



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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August 6, 2018

Dr. Bernie Patterson
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
2100 Main
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Dear Chancellor Patterson:

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) review evaluation completed by a peer review panel. University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point's QIR showed genuine effort and has been accepted by the Higher Learning 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 the adequate resource provision.

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 Jeffrey Rosen, your staff liaison.



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 Wisconsin-Stevens Point

State: WI

Institutional ID: 1716

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Mary Merrifield, Director of Institutional Research (Retired),
Maryville University of St. Louis

Douglas Davenport, Interim Provost and VPAA, Missouri Western State University

Date: 8/2/18

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 institution demonstrated its seriousness of the undertaking with the investment of time, funds, and buy-in for the Quality Initiative Project. By identifying a need for a critical thinking initiative and developing a plan for addressing the need, the school made significant progress toward the goal. The most impressive thing about the project is the faculty involvement. With over 350 full-time faculty, an endeavor of this type is daunting. The 35 instructors from 21 disciplines who have committed to the pilot project of 69 classes is a good start on a full roll-out of the teaching and assessment of critical thinking across campus.

The scope of the initiative is projected to be campus-wide and the impact is already showing meaningful results with the development of rubrics that align with the definition in the overarching critical thinking model. The training and buy-in are admirable, as is the inclusion of additional stakeholders from the community. The many professional development sessions provided for faculty and documented in the Appendices were well-designed and impactful.

The institution demonstrated a commitment to the project with faculty involved throughout the entire process, from the effort to define critical thinking for the institution through the implementation of critical thinking argument mapping work and rubric development. The engagement in the initiative was necessary to the successful implementation and is critical to the overall project outcome. Well-attended critical thinking workshops documented in the appendices show considerable faculty engagement in the process.

The resource provision for the project was considerable and the time commitment made the initiative work. Even with the funding issues in the state, which greatly affect the university, the project has been provided with the necessary resource allocation to see it to fruition. There is clear intention to continue the work beyond the project timeline and to collect outcome data to inform future critical thinking instruction. Future plans include embedding a fully articulated critical thinking curriculum within the General Education Program.

Overall, this project shows considerable effort on the part of the institution with evidence that points to an endeavor with great potential. There is clear demonstration of the seriousness of the undertaking; that the initiative had scope and impact; that the institution was committed to and engaged in the initiative; and that there was adequate resource provision. The institution demonstrated genuine effort for the Quality Initiative and continues to pursue improvements to the process to secure a successful future outcome.