



QEP

**Compass: Navigating Excellence
through Effective Communication**

**QEP Impact Report
Year Four
FY22**

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O **verview**

Each year, the QEP Executive Committee will provide the President's Executive Cabinet with an impact report, leading up to the required Fifth-Year Interim Report.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is one of only a few accrediting commissions that conducts a comprehensive review of its institutions every ten years. Most accrediting agencies conduct such reviews every 5 to 7 years. The U.S. Department of Education requires accrediting agencies to monitor institutions more often to ensure that institutions having access to federal funds continue to meet accreditation standards. To that end, the Commission has developed a Fifth-Year Interim Report.

This yearly report includes elements that will be addressed in the Fifth-Year Interim Report:

- **Executive Summary**
- **List of the initial goals and intended outcomes**
- **Discussion of changes made to the QEP and the reasons**
- **QEP's impact on student learning**
- **Assessment**
- **Reflection on what the institution has learned**
- **Budget summary**
- **Projection: Year Five**

Executive Summary

E Sul Ross State University (SRSU) initiated the broad-based institutional process of identifying possible QEP topics in the Fall of 2015, which involved solicited input from all stakeholders and a review of institutional data and best practices. From this process, the need for students to understand how to communicate effectively through written, oral, and visual communication emerged as our focus.

SRSU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) addresses the student communication need across all academic programs, academic colleges, and campuses. Based on the input from the Reaffirmation Committee, the objective of SRSU's QEP, **Compass: Navigating Excellence through Effective Communication**, is achieved in one student learning outcome aligned with two program goals.

Successfully implementing Compass increases opportunities for SRSU students to demonstrate competency in written, oral, and visual communication, and will enhance the capacity of SRSU educators to teach communication skills through increased professional development opportunities. Accordingly, our goals with Compass include: enhancing student communication skills, and expanding our faculty's skills to teach oral, written, and visual communication. We believe these two goals combined will improve our students' ability to contribute to a learned society.

Our QEP is directed at junior and senior-level courses, because the Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde campuses enroll only upper-level students. The following QEP-level student learning outcome (SLO) will be assessed in all SRSU's communication-infused courses:

The student will create works that exhibit skill in prepared and purposeful communication (written, oral or visual). SRSU will implement and monitor the QEP with the aid of Faculty Guides and Faculty Navigators teaching communication-infused Mapped Courses.

Students, faculty, staff, and community members should be encouraged by this QEP, as it aims to develop students in ways that can enhance their potential to contribute to a civil society as well as making them more marketable to potential employers. In this way, the name Compass is apt. We see this QEP as equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate toward a life of excellence.

Initial Goals and Outcomes of Compass

The following QEP-level student learning outcome (SLO) will be assessed in all SRSU's communication-infused courses: The student will create works that exhibit skill in prepared and purposeful communication (written, oral or visual).

SRSU will implement and monitor the QEP with the aid of Faculty Guides and Faculty Navigators teaching communication-infused Mapped Courses.

- Faculty Guides serve as mentors to faculty engaged in the development and instruction of Mapped Courses.
- Faculty Navigators are professors who redesign an existing course into a Mapped Course incorporating the QEP SLO.
- Mapped Courses follow a syllabus template that clearly spells out expectations of the QEP and the use of the Cardinal Rubric to assess student work.

Compass provides students with communication skills across campuses through the communication-infused courses. The Compass Student Learning Outcome (SLO) is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values among the student population. The student learning outcome is infused into all four university colleges through identified communication-infused courses.

For students to learn how to communicate effectively, it is imperative that SRSU faculty have the resources and opportunities to improve their classroom instruction, particularly improving their teaching of oral, written, and visual communication. Through the development of a QEP library, communication teaching guides, developmental faculty workshops, and contact with mentors in communication instruction, Compass will provide faculty with the required tools and methods to help them enhance their skills in teaching and assessing written, oral, and visual communication.

The QEP continues to implement an annual Student Artifact Review in May. All reviewers are drawn from the SRSU faculty body. Student artifacts are evaluated by a team of faculty, and student learning outcomes are reported.

Changes Made to Compass

All changes made to Compass were made as our QEP progressed through Year Four (FY22), making it obvious that there were more efficient ways to accomplish our goals and effectively manage data and personnel. All changes were based on suggestions made by Navigators, Guides, or QEP Executive Committee members.

Changes in the fourth year of implementation include:

- Reporting of Guides was adjusted to allow Guides who are also Navigators to guide themselves, rather than being assigned to other Guides.
- Turnover in the role of Data Coordinator; Greg Marsh, Institutional Research Director is now the Coordinator.
- QEP Student Artifact Review was reconfigured to a virtual event due to COVID-19, and worked well that it was continued virtually in FY22.
- The QEP Executive Committee contracted with ASCD for the fourth year to provide professional development with the focus on enhancing students' use of academic language. This event went virtual because of COVID-19 in FY21, but it actually allowed for more interaction time with the presenter and with Navigators across campus, so it was continued virtually in FY22.
- More coordination and verification of QEP Mapped Courses in the SRSU Course Catalog.

Compass' Impact on Student Learning

Spring 2022 marked the completion of Sul Ross State University's fourth year of QEP implementation. During this academic year, 18 SRSU faculty (up from 17 in FY21) embedded the QEP Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for improving students' communication skills in 18 upper-level courses (consistent with FY21). A total of 339 students were enrolled in these QEP mapped courses (down from 444 in FY21). The continuing COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on university enrollment. Accordingly, participation in QEP has decreased as well. The following two tables provide instructor, course, and enrollment details.

Table 1 – Compass Mapped Course Enrollment

SRSU QEP Enrollments Year Four (Fall 2021)		
Faculty	QEP Designated Course ID	Enrollment
Boyd, Jamie	ANSC_4306_001	21
Miller, Jennifer	ED_3314_002	5
Miller, Jennifer	ED_3314_MC2	5
Rodriguez, Diana	ED_4314_MC2	8
Rodriguez, Diana	ED_4314_WM2	3
Stein, Kathy	ENG_3311_001	11
Stein, Kathy	ENG_3311_Z01	2
Matula, Thomas	MGMT_3322_W01	36
Ray, Billy	KES_4360_W01	11
Stocks, Gina	EDUC_4307_Z01	14
Roche, Sarah	ENGL_3312_D01	9
Roche, Sarah	ENGL_3312_T02	10
Roche, Sarah	ENGL_3312_T03	9
Moody, Shanna	KES_4312_001	21
Total Fall Enrollment		165
SRSU QEP Enrollments Year Three (Spring 2022)		
Faculty	QEP Designated Course ID	Enrollment
Barrientes, Carolyn	THEA_3309_001	5
DeHart, Kendra	HIST_3311_W01	10
Kelsch, Jessie	GEOL_3402_MC1	3
Luna, Ryan	NRM_4305_001	10
Matula, Thomas	MGMT_3322_W01	30
Moody, Shanna	KES_4360_W01	14
Rodriguez, Diana	ED_4314_W01	14
Stein, Kathy	ENG_3312_W01	24
Trotman, Alicia	PSY_4316_001	11

Barrientes, Carolyn	THEA_3309_001	5
DeHart, Kendra	HIST_3311_W01	10
Kelsch, Jessie	GEOG_3402_MC1	3
Ortiz, Michael	MTH_4390_T02	5
Scott, Marjorie	THEA_4304_001	5
Taylor, Audrey	ENGL_3312_E02	11
Taylor, Audrey	ENGL_3312_T01	6
Taylor, Audrey	ENGL_3312_T03	6
Williamson, Savannah	HIST_4316_W02	2
Total Spring Enrollment		174

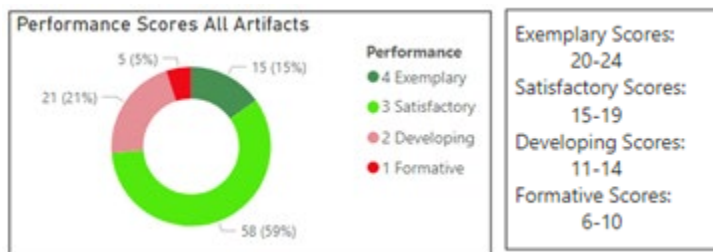
Assessment

Each year, we conduct a QEP Student Artifact Review. In FY22, ten volunteer reviewers scored 99 artifacts randomly selected from among the total pool of artifacts received. Each reviewer was paired with another reviewer to provide two separate reviews of the same artifact to ensure consistency in scoring and allow for comparison between reviewers. Each reviewer was assigned 10-20 artifacts.

The Cardinal Rubric was used to score student artifacts in all three communication modes (written, oral and visual). The Cardinal Rubric measures six criterion of effective communication: Organization, Content, Development, Purpose, Academic Language, Supporting Materials and Technique. Each criterion was scored using the performance levels of Exemplary, Satisfactory, Developing and Formative. Once scored, performance levels were changed to numerical values: Exemplary = 4; Satisfactory = 3; Developing = 2; Formative = 1.

Based on total rubric scores, we categorized overall communication scores into performance levels of: Formative (6-10), Developing (11-14), Satisfactory (15-19), and Exemplary (20-24). The QEP’s target is to have 70% students achieve Satisfactory or greater ratings. Among all artifacts, 74% of students scored at the Satisfactory or Exemplary skill levels, meeting our goal (Fig. 1).

Figure 1 – Overall performance among an aggregate of all artifacts and all communication types



When reviewing each communication type independently, 67% of Written artifacts reached the Satisfactory or Exemplary skill levels, 88% of Oral artifacts reached the Satisfactory or Exemplary skill levels, and 74% of Visual artifacts reached the Satisfactory or Exemplary skill levels. While Oral and Visual communication techniques demonstrated satisfactory level of mastery, our data indicate written communication skills still requires additional work (Fig. 2).

Figure 2 – Overall performance of artifacts parsed among each communication type



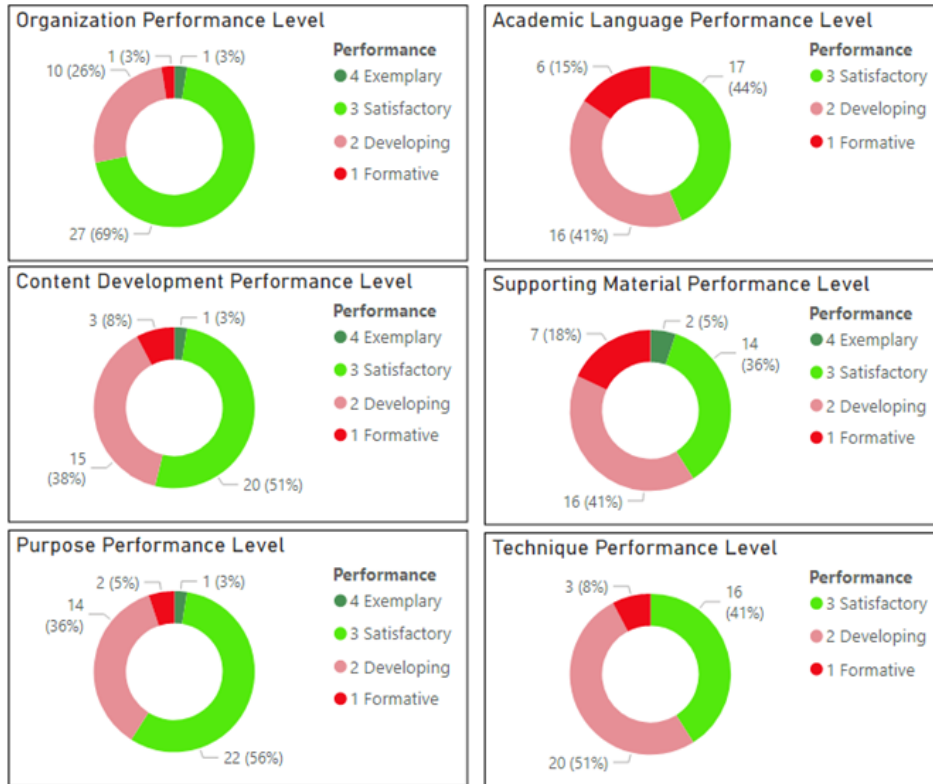
While the overall skill performance yields an inclusive measure of student achievement in communication, separating the measure into its component parts provides more specific details that can be used for continuous improvement of student learning. Collectively, among the three communication types, students scored highest (satisfactory or exemplary) in Organization (67%) and Purpose (71%). Specific areas for attention and needed improvement (Formative and Developing) include Supporting Material (62%) and Technique (55%) (Fig. 3).

Figure 3 – Overall performance of each communication component among all communication types



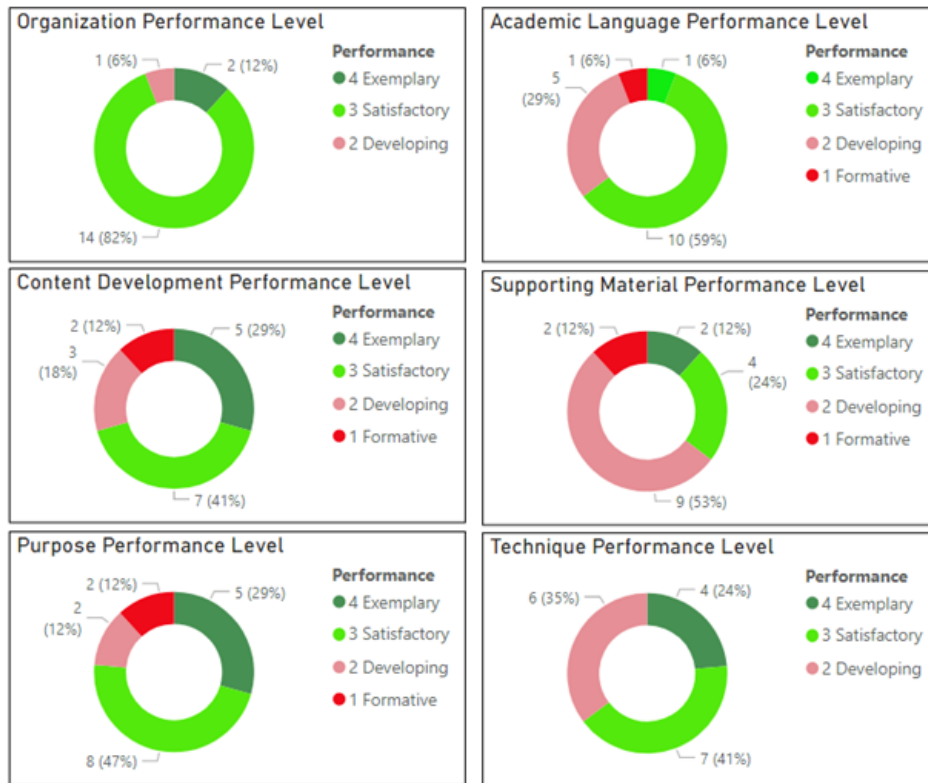
Reviewing just the written artifacts, both Organization (72%) and Purpose (59%) represent the two criteria with the highest Exemplary or Satisfactory skill levels while for both Supporting Material (59%) and Technique (59%), had the highest Formative and Developing percentages (Fig. 4).

Figure 4 – Performance of written communication components



Reviewing just the Oral artifacts revealed Organization (94%) and Purpose (74%) are components with Exemplary or Satisfactory skill levels mirroring Overall and Written artifacts. Of note is the improvement of Oral Technique from 78% at the Formative or Developing level during the previous year to just 35% now. Among Oral communication the area of most need for further improvement is that of Supporting Material (36%) (Fig. 5).

Figure 5 – Performance of oral communication components



Consistent with the other Written and Oral artifacts, the Visual artifacts scored well in Organization (77%) and Purpose (61%). However, the lowest scoring criteria were Supporting Material (35%) and Content Development (51%) (Fig. 6).

Figure 6 – Performance of Visual communication components



In summary overall, the highest (Exemplary or Satisfactory) and lowest (Developing or Formative) score levels are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of highest and lowest score levels among the three communication types

Artifact Type	Highest Score Criterion	Lowest Score Criterion
All	Purpose (63%) Organization (67%)	Technique (44%) Supporting Material (37%)
Written	Purpose (59%) Organization (72%)	Technique (41%) Supporting Material (41%)
Oral	Organization (94%) Purpose (76%)	Supporting Material (36%) Academic Language & Technique (65%)
Visual	Purpose (61%) Organization (77%)	Supporting Material (35%) Technique (40%)

One of the primary objectives of this QEP, or any QEP for that matter, is to highlight areas of deficiency and inform corrective actions. Programs which consistently demonstrate exemplary

levels of achievement often are rightfully judged as not encouraging students to stretch their intellectual abilities. Therefore, we are neither embarrassed nor dismayed by the shortcomings highlighted by our current QEP. On the contrary, we incorporate this newfound knowledge into a decisive corrective plan. As an example, data from FY20 indicated a deficiency in academic language among all communication types. After multiple professional development seminars and workshops, student performance in this metric increased 13-fold from 4% to 47% to 52% proficiency. Additional work still needs to be done but clearly, we are making significant strides with this metric.

What SRSU Learned as a Result of Compass

QEP Growth

- Participation among the number of faculty involved in QEP continues to increase.
- The number of courses with embedded QEP Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) also continues to increase.

Overall Communication Performance

- The target for student proficiency of 70% was exceeded. The combined rating for all student artifacts (satisfactory or exemplary) was 74%.
- By artifact type, oral performance exceeded the target at 88%, visual performance exceeded the target at 74%. Written performance was below the target level at 67%, but performance did increase significantly from the score in 2021 of 59%.

Numerical Criteria Scores

- Purpose and Organization criterion ranked the highest for overall scores (71% and 67%) and for the written (59% and 72%) and visual artifacts (61% and 64%). Oral artifacts ranked high in Organization (77%) and lower in Purpose (61%).
- Technique and Supporting Material remain among the lowest ratings in all three communication modes (exception of oral artifact rating for supporting materials).

TECHNIQUE	2021	2022
Overall Student Performance	36%	44%
Written Artifacts	34%	41%
Oral Artifacts	22%	36%
Visual Artifacts	40%	40%
SUPPORTING MATERIAL		
Overall Student Performance	36%	37%
Written Artifacts	41%	41%
Oral Artifacts	36%	65%
Visual Artifacts	35%	35%

We are seeing improvement. More faculty and students are engaging with the QEP each year. And while some communication criteria still need improvement, we have demonstrated that focused targeting of specific skills can drastically improve student proficiencies. Additionally, continuing reviewer training and pairing reviewers with specific artifacts continues to improve scorer reliability and reduce score variations.

Budget Summary

The QEP was allocated \$125,000 to implement in Year Four.

Table 3 – Budget Summary

Year Four (FY22) Budget by Category				
	Year Four Proposed		Year Four Actual	
Campus	<i>Alpine</i>	<i>RGC</i>	<i>Alpine</i>	<i>RGC</i>
Personnel				
QEP Coordinators	\$15,360	\$15,360	\$15,360	\$15,360
Secretary	\$2,560	\$2,560	\$2,560	\$2,560
Data Coordinator	\$2,560		\$0	
Faculty Guide Number of Guides	\$5,120 4	\$2,560 2	\$3,600 3	\$1,200 1
Faculty Navigator Number of New Navigators	\$17,920 14	\$6,400 5	\$3,600 3	\$1,200 1
FY21 Personnel Sum	\$40,960	\$26,880	\$25,120	\$21,520
Maintenance and Operation (M&O)				
Professional development	\$18,000	\$4,000	\$4,300	\$4,300
Assessment	\$3,300	\$1,450	\$0	\$0
Marketing	\$6,808	\$2,602	\$19.00	\$0
Operations	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$1,000.04	\$237.18
Student incentives	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$2,632.25	\$956.75
Travel				
Intercampus travel	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$1,029.87	\$56.64
Annual conference	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$2,500	\$3,066.96
FY21 M&O and Travel Sum	\$41,108	\$16,052	\$11,481.16	\$8,617.53
QEP TOTAL COST	\$82,068	\$42,932	\$36,601.16	\$30,137.53

In FY22, the QEP spent \$66,738.69, well under our approved \$125,000 budget, because COVID-19 meant that we were unable to travel between campuses, attend most conferences, and participate in in-person professional development.

In FY23, to maximize our budget to affect student learning, we plan the following:

- Scheduled off-campus retreat for Navigator professional development (including a fifth contract with ASCD).
- Speakers who are experts in aspects of communication.
- Mini-grants for faculty to implement communication strategies.
- Funding SACSCOC conference attendance for Navigators and Coordinators.
- Offering student incentives or rewards for excellent assessments.
- Ongoing salary expenses for the QEP Coordinators, Navigators, Faculty Guides and two part-time administrative assistants.

Projection: Year Four

In addition to the changes above that have already been implemented, or are in process of implementation, we are looking forward to the following modifications that will help us grow and manage Compass.

For Year Five, we have added five new Navigators (all from the Alpine campus) to teach Mapped Classes. Due to the realignment of colleges across campuses, we actually do have representation from each college. This means 24 courses (19 in Alpine, 5 at RGC campuses) will be taught with a special focus on written, oral, and visual communication in FY23. In total, with a few losses due to retirements and resignations, we have 24 Navigators. In our QEP report, we outlined a ratio of five Navigators to one Faculty Guide, and we are just above that number (6:1) in our final year of the QEP.

In Year Four, students made gains in four of the six criteria on the Cardinal QEP *Rubric*: content development, academic language, supporting materials, and technique. The challenging areas to focus on in Year Five include *technique* and *supporting materials*. Accordingly, professional development opportunities will be provided for faculty to enhance their techniques for addressing these areas.

In Year Five, we plan to continue our QEP New Year’s Party, the major QEP event of the year, held in-person on both the Alpine and RGC campuses. In January this year, we welcomed SRSU Alum and award-winning author, Guadalupe Garcia McCall, as our guest speaker. Communication-themed prizes and giveaways were awarded to students and attendees. In FY23, we will invite another esteemed speaker to our campuses to celebrate with us and to further the conversation about effective communication.

The QEP schedule of events is included here. Highlights for the next year include the QEP New Year’s Party, Professional Development, and opportunities for Navigators and Faculty Guides to interact more.

Table 4 – QEP Schedule of Events

QEP CALENDAR YEAR FIVE, FY23		
DATE	LOCATION	EVENT
July 6, 2022	Teams meeting	Faculty Guide planning meeting
July 17-20, 2022	Orlando, FL	SACSCOC Summer Institute
August 10, 2022	Teams meeting	Orientation for Navigators
August 31, 2022	HB2504 site	Fall QEP Syllabi upload
October 1, 2022	Sent via email	QEP Fall Newsletter date
October 13, 2022	Gage Hotel	Navigator Professional Development
October, 2022	QEP Blackboard site	Navigator discussion questions due
December 3-6, 2022	Atlanta, GA	SACSCOC Annual Meeting
December, 2022	QEP Blackboard site	Posting of Student Artifacts
January 31, 2023	HB2504 site	Spring QEP Syllabi upload
January 26-27, 2023	Alpine UC, RGC	QEP Networking Luncheon
January 26-27, 2023	Alpine UC, RGC	QEP New Year’s Party
February, 2023	QEP Blackboard site	Navigators Post Discussion Questions

February 1, 2023	Sent via email	QEP Spring Newsletter date
February, 2023	QEP Blackboard site	Navigator discussion question due
May, 2023	QEP Blackboard site	Posting of Student Artifacts
May, 2023	Teams, individually	Assessment Faculty Cohort Scoring
July, 2023	Dallas, TX	SACSCOC Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation Conference

In FY22, Year Four, we engaged 339 students and 18 faculty members as Navigators. Through our assessment process, we have demonstrated student gains in the six components of the Cardinal Rubric. We plan to address supporting material and technique in Year Five.