



## 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.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

8/29/19

Date

Ryan Purdy, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Mid-Plains Community College

Name of Institution

North Platte, Nebraska

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. Effective September 1, 2019, it is due no later than June 1 of Year 7. Prior to September 1, 2019, the proposal is due by August 31 of Year 7.

Submit the proposal as a PDF file to [pathways@hlcommission.org](mailto:pathways@hlcommission.org) with a file name that follows this 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.

*Project NACEP: Faculty Development, Engagement, and Student Success* will provide sustained support ensuring academic excellence for all Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC) dual credit students, faculty, and staff.

The path to seeking NACEP accreditation began in the Fall 2012. Prior to Fall of 2012, adjunct/dual credit faculty orientations were only held in McCook and North Platte which required adjunct/dual credit faculty to travel up to 260 miles (four hours) round trip. In the Fall of 2012, the vice-president for academic affairs started holding adjunct/dual credit faculty orientations at MPCC’s four community campuses as well as in McCook and North Platte reducing travel time for dual credit/adjunct faculty. On site faculty orientations help reinforce that adjunct/dual credit faculty were part of the college and helped build relationships while also valuing their time.

The next steps in the path toward NACEP accreditation occurred in January 2019 with the approval of a Statement of Principles and Standards for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Credit by the Nebraska Association of Community and Tribal Colleges. Then in March 2019, MPCC created the Office of Early Entry and Program Development and hired a director and assistant director who are directly responsible for working with area high schools to help high school students transition to post-secondary education.

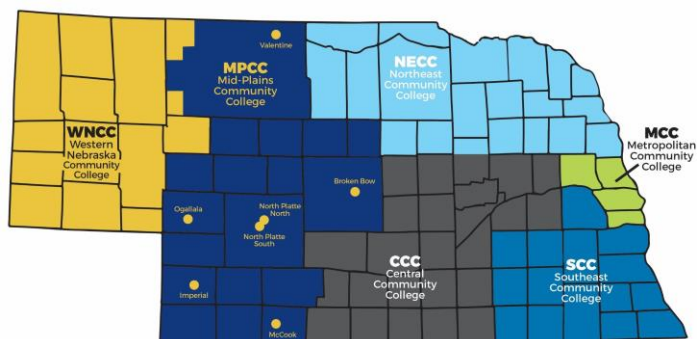
Applying for NACEP accreditation is the capstone project of a concentrated focus on dual credit students and faculty. NACEP accreditation will be completed within the Quality Initiative period.

## Sufficiency of the Initiative’s Scope and Significance

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

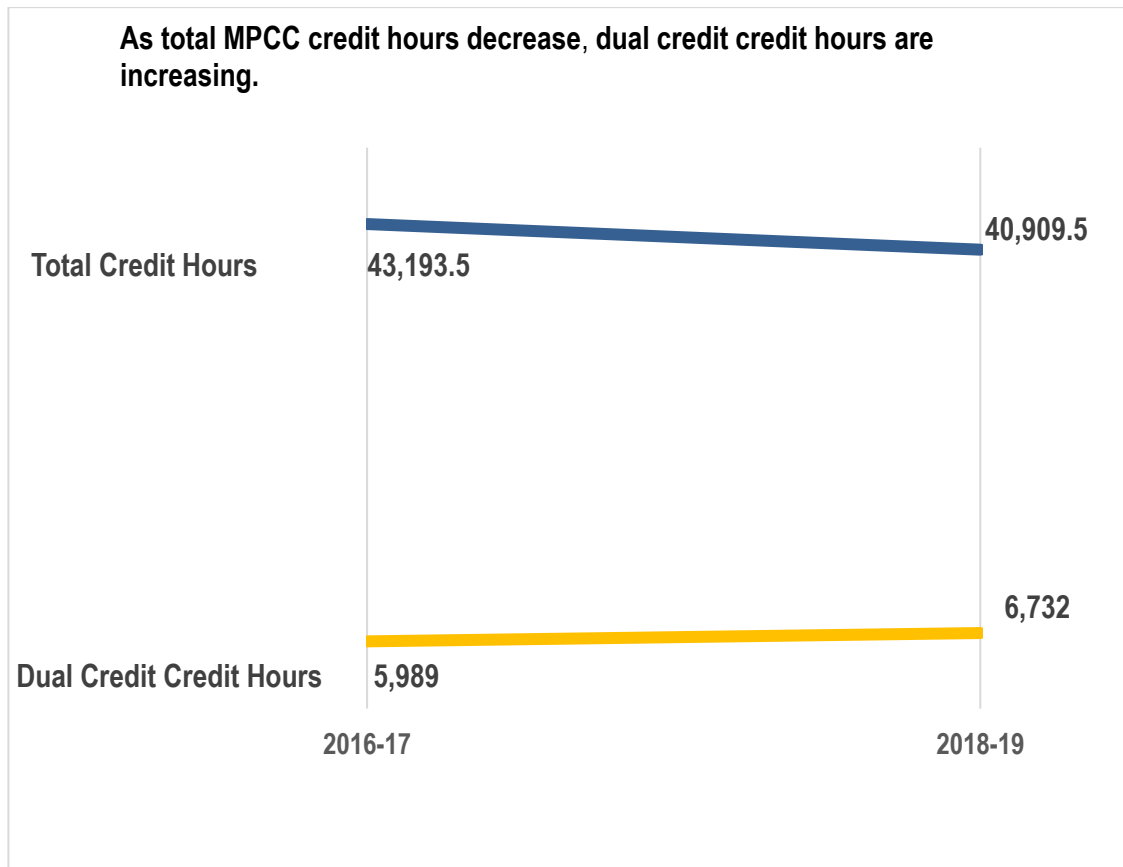
To fully understand Project NACEP’s significance, it is important to recognize a few basic facts about MPCC’s service area. MPCC’s campuses in McCook and North Platte and community campuses in Broken Bow, Imperial, Ogallala, and Valentine, serve 18 counties in west central Nebraska encompassing 20,500 square miles that is 26.5 percent of the state of Nebraska. A significant reason for the success of MPCC’s Early Entry program is due to the work of the community campuses, which are closer to some service area high schools in sparsely populated rural areas.

### Mid-Plains Community College Service Area Map



In 2018-19, MPCC offered dual credit courses at 33 high schools within its 18-county service area. Twenty-four of MPCC's sixty-seven full time faculty are certified by the Nebraska Department of Education to teach dual credit courses.

Since 2016, dual credit enrollment has consistently grown despite an overall decrease in area enrollment. In 2016-17, dual credit enrollment counted for 13.9% of all credit hours. In 2018-19, that percentage grew to 16.5%. The following chart illustrates growth in the credit hours taken for dual credit compared to total credit hours for the institution.



MPCC would be the first community college and second institution of higher education in Nebraska to be NACEP accredited. Achieving NACEP accreditation supports MPCC's mission statement of transforming lives through exceptional learning opportunities for individual student success as well as supporting the institution's vision of being first choice for area educational and vocational advancement. Further, NACEP accreditation serves as a guarantee to dual credit students and parents that MPCC meets NACEP's rigorous standards related to partnerships, program evaluation, curriculum, and dual credit faculty and students

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

Strategically focusing on the Early Entry program and dual credit faculty and supporting students has already led to improvements related to course rigor, faculty development, and partnerships with area high schools. The NACEP accreditation process will provide MPCC with

continued opportunities to focus on areas of improvement related to dual credit students and faculty.

NACEP's faculty standards require college faculty liaisons to provide course and discipline specific orientation and training for dual credit/adjunct faculty. Preparing for this training will encourage MPCC faculty to reflect on best practices and how to communicate that information to their colleagues in a dual credit classroom. The result of the training will impact academic rigor and better align dual credit courses with college-only coursework.

NACEP's student standards require dual credit students be advised about the benefits and implications of taking college courses and ensure they have access to learning resources and student support services. Preparing for NACEP accreditation will push the Office of Early Entry and student services staff to continue to find innovative ways to support dual credit students throughout its 20,500 square mile service area.

## Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

### 4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

The overall purpose of MPCC's Quality Initiative is to earn NACEP accreditation by participating in NACEP's rigorous accreditation process. MPCC Quality Initiative's goals align with NACEP's standards and the three topics selected in question five.

## Engagement

### Goal:

- Increase student engagement through improved access to student services.
- Increase faculty engagement through focused professional development opportunities, and improved partnerships with area high schools.
- Increase community engagement through improved visibility with parents and guardians of early entry students.

## Faculty Development

### Goal:

- Improved professional development opportunities for dual credit/adjunct faculty.

MPCC currently provides professional development for dual credit faculty primarily through adjunct orientations held in the fall in McCook, North Platte, Broken Bow, Imperial, Ogallala, and Valentine. As a part of NACEP accreditation process, the Office of Early Entry with support from Academic Affairs will establish a faculty liaison/mentor program that will provide all new dual credit faculty with course-specific training prior to the faculty member teaching the course for the first time.

MPCC has a strong presence throughout its 18-county service area through the four community campuses, outreach to area businesses, and the Early Entry program. Strengthening Early

Entry and dual credit opportunities will educate an even larger demographic about the opportunities MPCC provides.

### Student Success

#### Goal:

- Improve dual credit student access to advising and admissions to ensure students are enrolling in dual credit courses that align with their educational goals.
- Improve variety of course offerings at area high schools and career exploration within their home high school and community.

Currently, MPCC’s dual credit students have access to advising services. However, most advising is done informally through the home high school with assistance from MPCC advisors. As part of meeting NACEP student standard three, MPCC advisors will continue to work with high school counselors while taking a more active role in advising dual credit students. With a more visible role, college advisors can provide focused feedback on what courses and full programs are needed at service area high schools.

5. Select up to three main topics that will be addressed by the initiative.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Diversity                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development   | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching/Pedagogy          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engagement          | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development        | <input type="checkbox"/> Underserved Populations    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Evaluation         | <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First-Year Programs            | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Improvement        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Education              |   |   |

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

The Planning and Improvement Core (PIC) Team and NACEP Self-Study Team will guide MPCC’s Early Entry program through NACEP accreditation utilizing NACEP’s pre-determined accreditation timeline. The Early Entry advisory team will assist with the accreditation process and advise the Early Entry office on issues related to dual credit faculty and students.

## **NACEP Accreditation Process**

### **Step 1: NACEP Self-Study**

#### **Oversight: NACEP Self-Study Team and PIC Team**

The NACEP Self-Study Team will review MPCC's Early Entry program and document how the program meets NACEP's 16 standards, develop implementation plans for standards not in place, and identify evidence required for the application. The PIC Team will also assist with the self-study.

### **Step 2: File Pre-Application and Undergo Candidacy Review**

#### **Oversight: NACEP Self-Study Team and PIC Team**

NACEP's Pre-Application packet includes questions about institutional characteristics, program size, listing of dual credit courses offered, and completed coversheets for nine of the 16 standards. The coversheets contain concise descriptions of evidence showing how MPCC's Early Entry program meets each standard.

### **Step 3: Prepare and Submit a Completed Accreditation Application**

#### **Oversight: NACEP Self-Study Team, PIC Team, and Early Entry Advisory Team**

A completed NACEP application consists of a program description, NACEP cover sheets for the 16 NACEP standards, and evidence showing how MPCC's Early Entry Program meets or exceeds each NACEP standard.

### **Step 4: Peer Review**

#### **Oversight: NACEP Accreditation Commission**

#### **Contacts: Early Entry Advisory Team, and Director and Assistant Director of Early Entry**

MPCC's completed accreditation application will be reviewed by a three-person peer review team who will report their findings to NACEP's Accreditation Commission.

While the NACEP accreditation timeline is pre-determined, the Office of Early Entry and the NACEP accreditation team will make adjustments as needed.

## **Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative**

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

MPCC first offered dual credit courses in 1991. With much unknown, dual credit courses were administered out of Career Services because they were best equipped to oversee a new program. As dual credit enrollment has grown, MPCC is taking a risk by re-aligning its organizational structure and establishing the Office of Early Entry to manage the early entry program and support dual credit students and faculty.

Evidence of MPCC's commitment to dual credit students, faculty, and seeking NACEP accreditation is rooted in MPCC's strategic planning process and the re-alignment of departments and human resources to fully support MPCC's early entry program.

In Fall 2018, MPCC began its 2019-2022 strategic planning process. Phase one established a vision developed by the college president and Board of Governors. Based on naturally accumulated input from internal and external stakeholders and existing relationships, the vision



statement, “MPCC will be first choice in our region for education, partnerships, employers, and employees” was selected.

In phase two, a series of community input sessions were held in McCook, North Platte, and at MPCC’s four community campuses. Session attendees included external stakeholders from area high schools, businesses, and community leaders. As internal stakeholders, MPCC employees and students had similar opportunities to provide input on what would make MPCC first choice.

Input from community, employee, and student input sessions was compiled, analyzed, and reviewed by the college cabinet and the Planning and Improvement Core (PIC) Team. The PIC Team has been in place since 2008-09 with MPCC’s entry into the Academic Quality Improvement (AQIP) Pathway. With the phase out of the AQIP pathway in 2018, MPCC consciously chose to maintain focus on continuous quality improvement and kept the cross functional team in place.

The PIC Team identified two strategic objectives directly related to early entry/dual credit: strengthening partnerships with area highs schools and expanding programming. In the Spring of 2019, the PIC Team chose NACEP accreditation as MPCC’s Quality Initiative. The PIC Team will continue to provide input and support throughout the NACEP accreditation process.

Externally, the approved Statement of Principles and Standards for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Credit by the Nebraska Association of Community and Tribal Colleges supports MPCC’s efforts to ensure that dual credit courses are college level courses and dual credit faculty hold credentials consistent with the Higher Learning Commission Assumed Practices B.2.a Faculty Roles and Qualifications.

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

The Early Entry Office will lead the NACEP accreditation process with support from Academic Affairs, the Instructional Leadership Team, and the Institutional Effectiveness Team. Area high school administrators and faculty will be involved in the NACEP self-study and accreditation process.

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

Annual expenses include the Office of Early Entry salary and benefits, NACEP membership, and NACEP’s annual conference. NACEP accreditation expenses, including pre-application, accreditation processing fee, accreditation advisor (if needed), and accreditation institute are directly related to NACEP’s accreditation process and will re-occur four years after the initial accreditation, after which re-accreditation occurs on a seven-year cycle.

<b>Office of Early Entry</b>	
Director of Early Entry and Program Development salary including benefits	\$87,980.20

Assistant Director of Early Entry and Program Development salary including benefits	\$74,286.49
<b>NACEP accreditation expenses</b>	
Membership fee	\$560.00
Pre-application fee	\$200.00
Accreditation processing fee	\$500.00
Accreditation advisor (if needed)	\$750.00
Accreditation institute (estimated fees and travel for 3-4 people)	\$4,000.00
Required conference (estimated registration fees and travel for 4 people)	\$7,095.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$175,361.69</b>

### 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.

<b>Quality Initiative Proposal Timeline October 2019-August 2022</b>	
<b>Primary Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Attend NACEP conference in Salt Lake City, UT	October 2019
Complete NACEP Self-Study Attend a NACEP Accreditation Institute	January-December 2020
Submit Pre-Application for NACEP accreditation	December 2020
Submit complete NACEP accreditation application	July 2021
Achieve NACEP accreditation	Academic Year 2021-2022

### Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

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

Name and Title: Holly Andrews

Phone: 308.535.3798

Email: andrewsh@mpcc.edu





October 15, 2019

Mr. Ryan Purdy  
President  
Mid-Plains Community College  
601 W. State Farm Road  
North Platte, NE 69101

Dear President Purdy:

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Proposal (QIP) Review form completed by a peer review panel. Mid-Plains Community College's QIP is approved.

Within the QIP Review form, you will find comments from the panel for your consideration as you proceed with your Quality Initiative. The panel reviewed the QIP for four areas:

- Sufficiency of initiative's scope and significance
- Clarity of initiative's purpose
- Evidence of commitment to and capacity for accomplishing the initiative
- Appropriateness of the timeline for the initiative

If you have questions about the panel's review, please contact either Kathy Bijak ([kbijak@hlcommission.org](mailto:kbijak@hlcommission.org)) or Pat Newton-Curran ([pnewton@hlcommission.org](mailto:pnewton@hlcommission.org)). For any questions about your Quality Initiative, contact Tom Bordenkircher, at [tbordenkircher@hlcommission.org](mailto:tbordenkircher@hlcommission.org).

***The Higher Learning Commission***

# Open Pathway Quality Initiative Proposal Review Form

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Date of Review: 10/7/2019

Name of Institution: Mid-Plains Community College State: Nebraska

Institutional ID: 1897

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Dr. Thomas Hughes, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, Yavapai College; Mr. William Harting, Assistant Provost, Marian University

## Review Categories and Findings

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### 1. Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

- Potential for significant impact on the institution and its academic quality.
- Alignment with the institution's mission and vision.
- Connection with the institution's planning processes.
- Evidence of significance and relevance at this time.

#### Finding:

- The Quality Initiative Proposal demonstrates acceptable scope and significance.
- The Quality Initiative Proposal does not demonstrate acceptable scope and significance.

**Rationale and Comments:** (Provide 2–3 statements justifying the finding and recommending minor modifications, if applicable. Provide any comments, such as highlighting strong points, raising minor concerns or cautions, or identifying questions.)

Mid-Plains Community College makes a compelling case for the relevance and significance of its Quality Initiative project. The College began exploring accreditation of its early college program with the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) in the fall of 2012. The time is right to build on the momentum gained from receiving approval from the Nebraska Association of Community and Tribal Colleges and the creation of an office of Early Entry and Program Development. The project will assist Mid-Plains with ensuring that the academic rigor of its dual credit courses aligns with rigor and expectations of college-only coursework.

Regarding the project's scope, it is evident that the College has taken the time to study the situation, so Mid-Plains can ensure consistent guidelines and rigor as outlined in NACEP's accreditation standards. By meeting the NACEP standards, and improving the expectations and experience for both students and faculty, the proposal demonstrates significance and relevance.

### 2. Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

- Clear purposes and goals reflective of the scope and significance of the initiative.

- Defined milestones and intended goals.
- Clear processes for evaluating progress.

**Finding:**

- The Quality Initiative Proposal demonstrates clarity of purpose.
- The Quality Initiative Proposal does not demonstrate clarity of purpose.

**Rationale and Comments:**

The goals for the proposed initiative are clearly set forth: to improve dual credit students (and parents) and faculty engagement; improve professional development opportunities for dual faculty; improve student success by guaranteeing rigor and aligning dual course taking with students' educational goals.

Of minor concern, is the lack of detail on how engagement activities and claims of improved quality will occur and how will leadership know whether and how much they have improved? We encourage initiative leadership to begin developing metrics to assess the impact of NACEP accreditation.

**3. Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative**

- Commitment of senior leadership.
- Commitment and involvement of key people and groups.
- Sufficiency of the human, financial, technological, and other resources.
- Defined plan for integrating the initiative into the ongoing work of the institution and sustaining its results.
- Clear understanding of and capacity to address potential obstacles.

**Finding:**

- The Quality Initiative Proposal demonstrates evidence of commitment and capacity.
- The Quality Initiative Proposal does not demonstrate evidence of commitment and capacity.

**Rationale and Comments:**

The proposal has direct links to the College's mission and strategic plan. Also, Mid-Plains went to great lengths to solicit internal and external stakeholders input in developing their QI project. Externally, the College developed a Statement of Principles and Standards for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment credit that has been approved by the Nebraska Association of Community and Tribal Colleges.

The College has identified groups (NACEP Self-Study Team & PIC Team) and created a new office of Early Entry that will provide leadership and manage resources to implement and sustain the project. In addition, the project has the support of senior leadership and the Board of Governors.

Appropriate funding for the project appears to have been allocated, and the proposal included a table outlining project expenses by activity.

#### 4. Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

- Consistency with intended purposes and goals.
- Alignment with the implementation of other institutional priorities.
- Reasonable implementation plan for the time period.

#### Finding:

- The Quality Initiative Proposal demonstrates an appropriate timeline.
- The Quality Initiative Proposal does not demonstrate an appropriate timeline.

#### Rationale and Comments:

The NACEP accreditation timeline is pre-determined by the third-party accreditor. Nonetheless, the schedule is consistent with a QI and the intended purpose and goals of the project. A description of QI activities and related timelines was provided in the proposal.

## General Observations and Recommended Modifications

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Panel members may provide considerations and suggested modifications that the institution should note related to its proposed Quality Initiative.

The strength in the proposal is the identification of a project as one needed to meet the College's mission and service area needs. In addition, Mid-Plains thoroughness in gathering internal and external support for the Quality Initiative is commendable. We believe the College will find that the changes initiated by this project will improve student engagement and success for Mid-Plain's growing early college student population. With interest, we will watch to see the outcomes of this project and wish the College our best in its endeavors.

## Conclusion

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- Approve the proposed Quality Initiative with or without recommended minor modifications. No further review required.
- Request resubmission of the proposed Quality Initiative.

### **Rationale and Expectations if Requesting Resubmission**

### **Timeline and Process for Resubmission**

*(HLC staff will add this section if the recommendation is for resubmission.)*



## Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

### Institutional Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative Report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

6/1/2022

Date

Ryan Purdy, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

Mid-Plains Community College

Name of Institution

North Platte, Nebraska

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.

The report must be submitted by June 1 of Year 9.

Submit the report as a PDF file at [hlcommission.org/upload](http://hlcommission.org/upload). Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name of the report should follow this format: QIReport[InstitutionName] [State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

**Date: June 1, 2022**

**Contact Person for Report: Holly Andrews, Assessment Coordinator**

**Contact Person's Email Address: [andrewsh@mpcc.edu](mailto:andrewsh@mpcc.edu)**

## Report Categories

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### 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.

Project NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships): Faculty Development, Engagement, and Student Success succeeded in its goal of ensuring continued academic excellence for Mid-Plains Community College (MPCC) dual credit students, dual credit faculty, and staff who work with dual credit students and the early entry program. However, MPCC did not achieve the NACEP accreditation and is requesting reconsideration of the denial.

Participating in NACEP's rigorous accreditation process led to improvements in dual credit faculty and student engagement, engagement with high school partners, and professional development for dual credit faculty. For the MPCC's high school partners, applying for NACEP accreditation and the focused efforts to improve the early entry program helped strengthen relationships between the college and the 36 high schools within MPCC's 20,500-mile service area. Internally, pursuing NACEP accreditation raised awareness of the importance of the early entry program and, as with high school partners, strengthened relationships between faculty and staff who work with the early entry program.

Except for minor pandemic related timeline adjustments, no significant changes were made to the initiative over the three-year period.

Applying for NACEP accreditation was the capstone project of a concentrated focus on the early entry program. Prior to Fall of 2012, adjunct/dual credit faculty orientations were only held in McCook and North Platte which required adjunct/dual credit faculty to travel up to 260 miles (four hours) round trip. In the Fall of 2012, the vice president for academic affairs started holding adjunct/dual credit faculty orientations at MPCC's four community campuses as well as in McCook and North Platte reducing travel time for dual credit/adjunct faculty. On-site faculty orientations help reinforce that adjunct/dual credit faculty were part of the college and helped build relationships while also valuing their time.

The next steps in the path toward applying for NACEP accreditation occurred in January 2019 with the approval of a Statement of Principles and Standards for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Credit by the Nebraska Association of Community and Tribal Colleges. Then in March 2019, MPCC created the Office of Early Entry



and Program Development and hired a director and assistant director who are directly responsible for working with area high schools to help high school students transition to post-secondary education. Five months after the Office of Early Entry was created, the early entry program began the three-year NACEP accreditation process.

**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.)

Project NACEP’s goals focused on increased engagement with dual credit students, faculty, high school partners, and parents along with improved professional development for dual credit faculty.

<b>Engagement: Goals</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
<p>Increase student engagement through improved access to student services</p>	<p>Creation of dual credit transfer guides that list MPCC course number and titles, high school course title, and how courses transfer to the University of Nebraska system and Nebraska state colleges.</p> <p>Piloted an online registration process for dual credit students that parallels the college’s standard registration process. Earlier registration benefits students by allowing students and parents full control of the student’s schedule. They are able to see course offerings and enroll without delay or need for intervention of college staff members. This allows for additional payment time and ability to schedule payments prior to the start of the semester.</p> <p>Students are also able to autonomously register and drop classes. Accessing their student account allows them to view degree plans and schedule future courses that fit with their academic goals and provides the ability to connect with their advisor online.</p> <p>Accessibility is another benefit of moving information online. Students and parents who</p>

	are not native English speakers are able to read and understand information without the need of a translator.
Improved partnerships with area high schools and increased community engagement through improved visibility with parents and guardians of early entry students	<p>In 2021-22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assistant director of early entry made 29 formal visits to 21 area high schools.</li> <li>• Early entry staff collaborated with community campus administrators in Broken Bow, Imperial, Ogallala, and Valentine to visit 36 area high schools.</li> </ul> <p>After not being able to visit schools in person due to pandemic restrictions, college administration and early entry staff realized the critical role in-person visits play in developing relationships with high school partners.</p>
<b>Faculty Development and Engagement: Goal</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
Improved professional development opportunities for dual credit/adjunct faculty.	<p>A course was created in the Canvas online learning management system that gives adjunct dual credit faculty the opportunity to connect with their full-time counterparts and share ideas and resources.</p> <p>A new dual credit faculty handbook included college procedures related to dual credit faculty.</p> <p>Early entry staff created tracking documents for adjunct orientations and other professional development opportunities that allowed faculty liaisons to follow up with faculty who were not able to attend.</p>

3. 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.

Using NACEP accreditation as the college's first Quality Initiative was a risk. When MPCC submitted its proposal in August of 2019, the Office of Early Entry had been in existence for just five months. Applying for NACEP accreditation was a natural progression of MPCC's 28-year history of offering dual credit courses

and it was an ambitious goal for a newly established office. However, that risk combined with ambition set the stage for impactful changes for the early entry program.

The population most impacted by the NACEP accreditation process was and will continue to be early entry students. In 2019 prior to the establishment of the Office of Early Entry and pursuing NACEP accreditation, early entry students only had immediate access to information about courses at their high school. Information about online courses and courses at MPCC's campuses in McCook, North Platte, and the four community campuses were available through various sources, but it was not a unified effort.

Now, early entry students have access to customized, comprehensive course lists that include courses at their high school along with other available courses. In addition to the course lists, early entry students are encouraged to search the online student portal, CampusWeb, for other opportunities. Early entry staff also work with students and high school counselors on the financial awareness component of a college education and how potential financial aid eligibility may impact what courses a student takes while they are still in high school.

Overall, the NACEP accreditation process gave the early entry program increased internal and external visibility as meetings were scheduled with faculty, staff, and high school partners to prepare the accreditation application. While Project NACEP was focused on the early entry program and dual credit students, faculty, and processes, the impact of applying for NACEP accreditation was college-wide. All of these efforts combined led to a 18% percent increase in dual credit enrollment from 2017-18 to 2021-22.

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

Throughout the NACEP application process, early entry staff collaborated with the Institutional Effectiveness Team, the college-wide data governance team, and admissions staff to expand dual credit reporting and refine processes to accommodate the unique needs of dual credit students.

- With assistance from the Institutional Effectiveness Team and the data governance team, early entry staff created a report focused on early entry student matriculation to degree seeking students.
- In collaboration with the Institutional Research & Planning Office, early entry data is now tracked by student in addition to course section.
- Early entry staff conducted a review of the admissions application

process with a focus on the online user interface and worked with admissions staff to make minor adjustments to accommodate the unique needs of dual credit students and parents.

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

MPCC is a small, rural community college with a FTE of 1,318 that serves a 20,500 square mile service area which is 28.5 percent of the state of Nebraska. The Office of Early Entry serves 36 high schools within the college service area and additional high schools outside of the service area but within the state of Nebraska. One of the most significant challenges was communicating to NACEP how the physical size of the college service area impacts organizational structure and dual credit procedures.

One of the most significant opportunities is the decision to appeal NACEP's accreditation denial. Going through the reconsideration process will give the college continued opportunities to review and evaluate the early entry program.

#### **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.

Various college departments and external stakeholders played an important role in the Project NACEP's overall success. All involved felt the initiative was beneficial and will have a lasting impact on the early entry program.

The idea for pursuing NACEP accreditation as MPCC's Quality Initiative originated with the vice president for academic affairs, who supervises the Office of Early Entry. As work on the NACEP accreditation application began, the director and assistant director of early entry took the lead on writing and gathering evidence. Especially in the early stages of the NACEP accreditation process, early entry staff met frequently with academic division chairs who helped with writing and gathering evidence for NACEP's faculty standards.

From the beginning, high school faculty, administration, and staff were supportive of Project NACEP. Improvements made, such as the high school-specific course transfer guides, streamlined enrollment process for dual credit students, consistent visits to high schools by college staff, and improved professional development for faculty, positively impacted the college's 36 service area high schools.

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

Initially, the perception was that MPCC would have to add and revise policies and procedures to meet NACEP's standards. However, that was not the case. While some processes and procedures were adjusted to meet NACEP's standards, MPCC had most of the required policies and procedures already in place.

### Resource Provision

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

MPCC's direct financial commitment to Project NACEP was \$175,361 which included early entry staff salaries and benefits for one year, NACEP's accreditation application expenses and membership fee, and three staff attending NACEP's annual conference. To continue the work started by the initiative, MPCC will continue to budget for early entry staff salaries and benefits, annual NACEP membership fees, accreditation fees, and college staff and faculty to attend NACEP's annual conference at an estimated budgeted amount of 200,000.

The human resources supporting Project NACEP extended beyond the Office of Early Entry. Academic division chairs, dual credit faculty, student services staff, the Higher Learning Commission accreditation liaison, Planning and Improvement Core Team, and college cabinet played a critical role in the initiative's success.

### Plans for the Future (or Future Milestones of a Continuing Initiative)

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

Pursuing NACEP accreditation was just the latest achievement for the college's early entry program. Early entry staff will continue to build on Project NACEP's initial goals to increase and strengthen opportunities for dual credit students.

<b>Engagement: Students and High School Partners</b>	<b>Future Milestones</b>
Increase student engagement through improved access to student services.	Continue to expand the online registration process to high schools.  Continually update dual credit transfer guides.

<p>Improved partnerships with area high schools and increased community engagement through improved visibility with parents and guardians of early entry students.</p>	<p>Increase the number of dual credit certified faculty. In 2020-21, five new dual credit certified faculty were added.</p> <p>Within the next one-to-two years, course offerings will be expanded to include five additional career academy options for high school students to assist in the transition to postsecondary education and technical training.</p>
<p><b>Faculty Development and Engagement</b></p>	<p><b>Future Milestones</b></p>
<p>Improved professional development opportunities for dual credit/adjunct faculty.</p>	<p>In collaboration with division chairs and full-time faculty, expand and improve discipline-specific professional development opportunities for dual credit faculty by using Canvas and other distance learning options.</p>

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.

MPCC would be willing to share any information learned from Project NACEP including the NACEP application, transfer advising guides, dual credit handbooks, and how to structure and schedule visits to 36 high schools in one academic year.



June 23, 2022

Mr. Ryan C. Purdy  
President  
Mid-Plains Community College  
601 West State Farm Road  
North Platt, Nebraska 69101

Dear President Purdy,

Attached is the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review evaluation information. Mid-Plains Community College'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](mailto:kbijak@hlcommission.org)) or Pat Newton-Curran ([pnewton@hlcommission.org](mailto:pnewton@hlcommission.org)).

***Higher Learning Commission***





## Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report

### Panel Review and Recommendation Form

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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 [hlccommission.org/upload](https://hlccommission.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:** Mid Plains Community College

**State:** NE

**Institutional ID:** 1897

**Reviewers (names, titles, institutions):** Dr. Norma C. Noonan, Professor Emerita, Augsburg University, Dr. Lynette J. Olson, Provost and Professor Emerita, Pittsburg State University

**Date:** June 22,2022

### 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)

Genuine effort by Mid Plains Community College (MPCC) was determined through a review of Project NACEP's three goals and related outcomes. While NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships) denied MPCC's application for accreditation, other impacts and accomplishments were reported by the institution.

Application for NACEP accreditation was the "capstone" project for a focus on the institution's early entry initiative which appears to have begun in Fall of 2012 with the expansion of onsite adjunct/dual credit faculty orientations in the college's service area. In January 2019, a Statement of Principles and Standards for Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Credit was approved by the Nebraska Association of Community and Tribal Colleges. This was followed by the creation and staffing of MPCC's Office of Early Entry and Program Development. The early entry program began the three-year NACEP accreditation process five months after establishment of this office. The review panel determined that due to the impetus of this project, reported as the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the establishment of an Office of Early Entry as well as engagement of faculty and staff throughout the project, the institution has demonstrated its seriousness. This is also demonstrated in MPCC's determination to request NACEP's reconsideration of the recent accreditation denial.

Three goals established for Project NACEP were to 1) increase student engagement through improved access to student services, 2) improve partnerships with area high schools and increase community engagement, and 3) improve professional development opportunities for dual credit/adjunct faculty. Accomplishments related to these goals include creation of dual credit transfer guides; piloting an online registration system for dual credit students; increased number of visits to service area high schools; creation of a course designed for dual credit faculty using the online learning management system as well as a handbook for dual credit faculty; and, tracking documents for use in follow-up with dual credit faculty unable to attend professional development opportunities.

MPCC claims the greatest impact of Project NACEP to have been early entry student access to "customized, comprehensive course lists" as well as access to the online student portal CampusWeb. In addition, the institution claims increased internal and external visibility of the early entry program due to Project NACEP. An 18% increase in dual credit enrollment from 2017-18 to 2021-22 is credited by the institution as an impact of the NACEP accreditation application effort.

The review panel confirms the three goals as outlined in the report demonstrate the scope and impact of this quality initiative. Scope and impact are also demonstrated through the statement of the institution's plans for continuing work toward the Project NACEP's goals.

The review panel confirms that MPCC demonstrated a commitment to and engagement in this quality initiative in their report. Internal and external commitment and engagement are illustrated through involvement of MPCC administrators, faculty, and staff as well as various governance bodies (i.e., institutional effectiveness, data governance, institutional research and planning), and service area high school administrators and faculty.

A one-year financial commitment of \$175,361 was sufficient for salary and benefits for the Office of Early Entry director and assistant director as well as NACEP accreditation expenses including funding for three staff members to attend the NACEP conference. MPCC has committed continuation of support for this initiative through allocation of an estimated ongoing budget of \$200,000 which includes the Office of Early Entry staff. The review panel confirms the financial and human resources to be adequate for the quality initiative and applauds MPCC for the commitment of continued allocation and support.