



December 13, 2018

Dr. Hal Higdon
Chancellor
Ozarks Technical Community College
1001 E. Chestnut Expressway
IC 205E
Springfield, MO 65802

Dear Chancellor Higdon:

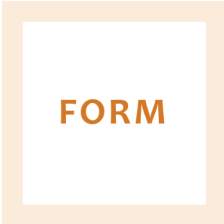
This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Ozarks Technical Community College's QIP is approved.

Within the QIP Review form, you will find comments from the panel for your consideration as you proceed with your Quality Initiative. The panel reviewed the QIP for four areas:

- Sufficiency of initiative's scope and significance
- Clarity of initiative's purpose
- Evidence of commitment to and capacity for accomplishing the initiative
- Appropriateness of the timeline for the initiative

If you have questions about the panel's review, please contact either Kathy Bijak (kbijak@hlcommission.org) or Pat Newton-Curran (pnewton@hlcommission.org). For any questions about your Quality Initiative, contact your Commission liaison, Barbara Johnson, at bjohnson@hlcommission.org.

The Higher Learning Commission



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

Date of Review: 12-4-18

Name of Institution: Ozarks Technical Community College State: MO

Institutional ID: 2042

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Dr. Terry Babbitt, University of New Mexico; Dr. Brian Dille, Mesa Community College

Review Categories and Findings

1. Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

- Potential for significant impact on the institution and its academic quality
- Alignment with the institution's mission and vision
- Connection with the institution's planning processes
- Evidence of significance and relevance at this time

Finding:

- The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates acceptable scope and significance.
- The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate acceptable scope and significance.

Rationale and Comments: (Provide two to three statements justifying the finding and recommending minor modifications, if applicable. Provide any comments, such as highlighting strong points, raising minor concerns or cautions, or identifying questions.)

Ozarks Technical Community College (OTCC) utilized a state mandate for common general education to construct their quality initiative. Like many other states, Missouri recently passed legislation that requires post-secondary institutions to unify general education courses with common content and requirements to enhance transferability among institutions. OTCC utilized this opportunity to combine strategic planning and institutional distinction to meet the legislated policy.

Any effort that includes revision of general education is a huge task and OTCC also integrated this with their strategic plan revision as well as evaluation of community needs.

The QIP involves all of these efforts but specifically addresses the assessment process needed to determine if this curriculum is delivering on the desired goals and outcomes. The entire task is more than substantial and the significance relates to improving student achievement which is the core of why the college exists.

2. Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

- Clear purposes and goals reflective of the scope and significance of the initiative
- Defined milestones and intended goals
- Clear processes for evaluating progress

Finding:

- The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates clarity of purpose.
- The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate clarity of purpose.

Rationale and Comments:

The background of the need for this initiative is extensive but the focus of the QIP is more narrowly tailored to assessing the new general education requirements. The clear direction is to design assessment plans; test and revise the plans; inform all faculty of the strategy; implement the final product; and foster continuous improvement in the process.

An assessment committee will guide the work and is charged with achieving ten deliverables directly related to the goals. A timeline allows for developing and implementing the plan for 1/2 of the competencies in 2019 and the other 1/2 in 2020 with evaluation and revisions taking place after that. The purpose of this plan is clear.

3. Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

- Commitment of senior leadership
- Commitment and involvement of key people and groups
- Sufficiency of the human, financial, technological, and other resources
- Defined plan for integrating the initiative into the ongoing work of the institution and sustaining its results
- Clear understanding of and capacity to address potential obstacles

Finding:

- The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates evidence of commitment and capacity.
- The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate evidence of commitment and capacity.

Rationale and Comments:

This initiative is central to everything higher education promises as far as student achievement and outcomes so it should easily retain the commitment and resources from the institution to carry it out successfully. This effort will likely receive ongoing support because it is an essential element in the criteria for accreditation and demonstrates OTCC's value to the students and community it serves.

The college has standard resources assigned from the academic units to carry out this work with representation by all deans and department chairs as well as senior administration. Expectations are for faculty to embrace this process and participate fully. This is a good time to reinforce a culture of rigorous assessment and continuous improvement at the entire institution.

4. Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

- Consistency with intended purposes and goals
- Alignment with the implementation of other institutional priorities
- Reasonable implementation plan for the time period

Finding:

- The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates an appropriate timeline.
- The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate an appropriate timeline.

Rationale and Comments:

The basic timeline is simple and easy to understand. Also, the matrix provides good summary detail of what is to be established on a semester basis. A slight improvement would be to add more details on a weekly or monthly basis within the semester timeframe.

5. General Observations and Recommended Modifications: (Panel members may provide considerations and suggested modifications that the institution should note related to its proposed Quality Initiative.)

This is a huge task beginning with the implementation of the legislatively mandated general education changes. OTCC has chosen wisely to narrow the scope of this QIP because it is a heavy lift even by itself. Most reviewers will understand the magnitude of this effort but it would be beneficial for OTCC to keep an extensive record of this undertaking.

A comprehensive record may well exist but it is helpful to maintain artifacts together with this report since it is likely an official element of record retention at the college. Meaningful inclusions as appendices could include lists of all courses included in the gen ed revision, cross-walked outcomes, detailed timelines by month or committee meeting, committee minutes etc.

6. **Conclusion:**

- Approve the proposed Quality Initiative with or without recommended minor modifications. No further review required.
- Request resubmission of the proposed Quality Initiative

Rationale and Expectations if Requesting Resubmission

Timeline and Process for Resubmission (the Commission staff will add this section if the recommendation is for resubmission)
