eighteen years. These challenges are most clearly seen in the various iterations of what is commonly called "the first-year seminar." Prior to 2004, a one-hour college success course was offered as an elective. In 2004, with the award of a Title III grant for advising, a required one-hour, eight-week FYES 1000 course was instituted, focusing on study skills, time management, and college readiness taught by professional staff. No institutional credit was awarded, but the grant provided funding for instructor remuneration. After the conclusion of the grant, the course became FYES 1200 and was changed to a two-hour, credit-bearing course paid for by additional student fees. However, those two credits did not fit in the general education curriculum, and student federal financial aid was not applied. Therefore, the College eliminated that version of the course in 2017.

The model in practice at the beginning of the QEP Planning Committee's work, a theme-based, one-hour, credit-bearing course with its place as an elective in the general education curriculum, began in 2018. The Perspectives course was approved with five course numbers reflecting the five major areas of the curriculum: PRSP 1010 (Perspectives in Liberal Arts), PRSP 1020 (Perspectives in Business); PRSP 1030 (Perspectives in Education), PRSP 1040 (Perspectives in Health Education), and PRSP 1050

(Perspectives in STEM). The course would serve as an elective option in the general core, so it needed approval by the College's Academic Programs Committee and the University System of Georgia's Council on General Education. The approval was granted in 2018, as evidenced in Appendix B. This course has been taught by full-time and part-time faculty and some professional staff, who choose their theme based on disciplinary interests. Themes have included human rights, health and wellness, reptiles, leadership, the history of coffee and tea, genres of literature, and themes based in specific career fields, such as entrepreneurship and preparation for careers in nursing.

The approved 2018 course description of Perspectives was as follows:

> Perspectives in … introduces students to academic learning and inquiry at the college level. These courses are based on a theme (chosen by the instructor) and will introduce students to college level research and writing in various disciplines. This course will help students develop critical thinking skills through integrative learning and encourage academic dialogue between first-year students, faculty, and staff. (1-1-1)

Note that the course is described as having one hour of credit, one hour of seat time, and one hour of lab to accommodate activities outside the classroom, whether online or in person. The General Education curricula for degree-seeking students in the University System of Georgia allow for four hours of "Institutional Choice." At Dalton State, those four hours are titled "Area B" and currently are fulfilled with a required three-hour public speaking course (COMM 1110) and a one-hour elective.

Perspectives courses continued into the Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 semesters with various challenges associated with producing the intended impact. These included:

- Scheduling enough sections to serve all first-year students;
- Faculty recruitment, remuneration, and professional development;
- Lack of policies requiring the course in the general education curriculum and on penalties for students who withdraw or fail the course;
- Inconsistency across course sections and associated faculty expectations; and
- Inconsistency across themes for nurturing "lifelong learning," an aspect of the institutional mission

In preparation for QEP implementation and the need to serve all first-year students, the Perspectives course became the required one-hour Area B course for all first-year students, except those entering Dalton State enrolled in programs that do not have this Area B requirement (B.S. in Organizational Leadership, A.A.S. programs, and certificate programs in health and technical professions). Additionally, a change to the course description was made to include an emphasis on student engagement and

discourse, as evidenced in Appendix C. After determining that the Perspectives course required revitalizations to advance impact, the QEP Planning Committee investigated how to leverage the course's potential to impact student success and existing issues and inconsistencies positively. The Committee agreed to utilize the QEP pilot year to gain more information for improving the course, as existing data were often inconclusive due to the absence of a course requirement for all incoming students. As a result, significant changes would be needed to the course as the QEP developed.

Advising. Recognizing that advising is a shared responsibility between advisor and advisee, the mission of academic advising at Dalton State College is to:

- Assist students in making a successful transition to and establishing their place in college life;
- Guide students to make well-intentioned and strategic decisions;
- Encourage self-reliant problem solving through self-exploration; and
- Maximize personal success in the student's undergraduate experience.

Advisors working with students accomplish the mission through regular meetings that involve understanding the student's personal and educational goals, creating an academic plan, making appropriate referrals to campus resources, and encouraging co-curricular involvement. However, Dalton State College's median caseload for professional advisors (350 advisees) soars above national figures in public, four-year colleges, with a 34% higher caseload. The institution's post-pandemic first-year student enrollment is improving, likely increasing this caseload. Additionally, the proportion of Hispanic student population continues to grow at the College. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) there are additional considerations for working with a diverse student population that may warrant even smaller caseloads that allow for greater individualization, as outlined in the literature review in section five. Larger-than-average caseloads also reduce the opportunity to streamline outreach with students that result in meaningful one-on-one interactions. As a result, the committee identified the following challenges:

- Larger-than-average caseloads reduce professional advisor interactions with students;
- Larger-than-average caseloads reduce professional advisor capacity for outreach that encourages one-on-one interactions with students; and
- Inconsistency in Perspectives course involvement, reducing consistent touchpoints with first-year students.

The Committee concluded that increasing first-year student interaction with professional advisors would be necessary to meet the student population's needs.

Campus Resources. Institutional data demonstrate student interest in consulting campus resources, with usage trending upward after most students' first year and toward the end of each semester of use. The Committee concluded that scholarly research points toward campus resource usage increasing student

success by facilitating the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging. Additionally, literature also highlights that many students fail to utilize resources because they fear that reaching out makes them appear intellectually deficient. However, many of the College's campus resources are peer-led, a format linked to positive academic outcomes at HSIs, as demonstrated in the literature review in section five. The Committee also determined that the knowledge and skills acquired through campus resources would equip students to navigate the complexities often associated with first-generation, low-income, or minoritized student identities. However, connecting students with campus resources in the first year poses the following challenges:

- Inconsistency in Perspectives course involvement, impeding consistent, early resource awareness for first-year students;
- Inconsistent student resource usage is often derived from one's assumption that only students who are intellectually deficit seek out these resources; and
- Inconsistent resource information uniformity connecting students with campus resources.

The Committee asserts that increasing student success for the College's first-year student population would rely heavily on connecting these students to campus resources earlier than they would typically seek them out on their own and normalizing the use of these resources by having all Perspectives students engage with the services through Perspectives course labs.

Engagement. With institutional data reflecting a decrease in student involvement and retention around the same time, the Committee concluded that it would be remiss to propose a QEP lacking a focus on student engagement. After exploring scholarly research, the Committee's stance was affirmed by Astin's (1999) theory of involvement that contends for student learning and growth to occur, students must engage in opportunities inside and outside the classroom, with institutions creating such conditions. Literature supports that student engagement is also linked with cultivating a sense of belonging during transitionary periods. After analyzing institutional conditions regarding student engagement and inconclusive findings surrounding student sense of belonging, the following challenges were identified:

- Inconsistency in Perspectives course involvement, impeding awareness of learning opportunities outside of the classroom for first-year students;
- Decreased student involvement;
- Inconclusive findings surrounding student sense of belonging inside and outside the classroom; and
- Inconsistent student involvement information uniformity connecting students with learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

The Committee stressed that due to the theoretical and empirical work demonstrating the connection between student engagement and student success, engagement must be an integral component of the QEP.

QEP Development

After identifying QEP topics, the plan was further developed after the QEP Planning Committee elicited feedback at campus-wide governance meetings, such as Administrative Cabinet, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and the Student Government Association. Feedback was also elicited from targeted stakeholder groups and in additional public forum spaces. Table 5 displays the general timeline of development activities. From the composition of the Committee to the Committee's open communication with its constituents, ensuring broad-based support of the Quality Enhancement Plan's efforts has remained a priority. These diverse perspectives further shaped the development of the QEP into our College's plan for setting the *PACE* for first-year students at Dalton State College.

Table 5: *General Timeline of QEP Development*

Date	Activity
November through December 2021	• The QEP was developed and refined.
January through February 2022	• The Planning Committee presented *PACE* plans and elicited feedback at campus-wide governance meetings (Administrative Cabinet, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Government Association). • The Planning Committee presented *PACE* plans and elicited feedback from targeted stakeholder groups (e.g., Deans, Chairs, Dean of Students Office). • The QEP Planning Committee appointed the QEP Publicity Subcommittee.
March 2022	• A complete QEP draft was presented to the Administrative Cabinet. • Dr. Forrest Blackbourn, Associate Professor of Spanish, was announced as Director of the QEP.
May 2022	• Ms. Brooklyn Herrera, already a member of the Planning Committee, was announced Associate Director of the QEP.

Identifying Key Components of the QEP

In January 2022, the QEP Planning Committee appointed the publicity subcommittee that developed a QEP title, logo, and a publicity and outreach campaign. The QEP officially became known as Dalton State College's approach to "Setting the *PACE* for Success." The title uses the acronym *PACE* to represent four key elements of the Plan: Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement, seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4: *QEP Plan Acronym*
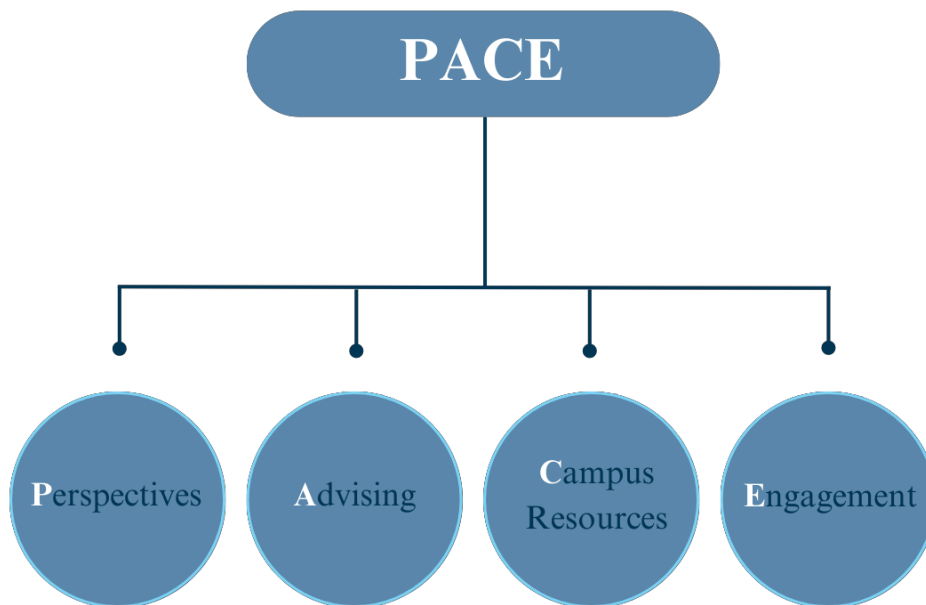
"Setting the *PACE* for Success" aligns with establishing a solid foundation in the first year, and the logo includes a homage to the College mascot, the Roadrunner.

The Committee further determined that *PACE* would utilize the Perspectives course as a vehicle to immerse students in a first-year experience that places emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging inside and outside of the classroom.

Later Committee conversations led to identifying proposed changes to the Perspectives course. The most significant enhancement was interweaving common course elements, associated labs, and reflective assignments related to advising, campus resources, and engagement opportunities across all course themes. The Committee is considering the purchase of a student engagement platform that would also enable students to see the cohesive alignment with learning opportunities outside of the classroom with their curricular experiences. This platform would also contain pertinent information for completing their Perspectives course labs. These changes will necessitate an expansion of the Student Success and Advising Center staff. Additionally, improvement to the campus culture that will strengthen first-year students' sense of belonging and increase engagement will be sought through intentionality and newly established campus traditions for first-year students.

Perspectives. In further developing the QEP, the Planning Committee identified the previous and/or current situation with the Perspectives, first-year seminar course, and the changes that will occur due to the construction of this QEP. To remain intentional, the Committee also identified the aforementioned issue or inconsistency that each change will address.

Table 6: *Perspectives Course Changes*

Previous or Current Situation	Changes to PRSP Course	Issue Addressed
An elective option	Required for all degree-seeking students while excluding those that do not have this Area B requirement (B.S. in Organizational Leadership, A.A.S. programs, and certificate programs in health and technical professions).	Lacked requirement in the general education curriculum
No common course elements	Common course elements, reflective opportunities, and labs will be designed to equip students with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging.	Inconsistency across course sections and faculty expectations; Inconsistency across themes for nurturing "lifelong learning," an aspect of the institutional mission
No streamlined solution for connecting students with opportunities for learning outside the classroom	Introduce students to a new student engagement platform with related opportunities for acquiring knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging outside of the classroom Connect students with advising, campus resources, and engagement lab components	Inconsistency across course sections and faculty expectations; Inconsistency across themes for nurturing "lifelong learning," an aspect of the institutional mission
No development or training for Perspective faculty	Faculty training for common course elements and consistent professional development through faculty learning communities	Faculty recruitment, remuneration and professional development
Frequently staffed as full-time faculty overload or part-time instructor assignments	Becomes part of full-time faculty member loads, with two sections counting as a typical three-hour course as opposed to two one-hour courses	Faculty recruitment, remuneration and professional development; Staffing enough sections to serve all first-year students

The common course elements that will be integrated in each Perspectives course were selected, with the delivery format, reflective activities, and labs also being identified. Sample reflection prompts are detailed in Appendix F. After assessing institutional data, alignment, and stakeholder feedback, the Committee concluded that the following elements would equip students with the skills, knowledge, and sense of belonging needed to be successful in their first year and beyond:

Table 7: *Perspectives Core Components*

	Delivery Format	Presenters	Assignment	Lab/Activity Type
Perspectives Common Course Elements				
Advising	Classroom Presentation (e.g., making sense of one's declared program, understanding personal scheduling needs, and learning steps to prepare for registration)	Advisors	Reflection	Required Schedule an advising appointment
Campus Resources	Classroom Presentation (e.g., library, career services, CARE, peer education, counseling, disability services, writing lab, financial aid)	Staff associated with presentation areas. Student leaders from these areas may also deliver content (e.g., peer educators, peer mentors)	Reflection	Required Activity options align with each resource discussed and potentially displayed in student engagement platform (e.g., Focus 2 Career assessment, attend a tutoring session, visit MSLC or writing lab, meet with a reference librarian)
Engagement/ Involvement	Classroom Presentation (e.g., involvement and learning opportunities outside the classroom)	DoS Office Staff; Student Life Associates	Reflection	Required Activity options align with each resource discussed and potentially displayed in student engagement platform (e.g., attend an SGA meeting, volunteer, research/experiential learning, attend an event)
Service- Learning	Collaborative class project (e.g., Can structure: Collect cans for the birdfeeder and make a structure representative of the course theme)	Course Instructor	Reflection; Classroom Dialogue	Optional Attend a gathering with peers, Perspectives instructors, and staff associated with the core components to build community, display structures (or pictures of structures), and attendees vote for structures best aligning with course theme.

Advising. Through continued development, the Committee highlighted the importance of increasing first-year student interaction with professional advisors, so the significant issue of higher-than-average advisor caseloads would need to be addressed. The Committee identified the previous or current situation with aspects of advising that identified changes with the QEP will address.

Table 8: *Advising Changes*

Previous/Current Situation	Changes to Advising	Issue Addressed
Currently staffed with 6.5 FTE professional advisors and success coaches (3.0 FTE grant-funded)	Staff with eight state-funded professional advisors	Larger-than-average caseload
Inconsistent involvement in Perspectives course, with outreach being dependent on faculty invitation and advisor capacity to fulfill	Advising core component, reflective activity, and lab integrated in Perspectives courses	Inconsistent involvement in Perspectives Course; Professional advisor capacity for outreach that encourages meaningful one-on-one student interactions
Resource information is scattered across campus and various mediums	Advising resources and information becomes readily available on new student engagement platform; Required Perspectives lab information becomes easily assessable on the student engagement platform	Inconsistent involvement in Perspectives Course; Professional advisor capacity for outreach that encourages meaningful one-on-one student interactions

Campus Resources. Through continued development, the Committee focused on first-year student awareness and usage of campus resources. The Committee identified the previous or current situation related to campus resources and the identified changes that will occur as a result of this QEP.

Table 9: *Campus Resources Changes*

Previous/Current Situation	Changes to Resources	Issue Addressed
Inconsistent involvement in Perspectives course, with outreach being dependent on faculty invitation, leaving the coverage of some resources to chance	Campus resources core component and reflective activity integrated in Perspectives course streamlines awareness information for first-year students	First-year students have inconsistent access to the same campus resource information

Inconsistent student resource usage	Campus resources required lab in Perspectives course to familiarize students with processes for usage	First-year students have inconsistent access to the same campus resource information; The need to normalize student resource usage
Resource information is scattered across campus and various mediums, which limits student reach	Campus resource information becomes readily available on student engagement platform; Perspectives lab information becomes easily accessible on the student engagement platform	Inconsistent resource information uniformity connecting students with campus resources

Engagement. Through continued development, the Committee identified student engagement for first-year students as an integral component of the QEP. The Committee identified the previous or current situation with campus engagement and the associated changes that will occur as a result of this QEP.

Table 10: *Engagement Changes*

Previous/Current Situation	Changes to Engagement	Issue Addressed
Inconsistent involvement in Perspectives course, with outreach being dependent on faculty invitation, reducing student reach	Student engagement core component and reflective activity integrated in Perspectives course streamlines involvement information for first-year students	First-year students have inconsistent access to the same student involvement information
Decreased student involvement outside the classroom	Engagement lab required in Perspectives course aids students in identifying interests and increasing the likelihood of a strengthened sense of belonging	Inconsistent involvement in Perspectives Course; Decreased student involvement; Inconclusive findings surrounding student sense of belonging
Involvement information is scattered across campus and various mediums, which limits student reach	Involvement information becomes readily available on new student engagement platform; Required Perspectives lab information becomes easily accessible on the student engagement platform	Inconsistent student involvement information uniformity connecting students with learning opportunities outside of the classroom
No campus traditions to engage first-year students	Campus traditions created for first-year students	Decreased student involvement; Inconclusive findings surrounding student sense of belonging

Implementation Planning

In preparation for the implementation of the QEP, extensive campus outreach was conducted. Additionally, a Director and Associate Director were identified, and the roles of Faculty Fellow, Assessment Coordinator, and *PACE* Project Coordinators were developed. An Implementation Committee structure for *PACE* was also created.

PACE **Outreach.** The publicity subcommittee outreach campaign facilitated broad-based *PACE* engagement among the College's administration, faculty, staff, and students to create a well-informed campus and cultivate support for the Plan. First, a collaborative video project explaining what it means to set the *PACE* for success was completed. The video consisted of various institutional stakeholders and was produced by a film studies student in our campus production lab. Since identifying the QEP, the *PACE* implementation team visited each Perspectives classroom to connect with students and unveil the *PACE* video personally. Additionally, an "Embrace the PACE" employee brunch and student kickoff event were implemented to educate institutional stakeholders, answer questions, discuss engagement opportunities, and distribute *PACE* t-shirts. Dates were selected for when *PACE* t-shirts will be intentionally worn to build community and plan awareness. Campus administration, faculty, staff, and students then collectively gathered for the "*PACE* Pizza and Pictures" event to rally excitement around the project, build community, and participate in a campus picture with their new *PACE* t-shirts. Figure 5 displays select campus-wide *PACE* event photographs.

Figure 5: *PACE Event Photographs*

Students engaged in the "Best *PACE* Face Photo Contest," with photograph submissions reflecting students' participation in any pillar of *PACE*. Figure 6 displays "Best *PACE* Face Contest" campus

communication. The photographs obtained will be utilized for marketing and social media purposes to support continued awareness and excitement for the Plan.

Figure 6: *Best PACE Face Contest Campus Communication*

Best practices for *PACE* outreach will continuously be evaluated throughout the entire life of the plan.

PACE **Personnel**

PACE **Director and Associate Director.** In March 2022, Dr. Forrest Blackbourn, Associate Professor of Spanish, was announced as the Director of the QEP. The QEP Director reports to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Due to the plan's co-curricular elements, the Planning Committee advocated that an associate director be hired from the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. In May 2022, Ms. Brooklyn Herrera, already a member of the Planning Committee, became the Associate Director of the QEP. The directors' responsibilities are further outlined in Appendix D and E. The directors' work officially began on July 1, 2022. Then, the Faculty Fellow, *PACE* Project Coordinators, assessment coordinator, and Implementation Team's work began in fall 2022.

Faculty Fellow. There will be a faculty fellow, in collaboration with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, who will be selected through a competitive application process. Fellow roles involve serving on the QEP Implementation Team and extending professional learning opportunities to faculty pertaining to teaching Perspectives courses and best practices and pedagogy for first-year courses.

PACE **Project Coordinators.** Implementing the proposed changes involving Perspectives, advising, campus resources, and engagement will require the support of functional area experts. Consequently, Dalton State College will appoint one project coordinator for each functional area, resulting in four knowledgeable individuals serving in this role to oversee the assigned pillar subcommittee and project implementation plans associated with the QEP.

PACE **Assessment Coordinator.** A data-minded individual will be appointed to serve as the assessment coordinator. This individual will be responsible for providing strategic data-driven guidance and managing the assessment plan, outlined in section seven of this document.

Implementation Team. The *PACE* implementation committee will represent broad constituencies on the campus. In addition to Director and Associate Director, four members are permanent, and each standard rotation is a commitment for two academic years, with the opportunity to reaffirm that commitment for two more academic years.

Table 11: *QEP Implementation Committee Members*

Committee Representative	Commitment
Director	Permanent
Associate Director	Permanent
Center of Student Success and Advising (1)	Permanent
Academic Support Services (1)	Permanent
Campus Life (2)	One Permanent; One Rotation
Institutional Research (1)	Permanent
Student Government (2)	One-Year Rotation
CETL Faculty Fellow for Perspectives and First-Year Teaching (1)	Standard Rotation
Enrollment Services (1)	Standard Rotation
Academic Dean, Assistant Dean, or Department Chair (2)	One Permanent; One Rotation
Dean of Students Office (1)	Standard Rotation
Wright School of Business Faculty (1)	Standard Rotation
School of Health Professions Faculty (1)	Standard Rotation
School of Arts and Science: Arts Faculty (1)	Standard Rotation
School of Arts and Science: STEM Faculty (1)	Standard Rotation
School of Education Faculty (1)	Standard Rotation
Ex-Officio: Executive Cabinet Members	Permanent

The College has experienced some redundancies on committees and units working on the issue of student success and retention. This QEP seeks to centralize and expand some of that work. The Faculty Senate removed a subcommittee on student success, and the Committee on Student Transitions' work will be

subsumed into another committee's work on students transitioning to the junior year. The Perspectives course, formerly under the Committee for Student Transitions, will now be under the collaborative work of chairs and deans (assignment and assessment of faculty), the QEP Implementation Team (assessment and improvement of the course), the faculty teaching the course, and the Faculty Fellow for Perspective and First Year Teaching.

Section Four: Improving Student Learning Outcomes

This QEP focuses on improving two student learning outcomes that are components of first-year student success. *PACE* will leverage Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement to improve the identified student learning outcomes. Additional information regarding the current state, proposed changes, and the rationale of each functional area highlighted can be found in section three. To guide assessment, competencies were aligned with the identified student learning outcomes, which are detailed in section seven.

Table 12: *Dalton State QEP Definitions*

Term	Definition
PACE	Dalton State College's 2023-2028 QEP. An acronym that stands for Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement.
Perspectives	First-year Seminar Course
Student	The target audience of the QEP
First-Year Student	Students enrolled in the first semester of a degree program at Dalton State with 29 or fewer earned credit hours before enrollment.

PACE

PACE immerses students in a first-year experience designed to improve student learning outcomes by leveraging identified strategies and related actions through Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement. Strategies include increasing engagement in opportunities that support students in their academic perseverance and improving the campus culture to strengthen first-year students' sense of belonging.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

PACE addresses the following SLOs for improving student success in the first year:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills that develop their academic perseverance.

SLO 2: Students will describe a strengthened sense of belonging within the college.

Goals and Related Actions for Implementation

Following the assessment of institutional data, alignment, scholarly literature, and input from broad-based constituents, the plan's focus turned toward two goals that produce the conditions for SLOs to be improved.

Table 13: *PACE Goal and SLO Alignment*

Goal	SLO
Increase engagement in opportunities that support students in their academic perseverance.	Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills that develop their academic perseverance.
Improve the campus culture to strengthen first-year students' sense of belonging.	Students will describe a strengthened sense of belonging within the College.

PACE goals were also aligned with corresponding action items that will make goal attainment feasible, as reflected in Table 14.

Table 14: *PACE Goal and Action Items*

Goal	Action Items
Increase engagement in opportunities that support students in their academic perseverance.	- Require first-year Perspectives course. - Develop and implement common Perspectives activities, labs, and reflective experiences aligning with campus resources and advising. - Expand outreach from Student Success and Advising Center.
Improve the campus culture to strengthen first-year students' sense of belonging.	- Create campus traditions for first-year students. - Design interactions for students to understand available engagement opportunities. - Develop and implement common Perspectives activities labs, and reflective experiences aligning with engagement, including involvement opportunities and service learning.

Goal One: Increase engagement in opportunities that support students in their academic perseverance.

PACE seeks to increase engagement in opportunities supporting students' academic perseverance. Consequently, increasing engagement in these opportunities will increase first-year student acquisition of knowledge and skills that further develop their academic perseverance.

Goal one creates the conditions for improving SLO one as our research indicates that student involvement in first-year seminar courses, academic advising, and campus resources supports the development of this knowledge and skill acquisition. *PACE* will: (1) require first-year students to enroll in a Perspectives course; (2) develop and implement common Perspectives activities, labs, and reflective experiences; and (3) expand outreach from the Student Success and Advising Center.

1.1: Require first-year Perspectives course. In preparation for the QEP, the Perspectives course shifted from a student elective to the required one-hour Area B course for all first-year students. *PACE* leadership and the implementation team will continue to make relevant, data-driven changes that best align with this new requirement. Section three of this document contains a full description of proposed course changes based on current information and associated rationale.

1.2: Develop and Implement common Perspectives activities, labs, and reflective experiences aligning with campus resources and advising. The Perspectives course will be used as a vehicle to immerse students in a first-year experience that places emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and skills inside and outside of the classroom. As described in further detail in section three, common course elements associated with campus resources and advising will be integrated with associated labs, reflective assignments, and the potential use of student engagement software. Sample reflection prompts for the various common activities are shown in Appendix F. In addition to the aims of the Student Success and Advising Center outlined in 1.3, *PACE* will ensure that students are encouraged to use the extensive support resources available to them, streamline access to resource information, and connect students to resources earlier than they would normally seek them out on their own.

1.3: Expand outreach from Student Success and Advising Center. With first-year student interaction with professional advisors being a prevalent area of focus for the QEP, *PACE* will bring a consistent advising presence into the Perspectives classroom, with an associated lab of meeting with a professional advisor outside the classroom. The aim of this outreach is to assist students in making sense of their declared major, create an understanding of how to assess one's own personal scheduling needs, and learn the steps associated with their upcoming registration process. Additionally, students will develop associated knowledge and skills that result in advisor consultation in the future and normalizing conversations surrounding academic progress and interventions. Aligning with considerations outlined in section three concerning larger-than-average advisor caseloads impacting the center's capacity to perform

student outreach, *PACE* will expand the professional advising staff from 6.5 FTE to 8 FTE employees to ensure the successful implementation of this outreach.

Goal Two: Improve the campus culture to strengthen first-year students' sense of belonging.

PACE aims to improve the campus culture to strengthen first-year students' sense of belonging. As a result, students will describe a strengthened sense of belonging within the College.

Goal two creates the conditions for improving SLO two as our research indicates that student involvement in traditions and shared learning experiences outside of the classroom results in an increased sense of belonging. *PACE* will: (1) create campus traditions for first-year students; (2) design interactions for students to understand available engagement opportunities; and (3) develop and implement common Perspectives activities, labs, and reflective experiences aligning with student involvement.

2.1: Create Campus Traditions for first-year students. *PACE* will create campus traditions for first-year students to strengthen the campus culture and increase student sense of belonging. Possible campus traditions may include a freshman convocation and/or a year-end celebration. A freshman convocation may be purposefully constructed to convey the importance of student engagement while foreshadowing each aspect students will engage in during their first year. The tradition could also serve as a collective opportunity for administration, Perspectives faculty, and the staff and student leaders associated with common Perspectives course elements to officially welcome students to the College. The event would also provide community-building opportunities with peers. A year-end celebration would offer similar opportunities but serve to celebrate students finishing their first year.

2.2: Design interactions for students to understand available engagement opportunities. With scholarly literature highlighting the connection between student engagement and the cultivation of a sense of belonging, the College must intentionally design interactions that create student understanding of the available engagement options. The Committee is exploring methods for streamlining this information in an engaging, administratively manageable format while producing reliable usage data; to accomplish this, purchasing access to a campus-wide student engagement software remains on the Committee's radar. The platform being strongly considered at the time of this writing includes an extensive number of features including the following: (a) a dashboard that compiles all involvement, research, experiential learning, and resource information on one site and mobile application, which can also be filtered by interests; (b) automatically compiles a co-curricular student record based on completed experiences while offering the opportunity to assign student learning outcomes with co-curricular opportunities that align them with curricular aspects; (c) tracks real-time student incentive points, such as assigning a point value for activities that students can redeem for prizes or earning digital badges; (d) provides unlimited campus tracking software, syncs to DSC's Student Information System and offers data analytics, which can be disaggregated by student demographic; (e) offers the capability to host online orientations or events; (f)

offers the options to attach reflection activities with selected experiences; (g) provides customization of curricular and co-curricular pathways and frameworks; (h) serves as a cohesive institutional marketing tool to generate prospective student interest and communicate a sense of community to current students; and (i) streamlines marketing by connecting all upcoming opportunities displayed in the dashboard by automatically scrolling on campus communal televisions.

2.3: Develop and implement common Perspectives activities, labs, and reflective experiences aligning with engagement, including involvement opportunities and service learning. In maintaining the spirit of leveraging Perspectives to connect first-year students inside and outside the classroom, the course will also include common elements, labs, reflective assignments, and the potential use of student engagement software centered around involvement opportunities and service learning. The aim of including this course element is to increase students' sense of belonging by providing information that leads to the discovery of opportunities to be involved socially and by providing opportunities that allow students to connect course ideas with other experiences while enhancing interactions with peers, faculty, and staff.

Implementation Plan

PACE will be implemented over a five-year span, with plan actions being developed and implemented in stages, as evidenced in Table 15.

Table 15: *PACE* Implementation Plan

Five Year Planning	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsible Role
Action 1.1: Require first-year Perspectives course	I	I	I	I	I	I	Perspective Project Coordinator and Advisors
Action 1.2: Develop common PRSP activities (campus resources and advising with reflections)	D	I	I	I	I	I	CETL Faculty Fellow; Perspectives Project Coordinator; Campus Resource Project Coordinator; and Advising Project Coordinator
Action 1.3: Expand outreach from Student Success and Advising Center		I	I				Advising Project Coordinator
Action 2.1: Create Campus Traditions for first-year students		D	I	I	I	I	Enrollment Services Committee Representative and Engagement Project Coordinator
Action 2.2: Design interactions for students to understand available engagement opportunities		D	I	I	I	I	Engagement Project Coordinator
Action 2.3: Develop common PRSP activities (other perspectives, engagement and service learning with reflections)		D	I	I	I	I	CETL Faculty Fellow; Perspectives Project Coordinator; and Engagement Project Coordinator

Note: D = Develop; I = Implement
Note: Year 0 = 2022/2023; Year 1 = 2023/2024; Year 2 = 2024/2025; Year 3 = 2025/2026; Year 4 = 2026/2027; and Year 5 = 2027/2026

Section Five: Literature Review

With Dalton State College's QEP seeking to improve student success in the first year, the Committee wished to determine what constitutes our definition of success and the best practices in attaining that standard, especially regarding the four factors of the QEP: the first-year seminar course; advising; campus resources, and engagement.

Perspectives Course

First-year seminars emanated from an effort at the University of South Carolina, which began in the 1970s. In 2018, over 90% of institutions offered some form of the first-year seminar (Permzadian & Credé, 2016). According to Barefoot (1992), the general purpose of first-year seminars is "to enhance the academic and/or social integration of first-year students by introducing them to (a) to a variety of specific topics which vary by seminar type, (b) to essential skills for college success, and (c) to selected processes, the most common of which is the creation of a peer support group" (p. 49). Institutions generally tailor the curriculum of their programs to meet the needs of students as well as the goals of the institution, with an underlying goal of engaging with peers, staff, and faculty to create a sense of belonging. Often, institutional goals center on improving academic success and retention (Edwards, 2018). Some studies, such as Coats (2014), have suggested that first-year seminars at predominantly commuter campuses are particularly useful in connecting new students with other students and creating a peer network that students who live off campus might not otherwise have. Additionally, the seminars are more effective when they have smaller enrollments than traditional first-year classes in general education.

Types of first-year seminars that institutions have implemented and utilized include extended orientation, academic content, basic study skills, pre-professional or discipline-linked, hybrid, or special populations (Hunter & Linder, 2005). Dalton State uses a hybrid model that primarily combines an academic focus related to a student's major/discipline with some basic study skills embedded in the delivery. Generally, first-year seminars do not use a traditional lecture format for content delivery. Institutions expect instructors to create an active classroom environment for students that incorporates instructor guidance and peer activities (Kahn & Kahn, 2015; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Moreover, several studies found that student-faculty interaction played a key role in persistence (Coats, 2014).

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), studies on the effectiveness of first-year seminars in terms of retention and academic performance suggest that students who completed a first-year experience seminar had "statistically significant and substantial, positive effects on a student's successful transition to college and the likelihood of persistence into the second year, as well as on academic performance while in college and on a considerable array of other college experiences known to be related directly and indirectly to bachelor's degree completion" (p. 403). Research also shows that the seven characteristics of an effective first-year seminar include: (a) offered for course credit, (b) centered in first-year curriculum,

(c) involved faculty and student affairs professionals, (d) included instructor training, (e) compensated instructors, (f) involved upper-level students in seminar delivery as peer leaders, and (g) included regular assessment of the courses effectiveness as well as a sharing of those results (Barefoot & Fidler, 1996).

Lane and Miller (2019) noted that the current literature on first-year seminars suggested "institutions seeking to improve student retention design first-year seminars with an orientation focus. In contrast, institutions that seek to improve the academic performance of college students should design first-year seminars with an academic component" (p. 26).

Advising

Dalton State's status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and other characteristics of its student population mean the College must attend to various needs. Torres (2015) encouraged institutions to help Latino students develop the academic and financial capital needed to succeed. Torres also emphasized the need for HSIs to find a balance in the challenge and support provided for students through experiences as institutions prepare students for the workforce. Support of this nature can occur through relationships built on trust. Darling (2015) also expressed the importance of trust for students in their relationships with campus personnel. For commuter students, advising allows the College to connect with students whose lives may be complicated and who spend limited amounts of time on the physical campus. Research by Torres et al. (2006) found that first-generation Latino students often wait to be told information or do not even realize the role of the advisor as an expert.

While research studies vary in findings, Swecker et al. (2013) used historical data to discover a positive relationship between the number of advisor meetings and the retention rates of first-generation college students at a large, public institution. The median caseload for professional advisors is 296, based on the National Academic Advising Association's (NACADA) *2011 National Survey of Academic Advising* research (Carlstrom & Miller, 2013). Currently, Dalton State's professional advisors' loads average 350, well in excess of this median. However, NACADA hesitates to prescribe a definitive advising load for all institutions across the board due to the following factors:

- Differences in how institutions define advising (prescriptive/developmental) and the professional advisor's responsibilities (entirely face-to-face advising, or in addition, committee work, teaching first-year seminars, etc.);
- The Advising Center's mission statement and primary modes of delivering advising services;
- The Complexity of student needs;
- Advising timelines (how often advising is offered to students); and
- The Technology available and in use.

Dalton State professional advisors utilize developmental advising with integrated academic coaching strategies, methods that produce data-driven results in the literature. While accounting for the complexity of student needs, these methods require increased student interaction, further supporting the Committee's stance for expanding the Student Success and Advising Center.

Campus Resources

Increased student enrollment and fewer resources at various institutions have encouraged traditional lecture-style class delivery with a reduction in small group and tutorial contact among faculty; the need to improve teaching and learning with fewer resources has increased interest in academic support resources, like tutoring, in higher education (Song et al., 2018; Topping, 2005). Academic support services, including peer-facilitated resources, have recently progressed toward extended thinking skills (Topping, 2005).

According to Colvin (2007), support resources in higher education continue to be increasingly implemented to aid in student learning while motivating and empowering students; while much of the literature addresses facilitating academic concepts, the social dynamics of student relationship formation within these resources is being increasingly explored. For example, tutors often take a holistic approach to student success, which has become increasingly common in recent years (Tan et al., 2020), making the role of a tutor comparable to the role of a mentor, who also places emphasis on course content. Campus resource usage is also linked with assisting students in recognizing and employing their cultural skills and improving student social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and goal commitment (Dennis et al., 2005) while simultaneously increasing positive academic outcomes (Hurtado et al., 1996).

Additionally, utilizing academic support resources is associated with increased active and participative learning, immediate feedback, lower anxiety, increased levels of self-disclosure, and significant ownership of the learning process. Such resources also allow students to increase time on task and opportunities to make mistakes and correct them in a low stake environment (Topping, 2005).

The literature describes social and academic gains for students consulting academic support resources that result in student success. The Committee believes that these resources should be consulted by students as early as possible in their first year to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and sense of belonging needed to be successful at the College. Consequently, a common element, associated lab, and reflective experience will be integrated into each Perspectives course.

Engagement

The QEP Planning Committee considered that "presence does not necessarily achieve connectedness or engagement;" in other words, simply requiring students to attend events does not ensure students are engaged by them or feel connected to the campus because of them. Jorgensen et al. (2018) distinguish

between social identification and student involvement, and their research "demonstrated a different way of how students viewed personal connection as inseparable from their experience of connection with the university as an institution (embodied in the people who carry out its functions)" (p. 81). The QEP facilitates the opportunity for personal connection, with theoretical support for practices included in the plan. The Committee wants students to be successful and feel successful, not just bear marks of success in terms of "sticking around." We want them to be involved and engaged in ways that allow them to gain knowledge, skills, and a sense of belonging at Dalton State. In fact, a sense of belonging is often established through co-curricular involvement (Bergen-Cico & Viscomni, 2012) and results in positive outcomes, including academic achievement, retention, and persistence (Braxton et al., 2013; Hausmann et al., 2007).

Scholarly literature also demonstrates how engagement in campus traditions cultivates a sense of belonging. Cooper (2009) describes how campus traditions can be intentionally created to promote particular common values, resulting in a supportive learning environment. This QEP will establish campus traditions for first-year students to set the *PACE* at Dalton State.

Astin (1999) theorized that the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement, which is the quantity and quality of physical and psychological energy the student invests in the college experience. Astin turned the focus away from resources provided to the student and subject matter or pedagogical technique to the motivation and behavior of the student. Astin admitted that his theory is similar to the tried and true "time on task" and asks, "How can I get students involved?" Kuh et al. (2017) also theorized that significant time and effort by students over an extended period and structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning progressed student success. As Astin noted, involvement uses student time through participation in various outlets on campus that add to the sense of belonging. Research indicates this is specifically true for underserved students, which is relevant to Dalton State College given the aforementioned characteristics of the institution's student population (Wilson-Kennedy et al., 2019). Theories introduced by Astin (1999) and Kuh et al. (2017) were utilized to construct the Perspectives course core elements, associated labs, and reflective experiences.

Section Six: Institutional Capability and Resources

SACSCOC establishes the expectation that institutions provide the appropriate "resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP." Therefore, Dalton State College is committed to materializing the financial, personnel, and logistical support that will result in the successful initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP.

Commitment of Finances

Dalton State College has approved the allocation of sufficient financial resources for *PACE*. The budget was intentionally developed to support specific goals and institutional actions while providing sufficient resources. In alignment with our institutional strategic priority of responsible stewardship, the College will also leverage various existing resources to support plan implementation.

Funding supports QEP implementation over five years, including a pilot year. Overall, projected QEP expenses for the first year are $197,136, with the remaining commitment being an average of $367,890 per year. Repurposed funding for the Plan will exist from Academic Affairs position realignment, which accounts for $177,136 in the first year and an average of $347,890 each year for the remainder of the Plan. New funding commitments are $20,000 annually is projected due to increased enrollment in the Perspectives course resulting in increased revenue from an existing student fee associated with the course. The QEP-related financial commitments, reflected in Table 16, have been approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Fiscal Affairs.

Commitment of Personnel

In addition to the support provided by the *PACE* Director, Associate Director, Faculty Fellow, Project Coordinators, Assessment Coordinator, and the Implementation Committee, further considerations ensure adequate personnel to implement and complete the QEP. The College has committed sufficient financial resources that account for the increased number of Perspectives faculty necessitated by the new Perspectives course requirement. Additionally, increased Perspectives faculty commitment is anticipated due to the shift in faculty remuneration and increased professional development as described in section three.

Additionally, it should be noted that the College's governing body, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents, voted in 2022 to include "support of student success efforts" as an evaluation criterion in yearly performance reviews and post-tenure reviews. The QEP's focus on the Perspectives course will be an area where faculty can evidence this support, thus making performance evaluation in teaching the course necessary, resulting in a significant change from previous iterations of the first-year seminar course.

Table 16: *PACE Budget*

	Description	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1.1	Perspectives Courses Staffed	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000
All	QEP Director Stipend	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500
All	QEP Associate Director Stipend	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000
1.1	Faculty Fellow Stipend (1)	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000	$1,000
All	*PACE* Assessment Coordinator	$1,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000	$2,000
1.2, 2.3	Project Implementation Stipends	$2,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000	$4,000
1.2, 1.3	Advisor Expansion Salary and Benefits (Year 1: Institutionalize 1 grant funded & hire 1 new; Year 2: Institutionalize 2 grant funded, hire 0.5 new; Sustain in years 3-5).	N/A	$110,286	$270,899	$270,899	$270,899	$270,899
All	Publicity and *PACE* t-shirts	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
2.1	First-Year Student Traditions	N/A	N/A	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
All	Campus-Wide Student Engagement Software (Year 1 includes 5k set-up fee; budgeted for 5% annual increase)	N/A	$21,300	$17,115	$17,970	$18,869	$19,812
2.3	Perspectives Common Element Supply Expense	N/A	N/A	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000
All	NSSE fees and participation incentives	$6,050	$6,050	$6,050	$6,050	$6,050	$6,050
	Annual Totals	$62,550	$197,136	$366,564	$367,419	$368,318	$369,261
	QEP Plan Total						$1,731,248

Campus-wide buy-in has also been cultivated through extensive efforts to gain input and feedback from broad-based constituents, increasing College personnels' dedication to involvement in the actions associated with improving identified student learning outcomes. Additionally, an assessment committee with broad-based representation will be formed under the leadership of the assessment coordinator; this committee will include data-minded individuals, as further described in section seven.
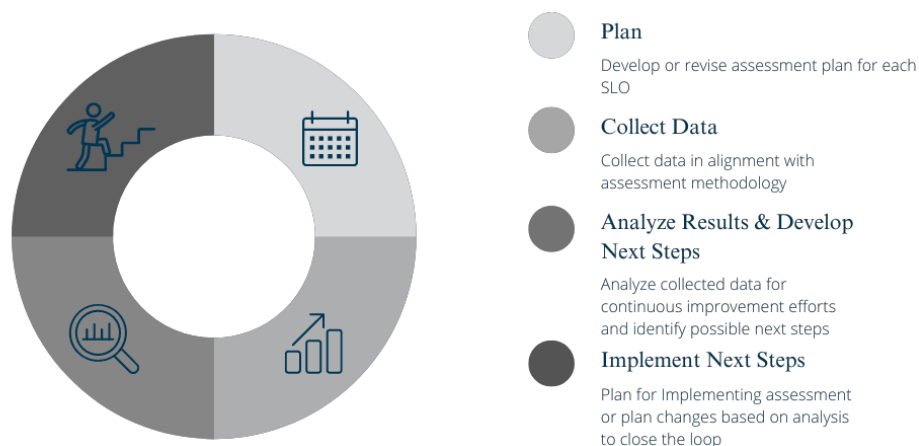
Section Seven: Assessment

The Committee devised a plan to assess *PACE* throughout the entire plan period. Formative and summative data will be analyzed to assess impact and improvement of student learning outcomes. Competencies aligning with student learning outcomes have been established to guide assessment. This plan further identifies processes, procedures, data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods. Intentional, data-driven discussion will occur to ensure continuous improvement.

Process

The impact of *PACE* will be formally analyzed in two phases. Common Perspective class activities will be evaluated early each spring semester, no later than February 15, to provide guidance and adaptations prior to the upcoming year's instructor training. Overall *PACE* program assessment will occur annually each fall, no later than September 15, upon receiving NSSE survey data. Continuous improvement efforts will be made cyclically over the lifetime of the project.

Figure 7: *Assessment Cycle*

Plan
Develop or revise assessment plan for each SLO

Collect Data
Collect data in alignment with assessment methodology

Analyze Results & Develop Next Steps
Analyze collected data for continuous improvement efforts and identify possible next steps

Implement Next Steps
Plan for Implementing assessment or plan changes based on analysis to close the loop

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Two student learning outcomes were identified for improvement through *PACE*. Student learning outcomes will be assessed through the evaluation of student work and student reactions. While Perspectives course themes are often discipline-specific and co-curricular engagement will vary based on student interest, the core elements of *PACE* have been designed to strengthen the identified outcomes despite these variations.

Competencies

PACE SLOs were written in broad terms and further described with detailed associated competencies. Each associated competency listed in Table 17 is based on engagement indicators and common rubrics.

Assessment Methodology

Methodology will include assessing the results from specific National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) questions, as specified in Appendix G. The survey will be administered annually during the Spring semester. Perspectives student reflection responses will be scored using the American Association of Colleges and Universities' VALUE rubric for *Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning* for applied competencies, as shown in Appendix H. Table 17 shows how each SLO and associated competencies will be assessed.

Table 17: *PACE SLOs, Associated Competencies and Assessment Methodology*

SLOs	Associated Competencies	Assessment Methodology
SLO 1 Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills that develop their academic perseverance.	• Better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective • Observe institutional support for students to succeed academically • Discuss academic progress and/or performance with an academic advisor and appropriate interventions • Examine policies and deadlines with an academic advisor to register for spring classes • Identify encouragement for using learning support services (e.g., tutoring center, writing center). • Demonstrate an ability to initiate the expansion of one's own knowledge, skills, and abilities • Demonstrate an ability to recall past experiences (inside and outside of the classroom) to a produce broader perspective	• Specific NSSE questions • AAC&U's VALUE rubric for *Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning* for applied competencies
SLO 2 Students will describe a strengthened sense of belonging within the College.	• Develop quality interactions with peers, faculty, academic advisors, and student services staff • Discover opportunities to be involved socially • Recognize the support for their overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.) • Express increased feelings of being part of the institutional community • Develop a sense of alliance with academic advisors who respect your identity, culture, and care about your overall well-being • Connect ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	• Specific NSSE questions • AAC&U's VALUE rubric for *Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning* for applied competencies

Results

Assessment tools will be used to collect data that will measure student learning, demonstrate competency attainment, and uncover overall plan effectiveness. The reflection prompt responses and rubric scores from common Perspective course activities will be collected from the D2L learning management system. Perspective instructors will assess learning outcomes by requiring reflective assignment responses using standardized prompts, as outlined in Appendix F. The instructors will score the reflection responses based on the VALUE rubric (Appendix H). At the end of the Fall semester, rubric scores from each reflection will be collected from all Perspective courses. Additionally, sample reflective statements will be collected as qualitative artifacts of student learning. NSSE survey data will be collected annually from first-year students in the Spring semester. The frequencies and statistical comparison results will be provided to the institution in late summer. Participation counts in first-year traditions will also be collected to help the College better understand engagement in *PACE* activities.

Evaluation

As annual data is collected, evaluation of *PACE* will be conducted by the *PACE* assessment coordinator, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and the *PACE* assessment sub-committee comprised of faculty and staff. As *PACE* advances, assessment results may necessitate adaptations to improve experiences or any area presenting ineffectiveness. However, Perspectives core component topic areas will remain constant to allow for adequate analysis of student learning. Improvements will be made by *PACE* Project Coordinators and associated area administrators.

Targets

The *PACE* assessment plan has been designed to quantify the student learning that occurs based on the program's activities across the first-year student experience. The outcomes will be measured based on the targets shown in Table 18 for SLO one and Table 19 for SLO two. Reflection rubric scoring targets will be set following their implementation years after analyzing baseline data. NSSE frequency targets were set based on continual improvement and comparisons with peer institutions. Annual performance will inform changes to *PACE*. The results of the previous year's activities will be shared with the campus community annually.

Table 18: *PACE Assessment Annual Targets Associated with SLO 1*

Annual Targets						
Five Year Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Baseline/Notes
Action 1.2: Develop common PRSP activities (advising with reflections)	Set goals following Year 1 implementation					Rubric scoring for PRSP course will begin in F23
Action 1.2: Develop common PRSP activities (campus resources with reflections)	Set goals following Year 1 implementation					Rubric scoring for PRSP courses will begin in F23
Action 1.3: Expand outreach from Student Success and Advising Center	Institutionalize 1 grant funded; hire 1 new	Institutionalize 2 grant funded, hire 0.5 new				Staff counts S23: 6.5 FTE staff members – 3 FTE positions grant funded
Action 1.1: Associated Competencies with PRSP class - Better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	65% of respondents chose often or very often	68%	71%	74%	76%	NSSE 2e: In 2020, 63% of respondents chose often or very often (76% in 2017)
Associated Competencies with Advising – provided support to help student succeed academically	68% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	70%	71%	72%	73%	NSSE 14b: In 2020, 66% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Associated Competencies with Advising – provided appropriate resources	68% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	69%	70%	71%	72%	NSSE Advising 3c: In 2020, 67% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Associated Competencies with Advising – notified of important policies and deadlines	61% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	62%	63%	64%	65%	NSSE Advising 3d: In 2020, 60% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Associated Competencies with Advising - discussed academic progress	45% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	48%	51%	53%	55%	NSSE Advising 3e: In 2020, 42% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Associated Competencies with Campus resources (Identify encouragement for using learning support services)	66% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	69%	72%	75%	80%	NSSE 14c: In 2020 63% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much (81% in 2017)

Table 19: *PACE Assessment Annual Targets Associated with SLO 2*

Annual Targets						
Five Year Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Baselines/Notes
Outcome 2: Students will describe a strengthened sense of belonging within the college.		68% of respondents chose agree or strongly agree	70%	71%	72%	NSSE 15c: In 2020, 67% of respondents chose agree or strongly agree
Action 2.1: Create First-year traditions		Set targets after inaugural year. Participation				Implement in Year 2 (August 2024)
Action 2.2: Design interactions for students to understand available engagement opportunities.		60% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	63%	66%	68%	NSSE 14e: In 2020, 58% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Action 2.3: Develop common PRSP activities (engagement with reflections)		Set goals following Year 2 implementation				Rubric scoring for PRSP courses will begin in F24
Action 2.3: Develop common PRSP activities (service learning with reflections)		Set goals following Year 2 implementation				Rubric scoring for PRSP courses will begin in F24
Associated Competencies with PRSP (Connect ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge)	62% of respondents chose often or very often	63%	64%	65%	66%	NSSE 2g: In 2020, 61% of respondents chose often or very often
Associated Competencies with Advising (Develop sense of alliance with academic advisors who respect your identity and culture)	64% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	65%	66%	67%	68%	NSSE Advising 3i: In 2020, 63% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Associated Competencies with Advising (Develop sense of alliance with academic advisors who care about your overall well-being)	64% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	65%	66%	67%	68%	NSSE Advising 3j: In 2020, 63% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much
Develop quality interactions with peers, faculty, academic advisors, and student services staff	Improve average to 5.3	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	NSSE 13: In 2020, the mean values on a 7-point scale were 5.2, 5.3, 5.2, and 4.7.
Associated Competencies with Engagement (Recognize the support for their overall well-being)		61% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much	63%	65%	66%	NSSE 14f: In 2020, 59% of respondents chose quite a bit or very much

Dalton State College will formalize the assessment of *PACE* through formative and summative assessments. The *PACE* leadership will conduct an analysis and plan for program improvements each year.

Appendix A: Stakeholder Suggested Topics for QEP 2022

(Duplicates Removed)

1. Experiential Learning
2. Student Success and retention
3. Student Success: Technological and Higher Ed Literacy
4. Increasing student engagement through experiential learning
5. Improving student success and resiliency through a campus-wide focus on mindset
6. Increasing student engagement through experiential learning in service learning
7. Increase use of online and hybrid learning to allow for greater flexibility for student scheduling
8. Helping students feel connected
9. Focus on academic integrity
10. Perspective classes - enhancement and integration
11. Diversity and Inclusion
12. Increase enrollment
13. Academic Excellence
14. Increase study abroad offerings and offers more academic and financial incentives to participate in these programs
15. School of Education Learning Lab
16. Critical Thinking
17. International / global education
18. Supportive Positive Peer Groups
19. Information literacy at the forefront
20. Culture of success through holistic approaches on campus
21. Increase Research Opportunities for Students (especially pre-health track)
22. Encourage and engage students in campus wide resources to help them with their well-being to include academic resources, campus recreation, counseling, and student life.
23. Health and Wellness.
24. Applying for scholarships for grad school
25. Making students feel cared for by having full-time academic advisors to help all students plan their four-year college experience.
26. Partner with national organizations providing financial aid to underrepresented groups, especially those without access to federal aid
27. Professional World meets Academic World
28. Encourage more collaborative learning activities in the classroom
29. Professor in Residence Partnership with Schools
30. Research as inquiry in action
31. Supporting and encouraging students in a wide array of resources on campus
32. Advising or pathways oriented
33. We need a better way to monitor testing done remotely
34. Mindset
35. Student Learning Communities
36. Enhance tutoring into a bigger Verizon
37. Create designated safe places within each department where potentially vulnerable students can self-disclose characteristics that are prohibited from inquiry by FERPA but may contribute to needs for increased support.
38. Study Abroad Program Guanajuato, Mexico
39. Offer more free learning skill training sessions that focus on changing student learning mindset.
40. High-Impact Practices
41. Creating Awareness and Better Utilization of Peer Educators

42. Helping students bridge the math gap between high school and college
43. Emphasis on advising
44. Include additional life-skill accountability, distributed among first- and second-year courses
45. Developing a campus-wide first-year experience program
46. Create a more diverse culture
47. Student Engagement and Involvement
48. Increase support of Student Support Services
49. Continued use of streaming/recorded videos for class instruction
50. Increasing student engagement through emphasizing the significance of the course material to areas of their life beyond the class in question
51. Creating a culture of success through mentoring, coaching, and advising
52. More Civic Involvement within the classroom
53. Increasing student sense of belonging, engagement, and retention with diversity and inclusion experiences
54. Cultivate a Culture of Student Success and Social-Belonging Through Peer Education

Appendix B: Documentation of the Perspectives Course Approval by USG

February 19, 2018

Dr. Patricia Chute
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dalton State College
650 College Drive
Dalton, GA 30720

Dear Dr. Chute,

The University System of Georgia Council on General Education met in full session on February 14, 2018. The following action was taken with respect to the proposal submitted by your institution.

Approved inclusion of the following course in Area B:
PRSP 1010 Perspectives in . . .

Although the Council approved this course, they made a formal observation about the difficulty of achieving the goals of this course within the constraints of a 1-hour course. (The institution is not required to respond to this.)

With this letter, I am also including the completed proposal form that documents the review of and actions taken with respect to this proposal. The completed proposal form contains feedback from the Advisory Committee that reviewed your proposal (part 2) and the Council on General Education (part 4). This will provide you with more detailed information than is provided in this cover letter. If you have questions about this decision, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Brown, Ph.D., Psy.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Transitional and General Education
Academic Affairs and Policy
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

Appendix C: Documentation of Changes to Perspectives Course from Academic Programs

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Bruno Hicks, Academic Programs Committee
From: QEP Planning Committee
Date: October 27, 2021
Subject: Proposals for November meeting

Please accept these changes to the PRSP courses.

1. Course description change.

FROM: Perspectives in XXX introduces students to academic learning and inquiry at the college level. These courses are based on a theme (chosen by the instructor) and will introduce students to college-level research and writing in various disciplines. This course will help students develop critical thinking skills through integrative learning and encourage academic dialogue between first-year students, faculty, and staff.

TO: Perspectives in XXX introduces students to academic learning, inquiry, **and engagement** at the college level. These courses are based on a theme chosen by the instructor and will introduce students to college-level research and **discourse** ~~in various disciplines~~. This course will help students develop critical thinking skills through integrative learning and encourage academic and **co-curricular** dialogue between first-year students, faculty, and staff. **Required as the Area B elective for all first-time, degree-seeking (AA, A.S., four-year program) students.** (1-1-1)

Students who do not complete PRSP with a C or better must repeat the course the next semester as a co-requisite with ENGL 1102 or as co-requisite of ENGL 1101 (if the student has not earned a C or better in ENGL 1101).

Rationale:

- *Engagement:* related to sense of belonging and community
- *Discourse*: some classes may use oral assignments (discussions, debates, etc.) as opposed to written assignments, as in the Student Learning Outcome)
- *Co-curricular*: related to engagement in first sentence.
- *Removal of "in various disciplines"* – seems redundant and some themes may not really achieve this particular goal; e.g., wellness themes; current events themes that might be more interdisciplinary.

- *Corequisite status with English 1102 and repeating policy.* If the PRSP class is 1. Part of the QEP; 2. Required of all AA. A.S., and bachelor's students, they would need to repeat it as part of the core. To this point, students have sometimes not taken the class seriously, have dropped it believing there was no penalty, or they could take some other Area B course. This policy change of course necessitates the teaching of PRSP in the spring semesters, but since there are incoming, first-time students then as well as the fall semester, the course would need to be taught anyway in the spring.

2. Change to a required course.

PRSP 1010, 1020, 1030, 1040, or 1050 are the only Area B electives available for first-time, degree-seeking (AA, A.S., bachelor's program) students beginning Fall 2022. COMM 1110 and PRSP 1010, 1020, 1030, 1040, or 1050 will be **the** required Area B courses.

3. Informational Items.

In the current catalog, the hours were inconsistent. They have been corrected to reflect how the course was originally approved by the General Education Council and DSC's Academic Programs, i.e., 1-1-1.

Appendix D: Position Description: QEP Director

The Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan will be responsible for and authorized to implement the ongoing execution, assessment, reporting, and adaptation of the Quality Enhancement Plan" from July 1, 2022.

Specific Duties:

- Meet regularly with Provost/VPAA and other campus leadership and as deemed necessary.
- Attend to all required SACSCOC reporting requirements regarding the QEP, its development, progress, assessment, and changes based on assessment. These include yearly reports as well as other timelines.
- Attend all required SACSCOC meetings (e.g., Annual Conference, Summer Institute)
- Develop professional development curriculum, in collaboration with CETL, for faculty teaching PRSP courses and expansion of those efforts to all first-year faculty.
- Facilitate the QEP Implementation Team (as distinct from the Planning Committee, which ends its work in Fall 2022).
- Collaborate with the Perspectives Project Coordinator to work with the deans/chairs to schedule PRSP courses, ensure their assessment, and recruit new faculty as needed.
- Work with the Advising and Student Success Center and the Executive Director of Advising and Student Success in regard to processes related to QEP student outcome assessments.
- Oversees QEP budget and budget reporting processes.
- The QEP Director will have authority, under the direction of the Provost and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, to
  o Assign and expect assessment data from the Perspectives Faculty regarding the Perspectives classes;
  o Work with chairs and deans to schedule Perspectives courses (sufficient number, time, and modality);
  o Request and expect relevant data from the Office of Student Services and Enrollment Management, the Dean of Students Office, and the Student Success and Advising Center regarding advising and student engagement.

Candidate Requirements:

- Tenured or tenure track full-time faculty
- Terminal degree
- Proven record of involvement in student success initiatives, including PRSP course
- Understanding of assessment processes
- Understanding of SACSCOC QEP and other compliance documents and processes
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Excellent group facilitation skills
- Proven record of campus leadership

Reports To: Provost/VP of Academic Affairs

*The QEP Director will, as a faculty member, be evaluated on an annual basis in accordance with College evaluation, tenure, and promotion policies; this evaluation will be completed by the Director's Department Chair. The Provost will provide a letter regarding the Director's QEP work to accompany this evaluation.

- o   Collaborates with:
- o   Office of Academic Affairs
- o   Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- o   Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- o   Dean of Students Office
- o   Advising and Student Success Center

Official duties begin June 1, 2022

Compensation: Two-course release per fall and spring semester (such that a faculty on 5/4 load teaches 3/2 in addition to these duties. Stipend included for academic year, and a separate stipend for summer stipend. The Director is contractually obligated to perform duties as assigned in the two months of summer.

Appendix E: Position Description: QEP Associate Director
Position Description: Associate Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan

This position provides collaborative leadership to Dalton State's campus in the support and development of its Quality Enhancement Plan beginning on July 1, 2022. Responsibilities for the position will be evaluated annually.

Responsibilities:

- Works with the Director to advance and implement the Quality Enhancement Plan across campus.
- Works with the Director to develop, implement, and evaluate the four primary pillars of the QEP, including Perspectives, Advising, Campus Resources, and Engagement.
- Meet regularly with Director and other campus leadership as deemed necessary by the Director.
- Collaborates with the Director to lead the Quality Enhancement Team, the QEP Implementation Team.
- Provides collaborative leadership in team meetings, budget planning and oversight, assessment of goals, and SACSCOC and other reporting requirements.
- Assists the Director in all aspects of the QEP.
- Collaborates with the Director on establishing an agenda relative to the QEP.

Candidate Requirements:

- Full-time employee status in Student Affairs and/or Enrollment Management
- Proven record of campus collaboration and leadership

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience in program development, process analysis, and student support and success.
- Master's Degree

Reports To: Director of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Collaborates With:

- Office of Academic Affairs
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

Compensation: Yearly Stipend as Determined

Appendix F: Reflection Prompts for Perspectives Course

Prompt 1: Advising

> Briefly discuss the importance of the requirements of your academic program. In what ways did the advising presentation change your perspective about core requirements? What strategies do you plan to use for interacting with your academic advisor and with the campus resources that you learned about earlier in the semester to be successful in your classes? Explain.

Prompt 2: Campus Resources

> Which resource did you take advantage of for your lab? Based on the classroom resource presentation and/or other experiences that developed preconceived beliefs, what assumptions had you made about the resource? Were there any assumptions that you made about the resource itself or your interactions with the resource that proved to be different once you experienced it? Explain. How will you leverage the resource as you move through college?

Prompt 3: Engagement/Involvement

> Which engagement opportunity did you participate in? Describe what you learned through the experience as it aligns with your career or personal interests and/or this class? Explain a situation where you observed a difference in perspective. Recall if you connected with another person when attending.

Prompt 4: Service Learning

> Recall one way that you contributed to the project as a result of something that you learned in the class and/or labs this semester. Describe something that you learned from a peer through their contributions to the project. What assumptions and expectations did you bring to the experience? To what extent were those assumptions and expectations validated or resulted in a different outcome than you imagined?

Appendix G: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Questions Aligning with Assessment

General Survey

2. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

    e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective

    g. Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

13. Indicate the quality of interactions with the following people at your institution.

    a. Students

    b. Academic advisors

    c. Faculty

    d. Student services staff

14. How much does your institution emphasize the following?

    b. Providing support to help students succeed academically

    c. Using learning support services

    e. Providing opportunities to be involved socially

    f. Providing support for your overall well-being

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

    c. I feel like part of the community at this institution.

Academic Advising

3. Thinking about academic advising, how much have people and resources at your institution done the following?

    c. Provided information about learning support services

    d. Notified you of important policies and deadlines

    e. Reached out to you about your academic progress or performance

    i. Respected your identity and culture

    j. Cared about your overall well-being

Appendix H: Reflection Prompt Rubric

Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning VALUE Rubric

	Capstone - 4	Milestone - 3	Milestone - 2	Benchmark - 1
Curiosity	Explores a topic in depth, yielding a rich awareness and/or little-known information indicating intense interest in the subject.	Explores a topic in depth, yielding insight and/or information indicating interest in the subject.	Explores a topic with some evidence of depth, providing occasional insight and/or information indicating mild interest in the subject.	Explores a topic at a surface level, providing little insight and/or information beyond the very basic facts indicating low interest in the subject.
Initiative	Completes required work and generates and pursues opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Completes required work and identifies and pursues opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Completes required work and identifies opportunities to expand knowledge, skills, and abilities.	Completes required work.
Independence	Educational interests and pursuits exist and flourish outside classroom requirements. Knowledge and/or experiences are pursued independently.	Beyond classroom requirements, pursues substantial, additional knowledge and/or actively pursues independent educational experiences.	Beyond classroom requirements, pursues additional knowledge and/or shows interest in pursuing independent educational experiences.	Begins to look beyond classroom requirements, showing interest in pursuing knowledge independently.
Transfer	Makes explicit references to previous learning and applies in an innovative (new and creative) way that knowledge and those skills to demonstrate comprehension and performance in novel situations.	Makes reference to previous learning and shows evidence of applying that knowledge and those skills to demonstrate comprehension and performance in novel situations.	Makes references to previous learning and attempts to apply that knowledge and those skills to demonstrate comprehension and performance in novel situations.	Makes vague references to previous learning but does not apply knowledge and skills to demonstrate comprehension and performance in novel situations.
Reflection	Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) in depth to reveal significantly changed perspectives about educational and life experiences, which provide foundation for expanded knowledge, growth, and maturity over time.	Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside the classroom) in depth, revealing fully clarified meanings or indicating broader perspectives about educational or life events.	Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) with some depth, revealing slightly clarified meanings or indicating a somewhat broader perspective about educational or life events.	Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) at a surface level, without revealing clarified meaning or indicating a broader perspective about educational or life events.

Note. From Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). *Foundations and skills for lifelong learning VALUE rubric.* https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initative/value-rubrics/value-rubrics

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