



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.

6-1-2020

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

Dr. Lisa Rhine, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Yavapai College

Name of Institution

Prescott, AZ

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.

Improving Student Success Through the Use of Open Educational Resource (OER) Course Materials.

Yavapai County, the college's service area faces many challenges with one in four residents living at near-poverty or below, bachelor's degree attainment rates are 1.3 times and 1.5 times lower than the state and U.S. levels respectively, and median income for households is 12% below the Arizona average and 20% lower than U.S. average. Despite these headwinds, Yavapai College remains dedicated to improving student success and making higher education more affordable and accessible. For the last 25 years, the cost of college textbooks has outpaced the rate of inflation by three times. On average, a student spends \$1000 a year on textbooks. In a national survey, the majority of college students report foregoing the purchase of a textbook due to the cost, putting their learning at risk, and knowing it could hurt their final grade. Individuals from lower socioeconomic levels are more likely to postpone college enrollment and are more likely to choose a community college for affordability. Half of community college students tend to be from the two lowest income quartiles compared with 38% of public 4-year students.

In response to rising higher education costs, especially the textbook cost problem, educators, staff, and administration at Yavapai College support the creation or adoption of open educational resources (OER) for course learning materials. Courses taught with OER material remove textbook cost barriers because they are often free, and students have immediate access to learning materials on day one of the course. In addition, studies indicate that OER course materials may lead to increased retention and success rates for students.

OER content is openly licensed teaching materials that are freely available online for an instructor, student or self-learner. Examples of OER materials include full courses, course modules, syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, lab and classroom activities, pedagogical materials, games, simulations, and many more resources contained in digital media collections from around the world. OER course materials are designated with a Creative Commons license or exist in the Public Domain. A Creative Commons license manages the copyright terms that attach automatically to all creative material under copyright. It allows that material to be shared and reused under terms that are flexible and legally sound. In the OER educational environment these are known as the 5 R's:

1. **Reuse** - Content can be reused in its unaltered original format - the right to use the content in a wide range of ways (e.g., in a class, in a study group, on a website, in a video)
2. **Retain** - Copies of content can be retained for personal archives or reference - the right to make, own, and control copies of the content (e.g., download, duplicate, store, and manage)
3. **Revise** - Content can be modified or altered to suit specific needs - the right to adapt, adjust, modify, or alter the content itself (e.g., translate the content into another language)
4. **Remix** - Content can be adapted with other similar content to create something new- the right to combine the original or revised content with other material to create something new (e.g., incorporate the content into a mashup)
5. **Redistribute** - Content can be shared with anyone else in its original or altered format - the right to share copies of the original content, one's revisions, or one's remixes with others (e.g., give a copy of the content to a friend)

Specifically, Yavapai College's quality initiative is to improve student success by focusing on the five components for the OER program:

1. Training and professional development for faculty members.
2. Collect data on student course retention, completion and persistence in OER courses.
3. Survey students who complete an OER course.
4. Survey faculty who teach a course with OER materials.
5. Collect data on students who take OER courses and their retention from semester to semester.

The OER program will be an ongoing initiative for three years. The college looks at this opportunity to eliminate textbook costs for students and create a consistent navigation experience for students in the institution’s learning management system CANVAS. Through an OER Committee, the college has completed an OER policy, an OER training program for faculty, and a course review process. We know OER course materials will save students money. We are also interested in learning if having day-one access to OER course materials and a course design that provides a clear and consistent navigation experience for students improves course retention, completion, and persistence.

Training and professional development for faculty. Two instructional designers from the college’s Teaching and Effective Learning Service (TeLS) created a seven modules self-paced online course to train instructors about teaching with OER. The modules cover Open Pedagogy, Course Design & Mapping, Open Licensing, Open Media, Adopting Open Lessons & Textbooks, Creating Open Materials, and Sharing Your Open Courseware. The course training outcomes for the instructor are to create or adapt an OER course and understand the formatting of consistent course navigation. Additional faculty support is available at this stage through the college’s OER librarians who will help faculty search for open-licensed material. If a faculty member needs extra help with course navigation, it is available through our teaching and learning center.

Outcome data on student course retention, completion and persistence in OER courses. The college will begin to offer students OER courses fall semester 2020. See Table 1. The quantitative data will be measured in the following ways: student course retention data will be based on the number of students who remain in the course after the tuition due date. The number of students who complete the course with a C or better will measure course completion. Persistence will be defined as the number of students who finish the course successfully with a passing grade. This data will be gathered for four semesters through the spring of 2022. A previous OER study conducted at Tidewater Community College, which launched the nation’s first OER degree in Business Administration, found after two semesters courses taught with OER material had a 2% higher retention rate and a 2.4% higher completion rate when compared to a non-OER course counterpart. Yavapai College’s initiative is focused on reaching the 2% improvement target.

Table 1

OER Courses Offered Fall 2020

ART 110	Drawing 1
BSA 130	Business Financial Applications
COM 100	Introduction to Human Communication
CSA 110	Introduction to Computer Information Systems
ENG 085	College Literacy Skills
ENG 100	Introductory Composition
ENG 101	College Composition 1

ENG 102		College Composition II
ENG 136		Technical Writing
MGT 112		Leadership & Collaboration
MGT 113		Leadership & Communication
MGT 220		Principles of Management
MGT 229		Strategic Management
MGT 230		Principles of Marketing
MGT 233		Business Communication

Data on student perceptions of taking an OER course. At the end of each semester, a student survey will be sent out in each OER course to gather qualitative data. The survey will be a combination of scale questions rating the quality of the OER material, the learning experience, the course design, the course navigation, and how likely they would take another class taught with OER material. The students will be asked open-ended questions such as: Did you know you were taking a course with open educational resources? What did you do with the money you saved from not having to purchase a textbook? Gathering these surveys will help the college determine if students notice a difference in the learning materials, does it matter to them, and what other financial need do they take care of because of the textbook cost savings.

Data on faculty perceptions of teaching a course with OER materials. Faculty members who teach with OER materials will also take a survey with open-ended questions about their experience, perceptions, and time commitment of teaching with OER material. These are a few examples: How many hours did you spend preparing for the online section course taught with OER material? How did you align the course learning outcomes to the OER content material? What do you think about the quality of the OER material? What were the benefits of teaching with the OER content material? What were the drawbacks of teaching with the OER content material? Ideally, when a faculty member is creating or adopting an OER course, we want them to know they have support in OER procurement from the librarians and course design support from TeLs. The college will learn what type of additional support faculty needs in teaching courses with OER from these surveys.

Data on students who take OER courses and their retention rate from semester to semester.

Research suggests that students who take at least two OER courses in one semester take an additional .5 more credits the following semester compared to students who are not enrolled in OER courses. The hypothesis is because students save money on textbooks, they may spend that money the next semester on an extra class. The college will track the student’s progression to evaluate if there is any merit to the hypothesis.

Sufficiency of the Initiative’s Scope and Significance

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

A majority of community college students face financial hardships such as rising tuition, fees, commuter costs, textbook prices, and the cost of housing. In a recent national survey of college students, 48% of community college students reported food insecurity, meaning a lack of a consistent food source for a healthy, active lifestyle. Community college leaders are concerned about the financial burden students are

experiencing and are encouraged to seek innovative ways to help them overcome them. To reduce the cost of attendance, college administrators are encouraging the use of OER as a valid alternative to costly textbooks or access codes. Yavapai County, the college's service area, faces educational and economic challenges. Bachelor's degree attainment rates are 1.3 times and 1.5 times lower than the state and U.S. levels, respectively. Similarly, 62% of YC students in a CCSSE survey reported that they are living paycheck to paycheck; and 46% stated that they had run out of money in the past year. A recent Ruffalo Noel-Levitz survey showed that 73% of YC students are working, and almost four in ten are working full-time.

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

The purpose of the quality initiative is to improve student success by removing a cost barrier and having day one access to learning materials utilizing OER. Specifically, the project will measure the amount of money students save by not having to purchase a textbook, to assess if OER course materials do have a significant impact on student course retention, completion, persistence and semester to semester retention, to engage faculty in OER, and course design and navigation professional development.

At Yavapai College, we plan to offer OER courses in a variety of disciplines where instructors are willing to teach them. This initiative is a coalition of the willing. Faculty members have to commit to taking the OER training course, follow a course design and navigation template, agree to have their course reviewed, and commit to teaching with OER for at least one semester. Creating an OER course is time-intensive, but there are previously constructed courses on the Internet to adopt and adapt. One example is Open Stax's Textbooks, which is an OER program provided by Rice University. These textbooks are general education textbooks written by a coalition of professors from universities all over the United States. The professors were given stipends by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to write the textbooks and license the material with a Creative Commons license, thereby allowing the material to be shared and distributed for free using the 5 R's. Because our faculty agrees to have their course reviewed for licensing, course mapping and navigation, the process ensures a level of academic quality. A librarian and instructional designer will conduct the OER course reviews. The OER curriculum content meets the learning outcomes on the official course outline and is at the discretion of the faculty member.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The purposes of this initiative are to:

1. Improve access to course learning materials
2. Determine student savings based on the average price textbook cost of \$110.
3. Find a significant improvement in student course retention in OER courses.
4. Find improvement in student completion with a C or better by numbers in OER courses.
5. Find a significant improvement in student persistence in OER courses.
6. Determine if students who enroll in two or more OER courses in one semester are retained the next semester with more credit hours than students in non-OER courses.
7. Determine student perceptions about participating in an OER course.

8. Determine faculty perceptions about teaching an OER course and course design and navigation principles.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Learning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Persistence and Completion | <input checked="" 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 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.

The main areas this project will address are faculty professional development, and student persistence, completion, and retention. The college is providing the faculty who choose to teach with OER professional development training to have a solid foundation to build or adapt their OER course. When the OER movement first started to generate interest in community colleges and universities, it was because of the cost savings for students. Because of course mapping and course navigation combined with OER materials, some institutions have seen improved student retention, completion, and persistence rates. We would like to know if we could replicate similar results for our students in this initiative. If positive results are confirmed, this initiative could become one more tool colleges can use to help students.

The progression of the initiative will follow the timeline described below. The QI committee will review the initiative at the beginning of each semester to determine if there need to be any adjustments. The Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives will work with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research at the end of each semester to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, track progress, write up and disseminate results, and publish as necessary.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

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

The President's Executive Leadership Team recognizes the cost of college tuition and textbooks is rising. The college's District Governing Board policy 1.1 Education Ends states; *Students achieve their educational goals at an affordable price; this is the first priority.* Because of this priority, the leadership team is supportive of efforts to eliminate the cost of textbooks, while at the same time possibly improving student retention and completion. The college has committed financial resources for the project in the form of incentives to faculty to enroll in the OER Training Course, create or adopt an OER course, and support for adaptive software that delivers OER content. The creation and adaption of OER course learning material is listed as a strategic action priority in the college's strategic plan.

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

The creation or adoption of OER course material has broad support at the college. To date, at the writing of this proposal, 37 faculty members have completed the OER Training Course. Twenty-two of those faculty members have committed to either creating OER course materials or adopting and adapting another course. For the fall semester 2020, 57 sections of OER courses are scheduled. The college's student development office is training its recruitment advisers and retention advisers on what OER material is and how to explain it to students when they see the *No Cost OER Textbooks* signifier in the registration system. The office of educational accessibility has met with the Vice President of Instruction and Strategic Initiatives to ensure the OER materials are accessible to all students. Yavapai College's marketing department is putting together a campaign to increase student awareness of the OER course effort. For students who have limited access to the Internet, the college printing office will print out the OER text material for students.

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

President Dr. Lisa Rhine, and Vice President of Instruction and Strategic Initiatives Dr. Diane Ryan, will co-chair the Quality Initiative Steering committee. Members of the OER committee include Dr. Sandy Van Lieu, Dr. Gino Romeo, and Ms. Denise Woosley, faculty members, and Tania Sheldahl, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs, and Stacey Hilton, Dean of Instructional Support. Additional personnel and departments supporting this initiative are Tom Hughes, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, Shelly Gilliam, Library Public Services Manager, Thatcher Bohrman, Manager of the TeLS department, Shelia Jarrell, Registrar, and Gina Earles, Coordinator of Strategic Initiatives.

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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.

Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

1. Identified and clarified the Quality Initiative

2. Structured the OER Committee to include representatives from the college who will work on the initiative: Faculty members, Teaching & eLearning Support members, Dean of Instructional Support, Director of Library Service, Librarian, Director of Business Services, Marketing Director and Student Service Representative
3. Developed an OER College Policy
4. Created an OER Training Course for Instructors
5. Establish the Quality Initiative Committee independent of the OER Committee to track and compile initiative's quantitative and qualitative results
6. Establish the research variables of the initiative
7. Launch the OER Training Course for Instructors
8. Develop a No Cost OER Textbooks label in the Banner Registration System for students to identify OER courses

Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

1. Ongoing OER Training for Instructors
2. Add additional OER course sections
3. Ongoing data collection, by tracking identified OER courses for student cost savings, course retention, completion, and persistence
4. Ongoing data collection, surveying faculty members each semester who teach with OER course materials
5. Ongoing data collection, compiling survey results from students who take an OER course
6. Ongoing data collection, semester-to-semester, and spring to fall retention of students taking OER courses

Fall 2021- Spring 2022

1. Ongoing OER Training for Instructors
2. Add additional OER course sections
3. Ongoing data collection, by tracking identified OER courses for student cost savings, course retention, completion, and persistence
4. Ongoing data collection, surveying faculty members each semester who teach with OER course materials
5. Ongoing data collection, compiling survey results from students who take an OER course
6. Ongoing data collection, semester-to-semester, and spring to fall retention of students taking OER courses

Summer 2022

1. Compile and summarize the data
2. Use data to prepare a set of recommendations for best practices for Yavapai College.

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

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

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