

November 29, 2023

Dr. Steven J. Robinson
President
Lansing Community College
600 N. Grand Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear President Robinson,

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Lansing Community College'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) or Pat Newton-Curran (pnewton@hlcommission.org).

Higher Learning Commission



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Panel Review and Recommendation Form

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. 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: Lansing Community College

State: Michigan

Institutional ID: 1338

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):

Anne Drougas, Associate Dean (Interim), Brennan School of Business Dominican University of Illinois

Nicholas Santilli, Professor of Psychology (Emeritus), John Carroll University

Date: 21 November 2023

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)

The Quality Initiative at Lansing Community College (LCC) aimed to establish a comprehensive culture of assessment by incorporating a formal cocurricular assessment process into existing plans. The initiative successfully achieved four out of eight objectives, including the development of a cocurricular assessment plan, template, handbook, and establishing a review cycle. However, unexpected challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and turnover in the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI), hindered the completion of two objectives related to reviewing tools and creating a non-credit transcript. Despite these challenges, the committee made modifications, created the ACCESS program to replace TRIO, and adopted a long-term goal for the non-credit transcript. The subcommittee collaborated with programs like the Leadership Academy and library-based information literacy training to conduct assessments and collected student success data. The project resulted in effective processes for cocurricular student learning assessment, with plans to extend assessments annually and create a webpage highlighting cocurricular programs. The Director of Assessment and Accreditation Liaison Officer have begun collaborating on assessment plans for the Athletic Director and the Kinesiology program. Future plans include presenting an update report to the Academic Senate, developing assessment plans for additional programs, and implementing a communications plan to inform College constituencies of progress and plans. It is our finding that this project confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution as evidenced by the four areas highlighted in the QIR Review:

Seriousness of the undertaking: Lansing Community College (LCC) has demonstrated a serious commitment to its Quality Initiative project, focusing on the development and implementation of a cocurricular assessment process. Beginning with the Academic Senate's approval of a definition for "cocurricular" in March 2019, which emphasized activities enhancing the educational experience and connecting students to the college and community, LCC outlined its goals. The Cocurricular Team, a subcommittee of CASL, took charge after the approval of the Quality Initiative Proposal in June 2020, working with five diverse cocurricular programs to develop assessment tools. The Director of Assessment collaborated with program leaders to align assessment procedures with student learning outcomes, recognizing the distinction between academic and student support cocurricular programs. While academic programs like the library support for Composition I and the Leadership Academy smoothly developed assessment plans, challenges arose with student support programs due to remote college activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and turnover in leadership. To address these issues, LCC incorporated the Cardio Exercise program and employed a Special Services Contractor within the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) to compile demographic data and create assessment plans. Despite challenges, the Cocurricular Team provided guidance through documents like the Cocurricular Student Learning Assessment Handbook and Cocurricular Assessment Design and Planning guide, disseminated through the CASL webpage.

To communicate progress and next steps, a comprehensive communications plan, including reports to the Academic Senate, was established. Despite the unexpected challenges of the pandemic and leadership turnover, programs like the library support, Leadership Academy, and Cardio Exercise program persevered, collecting valuable data. The student support cocurricular programs in ODI faced difficulties, but a strategic approach, involving a Special Services Contractor, aims to overcome obstacles with data collection planned for fall 2023. Recognizing the digital preferences of students post-pandemic, LCC opted for a webpage instead of a handbook to provide cocurricular information. In summary, LCC's thorough approach to cocurricular assessment, despite challenges, showcases its dedication to enhancing the educational experience and fostering student success.

Lansing Community College's (LCC) Quality Initiative project is closely aligned with the college's **strategic planning process**, serving as a pivotal step in advancing the institution's culture of assessment. The project's primary impact has been the establishment of a formal process for assessing student learning within cocurricular programs. Recognizing the need for a consistent approach to cocurricular assessment, the initiative ensures not only the quality of programs in supporting student success but also provides a basis for comparing programs, similar to the program review process for academic programs. By integrating cocurricular assessment into the broader framework of continuous quality improvement, LCC now has formal processes in place for assessing both general education and cocurricular programs. This aligns seamlessly with ongoing efforts to correlate course learning outcomes with program and institutional learning outcomes. The initiative facilitates the recognition and enhancement of ways in which cocurricular programs contribute to academic success in corresponding curricula. The intentional correlation of cocurricular assessment with various measures of student success, including course learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, Essential Learning Outcomes, and measures of persistence, retention, and completion, enhances the ability to ensure that cocurricular programs effectively support curricula across the College.

Looking ahead, the initiative positions LCC to address the impact of cocurricular programs on student success in academic programs more effectively. It fosters a heightened focus on ensuring that cocurricular programs align with and support student learning outcomes, whether within the cocurricular program itself or in conjunction with course, program, or institutional learning outcomes. The Committee for Assessing Student Learning (CASL) plays a key role in utilizing the assessment template to gather comparable, though not necessarily identical, data for various cocurricular programs. This standardized approach enables meaningful conversations about the contributions of these programs, such as ACCESS and Men About Progress, allowing for a deeper understanding of their effectiveness. The creation of a full-time support position underscores the commitment to thorough and comprehensive assessment work, ensuring the successful integration of cocurricular assessment into LCC's strategic planning and improvement processes.

Initiative Scope and Impact: Lansing Community College's (LCC) Quality Initiative project demonstrates an impressive scope and initiative in addressing the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) criteria for continuous improvement. Despite facing unforeseen challenges, such as the unprecedented disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the unanticipated turnover in the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI), LCC exhibited resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity. The pandemic posed significant obstacles, diverting attention to essential functions like transitioning courses online and resulting in minimal student participation in certain programs during remote periods. The commitment to addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges amid ongoing turnover underscores LCC's dedication to fulfilling its strategic plan.

The decision to include pilot groups affiliated with ODI, despite facing turnover challenges, aligns with LCC's commitment to diversity efforts. The creation of a similar program, ACCESS, to replace the federally-funded TRIO program, and the assignment of a Special Services Contractor as an assessment coordinator for ACCESS and LUCERO demonstrate the institution's proactive measures in stabilizing programs crucial to serving the community. While facing a lesser challenge related to technical issues in implementing a non-credit transcript, LCC remains forward-thinking in recognizing the primary opportunity stemming from the project's success—a formalized process guiding cocurricular programs and distinguishing them from extracurricular activities.

Furthermore, the project's success has opened doors for the LCC Stars Athletics program to explore its connection with the Kinesiology/Professional Fitness Leader program, showcasing the potential for identifying specific aspects of athletics linked to active curriculum and Essential Learning Outcomes. This aligns with LCC's commitment to actual assessment of student learning, a fundamental aspect of their definition of a cocurricular program. Overall, LCC's Quality Initiative project not only overcame challenges but also seized opportunities, establishing a robust cocurricular assessment process that aligns with continuous improvement goals and positions the institution for future success.

Commitment to and Engagement in the Initiative: The **commitment** to the Quality Initiative project at Lansing Community College is evident through the dedicated involvement of key individuals who have been actively engaged in the initiative since its proposal acceptance. The core team, led by the Director of Assessment, includes key figures such as the Chair of CASL, ALO, Ombudsperson/Director of the Leadership Academy, Online Learning Librarian, and eLearning Course Management System Instructional Design Specialist. Despite personnel changes, including departures, the team persisted in their efforts and even expanded their scope by incorporating the long-standing Cardio Exercise program within the Health & Human Services Division. Notably, ODI's addition of a Special Services Contractor emphasizes the ongoing commitment to identifying cocurricular learning outcomes for student support programs.

The **engagement** in this initiative is apparent through the diversity of perspectives brought by the various cocurricular programs involved. From the Leadership Academy's unique approach to leadership development to the library's partnership with faculty to enhance student success in specific courses, each program demonstrates a commitment to the multifaceted impact of cocurricular activities. The Cardio Exercise program's focus on improving student learning through data-driven interventions and its wide application across various courses underscore the initiative's pedagogical significance. CASL's Chair sees value in the cocurricular assessment process for its potential to connect stakeholders and make cocurricular activities more meaningful for students, while the Director of Assessment emphasizes the initiative's potential to strengthen connections between cocurricular and academic programs. The ALO underscores the initiative's worth in aligning with HLC's criteria for accreditation and formalizing the process, contributing to the overall culture of assessment at the college. Collectively, the commitment and engagement demonstrated by the project team highlight the dedication to continuous improvement and student success at Lansing Community College.

Adequate Resource Provision: Lansing Community College (LCC) demonstrated a strategic allocation of resources for its Quality Initiative project, leveraging existing assessment processes and utilizing personnel already in charge of participating programs. The Director of Assessment, members of CASL, the ALO, and leaders of cocurricular programs seamlessly integrated the initiative into their regular responsibilities. The commitment to continue supporting the initiative within existing roles underscores the efficient use of human resources. Recognizing the need for additional support in addressing concerns related to inconsistent processes, a new full-time support position was created. This position is specifically designed to assist the Director of Assessment in expanding cocurricular program assessment and ensuring the quality, consistency, and comparability of assessment data. The establishment of this support position signifies a proactive response to identified challenges, emphasizing the importance of maintaining rigorous assessment processes.

Additionally, LCC identified key areas of improvement, such as inconsistent alignment between student learning outcomes of cocurricular programs and Essential Learning Outcomes. The acknowledgment of this misalignment and the creation of intentional program goals and objectives demonstrate a commitment to addressing deficiencies in cocurricular programming. The challenge of conveying the importance of intentional planning for cocurricular assessment across the college highlights the need for ongoing education and communication. LCC's commitment to addressing these challenges through the creation of a dedicated position to oversee cocurricular assessment processes indicates a strategic investment in human resources to ensure consistency and meaningful assessment. This approach aligns with the understanding that effective cocurricular assessment requires careful planning, intentional program goals, and alignment with institutional outcomes for a comprehensive and purposeful evaluation of student success.

Conclusion: The panel confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution to engage in a Quality Initiative that leads to continuous improvement. The institution recognized the need for a consistent approach to cocurricular assessment and responded proactively by integrating existing assessment processes and personnel into the initiative. Despite unforeseen challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and turnover in key leadership positions, LCC exhibited resilience and adaptability, showcasing a commitment to student success and program improvement. The project's scope and initiative are underscored by the commitment of key individuals, including the Director of Assessment, members of CASL, the ALO, and program leaders, who seamlessly integrated the initiative into their regular responsibilities. The creation of a new full-time support position further demonstrates LCC's commitment to addressing concerns, ensuring the quality, consistency, and comparability of cocurricular assessment data.

In addition, the identification of areas for improvement, such as misalignment between program outcomes and Essential Learning Outcomes, signifies a genuine effort to enhance cocurricular programming. Moreover, the development of significant artifacts, the Cocurricular Assessment Design and Planning document, and the Cocurricular Student Learning Assessment Handbook, exemplifies LCC's commitment to transparency and sharing best practices. These documents provide practical guidance for faculty and staff, fostering a culture of assessment and continuous improvement. LCC's willingness to share these artifacts with other institutions and the consideration of a conference presentation demonstrate a genuine commitment to contributing to the broader educational community, reinforcing the institution's dedication to continuous improvement in cocurricular assessment practices.

One shortcoming of the project is the limited integration of technology resources, as highlighted by the delayed implementation of a non-credit transcript due to technical challenges. In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, this shortfall may impact the project's ability to efficiently track and communicate cocurricular accomplishments for students, potentially hindering the overall effectiveness of the initiative.