



Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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July 10, 2014

Dr. Cheryl Schrader
Chancellor
Missouri University of Science & Technology
206 Parker Hall
300 W. 13th Street
Rolla, MO 65409-0830

Dear Chancellor Schrader:

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Missouri University of Science & Technology'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

Enclosure



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

Date of Review: June 28, 2014

Name of Institution: Missouri University of Science and Technology State: Missouri

Institutional ID: 1471

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):

Anne Austin
Vice Chancellor for Research, Planning and Assessment
University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville

Daniel Domin
Director of Academic Assessment, Evaluation, and Achievement
Dominican 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.)

This project is intended to strengthen students' undergraduate experience by requiring every student to participate in a significant experiential learning experience as a component of degree requirements for graduation. This activity represents the operationalization of a theme in the institution's recently completed strategic plan: "Develop and inspire creative thinkers and leaders and life-long success." When fully implemented, this project has the potential to impact all students at Missouri S & T.

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 institution's purpose is clear with attainable goals that are reflective of the scope and the significance of the initiative. The institution provides data about the number of students currently involved in experiential learning activities and identifies several majors that include an experiential learning activity as a degree requirement. Although the institution has articulated a goal of 100% student participation and 100% departmental major participation, it is unclear of the extent of the challenge to meet this goal since no specific departmental data is provided. Appropriately, the departments have been given the authority to determine their own degree requirements. However, some standardization of learning outcomes for the experiential learning activity, as well as some standardization of review for the student reflection, would be appropriate, given that all students must fulfill this requirement for graduation.

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:

The institution appears to have devoted sufficient resources to this project and there is commitment of senior leadership to the project. The institution's plan of action is well defined. Because it is outside the scope of this project, the QI Proposal does not indicate what other activities the institution is undertaking with its new strategic plan. The QI represents a major undertaking for faculty and an increase in responsibility for student advisors; as such, it is important that they have the time to devote to this critical undertaking without energy being diverted elsewhere.

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 timeline is appropriate.

- 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 an interesting and worthwhile project that Missouri S & T has chosen to undertake. It has the potential to positively impact all students at the institution.

As the departments move forward with their task, it will be important for departments to document their discussions. In addition, it would be useful to utilize any standing committees such as faculty senate or assessment to ensure compatibility across majors of the rigor and expectations for the experiential learning activities. We encourage the institution to formulate a consistent measure that will indicate the depth of learning that occurs in the activity, as well as a measure of student effort and engagement. In implementation, it will be necessary to document student participation and learning. If the institution has not already done so, the departments will need to meet with the Registrar's Office (or other record keeping bodies) to ensure the technical and administrative details of this project are developed in practicable ways.

- 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)

