



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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October 2, 2019

Dr. Teresa Amott
President
Knox College
2 East South Street
Galesburg, IL 61401

Dear President Amott

Attached is the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review evaluation information. Knox College'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: Knox College

State: IL

Institutional ID: 1109

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Dr. Peter Bemski, Northcentral University and Dr. Haseeb Ahmed, The Registry for Colleges & University Presidents

Date: 9/22/2019

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)

Consistent with the Knox 2018 Strategic Plan, which called for “a comprehensive retention plan to better address the academic, wellness, and social needs of our student,” Knox College implemented a number of initiatives, and evaluated them on an ongoing basis. These initiatives, coordinated by College leadership, involved students, some parents, faculty, and staff. The College did not approach the issues from only one perspective but instead used a variety of tools to address retention and completion, both for at-risk and all students. While the initial Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant that made some of the funding possible is due to end in Summer 2020, the ongoing assessment of the initiatives makes it possible for the College to make decisions as to which are worthy of continued funding, and the process of identifying the necessary funds has taken place. The College has learned from these initiatives, for example deciding to try a "FOX" (First-Year Oriented Experience) program, suggested by the seeming success of the "SPARK" (Student Preparation and Readiness for Knox) Summer Bridge program. Increased training of faculty, both for pedagogical and advising purposes, has been implemented as has the provision of pre-advising for at-risk students, and in some cases for their parents. Recognition of the importance of pre-advising included the provision of Spanish speaking parental pre-advisement where needed. The retention and completion rates have fluctuated, and while the overall numbers do not reflect a steady positive trend, the College has seen "a significant narrowing of the completion gap between racially underrepresented students and non-underrepresented students and between TRIO-eligible students and non-eligible students."

The approaches included, among other things, financial literacy, pedagogical training for faculty, training and increased use of peer mentors, a new program, increased and quicker access for students to a diverse group of counselors, and funding of experiential learning known as Mellon Fellowships (initially for the at-risk student, and soon to be for all students as Power of Experience Grant). In addition, several high impact practices such as Living Learning Communities and First-Year Preceptorial (FP) were integrated into the college's first-year experience (FYE) program. The College is using data to build on strengths and plans to continue to assess these initiatives. The College appears to have made this a campus-wide effort and to have used resources in such a way that much of the plan will be sustainable. The timeline for success is ongoing, and as the College states, this initiative is "iterative." This is a serious and genuine undertaking.