



Cornerstone Experience

Welcome to the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) newsletter, *Cornerstone Experience*! *Cornerstone Experience* will play a vital role by publicizing events related to the QEP and by providing a college-wide forum to discuss student learning goals. Everyone is welcome to submit related comments, queries, brief articles and short essays to me at pmangene@edison.edu. Each newsletter will be posted to the QEP website monthly.

Objectives

Cornerstone Experience is meant to be by you and for you. Everyone (faculty, administration, staff, students) should read *Cornerstone Experience* and contribute to the newsletter. The objectives are four-fold:

- Report on progress of the QEP.
- Highlight people and their contributions to the *Cornerstone Experience*.
- Spotlight relevant resources; share ideas gleaned from resources.
- Discuss key concepts of the QEP.

All relevant viewpoints are acceptable and necessary for authentic dialogue. We tend to participate in pockets of conversation—but instead of islands of ideas and opinions, we need College-wide communication and collaboration. That's the vision of this newsletter—to promote engagement and the exchange of ideas. Thanks for your participation.

Pam Mangene, Editor

QEP CHAIRS

Steering Committee:

Kathy Clark, Economics Professor, Collier Campus
Dr. Thomas Rath, Academic Dean, Charlotte Campus

Sub-Committees:

Applied Learning — Judy Van Gaalen, Faculty
Coordinator, Professional Development

Critical Thinking — Scott Van Selow, Computer
Science Professor, Lee Campus

Relevancy — Dr. Eileen DeLuca, Associate Dean,
College Prep

Success Strategies — Dr. Christy Gilfert, Associate
Dean, Enrollment Management
Student Affairs, Charlotte Campus

CORNERSTONE ASSEMBLY: Progress and Opportunity

Wednesday, January 5, 2011

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Barbara B. Mann Hall

On January 5, 2011, faculty, staff and administrators across the district will gather in Barbara B. Mann Hall to celebrate progress to date toward Edison State College's reaffirmation of accreditation, and make plans for a busy year ahead. Presentations will include *Destination 2020* strategic goals by President Kenneth Walker, a status report on compliance with SACS COC Principles of Accreditation by Dr. Steve Atkins, an update on our Quality Enhancement Plan, *Cornerstone Experience* by Co-Chairs Professor Kathy Clark and Dr. Thomas Rath, and operational updates by Dr. James Browder.

Mark your calendar for this important event!

Spotlight: Cornerstone Experience Course



By Dr. Thomas Rath, Academic Dean,
Charlotte Campus and QEP Co-Chair

One of the most fundamental questions a college or university can ask itself is that of how we make a positive and measureable change in student learning. The commitment is at the heart of our mission. This learning happens abundantly at Edison

State College, but at times it is prudent to evidence this through a comprehensive effort that includes all of us. This is why we are asked to demonstrate this effort for accreditation reaffirmation. More importantly, however, we do this because it is the right thing to do for our students.

As described in this issue's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) overview, we selected the creation of a first-year experience (FYE) course for our QEP subject. For well researched reasons, students are found to be at most risk of not being successful within their first year at college. The creation of this course, and of our parallel efforts in our overall FYE program, should facilitate an increase in measures of student success within their first year.

Through our research and discussions, we determined that is very important to give the FYE course a good name. This name will guide its perception, and as the saying goes, "you only have one chance to make a first impression." We started informal discussions on a name early in the Fall 2010 Semester and we quickly gravitated to the concept of the cornerstone. The cornerstone is the essential building block in any sturdy structure. It is often inscribed with important information about the purpose and meaning of the structure being built. We called out to faculty, staff, and students to ask for input on this or other course names. What strongly emerged and was adopted is what we now call the *Cornerstone Experience* class.

This course will be a significant undertaking. In its final form it will be taken by every first time in college (FTIC) student, and will be one of the largest "programs" at the College. It will be very deliberately and thoughtfully implemented, giving us the ability to make adjustments along the way. Current plans call for us to start the course in Fall 2011 with pilot sections on the three campuses and the Hendry/Glades site, with the focus on students who have

tested into two or more College Preparatory courses. Furthermore, we hope to link these sections with College Preparatory course sections in order to reinforce their learning, and eventually to other non-preparatory courses. The course will gradually be phased in to any students taking any College Prep course, and in five years to all FTIC students.

Course content and student learning outcomes have and will emerge from research of literature and best practices, and from attending to what is unique to the student experience at Edison State College. The course will also be grounded in the frameworks of *Relevancy*, *Applied Learning*, *Success Strategies*, and *Critical Thinking*. It will be a rigorous course, necessarily setting the expectation of high quality work from our students. Instructors for the course may come from varied backgrounds, but all will complete extensive relevant professional development and their selection "will be based on talent, potential for working with first-year students, knowledge of their particular needs and challenges, enthusiasm for the Cornerstone initiative, and support of Edison State College's commitment to student success" (quoted from Edison QEP website).

The opportunity for input in this effort is ongoing. For example, you can have the say on selecting our logo (see p. 4). As always, feel free to contact me or my co-chair at any time with any ideas, questions or concerns.

Please remember that you are essential to the success of our QEP. Working together, we can help build the foundation for self-reliant lifelong learners.



The QEP Web Page

You can find relevant information regarding the QEP Project at the new web page:

<http://www.edison.edu/accreditation/qep/summary.php>

QEP Overview

The decision to create a unique version of a first-year experience course as the focus of the Edison State College (Edison) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) resulted from a collegial, thoughtful and deliberate process among faculty, administration, students, and staff over a two-year period beginning in August 2008. Campus constituencies met regularly to explore potential topics and debate the way forward. The need to increase student success and focus on first-time-in-college students was identified through the College's on-going planning and evaluation process, and confirmed by supplemental studies and a thorough literature review.

As a parallel initiative, approximately 120 faculty and staff began serving on a task force in August 2009 to undertake a nine-month externally guided self-study using *Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year* model. A vision for enhanced learning and retention of first-year students emerged, affirming that the broad topic which could singularly and most substantively impact student learning at Edison was improving students' first-year experience. On April 16, 2010, a combined QEP committee and *Foundations of Excellence®* committee narrowed the QEP focus to creating a unique version of a first-year experience course. The course is central to Edison's evolving first-year program, *Foundations of Self-Reliant Learning*, which addresses the needs of increasingly diverse, first-time college students, many of whom are underprepared.

The *Cornerstone Experience* course will empower new students to enhance their learning and self-reliance at Edison and beyond. The QEP Steering Committee chose *Cornerstone Experience* to illustrate the significance of this gateway course and its four theoretical anchors supporting retention, academic success and lifelong learning:

Relevancy: Students will enter the course on a pre-major track based on personal interests. Purposeful faculty-to-student and student-to-student connections will engage students in their transition to college.

Applied Learning: Successful students reinforce what they've learned in the classroom by applying it in other courses. Faculty teaching linked courses will emphasize relevant concepts and coordinate assignments to maximize learning.

Success Strategies: Students will demonstrate competencies and skills supporting college-level work. Trained tutors will sit in class so they are fully prepared to assist students. They will communicate to the faculty member observed behaviors that may be impeding success, such as poor note taking or personal distractions.

Critical Thinking: Metacognition is arguably the most important ability college students learn. Students will demonstrate how to use particular strategies for learning or problem solving. Trained faculty will guide students in learning to think for themselves and to analyze their own thinking in any situation.

Academic success in the *Cornerstone Experience* course will be bolstered by the comprehensive and coordinated support initiatives of *Foundations of Self-Reliant Learning*. Effective organizational structures and policies will enhance the new student experience and govern the implementation of the first-year experience program components including college orientation, the early alert system, and in-take processes such as admissions and advising. Employee training and assessment activities will be ongoing.



The Interchange

This section will publish short comments related to the QEP Project. Please submit questions to Pam Mangene at pmangene@edison.edu. Answers will appear in future issues of the newsletter or be posted to the FAQ section of the QEP web page.

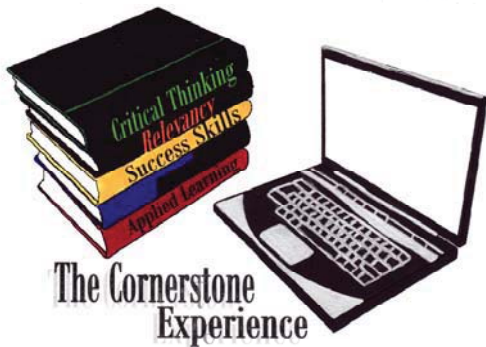
Cornerstone Experience Logo

The QEP Committee engaged the art students in Professor Dina Doll-Kelm's Basic Design class to assist in the development of a QEP/*Cornerstone Experience* logo. The students were provided with the QEP overview from page 3, and Kevin Shriner, Associate Dean for First Year Experience and Academic Success, visited the class to provide more direction and insight. The students were excited about the opportunity to design a logo that will be a prominent icon for the *Cornerstone*

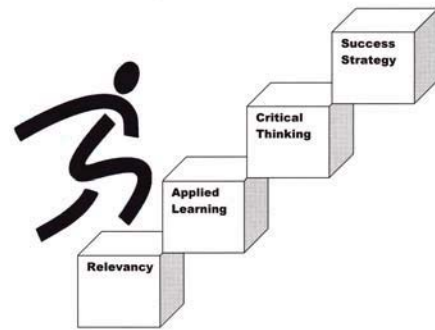
Experience. On this page are four designs that were chosen by the QEP committee as concepts for the QEP logo. We are asking that all students, faculty, and staff vote for one of the concepts by January 21 at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CM6CPRH>.

Thank you to all of the students who submitted a logo—it was truly outstanding work!



CONCEPT
SUBMITTED
BY
JESSICA CATTRILL
"BOOKS"



CONCEPT
SUBMITTED
BY
JULIA LEMIEUX
"STEPS"

The
Cornerstone Experience



EDISON STATE

CONCEPT
SUBMITTED
BY
APOLONIA UMUS
"CE STACK"



CONCEPT
SUBMITTED
BY
JAMES SHEARS
"C CIRCLE"