HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Holmes

CAREER COMPASS

SINCE 1925



Quality Enhancement Plan

2025-2026 Annual Report

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Executive Summary

In the 2025-2026 academic year, Holmes Community College successfully launched its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Career Compass*. The five-year plan aims to guide undecided students in choosing an academic or career-technical program of study, enhancing their likelihood of graduating and transitioning successfully into the workforce or higher education. *Career Compass* was developed to meet the QEP requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and is focused on enhancing student learning and success. This report marks the first annual update of *Career Compass.*

On September 17, 2025, SACSCOC announced a 14- to 18-month Principles Review that temporarily exempts institutions from participating in the QEP standard. Despite this announcement, Holmes chose to continue implementation of *Career Compass* due to research findings gathered during plan development and the anticipated benefits for students. During the September 2025 SACSCOC on-site reaffirmation visit, the college received positive feedback regarding the QEP and was later reaffirmed with all standards met.

The first year of implementation included several key accomplishments. Holmes successfully completed and submitted the QEP proposal, piloted the Career Profiles Assignment in English Composition I courses, hosted Career Exploration Seminars across its three main campuses, and provided advisor training focused on supporting undecided students. New assessment tools were implemented to measure student learning and engagement, while marketing efforts and campus partnerships helped build awareness and support for *Career Compass* among students, faculty, staff, and the community.

Assessment results and participant feedback indicate that *Career Compass* is making progress toward its intended outcomes while also identifying opportunities for improvement. Lessons learned during Year I led to updates in data collection processes, assessment measures, and program activities that will strengthen implementation moving forward. This report highlights the accomplishments, assessment findings, and planned improvements that will guide *Career Compass* into its second year.

About *Career Compass*

Holmes Community College's QEP, titled *Career Compass*, is aligned with the college's mission to offer innovative education opportunities to students to prepare them for university transfer, productive employment, and lifelong learning. The five-year plan focuses on students who choose General College Studies (GCS), as research shows the advantages of selecting a program of study earlier rather than later.

As the value of a college degree faces growing scrutiny, *Career Compass* aims to guide undecided students toward selecting an academic or career program of study through its interventions. By doing so, it enhances their likelihood of graduating and successfully transitioning into the workforce or higher education. Through a career-focused research essay (Career Profiles Assignment), a career exploration course, career exploration seminars, and advisor training, *Career Compass* is on track to have a positive effect on students' academic and career success. The chart below lists the overall goal of Career Compass along with three student learning outcomes.

Career Compass Goal	Students who are undecided in their career path (GCS students) will select their academic or career program of study within their cohort year, thereby increasing their probability of graduation and facilitating their entry into the workforce or university transfer.
Career Compass Student Learning Outcomes	1. GCS students will report increased confidence and clarity in the academic and/or career path they want to pursue. 2. GCS students will indicate an increase in their knowledge and awareness of attainable career paths. 3. GCS students will make contact with local businesses and industries that may impact their academic and/or career choice.

Key Accomplishments and Partnerships, 2025-2026

QEP Proposal

The QEP Leadership and Planning Committees began working closely together in Fall 2024 to prepare the full QEP proposal, which was submitted to SACSCOC in July of 2025. The Holmes Marketing Team collaborated with the Planning Committee to design the branding for *Career Compass* as well as the front and back covers of the proposal. The final proposal consisted of 72 pages, followed by 5 pages of references and 14 pages of appendices. A bound version of the completed QEP was provided to the SACSCOC Leadership Committee, the QEP Leadership and Planning Committees, Holmes' Board of Trustees, and the SACSCOC on-site review team.

SACSCOC On-Site Reaffirmation Visit

During the week of September 22, 2025, a SACSCOC on-site review committee visited Holmes Community College as part of the reaffirmation process. The committee had the opportunity to read the QEP six weeks prior to their visit and were provided with bound copies upon arrival. During their time on campus, the committee met with various departments across the college, including attending luncheons with students, faculty, staff, and members of the Board of Trustees. In addition, Dr. Bronwyn Martin, QEP Lead, and Bethany Miller, Director of QEP, presented an overview of the QEP to the review committee and answered questions about the five-year plan. QEP committee members were present during the presentation to assist in addressing any questions raised by the review committee.

Prior to the visit, the review committee scheduled individual and group interviews to clarify different sections of the QEP; however, these interviews were canceled after the overview, as all concerns were addressed during the presentation and subsequent discussion.

The visit concluded about a day earlier than planned with an exit interview, during which the SACSCOC review committee met with Holmes' SACSCOC Leadership Committee. The review committee informed Holmes that their visit was ending with no recommendations regarding the reaffirmation process. The SACSCOC QEP Lead Evaluator expressed satisfaction with *Career Compass*, particularly highlighting the public campaign and the flexibility offered within the five-year plan. A few suggestions for refining the QEP were provided. At the conclusion of the meeting, the review committee confirmed that Holmes had been reaffirmed, pending approval from the SACSCOC board. In June 2026, Holmes was officially notified by SACSCOC that all reaffirmation standards had been fully met.

Marketing to Achieve Broad-Based Support

The marketing and branding of *Career Compass* began in the summer of 2024 with full support from the Holmes Marketing Team. The initial branding effort was launched with a *Career Compass* video, which was shared with all Holmes faculty and staff during the Back-to-School Convocation in August 2024. In March 2025, the Marketing Team met with the QEP Leadership Committee to discuss strategies for promoting *Career Compass* to students, faculty, staff, and the community in preparation for the SACSCOC on-site committee visit in September. With insights from the QEP Leadership Team, the Marketing Team developed several promotional items for faculty, staff, and students and launched the *Career Compass* website. These items included buttons, stickers, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) cards, compass coins, and compass coin informational cards. The website, which went live in July 2025,

features detailed information about *Career Compass*, a student section with personality and career assessments and upcoming events, a feedback form for faculty, staff, and the community, as well as additional QEP-related resources.

Following the successful SACSCOC reaffirmation visit, the Holmes Marketing Department continued to support the initiative by updating the website, creating social media content for the QEP, and promoting seminars and the Career Exploration course (LLS 1321). Close collaboration with the Marketing Team ensured that branding and messaging remained consistent throughout the implementation phase and beyond. Additionally, the Communications Team played a key role in sharing news and updates with students and the community as well as documenting events through photography. The Recruiting and Student Activities departments also supported the QEP efforts by encouraging student participation during the SACSCOC visit and integrating *Career Compass* materials and goals into engaging activities, helping raise awareness about QEP resources and updates.

Career Profiles Assignment Pilot

In the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 semesters, the Career Profiles Assignment was piloted in face-to-face English Composition I courses taught on Holmes' main campuses. The English and Foreign Language Department Chair, Dr. Amber Mabus, collaborated closely with English instructors and the QEP Leadership Committee to develop the assignment and rubric, ensuring alignment with the QEP goal, student learning outcomes, and assessment measures while allowing for continuous feedback and refinement.

Approximately 335 students were enrolled in face-to-face English Composition I courses during the Fall 2025 semester, and approximately 170 students were enrolled during the Spring 2026 semester. In total, about 505 students had the opportunity to participate in the Career Profiles Assignment pilot. Of these participants, about 10.7% were included in the 2025-2026 General College Studies cohort. Student feedback collected through the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals* post-survey was overwhelmingly positive. Some of those comments include, "This assignment has helped me be sure that I know what I want to do," "It helped solidify my career path for me," and "It gave me knowledge and get a better understanding of what is needed to achieve the route I want to go."

Career Exploration Seminars

Career exploration seminars titled *Major Decisions: Find your Fit, Not Just Your Degree,* were held during the Spring 2026 semester across Holmes' three main campuses in Ridgeland, Goodman, and Grenada. To begin the planning process, an opinion survey was distributed to students on all three campuses to gain insight into preferred seminar times, career pathways of interest, and preferred presentation formats and content. With more than 600 responses collected, the Spring 2026 seminars were designed using this feedback as a guide.

Each campus seminar featured three Holmes alumni panelists representing a range of businesses and industries, most local to the area. Guided by a master of ceremonies (MC), panelists shared insights into their career journeys, including why they chose their professions, challenges they encountered, and the rewards of pursuing a career they are passionate about. Refreshments were provided at the conclusion of each event through sponsorship from Cengage, a leading educational technology and content company

widely used across the college. Students also had the opportunity to network with the panelists and ask additional questions in an informal setting.

The seminars received broad-based support from across the college and surrounding communities. Key partnerships included Holmes' Ridgeland Campus Phi Theta Kappa Chapter (Alpha Lambda Sigma), Alumni Affairs, and the Marketing Department, to name a few. Additionally, administrators and faculty contributed by welcoming attendees, serving as panelists, and participating as event hosts. Academic and Career-Technical faculty played a critical role in encouraging student participation and engagement. The chart below provides a list of panelists and MCs for each campus.

Ridgeland Campus February 11, 2026 9:30 a.m.	**Grenada Campus February 19, 2026 9:30 a.m.**	**Goodman Campus February 25, 2026 1:00 p.m.**
Dr. Tonya Lawrence, Dean of Academic Programs, MC	Dr. Tina Garrett, Academic Coordinator, MC	Sonja Arnett, English Instructor, MC
Dr. Autumn Barron, Audiologist at the Hearing Center of Jackson	Paul McCarley, City President at BankPlus	Dr. Dudley (DJ) Moore, Senior Engineer, Combustion Technology at Solar Turbines, Inc.
Dr. Amy Whittington, Vice President for Career Technical Education at Holmes Community College	Nicholas Johnson, 2nd Grade Math and Science Teacher at Grenada Elementary School	Lucas Price, Director of Business Services at Holmes Community College
Derek Starling, Sr., Principal and Co-Founder of SOL Engineering Services	Meghan Welch, PMHNP-BC Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner at Balance Therapy and Wellness LLC	Dr. Lily Fran Guastella, Staff Physician at Mallory Community Health Center

The seminars were highly successful, drawing more than 458 attendees, including 403 students. Results from the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals* post-survey were overwhelmingly positive. Student feedback included comments such as, "It has helped me understand that I need to change my major to something I can enjoy for myself," "It showed me how my career choice will impact my life," and "It has helped me to understand to shadow the career I want." Career exploration seminars will continue throughout the five-year QEP, with varied themes, speakers, panelists, and sponsors to ensure the events remain student-centered and engaging.

In addition to the seminars, Bethany Miller, Director of the QEP, participated in several college-wide events in collaboration with other departments to provide students with opportunities to ask questions and connect with *Career Compass* resources. These events included *Break into Your Future Day* in partnership with Holmes' Criminal Justice Department on the Ridgeland Campus and *Green Light to Graduation* held in collaboration with the Academic Counselor on the Grenada Campus.

Advisor Training

Advisor training for the Fall 2025 semester took place on August 12, 2025 during Back-to-School Meetings on the Goodman Campus. Faculty, staff, and administrators were in attendance and received updates on the upcoming SACSCOC on-site reaffirmation visit from Dr. Teresa Mackey, Vice President of Compliance and Institutional Research. In addition, Dr. Bronwyn Martin, QEP Lead, and Bethany Miller, Director of the QEP, provided an overview of *Career Compass* initiatives.

During these sessions, advisors were reminded of available advising tools to better support undecided students and connect them with *Career Compass* resources. A newly added question on the advising request form was also introduced and explained as a strategy to guide advising conversations. The question asks, "How confident are you that the program of study you have chosen aligns with your future career plans?" Response options range from "I am completely confident this is the right program of study for me" to "I am not confident at all and will likely change my program of study." Advisors are able to view both current and previous student responses to this question through the advising portal in MyHolmes, allowing for more informed and personalized advising.

Follow-up advisor training for the Spring 2026 semester, led by Dr. Jenny Jones, Vice President for Academic Programs and including Bethany Miller, Director of the QEP, was conducted via a Zoom recording on November 4, 2025. Additional advisor meetings for Fall 2026 were held across all three campuses in March 2026. These sessions included advising reminders, updates, and best practices, as well as the introduction of a new "common phrase" to inform students about *Career Compass* resources.

A "common phrase" allows advisors to select prewritten information within the advising request form, automatically populating tailored information for students. The newly developed *Career Compass* common phrase states: "Still unsure about your program of study? Let *Career Compass* help guide you toward a career path that may be your natural fit. Click here for more information about career exploration actions offered or to take free personality and career assessments." This message links directly to the *Career Compass* website, where students can access additional resources.

Advisors were encouraged to use this common phrase when working with General College Studies students and any student expressing uncertainty about their program of study, particularly those selecting "I have some doubts" or "I am not confident at all" on the advising form. They were also encouraged to use responses to the confidence question as a tool to better assess whether students are appropriately aligned with their chosen program of study. Additionally, advisors were informed about upcoming Career Exploration Seminars scheduled for Spring 2026 and the Career Exploration course (LLS 1321) set to launch in Fall 2026. Advisors were also asked to actively promote these opportunities and to guide students, especially those undecided in their program of study, toward engaging with *Career Compass* resources and initiatives.

The initiatives implemented during Year I were designed to support the Career Compass goal and student learning outcomes. Assessment data collected throughout the year provided insight into student participation, learning, and confidence levels while identifying areas for future improvement.

Assessment

2025-2026 General College Studies (GCS) Cohort

Total GCS Cohort	117	2.35% of Fall 2025 enrollment
Enrolled in ENG 1113 Face-to-Face Total	59	50% of GCS Cohort
Enrolled in ENG 1113 Face-to-Face F25	42	35.9% of GCS Cohort
Enrolled in ENG 1113 Face-to-Face SP26	12	10.26% of GCS Cohort
Attended Career Exploration Seminar(s)	17	14.53% of GCS Cohort

YEAR 1 (2025-2026) GOAL, STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, AND ASSESSMENT			
QEP Goal	**Assessment and Criteria**	**Assessment Results**	**Plan of Improvement**
Students who are undecided in their career path (GCS students) will select their academic or career program of study within their cohort year, thereby increasing their probability of graduation and facilitating their entry into the workforce or university transfer.	Using a comparative analysis (QEP Argos report) that is collected on the 10th day of fall term (Fall 2025) and the first day of the subsequent fall term (Fall 2026), the percentage of GCS cohort students who select their academic or career program will exceed the baseline percentage (18.81% or higher).	22.22% of Fall 2025 GCS cohort students selected their academic or career program of study by the first day of Fall 2026. The goal of 18.81% or higher was met.	QEP actions are scheduled to continue and increase for the 2026-2027 year including online and DE students completing the Career Profiles Assignment in English Composition I and launching a Career Exploration (LLS 1321) course. Career Exploration Seminars will also continue.
Student Learning Outcome (SLO)	**Assessment and Criteria**	**Assessment Results**	**Plan of Improvement**
GCS students will report increased confidence and clarity in the academic and/or career path they want to pursue (SLO 1).	**1a.** Using the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals Survey* (administered prior to and following the Career Profiles Assignment), GCS cohort students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 classes in fall and spring terms, will demonstrate an increase of 5 percentage points in confidence levels on question 6.a. "I am confident that I know the career I want to pursue" between pre- and post-survey results (confidence indicated by a 3 or 4 on a 4-point Likert scale).	**1a**. GCS students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 courses in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 combined demonstrated an increase of 11.43 percentage points (from 77.14% to 88.57%) in confidence levels on question 6.a. between pre- and post-survey results. The increase for Fall 2025 alone was 14.82 percentage points (from 70.37% to 85.19%) while Spring 2026 GCS students did not show an increase from pre- to post-survey, as 100% chose 3 or 4 on both the pre- and post-survey for question 6.a. The 2025-2026 (Year I of QEP) goal was surpassed by 6.43 percentage points.	**1a.** Using this data and this year's experience, the QEP Director and English Department Chair will continue to collaborate to increase percentages from pre- to post-surveys. In addition, the Career Profiles Assignment will be added to Online and Dual-Enrollment ENG 1113 classes in 2026-2027, giving more GCS students the opportunity to participate in the assignment, which may affect survey results. This will be evaluated next year to consider student needs pertaining to the assignment.

	1b. Using the question "How confident are you that the program of study you have chosen aligns with your future career plans?" from the Advising Request Form (collected when students are advised prior to the start of each semester), at least 30% of GCS cohort students will demonstrate confidence (confidence indicated by the responses "I am completely confident" or "I am mostly confident" in my program of study selection) in the fall semester after their cohort year (Fall 2026).	**1b.** 25.64% of the GCS cohort demonstrated confidence in their program of study by the end of the first week of the fall semester after their cohort year (Fall 2026). The 2025-2026 (Year I of QEP) goal of 30% was not met.	**1b.** Using this data and the experience from the 2025-2026 academic year, the QEP Director will continue to assess student needs and identify additional actions that may help increase students' confidence within their program of study. The addition of the Career Profiles Assignment to online ENG 1113 courses and the launch of the Career Exploration course (LLS 1321) in 2026-2027 will provide additional opportunities for GCS students to participate in QEP activities and develop greater confidence in their academic and/or career pathways. Student confidence levels will continue to be evaluated during the 2026-2027 academic year to determine the effectiveness of these actions and identify any changes or additional strategies needed to further support students' program confidence and help them to choose their program of study within their cohort year.
GCS students will indicate an increase in their knowledge and awareness of attainable career paths (SLO 2).	**2a.** Using the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals Survey* (administered prior to and following the Career Profiles Assignment), GCS cohort students enrolled in ENG 1113 face-to-face in fall and spring terms, will demonstrate an increase of 5 percentage points in confidence levels on question 6.c. "I am confident that I know the steps I need to take in my education to achieve my	**2a.** GCS students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 courses in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 combined demonstrated an increase of 14.29 percentage points (from 77.14% to 91.43%) in confidence levels on question 6.c. between pre- and post-survey results. The increase for Fall 2025 alone was 18.52 percentage points (from 70.37% to 88.89%) while Spring 2026 GCS students did not show an increase from pre- to post-survey, as 100%	**2a.** Using this data and this year's experience, the QEP Director and English Department Chair will continue to collaborate to increase percentages from pre- to post-surveys, as needed. In addition, the Career Profiles Assignment will be added to Online and Dual-Enrollment ENG 1113 classes in 2026-2027, giving more GCS students the opportunity to participate in the assignment, which may affect survey results. This

	career goal" between pre- and post-survey results (confidence indicated by a 3 or 4 on a 4-point Likert scale).	chose 3 or 4 on both the pre- and post-survey for question 6.c. The 2025-2026 (Year I of QEP) goal was surpassed by 9.29 percentage points.	will be evaluated next year to consider student needs pertaining to the assignment.
	2b. Using the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals Survey* (administered prior to and following the Career Profiles Assignment), GCS cohort students enrolled in ENG 1113 (English Comp I) face-to-face in fall and spring terms, will demonstrate an increase of 10 percentage points in confidence levels on question 6.d. "I have researched different career options and am confident that my career path is attainable for me" between pre- and post-survey results (confidence indicated by a 3 or 4 on a 4-point Likert scale).	**2b.** GCS students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 courses in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 combined did not demonstrate an increase or decrease of percentage points from pre- to post-survey results. The pre-survey percentage was 91.43% while the post-survey results also showed 91.43%. Looking at the results per semester, GCS students enrolled in ENG 1113 in the Fall 2025 term showed a decrease in percentage points of 3.7 (from 92.59% down to 88.89%) while those enrolled in the course during the Spring 2026 term showed an increase in percentage points of 12.5 (from 87.50% to 100%). The 2025-2026 (Year I of QEP) goal of a 10 percentage point increase was not met with combined results.	**2b.** Even though the Year I goal was not met with the combined results, Fall and Spring individual survey result differences from pre- to post-survey on question 6.d. showed a drastic difference. Students enrolled in the Fall showed a decrease and students enrolled in the Spring showed an increase. Many factors could have contributed to this-one being more GCS students took ENG 1113 in the Fall than in the Spring. With the assignment being added to online and dual enrollment sections of ENG 1113, survey results may also be affected in the next year. The QEP Director and English Department Chair evaluated the survey results and analyzed them alongside the assignment guidelines and rubric and concluded that for Year I, the assignment really did not give students the opportunity to research different careers to see which may be most attainable. Instead, students were asked at the beginning of the assignment to choose one focus career. Therefore, it was agreed that a preliminary assignment should be added to the Career Profiles Assignment asking students to choose 3 careers and briefly analyze those careers (for

			information such as years and expenses of college to degree, average pay for the job, etc.) to then choose the 1 that they feel would be most attainable for them. This should add the missing component of "researching different career options" to the assignment. At the end of year 2, the QEP Director and English Department Chair will re-evaluate the data and faculty/student feedback to see if the preliminary assignment addition is helpful for meeting this student learning outcome. **2c.** Using this data and the past year's experience with the assignment as a starting point, the QEP Director and English Department Chair will continue to work to increase scores and student percentages on this section and make any necessary changes. The preliminary assignment addition mentioned above in 2b. should also affect these results in a positive way. In addition, in Fall 2026, the assignment will be added to online English Comp I courses, giving more General College Studies students the opportunity to participate in the assignment. This may also affect these percentages.
	2c. Using the Career Profiles Assignment in ENG 1113, 70% of GCS cohort students enrolled in ENG 1113 face-to-face will score 70% or higher on the Knowledge and Awareness of Attainable Career Paths section of the rubric (measured in fall terms).	**2c.** In Fall 2025, 78.57% of students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 scored a 70% or higher on the Knowledge and Awareness of Attainable Career Paths section of the rubric of the Career Profiles assignment. The initial goal of 70% of GCS students scoring 70% or higher on this section of the rubric was surpassed by 8.57 percentage points.	
GCS students will make contact with local businesses and industries that may impact their academic and/or career choice (SLO 3).	**3a.** Using the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals Survey* (administered prior to and following the Career Profiles Assignment), GCS cohort students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 in	**3a.** GCS students enrolled in face-to-face ENG 1113 courses in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 combined did not demonstrate the increase of 10 percentage points from pre- to post-surveys on question 6.f. However, there	**3a.** Although the Year I goal was not met with combined results, Fall and Spring individual survey result differences from pre- to post-survey on question 6.f. showed a drastic difference. Students enrolled in the Fall

	fall and spring terms, will indicate an increase of 10 percentage points in having made contact with local businesses and industries on question 6.f. “I have made contact with local businesses and industries that may impact my academic and/or career choice” (making contact indicated by a 3 or 4 on a 4-point Likert scale).	was an increase of 5.71 percentage points (from 51.43% to 57.14%) for the combined semesters, a 3.71 percentage point increase for Fall 2025 (from 44.44% to 48.15%), and a 12.5 percentage point increase (75% to 87.50%) for Spring 2026 from pre- to post-surveys on question 6.f. The 2025-2026 (Year I of QEP) goal of a 10 percentage point increase was not met with combined results.	showed a slight increase and students enrolled in the Spring showed a more significant increase, surpassing the 10 percentage point increase goal. Many factors could have contributed to this-one being more GCS students took ENG 1113 in the Fall than in the Spring. With the assignment being added to online and dual enrollment sections of ENG 1113, survey results may also be affected in the next year. The QEP Director and English Department Chair evaluated the survey results and analyzed them alongside the assignment guidelines, rubric, and instructor feedback. For Year I, the only option to have contact with an employer for the assignment was to conduct an interview with a professional from a local business or industry in the field they chose to do their assignment on; however, students voiced to instructors that it was difficult to find someone to interview "locally," as the areas students live in vary drastically across the district. Also, some students have aspirations to gain employment in a field that does not have a presence in the area in which they currently reside. In addition, Year II (2026-2027) will include online students who may not have as much access to interview professionals. With this feedback in mind, the QEP Director and English Department Chair agreed

			that a change in the wording of Student Learning Outcome 3 is necessary as well as including additional forms of learning from a professional for the assignment. Student Learning Outcome 3 will be updated to state, "GCS students will gain insight (new or clear understanding) from business and industry professionals that may influence their academic and/or career choices." This also aligns with observed feedback of the below goal for 3b. Instead of just an interview option to complete the Career Profiles Assignment, students will be given the option to interview a professional, attend a Career Exploration Seminar on one of the main campuses of Holmes, or watch an online video such as a "day in the life" of the profession they are pursuing or a recording of previous Career Exploration Seminars. The updated outcome will still be assessed through the Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals pre- and post-survey, with question 6.f. being updated to fit the new student learning outcome.
	3b. Using the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals Survey* (administered following the career exploration seminars), 30% of GCS cohort students attending career exploration seminars in the spring term will indicate having made contact with local	**3b.** In Spring 2026, 47.06% of GCS cohort students who attended a career exploration seminar indicated they made contact with local businesses and industries on question 6.f. (making contact indicated by a 3 or 4 on a 4-point Likert scale), surpassing the initial goal of 30% by 17.06 percentage points.	**3b.** 17 cohort students attended one of the Spring seminars, but 8 of those did not complete the post-survey. While our goal was surpassed, there is still improvement to be made on getting more of our GCS cohort students to the seminars AND getting survey data on those that do

	businesses and industries on question 6.f. “I have made contact with local businesses and industries that may impact my academic and/or career choice” (making contact indicated by a 3 or 4 on a 4-point Likert scale).		attend. Adding the LLS 1321 course in Fall 2026 should increase seminar attendance. An attempt to mention the post-survey at the beginning and end of the seminars (instead of just at the end) will also be made in hopes to increase survey participation. In addition to the feedback noted above in goal 3a., it was observed during the Spring 2026 seminars that the majority of students did not make actual contact with the professional panelists (asking questions after, gathering contact information, etc.), although they did gain valuable information and insight from them, as noted on the comment section of the post-survey. Students already have the opportunity each semester to make contact with businesses and industries during career and transfer fairs, but seminars offer the unique experience of hearing stories and advice from different professionals and gaining insight from their education and career journeys. Options of panelists were also more limited due to trying to find those that were "local." Students may not have made contact with the panelists due to them not being related to their aspiring program, but many of them still gained valuable lessons and insight from the experiences of the panelists that they could apply to their own academic and/or career journey. Therefore, the results and proposed solutions from goal 3a.

			(noted above) of updating the SLO 3 wording are aligned with seminar findings. SLO 3 for 2026-2027 will be updated to "GCS students will gain insight (new or clear understanding) from business and industry professionals that may influence their academic and/or career choices." The updated outcome will still be assessed through the Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals post-survey, with question 6.f. being updated to fit the new student learning outcome.

The assessment findings from Year I demonstrate both the strengths of the *Career Compass* initiatives and areas where improvements are needed. These findings informed several updates to assessment practices, student learning activities, and implementation strategies for Year II.

Insights Gained and Looking Ahead

The initial year of implementation of *Career Compass* provided valuable insight into both data collection practices and student engagement with the QEP. Early findings revealed gaps in how and when students were prompted to respond to assessment measures, as well as opportunities to strengthen the quality of feedback gathered. These insights informed immediate adjustments to processes and survey instruments, ensuring more comprehensive and meaningful data moving forward. As the QEP continues to evolve, these early lessons will assist in refining implementation strategies and enhancing student support. Looking ahead, 2026-2027 will bring additional initiatives, continued evaluation, and ongoing improvements to sustain momentum and maximize the impact of *Career Compass.*

Updates During Year I

During the initial semester of implementation, reports indicated that many students had not responded to the new QEP confidence question on the advising request form, despite the form typically being completed by all students. Upon further review, Dr. Jenny Jones, Vice President for Academic Programs, and Bethany Miller, Director of the QEP, determined that many of the students who did not answer the question were those attending on-campus registration events such as Freshman Friday. Due to the large number of students participating in these events, completion of the advising request form is not required. Additionally, students who visited their advisor's office on a walk-in basis were sometimes not asked to complete the form in order to ensure timely service.

To address this gap in data collection, the confidence question from the advising request form was added to the Freshman Friday sign-up form. Furthermore, advisors were instructed to have walk-in students complete the advising request form during their advising sessions. These changes will help ensure the collection of accurate advising histories and more complete data for all students.

Additionally, Question 7 (the open-ended comment item) on the *Certainty in Program of Study and Career goals* English Comp I post-surveys initially read "Please share any additional details relating to your career goal." At the conclusion of the Fall 2025 semester, a review of student responses revealed that while some students commented on their program of study, the question did not explicitly prompt feedback on whether the Career Profiles Assignment had a meaningful impact. Recognizing the need for more targeted feedback to inform both assignment improvements and future seminars, Question 7 on both post-surveys was revised to read: "Please share how this assignment (or seminar) has helped you build confidence in your program of study and/or career goals, and how it might be improved to support you even more."

This revision proved effective. During the Spring 2026 semester, students provided more detailed and actionable feedback, offering both positive reflections and constructive suggestions. These responses will play a key role in strengthening the overall effectiveness of QEP-related initiatives for the upcoming year.

Looking Ahead to Year II

Looking ahead to 2026-2027, initiatives launched in Year I will continue, with lessons learned providing a strong foundation for growth and improvement. The Career Profiles Assignment will be expanded to include online and dual-enrollment formats in English Composition I classes during the fall semester. Additionally, the updated Career Exploration course (LLS 1321) will be offered in two 4-week online

sections to provide access to as many students as possible. Advisor training will continue to provide opportunities for collaboration and professional development among advisors. Assessment efforts will also increase, incorporating additional measures to better evaluate the ongoing impact of the Career Profiles Assignment, Career Exploration Seminars, and the newly added LLS 1321 course. In addition to continuing these initiatives, several updates will be implemented based on assessment findings, faculty feedback, and student input from Year I.

First, students in English Composition I (ENG 1113) will be more strongly encouraged to take the pre- and post-survey for the Career Profiles Assignment. This will be done in collaboration with the English Department Chair, Dr. Amber Mabus, and English faculty by having the surveys count as a daily grade or having the instructors incorporate survey completion into the assignment rubric. Face-to-face instructors of the course will be strongly encouraged to have students complete the surveys in class.

In addition, the Career Profiles Assignment will include a preliminary activity requiring students to research three potential careers before selecting one as the focus of their assignment. This change is intended to provide students with a more meaningful opportunity to compare career options and should strengthen alignment with SLO 2.

Lastly, SLO 3 will be updated moving forward. The original outcome stated, "GCS students will make contact with local businesses and industries that may impact their academic and/or career choice." Based on Year I assessment results, student and faculty feedback, and observations from the Career Profiles Assignment and Career Exploration Seminars, the QEP Director and English Department Chair determined that gaining meaningful insight from business and industry professionals more accurately reflects the intended student learning experience than requiring direct contact with local professionals.

During Year I, some students reported difficulty identifying local professionals to interview because students live throughout and beyond the Holmes district and may pursue careers that are not represented in their local communities. This concern is particularly relevant as the Career Profiles Assignment expands to online students in Fall 2026. In addition, observations from the Spring 2026 Career Exploration Seminars indicated that students often gained valuable information and insight from panelists even when they did not directly interact with them.

Beginning in Year II, SLO 3 will therefore be revised to "GCS students will gain insight (new or clear understanding) from one or more business and industry professionals that may influence their academic and/or career choices." To support this outcome, students completing the Career Profiles Assignment will have multiple opportunities to learn from professionals, including interviewing a professional, attending a Career Exploration Seminar, or viewing an online video featuring a professional or career experience. The revised outcome will continue to be assessed through the Certainty in Program of Study and Career Goals survey, with question 6.f. updated to align with the new outcome and include a brief definition of "insight" for student clarity.

This change will allow *Career Compass* to more accurately measure the ways students learn from business and industry professionals while providing greater flexibility and accessibility for students participating in face-to-face, online, and other course formats.

Summary

The first year of *Career Compass* implementation provided valuable insight into student engagement, assessment practices, and opportunities for improvement. Through ongoing review of data, student feedback, and faculty input, several meaningful updates were identified and implemented to strengthen both the quality of assessment and the student experience. These early findings have helped establish a stronger foundation for future implementation while reinforcing the importance of continuous evaluation.

As *Career Compass* moves into Year II, the institution remains committed to supporting students in exploring academic and career pathways with confidence. Planned enhancements to the Career Profiles Assignment, Career Exploration course, seminars, and assessment measures will build upon the successes and lessons of the first year. By continuing to refine strategies based on evidence and feedback, *Career Compass* is well positioned to expand its impact and help students make informed decisions about their educational and career goals. Ultimately, these efforts support the central goal of *Career Compass*: helping General College Studies students identify a program of study that aligns with their interests, strengths, and career goals.



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