



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative Proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.

Christopher M. Caldwell

06/01/2020

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

Christopher M. Caldwell, Interim President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

College of Menominee Nation

Name of Institution

Keshena, WI

City and State

The institution completes the Quality Initiative Proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words. The institution may choose to submit a brief implementation plan or supplemental charts or graphs as appendices to the template. The Quality Initiative Proposal will be accepted beginning September 1 of Year 5. It is due no later than June 1 of Year 7.

Submit the proposal as a PDF file to hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Pathways/Quality Initiative" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. Submission file names should utilize the following format: QIProposal[InstitutionName][State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a title and brief description of the Quality Initiative. Explain whether the initiative will begin and be completed during the Quality Initiative period or if it is part of work already in progress or will achieve a key milestone in the work of a longer initiative.

Title: Improving College of Menominee Nation's Policy Structure

Context: The College of Menominee Nation (CMN) is one of more than 30 tribal colleges and universities located between the Midwest and the West Coast. Chartered by the Menominee People in 1994, CMN now serves about 250 Native and non-Native students supported by 95 faculty and administrative, and staff members. CMN's Board of Directors and President lead the College, with the Board appointing an interim president in February 2020 (See <http://www.menominee.edu/news2.aspx?id=1972>)

The College was chartered by a sovereign nation, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, and therefore, CMN is not subject to state-level higher education policies. Because our students receive federal financial aid in the form of Pell Grants, CMN is subject to compliance with certain U.S. Department of Education policies, including Title IV and Title IX. Due to tribal sovereignty, other federal policies, such as the Civil Rights Act (Arnold, 2015), does not apply to tribal colleges and universities. For example, under tribal laws, tribal members receive hiring preference.

Pathway Transition: CMN transitioned from the AQIP Pathway to the Open Pathway in September 2018. CMN formed the HLC Accreditation Steering Committee in early 2019 to guide reaffirmation of accreditation activities. CMN's transition map provides these deadlines: (1) The Quality Initiative Proposal is due June 1, 2020, (b) the Quality Initiative Report is due June 1, 2022, and the Comprehensive Evaluation is scheduled for 2022-2023. Due to the transition from the AQIP Pathway to the Open Pathway, CMN's Quality Initiative will span two years rather than four years. Therefore, the scope of this initiative reflects the shortened timeline.

Quality Improvement Initiatives: Four years ago, CMN overhauled its academic and student support services (i.e. academic support, admissions, advising, enrollment, financial aid, and student billing) program review standards, processes, and procedures. Faculty are now working on general education revisions. As part of an extended Achieving the Dream project, all non-instructional units are developing key performance indicators (KPIs) to advance student success. In addition, CMN is in the early stages of preparing for online program approval, which will impact current academic and nonacademic policies. Affected academic policies were identified a year ago. Nonacademic policies related to online learning have yet to be formally addressed.

Another aspect of continuous quality improvement that fits with these academic and nonacademic initiatives is strengthening the policy structure. The policy structure defined here is a series of cyclical processes within the structure, including (a) identifying or averting a problem, (b) determining a policy response to the problem, (b) implementing the policy, and (d) evaluating policy outcomes (Scott, 2017). This Initiative addresses this need.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

2. Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.

The scope of this initiative impacts CMN's main decision-making bodies: Board of Directors, Board of Directors' Committees, Senior Leadership, Faculty Committee, Committee on Academic Quality, and Deans and Directors Council. Further, the HLC Accreditation Steering Committee provides guidance to the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and makes recommendations to the relevant decision-making bodies. The Faculty Committee, Committee on Academic Quality, and the Deans

and Directors Council represent CMN’s commitment to shared governance. See Appendix A for current responsibilities and representation.

This Initiative begins to address is CMN’s overall policy structure because the current structure lacks clarity and cohesiveness. First, CMN has not clearly defined academic versus nonacademic policies. Second, the current policy template needs revision because it does not adequately address problem identification, whether reactive or proactive, and policy outcomes (i.e., are policies effective in addressing problems). Third, because CMN does not have a policy approval flowchart, policy writers and members of the approval bodies are often unsure of the approval process. To illustrate, what policies is the Faculty Committee responsible for versus the Committee on Academic Quality? In another example, which committee is responsible for student support policies—the Committee on Academic Quality or the Deans and Directors? In yet another example, which policies should flow through to final approval by the Board of Directors—day-to-day management policies or high-level policies?

Another issue this initiative will address is CMN’s current lack of transparency. Existing policy documents are scattered across various platforms or residing with individuals who wrote the policy, leaving stakeholders unsure if a certain policy is in place or if they have the most current version. Also, stakeholders such as students and community members do not have public access to CMN’s policies.

3. Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic quality.

For decades now, CMN has focused on assessment of student learning and related academic policies. We have not yet explicitly addressed how nonacademic policies impact academic quality. There is some tacit understanding that finance policies or IT policies, for instance, affect student success but to date these understandings have not been explicated. Further, CMN claims to be a student-centered organization and in many ways, we are, but in other ways we fall short. Perhaps, as the policy template is revised we may need sections on how a specific policy proposal serves CMN’s mission and ensures decisions are student-centered.

The relevance of this initiative to CMN relates to equity for stakeholders, especially students, evidence-based decision making, and organizational planning. These factors will help CMN advance the effectiveness of its commitment to advancing a culture of quality and make continued progress toward being a truly student-centered organization.

Clarity of the Initiative’s Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The overall purpose of this project is to improve CMN’s current policy structure. The goals align with the four processes within the structure identified earlier:

Goal 1: Improve current problem identification or proactive problem aversion process based not solely on the problem but also the structure of the system.

- Goal 2: Improve policy response process.
- Goal 3: Improve policy implementation process.
- Goal 4: Improve policy outcome evaluation.

The goals, related activities, appropriate decision makers, and a timeline are presented in Appendix B.

5. Select up to three main topics that will be addressed by the initiative.

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|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advising | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Retention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Environment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum | <input type="checkbox"/> Persistence and Completion | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Success |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Pedagogy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Underserved Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-Year Programs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality Improvement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Policy Making |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Education | | |

6. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments and determine what has been accomplished.

The ALO will monitor and evaluate progress of the Initiative based on the goals, activities, and timeline as presented in Appendix B. CMN often uses problem-change reports to monitor initiative or project progress and related adjustments. The ALO will maintain a problem-change report for this Initiative. Problem-change reports will be shared with the relevant decision makers during their regular meetings and adjustments will be made in collaboration with these decision makers. The Initiative in the short-term will be considered a success based on completion of activities and survey responses. Short-term sustainability of the Initiative is beyond the scope of this proposal but will be reported in the comprehensive evaluation.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

7. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.

Based on options discussed by the HLC Accreditation Steering Committee in its June 2019 meeting, issues related to policy making rose to the surface. On February 18, 2020 through a formal motion, the Deans & Directors Council, which includes faculty representation, endorsed an outline of this initiative. The Committee on Academic Quality and Senior Leadership informally endorsed the

initiative. Note: Most members of Senior Leadership also serve on the Deans & Directors Council. The President's signature represents his support.

8. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.

The ALO is responsible for overall coordination of the initiative. With guidance from the HLC Accreditation Steering Committee, the ALO will present outputs to the relevant decision-making bodies. The ALO will seek endorsement of these outputs: definition of academic vs. nonacademic policies, gap analysis, revised policy template, policy approval flowchart, responsible parties, sunset review schedule, public access, communication plan, and evaluation plan. In collaboration with the main decision-making bodies, the ALO will ensure activities are conducted as outlined in the timeline. See Attachment A for decision-making bodies involved in the initiative.

9. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.

Human Resources: The ALO is the coordinator for this initiative. Her current title is Academic Affairs Special Projects Coordinator and works part-time (24 hours/per week) reporting to the Interim Chief Academic Officer for academic affairs matters and to the President for accreditation matters. As of January 2020, 75% of her responsibilities are devoted to ongoing accreditation matters such as completing substantive change requests and annual institutional updates, facilitating the quality initiative, and preparing for the comprehensive evaluation. The remaining 25% of her time is split between updating Institutional Review Board policies and procedures, Committee service and tasks, and minor projects.

CMN offers a B.A. in Public Administration. Prospective graduates are required to participate in a 3-credit internship. The ALO will recruit an intern to assist with the initiative.

Because the initiative works within the current decision-making bodies, all other faculty, staff and administrative time and effort will be in-kind.

Financial Resources: This initiative can be completed with no additional financial support.

Technological Resources: This initiative can be completed within the current technological structure, including Google Shared Drives and CMN's website.

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

(The institution may include a brief implementation or action plan.)

10. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline for implementing them.

See Appendix B

References

Arnold, G. S. (2015). Employment law in Indian country: Finding the private-action jurisdictional hook is not easy. *The Federal Lawyer*, 3-85.

Scott, P. (2017). Policy process in higher education. In J.C. Shin, & P. Teixeira (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of international higher education systems and institutions*. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9553-1_151-1

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. ANA Administration for Native Americans. (2014). *American Indians and Alaska Natives – The trust responsibility*. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ana/resource/american-indians-and-alaska-natives-the-trust-responsibility>

Appendix A

CMN's Decision-Making Bodies Purpose & Representation

Board of Directors

Board-level oversight as stipulated in the College Charter is provided by seven Directors. Those serving on the Board are enrolled members of the Menominee Tribe and appointed by the tribal legislature.

Board members are fiduciaries and perform their duties for the benefit of the College. The Board as a body has the authority to establish the policies that govern the College within the limits imposed by the Menominee Tribal Constitution and the CMN Charter. Specific powers of the Board that are relevant here include, but are not limited to the following: (a) govern and oversee the management of the College (b) delegate administrative functions to the President, and (c) approve and review policies, regulations and bylaws.

Board of Directors Committees

Board of Directors bylaws establish several committees. As part of CMN's approach to shared governance, committee membership includes faculty, administration, and staff.

Executive Committee: Responds immediately in the event of campus emergencies. In the event of an emergency, the Executive Committee has the power to act on behalf of the full Board. The committee provides reports to the full Board as necessary.

Finance and Audit Committee: Ensures financial stability and compliance with all funding source requirements, including review of financial procedures and policies and recommendations to the Board for approval.

Endowment Committee: Reviews, analyzes, and establishes investment goals and strategies for endowment funds in pursuit of a sustainable future for the College, including the development of endowment procedures and policies for recommendation to the full Board to maintain a sound investment policy.

Strategic Planning and Leading Committee: Develops, establishes and reviews an annual strategic plan.

Committee on Academics: Assists the Board in fulfilling its oversight of the College's academic programs, learning environments, support services, and related activities, including recommending action to the full Board any new programs of study as put forth by the Committee on Academic Quality, recommending action to the full Board any programs that may be put in latency (i.e., suspended), and monitor continuous improvement of academic quality.

Faculty Committee

The Faculty Committee is established to advance the vision, mission, and values of the College of Menominee Nation by: (a) Providing a regular forum for exchange and discussion of views on issues of concern to faculty; (b) Ensuring that academic freedom is encouraged and protected; (c)

Advocating for faculty viewpoints on issues where faculty are stakeholders; (d) Promoting communication between faculty and other groups on campus, (e) Facilitating faculty participation in fiscal planning and decision making; and (f) Assuring appropriate faculty participation at all levels of college governance.

Faculty Committee membership consists of all full-time and part-time faculty members. Adjunct faculty members and instructional staff are encouraged but not required to attend Faculty Committee meetings.

Committee on Academic Quality

This Committee shall study and make recommendations to the Standing Board Committee on Academics on Academic Policy, Academic Excellence, Academic Integrity, Curricula, Co-Curricula, and Assessment of Student Learning as well as serve in an advisory capacity to faculty. The Committee maintains at least 51% majority faculty representation with all faculty divisions represented. Other departments represented include the ALO and the Director of Institutional Research/Registrar.

Deans & Directors Council

Guided by the overall CMN mission and through support from the Executive Cabinet (now Senior Leadership), the Council is charged to encourage, promote, and build upon the strategic goals of the College.

The following objectives set the purpose of the Council: (a) Support and initiate the process to accomplish the clear and definable goals of the Executive Cabinet; (b) Develop and approve policies that provide effective, efficient and transparent direction to the College; (c) Build and align stakeholder relationships that meet the needs of the College; and (d) Be autonomous and visionary in order to lay the foundation of strategic management at the College.

Council membership includes the ALO, Chief of Staff, Dean of Continuing Education, Director of Retention, Director of Advancement & Enrollment, Director of Institutional Research/Registrar, Director of Library Services, Director of Public Relations, Faculty Representative, Finance Representative, Human Resources Representative, and Green Bay Campus Representative.

Senior Leadership

Senior leadership (formerly the Executive Cabinet) provides counsel to the President regarding high-level issues (e.g., response to the coronavirus pandemic), high-level policies, and budget development. Senior leadership consists of the Interim Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Staff, Dean of Continuing Education, Director of Advancement & Enrollment, and the Green Bay Site Administrator, who is also the Interim Dean of Letters & Science.

HLC Accreditation Steering Committee

This Committee provides guidance to the ALO regarding the Quality Initiative and preparations for the Comprehensive Evaluation in 2022-2023. Membership includes the Interim Chief Academic Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Staff, Dean of Continuing Education, Director of Advancement & Enrollment, Director of Retention, Faculty Chair, the Green Bay Site Administrator, who is also the Interim Dean of Letters & Science, Human Resources representative, and Director of Institutional Research/Registrar.

Appendix B
Goals, Activities, Decision Makers, & Timeline

Goals	Activities	Decision Makers	Timeline
Goal 1: Improve problem identification or aversion process			
	1a Define academic vs. nonacademic policies	Faculty Committee Committee on Academic Quality Deans & Directors	Sep. 2020
	1b Conduct gap analysis of current policies	Faculty Committee Committee on Academic Quality Deans & Directors Senior Leadership	Sep. – Nov. 2020
	1c Inform responsible parties of gaps	ALO	Dec. 2020
	1d Revisit nonacademic policy template	Deans & Directors	Nov. 2020
	1e Create academic policy template	Committee on Academic Quality	Nov. 2020
Goal 2: Improve policy response process			
	2a Create a policy approval flowchart	Faculty Committee Committee on Academic Quality Deans & Directors Senior Leadership	Oct. 2020
	2b Identify responsible parties for policy areas	Faculty Committee Committee on Academic Quality Deans & Directors Senior Leadership	Nov. 2020
	2c Create a sunset review schedule for existing policies	Faculty Committee Committee on Academic Quality Deans & Directors Senior Leadership	Dec. 2020
Goal 3: Improve policy implementation process			

	3a Identify area for public access to policies	ALO	Jan. 2021
	3b Develop a naming convention procedure for policies	ALO	Feb. 2021
	3c Create a communication plan for new or modified policies	ALO	Mar. 2021
	3d Identify staff position for sustaining initiative	Senior Leadership	Apr. 2021
Goal 4: Improve policy outcome evaluation process			
	4a Develop an evaluation plan	ALO	Sep. 2020
	4b Align, to the extent possible, with KPI development	Deans & Directors, ATD team	Ongoing
	4c Develop an internal survey regarding initiative success	ALO	Apr. 2021

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

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