

Alpha Nu Sigma 2019 College Project

1. Briefly describe your College Project and who from the chapter and the college administration was involved in determining it.

Alpha Nu Sigma members met with our college president, Dr. Fore, to discuss College Project ideas. She directed us to assist with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) requirement. We agreed that our project would address the portion of the Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) mission “to provide a student-centered environment and inspire lifelong learning.” The QEP Planning Team developed an initiative they titled: Effective Professional and Interpersonal Communication (EPIC). Believing that we would be an asset in communicating this initiative to the student body, Dr. Fore recommended that we contact Dr. Wilbanks, Vice President of Academic Affairs, to determine how we could help. Dr. Wilbanks invited the co-chairs of the QEP Planning Committee to our initial College Project meeting, where we discussed how to share the QEP initiative.

2. Summarize your objectives for the College Project and the process by which the chapter and college administration set these objectives.

Chapter officers researched HGTC’s mission statement during training in preparation for our meeting with Dr. Fore, and we anticipated brainstorming College Project ideas with her. However, because she recognized Alpha Nu Sigma’s campus leadership, she directed us to participate in the QEP. Dr. Fore believed our input would be vital to developing ideas from a student perspective. She instructed us to meet with the QEP Planning Committee co-chairs and Dr. Wilbanks and together we set the following objectives:

- Develop ideas about effective methods to convey the importance of EPIC to students
- Work with the QEP Planning Committee to communicate information to students
- Educate students about the need for a QEP
- Determine how to assist the QEP Implementation Team

3. Describe the planning process and strategies developed to complete the College Project.

Dr. Wilbanks and the QEP Planning Committee co-chairs informed us, at our first meeting, that the Welcome Back campus celebrations at the beginning of the

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semester would be an “EPIC Palooza.” They requested we assist the Student Affairs Department in hosting this event. At our next College Project meeting, we agreed to support the EPIC theme at our chapter’s information table during Welcome Back.

At the following chapter meeting, the College Project team described the QEP and its importance to our members. We asked them to brainstorm ideas about how best to convey the importance of the QEP initiative to students in that accreditation by SACSCOC allows HGTC to demonstrate its commitment to quality education, ensuring eligibility for federal financial aid and transferability of credits. We emailed these ideas to the planning committee co-chairs and their response indicated they would consider our suggestions.

HGTC’s Marketing Department invited officers to create an informative commercial explaining the goals of HGTC’s QEP and EPIC initiative. In it, our officers described how having a QEP benefits students and why EPIC is essential.

Upon SACSCOC approval of the QEP, our focus shifted to assisting the QEP Implementation Team. College Project members developed communication tips to help students understand what constitutes effective interpersonal communication. We sent these tips to implementation team members for feedback and approval.

4. What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of your project, including the lessons learned by your chapter members and others?

Chapter members brainstormed thirteen options to engage students in the QEP. Examples included events such as an EPIC Open-Mic night, EPIC Art Therapy, EPIC Sand Sculpture, and informational postcards. Upon receipt of our ideas, the QEP Planning Committee co-chairs reviewed them and requested we remove one item because it was not within the scope of the initiative.

Two officers who filmed the QEP commercial worked with a third-party production team, hired by HGTC. Filming taught our officers to project a confident appearance and proper posture while demonstrating professional communication skills to their audience. With additional coaching on diction and repeatedly rehearsing lines, they effectively delivered their message. This informative video aired countless times on televisions across HGTC's three campuses, reaching an estimated 7,000 students. The commercial also received almost 3,000 combined views and was shared at least 50 times on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

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We set up a Phi Theta Kappa information table and hosted a giant Jenga game at all three campuses for EPIC Palooza. Twelve members worked two-hour shifts on three consecutive days serving food and distributing EPIC-themed materials such as t-shirts, Chapstick, and pens to hundreds of students.

The QEP Planning Committee chose five chapter members to attend a luncheon with SACSCOC on-site visit committee members, who asked us to discuss our experiences at HGTC and our thoughts on EPIC. We shared details of our involvement in the QEP planning process and EPIC events. SACSCOC members were impressed with our level of student involvement at HGTC compared to other colleges they visited. In fact, the on-site committee found HGTC to be in compliance in all areas, including the QEP, and had no recommendations.

Officers developed two EPIC Communication Tips PowerPoints with different colors and backgrounds. Tips included, “Communicate with Confidence,” and “Focus on Body Language.” We submitted them to the QEP Implementation Team via email, and they suggested we edit the slides to ensure they were all written in third person. They selected the presentation which matched the color scheme for EPIC advertising. We made the changes and resubmitted the presentation for approval. We followed up with Implementation Team members via email when they did not respond within a week. We still did not receive a response ten days later, so we visited a team member on campus to determine if our presentation needed additional edits. It was approved three days after our campus visit, and we did not need to make changes. The HGTC Marketing Department finalized our presentation which will be displayed in January on closed-circuit television monitors on all campuses. Posters of the tips will be printed and distributed by HGTC’s Print Shop when we return to campus.

Chapter members involved in this project improved interpersonal communication skills and grew as scholar-servant-leaders while collaborating with advisors, SACSCOC members, and HGTC administrators throughout the process. Team members felt honored to participate in such an important initiative after meeting with Dr. Fore. She demonstrated the importance of eye contact, a firm hand shake and confidence while speaking to us. We followed her example in communicating with the QEP team and SACSCOC committee members. Our advisors reviewed all College Project correspondence before we sent it to administrators and QEP committee members. This helped us improve our writing practices and understand the importance of time management by teaching us how to meet deadlines. Administration shared it was highly unusual for any college to receive approval of

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the QEP at the conclusion of the on-site visit and to receive no recommendations for reaccreditation.

We emailed a summary of our EPIC involvement to Dr. Fore and Dr. Wilbanks. Both were pleased with our commitment and execution, and Dr. Fore stated how proud she was of our members. Dr. Wilbanks expressed, "We continue to be amazed at all your team has accomplished in such a short time even under the circumstances with the storms. The EPIC Palooza events were fun and engaging; the work with the video was professional, and the discussions with the SACSCOC team were invaluable. HGTC is fortunate to have an active and caring PTK community on our campus."