



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

Pam Shockley-Zalabak

August 31, 2016

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

Pamela Shockley-Zalabak, Chancellor

Printed/Typed Name and Title

University of Colorado Colorado Springs

Name of Institution

Colorado Springs, CO

City and State

The institution uses the template below to complete its Quality Initiative Report. The institution may include a report it has prepared for other purposes if it addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the narrative in the template. This template may be used both for reports on initiatives that have been completed and for initiatives that will continue and for which this report serves as a milestone of accomplishments thus far. The complete report should be no more than 6,000 words. Quality Initiative Reports are to be submitted between September 1 of Year 7 and August 31 of Year 9 of the Open Pathway cycle. Submit the report 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.

Date: 08/29/2016

Name of Institution: University of Colorado Colorado Springs

State: Colorado

Contact Person for Report: Venkat Reddy, Associate Vice Chancellor for Online Education and Initiatives

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Report Categories

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a one-page executive summary that describes the Quality Initiative, summarizes what was accomplished, and explains any changes made to the initiative over the time period.

The University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) Quality Initiative was to expand our existing robust online degree offerings at the graduate level to undergraduate degree completion programs. The initiative had the following goals:

- a. Increase access (and enrollment) by allowing undergraduates who cannot physically come to campus to complete UCCS degrees and provide on-campus students additional options to accommodate schedules and circumstances.
- b. Maintain and extend instructional quality by maintaining equivalency between face-to-face and online offerings and utilize the Quality Matters rubric to assure that online courses adopt best practices for online learning.
- c. Provide faculty development through assistance of instructional designers and technologists to help faculty create engaging and effective online courses. Bring the lessons learned online to their face-to-face courses, particularly with regard to clarifying educational outcomes and promoting student engagement.
- d. Extend student services to include fully online learners. Use effective technology for all students, thus improving access for on-campus students as well.
- e. Strengthen the technical support available to faculty and students using campus technology.

In 2013, we proposed a goal to increase access to quality education through online delivery. We have made significant progress toward this goal. Between AY2013 and AY2016, we offered 18% more online course sections (total of 558), increased average online section size by 78.5% (to 18 students), and increased online student credit hours 47% (to 36,774).

This growth was accomplished through developing and offering five undergraduate degree completion programs that are now in conversion to fully online degrees, effective fall 2016. This project included the creation of 43 lower-division general education courses sufficient to enable moving the degree completion programs to fully online degree programs. The course offerings include anthropology, chemistry, English, mathematics, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology.

To ensure quality of the online courses, UCCS invested in and re-focused the efforts of the Faculty Resource Center to better support faculty in creating quality online offerings. One outcome has been a very substantial engagement with Quality Matters as our overall quality rubric.

Recognizing the importance of the online delivery initiative and to better serve our online student population, in 2013 the Chancellor created an Associate Vice Chancellor of Online Education and

Initiatives (AVCOEI) position and re-organized existing resources to form the Office of Online and Academic Outreach.

Scope and Impact of the Initiative

2. Explain in more detail what was accomplished in the Quality Initiative in relation to its purposes and goals. (If applicable, explain the initiative's hypotheses and findings.)

The impact of this initiative has not only been in numbers but also in a true cultural shift in faculty awareness for the importance of online education. The expanded reach of our programs to traditional, non-traditional, high school, community college, and degree completer students has increased access to the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS). One powerful impact of our online initiative is increased access for the rural areas of Southern Colorado where students can stay in their communities, study at UCCS online, and make a difference in their communities through the education they receive from us.

The Quality Initiative allowed us to develop five online undergraduate degree completion programs in the following areas: Allied Health, Business, Criminal Justice, RN to BSN, and Sociology. These completion programs were identified by assessing needs in rural communities, identifying completion programs where transfer students from a variety of institutions could effectively utilize credits, and reviewing degree preparation for jobs where employment shortages are projected by the State of Colorado. For AY2015-16, 52 new online courses were offered for the first time. An additional 48 courses are under development for offering in AY2016-17. By fall 2016, the following undergraduate degree programs will be available from UCCS entirely online: Business, Communication, Criminal Justice (CJ), Health Care Sciences, Sociology, and CJ/Sociology dual degree.

Between spring 2013 and spring 2016, the number of online-only undergraduate students more than doubled, from 216 to 463. The growth in out-of-state students taking online courses in that same period accounted for relatively little of that increase, rising from 41 to 67. Meanwhile, our ability to serve rural Colorado has grown, with the number of online-only undergraduates from rural counties increasing from 30 to 76 over that period. During the period of the initiative, the total number of undergraduates at UCCS older than 23 also grew markedly from 2,632 to 5,116. This age category was more likely than their younger counterparts to take at least one online course per semester suggesting online efforts have increased our accessibility to these students. With the offering of fully online undergraduate degrees in fall 2016 we expect these numbers to continue to increase.

As a result of this initiative, Campus Wide Extended Studies has been completely reconfigured to become the Office of Online and Academic Outreach. This office reports to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Online Education and Initiatives for online related activities and to the Provost for academic outreach related activities. The office includes a redesigned website called UCCS Connect (<http://www.uccs.edu/connect>) that serves as an online front desk, offering telephone, email, and live chat to easily connect students to existing services on campus. Additionally, the Online and Academic Outreach Office worked with the Recruitment Office to develop an unofficial transcript evaluation process, accessible through UCCS Connect, to help prospective students determine how their existing credits would transfer to UCCS programs prior to application. To serve online-only students, the existing online orientation process was revised, originally developed to allow incoming out-of-area freshmen to complete orientation prior to registering for courses, to serve the needs of online-only students as well. This office also works closely with

colleges and student success offices in providing online students with online front desk services and most of the key services that on-campus students receive. Another key responsibility of this office is to market our online program offerings.

UCCS has placed a significant emphasis on the quality of online courses developed and offered through this initiative. The formal Quality Matters (QM) program has been adopted and customized to meet individual college's needs to ensure the quality of our online efforts. The Quality Matters program is a nationally recognized faculty-centered, peer review process designed to certify the quality of online courses and online components. Colleges and universities across and beyond the United States use the QM tools in developing, maintaining and reviewing their online courses and in training their faculty (http://www.uccs.edu/frc/quality_matters.html). UCCS is the only campus in the University of Colorado System that has adopted the Quality Matters concept. As of spring 2016, fourteen courses had earned QM certification, with an additional three under review and fifteen more in various stages of preparation for review. The faculty who have completed the rigorous review process are becoming role models for other faculty as they venture into online education development. UCCS currently has three faculty and staff who hold QM Master Reviewer certification. An additional five have earned QM Peer Reviewer certification. We also have two certified QM Online Facilitators and a certified QM Course Review Manager. This places UCCS in the forefront of Colorado institutions participating in Quality Matters thereby assuring online students high quality educational offerings.

Based on the emphasis on quality which the QM adoption certifies, a broader quality assurance effort is housed in the Faculty Resource Center (FRC: <http://www.uccs.edu/frc/>) and the four colleges involved in the initiative. The FRC's Teaching Online Certificate Program (http://www.uccs.edu/frc/programs_grants/teaching_online_certificate_program.html), built around the QM standards, has certified 115 faculty so far, with another 28 scheduled in upcoming sessions. Each of the four colleges contributing to the online undergraduate initiative (College of Business, College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth El College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the School of Public Affairs) has its own Educational Technology experts who help develop quality standards checklists to guide faculty course development. The College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, having had limited prior experience with online courses compared to the other participating colleges, has invested heavily in faculty incentives tied to online course development (http://www.uccs.edu/las/faculty-and-staff/online_incentives_program.html). Many new faculty, as a part of their contracts, are agreeing that their teaching loads will include online course development and instruction.

The campus has systematically worked to strengthen the capacity of the FRC to support the work of faculty in creating the online undergraduate degree programs, increasing the focus on online learning, and adding instructional development staff (<http://www.uccs.edu/frc/aboutfrc.html>) to supplement existing positions in business, nursing, and public affairs. The FRC also serves as a central provider for relevant resources (http://www.uccs.edu/frc/teaching_resources.html), such as industry best practices, lecture capture tools, Blackboard support, course development grants, course enhancement grants, and online certifications.

U.S. News and World Report magazine's 2016 Best Online Graduate Education Rankings, released January 12, 2016, ranked UCCS programs in business, education, engineering and nursing among the nation's best based on criteria such as student engagement, faculty credentials and training, student services, peer reputation and admission selectivity. U.S. News and World Report leads in the collection of data and its use to rank colleges and universities as a consumer guide.

- Evaluate the impact of the initiative, including any changes in processes, policies, technology, curricula, programs, student learning and success that are now in place in consequence of the initiative.

The biggest impact of the initiative is the faculty acceptance of online courses and programs as a critical tool in providing quality education to students. This culture of acceptance is not only in the professional schools but in the last couple of years also has spread to the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences.

From the beginning, the team working on the initiative embraced two supplemental goals embedded in the proposal: extending technology-supported access to student services to all students and facilitating the transfer of pedagogical improvements from the online environment to face-to-face offerings. A good example of the former is the strengthening of online orientation for first-time freshmen and undergraduate transfers. Prior to the initiative's launch, online orientation was limited to telling students what they need to know to register for classes if they were not planning to come to campus before the start of classes. The assumption was that students would complete their on-campus orientation on the Saturday before the start of classes. Now, these students get a more complete online orientation and also have a more tailored introductory experience on campus. Other examples include the new availability of tutoring for students while traveling or unable to come to campus, a particular benefit to our non-traditional students, an improved ability to resolve financial aid, payment, and other issues without their coming to campus. Results on the second supplemental goal are more anecdotal with many faculty reporting an increased awareness of tools that transfer to their on-campus courses. There also is a significant rise in hybrid course models on campus. This may have occurred without the initiative, but it is certainly the case that it is easier to create a hybrid course once an online version exists.

To be more competitive in the market place, and with the approval of the Board of Regents, we have created a different tuition structure for purely online undergraduate out-of-state students. Nursing students pay 125% and all other students pay 130% of our resident tuition rate. Further, online only and out-of-state only students are not charged student activity fees for services they will not use, such as the recreation center and the university center.

- Explain any tools, data, or other information that resulted from the work of the initiative.

The UCCS Connect website and Online Front Desk are the most visible outcomes of the initiative. The new website features degree programs, courses, application information, transcript review, and live chat features. We have a focused marketing effort to promote online programs that includes not only the website but also billboards, digital marketing, and print materials.

Another critical impact is that the best practices used in online classes have been found so valuable by faculty that they have moved those practices through Blackboard and other technologies to their on-campus classes as well. For example, early use of Skype and other conferencing technologies began in online classes and now is routinely utilized for face-to-face instruction.

- Describe the biggest challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the initiative.

A major challenge was the need to provide a broad range of services to online students, including orientation, advising, and tutoring. To address this need, we established the Online Front Desk as an initial entry point to student services, creating a dedicated online website, re-designing new student online orientation to address the needs of online students, strengthening advising for

online students, and adopting technology to make online tutoring available. Remote proctoring continues to be a challenge, and we continue to explore ways to address it.

Another issue has been one of IT capacity to support faculty with online interest and expertise on how to manage larger enrollment sizes effectively. To address this issue, the campus has invested in the Faculty Resource Center, IT support positions, faculty support positions within the colleges, and new faculty positions in pertinent programs. To address accreditation purposes, the College of Business has adopted a lead faculty/instructor model to increase tenure-track faculty engagement in online teaching. Further investment is being rolled into the regular budgeting process.

Two funding challenges have been identifying needed investment in areas other than those required for on-campus enrollment growth and identifying dedicated funding adequate to those needs in the face of other critical campus priorities. In addition to the base budget investments made and envisioned by the campus, the campus is re-configuring the fee structure associated with online courses. Under existing arrangements, the student fees generated by online enrollments flow to the same purposes as on-campus fees. The new arrangement will distribute the fees from online courses to activities that directly support those courses.

Reaching students who wish to attend UCCS online only requires specialized recruitment. Strategies have been developed to reach students interested in online courses through avenues most likely to reach that population, and the campus has set aside additional funding for online recruiting. The timing of initiating this campaign has been coordinated with an update of the online website to maximize recruitment. What we learn from this experience will guide development of future marketing efforts.

The biggest opportunity occurring during the initiative was the decision by the University of Colorado Regents to ask all four campuses of the system to expand online education more rapidly. The Regents asked the campuses to examine whether the University of Colorado System should consider a fifth campus model for online education or stimulate more rapid expansion of campus-based programs while exploring opportunities for collaboration among campuses. The chancellors of the four campuses, in consultation with faculty and administrators, recommended to the Regents that growth of campus-based programs would ensure the quality for which the University of Colorado should be known. The Regents accepted the recommendation for more rapid campus-based expansion and asked each campus for an expansion plan. The chancellors of the four campuses mobilized to create a governance structure for expansion that preserved the integrity of each campus while exploring options for collaboration and joint marketing. Chief among the opportunities and challenges for UCCS was the need to develop lower-division general education courses necessary to move our degree completion offerings to full online degrees. The original intent had been to focus on degree completion programs where we had willing participants and regional need. Such programs were relatively easy to identify and incentivize. As the need for courses broadened beyond our existing coalition of the willing, a significant concern arose regarding faculty engagement in course development. Fortunately, the Associate Vice Chancellor of Online Education and Initiatives, the Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance, the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, and the faculty Director of the Faculty Resource Center worked collaboratively to identify and deploy additional resources, particularly funding. This focused funding effort resulted in 43 additional general education course offerings. We also found ourselves needing to coordinate across the campuses of the University of Colorado System in a way we had not anticipated. We participated in technology, marketing, and curriculum committees to explore potential collaborations and efficiencies. The need to coordinate

marketing with the other campuses resulted in the University of Colorado Connect website which has become a portal for UCCS Connect for those who would not have come directly to our website.

Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative

6. Describe the individuals and groups involved at stages throughout the initiative and their perceptions of its worth and impact.

The Campus Online Task Force was composed of faculty and staff from the colleges and functional areas most affected by the initiative:

- Venkat Reddy, Associate Vice Chancellor of Online Education and Initiatives (chair)
- Homer Wesley, former Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Enrollment Management
- David Moon, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning
- David Anderson, Chemistry Faculty and Faculty Director of the Faculty Resource Center
- Jerry Wilson, Chief Technology Officer (retired)
- Gayanne Scott, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Finance and Human Resources
- Carley Ries, Executive Director of Online and Academic Outreach Office
- Mathew Cox, Executive Director of Enrollment Management
- Steve Medlin, Director of Student Financial Services
- Jevita Rogers, Executive Director of Financial Aid/Student Employment
- Vicki Brownrigg, Assistant Professor, Nursing
- Rebecca Duray, Professor of Operations & Technology Management, College of Business
- Beth Kumar, Assistant Professor, Kraemer Family Library
- Regina Winters, Senior Instructor, School of Public Affairs
- Tim Chamillard, Associate Professor, Computer Science
- Greg Augspurger, Instructor of Information Systems, College of Business
- Jackie Crouch, Instructional Technologist, Faculty Resource Center
- Cindy Brown, Technology Coordinator, College of Education
- Kathryn Andrus, Faculty Resource Center Multi-Media Specialist
- Patrick McGuire, Co-Director UCCS Teach
- William Daughton, Director of Master of Engineering Program
- Kirk Moore, Director of Computing Services
- Kyle Blakely, Marketing Consultant

A subset of the Campus Leadership Team met regularly with the Chancellor to consider larger policy issues raised by the Campus Online Task Force:

- Mary Coussons-Read, former Provost
- Susan Szpyrka, Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance
- Homer Wesley, former Vice Chancellor for Student Success and Enrollment Management
- Martin Wood, Senior Vice Chancellor for University Advancement and Development
- David Moon, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning
- Venkat Reddy, Associate Vice Chancellor of Online Education and Initiatives

- Jerry Wilson, Chief Technology Officer (retired)
- Gayanne Scott, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Resource Management

In addition, the deans of the four participating colleges and the chairs and other faculty of the participating departments were actively engaged on an ongoing basis.

The Online Task Force regularly reported the progress of the initiative to the Chancellor. Individuals involved believed the initiative to be successful and necessary for expanding access to UCCS throughout our service areas and throughout the state. Most individuals suggested the initiative moved UCCS more quickly into diversified learning strategies necessary to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse set of learners. Those involved beyond the task force generally concluded the initiative was successful and worth the investment of time and energy. The initiative was described as professional development for faculty and staff as well as increased access opportunities for students. Some of the thoughts expressed by the initiative members include:

- Bringing disparate and cross functional faculty and staff across the campus to collaborate and work together to ensure the success of the initiative
- Taking individual ownership of what they need to get done in their respective areas
- Creating an openness in the process that allowed innovative and radical ideas to be shared and encouraged
- Working in broad committee group as well as cast into smaller working groups
- Adopting Quality Matters concept across all colleges by team consensus
- Achieving a lot of progress in a short amount of time leading to launching degree completion and fully online degrees
- Acknowledging this process should be adopted for other key initiatives on the campus
- Allowing for creating quasi policies for online programming that came out of the grassroots rather than top down
- Bringing out the expertise each person had thereby strengthening the conversations
- Generating more enthusiasm and excitement

The initiative has been formally integrated into the overall enrollment management strategic planning efforts which report directly to the Chancellor.

7. Describe the most important points learned by those involved in the initiative.

The campus leaders identifying the online initiative as a strategic initiative was critical to its success. The Chancellor created a dedicated online leadership position of AVCOEI and formed the Office of Online and Academic Outreach to give focused support to the initiative. The Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance Office, in collaboration with AVCOEI, worked on entrepreneurial budget models to support the development and offering of online classes.

The importance of building a culture of innovation and collaboration was critical in moving the campus toward significant expansion of not only online courses but also full degree programs. This initiative has produced much higher levels of collaboration among deans, faculty, instructional designers in the FRC, the colleges, student support units, IT, and even between campuses than previously existed. For the first time, in some cases, diverse units came together to share best practices that resulted in a support structure to serve online students including quality online classes, user friendly websites, financial aid, and student support services. These best practices and others have created a broad support structure which benefits both online and face-to-face students.

A strengthened instructional design support staff has helped ensure quality across all aspects of online education. Redesigning our Teaching Online Certificate Program (TOCP) to help faculty members structure their online courses to meet the Quality Matters standards has often resulted in courses passing a Quality Matters review with little effort. Regardless of whether faculty have completed the TOCP, mentoring faculty prior to a QM review to ensure that their courses meet the QM standards facilitates a trouble-free review. Faculty have embraced those standards and are increasing their use of the resources the campus provides.

We learned we needed to tell students exactly what courses are offered online each semester, how much they cost, and what are the exact steps for enrollment and degree planning. This has been accomplished effectively through our UCCS Connect website.

We believe the bottom line is that trust and collaboration among a variety of stakeholders has supported our abilities to overcome a significant number of issues and challenges.

Resource Provision

8. Explain the human, financial, physical, and technological resources that supported the initiative.

Creation of the Associate Vice Chancellor of Online Education and Initiatives position and formation of the Online and Academic Outreach Office were critical in not only establishing a leadership structure but also in sending a signal to faculty, staff and students that expanding online offerings is an important initiative for UCCS. The collaborative work of this office with the Faculty Resource Center and the deans of the colleges allowed for the widespread acceptance for development and offering of online programs on the campus.

The Board of Regents' charge to the CU campuses to create new collaborative online programs resulted in the University of Colorado Connect initiative. This initiative has brought additional funding to our campus from the President of the University of Colorado System.

Over the last four years, the campus has made significant investment in online education with both one-time and on-going funds.

General Fund allocations include a \$341,895 investment in technology and \$798,105 in personnel and operations, including the hiring of faculty, educational support staff, and information technology staff. Of note is an \$80,000 investment in 2013 in a staff position in the Faculty Resource Center which provides faculty with the instructional resources and support to explore and implement innovative teaching practices and a \$64,500 investment in technology support staff. In 2013, \$30,000 was allocated for instruction to the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences.

Another source of funding is the online student fee which in fiscal year 2015-16 funded \$80,653 in course development expenses in the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences.

University of Colorado System funds in the amount of \$746,275 have been allocated to cover instructional costs incurred during the first two to three years of an initiative to launch new fully online academic programs. These funds will be available through fiscal year 2017-18. In 2016, \$39,777 in System funds was allocated during the summer term, and to date for fiscal year 2017 \$149,790 has been allocated to instructional costs for new online program courses. These one-time initiative funds allow the campus to expand student access to programs over time without the immediate need for enrollment growth results. Base funding will be made available at the end

of each academic year proportional to the growth in programs. Online enrollments are treated the same as campus enrollments in growth funding models.

Plans for the Future (Feature Milestones of a Continuing Initiative)

9. Describe plans for ongoing work related to or as a result of the initiative.

After UCCS had begun its online initiative, the CU Board of Regents identified online education as a primary focus for the entire system. This resulted in acceleration of our efforts in expanding our online full degree offerings. In our initial Open Pathway Quality Initiative proposal we only talked about developing online undergraduate degree completion programs. Currently we have moved several completion programs to fully online degree programs with plans in development for the addition of more degree programs.

Full degree programs required the launching of lower-division requirements and general education courses that were not originally part of the initiative. Those are being launched starting fall 2016.

Further, UCCS is now engaged with the other CU system campuses in how to best share resources in support of online students. A marketing and access program at the system level, branded University of Colorado Connect, linked to the UCCS Connect website, has been launched. The three general campuses are diligently working to facilitate concurrent enrollment across the campuses, potentially greatly expanding the pool of available courses for all students. A proposal went to the Board of Regents in July 2016 to create a multi-campus online degree program in interdisciplinary studies.

The campus has integrated online education into the overall enrollment goals for the campus and the initiative is institutionalized in the UCCS strategic enrollment management plan.

10. Describe any practices or artifacts from the initiative that other institutions might find meaningful or useful and please indicate if you would be willing to share this information.

Yes, we would be happy to share our practices and artifacts from the initiative.

1. Charge to develop online programs should come from the Chancellor's/President's office and should be a key strategic initiative for the campus to be successful.

2. Bring administrators, faculty, and staff early into the planning process to gain strong support for the initiative.

3. Establish a fair compensation structure for online course development and instruction that can be sustained over an extended period. Do not set unrealistic expectations.

4. Establish appropriate and fair budget sharing models to encourage developing and offering of online programs.

5. Effective delivery and quality of course material is critical to the success of the program.

6. Provide generous technical help for faculty adopting online teaching. A true team effort between the faculty member and the educational technologist is essential.

7. Build a culture of faculty workloads containing a mix of on-campus and online courses. Do not give more importance to online courses over on-campus courses.

8. Provide focused training to support staff for effectively serving online students.

9. Ensure that the website and learning management system function well.
10. Work on building a virtual community for online-only students.
11. Intellectual property issues are not as critical as faculty might think. It is best to give faculty the option to receive compensation for course development, providing ownership of the course to the college or campus.
12. Online programs offer a great opportunity to serve non-traditional student populations, increase retention numbers, ease physical infrastructure constraints, and increase campus revenues.