



## **COM's Quality Enhancement Plan: *Find Your Voice!***

### **(Oral Communication across the Curriculum)**

#### **What is a QEP?**

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is proscribed by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and represents approximately 70% of the accrediting process. This plan must fundamentally change the direction of the college, and demonstrate the dedication of human resources and capital sufficient to carry out the plan. The average cost of a QEP for a community college of our size is over \$600,000.

#### **Why this topic?**

The topic selection committee conducted an exhaustive literature review, surveys of the community and campus, and utilized advisory council input in determining the QEP topic. From this input, the committee developed a list of eleven topics and solicited two page proposals from the campus on any of the topics. From these two page proposals, the top five were selected, and fifteen-page proposals were solicited from the authors of the two page proposals. From these fifteen-page proposals, the topic selection committee picked the topic based on the best "road map for success", economic feasibility, and perceived need by the campus and community. The research demonstrated that oral communication was very important to employers and universities, and was not being addressed adequately by COM.

#### **When does all this take place?**

Colleges must reapply for accreditation every ten years. COM's next accreditation process will take place in 2013. The QEP cannot actually begin implementation prior to that date, but everything must be in place awaiting SACS approval. The QEP must be implemented over no more than a five year period, and a five year monitoring report must be submitted in 2018. COM began working on its QEP in February of 2007. The topic was selected in March of 2009. The topic selection committee was disbanded after the topic was chosen and a topic development committee and several subcommittees were created to develop the topic. Development of the topic is currently under way. From this point, the document will be written, circulated for comment and critique, and submitted to SACS in August 2012. The QEP will be defended during the SACS accreditation visit in October, 2012.

#### **Where will the QEP affect our students?**

The QEP topic is Oral Communication **across the Curriculum**. Therefore, oral communication must be taught and assessed in the majority of credit courses offered by COM. Starting immediately after the SACS visit in 2012, we will begin implementation of the QEP by incorporating oral communication in 20% of the classes at COM and increasing that number each year until oral communication is being taught and assessed in the majority of all COM credit courses by 2018. By 2018, oral communication will become a part of the COM culture, and we will start thinking about the next QEP topic in 2023.