**Quality Focus Essay**

**Introduction**

De Anza College’s Quality Focus Essay (QFE) is developed from the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER). It provides the college with an opportunity to delve more deeply into areas of improvement that are aligned with the mission in order to have a greater impact on student outcomes.

Topics for the QFE were identified by the Accreditation Steering Committee, which evolved from the standing College Planning Committee (CPC) for the ISER preparation period and which includes representatives from all campus constituencies. The committee met to review the action plans identified in the self-evaluation report and to develop potential action projects the QFE.

During this self-evaluation process, De Anza College reflected on its mission and Educational Master Plan (EMP), as well as its long-standing commitment to equity and to serving students from historically underrepresented populations. This enabled the college to identify plans and projects to help fulfill the mission and improve student learning and achievement.

Through deep and reflective discussion, the steering committee identified two major themes for action projects: continuing the college’s commitment to equity, and enhancing integrated planning and communication. The selected projects focus on areas that support long-term improvements over a seven-year period.

This QFE begins with a review of De Anza’s equity goals and a discussion of other Institutional Metrics, followed by a summary of the action plans listed in the Institutional Self-Evaluation. The QFE then explains the process that led to identifying projects and lists steps the college will take to complete each project, including timelines, responsible parties and any needed resources. Lastly, this essay includes a plan for evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of the projects.

**De Anza's Equity Goals**

De Anza first identified its Institutional Metrics in the Educational Master Plan 2010-2015. The college reaffirmed these metrics, along with some additions, in the Educational Master Plan 2015-2020. De Anza has committed to achieving the following equity metrics by 2020:

* Targeted groups will persist at a rate within 5 percent of all other groups (Student Success Scorecard metric).
* There will be a difference of no more than 5 percentage points between the annual course completion rate for targeted groups and the rate for all other groups (Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative indicator).

Within the Educational Master Plan process, the college also decided to adopt an Equity-Driven Systems Change Model for creating an equity-driven institution, through such processes as reflection and continued improvement. The college used this model to develop a rubric for evaluating its organizational policies and practices, student learning and outcomes, organizational and professional development, community and civic engagement, as well as the sustainability of institutional equity.

In addition to establishing equity goals, the college identified six Institutional Metrics that require additional attention. Through its annual review, the College Planning Committee (CPC) determined in 2016-17 that De Anza should make further progress toward achieving the master plan goal for these six metrics by 2020:

**Basic Skills**

* The Basic Skills English course sequence completion rate will be 77 percent.
* The Basic Skills Math sequence completion rate will be 57 percent.
* The Basic Skills English as a Second Language (ESL) sequence completion rate will be 50 percent.

**Civic Engagement**

* Six percent of students with a goal of transfer or degree will have enrolled in at least one course having a community/civic engagement component each fall.

**Career Technical Education**

* Fifty-seven percent of students who were enrollment in a career technical education program will be employed full time, one year after leaving De Anza College.

**Funding**

* The annual FTES enrollment will increase to 20,000.

The CPC brought these metrics to College Council, which asked the Academic Senate to work with the college community to meet the stated goals by 2020. Since fall 2016, the Academic Senate leadership has been working with the English, Math and ESL departments, Enrollment Advisory Team, the Vasconcellos Institute for Democracy in Action (VIDA) and the Equity Action Council (EAC) to develop a plan and timeline for this effort.

These six metrics – directly linked to the college’s mission and planning processes – will continue to serve as the college’s targeted metrics within this QFE.

 **Institutional Self-Evaluation – Action Plans**

The following action plans represent strategies for improving outcomes that were identified in the institutional self-evaluation.

1. Work toward achieving the six identified institutional metrics in order to meet the Education Master Plan goal by 2020. (Standard I.B.3)
	* In 2016, College Council asked the Academic Senate to take the lead in addressing six institutional metrics that it seemed the college may not meet by 2020. The Academic Senate has identified key stakeholders to develop plans for improving performance on these metrics, including steps for implementation, monitoring and assessment of improvement efforts. The stakeholders will present their plans to College Council and provide a quarterly status report.
2. Increase training for institutional planning, program review and resource allocations. (Standard III.A.14)
	* Work with the Office of Professional Development and the planning and budget teams to provide faculty and staff members with training and information about the institutional planning process, with the goals of improving their understanding and increasing engagement in the process.
3. Continue the college’s commitment to Student Learning Outcomes work at all levels: SSLO, SLO, AUO, PLO and ILO. (Standard I.B.2)
	* Continue to refine the data collection system for Outcomes Assessment (TracDat) with an aim toward more easily integrating assessment data in program review documents.
	* Make the data submission process easier through steps such as encouraging use of the “Assignments” feature in the TracDat system.
	* Work with Nuventive, the TracDat developer, to improve reports generated by the system.
	* Promote the need for ongoing assessment cycles through regularly scheduled workshops in conjunction with the Office of Professional Development, as well as Opening Day activities and workshops, weekly “drop-in help” office hours for faculty, and the annual convocation.
4. Continue to advance the college's commitment to equity (Standard I.B.2)
* Develop and better integrate programs and services that directly address issues of equity among our students and within our institution, through collaboration between the offices of Instruction and Student Services.
1. Improve the dissemination of information from the planning and budget teams (PBTs) to the campus community. (Standard IV.A.5)
* Under the direction of College Council, the College Planning Committee will lead an assessment of how information is currently being disseminated and accessed by various groups.
* Identify ways to improve communication before and after proposed changes take place, as well as communication about how changes will impact other areas.
1. Improve coordination between the PBTs. (Standard I.B.9)
* Improve integration between the PBTs on matters such as resource allocation and hiring, so as to have a college-driven process in which members of College Council provide leadership and guidance as opposed to merely receiving information. This is aimed at helping the campus community better understand how factors such as hiring, reductions and program viability affect the college as a whole. College Council will serve as the lead for integration and ask for a status update from the PBTs at each meeting to increase the sharing and discussion of information.

**Identification of Action Projects**

De Anza College’s Accreditation Steering Committee met monthly during the ISER preparation period to review progress and to work on the standards it had been assigned to evaluate. In winter 2017, two themes emerged from the action plans identified in the self-evaluation report. These themes are linked to multiple standards and are deeply rooted in long-standing work at the college.

After discussion by the committee, the members agreed to share the themes with the constituency groups they represent. The themes were then presented to the board of trustees at its February 2017 study session. The steering committee took responsibility for drafting the QFE, which, together with the full report, were presented to shared governance groups for dialogue and feedback in spring 2017.

The final draft of the QFE incorporates feedback from the Academic Senate, Classified Senate, Instructional Planning and Budget Team (IPBT), Student Services Planning and Budget Team (SSPBT), Finance and College Operations Planning and Budget Team (FCOPBT), Equity Action Council (EAC) and College Council. The Academic Senate and College Council approved the final draft in May 2017.

The table below identifies the links between QFE themes, action plans and the accreditation standards.

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| **QFE Theme** | **Action Plans** | **Standards** |
| Student Equity | 1, 4 | Standard I.B.3, Standard I.B.2 |
| Integrated Planning and Communication | 2, 3, 5, 6 | Standard III.A.14, Standard I.B.2,Standard IV.A.5,Standard I.B.9 |

The two action projects that De Anza College identified are outlined in detail below.

**Action Project 1: Student Equity**

Goal: Create a collegewide vision for reaching equitable outcomes for all student groups and a plan to achieve this vision.

A collegewide vision for student equity will enable the college to focus its efforts in one direction with a clear plan for achieving its goal. The plan would include a holistic assessment of current practices and policies, a review of what works nationally in order to implement locally, and a collegewide commitment to the vision. Specific implementation activities are listed in the table below.

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| **Desired Outcome** | **Action Steps** | **Timeline** | **Responsible Groups/Individual** |
| Promotion of equity vision | Assist and support the president, who has primary responsibility for promoting the collegewide vision.  | 2017-18 | Senior staff |
| Continued development of Equity Plans | Continue to support development and implementation of department and division Equity Plan goals.  | 2017-18 | Deans, chairs, Equity Office |
| Assessment of equity work | Assess equity plans to determine which prototypes are achieving Institutional Metric goals; determine which should be enhanced or supported with equity funding. | 2018-19 | Equity Office |
| Assessment of equity work nationally | Conduct a review of equity practices nationally to identify effective strategies for De Anza | 2018-19 | Equity Office |
| Equity Plans linked to program review | Incorporate the department equity action plans into the Annual Program Review Update (APRU) form used by PBTs.  | 2018-19 | PBT chairs |
| SLO work linked to Equity Plans | Encourage integration of program SLOs, SSLOs and AUOs with equity plan goals so more assessments are linked to an equity component, such as the Institutional Core Competency of Civic Capacity for Global, Cultural, Social and Environmental Justice. | 2018-19 | SLO Steering Committee, Equity Office |
| More time available for equity work | Hold an Equity Flex Day at which departments and divisions have time for dialogue about playing a key part in advancing the vision of equity and achieving the college’s goals. | 2018-19 | Office of Instruction, Equity Office |
| Integration of planning and equity work | Integrate current equity metrics into those tracked for the QFE action project, while linking that integration to all planning documents.  | 2016-17 | Accreditation Steering Committee |
| Advancement of equity vision | Continue to promote this vision on a regular basis. | 2017-18 | President |
| Integration of planning and equity work | Integrate a seven-year equity planning cycle into the college planning calendar. Have each department and service area develop a plan – with activities, responsible parties and timelines – for how their area will help achieve this goal in the next seven years.  | 2018-19 | College Planning Committee, all departments and service areas |
| Expansion of programs that work to close the equity gap | Continue to assess the First Year Support cohort program and its preliminary success. Evaluate the feasibility of expanding the program and assess what resources are needed, such as personnel, facilities, leadership and funding.  | 2017-18 | Outreach Office |
| Expansion of programs that work to close the equity gap | Define the elements of each program that are closing the equity gap and identify which populations are having more success. Allocate resources to programs that are closing the gap. | 2018-19 | College community as a whole |
| Achievement of equity goals | Continue to work with designated departments on strategies for meeting the institutional metric of closing the achievement gap by 2020. Monitor and continue the work that the Academic Senate is already supporting. | 2017-18 | Academic Senate, English, ESL, Reading and Math departments |

**Action Project 2: Integrated Planning and Communication**

Goal: Develop better integration between the planning and budget teams.

By increasing integration between the planning and budget teams, the college will increase opportunities for cross-campus dialogue about resource allocations, hiring, program viability, Student Learning Outcomes assessment and other important issues. Better integration will produce greater transparency, make processes more effective and ultimately contribute to better student outcomes. Implementation activities in support of the project are listed below.

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| **Desired Outcome** | **Action Steps** | **Timeline** | **Responsible Groups** |
| Better understanding of current planning processes within the PBTs | Conduct a needs assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses of the integrated planning process. | 2017-18 | President, Institutional Research office  |
| Improved coordination between PBTs | Schedule joint meetings of PBT committees on a quarterly basis – identify a lead responsible for establishing the agenda and calendaring the meeting. | 2017-18 | PBT chairs |
| Improved interaction between shared governance groups | Develop guidelines for increasing PBTs’ involvement and communication with other shared governance committees. | 2017-18 | PBT chairs  |
| Improved alignment of the program review process | Align timelines and cycles for all PBTs. Each PBT will maintain their own program review form, but work toward integrating overarching goals such as student equity and success. | 2018-19 | PBT chairs, College Council |
| Increased visibility of hiring processes | Establish channels for sharing information about hiring processes so each PBT has better understanding of hiring by other PBTs. Establish similar criteria for ranking positions across the PBTs. Criteria may include a link to Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and evaluation of SLOs. Establish a rubric that is used for deciding on the positions. | 2018-19 | PBT leadership, College Council |
| Sustained links between planning and SLO work | Ensure that all PBTs integrate APRUs to Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), Student Services Learning Outcomes (SSLOs), Administrative Unit Outcomes (AUOs). | 2018-19 | PBT leadership, SLO Committee |
| Streamlined reporting structure | Ensure that all PBTs complete the APRU and Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) in TracDat. | 2017-18 | PBT leadership, SLO Committee |
| Increased communication and dissemination of information | Expand role of College Council to be more of a source for discussion of proposals and explore how resource allocations are integrated across the campus rather than simply approving what comes from the PBTs.  | 2017-18 | PBT leadership, College Council |
| Increased communication and dissemination of information | Establish a process at College Council by which representatives from each PBT report on activities at each meeting. | 2017-18 | PBT leadership, College Council |
| Increased communication and dissemination of information | Designate a representative from each PBT to attend the meetings of the other PBTs to bring back information to their respective PBT on a regular basis. | 2017-18 | PBT leadership |
| Standardized program review process for resource requests | Carry out an evaluation by the College Planning Committee of which departments, divisions and offices complete learning outcomes and program review, to determine if any areas have been left out and should be included.  | 2017-18 | College Planning Committee, College Council |
| Increased communication and dissemination of information | Launch assessment by College Planning Committee of how much campus stakeholders understand the planning and resource allocation process, and tailor trainings around their needs. | 2017-18 | College Planning Committee, College Council |
| Increased communication and dissemination of information | Launch assessment by College Planning Committee of how information about planning and resource allocation is disseminated, with the goal of understanding what information is being shared, what information the college community wants, and what the best channels are for sharing the information. | 2017-18 | College Planning Committee, College Council |

**Assessment of Action Projects**

De Anza College will annually evaluate its progress in meeting the goals of the QFE, as well as its progress in meeting goals and timeline for the Action Projects. The college will assess the effectiveness of the plans, timeline, responsible parties and outcomes. To ensure the action plans are carried out, they will be embedded in existing college processes for program review and institutional planning. The CPC will be responsible for annually reviewing the QFE goals in connection with De Anza’s institutional metrics and the Educational Master Plan. The CPC will use the college’s equity-driven change model and rubric as part of this assessment process.

**Resources**

The college will use existing human, technological, physical and financial resources to meet the goals outlined in the QFE. Funding from the state’s Student Equity program, the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP), the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) and the Adult Education Block Grant will be allocated to this purpose when available and appropriate.

**Sample Timeline and Process for Annually Assessing the Quality Focus Essay**

**September:** The accreditation liaison officer will convene the College Planning Committee to develop a process for gathering feedback from the governance groups responsible for implementing the plan, and for reviewing the work each fall to produce a progress report. The college president will reemphasize his vision and De Anza’s commitment to these projects, at the beginning of each academic year. Responsible parties identified in the QFE will ensure that plans are in place and moving forward.

**October-November:** The College Planning Committee and Office of Institutional Research and Planning will compile information on De Anza’s progress toward meeting the stated goals. The CPC will monitor achievement of the goals against the established timeline. If goals are not being met, the CPC will report this information to College Council, which will determine the best way to proceed.

**December:** The college president will provide a progress report to College Council.

**January-February:** The College Planning Committee and Institutional Research office will summarize all feedback and produce a report on the results. The report will be shared with College Council to determine if De Anza is on track to meet its goals.

**March-April:** The College Planning Committee and relevant governance groups will assess the findings and recommend improvements as well as strategies for continuous improvement.

**May-June:** Responsible parties will determine how to implement plans for the following year, so as to continue progress and meet the goals.