QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
March 3-5, 2015
The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for Texas A&M University-Kingsville marshals ideas, expertise, physical resources, and campus-wide cooperation for the purpose of rectifying a recognized shortcoming in undergraduate student learning. To address this shortcoming, the primary goal (the student learning outcome goal) of the QEP is *Improved Student Writing Proficiency*. To bring this vision to fruition requires that the University dedicate specific facilities, processes, and individuals to the cause. Thus, the second goal (the process and infrastructure goal) of the QEP is *Increased Support for Student Learning in the Area of Writing Proficiency*. Ultimately, the University hopes to produce student writers confident in using writing as a way of thinking and of communicating effectively in their disciplines, professions, and/or graduate studies, as we improve our writing infrastructure and writing instruction. These plans are expressed in the third goal (the aspirational goal), *A University-Wide Culture of Writing*. The commitment and plan demonstrated in this document affirm to SACS-COC and to the greater University community the institution’s resolve to achieve these goals.

Why writing? Texas A&M-Kingsville admits many students whose scores on nationally calibrated tests of writing proficiency hover far below the national average. Unfortunately, students’ response to the National Survey of Student Engagement indicate relatively few experiences with writing instruction while on campus; thus, predictably, graduating seniors earn writing proficiency scores well below the national average for seniors. These facts, along with the commonly held perception among members of the University community that students enter the University sorely underprepared as writers, spawned the initiative to take significant and meaningful measures to improve writing proficiency. As the faculty, along with student and academic governance bodies, considered options for the QEP, the plan to improve student writing proficiency emerged as the favored plan.

In support of our goals, we have devised three broad strategic objectives. The first objective is to establish a university-wide Undergraduate Writing Center, directed by a qualified faculty member and staffed by trained peer tutors who will supplement the writing instruction students receive in the classroom. The second objective is to bolster the writing experiences of students throughout their academic careers by focusing attention on the number, quality, and efficacy of Writing Intensive Courses across the curriculum. The third objective is to improve the teaching of writing on campus by providing faculty development programs and experiences. One such program is the creation of a cohort of Writing Faculty Fellows (experienced teachers of Writing Intensive Courses) who will serve as mentors to new writing intensive faculty. Other programs and experiences will include individualized support for Writing Intensive Faculty, as well as instructional resources and workshops for all interested faculty—all provided under the auspices of the Undergraduate Writing Center.

To determine the success of these strategic objectives in achieving our three stated goals, the University will rigorously assess outcomes.
from all aspects of the QEP. The first set of assessment activities, already begun, is the collection of baseline data regarding measureable levels of student writing proficiency, and student and faculty perceptions of teaching and learning experiences. The Undergraduate Writing Center will coordinate the continued use of nationally calibrated measures of writing proficiency, as well as national and local surveys of faculty and student perceptions. Additionally, trained quality raters will assess writing from artifacts created in Writing Intensive Courses against pre-selected rubrics. The Undergraduate Writing Center Director will report assessment findings to University stakeholders, and will consult regularly with the QEP Advisory Committee. The University, through the Center Director, will respond to findings swiftly and doggedly to ensure continuous improvement in program effectiveness. In this way the QEP will remain sufficiently agile to adjust expectations, program delivery methods, and/or infrastructure as deemed appropriate and in the best interest of students.