



East Georgia

STATE COLLEGE®

Student Learning Communities

LEARNING TO ASSOCIATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

East Georgia State College (EGSC) and the University System of Georgia (USG) have a long history and deep commitment to improving student success and student learning outcomes, improving retention, and improving progression towards graduation and graduation rates. National research, as validated by the experiences of the USG and EGSC, locally, indicates that students in their first year of college are at a high risk of failing academically and not persisting. Different initiatives to mitigate student attrition have been instituted in recent decades nationally, in Georgia, and at EGSC. One of the most powerful initiatives to be developed is the USG promotion of “Gateways to Completion” (G2C), which identifies and seeks to improve academic outcomes in first-year courses required for general education completion. These courses tend to have high DFWD rates and are major barriers to academic success and persistence. EGSC has been building G2C emphases into its First Year Experience (FYE) programming and is using this Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to enhance the power of such G2C reforms through the creation and expansion of Student Learning Communities (SLCs) for selected first-year courses.

This QEP takes a systematic approach to establishing well-designed SLCs and expanding their provision on its main campus in Swainsboro and at two other off-campus instructional sites in Statesboro and Augusta. The QEP calls for EGSC to evolve from not having any SLCs, presently, to a total of 20 per semester by the fifth year of this QEP. By 2024-2025, an estimated 30% of EGSC freshmen will have taken selected first-year courses as part of SLCs. The impact of SLCs involving selected first-year courses at EGSC will be assessed in this QEP through use of three clearly stated, specific, and measurable student success outcomes (SSOs):

- Improved Success in Selected First-Year Course Completions,
- Improved Success in First-Year Academic Performance, and
- Improved Success in First-Year Retention.

The impact of these SLCs will also be assessed using two additional student learning outcomes (SLOs):

- Improved Student Learning in Passed SLC Selected First-Year Courses and
- Improved *Learning to Associate* in SLCs.

Assessment plans have been developed for determining the extent to which these expected outcomes are achieved during the formative stages of the QEP implementation and the summative stage of the completion and at the time of the Fifth-Year Interim Report. These assessment plans rely on analysis of both direct measures of student success and student learning and on indirect measures of Learning to Associate. Throughout the five-year course of the QEP, the use of these assessment results to modify and improve aspects of the QEP is expected.