



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500
Chicago, IL 60604-1411
312.263.0456 | 800.621.7440
Fax: 312.263.7462 | hlcommission.org

March 23, 2017

Dr. Laurie Stenberg Nichols
President
University of Wyoming
1000 East University Avenue
Laramie, WY 82071

Dear President Sternberg Nichols:

Attached is the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review evaluation information. University of Wyoming's QIR showed genuine effort and has been accepted by the Commission. The attached reviewer evaluation contains a rationale for this outcome.

Peer reviewers evaluate all the QIRs based on the genuine effort of the institution, the seriousness of the undertaking, the significance of scope and impact of the work, the genuineness of the commitment to the initiative, and adequate resource provision.

If you have questions about the QIR reviewer information, please contact either Kathy Bijak (kbijak@hlcommission.org) or Pat Newton-Curran (pnewton@hlcommission.org).

Higher Learning Commission



FORM

Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Panel Review and Recommendation Form

The Quality Initiative panel review process confirms or questions the institution's effort in undertaking the Quality Initiative proposal approved by the Commission. As indicated in the explication of the review, the Quality Initiative process encourages institutions to take risks, innovate, take on a tough challenge, or pursue a yet unproven strategy or hypothesis. Thus failure of an initiative to achieve its goals is acceptable. An institution may learn much from such failure. What is not acceptable is failure of the institution to pursue the initiative with genuine effort. Genuineness of effort, not success of the initiative, constitutes the focus of the Quality Initiative review and serves as its sole point of evaluation.

Name of Institution: University of Wyoming

State: WY

Institutional ID: 1726

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Dr. Rita Kottmeyer, Lindenwood University

Ms. Mary Merrifield, Maryville University of St. Louis

Date: 03/10/17

I. Quality Initiative Review

- ☒ The institution demonstrated its seriousness of the undertaking.
- ☐ The institution demonstrated that the initiative had scope and impact.
- ☐ The institution demonstrated a commitment to and engagement in the initiative.
- ☐ The institution demonstrated adequate resource provision.

II. Recommendation

- ☒ The panel confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution.
- ☐ The panel cannot confirm genuine effort on the part of the institution.

III. Rationale (required)

The University demonstrated a good faith effort on this Quality Initiative. Highlights of the Initiative include implementation over a shortened timeline, an ambitious roll out of the initial course development, clearly defined Student Learning Outcomes, robust collection and evaluation of data, broad communication of findings to determine changes that needed to be made and well thought-out resource allocation. The six high impact Student Learning Outcomes covered areas such as critical thinking skills and communication skills. Mastery, however, requires multiple measures to accurately assess. To establish mastery of these outcomes, the additional use of standardized rubrics such as those from the AAC&U would improve the ability to inform instruction.

Evaluation included surveys and student work assessment for the overarching SLOs that each First Year Seminar class incorporated regardless of topic. Communication of this assessment data went beyond involved faculty to Academic Affairs, the Faculty Senate and the University Studies Program Committee. The resource allocation process was inclusive and comprehensive, with a well-developed budget. With the addition of a standardized rubric this process would be far more robust.

The beginning stages of designing the project were thorough and inclusive. The implementation required and obtained considerable buy-in from a broad group of stakeholders. What made the project successful, however was the strength of the evaluation. The program was assessed with both direct and indirect evidence of effectiveness, then the assessment data were used to make improvements over time. This method will allow the institution to continually improve using the feedback loop and ultimately sustain the program.

The awareness that communicating the Student Learning Outcomes more often with the students will be a valuable tool as the project matures. This can inform professional development in the future. One of the most important aspects of this initiative has been the ability to use the awareness of opportunities for improvement to move the needle on the project with each cycle.