

Flight Ready

**Enhancing career readiness through the
first-year experience, faculty training, and
alumni mentorship**

Winthrop University
Quality Enhancement Plan

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I. Executive Summary

Flight Ready: A Career Readiness Quality Enhancement Plan Winthrop University, Rock Hill, South Carolina

Preparing students for a career is at the core of higher education's mission. Winthrop University's alumni were critical in identifying that among our data-informed institutional areas for improvement, enhancing career readiness should be the priority opportunity, one that also aligns with our substantial Pell-eligible and first-generation student populations. Prior to the rollout of this Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Flight Ready*, structured career readiness opportunities exist, but vary greatly throughout the institution. The purpose of this QEP is to ensure a proficiency across colleges and majors at the foundational level of career readiness, from which individual faculty, programs, and/or colleges within Winthrop University will continue to build and/or evolve.

Making use of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) definition, Winthrop's QEP will define career readiness as, "a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management." NACE's eight career readiness competencies begin with "Career and Self Development," which is the focus of *Flight Ready*. This competency includes "proactive development of oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization." Simply, Winthrop graduates will understand both that they need to, and how to, manage their careers.

Flight Ready enhances career readiness through (1) the First-Year Experience (FYE), (2) faculty training, and (3) alumni mentorship. In Part One, a dedicated unit within the FYE "Principles of the Academy" course will provide instruction on the concept of career competencies and the principles of career and self-development; furthermore, all incoming students will complete The Strong Interest Inventory® in their first semester. In Part Two, Winthrop faculty will complete the Association of College and University Educators' (ACUE) Career Concentration training which informs both teaching strategies and faculty advising conversations. Finally, in Part Three, the Alumni Office and the Center for Career Development and Internships will lead the establishment of a university-wide alumni mentorship network open to all Winthrop students.

Flight Ready's student learning outcomes assure that students will be able to (1) connect relevant careers with identified personal strengths and interests and (2) develop themselves through continual learning and the navigation of career opportunities. The planned assessment of these student learning outcomes, along with assessing program outcomes, will support the institution's ability to gauge student learning and increase program effectiveness yearly, as well as beyond the five-year initiative. Assessment of student learning includes, but is not limited to, the following: a signature writing assessment within the FYE program (First Year), NSSE's Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module (First Year and Senior Year), and alumni mentorship focus groups. Moreover, in addition to providing directly for student career and self-development, implementing *Flight Ready* strengthens the connections the institution has among its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and employers, making visible the interdependencies between college and workplace preparedness.

II. Process Used to Identify the QEP Topic

The QEP Topic Selection Committee, comprised of 20 representative voices from across the Winthrop community, worked together from fall 2019 into summer 2020 to identify and to recommend appropriate topics for Winthrop University's next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Informed by institutional priorities and institutional data, Winthrop's senior leadership determined the final selection from the committee's three recommended topics in fall 2020. The purpose of this chapter is to more fully describe the topic selection process that led to Winthrop's Career Readiness QEP.

The QEP Topic Selection Committee Membership

In late fall 2019, President Daniel Mahony, Provost Adrienne McCormick, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Meg Webber selected 20 individuals to serve on the QEP Topic Selection Committee; all invitations were accepted. As evidenced in the table below, the committee's diverse and broad-based membership was comprised of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. The committee also was inclusive of gender and ethnic/racial perspectives with an almost even split of men (9) and women (11) as well as ethnic and racial minority representation (7).

Table II.1 – QEP Topic Selection Committee Membership

Member	Title	Area	Affiliation
Ms. Imani Belton	President, Council of Student Leaders	Winthrop Student, Student Government	Student
Dr. Andrew Besmer	Assistant Professor of Computer Science	College of Business Administration	Faculty
Dr. Tomoko Deguchi	Professor of Music	College of Visual and Performing Arts	Faculty
Dr. Ruvi English	Assistant Professor of Human Development & Family Studies	Richard W. Riley College of Education	Faculty
Dr. Kimberly Faust	Vice President and Chief of Staff, Secretary to the Board of Trustees	President's Office, Board of Trustees	Administration
Dr. Cheryl Fortner-Wood	Professor of Psychology; Director of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program	College of Arts & Sciences, University College	Faculty
Dr. Nathaniel Frederick	Associate Professor of Mass Communication; Director of the African-American Studies Program	College of Arts & Sciences	Faculty
Dr. Philip Gibson	Associate Professor of Finance and Director of Certified Financial Planning	College of Business Administration	Faculty

Member	Title	Area	Affiliation
Mr. RJ Gimbl	Associate Vice President, University Advancement	Advancement	Staff
Mr. Hank Harrawood	Associate Athletics Director & Director, Student Success for Winthrop Athletics	Athletics	Staff
Ms. April Hershey	Graduate School, Assistant to the Dean & Staff Conference Chair	Staff Conference	Staff; Alumna
Ms. Jackie McFadden	Associate Professor & Head of Public Services	Ida Jane Dacus Library	Faculty
Ms. Brittany Neely	Interim Director, Alumni Relations; Alumni Engagement Coordinator	Alumni	Staff; Alumna
Mr. Darien Nguyen	Winthrop Student – Student FYE Program	Winthrop Student, FYE Programs	Student
Ms. Katie Price	Marketing Director	University Communications & Marketing	Staff; Alumna
Mr. Eduardo Prieto	Vice President for Access and Enrollment Management	Student Recruitment	Administration
Mr. Grant Scurry	Assistant Dean of Students & Director, Recreational Services and West Center	Student Affairs	Staff
Dr. Kyle Sweeney	Assistant Professor of Art History	College of Visual and Performing Arts	Faculty
Dr. Meg Webber	Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Executive Director of the Center for Professional Excellence	QEP Topic Selection Chairperson; SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team; Graduate Student, Learning Design & Technology	Administration; Student
Dr. Janet Wojcik	Associate Professor and Program Director in Exercise Science	Richard W. Riley College of Education	Faculty

Winthrop's Topic Selection Process

The QEP Topic Selection Committee was charged with leading the campus community in exploring appropriate topics to serve as the university's next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). Committee members also were asked to act as ambassadors for the QEP throughout its lifespan.

Early QEP Topic Selection Committee work included a review of the relevant SACSCOC standard and requirements for compliance as they related to the specific work of the QEP Topic Selection Committee. These conversations grounded the committee in its purpose and scope. Committee meetings included in-person reviews and discussions of both Winthrop's institutional strategic plan (The Winthrop Plan, along with its success metrics) and Winthrop's mission as integral to topic recommendations (only topics that aligned would be recommended). The committee reviewed Winthrop's university-level competencies as well as nationally recognized high impact educational practices (first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, ePortfolios, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses & projects). The committee also read and discussed Winthrop's last (and first) QEP Impact Report, which provided a snapshot of the successfully reviewed Global Learning Initiative (GLI).

In addition, the committee discussed other factors that might be useful in recommending final topics to senior leadership. The QEP Topic Selection Committee did identify certain criteria to guide discussions as topic selection steps continued. In addition to the aforementioned requirement of (a) **alignment with Winthrop's strategic plan, institutional data, and/or mission** and (b) prioritizing **institutional survey data from campus constituents**, the committee discussed the following as additional points of consideration:

- (c) **Winthrop University Transformation** (could create or sustain a transformative WU learning experience)
- (d) **Market Match/Recruitment** (likely interest by potential students/their families as a recruitment element)
- (e) **Value for Graduates** across Colleges/Academic Clusters (strengthens the value of the degree for graduates and/or community)
- (f) **Implementation Lift** (ease to build and manage a communication campaign for said topic, ease to identify/capture/report on student learning for said topic, and overall design simplicity potential)

Importantly, the QEP Topic Selection Committee determined that though (g) **feasibility** of topic also was important (existing capacity, infrastructure with expertise, staffing levels, and other services essential to support a topic), the QEP Topic Selection Committee, itself, was not going to consider feasibility as a limiting factor in recommending topics to senior leadership. The QEP Topic Selection Committee decided, instead, that issues of feasibility could be considered by Senior Leadership in determining their final selection.

As the work progressed, the committee reviewed common QEP topic themes (or focal outcome categories) across approved QEP proposals at SACSCOC institutions to better understand likely topics. In particular, committee members became more familiar with SACSCOC QEP executive summaries from other institutions in order to learn how common topics are developed into QEPs (the work of the next committee). These steps helped orient committee members to how this committee's contributions would

feed into the larger QEP effort while also preparing those who would assist with survey analysis to identify and imagine likely topics and themes for well-received QEP proposals.

Simultaneously, the committee was developing surveys and promoting participation in them. Two surveys were conducted as part of the committee's topic selection process in order for the campus community to participate in identifying institutional strengths and opportunities in the realm of student learning while becoming an integral part of the topic identification and selection process. An overview of those surveys follows.

First Campus Survey: Student Learning at Winthrop

In coordination with Winthrop's Director of Assessment, the QEP Topic Selection Committee's first of two surveys addressed the core of a QEP's focus, student learning. First, the survey introduced its purpose:

Winthrop is about to begin a new project (Quality Enhancement Plan) focused on student learning.

Your answers to the following two questions help determine what that project should be.

Then, after assuring confidentiality and asking for group identification (alumni, faculty, staff, student body), there were two open-ended questions:

- 1. Name one thing that Winthrop does particularly well to support student learning.***
- 2. What is an area in which Winthrop could do more to support student learning?***

This survey was distributed across Winthrop alumni, faculty, staff, and students from late fall semester 2019 through spring 2020 (exact dates varied by participant type). The survey was announced at assemblies, within email announcements and electronic digests, to targeted sub-groups by committee members (such as at office or department meetings), and directly from the alumni office to alums. The survey response was 997 total participants with a categorical breakdown of 434 alumni, 271 faculty, 134 staff, and 158 students.

As survey responses were analyzed, topic clusters emerged that at least two of the four survey groups (alumni, faculty, staff, and students) consistently listed (1) *foundations and skills for college success (with or without advising references)* and (2) *career readiness/research/internships* as things "Winthrop does well" to support student learning. Ironically, at least two of the four survey groups also consistently listed these same two topic clusters as things about which "Winthrop could do more" to support student learning. Additionally, there were trends developing, but in a less clear and decisive pattern across groups, for (3) *intercultural knowledge and competence* and (4) *critical thinking/inquiry analysis as strengths* and (5) *experiential learning*, (6) *technology literacy*, (7) *intercultural knowledge and competence*, and (8) *critical thinking/inquiry analysis as areas of opportunity*.

After reviewing survey data, analysis tables, and discussing findings, the committee made the following determination. Because the top two categories (*foundations and skills for college success with or without advising references* and *career readiness/research/internships*) dominated our survey data and were both large clusters, we divided them up into four discrete choices--while adding the next highest improvement area of experiential learning--to offer a total of five topics for faculty/staff to consider for comment in our follow-up survey.

Thus, the semifinalist topics identified for use in our second campus survey were:

- Foundations and Skills for College Success
- Career Readiness/Internships
- Advising
- Research
- Experiential Learning

Second Campus Survey: Implementing Specific QEP Topics at Winthrop

The QEP Topic Selection Committee's second of two surveys focused on gathering input on proposed topic semifinalists from Winthrop's faculty and staff, the two groups who will be called on to execute the next QEP.

This survey, focused on the QEP semifinalist topics, was distributed to Winthrop faculty and staff during May 2020. The survey was announced at assemblies, within email announcements and electronic digests, and directly to targeted sub-groups by committee members (such as at office or department meetings). The survey response was 374 total participants with a categorical breakdown of 180 faculty and 194 staff.

First, the survey introduced its purpose:

The QEP Topic Selection Committee, informed by campus surveys this past academic year as well as our institutional mission and strategic plan, is preparing to recommend QEP topics to senior leadership for their consideration. These may include: Career Readiness & Internships; Foundations and Skills for College Success; Experiential Learning; Research, and/or Advising.

Again, a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a five-year project to enhance student learning and/or the student learning environment. A successful QEP is an important component of our accreditation with our national accrediting body, SACSCOC.

At this point in the process, the QEP Topic Selection Committee would like faculty and staff to provide comments on the strengths, weaknesses, and/or opportunities in implementing each of these topics as a QEP at Winthrop. This information will be presented to senior leadership. . . as well as to the QEP Topic Development Committee later in the fall.

What followed was an introduction of each possible semifinalist topic choice, along with examples and one-page abstracts for several approved QEPs completed at other regional colleges and universities focused on each semifinalist topic. Then, each of the five semifinalist topic choices had a single, open-ended question for the participant to answer:

What are the strengths, weaknesses, and/or opportunities for this topic as a QEP at Winthrop?

After reviewing survey data and analysis tables, the committee's discussion of findings included the following:

- There was interest in Career Readiness (but not necessarily requiring internships) as something that could both recruit students and serve graduates but must be carefully framed to go beyond the perception of vocational training.
- Foundations and Skills for Success as a QEP topic was noted as well aligned with institutional guideposts (mission, values, strategic plan) and the population Winthrop serves.
- Advising as a proposed standalone QEP topic received the highest frequency of negative comments, though thoughtful comments were made on the benefits for the institution should advising practices be strengthened.
- Research as a QEP topic received frequent remarks that undergraduate research was something Winthrop already did well. There were also concerns that a singularly research focused QEP might impose an additional workload challenge for faculty.
- Experiential Learning included a range of comments, all of which will be carefully reviewed by the QEP Topic Development committee should senior leadership make this selection. Survey participants provided interest in a number of high impact practices that could fall under this topic umbrella.

Based on the survey responses from both surveys and the committee's subsequent discussions, the committee made the following determination to (1) move internships and research within the topic of experiential learning; and to (2) provide advising as a possible component under topic headers of both career readiness and of foundations and skills for college success, but not as a standalone QEP topic. This resulted in three topic recommendations, the culmination of the QEP Topic Selection Committee's work:

- (A) Career Readiness
with an advising component
- (B) Experiential Learning
to include high impact practices such as internships, research, and/or study abroad
- (C) Foundations and Skills for College Success
with an advising component

Senior Leadership Selects Topic from Committee Finalists

A 10-page report summarizing the committee's process and recommendations was provided to senior leadership in advance of a live presentation. On October 7, 2020, the QEP Topic Selection committee chairperson attended the weekly Senior Leadership Group (interim president, vice presidents, including two other QEP Topic Selection Committee members) meeting to answer questions and present the committee's three recommended topics. Discussion included Senior Leadership Group membership understanding of our institution's strengths and opportunities per The Winthrop Plan (institution's strategic plan with corresponding institutional data), the SACSCOC QEP rubric criteria, and recognition that a QEP not only offers an institution an opportunity to enhance educational quality in a focused area, but also to make a statement about the institution's distinctiveness and/or priorities. After a good discussion among the committee chairperson, present QEP Topic Selection Committee members, and other senior leaders not serving on the QEP Topic Selection Committee, the decision was made to pursue and develop a focused QEP on the topic, "Career Readiness."

III. Process Used to Develop the QEP Proposal

Once senior leadership selected the topic from the QEP Topic Selection Committee’s recommendations, the next committee, “The QEP Topic Development Committee” was formed to develop the selected topic into a Winthrop-specific QEP proposal. The QEP Topic Development Committee, comprised of 20 representative voices from across the Winthrop community (only the chair of the topic committee also served on the development committee), worked together from early spring 2021 into late fall 2021 to translate the topic of Career Readiness into a meaningful, measurable, and manageable Quality Enhancement Plan. The purpose of this chapter is to more fully describe the topic development process that led to Winthrop’s proposed Career Readiness QEP, *Flight Ready*.

The QEP Topic Development Committee Membership

In late fall 2020, Interim President George Hynd, Provost Adrienne McCormick, and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Meg Webber selected 20 individuals to serve on the QEP Topic Development Committee; all invited to participate agreed to support the topic development work. As evidenced in the table below, the committee’s diverse and broad-based membership was comprised of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni. With a “Career Readiness” topic, or theme, now identified for development, this new committee’s membership targeted specific topic or functional competencies and experiences within its membership (in addition to broadening campus representation in the overall process). Moreover, the committee also was inclusive of gender and ethnic/racial perspectives with 8 men and 12 women as well as ethnic and racial minority representation (9).

Table III.1- QEP Topic Development Committee Membership

Member	Title	Area	Affiliation
Mr. Pete Airheart	Senior Designer	University Communications & Marketing	Staff
Dr. Antoinette Bellamy	Career Services Transition Architect, Career Development & Internships	Student Affairs - Center for Career Development & Internships	Staff
Dr. Barbara Burgess-Wilkerson	Professor, Management & Marketing; Director, Student Professional Development	College of Business Administration	Faculty
Dr. Chen Chen	Assistant Professor of English & Internship Coordinator, English Department	College of Arts & Sciences	Faculty
Dr. Jinwook Jason Chung	Assistant Professor, Director of Sport Management Program	Richard W. Riley College of Education	Faculty

Member	Title	Area	Affiliation
Dr. Jamie Cooper	Vice Provost for Student Success & Dean, University College	Provost's Office, University College	Administration
Mr. Jeremiah Dahl	Library Specialist	Ida Jane Dacus Library	Staff
Dr. Elizabeth Dulemba	Associate Professor of Design	College of Visual and Performing Arts	Faculty
Mr. Matt Ferrell	Assistant Professor, Theatre & Dance	College of Visual and Performing Arts	Faculty
Dr. Tracy Lambert Griggs	Associate Professor, Management & Marketing	College of Business Administration	Faculty
Mr. Brandon Jackson	President, Council of Student Leaders	Winthrop Student, Student Government	Student
Mr. John Kroft	Registration/Readmission Coordinator, Office of Records & Registration	Staff Conference Vice Chair & Chair-Elect	Staff, Alumnus
Ms. Jennifer McDaniel	Director, Social Work Field Experiences	College of Arts & Sciences	Staff
Ms. Shardae Nelson-Johnson	Coordinator, Office of Accessibility	Student Affairs - Accessibility	Staff
Dr. Leigh Poole	Director, International Center	University College	Staff
Dr. Tenisha Powell	Associate Professor, Early Childhood Education	Richard W. Riley College of Education	Faculty
Ms. Julie Schrader	Assistant Director for Residence Life	Student Affairs - Residence Life	Staff
Ms. Ani Subotic	Senior Admissions Counselor	Student Recruitment	Staff
Dr. Danko Tarabar	Assistant Professor, Accounting, Finance, & Economics	College of Business Administration	Faculty
Dr. Meg Webber	Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Executive Director of the Center for Professional Excellence	QEP Topic Development Chairperson; SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team	Administration, Alumna

In addition to the 19 discrete members of its predecessor committee (the QEP Topic Selection Committee), the QEP Topic Development Committee also worked with the following QEP Topic Development Committee **Contributing Partners**.

Table III.2 – QEP Top Development Committee Contributing Partners

Member	Title	Area	Affiliation
Ms. Tiffany Alexander	Associate Director, Employer Engagement & Internships	Center of Career Development & Internships - Student Affairs Division	Staff
Dr. Bettie Parsons Barger	Associate Professor, Elementary Education and Literacy; Director of the Jim and Sue Rex Institute	Richard W. Riley College of Education	Faculty
Dr. Nicholas Grossoehme	Professor of Chemistry; Director of the Undergraduate Research Program	College of Arts & Sciences, University College	Faculty
Ms. Lori Tuttle	Executive Director of Alumni Relations and Reunion Giving	Alumni Office - Advancement Division	Staff

The QEP Topic Development Committee members were welcomed by email on February 1, 2021, with the expectation set that committee work would likely continue into the fall of 2021 and that committee members were expected to act as ambassadors for the QEP throughout its lifespan. The committee began meeting on February 12, 2021, with the last full committee meeting occurring on November 17, 2021; contributing partners were engaged intermittently throughout that time. Moreover, the QEP Topic Development Committee chairperson also continued consultative check-ins with the Director of Assessment and SACSCOC Liaison.

Spring 2021 Committee Launch and Subcommittee Charges

The QEP Topic Development Committee's work began with an overview of SACSCOC accreditation, the role of the QEP in the reaffirmation process, and the accomplishments of the QEP Topic Selection Committee. Discussion quickly moved to the work of this committee in developing the selected topic into a proposal for a well-developed Quality Enhancement Plan. To accomplish this work, the large committee was broken into four subcommittees. The four subcommittees and their charges were as follows:

Subcommittee A: SACSCOC QEP Subcommittee

This subcommittee reviewed SACSCOC's *Quality Enhancement Plans: Lists and Summaries Since 2007* (available on the SACSCOC website) to learn more about approved QEPs at other institutions. This knowledge was shared with the larger committee and used, along with institution specific contextual knowledge, to provide recommendations for a Winthrop specific

enhancement program focused on career readiness. This group also considered how the QEP could offer a point of distinction at Winthrop.

Subcommittee B: Best Practices Subcommittee

This subcommittee focused on career readiness best practices (including recognition of current trends), including Winthrop College of Business Administration resources, resources from other universities (and outside higher education, as the group saw appropriate), and the identification of key guidance from professional organizations and partners such as American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), and EAB (now known exclusively as their former acronym for the name, “Education Advisory Board”). This knowledge was shared with the larger committee and used, along with institution specific contextual knowledge, to provide recommendations for Winthrop’s Career Readiness QEP’s student learning and/or student success outcomes, priority practices, and/or guiding standards and definitions.

Subcommittee C: Literature Review Subcommittee

This subcommittee explored the scholarship on career readiness and workplace preparation in higher education with a concentration on the needs of student populations such as Winthrop’s, many of whom are Pell-eligible and/or first-generation college students. This knowledge was shared with the larger committee and, importantly, cross-referenced with the work being accomplished by the Best Practices Subcommittee.

Subcommittee D: Winthrop Community Involvement Subcommittee

The committee was charged with planning for how the developed QEP could be successfully promoted and communicated in order to increase Winthrop community awareness and involvement. Where possible, the subcommittee was charged with expanding involvement in the development of the QEP through creating opportunities for students and other campus community members to participate in the development process itself. This subcommittee, with members including the institution’s senior graphic designer and an award-winning illustrator/design faculty member, created press kit components with logo and logomark design and naming possibilities to market the developing QEP. Additional work included planning for QEP-related career preparedness maps that could serve both as resources for Winthrop students navigating QEP initiatives and as recruitment tools for prospective students.

The full QEP Topic Development committee also was made aware that institutional data specific to Career Readiness would be available in fall 2021 to support further development of the QEP at that time. Because the topic of Career Readiness had been identified prior to the institution’s administration of its spring 2021 The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the addition of the topical module “Career & Workforce Preparation” had been added for the first time with results likely late summer/early fall.

Once launched, the full QEP Topic Development Committee met at least twice a month during the spring 2021 semester with additional subcommittee meetings set by each subcommittee membership. As part of their work addressing their individual charge, the Best Practices Subcommittee initiated and developed a career readiness competencies survey which was distributed to its targeted audience as the spring semester ended and May-term began (2021).

May 2021: Integration of Career Readiness Competencies (at Winthrop) Survey

In May of 2021, the QEP Topic Development Committee surveyed instructional faculty, program directors, and department chairs to identify where (or not) career readiness competencies were already

integrated into the Winthrop student learning experience. The committee wished to use these results to inform a QEP design that simultaneously leveraged what the university was already doing well with attention on supporting those elements while addressing gaps elsewhere. Career center staff were meanwhile conducting their own audit of center survey instruments and historical center data while recruiting new leadership and permanent staffing. The survey, developed prior to NACE's career competency revisions in March/April of 2021, recognized the National Association of Colleges and Employers' (NACE) definition of Career Readiness as the attainment of requisite competencies that broadly prepare college graduates for a successful transition into the workplace and adapted the eight NACE competencies into seven categories for purposes of this internal survey (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2021b). The survey categories were:

1. **Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:** Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems. The individual is able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.
2. **Oral/Written Communications:** Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization. The individual has public speaking skills; is able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.
3. **Teamwork/Collaboration:** Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints. The individual is able to work within a team structure and can negotiate and manage conflict.
4. **Integrity & Ethics:** The individual demonstrates integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes. Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.
5. **Branding & Professionalism:** Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one's intended and perceived reputation. Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image.
6. **Equity & Inclusion:** Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.
7. **Technology:** Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Participants were informed that, "The QEP Career Readiness survey reflects aspects of Career Readiness for undergraduate students. The purpose of this survey is to ascertain the extent to which Winthrop students have the opportunity to obtain the necessary career readiness competencies and the extent to which they are an integral part of their college experience. To assist the QEP Committee in identifying strategies to ensure every Winthrop student is provided the opportunity to achieve the competencies across the board please assist in completing this survey."

The survey results were as follows, with a total of 72 participants.

1. What is your position at Winthrop University?
 - a. **Chair** – 11% (n=8)
 - b. **Program Director** – 18% (n=13)
 - c. **Faculty Teaching Undergraduate Courses** – 69% (n=50)
 - d. **Staff** – 1% (n=1)

2. **Location of Competencies** - Please indicate where the opportunities to develop the competencies most likely and frequently occur. (You may choose multiple sections.)

	The competency is developed as part of the college/ department curriculum.		The competency is developed as part of a department or college program.		The competency is developed as part of the General Education program.		The competency is developed in partnership with Student Services.		Student is trusted to master the competency on their own.		The opportunity to develop the competency is not provided in a meaningful manner.		Other - please explain below.	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	47	38%	38	31%	29	24%	4	3%	2	2%	1	1%	2	2%
Oral/Written Communications	45	37%	36	30%	35	29%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	3	2%
Teamwork/Collaboration	41	37%	38	34%	16	14%	9	8%	1	1%	2	2%	4	4%
Integrity & Ethics	37	30%	39	31%	24	19%	9	7%	7	6%	7	3%	4	3%
Branding & Professionalism	35	29%	39	33%	14	12%	12	10%	4	3%	10	8%	5	4%
Equity & Inclusion	33	29%	33	29%	25	22%	12	10%	3	3%	5	4%	4	3%
Technology	43	36%	36	31%	25	21%	5	4%	2	2%	4	3%	3	3%

3. **Identification of Competencies** - Please read each statement and decide which of the five possible responses best describes and reflects what is currently being taught and/or demonstrated among Winthrop students in your college, department or unit.

	Very seldom demonstrated at all by our students		Seldom demonstrated by our students		Sometimes demonstrated by our students		Often demonstrated by our students		Frequently demonstrated by our students	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Students are given the opportunity to exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.	0	0%	0	0%	6	12%	24	48%	20	40%
2. Students are given the opportunity to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality/ inventiveness.	0	0%	3	6%	4	8%	21	42%	22	44%
3. Students are given the opportunity to develop public speaking skills; are able to express ideas to others; and can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively.	0	0%	3	6%	5	10%	19	38%	23	46%

	Very seldom demonstrated at all by our students		Seldom demonstrated by our students		Sometimes demonstrated by our students		Often demonstrated by our students		Frequently demonstrated by our students	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
4. Students are given the opportunity to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization.	0	0%	3	6%	8	16%	17	34%	22	44%
5. Students are given the opportunity to build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints.	0	0%	6	12%	7	14%	21	42%	16	32%
6. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits, e.g., punctuality, working productively with others, and time workload management, and understand the impact of non-verbal communication on professional work image.	1	2%	4	8%	8	16%	20	40%	17	34%
7. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior, acts responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind, and is able to learn from his/her mistakes.	1	2%	4	8%	6	12%	21	42%	18	36%
8. Students are given the opportunity to work within a team structure, and can negotiate and manage conflict.	0	0%	4	8%	11	22%	17	34%	18	36%
9. Students are given the opportunity to make important career-related decisions based on current and future financial assets and liabilities.	2	4%	12	24%	11	22%	17	35%	7	14%
10. Students are given the opportunity to consider geographic region, student loans, pet care, insurance, personal health, wellness, housing, professional expenses, and transportation when determining career paths.	8	17%	11	23%	16	33%	11	23%	2	4%
11. Students are given the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experience through: work study, on-campus internships, off-campus internships, research, and jobs.	0	0%	2	4%	9	19%	16	34%	20	43%
12. Students are aware of starting salaries for a given profession and understand the long-term effects on an individual's lifetime earnings. In addition, they understand how to use starting salaries as a baseline for annual raises and promotions.	7	14%	9	18%	17	35%	13	27%	3	6%
13. Students are given the opportunity to leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.	2	4%	5	10%	13	27%	14	29%	15	31%
14. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.	0	0%	6	12%	18	37%	15	31%	10	20%
15. Students are given the opportunity to leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.	1	2%	6	12%	16	32%	12	24%	15	30%

	Very seldom demonstrated at all by our students		Seldom demonstrated by our students		Sometimes demonstrated by our students		Often demonstrated by our students		Frequently demonstrated by our students	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
16. Students are given the opportunity to assess and manage his/her emotions and those of others; use empathetic skills to guide and motivate; and organize, prioritize, and delegate work.	1	2%	9	18%	18	36%	13	26%	9	18%
17. Students are given the opportunity to identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position desired and career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional growth.	0	0%	4	8%	16	32%	12	24%	18	36%
18. Students are given the opportunity to navigate and explore job options, understands and can take the steps necessary to pursue opportunities, and understands how to self-advocate for opportunities for professional growth.	2	4%	7	14%	14	29%	21	43%	5	10%
19. Students are given the opportunity to develop value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.	1	2%	3	6%	9	18%	19	38%	18	36%
20. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity, and the ability to interact respectfully with all people and understand individuals' differences.	1	2%	3	6%	6	12%	21	42%	19	38%

Findings from this survey included, but were not limited to, the conclusion that all NACE competencies were intentionally provided (at varying frequencies within colleges, programs, and courses) as part of a student's plan for learning at Winthrop; however, **the data indicate an opportunity for partnering across the institution to further develop each competency.**

In addition, the areas indicated below scored the lowest:

- Q9 - Students are given the opportunity to make important career-related decisions based on current and future financial assets and liabilities.
- Q10 - Students are given the opportunity to consider geographic region, student loans, pet care, insurance, personal health, wellness, housing, professional expenses, and transportation when determining career paths.
- Q12 - Students are aware of starting salaries for a given profession and understand the long-term effects on an individual's lifetime earnings. In addition, they understand how to use starting salaries as a baseline for annual raises and promotions.

Therefore, the data also indicate that there is an instructional gap in career readiness as it relates to the finance aspect of career preparation, providing for QEP (and/or other) initiatives to address this deficiency.

Summer 2021: Focused Conversations, Board of Trustees Updates, and the SACSCOC Summer Institute

The QEP Topic Development Committee's last full committee meeting prior to summer was May 7, 2021. Subcommittees also uploaded documentation of progress and, where appropriate, findings, into the online repository (Microsoft Teams) prior to the full committee summer recess. Progress documentation was now available among the full committee to analyze and reference during the summer months. Full committee meetings were tabled for the summer.

While the full committee work was suspended for the summer term, the committee chairperson conducted several update meetings with collaborative partners and a small focus group with the full Center for Career Development & Internships (CDI) office staff. On May 11, 2021, committee developments were shared with Dr. Nicholas Grosseohme with discussion concentrating on how the developing QEP might appropriately bolster undergraduate research funding. On May 13, 2021, committee developments were shared with Dr. Bettie Parsons Barger to discuss QEP development and possible intersections with teacher candidate programs. Dr. Barger shared information about the College of Education's in-place SEE (Supplemental Education Experience) initiative, which includes professionalism components (including a mock interview).

On June 4, 2021, the committee chairperson conducted a focus group with the Center for Career Development & Internships (CDI) staff. Participants included: Dr. Antoinette Bellamy (Career Services Transition Architect), Ms. Tiffany Alexander (CDI Associate Director; Employer Engagement & Internships), Ms. Ashley Ravenell (Internship Coordinator), and Ms. Chloe Gill (Administrative Specialist). Discussion included the professional staff's observations and analysis of the institution's strengths and weaknesses in preparing career ready graduates, as well as recommendations for what components must be considered as core to the developing QEP. Major themes included the need to strengthen partnerships between faculty and CDI staff to build a broader and more robust internship program as well as the recommendation that experiential components be included within the final QEP. Stretch goals included allocating and/or acquiring institutional financial resources earmarked for students

without means to acquire premium, but unpaid, internship opportunities that are otherwise out of reach for lower SES segments of student populations.

Winthrop University Board of Trustees' (BOT) meetings from June 24 - 25, 2021 included a featured presentation on the institution's 2022 Decennial Reaffirmation by Dr. Noreen Gaubatz, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and SACSCOC Liaison. Attention was given to SACSCOC Accreditation in the Academic Quality subcommittee (full presentation) as well as in the full board meeting (summary provided by the Academic Quality subcommittee BOT chair). This presentation included a reminder of the selected Career Readiness topic being developed into a QEP with the QEP Topic Development Committee chairperson named for contact purposes.

From July 19 to 22, 2021, four members of the QEP Topic Development Committee participated in the SACSCOC Summer Institute, with both faculty and staff representation. Because SACSCOC accreditation was a new area of professional interest for three of the four, the group also attended the pre-conference session, "Accreditation 101." Sessions attended included, but were not limited to, those focused on developing, proposing, implementing, and assessing QEPs.

Fall 2021: QEP Development Continues, Evolves, Portions Piloted

On September 10, 2021, the full QEP Topic Development Committee resumed its collective work by reconvening to (a) confirm points of consensus, (b) approve or edit a proposed framework built over the summer based on subcommittee final reports and further informed by the May survey, summer activities such as focus group with CDI staff, conversations with contributing partners, and participation in the SACSCOC Summer Institute, and (c) as a basis for creating the fall semester's project plan. Discussion of this framework during the September 10th meeting confirmed the committee members' mutual prioritization of NACE's definition of Career Readiness, as well as an interest in focusing the QEP on the first of the eight competencies. Winthrop's QEP, therefore, would define career readiness as, "a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management." Moreover, this first competency of "Career & Self-Development" (see Appendix A) includes "proactive development of oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization." Simply, the committee agreed that a Career Readiness QEP focused on this first competency would appropriately set the agenda that all Winthrop graduates—regardless of home college, department, or major—will understand both that they need to, and how to, manage their careers.

Furthermore, the following three-part initiative resonated with the committee:

Part One of Winthrop's Career Readiness QEP focuses on a First-Year Experience unit, introducing all eight NACE competencies and the Center for Career Development & Internships (CDI). This will occur in the ACAD 101 course, "Principles of the Academy," thus reaching all first-time undergraduate Winthrop students (including undergraduate transfer students) at the beginning of their Winthrop experience. Moreover, the unit would incorporate students completing a nationally recognized career/interests inventory in (typically) their first semester as Winthrop students.

Part Two provides nationally recognized faculty training on integrating career guidance from The Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). This supports our faculty with professional development to provide for increased career readiness in a way that is not prescriptive. Additionally, the ACUE Career Concentration training (see Appendix B) creates the

opportunity for faculty to plan and practice intentional course and discipline appropriate and specific career readiness enhancements within their courses and advising.

Finally, Part Three includes a yet-to-be-determined experiential element. The committee agreed that an experiential component was the most unwieldy portion to plan in early fall of 2021 with an ongoing pandemic, budget challenges, and some staffing uncertainties. However, the committee agreed that this third component, an experiential one, could and should be built in such a way as to provide for some flexibility in mode as well as in resources needed. The decision to discuss these options with senior leadership as a next step was made.

With buy-in from the QEP Topic Development Committee as to the proposed outline of Winthrop's still-developing QEP, the QEP Topic Development Committee chairperson presented the developed QEP framework to the EOs, or Executive Officers on September 22, 2021, including Interim President George Hynd, Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs Adrienne McCormick and Vice Presidents Shelia Higgs Burkhalter (Student Affairs) and Kimberly Faust (VP University Communications & Marketing, Secretary to the Board of Trustees, and Chief-of-Staff for the President).

One of the presented experiential possibilities for Part Three of the QEP included the launch of an institutional alumni mentorship network. Given the high participation rates of alumni in the QEP Topic Selection Committee's first survey on student learning at Winthrop and the alumni's clear prioritization of Career Readiness as an area where the institution could strengthen its student learning outcomes, the decision to include alumni in the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan on Career Readiness was well-received by the EOs. The other proposed parts – an embedded FYE lesson and broadly offered Career Readiness ACUE faculty training - were also approved by the Executive Officers. The committee now had support to continue developing all three parts of the initiative.

Of note from a project planning and implementation standpoint is the committee chairperson's initial recommendation to the QEP Topic Development Committee and to the Executive Officers of a staggered rollout for the three parts. Because of the scope of the program, the context of the times, and the coordination of efforts among individuals, committees, and departments involved in more than one major component of the program, the QEP could roll out in phases (gain time when staffing and finances are restricted). A staggered roll out could provide a QEP Implementation Committee, or Team, with additional time to build a quality program with equity and within capacity. Thus, the initial recommendation had QEP-related Career Concentration faculty training and first-year student initiatives (ACAD/1 credit hour online course, in FYE) to begin in Academic Year (AY) 2022-23; QEP-related curriculum infusion enhancements from ACUE trained faculty expected in AY 2023-24; and QEP-related experiential and networking enhancements to launch in AY 2024-25. However, in recognition of the positive impact that this initiative could have on students and future alumni, Interim President Hynd asked for a quicker rollout to be established and for a collapsed launch. This request was prioritized in the next phase of planning and development.

After the meeting on September 22, 2021 with the Executive Officers, the committee chairperson provided an update to both the QEP Topic Development Committee and its predecessor committee, the QEP Topic Selection Committee with news of the Career Readiness QEP framework as now approved by the institution's Executive Officers. Then, the full QEP Topic Development Committee continued its work through November 17, 2021 with several full committee meetings on Fridays and/or Wednesdays and drop-in virtual office hours with the committee chairperson on alternate days of the week (if the full committee were meeting on a Friday, the office hour the week before or after would be on a Friday, or vice versa to minimize scheduling conflicts for any one individual or group of individuals).

Other work began and/or intensified based on initiative components or functional need. The following are summaries and/or examples of key development work and milestones during the fall 2021 semester as the QEP Topic Development Committee concluded its charge:

Part One: The First Year Experience

- Week Ten of Fall 2021 a piloted version of the Career Readiness unit was taught in ACAD 101.
- The Career Readiness unit's pilot lesson included outdated NACE competencies (ACAD 101 planner was published prior to April 2021 NACE competency revisions), a free online interest inventory (funding not yet secured for a nationally recognized one), and a not fully developed signature assessment or introduction to the career center (both pieces piloted by interim leadership in FYE and/or career services). These components were further developed/revised throughout the later fall months, with additional revisions planned prior to the next ACAD 101 planner publication in spring of 2022.
- A January 5, 2022 meeting was established (and has since been held) for the new CDI Director, University College Dean, QEP Topic Development Committee chairperson, and key others to debrief on the pilot and further build out the plan for an AY 2022-23 launch of a revised Career Readiness unit.

Part Two: Faculty Training

- With approval from senior leadership, a two-year contract to secure eight courses with ACUE (each one including the Career Concentration) was procured; this initial two-year investment provides up to 240 seats for Winthrop faculty members to be trained on incorporating career readiness into their courses and advising. An additional eight courses with four of them including the Career Concentration are planned in the two subsequent years.
- On October 25, 2021, the ACUE Partnership Kick-Off Meeting was held. During the meeting, pilot data was offered as possible by the on-site SACSCOC review dates in late March of 2022 if Winthrop were able to conduct a late fall 2021 recruitment for an early spring 2022 launch (instead of the planned early spring 2022 recruitment for a mid-spring 2022 launch).
- As Executive Director of the Center for Professional Excellence, Dr. Meg Webber will serve as Winthrop's ACUE lead (faculty training). On November 1, 2021 she and two ACUE account liaisons participated in the kick-off ACUE Implementation Meeting.
- As lead on Part Two (faculty training) and chair of the QEP Topic Development Committee, and to supplement recruitment emails for faculty applications in the two spring 2022 courses, Webber began QEP update/ACUE faculty recruitment presentations with college dean's councils. Dean's councils within each degree granting academic college include dean's offices and department chairpersons. On November 17, 2021, Webber presented to the College of Arts & Sciences' Dean's Council.
- The original deadline for applications was on November 19, 2021. This date was also the November Faculty Conference meeting, during which Provost McCormick updated the faculty body on both the QEP framework and ACUE registration numbers.

- In negotiation with ACUE, Winthrop’s recruitment period was extended to December 13, 2022.
- On December 8, 2021, Webber presented –in-person–to the remaining three dean’s councils (College of Business Administration, College of Visual & Performing Arts, and College of Education).
- When recruitment closed on December 13, 2021, the two spring courses included faculty representing 19 of the 25 departments. Including pledges for summer course enrollment, departmental representation moved to 20 of 25 departments with faculty trained on the Career Concentration *prior* to the official launch of the Career Readiness QEP.

Part Three: Alumni Mentorship

- On October 1, 2021, the QEP Topic Development chairperson met with alumni mentorship project leads Lori Tuttle (alumni) and Tiffany Alexander (CDI), adding them both as contributing partners and discussing progress needed for purposes of the QEP proposal.
- Faculty member Dr. Barbara Burgess-Wilkerson joined Alexander, Tuttle, and Webber’s update meeting on October 22, 2021 to discuss her experience and offer her expertise regarding building and facilitating career mentoring programs.
- On October 27, 2021 the QEP Topic Development chairperson met with Dr. Padmini Patwardhan, Professor of Mass Communication and IMC Program Coordinator to discuss how the alumni mentorship program within the Mass Communications department worked to inform the institutional model.

CDI Leadership and Staffing:

- During much of the QEP topic selection and development process the career center leadership was in transition. The director had relocated prior to the topic of career readiness’s selection and a new director was placed in place in December of 2021.
- During this time, other career center staff—including a part-time consultant—were actively involved in supporting the advancement of the QEP.
- The new Director of the CDI, Dr. Nina Grant, was interviewed the week of September 27, during which the approved framework of the Career Readiness QEP was provided to her; the QEP Topic Development chairperson also participated in the interviews.
- Dr. Grant assumed leadership of the CDI the first week of December 1, 2021.
- Dr. Grant and Dr. Webber began 1:1 QEP meetings on December 13, 2021, with a second planning meeting on December 21, 2021 prior to the winter holiday.

NSSE Results:

- On September 27, 2021, results from Winthrop’s first-time inclusion of the topical module “Career & Workforce Preparation” in its The National Survey of Student

Engagement (NSSE) administration were made available to Winthrop for consideration in QEP development.

- In brief, a review of the institution's first data on the "Career & Workforce Preparation" module validated that Winthrop had important opportunities to increase its role and effect in developing students' career preparedness. Simply, student responses regarding institutional influence were largely static when comparing first year to senior year datasets.

Reconfigured Promotions Committee:

- On October 20, 2021, QEP Topic Development committee member Dr. Leigh Poole accepted the request from the QEP Topic Development committee chair to relaunch a reconfigured promotions subcommittee for a limited time, with Dr. Poole as chair. A narrowed task list and pre-winter holiday deadline were provided (some work once imagined for this subcommittee would, instead, be moved to the implementation team and/or QEP Director task lists).
- In the spring of 2021, the predecessor to this sub-group had been quite challenged with the pandemic's reduction in frequency and size of campus gatherings, as well as fewer in-person classes during the spring semester of 2021.
- In Spring 2021, the original QEP Promotions subcommittee had commenced work on identifying at least two concept ideas (name, logomark, and so on) for Winthrop's upcoming Career Readiness QEP. Two concepts were identified with one being more popular than the other among the small working group. Research related to prospective promotional items, potential mapping strategies, and alumni data were also completed.
- In October 2021 the QEP Promotions subcommittee work was again initiated. The less popular concept from the spring was eliminated, and the group began developing a new 2nd concept for senior leadership and/or campus-wide consideration.
- Additionally, Dr. Poole as committee chair facilitated a student focus group into the process to get first-hand feedback from students related to both potential naming/logo concepts for Winthrop's Career Readiness QEP and additional feedback on the framework of the initiative itself. The committee's main concept was also shared with the focus group for student feedback. Student representatives included leadership from the Council of Student Leaders, Orientation Leaders, Residence Life, and other Academic Colleges. Participants included 80% students of color with a gender breakdown of 40% male and 60% female.
- Between the committee members (representing a cross-section of faculty, staff, and departments including University Communications and Marketing, CVPA, University College, Student Affairs, and Academic Affairs) and the student leaders selected for the focus group, three concepts were selected for consideration by senior leadership prior to a possible campus-wide vote on QEP designs. These three concepts are:
 - Beyond the Nest – *student nomination*
 - Flight Ready – *a combination of student and committee member ideas*

- Professional Passport / Pro Passport – *Spring 2021 original concept* (Students from the focus group preferred the term “Pro Passport” over “Professional Passport” by 60% should the campus select that campaign.)
- The reconfigured QEP Development Promotions subcommittee’s work concluded on Friday, December 10, 2021 having met the target date and provided all deliverables.

Other Items of Note:

- Winthrop’s Board of Trustees’ October meetings took place on October 28 and 29, 2021. Committee structures had been revised and the now dissolved Academic Quality committee was merged into a joint committee among Academic Affairs, Enrollment, and Student Affairs. In this October meeting, Provost McCormick’s report included an update to the committee on the Career Readiness QEP’s three-part framework while Vice President Burkhalter shared the news of Dr. Grant’s hiring.
- On November 9, 2021, The QEP Topic Development chairperson met with the Director of Winthrop’s General Education Program and Assessment Lead. Discussion included NACE competencies, Winthrop’s university learning competencies, the FYE signature assessment, and other points of potential alignment among the QEP assessment and other institutional assessments of student learning.
- Monthly check-ins and other internal consultation continued with Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and SACSCOC Liaison, Dr. Noreen Gaubatz.
- December 2-7, 2021, representatives from the QEP Topic Development committee participated in SACSCOC’s Annual Conference.
- On January 21, 2022, the Executive Officers approved *Flight Ready* as the name for Winthrop’s Career Readiness QEP.

Next Steps/Spring 2022

Simultaneously with finalizing the written *Flight Ready* proposal are several next steps that will occur between the proposal submission February 2022 and the on-site visit in March 2022. These include, but are not limited to, a reporting out of QEP development updates to the Staff Conference in their January and/or February assembly, as well as to the library faculty and staff at their January meeting on January 14, 2022. Multiple, focused working sessions on QEP resource allocation are on the calendar for the Provost, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Chief Financial Officer and his team. Preparation for the on-site SACSCOC team will also begin in coordination with the SACSCOC Liaison. On the ACUE front, the first two courses including faculty training on career guidance will begin. The *Flight Ready* Implementation Team will be finalized and considerations will begin for both the nomination process and/or identification of people critical to a successful *Flight Ready* Advisory Council. Finally, a timeline for a *Flight Ready* Director (recruitment and onboarding) will be established.

IV. Literature Review

Career Readiness for the 21st Century College Graduate

In 2014, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) surveyed 606 hiring representatives from employers across multiple sectors and from nearly 20 industries regarding the top competencies for career-ready college graduates. Among the most desirable competencies for college recruits were professionalism/work ethic (97.5%), critical thinking/problem solving (96.3%), oral/written communications (91.6%) and teamwork/collaboration (90%), followed by information technology application (72%), leadership (55.9%), and career management (45%) (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2014). While some of these competencies represent technical knowledge and skills, most of them represent a much broader set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that cut across fields and disciplinary lines. A 2015 study by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), “Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success,” suggested that when hiring, employers value both field-specific knowledge and broader transferrable skills and behaviors, and that they place the greatest value on demonstrated skills and proficiencies that cut across majors. Doyle (2020) further points out that soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, leadership, positive attitude, teamwork, and work ethic are more difficult to learn and are often the reason an employer decides to keep or promote an employee. Because of this, candidates are encouraged to develop, demonstrate, and articulate these skills when job seeking.

Despite a growing body of research highlighting the importance of these transferable career competencies, there remains a substantial disconnect between what college students say they learn in school and what employers say they need for work (Fain, 2021). Many employers also report that recent graduates lack the necessary skills to jumpstart and maintain a successful career. The study conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities reports that out of 400 private and non-profit organizations surveyed, less than 40% of employers rate college students as well prepared and fewer than 30% think that recent college grads are proficient in applying knowledge and skills in real-world settings or areas such as critical thinking and communication (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2015). Furthermore, NACE reports that college students typically overestimate their level of competencies in career-readiness, suggesting that they are not aware of their career deficiencies when they are in the job market (2014).

The skills gap - a gap between the skills an employee has and the skills he or she actually needs to perform a job well - has gained greater attention among scholars, employers, postsecondary institutions and policy makers, because this gap makes it more difficult for individuals to find employment and for employers to find appropriately trained workers. Each of these stakeholders has a role to play in developing and maintaining a healthy and successful workforce. Strategic collaborations will be necessary to ensure that career pathways are developed and that college graduates are prepared to meet the call of the modern workplace. University leadership, especially faculty and support staff, will be key to closing this gap, and this may require radically rethinking the way that institutions of higher education prepare students to engage with their careers. Namely, colleges and universities will need to include in their educational focus, a commitment toward the development of career competencies in addition to traditional academic ones. This means spending more instructional time on career related competencies, designing curriculum and student experiences to provide opportunities for career competency practice and feedback, building a culture that supports competency development across the entire student experience, and measuring the impact of these initiatives on career readiness and other career outcomes.

Winthrop University’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Flight Ready*, will focus on equipping students to become strategic partners in their own career development. By educating students about the importance of managing their own career, inspiring students to engage in career development activities as a lifelong skill and equipping them with a basic understanding about how to use campus and off-campus resources

to build and refine a set of career-ready competencies, Winthrop will increase students' levels of career readiness at the time of graduation.

Modern Career Theory and the Changing Nature of Careers

In order to understand the rising importance of career readiness to today's college graduates, it helps to understand the context in which today's graduates work. Defining careers and career success is an important step on the way to understanding how to develop career readiness. Additionally, the discussion of the work and labor landscape and the challenges facing employers and employees with regard to career competencies will be addressed.

Defining Careers

In the mid- to late-20th century, the term "career" was reserved for special types of jobs, industries, or professional occupations. A job which required greater training, specialization or education might be deemed a career, while other roles were simply described as jobs. Sometimes the term was ascribed to organizations (e.g., the "military career" or the "career IBMer"). The very notion that one had a career and not just a job was seen as a status symbol -- an achievement of sorts.

Today, the term "career" is more broadly used to encompass the series of work-related events occurring across a person's lifespan. From their first lemonade stand or paper route, to their first volunteer job, their 4th major job transition, and even their post-retirement job, a career is now widely regarded as property of the individual, not the particular job, industry, or the occupation in which they are employed. A career is better understood as an individual's unique work path, than it is a type of work. In that sense, anyone – indeed everyone who has ever worked, even simply to volunteer —has begun the journey which will be described as their career. This is important because it suggests that career development a lifelong pursuit that often begins *before* students commence their college education and that it will continue long *after* they leave campus.

Objective and Subjective Career Success

One of the most elusive concepts related to careers is what constitutes "success." Scholars often measure success on two overarching dimensions: objective success and subjective success (Abele & Spurk, 2009). Objective indicators of success include observable career accomplishments, such as salary, promotion rate, or position level and influence. Subjective success refers to employee perceptions of career attainment and may include subjective perceptions of meaningfulness, job fit, satisfaction or enjoyment, and work-life balance, among others. These success constructs are conceptually and statistically distinct and may hold different value for different employees. In a study of the outcomes of career readiness, any measure of career success should be thoughtfully constructed to include all the outcomes of interest.

The Traditional vs. Boundaryless or Protean Career Models

Traditional careers were defined by employment in a single firm or industry, wherein the emphasis for new-hires was on the development of technical and firm-specific skills, employees could enjoy job security in exchange for loyalty, and their firms provided the developmental career opportunities they needed to be promoted. Over the past several decades, the nature of work has changed significantly and so has the narrative by which careers develop and unfold. Modern careers are more dynamic and are often described as "boundaryless" (characterized by high physical and/or psychological mobility) and "protean" (characterized by developmental progression and self-fulfillment) (Volmer & Spurk, 2011).

Several major shifts in the employment landscape explain the need for greater career competencies among today's graduates than may have been expected for previous generations.

Shift 1: Career transitions are the new normal

Starting in the mid 1980's, the relationship between employers and their employees was radically redefined. Mass movement of jobs overseas led to unprecedented downsizing, a rise in contract roles and gig work; and the guarantee of continuous lifelong employment with a single employer largely died. While employees of previous generations had exchanged their loyalty for the promise of job security - sometimes spending their entire career in a single organization - the certainty of stable employment is now considered a luxury. The savviest employees became more flexible, adopting a posture of readiness for change. Scholars began to study the factors which predict effective career transitions. Among the most successful employees in this changing landscape were those who stay up-to-date with current and emerging technologies, look for ways to retool or grow their skill sets, network outside the organization to learn about new roles, and find ways to communicate their value across organizations and industries (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994).

Shift 2: Growth of the knowledge economy and transition to a multi-skilled workforce

The next several decades would see other disruptive changes (e.g., automation, digitization, outsourcing of most manufacturing and service roles, globalization and multinational companies, and an increasingly diverse workforce to include more women and ethnic minorities). The shift away from a manufacturing economy toward a knowledge economy placed greater emphasis on the production, distribution and utilization of knowledge and not on production itself. This meant that workers often needed skills beyond the technical skills they had acquired in traditional educational and training settings. They needed strong skills in managing information, processes, people, and production. These skills include things like communication, leadership, conceptual and analytical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and a willingness to undertake continuous learning. More recently, emphasis is placed on a set of skills known as social-emotional skills, like emotional intelligence, which includes regulating and managing emotions in self and others at work.

These changes in requisite skills present challenges for both employers and employees. Namely, employers must compete to attract and retain employees from a smaller pool of qualified applicants or prepare to invest in developing workers after they begin work. Employees must remain poised for change by periodically reinventing themselves and demonstrating adaptability across settings. To remain relevant and employable, individuals' skills must expand beyond those which are industry, or firm-specific, and to a great extent, they must adapt over time. The rate of change means that many technical skills become quickly obsolete. There is a greater focus on hiring for transferable competencies or soft skills, with an expectation that technical or hard skills will be learned and updated along the way.

Shift 3: Organizations became lean and flat, making cross-functional teams the norm

The hyper focus on organizational restructuring and right-sizing in the later part of the 20th century created flatter and leaner organizational structures. Today, it is far less common to find multiple layers of management within siloed functional areas (e.g., sales, marketing, accounting, operations). Instead, managers often oversee the work of cross-functional product or service teams. This change requires many college graduates to be in positions managing workers of different and diverse backgrounds, skills, and preferred approaches to work. Now, more than ever, skills in communication, teamwork/collaboration, leadership, ethics and professionalism are critical for a successful career.

Shift 4: Greater opportunity and expectation for career growth

While this new imperative seems like a heavy burden for many employees, it also represents opportunity for both career growth and challenge and the ability to make a change for better pay, better benefits, better location or company culture, without the stigma of “job hopping.” The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) suggests that between the ages of 18 and 50 (a 32-year span), the average American holds 12.4 jobs. In fact, if one spends too long in their position without being promoted or moving, they are often said to have plateaued, which is a sign of career derailment. As a result, upward or forward movement is often viewed as the norm, and most employees today feel some pressure to do one or the other, lest they become stagnant, or worse obsolete. Thus, one of the best competencies that colleges and universities can encourage among our students is to remain open to change, be ready to adapt and prepare with the kinds of skills that are likely to lead to career success regardless of their chosen starting point, their field or industry.

Shift 5: Careers became primarily self-managed

Employers today face a paradox in that any investment they make in training and developing employees may be lost on employees who are more accustomed to leaving after only a few years. Because of this, most employers are hesitant to invest in career pathways, or extensive career development systems, and instead, they leave the responsibility for career development primarily to their employees to manage. While developmental opportunities may be offered by an employer, it is largely up to the employee to opt in or to craft those opportunities that will best serve their future goals. Job crafting, (self-initiated, proactive strategies to change the characteristics of one's job to better align the job with personal needs, goals, and skills), has received a great deal of recent attention by scholars and is thought to provide individuals with greater levels of both objective and subjective career success (Rogala & Cieslak, 2019). With this in mind, it is perhaps more important than ever that students become aware of the ways in which they will be expected to manage their own career development.

Taken together, today's graduates face career challenges that many universities have not adequately addressed. Winthrop's proposed QEP seeks to directly address these issues by:

- Helping students understand that managing their career is something they need to do and inspire students to start the process of career development while at Winthrop
- Equipping students with the basic understanding of how to pursue career readiness, including where across campus they can get support for this, so that they can begin the practice career management as a lifelong pursuit

Defining Career Readiness

There are a number of definitions of “career readiness” used in the literature. For instance, the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE, 2011) defines career readiness as three areas of core academic skills, employability skills, and technical, job-specific skills:

- **Core academic skills** include proficiency in areas like math and literacy, the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities.
- **Employability skills** include a set of transferable skills like critical thinking and responsibility that are essential in any career area.
- **Technical skills** are said to be job-specific skills related to a specific career pathway.

While this model provides some very useful distinctions between categories of skills, it is not as well developed in terms of defining what the skills look like. The most often utilized definition of “career readiness” comes from the National Association of College and Employers (NACE), who define career readiness as “a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management” (National Association of College and Employers, 2021b). NACE has undertaken the goal of defining career readiness competencies and is currently working to validate this list of competencies through predictive research. For these reasons, the NACE definition and competencies have been chosen to guide the Winthrop QEP.

The term competencies may refer to knowledge, skills, and behaviors. NACE (National Association of College and Employers, 2021a) lists and then further defines its current eight career readiness competencies as:

1. **Career & Self-Development:** Proactively develop oneself and one’s career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one’s organization.
2. **Communication:** Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.
3. **Critical Thinking:** Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.
4. **Equity & Inclusion:** Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.
5. **Leadership:** Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.
6. **Professionalism:** Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.
7. **Teamwork:** Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.
8. **Technology:** Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Several things are noteworthy about the NACE career readiness competencies. First, these are primarily soft skills, (with the exception of elements of technology), which indicates these are best defined as cross-major skills. Second, *Flight Ready* will focus largely on the first of these competencies, understanding that with increased career and self-development, students will naturally begin to recognize where their strengths and weaknesses lie on the other seven competencies and that they will be more likely to engage in activities to help build upon those other competencies. Likewise, faculty and staff with a mindset toward prioritizing career and self-development cannot help but consider the ways in which their pedagogical choices are helping students to meet each of these other competencies.

Linking the Career & Self-Development Competency to Career Success

For some individuals, the prospect of adding career readiness to their curricular goals may be exciting, presenting an opportunity for increased autonomy, creativity, or an increasing number of occupational alternatives. For other individuals, it may create some anxiety, pushing them to make decisions before they feel prepared or equipped to do so. An effective career readiness initiative should be designed to meet individuals where they are and to help individuals engage in activities which increase certainty about their careers. A well-designed program may provide participants with more career options as well as the tools to determine those jobs for which they would be best matched in terms of skills, education and personal qualities. One of the primary ways to do this is by engaging participants in planned career development via the practice of career exploration (Kirk, 1994). Career exploration leads to career awareness and both of these constructs have been linked with greater career success.

Career exploration refers to the purposive behavior and cognitions that afford an individual access to career-related information that was not previously a part of the individual's knowledge scheme (Stumpf, Colarelle & Hartman, 1983). In particular, career exploration is the active process of gathering career-related information in order to make well-informed career decisions. Individuals may gather career information from a variety of sources, but two sources have been widely identified as being the most important: the environment and oneself.

Environmental exploration involves gathering information about various occupations, jobs and organizations. This type of exploration might include an assessment of the market for a particular job or field, an investigation of the duties and responsibilities involved in a particular job or occupation, the different career options available to a person with a particular degree, or skill set or information about salary and benefit options at different organizations. In the university setting, individuals may engage in environmental exploration by attending job search workshops, using online job search banks and research tools, networking with other students and employers, meeting with a personal career counselor, engaging in high impact practices such as internships, experiential learning and applied course projects, and more.

Environmental awareness. According to Greenhaus & Callanan (2006), if conducted properly, self and environmental exploration should enable an individual to become more fully aware of which work settings they are most likely to be comfortable and happy working and from which occupations or organizations their career needs will be met. Alternatively, individuals who engage in only a limited amount of exploration or who do not obtain information from reliable sources may base their career decisions on information that is stereotyped, biased or distorted. Thus, the accuracy of information gained during exploration is *key* to making effective career decisions.

Self-assessment is the process by which individuals gather information and examine their own personality characteristics, values, attitudes, and career-related interests that are relevant to career decision-making. College students are usually provided access to a variety of career-related assessments, including personality (e.g., Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), vocational-interests (e.g., Strong Interest Inventory®), and various other strengths, skills or values inventories. They may also engage in self-reflective thought or writing exercises during classes, workshops or meetings with personal career counselors.

Self-awareness. Effective self-exploration should lead individuals toward a state of *self-awareness*, allowing individuals to answer questions about their own career-related strengths, weaknesses, interests and values, including their preferences on extrinsic and intrinsic job factors and the balance between their work-and non-work lives

Concluding Thoughts: Career Exploration and Awareness

Career exploration has been studied extensively among high school and college students who are embarking on new careers. Research shows that high school and college students who engage in career

exploration are likely to have more career options, be more satisfied with their career options, and be more satisfied with their career choices (Stumpf et al, 1983).

Career awareness has also been linked with several positive career planning outcomes. For instance, individuals who report extensive awareness are likely to have obtained accurate information regarding possible occupational and career options as well as an awareness of their personal career identity (Greenhouse & Callanan, 2006). They are also more likely to have achieved clarity in their career goals, to have established valid and realistic career goals and to be more satisfied with their goals than those who were relatively unaware of self and of career fields (Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994; Greenhaus, Hawkins & Brenner, 1983). Career awareness, then, may be the underlying process by which individuals move from exploration behaviors during college to making successful career decisions.

V. Student Learning Outcomes

Flight Ready provides students the opportunity to engage in, and reflect on, increased career readiness opportunities with an institution prioritizing career and self-development as an integral, intentional, and voiced priority. Winthrop's Career Readiness QEP Goals, framed by NACE's first of eight career readiness competencies, are to enhance the career and self-development competency of Winthrop students and increase career readiness learning opportunities for Winthrop students. To do this, the program has a three-part plan built on this first NACE competency, Career & Self-Development, which NACE defines as follows (National Association of College and Employers, 2021a):

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

The foundation of *Flight Ready* is the first-year experience program during which Winthrop students, in their first semester, will learn about the eight NACE competencies of career readiness and begin to practice the first one, which is the heart of the *Flight Ready* QEP. Students also will complete the Strong Interest Inventory®, providing for a structured identification and reflection of how their own interests and strengths can translate into careers. Moreover, students will be introduced formally to the career services available to them through the Center for Career Development & Internships (CDI), an awareness that is essential for them to begin a direct relationship with professional career support that complements faculty advising.

With Part One of *Flight Ready* completed in a student's initial semester, students will continue their studies with the knowledge critical to recognizing and seeking additional career self-development. To provide for a richer and more expansive set of career readiness opportunities, Part Two of *Flight Ready* is career guidance training for faculty through ACUE. This Career Concentration training assists faculty in developing and implementing strategies in both their courses and in their advising that intentionally supports students' career and self-development. Finally, in Part Three of *Flight Ready*, a new institutional alumni mentorship network is initiated, creating an opportunity for all interested Winthrop students – regardless of program of study – to build relationships with Winthrop alumni. These experiences and opportunities, coupled with reflection, help students to fine-tune their career goals and increase their career preparedness in anticipation of a lifetime of career management as Winthrop alumni.

The ultimate success of *Flight Ready* will be determined by student learning. For *Flight Ready*, the student learning outcomes are as follows:

Students will be able to:

1. Connect relevant careers with identified personal strengths and interests.
2. Develop themselves through continual learning and the navigation of career opportunities (e.g., career interest discussion with faculty advisor or career center staff, career fair, alumni mentorship).

VI. Organizational Structure

Flight Ready is housed within the Provost's Office, signaling its institutional priority. The Career Readiness QEP Director will report directly to the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, which also provides the director with ready access to both the President's Executive Staff and the Provost's Academic Leadership Council. Because this QEP is a shared initiative among three divisions (i.e., Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Advancement Division), the *Flight Ready* Director will require a strong partnership among leadership across these three divisions. The success of *Flight Ready* also requires dedicated staff, collaborative partners, and committee support.

***Flight Ready* Director**

Essential leadership for the QEP proposal process (topic selection, topic development, and initial coordination and/or implementation of pilot components including ACUE faculty training recruitment) was provided by Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. Meg Webber, who chaired both the QEP Topic Selection Committee and QEP Topic Development Committee. Having served in the Office of Academic Affairs at Winthrop University since 2011—including as the final director for Winthrop's first QEP on global learning—Webber's background includes effective project management specifically at Winthrop University and a history of successful collaborations while there with other administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

In spring 2022 recruitment will occur for a permanent *Flight Ready* Director (to begin summer 2022); once selected, onboarding will be led by Dr. Webber as part of the leadership transition. Internal candidates will be encouraged to apply for the *Flight Ready* Director position, which will be a half-time position (fall and spring half teaching load if directed by a faculty member and summer work equivalent to a single course). It is important that candidates are fully committed to the goals of this QEP while possessing strong organizational skills and being well-respected by their campus colleagues.

The *Flight Ready* Director will assume responsibilities including:

- Managing and executing the implementation phase of *Flight Ready*
- Chairing the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team
- Serving on, and staffing, the *Flight Ready* Advisory Council
- Monitoring *Flight Ready*'s budget and project resources, including departmental grant impact reports
- Marketing *Flight Ready* to prospective students, faculty, staff, administrators, and the local community. This may include leading the final phase of designing and/or branding the named QEP as well as directing the creation and maintenance of its web pages.
- Planning and facilitating the *Flight Ready* Career Readiness Workshops for Faculty & Staff as a Center for Professional Excellence partner in Years 2 – 5
- Facilitating the *Flight Ready* assessment plan, including NSSE topical module administration in years where the institution is not administering the full NSSE instrument

- Preparing and presenting an annual *Flight Ready* QEP Impact Report to internal constituencies (e.g., faculty and staff conferences) and the *Flight Ready* Advisory Council
- Writing the QEP Impact Report, as part of the SACSCOC Fifth-Year Review
- Engaging the campus and, as appropriate, the local community, in continuing conversations regarding Winthrop student career readiness

***Flight Ready* Implementation Team**

With the *Flight Ready* QEP Director leading a highly collaborative effort, and doing so as a half-time position, fully committed team members are essential for this QEP to be fully and successfully implemented. The remaining QEP Implementation Team members and their responsibilities are as follows:

- Ms. Tiffany Alexander, Associate Director, Center for Career Development and Internships (CDI). Ms. Alexander supports Ms. Grant's overall leadership in CDI and will lead or co-lead components of QEP-related career center projects and processes.
- Dr. Nina Grant, Director, Center for Career Development and Internships (CDI). Dr. Grant provides administrative oversight for CDI's involvement in Part One and Part Three of the Career Readiness QEP, as well as leadership for the institution's overall (not just QEP-related) career center portion of career preparedness responsibilities.
- Dr. Tourgéé Simpson, Jr., Assistant Dean for Academic Success. Dr. Simpson provides oversight for Winthrop's First Year Experience, in support of the QEP's Part One.
- TBD, The Director of the FYE Program (hiring spring 2022 for summer 2022 start).
- Ms. Lori Tuttle, Executive Director of Alumni Relations and Reunion Giving. Ms. Tuttle provides administrative oversight for Part Three of the QEP, in partnership with CDI staff.
- Dr. Meg Webber, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Executive Director of the Center for Professional Excellence. Dr. Webber will continue as the ACUE Lead for the Career Concentration faculty training (Part Two of the QEP).

Collaborative Partners

It is important that those leading *Flight Ready* continue the collaboration begun during the QEP topic selection and topic development with individual campus partners for whom career readiness already was an area of expertise, passion, and/or practice. This collaboration was modeled in the QEP proposal process; in fact, to facilitate this collaboration, key administrators, faculty, staff, and students were part of the topic selection and topic development committees both through membership on it and, for others, as an extension of the committees' work. These intentional, collaborative efforts will continue in order to strengthen both the five-year QEP and the intended institutionalization of its transformational value for Winthrop's students and alumni in future years.

When considering collaborative partners, it is important to recognize that Winthrop's faculty are an integral part of *Flight Ready*'s success. They are the majority of the ACAD instructors for Part One and

will be integral to maximizing the value of Part Three's alumni mentorship network. Moreover, they are the essential element in Part Two, the ACUE faculty training.

As a demonstration of faculty buy-in and support for *Flight Ready*, faculty from across the university began registering for the ACUE Career Concentration training in late fall 2021. Specifically, in November and December of 2021, faculty were asked to begin participating in the pre-launch of the QEP by registering for one of the first two ACUE classes with the Career Concentration. In response, faculty representatives from 19 of 25 academic departments signed up for classes beginning in January 2022, and a faculty member from a 20th department signed up for the planned summer course, bringing departmental representation to a 20 of 25 or 80% participation prior to *Flight Ready*'s fall 2022 launch. Significantly, three of the four degree granting colleges (i.e., College of Business Administration, College of Education, and College of Visual & Performing Arts) have already attained 100% departmental representation.

Departments represented with at least one faculty member participating in spring and summer 2022 ACUE faculty training courses with the Career Concentration include:

- Accounting, Finance, & Economics
- Biology
- Chemistry, Physics, & Geology
- Computer Science & Quantitative Methods
- Counseling, Leadership, & Educational Studies
- Curriculum & Pedagogy
- Design
- Education Core
- English
- Fine Arts
- History
- Human Nutrition
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Management & Marketing
- Mass Communication
- Music
- Physical Education, Sport, & Human Performance
- Political Science
- Social Work
- Theatre & Dance

Faculty from remaining departments, all in the College of Arts & Sciences, are being actively recruited for summer and fall faculty training participation. These include:

- Mathematics
- Philosophy & Religious Studies
- Psychology
- Sociology, Criminology, & Anthropology
- World Languages & Cultures

Flight Ready Advisory Council

The *Flight Ready* Advisory Council, staffed by the *Flight Ready* Director, will commence during the 2022-2023 academic year, meeting once each in the spring and fall semesters. The *Flight Ready* Advisory Council will consist of representation from Institutional Effectiveness, Council of Student Leaders, community partners, ACAD faculty and staff, peer mentors from the ACUE courses, and those involved in supporting the launch and evolution of the alumni mentorship programming.

The *Flight Ready* Advisory Council will assist and support the director with his/her responsibilities in leading a successful QEP initiative, as well as reviewing and modifying QEP elements such as, but not limited to, assessment tools as the data warrants. The overarching goal of the *Flight Ready* Advisory Council, then, is to both advise the director and actively reflect with him/her on recommended adjustments to the management of the initiative during its five years in order to inform a transformational and institutionalized career readiness priority that extends beyond this initiative.

VII. Actions to be Implemented

To achieve our desired *Flight Ready* goals, student learning outcomes, and program outcomes, key mission-critical activities for this initiative must occur. Mission critical activities are those actions that are essential to meeting QEP goals and outcomes and, therefore, are the priorities of this initiative. These include implementation of components within each of the three *Flight Ready* parts (First-Year Experience, Faculty Training, and Alumni Mentorship). In addition, there are key *Flight Ready* infrastructure, marketing/communication, faculty/staff development, and faculty/staff recognition actions that complement and transcend each of the three major parts and are also listed in this chapter. Table VII.1. outlines all five years of the QEP: Year 1 (AY 2022-23) through Year 5 (AY 2026-27). The shaded areas identify the term (i.e., fall, spring, summer) for each identified action.

Table VII.1 – 5-Year Actions to be Implemented

		Year 1 2022-23			Year 2 2023-24			Year 3 2024-25			Year 4 2025-26			Year 5 2026-27		
Activity		F	S P	S U												
First-Year Experience																
A1	Strong Interest Inventory® Administration	■			■			■			■			■		
A2	Career Readiness Unit (FYE)	■			■			■			■			■		
A3	Career Readiness Self-Reflection (FYE)	■			■			■			■			■		
Faculty Training																
B1	ACUE Career Concentration Training	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
B2	ACUE Recruitment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
B3	ACUE Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
B4	ACUE Completer Celebration Lunches	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
B5	ACUE Recognition Award Items	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
Alumni Mentorship																
C1	Alumni Mentor Recruitment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
C2	Alumni Mentorship Network Pilot	■	■	■												
C3	Alumni Mentee Recruitment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
C4	Alumni Mentorship Participant Assessment	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<i>Flight Ready</i> Infrastructure																
D1	<i>Flight Ready</i> Director Recruitment & Onboarding	■														
D2	Establish & Maintain <i>Flight Ready</i> Advisory Council	■			■			■			■			■		
D3	Hire Second Career Coach						■	■	■							

		Year 1 2022-23			Year 2 2023-24			Year 3 2024-25			Year 4 2025-26			Year 5 2026-27		
		Year 1 2022-23			Year 2 2023-24			Year 3 2024-25			Year 4 2025-26			Year 5 2026-27		
Activity		F	S P	S U												
D4	Administration of NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module															
D5	Review of Impact Reports from Academic Departments															
D6	Distribution of Academic Department Career Readiness Grants															
D7	Collection/Further Analysis of FYE, ACUE, and Alumni Mentorship Network Data															
D8	Strong Interest Inventory® Certification Training															
D9	SACSCOC & NACE Conferences, Competency Symposium															
<i>Flight Ready</i> Marketing/Communication																
E1	Logo Finalization															
E2	Webpages															
E3	Marketing Pieces															
E4	Communication Plan															
<i>Flight Ready</i> Faculty/Staff Development																
F1	Career Readiness Workshops for Faculty and Staff															
<i>Flight Ready</i> Faculty/Staff Recognition																
G1	<i>Flight Ready</i> Faculty/ Staff Recognition Items															

The following provides a description of each mission-critical component as part of the overall 5-year QEP timeline.

First-Year Experience

- (A1) Strong Interest Inventory® Administration - First-Year Students, Fall Semester – Within the First-Year Experience, the Principles of the Academy Course (ACAD 101), first-year students will complete the Strong Interest Inventory®, learning more about how their strengths and interests can connect them with majors and careers.
- (A2) Career Readiness Unit, First-Year Students, Fall Semester – Within the First-Year Experience, the Principles of the Academy Course (ACAD 101) will continue its full unit (piloted in Year 0) on Career Readiness and the NACE Career Competencies. Beginning in Year 1 and continuing through Year 5, ACAD 101 will also include a video introduction to the resources and services available to them through Winthrop’s Center for Career Development & Internships (CDI). This video provides CDI staff with a feasible approach to reach all 50 – 60 annual sections of ACAD 101. Students also will participate in a guided in-class activity that shows students how their interests influence their choice of major, career, and work settings.
- (A3) Career Readiness Self-Reflection (Signature Assessment for ACAD 101), Fall Semester – First-Year students will complete their ACAD 101 signature assessment for the course through a critical reflection writing assignment.

Faculty Training

- (B1) ACUE Career Concentration Training – This training will occur every semester in the Fall/Spring/Summer, starting Spring 2022 through Summer 2025 (alternatively, should faculty enrollment and/or completion patterns in the first two years indicate a need to restructure the schedule of offerings, ACUE training could extend through Fall 2025). During that time, 16 separate courses with 30 seats per course, will be taught with the Career Concentration training.
- (B2) ACUE Recruitment – For the ACUE faculty training, recruitment is a continuous cycle including up to the add/drop date for the last course scheduled during summer of 2025. The Executive Director for the Center for Professional Excellence will continue the recruitment work begun in December 2021: attending college meetings with dean’s offices and department chairs, sending emails to faculty conference, providing information to the provost for the provost’s report during faculty assemblies, and following up with individual faculty who express future interest. In addition, celebrating completers will also become an indirect part of recruitment. Completers will be recognized for completing the *Flight Ready* ACUE Career Concentration at both college-level and university-level assemblies.
- (B3) ACUE Assessment – ACUE’s assessment for the Career Concentration occurs each course. Faculty Confidence to embed career guidance in their courses and design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals is measured, collected, and reported to Winthrop’s Executive Director of the Center for Professional Excellence at the completion of each ACUE course.
- (B4) ACUE Completer Celebration Lunches will be held at the end of each semester in which ACUE training took place. Each lunch includes faculty trained in the Career Concentration module and will provide an opportunity for the *Flight Ready* Director and/or *Flight Ready*

Implementation Team members to have an active audience with highly engaged faculty. Lunch programs will include annual updates on *Flight Ready* along with announcements of upcoming opportunities to further engage in campus career readiness activities.

- (B5) ACUE Recognition Award Items, branded with the *Flight Ready* logo, serve as recognition for faculty who successfully complete courses while also increasing the visibility of the QEP. These awards are provided at the end of each semester in which ACUE training took place, from Spring 2022 through Summer 2025.

Alumni Mentorship

- (C1) Alumni Mentor Recruitment – To launch a new alumni mentorship network, recruiting prospective mentors began in Year 0 and will continue throughout and beyond Year 5. This type of network requires that the mentor pool be well established prior to the recruitment of mentees. The mentor program will be marketed to alumni via the Alumni Association website, emails to alumni, the alumni publication the *Winthrop Insider*, social media, and the Graduway platform itself, “Winthrop Connect.”
- (C2) Alumni Mentorship Network Pilot – Year 1, Academic Year 2022-23, is the alumni mentorship network’s pilot year with a fall launch. In Year 1 there will be a sufficient number of alumni mentors registered in Graduway (the network platform) across a variety of job functions to create a sustainable pool for recruiting matches in interested student mentees. Graduway tool functions will have been tested and all essential elements will be established, including the systematic inclusion of both pre- and post- assessments for both mentors and mentees.
- (C3) Alumni Mentee Recruitment – Targeted mentee recruitment efforts will begin in Year 1. The mentor program will be marketed to students via the Center for Career Development and Internship (CDI) webpages, announcements in presentations to classes, standalone information sessions introducing the Alumni Mentorship Network, daily announcements, “Handshake” email, CDI Instagram, Tabling, posting of program success stories through video on the alumni webpages, and partnerships with other student organizations.
- (C4) Alumni Mentorship Participant Assessment – Program effectiveness data from network participants, both mentors and mentees, will be formally collected beginning with the pilot launch in fall of Year 1 and continuing throughout the *Flight Ready* initiative. Focus groups with student mentees who have completed the alumni mentorship opportunity will take place primarily during fall and spring semesters when the program activity is most concentrated.

***Flight Ready* Infrastructure**

Human Resources

- (D1) *Flight Ready* Director Recruitment & Onboarding – Internal recruitment for the *Flight Ready* Director will begin in spring of 2022, with onboarding to follow through fall of 2022.
- (D2) Establish & Maintain *Flight Ready* Advisory Council – Consideration of membership will begin in spring of 2022, with membership determined prior to the start of Year 1. Each fall, the *Flight Ready* Director will consult with the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team and appropriate others to review Advisory Council membership and fill empty seats.

- (D3) Hire Second Career Coach – To hire the second career coach in Year 3, hiring processes will begin in the summer of 2024 with recruitment and interviews through the fall of 2024 and, as needed, the spring of 2025.

Program-wide Assessment & Academic Department Grants

- (D4) Administration of NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Module Distribution & Analysis (Standalone or Full NSSE) will occur each spring from Year 1 – 5. Additional detail is provided in Chapter IX – Assessment Plan.
- (D5) Review of Impact Reports from Academic Departments will occur at the beginning of each summer from Year 1 – 5. Additional detail is provided in Chapter IX – Assessment Plan.
- (D6) Distribution of Academic Department Career Readiness Grants will occur at the end of every semester when a department first meets the required threshold of three ACUE Career Concentration trained faculty members. After which point, if Impact Grants are delivered annually demonstrating purpose fidelity, an annual grant will continue through Year 5 and be distributed at the start of the fiscal year. Based on initial enrollment in the courses during Year 0, at least two departments will receive grants at the start of Year 1.
- (D7) Collect and Review FYE Signature Assessments, ACUE Faculty Surveys, and Alumni Mentorship Network Data for further analysis against goals, student learning outcomes, and program outcomes. Additional detail is provided in Chapter IX – Assessment Plan. This work is concentrated in early summers of Years 1 – 5.

Implementation Team, Contributing Partners Learning & Development

- (D8) Strong Interest Inventory® Certification Training –This two-day on-campus training by the Myers-Briggs Company’s Strong Certification Program certifies participants to administer and interpret the Strong Interest Inventory® instrument. In Year 0, current Center for Career Development & Internship (CDI) staff are Strong certified. However, with new staff onboarding, routine turnover, and the importance of the integration of the Strong assessment into ACAD 101, as well as its potential to impact faculty advising, an on-site training of up to ten Winthrop employees every three years (Year 1 and Year 4) is planned in late summer and/or early fall. This will provide for new CDI staff, those involved leading the first-year experience portion of this QEP, and key others in advising roles across campus (i.e., Student Services leadership/advising leads within each college) to be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to increase, lead, and model appropriate usage of the instrument.
- (D9) SACSCOC & NACE Conferences, Competency Symposium -- To support *Flight Ready*’s Implementation Team to effectively lead this campus-wide initiative, *Flight Ready* relevant professional development opportunities are priorities. For SACSCOC, on-site attendance costs for either the Summer Institute or Annual Conference are included for the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the QEP Director, and/or an additional one or two *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members or collaborative partners. For NACE and The Competency Symposium, on-site attendance costs for the Annual Conference are included for the CDI Director or Associate Director and the QEP Director with an additional *Flight Ready* Implementation Team member(s) or collaborative partner(s) attending on-site or virtually (Competency Symposium).

***Flight Ready* Marketing/Communication**

- (E1) Logo Finalization – The *Flight Ready* name was determined in Year 0 along with several design concepts that will be vetted and finalized in spring and/or summer of 2022, prior to the beginning of the five-year QEP. Additional design work to supplement the main brand kit (colors, name, logomark) for alternative usage (e.g., social media formatting and/or other needs discovered during the first semester of full implementation) may continue into the fall of 2022.
- (E2) Webpages – *Flight Ready*'s web presence is an early priority, with an initial build prioritized to occur prior to fall 2022; nonetheless, continuing to update and leverage *Flight Ready* webpages on the Winthrop website will serve as an each-semester priority. The *Flight Ready* web presence will provide an online hub for both communicating events, as well as documenting project progress.
- (E3) Marketing Pieces for current students, prospective students, and alumni, such as the production and installation of *Flight Ready* banners and other signage is scheduled for installation prior to fall 2022. Additional marketing pieces include promotional items for students, faculty, staff, and alumni; display tables, and activity materials; and brochures. The need to check inventory of promotional items, investigate changes to promotional materials from year-to-year of student recruitment, and rotational replacements of faded exterior *Flight Ready* banners will take place each summer from Year 1 – 5.
- (E4) Communication Plan (In-person & f2f options) – A communication plan for *Flight Ready* includes not only maintaining the QEP's webpages on the Winthrop website, but also ensuring keeping the campus and its constituencies informed and involved in the initiative's progress. At Winthrop, throughout the five-year *Flight Ready* plan, the *Flight Ready* Director will present at faculty and staff assemblies each fall and spring, with monthly email bulletins (Daily Digests) to campus employees. Students will be informed of *Flight Ready* activity through digital monitors in public spaces such as the DiGiorgio Campus Center and tent cards in public dining spaces. Smaller, more targeted communications will also occur within each part of the QEP. For example, the Executive Director for the Center for Professional Excellence will provide ongoing communications with faculty as part of the ongoing recruitment effort for the Career Concentration training, and the Alumni Office will use the Graduway platform, their social media accounts, the alumni magazine, and in-person events to recruit alumni for the alumni mentorship network while updating them about *Flight Ready* progress.

***Flight Ready* Faculty/Staff Development**

- (F1) Career Readiness Workshops for Faculty and Staff in the spring of years 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be conducted in partnership with the *Flight Ready* QEP Implementation Team and/or Advisory Council and the Center for Professional Excellence. These workshops will provide faculty and staff the opportunity to learn from one another during the QEP (informed by ACUE training, departmental initiatives with incentive money, and reflective practice), as well as provide a venue for guest speakers to continue inspiring innovation in how Winthrop develops its career readiness infrastructure and practices. Career Readiness Workshops begin in the 2nd year of the QEP, once a critical mass of faculty has completed the ACUE Career Concentration training with lessons learned from practicing common strategies across their courses.

Flight Ready Faculty/Staff Recognition

- (G1) *Flight Ready* Faculty/Staff Recognition Items branded with the *Flight Ready* logo, serve as recognition for faculty and staff who actively contribute to the QEP Goals. Items awarded also increase the visibility of the QEP. These awards begin in the first year of the QEP, providing for end-of-year recognition each year of the initiative. These awards will be distributed annually in the spring at Career Readiness Workshops for Faculty and Staff and/or at end-of-year (April) faculty and staff assemblies.

VIII. Resources

Career readiness is a core purpose for higher education itself and one that is increasingly of expressed interest for students, parents, lawmakers, and other stakeholders in the public education ecosystem. Therefore, *Flight Ready* is a priority initiative for Winthrop University as it seeks to enhance its real and perceived value to the public and all of its constituents. The university is committed to the successful implementation of this initiative with the intent to continue strengthening its career readiness infrastructure beyond the lifespan of the QEP. Including the year leading up to the QEP, the university will invest approximately \$750,000 in the five-year QEP's specific resources, with significant administrative in-kind support across several named units in addition to that dollar amount. Monitoring all QEP-related budget expenses will be the responsibility of the *Flight Ready* Director, though some critical expenses will be housed within other operational budgets (e.g., the alumni platform Graduway is an Alumni Office budget line item). Table VIII.1 summarizes the 5-year *Flight Ready* budget.

Table VIII.1 – 5-Year *Flight Ready* Budget

		Year 0 (FY22) 2021-22	Year 1 (FY23) 2022-23	Year 2 (FY24) 2023-24	Year 3 (FY25) 2024-25	Year 4 (FY26) 2025-26	Year 5 (FY27) 2026-27
A	Stipends, Salaries, and Benefits	\$8,000	\$22,000	\$19,000	\$84,250	\$82,250	\$82,250
1	<i>Flight Ready</i> Director Summer Stipend + Fall & Spring course(s) buyout	\$5,000	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$17,000
2	ACUE Cohort Facilitators	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$2,000		
3	Second Career Coach Salary & Benefits				\$65,250	\$65,250	\$65,250
B	Faculty/Staff Development	\$13,390	\$15,024	\$11,974	\$11,974	\$3,450	\$3,450
1	ACUE's Career Concentration	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$6,000	\$6,000		
2	Recognition Award Items for ACUE Completers	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500		
3	Recognition Lunches for ACUE Completers	\$890	\$2,024	\$2,024	\$2,024		
4	Hospitality for <i>Flight Ready</i> Career Readiness Workshops			\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450
5	<i>Flight Ready</i> Career Readiness Workshops for Faculty & Staff			\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
6	Recognition Award Items for <i>Flight Ready</i> Faculty & Staff Contributors		\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
C	Professional Staff & <i>Flight Ready</i> Implementation Team Development	\$3,225	\$31,396	\$18,750	\$18,750	\$32,569	\$18,750
1	Strong Interest Inventory® Certification Program		\$12,646			\$13,818	
2	SACSCOC Conference Participation (July Summer Institute, December Annual Conference)	\$2,100	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250
3	NACE Conference (July)		\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250
4	Competency Symposium (March)	\$1,125	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250	\$6,250
D	Funding for Academic Department Career Readiness Initiatives		\$10,000	\$10,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500
1	College of Arts and Sciences, by department (14 departments)		\$4,500	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
2	College of Business, by department (3 departments)		\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
3	College of Education, by department (4 departments)		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
4	College of Visual & Performing Arts, by department (4 departments)		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
E	Technology, Membership, & Licenses	\$11,345	\$23,883	\$24,406	\$25,300	\$26,014	\$26,550
1	Strong Interest Inventory® Assessment		\$11,083	\$11,416	\$11,759	\$12,112	\$12,476
2	NACE Membership	\$645	\$1,070	\$1,070	\$1,070	\$1,070	\$1,070
3	NSSE – Career & Workforce Topical Module License	\$400	\$400	\$250	\$450	\$450	\$250
4	Graduway Platform, “Winthrop Connect” (August)	\$10,300	\$11,330	\$11,670	\$12,021	\$12,382	\$12,754
F	Marketing	\$23,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
1	Costs to roll-out the <i>Flight Ready</i> initiative and maintain campus presence	\$23,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
G	Office Expenses/Supplies	\$1,250	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
1	<i>Flight Ready</i> Director and <i>Flight Ready</i> Implementation Team	\$1,250	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
	Total QEP University Expenses	\$60,210	\$110,803	\$93,130	\$161,274	\$165,282	\$152,000

The following provides a description of each component as part of the overall 5-year QEP budget.

Stipends, Salaries, and Benefits

- (A1) The *Flight Ready* Director is planned as a half-time position in fall and spring with up to a \$5,000 stipend for the summer semester. The summer stipend will match faculty compensation rate for a summer course of same length with same credentials). Partial funding begins as early as Year 0 once the QEP proposal is approved, to recruit and hire for summer 2022 implementation leadership. An internal search will be conducted with no direct recruitment costs. As a half-time position, anticipated costs for covering the teaching load of a faculty QEP Director are also budgeted for up to \$6,000 for fall and up to \$6,000 for spring, annually, reflective of average adjunct salary. This compensation structure is comparable to both our previous QEP's first director (faculty member) and the current framework in place for faculty course release workload.
- (A2) ACUE Cohort Facilitators are provided with a stipend of \$1,000 each for a leadership/peer mentor role embedded in each ACUE course. Eight courses, all with the Career Concentration add-on in Years 0, 1, and 2 are already in progress. Eight more courses with an additional four Career Concentration add-ons in Years 2 and 3 are planned (four courses will be offered without the Career Concentration and four with the Career Concentration). Thus, 16 ACUE courses, 12 with the Career Concentration, will be offered from Year 0 through Year 3. In 12 separate Career Concentration course sections (by the end of Year 3), all faculty wishing to enroll in the training will have had an opportunity to do so. The \$1,000 stipend is in alignment with dedicated hours spent by faculty involved in our most recent university-wide faculty training initiative, an early pandemic online training sequence developed and facilitated in-house during summer 2020. As demonstrated faculty leaders, all ACUE Cohort Facilitators who have completed the Career Concentration also will be invited to participate in *Flight Ready* Career Readiness Workshop planning.
- (A3) The salary and benefits for a second Career Coach represents the cap for the position at \$45,000 plus the institution's current rate of 45% fringe, totaling \$65,250. With career readiness as an institutional priority and *Flight Ready* activities designed to increase interest in career services, the addition of a second Career Coach in Year 3 of the initiative accounts for our building capacity along with anticipated (and at that point, realized) demand.

Faculty/Staff Development

- (B1) Online faculty training (teaching excellence certificate program) provided by the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) and endorsed by the American Council on Education (ACE) is contracted and scheduled during Year 0, 1, and 2 for up to 240 Winthrop faculty members. Each training in the first eight courses on teaching excellence includes the Career Concentration add-on. This ACUE training is planned to continue for Years 2 and 3, but with half of the courses including the Career Concentration (an additional 240 seats for teaching excellence training with 120 of them including the Career Concentration). The cost for the ACUE training is an ongoing (and shared) priority with the Center for Professional Excellence (the bulk of the cost is not included in the QEP but is housed in the Center for Professional Excellence's budget). ACUE's Career Concentration is added at \$3,000 per teaching excellence course to which it is added for a total cost of \$36,000. By Years 4 and 5 all faculty wishing to enroll in the training will have had an opportunity to do so.

- (B2) Recognition Award Items for ACUE Completers, branded with the *Flight Ready* logo, serve as recognition for faculty who successfully complete courses while also increasing the visibility of the QEP.
- (B3) Recognition Lunches for ACUE Completers provide for a celebration of the completion of a course or courses. Each lunch includes faculty trained in the Career Concentration module and will include an opportunity for the *Flight Ready* Director and/or *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members to have an active audience with highly engaged faculty. Lunch programs will include annual updates on *Flight Ready* along with announcements of coming opportunities to further engage in campus career readiness activities.
- (B4) Hospitality for *Flight Ready* Career Readiness Workshops is an important part of establishing an opportunity for faculty and staff attendees to not only be welcomed, but to converse and network informally before, during, and/or after the learning event.
- (B5) *Flight Ready* Career Readiness Workshops for Faculty & Staff -- Career Readiness focused Workshops in years 2, 3, 4, and 5 will be conducted in partnership with the *Flight Ready* QEP Implementation Team and/or Advisory Council and the Center for Professional Excellence. These workshops will provide faculty and staff the opportunity to learn from one another during the QEP (informed by ACUE training, departmental initiatives with incentive money, and reflective practice) as well as provide a venue for guest speakers to continue inspiring innovation in how Winthrop develops its career readiness infrastructure and practices. Career Readiness Workshops begin in the 2nd year of the QEP, once a critical mass of faculty has completed the ACUE Career Concentration training with lessons learned from practicing common strategies across their courses.
- (B6) Recognition Award Items for *Flight Ready* Faculty & Staff Contributors, branded with the *Flight Ready* logo, serve as recognition for faculty and staff who actively contribute to the QEP Goals. Items awarded also increase the visibility of the QEP. These awards begin in the first year of the QEP, providing for end-of-year recognition each year of the initiative.

Professional Staff & *Flight Ready* Implementation Team Development

- (C1) Strong Interest Inventory® Certification Program (Training) -- This two-day on-campus training by the Myers-Briggs Company's Strong Certification Program certifies participants to administer and interpret the Strong Interest Inventory® instrument. In Year 0, current Center for Career Development & Internship (CDI) staff are Strong certified; however, with new staff onboarding, routine turnover, and the importance of the integration of the Strong assessment into ACAD 101 as well as its potential to impact faculty advising, an on-site training of up to 10 Winthrop employees every three years (Year 1 and Year 4) is planned in order that new CDI staff, those involved leading the first-year experience portion of this QEP, and key others in advising roles across campus (i.e. Student Services leadership/advising leads within each college) will be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to increase, lead, and model appropriate usage of the instrument. A 3% annual increase is included in the projected costs.
- (C2) SACSCOC Conference Participation (July, December) -- To support *Flight Ready*'s Implementation Team to effectively lead this campus-wide initiative, *Flight Ready* relevant professional development opportunities are included in this budget. For SACSCOC, on-site attendance costs for either the Summer Institute or Annual Conference are included for the Vice

Provost for Academic Affairs, the QEP Director, and/or an additional one or two *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members or collaborative partners.

- (C3) NACE Conference Participation (July) -- To support *Flight Ready*'s Implementation Team to effectively lead this campus-wide initiative, *Flight Ready* relevant professional development opportunities are included in this budget. For NACE, on-site attendance costs for the Annual Conference are included for the CDI Director or Associate Director and the QEP Director with an additional one or two *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members or collaborative partners.
- (C4) Competency Symposium Participation (March) -- To support *Flight Ready*'s Implementation Team to effectively lead this campus-wide initiative, *Flight Ready* relevant professional development opportunities are included in this budget. For the Competency Symposium in Years 1 - 5, on-site attendance costs for the Annual Conference are included for the CDI Director or Associate Director and the QEP Director with additional *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members or collaborative partners attending virtually (ongoing virtual components being offered).

Academic Department Career Readiness Initiatives

- (D, 1 – 4) As both an incentive for participation in the faculty training and as a resource for departments to meet the identified needs and opportunities within their own departments and disciplines for career readiness enhancements, once three or more faculty members in a department have completed the ACUE faculty training (July and Dec census dates), the department receives a \$500 QEP grant for departmental career readiness activities, automatically renewed for each remaining fiscal year of the QEP, assuming Impact Reports demonstrating purpose fidelity are received each subsequent year.

Department chairs will provide a one-page Impact Report to the *Flight Ready* Director at the end of each fiscal year, reporting on how the money was used and how impact was measured. Ideas for usage include, but are not limited to, professionalism workshops for students in the major, and/or materials for use by departmental faculty to support career counseling within the faculty advising role. Department chairs are expected to include ACUE Career Concentration trained faculty members in determining fund usage. Numbers are estimates based on pilot launch enrollments by department.

Technology, Membership, and Licenses

- (E1) The Strong Interest Inventory® Profile Report, College Edition is being included as part of the ACAD 101 First-Year Experience curriculum for every first-year and transfer student enrolled in ACAD beginning in Year 1. An additional number of instruments are being purchased for use with students who completed ACAD 101 prior to the inclusion of the Strong and seek out career counseling at the CDI during the QEP. A 3% annual increase is included in the projected costs.
- (E2) NACE Membership – Winthrop's National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) membership account will move to a higher tier (up to 10 members) membership fee structure to also serve as a resource for the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team and key collaborative partners. The membership was formerly accessed exclusively by Winthrop career services staff. NACE provides up-to-date data regarding employment trends and employer expectations for new professionals as well as research, career readiness activities, and surveys relevant to the

enhancement of college career readiness practices. A membership with NACE is particularly instrumental because of *Flight Ready*'s adoption of NACE's definition of career readiness and focus on the first of eight NACE career competencies.

- (E3) NSSE's Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module License Fee – This topical module cost, if selected as the single included topical module, is included at the cost of \$250 with full National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) participation. Winthrop participates in NSSE every three years. In the off years, the *Flight Ready* assessment plan will continue to make use of this topical module annually. NSSE charges a \$400 license fee to for an institution to administer and analyze a topical module on its own during off years. After the spring 21 administration of the full NSSE, Winthrop will administer the standalone module survey for QEP purposes in Years 0, 1, 3, and 4. A \$50 increase for the standalone topical module is included to cover a small possible increase for Years 3 and 4.
- (E4) Graduway is the platform Winthrop has customized to call "Winthrop Connect." This digital platform houses Winthrop's in-progress alumni mentorship network, Part Three of the *Flight Ready* plan. Its annual cost increases by 3% annually.

Marketing

- (F1) The marketing budget for Year 0 (\$23,000) reflects costs for the roll-out of *Flight Ready* to the campus, including significant costs in campus items such as the production and installation of *Flight Ready* banners and other signage. Additional costs include promotional items for students, faculty, staff, and alumni; display tables, and activity materials; website design; and brochures. Much of this will be put in place during summer 2022. Year 1's budget decreases to a continuing \$8,000 to accommodate the lighter demands of marketing in the subsequent years (including promotions to incoming new students and the rotational replacements of banners faded quickly by the South Carolina sun).

Office Supplies and Expenses

- (G1) The larger office expenses/supplies budget for Year 0 allows for the initial start-up of the initiative. Office supplies will include, but not be limited to, a dedicated copy code and operational printing expenses separate from larger promotional campaigns.

Administrative In-Kind Support from Units

In addition to resources depicted in Table VIII.1 and described earlier in this chapter, substantial administrative in-kind support for the QEP will be provided by the following units: Alumni Office, Center for Career Development & Internships, Center for Professional Excellence, Office of the First-Year Experience, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Provost's Office, and University Communications & Marketing.

IX. Assessment Plan

The assessment plan for *Flight Ready* addresses the objective of meeting QEP-specific targets while fostering an institutional culture of continuous improvement through ongoing, systematic, and sustainable assessment. Importantly, because this far-reaching initiative involves both assessment experts and novices, the plan was developed with the intent of modeling that assessment work is both important and accessible, not a mysterious endeavor that only a few can master.

Measuring “Career Readiness”

In some respects, as long as the demands of the workplace continue to change, an individual is never fully “career ready.” Career readiness is a continuous life-long pursuit that must become a normal and routine part of an individual’s growth over one’s lifespan. Success in the boundary less career requires continuous learning and a willingness to embrace change and to move across boundary less between functions and industries (Noe, 2017).

Nonetheless, in order to understand and measure the impact of increased career readiness activity, the institution will operationalize career readiness. Trying to determine the “readiness” of a college student for a career requires looking at more than the core academic and technical skills preparation. The softer employability skills previously mentioned are essential to success. A number of options for assessing overall career readiness are available, including The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Module for Career & Workforce Preparation. This self-reported measure is completed by students during their first-year and senior year of college. Questions address the institutional contributions to students’ career plans, influences on their goals, confidence in work-related skills, career exploration in the curriculum, and use of career resources and services.

In addition to national assessments such as NSSE, institutions wishing to assess their students’ career readiness can add additional home-grown measures to assess the degree to which individuals feel or perceive themselves to be career ready, such as greater clarity on career goals (also called career indecision), career self-efficacy, or job search self-efficacy (e.g., written critical reflections, focus group responses). As the institution’s career readiness foundation strengthens, Winthrop University might consider linking measures of career readiness to measures of objective and subjective career success including time to land a job after graduation, income from first employment, and satisfaction with career.

Despite a plethora of research linking various *specific career competencies* (e.g., Career & Self-Development) to career success, there is surprisingly little research linking the composite construct called “career readiness” with career outcomes. Part of this may be because the construct is still being developed (NACE, 2021a). Another likely reason for this is that many students will not be touched by or participate in all the services offered through the program (e.g., all Winthrop undergraduate students will participate in FYE, but not all of them will participate in the alumni mentorship network). Due to this, it is not appropriate to assess the effects of *Flight Ready* as a single large-scale intervention by any one metric or outcome. Therefore, *Flight Ready* Assessment depends on units of analysis made more specific with the intent to relate each of the components (e.g., FYE activities vs. alumni mentoring) or combinations of initiatives (e.g., first-year experiences with having taken classes from multiple ACUE Career Concentration trained faculty members) with the outcomes that they are designed to impact (more comprehensive cross-institutional impact).

QEP Goals

Winthrop’s *Flight Ready* Goals, framed by NACE’s first of eight career readiness competencies, are to:

1. Enhance the career and self-development competency of Winthrop students.

2. Increase career readiness learning opportunities for Winthrop students.

Both the student learning outcomes and the program outcomes that follow later in this chapter support the QEP Goals. The planned assessment of both the student learning outcomes and the program outcomes will support the institution's ability to gauge student learning and increase program effectiveness from year to year during the lifespan of the initiative as well as beyond it.

Assessment of Student Learning

The *Flight Ready* student learning outcomes frame the assessment of the student learning plan.

Students will be able to:

1. Connect relevant careers with identified personal strengths and interests.
2. Develop themselves through continual learning and the navigation of career opportunities (e.g., career interest discussion with faculty advisor or career center staff, career fair, alumni mentorship).

To create an assessment system sufficiently robust but simple, Barbara E. Walvoord's "No-Frills Assessment Plan" was the model used (Walvoord, 2010). Once student learning outcomes were identified, a direct measure (i.e., signature writing sample captured after the foundational career readiness unit in ACAD 101, part of the First-Year Experience) and indirect measure (i.e., focus groups asking three key questions for students having completed both the career readiness unit in FYE and an alumni mentorship opportunity) were created. A forum to discuss the data and identify action items was established as an annual spring priority for the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team.

With the assessment of student learning for this initiative including both a direct and indirect measure, along with a routinized plan for discussing and acting upon the data, the plan was now ready to consider any additional measures that would complement the assessment of student learning or that would provide important data to inform program effectiveness and/or program outcomes. The Strong Interest Inventory® was already an integral instrument in the *Flight Ready* plan (both as an activity and as an assessment aid for students) because of its value in equipping student reflection, planning, and advising in connecting relevant careers with student identified personal strengths and interests. It was determined that the NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module also would be of value; relevant questions to the goals and objectives were identified along with the appropriate sample population from year-to-year (with thoughtful consideration of when a student surveyed would have completed FYE, been in a Career Concentration trained faculty member's class, and/or completed an alumni mentorship network opportunity); moreover, baseline data from spring 2021 had been captured prior to any QEP component pilots. Moreover, program effectiveness surveys for both the mentor and mentee were developed for the alumni mentorship network, confidence measures for faculty trained with ACUE were obtained from ACUE, and additional points of discussing *Flight Ready* data and acting upon it were added (e.g., faculty and staff assemblies, the *Flight Ready* Advisory Council). What follows, then, is a usable and meaningful plan for assessing *Flight Ready* guided by Walvoord's "No Frills" model (2010).

Standardizing Career Readiness for Flight Ready

The standardization of Career Readiness for this QEP is based on the NACE definition of career readiness and with a focus on the first of eight competencies, “Career & Self-Development.” It addresses career readiness for students with three specific initiatives designed to produce Winthrop students who can connect careers with identified personal strengths and interests while developing themselves through continual learning and the navigation of career opportunities. These three components make up the *Flight Ready* activity designed to meet the *Flight Ready* goals and outcomes:

1. First-Year Experience

Students will take the Strong Interest Inventory® with debriefing and a follow-up activity. They will have a unit within their ACAD 101 course on the eight NACE competencies for Career Readiness with an emphasis on the *Flight Ready* focus of the first competency, Career & Self-Development. This unit culminates in a signature writing assessment analyzed by faculty. At the end of this component, students will be able to understand the NACE career competencies; identify career options that pertain to their selected interests and/or major; recognize Winthrop resources available to them through the Center for Career Development & Internships; and reflect on actions they can take to develop themselves for future careers. This agenda sets career management as a priority for Winthrop students and the institution, assessing student learning of the QEP at the first-year mark, in the foundational component of the *Flight Ready* initiative.

2. Faculty Training

Faculty across Winthrop’s 25 academic departments will participate in ACUE’s Career Concentration training. The purpose of this training is to provide faculty with proven strategies to intentionally integrate and embed career guidance into their courses and their advising. The Career Concentration will be taught to twelve separate faculty cohorts in teaching excellence courses for up to 360 trained faculty by the fourth year of the *Flight Ready* initiative. *Flight Ready*’s assessment plan will make use of ACUE’s participant survey, assessing faculty members’ pre- and post-confidence to embed career guidance in their courses and to design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals. This training provides faculty with the professional development essential to enhancing the intentionality and effectiveness of co-leading the enhancement of career readiness opportunities at Winthrop.

3. Alumni Mentoring

As part of *Flight Ready*, Winthrop is developing an alumni mentorship network for students across the institution, which will give them an experiential opportunity to practice multiple career competencies. In particular, the alumni mentorship network provides an experiential option available to *all* Winthrop students regardless of their major or program. Students can participate year-round with most programming and activity concentrated in the fall and spring. Furthermore, it is an experiential opportunity that provides direct application of the *Flight Ready* focus, “Career & Self-Development.” The pre- and post-assessments for both mentors and mentees provide insight into the program effectiveness. For the mentees, the *Flight Ready* student learning outcomes are measured through a series of focus groups, beginning in Year 1.

Instruments, Measures, and Targets

Strong Interest Inventory®

The Strong Interest Inventory® is an internationally recognized career assessment based on the work of psychologist John Holland that, as part of the *Flight Ready* initiative, will be taken by Winthrop students their first semester. The report generated will help students (and those advising them) consider potential careers and the curriculum that can prepare them for their chosen field(s) based on their identified strengths and interests. Though this tool does not directly measure the student learning outcomes of this QEP, it is a critical assessment in the activity of students practicing and becoming proficient in career and self-development; it is included here as another example of how meaningful and usable assessment is integrated into the overall plan.

Signature Writing Assessment (First-Year Experience)

The foundational activity for *Flight Ready* is in the Career Readiness unit and activities during the First-Year Experience (FYE) course, ACAD 101, “Principles of the Academy.” In this first semester course, Winthrop students will be introduced more fully (a high-level introduction during summer orientation will have taken place) to the *Flight Ready* initiative, the NACE definition of Career Readiness, and the eight career readiness competencies. Students also will have completed the Strong Interest Inventory®, a complementary activity to it, and been introduced to the Center for Career Development & Internships (CDI).

The signature writing assessment prompt is as follows:

As a follow-up to our in-class discussion, you will write a reflective essay on your personal career readiness. Specifically, you will address each of the eight career competencies and your approach to development in these areas. In your discussion, it is important to note your personal strengths and weaknesses. Be sure to discuss where you are currently with regard to each competency and then, how you plan to develop each competency in your time at Winthrop. Your responses can include courses you will complete as part of Winthrop’s general education program, courses in your major, jobs you will hold, internships you will pursue, leadership activities, and any involvement you hope to participate in outside of the classroom.

The Signature Writing Assessment Rubric was piloted in fall 2021. The rubric established standards for novice, competency, and proficiency levels.

Table IX.1 – Signature Writing Assessment (FYE) Pilot Rubric

Criteria	Levels of Achievement		
	Novice	Competent	Proficient
Thorough exploration of each career competency. Weight 20.00%	50.00 %	75.00 %	100.00 %
Specific reference to previous development of competencies. Weight 20.00%	50.00 %	75.00 %	100.00 %
Reflection on personal development of each competency. Weight 20.00%	50.00 %	75.00 %	100.00 %
Concrete examples of how you plan to develop each competency. Weight 20.00%	50.00 %	75.00 %	100.00 %
Appropriate command of Standard English. Weight 20.00%	50.00 %	75.00 %	100.00 %

The signature writing assessment for FYE was piloted in fall 2021 to provide baseline data to inform QEP targets and to support Winthrop’s general education assessment. For the pilot year, a sample of 68 papers were graded per the new rubric with the following results for the four QEP-relevant criteria:

Table IX.2 – Signature Writing Assessment (FYE) Pilot Data – Fall 2021

Criteria	Thorough exploration of each career competency.	Specific reference to previous development of competencies.	Reflection on personal development of each competency.	Concrete examples on how you plan to develop each competency.
Scale	1=No Evidence (0%) 2=Novice (50%) 3=Competent (75%) 4=Proficient (100%)			
Average	3.59	3.31	3.50	3.15
Percentage Competent or Better	88%	85%	83%	73%

Beginning in Year 1, all student papers will be graded with a shared rubric by course faculty, enlarging the sample to the full first-year class. The assessment prompt will be modified only to update the NACE competencies (per spring 2021 NACE categorical revisions) and to include reference to the newly included Strong Interest Inventory® and/or John Holland theory-based activity. In addition, calibration sessions and rubric guidance will be provided by the FYE Director with support from *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members.

In partnership with the Director of Assessment for Winthrop's General Education Program, after reviewing the pilot data (small sample size and untested rubric with uncalibrated faculty raters), the ongoing target for the signature writing assessment will be set at 80% of (all first-year) Winthrop students meeting the competency level (75% or better) in each criterion category, each year, beginning in Year 1. This signature writing assignment will be a shared measure for both the QEP (annually) and the general education program (on rotation), increasing both its usefulness and the value in time spent (e.g., training, calibration, faculty raters) ensuring that it is a reliable measure.

NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects student survey data from hundreds of four-year institutions of higher education each year, providing important comparative data across engagement indicators, high-impact practices, and a variety of other participation and activity categories intended to influence students learning and personal development. NSSE surveys first-year and seniors and also provides topical modules that can be added to their standard survey. Winthrop administers the standard survey every three years, with the most recent administration in spring 2021. With the topic of career readiness having been identified in advance of the spring 2021 NSSE administration, the topical module of Career & Workforce Preparation was added. This provides the QEP with baseline data on Winthrop students' participation and perception of career readiness in a number of categories. With a very rigorous marketing campaign, Winthrop's NSSE response rate in 2021 was 38.4% for first-year students and 33.2% for seniors with an overall response rate of 35.3%.

For *Flight Ready* assessment purposes, NSSE's Career & Workforce Preparation topical module is an important indirect measure for both the QEP's student learning outcomes and program outcomes. Selected questions being used for both or either of the student learning outcomes and/or program outcomes from NSSE's Career & Workforce Preparation topical module are identified in Table IX.3-NSSE Topical Module (Career & Workforce Preparation) Selected Items. Table IX.4-Student Learning Assessment Plan and Table IX.5-Program Outcomes Assessment Plan map the topical module questions to specific student learning outcomes and/or program outcomes.

Table IX.3 – NSSE Topical Module (Career & Workforce Preparation) Selected Items

<i>Questions are the same for First-Year and Senior Surveys</i>	
To what extent do the following apply to you?	
1b	Your experience at this institution has helped clarify your career plans
1c	What you are learning at this institution is relevant to your career plans
1d	You know where to go with questions about your career plans or further education
1f	You have received supportive feedback from faculty or other advisors about your career plans

To what extent have the following influenced your career plans?	
2a	Interest or passion for the work
2b	Fit for your skills and abilities
2e	Interaction with a faculty member or advisor
2f	Co-curricular activities (student organizations or clubs, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)
2g	Internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement
2i	Career fairs, workshops, or course-based exploration of career options
How much confidence do you have in your ability to do the following?	
3b	Network with alumni or professionals to make potential career connections
In your courses at this institution, about how often have you done the following?	
4a	Analyzed a case, scenario, or simulation of a real-life situation
4b	Researched a career interest, a potential employer, or the job market
4c	Learned about a career or industry from practicing professionals
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do at this institution before you graduate?	
5a	Take a career exploration, planning, or development course
5b	Complete a career profile or self-assessment to identify occupations that match your strengths and interests
5c	Attend a talk, panel, discussion, or workshop about careers
5d	Discuss your career interests with a faculty member
5e	Interview or shadow someone in a career that you are considering
5f	Participate in a major or career-related co-curricular activity (student organization, professional honor society, etc.)
5g	Use resources and information (database or other digital tools, videos, guides, books, etc.) from career services
5h	Meet with career services staff to explore your interests and future plans
5i	Get help with your resume
5j	Participate in a mock or practice interview

5k	Participate in a career fair
5l	Network with alumni or professionals in a field related to your career interests

It is important to note that because the foundational activity for *Flight Ready* occurs in the first-semester of the fall for Winthrop students, a competence level for the Career & Self-Development career readiness competency is expected as early as Year 1 for first-year students; even, perhaps, in Year 0 which will include students with the piloted FYE activity. In Years 2 – 5, both first-year and senior students are expected to have experienced an increasing number of Career Concentration trained faculty embedding career guidance into their courses, seeking out more career support through CDI and academic departmental offerings, and taking advantage of a fully launched and expanding alumni mentorship network; therefore, we anticipate and are targeting increasing numbers across all selected questions each year in Years 2 – 5 (indicating an increase in student participation in career preparedness and career development activities as well as an increase in identification of the institution’s contribution to their career readiness).

In full NSSE years (Year 2 and 5), the QEP Director will use the full student sample (all first-year and seniors) results captured by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. In Years 0, 1, 3, and 4, the QEP Director will administer the Career & Workforce Preparation topical module as a standalone survey, with the option of administering it to the full first-year and senior population or targeting students who have had courses with Career Concentration trained faculty and/or participated in the alumni mentorship network. In the former, students would be asked to self-identify having had one or more of Career Concentration trained faculty and/or having participated in the alumni mentorship network. In either case, looking for relationships between the *Flight Ready* components is a priority to inform ongoing career readiness priorities for the institution. It is important to note that seniors in Year 3 will be the first to have participated in the pilot first-year experience career readiness activities from Year 0 and will be identified as such in reporting.

Baseline data across question sets from the spring 2021 NSSE administration of the Career & Workforce Preparation topical module will be used in analysis of future performance. Targets across questions are to perform, by Year 5, at or ahead of the national comparison in each selected line-item question/category and to do so with Winthrop students in underrepresented categories succeeding at the same level as their peers at Winthrop. Therefore, the data in the baseline and in Years 1 – 4 are lead measures, informing the *Flight Ready* Director and Implementation Team, as well as the broader campus and campus leadership, of progress made and progress needed.

Alumni Mentorship (Mentee) Focus Groups

In addition to program surveys for both mentors (alumni) and mentees (students) on program effectiveness, focus groups will be conducted every fall and spring (summer addition if numbers warrant) with students who have completed an alumni mentorship opportunity. Program surveys for mentees/students will include a question indicating willingness to participate in a focus group; cohorts who partner with the alumni mentorship network (e.g., a faculty member includes the networking opportunity as a class project) will also be encouraged to participate in a focus group.

These focus groups will be the shared responsibility of the Alumni Director and CDI director, with the following three questions included in each focus group to measure student learning outcomes and inform modification of the plan’s activities from year-to-year. These questions are adapted from Walvoord (2010, p. 60):

1. In your time so far at Winthrop, how well did you achieve each of the following *Flight Ready* learning goals?

[scale for each = extremely well, very well, adequately well, not very well, not at all]

 - a. Connecting relevant careers with identified personal strengths and interests
 - b. Developing yourself through continual learning and navigation of career opportunities (e.g., career interest discussion with faculty advisor or career center staff, career fair, alumni mentorship)
2. What aspects of your education at Winthrop helped you with learning how to plan for and prepare for a career and why were they helpful?
3. What might Winthrop do differently that would help you connect your interests to a career and/or help you develop your career plan more effectively, and why would these actions help?

The student learning assessment plan includes both direct and indirect measures with internationally and nationally recognized instruments, as well as home-grown ones. The approach is to model a simple and streamlined assessment plan accessible to a team of responsible parties at varying levels of assessment experience. Assessment activity is staggered throughout the year with annual reviews by the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team and *Flight Ready* Advisory Council. Discussion among parties is intended to inform action from year-to-year so that lead measures move over time to the targets established both annually and at the five-year mark. Table IX.4 provides the Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan.

Table IX.4 – Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

QEP Goal 1: Enhance the career and self-development competency of Winthrop students			
Student Learning Outcome	Measurements/ Evidence	Responsible Party/Parties	Frequency of Analysis
Connect relevant careers with identified personal strengths and interests	(FYE Program/ACAD 101) Career Readiness Unit Lesson - Signature Writing Assignment	FYE Director	Fall/First semester as Winthrop student, Year 0 - 5
	(FYE Program/ACAD 101) Strong Interest Inventory®	CDI Director	Fall/First semester as Winthrop student, Year 1 - 5
	NSSE Topical Module: FY Questions 2 a-b	QEP Director	Annually (Spring), Year 0 - 5
	NSSE Topical Module: SR Questions 2 a-b	QEP Director	Annually (Spring), Year 3 - 5

QEP Goal 1: Enhance the career and self-development competency of Winthrop students			
Student Learning Outcome	Measurements/ Evidence	Responsible Party/Parties	Frequency of Analysis
	Alumni Mentorship (Mentee) Focus Groups	Alumni Director & CDI Director	Fall, Spring, Summer (as appropriate), Year 1 - 5
Develop themselves through continual learning and the navigation of career opportunities	(FYE Program/ACAD 101) Career Readiness Unit Lesson - Signature Writing Assignment	FYE Director	Fall, First semester as Winthrop student, Year 0 - 5
	(FYE Program/ACAD 101) Career Readiness Unit Lesson - Signature Writing Assignment	CDI Director	Fall, First semester as Winthrop student, Year 0 - 5
	Alumni Mentorship (Mentee) Focus Groups	Alumni Director & CDI Director	Fall, Spring, Summer (as appropriate), Year 1 - 5
	NSSE Topical Module: FY Questions 1d, 3b, 5a - 5l	QEP Director	Annually (Spring), Year 0 - 5
	NSSE Topical Module: SR Questions 1d, 3b, 5a-5l	QEP Director	Annually (Spring), Year 3 - 5

Assessment of Program Effectiveness

The *Flight Ready* program outcomes complement the student learning outcomes. Ensuring these program outcomes are met increases the likelihood of positive student learning outcomes and the accomplishment of the overall QEP goals. *Flight Ready*'s program outcomes are to accomplish an:

1. Increase in faculty confidence to embed career guidance in their courses and to design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals.
2. Expand student participation in alumni mentorship programming.

3. Increase in student recognition of positive institutional impact regarding career readiness learning opportunities.

ACUE Faculty Training Confidence Assessment/Participant Survey

ACUE's assessment of its Career Concentration faculty training module provides two confidence measures. As part of the *Flight Ready* program assessment plan, both confidence measures are being adopted, including:

1. Increase in faculty confidence to embed career guidance in their courses.
2. Increase in faculty confidence to design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals.

As part of their promotion to potential clients, ACUE reports pre- and post-assessment dramatic increases in faculty confidence across measures in their Career Concentration training with other institutions (i.e., from 44% to 88% in embedding career guidance and from 39% to 93% in designing assignments). These numbers are impressive, but are showcase data and may not be representative of Winthrop faculty. Winthrop's pilot data from spring 2022 courses will be available in March 2022 and may inform an adjusted target. As a proposal target, Winthrop's *Flight Ready* program outcomes' target is for a post training completion of 80% or higher in faculty confidence to both embed career guidance in their courses and to design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals. Furthermore, the number of represented academic departments is set at a goal of 100% (at least one faculty member from each academic department to have completed the Career Concentration training from ACUE) with a target of total number of trained faculty (successful completers) at a goal of 200 or more individual faculty members.

Graduway System, "Winthrop Connect," Registration Metrics

Increasing the number of students being mentored (with possibility of a student having more than one mentor) is an important program outcome for *Flight Ready*. The alumni mentorship network's fall launch in Year 1 will provide the baseline number (Academic Year 2022-23 number of student participants). In Year 2, 3, 4, and 5, *Flight Ready* is committed to increasing the participant of student mentees by 10% each year above the prior year. The platform Graduway, called "Winthrop Connect" internally at Winthrop, will capture registration numbers and be monitored directly by the Alumni Director and discussed annually by the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team.

NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module

Prior to the launch of any *Flight Ready* pilots or components, the full administration of NSSE in spring 2021 provided the institution with further validation of the topic of career readiness as an institutional priority. In the Career & Workforce Preparation topical module, the mean rating for "feeling prepared for my career" was no different between the senior respondents and the first-year respondents. That is very telling for what Winthrop had not done in contributing to student career readiness, as measured by this instrument, in the years immediately prior to the *Flight Ready* QEP.

Because *Flight Ready* prioritizes a first-year fall intervention through the robust First-Year Experience (FYE), the assessment plan is not building significant targets of difference between first-year and senior responses; we expect first year spring responses to already be strong (a significant number of "3-quite a bit" or "4-very much"). Furthermore, with a pilot FYE implementation of *Flight Ready* activities as early

as Year 0, NSSE survey data from Year 0 – 5 is expected to be higher in both first-year and senior responses during all five years of the initiative than it was in the 2021 survey prior to *Flight Ready*. The first program outcome measure within NSSE, then, is a target to see, in Years 0 – 5 a higher rating each year than the year before in identified question items. In other words, in response to questions, the distributions in Year 5 should be in the “3-quite a bit/4-very much” instead of the current responses distributed more evenly across, “2-some/1-very little.” Because the NSSE Career & Workforce Preparation topical module also provides for a national comparison to help gauge reasonable goal-setting, the *Flight Ready* target for Year 5 is Winthrop comparative ranking at or above comparative institutions for each of the identified questions selected to demonstrate an increase in student recognition of positive institutional impact regarding career readiness learning opportunities. Table IX.3 lists NSSE questions to be used within the *Flight Ready* assessment plan and Table IX.5 maps the topical module questions to the program outcome, “to demonstrate an increase in student recognition of positive institutional impact regarding career readiness learning opportunities.”

Similar to the student learning assessment plan, the program assessment plan has assessment activities staggered throughout the year, with annual reviews by the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team and *Flight Ready* Advisory Council. Discussion among parties is intended to inform action from year-to-year so that lead measures move over time to the targets established both annually and at the five-year mark. Table IX.5 provides the Program Outcomes Assessment Plan.

Table IX.5 –Program Outcomes Assessment Plan

QEP Goal 2: Increase career readiness learning opportunities for Winthrop students			
Program Outcome	Measurements/ Evidence	Responsible Party/Parties	Frequency of Analysis
Increase in faculty confidence to embed career guidance in their courses and to design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals	ACUE faculty training: Career Concentration (Faculty) Participant Survey	CPE Exec. Director	At the completion of each ACUE course, each semester, Year 0 – 3, 4 (depending on delivery of final course)
Expand student participation in alumni mentorship programming	Graduway system registration metrics	Alumni Director	At the end of each Fall, Spring, Summer semester, Year 1 - 5
Increase in student recognition of positive institutional impact regarding career readiness learning opportunities	NSSE Topical Module FY & SR Questions 1b, c, & f 2e, f, g, & i 4 a, b, & c These questions provide a baseline in years prior to launch	QEP Director	Annual (Spring), Year 0 - 5

	and lead measures in years up to Year 5		
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Collection, Review, and Modifications

Collecting and reviewing assessment update components will be conducted by the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team members within each academic year (differing assessments and timetables for Part One: First-Year Experience, Part Two: Faculty Training, and Part Three: Alumni Mentorship). Collecting additional assessment updates (i.e., NSSE's Career & Workforce Preparation Topical Module survey) will be conducted by the *Flight Ready* Director on an annual timeline, with data review conducted by the entire *Flight Ready* Implementation Team on an annual timeline. The *Flight Ready* Director will report out to campus constituents annually across QEP goals, student learning outcomes, and program outcomes. Comprehensive assessment results also will be reviewed annually by the initiative's Advisory Council and posted on the *Flight Ready* website.

Importantly, the *Flight Ready* Director is responsible for the implementation and any modifications to the overall assessment plan with the support of the Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness and SACSCOC Liaison; modifications to the assessment plan will mirror data-informed modifications to the institution's overall career readiness initiatives. This chapter, then, describes the QEP's core career readiness assessment plan approach and framework, including details on methodology, instrumentation, and responsible parties entrusted to discuss and act on the data to inform the ongoing work of a successful five-year quality enhancement initiative, *Flight Ready*.

X. Conclusion

The topic of Career Readiness, utilizing NACE's Career Readiness definition and focusing on its first of eight competencies (Career & Self Development) is clear and well-defined. The Career Readiness topic arose out of an extension to the university's institutional-wide planning through a two-survey series on student learning at Winthrop, including alumni, faculty, staff, and students. The QEP Topic Selection Committee, a representative body of 20 individuals, analyzed the survey data along with the institution's strategic plan, "The Winthrop Plan," and the school mission. Three recommended topics were presented to Winthrop's senior leadership from which Career Readiness was enthusiastically selected for its alignment with identified institutional needs and the ability to make the appropriate investment. Among other validation points, NSSE's Career & Topical Workforce Preparation results from Spring 2021 Winthrop-specific data validated the topic selection with numbers illustrating little perceived change from first-year to senior-year in a Winthrop student's perception of institutional impact on career readiness.

Flight Ready's development and implementation processes have, and will continue to, engage important constituent groups. The aforementioned student learning surveys that were part of the topic selection process provided initial notice to alumni, faculty, staff, and students that the institution was beginning formal development of its next institutional QEP while adding to the pool of institutional data that would inform the QEP's creation. The committee membership for the QEP Topic Selection Committee was a diverse body of 20 members living across Winthrop's local region who represented student government, first-year experience peer mentors, each academic college, the library, the president's office and board of trustees, advancement, athletics, staff conference, alumni office, university communications & marketing, student recruitment, and student affairs.

The QEP Topic Development Committee membership included an additional 19 discrete members (plus 4 contributing partners), with faculty and professional staff whose expertise aligned with the now selected topic of career readiness. This committee – along with key collaborators – developed the career readiness topic or theme into a three-part career readiness initiative. The institution's Career Readiness QEP, *Flight Ready*, will enhance career readiness through (1) the First-Year Experience (FYE), (2) faculty training, and (3) alumni mentorship. In Part One, a dedicated unit within the FYE "Principles of the Academy" course will provide instruction on the concept of career competencies and the principles of career and self-development; furthermore, all incoming students will complete The Strong Interest Inventory® in their first semester. In Part Two, Winthrop faculty will complete ACUE's Career Concentration training which informs both teaching strategies and faculty advising conversations. Finally, in Part Three, The Alumni Office and the Center for Career Development and Internships will lead the establishment of a university-wide alumni mentorship network open to all Winthrop students.

Toward the end of the development process, the *Flight Ready* Implementation Team (led by a to-be-hired *Flight Ready* Director) was formed to launch (or revise piloted) components of the Career Readiness QEP, with the responsibility and authority to implement and assess the QEP in a way that will continue to inform and appropriately engage the Winthrop community. Finally, an Advisory Council – with plans for Spring - Summer 2022 formation, prior to *Flight Ready's* launch – was added to provide external consultation and local community connectivity throughout the lifespan of the initiative. Human and financial resources are clearly identified for all stages of implementing and completing the five-year plan. Institutional stakeholders are involved in ongoing planning and evaluation to adjust the resources as the plan proceeds, if necessary.

Flight Ready's goals, framed by NACE's first of eight career readiness competencies, are to (1) enhance the career and self-development competency of Winthrop students and (2) increase career readiness learning opportunities for Winthrop students. Both the student learning outcomes (students will be able to

connect relevant careers with identified personal strengths and interests; students will be able to develop themselves through continual learning and the navigation of career opportunities) and the program outcomes (increase in faculty confidence to embed career guidance in their courses and to design assignments that prepare students to achieve their career goals; expand student participation in alumni mentorship programming; and increase in student recognition of positive institutional impact regarding career readiness learning opportunities) support the QEP Goals, are specific, and are measurable.

Student learning outcomes are prioritized with program outcomes integrated; the planned assessment of both the student learning outcomes and the program outcomes will support the institution's ability to gauge student learning and increase program effectiveness yearly, as well as beyond the five-year initiative. Assessments are appropriate with both direct and indirect assessment of the outcomes. Institutional personnel responsible for gathering and analyzing assessment data are identified and appropriately supported.

In *Flight Ready*, Winthrop University has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that has met all requirements of SACSCOC. It has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; broad-based support of institutional constituencies; focus on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; committed resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and a plan to assess achievement. In addition to providing directly for student career and self-development, implementing *Flight Ready* strengthens the connections the institution has among its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and employers, making visible the interdependencies between college and workplace preparedness.

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Appendix A – NACE Core Competencies: Competency One



Career & Self-Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

Sample Behaviors

- Show an awareness of own strengths and areas for development.
- Identify areas for continual growth while pursuing and applying feedback.
- Develop plans and goals for one's future career.
- Professionally advocate for oneself and others.
- Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.
- Assume duties or positions that will help one progress professionally.
- Establish, maintain, and/or leverage relationships with people who can help one professionally.
- Seek and embrace development opportunities.
- Voluntarily participate in further education, training, or other events to support one's career.



What Is Career Readiness?

Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.



Appendix B – ACUE Career Concentration

Career Concentration

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Developing Students' Career-Ready Skills

Students are more motivated in their studies when they see the relevance of learning outcomes, assignments, and course content to their personal and professional goals. To ensure students develop the soft skills needed for personal and professional success, we'll discuss practices you can use to:

1. Engage students in authentic assignments, projects, and activities that build the career-ready skills they need to be productive citizens prepared to reach their personal and career goals:
 - Work effectively and collaboratively in teams (and develop leadership skills)
 - Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in real-world contexts
 - Develop written and oral communication skills for varied audiences
 - Develop project- and self-management skills to meet timelines and expectations

Embedding Career Guidance into Your Course

Faculty are significant role models. Regardless of whether students pursue academic careers, we're seen as accomplished professionals pursuing our life's work. How can we help students find successful paths of their own? In this module, we'll discuss practices you can use to:

1. Effectively respond to students' inquiries about choosing a major, finding an internship, and considering career options
 - Utilize questions to help students explore their values, interests, skills, and future goals to inform their consideration of majors, internships, and career options
 - Recommend students visit the career center and share the offerings most relevant to your students
 - Recommend students engage in internships to assist them in choosing a major and/or career
2. Create opportunities for students to engage with alumni and upper-level peers to understand the relevance of coursework to their future goals
 - Invite alumni to share how course learning experiences have been relevant to their career, personal, and community-based goals
 - Create opportunities for upper-level students to share career-connected experiences, including internships, with first- and second-year students
3. Connect coursework to students' goals and skills development
 - Make explicit the relevance of course learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) to students' future career, personal, and community-based goals
 - When aligned to your course outcomes, develop students' career-related skills, including résumé writing, professional correspondence, and interview preparation
 - Share potential career paths relevant to your area(s) of expertise