

## Executive Summary

In September of 2019, Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW) began the process of identifying a topic for a Quality Enhancement Plan as part of the 2022 SACSCOC reaffirmation process. The Topic Identification Committee began by asking three questions of faculty and staff:

- 1) What is something FSW can do to improve student learning outcomes?
- 2) What is something FSW can do to improve student success?
- 3) What ideas for a QEP would have broad-focused support across campuses and/or departments/disciplines?

While several excellent suggestions were advanced, including initiatives supporting guided pathways, student mental health, and information literacy, ultimately after much research and reflection, the QEP Topic Identification Committee selected “transdisciplinary communication” as the topic that best fulfilled the college’s criteria. The topic is based on FSW’s ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process; has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and student success; will facilitate the assessment of achievement and is achievable under the QEP Evaluative Framework. The QEP title was chosen based on this process and promise: “CREATIVE Connections: Breaking Barriers Across Disciplines.” The QEP will develop a capstone course for the general education program to be named “CREATIVE Capstone,” required of all FSW students seeking an Associate in Arts Degree, which will improve student outcomes and deploy High Impact Practices (HIPs) to a wider range of students.

Broadly speaking, transdisciplinary work addresses the shared, complex problems that confront us, works to produce something new, mixes materials and methods from different disciplines and practices, and involves communities and/or the public. Florida SouthWestern State College’s general education capstone course will foster transdisciplinary work through reading, writing, speaking, and graphical/visual communication. Students, faculty, administrators, and staff will work collaboratively and creatively to promote transfer of learning and adaptability to new contexts in fulfillment of the college’s general education mission and curriculum. The goal of the QEP is to help students make connections between their general education courses and the problems they hope to solve, and the questions they hope to address, in their majors and careers through critically engaged reading and the production of projects that require writing, public speaking, and graphical/visual communication.

During the previous reaffirmation cycle (2012), FSW developed a QEP focused on the development of a First Year Experience program, including a Student Life Skills course called “Cornerstone Experience.” Cornerstone provides an opportunity for all incoming, first time in college (FTIC) students at FSW to learn about the college’s resources, participate in common intellectual experiences, and develop plans for their degrees at the college. Over the course of the previous QEP, student retention was increased, as was student achievement of critical thinking as assessed on dimensions of the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) and through assignments assessed using faculty-developed rubrics aligned with the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework. The 2022 QEP, the CREATIVE Capstone, builds on the success

of Cornerstone Experience by introducing a capstone course that allows students to synthesize knowledge gained through completing the general education program at Florida Southwestern State College.

FSW's QEP, "CREATIVE Connections: Breaking Barriers Across Disciplines," will continue to promote innovation and adaptability to improve students' transdisciplinary communication skills. This QEP compliments and strengthens the college's mission by implementing innovative teaching frameworks to inspire learning; preparing a diverse student population for participation in a global community by taking a transdisciplinary approach to explore global problems and questions of interest; and helping graduates to be intellectual leaders in their communities by preparing them to use and communicate knowledge and skills acquired from different disciplines. The CREATIVE Capstone program at FSW will provide students with a structured opportunity to reflect on their general education coursework, apply their learning to new contexts, and consider how flexibility and transdisciplinary approaches are necessary to advance knowledge and solve the problems of the future.