



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Nook".

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date May 18, 2017

Mark Nook, Ph.D., President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

University of Northern Iowa

Name of Institution

Cedar Falls, IA

City and State

The institution completes the Quality Initiative proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. The institution may choose to submit a brief implementation plan or supplemental charts or graphs as appendices to the template. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words. The Quality Initiative Proposal is due no later than August 31 of Year 7 (and will be accepted beginning September 1 of Year 5). Submit the proposal as a PDF file to pathways@hlcommission.org with a file name that follows this format: QI Report No Name University MN. 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.

Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI

The University of Northern Iowa's (UNI) 2017-2022 strategic plan outlines a unifying goal of student success. UNI is dedicated to providing students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need to become lifelong learners and active, contributing members of society. Each student is an individual deserving dedicated support and purposeful pathways to success, regardless of economic status, academic background or major. Outstanding faculty and staff advance student success through offering high-impact practices and innovative programs, all focused on supporting a liberal arts education and inclusive excellence. Students attending UNI receive a transformational, holistic engaged learning experience that advances their intellectual, social, and civic development preparing them to pursue their personal and professional goals (2017-2022 UNI Strategic Plan).

As a regional, comprehensive institution, the University of Northern Iowa relies on its partnerships with community agencies to help achieve its strategic goals. In an effort to cultivate a purposeful commitment to civic responsibilities, the Quality Initiative Proposal focuses on UNI's Strategic Plan Supporting Goal #3, Community Engagement. Specifically, this initiative focuses on service-learning to support and enhance students' success.

UNI has a rich history of community engagement. UNI received the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement in 2006 and was reclassified in 2015. In addition, UNI has been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll since its inception including being named the Presidential Award Winner in 2016 in the category of Economic Opportunity. Community engagement work is embedded across campus; however, the newly developed strategic plan is the first time UNI has named community engagement as an essential aspect to student success. *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* outlines components leading to a full adoption of service-learning pedagogy to support intentional, developmental community engagement opportunities for students to advance their intellectual, social, and civic development.

The *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* initiative has 3 components including: 1) designating service-learning courses, 2) implementing a Service-Learning Institute (SLI), and 3) recognizing and celebrating community engagement work. The first component, designating service-learning courses, will include: defining service-learning at UNI, outlining criteria for course designation, determining a systematic approach for course designation, educating faculty/staff on the criteria and processes, and then designating service-learning courses within the course catalogue and student information system. The second component, the Service-Learning Institute, will be an annual three-day workshop which will focus on incorporating service learning activities that align with course learning goals, enhancing student growth and civic awareness, and strengthening our community. Ten faculty will be selected and matched with a community partner. The three-day workshop will include a tour of local agencies, understanding service-learning pedagogy and a day for the faculty member and the community partner to co-create a service-learning project that will both enhance student learning and advance the organization's mission/programs. The third component of *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* includes recognizing students at graduation for their work in community engagement and hosting an annual community engagement celebration day. Please see Appendix A, demonstrating support for this initiative.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

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

During the 2016 calendar year, UNI engaged in a strategic planning process. This process, led by a steering committee of faculty, staff, students, and community members, worked to engage many facets of the institution in developing the vision and mission of the university. Building on the feedback from statewide listening sessions, group planning activities, and systematic online response opportunities, the university completed its strategic plan in October of 2016. Below is the outline of UNI's 2017-2022 strategic plan's vision, mission, unifying goal and the third supporting goal which guides the Quality Initiative Proposal for UNI.

Vision

Offering personalized attention to students, the University of Northern Iowa will be a diverse and inclusive campus community that provides an engaged education empowering students to lead locally and globally.

Mission

Within a challenging and supportive environment, the University of Northern Iowa engages students in high-quality and high-impact learning experiences and emphasizes excellence in teaching and scholarship.

Unifying Goal: Student Success

Develop and support engaged learning experiences, dynamic and high-quality academic programs, and outstanding faculty and staff to foster student success.

UNI has structured its Strategic Plan 2017-2022 around one central theme of "Student Success." Supporting the theme of "Student Success" are three goals: 1) Diversity and inclusion, 2) Campus vitality, and 3) Community engagement. In implementing Supporting Goal #3 Community Engagement, the QIP is central, providing the foundation for which to build community engagement work at UNI.

Supporting Goal #3 Community Engagement

Create opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to build external relationships that enhance local and global learning experiences and contribute to the cultural and economic vitality of the Cedar Valley and Iowa.

The implementation plan of Supporting Goal #3 Community Engagement is directly tied to the development of a Civic Action Plan. UNI is a member of Iowa Campus Compact. In 2016, UNI's president signed a commitment with Iowa Campus Compact to develop a Civic Action Plan. The Civic Action Plan is serving as the implementation of Supporting Goal #3, Community Engagement. *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* is one component of the Civic Action Plan. The Civic Action Planning Team has selected an approach in which the institution's identity is tied to an overarching commitment to engagement. The opportunities for community engagement will be varied, but structured, to give every student a meaningful experience. *Enhancing Service-*

Learning at UNI is one of the approaches used to give students access to meaningful experiences in the classroom.

In addition to *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI*, being a significant component to the implementation of the strategic plan, the recently administered National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE) report supports the need and significance of this initiative. In the 2015 report for UNI, the NASCE results outlined student's community engagement efforts over the course of an academic year. The findings noted that 97% of the respondents are motivated to serve because they believe they can help people in need. Findings revealed that 88% of respondents noted that an obstacle to service was being "too busy with schoolwork" (NASCE Report, 2015). *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* will not only be an implementation component to the strategic plan but will also assist in addressing an obstacle to student's engaging in community service by embedding service into the curriculum and identifying service-learning courses so students can make intentional choices about learning and serving simultaneously.

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

The intended impact of *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* is twofold. This initiative is intended to affect both student learning and the partnerships between the university and organizations throughout the Cedar Valley and Iowa.

1. Student Learning

Supporting UNI's strategic plan and Civic Action Plan, we are working to "prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act and lead in pursuit of the public good" (Campus Compact, 2016). The Service-Learning Institute (SLI) will educate faculty and staff on the best practices of service-learning. Every year, ten new faculty from a broad range of disciplines across campus will teach a service-learning course that was designed and co-created by both the faculty member and a representative from an organization. Students will benefit from the co-created classes that embrace best-practices of service-learning. In addition, once courses are designated as service-learning courses, students will be able to be intentional about embedding service into their coursework. With this intentional approach, complemented by teaching best-practices of service-learning, students will be able to meet their desires of wanting to participate in service through their courses. By providing opportunities for service-learning within the classroom, students will be able to embrace a sense of commitment to civic engagement while completing the requirements for their degree.

2. Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

An element of the Service-Learning Institute is that faculty are partnered with an agency and for a day of the institute the faculty member and representative from the agency co-create a service-learning project/class. Faculty will be trained to ensure the service-learning project/class meets the learning outcomes of the class. Likewise, the representative from this agency will be an equal partner ensuring that the service-learning project/class is helpful and furthers the mission of their organization. Again, supporting the strategic plan and our Civic Action Plan, we are working to

“empower our students, faculty, staff and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnership in pursuit of a just, equitable, sustainable future for communities beyond the campus – nearby and around the world” (Campus Compact, 2016).

Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI has three additional intended impacts on the institution and its academic quality. These commitments were also embraced when the university agreed to develop a Civic Action Plan through its partnership with Iowa Campus Compact. UNI is working toward “embracing our responsibilities as a place based institution and will contribute to the health and strength of our community – economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.” UNI is working to “harness the capacity of our institution through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.” And UNI is working to “foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectation for members of the campus community to contribute to our achievement” (Campus Compact, 2016).

Clarity of the Initiative’s Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The purpose of *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* is to build a broad reaching, systemic initiative linking curriculum, faculty engagement, and student success. Through the three components of the initiative, each building off of the previous component, the University of Northern Iowa will provide a foundation in which future initiatives related to community engagement, as outlined in the strategic plan, can be developed. The goals of this initiative align with the goals of Supporting Goal #3, Community Engagement, which are outlined below following by the component of the QIP that addresses that goal:

1. Build and strengthen relationships and partnerships with Cedar Valley and statewide businesses, organizations, and educational institutions to increase diverse experiences and embrace the changing demographics and economic base of Iowa. QIP component – Service-Learning Institute.
2. Provide all students with a community engagement experience. QIP Component – Designation of service-learning courses.
3. Establish a central access point for community engagement to improve communication and promote campus engagement and participation. The implementation of the QIP will be led by the central access point for community engagement work.
4. Reward and support faculty and staff outreach and community engagement. QIP component – Recognition and celebration of community engagement.

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

Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI has three components. The first component, Designating Service-Learning courses, involves four steps that build upon one another, working toward embedding service-learning courses broadly across campus. The second component, the Service-Learning Institute, will be implemented in the first year and continue to be an annual event. The third component, recognizing and celebrating service-learning and community engagement, has two steps, a community engagement celebration will be implemented in the first year and continue to be an annual event and the second step, recognition at graduation, with the goal of recognizing graduates by the spring of 2020. The spreadsheet below outlines each component and their accompanying steps, how progress will be measured, how adjustments will be made, and how accomplishments will be determined.

Components of QIP	Steps in Each Component	Measurement/Progress	Adjustments	Indicator of Success
Designating service-learning courses	Define service-learning and outline criteria for designating service-learning courses	Progress is measured, working toward 100% complete	If not 100% complete, continue to define and outline criteria	Adopting a definition and criteria for designating service-learning courses
	Determine the systematic approach for designating service-learning courses	Progress is measured, working toward 100% complete	If not 100% complete, continue to determine the approach	Systematic approach for designating service-learning courses is completed
	Educate faculty and staff on the criteria and process for designating service-learning courses	Progress is measured, working toward 100% complete	Progress towards meeting with all faculty/staff will be monitored until every department has been educated on the criteria and process; review survey responses	Every department has been visited and 80% of survey respondents indicate they understand the criteria and process for designating service-learning courses

	Designate service-learning courses	Progress is measured, working toward 100% complete	If not 100% complete, continue designating service-learning courses	Courses are designated as service-learning for fall 2020
Service-Learning Institute (SLI)	Implement a Service-Learning Institute for 10 faculty/staff annually	A pre/post evaluation will be administered for each SLI	Feedback from post evaluations will be used to improve the next SLI	100% of faculty/staff will report the SLI as being helpful in designing a service-learning project/course
Recognize & celebrate service-learning and community engagement annually at UNI	Implement an annual community engagement celebration day	Progress is measured, working toward 100% complete	If not 100%, work to implement a community engagement day celebration the following year, to be held annually	There is an annual community engagement day celebration event held annually
	Recognize students at graduation for their work in community engagement	Progress is measured, working toward 100% complete	If not 100% complete, start and continue to define criteria for recognition at graduation	In spring 2021, students are recognized at graduation for their community engagement work

In addition to measuring and making adjustments to continue progressing on each of the three components of *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* as outlined above, an additional assessment will be used as an indicator of success in realizing our goals and intended impact. The National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement (NASCE) was administered in 2015, giving UNI a baseline for assessment of progress. NASCE will be administered again in the fall of 2019 with a goal of improving selected aspects of the assessment including but not limited to: 1) increasing the institutional POP score to at least 23 (an increase of 5 points); 2) increasing the percent of students that report participating in community service to at least 55% (an increase of 5%); 3) of the students that report participating in community service, increasing the percent of students that report the service coming from courses to 25% (an increase of 5%); 4) increase the percent of students that report being satisfied with their level of involvement in community service at UNI to 53% (an increase of 5%); and 5) increase the percent of students that report

participating in a service-learning course to 38% (an increase of 5%). UNI will continue to use NASCE every four years as an indicator of its progress on its strategic plan.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

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

The University's Executive Management Team (EMT) supports *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI* as the University's Quality Initiative. Through financial support, the Provost's Office will approve the three-year budget for the initiative. Additional support from the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management will assist the initiatives through an implementation partnership with technology services and the Registrar's office. Finally, the Civic Action Planning Team and QIP implementation team support the outlined proposal.

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

Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI will involve a number of organizations and individuals from across the campus community as well as the Cedar Valley community. The implementation will be led by the Director of Community Engagement. Outlined below are the organizations and individuals supporting the implementation of the QIP.

Representation	Department
Director of Community Engagement	Community Engagement
Director of Institutional Research	Institutional Research & Effectiveness
President	Northern Iowa Student Government
President	Residence Hall Association
Faculty Member	Faculty Senate
Faculty Member	College of Education
Faculty Member	College of Business
Faculty Member	College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Faculty Member	College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences
Faculty Member	Graduate College
Graduate Student	Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services
Graduate Student	AmeriCorps ICAP

Staff Member	Registrar
Staff Member	IT
Staff Member	Continuing Education
Staff Member	Student Affairs
Staff Member	Student Affairs
Individual	Volunteer Center of Cedar Valley
Individual	Community Agency
Individual	Community Agency

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

The University of Northern Iowa will develop and support an implementation team including various stakeholders from across campus and the community. In addition to personnel, the Provost's office has committed financial resources to support *Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI*.

Budget total: \$256,476

2017-2018 - \$82,927

Director of Community Engagement: \$69,577

SLI Faculty stipends: \$10,500

SLI catering and transportation: \$1,350

Fall/spring lunch meetings: \$500

Recognition/celebration event: \$1,000

2018-2019 - \$83,823

Director of Community Engagement: \$70,273

SLI Faculty stipends: \$10,500

SLI catering and transportation: \$1,450

Fall/spring lunch meetings: \$550

Recognition/celebration event: \$1,050

2019-2020 - \$89,726

Director of Community Engagement: \$70,976

SLI Faculty stipends: \$10,500

SLI catering and transportation: \$1,550

Fall/spring lunch meetings: \$600

Recognition/celebration event: \$1,100

Administration of NASCE: \$5,000

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

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

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

Fall 2017

- Identify Enhancing Service-Learning at UNI Implementation team(s) coordinated by the Director of Community Engagement
- Identify the definition of service learning and the criteria to be used during the course identification processes
- Advertise for Community Engagement Celebration Day for Spring 2018

Spring 2018

- Adopt formal definition of service-learning and criteria for the designation of service-learning courses at UNI
- Advertise and recruit faculty to participate in the SLI summer 2018
- Host a Community Engagement Day Celebration

Summer 2018

- Implement the Service Learning Institute (SLI) for 10 faculty members and 10 community agencies

Fall 2018

- The SLI is reviewed and adjustments made in the planning of SLI 2019
- Begin defining the systematic approach for designating service-learning courses
- Fall meeting for SLI participants (discuss challenges and successes)

- Advertise for Community Engagement Celebration Day for Spring 2019
- Begin writing the QIP final report

Spring 2019

- Advertise and recruit faculty to participate in the SLI summer 2019
- Define the systematic approach for designating service-learning courses
- Spring meeting for SLI participants (discussion challenges and success)
- Host a Community Engagement Day Celebration
- Complete and submit Final Quality Initiative Report to HLC no later than March 1, 2019

Summer 2019

- Implement the Service Learning Institute for 10 faculty members and 10 community agencies

Fall 2019

- Begin educating faculty/staff on criteria and process for designating service-learning courses
- The SLI is reviewed and adjustments made in the planning of SLI 2020
- Fall meeting for SLI participants (discuss challenges and successes)
- Advertise for Community Engagement Celebration Day for Spring 2020
- Administer NASCE

Spring 2020

- Continuing to educate faculty/staff on the criteria and process for designating service-learning courses
- Advertise and recruit faculty to participate in the SLI summer 2020
- Spring meeting for SLI participants (discussion challenges and success)
- Host a Community Engagement Day Celebration
- At graduation, students will be recognized for their community engagement work
- Fall 2020 courses will have service-learning designation
- Outline future implementation of service-learning course identification within course catalogue

References

Strategic Planning Committee (2017). 2017-2022 UNI Strategic Plan (2017). Retrieved on March 10, 2017 from <https://president.uni.edu/strategicplan>.

Siena Research Institute (2015). 2015 National Assessment of Service and Community Engagement: Report Presented to the University of Northern Iowa. Loudonville, NY.

Campus Compact (2016). Creating a Great Civic Action Plan. Retrieved on March 10, 2017 from <http://compact.org/actionstatement/#1485877350933-9992611d-a10c>.

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

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

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