

June 24, 2025

Dr. James Beeby
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
1725 State Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

Dear Chancellor Beeby,

This letter is accompanied by the Quality Initiative Report (QIR) Review form completed by a peer review panel. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse'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

Review Process

The Quality Initiative panel review process evaluates the institution's effort in undertaking the Quality Initiative Proposal approved by HLC. 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.

Submission Instructions

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: University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

State: Wisconsin

Institutional ID: 2029

Reviewers (names, titles, institutions): Dr. Jodi Koslow Martin, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Triton College; Dr. Jay Simmons, President, Saint Paul School of Theology

Date: June 23, 2025

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)

“Minds Matter,” the Quality Initiative adopted by the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse for 2022 through 2025, “focused on a public health approach to promoting mental health with a focus on enhancing student success through increased attention to a healthy campus environment.” The theme seems an appropriate and timely one for any institution, although UW-La Crosse noted that the issue proved particularly important to their community, citing the fact that most of their students come to UW-La Crosse directly from high school. In their high schools, surveys suggested that these students possessed better awareness of the mental health resources available to them in their high schools as compared to their awareness at the University. Thus, Minds Matter’s goals sought:

- To coordinate and enhance current university activities associated with mental health for students (student orgs, residence life, curriculum, etc.).
- To involve the larger campus community in conversations regarding appropriate expectations in terms of the role of an institution of higher learning and mental health.
- To clarify the role of faculty and staff in responding to student mental health challenges from both a student and faculty/staff perspective.
- To relate the mind/body focus of UWL and current research to the initiative.

A steering committee overseeing attainment of the goals included the Provost, the Director of Counseling and Testing, “the Wellness Coordinator, the Director of the Disability Resource Center, Residence Life Associate Director, the Executive Director of a Campus Center focused on regional health initiatives, 2-3 students, 2 faculty, and a representative from University Communications. The committee represented the divisions of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Access, Belonging & Compliance.” Thus, participation was wide-ranging across campus departments and constituencies and reflected a commitment of time and resources from the University’s leadership.

Surveys were deployed to assess awareness of available campus mental health resources. Based on the results of those surveys, marketing initiatives sought to raise awareness among faculty, staff, and students about how make referrals and under what circumstances. The steering committee leading the effort concluded simplifying options for referrals enhanced community understanding and awareness of resources because those persons seeking assistance found it more quickly. In other words, publicizing every available resource on campus led to confusion and delay as advisors and persons seeking help tried to discern where to go.

The University demonstrated genuine effort for the QI. Data show awareness of resources has improved along with specificity about how to help students who demonstrate mental health concerns. Simplifying referrals turned out to be the greatest need. The steering committee may want to consider how to track referrals by incorporating a user-friendly electronic system for faculty, staff, and students. By selecting mental health as the core of the QI, the institution has been able to increase awareness and greater satisfaction with campus mental health resources.