



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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June 22, 2021

Dr. John Langell
President
Northeast Ohio Medical University
4209 Street Rt. 44
P.O. Box 95
Rootstown, OH 44272

Dear President Langell:

Attached is the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review evaluation information. Northeast Ohio Medical University's QIR showed genuine effort and has been accepted by the Commission. The attached reviewer evaluation contains a rationale for this outcome.

Peer reviewers evaluate all the QIRs based on the genuine effort of the institution, the seriousness of the undertaking, the significance of scope and impact of the work, the genuineness of the commitment to the initiative, and adequate resource provision.

If you have questions about the QIR reviewer information, please contact either Kathy Bijak (kbijak@hlcommission.org) or Pat Newton-Curran (pnewton@hlcommission.org).

Higher Learning Commission



Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

Panel Review and Recommendation Form

The Quality Initiative panel review process confirms or questions the institution's effort in undertaking the Quality Initiative Proposal approved by HLC. As indicated in the explication of the review, the Quality Initiative process encourages institutions to take risks, innovate, take on a tough challenge, or pursue a yet unproven strategy or hypothesis. Thus, failure of an initiative to achieve its goals is acceptable. An institution may learn much from such failure. What is not acceptable is failure of the institution to pursue the initiative with genuine effort. Genuineness of effort, not success of the initiative, constitutes the focus of the Quality Initiative review and serves as its sole point of evaluation.

Submit the final report as a Word document to HLC at hlcommission.org/upload. Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the report is sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name for the report should follow this format: QI Report Review <Name of Institution>.

Name of Institution: Northeast Ohio Medical University

State: OH

Institutional ID: 2137

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Mr. Matt Ashcraft, Maricopa CC; Dr. Judy Colwell, Retired, VP for Academic Affairs, Northern Oklahoma College

Date: 06/11/2021

I. Quality Initiative Review

- The institution demonstrated its seriousness of the undertaking.
- The institution demonstrated that the initiative had scope and impact.
- The institution demonstrated a commitment to and engagement in the initiative.
- The institution demonstrated adequate resource provision.

II. Recommendation

- The panel confirms genuine effort on the part of the institution.
- The panel cannot confirm genuine effort on the part of the institution.

III. Rationale (required)

As practicing and resident pharmacists, students in the HSPA program have demanding schedules that often create obstacles for the pursuit or completion of further graduate study, Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) determined that converting its traditional graduate program to distance education was the most promising way to address this need. However, NEOMED was not equipped to deliver programs via distance education. A collaboration with a neighboring comprehensive public university that had an extensive infrastructure and long-time experience in distance education was selected as the best option to transition the HSPA program fully online. So, NEOMED's Quality Initiative was developed to implement a collaborative agreement between NEOMED and Kent State University (KSU) to transition and deliver NEOMED's HSPA program courses online by using KSU's infrastructure and associated services for distance education. This collaborative arrangement required monitoring project implementation through the appointment of a special task force composed of personnel from both universities.

An important impact of the quality initiative was the continuous interaction between the two universities from a strategic perspective, including NEOMED's goals for program growth and accreditation considerations and KSU's entrepreneurial goals and aspirations for the Shared Services Agreement. Given size and scope difference between the universities, the perspectives about the Quality Initiative were diverse while mutually respectful, supportive, and beneficial. For example, both institution's shared goals for and benefits resulting from the initiative, especially the ability to transition and deliver the HSPA program online using high-quality best practice distance education with minimal cost; strengthening each institution's distance education infrastructure and related procedures; and strengthening the long-time relationship between the two universities. Based on the recommendation of the task force at the conclusion of the Shared Services Agreement, the project contract was renewed with modifications for the continued provision of faculty development in the areas of online teaching, including student engagement and course review methodologies, providing evidence of continued commitment and engagement in the project.

It is clear that the institution has invested significant resources into this initiative as evidenced in the Shared Services Agreement. Terms of payment for the Agreement included a fee for services and a percentage of HSPA student tuition, described in Schedule D of the Agreement (provided in the institution's report in Appendix A, *Shared Services Agreement*). In addition to providing annual fixed funding for the HSPA program, NEOMED demonstrated its commitment to this initiative through the dedication of additional financial resources to execute the Agreement for a period of two years. An extension to the Agreement with modifications from the original was begun in the 2020-2021 academic year with continuing financial commitment from NEOMED.

The evidence provided in this report confirms the genuine effort and commitment on the part of the University to the continuing success of this initiative.