



**REVISED**

**THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN OF  
BLUEFIELD COLLEGE**

**SUBMITTED TO:**

**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS  
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES**

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## I. Executive Summary

Bluefield College is a Christ-centered learning community in covenant with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Developing students' potential through academic excellence and the intentional integration of faith in liberal arts and professional studies is among our guiding values. Our other core values include the purposeful creation of a caring community characterized by respect, support, and encouragement for each member of our College community. We believe in service above self and seek to graduate compassionate, globally-minded students who will impact the world. Bluefield's academic offerings include undergraduate degrees in 24 majors with 25 available minors. With a student body population of 724 students in the spring of 2012, the College advocates the many benefits of a small learning community: an academic setting with individualized attention, ample leadership opportunities, and ready access to academic support.

One of the greatest challenges at Bluefield College has been student retention. Our four-year graduation rate is approximately 35%. This means that only 35% of students who enter Bluefield College as freshmen stay four years to graduate from the institution. The students who graduate do demonstrate a basic competence in writing skills based on scores on the College Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) test. Because so many students enroll in Bluefield College with substandard writing skills as evidenced by the CAAP test and/or placement into "Basic" or "Intensive" Freshman Composition sections, students who struggle with written communication routinely leave the college in two years or fewer. Evidence suggests that if students could raise the level of their writing skills as sophomores and juniors, they would be more academically successful and be more likely to stay at Bluefield College for four years. A Quality Enhancement Plan, "The Confident Communicator," has been developed not only to prepare more effective graduates for the workforce or further education, but to help students succeed while matriculating at Bluefield College, thus boosting retention and enrollment. Thus, this Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is not merely academic; upon its success rests the financial sustainability of this tuition-driven institution.

As Bluefield College has approached its reaccreditation process, the administration, faculty and staff have sought to establish a Quality Enhancement Plan that is both foundational and fundamental to student learning. The mission statement of the College clearly asserts that “We offer a challenging academic experience within a diverse Christian environment. Our academic and co-curricular programs transform students’ lives by integrating liberal arts with career-oriented studies and service to God and the global community. We are committed to graduating students who think critically, communicate effectively, and adapt readily to a changing world.” The Confident Communicator QEP is intrinsically linked to this mission through a plan to graduate student writers who are able to analyze their beliefs, acquire and critically evaluate information, and communicate by writing in a clear, engaging, and convincing manner.

The process for determining the QEP topic for Bluefield College occurred between March 2011 and November 2011. Several methodologies were employed to establish the parameters of the QEP topic, which was eventually refined to focus on student writing as the foundational component. The hallmarks of the Confident Communicator QEP include intentional assessment of writing skills from incoming students to graduating seniors, enhanced courses in each department to model for and instruct students in the fundamental components of writing in the discipline of the students’ major, and multiple opportunities for faculty development in the teaching of writing in most courses.

## **II. Process Used to Develop the QEP**

The initial query used to refine the topic of the QEP was a broad-based institutional survey. The process for developing the QEP began in December 2010 when Dr. Robert Shippey, Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), and Ms. Amanda Jordan, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research (DIER), began developing a survey that asked college faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends to rank institutional priorities in six different categories. The survey questions, located in Appendix C, asked for ranked responses about the school’s mission, co-curricular learning themes, the value of a Bluefield College education, the strength of Bluefield College academic programs, fundamental academic skills, and spiritual development. In January of 2011, the Institutional Leadership Team, composed of the College President, Dr. David Olive; Dr. Robert Shippey, VPAA; Ms. Sarah Beamer, Vice President for Finance and Administration (VPFA), Dr. Robert Boozer, Associate Professor of Psychology; and Ms. Amanda Jordan, DIER, received a draft of the survey. Following the survey’s review by the

Institutional Leadership Team, suggested changes were presented to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee for further feedback. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee members are Ms. Amanda Jordan, Director of Intuitional Effectiveness and Research; Mr. Shawn White, Instructor of Christian Studies; Dr. Doug Minnix, Associate Professor of Exercise and Sports Science; Dr. Emily Lambert, Assistant Professor of Biology; Mr. Mark Hipes, Director of Traditional Admissions; Ms. Dena Monroe, Assistant Registrar; Mr. Josh Cline, Director of Alumni Relations; Dr. Robert Shippey, VPAA, (ex officio); and Ms. Sarah Beamer, VPFA (ex officio).

The Student Government Association (SGA) informed students about the reaffirmation of accreditation process and the QEP during a campus-wide convocation. Members of the SGA invited the student body to share their opinions on the selection of the QEP topic through the electronic survey. The VPAA informed the Trustee Board and the Faculty about the Reaffirmation Process and QEP, and encouraged them to complete the survey. The College President, Dr. David Olive, filmed a video explaining the Reaffirmation and QEP to the alumni, and Mr. Josh Cline, Director of Alumni Relations, submitted the video and survey links to the alumni through an email. A link to the video was also placed on the Bluefield College website. The survey was distributed to all constituencies: students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, parents of current students, and BGAV pastors. The BGAV pastors were included as constituents because of the College's covenant with the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

A team documented the results of the surveys in May 2011, and the VPAA discussed the findings with the President of the College. The DIER and the VPAA also presented the findings to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and planned the course of action for going forward. Based on the results of the survey, the VPAA assigned topic proposals. Results of the survey pointed to specific topics that constituents felt were of importance to the Bluefield College learning environment. The VPAA requested faculty members from different departments to develop proposals related to these topics.

On June 15, 2011, the College President, the VPAA and the DIER presented a day-long workshop on refining the selection of a QEP topic with faculty, staff, students, trustees and alumni. In order to facilitate conversation across the disciplines, participants were assigned seating and grouped at large tables to ensure that members of the same academic discipline were not seated together. The participants received a general overview of instruments used to assess student learning, including the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP),

the Defining Issues Test (DIT-2), the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST), and the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI). The participants in the workshop received a description of each of these test instruments and a report of the 2010 student learning results collected from test administration. The participants in the workshop also received a handout which explained the standards for adopting a QEP, and the results of the QEP survey were reviewed.

Six proposals were submitted by faculty members, and the DIER then presented each proposal to the workshop participants. The proposals were Writing and Math Skill Enhancement, Effective Writing and Thinking in the Disciplines, Developmental Studies Program, Combining Effective Writing & Thinking and Developmental Studies, and Effective Writing & Thinking. The participants then formed groups by table and were instructed by the VPAA to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal and to select a group spokesman to share their ideas after a 45-minute time period. Following this time, group reflective analysis was employed by each table. The groups were given large sheets of paper on which to write the QEP topic they collectively chose and to write proposed student learning outcomes and reasoning for their topic selection. The sheets of paper detailing the topics by each group were then hung up around the room for everyone to view. The topic ideas were to be voted on and ranked by each individual attending; however, each group selected the same topic so a vote was deemed unnecessary. All groups focused on writing/thinking and developmental studies. The VPAA led the discussion to determine a possible title for the QEP and the key points on which the QEP should focus.

As a result, this body generated a proposal that the QEP topic should focus on incremental and intentional learning throughout the four years of studies in the areas of writing, oral communication, and mathematics and developmental studies. Before the meeting ended, each academic division met as a group to discuss how they could contribute to the QEP.

The following day, June 16, 2011, a QEP planning meeting was held. Invited participants in this meeting included: VPAA, Dr. Robert Shippey; DIER, Ms. Amanda Jordan; Chair of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, Dr. Robert Boozer; Chair of the Language, Literature and Communication Division, Dr. Rob Merritt; Chair of the Math and Science Division, Dr. Lewis Buterakos; Communications Assistant Professor Mimi Merritt; and Director of Academic Support Services and Instructor of English, Ms. Crystal Kieloch. These participants were selected because of their respective connection to the selected topic. During this meeting, the VPAA

reviewed the outcome of the previous day's workshop, and the group worked through forming the QEP Steering Committee by determining those who would be invited to serve. Dr. Rob Merritt was appointed as the chair of the QEP Steering Committee because, as Chair of the Division of Language, Literature and Communications, he had made a presentation to the faculty suggesting a QEP that focused on enhancing student written communication. Further discussion occurred on the recommended QEP topic of incremental and intentional learning throughout the four years of studies in the areas of writing, oral communication, and mathematics and developmental studies and the process of developing a QEP focusing on this area. After a thoughtful discussion, the group determined with the agreement of Dr. Lewis Buterakos that the inclusion of math in the QEP was too broad and did not fit with the idea of writing and communication. The determination was made to present a revised QEP that focused on writing and communication, which subsequently was affirmed by faculty. The group agreed to invite several individuals to serve on the QEP Steering Committee and discussed the need to involve a variety of stakeholders. The group also agreed that the Steering Committee should develop subcommittees that would focus on various parts of the QEP development including the literature review, budgeting, marketing, assessment, and professional development. The group generated a list of potential committee members. Among those present who agreed to serve were Dr. Rob Merritt as Chair of the Steering Committee, as well as Ms. Amanda Jordan and Ms. Crystal Kieloch. The VPAA determined that an invitation to serve on the committee would be sent from the President of the College, Dr. David Olive, to those others identified as candidates during this meeting. The group agreed that the first meeting of the QEP Steering Committee would occur during the first week of August 2011.

By the end of August, the Steering Committee included the Chair, Dr. Rob Merritt, Chairman of the Division of Language, Literature and Communication; Dr. Martin Offield, Associate Professor of Biology; Ms. Phyllis Owens, Assistant Professor of Education; Ms. Amanda Jordan, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research; and Ms. Crystal Kieloch, Director of Academic Support Services and Instructor of English. Dr. Merritt and Ms. Kieloch were selected because of the selection of the topic and its relation to English instruction. Ms. Owens possesses expertise in the area of assessment and taught English in the public school system. Dr. Offield represented the Science Division and also has previous experience with SACSCOC assessment at a previous institution, and Ms. Jordan was selected because of her experience as the DIER. In the fall of 2011, subcommittees were formed under the leadership of those serving on the Steering Committee. Dr. Rob Merritt oversaw the Professional Development

Subcommittee, which was soon renamed the Program Development Subcommittee, and took the lead in determining the actions to be implemented in the Bluefield College QEP. Dr. Martin Offield led the Assessment Subcommittee, and Ms. Amanda Jordan facilitated the Marketing, Budget and Communication Subcommittee. Ms. Phyllis Owens and Ms. Crystal Kieloch co-chaired the Literature Review Subcommittee. A full listing of those subcommittees and their members is contained in the organizational chart in Chapter VIII: Organizational Structure. The Committee approved the name Confident Communicator for the Bluefield College QEP.

The Steering Committee members moved forward with forming the subcommittees to embrace the goals produced in the June QEP workshop. The Literature Review Subcommittee created a process by which all full-time faculty would assist in the literature review process. Ms. Owens and Ms. Kieloch enlisted the assistance of Bluefield College reference librarians, Ms. Lynne Bartlett and Mr. Werner Lind, to research writing skills, speaking skills and critical thinking skills, which were the areas encompassed within the proposed QEP topic. Full-time faculty were then assigned various journal articles for review and asked to submit their reviews electronically to the Literature Review Subcommittee by December 1, 2011.

As the QEP Steering Committee assessed the results of the literature review, it became apparent that the topic was still too broad. A review of the available assessment data at Bluefield College revealed that the writing skills of incoming freshmen were decreasing and those skills of graduating seniors, while improved, were not at an acceptable level. It was determined that the QEP should focus completely on writing. This determination was based upon several available data. Information contained in the Bluefield College Fact Book shows that the incoming freshman grade point average has steadily decreased from 3.02 in 2005 to a 2.56 in 2011 and freshman retention rates have also declined at a steady rate from 65% in 2001 to 56% in 2010. The CAAP data included in Appendix A reveal that in 2010, 80% of Bluefield College freshmen fell below the national mean in the category of writing skills. In 2011, an improvement occurred with 56% of the freshmen falling below the national mean.

The English faculty observed, in the fall of 2008, a significant number of students who were unprepared to advance from the Introduction to Writing course (ENG 1013) to the next course in the composition sequence, Argumentative and Analytical Writing (ENG 1023). In response to this concern, the English department, in the spring of 2009, created an intensive track for one section of the Introduction to Writing (ENG 1013) course that required students to meet five days per week. The ENG 1013-Intensive class is not “developmental.” Rather, the students

attend class for three days, following the format of the regular ENG 1013 by writing full-length essays, but receive more individualized instruction than possible in the regular ENG 1013 course. During the additional two days a week, students are given additional conferencing time with course instructors and an intensified focus on writing and grammar skills. In 2009, thirteen students were enrolled in Introduction to Writing – Intensive and five students were placed in the course in 2010.

During the spring of 2011, the English department developed an objective writing placement test and added developmental writing courses (ENG 0103) to the schedule. The Basic Writing (developmental) courses (ENG 0103) are not for college credit and emphasize sentence grammar and paragraph-length assignments. Upon completion of this course, students are prepared to further develop their essay-writing skills in ENG 1013. The placement testing in spring of 2011 demonstrated a need for two Intensive ENG 1013 courses and two Basic Writing courses (ENG 0103) in the fall of 2011. The increased number of students being placed in the intensive and developmental courses was due in part to increased freshman enrollment in the fall of 2011. In the fall of 2011, 48 students were enrolled in the newly added developmental writing class, 44 students were placed in the intensive writing class, and only 52 were prepared for college level writing. This data represent over a 200% increase in placement to the intensive course. The Intensive Writing data are available in Appendix B. In fall 2012, three intensive writing courses and three basic writing courses were scheduled and filled.

Following substantive discussion by the Steering Committee, members agreed on November 29, 2011, to propose that the QEP focus would be narrowed from the broader focus on writing skills, speaking skills and critical thinking skills to the development of a writing program that would seek to build skill and confidence throughout a student's four-year college career. On November 30, 2011, the Steering Committee met with the VPAA and discussed the proposal for the Confident Communicator Writing Program. Dr. Shippey, the VVPA, affirmed this decision and communicated this proposal to President Olive and the Bluefield College faculty who, voted to affirm the proposed QEP.

### **III. Identification of the Topic**

The initial query used to refine the topic of the QEP was a broad-based survey that was intended to refine the QEP topic and contribute to the success of Bluefield College's QEP. The results of this survey and the June 2011 QEP workshop yielded a focus that covered areas of

intentional and incremental learning. The QEP leadership, with the input of the VPAA and approval of the College President, further refined the focus of the QEP.

Long-standing concerns over the quality of student writing guided the refining of the QEP topic. Two areas of the QEP survey addressed the issues of promoting effective thinking and the improving of writing skills across the curriculum. Scholars such as James Britton, Janet Emig, George Hillocks, and William Zinsser have long affirmed the recursive link between writing and critical thinking. When surveyed, students affirm the value of writing to learn and report that writing assignments help with their critical thinking processes (Hilgers, 339-342). Additionally, researchers Hilgar, Hussey and Stitt-Bergh reported “students claimed that their writing experiences helped boost their confidence in themselves” and “when directly asked, 76% of the interviewees reported feelings of confidence when writing in their majors” (343).

Bluefield College’s CAAP data, in Appendix A, have shown that freshman students’ writing skills were well below the national mean. While there has been some improvement, producing better student writers is important to achieving the mission of the institution. In recent years, the English department responded to the perceived need for the improvement of student writing by altering a section of English 1013 to include a stronger focus on weaker students. This section of Introduction to Writing meets five days a week instead of three and seeks to provide more in-class instruction on writing and grammar skills by ensuring that these students have more individual conferencing time with the professor. A chart with the data on English 1013, Intensive Introduction to Writing, is in Appendix B.

A statement of purpose was developed by the Steering Committee which conveys that the Confident Communicator QEP will implement a writing program that develops student skills and abilities over students’ four-year academic experience at Bluefield College. The intentional development of confident writers who are able to communicate with purpose and clarity is the central goal of the Bluefield College Confident Communicator QEP. Ultimately, these “Confident Communicators” will serve well their employers and communities with the writing skills developed under this plan. The complete statement detailing the goals and student learning outcomes is contained in Section IV.

#### **IV. Desired Student Learning Outcomes:**

##### **The Confident Communicator**

The Bluefield College QEP is distinctive because it incrementally highlights classes with writing-focused assignments at freshman, sophomore, junior and senior level in most disciplines, progressing students toward greater precision of expression and comprehensiveness of argument from freshman to senior level. These courses incorporate a pedagogical method that intentionally instructs students in techniques to hone their writing skills so that graduates will be confident communicators.

Nearly all courses at Bluefield College, regardless of subject matter, will include the same learning objective: students will demonstrate proficiency in Confident Communicator skills, a proficiency of increasing complexity from 1000- to 4000-level courses with specific measurable student learning outcomes.

##### **Goals**

**Goal 1:** In order to measure the extent to which improved writing abilities are achieved, develop an assessment process that will measure student writing ability at several levels: (1) incoming freshman, to establish a benchmark; (2) freshmen at the end of the first semester; (3) freshmen at the end of the second semester, (4) sophomores or juniors upon completion of the course in their major which includes instruction in writing in the discipline, and (5) seniors upon completion of the major writing assignment that is a component of the senior capstone course.

The rationale for this assessment process is that while developing this QEP, the College discovered a lack of sufficient writing assessment data from incoming freshmen through graduating seniors. Hence, an important goal of the plan is to increase the number of assessment measures in order to document the writing abilities of incoming students and track their progress and the effectiveness of the newly implemented Confident Communicator Program.

**Goal 2:** Establish a writing program that will lay a firm foundation for writing in all coursework, beginning with the freshman composition sequence and reinforced by a sophomore- or junior-level course in each discipline that will intentionally instruct students in techniques and expectations for writing specific to each major field of study. Specific Confident Communicator

methods will be incorporated into these courses. All courses in the major will refer to and incorporate the skills introduced in the foundational course's writing module.

**Goal 3:** Enhance the senior writing experience. Each major must have a capstone course that includes a significant writing project. Students will be instructed on how to achieve the writing project and have opportunities for feedback and suggestions at multiple points during the process. The final product should represent successful writing in that academic field of inquiry.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students who graduate from Bluefield College will be able to produce written products that demonstrate proficiency in content, structure, language use, and mechanics.

#### **1. Content**

- a. By providing sufficient supporting details and examples
- b. By synthesizing information from appropriate sources

#### **2. Structure**

- a. By clearly stating a thesis
- b. By organizing the document in a logical manner

#### **3. Language Use**

- a. By choosing diction that is accurate and appropriately formal.
- b. By incorporating effective sentence variety.

#### **4. Mechanics**

- a. By exhibiting minimal errors in grammar
- b. By exhibiting minimal errors in spelling and punctuation

These specific outcomes will be measured by the Program Writing Assessment Rubric. These expectations are also assessed on grading criteria for individual writing assignments across the disciplines. The Assessment Subcommittee developed QEP Program Assessment Rubric that assesses the above outcomes (see section D of the Appendix). This rubric will be used to perform program assessment of selected writing samples beginning with the freshman class in the fall of 2012 and following those students through their four years at Bluefield College. Individual departments across the disciplines will be encouraged to develop departmental and assignment-based grading criteria using the QEP Program Assessment Rubric and the Confident Communicator Writing Rubric (see section E of the Appendix).

## **V. Literature Review and Best Practices**

### **Writing: national and local concerns**

The Neglected "R": The Need for Writing Revolution, a 2003 report of The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, makes an appeal for a unified effort by educators from every corner of the nation to develop advanced writers who can communicate and write effectively. While this report focused on primary and secondary education, the deficits in writing ability among America's students extend to postsecondary education. Research from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows first-year college students required remedial writing classes at a rate of one in every five freshmen (qtd. in Harris, Graham, and Mason). A growing percentage of Bluefield College students require remediation in basic writing skills and support in developing advanced writing skills.

Important for these students and their academic achievement is the realization that society looks at higher education as a vehicle that will ensure job place and advancement. This declining inclination toward writing by a growing number of Bluefield College students may affect their futures, so it is paramount that they connect the importance of good writing to their own future professional and economic success. The power of written language holds the key to the future of individual and corporate success of both the American economy and culture (National Writing Commission 13). According to the Commission's report, over 90% of working professionals who were in the middle of their careers said that effective writing was an important aspect of their everyday job responsibilities (National Writing Commission 11). Also, writing skills were considered to be essential "business skills" (Zhu 36). With these sobering facts, educators must help students meet the demands of academic work at the college and university level.

### **Student preparedness to write**

During the late nineteenth century, the faculty at Harvard University developed the first freshman composition course in response to what they thought was deficient writing in upper-level students. These writing courses were seen as a "preventive measure" and prescribed to all students as a method of ensuring that they could meet academic writing demands (Huse 29). Harvard's offering set a precedent that began the movement toward making freshman composition a standard requirement at other national colleges and universities. These efforts were the beginning of an educational standard that sought to ensure students were capable of

communicating their learning through writing (Gottschalk 3). Into the twenty-first century, the increasing population of college students and increasing diversity among these students makes the need for refined approaches to teaching freshman writing and writing throughout the entire academy.

David Bartholomae is a leading scholar in writing pedagogy and writing remediation. In his much referenced essay "Inventing the University," Bartholomae states that students are often unprepared for college writing and that students often acknowledge that they are not ready for college-level composition. Students, when approaching writing for their classes, especially those that are new and unfamiliar to them, feel as if they must write to their professors in a language that they have not yet acquired, so they create it. In essence, before they truly learn the language, they feel compelled to create or bluff their way through the languages of economics, or anthropology, or history. The pressure to speak academic language or the language of the professor, throughout "various discourses" in the "liberal arts education [where] a student . . . must learn to try on a variety of voices and interpretive schemes," pushes a student toward inventing that which he or she does not know (Glenn 382). Bartholomae further observes that students must "write. . . as a literary critic one day and an experimental psychologist the next" and "work within fields where the rules governing the presentations of examples or the development of an argument are both distinct and, even to a professional, mysterious" (Glenn 382). This appropriation of a language not truly learned creates an "assembling and mimicking" that finds "some compromise between idiosyncrasy, a personal history, and the requirements of convention" (Glenn 382). Bartholomae insightfully says that "they [students] must learn to speak our language. Or they must dare to speak it, or carry off the bluff, since speaking and writing almost certainly be required long before the skill is 'learned.' And this, understandably, causes problems" (Glenn 382). Considering Bartholomae's observations, the research and views of other scholars like Lee Ann Carroll, Marilyn Sternglass and Katherine Gottschalk lend further insight into the writing skills of college students.

Carroll and Sternglass performed two separate longitudinal studies that suggest students are unjustly accused of being unprepared to write sufficiently when they arrive on the college campus. Sternglass performed research through case studies with students at City University of New York, and Carroll conducted her study at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. Both researchers document the idea that college students as writers develop over time, with intentional and incremental instruction, responding to diverse writing assignments that are implemented as tools for learning, articulation and communication.

The purpose of Lee Ann Carroll's research documented in *Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students develop as Writers* is to demonstrate that a freshman writing sequence of one or two courses will not be able to prepare fully students for the next three years of writing tasks. Carroll observes that "students' complex literary skills develop slowly, often idiosyncratically, over the course of their college years, as they choose or are coerced to take on new roles as writers" (xxi). The students studied in the project "did not necessarily learn to write 'better' but they did learn to write differently – to produce new, more complicated texts, addressing challenging topics with greater depth and complexity. . . [by being] better able to juggle the multiple literacy acts often required by the commonplace writing assignments of college courses" (xxi). Carroll argues that the writing is not a "stable, unitary skill that can be learned once and then simply applied in new circumstances" but even writers who are "proficient in constructing simple reports or arguments will struggle with tasks that require more complex analysis and methods of presentation," and it is "in struggling with these challenging tasks that they develop new skills" and write and learn "in new roles " (27).

Students in Carroll's research were followed over a four-year period and considered as academically prepared students based on their college placement scores and high school GPAs. Nevertheless, these students reported feeling overwhelmed by the number of diverse writing assignments in the first two years of their education, and they continued to need support and practice during their upper-level courses in order to feel they were proficient in their academic majors (Carroll 2). Carroll's research echoes Bartholomae's insights; students reflected that their writing courses ranged from "fun and creative to frustrating and random" and that the writing was "more diverse" because it was the "writing expected of perspective psychologists, scientists, philosophers, or business managers"(6). Carroll cites the work of Lynn Troyika, who writes in her essay, *Defining Basic Writing in Context* (1987), that "judgments about who is prepared or underprepared for college-level work are relative to the institutions and individuals making the judgment" (as qtd. in Carroll). Considering the observations of Carroll and Bartholomae, Marilyn Sternglass offers further insights into the preparedness of students for writing.

Sternglass, in *Time to Know Them: A Longitudinal Study of Writing and Learning at the College Level*, states that among the most significant findings of the study were the observation that "students with poor academic preparation have the potential to develop the critical reasoning processes that they must bring to bear in academic writing if they are given time" and that "instructional approaches in a wide range of disciplines have the ability to use writing to foster

critical thinking” (296, 297). She notes that students preferred writing opportunities over multiple-choice and short answer because they felt that they could better demonstrate their learning and that writing helped them to learn more and “demanded their questioning of assumptions” (297). Other practical implications discovered were that writing instruction is most effective when it is implemented for a four-year time span because student writing growth often occurs in a non-linear format (141, 297). Encouraging and assisting students in analyzing their own writing is a key to writing improvement, and thoughtful evaluator feedback fertilizes growth (141). Sternglass’ insight is pivotal in framing the basic tenets of the Confident Communicator Program, and these observations will help Bluefield College further refine an approach to developing a stronger approach to the teaching of writing.

Scholars Katherine Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj of Cornell University collaborated on the book *The Elements of Teaching Writing: Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines* that offers practical, insightful, and researched approaches toward teaching writing across the disciplines and throughout the entirety of a college student's academic career. Gottschalk and Hjortshoj reiterate that students are "unfamiliar with the assigned task" and "use inappropriate methods (or lack of time) for completing the task successfully" because "undergraduates are trying to do a particular kind of writing for the first time, often without models or adequate guidance" (4). The process of learning to write efficiently continues to be a process of “trial and error in which rules and expectations unpredictably change” (4). Furthermore, they take a realistic view concerning all of the demands upon students, including “close deadlines, congested schedules, procrastination” which “can lead the great majority of these students to try to complete an assignment in a single draft, often on the night before it’s due,” and consequently “writers who are trying to do something unfamiliar, without much preparation revision, don't get it right” (4). The quality of student writing, according to Gottschalk and Hjortshoj, creates “contexts that give students the opportunity to meet their responsibilities more effectively” (5).

The authors cite an additional factor in the perception of the deterioration of student writing: the growing diversity of students pursuing an undergraduate education. Gottschalk and Hjortshoj state that among high school graduates, 63% enroll in colleges and universities that offer a myriad of study programs and specialization. The student diversity coupled with an increased enrollment in a variety of programs calls for careful and deliberate planning of instruction that will support student success. Therefore, an intentional and incremental focus on writing proficiency will help students to create more effective learning and thinking as they move toward successful completion of these degrees and careers that demand strong critical thinking and

literacy skills. The recognized need for these skills is acknowledged by educators, scholars, and various types of leaders.

### **Guiding Documents**

In January of 2011, the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project in joint association published the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, which will serve as one of the guiding documents for shaping of writing assignments as part of the Bluefield College Confident Communicator program. This document was composed and reviewed by college and high school writing teachers throughout the country and outlines the "habits of mind and experiences with writing, reading, and critical analysis that serve as foundations for writing in college level, credit-bearing courses" (2). This framework unites teachers of writing from kindergarten to college with rationale that "writing development takes place over time as students encounter different contexts, tasks, audiences, and purposes" (2).

At Bluefield College, composition studies remain under the purview of the English department where the faculty is united in its dedication to teaching composition and literature separately but equally. The entire College faculty is deeply committed to providing superior instruction and personal attention to its students. Further, the intention of the QEP Steering Committee has been to design a writing program for the unique needs of Bluefield College students who are drawn to the College because of its small size and commitment to classroom excellence. The College recognizes that excellence in the teaching of writing is not confined to a minority of classrooms in a minority of disciplines but that this teaching moves across all disciplinary boundaries and is of universal value and one of national, if not global, concern.

*The Elements of Teaching Writing: a Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines* written by Katherine Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj will be considered a guiding document and faculty resource for the further integration of writing assignments throughout the Bluefield College curriculum. The authors present a thorough approach to implementing writing in the disciplines and throughout the span of the student college career. This resource will provide faculty members with training in integrating writing into their courses, designing writing assignment sequences, responding to student writing, and assessing individual writing assignments. Training workshops will include "how to" elements such as developing and using grading criteria, introducing relevant writing assignments into coursework, and structuring writing assignments that foster student learning goals. Workshops will be designed to foster

conversation and collaboration among faculty across the disciplines, and experts from outside the institution will be invited to lead annual training events.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is crucial in the process of providing excellent instruction. A comprehensive assessment structure will be necessary for Bluefield College to gauge the progress and improvement in its Confident Communicator Program. More thorough, structured assessment in incremental writing improvement is planned so that adequate reporting, development and calibration can occur to foster better student success.

The Conference on College Composition and Communication published a position statement in March 2009 focused on writing assessment. The statement is a thorough, concise document produced by leading professionals in the field of college composition and recommends best practices to guide those working with the assessment of writing. Through the document, the Committee on Assessment addresses different levels of review from broad-based institutional evaluation to individualized assessment. Among the recommendations for comprehensive evaluation is that writing assessment remain focused on local goals and that evaluation is best when determined and performed on a local level. Training faculty, those professionals who have direct contact with students, to serve as evaluators is the most efficient investment in the success of a writing program because it will enhance the “professional development of the faculty, the program development and student learning” (Committee on Assessment 3). The statement declares that this type of assessment is preferable to outside, often machine-scored assessment (Committee on Assessment 3). The writing assessment position written by the CCCC Committee statement will also be adopted as a guiding document for writing assessment.

Within the last ten years researchers began the process of gathering information about how college writers develop over the course of their academic careers, and the question should be answered on the local level regarding how instructors could best support student writers throughout all disciplines and over the years of study (Carroll xiii). Isolated assessments performed only once at the end of the senior year or at the beginning of the freshman year are insufficient in tracing sufficient or inadequate progress over several years. Marilyn Sternglass, in her text *Time to Know Them* (1997), convincingly argues that “one-time institutional assessments often fail to capture development that occurs slowly over time” (Sternglass 114).

Assessments that occur only at the beginning and the end of the student's college career cannot adequately document improvement. Rather, a comprehensive assessment structure to measure the quality and success of the Confident Communicator Program should provide necessary data that will contribute to the modification and improvement of the plan.

Reasonable and prudent use of the incremental assessment should result in improved student writing skills over time in the course of study at Bluefield College. Using this process of assessment and this plan for writing skill improvement will demonstrate to Bluefield College constituents our commitment to this national and local issue of competent and confident communication through writing.

### **A Four-Year Writing Program including a Focus in the Majors**

Scholars agree that writing instruction is not confined to the composition classroom. According to Lee Ann Carroll, in her text *Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop As Writers*, composition instruction is not isolated to the freshman year, and she agrees with Marilyn Sternglass that student writing improves with intentional focus over an extended period of time. The establishment of writing tasks in various courses over the entire college career will best serve students to prepare them for the literacy tasks and critical thinking skills needed to improve their own lives and contribute to the global society.

Researchers Johnstone, Ashbaugh, and Warfield report in the article, "Effects Of Repeated Practice And Contextual-Writing Experiences On College Students' Writing Skills," published in *Journal Of Educational Psychology*, that "general, repeated writing experience" through the freshman and sophomore years and "repeated writing experience writing within specific test domains incrementally improved student writing skills" (312). This focus on writing in the first two years of collegiate education will serve the purpose of increasing skill in building a foundation toward specialized writing in the majors.

Sternglass points out that the "goals of writing should be: the ability to develop a purpose for writing, the ability to formulate ideas clearly and succinctly, the ability to develop and defend the most crucial points in the argument, the ability to analyze evidence, the ability to synthesize ideas, the ability to influence an audience, and the ability to express their points clearly" (141). After students identify particular purposes of writing, "they will understand that it will take time, effort, and commitment to be able to carry them out" and yet, Sternglass writes that even "the period of a college education does not provide the time to practice these activities and to master these processes [but] starting out in the right direction is one crucial step" (141). As students

come to understand the importance of formulating and defending arguments, articulating with clarity and employing revision, writing in each of their courses will become meaningful (Sternglass 141). This will result in a confidence boost for the writer (Hilgers 343).

As students begin to gain more confidence and find more meaning in their writing with practice in the lower-level, general education courses, they will be more able to meet the challenges of writing in the different situations found within their majors. The report from The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges calls for "the integration of writing instruction with learning in all fields of study, including the sciences and mathematics, and at all levels of education" and Gottschalk and Hjortshoj assert that "in history, foreign languages, mathematics, economics, science, physical education, art, and social science, all students can be encouraged to write more – and to write more effectively" (169). More effective writing within the disciplines should lead students to more effective writing on the job and as citizens in their local communities.

Effective writing in the disciplines is stimulated by the engagement of students with their chosen subjects and by instructors who implement teaching strategies that foster this engagement. Cornell University scholars working through the John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines published a volume of essays on topics significant to writing and disciplines pedagogy and the recognition of the "diverse roles of writing throughout the University" (Monroe 26). The foundational principle of their writing program is that "writing is best addressed by teachers as part of the intellectual journeys upon which students embark; writing is not simply a skill" (Monroe 34). With this in mind, as an incentive to inspire engaging, incremental writing instruction within the majors, Bluefield College will recognize outstanding writing assignment sequences submitted by instructors (Monroe 35). A monetary incentive will also be included as part of this recognition.

Bluefield College embraces a thorough and comprehensive writing program that is not limited to first year composition courses. The Confident Communicator Plan contains sequenced, intentional writing instruction intended to prepare students for each new level of writing, assisting them as they take on new roles and ways of writing that will build confidence and skill. From freshman composition to the capstone course within the students' majors, instructors will seek to motivate their students toward focused, engaged writing.

## **Purposeful Curriculum Additions**

Building a writing program that is sequenced and interconnected requires several tools to shape the structure. Foundational pieces include a writing reference that serves as the rule for standard academic writing expectations and a freshman composition textbook that will include instruction in writing in the disciplines. Common grading criteria for each discipline and purpose-driven, sequenced writing assignments implemented by instructors further build the structure. A sophomore- or junior-level course in each discipline will intentionally instruct students concerning techniques and expectations for writing specific to each major field of study.

### *Common Writing Handbook for Campus-Wide Use*

For the Confident Communicator Plan, it is also necessary to provide a consistent reference for use throughout the entire program that includes information for general and discipline specific writing. The adoption of a college-wide writing handbook will assist both students and faculty in demonstrating that Bluefield College expects students to pursue adequate writing skills in the areas of rhetorical value, relevancy, and demonstration of learning as well as expected skill using standard grammar and mechanics. Additionally, the standard handbook will assist instructors in creating writing assignments that are maximized to build writing ability (Gottschalk and Hjortshoj 86). The use of a standard writing handbook is crucial in offering consistent academic support through a Writing Center and will generate consistent assistance to lighten the load of tutoring staff because it will serve as a point of reference for all courses.

### *Common Grading Criteria for Each Discipline*

Establishing a common grading criteria for each discipline based on the QEP Program Assessment Rubric and the Confident Communicator Writing Rubric will benefit instructors and students. Departments will be encouraged to develop grading criteria based on the concepts contained in these two rubrics, and this should help students to recognize foundational similarities between the common grading criteria in each discipline. This will help to unify the institutional focus on writing and be of benefit for students. Edward M. White, in his text, *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Teacher's Guide*, addresses an issue that instructors face each time they assign a writing task. Students feel the pressure, both internal and external, to reduce an assignment to some version of the question "what does the teacher want?" because of their powerful concern with getting good grades (74). With a rubric/grading criteria or scoring guide, clear expectations are presented to the student so that the mystery of what is expected

with writing assignments is minimized (White 74). The use of grading criteria helps to focus writing, has the potential to inspire better work, and can also encourage student self-assessment (74). For instructors, grading criteria, once established, also have the potential to make grading papers easier and more consistent.

#### *Purpose-Driven, Sequenced Writing Assignments*

Creating sequenced writing assignments will build on the foundation of the new freshman composition text. These assignments will be planned to become gradually more complex and academically focused. Again, the partnership between composition instructors and those in other disciplines will be important in developing these assignments. The Confident Communicator Program will introduce this opportunity for conversation during the planned faculty training and workshops. Wingate, Andon, and Cogo argue that teachers in majors other than English would benefit students by becoming more responsible for writing instruction because they themselves are the experts in their respective disciplines and “are in the best position to induct students into relevant literacy practices” (70). Wingate and her fellow scholars cite breakdowns in the students’ understanding of the goals and requirements of writing assignments; therefore, the creation of assignment sequences will be beneficial to students (70). As previously stated, Johnstone, Ashbaugh and Warfield demonstrate that “from a curriculum design perspective” generalized writing tasks with similar components played an important role for developing writers and improving their skills (312). According to Robert Ochsner and Judy Fowler in their article “Playing Devil’s Advocate: Evaluating The Literature Of The WAC/WID Movement,” even low-stakes writing assignments like reflections, summaries of lectures, and journals all work well to provide effective agents of engaged learning(120). These assignments will also produce fully actualized writing and thinking skills that are inventive and imaginative.

## **VI. Actions to be Implemented**

For The Bluefield College “Confident Communicator” Quality Enhancement Plan, departments will implement intentional writing instruction and writing assessment that allows opportunity for revision at several crucial points within the major. In order to reinforce and refine skills to which students were introduced in the freshman composition course sequence, each department will eventually offer a sophomore/junior course and capstone course that will concentrate on specialized writing skills required in the particular academic discipline. Of course, the use of the

campus-wide handbook and enhanced writing instruction and assessment will occur in most classes.

The sophomore/junior courses and capstone courses that will concentrate on discipline-specific writing skills are in place in some departments and not in others. Appendix I in Section XIII of the document outlines where each department stood in the fall of 2012.

Beginning in January 2013, members of the QEP steering committee will meet with each department chair to discuss ways in which faculty instruct and assess in these sophomore/junior and capstone courses and specific ways to implement Confident Communicator methodology. A form will be developed for these interviews to determine more detail on the type of assignments given in these courses, how students are instructed, and how faculty assesses the writing assignments.

The plan is for each department to have the fully developed sophomore/junior course ready to be taught in the fall of 2013. The enhanced capstone course will be in effect for the spring 2014 semester. Faculty will receive further training on campus during the summer of 2013, and subsequent summers.

At the end of the 2013-14 academic year, the committee will take another survey of the departments and then work with those faculty members that may need additional assistance and further faculty development for the 2014-15 academic year.

To implement the goals detailed in Section IV, faculty must be adequately trained and inspired, for the teaching and learning of writing requires both a knowledge of specific techniques for designing and assessing writing assignments and an attitude—an ethos—for valuing successful written communication. Both groups—students and faculty—must understand the worth of confident written communication as they join in the shared endeavor to experience the exhilaration and pride that comes from achieving the goal of using language to arrive at new understanding for writer and reader. The instructor training workshops that will be presented on campus will motivate faculty to assist students to experience the “rapture” Virginia Woolf felt “when in writing I seem to be discovering what belongs to what.” In every course, students and professors are on a journey to ask and answer fundamental questions in the discipline.

### **Tasks that “The Confident Communicator” QEP will Address 2012-2016**

The QEP Steering Committee, QEP Subcommittees, and the QEP administrator will:

- i. Create a QEP Program Assessment Rubric (see Appendix section D), a standard by which the Assessment Subcommittee will measure student writing abilities in the freshman, junior, and senior years. This holistic rubric in conjunction with the Confident Communicator Writing Rubric/Grading Criteria (see Appendix section E) will be suggested as a model by which each department will adapt to fit the requirements for writing within their specific disciplines. This task has been accomplished.
- ii. Assist faculty in each department to develop a discipline-specific, assignment-based grading criteria that will incorporate the fundamentals of the Confident Communicator Writing Rubric/Grading Criteria.
- iii. Assist faculty in each department to develop a sophomore- or junior-level course and a capstone course in each discipline that will intentionally instruct students concerning techniques and expectations for writing specific to the field of study.
- iv. Assist faculty in each department to develop enhanced writing instruction and assessment in both general education courses and courses in the major.
- v. Offer off-campus summer training in writing instruction for QEP Steering Committee members at the Blue Ridge Writing Project (Virginia Tech) and the Appalachian Writing Project (UVA-Wise).
- vi. Urge faculty to participate in off-campus faculty training in writing programs through the National Writing Project, the Appalachian College Association and other organizations as these workshops become available.
- vii. Create a “Why-Writing-Is-Important” message, a brief list of talking points to convince students of the significance of this campus-wide initiative and to reinforce professors’ attitudes toward using writing themselves.

- viii. Plan selected time slots during the Fall Faculty Workshop, August 16 -17, 2012, to be a model for repeated, annual training that will share Confident Communicator data results and teaching strategies with faculty within the two-day workshop covering a variety of topics to prepare instructors for the upcoming semester. Provide all faculty with a copy of *The Elements of Teaching Writing: a Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines* by Katherine Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj. This task has been accomplished.
- ix. Assess writing skills of incoming students using the examination developed by the Bluefield College English department and with the CAAP test.
- x. Assess students using quantifiably measurable goals at the end of the first freshman semester, the end of the second freshman semester, upon completion of sophomore/junior course that includes instruction in writing in the discipline, and upon completion of the major writing assignment that is a component of the senior capstone course in all majors.
- xi. Establish an Assessment Subcommittee that, each summer, will evaluate 30% of the collected writing samples from the year. These faculty will receive training to insure interrater reliability and will receive a stipend for grading essays.
- xii. Design an on-campus faculty training in writing program, developed by the QEP director in consultation with key faculty and the QEP Steering Committee, occurring at regular intervals over the course of the academic year to discuss designing writing assignments, using departmental grading criteria, providing the most effective feedback, and motivating students.
- xiii. Survey faculty annually to determine attitudes concerning the success of the QEP, problems encountered, and additional assistance needed in order to enhance the teaching of writing in various disciplines.
- xiv. Create a practical, hands-on document for faculty (especially newly hired personnel who are just learning about the Bluefield College QEP), entitled *The Confident Communicator Handbook*.

- xv. Work in collaboration with the Creative Media Department to design the Confident Communicator portion of the Bluefield College website.
- xvi. Continue publicity to all constituents concerning the progress of the QEP, using the Confident Communicator Strategic Communication Campaign.

**Goal 1:** In order to measure the extent to which improved writing abilities are achieved, develop an assessment process that will measure student writing ability at several levels: (1) incoming freshman, to establish a benchmark; (2) freshmen at the end of the first semester; (3) freshmen at the end of the second semester, (4) sophomores or juniors upon completion of the course in their major which includes instruction in writing in the discipline, and (4) seniors upon completion of the major writing assignment that is a component of the senior capstone course.

The rationale for this assessment process is that while developing this QEP, the College discovered a lack of sufficient writing assessment data from incoming freshmen through graduating seniors. Hence, an important goal of the plan is to increase the number of assessment measures in order to document the writing abilities of incoming students and track their progress and the effectiveness of the newly implemented Confident Communicator Program.

**Actions necessary to achieve goal #1:**

There are two components of the assessment process: one focusing on students and one focusing on faculty.

1. Institutional assessment of student writing skills to determine the success of the QEP program will occur at the following points:
  - at the incoming freshman level with English placement testing to set benchmarks
  - at conclusion of the first freshman semester
  - at conclusion of the freshman year
  - at conclusion of the designated departmental course which includes instructions in writing in the discipline
  - at conclusion of senior capstone course

2. Institutional assessment of faculty's implementation of the Confident Communicator program. Discussions will be held with each department to ensure that a majority of courses in the major in addition to the designated sophomore/ junior and capstone courses include writing assignments with the following components:

- intentional use of the handbook, *A Writer's Reference with Writing in the Disciplines*
- scaffold assignments
- individual conferences
- in-class "writing to learn" assignments
- opportunities for students to revise after thorough instructor comments upon a draft
- a grading rubric returned with each assignment so that student will understand rationale for grade received.

**Goal 2:** Establish a writing program that will lay a firm foundation for writing in all coursework, beginning with the freshman composition sequence and reinforced by a sophomore- or junior-level course in each discipline that will intentionally instruct students concerning techniques and expectations for writing specific to each major field of study. Specific Confident Communicator methods will be incorporated into these courses. All courses in the major will refer to and incorporate the skills introduced in the foundational course's writing module.

**Actions necessary to achieve goal #2:**

1. Adopt a campus-wide writing handbook. This task has been accomplished.
2. Establish common grading criteria in Freshman Composition courses.
3. Establish departmental grading criteria. Each department will develop assignment-specific grading criteria.
4. Develop scaffold assignments in each department that will become gradually more complex and academically focused as students proceed from 1000- to 4000-level courses in the major.

5. Include enhanced writing instruction and scaffold assignments in at least 80% of courses offered in each department.
6. Research and recommend ways to develop innovative teaching methods for faculty members as they begin to implement the Confident Communicator Program in their courses.
7. Ensure each department has a capstone course which includes a significant writing assignment.
8. Educate writing tutors about the Confident Communicator Program so that they may better understand the requirements given to students who are required to complete writing assignments.

**Goal 3:** Enhance the senior writing experience. Each major must have a capstone course that includes a significant writing project. Students will be instructed on how to achieve the writing project and have opportunities for feedback and suggestions at multiple points during the process. The final product should represent successful writing in that academic field of inquiry.

**Actions necessary to achieve goal #3:**

1. Engage in discussions between the QEP Steering Committee and each department to determine the type of capstone course offered and review the writing assignment(s).
2. Revise capstone courses if necessary to include specific instruction in techniques such as prewriting and revision that students will need to succeed in the major writing assignments.
3. Include the capstone course final writing project will be used in an institutional assessment of graduating seniors. The QEP Director and the Assessment Subcommittee will evaluate essays as part of the institutional assessment of the QEP at the end of each spring semester.

### **Confident Communicator Program Instructional Methods Suggested for all Departments**

1. Incorporate classroom activities that require students to become active participants in the class through writing.
2. Focus classes on questions to be answered and use writing activities to allow all students to participate.
3. Include time for writing in most class periods by giving students the opportunity to make connections among ideas discussed in class and readings. This will allow the instructor to see how well students understand the material and students to see that they are responsible for the quality of the class. Such writing assignments may include:
  - a. writing informal responses at end of class period
  - b. discussing questions in pairs or small groups
  - c. “homework” writing to share in class
    - Study questions
    - Reading summaries
    - List of questions
4. Involve students in inquiry. The emphasis on inquiry and not only knowledge imparted will create learning that includes exploration, discovery, and debate (Gottschalk, Hjortshoj 22).
5. Structure the course and its writing assignments around key questions in the discipline.
6. Make reading assignments relevant.
7. Allow time to write and discuss in class.
8. Begin many class sessions with a focusing question requiring a written answer that will serve as a basis for discussion.

### **VII. Timeline: Planning Accomplishments and Actions to be implemented**

**Spring 2011** Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the Board of Trustees surveyed to discover greatest concerns relating to student learning.

**Summer 2011**

1. QEP information session held for faculty, staff, and selected trustees.
2. Faculty formulated list of possible QEP topics; results compiled and distributed to faculty.
3. Possible QEP topics reviewed, discussed, analyzed, and ranked by faculty.
4. Communication skills identified by the faculty as the most critical area of concern needing improvement to enhance learning at Bluefield College.
5. QEP Steering Committee established and charged with the responsibility of narrowing the QEP focus within the area of critical concern identified by the faculty.

**Fall 2011**

1. "The Confident Communicator" chosen as title of Bluefield College QEP.
2. QEP subcommittees developed.
3. The Literature Review subcommittee created a bibliography of articles concerning Best Practices concerning improving communication and critical thinking among college students; all faculty were involved in reviewing articles and reporting findings to the Literature Review Committee.
4. QEP topic narrowed to focus on written communication for academic years 2012-13 through 2016-17.
5. SACSCOC timetable reviewed.
6. QEP information session held for faculty.
7. Steering Committee gathered further evidence that student writing must be improved.

**Spring 2012**

1. Consultant brought to campus to familiarize steering committee with essentials for creating the QEP Plan document.
2. Assessment subcommittee began development of rubric for assessment of student writing skills.
3. Literature Review committee gathered specific Best Practices that will become part of the teaching strategies all faculty at Bluefield College will gradually begin to implement into their classrooms.

4. Program Development Committee met with focus groups of the entire faculty to determine what practices for teaching writing are already in place, what assistance faculty need in order to enhance their writing instruction, and specific feedback concerning a selection of rubrics and grading criteria.
5. Lead evaluator nominations submitted to SACSCOC.
6. Publicity campaign begun.
7. Student focus groups consulted.

**Summer 2012**

1. Two QEP Steering Committee members attended workshops connected with the National Writing Project.
2. QEP Plan submitted to SACSCOC.
3. Fall Workshop for Faculty planned, to include:
  - a. Creation of a “message” for all faculty to present to their classes to explain why we all need to write well
  - b. Agreement upon a standard grading rubric for writing assignments in all disciplines
  - c. Presentation by a guest speaker about assigning and assessing writing in all disciplines
  - d. Practice in assessing writing samples to calibrate grading methods
  - e. Round-table sharing: “what to do about writing deficiencies”
  - f. Development of a timeline for implementing “Confident Communicator” methods across the disciplines beginning in the freshman year, building to the senior year.
  - g. Institution of a common writing handbook to be used in all classes
4. English faculty meetings to plan to implement “Confident Communicator” methodologies.

**Fall 2012**

1. Confident Communicator discussed at Fall Faculty Writing Workshop (A complete account of the specific components of this workshop are included in section H of the Appendix).
2. Freshman took CAAP and English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test before the beginning of classes.

3. English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test given to freshmen after completing the first course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1013).
4. Base-line writing samples collected from first writing assignments completed by students in ENG 1013 courses.
5. Each department surveyed by QEP steering committee to determine whether capstone courses were required for majors and the types of assignments, instruction, and assessments of writing used in those courses.
6. Each department surveyed by QEP steering committee to determine which course(s) at the sophomore or junior-level in the major could be enhanced or developed to include intentional instruction and assessment of writing skills required by that particular discipline. Results of these surveys can be found in section I of the Appendix.
7. Each department surveyed by QEP steering committee to determine base-line attitudes toward the teaching of writing.
8. Components of Confident Communicator methodology implemented into ENG 1013 courses, such as.:
  - a. enhanced use of handbook as textbook.
  - b. thematic semester-long focus: Identity
  - c. multiple individual conferences
  - d. in-class "writing to learn" assignments
  - e. opportunities for students to revise after thorough instructor comments upon a draft
  - f. a grading rubric returned with each assignment so that student will understand rationale for grade received.
9. SACSCOC on-site visit conducted.
10. QEP document revised to address suggestions made by on-site committee.

**Spring 2013**

1. Meeting of QEP steering committee with each department head concerning writing assignments in sophomore/junior foundational course(s) in the major and capstone course. Questions will include:

- a. if no capstone course is present, from which courses will writing samples be collected to assess skills of graduates in the major?
  - b. how is instruction for successful writing projects provided?
  - c. how comfortable are faculty members with assigning and assessing writing?
  - d. What Confident Communicator methods are/will be employed in which particular courses?
2. Collection of writing products from end-of-year freshman English courses.
  3. Collection of writing products from senior capstone courses in all departments.
  4. Administering English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test to freshmen after completing the second course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1023).
  5. Presenting opportunities to faculty for off-campus summer professional development for instruction concerning the teaching of writing in the disciplines by the Professional Development QEP subcommittee.
  6. Creating a subcommittee that will assess the 2012-13 writing samples, which include:
    - a. base-line writing samples of first writing assignments completed by students in ENG 1013 courses
    - b. writing products from end-of-year freshman English courses
    - c. writing products from senior capstone courses in all departments.

**Summer 2013**

1. Assessment of end-of-year freshman and Senior Capstone writing products by the Assessment Committee.
2. Assessment of freshman English placement test post-testing.
3. Off-campus faculty development in the teaching of writing for faculty who have chosen to do so.
4. On-campus faculty writing workshop to discuss:
  - a. Reports on best practices
  - b. Challenges

- c. Presentation of new ideas by QEP committee and an invited presenter
5. Attendance of off-campus faculty development programs in the teaching of writing by several faculty members.
6. Calibration of Assessment Committee.

**Fall 2013**

1. Fall Faculty Writing Workshop will include:
  - a. Report on progress in 2012-13 academic year
  - b. Faculty concerns
  - c. Workshop on calibration of assessment of student writing
  - d. Presentation by selected faculty on "Ideas that Work" concerning motivating students and creating interesting assignments (different faculty from a variety of disciplines will present each year)
2. Freshmen take CAAP and English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test before the beginning of classes.
3. English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test given to freshmen after they complete the first course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1013).
4. Base-line writing samples collected from first writing assignments completed by students in ENG 1013 courses.
5. Continued implementation of Confident-Communicator enhanced sophomore/ junior courses that include instruction in writing in the discipline.
6. QEP steering committee continues to meet with departments to ensure in-depth instruction is provided and Confident Communicator methodology is employed for the capstone writing assignment in the major.
7. Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) reports to QEP steering committee how many and which students are receiving writing assistance from the center.
8. QEP steering committee and Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) work to develop material for website and in printed form to aid faculty in the teaching of writing in their discipline.

**Spring 2014**

1. Collection of writing products from students who have completed second course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1023).
2. Collection of writing products from senior capstone courses in all departments.
3. Collection of end-of-semester writing samples from the Confident-Communicator enhanced Sophomore/Junior courses in every department that have included instruction in writing in the discipline.
4. Professional Development QEP committee presentation to faculty of opportunities for off-campus summer professional development for instruction in the teaching of writing in the disciplines.
5. QEP Steering Committee meeting with each department to determine how intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies can be implemented into more 1000- and 2000- level classes for the 2014-15 academic year. Every faculty member should be teaching at least one course per semester that includes intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies.

**Summer 2014**

1. Assessment of end-of-year freshman and Senior Capstone writing products by the Assessment Committee.
2. Assessment of freshman English placement test post-testing.
3. Off-campus faculty development in the teaching of writing for faculty who have chosen to do so.
4. Assessment of end-of-semester writing samples from the Confident-Communicator enhanced courses in every department which have included instruction in writing in the discipline.
5. On-campus faculty writing workshop to discuss:
  - a. Reports on best practices
  - b. Challenges
  - c. Presentation of new ideas by QEP committee and an invited presenter
6. Attendance by several faculty of off-campus faculty development programs in the teaching of writing.

7. Calibration of Assessment Committee.

**Fall 2014**

1. Fall Faculty Writing Workshop will include:
  - a. Report on progress in 2013-14 academic year
  - b. Faculty concerns
  - c. Workshop on calibration of assessment of student writing
  - d. Presentation by selected faculty of "Ideas that Work" concerning motivating students and creating interesting assignments (different faculty from a variety of disciplines will present each year)
2. Freshmen take CAAP and English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test before the beginning of classes.
3. English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test given to freshmen after completing the first course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1013).
4. Base-line writing samples collected from first writing assignments completed by students in ENG 1013 courses.
5. Follow-up assistance by QEP Director for departments who have not fully implemented Confident Communicator methodologies in courses and capstone courses.
6. Implementation by every department of intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies in 1000- and 2000- level classes. Every faculty member should be teaching at least one course per semester that includes intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies.
7. Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) reports to QEP steering committee how many and which students are receiving writing assistance from the center.
8. QEP steering committee and Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) work to develop material for website and in printed form to aid faculty in the teaching of writing in their discipline.

**Spring 2015**

1. Collection of writing products from end-of-year freshman English courses.

2. Collection of writing products from senior capstone courses in all departments.
3. Collection of end-of-semester writing samples from the Confident-Communicator enhanced courses in every department which have included instruction in writing in the discipline.
4. Administration of English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test to freshman after completing the second course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1023).
5. Professional Development QEP committee presentation to faculty of opportunities for off-campus summer professional development for instruction in the teaching of writing in the disciplines.
6. QEP Steering Committee meeting with each department to determine how intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies can be implemented into more 3000- and 4000- level classes for the 2015-16 academic year. Every faculty member should be implementing some intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies in all courses taught.

**Summer 2015**

1. Assessment of end-of-year freshman and Senior Capstone writing products by the Assessment Committee.
2. Assessment of freshman English placement test post-testing.
3. Off-campus faculty development concerning the teaching of writing for faculty who have chosen to do so.
4. Assessment of end-of-semester writing samples from the Confident-Communicator enhanced courses in every department which have included instruction in writing in the discipline.
5. On-campus faculty writing workshop, which include:
  - a. Reports on best practices
  - b. Challenges
  - c. Presentation of new ideas by QEP committee and an invited presenter
6. Attendance by several faculty of off-campus faculty development programs in the teaching of writing.
7. Calibration of Assessment Committee.

8. Based on assessment of capstone projects, QEP Steering Committee further actions to be implemented to enhance student performance.

**Fall 2015**

1. Fall Faculty Writing Workshop which will include:
  - a. Report on progress in 2014-15 academic year
  - b. Faculty concerns
  - c. Workshop on calibration of assessment of student writing
  - d. Presentation by selected faculty of "Ideas that Work" concerning motivating students and creating interesting assignments (different faculty from a variety of disciplines will present each year)
2. Freshmen take CAAP and English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test before the beginning of classes.
3. English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test given to freshman after completing the first course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1013).
4. Base-line writing samples collected from first writing assignments completed by students in ENG 1013 courses.
5. Continued implementation of Confident-Communicator enhanced courses which include instruction in writing in the discipline.
6. QEP steering committee continues to meet with departments to discuss new innovations to implement for writing instruction.
7. Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) reports to QEP steering committee how many and which students are receiving writing assistance from the center.
8. QEP steering committee and Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) work to develop material for website and in printed form to aid faculty in the teaching of writing in their discipline.

**Spring 2016**

1. Collection of writing products from end-of-year freshman English courses.
  - i. Collection of writing products from senior capstone courses in all departments.

- ii. Collection of end-of-semester writing samples from the Confident-Communicator enhanced courses in every department which have included instruction in writing in the discipline.
- iii. Administration of English-department-developed multiple-choice grammar and writing test to freshman after completing the second course of the English composition sequence (ENG 1023).
- iv. Professional Development QEP committee presents to faculty opportunities for off-campus summer professional development for instruction concerning the teaching of writing in the disciplines.
- v. QEP Steering Committee meets with each department to determine how intentional writing instruction and Confident Communicator methodologies are being implemented in all courses across the major.

**Summer 2016**

1. Assessment of end-of-year freshman and Senior Capstone writing products by the Assessment Committee.
2. Assessment of freshman English placement test post-testing.
3. Off-campus faculty development concerning the teaching of writing for faculty who have chosen to do so.
4. Assessment of end-of-semester writing samples from the Confident-Communicator enhanced courses in every department which have included instruction in writing in the discipline.
5. On-campus faculty writing workshop which will discuss:
  - a. Reports on best practices
  - b. Challenges
  - c. Presentation of new ideas by QEP committee and an invited presenter
6. Attendance by several faculty of off-campus faculty development programs in the teaching of writing.
7. Calibration of Assessment Committee.
8. Based on assessment of capstone projects, QEP Steering Committee further actions to be implemented to enhance student performance.

## **2016 and Beyond**

During the QEP and after, it is inevitable that new strategies will emerge that will further the stability, sustainability, and capability of the Confident Communicator QEP. These discoveries will be used to further enmesh the Confident Communicator plan into the fabric of the College.

## **VIII. Organizational Structure**

### **Bluefield College Quality Enhancement Plan Director Job Description**

The QEP Director position will require a five-year time commitment coordinating all activities associated with the QEP project and will include the following responsibilities:

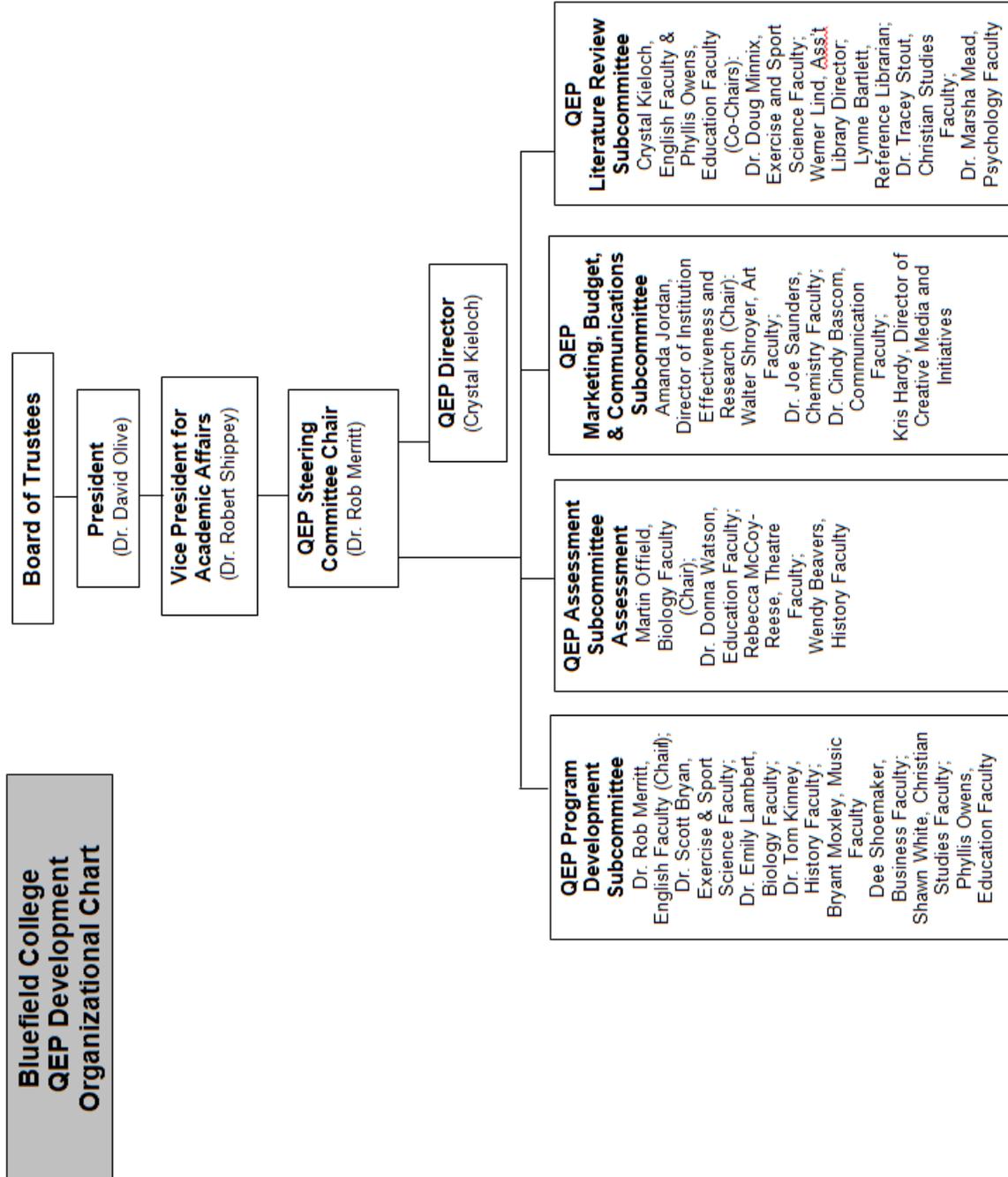
- Offer guidance, support, and direction to faculty in their quest to integrate writing skills into programs and courses.
- Oversee the development and implementation of the QEP and report progress to the QEP Steering Committee.
- Coordinate and supervise the work of the QEP Subcommittees.
- Supervise faculty/staff development initiatives providing training to fulfill the goals and objectives of the QEP utilizing outside consultants and in-house talent.
- Manage the QEP Budget.
- Develop and capture benchmark data to ensure continued assessment is conducted through courses impacted by the QEP.
- Analyze learning outcome improvements, working in collaboration with the Institutional Effectiveness office.
- Report assessment findings and discuss issues with the QEP Steering Committee.
- Prepare QEP reports, including the Impact Report.
- Collaborate with the Office of Public Relations to market the QEP.
- Conduct applicable research related to the QEP.
- Collaborate with ACE personnel to fulfill the goals and objectives of the QEP.
- Provide appropriate follow-up, as requested, by the SACS on-site review team and to prepare all follow-up reports as needed.
- Work with the Instructional Technology Department to maintain a QEP website.
- Maintain meeting minutes and disseminate information to the Leadership Team.

Initially, this will be a half-time appointment. In year three, contingent on assessment and

planning, the position will be moved to full-time status. This position will be held by a faculty member whose education and training are in the areas of English or Communication. This person will be a member of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

**Requirements:** eighteen graduate hours in English, Communication, or Journalism.

The Bluefield College QEP Organizational Chart



**IX. Resources:**

**Financial**

		<b>Year 1 2012-2013</b>	<b>Year 2 2013-2014</b>	<b>Year 3 2014-2015</b>	<b>Year 4 2015-2016</b>	<b>Year 5 2016-2017</b>
Consultant		500.00	-	-	-	-
Personnel Search		-	-	-	-	-
Literature		150.00	-	-	-	-
Travel		200.00	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Program Development</b>		<u>850.00</u>	-	-	-	-
Information Technology		200.00				
Promotional Events		500.00	-	-	-	-
Advertising & Promotional Materials		1,000.00	-	-	-	-
Supplies and Materials		300.00	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Program Implementation</b>		<u>2,000.00</u>	-	-	-	-
Workshops and Training		1,000.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00
Office overhead/Supplies/Materials		650.00	950.00	950.00	950.00	950.00
Tutors		600.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Faculty Stipends/Recognitions		1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00	1,800.00
Administrator Stipend		15,000.00	15,000.00	32,000.00	32,000.00	32,000.00
Writing Center Coordinator Stipend		-	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00	1,650.00
Continuing Education		1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Dues and Fees		400.00	400.00	400.00	400.00	400.00
Travel		1,200.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Assessment		2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
<b>Total Program Administration &amp; Support</b>		<u>24,150.00</u>	<u>27,000.00</u>	<u>44,000.00</u>	<u>44,000.00</u>	<u>44,000.00</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<u>27,000.00</u>	<u>27,000.00</u>	<u>44,000.00</u>	<u>44,000.00</u>	<u>44,000.00</u>

## **Physical Resources**

The Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) is based on a traditional learning center model that houses the coordination of academic tutoring, testing services, and other general academic support. One facet of ACE support is a writing lab where students trained in the tutoring of writing provide support as requested by the general population of students.

Bluefield College dedicated one computer lab specifically as a composition lab with 24 computers. All composition courses are taught in this lab or other computer labs because these classes incorporate the writing workshop component in their instructional format.

One-half of Bluefield College's allocated classroom space is equipped with SMART technology. This technology provides both students and professors the ability to engage interactively through diverse methodologies in the teaching of writing and communication throughout all the disciplines.

## **Human Resources**

Faculty, staff, and students have all contributed to the evolution of Bluefield College's QEP. Their continued commitment to the writing initiative will bolster our success. The initial literature review for the QEP achieved 100% full-time faculty involvement. The entire faculty will continue to develop their knowledge of teaching writing in their respective disciplines through workshops and conference attendance as part of the Confident Communicator Program. Staff members who served on QEP Committees and a focus group with students have proved to be a valuable asset in forming our QEP. The College Leadership Team expressed full commitment to Bluefield College's QEP with a pledge to fund this initiative. The QEP will require increased academic support through the writing lab and the reimplementation of a full-service Writing Center. These resources will require additional trained tutors in writing to provide support in the Writing Center, the writing workshop classroom, and, as needed, in individual courses to assist faculty.

The Director of QEP will lead the Confident Communicator QEP and oversee all aspects of the implementation of the QEP in consultation with the QEP Steering Committee and under the overall supervision of the VPAA.

Each spring, the QEP Director will assemble a group of faculty who will be trained to evaluate the sampling of written work collected for assessment using the Institution Writing Assessment Rubric. This faculty group will receive training to insure inter-rater reliability when serving as evaluators in this capacity and will receive a stipend for their work.

Selected students participated in a spring 2012 focus group to share their perspectives on writing as part of the academic programs at Bluefield College. As part of the continuing process of the Confident Communicator Program, the implementation of student focus groups will continue each spring to receive feedback on the program.

The Marketing & Budget Subcommittee of selected faculty and staff developed a preliminary budget and began marketing efforts to inform students, faculty, and staff about the QEP. The Confident Communicator logo was the result of a campus-wide student contest facilitated by members of this Subcommittee.

## **X. Assessment**

### **Confident Communicator QEP Assessment Plan**

In order to collect adequate information to evaluate the success of the Confident Communicator program, Bluefield College will implement an increased number of assessments to measure the student learning outcomes outlined in the program. This data will be collected every year in freshman writing courses and designated courses within each major in order to document the writing abilities of incoming students and track their progress and the effectiveness of the newly implemented Confident Communicator plan throughout the four-year career of the student.

Given the diverse nature and number of courses in the various majors, evaluation of all writing assignments as part of our holistic institution-wide program assessment would become unwieldy; however, significant writing assignments in specific courses will allow for measurement of student improvement throughout the academic career. These assessments will allow the QEP leaders to improve the Confident Communicator program to ensure the best possible implementation and success.

## **Program Assessment**

The guiding principles contained in the Conference on College Composition and Communication's *Writing Assessment Position Paper* stress the importance of institutionally-based program assessment that considers local goals to improve the teaching and learning of writing (Writing Assessment). The Confident Communicator Program will follow that directive by assessing writing proficiencies for the following groups of students: (1) incoming freshman, to establish a benchmark; (2) freshmen at the end of the first semester; (3) freshmen at the end of the second semester, (4) sophomores or juniors upon completion of the course in their major which includes instruction in writing in the discipline, and (5) seniors upon completion of the major writing assignment that is a component of the senior capstone course. Furthermore, faculty and the training designed to assist them with teaching writing within the disciplines will be assessed.

An additional direct measurement will be a survey designed to capture student perception of their individual learning and of their instructors' teaching of writing. Students in the selected courses where direct writing instruction is employed (freshmen, juniors and seniors) will be asked to answer a Confident Communicator student survey at the end of these selected courses to provide data regarding their learning experiences and perceived improvement in their writing abilities in the course.

Indirect measures of program assessment will include the results of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) administered by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The CAAP assessment is administered to incoming freshman to measure certain aspects of student readiness for college writing. Additionally, CAAP is administered to graduating seniors and provides information about college seniors' writing skill abilities.

### **The QEP Program Assessment Committee**

The largest program assessment activity will occur at the end of each academic year, during late spring, with the review of collected essays from designated freshman, sophomore/junior, and capstone courses. This assessment activity will be conducted by a committee of faculty, which will include members of the QEP Assessment Committee and faculty members selected from across the disciplines. This QEP Program Assessment Committee will be trained to use the QEP Program Assessment Rubric when evaluating the selected essays and will be asked to participate in a writing assessment workshop training to calibrate scoring to ensure interrater

reliability when reviewing 30% of the essays collected. These essays will be drawn at random using the functions of electronic database/repository. All members of the QEP Program Assessment Committee will receive an appropriate stipend for participating in the training workshop and annual essay evaluation sessions. Membership in the committee will rotate over the years. The results of the yearly assessments will be used to target areas that need stronger focus in the teaching and learning of writing.

### **The QEP Program Assessment Rubric**

To enable this writing evaluation, Bluefield College will adopt a holistic writing assessment rubric (QEP Program Assessment Rubric in Appendix E) to be utilized for program assessment as part of QEP goal one. Adapted from the Written Communication Value Rubric provided by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the Bluefield College QEP Program Assessment Rubric is designed to produce a holistic measurement of student writing abilities; it is not necessarily used for giving a grade to a particular assignment. This holistic rubric is intended to be used as an instrument in the program assessment of the Bluefield College Confident Communicator QEP. This holistic rubric in conjunction with the “Confident Communicator Writing Rubric” is also proposed to serve as a foundation upon which departments may create analytical grading criteria for their own disciplines.

### **Assessment of Incoming Students’ Writing Proficiencies**

Bluefield College currently uses one direct assessment to determine an incoming students’ level of preparedness for college-level writing. The primary tool for assessment is the Bluefield College writing placement test. This test, developed by members of the English faculty, places students in appropriate first-year composition courses according to their abilities. The assessment contains fifty multiple-choice questions that examine the student’s knowledge of essay development and organization along with grammar and mechanics. The assessment places students into three distinct categories: those who are ready for college writing, those who need intensive review of grammatical and stylistic conventions, and those who are in need of remediation. These students are then placed into regular, intensive, or basic writing classes according to their scores. Beginning in the Fall of 2013, a short writing sample will be added to this placement test in order to better evaluate students for placement in appropriate courses. Additionally, the first writing assignment in each ENG 1013 course will be collected as another benchmark measure.

### **Assessment of Students' Writing Proficiencies after Freshman Writing Courses**

The final essays from each freshman level writing course (ENG 1013 and ENG 1023) will be electronically collected by the instructors and submitted into the electronic repository. Each essay will contain only the student ID number and not the name of the student. Thirty percent of the electronically compiled essays will be randomly selected for assessment by QEP Program Assessment Committee. The members of the QEP Program Assessment Committee will divide into two groups. The two groups will separately evaluate each essay and record the scores in an electronic database developed by Bluefield College IT staff. All essays will be scored twice by two different faculty members and any scores that differ more than one level will be re-evaluated through an analytical scoring process. The analytical scoring process will include assigning numerical values to all portions of the QEP Program Assessment Rubric. This process would be employed if, for example, Rater 1 scored Essay 1 as Proficient and the Rater 2 scored Essay 1 as Marginal. The analytical scoring process will ask the evaluators to provide scores (and explanatory remarks) for each criterion on the holistic rubric. A similar assessment process is used by the writing program evaluators at Winston-Salem State University according to their published QEP document (31).

The QEP Director will analyze the assessment data and compile a report of the results to be reviewed by the QEP steering committee, and the VPAA. The QEP Steering Committee will measure success of the Confident Communicator Program if by the fourth year of the program, 90% of Bluefield College students are rated as competent according to the QEP Program Assessment Rubric. If the number of successful students should fall below the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, the QEP Steering Committee will research and suggest further adaptations to improve upon the aspects of the program.

### **Assessment of students' writing proficiencies after selected junior- and senior-level courses within the major with intentional writing instruction**

Similarly, essays will be collected from the sophomore/junior-level course withn the majors that focuses on teaching writing in the discipline and from the senior level capstone courses. All of the essays from these courses will be assessed and will be evaluated in a similar manner to those essays collected from the freshman courses.

### **Assessment of graduating students' writing proficiencies**

In Year 4 of the Confident Communicator, the QEP Director will use the internal electronic collection system to compile graduating student portfolios from the essays available over the previous four years. The system will compile portfolios using student ID numbers only. A complete portfolio will contain essays assessed with the QEP Program Assessment Rubric from each collection point: the benchmark freshman assessment, the designated freshman writing courses, the designated sophomore/junior course in the major, and the senior capstone course. If more than 75 complete portfolios are available then 30% of these will be assessed. The appropriate number of complete portfolios will be reviewed and analyzed by the QEP Director. These portfolios will be representative samples of the results of the Confident Communicator QEP and these statistical results will be compiled on a yearly basis thereafter. Results of a complete program assessment of graduating students will not be available before 2016. A complete report of the results will be reported to the QEP Steering Committee and the VPAA. At this point, if the number of successful students should fall below the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, the QEP Steering Committee will research and consult with writing professionals from outside the College to adapt and revise the Confident Communicator program so that the desired results can be realized within two years.

### **Assessment of faculty training and preparedness to teach writing within the disciplines**

Each department currently submits an Institutional Effectiveness Annual Report (IEAR), which reports on department and curriculum performance. This report will be used as the mechanism for communicating further data for the Confident Communicator QEP to the administration. Each department will report the courses selected for each of their majors for use in assessment of writing. The first year report will also include any changes that are being made to existing writing assignments in order to accommodate the assessment requirements. The IEAR reports from each department will be used to gather information on what techniques departments are using and which are successful. These departmental assessments of specific writing projects in conjunction with the results from the QEP Program Assessment Committee will provide a snapshot of the effectiveness of writing instruction for each department. This will aid the VPAA's office in reporting departmental successes and providing the faculty-at-large with information concerning techniques that provided the best results.

In year 2 of the QEP implementation, departments will begin tabulation of data from selected courses within the majors that report the levels of improvement observed on the designated Confident Communicator writing assignment. The data should evaluate the general writing skills specific to the major and submit plans in instructional design and techniques ( i.e. modeling writing skills specific to the discipline, composing a lab report, a business plan, or a marketing plan) that will be implemented the following year to improve in those areas.

The IEAR departmental data are forwarded to the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA). Members of his staff will forward the QEP data to the QEP Director's office where it will be collectively analyzed. From the various data which are being collected, the college will have the ability to analyze progress from freshman, to sophomore, to junior and to senior levels. An annual report will be produced by the QEP Director's office and submitted to the VPAA's office for review and report to the faculty on progress and areas of deficiency. Information will become available concerning student writing performance for each major. Specific faculty can be assisted by the QEP Committee and the Academic Center for Excellence to improve teaching effectiveness.

Finally, the value and effectiveness of the faculty training will be assessed by the attending faculty (see Workshop Survey in Appendix X). Faculty participation will also be tracked through attendance records at workshops. Faculty surveys will provide feedback on the quality of training and its effectiveness in preparing them to teach writing within their disciplines. Surveys will be implemented to gather reflections from faculty regarding their experiences with teaching writing in their courses and the College will provide regular professional development opportunities to assist faculty in teaching writing. (See Appendix J for Fall 2012 data.)

## **XI. Conclusion**

Over the next five years, The Confident Communicator QEP will cultivate a community of faculty at Bluefield College united around a common goal: to build a community of student writers who are empowered as they see their writing skills improve and develop in a variety of rhetorical situations across the disciplines.

The program will be implemented gradually, giving faculty time to implement new teaching methodologies year-by-year. The program is incremental in that students are expected to write at increasing levels of proficiency as they move toward graduation.

Specific pedagogical techniques will be instituted in the disciplines and results will be measured within each department. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee will evaluate selected writing assignments of freshmen through senior students in all departments at the conclusion of classes every spring

Faculty will become increasingly confident in their ability to instruct, model and assess effective writing in their discipline through ongoing on- and off-campus training.

The Confident Communicator QEP affirms that:

- Students and faculty are on a journey to answer important questions in the discipline of each course.
- Faculty will incorporate a variety of short and longer writing assignments in every course, which will give students the opportunity to respond to and analyze the subject matter.
- Students will have the opportunity to revise longer assignments based on faculty feedback.
- Grammar and style are essential to making an effective rhetorical argument, and all writing is an argument—an attempt to affect the thinking of an audience. Bluefield College will offer students the instruction and assistance they need to become successful writers.

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### **XIII. Appendices**

#### **Appendix A : CAAP Results Report**

##### CAAP Broad Based Knowledge Assessment

Freshmen of Fall 2010 and 2011 and Seniors of May 2011

#### THE INSTRUMENT

The College Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) is designed to provide the institution with information regarding the general education foundational skills typically attained during participation in the general education program. In this administration, the test is used to provide BC with baseline information for our incoming freshmen so that we can later measure student development in reference to these same educational outcomes and employ the current descriptions associated with our incoming students to optimize our interventions intended to improve the educational processes used to facilitate attainment of these outcomes.

A comparison of local scores with national frequency distributions, although a comparison not as representative as would be ideal since the comparison group is composed primarily of sophomores, can be interpreted by the faculty in a way that identifies areas of emphasis and opportunities to improve the academic proficiencies of our future graduates.

The CAAP as employed at BC provides a measure of general education foundational skills in four areas. They are:

#### Writing Skills:

The CAAP Writing Skills Test is a 72-item, 40-minute test measuring students' understanding of the conventions of standard written English in punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. Spelling, vocabulary, and rote recall of rules of grammar are not tested. The test consists of six prose passages, each of which is accompanied by a set of 12 multiple-choice test items. A range of passage types is used to provide a variety of rhetorical situations.

#### Mathematics Skills

The CAAP Mathematics Test is a 35-item, 40-minute test designed to measure students' proficiency in mathematical reasoning. The test assesses students' proficiency in solving mathematical problems encountered in many postsecondary curricula. It emphasizes

quantitative reasoning rather than the memorization of formulas. The content areas tested include prealgebra; elementary, intermediate, and advanced algebra; coordinate geometry; and trigonometry. Descriptions of the content areas and the approximate proportions of items in each are provided below.

#### Reading:

The CAAP Reading Test is a 36-item, 40-minute test that measures reading comprehension as a combination of skills that can be conceptualized in two broad categories: Referring Skills and Reasoning Skills.

**Referring Skills.** Test items that focus on referring skills require the student to derive meaning from text by identifying and interpreting specific information that is explicitly stated. Typical items of this type require students to recognize main ideas of paragraphs and passages, to identify important factual information, and to identify relationships among different components of textual information.

**Reasoning Skills.** Test items that focus on reasoning skills require students to determine implicit meanings and to go beyond the information that is explicitly presented. Typical items in this category assess students' ability to determine meaning from context, to infer main ideas and relationships, to generalize and apply information beyond the immediate context, to draw appropriate conclusions, and to make appropriate comparisons.

#### Science:

The CAAP Science Test is a 45-item, 40-minute test designed to measure students' skills in scientific reasoning. The contents of the Science Test are drawn from biological sciences (e.g., biology, botany, and zoology), chemistry, physics, and the physical sciences (e.g., geology, astronomy, and meteorology). The test emphasizes scientific reasoning skills rather than recall of scientific content or a high level of skill in mathematics or reading. A total score is provided for the Science Test; no subscores are provided.

## THE RESULTS

We have long recognized that a substantive portion of our students come to the academy underprepared in the fundamental skill areas measured by the CAAP. The mean scores

frequency distribution scores from the Fall 2010, Fall 2011, Spring 2011, and Spring 2012 administration to incoming freshmen and seniors yielded the following results.

Bluefield College QEP  
The Confident Communicator

Subscore	2010-2011 Nat. Mean/2012 Nat. Mean	Freshman 2010		Seniors 2011		Freshman 2011		Seniors 2012	
		BC Mean	% BC Freshmen below Nat. Mean	BC Senior Mean	% BC Seniors below Nat. Mean	BC Freshman Mean	% BC Freshmen below Nat. Mean	BC Senior Mean	% BC Seniors below Nat. Mean
Writing Skills	63.9/63.6	59.2	80%	65.5%	36%	61.5	56%	63.0	50%
Mathematics	58.5/58.5	55.5	74%	53.8	90%*	55.3	83%	54.7	64%
Reading	62.3/61.9	59.8	64%	63.3	45%	56.3	88%	62.8	44%
Science	61.6/61.2	58.0	84%	57.4	100%*	56.5	83%	60.3	55%

\*NOTE: For Seniors, 2011, 80% indicated they “tried my best” or “gave moderate effort” on the mathematics portion. For science, 92% indicated “tried my best” or “gave moderate effort.”

## Appendix B: Intensive Writing Process (ENG 1013-I) Course Enrollment Data

### INTENSIVE WRITING PROCESS (ENG 1013-I) COURSE ENROLLMENT DATA

Year	Sem	Course code	Course Enrollment
2009	Fall	ENG 1013 01	13
2010	Fall	ENG 1013 01	5
2011	Fall	ENG 1013 01	21
2011	Fall	ENG 1013 08	20
2012	Fall	ENG 1013 01	18
2012	Fall	ENG 1013 02	18
2012	Fall	ENG 1013 07	8

Students who have placed into the ENG 1013-Intensive have increased from 13 in 2009 to 41 in 2011 and 44 in 2012 (as of August 1).

### Appendix C: QEP Institutional Survey Questions and Results

<b>QEP INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS</b>	
Questions:	Answer Options:
<p>1. Bluefield College’s vision is to be a nationally recognized Christ-centered liberal arts college, preparing innovative learners and transformational leaders to impact the world. Under the topic of core values, rank A through F in terms of importance to you using a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest.</p>	<p>A. Christ-centered learning community.</p> <p>B. The curriculum should promote social change that helps students make the world a better place for all.</p> <p>C. Developing students' potential through academic excellence and the intentional integration of faith, the liberal arts, and professional studies.</p> <p>D. Creating a caring community characterized by respect, support and encouragement for each member of our College community.</p> <p>E. Believe passionately in service above self.</p> <p>F. Preparing compassionate, globally-minded students who impact their world.</p>
<p>2. Under the topic of co-curricular learning themes, rank A through E in terms of importance to you using a scale of 1 to 5, which 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.</p>	<p>A. Enhance student learning by integrating academic learning opportunities with residential life.</p> <p>B. Enhance student success by providing a developmental/remedial studies program.</p> <p>C. Enhance student learning by providing opportunities for missions and service.</p> <p>D. Enhance student learning by providing global education and cultural awareness opportunities.</p> <p>E. Enhance student success by assisting them with hearing and responding to their call to vocation.</p>
<p>3. In considering the value of an education at Bluefield College, rank each of the following in terms of importance to you using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.</p>	<p>A. The curriculum should promote personal enrichment that helps students develop autonomy and discover themselves.</p> <p>B. The curriculum should promote social change that helps students make the world a better place for all.</p> <p>C. The curriculum should promote effective thinking that helps students acquire general skills that can be applied to many situations.</p> <p>D. The curriculum should be skill-oriented that prepares students to earn a living.</p> <p>E. The curriculum should help students clarify values and beliefs.</p>

<p>4. Under the topic of strengthening academic programs, rank A through G in terms of importance to you using a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest.</p>	A. Create a distinctive general education curriculum.
	B. Create a distinctive honor's program curriculum.
	C. Create a developmental studies curriculum.
	D. Expand online curriculum.
	E. Develop the Freshman Year Experience.
	F. Expand professional degree programs.
	G. Expand global education opportunities.
<p>5. Under the topic of fundamental skills, consider what you regard as most needed in Bluefield College's Curriculum. Rank A through G in terms of importance to you using a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the lowest and 7 being the highest.</p>	A. Improving writing skills across the curriculum.
	B. Improving how technology is integrated in the classroom.
	C. Improving reading across the curriculum.
	D. Improving reasoning and analytical thinking across the curriculum.
	E. Improving ethics across the curriculum.
	F. Improving oral communication across the curriculum.
	G. Improving the use of visual and performing arts across the curriculum.
<p>6. Under the topic of spiritual development, consider which of the following is most similar to your thinking. Rank A through D using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest.</p>	A. Integration of a prescribed set of Christian principles across the curriculum.
	B. Encourage students to take responsibility for their own moral and spiritual development with no intentional emphasis in the curriculum.
	C. Assist students in their moral and spiritual development with intentional emphasis throughout the curriculum.
	D. Emphasis on Christian ethics and spirituality is secondary to acquiring knowledge and skills.

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<b>Results of Quality Enhancement Plan Survey</b>										
		Residential St	Commuter	inSPIRE	FT Faculty	Adj Faculty	Staff	Alumni -	Trustee	Parent
<b>Response #</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>- 8</b>
<b>Question One</b>	A.	4.75	4.62	4.24	4.94	4.00	5.32	4.68	4.86	3.00
	B.	2.91	2.77	3.07	2.11	2.95	2.34	2.68	2.57	2.17
	C.	4.57	4.23	5.00	5.2	4.79	5.02	4.93	4.64	4.67
	D.	4.54	3.77	4.78	4.31	4.26	4.09	4.5	4.29	3.5
	E.	4.03	2.62	4.27	3.29	3.89	3.95	3.77	4.14	3.33
	F.	4.37	3.35	4.61	3.66	4.42	3.57	3.98	3.93	4.33
<b>Question Two</b>	A.	3.45	2.96	3.49	2.74	2.58	3.00	3.30	3.43	3.17
	B.	3.31	3.19	3.78	3.71	2.63	3.66	3.18	2.93	3.33
	C.	4.00	3.46	3.88	2.91	3.47	3.70	3.57	3.57	2.17
	D.	3.52	3.15	3.88	3.26	4.16	3.14	3.5	3.29	3.5
	E.	3.88	3.81	3.71	3.77	3.58	3.91	3.98	3.86	2.83
<b>Question Three</b>	A.	3.90	3.35	3.93	3.49	3.37	3.16	3.47	3.21	2.83
	B.	3.69	2.88	3.68	2.94	3.42	3.36	3.22	2.79	3.54
	C.	3.97	4.04	4.41	4.17	4.16	4.05	3.95	4.29	3.67
	D.	3.76	3.85	4.02	3.14	2.84	3.27	3.78	3.71	2.50
	E.	3.64	3.38	3.39	3.03	3.21	3.70	3.37	3.29	2.50
<b>Question Four</b>	A.	4.97	4.77	4.95	5.00	4.79	4.3	4.78	4.71	4.17
	B.	4.51	4.88	4.07	4.26	4.00	3.82	4.77	3.77	4.00
	C.	4.33	4.5	4.88	4.60	3.63	4.25	4.08	4.29	4.50
	D.	4.06	4.08	5.37	3.66	3.26	4.43	4.6	4.64	3.83
	E.	4.03	3.69	3.56	3.89	3.53	4.84	4.08	4.64	5.00
	F.	5.42	5.31	5.63	4.83	5.11	5.02	5.85	5.36	3.33
	G.	4.40	4.44	5.05	3.77	7.16	4.18	3.77	3.93	3.17
<b>Question Five</b>	A.	4.85	4.69	5.10	6.11	5.42	5.64	5.18	4.79	4.33
	B.	4.31	4.04	5.41	3.46	3.21	4.23	6.02	5.07	4.67
	C.	4.25	4.12	4.43	5.03	4.53	4.18	4.2	4.07	4.67
	D.	5.25	5.38	5.23	5.69	5.63	5.39	5.12	6.14	4.83
	E.	4.87	4.96	4.65	4.26	4.16	4.89	4.78	4.71	3.17
	F.	4.91	4.27	4.88	4.26	5.21	4.91	4.85	4.93	3.33
	G.	3.82	3.88	4.5	2.89	2.68	2.68	3.63	3.00	3.17
<b>Question Six</b>	A.	4.72	4.31	4.66	3.31	3.26	4.27	2.73	3.5	2.00
	B.	4.36	5.50	4.39	3.77	4.32	3.8	3.12	1.86	2.5
	C.	5.04	5.19	4.63	4.86	4.63	4.98	3.3	3.21	2.5
	D.	3.93	3.08	4.37	3.49	3.42	2.98	2.32	1.93	3.00

**Appendix D: QEP Program Assessment Rubric**

	Proficient (4)	3	Competent 2	Marginal 1
<b>Context of and Purpose for Writing</b> <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
<b>Content Development</b>	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
<b>Genre and Disciplinary Conventions</b> <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.

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<b>Sources and Evidence</b>	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
<b>Control of Syntax and Mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.
<b>Grammar and Usage</b>	Three or fewer mistakes that causes reader distraction	Is free of most errors in grammar and usage	Shows control of grammar and usage but may display some errors.	Repeated errors in grammar and mechanics interfere with the writer's purpose.

## Appendix E: Confident Communicator Writing Rubric

### Confident Communicator

#### Writing Rubric

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Language Usage</b>	<b>Mechanics</b>
<b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluently addresses the topic</li> <li>Provides supporting details and/or examples</li> </ul> Excellent use of appropriate sources with correct citation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main idea clearly stated/implied</li> <li>Clearly organized in logical manner</li> <li>College-level sentence variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College-level vocabulary</li> <li>Sophisticated word selection</li> </ul>	0-2 errors in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalization</li> <li>Punctuation</li> <li>Grammar</li> <li>Spelling/Word usage</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skillfully addresses the topic</li> <li>Provides supporting details and/or examples</li> <li>Effective use of appropriate sources with correct citation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main idea clearly stated</li> <li>Clearly organized in logical manner</li> <li>Provides sentence variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily college-level vocabulary</li> <li>Appropriate word selection</li> </ul>	3-5 errors in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalization</li> <li>Punctuation</li> <li>Grammar</li> <li>Spelling/Word usage</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequately addresses the topic</li> <li>Provides at least 2 supporting details and/or examples</li> <li>Adequate use of mostly appropriate sources and some errors in citation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main idea stated</li> <li>Organized in logical manner</li> <li>Provides some sentence variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some college-level vocabulary</li> <li>Appropriate word selection</li> </ul>	6-8 errors in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalization</li> <li>Punctuation</li> <li>Grammar</li> <li>Spelling/Word usage</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaguely addresses the topic</li> <li>Provides at least 1 supporting details and/or examples</li> <li>Inadequate/Inappropriate sources used and significant citation issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main idea not clearly stated</li> <li>Organized in an unclear manner</li> <li>Provides little sentence variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Below college-level vocabulary</li> <li>Ineffective word selection</li> </ul>	9-10 errors in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalization</li> <li>Punctuation</li> <li>Grammar</li> <li>Spelling/Word usage</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not address the topic</li> <li>Provides no supporting details and/or examples</li> <li>Poorly chosen/no sources or possible lack of citation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main idea not evident</li> <li>Not organized in logical manner</li> <li>No sentence variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immature vocabulary</li> <li>Inappropriate word selection</li> </ul>	<10 errors in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capitalization</li> <li>Punctuation</li> <li>Grammar</li> <li>Spelling/Word usage</li> </ul>

## Appendix F: Descriptions for Rubric

The following is meant to define a LEVEL 5 writing assignment.

**Content.** The content of a level 5 paper should show evidence of significant time and effort on the student's part to craft a paper that flows from idea-to-idea, which uses the best sources of information and then integrates the thoughts from those sources into a coherent message which draws the reader into the subject matter. The degree to which a paper is arguing a point may differ according to the purposes of the assignment, but the paper should communicate a recognizable message or thesis and should do so in a convincing and compelling way.

**Fluently Addresses the Topic.** A level 5 paper should have more than just grammatically correct sentences; the sentences should flow and use carefully selected words which go beyond just transferring information to holding the reader's interest. The theme of the paper should be well supported and thoroughly explained in a clear and concise manner.

**Provides Supporting Details and/or Examples.** Students should include well-chosen illustrations to support the points they are attempting to make in the paper. These illustrations should be drawn from reliable sources and be appropriate to the theme and the point of the thesis or message.

**Excellent Use of Appropriate Sources.** The student should demonstrate discrimination in the sources used and the degree to which the thesis relies on them. If web sources are allowed for the assignment, students should utilize other primary sources of information for the major support of their arguments. Information obtained from other sources should be clearly indicated through properly formatted quotations and/or citations according to the style of the assignment. The writer should not overuse quotations or paraphrases so that there are no original thoughts to be found. There should be evidence of thinking in new and diverse ways which makes the paper provocative to read.

### Structure

**Main Idea Clearly Stated.** The well-written paper of a Confident Communicator should have the main idea stated clearly and concisely in the opening paragraph(s) of the paper. There should be no confusion about what topic the student will pursue or what direction that discussion will take.

**Clearly Organized in a Logical Manner.** The student's paper should be arranged so that one idea leads logically to the next. Each paragraph should contain a topic sentence with the remaining sentences logically supporting or relating to the idea of the topic sentence. The well-written paper will have fluid and sophisticated transition sentences leading from one paragraph to another.

**College-Level Sentence Variety.** The student should use a variety of sentence structural styles and lengths that are correctly formatted and punctuated displaying the student's competency in the usage of simple and compound/complex sentences. Sentence structure should reflect the style and content of the paper.

### **Language Usage**

**College-Level Vocabulary.** The well-written paper of a Confident Communicator should skillfully and appropriately use college-level and correctly used terms that are in the disciplinary field. Word choice should be varied and descriptive. Active voice is preferred over passive voice.

**Sophisticated Word Selection.** The tone and narrative should accurately match the intended audience and support the purpose of the paper. Slang, informal phrases, and abbreviations should not be used unless they are discussed as part of the studied topic or are found in a direct quotation. Unless otherwise stated, the audience for the paper is comprised of college professors and college educated students.

### **Mechanics**

All of the characteristics below may not apply to every writing assignment. For example, the writing of dialogue may not follow traditional grammar rules. A score of five on the QEP Writing Rubric does allow for a few minor errors; however, the errors should not significantly detract from the paper.

**Capitalization.** Student uses the appropriate capitalization for names, terms, and titles in the subject area within the text and in any citations.

**Punctuation.** Student uses appropriate punctuation in the text and in citations, including periods, commas, semi-colons, colons, apostrophes, question marks, quotation marks, exclamation points, etc. In particular, the use of commas and semi-colons should be correct in order to avoid creating run-on sentences, sentence fragments, or incomplete phrases. The

punctuation within citations and reference pages or bibliographies should be consistent with the style used for the assignment.

**Grammar.** Student uses correct verb tenses in all sentences. Possessives and plurals should not be confused. All subjects and verbs should be in agreement in the paper. Sentences should be logically constructed so that they are not confusing to the readers. The work should be free of run-on sentences or fragments. Words should be appropriate to the level of writing and should be used correctly in the context of the writing.

**Spelling and Word Usage.** Student should use appropriate spelling and word usage for the subject area. Spelling of terminology in the field should be correct. Correct plurals and possessives should be used and spelled correctly. Homonyms (especially common ones such as there, their, and they're) should not be confused in a paper with a score of five on the rubric. In general, contractions should be spelled out in formal writing, but may be appropriate for certain types of writing assignments. Numbers should be spelled correctly for the subject matter (generally numbers of two words or fewer are spelled out). Absolutely no text language, spelling, or abbreviations (lol, bff, etc.) should be in the work unless that is the topic of the paper. Likewise, inappropriate or offensive language should be avoided within the writing assignment.

## Appendix G: Student Focus Group

This focus group was held to research student opinions/reflections and feedback for the QEP Confident Communicator Program. The group met on April 4, 2012, at 5 p.m. in the Academic Center for Excellence.

Pizza, chips, drinks and desserts were provided by Bluefield College for this event. Invitations to participate in the student focus group were distributed to a variety of students. The students who attended represented several populations including freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students; athletes and non-athletes; one student on academic probation; two high-achieving students; moderate scholars and a Student Government Association member.

The student focus group began with a welcome from Crystal Kieloch, Director of Academic Support Services, and Amanda Jordan, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research. The students were invited to enjoy the pizza and refreshments while the researchers initiated discussion about student attitudes toward writing and writing instruction at Bluefield College. Amanda Jordan began the discussion/brainstorming session in which she generated lively conversation among the students by presenting the questions listed below. Crystal Kieloch recorded the discussion, and responses are listed below the questions.

Questions:

- **What are your likes and dislikes about writing?**

Among the responses to this question were the following:

*Likes:* writing with passion

expressing yourself

peer review and creativity

Outlines, rough drafts and revisions

Feedback, anything to help improve writing like rubrics, comments on thoughts, ideas, points of view, knowing that the professor took time to read it, anything positive -- even a smiley face

*Dislikes:* professor not specific with expectations or rules

length requirements

forced organization,(when asked for further explanation student commented that she didn't like to follow a specific outline or pattern)

starting the paper  
transitions  
reading aloud/oral presentations  
peer review with student who have low grades  
topic selection  
following specific due dates

- **Did you feel prepared for writing in college?**

Students responded that they did not feel prepared and that they had to teach themselves. Most felt that they were unprepared to write. One student said she was an early reader so that helped her to be a better writer. One student mentioned not being prepared to write for Chemistry or Biology and then most students affirmed this. Seven students said that they weren't prepared to write larger papers.

- **What type of writing did you do in high school?**

One student noted that he was from a Virginia high school and four others acknowledged this as well. One of the students from Virginia mentioned that she learned only what was on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests and that she did not do much writing in high school. Others noted the same and said they might have only written book reports and "pulled all-nighters" when they did have to write.

- **Do you think your writing courses will help you in your career?**

Most students agreed that writing would help them in their careers. A few mentioned that they were not focused on "five years from now." A student mentioned that she would have to write for her career and that her education courses were helping her to learn to write for a teaching career. Another said that making outlines would help in career writing. Some students mentioned that they would need to learn how to write resumes.

- **What is your perception of freshmen writing courses? Will they help you in your major?**

This question did not generate much response. Generally, they felt that it would help them in their majors but they didn't quite see the correlation between the two.

- **How do you view the importance of writing?**

This question generated another response about careers and how they might use it in their future jobs.

- **How can the teaching of writing be enhanced at Bluefield College?**

This question had several responses which included that they wished professors would break down writing assignments into “baby steps,” starting with producing a thesis statement and then an outline, brainstorming sessions and the opportunity for different drafts. They felt as if they needed more instruction on citation style and they felt as if everyone should use one citation style instead of several for several different disciplines. Professors should “enforce outlines” and let them do parts of one paper throughout the semester.

Additionally, they felt that professors should spend time on students who need help. They wanted more feedback that would build their confidence not just strange symbols and abbreviations on a page. Students were interested in learning how to write within the disciplines and might welcome a freshman writing text that dealt with writing in the disciplines. Learning more about the kinds of writing that they should do in their majors was important. They also felt that it would be good if the professors asked the students what they felt they needed to learn about writing.

- **Have you gotten any other writing instruction since your freshman writing class?**

**If so, when?** One student pointed to specific writing assignments that she had completed in her education courses. This student also shared that she felt more intelligent than she was able to express with her writing, that she “lacked voice” in her writing, and that she always wanted to strive for perfection.

At this point, the focus group discussion concluded and students were dismissed for the evening.

## Appendix H : 2012 Fall Faculty Workshop

### Bluefield College Confident Communicator Writing Workshop August 16-17, 2012

Paul Heilker, Director, PhD in Rhetoric and Writing, Virginia Tech

#### Day One

Introduction and Overview (5 minutes)

Part One (15 minutes)

*What are your concerns? What are your goals?*

5 minutes – Writing

10 minutes -- Sharing with whole group

Part Two (30 minutes)

*What makes writing effective?*

10 minutes -- Reading my "Two Summer Vacations"

5 minutes -- Sharing with a partner

15 minutes -- Whole group discussion; connect to Bluefield rubric

Part Three (30 Minutes)

*What makes upper-level writing effective in your discipline?*

Each participant will bring hard copy of at least one example of effective upper-level student writing from his or her discipline.

10 minutes -- Examining student text in your discipline: What makes this piece of writing effective?

10 minutes -- Talking to someone else in your area; comparing notes

10 minutes -- Generating a list of terms/concepts/features for strong upper-division student writing you would want to add to the rubric beyond those we have talked about as a group.

Break (15 Minutes)

Part Four (45 Minutes)

*Why is writing instruction like reverse-engineering?*

Working with another faculty member in your discipline or a closely-related discipline, and thinking of effective upper-level writing in your discipline, discuss the following questions:

9 Minutes -- What are the additional writing skills needed to produce this kind of writing? audience? purpose? organizational scheme? collaborative writing? what kinds of support count as good evidence? what uses does it make of visual information? discipline-specific citation format? etc.

9 Minutes -- What are the thinking skills required to produce this kind of writing? application? analysis? evaluation? synthesis? classification? induction? deduction? description? causal analysis? comparison/contrast? interpretation? extrapolation? definition? problem-solving? what does "critical thinking" mean to you -- the ability to do what, exactly?

9 Minutes -- What are the technological skills required to produce effective upper-level writing in your discipline? particular software packages (SAS)? footnotes? running headers or footers? desktop publishing? web development? database searching?

9 Minutes -- Where in your current curriculum are students taught the writing, thinking, and technological skills necessary to produce effective upper-level writing in your discipline?

9 Minutes -- Where in your disciplinary curriculum should these writing, thinking, and technological skills be introduced? Where should they be reinforced?

Part Five (10 Minutes)  
Findings / Discussion

## **Day Two**

Part One (15 Minutes)

*What are the differences between "Writing in the Disciplines" and "Writing Across the Curriculum"?*

Short presentation on WID vs. WAC, high-stakes vs. low-stakes writing

Part Two (35 Minutes)

*What makes for a good writing assignment?*

Each participant will bring hard copy of at least one writing assignment typically used in upper-level classes in his or her discipline.

10 Minutes -- Brainstorming: When you are given a writing task, what do you want to know? What information would help you produce an effective document? Put items on board.

15 Minutes -- Whole group work: Examining and collectively revising a model assignment.

10 Minutes -- Each participant individually revising the assignment he or she brought.

Part Three (35 Minutes)

*How can I help support students' writing processes?*

5 Minutes -- Writing: How do YOU produce effective writing? What are steps or stages in YOUR process? What or who do you find to be helpful or supportive when you write?

10 Minutes: Sharing in small groups. One person records the similarities.

15 Minutes: Recorders sharing similarities with whole group. As each item comes up and is written on the board, we will ask "OK, how can we support that process for our students? What might we do?"

Break (15 Minutes)

Part Four (40 Minutes)

*How can I help students with grammar?*

5 Minutes -- Writing: Why is grammar important, in your estimation?

5 Minutes -- Writing: Why do you think grammar errors occur?

5 Minutes -- Writing: Which errors do you see most frequently? Which errors do you find most troublesome?

10 Minutes -- Individuals sharing with whole group

15 Minutes -- Presentation on best practices in grammar instruction

Part Five (10 Minutes)

Discussion / Next Steps?

## **Bluefield College**

### **Confident Communicator Workshop**

**17 August 2012**

#### **Paul Heilker, Blue Ridge Writing Project**

**Write to Learn Activities: informal, low-stakes writing activities to help students learn disciplinary content.**

Daily Logs

Prime the Pump

Reality Checks

Paraphrases (lecture, assignment, feedback, etc.)

Reflections / Cover Sheets

Letters

Interviews

Field Notes

Definitions

Micro-Themes

Dialogues

Entrance Tickets

Freewriting

Summaries/Annotations

Questions

Notices

Blocks

Associations

Predictions

Analogs

Scenarios

Believing/Doubting Games

Exit Ticket

### **Heilker Handout Grammar Humor**

#### **GRAMMER MADE EASY IN TWENTY-THREE STEPS**

#### **or HOW TO RITE RITE**

1. Don't abbrev.
2. Check to see if you any words out.
3. Be carefully to use adjectives and adverbs correct.
4. About sentence fragments.
5. When dangling, don't use participles.
6. Don't use no double negatives.
7. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
8. Just between you and I, case is important.
9. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
10. Don't use commas, that aren't necessary.
11. Its important to use apostrophe's right.
12. It's better not to unnecessarily split an infinitive.
13. Never leave a transitive verb just lay there without an object.
14. Only Proper Nouns should be capitalized. also a sentence should begin with a capital and end with a period
15. Use hyphens in compound-words, not just in any two-word phrase.
16. In letters compositions reports and things like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.
17. Watch out for irregular verbs which have crept into our language.

18. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
19. Avoid unnecessary redundancy.
20. A writer mustn't shift your point of view.
21. Don't write a run-on sentence you've got to punctuate it.
22. A preposition isn't a good thing to end a sentence with.
23. Avoid clichés like the plague.

## **HOW TO WRITE GOOD**

by Frank L. Visco

My several years in the word game have learnt me several rules:

1. Avoid alliteration. Always.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. Avoid clichés like the plague. (They're old hat.)
4. Employ the vernacular.
5. Eschew ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
6. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are unnecessary.
7. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
8. Contractions aren't necessary
9. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
10. One should never generalize.
11. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson once  
said: "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
12. Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
13. Don't be redundant; don't use more words than necessary;  
it's highly superfluous.
14. Profanity sucks.
15. Be more or less specific.
16. Understatement is always best.
17. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.

18. One-word sentences? Eliminate.
19. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
20. The passive voice is to be avoided.
21. Go around the barn at high noon to avoid colloquialisms.
22. Even if a mixed metaphor sings, it should be derailed.
23. Who needs rhetorical questions?
24. Always check you're spelling.

A final thought:

When promulgating your esoteric cogitations or articulating your superficial sentimentalities and amicable philosophical and psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your verbal evaporations have lucidity, intelligibility and veracious vivacity without rodomontade or thespian bombast. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous propensity and sophomoric vacuity. (Don't use big words.)

**Punctuate as a love letter:**

Dear Hortence

I need someone who understands what love is all about you are giving sincere warm people who are different from you confess to being lousy and no good you have devastated my feelings for others I long for you I feel nothing when we're separated I am eternally elated please let me be yours

Heathcliff

**Punctuate as "drop dead" letter:**

Dear Heathcliff

I need someone who understands what love is all about you are giving sincere warm people who are different from you confess to being lousy and no good you have devastated my feelings for others I long for you I feel nothing when we're separated I am eternally elated please let me be yours

Hortence

Fall Faculty Workshop August 16 & 17, 2012  
Confident Communicator Evaluation Results

On August 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012, as part of the Fall Faculty Workshop, Paul Heilker presented two afternoons of workshops geared toward helping faculty to incorporate more writing into their courses and offering suggestions regarding how to implement assignments and return good feedback. We received 33 evaluation forms.

Question #	5=Strongly Agree	4= somewhat agree	3= Neutral	2=somewhat disagree	1= strongly disagree
1-useful	21	6	2	0	2
2-well prepared	29	1	1	0	2
3-learned much	20	9	2	1	1
4-did not learn much	0	2	2	6	22
5-teaching strategies	19	8	4	1	1
6-significant initiative	26	5	0	0	2

Comments:

- Paul was enthusiastic and gave us resources we could use
- Very effective-opens up some avenues for new thinking and applications
- Lively, good timing, good length, well done
- Lots of strategies to consider with a positive approach. Many thanks!
- One of the best and most applicable faculty workshops
- Techniques and best practices are most helpful. Ideas for gearing assignments toward writing with the discipline were helpful
- I felt Paul had much more he could have shared
- Paul was great!
- Reinforces the need for an institutional commitment to faculty development
- I thought Paul did an excellent job in motivating us. I wanted to write because of workshop
- Practical, helpful and inspirational- ready to get started!
- Paul was a very humorous speaker, extremely knowledgeable, helpful, and focused. What we needed!

- Great speaker!
- Excellent presenter
- Enjoyed it tremendously. Very thought provoking perspective about importance of grammar. Thanks!
- Excellent presentation!
- One of the best ( most useful) faculty workshops in my tenure at BC
- Excellent
- Speaker very engaging, keeps one's attention
- Most helpful
- Excellent, practical advice coupled with a philosophy for looking at the project.
- Very helpful. I hope we can do more of this.
- Well done
- He provided good practical suggestions and help. Thanks!
- Enthusiastic presenter! Realistic expectations from faculty

## **Appendix I: Departmental Surveys regarding Writing Assignments and Instruction**

The following section contains the result of the departmental surveys that were given to determine which sophomore/junior-level and capstone courses contain intentional writing instruction in the discipline.

### **THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS**

#### **ART DEPARTMENT**

##### **Sophomore/Junior -Level Writing in the Disciplines courses**

- Course number and Title: ART 2413 – Studies in Modern Art (Art history class)
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Research Paper - Due the last day of class, 25% of final grade. The purpose of this paper is for the student to write an intensive research paper and learn about a specific artist or style. The paper should be a polished and well-written paper. Students should assume the audience is a layman and should integrate into your paper a critique in written form on one art piece using your own insight and opinion. Written and Oral Report - Due at mid-term, 15% of final grade. The purpose of this paper is to find an article written within the past three years dealing with Avant garde art. Students should choose from these three art periodicals found in the BC library: Art News, Art in America, and American Craft. The paper should include a brief review of the article, understanding of the work, and a personal interpretation of current trends in art. The purpose of the oral presentations is to share with the class your findings.

##### **Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses**

- Course number and Title: ART 4413 Contemporary Art History and Criticism
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Written and Oral Report - 30% of Final grade. The purpose of this paper will be to find several articles/books written within the past ten years concerning one contemporary art movement and/or style. This paper should be a thorough research of the topic. It should reflect an understanding of the work and can include personal interpretations. The purpose of the oral presentation is to share with the class your findings. Art Exhibit Review - 30% of Final grade. This paper will be a review of a current art exhibit either locally or regionally. Pretend you are writing this article for an art magazine or journal. The paper should reflect an understanding of the work, and personal interpretations. The paper needs to be a minimum of four pages typed (double spaced). 10% of this grade will be meeting the due dates above. The art exhibit review is the most discipline specific writing for art majors.

## CHRISTIAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: CST 2313 (existing course)
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? New Course – Methods of Biblical Interpretation
- Brief description of writing assignments: Currently the department plans to include assignments and instructions on writing in the discipline in two courses during the sophomore year. The first semester CST majors will take the new Methods of Biblical Interpretation course which will include writing assignment that will be typical for our upper level biblical studies courses. The second semester the students will take Intro to Theology which will be the official course for the writing instruction. The assignments in Theology include writing biographies of important historical figures and “exploration paragraphs.” The semester essay, which will be developed for further writing instruction will be done in three drafts. Each is to be expanded and improved upon. The first version is read by the professor, the second version is peer reviewed and reviewed again by the professor. The third version of the paper is turned in for the grade.

### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: CST 4013 Senior Seminar
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: The final project is a large-scale research project and presentation. The student will choose a topic similar to one already undertaken during a previous CST project, and use this opportunity to expand and improve it. A paper from a concurrent course may be selected with approval of the instructor, but this is not recommended. The purpose of the project is to demonstrate the student's ability to research a topic, and to communicate this research effectively. This project should be 16-20 pages with 12 point font at double spacing. It should be formatted according to the CST style guide (Turabian), and use 2-3 sources per page of text. The use of up-to-date sources including journal articles is expected. The work will be graded according to the marking rubric provided. Spelling errors or grammatical problems will result in a lower grade. Papers will be due on the first presentation day, April 20. Students also have to do short integration papers and case studies for Senior Seminar.

## ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: ENG 3XX3

- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? New course, actually an adaptation of ENG 2003: Literature Appreciation. This course will replace that general education course and be a foundational course for English majors offered in the junior year. This course, using a textbook like *The Bedford Introduction to Literature*, ed. Meyer (which has well-developed chapters devoted to writing in the discipline), will demonstrate how to analyze and write about fiction, poetry, and drama. Students will be introduced to literary criticism. There is currently not a course like this for English majors. Tentative title: Introduction to Literary Analysis: Critical Thinking and Writing about Literature
- Brief description of writing assignments: This writing-intensive course will require essays investigating various genres using the formalistic critical method and discipline-specific vocabulary and essays using biographical and cultural information (much of which is provided by the textbook). Students will do multiple drafts of essays, instructor and peer reviewed, and create annotated bibliographies.

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: ENG 4403: English Seminar
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing course for senior English majors investigating authors neglected in students' previous coursework, methods of literary criticism, and techniques for writing a scholarly critical essay.
- Brief description of writing assignments: This course requires a number of different writing projects typical in the study of literature. Students write an explication essay, an explanatory essay focusing on defining and demonstrating a specific school of literary criticism, and a culminating critical essay developing an interpretative argument about a work studied in class providing ample support from secondary critical sources. Students write multiple drafts of this essay and read a number of critical articles on the work from a variety of scholarly journals.

#### HISTORY DEPARTMENT

##### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: HIS 2603 History and Historians
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Contains assignments and instruction on how to write in the discipline. There are four short essays required, one long essay, a research paper, and a journal article review. The essays are sequential and the course includes revision of some assignments.

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: HIS 4603 Senior Seminar
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Writing assignments include short writing assignments that vary based on the topic each time the course is taught. There is a research paper required as well. It is 20 pages in length, must contain primary and secondary sources, be formatted/cited in proper Chicago style, and contain elements of good writing (organization, grammar, transitions, thesis, topic sentences, etc...).

#### MUSIC DEPARTMENT

##### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: MUS 3573 Music History I; MUS 3583 Music History II
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Not available.

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: MUS 4810 Senior Recital I; MUS 4890 Senior Recital II
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Writing project - Researched program notes for senior recital

#### THEATRE DEPARTMENT

##### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: THR 3053, 3063 Theatre History sequence
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Both are required for our majors and require major research papers. We talk about format and style, appropriate academic sources, citation of sources, etc.

### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: THR 4503 Senior Project
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: There are writing assignments in this course but they are all smaller assignments. The bulk of the capstone course is their senior performance project.

## **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

#### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: EDU 3133: Introduction to the Exceptional Child
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: A modified research paper. Students choose a different educational topic weekly and write a reflection answering the following questions: discuss the topic in terms of your current teaching situation. What have you learned about this topic?

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: EDU 4608: Student Teaching Grades PreK-12; EDU 4708: Student Teaching Grades 6-12; EDU 4908: Student Teaching PreK-6
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: While this is not a major, there is a capstone course which is Student Teaching, a 12 hour course that is taken during the student's last semester. Student teachers are required to write weekly professional themes (10) and also prepare a professional portfolio based on the 10 INTASC standards with a written rationale and reflection for each standard. They make a presentation at the end of the semester to a panel of Bluefield College Faculty and Area School Personnel.

## COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

### BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

#### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: BUS 3223 Business Writing
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: letters, reports and resume writing – composition assignments – portfolio development

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: BUS 4213 Business Policy and Strategy
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: A team project. Case Study Assignment with three sections. Case Study Parameter - objective is to recommend a company strategy for a target firm, as if you were a team of outside consultants hired to advise the company's board of directors. Augment the information with extensive research into the company and its operations.  
Case Study Deliverables-Formal Report of detailed explication of the recommended strategy, as well as a treatment of the analytical tools utilized include the recommendation, an execution plan (including a timetable), and an evaluation of the financial impacts of implementing the strategy.  
Case Study Deliverables-Presentation: 30 minute summary presentation of the proposed strategy. Of this time, ten (10) minutes must be allocated to questions from the audience. The presentation should be developed using PowerPoint and should be of a professional quality.

### COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

#### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: COM 3243 Advertising and Promotions
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Students write advertising and PR plans

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: COM 4123/4133 Senior Seminar in Journalism/Marketing Communication, COM 4143 Senior Project
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Secondary research/literature review is done at the end of fall semester their senior year and primary research is done second semester of senior year.

#### CRIMINAL JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

##### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: 3093 social research methods
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: No junior level writing in the discipline course – police report writing taught in the academy for law enforcement oriented majors

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: CRJ 4073 Critical Perspectives in CRJ
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Students select, research, write and present a report on an unsolved homicide.

#### GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

##### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: COM 3243 Advertising and Promotions
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments:

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: ART 4183 Portfolio Presentation

- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Creating resumes and cover letters

## inSPIRE MAJORS

### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: INT 3063 Learning and Research Skills / BUS 3113 Business Communications
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: The very first course, INT 3063, is the course used by inSPIRE to introduce students to writing in their respective major. In this course there is an emphasis on Academic writing techniques such as APA style, and the basics of writing, to include, but not limited to writing across the curriculum, the writing process, and various strategies for narrative, descriptive and reflective writing (i.e., narrative, analytical, persuasive report and special forms of informal writing). The INT 3063 is followed by Business Communications (BUS 3113) that covers various special forms of less formal writing generally used by organizations, agencies and businesses.

### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title:
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed?
- Brief description of writing assignments: One course will be chosen from the final semester to be adapted to include intentional instruction in Confident Communicator methodology. A final writing document will be evaluated by the QEP assessment committee. All of the inSPIRE online courses have writing assignments. The courses are and always have been writing intensive. There are no capstone courses. There are however two courses where writing is the focus of the courses: Learning and Research Skills (INT 3063) and Business Communications (BUS 3113). Nursing students uses a case study method and follow a slightly different approach but their courses are also writing intensive. The Criminal Justice and Public Safety majors use the INT 3063 course. Again all of these courses also are writing intensive with the completion of written work-products expected.

## COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

### BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

#### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: BIO 3111
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Course to be modified
- Brief description of writing assignments: Science Colloquium (BIO 3111) could be adapted to fulfill this purpose, however, currently; it focuses on critically analyzing scientific literature and oral communication. Most of the students that take this course are juniors with occasional underclassman.

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: BIO 4081 and BIO 4091
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: The Biology Senior Seminar writing assignment involves students researching the scientific literature and preparing a report, complete with literature cited. The report consists of a clear statement of the specific nature of the question to be examined, the student's personal thesis relating to it, appropriate general background information on the topic, why the question is of interest, and a detailed analysis of the question under consideration in which the student uses the data from primary research articles to defend his/her thesis. The report must include properly cited references for all factual statements.

### CHEMISTRY DEPARTMENT

#### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: BIO 3111 Science Colloquium
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Required of chemistry majors, is the course which targets discipline-specific writing instruction. BIO 3111 is a current course that requires little modification to emphasize the Confident Communicator methodology.

#### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: CHM 4081 Senior Seminar I

- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: In this course students research the primary literature and generate a written review in a focused topic of their interest in chemistry, biochemistry, and/or forensic science. Literature references are cited the American Chemical Society format.

## EXERCISE & SPORT SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: ESS 3623 Facility Design & Management
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: The course requires submitting a written business plan for financing, designing, constructing and operating a sport facility. This must be accompanied by an oral and visual presentation. Also, the ESS 4503 Sport Communication which soon should have a new number requires a research paper written in APA Style which must also be accompanied by an oral and visual presentation.

### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: ESS 4206 for Sports Medicine; ESS 4219 for Sport Management; EDU 4608 for Sport Science: Teacher Licensure
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: Writing varies with each concentration: In student teaching, the education department requires a portfolio and much writing. Within Sport Management, the senior capstone course is their 400 hour working internship. The writing requirements include a short mid-term evaluation, answering questions both orally and in writing as part of the review process and a final portfolio which must contain weekly hours logged and brief descriptions of work accomplished along with the review process questions, mid-term and final evaluations. It requires a written paper that details all aspects of their work. It may also include pictures of the workplace and information from the organization such as fliers, brochures, forms, employee handbook, policies, procedures etc. It must also contain an up to date resume and a letter of recommendation from their employer.

## MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: MAT 3603 College Geometry
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: A project with a significant writing component as part of the project.

### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: MAT 4443 Senior Seminar
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Course to be modified
- Brief description of writing assignments: Does not contain a writing assignment.

## PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### Sophomore/Junior-Level Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title:
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed?
- Brief description of writing assignments: Two years ago the psychology department made all of its courses “writing intensive” by assigning multiple short papers and one major paper in all of its courses except PSY 1013 where only short papers are assigned. In all submissions APA style is expected. By the time students enroll in PSY 4603, APA has become a minimal expectation.

### Capstone Writing in the Disciplines courses

- Course number and Title: PSY 4603 Senior Seminar
- Existing Course, Course to be modified, or Course to be developed? Existing
- Brief description of writing assignments: There are multiple writing assignments throughout the semester with a major integration of faith and the discipline due at the end of the course.

**Appendix J : Questions Used for Faculty Interviews Regarding the Implementation of  
The Confident Communicator Methods.**

A form will be used for each meeting which will ask the following questions:

1. How do you instruct students on how to successfully complete a writing assignment?
2. Which Confident Communicator methods do you already use?
3. How do you feel about the way you grade? How do you grade?
4. How do you feel about student writing ability?
5. Do you find the writing better at the end of the course? Do you assess students in the beginning of the semester?

## Appendix K: Survey to Gather Faculty Attitudes Before Confident Communicator QEP

### Confident Communicator



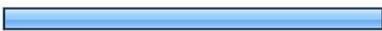
1. Prior to conversation and instruction on QEP/Confident Communicator, what was your perspective on using writing as part of your teaching:

	Response Count
	18
answered question	18
skipped question	0

2. According to our Sept. 2011 survey, some writing instruction is happening outside of the composition courses required; however, evidence suggests that students are not making significant improvement. What are your perceptions of the reasons why? We are gathering more specific data to understand where improvements are needed.

	Response Count
	18
answered question	18
skipped question	0

3. Do you allow students to revise thier writing assignments after you provide feedback?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	66.7%	12
No 	33.3%	6
Please Explain		14
answered question		18
skipped question		0

#### 4. Do you feel as if you have adequate time to devote to instructing and assessing writing?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		38.9%	7
No		61.1%	11
	Please Explain		15
answered question			18
skipped question			0

#### 5. Our data shows that 85% of faculty use a research paper assignment. Do you allow the student to submit a draft?

		Response Count
		18
answered question		18
skipped question		0

#### 6. Do you use sequenced writing assignments?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		38.9%	7
No		27.8%	5
I don't know		33.3%	6
	Please Explain		9
answered question			18
skipped question			0

### 7. Do you use increasingly complex assignments to lead up to a major research paper?

	Response Count
	18
answered question	18
skipped question	0

### 8. Do you give models for writing assignments?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		44.4%	8
No		55.6%	10
	Please Explain		10
	answered question		18
	skipped question		0

### 9. Do you provide a handout or electronic document with written instructions for your writing assignment?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		88.9%	16
No		11.1%	2
	Please Explain		12
	answered question		18
	skipped question		0

**10. Define what a personal reflection assignment means. Personal reflection is...**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Homework		36.4%	4
In-class		0.0%	0
After Lecture		0.0%	0
After Reading Assignment		63.6%	7
	Other (please specify)		8
	answered question		11
	skipped question		7

**11. Indicate how you explain to the student how to create an effective writing assignment based on your rubric or grading criteria.**

	Response Count
	18
answered question	18
skipped question	0

## **Appendix L: Brief Summary of Marketing, Budgeting and Communications Subcommittee Activities**

The Marketing and Budget Subcommittee formed to assist the QEP Steering Committee. Representatives from both faculty and staff served on the committee. The purpose of the committee was to draft an initial budget and a marketing plan.

The budget would reflect expenses for 6 academic years from 2011-2017. The committee categorized the budget into the following: program development, implementation, administration, and support. The initial proposed budget was given to the Chair of the Steering Committee who then forwarded it to the College Leadership Team (CLT). CLT then began to include the items into strategic planning and budgeting.

The subcommittee put together a marketing strategy to reach students, faculty, staff, and the community. The goal was to create excitement and intrigue about QEP. The marketing message was devised to explain that the QEP was unique to Bluefield College, it would transform students' education and their future, and it would strengthen our college and our students. The sub-committee discussed many different ideas to help spread the word about the QEP. The first step was to create awareness about a quality enhancement plan and to do so, yard signs were placed around campus that read, "QEP is Coming," along with colorful posters in each dorm and building on campus. Next, an ice cream social was held to inform students that BC's QEP was titled Confident Communicator. Pencils were distributed with "QEP: Confident Communicator" on them. Then, the QEP was discussed by faculty in classrooms and by QEP Director and Steering Committee Chair in Chapel. Faculty were given cookies with the statement, "QEP is Sweet" on them and a video was produced which starred VPAA and student musical group which informed faculty all about QEP. Faculty also placed information about Confident Communicator on syllabi. Moving forward, the Director of Confident Communicator assumed marketing and budget plans, thus the sub-committee dissolved. The Director will continue to plan events and information sessions for incoming freshmen to ensure understanding and invoke excitement about Confident Communicator.