Emergency Medical Care Program Goals and Learning Outcomes:
WCU’s Emergency Medical Care (EMC) Program was established in 1977 and represents the nation’s first paramedic training program leading to the baccalaureate degree. The EMC Program prepares graduates to enter a variety of employment settings and to render care to a wide spectrum of individuals. Students must retain and integrate information from semester to semester since the medical curriculum is cumulative and dynamic. The overall goal of the EMC Program is to prepare competent entry-level paramedics in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains. The EMC Program strives 1) to provide a learning environment that offers the student the cognitive and technical skills necessary for a competent, entry-level paramedic; 2) to provide leadership in the emergency medical care community; 3) to provide students the ability to understand the administrative functions of health care managers; 4) to promote the importance of research and provide the tools for understanding basic research and evaluation techniques; and 5) to provide students with the ability to effectively communicate via oral and written means.

WCU QEP Learning Outcome: Communicate Effectively and Responsibly
Students are required to communicate effectively and responsibly in every aspect of their participation in the EMC Program. The EMC Program utilizes numerous tools to measure student outcome in this area. Students are required to complete a research paper in EMC 410. In HSCC 470 students must complete a research proposal. The class of 2012 students all scored above the minimum requirements in both classes. Current EMC Program seniors just participated in an EMS Research Summit and will be participating in NCUR in the spring and will be submitting abstracts to state and national EMS conferences (Outcomes for this will be measured next year). Communication is also evaluated and documented in EMC 485 (ambulance field internship) by specially trained paramedic preceptors to determine student competence in this area. Communication is evaluated each semester at the mid-term progress report meeting with each student. Any communication issues were addressed and corrected. Students are required to compile a professional portfolio as a part of the EMC Program clinical courses (EMC 381, EMC 382, EMC 483, EMC 484, and EMC 485). This includes a resume, curriculum vitae, letters of reference, cover letter, etc. This is reviewed and updated each semester students are in the EMC Program. These documents showed the growth in the students and their specific professional experiences as they progressed through the EMC Program. In addition, students are required to keep a reflective journal during all of the clinical courses. Student growth and development was noted in these journals for the class of 2012. During the Senior Seminar capstone course (EMC 496), students are required to prepare numerous presentations and present to the instructor and his or her peers. These presentations are formally evaluated by both the instructor and the students. All students showed incremental improvement their presentation and communication skills as noted by the evaluations. EMC Program students participate in numerous service learning activities where they must communicate with many different types of individuals and groups. This is formally evaluated and documented by preceptors during the clinical and field internship rotations throughout the EMC Program. All students in the class of 2012 received scores above the required minimums.

WCU QEP Learning Outcome: Solve Complex Problems
Students are required to solve complex problems throughout their participation in the EMC Program. The EMC Program utilizes numerous tools to measure student outcome in this area. Students must progressively (from semester to semester) assume increasing responsibility in acting as “team leader” in the EMC Program laboratory courses. They move from depending on each other for decision making in early EMC Program courses (EMC 350 and EMC 361) to independence in determining the ultimate course of treatment for simulated and scenario-based patients in later Program courses (EMC 410, EMC 420, EMC 452, and EMC 461). Team leadership is vital in providing appropriate and accurate patient care. EMC Program terminal competencies are evaluated by the Advanced Life Support competency examination. This is a three part evaluation, including a written examination, oral boards with the EMC Program Medical Director, and a hands-on, simulated scenario where each student serves as team leader. All class of 2012 students passed each portion of this exam. Complex problem solving is also evaluated and documented in EMC 485 by specially trained paramedic preceptors to determine student competence in this area. Each graduating student participates in an exit interview with the Program Director. Feedback from the class of 2012 indicated that the EMC Program prepared them well and that they felt comfortable in transitioning to an entry-level paramedic. One student commented, “From start to finish, students were very involved”. Another commented, “You actually learn and grow step-by-step throughout the Program”. A terminal competency checklist is completed for each student to ensure they have completed all EMC Program requirements in all three learning domains. This document is reviewed and signed by all EMC Program faculty members. All students in the class of 2012 completed the minimum EMC Program requirements.

QEP Impact:
The impact of the EMC Program’s integration of the WCU QEP is that data indicates the students in the class of 2012 have evolved throughout the EMC Program, improving their communication and problem solving skills. The first time pass rate on the North Carolina paramedic examination continues to be 100% (since 1999) and is well above the national average on the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians’ paramedic exam (88%, 100%, and 82% in the last three years respectively). Another outcomes assessment tool is job placement after graduation. The class of 2012 had 100% job placement. In addition, a few of these students have applied for professional school (graduate, medical, and physician’s assistant). Additionally, the EMC Program has nearly tripled the number of undergraduate campus majors in the last five years and has increased the number of graduates from the Program.