MINDING THE GAP

Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction

Quality Enhancement Plan

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

Reynolds
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Minding the Gap:
Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction

Executive Summary

The J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College 2020 Quality Enhancement Plan, *Minding the Gap: Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction* is a plan designed to increase retention and completion rates for all Reynolds students and to close the achievement gap that exists currently among students of color and their white peers. An investment in faculty professional development that is housed within a newly created unit for the college, Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development, is the foundational element of the QEP and also the critical element for student success. This QEP supports the mission and values for Reynolds and supports the college's strategic plan. The QEP presents an investment in faculty professional development to create opportunities and areas for ongoing learning and sharing of best practices to improve student success.

J Sargeant Reynolds Community College Mission Statement: *Reynolds Community College (Reynolds) provides an accessible, quality education that develops students for success in the workplace, prepares students for successful transfer to colleges and universities, builds a skilled workforce that contributes to regional economic development, and promotes personal enrichment and lifelong learning.*

Vision Statement: *Reynolds will be the preeminent pathway to the workforce and degree attainment for the greater Richmond region.*

Values:

- *Our Students*—We promote high academic standards and innovative programs that enable our students to go further and faster in pursuit of their goals.

- *Our People*—We promote a culture of collaboration, hire talented individuals, and invest in their professional and personal growth.
- *Our Community*—We enrich our community through education, leadership, partnerships, and volunteerism.
- *Our Environment*—We create and foster safe, healthy, and inclusive places for learning, teaching and working.

Reynolds has a history of investing in professional development through a dispersed structure. The department of human resources offers workshops on a number of topics. Technology training is provided through the department of technology. In 2018, the college established the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to promote quality in teaching and learning and support faculty in their development of instructional and professional skills. CETL was established to impact student learning, instructional engagement, professional development, and the pursuit of scholarship and research. These outcomes were achieved through faculty learning cohorts, faculty workshops, new faculty mentoring, and a faculty lunch and learn series.

Reynolds will create a comprehensive approach to professional development through an equity lens. Reynolds is and has been experiencing a cultural shift in its classroom demographics, a shift that mirrors the changing demographics of the Greater Richmond Region. Reynolds now has a majority-minority student population. Student success rates show an alarming gap between students of color and their white peers. If Reynolds fails to change the current approach to teaching, learning and achievement for all students, the college will ultimately fail at its core mission and in service to the community.

The Reynolds Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) will support the Reynolds mission, vision and goals of degree attainment, workforce readiness, and the delivery of an inclusive environment for all students. The purpose of *Minding the Gap: Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction* is centered on promoting a culture of student success informed by four overarching

principles: first, support and guide the development of an engaging and inclusive learning environment for students, second, increase student course completion, third, increase completion rates for all programs of studies, and fourth, close the educational attainment gap at Reynolds. To accomplish these principles, the QEP has four major components:

1) Develop and implement a department of inclusive instruction and professional development;

2) Implement a comprehensive faculty professional development program focused on enhancing faculty skills to support and deliver inclusive and engaging instruction;

3) Identify and share best practices for inclusive and engaging classroom teaching; and,

4) Establish a faculty resource room (The Faculty Room) to support faculty in the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices and use of instructional technology.

Student Success Outcomes in Minding the Gap: Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction

The current faculty development and support structure is the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). CETL was heavily focused on online courses, centered on technology training to provide faculty with knowledge and skills on pedagogical approaches to inclusive and engaging instruction to foster in students a sense of self-efficacy and belonging. Through the 2020 QEP, Reynolds will expand upon the current CETL offerings and create a broader and more cohesive purpose for faculty development. Reynolds will align training and professional development programming to equip faculty with a skillset to manage a more diverse classroom. The goal is to create a setting where all students have a sense of purpose and belonging within every class and are taught in an environment where faculty have an enhanced skillset centered on an inclusive classroom experience. This focus for faculty development programming is built within the broader framework of student access, equity, and completion. This Reynolds commitment extends beyond the classroom and through all academic and student support services designed to help students from low-income households or students of color successfully navigate the college, the classroom, and prepare for transfer and work. In short, Reynolds is investing in equity in every aspect of college's academic services.

Research asserts that it is an intentional cohesive investment in faculty that will most impact the success of students who have been historically marginalized. The classroom, whether online or face-to-face, is where students spend the greatest amount of time. Therefore, a strong relationship with faculty who can help students of color and poorer students see themselves as college students who belong at Reynolds, who are fully capable of succeeding and completing, and who carry that sense of belonging with every course in which they enroll, are critical elements to closing the achievement gap and to increasing educational attainment overall at Reynolds.

Profile of Reynolds Community College

Reynolds is the third largest in annual enrollment, and youngest, college in the Virginia Community College System. A guiding principle of the college is to provide students with skills needed in today's workforce. The college's three campuses serve residents in the City of Richmond and the counties of Henrico, Hanover, Goochland, Powhatan and Louisa. Reynolds has served more than 346,000 students since it opened in 1972. Student demographics show that currently Reynolds is a majority minority college, with 48.5% white students, 31.2% African American and the remaining 20.3% a combination of Hispanic, Asian and other ethnicities.

The college offers seven degrees in transfer programs, over 30 career studies certificates and seven certificates as well as 19 applied associates' degrees. Contributing to the Richmond area's economic development is an important part of Reynolds' mission. The college partners with John Tyler Community College to provide workforce training and services for local businesses, industries, and government entities via the Community College Workforce Alliance (CCWA) located on Reynolds' Parham Road Campus. Reynolds values an inclusive environment for its students and employees, strong academic and workforce training programs, an investment in teaching and learning as well as community outreach and partnerships, and seeks to close the educational attainment gap that exists among its student populations.

Reynolds has been experiencing a shift in its classroom demographics, a shift that mirrors the changing demographics of the Greater Richmond Region, which has gone from 64.1% white to 57% white in the last 20 years. Within the next 20 years, the Greater Richmond area is projecting to be 45.2% white. In general, Reynolds' student body reflects those demographics. As is evident in data presented later in this report, Reynolds has lower retention and success rates for students of color; and persons of color are more likely to experience poverty.

Selecting and Developing the QEP Topic

February – March 2018

- On February 22nd, the Associate Vice President, Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, presented the *Reynolds QEP 2020* process to the members of the Reynolds Leadership Council (RLC). The RLC includes leadership from across all areas of the college and includes student representatives. The presentation highlighted the QEP process of topic selection, broad-based support, student learning/student success outcomes, resources, and assessment as well as changes in SACSCOC requirements. A SharePoint project site was developed to store related documents and a template for members of the college community to suggest a QEP topic. April 18, 2018 was established as a due date for topics. Additional discussions of the 2020 QEP took place at the Planning Committee meeting and the Joint Faculty Senate meeting on February 26th and 28th respectively.
- On March 5th, an email was sent to all college faculty and staff outlining the 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation process, including the compliance certification and the QEP. The email also issued a call for topics with a connection to (one or more) existing Student Success Plan initiatives: Meta Majors and Guided Pathways, Advising, Revision of/and accelerated competency in developmental education, "Five to Thrive" (to increase the percentage of students who are successful in their first, five courses within their first year of study), and/or using Reynolds student success metrics for performance measurement, planning, and decision making.

- On March 6th, the Executive Vice-President (EVP), met with the Student Senate Chairperson, Aaron Roland, and the Chair of the Student Senates Student Services Committee, Diocia Thomas, to discuss the QEP selection, development, and implementation process as well as how the QEP project addresses the college's student learning outcomes and/or student success plan.

- April 2018: The RLC reviewed and rated all eight topics that were submitted by a wide range of college personnel (Institutional Effectiveness, Communications, Faculty, Directors, and Deans). Rankings were tallied by the AVP of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. The top four topics highlighted similar themes related to historically underserved and marginalized students (identified as Pell eligible, first-generation, ethnic minorities, or underprepared).

June – August 2018

- The EVP team, which consists of vice president of academics, student affairs, technology and institutional effectiveness, met with authors of the four topics to discuss ways to reshape their ideas into a more focused proposal. Participants represent views from student affairs, academic affairs, and institutional research and effectiveness. Participants discussed topic proposals and identified similar themes of underserved students, including students who placed into developmental courses and the academic and student support required. Discussion also included the necessity of appropriate and effective academic and student support for underserved students in general.

- Participants researched and reported out on best practices for supporting underserved students and best practices at comparable institutions. Participants developed a centralized program framework detailing best practices for underserved students and aligned with comparable institutions' best practices as well as with Reynolds' existing resources.

- In July, the EVP announced the QEP coordinator position and called for applicants.

- In early August, an English faculty member was appointed as QEP coordinator. Participants of the topic planning transitioned to comprise the QEP planning committee.

September – December 2018

- The QEP Planning committee narrowed the focus on promoting equity for underserved and under-resourced students through academic and support services: "Promoting Equity in Education at Reynolds (P.E.E.R) Program."

- On September 21st, the QEP coordinator presented an overview of the QEP concept to Enrollment Management Council for Completion Committee, chaired by the EVP, which consists of administrative leadership and representatives from across the college (related to enrollment).

- On September 27th, the QEP coordinator also presented an overview of the QEP concept to Reynolds Leadership Council (RLC). The QEP planning committee agreed wider constituent group discussions on "who" Reynolds students are, what services they need, and how to better serve students was discussed.

- In early October, the QEP planning committee developed a script and questions to solicit college-wide constituent input. From October through November, the QEP planning team liaisons met with (either electronically or in person) fifteen constituent units and departments reviewed the prepared script and set of questions. The results of these discussions were coded and compiled into a constituent input report. (Appendix)

- At the December QEP planning meeting, results of the compiled Constituent Input Report were discussed and college-wide and faculty development was identified as an integral component of the QEP.

- On December 13th, a QEP update was provided for the college president identifying the focus of the QEP as a one-stop program that provides and coordinates wrap-around, holistic student support services to promote equity in education, from entry to transition, for underserved students at Reynolds. The proposal incorporated three specific, equity-oriented areas to enhance retention, success, and credential attainment of Reynolds' underserved student populations, with an emphasis on African-American

students: P.E.E.R. Program Mentors, Reorganization and Enhancement of Academic Support Services and Math Central, and Equity-based, college-wide and faculty-specific Professional Development, and proposed centralizing these services in one location.

February – May 2019

- February 2019, the QEP committee met to further define the three components of the plan and agreed to move forward with Implementation Design sub-committees, one for each of the components (coaches, writing center, professional development).

- On February 19th, the plan was presented to the President's Executive Cabinet for approval. In March, the QEP planning was put on hiatus because of impending college restructuring.

- In early April, the QEP coordinator, EVP, VPAA, Assistant VPAA, and the Dean of Student Services met to discuss how the original QEP was impacted by the reorganization and identified that while the equity-based focus of the QEP would remain, the plan would consist of Success Coaches (previously named P.E.E.R. Program mentors for targeted populations), Development and Implementation of a Writing Center, and Equity-based, college-wide and faculty-specific professional development. This revised plan was presented to the college President on April 15th.

- The plan title was revised to "*Promoting Equity in Education at Reynolds.*" In late April and early May, sub-committees for each of the three components were convened and work proceeded toward implementation planning.

June – August 2019

- The SACSCOC Vice President visited on June 4, 2019 and provided advice that the scope of the QEP was too broad, with the PEER component (which could be challenging to scale), the Writing Center, and the Professional Development Component.

- Members of the President's Executive Cabinet met with the QEP coordinator, and based on the recommendation of the SACSCOC VP, made the decision to narrow the scope and exclude the peer mentoring component, leaving the Writing Center and Professional Development. However, the peer mentoring concept is still being implemented in student services as brought forward by the faculty.

- The QEP Coordinator chose to resign from the role, feeling that her strength rested with the PEER component and not with faculty professional development or the Writing Center.
- The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs was appointed the responsibility of completing the QEP writing in July.
- A meeting was held on August 6, 2019 to remove the Writing Center from the QEP. Faculty, academic leadership who comprise the QEP Implementation Work Group gave the recommendation that the QEP focus on faculty professional development.

Literature Review

High quality instruction is foundational to American higher education, particularly at community colleges where teaching is the core mission of faculty work. How to measure effective teaching and determine its impact on a vastly diverse population is vital if Reynolds is going to dramatically increase the number of Americans who earn a college degree, especially for students of color and students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds.

Colleges with the greatest leaps in achievement, success rates and equity in educational attainment have done so with a significant investment in the professional development of their faculty. These colleges have created a culture based on student success, where faculty and staff consistently invent ways to improve student outcomes. West Kentucky Community and Technical College increased educational attainment by more than 20 percent from 2004 to 2009. Valencia Community College showed similar results where 52% of full-time, first-time students completed or transferred within three years (the national rate is 40%). With respect to equity gaps, 46% of Valencia's minority students complete or transfer at nearly the same rate as their white students (the national average is 34%). Patrick Henry Community College in Virginia has increased its completion rate from 19% to 35%. Indian River Community College has increased its graduation rate by 19 points, to 39%. Miami Dade Community College has nearly eliminated the achievement gap with 43% of students of color completing and a 44% completion rate overall. Odessa College in Texas is another example with a 96% course

completion rate. Palo Alto Community College increased its completion rate from 28% to 47%; and Pierce College has a completion rate of 59%. These colleges share one common thread among the four pillars of an excellent community college; each made a conscious decision to make demonstrated institutional investments in teaching, learning and student success (Aspen Institute, 2019).

These college presidents state again and again that a well-designed curriculum, student support measures, guided pathways, developmental education redesign, or elimination thereof, are all excellent strategies on which to build. But, the single greatest impact on student success is an investment in faculty for improving learning, trying new ideas, measuring learning outcomes and sharing innovations across the college. Put another way, improving the quality of instruction is an institutional imperative, as better teaching leads to better student outcomes.

A current challenge facing Reynolds is the diverse student demographics, which make it crucial that faculty are attuned to culturally responsive teaching. "In higher education, teaching practices that promote inclusive and deep learning within and across cultural and linguistic groups is ever more important to supporting students along their educational journey. Given the inseparability of motivation and culture, instruction that supports educational attainment of a student within and across cultural groups in a higher nuanced and urgently needed endeavor" (Aspen, 2019; Adams, Bell, and Griffin, 2007; Kitayama and Markus, 1994; Geertz, 1973).

In summary, Reynolds must invest in faculty now for several reasons: first an investment in faculty professional development leads to the influence and improvement of pedagogy and curriculum and has a very important role in student development and success; second faculty involvement in professional development positively affects classroom pedagogy, student learning and the culture of teaching and learning; and third faculty development that uses goal oriented benchmarked data to improve quality, equity and educational attainment yields improved results for all students. These efforts are strengthened the college is actively investing

with other reform measures such as guided pathways, advising, and support reforms that enable students more structures in places to ensure success.

Investing in Faculty: The Connection between Faculty & Student Success

Today's higher education system is complex and is increasingly becoming more challenging with calls for greater accountability, constrained budgets and a more diverse student population, where many students enter college unprepared or underprepared. Reynolds is not immune to any of these factors. The college will begin moving to direct placement beginning in Fall 2020, eliminating developmental studies, and assigning students directly into college credit coursework. A portion of the allocation of state funding for community colleges in Virginia uses a performance-based method on student success factors in English and math coursework, retention and graduation. Findings from decades of educational research indicate that in order to ensure student success, higher education institutions can no longer ignore the positive impact and untapped potential of good teaching. Given this evidence, an expanding body of researchers and policy makers are beginning to acknowledge that "the necessity for improving quality teaching has never been as compelling" (Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015, p 92). Moreover, research has established a connection between faculty development and student success (Condon et. al. 2016; Seidman, 2012). In a thorough examination of institutional action and retention, Seidman and others squarely connect faculty development with student learning. Faculty development plays a direct role in influencing pedagogy and curriculum and an indirect but very important role in student involvement, and therefore student learning and success. Further, Condon and colleagues (2016) show that faculty participation in professional development activities positively affects classroom pedagogy, student learning and the overall culture of teaching and learning in a college or university" (260).

To make wise investments in faculty professional development, it is imperative to understand how and why professional development literature and trends have shifted. With these shifts also comes the need for institutions to refine and expand that which they have established with respect to academic supports and teaching, especially as students who enroll diversifies or as

the population of students who enroll becomes more diverse. The professional field of faculty development is relatively young. From 1970 through 2019, trends and practices in faculty development have evolved. Early scholars (Phillips 1975; Gaff, 1975) focused much of their research on psychology, organizational development, and public policy. During the 1980's, known in research as "The Age of the Developer", at least 50 percent of four-year institutions offered some formal faculty or teaching development services, leading to a heightened interest in the evaluation of faculty members as teachers, since most research was centered more around teaching and not learning. During the 1990's (The Age of the Learner), student learning became the focus of higher education rather than an assessment of teaching. According to Harris et. al (2017), "There were no comprehensive studies of faculty development during this decade, but external stakeholders were beginning to ask hard questions about performance measurement at every level—from individual faculty members in classrooms to departments to institutions." During the early 2000's, researchers guiding faculty development questioned practice, faculty development structures, staffing and services (Sorcinelli et al, 2006). Most recent research focuses on how faculty developers think about the assessment of student learning, faculty development and the impact of faculty development on student success. Much of the shift has come from accountability and completion measures, especially as the classroom becomes more diverse.

How Students Succeed

Effective teaching involves acquiring relevant knowledge about students and using that knowledge to inform course design and classroom teaching. All students come to specific college courses with knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes gained in other educational settings (K-12), other college courses, and in their daily lives. These experiences and knowledge drive how they interpret information. Ehrlich (2019) suggests that "if the knowledge is robust and accurate and activated at the appropriate time, it provides a strong foundation for learning." If the knowledge is inert, insufficient, or inaccurate, it can impede new learning.

At colleges where students of color and poor students succeed, faculty have been trained to tap into two principles and to develop them within the learning environment. The first of these is that a sense of self-efficacy is critical to learning—*I know I can do this.* Successful teaching faculty are trained to build structures and activities that lead to this self-efficacy at a higher rate. If students do not hold this belief in themselves, the hurdles to overcome academic fears are high, if not impossible. The more faculty can learn about students and their backgrounds, the better equipped faculty are to establish a sense of success. A second principle, and important one for students of color, is that they have a sense of belonging and are not outsiders in an alien world. Students must see the classroom, the program of study as their own; they must know they belong there. Trained faculty engage with students and help them to engage with others within the classroom setting so that they are likely to remain enrolled and are more likely to succeed.

Millions of students start college unprepared. According to The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board (2010) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), about 40% of first-year students are not prepared for college-level coursework in math and reading. Additionally, students face financial concerns when trying to obtain a college education. McKee and Tew (2013) stated that for higher education to "manage societal shifts of near epoch proportion… faculty development should be viewed as a necessity, not a nicety" (p. 3) Strong 2010 wrote that "of all the factors within our control in the educational enterprise, teacher quality matters most" (p. 85). Evidence suggests that skills such as organization, preparation and clarity are very influential in stopping student attrition. These skills also contribute overwhelmingly to cognitive and critical thinking skills. Braxton et al., (2000) noted that faculty professional development also has a direct positive effect on students' social integration, which then impacts their commitment and intent to reenroll. Students who are taught by these faculty are likely to put effort into the social communities that exist within their college and have that sense of belonging necessary to be retained and to succeed, echoing the sentiments of self-efficacy and belonging that Elhrich (2019) states are the two critical principles to student success in college. Moreover, Tinto

(2006) noted that if involvement does not occur in class, it is not likely to occur anywhere else on the college campus. This means that increasing the quality of classroom instruction is the key factor in efforts to positively impact retention. Simply put, students learn better when they have a connection to one another, the faculty, and the college. Beyond faculty teaching skills, extensive evidence suggests that student-faculty interaction both inside and outside of the classroom—is highly correlated with student success, including persistence and degree completion, underscoring why a highly skilled faculty is important (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Pascareella & Terenzini, 2005; Swail, Redd & Perna, 2003). In short, the relationship with, influence of, and connection to faculty is the single greatest influence on persistence, success and retention.

Assessment of Student Success

The assessment of student success begins with educational values and should focus on the kinds of successful outcomes Reynolds most values. If Reynolds is going to close the achievement gap, it is imperative that it focus on an assessment of the success of students of color and poor students; regular college review of data has indicated that these groups are not achieving at the same rate as other students. Furthermore, assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. It requires attention to outcomes but also to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Therefore, if the purpose is to close the achievement gap and to increase completion rates for all students at Reynolds, it is critical to understand what experiences lead to success and provide faculty with enhanced skills to accomplish these goals. To better assess what is and is not working, measurement must be ongoing to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Assessment creates a powerful impact when a close connection exists between the outcomes and the evidence to be collected. Questions such as "Why are we doing this?" "Why does it matter?" are foundational to assessment succeeding. But, more important is an adoption of this shared value among college faculty: *The classroom experience is the critical component to closing the achievement gap in educational attainment among Reynolds students.* Through assessment, educators respond to the student and public and are able to report on those

outcomes. Colleges that are closing the achievement gap demonstrate through evidence that students learn at high levels and reinforce institutional practices and policies that result in strong and improving levels of student success in courses within programs college-wide.

Why Should Reynolds Promote Equity? What the Data Tell Us

Data on community college students clearly reveal there is a correlation between community college student demographics and completion. "Of the 60 percent of students who enter community college with developmental needs, only a quarter of them earn a degree within eight years. That means that 45 percent of the entire community college population enters behind *and* never gets a degree" (Wyner, 2014). "31 percent of white adults have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to only 18 percent of African Americans and 13 percent of Hispanics" (Wyner, 2014). Of those ethnic minorities in pursuit of a higher education, more than half are enrolled in community colleges, and only 60% of community college students receive
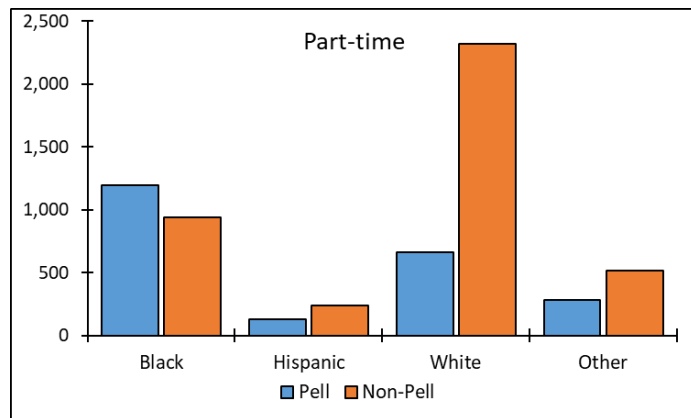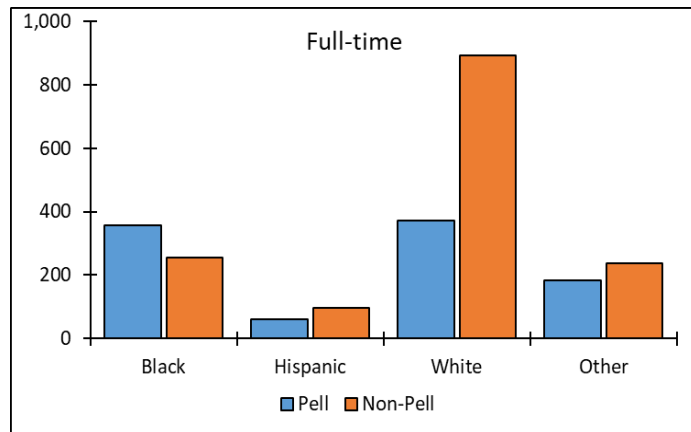
Figures 1 & 2 – Enrollment and Pell Recipients

some form of financial aid (Boylan, Calderwood, & Bonham, 2017). Part-time students, which comprise the majority of community college enrollment, are only 20% likely to graduate within six years (Wyner, 2014). Additionally, underserved students experience persistence and success obstacles of background and individual characteristics as well as environmental factors (Horton, 2015). Comparatively at Reynolds:

- 49% of the student population has developmental needs

- Two-year Graduation rates are at 18% overall and are as low at 10% for Black / African American students and 8% for other minorities

- Ethnic minorities comprise about 50% of the student population

- 47% of students are Pell recipients (approx. 60% are eligible) and 20% are loan borrowers

- Part-time enrollment hovers around 84%

- African American student retention and progression rates are significantly lower than their peers (Reynolds OIE, 2018).

The Center for Urban Education designed the Benchmarking Equity and Student Success Tool (BESST). This interactive tool makes the story behind the data visible, understandable, and actionable for

Figure 3 – Graduation Rates

practitioners. Using the BESST, practitioners can understand equity gaps longitudinally and by race and ethnicity, and can manipulate the data to determine how many more students of a particular group need to reach particular milestones in order for an institution to achieve its overall goal" (Bensimon, Dowd, & Witham, 2016). For Reynolds to close the achievement gap, the college must fully understand where gaps are occurring along the student's journey to success. The table and charts on the next page include data outlining completion in high enrollment and high impact courses, fall to spring retention, fall-to-fall retention and graduation rates. Understanding student success at every milestone of a students' progress to completion and the gaps that exist therein will allow Reynolds to prepare faculty to take action at critical points in the students' academic experience. These data will also drive when and where to invest in support resources so that they are delivered at "just in time points" throughout the academic journey.
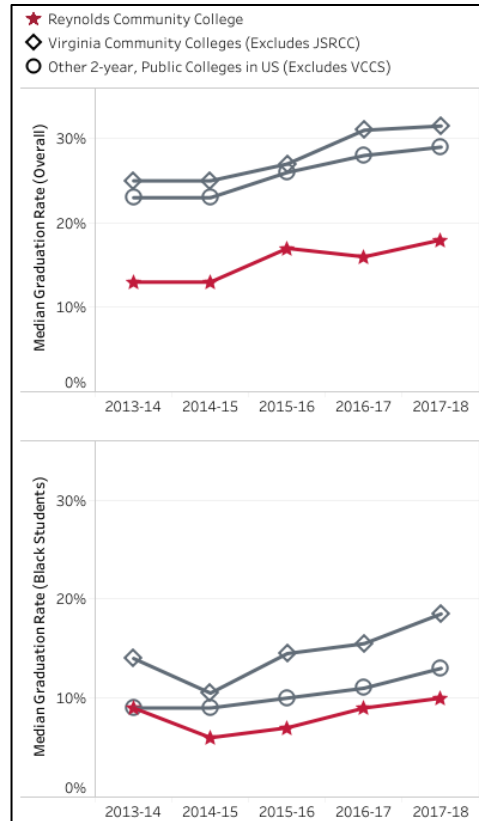
Course	Overall	AfAm	Hispanic	White	Other	GAP (w-b)	GAP (w-h)
HIS 101	68.8	50.5%	78.4%	74.4%	75.6%	23.9%	-4.0%
MTH 167	58.9	44.5%	50.0%	61.8%	70.6%	17.3%	11.8%
MTH 161	58.4	56.6%	55.6%	58.9%	61.5%	2.3%	3.3%
SPA 101	68.5	50.9%	86.7%	77.1%	76.2%	26.2%	-9.6%
CST 110	67.6	56.3%	85.7%	75.8%	81.3%	19.5%	-9.9%
ASL 101	65.7	53.8%	71.4%	72.4%	62.5%	18.6%	1.0%
MTH 240	69.5	68.8%	57.1%	73.3%	60.0%	4.5%	16.2%
MTH 174	68.9	50.0%	66.7%	72.0%	76.9%	22.0%	5.3%
CSC 201	67.4	56.8%	83.3%	73.8%	63.3%	17.0%	-9.5%
CHM 241	69.0	56.3%	33.3%	81.4%	61.1%	25.1%	48.1%
HCT 110	61.1	62.0%	50.0%	60.6%	60.0%	-1.4%	10.6%
PHY 241	56.6	42.9%	50.0%	56.1%	75.0%	13.2%	6.1%

Table 1 – Course success rates, 2018-19

As Table1 reveals, high enrollment gateway courses at Reynolds show an achievement gap from 26% to 2% gap in success between white and African American students. Additionally, fall-to-fall retention rates in Figure 4 show the highest gap in achievement of more than 20% between student ethnicity groups.

Figure 4 – Fall-fall retention rates

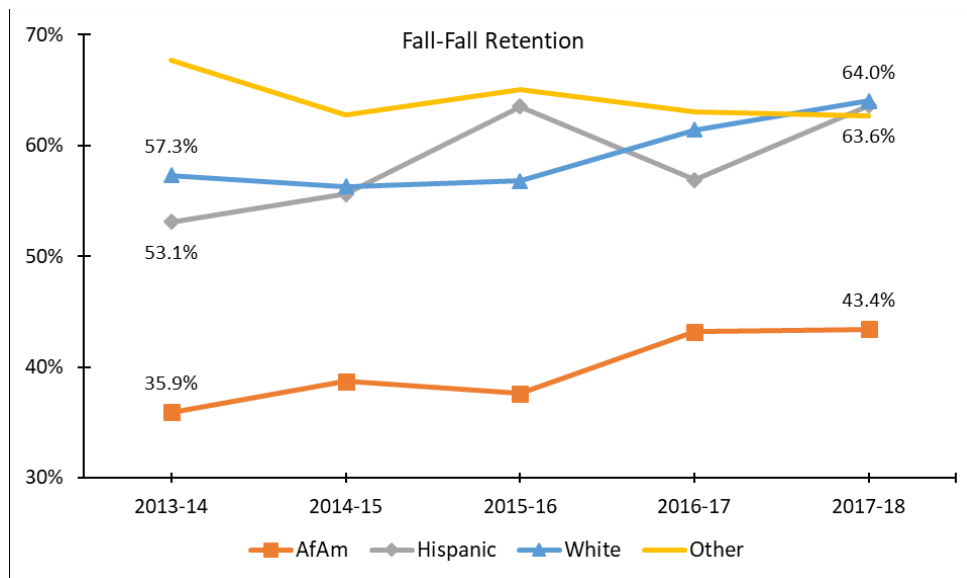Even lower is the graduation rate in Figure 5, which in 2017-18 rested at 18% overall, with a 12% attainment gap between white and African American students. Reynolds intentional investment in professional development seeks to improve retention, completion and reduce the educational attainment gap. The college recognizes it must improve and as it does so, ensure that all students are succeeding.

Figure 5 – Graduation Rates

Institutional Investment in Student Excellence

Effective colleges that view their work through an equity lens ensure there are high and equitable levels of access and success for students who have been historically underserved—particularly students of color. These colleges also revise or implement policies and support structures to drive equity. They do so by intentionally providing structures to guide and support students who have been historically marginalized while maintaining a commitment to the success of all students. Reynolds' administration and faculty acknowledge that more is required to close the achievement gap and to increase student completion. Attaining positive outcomes requires a multifaceted overhaul that builds structures for student success college-wide. Colleges around the country are making strides. "When colleges have a culture based on student success, faculty and staff consistently invent ways to improve student outcomes" (Wyner, 2014); there is a deep dissatisfaction with the status quo. Colleges that have adopted this commitment to equity have built in an intentional effort to approach teaching and learning

based on a culture of student success, yielding tremendous results. Colleges where completion and educational attainment gaps have closed focused on transformational change in these areas:

- created a vision for advancing student access and success

- developed guided pathway redesign, while removing barriers to student success

- organized academic pathways with stackable credentials

- emphasized faculty development, with a focus on active learning strategies and inclusive curricular design

- used data to drive decision-making

- restructured to emphasize quality student advising

- phased-in comprehensive technology infrastructure to accelerate implementation of strategic initiatives

- redesigned tutoring services for gateway courses, developed and delivered within the academic unit

With the exception of a redesigned unit for cohesive faculty professional development that is focused on inclusive instruction in an effort to close the achievement gap, Reynolds has begun each of these initiatives. Academic programs have long been using data on student success measures and labor market demands to inform curriculum design. Over ten years ago, the nursing faculty and their dean launched a nursing tutoring program to increase fall-to-fall retention. Several years ago, Reynolds math faculty and their dean launched Math Central, providing tutoring for math courses at all levels. As mentioned earlier, CETL was launched to improve instructional technology and online learning. The college's occupational and technical programs have begun creating stackable credentials leading to the associate degree. This year, an expansion to Math Central Plus will provide tutoring for courses where math is a fundamental learning component, such as physics, chemistry, and engineering. The English faculty are creating a Writing Center. A committee of faculty and deans are implementing guided pathways. Most importantly, college leadership and faculty have made a renewed commitment to the vision of ensuring all students succeed.

The 2020 QEP Design

Reynolds is redesigning professional development for all employees within the framework of student success. Reynolds' 2020 Quality Enhancement Plan, *Minding the Gap: Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction* will focus on *faculty* professional development because, as the research demonstrates, faculty and the experiences they create in and out of the classroom are the most important drivers to closing the achievement gap. The QEP's four major goals are to:

1) Develop and implement a department of inclusive instruction and professional development;

2) Implement a comprehensive faculty professional development program focused on enhancing faculty skills to support and deliver inclusive and engaging instruction;

3) Identify and share best practices for inclusive and engaging classroom teaching; and,

4) Establish a faculty resource room (The Faculty Room) to support faculty in the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices and use of instructional technology.

Becoming an equity-based institution necessitates raising awareness specifically in instructional delivery, building an understanding of inequitable outcomes and systemic inequalities, cultivating "evidence-based knowledge" about the nature of inequities, motivating others to act, and promoting the engagement of everyone (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017) **before** immersion in professional development. "It is important to think about the larger campus environment into which underrepresented and underserved students are recruited, and this includes both the academic and social spaces that they will navigate…. Campus climate brings together the social and institutional contexts that affect the ways that students experience colleges and universities. Oftentimes, colleges are unaware of how underrepresented students experience campus and collegiate environments" (Castro, 2015). In fall semester 2018, the QEP planning committee developed a template to guide college-wide constituent discussions to solicit input on the QEP topic and help the planning committee develop a more in-depth understanding of *who* Reynolds students are perceived to be and how the college community

could help promote equity for students. (See Appendix). The template gave a brief overview of the intended QEP objectives and posed a series of relevant questions to guide the conversations:

1) In what ways could we change our culture to be more student-centered?

2) What academic & support services do our students need?

3) How can we transform our students experiences at Reynolds?

4) What college and community resources could be used to enhance student outcomes?

5) What risk factors have you directly observed in your role at the college?

The responses were compiled and coded by identifying key word(s) that summarized the individual responses within the context of the question asked. Input then was further coded and organized by following themes and subject matter categories related to the equity-based foundation and proposed objectives of the QEP concept: Institutional equity domains of "attitudes and dispositions" and the "politics and power dynamics" (Wood, 2017); perceptions of Reynolds' college climate; and, anecdotal awareness. Threaded throughout the constituent discussions was the need to train Reynolds faculty and staff to *see* and *value* students for the individuals they are. In embracing an equity cognitive frame and enacting institutional equity to promote equitable outcomes, Reynolds recognizes that employees "need continual education and new knowledge to help support the success of students who may experience the world and the institution differently than they do [and] practitioners need to know that equity is an institutional value and they should be given the knowledge and resources to work toward this goal" (Castro, 2015).

Presented below are the four major goals of the QEP, which will lead to increased student success and each provides details on how the college intends to achieve these goals:

Goal 1: Develop and implement a department of inclusive instruction and professional development

The organizational chart for the Department of Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development, Figure 6, shows the construct of the newly created unit, which is comprised of positions to lead, develop and support the implementation of a comprehensive and cohesive

college that is committed to learning. This department will provide a support structure for professional development at Reynolds for all staff and faculty to promote equity, diversity and inclusion. Each of the roles in the department is discussed below with a purpose statement for the position to implement Reynolds' commitment to professional development and support student success.
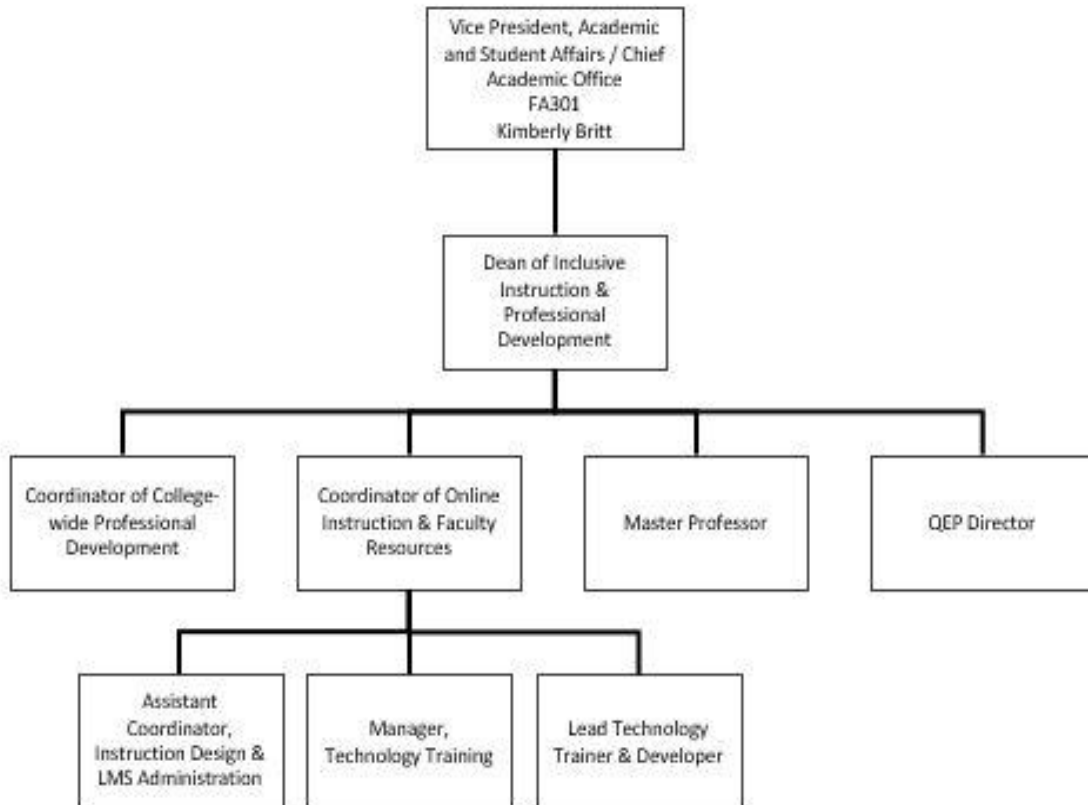

Figure 6, Organizational Chart for Department of Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development

- **Dean of Inclusive Instruction & Professional Development—**This newly created position will provide leadership to the unit focused on college-wide professional development and inclusive instruction. The dean will ensure that professional development will be delivered through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens. The dean will work with the president's executive cabinet and professionals within this college unit to create cohesive and intentional professional development activities focused on achieving equitable outcomes and student success at Reynolds.

- **Coordinator of College-Wide Professional Development**—The coordinator for college-wide professional development is an existing position at Reynolds that falls within the department of human resources. As part of the cohesive approach to professional development, the coordinator is reassigned to this unit to create consistency in focus, message and training college-wide. The work of this coordinator's work will expand to include assembling of teams to create and build several professional development programs within the college to support student success (e.g. Department Chair Leadership Program, Conflict Resolution Seminars, Professional Seminars for Classified Staff focused on creating equity in services and creating an inclusive and welcoming environment, etc). Currently, these programs do not exist.

- **Coordinator of Online Instruction & Faculty Resources** This newly created position will provide leadership for the start-up and management of the Faculty Room to support online and face-to face instruction. This leader will be positioned to support professional development in best practices and pedagogy centered in online coursework and in the use of technology to support active, engaging learning environments which lead to inclusive classroom experiences.

- **Master Professor**—The master professor will be the faculty lead for the Association for College and University Educators (ACUE) (description of this faculty professional development program follows) cohorts. Reynolds believes that faculty professional development should have a faculty leader who drives the training in collaboration with the college's administration. Ensuring shared governance matters. Therefore, the master professor will seek to facilitate opportunities for cohort groups to collaborate and share their learning resources, work with the QEP coordinator to facilitate assessment of student success, and champion the faculty to participate in the Faculty Symposium, where best practices and success strategies will be shared along with supporting data. Finally, the master professor will work with the Coordinator for Online Learning and Faculty Resources to design the Faculty Room.

- **QEP Director—**The QEP Director will support the dean in the roll-out of the QEP and assist the office of institutional research and effectiveness (OIE) in data collection for assessment.

- **Assistant Coordinator of Instruction Design & Learning Management System Administration—**An existing position, this role provides management for instructional design for online courses and face-to-face courses which use CANVAS, the learning management system.

- **Manager for Technology Training—**An existing position that is reassigned from the institutional technology department to this unit to work more closely with the dean of inclusive instruction and professional development on technology training to support student success at Reynolds.

- **Lead Technology Training & Developer—**An existing position that is reassigned from the institutional technology department to this unit to assist the manager for technology training and to manage The Faculty room.

Goal 2: Implement a comprehensive faculty professional development program focused on enhancing faculty skills to support and deliver inclusive and engaging instruction

To address inequitable learning outcomes, which for an equity-minded institution means the "eradication of racial inequality," faculty, staff, and administrators must understand and embrace the characteristics of equity-mindedness:

(a) being race conscious in a critical way, as opposed to color blind; (b) being cognizant of structural and institutional racism as the root cause of inequities as opposed to deficiencies stemming from essentialist perspectives on race or ethnicity; (c) recognizing that to achieve equity it may be necessary to treat individuals unequally as opposed to

treating everyone equally; and (d) being able to focus on practices as the source of failure rather than student deficits" (Felix et al, 2015).

The professional development plan for faculty affords opportunities to learn how to "help support the success of students who may experience the world and the institution differently than they do…Practitioners need to know that equity is an institutional value and they should be given the knowledge and resources to work toward this goal. Understanding how underrepresented students experience the climate of the institution is an important place to begin this work" (Castro, 2015). As an equity-minded institution, it is Reynolds' responsibility "to ensure that the individuals representing the college are committed to equity and that routine practices—including habits, dispositions, norms, and regulations—reflect this commitment" (Castro, 2015). Advancing opportunities for Reynolds' faculty to learn why an equity cognitive frame and equity-mindedness is critical to reducing inequitable learning outcomes is a fundamental stepping stone in institutional equity.

> The problem of unequal outcomes resides within individuals, in the cognitive frames that govern their attitudes, beliefs, values, and actions. Similarly, the reduction of inequalities also lies within individuals, specifically, in their capacity to develop equity as their cognitive frame…Institutional actors, as a consequence of their beliefs, expectations, values, and practices, create or perpetuate unequal outcomes and that the possibility for reversing inequalities depends on individual learning that holds the potential for bringing about self-change. That is, individuals—the ways in which they teach, think students learn, and connect with students, and the assumptions they make about students based on their race or ethnicity—can create the problem of unequal outcomes. Such individuals, if placed in situations where they learn the ways in which their own thinking creates or accentuates inequities, can also learn new ways of thinking that are more equity minded. Individually and collectively, campus members can be the creators of the conditions that result in unequal or equitable outcomes (Bensimon, 2005).

Research demonstrates that "faculty behaviors and attitudes affect students profoundly" (Umbach and Wawrzynski, 2005), and Wood, Harris, and White (2015), in their studies of men

of color in the community college, posit "student success is more a function of the environments created by faculty members than factors relevant to themselves." Clearly, "a deep and guided examination of teaching and learning" and an acknowledgement of the "primacy of faculty over just about everything that affects educational outcomes" (Felix et al, 2015) is also crucial to promoting equitable educational outcomes. "If patterns of inequality are invisible, they will not be discussed, and if institutional participants do not have a reason or opportunity to talk about unequal outcomes, the problem will not be addressed directly" (Bensimon, 2005). The proposed professional development plan reflects the commitment for all Reynolds to become equity-minded practitioners.

The faculty professional development plan will focus on transforming the classroom culture to reflect the equity-mindedness necessary for reducing inequitable learning outcomes. This plan will be developed in tandem with the faculty development plan. Delivery of training topics will continue from year-to-year and be revised as needed.

ACUE: Professional Development Seminar for Faculty

The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) provides a rich professional development experience for faculty online. The premise of its teaching framework is that with great teaching, students succeed. Built upon decades of scholarship, there are four core competencies that comprise ACUE's Effective Practice Framework including a comprehensive statement of essential knowledge and skills in five major areas of teaching. The seminar includes over 200 recommended evidence-based practices which have been developed in collaboration with leading experts, teaching center directors, and faculty. Additionally, the framework has been independently validated by the American Council on Higher Education. The framework centers on collaboration, course design, and continuous improvement. ACUE seminars offer faculty the opportunity to collaborate with peers and receive guidance from expert facilitators—through a teaching center. Courses include numerous instructional resources, interviews with leading experts, and demonstration videos showcasing great teaching in action. The practical and relevant experience helps faculty learn deeply and implement approaches across all of the Frameworks. Additionally, ACUE is designed for change. The research-based learning design guides faculty cohorts from foundational

knowledge through higher order learning to implementation of proven approaches, reflection on one's practice and refinement based on peer and expert feedback. These are graduate-level credits which are delivered online and certified by Quality Matters, leading to a credential that is co-issued with the American Council on Education. Finally, once the credential is earned, faculty will receive ongoing support to refine their teaching, stay current on research and advance the national conversation on best teaching practices. The ACUE Modules focus on practices across four frameworks and core competencies to help students succeed and are outlined below.

Module One: Designing an effective course and class

Module one focuses on redesigning courses, syllabi, and class sessions to better define and achieve desired results in student success. The module equips faculty with knowledge on establishing powerful learning outcomes, aligning assessments with course outcomes, creating assignments and activities and aligning those to courses outcomes and preparing an effective syllabus. This module delivers content to help faculty develop well-structured, well-planned and thoughtfully designed assessments. This structure and precision is critical to the success of all students, and especially students of color or under-prepared and under-resourced students who need clear direction to improve their success.

Module Two: Establishing a productive learning environment

Module two focuses on practices that build relationships, embrace diversity, help students persist, and create an environment that supports learning and success. This module offers best-practices for building an environment that is inclusive and creates a sense of belonging for all students. Module two develops specific approaches to leading the first day of class, promoting a civil learning environment, connecting with students, motivating students, engaging underprepared students, helping students persist in their studies, and embracing diversity in the classroom.

Module Three: Using active learning techniques

Module three develops techniques that promote active learning in large and small classes and enhances a professor's ability to lead engaging discussions. This module teaches faculty to use active learning techniques in small groups, in small classes, during lecture, and also equips them with a stronger skillset to plan and facilitate active learning techniques in discussions as well as integrate civic learning into their courses.

Module Four: Promoting Higher Order Thinking

Module four seeks to develop strategies that deepen learning and help students take greater ownership of their studies. The module focuses on providing clear directions and expectations, using concept maps and other visualization tools, teaching powerful note-taking skills, using advanced questioning techniques, and developing self-directed learners. In short, this module provides faculty with a skilled approach to making student success in courses a shared partnership between student and faculty, with the student becoming more involved in their success.

Module Five: Assessing to inform instruction and promote learning

Module five, which is critical to knowing what teaching practices are helping students to be successful focuses on methods of formative and summative assessment to promote success and refine teaching. Faculty will learn to develop fair, consistent and transparent grading practices. Additionally, the module focuses on using rubrics and checklists, using useful feedback and checking for student understanding as best-practices to improving student success.

The college will sponsor two cohorts over the next four years, with each cohort consisting of 30 faculty each who will participate in ACUE's teacher certification program to become a master teacher. Approximately 240 faculty will be credentialed over the four-year period, nearly half of all faculty (full-time and part-time) who teach at Reynolds. Reynolds is committed to the development of its full-time and part-time faculty who have a significant impact on student

success and retention. Each year the cost for these certifications is $75,000, which the college has budgeted as part of the QEP.

The faculty-specific professional development plan will afford all Reynolds faculty, both full-time and adjunct, multiple opportunities to invest in their professional development in the areas of teaching and learning. Approaches to faculty development will occur in the following formats:

- Faculty Learning Cohorts
- Webinars
- In-Class Workshops
- Faculty Teaching and Learning Symposium

As each of the annual focal areas are developed and implemented, the previous years' efforts will continue to be provided for faculty development. Assessments will take the form of satisfaction surveys, pre- and post-tests, self-reflections and inquiry-based participant practices and responses. The overarching goals of the Reynolds Faculty Professional Development program include:

- *Create a learning environment that increases meta-cognition and self-reflection:* meta-cognition and self-reflection are inquiry-based strategies that assist students in realizing their own potential and recognizing self-efficacy as well as self-advocacy, all of which are crucial to success in all areas of life. Importantly, such learned strategies increase the likelihood that the program students will come to understand that the "centrality of [their] experiential knowledge…is legitimate" as Critical Race Theory posits (Yosso, 2005). Additionally, "helping students to concretely identify and refine their own learning preferences, aptitudes, confidence, locus of control, and self-regulation and helping them to learn other "soft skills" have proven to have long-term effects that promote retention and continued success" (Becker, 2017).

- *Create an environment of social, emotional, and academic value:* With the direct and personal contact, faculty are positioned to be "attentive to the environment into which they are welcoming underrepresented and traditionally undervalued student communities" (Castro, 2015). An important component in achieving this outcome is to

create an environment where students are able to build upon *their own* social and cultural capital, and not only that of institutionalized "privilege" within the classroom. The traditional conception of cultural capital stems from Bourdieu who asserts "cultural capital refers to an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities possessed and inherited by privileged groups in society." Critical Race Theory argues this perspective nullifies the cultural capital of people of color because it deems that of the "privileged groups" to be the standard (Yosso, 2005). Social capital refers to social networks and community connections (Yosso, 2005). As previously noted, people of color, value community connections that are distinctly their own. In the broader sense, each of these types of capital represent the accumulation of "tools" and assets that enables one to move among and upward in a society that marginalizes based on the level *and type* of such capital. By affirming and validating everyone, faculty will assist in creating an environment where African-American and Hispanic students (and others) can thrive. Master Teachers will have an increased skillset upon completion of ACUE to facilitate this experience for students.

- *Increase student engagement with resources and connect students to comprehensive college and community resource referral and utilization:* ACUE certified faculty will be provided a skillset to assist them with connecting students to critical resources that students of color and students coming from low-socio economic homes need to manage life and college. For these students, a lack of knowledge about what resources are available, fear of asking for help, or even not knowing help is needed are common barriers to student success. As Reynolds develops a comprehensive repository of college and community resources with a specific point of contact in each area, faculty will be trained to connect students to these resources and points of contact, counselors and advisors to ensure students are more prepared to succeed in class. This network allows faculty to assist students with personal connections instead of the traditional "take this form and go to office X." Referrals to resources will be a part of the student's plan as needed. The concerted referral to specific people within the areas has the potential to

create hundreds of opportunities for students to make meaningful connections of support. The value of this objective extends to all students.

- *Expand academic and non-academic student supports:* To insure equity-mindedness is at the heart of what Reynolds provide for students, assessing what academic and non-academic supports the college currently offers is important.

Achieving these objectives will contribute to closing the attainment gap in gateway course completion, retention, and, ultimately, credit completion. The assessment plan allows for assessment of the student success outcomes, formatively and summatively.

Goal 3: Identify and share best practices for inclusive and engaging classroom teaching

A major goal of the QEP is to create opportunities for faculty to share the learning and practices they are implementing to effect change. Faculty will identify and share knowledge and best practices that have led to student success while expanding opportunities for change in teaching, learning and student success in a more impactful way. Therefore, Reynolds' QEP does not stop with just supporting a professional development program for faculty. As part of the 2020 QEP, Reynolds will provide resources, spaces, and facilitate the sharing of ideas that are gained and implemented as a part of ACUE. This sharing will ensure that faculty learn from other faculty who have gone before them and to help faculty who are new to Reynolds and not certified through ACUE, have an opportunity to use select best practices to improve their classroom design and course implementation.

To support and share best practices, as part of the QEP, Reynolds will establish the following:

- *Faculty Teaching and Learning Symposium*—The symposium will be scheduled in April each spring and will showcase the best teaching practices that have effected change in courses at Reynolds. ACUE credentialed faculty will have the opportunity to share the successful outcomes from their courses and share student feedback. This will also allow faculty to compare similar courses taught prior to the ACUE program and after to discuss specifically who their approaches seem to be helping the most.
- *Master Professor*—The master professor will be the faculty lead and representative in faculty professional development to the administration. This position will help to facilitate internal shared learning experiences, design the Faculty Room (in collaboration

with other faculty and administration) and serve as the liaison to administration for faculty needs that specifically relate to teaching and learning.

- *Video Sharing*—Reynolds will film "faculty in action" as they put into practice the refined teaching skills learned from ACUE. The videos seek to serve as an online repository for other faculty to see best teaching practices in action, in a Reynolds classroom.

- *Best Practice Repository*—The Repository will be shared online and supplemented with materials to be housed in The Faculty Room. This room is designed to provide a space and structure to support conversation, collaboration to develop refined approaches to teaching, and a sandbox to experiment with new technology and discuss how to effectively embed it into the classroom setting.

Goal 4: Establish a faculty resource room (The Faculty Room) to support faculty in the implementation of inclusive pedagogical practices and use of instructional technology

The QEP proposes developing and implementing an extensive and continuous, multi-layered, equity-based, college-wide professional development plan for faculty but also seeks to implement structures to support on-going professional growth and expansion in online and traditional course delivery modes as noted above. The faculty will share resources within a central space and the room will serve as central hub for faculty to collaborate and engage in continuous conversation. These efforts will improve the awareness of disparities in equity, foster knowledge of systemic (social and cultural) barriers encountered by underserved students, highlight implicit biases and assumptions, engage practices of inquiry and encourage self-assessment, reflection, and sharing, and emphasize institutional (and individual) ownership for student success. The faculty-specific professional development includes and expands upon the college-wide professional development objectives to enhance faculty skills in supporting student success in college-level reading, writing, and mathematics and to assist faculty in developing strategies to promote equitable outcomes for students of color in the classroom.

Minding the Gap Assessment Plan

As described throughout Reynolds' 2020 Quality Enhancement Plan – *Minding the Gap: Professional Development for Inclusive Instruction*, measuring and improving student success is

at the core of the work of the plan. All effective assessment plans begin with measurable goals. The student success goals for the *Minding the Gap* plan will occur throughout the implementation and be the responsibility of several key participants in the plan. While the primary goal of the plan is to close the achievement gap among students at Reynolds, the means to accomplish that end, including the monitoring, collection, and analysis of data is part of the college's ongoing efforts to measure and improve its effectiveness at meeting its mission. The details of the assessment plan are presented in the table below, complete with specific activities designed to measure the impact of the Minding the Gap plan through its first five years of implementation. The goals are presented in summary form along with their corresponding measures that will enable Reynolds to monitor the plan's achievement:

1) Increase **course success rates** in gateway/high impact courses for all students and eliminate the achievement gap between student ethnic categories of white, African American, and Hispanic. Selected gateway courses from Table 1 (on page 18) are highlighted below to represent the breadth of courses on which to focus attention for the QEP. These were identified as preliminary sites of focus due to the enrollment of more than 100 students, with success rates (earned grades of A, B, C) less than 70% and eventually the focus on course success rates will expand to include all classes with high risk features. The faculty participating in the professional development program through ACUE will be tracked and engaged in conversations on how to improve success rates for these high impact courses. Goal metrics include: overall success rates for all courses to increase from 80% to 85% by 2025, while reducing by half the gap between African American (75%) and white (82%) student course success rates from 7% to 3% by 2025.

Course	Overall	Black	Hispanic	White	Other	GAP (w-b)	GAP (w-h)
HIS 101	68.8	50.5%	78.4%	74.4%	75.6%	23.9%	-4.0%
PHY 241	56.6	42.9%	50.0%	56.1%	75.0%	13.2%	6.1%
MTH 161	58.4	56.6%	55.6%	58.9%	61.5%	2.3%	3.3%
SPA 101	68.5	50.9%	86.7%	77.1%	76.2%	26.2%	-9.6%
CHM 241	69.0	56.3%	33.3%	81.4%	61.1%	25.1%	48.1%
CST 110	67.6	56.3%	85.7%	75.8%	81.3%	19.5%	-9.9%

Table 2 – Selected high impact, high risk courses from 2018-19 academic year

2) Increase fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall **retention rates** for all students while eliminating the achievement gap between student ethnic categories of white, African American, and Hispanic. The chart for fall-fall retention is presented for reference, both categories will be monitored during the QEP assessment plan. Retention rates improvement also depends heavily on the faculty engagement with students early and often at Reynolds. Using the Navigate tool to alert students early and record attendance and first assignment grades will enable monitoring of some faculty and student interactions while also discussing with the faculty how they are working with students to keep them enrolled at the college. The development of the "Faculty Room" will enable instructors to test new approaches, tools and techniques to engage with students during the times in between class meetings to encourage return and persistence. Goal metrics include: overall retention for all students will increase from 50% to 60% by 2025 and to reduce by half the gap between African American (43.4%) and white (64%) student retention rates from 21% to 10% by 2025.
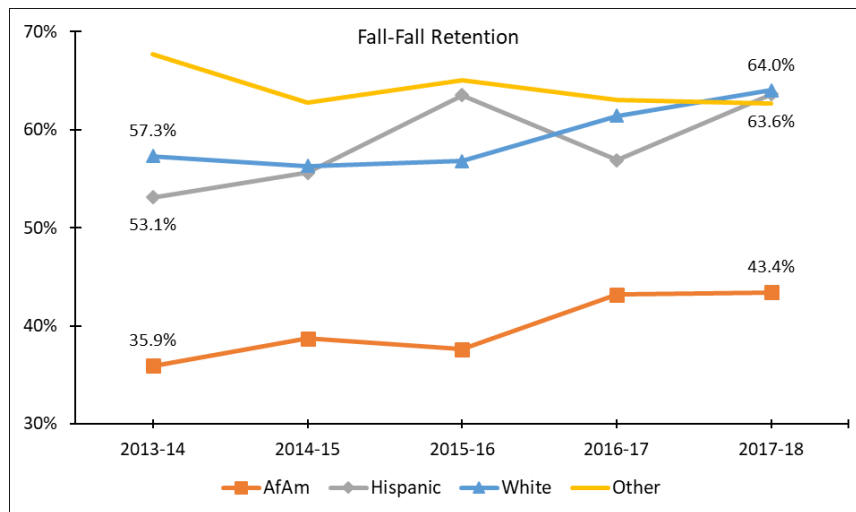

Figure 7 – Fall-Fall Retention Rates

3) Improve **graduation rates** in all programs for all students while eliminating the achievement gap between student ethnic categories of white, African American and Hispanic. Faculty and professional staff at Reynolds will closely collaborate to work with students to keep them enrolled and to persist through their programs of study. Taskstream is a newly implemented tool at Reynolds to monitor both academic and

administrative program improvement efforts by measuring goal attainment. Reports from the Taskstream system will be monitored to track the changes implemented within programs that lead directly to student persistence and completion. Peer tutors will also be a critical piece in monitoring student engagement with college meetings designed to help persistence toward completion. Goal metrics include: overall graduation rates will double from 18% to 36% by 2025, the gap between African American (10%) and white (22%) student graduation rates will be reduced by half from 12% to 6% by 2025.
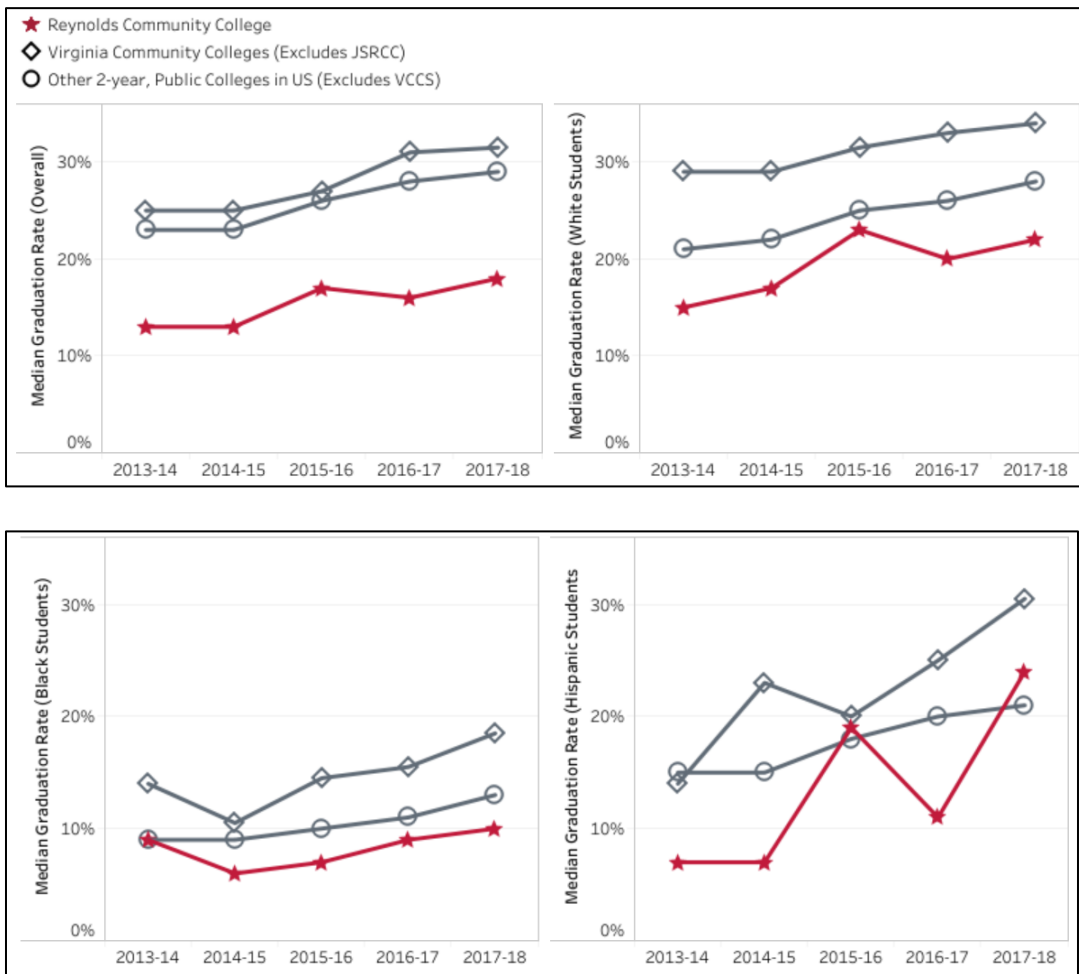

Figure 8 – Graduation Rates

Monitoring and adjusting the *Minding the Gap* QEP to meet its goals will be the primary responsibility of the QEP coordinator who will work closely with faculty, the new Dean of Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The assessment plan table below provides a summary on how this will occur and is organized by goal, measurement activity and timeline.

Minding the Gap QEP Assessment Plan Table

Goal	Measurements	Timeline & Key Leaders
1) Increase **course success rates** in gateway/high impact courses for all students and eliminate the achievement gap between student ethnic categories of white, African American, and Hispanic.		
a) Faculty ACUE participation impact on course success rates	**Activities:** compare success rates for students in courses taught by ACUE certified faculty to those in non-ACUE faculty courses. Survey faculty and students regarding perceptions of what worked and did not in ACUE (pre-, post-measures) courses. Active participation in sharing teaching practices in symposiums with emphasis on impact of students in ethnic categories **Methods:** faculty and student survey results from Class Climate, focus group data from faculty meetings and student gatherings, peer review ratings, rubric scores from faculty ACUE symposium **Use of results**: to improve faculty learning and application of techniques from ACUE modules shared at Faculty Senate meetings and among school and program academic and administrative leadership, discussed openly with faculty at program meetings and within Faculty Senate gatherings	Springs 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, following cohort completion of ACUE training Led by academic faculty facilitator, master professor and QEP Director
2) Increase fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall **retention rates** for all students while eliminating the achievement gap between student ethnic categories of white, African American, and Hispanic.		
a) Faculty, staff, and student use of Navigate tool to engage with students emphasizing consistent, positive messaging	**Activities**: track Navigate usage of appointment setting and early alerts by students and the capture of meeting notes, so faculty and staff are better informed of discussions on student progress **Methods**: activity tracking with engagement with online tool implemented college-wide, working with staff to encourage advising appointment use and follow-up	Throughout each semester during the timeframe of the QEP Led by QEP Director, college assessment coordinator, faculty liaisons, faculty master advisors, and professional advising staff

Goal	Measurements	Timeline & Key Leaders
	notification, and SDV instruction by students **Use of results**: improve connection between tool and student information system for accurate and timely data, best practices shared at symposium on teaching and within school and program meetings among faculty, including adjunct convocation events lead by faculty liaisons	
3) Improve graduation rates in all programs for all students while eliminating the achievement gap between student ethnic categories of white, African American, and Hispanic.		
a) Program improvement and annual health plans submitted in Taskstream	**Activities**: the annual process of program review for both academic and administrative units will highlight efforts to retain and graduate students **Methods**: annual submissions of status on student progress through pathways, curriculum changes to impact persistence and completion **Use of results**: best practices will be shared with other units at symposiums and faculty meetings, sharing areas of improvement as discussed with key stakeholders, with guidance of diversity, inclusion and equity college council	Throughout academic years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 Led by academic program heads, deans, coordinator of assessment, QEP Director

Implementation Plans and Timeline

The plan below identifies the timeline, activities, and personnel involved. The QEP coordinator is responsible for managing the plan and overseeing the implementation and assessment as well as holding meetings, communicating with internal and external constituents and writing reports.

Year	Semester	Activities	Personnel
Zero	Fall 2019	1. Reorganize all Professional Development at the College under one the Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development 2. Sign Contract with ACUE 3. Advertise and hire a Dean of Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development (new position)	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA

Year	Semester	Activities	Personnel
		4. Conduct Space needs analysis for Faculty Room 5. Establish Master Professor Role 6. Develop PDO's on course assessment learning strategies 7. Identify first and second cohort of faculty to participate in ACUE (30 faculty each) 8. ACUE Cohort one will launch in September 9. Design rubrics for Faculty Symposium (rubrics are in support of professional rewards and recognitions for excellent teaching).	
Zero	Spring 2020	1. Launch second cohort for ACUE (30 faculty) 2. Establish and hold a Master Teacher Symposium 3. Create assessment for student input (comparison models for courses with master teachers and non-master teachers) 4. Develop space renewal plan for Faculty Resource Room 5. Research technology to be purchased an included in the room 6. Begin recruitment for faculty cohort 3	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Zero	Summer 2020	1. Hire Coordinator for Online Learning and Professional Development 2. Research and identify needed software and hardware 3. Design collaborative workshops with faculty for stronger writing instruction in the disciplines 4. Develop reward and recognition plan for faculty 5. Hold training sessions for faculty to help them connect students to resources available to assist students and to success coaches	• Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development • OIE • Department of Technology • Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs • Chief Financial Officer • Human Resources
One	Fall 2020	1. Soft opening for Faculty Room 2. Develop and facilitate collaborative workshops with faculty for stronger instruction in their respective disciplines 3. Launch cohort 3 for ACUE 4. Assess and report out on Year 1 accomplishments and assessments 5. Begin website design for shared learning resources and videos showcase best teaching strategies in use at Reynolds 6. Recruit cohort 4	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
One	Spring 2021	1. Official opening of Faculty Room 2. Launch cohort 4 of ACUE 3. Hold second teaching and learning faculty symposium 4. Ongoing assessment of implemented processes including training, assessment, scheduling, record-keeping, etc. 5. Conduct analysis of need for handouts and online resources for faculty	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff

Year	Semester	Activities	Personnel
		6. Recruit for cohort 5	• Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
One	Summer 2021	1. Assess outreach and marketing plan 2. Begin build of faculty shared website 3. Begin collection and production of online resources for faculty 4. Create social media presence 5. Develop strategic plan for interactive classroom learning spaces 6. Select and appoint Master Professor for Year Two	• Marketing Director • Master Teachers from Year one • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development VPASA
Two	Fall 2021	1. Launch cohort 5 2. Recruit for cohort 6 3. Assess website design for functionality and accessibility 4. Manage social media presence 5. Develop plan/procedures for cohort collaboration as cohorts grow in number. 6. Launch semester seminars to be delivered in-person for faculty not enrolled in ACUE to supplement general faculty professional development.	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Two	Spring 2022	1. Launch cohort 6 2. Recruit for cohort 7 3. Assess student success data for distribution on professional development day for the college. 4. Begin in-class visits and writing center workshops at large 5. Hiring search for full-time coordinator 6. Continue collection and production of online resources (for students and faculty) 7. Expand social media presence (blog, etc.)	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Two	Summer 2022	1. Develop plan for focused faculty outreach and support (in person and on website) 2. Assess the efficacy of ACUE and the Faculty Room (add resources, user statistics, etc.) 3. Appoint Master Professor for Year Three	• Marketing • OIE • VPASA
Three	Fall 2022	1. Launch cohort 7 2. Recruit for cohort 8 3. Assess best teaching practices, recruitment processes, procedures, etc. 4. Plan and develop online ancillary training modules and site to share information and best practices 5. Plan for college-wide event programming to promote success measures reached. 6. Continue to develop plan for focused faculty outreach and support (in person and on website)	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development

Year	Semester	Activities	Personnel
		7. Appoint Master Professor for Year Four	
Three	Spring 2023	1. Implement plan for focused faculty outreach and support 2. Launch cohort 8 3. Recruit cohort 9 4. Continue ongoing needs assessment for teaching and faculty support for online site and the Faculty Room 5. Continue developing and designing workshops for faculty 6. Develop video tutorials faculty for website 7. Hold third teaching and learning symposium	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Three	Summer 2023	1. Assess plan for focused faculty outreach and support (virtual and in-person) 2. Continue to develop video tutorials for and faculty.	• OIE • VPASA • QEP Coordinator • Marketing
Four	Fall 2023	1. Conduct regular workshops for faculty. 2. Launch cohort 8 3. Recruit cohort 9 4. Continue plan for focused faculty outreach and support 5. Launch and assess video tutorials on website 6. Appoint Master professor for Year Five	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Four	Spring 2024	1. Launch cohort 9 2. Develop semester long training for peer tutors 3. Develop peer-led workshops for students 4. Recruit cohort 10 5. Hold fourth teaching and learning symposium	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Four	Summer 2024	1. Continue to develop semester long training for peer tutors 2. Continue to develop peer-led workshops for faculty	• Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development • Faculty representing all schools • VPASA
Five	Fall 2024	1. Launch cohort 10 2. Recruit cohort 11 3. Host professional development series during in-service that is faculty led 4. Develop faculty professional development efficacy assessment plan 5. Develop a service learning plan for students	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA

Year	Semester	Activities	Personnel
			• OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Five	Spring 2025	1. Launch final cohort 2. Continue to research and find resources and Technology for The Faculty Room 3. Add teaching videos to website 4. Hold fifth teaching and learning symposium 5. Host a celebration event for ACUE Credentialed Master Teachers	• QEP Coordinator • Master Professor • Coordinator for college-wide professional development • Faculty from all disciplines • VPASA • OIE staff • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development
Five	Summer 2025	1. Implement and assess community outreach/service learning plan 2. Report results of WC efficacy assessment to PEC	• OIE • QEP Coordinator • Dean for Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development • VPASA

QEP Budget Summary

Reynold Quality Enhancement Plan Budget					
FY2020 - FY2024					
Description	**FY2020***	**FY2021**	**FY2022**	**FY2023**	**FY2024**
Personnel-Salary and Benefits					
Full-Time					
- Dean of Inclusive Instruction and Professional Development	$131,373	$131,373	$131,373	$131,373	$131,373
- Coordinator of On-Line Learning and Faculty Resources (Quality Matters)	$0	$109,478	$109,478	$109,478	$109,478
Part-Time/Adjunct					
- Master Professor	$5,490	$5,490	$5,490	$5,490	$5,490
- QEP Coordinator/Implementation	$5,490	$5,490	$5,490	$5,490	$5,490
Total Personnel	**$142,353**	**$251,831**	**$251,831**	**$251,831**	**$251,831**
Non-Personnel Expenses					
Faculty Resource Room	$50,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000
Faculty Symposium	$8,600	$8,600	$8,600	$8,600	$8,600
Professional Development (ACUE)	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000	$75,000

Reward and Recognition	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000
Supplies	$250	$250	$250	$250	$250
Travel	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500
Total Non-Personnel Expenses	**$154,350**	**$134,350**	**$134,350**	**$134,350**	**$134,350**
Total Expenses	**$296,703**	**$386,181**	**$386,181**	**$386,181**	**$386,181**
* Sources of funds are from existing State and Local funds.					

Institutional Commitment to the QEP

Reynolds' 2022 Strategic Plan consists of several themes that *Minding the Gap* supports. The purpose of this QEP is to lead the college to the completion of highly impactful pieces of the college's Strategic Plan, which will end in 2022. Additionally, the QEP supports the missions and values of Reynolds and is one piece of a college-wide effort to support equity, diversity and inclusion. However, as noted in the Literature Review and reiterated in the Faculty Development Plan, investment in faculty professional development, if left unattended and not nurtured, will mean that other success strategies, structures and initiatives will fail.

Theme 1: Pathways to Post-Secondary Completion is the first thematic approach for Reynolds' 2022 Strategic Plan. It states Reynolds goal *to achieve recognition for being the preeminent pathway to quality, accessible post-secondary attainment*. The 2020 QEP specifically supports Goal D.5, *actively recruit and support underserved student in obtaining a credential*. Specifically, through intentional investments in faculty learning and resources that will equip faculty with enhanced skills, the place where students spend the bulk of the time while in college—the classroom—will support their success.

Theme 2: Pathways to Collegiate Experiences is the second theme of the strategic plan. The purpose of theme 2 is to *advance a world-class collegiate environment that supports the needs of a diverse student body through academic support, engaging activities, and a spirit of inclusiveness*. Strategies C.1 aD.1, D.2, and D.3 are supported through an investment in faculty professional development.

Strategy C.1 focuses on *ensuring college policies and practices related to administration, academics, students, and faculty and staff promote equality and inclusion*. Specifically, this professional development plan will equip faculty with a skillset to design and implement classroom practices and policies and deliver equitable and inclusive instruction to support a diverse student body.

Goals D.2, and D.3 connect most directly with the QEP. The goals stated below intentionally layout a plan for Reynolds to invest in a dynamic, diverse faculty and staff to create a vibrant and sustainable organization that supports a diverse student body. Strategies to achieve this goal are noted below and quoted directly from Reynolds' Strategic Plan:

1) Goal D.2--*Invest in the professional and personal growth of the full-time and part-time faculty and staff*.
2) Goal D.3--*Provide faculty and staff access to and training for current and emerging technologies necessary for effective teaching, learning, and administrative support and achieving and demonstrating appropriate technology competence*.

These specific strategies of the college's 2022 Strategic Plan are supported with the roll-out of a comprehensive professional development unit, the intentional investment in faculty to support student success, and through the establishment of resources and structures to encourage on-going learning at Reynolds. The Faculty Symposium and Faculty Room are both supportive investments in best-practice and the use of technology to create an engaging and active learning environment.

Student success, equity, diversity and inclusion in the pursuit of educational attainment has been enhanced and supported college-wide with diverse initiatives designed to directly support student success. As noted earlier, Reynolds has begun the process of opening a Writing Center (in the design phase during the 2019-20 academic year; it will open in the fall 2020). Reynolds has also expanded Math Central services to support all math-based courses or courses that require a significant background in math to succeed, to include physics, engineering, and chemistry. Library Services has been expanded to include one-on-one tutoring in subjects that support progression beyond gateway courses, such as accounting, anatomy and physiology, and

foreign language, to list a few. However, academic support is not the only investment outside the classroom that Reynolds has designed.

Wrap-around services and counseling services which support the development and success of the "whole" student are beginning in Fall 2019. These wrap-around and counseling services are designed to help students balance college life and life barriers. These services include the establishment of success coaches to support students of color and underserved students to navigate academic pathways, trouble-shoot academic issues, and to have a mentor to guide them to their second year of college success.

The college is also seeking to support students who bring a host of challenging life circumstances to college that can interfere with their ability to complete successfully. The college has extensively expanded support services to include Single-Stop, Retention services, and to build a connection for students to community resources that will allow them to better balance financial, psychological, and/or educational supports to assist them in their journey. Recently, Reynolds has launched food pantries on every campus to help students to access food throughout the day, as necessary, so they can focus on learning.

This comprehensive structure of student support will be combined with curriculum and scheduling overhauls to follow a Guided Pathways model in support of student success., Four counselors were recently hired and in combination with an investment in professional development for faculty, these support structures will lead to improved student attainment. The administration, faculty and staff recognize that no one solution will increase completion and close the achievement gap; however, a comprehensive approach, with a significant investment in the classroom experience will increase student success for every student at Reynolds as the same practices have for colleges very similar in size and composition. Reynolds is committed to changing the life trajectory for students who come to the college.

Conclusion

In closing, the J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College 2020 QEP *Minding the Gap* is being launched to respond to increased demands from the United States Department of Education, The State Council for Higher Education in Virginia, and the Virginia Community College's Chancellor, Dr. Glenn DuBois, to improve retention and completion rates and to ensure equity in education for students of color. The expanded, focused and intentional investment of Reynolds into its faculty and the resources needed to empower student success will lead to better outcomes for the Greater Richmond region. Reynolds' faculty, staff and executive leadership are focused on implementing structures and support to enable students to succeed and positively impact the local community per the college's mission. With this renewed commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion with several key initiatives and this investment, Reynolds will make great strides in closing the educational attainment gaps that exist for its students and will simultaneously improve overall completion rates. Reynolds is ready to "Mind the Gap" by continuing to align structures, resources and support to improve student success.

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