



September 21, 2016

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

Dear President Amott:

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Knox 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, Sunil Ahuja, at sahuja@hlcommission.org.

The Higher Learning Commission

Enclosure



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

Date of Review:

Name of Institution: Knox College

State: Illinois

Institutional ID: 1109

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):

Dr. Douglas Davenport, Associate Provost, Missouri Western State University

Dr. Jo Lynn Autry Digranes, Coordinator for Assessment, Oklahoma City University

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.)

- The goals include increasing persistence and increasing completion. If these goals are achieved, the College could benefit from increased enrollment and thus increased financial resources.
- The Quality Initiative project is directly linked to the College's 2018 strategic plan that includes the development and implementation of a comprehensive persistence and completion plan.
- According to the proposal, the College has experienced a growth in the enrollment of TRIO-eligible and underrepresented populations, citing that 60% of the first year, full-time U.S. students meet these criteria although not all of these students can be served by the TRIO program at the College. The College realizes that this segment of the College's enrollment typically has lower retention, persistence, and completion rates so challenges have been created in providing adequate and appropriate services for these students. The proposed QI could assist in meeting these challenges, as well as benefitting the entire student body.

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 goals include increasing persistence and increasing completion through redesign of curriculum and co-curriculum and by developing new and improving existing programs to support the curricula and students' well-being.
- Specific goals are defined, such as increasing the four-year graduation rate to 75%.

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:

- Primary personnel responsible for the QI include the vice president for student development and the associate dean. Others include the following:
 - Registrar
 - Dean of students
 - Directors of financial aid, the center for teaching and learning, the counseling center, the center for intercultural life, the SPARK program, and the TRIO programThe Admission, Retention, and Placement Committee (ARP), a standing committee of the faculty, has been and will continue to be involved. Faculty members are involved through the implementation of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) high impact practices. This evidences broad involvement.
- Evidence of financial commitment includes funds that have been budgeted for revision of the College educational experience and a summer bridge program. Peer mentoring and new staff members have also been added.
- The College received an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant of \$ 800,000.00 to fund experiential learning stipends for first-generation and income eligible students, expansion of the summer bridge program, and funds for alternative models of advising. The grant expands financial resources for the proposed QI.

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:

- Descriptions of activities for Phase I (2014-2016) and II (2016-2018) are specific and are linked to years of implementation.
- Some projects have been completed, such as implementing the summer bridge program (SPARK), or are in progress. With these accomplishments, it appears that the other activities can be accomplished within the defined timeline.

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 project is a substantive and broad-based effort to enhance both retention and persistence to graduation. The goals are clear, ambitious, and focused. Knox College has chosen to implement a set of best practices that have proven track records in advancing student success and should be commended for their work in preparing for this project.

A key challenge will be to connect the strategies employed to the graduation goals. This will require adequate time for implementation, as well as the use of appropriate assessment and analysis before substantive modifications are made.

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)

