# Meeting the Challenge

2020 QM COMMUNITY IN REVIEW

QUALITY MATTERS
QM

qualitymatters.org

PREPARE

PIVOT

PERSIST

**94%**

MEMBER RENEWALS
**94%**
of QM Institutional Members renewed their membership

TOTAL NEW INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS
**359**
**12%** International Members

New Individual Members

**42**

**317**

QM Staff Tapped for Expertise on Pandemic Response

**8** Interviews
**3** Podcasts
**30** Presentations
**6** Articles

# The Power of Working Together — Reflections from 2020

It was just about this time last year when it all started.

First, murmurs from Asia and Europe. Then whispers in the U.S. Then on March 10, 2020, the whispers became shouts, with professional and college sports leagues abruptly cancelling games, tournaments and seasons.

Within the span of a few days, schools, colleges and universities began sending their students home. Teachers scrambled to convert their traditional plans and lessons into online plans and lessons, for what was supposed to be a short-term stint of online learning described as Distance Learning, Remote Learning, Emergency Remote Instruction, Virtual Learning…many terms, and even more approaches. Some, more successful than others.

Digital learning, which had previously been a "growing segment" of the education landscape, had instantly become…

…the *entire* education landscape.

Worldwide, teachers, students and parents were faced with the issues of quality that QM — and many QM members — had been sounding the alarm about for over a decade.

The statistics reveal the challenge:

As of 2019, only 63% of high school and 45% of elementary students in grades 3–12 had used digital learning tools on a daily basis (source: Statista) (source: NCES), and as of 2018, just 35% of post-secondary students had taken a distance learning course.

But with 2020's figurative snap of a finger, nearly *every single learner* became exclusively reliant on distance learning and/or digital learning tools.

With this migration of in-person to digital learning and teaching out of necessity, Quality Matters responded to the enormous need when our community turned to us for support. Requests for QM Professional Development sessions more than doubled over 2019, with K-12 participation more than quadrupling, up 445%. In-person events that had been planned for months or longer had to be completely reconfigured to be held virtually.

*continued on next page*

**11,786**
Applying the Quality Matters Rubric

**2,947**
Designing Your Online Course

**2,516**
Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery

**2,301**
Improving Your Online Course

**1,809**
Introduction to Quality Matters

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
**36,284**   participants in QM facilitated & assessed professional development

FREE WEBINARS
**16,376**   participants attended QMSS, Online Learning Webinars and Research Webinars

— MEMBERS
TURNING TO
QM FOR
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
DURING
THE PANDEMIC

**Faculty Support**

While scrambling to provide continuity of learning for their students, QM members also had to find ways to support faculty new to online teaching. QM professional development provided a beacon of light for many, including these higher ed institutions that offered several customized opportunities:

- Central Connecticut State University
- McMurry University
- Roxbury Community College
- Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania
- Thomas Jefferson University
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Virginia State University

CERTIFIED FACILITATORS

**484**
with **234** certified in 2020

**48%**
in 2020

**144%** increase in K-12 members
**31%** increase in K-12 course reviews
**445%** increase in K-12 professional development participation
**94%** increase in higher ed. professional development participation
**104%** increase in requests for dedicated professional development sessions

It was a monumental increase in workload for Quality Matters staff, who were experiencing the same issues as everyone else... working from home, helping children at home with distance learning, dealing with social separation from friends and colleagues, and working through the fear and personal tragedies from the virus itself.

Of course, QM member organizations who had fully engaged with QM resources — institutions who had invested in infrastructure, faculty development, skilled staff, program management, quality standards, and administrative expertise in online education — were well positioned to meet the challenge of transitioning in-person learners to the digital environment. Our CHLOE 5 Report brings this home.

We heard stories nationwide of how experienced, qualified online faculty were heavily relied on by their face-to-face colleagues to assist in the abrupt transition to digital learning, and to provide professional development to their peers. It was heartening to see how traditional classroom faculty — even those who previously did not embrace digital learning — met the challenge out of a heartfelt desire to help their students. We saw record attendance numbers at QM Success Stories webinars as colleagues helped colleagues.

The QM community is generous. With everything expected of them within their own organizations and institutions, experienced, QM-rooted educators still found time to further the goals of the community at large by serving on course review teams, presenting at conferences and webinars, providing feedback on aids for emergency remote instruction, and much more.

We can't know what the future will bring. As of this writing, students are trickling back to classrooms either fully in-person or in hybrid modalities, but none of us know for how long. Even when the crisis of this pandemic has passed, we need to consider our preparation for the next. And in that preparation, we need to recognize and overcome the equity and inclusion challenges we face today, including those that result from unequal access and capacity for learning online. There is much work to do to achieve goals of ensuring access and representation for all learners regardless of modality

It's been a year of amazing change, flexibility, improvisation, and adaptation...a year that really showed the power and promise of quality digital learning. A year of seeing what we can do when we all work together.

CERTIFIED COURSES

**1,152**
courses QM-Certified through the official review process

**47**
courses re-certified through the official review process

CERTIFIED PEER REVIEWERS

**3,311**
with **920** certified in 2020

**28%**
certified in 2020

CERTIFIED MASTER REVIEWERS

**651**
with **94** certified in 2020

**14%**
certified in 2020

# Member Momentum

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions across the globe took critical steps in 2020 to move their quality assurance journeys forward, from becoming members to utilizing course reviews to engaging in professional development. For some it was their first step. For others it was another leg in an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. The members highlighted here represent the remarkable actions of many, all of whom stepped up to meet the needs of their students, faculty and staff.

### D'Youville College
Re-engagement was at the heart of D'Youville's QM activity in 2020. The college's two QM Coordinators attended many of QM's webinars and are planning to apply what they learned throughout 2021 as they reimplement QM on campus.

### A. T. Still University
By the end of 2020, A.T. Still was well on its way to earning all four QM Program Certifications and achieving QM's Exemplary Program Status. It will be only the second institution to achieve that distinction.

### City Colleges of Chicago
Bolstering its team's online teaching skills was the focus for the City Colleges of Chicago. Faculty were required to complete a series of workshops, including Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR) and Teaching Online: An Introduction to Online Delivery (TOL). More than 300 individuals completed the TOL while some opted to take things a step further and earn their Teaching Online Certificate.

### Gaston College
A significant investment in professional development workshops such as Designing Your Online Course and Improving Your Online Course culminated in Gaston's first QM-Certified course! Several faculty members also took advantage of QM's Self-Review tool.

### University System of Maryland
It was a busy year for the University System of Maryland. To meet the needs of its members — 12 universities and three regional centers — and increase engagement, the System hosted over 80 QM web-conferencing workshop sessions in 2020.

Workshop topics ranged from Rethinking Content for the Online Classroom to Developing Consistent Navigation to Creating Discussion Forum Rubrics. The Applying the Quality Matters Rubric workshop was also offered.

### Albizu University
The Higher Ed Essentials for Full Subscription package helped Albizu University kick start its quality assurance journey by providing access to key QM elements, including professional development, course reviews and conference attendance.

### Florida Southwestern State College
Faculty are leading the charge at Florida Southwestern State College (FSW) — fueling the use of QM tools and resources to ensure course quality. It all started when FSW offered an Applying the Quality Matters Rubric workshop. From there, the use of QM became a self-perpetuating community as faculty embraced the QM process.

This surge of interest inspired FSW's instructional design team to re-evaluate its internal review process and course templates. New practices were implemented to ensure that every new online course is measured against QM Standards from the get-go.

**HE**

### Johnston Community College
It was all in on professional development for JCC. Between May and December, dozens of faculty and staff engaged in multiple QM workshops, including six sessions of Applying the Quality Matters Rubric.

### University of Southern Indiana
Official course reviews were the focus for the University of Southern Indiana (USI) in 2020. Fifty-eight courses earned the QM Certification Mark, surpassing their goal of 40 to 45 courses. They are on track to achieve similar results in 2021.

Course reviews are a part of the institutional strategic plan and directly tied to the university's online growth goals. However, as Instructional Designer JD Weagley, noted, it's the students and faculty that truly benefit. "Students get courses that are well designed with assignments that are aligned to the stated learning outcomes. For faculty, they have a course that is complete prior to teaching so they can focus on student needs and providing feedback to students."

USI's efforts had another unexpected result: its CMST 107 Interpersonal Communications course became the 10,000th course to earn QM Certification worldwide!

### University of North Carolina System
Building on its strong commitment to quality, the UNC System took significant steps to fortify foundations, capitalize on the value of a statewide system, and expand its capacity to support quality assurance in online learning.

Members from the System's 17 institutions kicked off the year at the annual summit, highlighting the innovative ways they implement QM on their campuses. Following the remote pivot, the focus shifted to inter-institutional support and ensuring the quality of courses in transition. A network of System-wide Peer Reviewers was established to expedite internal reviews and provide faculty with QM Rubric implementation support. The result — the completion of more than 100 internal reviews and 200 hours of support to over 100 instructors.

The System also awarded $15,000 to 61 faculty and staff to pursue QM professional development with the goal of installing two QM-Certified Master Reviewers at all UNC System institutions and increasing the total pool of Peer Reviewers. That initiative laid the groundwork for the launch of the 2021 System-wide campaign of course reviews and workshops.

The extraordinary efforts of the UNC System were recognized at QM ConnectLX with two UNC System members taking home awards — Bethanne Tobey, Assistant Director of Course Quality at North Carolina State University, and Dr. Racheal Brooks, Coordinator of the Office of e-Learning at North Carolina Central University.

Listen to how the UNC System uses QM ▶

## K-12 EDUCATION

Throughout 2020, the QM K-12 community fortified their commitment to quality in online and blended courses — investing in a host of professional development, course reviews and other best practices to meet the needs of their teachers and students during the pandemic and beyond. The QM members highlighted here exemplify the extraordinary efforts of our community to meet the unprecedented challenges they faced while delivering on their online promise.

### The Lilead Project
This grant-funded program that develops leaders in library sciences put faculty, librarians and district-level administrators from 24 school districts, four universities, one independent school district, and one international school through QM's K-12 Applying the Quality Matters Rubric, Introduction to Teaching Online, and Online Course Design workshops. Participants also took part in the Fast Track to Remote Teaching and Learning web-conferencing series.

### East Baton Rouge Parish School System
One hundred participants from this system completed QM's Growing Online with Precision Series. Seventeen employees also went through the Teaching Online Certificate (TOC) program! More TOC cohorts are planned for 2021.

### Warren Easton Charter High School
More than 80 teachers and staff took part in four different QM workshops — Flip the Switch: Motivate Learners with Course Tools and Tech, K-12 Active Learning: 3-2-1 Engage!, Instructional Materials: Investigating What Works, and Objectives and Alignment: The Framework for Student Success.

### Virtual Arkansas
Concurrent enrollment courses and teachers were a big focus for Virtual Arkansas in 2020. Each of their 11 concurrent credit teachers went through the K-12 Applying the Quality Matters Rubric workshop — facilitated by Arkansas Tech University, their partner university. Those teachers then participated in an internal review process and worked to improve their courses before submitting them for official review.

### Ohio Educational Service Centers
To help its districts transition to remote teaching and learning, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio tapped QM K-12 program Director Christine Voelker to host a webinar on pandemic pedagogy. While the Butler County Educational Service Center sent 120 individuals through a variety of web-conferencing workshops.

### Idaho Digital Learning Alliance and Springfield Public Schools
Both of these K-12 members tackled online elementary course design in 2020. Using QM's new K-12 Rubric Annotation notes for elementary courses as a guide, these organizations worked hard to make sure even their youngest learners were set up for success.

### Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance
The 17-member Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance tapped into their expansive QM and online learning knowledge to support other local schools during the transition to remote learning.

### Edgenuity
The K-12 Publisher — a QM member since 2014 — renewed its commitment to quality in 2020, submitting nearly 60 courses for official review and earning the QM Certification Mark on diverse offerings such as Advanced Quantitative Reasoning and Foundations of Personal Fitness. Edgenuity plans to submit another 100 courses for review in 2021.

K-12
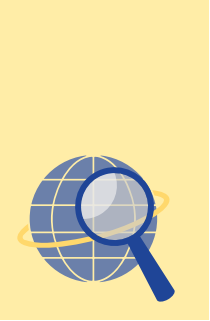
# Leading Through Research

Research is the foundation of Quality Matters — informing every aspect of our work, from our flagship Rubrics to community resources to learning opportunities. In 2020, the QM research team led numerous efforts to ensure that research continued to guide our efforts even in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

### CHLOE 4
Building on previous iterations of the Changing Landscape of Online Education (CHLOE) surveys, CHLOE 4 was released in early 2020. The results provided critical insights into key online learning topics, including faculty preparation, online support services and quality assurance practices at a time when countless institutions were moving to emergency remote instruction. The survey was conducted by Quality Matters and Eduventures® Research.
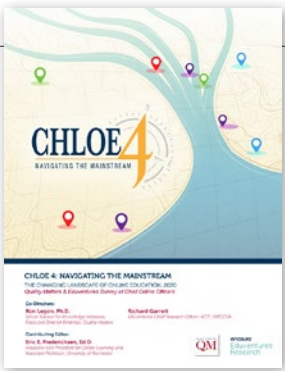
### CHLOE 5
QM and Eduventures® Research teamed up again in 2020 to explore how institutions responded to the remote learning pivot. A special edition of the annual CHLOE Survey was administered in May 2020. The results — which have been downloaded over 1,500 times — provide insight into how institutions reacted to the pandemic as well as how they plan to move forward. As Inside Higher Ed's Josh Kim noted, "Spending time with the 2020 CHLOE 5 Special Report will provide you with an excellent ROI."

### Digital Accessibility White Paper Series
Higher education QM Coordinators provided numerous useful insights during a 2019 accessibility survey conducted by Dr. Barbara Frey and Dr. Rae Mancilla. The survey — a follow-up to a similar 2010 survey — was designed to gauge progress on accessibility issues at QM member institutions. The results were first shared in a June 2020 QM Research Webinar. Drs. Frey and Mancilla are now expanding on their findings in a series of white papers, each tailored to a particular aspect of the findings and brief enough to be easily read and used.

### Evaluating Online Course Quality: A Study on Implementation of Course Quality Standards
Longitudinal data on official QM course reviews — highlighting that advance preparation for such reviews manifests in more successful outcomes — was featured in a special issue of the Online Learning Journal. The special edition focused on online learning special interest group presentations originally planned for the American Educational Research Association, which had to be canceled because of the pandemic.

### Challenges and Solutions of Research into the Quality of Online Learning: A Quality Matters Lens
Conducting research on online education is critical — but it can also be challenging. This article written for EvoLLLution delves into the complexities of performing quality educational research and provides guidance to our community on how to perform research on QM's impact. The role research has played in development of the QM Rubric is also addressed.

### Teaching Online: Where? What? Who? When? Why? How?
Updated research on who is teaching online and how that teaching is happening was featured in the Fourth Edition of The Handbook of Distance Education. Chapter thirty of the handbook was written by Dr. Kay Shattuck, QM's Founding Director & Senior Advisor for Research.

### 5 Tips for Moving from Remote Instruction to Quality Online Learning
Based on research conducted from 2018 to 2020, this 5 tips article was developed to provide best practices and tips to the many educators wanting to move from the emergency remote instruction of spring 2020 to quality online learning.

### HyFlex Design Tips and Webinar
HyFlex course design became a hot topic in 2020 as institutions searched for ways to best meet their students' needs. To help, QM Director of Research and Innovation Dr. Bethany Simunich worked with Kent State University's Dr. Wendy Tietz, an accounting professor with over a decade of experience in designing and developing HyFlex courses. Together, they developed research-based resources, including a webinar presentation and design tips.

### Quality Assurance Implementation: How It Works
Research in support of QM Executive Director Dr. Deb Adair's theory of a quality assurance continuum of excellence — optimal implementation of QM — culminated in the publication of this Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration article. The research and resulting article provide a framework for institutions and organizations to see where they are and where they might aim to be along the continuum, along with strategic activities to undertake to achieve online learning quality assurance.

# Impact & Outreach

In the face of an unexpected pandemic, institutions across the globe scrambled to provide their students with continuity of education. QM staff responded to the rapidly evolving situation by filling information gaps and providing critically-needed resources while continuing to implement previously-planned initiatives.

## EMERGENCY REMOTE INSTRUCTION CHECKLISTS

Since many educators had never taught online, QM developed the Emergency Remote Instruction Checklists — guides to help higher education and K-12 instructors set their students up for success in the new remote environment. The checklists were accessed over 28,000 times. A K-12 companion guide was also created for IEP & 504 Plans.

## NEW LMS PLATFORM: CANVAS

In July 2020, QM transitioned all of its professional development courses and workshops to the Canvas learning management system — reflecting QM's commitment to continuous improvement in delivering assessed professional development to thousands of educators across the world annually.

## BRIDGE TO QUALITY COURSE DESIGN GUIDES

Building on the Emergency Remote Instruction Checklists, QM developed the Bridge to Quality Course Design Guides to help move educators from emergency remote instruction to intentional, well-designed online learning. The guides — created for both higher education and K-12 — contain a phased, step-by-step approach to course design that is aligned to QM Standards. Considerations for culturally responsive design are also included. The guides were accessed almost 3,000 times in 2020.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS

As QM's Senior Academic Director: Program Services Brenda Boyd explained, "When the pandemic hit, we looked at our professional development (PD) offerings and developed new, timely topics to meet the needs of the moment." That included creating several new web-conferencing workshops such as Fast Track to Remote Teaching and Learning and Instructional Materials for Online Teaching. Participants in these workshops called them "robust" and "engaging", and noted the numerous takeaways they could apply to their own work.

## SPECIAL TOPIC WEBINARS

In-demand topics such as building on emergency remote instruction successes and creating HyFlex courses were addressed through several special webinars. Almost 8,000 individuals registered for the seven free webinars, with many commenting on how helpful they were, including Sindia Rivera-Jimenez who implored, "Please do more of this!!!!!" following the presentation of "Building on Remote Instruction Successes: A Roadmap to Quality."

## VIRTUAL OPTIONS FOR QM FACE-TO-FACE PD

With the safety of our community top-of-mind, QM created virtual versions of our most popular face-to-face (F2F) workshops — allowing members with QM-Certified F2F Facilitators to deliver the workshops online. Virtual workshop options included Applying the Quality Matters Rubric, Improving Your Online Course and Designing Your Online Course.
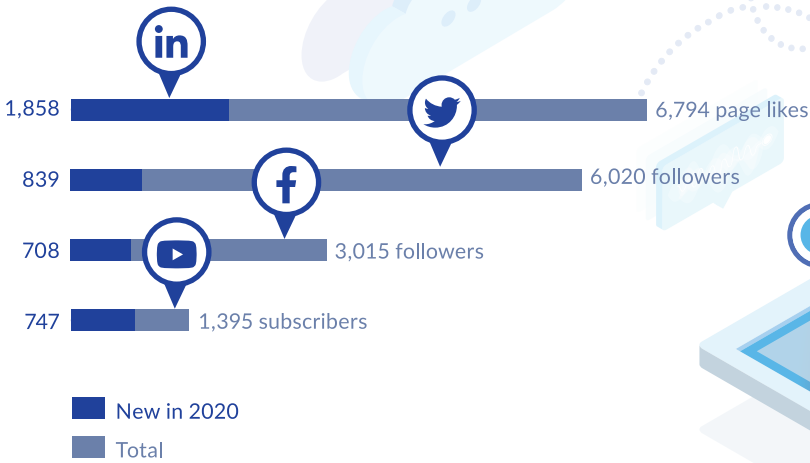
## OPTION TO LICENSE THE DESIGNING YOUR ONLINE COURSE (DYOC) WORKSHOP

The workshop was added to the list of those that can be delivered independently with a Full or System subscription. Several member organizations, including the University Akron, jumped on board. As the university's QM Coordinator Steve Kaufman noted, "Offering the DYOC at my institution allows my team to better meet our faculty where they're at. Whether they are experienced with online learning or if they are just starting out with development, we can now introduce Quality Matters in a way that's approachable and appropriate to their experience level."

## NEW WORKSHOP: INTRODUCTION TO QUALITY MATTERS

Answering the call for a "lite" version of the Applying the Quality Matters Rubric workshop, QM launched Introduction to Quality Matters — a two-week, online, facilitated workshop that helps participants understand how QM can help them deliver on their online promise. The workshop was well-received with 94% of participants reporting that the material was helpful to their current position. To maximize its impact, the workshop was also added to the list of workshops that can be facilitated independently — allowing institutions to deliver it directly to their faculty and staff.

## SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT

| | New in 2020 | Total |
|---|---|---|
| in | 1,858 | 6,794 page likes |
| (Twitter) | 839 | 6,020 followers |
| (Facebook) | 708 | 3,015 followers |
| (YouTube) | 747 | 1,395 subscribers |

## K-12 NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR QUALITY ONLINE LEARNING

The Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA) and Quality Matters (QM) continued their broad-based effort to promote adoption and use of the National Standards for Quality Online Learning (NSQ), building upon the work started by the Aurora Institute (formerly iNACOL).

- Since March 9, 2020, when schools began the pivot to remote learning, approximately 70,000 visitors have engaged with the NSQ website. Over 16,000 visitors have downloaded one or more of the standard sets.

- The NSQ Online Teaching Professional Learning Portal (Powered by 2gnoMe) was launched in October. The portal enables teachers to reflect on their teaching practice in relation to the NSQ Online Teaching framework through self-reflection and recommends high-quality professional learning resources personalized to individual needs and strengths.

## INTERNATIONAL

- Institutions from 11 countries outside of the U.S. joined QM in 2020, bringing the total to 25 countries, across six continents. Since 2019, QM's international membership has increased by sixty-nine percent.

### NEW COUNTRIES

| 11 | Bahrain | Pakistan |
|---|---|---|
| | Barbados | Papua New Guinea |
| | Cambodia | |
| | Chile | Paraguay |
| | Dominican Republic | Qatar |
| | | United Arab Emirates |
| | Malaysia | |

- QM welcomed its first System membership from outside the U.S. The System lead is Higher Ed International (HEI). Five QM member institutions in South Africa became affiliates of the System and HEI is requiring all their client institutions in other countries to become QM members.

- QM staff were invited to speak at over 20 international events on various topics related to quality, including those hosted by AACE, ICDE, INQAAHE, CLICKs, HETS, and various organizations and institutions in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Mid-East and North America including Morocco, Pakistan, China, the Philippines, UK, Dominican Republic, Bahrain and Kuwait.

- QM's Executive Director Dr. Deb Adair was selected to serve on the International Advisory Committee for eLearning under the direction of the National eLearning Center (NELC) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. With guidance from the Director General of the NELC, Deb and other committee members will help guide e-learning across all sectors of the Kingdom.

**WEST REGIONAL:**
**29** sessions
**176** attendees
**49** presenters
**5** Zoom rooms

**QM CONNECTLX:**
**99** sessions
**546** attendees
**118** presenters
**8** Zoom rooms

**EAST REGIONAL:**
**32** sessions
**192** attendees
**44** presenters
**5** Zoom rooms

YOUTUBE PLAYLISTS WITH
PRESENTATION RECORDINGS:

QM West Regional Conference

QM East Regional Conference

QM ConnectLX Conference

## QM CONFERENCES

**QM West: Reaching for Student Success, April 3**

**QM East: Reimagining Quality Pathways, April 24**

Set goals but be willing to adapt — that was the timely advice from Dr. Melody Buckner, Associate Vice Provost of Digital Learning Initiatives and Online Education at the University of Arizona, during her keynote address at the QM West Regional Conference.

The East and West Regional Conferences were held in the midst of the transition to remote learning. Sessions addressed immediate needs — providing tips and strategies for those new to the online modality — and offered guidance on building quality-focused online programs for the future. None of these events would have been possible without the QM community. The critical insights, valuable data points and inspiring stories shared served to energize attendees and provide them with the tools and resources needed to continuously improve for the fall and beyond.

Popular topics at the conferences — including photovoice, alternatives to discussion boards, fast-tracking new online instructors, and how K-12 teachers could navigate the "not normal" — led attendees such as Monica Rysavy from Goldey-Beacom College to exclaim, "This has been the best conference I've attended in a long time - everything was extremely high quality and on-point." Both Dr. Buckner's keynote and QM East Regional Conference keynote speaker Dr. Sasha Thackaberry, Vice President Digital and Continuing Education at Louisiana State University, also drew rave reviews, with many finding their thoughts on leadership and career growth extremely helpful.

**QM ConnectLX: Bring Quality Into Focus, Oct. 22 - 28**

The theme for QM's annual conference for quality assurance in online learning was established long before the "Grand Pivot" occurred. But it proved to be very appropriate as many flocked to the refashioned virtual "learning experience" in search of inspiration and transformation. And not just in relation to online learning and the pandemic. Many came to the conference with another weighty topic in mind — equity.

In her keynote address, Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President of Montgomery College, underscored that we were (and are) experiencing two pandemics. Plexiglass cannot save us if we don't address the issues of financial hardship and inclusion that so many students face. Dr. Pollard noted that the demand for online learning was growing exponentially before COVID and called on everyone to close the achievement gap in instruction. "Faculty development is the secret sauce," she noted while urging all of us to protect the dignity of our students by providing quality education.

And the sessions heeded her call. As Jacklyn Pierce from Lake-Sumter State College shared, "I learned something from every session that I can use either in my own teaching or that I can share with my colleagues in professional development."

Inspiration came from topics such as "30 Going on 13: Thinking Like a Student for Course Design," "Live and Online: Finding What Works for Synchronous Class Meetings" and "Quality Spectrum Support for Neurodiverse Learners." A lot of great ideas were also exchanged in Gatherly, the platform used for networking. Another new feature this year: Course Checkups. The chance to work in a small group with an instructional designer was appreciated by many.

---

# Quality: A Rising Tide That Raises All Boats

A few years ago during a conversation with an administrator at a major research institution, I discussed QM as an approach to quality intended to "raise all boats." He felt his faculty would be uninterested, preferring opportunities to set themselves apart in keeping with the exclusivity of their brand. As if teaching quality isn't worth pursuing if everyone is enabled to achieve it. That's a troubling thought.

At QM, we have always believed that quality is about creating processes and systems that work for every learner and that all faculty can deliver this. However, the challenges of 2020 have given us all the opportunity to reconsider issues of equity and quality — and have encouraged us to see them as two sides of the same coin. In the rush to move teaching online, it became obvious, quickly, that access to education alone isn't enough to ensure a successful outcome. If it isn't equitable, it isn't quality.

Now what? Just as QM member faculty recognize their efforts to learn about online teaching and course design are improving their in-person teaching, QM knows that we can be more relevant, flexible and scalable by doubling down on research and development to:

- Initiate, curate and disseminate research on quality in different delivery modalities, focused on affordances of synchronous vs. asynchronous learning and effectiveness for different types of learners

- Engage in examining quality at the intersection of work and education

- Examine ways to scaffold the QM Rubrics and reviews to increase their applicability, accessibility and use in different contexts

- Expand our digital credentials and create more modularized learning pathways for professional development.

All of this work is done for and with our community, many of whom are leading the way towards high quality approaches to teaching with technology. Their embrace of the QM framework propels their work. For example, 97% of those who submitted a course for an official QM course review using the Higher Education Rubric, Sixth Edition, reported that feedback provided by the Peer Reviewers was constructive and useful. QM's approach is widely recognized as instrumental in an institution-wide pursuit of quality. This uniqueness is also appreciated by experts outside the QM community, as illustrated in this quote from Developing a High Performance Digital Education Ecosystem: Institutional Self-assessment Instruments:

*"The [QM] framework adopts a strong peer review philosophy, reflecting the understanding that quality has to live throughout an institution. … what makes Quality Matters unique is … the emphasis on creating a culture of scholarly peer review. The framework is intended to scaffold conversations about quality among colleagues"*

And…

*"…the QM label is often used for external accreditation purposes because it is regarded as the most credible quality indicator in the US."*

We could not agree more. Here's to a 2021 that creates a tidal force of educational quality that raises all boats, across all institutions, for all learners.

When we joined QM in 2018, we were nervous about submitting our courses for review because we didn't think they were "ready." As we quickly learned, that's the exact opposite attitude to have towards QM review.

QM's guiding philosophy is "continuous improvement," and the reviews we've been part of since 2019 have been extremely valuable for the continued improvement of our course design and development. Even when a standard is considered "met," QM reviewers provide helpful feedback.

In analyzing our reports from reviewers, we've found many suggestions that are applicable to all of our courses (not just the course submitted for review).

DR. MEGHAN ROE
QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALIST
QM COORDINATOR
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# — 1,500+ QM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS —

AS OF DECEMBER, 2020

QUALITY MATTERS
QM

CANADA
40+

UNITED STATES
1,300

MEXICO

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

BARBADOS

COLUMBIA

CHILE

PARAGUAY

UNITED KINGDOM

FRANCE

JORDAN

SAUDI ARABIA

KUWAIT
BAHRAIN

QATAR
U.A.E.

CHINA

JAPAN

PAKISTAN

CAMBODIA

VIETNAM

MALAYSIA

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

FIJI

AUSTRALIA

SOUTH AFRICA

## — 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 & South**
Connecticut 👤👤
Florida 👤👤👤
Maryland 👤👤👤👤
👤👤👤👤👤
Pennsylvania 👤
South Carolina 👤
Tennessee 👤

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), an advisory 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
Professional Development: registrar@qualitymatters.org
Course Reviews: qmcoursereviews@qualitymatters.org

🐦 in f ▶

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.