



February 22, 2016

Dr. Daniel Bradley
President
Indiana State University
200 North 7th Street
Terre Haute, IN 47809-9989

Dear President Bradley:

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Indiana State University'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, Mary Vanis at mvanis@hlcommission.org.

The Higher Learning Commission

Enclosure



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

Date of Review: 1/25/20016

Name of Institution: Indiana State University

State: Indiana

Institutional ID: 1191

Reviewers:

Dr. Rick Mihalevich, Dean of Institutional Research and Planning, State Technical College of Missouri

Dr. Maura Abrahamson, Chair of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Morton College

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:

X The Quality Initiative proposal demonstrates acceptable scope and significance.

The Quality Initiative proposal does not demonstrate acceptable scope and significance.

Rationale and Comments:

ISU provides sufficient evidence of how this Initiative will impact the institution and academic quality. References to mission and vision statements are clear and aligned with the proposal. The Quality Initiative also connects to ISU's Pathways to Success Strategic Plan. The University builds on previous initiatives that provide a strong foundation for success in implementation of this proposal.

The University has seen a growth in enrollment, especially with underprepared and lower income students, a move to performance-based funding which has driven down funding and impacted the budget, and the establishment of linkages between two state need-based aid programs and the achievement of student milestones with regard to credit hour achievement. These factors directly impact the need for the University to focus on increasing persistence and retention and decreasing time to degree completion. Furthermore, as earlier initiatives were not successful in altering the 4 and 6 year-completion rate, which hover around 20% and 40% respectively, undertaking curricular change seems to be justifiable at this juncture. With buy-in and support from all sectors of the University, the Initiative has the potential for significantly impacting academic quality.

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 proposal has clear purpose and measureable goals that have sufficient scope and intended outcomes are also provided. The scope of evaluation component provided is a strength.

ISU explains that the QI aligns with the focus on teaching, the quality of the learning environment, the commitment to improving the community--all intrinsic to its mission and vision. It is also a campus-wide initiative. The purpose of the Initiative is to increase completion rates. The University has carefully outlined the Degree Structure Redesign project, Math Pathways, and Outcomes and Competency Based Curriculum Redesign project, each of which directly impacts student success.

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 proposal indicates that the Board of Trustees and President are committed, the strategic plan is aligned with proposal goals, and key stakeholder groups have been identified. Resources have been committed and alignment of responsibilities and resources appears to be sufficient. ISU admits, however, that the Initiative is “inherently risky”; faculty are often resistant to curricular change. In order to ensure that faculty do support the goals as stated in the proposal, it will be important to ensure that they are actively engaged in the QI, every step of the way. If this turns into an initiative driven and implemented by the administration, it will not be successful. Furthermore, while relieving faculty of their other institutional responsibilities may be helpful, there should be other incentives built in as well. For example, offering professional development opportunities, further release time, and perhaps financial incentives will also motivate faculty to become involved and maintain a commitment to the 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:

The timeline is consistent with purpose and goals and appears to be aligned with institutional priorities as described in this proposal; the exception being the integration within the timeline of formative and summative evaluations described in sections 4 and 5. Also, the timeline, while detailed, does not include specifically targeted dates, which should be embedded as the University progresses with this project. Overall, the timeline appears to be reasonable.

The College has done a nice job aligning the QI with two other projects (Community Engagement and Experiential Learning Outcomes and Career Readiness Skills), recognizing the connection between these initiatives. The three parts to the QI are aligned with the Career Readiness project in the timeline.

5. General Observations and Recommended Modifications:

This is a major project for the University and, if successful, has the potential for improving completion rates and ensuring student success. ISU should be commended for making a decision to adhere to an inclusive policy with regard to admission standards while focusing on increasing retention and completion rates.

As with any large project, the University will need to stay on track with the proposed plan, refine target dates, and find ways of enlisting the support and engagement of various stakeholders, such as faculty. Collecting and analyzing data at strategic times during the development and implementation phase will help the University to identify opportunities for change or improvement.

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)

