



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.

7/13/20

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

David Glassman

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Eastern Illinois University

Name of Institution

Charleston, Illinois

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.

Diversifying Eastern Faculty and Staff for Student Success (DEFSSS)

The primary purpose of the quality initiative project is to increase student success (e.g., retention, academic achievement, and graduation rates) by increasing the diversity of Eastern Illinois University's (EIU's) faculty and staff to levels that are representative of the increasing diversity in our student population.

According to the U.S. Department of Education,¹ in 2018 the national 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time (FTFT) undergraduate students who started their bachelor's degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2012 was 62%. This was slightly lower (61%) at public institutions. A significant gap exists by race; White students (64%), Hispanic students (54%), and Black students (40%).

In Illinois, the college completion rate in 2015 at a four-year public institution was about 62% percent.² However, African American students were completing at a rate that was 50% that of their White peers, 33.7% compared to 66.4%. Eastern is ahead of many of our peers in this respect, with a graduation rate of 42% for African American students and 52% for Hispanic students in the 2012 cohort, but we know we still must do better.

This project aims to both narrow this achievement gap between African Americans (the largest traditionally underrepresented group) and their White peers, by providing an environment in which they can see themselves reflected in the demographics of the university's faculty and staff.

Over the last 15 years EIU has seen a steady increase in the diversity of its students, from 10.5% non-White students in 2005 to 31.5% in fall 2019. In comparison, only 13.8% of the employees (faculty, staff, and administration) identify as non-White.

The largest increase in non-White students has been in African American (7% in 2005 to 14.67% in 2020) and Hispanic (2% in 2005 to 11.72% in 2020). Though the student demographics have been changing, the faculty and staff populations have remained predominantly White, creating a growing racial gap between students and those who serve them. This increasing disparity creates an urgent need for the institution to take more aggressive action to create an organization that, both in spirit and in visible presence of people of color in positions of power, reflect our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

This project will begin with a period of self-study and review of best practices leading to the development of a strategic plan for increasing diversity and inclusion among the faculty and staff, and then will proceed to the implementation of that plan that will lead to increased success of underrepresented student populations. This initiative will begin during the quality initiative period and will continue, at least in part, indefinitely.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

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

According to the EIU 2019 Factbook, 31.5% of the EIU student body are students of color ("minority" students identifying other than White.) Among them, 14.7% identify as African

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *The Condition of Education 2019* (NCES 2019-144), Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_ctr.asp

² Partnership for College Completion (2017). *Unequal Opportunity in Illinois: September 2017. A Look at Who Graduates College and Why It Matters — A Meta-Analysis*. Retrieved from https://partnershipfcc.org/images/Unequal_Opportunity_in_IL2019.pdf

American, and 11.7% as Latinx. These are the two populations of college students that demographic projections in Illinois predict will grow the most in the coming decade. At the same time, we have a faculty that is 78.7% White, with only 4.7% identifying as Black or African American and 1.4% identifying as Latinx. The USC Race and Equity Center recently issued a [report card](#) of public universities in all 50 States, according to which EIU received an A for recruitment of African American students and a D for Black student to Black faculty ratio (57:1). The disparity is likely even more pronounced if one excludes adjunct faculty.

The disparity between student and faculty representation presents a major stumbling block to the success of students from underrepresented groups. According to Michael Benitez et al., “Students of color understand on the level of lived experience that the paucity of faculty of color diminishes their sense of belonging on predominantly white campuses, eroding their resilience and resolve over time.”³ Furthermore, the impact of faculty diversity can be seen in the differences in pedagogical approaches between faculty of color and their White counterparts, with the former being more likely to utilize cooperative learning approaches, require readings on racial/ethnic/gender issues, employ culturally sensitive educational practices, and less likely to utilize extensive lecture (Hurtado, 2001; Kuh et al., 2004). Bridges et al. (2005) found that Hispanic students interacted more with faculty and were more likely to participate in collaborative learning opportunities when Hispanics made up at least 10% of the faculty at Hispanic Serving Institutions.

The campus community has become increasingly aware of these disparities and has been seeking ways to address them. EIU’s 2019 RISE Conference keynote speaker, Dr. Mary F. Howard-Hamilton of Indiana State University’s Department of Educational Leadership, argued in her address that students must see themselves reflected in their faculty in order to imagine their own academic success. Dr. Jerlando Jackson of University of Wisconsin at Madison presented EIU faculty, administrators, and staff a similar message during the Diversity Dialogues of Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2019, an event sponsored by President Glassman and his Diversity Advisory Committee.

Although less research exists on the role of staff of color in the success of students from underrepresented groups, there are indicators that this is also a vital link. In recent years, student activists across the country have demanded the hiring of more people of color in counseling centers and academic advising roles. At least one study has shown that mentoring by members who identify in the same racial or ethnic group increases retention, GPA, graduation rates, and graduate school attendance. Another study has shown that “ethnic matching” enhances trust in the reliability of those helping students find information; although this study was conducted in a

³ New, Jake, “A Counselor Who Looks Like You,” *Inside Higher Ed*, Mar. 3, 2016; Campbell, T.A., & Campbell, D.E., “Outcomes of mentoring at-risk college students: Gender and ethnic matching effects,” *Mentoring and Tutoring* 15 (2007): 135-148; VanScoy, Amy and Kawanna Bright. “Racial and/or Ethnic Matching in Information Intermediation.” *Information Research* 21(4): Dec. 2016. <http://informationr.net/ir/21-4/istic/isics1603.html>; Benitez, Michael, Mary James, Kazi Joshua, Lisa Perfeti, and S. Brooke Vick, “‘Someone Who Looks Like Me’: Promoting the Success of Students of Color by Promoting the Success of Faculty of Color.” Text. Association of American Colleges & Universities, May 25, 2017. <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2017/spring/benitez>.

reference library setting, it seems reasonable to assume that similar trust relationships apply in many of the student-facing staff roles on campus.³

EIU's difficulty in recruiting and retaining faculty of color cannot be reduced merely to location. As Dr. Jackson pointed out in his presentations, much also rests on institutional commitments (i.e., allocation of resources), institutional structures, and institutional culture. The composition and priorities of search committees, and the training of search committee members, constitute a major obstacle to even bringing faculty to campus. Darryl G. Smith, et al., for example, have identified the need to "interrupt the usual" in faculty hiring, by which they mean "examining and changing how regular search and hiring processes are conducted" as an essential strategy in hiring faculty from underrepresented groups.⁴

It is not enough to recruit; we must also work to retain a diverse faculty by creating conditions under which all faculty may flourish. We may think of this as creating opportunities for collaboration, collegiality, and community.⁵

Enhancing programming for students of color, while important, will inevitably be limited in its success in recruiting and retaining diverse students unless we address the structural deficiencies in the composition of our faculty and staff first or concurrently.

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

Impact of Diverse Faculty. Research has shown that faculty of color tend to engage in scholarship and practices that support a diverse student population. In addition, they tend to engage more with students in general, and on diversity issues more specifically and emphasize higher-order cognitive experiences more than their white counterparts.⁶ Generally, structural diversity leads to positive student outcome. Given the increasing trend towards a more diverse student population, any long-term plan to recruit and retain these students must include a change to diversity of the faculty and staff who interact, educate, and mentor them. President Glassman has articulated a FTFT retention goal to be consistently at least 78% by 2024. It is currently 70.3% for all students and 64.3% for students of color. In addition, the Provost has a 6-year graduation rate goal between 63-65% consistently. The current rate is 58% and 45% for all students and students of color, respectively. The goal would be to raise the retention and 6-year graduation rates of students of color to be on par with the rest of the student body.

Impact of Diverse Staff. Most work conducted on diversity among higher education employees focus on faculty. However, it is safe to assume that similar to the impact of faculty, diverse staff bring their unique experiences into their positions. In past studies, students of color report having more

⁴ Daryl G Smith., Caroline S. Turner, Nana Osei-Kofi, and Sandra Richards. "Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty." *The Journal of Higher Education* 75, no. 2 (March 1, 2004): 156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2004.11778900>.

⁵ Butner, Bonita K., Hansel Burley, and Aretha F. Marbley. "Coping with the Unexpected: Black Faculty at Predominately White Institutions." *Journal of Black Studies* 30, no. 3 (January 2000): 453–62. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002193470003000309>.

⁶ Paul D. Umbach, "The Contribution of Faculty of Color to Undergraduate Education." *Research in Higher Education* 47, no. 3, (2006): 317–345. www.jstor.org/stable/40197402.

positive experiences with faculty and staff who look like them. Seeing themselves reflected in the leadership roles serve as a source of inspiration and pride. In addition, like their faculty colleagues, staff from underrepresented groups tend to engage more in service, programs and mentoring that directly impact all students.

Indirect Impact. In addition to direct impact, there are many indirect benefits of a more diverse faculty and staff. For example, it is generally agreed that interacting with diverse groups leads to increased cross-racial understanding and sensitivity. This means that White faculty, staff and students benefit from those interactions, potentially helping to create a more diversity-focused culture on campus and prepare students for global citizenship.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

We propose a process to identify and implement a set of activities aimed at diversifying EIU's faculty and staff to increase student success.

During the Quality Initiative period, the project will have three phases focused around evaluating and addressing three major factors that influence our likelihood of success including hiring policies and practices, recruitment, and retention of diverse faculty and staff.

Phase 1: Self-Study and Research on Best Practices.

A committee of 18 faculty and staff has already been convened and has begun initial research both on the current conditions and practices at EIU and on best practices at peer institutions. Based on this preliminary research, we have identified the following areas for institutional and comparative research.

- Identify current practices across campus. There are three general sets of hiring practices: (a) civil service (which is governed by state law and includes a range of positions, some covered by union contracts and some non-negotiated), (b) faculty, and (c) administrative and professional. These three sets of hiring practices are administered by two separate offices (Human Resources for civil service positions and the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity for the others). We will be identifying the places in the hiring process where subjective decision-making plays a significant role (for example, in initial screenings and selection processes) to identify where more inclusive practices may be fostered. An important element of this comparison will be the composition of search committees. For example, at the institutions most successful in the recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups, how do they comprise and train search committees?
- Study the current reputation of the University as an employer, both as represented on our website and other materials and in terms of our word-of-mouth reputation in the local community. We will also seek best practices for improving local reputation and reaching out to local candidates for Civil Service and other positions. Possible action steps here would include actively recruiting in the local area to increase and diversify the pool of Civil Service applicants and offering workshops designed to help candidates understand and prepare for Civil Service exams.
- Compare our hiring practices to those at peer institutions: After identifying a pool of suitable peer institutions, we will identify and describe the hiring practices, including any recent diversification efforts. This will include a comparison of civil service hiring practices

within and without Illinois. And we will identify, where the data is available, the relative success of these hiring efforts with the reported diversity of the faculty and staff at the institutions.

- Analyze the results of recent hires on campus. What can we learn from successful searches, if “success” in this context is defined as resulting in the hire of a member of an underrepresented group? According to the available data from the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, 24 of the 100 faculty and administrative/professional searches made between 2015 and 2018 resulted in hires from underrepresented groups and 24 of the hires from those searches were women. In preparing the hiring plan, we will need to research all searches in the past five years to determine the proportion of underrepresented groups in each applicant pool compared to the number selected for initial screening interviews, those chosen as finalists, and the successful candidates. In this way we will determine the points in the search process most in need of improvement from a diversity and equity perspective.
- Study best practices in advertising for positions, both for Civil Service and for faculty and non-Civil Service staff.
- Study the effectiveness of partnerships like that between The Ohio State University and the Southern Region Education Board or other partnerships between predominantly White institutions and HBCUs. Consider whether such a partnership might be effective for us and begin discussions with potential partners.

Phase 2: Create a strategic plan for increasing diversity, equity and inclusion among the faculty and staff, as part of the University’s strategic planning process.

We foresee this strategic plan as encompassing three main areas: recruitment, hiring, and retention.

Recruitment refers to the practices through which the University identifies pools of applicants, presents itself as an attractive employer, and encourages candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply.

Hiring refers to the policies and practices used by the institution to select candidates from the applicant pool. These include the materials requested from applicants, the composition and training of screening committees, the behaviors and practices of all those involved in initial and on-campus interviews (including unit employees, members of the screening committee, hiring agents and their supervisors), the negotiation and job-offer process.

The final area for improvement is retention practices, which includes campus climate and culture, the development of support systems on campus for faculty and staff of diverse backgrounds and identities, fostering of professional networks outside the institution to support faculty and staff members’ professional development and sense of belonging.

This project proceeds from the assumption that these three areas are interrelated. By this we mean that a supportive campus climate is necessary for the successful recruitment of a diverse faculty and staff; that successful hiring practices depend upon intentional recruitment policies and an inclusive campus culture; that the retention of diverse faculty and staff results in part from the recruitment and hiring of a critical mass of faculty and staff with diverse identities and

backgrounds. The second phase of this project will therefore entail the development of a strategic plan.

An external report on a series of pilot studies conducted to support the success of under-represented faculty provided a number of strategies that we believe may be appropriate for implementation at EIU.⁷ Based on this and our preliminary research, we believe that an effective strategic plan should include some form of the following:

- Establishing a central person, office or campus body whose purpose is to support diversity efforts.
- Providing ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion training for faculty and staff with incentives for participation
- Creating a reward system that recognizes faculty and staff who practice DEI.
- Evaluating campus climate at some regular interval that includes all levels of the university community
- Creating a means for complaints to be heard and acted upon.
- Supporting a committed and sustained mentorship program
- Establishing an explicit procedure for creating diverse search committees for faculty and staff searches, such as including external member and developing a training program for advocates and allies.
- Exploring models for cultivating diversity, equity, and inclusion among faculty in particular, which might include
 - A one- or two-year fellowship program to bring junior scholars to campus.
 - A short-term Visiting Scholars program for doctoral candidates, early career scholars, or even established faculty.
 - Increased emphasis on EIU's participation in the [Diversifying Faculty in Illinois](#) program, which is designed to increase the representation of minority faculty at Illinois's four and two-year institutions of higher learning.
- Creating practices aimed at promoting the success of faculty and staff of color. This might include:
 - Supporting the Faculty Development and Innovation Center to assure all new faculty receive affirmative mentoring.
 - Developing a consortium network of underrepresented faculty and staff across regional campuses.⁸
- Encouraging deans and chairs to offer faculty and staff of color leadership and service opportunities that promote their professional success and make use of their expertise while not at the same time overburdening them to “represent” as minorities on committees.

Phase 3: Begin implementation of the strategic plan.

⁷ Piercy, Fred, et al. "Improving campus climate to support faculty diversity and retention: A pilot program for new faculty." *Innovative Higher Education* 30.1 (2005): 53-66.

⁸ Michael Benitez, Mary James, Kazi Joshua, and S. Brooke Vick. "‘Someone Who Looks Like Me’: Promoting the Success of Students of Color by Promoting the Success of Faculty of Color." Association of American Colleges & Universities, May 25, 2017 (accessed December 2, 2019) <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2017/spring/benitez>.

We anticipate self-study, research into best practices, and creation of a strategic plan will take place during the first year of the project, and that implementation of some activities will also begin during the first year. Years 2-4 will be focused on implementation to increase the physical and visual presence of faculty and staff of color in the classroom and across campus as a means to:

- enhance academic achievement, retention and graduation for students of color;
- enhance the educational experience of majority students who will enter an increasingly diverse workforce;
- increase the sense of empowerment among an increasingly diverse student population by seeing themselves reflected in people in position of power in the academy.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> Persistence and Completion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Success |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Pedagogy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development | <input checked="" 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.

A comprehensive report of our current hiring practices and policies, recruitment, and retention of diverse faculty and staff will be the first step in determining baseline metrics for comparison as we work toward our goals. Successful implementation of adjustments to existing practices will be evident through the following assessments and metrics:

Student Retention Data. Though we expect that all students will benefit from a more diverse faculty and staff, the impact is expected to be more significant among students from traditionally underrepresented groups. Hence, progress will be evaluated through semesterly year-to-year retention data that include disaggregated demographic information (racial or ethnic variables, gender identity, socio-economic status etc.). This data will be curated by the Academic Success Center. The final year FTFT retention data will be compared to retention data from the final year pre-project implementation. We will expect to see improvement over the current retention of 64.3% and improvement in the graduation rate which is currently 45% for students of color, while controlling for socio-economic status.

Tracking the diversity of applicant and candidate pools from search committees (diverse/not diverse). To measure the effectiveness of the recruitment phase, OCRD should record the diversity status of individuals from the initial application pool to the final selection process. We expect an increase in the diversity of applicants and candidates through all stages of the search process.

Faculty and staff campus climate survey with disaggregated data. Ongoing campus climate surveys should be administered to faculty, staff, and students (separate surveys) that includes demographic information (racial or ethnic variables, gender identity, etc.) and will allow for the evaluation of disaggregated data so that any disparities among groups can be uncovered.

Ongoing exit interview with departing faculty and staff. Qualitative and quantitative data should be collected from faculty and staff who are planning on exiting the institution to find out why they are leaving. This could be done with a voluntary exit survey that is administered by Human Resources as part of the normal employee separation check out process.

Feedback from faculty and staff participants on student engagement and scholarship. Track the level and nature of student engagement and scholarship across departments in order to reveal any impact from interaction with diverse faculty/staff. This includes participation of students of color in research, conferences, grants, departmental honors, showcases, etc., which we would expect to increase.

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 support for this initiative is wide and deep. It was one of three proposals put forward last Fall by a committee of representatives from across Academic Affairs. After a vetting process that included wide circulation of the proposals and a public Q&A session, campus constituents voted on the proposals and there was broad support for this one. Subsequently, the President's Council reviewed the proposals and selected this one for implementation.

The President then appointed an 18-person committee tasked with further developing the successful proposal into its current form and seeing it through. The committee includes representatives from all areas of campus including representatives from the four Vice Presidential areas of the university, Human Resources, Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, and the faculty union. Many of the people on the committee have been involved in diversity, equity, and inclusion work on campus and are thus deeply invested in the project's success.

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

- Provost's Office
- President's Office (including Office of Civil Rights and Diversity)
- Faculty Development and Innovation Center
- Human Resources
- Deans
- Department chairs
- QI Committee
- Making Excellence Inclusive Committee
- Faculty Senate
- Staff Senate

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

Human resources committed to this initiative include the 18-person committee, the members of which have agreed to serve over the coming years to provide continuity as we see the project through its development to its implementation. The HLC Liaison, Jeffrey Stowell (Prof. of Psychology), will head the committee and direct the project's implementation. The Office of Institutional Research will provide needed data, as will the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity and Human Resources. The Provost's office will make available a graduate assistant for mining data from hiring searches.

The Provost's office will make available financial resources for supporting planning retreats during Year 1 of the project and workshops, trainings, and other kinds of professional development necessary during Year 2. Other more substantial forms of support in subsequent years will be dependent on university budget. For academic searches, the Provost intends to continue his practice of renewing searches for tenure lines if the search fails and does not yield a diverse pool of candidates.

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.

Phase 1: Self-Study and Research on Best Practices

April – June 2020

- Organize QI subcommittees
- Prepare QI proposal for submission to the Higher Learning Commission

July – December 2020

- Review current university guidelines and policies
- Collect models and other best practices from other institutions

Phase 2: Development of Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Hiring

January – March 2021

- Draft strategic plan
- Seek feedback from campus constituents

April – May 2021

- Finalize strategic plan

Phase 3: Begin Implementation

June 2021 – Spring 2024

- Implement the first three years of the strategic plan
- Track data for initial assessment (*note: we expect at least 4 years of implementation to be required before robust results are obtained; the project will extend beyond the QI period*)

June 2024 (or before)

- Submit QI report to HLC

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

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

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