



June 27, 2022

Dr. Hugh Sherman  
President  
Ohio University  
Cutler Hall  
Athens, Ohio 45701

Dear President Sherman:

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Ohio 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](mailto:kbijak@hlcommission.org)) or Pat Newton-Curran ([pnewton@hlcommission.org](mailto:pnewton@hlcommission.org)). For any questions about your Quality Initiative, contact Dr. Tom Bordenkircher at [tbordenkircher@hlcommission.org](mailto:tbordenkircher@hlcommission.org).

***The Higher Learning Commission***

# Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

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Date of Review: 20 June 2022

Name of Institution: Ohio University State: OH

Institutional ID: 1589

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Dr. Margaret Healy, Professor Emerita, University of North Dakota and Ms. Jessica Ickes, Vice President for Compliance and Accreditation, Florida Institute of Technology

## Review Categories and Findings

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### 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 2–3 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 university's QIP proposal clearly defines the significance and scope of the QIP to scale up an on-going successful initiative to all academic programs. The QIP proposal aligns with the university's long-standing mission, is connected to on-going planning processes, and expands the implementation of an already successful initiative. Successful implementation has the potential to be transformative for students.

### 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 QIP is clear in describing the purpose of the initiative, to scale up a currently successful Guarantee+ Graduation Plan initiative. The proposal outlines three clear outcomes, overarching goals and metrics, and an evaluation plan. The university is encouraged to develop a communication plan for all target audiences [faculty, staff, students and parents] as they implement the Guarantee+ Graduation Plan initiative. The reviewers found the proposal used many acronyms and local vocabulary that were not familiar to us; it is likely that students and their parents may have a similar problem unless the concepts are explained in more colloquial language. The communication plan also could be used to inform faculty and staff about changes that may impact their work.

### **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 President has identified this initiative as his highest priority and there has been commitment from university leadership and the campus community. Human, financial, and technological resources are in place and continue to be committed to this initiative. A pilot was conducted in 2020 which informed the planning for more expansive implementation and the university has already committed more than two million dollars and more than 40 staff members to the implementation.

### **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 and based on milestones that have already been completed. The intended purpose and goals are clear and the benefit of scaling the plan up to all programs through this QIP has been well articulated.

## General Observations and Recommended Modifications

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Panel members may provide considerations and suggested modifications that the institution should note related to its proposed Quality Initiative.

This is a really exciting initiative and the reviewers were excited to see that the university was using momentum that it already had for this initiative to continue to expand it through the QIP. It is clearly a student forward initiative that has the potential to continue to be impactful to the university's undergraduates. Well done!

The reviewers would encourage the university to be thoughtful in how they communicate about Guarantee+ Graduation Plan to insure that all constituencies understand what it entails and its benefits.

## Conclusion

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- 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

*(HLC staff will add this section if the recommendation is for resubmission.)*