



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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July 19, 2022

Dr. Thomas Ramage
President
Parkland College
2400 W. Bradley Avenue
Champaign, Illinois 61821-1899

Dear President Ramage,

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Parkland 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 hlccommission.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: Parkland College

State: IL

Institutional ID: 1138

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Kristin L. Mallory, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Wor-Wic Community College; Patrick Oliver, Director and Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Cedarville University

Date: 7/15/2022

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)

The College's Quality Initiative focused on improving aspects of their organizational culture around customer service to students and campus visitors. The institution approached the initiative through a pilot project lead by eager departments willing to provide feedback on the pilot to address organizational culture. The project was organized into three phases, with the first phase focusing on improving customer service processes, the second phase included training for front-line staff, and the third evaluated the physical space of the college. The pilot involved a wide range of office areas including employees from community education, marketing, assessment, financial aid, foundation, business office, admissions, president's office, human resources, learning commons and the bookstore.

Through the second phase of the initiative, 39 staff completed the customer service training using LinkedIn Learning. The institution found that less than half of those who participated reported a key takeaway from the training resulting in a less than desirable outcome. The third phase of the initiative involved campus and office visits by employees and community members to identify ways to improve campus navigation. Areas visited included admissions, advising, assessment center, cashier's office, and financial aid.

The College implemented change related to the lesson's learned from the office visits including changing processes for alternative loan acknowledgement, ESL assessment, improving payroll reports and graduation processes, streamlining employee tuition waivers and marketing project processes. These immediate changes because of the initiative demonstrate the College's commitment to the project's focus on quality improvement. Employees from multiple areas included administrators, frontline supervisors, support staff, and student employees.

The College was able to complete the initiatives with minimal expenditure of institutional funds. The most significant expense was attributed to human capital, with staff devoting time for the process mapping, customer service training, and office visits. The College utilized technology resources to support the initiative including the license for LinkedIn Learning and providing lunches in appreciation of the campus visitor feedback work.

The intent of the College was to work through the pilot project process to build support for improved customer service and the organizational culture rather than create an immediate college-wide implementation. The College has continued its work to improve signage and navigation around the campus to create a more user-friendly environment. Additional departments will engage in project mapping exercises to address processes that had been identified for improvement.