Navigating a Journey to Success

2018 QM COMMUNITY IN REVIEW

CREATE

COMMIT

DELIVER

EXCELLENCE

Table of Contents

── MEMBERS* RECEIVING ──
QM CREDENTIALS

428

became certified/
re-certified to deliver
the Applying the QM
Rubric workshop

81

became certified/
re-certified to deliver the
Improving Your Online
Course workshop

464

Teaching Online Certificates issued in 2018

QM has over 1100 member organizations and over 80,000 individual members who access QM through an organizational or individual membership.

Change is afoot. ROI in TEL.

For years, applying technology to learning has been a given. The thought was more technology = more learning.

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has been touted as a way to help students learn at their own pace, to bring in additional resources beyond lectures and textbooks, to help keep students engaged by bringing life to mundane tasks. And, as a way to provide personalized learning to students, and enhance and extend the abilities of instructors.

Technology has been thought of as a magic bullet of sorts — a way to break through the iron triangle of access, cost and quality. We've seen success in increasing access and are beginning to see impact on reducing costs — witness the growing number of micro-masters programs and $10,000 bachelor degrees. What we have not seen, however, is much of a positive impact on quality in a way that's consistent or scalable.

Since the mid 1990s, technology has been used to efficiently reach new markets, some underserved, by making education accessible to more people through online education. This created a disrupting force throughout the education landscape. Traditional colleges and universities launched online programs and saw these programs grow prodigiously, overcoming a decline in traditional students.

Until recently.

This growth in online education has not been enjoyed equally by institutions and, in fact, online enrollment remains concentrated in a relatively small number of institutions. Many traditional colleges and universities have seen online enrollment flatten out, and paired with a decline in traditional enrollment, overall enrollments may be in jeopardy. Institutions are asking, "What can we do?"

In an effort to stem the tide of decreasing enrollments, institutions are going back to the well, adding online courses and programs. Institutions are making decisions on additional technology in their programs and courses based on the expectation of anticipated improvement in student success. Our own Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) surveys bear this out.

These surveys also point to another essential element of the ROI of any learning system: quality of that system.

> "… we were seeing online growth from a hundred to 150 percent each semester because we were one of the first to hit the market with online courses offerings. Once we determined what we wanted to accomplish and what resources we were going to utilize, we found an avenue through QM to really develop and sustain that project."
>
> **EDDIE ANDREO, COWLEY COLLEGE**

As we see a larger number of online students enrolling in a smaller number of online institutions, it is vital to remember that quality is essential to student success, and that student success is more important to society than enrollment numbers. As opportunities for access are increasing and more institutions offer technology-enhanced education at scale, quality is becoming a strategic imperative for most institutions to both attract and support learners.

At Quality Matters, our position as a longtime, trusted partner with institutions — both traditional and purely online — has given us a unique perch to see this changing landscape firsthand. We have been on the front lines of technology in education as a third-party evaluator and standard bearer, providing for evaluation of quality in online education. Supported by research and our extensive community of online educators, we

QM IMPACT: 2018

1,294
OFFICIAL COURSE REVIEWS

115 — **10%** OF QM'S **1,150** ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS WERE NEW MEMBERS

155 — **53%** OF QM'S **290** INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS WERE NEW MEMBERS

1,089 New **122** Re-Certified
QM-CERTIFIED COURSES

93%
RENEWAL RATE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

67% OF **3,602** ELIGIBLE CERTIFIED PEER REVIEWERS WERE PROVIDED A REVIEW OPPORTUNITY

85% OF **682** CERTIFIED MASTER REVIEWERS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHAIR A REVIEW

---

continue to examine how, and how well, instruction is being affected through the investment in and use of technology.

But is this working? Is there evidence?

As competitive pressures on institutions increase and budgets decrease, investments in teaching with technology will need to increasingly focus on quality to achieve desired outcomes for institutions and their students.

Institutions, and those educators developing courses and programs, clearly believe that the success of their online programs, and their ability to meet institutional goals, depends on how well they identify and use those technologies most likely to support student success.

How will students determine which institutions are making the investments in quality that will help them succeed? Are institutions able to differentiate themselves in a crowded, competitive marketplace to prospective students? Are they able to demonstrate to stakeholders — internal and external — that their use of technology is truly "getting the job done"?

These are the questions that QM is working with institutions to answer.

QM Certification of course quality is recognized as the true objective measure for assuring quality in online learning. Results of an official review can be used to objectively compare courses among programs and institutions. Sure, institutions can customize reviews to help meet localized needs. But when it comes to official QM Certifications, the integrity of our research-supported rubrics, and the peer-based, unbiased nature of our course review process assure evaluations that are objective, valid and comparable.

In short, QM Certification is a way to demonstrate to all your stakeholders — faculty and staff, students and parents, accreditors and administrators — that the application of technology and the design of courses and programs are aligned to the metric that most matters: the success of students. And it's a way to keep educators and support staff, connected through a common set of standards, pursuing a path to quality... and ultimately success.

In addition to the ROI benefits of the QM program, the year 2018 saw specific initiatives at QM dedicated to helping institutions understand ROI in TEL.

- Research on the Continuum of Excellence and related action research is helping us understand how institutions move forward in their online innovations from setting and sharing standards, to developing and maintaining an evaluation process, using data to improve processes and outcomes, and benchmarking quality.

- The mini-track of special sessions on the ROI of technology-enhanced education at QM Connect provided perspective for leaders on quality, data analytics and student success. They shed light on the competitive landscape of online programs, academic integrity in an interconnected world, educational policy and quality assurance, and Chief Academic Officer perspectives on quality in technology-enhanced learning.

- Additionally, we are looking at what machine learning and predictive analytics can tell us about the factors that matter in student success and the key levers influencing learning. See the "Looking Forward" column at the end of this report for more information.

This isn't the first you've heard from us on ROI for TEL, and it's most certainly not the last. It's the start of an exciting conversation that we hope will help propel education — online, traditional and blended — into the future.

Change is afoot. And at Quality Matters, we are your partner in navigating that change.

Gearing Up with Research

At Quality Matters, research is a founding principle, the cornerstone of our rubrics, tools, methods. The engine that drives everything we do. In 2018, we conducted research to not only inform the services we provide to our community, but to investigate the direction in which online learning is moving and the impact quality assurance can have on it.

Here are some of our initiatives from 2018:

QUALITATIVE INQUIRY ON THE QM CONTINUUM OF EXCELLENCE

Our Continuum of Excellence is a way of identifying and demonstrating the milestones in a quality assurance process. In 2018, we conducted interviews with organizations that are highly involved with QM in an effort to determine key factors for successful QM implementation.

Some of the factors identified include:

- Connecting QM to existing initiatives and goals
- Identifying a champion to push quality initiatives forward
- Having people at the organization familiar with QM from experience at previous organizations

- Support of organization leadership
- Support of instructional design staff
- Use of design templates
- Professional development, particularly the APPQMR and IYOC
- Attention to who does it and how they do it, in addition to what they do
- Being part of a QM system/having support and sharing work with other QM-member organizations
- Disseminating positive info about QM within the organization (e.g., acknowledging exemplars, citing accreditors' positive attitude about QM as a lever for change)
- Awareness of and sensitivity to the organizational context — allowing for special work arrangements for unionized faculty

How does this play in the field? "After our Provost at Kent State mentioned QM training … the floodgates of interest opened," said Bethany Simunich, Kent State University, as she discussed the increase in support for QA efforts. "Many faculty sought out QM training, as they wanted to feel better prepared for online teaching, and to distinguish themselves by having completed QM courses and workshops."

Pat Abrego of Texas A&M talked about their process for integrating QM into

"The fact that we are on a QM consortium helps a lot because some of our sister universities lack internal reviewers to review their courses. Just knowing that you're not alone, that there is another institution you can reach out to and get some expertise in-house really helps."

PAT ABREGO, TEXAS A&M

their organization, "We started with a group of what we call our champions, which were faculty representatives from different colleges that were already teaching online and that had come from another institution that was familiar with QM."

Finally, our researchers conducted a poll at the "QM Connect — Quality Assurance" session about how the study could be more helpful. Responses fell into several general classifications, including that the study could (1) lead to outside recognition of high-level QM activity, (2) tie QM activity to student success, (3) include mechanisms for measuring QM's impact based on activity, and (4) provide more detail about specific pathways members are using.

CHLOE 2 REPORT AND CHLOE 3 SURVEY

In year two of our multi-year Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) study, in partnership with Eduventures Research, the CHLOE 2 report was released in March 2018. In addition, we administered the CHLOE 3 Survey and created presentations on the data. To date, more than 2,100 people have downloaded the CHLOE 2 report.

One of the key findings in CHLOE 2 was a mainstreaming of online education, which means that online education is included in the strategic plan of institutions and there is a tendency for institutions to centralize the management of it. Also, instructional designers are underutilized — in some cases due to budgets. The survey also revealed that only one-third of respondents are seeking external quality assurance. This points to the need for quality standards that institutions can use to improve their online education.

QM RESEARCH WEBINAR SERIES

The year 2018 was the first year we expanded our Research Webinar Series to four webinars. Here are some highlights:

- Researchers Yingjie Liu, Instructional Designer, San Jose State University, and Patrick Dempsey, Lead Instructional Teaching Specialist, The Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, provided an overview of the challenges of — and best practices for — scaffolding professional development to optimize the use of QM in *QM - Now What? Faculty Perceptions of Instructional Design and QM Standards*.

- Shortly after the full report's release, a webinar offered the public an initial overview of the second Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) Report. With results from a large number of chief online officers, this report spoke to the mainstreaming of online learning.

- A slew of experts presented on *The Role of Research in Developing the Sixth Edition of the QM Higher Education Rubric for Course Design*, including inter-rater agreement analyses of course reviews using the Fifth Edition and the contextualized use of recent research on online education and quality assurance in higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

In order to have the most up-to-date resources possible in our ever growing research library, we have set up continuous reviews of research literature. As a result, we now have nearly 1,400 references in our library — an exceptionally strong number compared to a number of similar resources in our field.

QM Research performed literature reviews to assist with the joint QM - Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance project to revise the National Standards for K-12 online courses, online programs and online teaching.

NSSE INVOLVEMENT

More than 6,000 students from 21 institutions responded to our beta set of questions on online learning in the National Survey on Student Engagement. The responses are now being interpreted, with plans to co-present on the findings at the Association of Institutional Research conference in May 2019.

Categorizing Returns: Student Success, Saving Time, Program Growth, Empowered Faculty

Members from the entire spectrum of online learning have seen success in 2018. As presented throughout this report, an examination of return on investment (ROI) in technology, and in quality assurance, has come to the forefront. But what is included in ROI? We see several categories of returns: Student Success, Saving Time, Program Growth/Increased Access, and Empowered Faculty. Here are how some of our members have seen returns in 2018.

HIGHER EDUCATION

HE Student success

Hillsborough Community College — Featured in the March 2018 HE newsletter, HCC had more than 300 faculty complete the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) workshop. They gained 4.6% in student success rates (grade C or higher) in their QM-Certified vs. non-certified courses. As a result, faculty now are redesigning their courses to meet QM Standards.

Southeast Missouri State University — As seen in our July 2018 HE newsletter, this 2018 QM Award Winner began implementing QM as a result of high withdrawal rates that had historically occurred in online courses during a four-week winter session between the fall and spring semesters. As a result of an institution-wide Quality Matters implementation program, the average GPA in online sections improved 1.25%. Activity within the LMS rose 20% in general and 28% for general education courses.

California State University, East Bay — Our November 2018 HE newsletter details how, throughout the growth of Cal State East Bay's online courses and undergraduate and graduate degrees, all Cal State East Bay faculty have access to QM professional development including the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) workshop and the Improving Your Online Course (IYOC) workshop. As a result of these implementations, the most recent three-year analysis indicates that participation in QM review processes and professional development did impact student learning by reducing

repeatable grades (D's, F's or course withdrawals).

Saving Time

The University of Northwestern Ohio — UNOH is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Rather than course-by-course certification, UNOH made the decision to move to a QM Program Review, which would cover the entire program and would meet the rigorous requirements for the HLC Quality Initiative. UNOH presented their success story at the 2018 QM Connect Conference.

Salve Regina University — Thanks to the DYOC (Designing Your Online Course) workshop, Salve Regina University has seen a significant shift in the course design process, with the workshop helping them understand that online courses have unique needs that differ from face-to-face courses. And, as the DYOC workshop helps prepare faculty beforehand, there are fewer, but more productive, meetings between faculty and Center for Teaching and Learning staff as new online courses are created.

Program Growth/Increased Access

Guided by its goal of ensuring student success in the online space, Cape Cod Community College, applied for and received a 2018 Performance Incentive Grant through the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. This grant is enabling CCCC to provide faculty professional development using QM to expand access to educational opportunities.
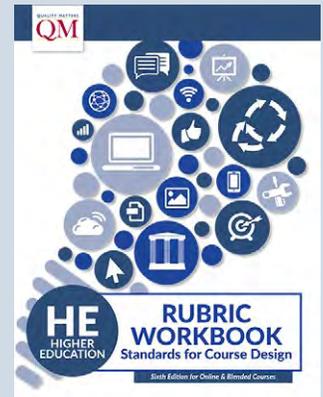
University of Southern Indiana — As we discuss in our September 2018 HE newsletter, the University of Southern Indiana, like so many other organizations, recognizes the importance of goal setting in an educational program and developed strategic goals related to their efforts. Professional development plays a huge role in meeting these goals. After having so much success with the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) workshop and internal reviews, USI is moving toward QM-Managed Course Reviews, which, in addition to giving faculty the opportunity to have their courses QM-Certified, also frees up some time for their instructional designers.

University of Colorado Colorado Springs — UCCS is using Quality Matters Course Design Reviews to support its strategic plan. The University feels strongly that QM reviews and certification not only increase the pedagogical soundness of its courses, but the appeal of them as well. They believe these factors will work to increase enrollments from diverse, non-traditional audiences identified in their strategic goals.

QM HIGHER EDUCATION RUBRIC, SIXTH EDITION, RELEASED

In July of 2018, we released the QM Higher Education Rubric, Sixth Edition for course design. It was a monumental effort wherein we assembled a diverse group of professionals — each recognized for their dedication to continuous improvement and expertise in quality online education — to serve on the QM Rubric Committee. The process included a comprehensive literature review, data analysis of QM course reviews and a survey of Fifth Edition users.

The Sixth Edition represents a fundamental outcome of the ongoing design-based research project that is at the core of Quality Matters, providing updates that will enhance the design of online courses. These include a more deliberate focus on learner activities and interaction — showing how learning activities help learners achieve course and module objectives. To quote J.J. Johnson, Eastern Washington University, "It [the Sixth Edition] lends itself well to current instructional design practices and will help faculty and instructional design staff design and develop higher quality courses."

Online learning should not be an isolated activity. Interactions with content, faculty and other learners are part of the learning process, and important to consider during course design. The Sixth Edition of the Rubric looks to ensure courses are accessible to all learners, with Specific Review Standards that focus on accessible technology and ensure alternate forms of content are available for learners.

The Sixth Edition pushed the envelope on the increasingly important need for accessibility — with Specific Review Standards focused on equal access for all learners. "The revised edition not only provides a wealth of guidance to improve the quality and consistency of our online courses," says Eddie Andreo, Cowley College, "but the updates to General Standard 8, (reflecting a commitment to accessibility and usability for all learners), has also assisted us with our most recent Higher Learning Commission accreditation strategic initiative to improve the accessibility of our online course content."

The new edition was well received by QM members, with 25,000 workbooks shipped in 2018 and about 7,300 having completed the free Rubric Update session designed to facilitate the transition from the Fifth Edition. The Rubric is available for members via the Course Review Management System in MyQM and through the purchase of Rubric Workbooks.

Empowered Faculty

Samford University — Samford University saw how QM processes empower their faculty. Three main vehicles used are Lunch & Learn seminars based on individual QM Standards, layered course review processes for application of the QM Standards, and professional development cohorts. Samford sent faculty and staff through QM's Teaching Online Certificate (TOC) program as a group which resulted in greater collaboration and synergy for using resources available campus-wide and.

Metropolitan State University of Denver — The host of our 2018 Mountain Regional Conference, MSU Denver offered two presentations at the conference. The second of their presentations focused on their ELITE Certification for faculty and how that set of workshops armed faculty with the tools to work towards getting their program certified. Through one pilot and three full development cycles under this new model, the data on course quality improvement is fairly staggering. Across 40+ courses, design quality (as defined by the QM Higher Education Rubric, Fifth Edition) has improved by nearly 25%.

K-12

Student Success

K-12

Wisconsin Virtual — Wisconsin Virtual School encourages all of their instructors to take QM professional development, especially since the program aligns their courses with QM Standards. A higher rate of student engagement, satisfaction and success

was observed. Students are more confident at the beginning of a course and ask fewer questions relating to course structure, assignments and objectives. Students are completing assignments on time and with higher grades than before.
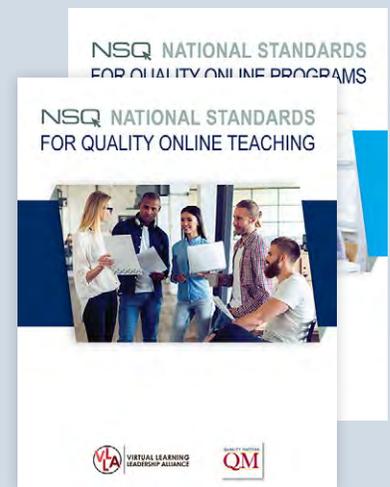
Continuous Improvement

Odysseyware — Glynlyon, the parent company of Odysseyware, is putting quality assurance into practice by using Quality Matters Reviews to inform the continuous improvement of its content. Based on their overwhelmingly positive

experience, Quality Matters Reviews are now an integral part of Glynlyon's development planning and processes. Glynlyon is planning to submit more new and revised courses for reviews while seeking out other ways to continuously improve.

Springfield Public School District – Last summer, in an effort to provide students in Missouri with more online course options, the Springfield Public School District launched *Launch* — a dedicated online school housed within the district. Because of the tremendous growth — adding dozens of courses and hundreds

---

K-12 NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

In 2018, QM embarked on a new partnership with the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA) to revise the National Standards for Quality Online Courses, Online Teaching and Online Programs, building upon the work started by iNACOL. The purpose of the National Standards for Quality revision initiative is to provide the K-12 online and blended learning community with an updated set of openly licensed standards to help evaluate and improve online courses, online teaching and online programs.

The final products will prove useful for schools, districts and programs adopting the standards and using the indicators to fit their unique needs. The new standard sets (released March 1, 2019) include explanations and examples. The standards revision teams have been mindful to balance the need for a usable set of benchmarks for quality online learning practices with the need for flexibility to accommodate the wide range of program types and available resources. These new standards sets will be assets to the QM community and will complement the QM quality assurance process.

The first two standard sets are available to the public under a Creative Commons Licence on the National Standards for Quality (NSQ) website. The National Standards for Online Courses will be released in September of 2019 in conjunction with the revision of the QM K-12 Secondary and QM K-12 Publisher Rubrics.

of students in just a few months — the district knew it needed a clear, rigorous quality assurance process. Using the QM Rubric has allowed the district to expand with the confidence that quality can be balanced with growth.

Meeting Students' Needs

Rockwood School District — In an effort to offer more personalized learning options for their students, this Missouri district purchased a variety of online coursework. They soon discovered a disconnect between the materials they had purchased and the types of skills they work with students to build. There was a gap in learning that the District knew it had to close, and the decision was made to create its own blended and online courses to incorporate those skills. To be certain the new coursework reinforced the types of skills they work with students to build, Rockwood came to Quality Matters to develop a collaborative quality assurance process.

Pearson/Connections Academy — Pearson Online & Blended Learning, which supports Connections Academy, full-time online schools for grades K-12, recently had its 100th course QM Certified. Pearson is

committed to continuous improvement and QM is a piece of that equation. Course reviews and approvals benefit students beyond the borders of Maryland as QM-Certified courses are used nationwide — modified slightly based on state-specific requirements.

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPE)

CPE We saw an increase in CPE review activity for teacher professional development courses, as members see value in certifying the quality of all kinds of non-credit bearing courses. In 2017, we told you about the 2016 Texas Administrative Code requirement that establishes guidelines for Educator Preparation Programs. QM's CPE has been instrumental in helping organizations get into and stay in compliance with this groundbreaking requirement. We have also seen continued interest in certification courses for fire and law enforcement, and for courses delivered entirely in Spanish. In addition, many institutions use the CPE supplemental membership for their faculty professional

development or non-credit courses offered online.

PROGRAM REVIEWS

Chicago School of Professional Psychology — As QM Members since 2012, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP) expects all faculty to take QM professional development so they can meet key performance indicators and accessibility standards, develop strong assessment tools based on best practices, and build highly engaging and academically sound online courses. As a result, they pursued, and achieved, QM Program Certification for Online Learner Support, a step which exemplifies their commitment to quality and to their students. TCSPP is in the process of promoting their new certification through a few different outlets, such as the President's external and internal communications, the online campus newsletter, their website and social media pages, and a press release.

University of Alaska Fairbanks — In 2018, University of Alaska Fairbanks became the fourth university in the nation to earn QM Program Certification for Online Learner Support, which recognizes programs that provide all the critical student and academic services needed for learner success and use learner feedback to continuously improve those services. Adding to their laurels, UAF also achieved QM Program Certification for Online Program Design, which recognizes programs that are designed around measurable learning objectives or competencies. Design or revision of individual courses within the program aligns with program objectives, involves QM-Certified staff, and is consistent with the relevant QM Rubric.

Impact and Outreach

QM CONNECT AND QM REGIONAL CONFERENCES

As always, our QM Connect and QM Regional Conferences are highlights of the year. From our standpoint, the ability to get out of our offices and be face-to-face with our members is priceless. Members tell us they value the content of the conferences and the ability to meet with QM staff and contributors, but even more importantly, to meet with other QM "believers" throughout the country — and often, the world.

QM Connect

This year QM Connect traveled to St. Louis to open the "Gateway to Quality." Keynote speaker Mark Milliron, Co-Founder and Chief Learning Officer, Civitas Learning, presented "Quality AND Student Success: The Dream Team." He discussed how the last 10 years have seen the rise of large-scale student success efforts focused on helping more and more diverse students finish what they start in higher education. Mr. Milliron explored how quality online and blended learning have expanded access and success in higher education, and how the digital signal coming from these efforts has informed and improved student success work. He also presented strategies for

leading efforts to connect quality and student success.

Conference sessions covered a wide range of topics, among them:

- Transformation of Online Education: Jeopardy to Excellence
- Strategic Planning for Online Ed: Course Quality, Capacity, Culture - The 3 C's Framework
- Creative Alternatives for Fiscally Responsible Quality Assurance
- Raising the Bar: An Institution's Journey to Sustainable Quality in Online Education
- Quality Assurance, Education Policy, and Regulation

While content of the presentations can be understood from the links above, the context — the true story of QM Connect — is written by the comments that we received from participants.

A common thread in the comments spoke to the sense of community conference-goers felt. "It was so great to connect with my QM Ohio friends…. Much like the arch, my experiences with QM have been an inspiring gateway to all things good," said Phoebe Ballard, Columbia University School of Professional Studies. Melissa Walter, from the University of South Alabama,

said, "I ❤ this QM community! It's inspiring to be around so many people who care about online education!"

Others found concrete solutions to problems that had been vexing them. "I was struggling with next steps. Now I'm developing a 3 year plan and can't wait to get started. … The timing was perfect," said Jessica Gordon, University of Missouri Extension.

And in diversity of opinion, experience, background, and situation, QM Connect brought a unique value to attendees. "The participants … all come from different institutions with a variety of funding and educational systems … That's what makes this conference unique. QM isn't limited to one discipline or program of study, but all of the people who are interested in QM are interested in quality, and that's what makes QM rock," Darrin Jones, Iowa State University, shared.

And this sums it up, from Joseph Scuralli, Berkeley College NJ/NY, "Anyone interested in improving quality in online courses should attend this conference — it is the premier venue for the exchange of ideas, training and implementation for quality in online courses."

We could not have said it better.

2018 REGIONAL CONFERENCES

We held two QM Regional Conferences in 2018 with content as varied as the locations themselves. These smaller regional conferences allow participants from institutions in statewide systems and in a region with shared interests and challenges to come together for discussions about using QM to meet their unique goals.

2018 East Regional Conference - in Partnership with Towson University

In Towson, Maryland, our East Regional Conference featured a keynote by Associate Vice Provost, Center for Innovation in Learning and Student Success at University of Maryland-University College, Cristi Ford and Paul Walsh, USMx Program Director William E. Kirwan Center for Academic Innovation University System of Maryland, titled "Perspectives on Scaling Quality in Online Learning: MOOCs and Microdegrees, "Traditional" Online Courses, and Personalized Learning." Conference sessions included 30 presentations on topics from "Beyond the Buzz: Recent Research on Hot Topics in Online Learning and Quality Assurance" to "NCCU Has an App for That! RE-Applying the Quality Matters Rubric Through Gamification."

A key feature of regional conferences is the location — on campus. That did not go unnoticed by our attendees: "It had a true academic feel because it was on a campus. …Like Goldilocks, it provided quality that was just right for the venue and size." Presenters also drew kudos from attendees, as well they should: "Each session presenter used his or her time differently, but…all sessions were engaging…and EXCELLENT. Sessions were

very helpful, very right on, very timely and perfect for my interests."

2018 Mountain Regional Conference - hosted by MSU Denver

The 2018 Mountain Regional Conference was held in Denver, Colorado, with a keynote address by QM Board Chair and Vice President for Larimer Campus of Front Range Community College Jean Runyon, titled "Pathways to Elevating Quality: Strategic, Transformational Leadership," followed by 33 presentations ranging from "The Yin and Yang of Online Curriculum Design" to "Dude! Where Do I Start? - Utilizing a Landing Page Within Canvas."

Attendees told us about the many networking experiences they experienced: "The networking was HUGE." We heard that they gained important reinforcement of things they knew or believed, but maybe had not quite had the mettle to implement. When participants see others using

strategies or tactics that they have been advocating for at their home institution, and learn that those things are working well or even recommended as best practice at other institutions, it has a big impact. "I felt validated… The conference gave me confidence," reported one participant.

That's music to our ears!

SPREADING THE WORD OF QUALITY AT CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Building Awareness of QM and Our Offerings

In 2018, we continued to promote QM to stakeholders and communities that might not be aware of QM and our offerings, targeting both higher education institutions and K-12 districts or schools who are not currently members of QM. Through presentations and exhibit space at nine conferences, QM staff members connected with

QM IMPRESSIONS

4,652
over 12 sessions

QM SUCCESS STORY
WEBINAR VIEWERS

9,787
in engagement

OF LIKES, SHARES, COMMENTS, MENTIONS OF QM, AND RETWEETS

2,008
over 4 sessions

RESEARCH
WEBINAR VIEWERS

641
New Followers

727
New Followers

212
New Page Likes

— QM AWARDS: — MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

These awards recognize excellence for the impact individuals and institutions have on the lives of their students and the furthering of quality online learning. A common thread woven through the 2018 nominations was the building of internal resources to review online courses — using the QM Rubric — to focus on increased student improvement and student success. Congratulations, all!

Ron Legon Leadership Award for Quality Assurance in Online Education: Dr. Michael J. Offerman, President Emeritus, Capella University

Directors' Award for Exceptional Service to Quality Matters: Eddie Andreo, Cowley College

Outstanding Impact by an Individual in Higher Education: Karen White, Amarillo College

Outstanding Impact by a Higher Education Organization: Southeast Missouri State University

Recognition: Outstanding Poster: Jessica Handley, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

the decision makers of institutions seeking quality assurance solutions to their blended and online offerings. Some highlights:

- **ITC (Instructional Technology Council) — Tucson, Arizona.** Brenda Boyd presented "Strengthening Course Design".

- **SIDLIT (Summer Institute on Distance Learning and Instructional Technology) — Overland Park, Kansas.** Kathy Tally offered a QM overview.

- **ICED (The International Consortium for Educational Development) — Atlanta, Georgia.** Dr. Yaping Gao presented "Adopt, Adapt, and Apply a Quality Assurance Framework to Drive Institutional Change" and Ron Legon presented two sessions: "Adapting Formative Peer Review Principles to Online Course Evaluation" and "The Online Course: Who Builds It, Who Owns It? Findings of the 2018 CHLOE Report."

Raising QM's Profile Regarding Quality Assurance In Education

Our involvement in business development conferences seeks to raise QM's overall profile in quality assurance in education. Strategic to the organization, the seven conferences we attended in 2018 were selected to partner and/or work with outside parties collaboratively. Several new markets were explored in 2018, including:

- Connecting with students directly or those that conduct outreach to them.
  - **National Student Success Conference.** Innovators and Innovations and National Conference on Student Recruitment, Marketing, and Retention in Tampa, Florida. Brenda Boyd attended this inaugural event to connect with others interested in student success.

- Teaching and learning centers at both member and non-member institutes of higher education.
  - **POD Network (Professional and Organizational Development Conference) — Portland, Oregon.** Brenda Boyd and Jim Snyder made connections with teaching and learning center directors participating in the Resource Fair.
  - **IFWE (International Forum for Women in E-Learning) — San Antonio, Texas.** Dr. Yaping Gao presented "Becoming a Leader in Quality Assurance for Online/Blended Learning!" and "Adapting a Proven Process to Overcome Resistance to Innovative Teaching/Learning". Deb Adair was a panelist for the closing keynote presentation.

- Conferences around technology in online learning or online learning in general.
  - **FETC (Future of Education Technology Conference) — Orlando, Florida.** Chris Voelker presented "Extreme Vetting: Purchase the Right Online Courses for your Students."
  - **OLC Global Quality Summit — Orlando, Florida.** Dr. Yaping Gao & representatives from Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (IAU) presented "Adopt, Adapt, and Apply a US-Based Quality Assurance Process to Culturally and Pedagogically Different Educational Systems – The Saudi Arabia Case" and Dr. Ron Legon gave a talk titled "Achieving Online Learning Success; Contrasting Institutional Models."

Maintaining Relationships

As we are a recognized leader in the area of quality assurance, QM leadership and staff regularly receive invitations to present at conferences and events. Some highlights:

- **Ohio QM Annual Member Meeting — Columbus, Ohio.** Dr. Deb Adair presented the keynote.

- **CAHIIM Conference (Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education) — Chicago, Illinois.** Dr. Deb Adair presented the keynote.

QM EXPANDS INTERNATIONALLY

While our international initiatives, and our intention to further expand our reach internationally, began in 2015 with a five-year agreement with Fudan University and continued apace in 2016 and 2017, in 2018 we saw clear signs that the word was getting out. QM international membership rose to 12 countries in 2018, with new members in Mexico, Colombia, Vietnam, and Jordan, and membership grew in Saudi Arabia, China and Australia. All of this would not have been possible without the leadership and guidance from QM's International Strategy Committee as well as the continued support from the iQM Association, a special-interest group of 200+ members who are QM-expert, online-education professionals with language expertise and cultural awareness in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Hindi, Korean, and more.

QM staff spread the word of quality through a number of presentations at international conferences:

- 2018 Conference on Innovative Teaching and Learning at Fudan University was QM's first regional conference outside the U.S. Dr. Deb Adair delivered the keynote address, "The Important Role Faculty Play In Developing And Delivering Quality Online Courses And The Impact On Student Success." Several iQM Association members, bilingual in English and Chinese, also presented and facilitated workshops during the Fudan conference. An ongoing partnership with Fudan is fostering interest in quality assurance for online/blended learning in Chinese higher education.

- Dr. Deb Adair's keynote address at EdCrunch in Moscow on "Many Directions for eLearning: One Path to Quality" helped set the stage for QM to be the leader in international QA processes.

- Dr. Deb Adair delivered two talks at the 2018 Global Online Learning Conference in Toronto: "Adopt, Adapt, and Apply a Quality Assurance Framework for Faculty, Staff, and Institution Development" and "Internationalizing US-Based Research-Supported Quality Standards for Online and Blended Learning for

2018 QM CONFERENCES

QM CONNECT CONFERENCE

197 proposals

114 sessions

444 participants came from **46** U.S. states, **4** countries and Puerto Rico representing

257 institutions

DENVER REGIONAL CONFERENCE

44 proposals

33 sessions

163 participants came from **26** U.S. states and Puerto Rico representing

71 institutions

TOWSON REGIONAL CONFERENCE

50 proposals

30 sessions

160 participants came from **15** U.S. states representing

59 institutions

Culturally and Pedagogically Different Educational Environments."

- Dr. Yaping Gao delivered two talks at the AACE E-Learn 2018 World Conference on eLearning: "Make

QM INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP ROSE TO 12 COUNTRIES IN 2018, WITH NEW MEMBERS IN MEXICO, COLOMBIA, VIETNAM, AND JORDAN …

Quality Matter: Applying a Research-Supported Quality Assurance Process to Improve Online and Blended Learning at Course, Program, and Institutional Levels" and "Adopt, Adapt, and Apply a US-Based Research-Supported Quality Assurance Process to Culturally and Pedagogically Different Educational Systems and Environments."

- Dr. Ron Legon presented at Cohere in Quebec City on "Online Learning Organization, Policies, and Practices: U.S. And Canada Compared; Based on the annual CHLOE (Changing Landscape of Online Education) Surveys."

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS & COMMITTEES

QM Academic Advisory Council (QMAAC)

In 2018, the QMAAC's focus on improving peer review led to the decision to bring on in-house facilitators for QM's certification courses. This move to increase consistency in reviewer training is balanced by the continued use of facilitators from the QM community in other QM workshops where their deep

insights and broad perspectives are of immense value.

QM Instructional Designers Association

This group saw its membership grow to nearly 1,000 members. A professional development needs analysis of membership was completed. As a result, new offerings are being considered, including a listserv, book club and support for local and regional meet-ups. This volunteer-based group continued to hold Twitter chats (#QMIDAchat),

Instructional Designers' Learning Exchange sessions and QM IDA pre-conference workshops at QM Connect.

K-12 Strategy Committee

To support QM's vision and mission, the QM K-12 Strategy Committee was created in early 2018 under the direction of the QM Board. The K-12 Strategy Committee is an ad hoc committee established for the purpose of providing advice and guidance on QM K-12 expansion and initiatives in support of QM's strategic objectives.

——— ACCESSIBILITY & USABILITY ——— RESOURCE SITE LAUNCHED

Institutions across the country are grappling with how to make education accessible for all learners. That's why the QM community came together to build the Accessibility & Usability Resource Site (AURS) — a moderated resource — for QM members. The volunteer group worked with QM staff to gather and vet resources, resulting in a go-to site for QM members to get information on how to address key accessibility and usability concerns, including:

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

ALTERNATIVE TEXT

VIDEO CAPTIONS AND AUDIO DESCRIPTIONS

HYPERLINKS

ACCESSIBLE MS OFFICE PRODUCTS

READABILITY: COLOR CHOICE AND CONTRAST

READABLE PDFS

ACCESSIBLE DESIGN IN LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Signaling the Future of Education

Signaling. In economics signaling is the idea that one party conveys information about itself to another party, whether sellers to buyers, investors to companies, employers to prospective employees, etc.

And in online education, QM Certification is a signal to students, the education community, parents, stakeholders, and competitors that an organization is serious about its online learning, serious about making the most out of its resources and serious about student success. As signals go, it's a pretty good one.

Across the U.S., quality stakeholders are paying attention to our certification. The American Dental Association has endorsed QM Standards for continuing education courses. The Florida Fire College uses QM Certification as evidence for accepting courses towards licensing. The Texas State Board for Educator Certification has identified QM Program Certification in the Texas Administrative Code as one of the few ways teacher education programs can be approved in the state. And QM has recently been approved as an evaluator for K-12 Online courses (both publisher and locally developed) used by districts in the state of Missouri. We are now seeing major state university systems integrate QM Standards and/or Certification into their strategic plans to perform quality review of all of their online courses.

But there's so much more that can be done if we can better understand signals and the data that underlie them.

All sectors of our society are awash in data. Those that learn to harness it appropriately, to deploy it to help understand and influence forward direction, are prospering. We see this in everything from selling soda pop to electing our leaders.

There's an incredible amount of data surrounding education as well. Buried deep in the data we already have, or that we could collect, are signals that can help us understand so many factors that influence how we educate students… but it will require a reexamination of the analytics involved in tracking students

— RIGOROUS —
ASSESSMENTS,
ROBUST
FACILITATION

17,345

NUMBER THAT PARTICIPATED IN FACILITATED AND ASSESSED QM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN 2018

QM is one of the largest providers of assessed professional development for online faculty. While many organizations offer "sit and get" webinars or issue certificates of completion for lightly-facilitated workshops, QM courses and workshops feature rigorous assessments and robust facilitation.

and courses, over time and across learning providers, to better recognize the learning that has been achieved and how to advance it.

Moving forward, we are working with partners to not only help institutions better collect information around quality and how it affects student outcomes — but once collected, to make productive use of the data.

This was a powerful "lesson learned" from the Wabash National Study Of Liberal Arts Education, a hallmark longitudinal study that collected a great deal of data and identified key factors influencing student success. This analysis was shared with the participating institutions…where, in most cases, very little was done with it.

We want to change this. We want to help institutions not only make the most of data that's collected, but to help collect the right data in the first place. The movement towards lifelong learning requires that institutions understand and evaluate evidence of learning that

happens outside of their institution. It also requires that they fully understand how their own initiatives and opportunities are positively increasing student success. QM is working with

---

MOVING FORWARD, WE ARE WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO NOT ONLY HELP INSTITUTIONS BETTER COLLECT INFORMATION AROUND QUALITY AND HOW IT AFFECTS STUDENT OUTCOMES — BUT ONCE COLLECTED, TO MAKE PRODUCTIVE USE OF THE DATA.

---

partners on both ends — to help institutions understand how they can properly evaluate learning that students bring with them, as well as how they can take their own institutional data and use it to improve the learning experience and success for students while those students are enrolled with them.

If this was "tl;dr" as the kids say (too long; didn't read), here's the summary:
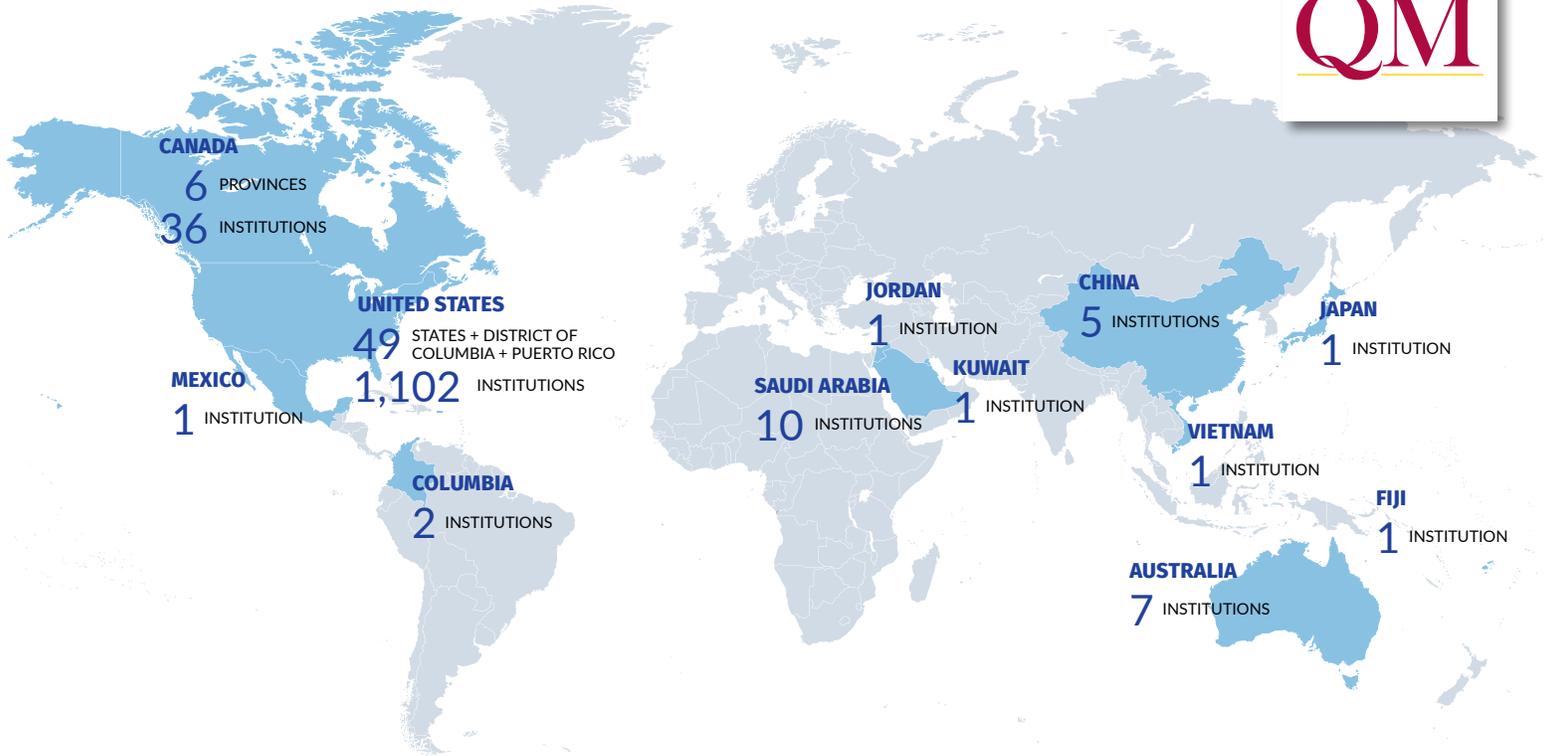
Data is hard. We're here to help.

We want our members to collect and use data better, to improve their institutions and to improve student outcomes.

In the realm of quality in education, at Quality Matters, we are the North Star, the lighthouse, the far-off landmark guiding you in the right direction. Because the QM system is designed to collect evidence and evaluate it, provide specific direction about needed improvements, and reevaluate to confirm those improvements.

That's what we do and what we're signaling to you in 2019.

QM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

CANADA
6 PROVINCES
36 INSTITUTIONS

UNITED STATES
49 STATES + DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA + PUERTO RICO
1,102 INSTITUTIONS

MEXICO
1 INSTITUTION

COLUMBIA
2 INSTITUTIONS

JORDAN
1 INSTITUTION

SAUDI ARABIA
10 INSTITUTIONS

KUWAIT
1 INSTITUTION

CHINA
5 INSTITUTIONS

JAPAN
1 INSTITUTION

VIETNAM
1 INSTITUTION

FIJI
1 INSTITUTION

AUSTRALIA
7 INSTITUTIONS

QM STAFF ACROSS THE USA

Quality Matters is a non-profit organization based in Maryland whose employees work virtually from points across the United States.

West
Nevada 👤
New Mexico 👤
Oregon 👤👤
Texas 👤
Washington 👤👤

Midwest
Illinois 👤👤
Indiana 👤
Kansas 👤
Michigan 👤
Missouri 👤
Ohio 👤👤👤👤👤👤

East
Connecticut 👤
Florida 👤👤👤
Maryland 👤👤👤👤
👤👤👤👤👤
Pennsylvania 👤
South Carolina 👤

QM's Board of Directors is dedicated to providing the guidance and support that will stimulate the further expansion of services from Quality Matters, its reach and influence. In partnership with QM staff, its aim is to build a world-class organization.

The Quality Matters Academic Advisory Council (QMAAC), a standing committee, includes representatives of QM-member organizations, QM senior staff and online and blended learning leaders who provide a national perspective, as well as guidance to and oversight of the programmatic directions and initiatives of Quality Matters.

CONTACT US

PHONE

Toll Free: 866-851-4984
Maryland Local: 301-358-2621

ADDRESS

1997 Annapolis Exchange Parkway, Suite 300
Annapolis, MD 21401

EMAIL

General: info@qualitymatters.org
Prof. Development: registrar@qualitymatters.org

Quality Matters (QM) is the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments. It provides a scalable quality assurance system for online and blended learning used within and across organizations. When you see QM Certification Marks on courses or programs, it means they have met QM Course Design Standards or QM Program Review criteria in a rigorous review process.