



## 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.

10/5/21

*Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor*

*Date*

*Tim Hood, President*

*Printed/Typed Name and Title*

Mid Michigan College

*Name of Institution*

Harrison, Michigan

*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](http://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.

The project we intend to pursue is entitled: Development of a New Strategic Plan. Feedback from the Peer Reviewers stated that the building of a new plan is a perfunctory endeavor that each college must participate in after regular pre-defined intervals. And in some respects this is true of Mid's plan. However, Mid's plan is very much unlike anything we have done in the past and will require a broad-based self-evaluation across the college which will lead to a significant update of our vision and goals. As stated on a previous iteration of this form, Mid's previous strategic plan, Vision 2020, expired in July 2020. Since that time Mid has hired a new President. As a previous AQIP institution Mid received feedback that HLC-related processes were too centered at the top. In fact, while the previous strategic plan included multiple focus groups with a variety of constituents, the actual writing of the plan was centered in its College Council. Internal feedback indicated that this process led to a very top-down approach where goals and metrics were determined without a great deal of departmental feedback. The new process is designed to dramatically transform the process and provide departments and divisions a great opportunity to reflect on and revise their goals in the context of the new strategic plan.

The project began in the fall of 2020. Each division and department will engage in more specific plan development to address the priority areas established as part of the college's overall plan. Because it is a living document it will continue to be updated and amended throughout its entirety which ends in June 2024.

## **Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance**

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

As mentioned earlier previous iterations of the college's plan has been top-down in nature. This was discussed in feedback on previous AQIP Pathway Systems Portfolios. The College took this feedback to heart and set out to drastically change the culture of planning in general. So from this respect, the new proposed process represents far more than a new plan. It represents a significant shift in organizational planning and an opportunity to drive quality principles much further into the organization and allow for individual departments and divisions to be heavily involved in goal setting and vision building. It not only provides an opportunity for more intimate involvement on the department level, but it also provides significant training and support portions to help departments effectively engage their employees. This is a significant departure from past practice and is an attempt to create a new culture that places a higher premium on the value of long-term planning at the macro-level combined with planning on the micro-level where new visions and goals will be established, metrics will be set, progress will be reported out, and adjustments will be made. With the current process we hope to develop more general priority areas, then bring in consultants to assist individual divisions in developing their own more specific plans to address priority areas. This intent is to encourage and provide support to many more members of the campus community and engage in discussions and processes that will allow the subject-matter experts to utilize their own expertise in developing plans to address priorities and drive down strategic planning principles deeper into the organizational structure. With financial and enrollment challenges facing the college, more regular planning and evaluation based on data are needed for long-term viability.

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

The intended impact is dramatic in that it will set the strategic direction of the college for the next three years. The plan will establish strategic priorities and will set a framework for departments and divisions to build their own plans which will help build a connectedness and a sense of moving in the same direction that has been lacking. Enrollment at the college has been steadily declining since

2012. Mid is located in a high poverty area where college attainment is low. This is further impacted by the fact that graduating class numbers have been trending downward. Since the college's budget is comprised largely of tuition and fees (approximately 67%), we cannot continue to do the same things and expect different results. Goals and visions need to be updated and, in our opinion, with specifics developed at the departmental/divisional level with guidance from our various constituents. Our hope is that developing a large process in such a dramatically different way will help modify culture to focus on more regular goal setting and assessment of these goals to more appropriately respond to the challenges Mid faces. Beyond that, we hope that this plan will mark a new beginning in the way Mid plans in the future. While future plans will undoubtedly focus on different goals, our hope is that this PROCESS will serve as a model of the value of both macro and micro-level planning and the importance of regular reporting of progress and adjustment of plans to reflect the idea that they are actually a living document. That is why we believe this represents a major shift in the culture to become more focused on quality improvement throughout the organization.

In terms of academic quality, which the plan has yet to be built, the college is already heavily engaged in projects involving open educational resources, guided pathways, and remote learning. In particular, Mid has been piloting a hyflex model of instruction. Based on preliminary analysis of data collected so far, there is a major interest in maintaining flexibility in course modality that was "discovered" during the pandemic. To accomplish this we will continue to need to focus on maintaining academic quality in remote course sections will continue to be an important area particularly as we deal with COVID issues. The need for course flexibility will only increase and the plan will hopefully discuss ways that we can ensure quality and accessibility with maintaining flexibility.

## Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

### 4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The purpose of the initiative is to build a college-wide strategic plan. We began the data collection process in fall of 2020. This involved engaging Mid's College Council, which is the main shared governance committee with representatives from students and all employee groups. College Council identified and assigned a sub-committee of 13 individuals representing all employee groups. This sub-committee was co-chaired by the VP of Academic Affairs/Community Outreach and the VP of Student Services. Originally the group planned a series of forums (so intended for general audiences, some more targeted to specific groups and individuals) to discuss thoughts, directions, needs etc. However, COVID-19 restricted our ability to host in-person events. So instead the group build and distributed a survey that was sent to all employees, all registered students in the 2021 Winter semester, along with members of all departmental advisory groups, local chambers of commerce members, and recipients of our annual Connections annual report. Survey distribution began on April 26<sup>th</sup>, and closed on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The College received nearly 225 responses. At the end of the data collection process, three individuals evaluated data and group qualitative comments into themes which will be further narrowed down into priority areas. These priority areas will then be member checked by the groups who provided the initial data. After presenting the data analysis to both the College Council and the Board of Trustees, a decision was made to assign the 13-member committee the task of writing the first draft of the four priority areas (based on the Four Enduring Goals established in the previous iteration of the strategic plan). This group will be broken into four groups (one group for each enduring goal) and will be joined by members of the three employee groups that do not serve on the committee to gather as much feedback as possible while writing the priority areas (each group will consist of approximately seven individuals). Once all teams

have completed their drafts of priorities, the original 13-member committee will review the drafts and make final edits before presenting to College Council and the Board of Trustees for final approval.

Building the plan is only the first part of the overall project. After priorities have been established, Mid will contract with the Strategic Planning division of Ellucian who has already been briefed on this project. Ellucian kicked off the process for strategic plan creation for individual divisions at Mid's fall welcome back day in August. From here, monthly training sessions will be held for divisional/departmental managers throughout the fall semester. The trainings will be progressive in nature and will involve assignments that will be completed before the next scheduled session. Divisional/departmental plan development is expected to continue throughout the 2021-22 school year. Once departmental/division plans are developed, budgetary processes will be tied to implementation of the plans. This typically occurs in the spring, approximately halfway through the semester. Additionally, Institutional Research along with Information Technology will work with departments/divisions to develop data needs and establish processes for data collection. Progress on the departmental/division plans will be reported out to the campus community at the college-wide professional development day in the winter semester. At the end of the winter semester each department/division will reevaluate their plans and make necessary updates and adjustments. This is to encourage regular evaluation of the plan and solidify the concept that the plan is a living document.

While a major goal of this project is to complete the college's 3-year strategic plan, the larger goal is to change the overall culture of the institution. Previously quality initiatives were centered at the top of the organizational chart with very little focus on connecting departmental-level planning to larger institutional goals. By engaging with strategic planning experts, we hope to provide significant support to department/division managers which will aid them in engaging their own employees in the process. Our hope is that by giving voice to employees at all levels, we will build a stronger sense of ownership and leverage expertise from those that directly work with students. Additionally, we hope the process emphasizes the necessity for regular evaluation and adjustment of goals and the importance of process in establishing plans. This will make the institution more efficient in its efforts and reduce the number of projects created based purely on anecdotal observations that are not connected to the college's overall goals and plans.

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

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other:                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Education     |   |  |

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

After the plan is developed, each division will be expected to build their own strategic plans detailing how they will address the more broad priority areas identified by the feedback from all constituency groups. To aid with this effort, the college will engage consultants from Ellucian who are experts on building strategic plans. During fall Welcome Back Day in August consultants will set up a series of sessions to assist Mid managers in designing processes. This process will continue into the fall in order to provide support to each department.

Progress on plans will be reported out to the campus community during the winter semester campus-wide professional development day. At the conclusion of the academic year, departments/divisions will evaluate their plans and update/amend accordingly based on data collected through processes set up in consultation with Institutional Research and Information Technology. Any updates will be presented to College Council (shared governance committee consisting of reps from all employee groups) for review and consultation. Changes to data collection will be made in consultation with Institutional Research and Information Technology.

## **Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative**

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

It is difficult to ascertain the level of support as the final plan has yet to be developed. But in years past we have enjoyed tremendous support both internally and externally. As a corollary, Mid has regular feedback channels through our advisory boards in occupational and health fields, as well as our advisory boards representing our extended sites. Within the past decade Mid has engaged in a successful capital campaign, raising a record \$5 million for facilities. Additionally, Mid recently completed a campaign that resulted in annexation of the Mt. Pleasant School District. As part of this effort, a community perception survey was commissioned which found that 73% of residents surveyed rated Mid as "Excellent" or "Pretty Good." Furthermore, Mid presented and gathered feedback from 30 separate groups as part of our annexation efforts and the enthusiasm was generally high with a strong willingness to engage with Mid in setting future directions.

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

The Strategic Planning Sub-Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Amy Dykhouse, Career Center and Accommodations  
Lillian Frick, Finance, Facilities, and Technology  
Scott Govitz, Workforce Development  
Tim Hood, President  
Amy Lince, President's Office  
Scott Mertes, Academic Affairs/Community Outreach, Co-Chair  
Matt Miller, Student Services, Co-Chair  
Tom Olver, Mid Foundation  
Jeff Percha, Science Faculty  
Kati Sellers, Mid Mentor  
Katie Shear, Academic Affairs  
Peter Velguth, Institutional Research

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

Since the survey was distributed electronically, much of the resources expended were human in nature. This included significant time spent in identification of appropriate sub-committee members, along with building, administering, and analyzing the survey. The survey was sent out via jotform, but the cost was minimal as the college already subscribes to the service. Mid's contract with Ellucian already includes strategic planning consultation services. Starting at the annual Welcome Back day in August, strategic planning experts will provide an overview presentation in the morning to the campus community. This is meant to introduce Mid's newly developed plan along with provide a roadmap of sorts for plan implementation moving forward. In the afternoon Ellucian will facilitate departmental-specific conversations to begin the actual process of plan development within departments/divisions. Ellucian has a permanent presence on Mid's campus and will continue to provide support and feedback throughout the 2021-22 academic year to departments /divisions.

**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.

Month/Year	Activity
20-Nov	Steering Committee Meets
20-Dec	Talk to College Council - identify sub-committee
21-Jan	Meet with Sub-Committee to discuss goals and process
21-Feb	Begin Survey construction
21-Mar	Finalize Survey construction
21-Apr	Distribute Survey
May/June 2021	Compile and analyze survey results
21-Jul	Write college-wide strategic plan priority areas
21-Aug	Plan approval by College Council and Board of Trustees
21-Aug	Provide strategic planning consultation/training for division/departments
October-December 2021	Establish monthly training opportunities by consultant, with an LMS shell created, materials shared, and assignments developed

September-February 2022	Development of division/departmental strategic plans
Mar-22	Sharing of plans with the college community at the college-wide professional development day
April-May 2022	Revision of plans based on feedback from professional development day
June-July 2022	Work with Institutional Research to develop data gathering tools for plan metrics
August-March 2023	Implementation of plans
Mar-23	Sharing of data/progress on plans at the college-wide professional development day
April-May 2023	Evaluation of plans with updates based on results
June-July 2023	Present updates to College Council and work with IR to update data gathering tools
August-March 2024	Implementation of plans
Mar-24	Sharing of plans with the college community at the college-wide professional development day
April-June 2024	Begin preparations for next iteration of strategic plan

## **Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal**

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

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