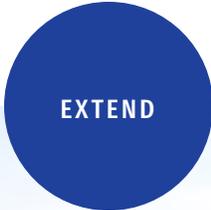


# Building Partnerships for Lasting Impact

2017 QM COMMUNITY IN REVIEW



[qualitymatters.org](http://qualitymatters.org)



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## MEMBERS RECEIVING QM CREDENTIALS

393 

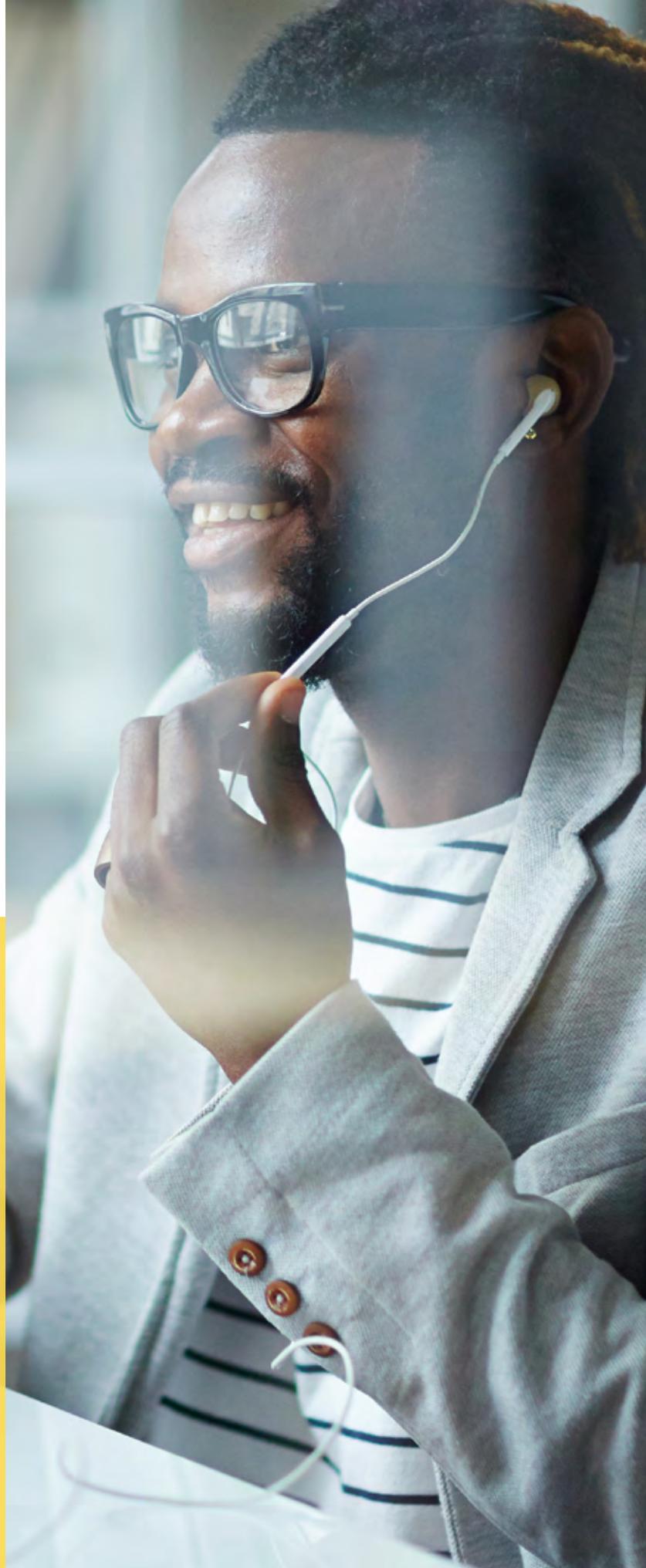
(178 face-to-face and 215 online) became certified to deliver the Applying the QM Rubric Workshop

36 

(13 face-to-face and 23 online) became certified to deliver the Improving Your Online Course Workshop

171

Teaching Online Certificates Issued in 2017





# Defining “Rigor” to Work on Behalf of Learners

Rigor. In the dictionary, it is defined as “the quality of being extremely thorough, exhaustive, or accurate.” Who could be against that? We all want education, be it K-12 or higher education, to be rigorous. We want education that helps students develop into curious, lifelong learners, with the skills, knowledge and tools to change the world. Without compromise, without shortcuts.

But what if an alternative definition of rigor is applied? One that includes “rigid, inflexible, or unyielding.” If we, as educators, think about rigor as ‘a condition that makes life difficult, challenging, or uncomfortable,’ are we creating a robust educational experience or are we simply making it more difficult for students to demonstrate achievement by imposing localized and/or idiosyncratic criteria? Could equating rigor with intellectual challenge as implemented through a highly localized and specialized curriculum have the unintended consequence of creating barriers for an increasingly mobile student population?

On the other hand, has an overly generalized but easily measured definition of rigor served to cast

doubt on the value of education, such as that contained in [the US Senate report](#) in which higher education was castigated for a lack of rigor? If rigor is measured, as it was in this case, by pages of assigned reading and length of essays, how is it that the non-academic providers of education were held out, in this same report, to be of high quality?

It’s imperative that we develop a shared understanding of rigor and its relevance for high quality education so that we can improve, assure and defend the work of educators while ensuring that we fully support, and not be an impediment to, the learning paths and goals of our students.

A [2014 NCES report](#) found that 35% of all postsecondary students transfer between institutions (21% transfer once, 11% more than once). And of those students, 39% received no transfer credits — losing 27 credits on average. Another 28% of students were able to transfer only some of their credits. Among all students, an average of 13 credits — an entire semester — were lost simply by transferring to another institution.

We can do better.

“A goal we set back in 2015, when only 20% of the online faculty completed our online training, was to have all faculty who teach online complete online training by 2017. We reached that goal and the online training, which includes QM training for course developers and reviewers, has inspired our faculty to think differently about what makes a quality course.” This in turn improves student success and as St. Petersburg College President Tonjua Williams said, ‘Helping students succeed is a core value at our institution, and that drives our passion for delivering high impact practices in the classroom and online.’”

**VICKI WESTERGARD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT, ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE**

A clear and consistent definition of rigor can enhance the transparency of what is, and is not, credit-worthy for work accepted towards degree pathways. It would help ensure that these decisions are not made on the basis of institutional brand or faculty reputation, but on specific evidence about the quality of the education and student work. We can defend our curriculum from the application of spurious definitions of quality while ensuring more efficient



and effective academic progress for students.

And this is our primary rationale for working towards a common definition of academic rigor: Let's not let overly localized or individualized definitions of rigor become a barrier to important goals such as credit transfer, student mobility, inclusivity in student assessment protocols, and the recognition of the value of education. A broadly shared and understood definition of academic rigor becomes important in this context.

In a special session at QM Connect in September of 2017, we explored the meaning of academic rigor from the viewpoint of various educational stakeholders (a student, a faculty member, an administrator, and a foundation representative) and from a panel of credit evaluators. And while no one, true definition emerged, several common themes became apparent. Themes such as peer review, faculty engagement, academic integrity of the process, regional accreditation, and positive learning outcomes. Themes

which are right within our definition of quality.

So what is our role in this? By leading, meeting and collaborating with our partners and members to shine a light on this issue, we work toward best practices and policies to enable students to use what they've learned to continue their learning journey. To actually promote and enable student mobility, rather than hinder it. To help learners discover the best fits for their individual lives, without forcing three steps back with each single step forward.

A guiding principle of Quality Matters since our founding has been breaking down barriers to quality learning – removing obstacles, whether through course design and program standards, professional development or promotion of research and best practices.

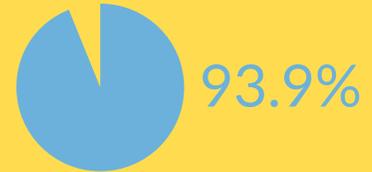
Or, in this case, by bringing people, groups and organizations together to lead an effort toward defining rigor so it truly works on behalf of learners.

Not against them.

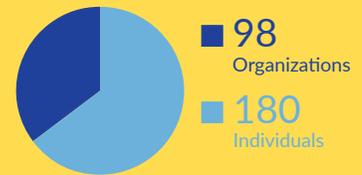


QM IMPACT: 2017

Renewal Rate



New Members



1,432

Official Course Reviews

976

QM-Certified New Courses

142

Re-Certified Courses

515,520

Students Impacted

409

Master Reviewers Certified

2,157

Peer Course Reviewers Certified



## Extending Research and Impact

Research is the foundation of all we do at Quality Matters, and 2017 was a banner year for us, featuring high-level reports, prestigious presentations and publications, and hard-working, dedicated research colleagues. As we extend our reach with quality assurance and become a champion for rigor in education, it is of supreme importance that we continue and expand research on QM and on the effects of quality assurance on the learning experience. Here are some noteworthy items from 2017:

### QM RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- The first QM-Eduventures [Changing Landscape of Online Education \(CHLOE\)](#) Report came out in the spring, including results from the CHLOE Survey administered in 2016. The CHLOE Survey is the outcome of a valuable research partnership between QM and Eduventures and fills a gap in the knowledge of how online education is strategized and managed by chief online officers at different types of institutions across the U.S. The [report](#) was downloaded by more than 2,500 individuals and was the subject of numerous presentations for various audiences both within and beyond the QM community.

- QM Director of Research Kay Shattuck has been a follower and reader of [The American Journal of Distance Education \(AJDE\)](#) for decades, having worked on a number of projects with Michael G. Moore, AJDE’s founding editor and now retired Distinguished Professor at Penn State University. Dr. Moore invited Dr. Shattuck in 2014 and, again, in 2016 to be a guest editor for QM-focused issues released in 2015 and 2017. Shattuck invited authors who had presented at QM conferences to contribute articles. [Volume 31, Issue 3](#) of the AJDE, issued this past year, is the result of their work.

- In preparation for the revision of the [Higher Education Rubric](#), QM Research conducted several analyses for the Rubric Committee to use, including a survey of the QM community, a research literature review, and an inter-rater agreement analysis of the standards in the current Higher Education Rubric as they were determined in course reviews as met or not met. A couple of the findings include:

- Course structure, interactions and learner autonomy as significant predictors of learner satisfaction.
- A positive relationship between the inter-rater agreement of a Specific

“The CHLOE Report provided me a glimpse into how other Chief Online Learning Officers were thinking about the management of their program portfolio, how they were grappling with technological infrastructure, and their approaches to faculty support and quality standards for course design and delivery. Since the survey was published, I have attended conference sessions by the report authors and believe they are truly trying to ask the right questions and check their findings with the larger community of fully engaged practitioners.”

**LUKE DOWDEN, DIRECTOR OF DISTANCE LEARNING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA - LAFAYETTE**

Review Standard and the percent of reviews meeting that Specific Review Standard.

– Support for informing learners of learning objectives at levels smaller than a full course in the book, *How Learning Works: Seven Research-based Principles for Smart Teaching*.

- QM Director of Research Kay Shattuck facilitated a half-day workshop for Towson University on the ABC’s of QM Research in April. Workshops like this introduce participants to the research mindset as it relates to QM,



how to collect data and embark on their own research related to their quality assurance goals.

### RESEARCH COLLEAGUES

- QM’s Research Colleagues are instrumental in our work to help institutions understand how to capture and translate their QM activity into actionable data. Their contributions are many: research-centered conference presentations, research webinars and training, advice on methodology for QM research projects, and support for [QM’s Research Library](#). The efforts of the volunteer Research Colleagues keep QM anchored as a research-centered approach to quality in teaching and learning.

### PUBLICATIONS

- In 2017, the QM Newsletters regularly featured research of interest to the QM community, including [14 Years](#), [3 Mega Trends](#) and [The Link Between QM and Retention](#).
- Collaborating with the [National Survey on Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#), QM Research wrote a beta set of questions on students’ online learning experiences. These will be available to institutions in their 2018 administration of the survey. 2018 is the first time the NSSE has a section specifically on students’ online learning experiences.

### QM RESEARCH COLLEAGUES

**Barbara W. Altman, Ph.D.**,

Texas A&M University - Central Texas

**Deborah Anne Banker, Ed.D.**,

Tarleton State University

**Yan Ding, Ph.D.**,

Fudan University

**Ericka Hollis, Ph.D.**,

University of Kentucky

**Elizabeth McMahon, MSED**,

Minnesota Online Quality Initiative

**Stella C. S. Porto, Ph.D.**,

Inter-American Development Bank

**Dr. Kay Shattuck, D.Ed.**,

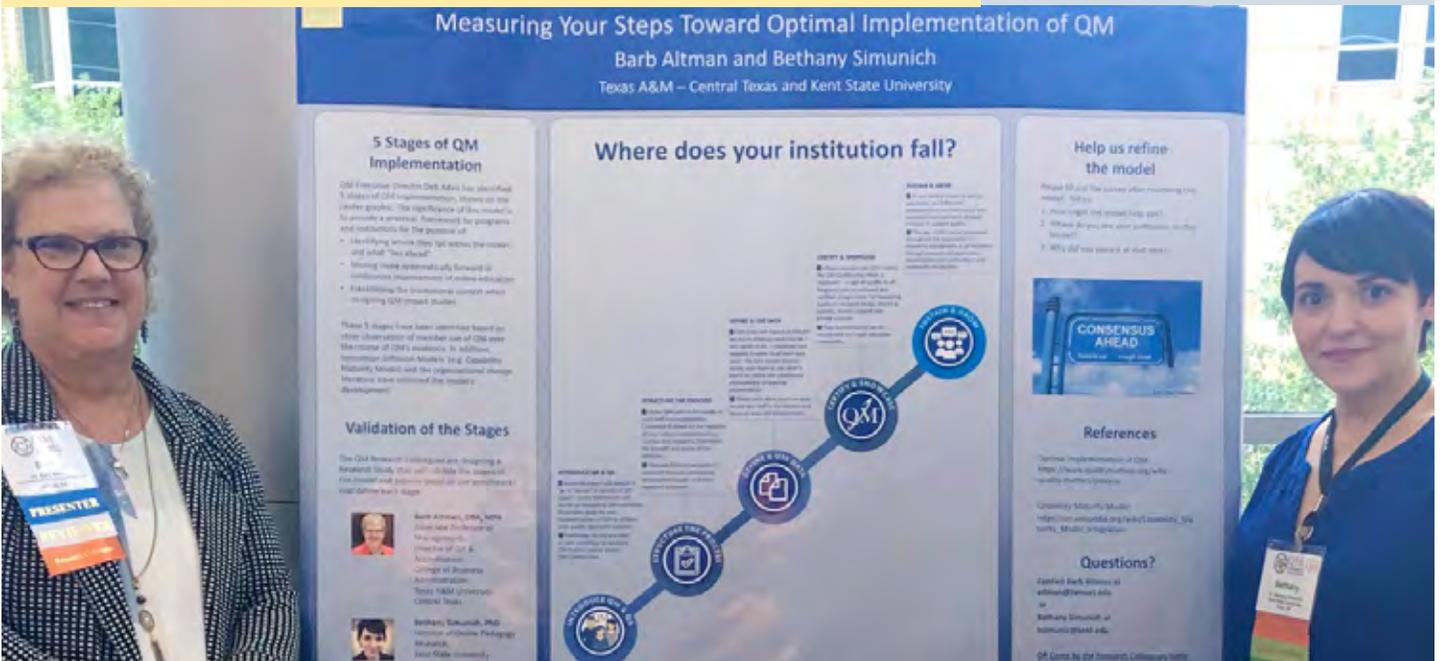
QM Director of Research

**Bethany Simunich, Ph.D.**,

Kent State University

“The QM Research Colleagues contribute their expertise in scholarship and the practice of QM to the analysis and implementation of QM research for the QM community. Their insight is invaluable as we continue to hone the quality assurance continuum of excellence model.”

**KAY SHATTUCK, QM DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH**





Wyoming Department of Education offered 5 face-to-face workshops held at various schools throughout Wyoming. "Providing [districts] with access to the QM Rubric and training is helping to set them up for success on what most would agree is a fairly arduous journey."

**LORI THILMANY, VIRTUAL EDUCATION CONSULTANT FOR THE WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MEMBER MOMENTUM**

# Unique Pathways, Common Goals

The depth, breadth and diversity of our membership is amazing. From K-12 schools and districts of all sizes, to community colleges, selected private colleges and universities to massive public universities, QM Members all have unique pathways. And even though their specific goals are not identical, their end goal is to improve education and fulfill their promises to learners. Here are some highlights from 2017:

**HIGHER EDUCATION**



- **University of Texas at Rio Grande Valley.** Having joined in 2011, UTRGV (formerly University of Texas - Pan American) offers 20 QM-Certified courses, and in 2017 held monthly online and face-to-face Applying the QM Rubric (APPQMR) workshops that were completed by 247 faculty and staff. Four faculty became Peer Reviewers in 2017. The main APPQMR facilitator, Anthony Salinas, is also Member-at-Large on the QM Instructional Designers Association Leadership team.

- **Drake University.** A new member in spring of 2017, they have already had

nine people earn the QM Teaching Online Certificate (TOC).

- **Laredo Community College.** A member since 2014, LCC had 27 QM-Certified courses for 2017. They started doing course reviews this year and have seen 35 professional development enrollments in 2017.

- **St. Petersburg College.** A subscriber since 2014, St. Petersburg won our 2017 Making a Difference for Students Award in Higher Education. As stated in their award submission, as of 2017 100% of their faculty completed online professional development compared to 20% in 2015.

- **California State University-Stanislaus.** A member since 2014, they added the Improving Your Online Course (IYOC) supplemental subscription in 2016 so they can deliver both the APPQMR and the IYOC workshops. Both were offered quarterly in 2017. In addition, 11 people completed the TOC.

TO SUPPORT THEIR HYBRID COURSE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-LOS ANGELES STRUCTURED A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES DEDICATED ONLINE SESSIONS OF THE DESIGNING YOUR BLENDED COURSE WORKSHOP.

- **Virtual College of Texas (VCT).** A member since 2014, 23 of VCT's community college districts partner with the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) to form the Texas Quality Matters Consortium (TxQMC). The Consortium offers members reduced individual dues, discounts on QM services and materials, free professional development, and more.

- **The University of North Carolina QM system** formed in 2015. In 2017, 196 staff and faculty enrolled in QM workshops and courses, including 71 in the APPQMR, 38 in Designing Your Online Course (DYOC), 16 in the Peer Reviewer Course (PRC), and seven in Improving Your Online Course (IYOC). They also had nine courses meet QM Standards in 2017.



## K-12



The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is leading K-12 this year. To quote from the US

Department of Education: “ESSA requires — for the first time — that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers. ...advances equity by upholding critical protections for America’s disadvantaged and high-need students.” Rural schools, identified by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) as having the greatest struggles with the No Child Left Behind act, have been a focus for QM this year.

- **Nevada Learning Academy.** Five participants completed the seven-course TOC program, and four are currently enrolled. Thirty teachers participated in QM face-to-face workshops during a professional development day in August 2017.
- **Kodiak Island Borough School District.** Four participants completed the TOC program, with seven teachers registered for 55 overall sessions. Kodiak Island is a great example of a district committed to bringing quality to rural areas. *See sidebar above.*
- **Wyoming.** Thirty-nine teachers took the K-12 Applying the QM Rubric course; 39 took the K-12 Online Course Design Workshop; 10 took the K-12 Designing an Engaging and Active Learning Environment; three have gone on to become K-12 Course Reviewers. In addition, QM is playing a big role in Wyoming’s rural schools through the [Wyoming Department of](#)

## RURAL CONNECTION

Dating as far back as 2004, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that rural school districts “faced challenges in meeting ... student proficiency goals and implementing teacher qualification requirements.” The report also found that rural districts faced some of these challenges “to a greater extent than non-rural districts.”

With economically disadvantaged students lacking access to resources such as libraries and computers that could be used to increase student achievement, geographic isolation limiting access to teacher training facilities, and internet line maintenance difficulties, rural districts were more likely to increase computer capacity. Unfortunately they were less likely to use other strategies to improve student achievement, such as teacher mentoring and providing quality information from highly qualified content experts. QM Members Kodiak Island and Wyoming both chose QM to help them meet their goals in this area.

## HOW QM FITS

The QM Rubric Standards provide a framework upon which rural schools can build capacity for their teachers to achieve quality instruction goals. With resources gained from a grant, Wyoming and Kodiak Island Borough started using QM as their framework. As they worked to apply the QM Rubric, teachers began examining and approaching distance learning and course design differently. Both QM Members are working to standardize course design and develop a common language to use when teachers collaborate with one another. Wyoming began the endeavor as a Consortium. The success of QM for Kodiak Island Borough has resulted in a new consortium formed with other districts in Alaska. This will cultivate collaborative opportunities for teachers to build capacity to implement a quality assurance model for their online and blended course offerings.

[Education’s Distance Education Grant.](#)  
*See sidebar above.*

- **VirtualSC.** By building capacity for their staff to accomplish QM-based quality assurance goals, and by following QM guidelines, VirtualSC, a program of the South Carolina Department of Education, is on the path to ensuring rigor in their curriculum. In the last calendar year, VirtualSC had 14 staff complete the K-12 APP and five went on to complete the Reviewer Course. Since joining QM in November of 2014, VirtualSC has had 59 staff complete the K-12 APP and 26 have completed the K-12 Reviewer Course. Twenty-two of those are now

K-12 Course Reviewers who can serve on K-12 Course Reviews. VirtualSC has three K-12 Master Reviewers.

## CONTINUING & PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



Members use the Continuing & Professional Education Rubric (CPE) Rubric — either solely or added on to their existing

subscription — to ensure that the professional development they offer faculty and staff, or provide to other organizations, supports learning outcomes and their goals for creating quality training.



- Organizations as varied as the **American Medical Association** and **International Finance Corporation**, and several well-known universities and higher education institutions were among the 16 new subscribing organizations for 2017.
- **Arlington Independent School District**, a large K-12 school district in Texas, used QM CPE Standards to ensure quality professional development for their 4,000 educators. In December of 2017, Steve Simpson, Digital Learning Specialist, delivered a [QM Success Story](#) based on their QM Connect Conference session: “[Using the CPE Rubric as a Cattle Guard.](#)”
- Others such as **Cellebrite** and the **Ohio Office of Educator Effectiveness** became CPE members with plans to embark on continuous improvement and course review for their professional development and continuing education offerings.

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE HAS USED FACE-TO-FACE WORKSHOPS FOR SEVERAL YEARS. INITIALLY TO IMPROVE ONLINE COURSES BY APPLYING THE QM RUBRIC. THEN TO CONNECT AND ALIGN COURSE LEVEL OBJECTIVES TO MODULE LEVEL OBJECTIVES AND PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION FOR RE-DESIGNING ONLINE COURSES.

- **Chamberlain University’s** journey to Program Certification began with the institution’s desire to “demonstrate exemplary practices in supporting both teaching and learning” for their RN-BSN Online Option. Since the program was mature and had several years of available data, they chose to pursue Program Certification — a decision they felt would benefit their learners. Jill Price, Dean, RN-BSN Program Option explains that the time and effort required are worth it, “Program Certification provides a deliberate and laser-focused evaluation of the policies, processes, resources and support services for students. It is essential to be on the cutting edge of [online] education.”
- **University of North Carolina Charlotte** is the first UNC system school, the second major research institution and the fourth university worldwide to attain program-level QM Certification. Florence Martin, UNCC’s director of their fully online Instructional Systems Technology Program says, “As we prepare our graduates to be future instructional designers, technology facilitators and online learning designers and facilitators, this certification has added value to our program.” The Program Design Certification has helped us with carefully aligning our program objectives with course objectives, and also making sure that all of our instructors have received the professional development to design and teach online courses.”

## PROGRAM REVIEWS

Program Reviews are a way to leverage the work an institution has done with quality assurance for course design and expand upon it. They provide evidence to accreditors and stakeholders that an online program has met quality criteria in one or more specific areas: Program Design, Teaching Support, Learner Support or Learner Success. Program Reviews can also lead to certifications.

## DEDICATED SESSION ACTIVITY SHOWS GROWTH FOR K-12 AND HIGHER ED

Dedicated professional development sessions for our Higher Ed and K-12 members saw a nice spike in activity in 2017, especially face-to-face sessions on our flagship workshop, Applying the QM Rubric. Course design (online and blended) and course improvement geared toward engaging learners also saw increased interest. Some members, such as Nevada Learning Academy and others, present these as Professional Development Days, while others take advantage of summer or winter breaks in order to maximize staff time. Also, several members put cohorts through the online Teaching Online Certificate (TOC) workshop sessions as a way to create camaraderie and increase faculty knowledge.

Dedicated sessions can be scheduled at times convenient for the faculty and staff, and can be a cost effective way to expose a large group to QM. Workshops can be selected for the focus of the group or district. And, the selection of dedicated professional development can be matched to the member’s level of implemented quality assurance — where they are on the QM pathway to quality.

“I feel that the cohort model has been very beneficial. I have seen how the faculty working together, learning together and supporting each other has increased our success rate.”

**MONICA MARTINEZ, LEE COLLEGE  
18 COMPLETED TOC TOGETHER**



## Impact and Outreach

We get a lot done in our offices, but to really feel the pulse of our members, and to help “evangelize” about quality assurance, we need to get out among our people. Between our own QM Conferences and many appearances at conferences and events by our staff, QM is working to interact with our community of more than 60,000 members and 1,100 institutions, and bring our love of improving online learning to more and more people, organizations and institutions.

Here are some of the ways we engaged with the community in 2017:

### QM CONNECT AND QM REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Again this year, our [QM Conferences](#) brought our communities out from behind their keyboards, matching avatars with names and faces, and engaging them with great opportunities to learn, to collaborate and to make connections. We received great feedback about how interactive the conference was, and how attendees appreciated being with like-minded folks focused on quality assurance in online learning.

Our annual QM Connect Conference in Ft. Worth was keynoted by Dr. Todd

Zakrajsek, whose [presentation](#) can only be summed up by his actual description: “Actual pathways expedite transmission along a given route, whether a trail through the forest, the organizational chart in a company, or the synergy that occurs when two or more concepts align. Connections are the true foundation of learning. ... [The Session explored] connections that motivate learners, advance concepts, and integrate learning systems and how these connected pathways contribute to enriching the foundation for learning.” In addition to this fascinating keynote, sessions covered a wide range of subjects:

- [Do Something NEW with Tools in Your Online Classes.](#)
- [Everything I Need to Know about Student Engagement I Learned from a Rabid Sports Fan.](#)
- [Using Curriculum Mapping for Alignment-Based Course Development.](#)
- [CHLOE 2017 and 2018 - A Deeper Dive into Trends in Online Education.](#)

Our QM Regional Conference at Berkeley College in New York provided an excellent opportunity to network with peers. Ellie Fogarty was the keynote, speaking on “The Changing Landscape of Accreditation: Implications for Higher Education Institutions.”



The presentations brought new insights and considerations for online and hybrid learning opportunities including:

- Presentation from Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (IAU): QM’s Role in Driving Change to Deploy Web-Enhanced Learning at the University Level.
- [The Course Map for the Road to QM!](#)
- [We’re Not Just in Kansas Anymore: Faculty Perspectives on Online Course Development and Delivery.](#)
- [Aligning Course Design and Faculty Development with Middle State’s 9 Hallmarks of Quality.](#)



## SPREADING THE WORD OF QUALITY AT CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

The extension and dissemination of Quality Matters requires sharing and learning at events throughout the teaching and learning community. QM's advocacy for quality continues through speaking, presenting, connecting, and listening at conferences and events across the country to advance educational practice to better serve learners. These important conversations and contributions include:

### Convenings on quality for credentials and external/alternative education

- Educational Quality through Innovative Partnerships (EQUIP) Experiment: Quality Assurance Entity convenings.
- Credential Engine quality advisory group meetings.
- IMS Summit on Digital Credentials and Badges.
- QM Connect colloquium on *Alternative Learning and Higher Education*.

### Online learning policy and leadership

- Presidents Forum on Leadership & Innovation in a Time of Transition.
- Southern Regional Education Board Maryland Intrastate Networking Meeting.
- WCET Steering Committee.

### Quality standards and practices in international contexts

- *Make Quality Matter: Applying a Research-Supported Quality Assurance Process to Improve Online*

*Learning at the World Conference on Online Learning.*

- *Adapting US-Based Quality Standards to Culturally and Pedagogically Different Education Systems: The China Case* at the World Conference on Online Learning.
- *US-China Collaboration on Quality Assurance in Online Education* at the Chinese Higher Education Development Network (CHED) Conference.
- *A Course Quality Rubric For China: The QM-Fudan Standards* at the OLC Accelerate Conference.

### QM integration and support for accreditation

- *Quality Matters for Accreditation: Course and Program Level Quality Assurance* at the DEAC Fall Workshop.
- *Quality Matters for Teaching and Learning* at the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs – Region 7.
- *Quality Matters (it really does!)* at UPCEA - The Summit for Online Leadership.

### Open educational resources

- *Advancing Postsecondary Student Success Through OER: A Statewide Summit on Open Educational resources in Higher Education.*
- *The Thrill of the Hunt: Find and Evaluate OER to Personalize and Differentiate* at QM Connect.
- *Personalize Your Course By Finding The Right Ingredients* at the Mid-Atlantic Conference on Personalized Learning.

## 2017 QM CONFERENCES

### 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

210 proposals      120 sessions

546

participants came from  
47 U.S. states  
3 countries  
and Puerto Rico  
representing

271   
institutions

### QM REGIONAL CONFERENCE:

58 proposals      60 sessions

143

participants came from  
25 U.S. states  
3 countries  
and Puerto Rico  
representing

75   
institutions





### Improving the practice of teaching and learning in Higher Education

- *Creating a Competency-Based Teaching Online Certificate for Faculty Professional Development* at the 2017 ELI Annual Meeting.
- *Addressing Accessibility & Usability* at the 2017 ITC eLearning Conference.
- *Affordable Degrees at Scale Symposium* at Georgia Tech.

### Improving the practice of teaching and learning in K-12 Education

- *Growing Quality Online Courses and Joining Forces to Create Better Blooms: Findings from the Field* at iNACOL (International Association for K-12 Online Learning).
- *Chart a Course for Quality: Navigate the Online Learning Waters with Quality Matters* at the Wyoming Innovations in Learning 2017 Conference.
- *National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships Conference*.

### The practice and management of Online Education

- *Results of the Quality Matters - Eduventures Survey of Chief Online Officers Complementing the ITC Survey Findings* at the 2017 ITC eLearning Conference.
- *What the Research Says About Online Learning Leadership* at the EDUCAUSE Annual Conference 2017.
- *Online Learning Journal Panel: What The Research Says On Online Learning Leadership* at the OLC Accelerate Conference.

## QM AWARDS: MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

These awards recognize excellence in the impact individuals and institutions have on the lives of their students and the furthering of online learning. Here are the winners of our 2017 Awards.

**Ron Legon Leadership Award for Quality Assurance in Online Education:** Larry Ragan, Pennsylvania State University

**Outstanding Impact by a K-12 Organization or Individual:** Michigan Virtual

**Outstanding Impact by an Individual in Higher Education:** Sherrell Wheeler, New Mexico State University Alamogordo

**Recognition:** Outstanding Poster: Patrick Dempsey and Veena Radhakrishnan, Johns Hopkins Carey Business School

**Outstanding Impact by a Higher Education Organization:** SPC St. Petersburg College, Florida

**Directors' Award for Exceptional Service to Quality Matters:** Penny Ralston-Berg, Penn State - World Campus

## QM INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS ASSOCIATION

The QM IDA is special interest group, supported by QM, with a mission to promote and improve the quality of online education and student learning through instructional design (ID) practice. They provide professional development to strengthen ID practice, opportunities for networking and mentoring, and a platform to share and promote research-supported and standards-based best practices.

The QM IDA's highlights for 2017 include:

- New leadership team elected by QM IDA members:
  - *Chair* (re-elected for a second term): Penny Ralston-Berg, Penn State World Campus.
  - *Vice Chair*: Stephen Kaufman, University of Akron.
  - *Secretary*: Jessica Gagnon, Colorado Community Colleges Online.

- *Professional Development Lead*: Shannon Riggs, Oregon State University Ecampus.
- *Member at Large*: Anthony Salinas, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

- Assisting with the launch of the [Showcase of Best Practice](#). QM IDA volunteers are curating contributions and ensuring that they represent best practice. The Showcase will be a valuable resource for those looking for tangible examples of how a course can be designed to meet QM Standards.
- Hosting six Twitter chats (#QMIDAchat) in 2017, which provided a forum for members to share thoughts and resources related to questions around using QM.
- Selecting pre-conference workshops for the QM Connect Conference to provide professional development opportunities geared to instructional designers.

## QM AND PARTNERS IN 2017

### Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

CAEL teaches participants how to assess prior learning, using the course learning objectives or outcomes as a guide to determine whether or not a learner has presented sufficient evidence of learning to meet identified learning outcomes.

Both QM and CAEL seek to provide guidance on creating measurable outcomes and this overlap provides a partnership opportunity.

In 2018, QM Members in the Chicago and Cleveland areas will have the opportunity to participate in CAEL or QM workshops at member rates. Institutions in the region can register faculty and staff to participate in all or part of CAEL’s workshop series. The roadshow provides an opportunity to participate in QM workshops at a location that may be convenient for CAEL and QM Members.

### SmarterServices

This organization created a student readiness indicator tool for determining whether or not learners are ready to learn online. QM has worked with them over the years and had expressed a need to use their tools to help with faculty readiness to teach online. During the development of the “[Gauging Your Technology Skills workshop](#)” (part of the Teaching Online Certificate), we worked with them to customize their learner readiness tool toward instructors. We continue to work with them as they are changing their tool to an assessment engine that will enable more precise assessment of skills needed to teach online.

### WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)

Dr. Deb Adair, Executive Director of QM, completed her term with the committee in 2017. QM’s Senior Academic Director: Program Services, Brenda Boyd, was elected to the WCET Steering Committee in the fall of 2017, creating a relationship

that, as Brenda explains, makes sense for all, “WCET and QM have similar missions and overlapping memberships. The services for members are different, yet complementary in promoting quality in education. Service on the WCET Steering Committee provides closer information sharing and collaboration in ways that will enhance the benefits for all participants.”

### University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA)

QM will continue its work with UPCEA, into 2018, on supporting our stakeholders in understanding the distinctions and connections in quality assurance solutions in online learning.

### Eduventures

As noted in the [Research](#) section of this document, The first QM-Eduventures [Changing Landscape of Online Education \(CHLOE\)](#) Report came out in the spring, including results from the CHLOE Survey that was administered in 2016.





## NEW HORIZONS

# Promoting the QM Process Internationally

The desire and need for quality assurance in online education are not limited to the United States or North America, they are worldwide concerns. In 2017, QM's [International Strategy Committee](#) was created, and charged with providing oversight and guidance on QM international expansion policies and early initiatives in support of QM's strategic objectives for international outreach. These objectives are also supported by the QM International Association — a voluntary special interest group with 157 members, representing at least 15 different languages and regions.

### CHINA

In May 2017, Quality Matters and Fudan University received the US Distance Learning Association Global Impact Award for the development of QM-Fudan Higher Education Online Course Quality Standards for China.

The Fudan-QM Standards follow the same structure as the US-based Rubric and contain 8 General Standards with a total of 33 Specific Standards, which can be used for course design as

well as course review. QM and Fudan are currently working to develop a QA consortium in China, as well as related services for the Chinese higher education community. According to the [China Internet Education Trend Report](#) released by Baidu in 2016, 448 million — 67% of China's total internet users — use the internet to learn. With the online education market in China [expected to grow 20% annually](#), the same opportunities and obstacles we have worked through — and are working through — will likely arise in China. And QM will be there.

### LATIN AMERICA

Increasingly, higher education organizations in Latin America are embracing online learning and recognizing its potential for increasing access to education opportunities.

QM recognized the growing need for quality assurance in the region and contracted with Dr. Fernando Senior, a consultant with a broad background



working in the region, to serve as the QM International Representative to Latin America & the Caribbean. His goals are to promote QM in the region, conduct outreach through his extensive contacts, and provide guidance about the localization of QM tools and processes. Dr. Senior attended the QM Connect conference in 2017 where he met up with attendees from the Latin American region and [created a video](#) (in Spanish) about QM and the conference experience.

### SAUDI ARABIA

Quality Matters has partnered with Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University (IAU), a well-established institution in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, to establish a framework to collaborate on localizing the QM Rubric for the Arabic-speaking region and providing related services including professional development and course/program certification.

Dr. Deb Adair, QM Executive Director, and Dr. Yaping Gao, QM Senior Academic Director of Member Services and Partnerships, were invited to IAU in November and met with Deans of eLearning from the other 20 public institutions in Saudi Arabia, some of them QM Member institutions.

While there, they also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IAU, a major initiative the University has taken under the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's 2030 mission and vision to establish their leadership and scale a quality assurance process for online and blended learning in the region.

### QM LEADERSHIP AND INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

With our fast-growing international membership, we are ensuring that we represent our entire community through our participation and leadership in international online learning and quality assurance organizations.

#### Members of ICDE - International Consortium of Open and Distance Education

ICDE is an international organization with a focus on open education and distance learning. Its membership is

### OUTREACH EXPANDS

Regions and areas where QM outreach and activity are occurring:



composed of academic institutions, accrediting bodies and authorities, and academic service organizations around the world.

QM's involvement in its Consultative Committee puts QM directly in a leadership role and provides opportunities for QM to collaborate with various international organizations.

#### INQAAHE – International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

INQAAHE is a world-wide association of near 300 organizations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education.

Being a member of INQAAHE positions QM squarely as the quality assurance leader to represent North America and we are excited to have this broad community to share what we have learned over the years and to learn from and collaborate with colleagues all over the world.

QM contributes to the process of inquiry and the body of research for INQAAHE through research projects such as "The Impact of Faculty Peer Review on Online Quality Assurance" authored by Dr. Ron Legon, QM Executive Director Emeritus, and in data collection efforts in preparation for 2018 UNESCO's first global conference on quality assurance in higher education.



Dr. Deb Adair, QM Executive Director, with Dr. Abdullah Al-Rubaish, President, Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University (IAU), signing the MOU between QM and IAU.



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEB ADAIR

# Research-Supported, Data-Informed: Always



We've offered our assertion that a common, shared understanding of rigor must be adopted to support — not impede — the students and learners, no matter their pathway.

Although the debate over the impact and application of rigor is newly emerging, the impetus for our work at Quality Matters is well established. From the beginning at Quality Matters, working through our community of educators, organizations and institutions that provide education, the primary beneficiaries have been those students and learners who look to our members to advance their futures.

QM's focus remains on quality assurance — this focus makes us unique among other online education-focused organizations and informs what we do and how we do it. Because of this we take great care in ensuring our work is research-supported, specifically informed by application data, validated in its use by 1,100 institutions (about a quarter of all U.S. higher education institutions), and regularly improved

upon by educators and practitioners who have deep experience with our tools. We use research on student learning to explicitly provide the foundation for our work, and we use data from the use/application of the Standards to inform the tools and process.

Looking ahead, we take the same serious and well substantiated approach. The community can trust us because of the standards we have demonstrated over the years in all of the work we do. We move forward from our areas of expertise and expand such that we address the needs of our community in robust and trustworthy ways.

And it is this community, and our research, outreach, and established position as experts in education quality, that gives us the background, the expertise and the confidence to move forward and push the boundaries of how quality assurance, and Quality Matters, can improve the student experience. When we make education better for learners, everyone benefits.

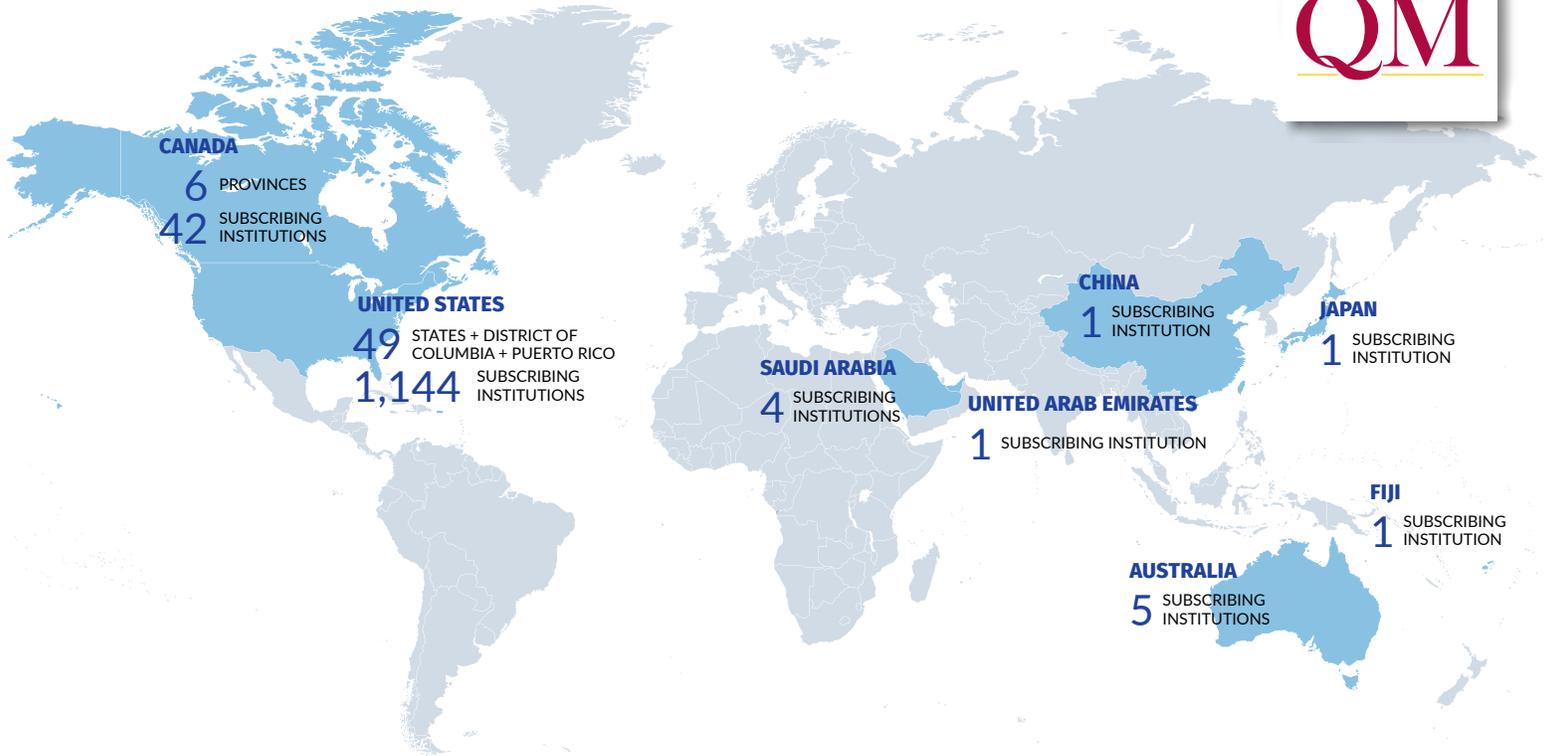
2018 brings us a significant list of initiatives...some that move us forward from our traditional areas of expertise

and into important new worlds, but all of which build upon QM's core principles:

- Building momentum in K-12, as we assume stewardship with VLLA of the iNACOL National Standards.
- QM International: expanding the progress of 2017 in China, Latin America and Saudi Arabia.
- The Higher Education Rubric, Sixth Edition Standards — layered on the foundation we've built.
- New overlays on QM Rubrics, aligned with current instructional standards to assure that course design is effectively implemented during delivery.
- QM Instructional Designer Certification.
- Expansion of our Partnerships & Relationships to better connect our work with other organizations to better serve our members.

An ambitious list, but one which has its roots in the very foundations of Quality Matters, its community and the partnerships we continue to build.

## QM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS



### 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   
Oregon   
Washington

#### Midwest

Illinois   
Indiana   
Kansas   
Michigan   
Missouri   
Ohio

#### East

Connecticut   
Florida   
Maryland   
Pennsylvania

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 subscriber schools, 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.

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Quality Matters (QM) is an international non-profit organization that provides tools and professional development for quality assurance in online and blended learning. 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.

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