



## **Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative Project**

**OVERVIEW:** The next Higher Learning Commission accreditation visit is in the year 2016-2017.

Recent changes in both the accreditation criteria and the review process present our campus with new requirements and an opportunity to design an institution wide initiative used to evaluate our accreditation status. The Commission recently informed the Chancellor that we are eligible for the Open Pathway Model for reaccreditation. Under this model, we will design a multi-year Quality Initiative Proposal that addresses our institution's present concerns or aspirations. The Quality Initiative Proposal will be designed by the campus and submitted to the HLC for approval in late spring 2013. After three years, a follow up report on the progress of the Quality Initiative will be submitted to the HLC in spring 2016. The Quality Initiative and the 10-year report are used in combination with an HLC team visit in 2016-2017 to determine our accreditation status.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** The overall goal of the UW Oshkosh Quality Initiative project is:

**To enhance the quality of undergraduate education through curriculum reform to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** This project involves the implementation of a new general education program (the University Studies Program) and the integration of high impact practices throughout the curriculum. The project will include activities for a review of degree requirements and an analysis of trends related to credit and time to degree. Curricular reform efforts are guided by the AAC&U *Principles of Excellence* to make excellence inclusive, to connect knowledge with choices and action, to foster civic, intercultural and ethical learning and to assess students' ability to apply learning to complex problems. The multi-year project focuses on the implementation of a new University

Studies Program and the creation of a learning environment in which students of all backgrounds can be successful.

**RATIONALE:** The institution-wide change represented in this project centers on the need for a more cohesive undergraduate experience to foster greater efficiency in terms of less time to degree, less average credits to degree, enhanced educational quality, and increased success for all students. The University Studies Program represents a shift in curriculum design from a distributive general education model to a more quality and cohesive and integrated learning experience supported by numerous high impact practices, such as freshman seminars, learning communities, community engagement projects, inquiry-based synthesis projects and capstone experiences. New partnerships will be formed across the campus where faculty and staff plan integrated experiences. The curricular change is also a response to concerns raised during two prior Higher Learning Commission reviews. The outcomes of the project represent a continuation of several key campus initiatives identified in the Academic Program Plan focusing on retention and curriculum reform and is guided by the LEAP guiding principles.

**PROJECT OUTCOMES:** The three-year project consists of four main outcomes, one each for faculty development, academic learning support, the assessment of student learning, and the review of degree requirements. Each outcome promotes the mission of UW Oshkosh, which includes an “inclusive learning environment, the centrality of student and faculty interactions, and preparing students with the integrative learning skills, and practical skills needed to succeed in and contribute to a rapidly changing society.”

**Outcome A: Professional Development of Faculty** - This is a key component of the project. Activities will assist faculty in integrating pedagogies of engagement, designing assessments, and the transitioning of existing courses to fit the new University Studies curricular model which will be intentional in connecting knowledge with action, and engaging in big questions about intercultural

knowledge, sustainability, and civic engagement.

**Outcome B: Student Support** - Academic and student support services will review their services based on the new University Studies Program curriculum in gateway courses. Underserved students, including transfer students, will receive customized services to meet distinct needs identified through assessment, data collection and the ongoing monitoring of student progress. This will support each student's plan of study for achieving the essential learning outcomes and will also serve to assess student progress.

**Outcome C: Assessment** - To monitor the student success pathways of all students at the University, the Assessment Committee will create a new assessment plan to inform the campus community regarding the relationship between diversity and excellence, representational equity, and the achievement of select student populations. Additionally, the plan will provide evidence for curricular decision-making based on student achievement of the university learning outcomes. Student achievement of the essential learning outcomes is at the core of the assessment processes.

**Outcome D: Curriculum Review**-Revised degree requirements and coherent degree programs will assist students to complete their degree program on time and within the 120-credit requirement, thus increasing quality. The implementation of the new University Studies Program will provide clear coursework expectations and requirements that should support a variety of degree programs that are both effective and efficient.

The UW Oshkosh community is engaged in a comprehensive and collaborative process of campus-wide curricular reform, demonstrating the collective will, stamina and competence to enact institutional change.

## **Proposed Timeline**

### Spring 2013

Meet with governance groups (CAS, PAS, UPlan, and Exec. Committees of Senates)  
Overview of new HLC pathway/process  
Explain Quality Initiative Proposal-Curriculum Reform/ Time & credits to degree  
Seek campus endorsement of proposal  
Submit Quality Initiative Proposal to HLC  
Attend HLC Annual meeting for additional training

### Summer 2013

**Receive HLC approval of Quality Initiative proposal**

### Fall 2013

Gather information about progress on Quality Initiative proposal goals  
Gather baseline data related to QI proposal outcomes  
Inventory current evidence based on new accreditation criteria  
Create campus teams based on criteria  
Provide overview/training on new criteria & process for campus teams

### Spring 2014

Establish infrastructure: workgroup or use existing committee structure and chairs  
Continue to educate campus community on new process  
Create electronic portfolio for evidence  
QI project: Continue to review progress on goals  
Continue data collection for QI project  
Collect evidence for review portfolio  
Attend HLC annual meeting

### Fall 2014

QI project: Continue to review progress on goals  
Continue data collection for QI project  
Collect evidence for review portfolio  
Workshops for HLC team  
Continue to gather evidence for Quality Initiative Report  
Continue to build evidence for 10-year report portfolio

### Spring 2015

QI project: Continue to review progress on goals  
Continue data collection for QI project  
Collect evidence for review portfolio  
Examine evidence and organize 10-year HLC report  
Continue to build evidence collection for portfolio  
Campus discussions on criteria/evidence/concerns/planning  
Team to HLC annual meeting

### Fall 2015

QI project: Continue to review progress on goals

Continue data collection for QI project

Collect evidence for review portfolio

#### **Prepare DRAFT Quality Initiative report to HLC**

Continue to write draft 10-year report

Build evidence collection for portfolio

Campus conversations on findings of self-study

### Spring 2016

#### **Submit Quality Initiative report to HLC**

Continue to write 10-year report

Build evidence collection for portfolio

Begin logistics/Plan for 10-year onsite visit

Prepare evidence submissions for portfolio

HLC team attend annual meeting

### Fall 2016

Prepare campus community for onsite review

#### **Submit 10-year report to HLC**

Plan for 10-year onsite visit

Prepare final evidence submissions for portfolio

### Spring 2017

Plan for 10-year onsite visit

Prepare final evidence submissions for portfolio

#### **CAMPUS VISIT**

#### **HLC Criteria-<http://www.nca.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-and-core-components>**

**I. Mission-**The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

**II. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct-**The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

**III. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support-**The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

**IV. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement-**The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

**V. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness-**The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.