



# HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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June 23, 2022

Dr. Joseph Harroz  
President  
University of Oklahoma  
660 Parrington Oval  
Evans 110  
Norman, Oklahoma 73019-3073

Dear President Harroz,

Attached is the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review evaluation information. University of Oklahoma'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](mailto:kbijak@hlcommission.org)) or Pat Newton-Curran ([pnewton@hlcommission.org](mailto:pnewton@hlcommission.org)).

***Higher Learning Commission***



## Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

### Panel Review and Recommendation Form

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The Quality Initiative panel review process confirms or questions the institution's effort in undertaking the Quality Initiative Proposal approved by HLC. 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.

Submit the final report as a Word document to HLC at [hlcommission.org/upload](https://hlcommission.org/upload). Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the report is sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name for the report should follow this format: QI Report Review <Name of Institution>.

**Name of Institution:** University of Oklahoma

**State:** OK

**Institutional ID:** 1642

**Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):** Dr. Stephanie Bulger, Vice Chancellor, Instructional Services, San Diego CC District and Dr. Tami Eggleston, Provost, McKendree University

**Date:** June 10, 2022

### 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)

### **Seriousness of the undertaking.**

The University of Oklahoma worked on reviewing the annual faculty evaluation processes. This project fits in with the OU Lead On Strategic Plan “to facilitate outcomes and goals related to success of students, faculty, the university, and the community.” The Quality Initiative Project (QIP) examined peer aspirational institutions to evaluate their annual evaluation system.

The findings suggested that most institutions evaluated faculty based on the three main criteria of research, teaching, and service.

OU developed a comprehensive campus team and selected 11 peer institutions, research assistants gathered publicly available information, a questionnaire was developed, and the findings from the survey and/or interviews were coded and summarized.

### **Initiative scope and impact.**

OU was committed to determining some benchmark information. It appears that it was challenging to gather all of the information from other institutions as this process varies across institutions and across divisions/schools/departments at institutions. No significant changes occurred but future revisions of the faculty evaluation process may take place now that more information has been gathered.

### **Commitment and engagement in the initiative.**

There appeared to be good engagement with this initiative and there was involvement from provosts, faculty fellows, associate provost, institutional research, director of the center for excellence, faculty senate chair, and graduate students. There appeared to be a good number of people involved, but the fact that no significant changes resulted could be due to some changes in leadership, a desire to change a difficult process, and of course some of this work was taking place during COVID.

### **Adequate resource provision.**

The OU QIP did not need many financial resources, but needs people committed. The report suggests that people “contributed enthusiastically to the project.” The report finds that many institutions struggle with centralization to standardize the process and still allow for the divisions/departments to meet their needs. There was a difference in who, what, when, and how the reviews are completed across institutions and even within institutions. There was also an interesting suggestion about how the teacher evaluations are rated in terms of satisfactory/unsatisfactory to a more detailed categories of excellent to poor.

Even though this project did not require many direct financial costs, the project will continue to need personnel and OU has listed specific findings they will implement in the future. OU specifically states that it proposes to gather feedback on the project from the various internal stakeholders. There appears to be a commitment to continue the work started in the QIP.