QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN: UPDATE
by Charity Lewallen

As we kick off the new year, the QEP Team continues to move forward at a fast pace. At the December Board Meeting, the request to purchase the degree audit and planning software was officially approved. The QEP Team is particularly appreciative to the Board of Trustees for approving the system that best suited the specifications—CollegeSource u.achieve® and u.direct®.

The new u.achieve® and u.direct® system will provide a user-friendly platform that allows students to engage in their academic planning process via a customizable and personalized student “dashboard.” This will provide a seamless integration between the degree audit, course planning and course registration processes so that students no longer have to learn how to navigate among different systems before even beginning to figure out their classes.

The QEP slogan, There’s a Map for That, will become more applicable as students are able to clearly see which courses are available and appropriate for their desired degree/certificate. Additional functions that will benefit staff and faculty as they assist students with the academic planning process are also available in the CollegeSource system.

Installation of the u.achieve® and u.direct® system will take several months. This newsletter and college emails will be used to keep the college community updated as the launch date draws near. A special implementation team will ensure that key stakeholders are represented as the software is configured for Collin College. Exciting results are anticipated as the QEP moves forward.

ACADEMIC COACHING CORNER

Why I became an Academic Coach. . .
by Amy Myrick

Since 2003, I have worked as a teacher or counselor to students at almost every grade level past elementary school. This array of experiences taught me how blessed I truly was in my own educational journey. All four of my grandparents held college degrees and so did my parents and most of their siblings. When it came time for me to go to college, my mother and my grandmother, a high school guidance counselor, sat me down and guided me through the process of selecting a major and planning my degree path, semester by semester. They were experts in the field of education and passed that information on to me.

Unfortunately, for most of our students, college role models are a rarity rather than the norm. They have no one at home who can teach them the ins and outs of registration, applying for financial aid, picking a major, or planning a degree path. While many of our students are first generation college students, even those whose parents attended college may lack knowledge of these systems because of the vast changes technology has made in the higher education landscape. Students often have to learn how to be college students as much as they have to learn the material presented in their classrooms.

This gap between what many students actually know and what they are expected to know in order to be successful is the main reason why I became involved in the Academic Coaching Program here at Collin College. Students need guides and advocates who can not only impart this knowledge, but also show them how it applies to their unique situations. They need someone to do what my grandmother and my mother did for me. That is why I became an Academic Coach.