Oregon DQP Project
First Year Interim Narrative Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Lumina Foundation for Education
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Preamble
The primary purpose of the Oregon DQP Project is to employ the DQP framework to engage seventeen (17) pubic two-year and seven (7) four year institutions throughout Oregon in purposeful discussions and reflections on the meaning and alignment of their degrees. More specifically, it is designed to apply the DQP concept to create a flexible non-prescriptive curricular framework of essential meta learning outcomes that characterizes and (where possible) aligns overarching degree-level learning outcomes within and among Oregon's two-year and four-year institutions. A secondary purpose of the project is to document and disseminate intra-institutional and inter-institutional discussions, activities, and plans related to the beta test of the DQP framework. A record of the Oregon experience will be maintained on the DQP website to share learning and stimulate thought on uses of the DQP framework to inform institutional practice and enhance student success. Fulfillment of these purposes will be advanced through active institutional participation in three Oregon DQP initiatives:

> *Institutional Engagement*: Using the DQP framework, institutions will create profiles of their current meta learning outcomes for their respective overarching degrees (AA, BS. etc.) and craft spider web diagrams that graphically represent discipline-specific degree outcomes (e.g., BA in History) or general education outcomes in relation to the meta outcomes of the degree qualifications profile.

> *Horizontal Alignment*: Using the DQP as a guiding framework, community colleges and OUS institutions will work collaboratively to compare and (where possible) align common associate degrees (AA, AS, etc.) and common baccalaureate degrees (BA, BS, BAS, etc.) across institutions.

> *Vertical Integration*: Using DQP meta outcomes as a guide, community colleges and OUS institutions will articulate relationships between, and (where possible) improve the alignment of, expectations for associate degrees and expectations for baccalaureate degrees to enhance student transition, progress, and completion as students move between degrees.

Section I: Progress on Goals, Activities and Timeline
The Oregon DQP proposal submitted to the Lumina Foundation identified four primary project objectives (paraphrased below).

> *Objective 1 - Institutional Engagement:* By end of year one, seven community colleges and three universities will be actively engaged in the Oregon DQP Project.

> *Objective 2 - Horizontal Alignment*: By end of year two, one-third of Oregon's universities and community colleges will use the DQP as a guide to review and calibrate "horizontal" alignment of comparable degree-offerings within different disciplines across institutions within same degree-level.

> *Objective 3 – Vertical Integration*: By beginning of year two, at least one university and three community colleges will begin a review of learning outcomes from the associate to baccalaureate levels to articulate the necessary "ratcheting up", to differentiate "vertically" what a student should know and be able to do at each degree level.

> *Objective 4 – Artifacts:* By end of the grant period, an Oregon DQP repository website will be developed to create the record of Oregon's three-year experiences and accomplishments in using the DQP framework.

Objective 1 and Objective 4 have been met. Substantial progress has been made on Objective 3. While conversations have been initiated with regard to Objective 2, little progress has been made on horizontal alignment of comparable degree-offerings. With respect to Objective 1, twelve community colleges and six universities have submitted institutional work plans. At the time of submission of this report, eight of the twelve community colleges and all six of the universities have submitted work plan progress reports to note their progress in achieving the objectives identified in their respective first year work plans. Progress reports from the remaining four community colleges that have submitted work plans are expected to be received by the end of the academic year.

As evidence of progress in achieving Objective 4, a comprehensive and robust Oregon DQP website has been created to capture artifacts from the project. It is also the primary vehicle for intra-institutional, inter-institutional, and extra-institutional communication of the project's progress and accomplishments. A more comprehensive description of the Oregon DQP website is described in Section IV of this report.

With regard to Objective 3, two pairs of neighboring institutions are engaged in vertical integration activities. Although still in the preliminary stages of development, Portland Community College and Portland State University are exploring the use of the DQP to create a vertical integration of their respective Business programs. Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) and Oregon State University (OSU) are further along in their work in comparing LBCC Associate of Arts-Oregon Transfer (AAOT) and Associate of Sciences (AS) degree learning objectives with OSU Baccalaureate Core Category Learning Outcomes in the areas of Mathematics, Writing, and Speech. As part of this work, faculty are engaged in the development of discipline-appropriate rubrics for evaluation of general education outcomes.

The early work between LBCC and OSU has produced interesting results. Even though LBCC AS and AAOT degrees are expressly intended to enable student transfer to OUS institutions,

particularly Oregon State University, LBCC and OSU have proceeded along sufficiently independent paths. As a result, learning outcomes for articulated general education requirements are slightly different. As an example, the OSU learning outcomes for the "Writing I" requirement of the OSU general education requirement (the Baccalaureate Core) are very specific to the writing craft, addressing style and other competencies that are specific to writing. In contrast, the corresponding LBCC outcomes for equivalent articulated courses are more general, addressing the role of writing within the general context of communication. The DQP project may provide a framework to create a more seamless vertical integration of student learning expectations while simultaneously preserving institutional integrity of those outcomes with institutional characteristics and purpose.

Little progress, beyond expressions of interest, has been made on Objective 2. That lack of progress may be due to substantial changes underway in the way Oregon higher education is coordinated and governed, causing changes of leadership within community colleges and universities. As a result, there is concern for the future and direction of existing initiatives, let alone emerging initiatives like the implementation of the DQP framework. While horizontal alignment is a worthwhile concept, faculty and administrators express concern that the DQP may duplicate existing efforts or may lack integration with existing priorities at a time when there is little time or resources to support current endeavors.

One noteworthy product of the Oregon DQP is the spider web mapping tool developed by Umpqua Community College. The spider web mapping tool creates a visual representation of the relationships among learning outcomes within courses and relationships of course outcomes with respect to program and degree learning outcomes. More than a product, it is a catalyst for more profound intra-institutional and inter-institutional discussion on the meaning of associate and baccalaureate degrees within their respective institutions and between institutions. As with all products produced by the Oregon DQP, the spider web mapping tool is available to interested parties through an open source license agreement.

Section II: Major Changes
Even though it is only eight months into this project, there are several changes and adjustments that have influenced the project. Oregon is currently experiencing a major restructuring of the coordination and governance for higher education. The Governor is combining the oversight of universities, community colleges and financial aid under one coordinating council. Because this grant involves all public universities and community colleges in Oregon, it has been supported by the Oregon University System Chancellor's Office and the Commissioner of the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. These entities will be impacted by the planned changes, and it is unclear what role, if any, these agencies will be able to maintain in the future. It is anticipated that the in-kind services and small amounts of funding provided by these agencies will be available for the remaining two years of the grant. As the structure of higher education in Oregon becomes stable, relationships will be developed with the new leadership.

The project has also undergone significant changes in key leadership personnel. Three people have transitioned to new positions and responsibilities. Earlier this year the Chancellor of the Oregon University System (OUS) resigned and an Interim Chancellor was selected. On July 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Community Colleges and Workforce Development will become the

President of [Blue Mountain Community College](#) in Pendleton, Oregon. Most significantly, the primary Co-Principal Investigator (PI) for the Oregon DQP left within the first few months of the grant to become the President of [Bakersfield College](#) in Bakersfield, California. A replacement Co-PI was recruited from the OUS Chancellor's office, but she was unable to continue in that position due to changes in personnel in the Chancellor's office. Another person from the Chancellor's office is now representing OUS on the project leadership team. The project now operates with a single PI. Moreover, two major members of the Core Group left their institutions and two people new from those institutions, both new to the DQP, have taken their place on the Core Group leadership team. All of these unanticipated and significant changes in personnel have resulted in considerable time and effort in backfilling the positions, orienting the replacements, and reestablishing direction for the project.

As a starting point for the diverse institutions participating in the project, institutions were asked to integrate a discussion of the DQP with their regular and ongoing outcomes and assessment work and other related initiatives already underway at their institutions. They were given flexibility in when and how to start that work. It took most institutions until December, four months later than anticipated, to develop and submit project work plans. All institutions included the project objective of [institutional engagement](#) in their work plans. A small number of institutions cited the project objective of [vertical integration](#) as a primary interest. While several institutions applauded the project objective of [horizontal alignment](#), none were prepared to dedicate significant time to that topic during the first year of the project. Consequently, attention to Horizontal Alignment was postponed to the second year of the project and will be a primary topic addressed at the October 2013 conference.

Section III: Evaluation

Given the number of changes of key project personnel and changes occurring at the state level, much of the initial work of the Oregon DQP has focused on establishing and implementing institution-centric work plans that employ the DQP framework. Moreover, it took longer than anticipated to establish a baseline for institutional participation. Given the challenges of implementing the Oregon DQP project were greater than originally anticipated, there has been little opportunity to conduct the evaluation activities outlined in the proposal to the Lumina Foundation. Nonetheless, some evaluation has been undertaken. An [analysis and summary](#) of responses to the [NILOA DQP Institutional Activity Report](#) (completed by institutional representatives at the October 25-26, 2012, Oregon DQP conference) is posted on the Oregon DQP website. Institutions also submitted [work plan progress reports](#), which are currently being analyzed. Discussions at Oregon DQP [conferences](#), interactions during [information forums](#), and feedback from the [National Resource Committee](#) and [NILOA](#) staff offer additional opportunities for informal evaluation of the project. Oregon responses to the Lumina Foundation [DQP Feedback Request Form](#) will also be used for Oregon DQP planning over the next two years of the grant.

Section IV: Communication

The primary communications vehicle for the project is the [Oregon DQP website](#). It is organized under five major tabs to provide comprehensive and transparent disclosure of all information related to the Oregon implementation of the DQP framework. The *Home* tab offers a brief introduction to the Oregon DQP. The *About the DQP Project* pull-down menu includes project

organizational and operational information. It also includes information on project structures and meetings. The *Project Data* pull-down menu is organized in a variety of ways. It aggregates institutional information by work plans and by work plan progress reports as well the tracking of cumulative institutional in-kind contributions in support of the project. It also organizes work plans, work plan progress reports, and spider graph data by institution to enable a holistic view of each institution. A number of DQP-related documents can also be found under the *Other Information* tab under the *Project Data* menu.

The *Project Management* pull-down menu provides secured access to institutional leads and their designees to manage institutional work plans, reports, in-kind contributions, and spider web graphs for their respective courses and programs The *Conferences* tab includes links to past Oregon DQP conferences and materials related to those conferences. It also provides a mechanism to register for upcoming conferences.

A media news release announcing receipt of the Lumina Foundation grant was distributed on August 28, 2012. Additional awareness of the Oregon DQP has been achieved through presentations at state, national, and international conferences (Association of American Colleges and Universities, Oregon Student Success and Retention, and Community College Baccalaureate Association). Presentations were also made at meetings of the Oregon community college Council of Instructional Administrators, Joint Meeting of the Oregon Community College Council of Instructional Administrators and University Provosts, and Oregon State Board of Education.

Regular communication within the project is maintained in a variety of ways. The Core Group has monthly conference calls to provide assistance and feedback for the Principal Investigator and Co-Coordinators. Information forum audio and video conferences, which are open to all interested parties, are conducted monthly to provide opportunities for institutions to interact with the co-coordinators and colleagues around the state. These Information Forums foster discussion among colleagues to share insights, challenges, and progress on applications of the DQP of particular institutional interest. A self-subscribing listserv is used to communicate with interested parties and disseminate information and materials about upcoming information forums.

During the first eight months of the project a number of in-person and video conferences have been conducted. The project began with an introductory video conference on September 10, 2012. That was followed by a major kickoff conference on October 25-26, 2012, which had over one hundred on-site participants as well as several others who participated by phone or video conference. An information forum video conference for institutional representatives followed on February 13, 2013. Another information video conference is scheduled for May 17, 2013.

To communicate Oregon DQP findings with key regional and national perspectives, a National Resource Committee was created. In addition to sharing progress, this committee will also provide feedback on the progress to date and offer suggestions on ways to connect the work of the Oregon DQP to other national initiatives.

All of these communication efforts are intended to establish a strong foundation for the project that will support institutions and continue their work beyond the scope and timeframe of the Lumina Foundation grant.

Section V: Learning

As community colleges and universities are proceeding with their work plans, a number of lessons learned have surfaced. Some of the lessons may inform planning and actions by the Core Group as the leaders of the grant. They might also be of interest the Lumina Foundation and the authors of the DQP.

Learning from the DQP Framework

1. The DQP framework is relevant and helpful in examining and discussing program and institutional student learning outcomes. Some colleges report that the five knowledge areas of the DQP provide a way to group learning outcomes and "sum up" their value. This allows faculty to discuss the integration of the outcomes in new ways. Institutions also report that they can align their own outcomes with the DQP outcomes, and frequently find their assessment tools work for both.

2. The DQP encourages faculty to discuss levels of learning in the context of the Baccalaureate as well as the Associate degrees. It encourages faculty to think about and consider what comes before and what comes after the student leaves the institution. There is interest in examining how the Common Core State Standards align with the DQP and how do they prepare students within the five areas.

3. Currently, the verbs used at the associate degree level aren't congruent with the student learning that occurs within that degree. Both the language and the visual representation for the DQP appear to be linear in nature, and may not adequately reflect the learning process for students. Deeper discussions are planned to explore this as institutions gain a deeper understanding of the DQP. The visual spider graph mapping being done in the Oregon project appears to be a useful visual tool and is assisting faculty to engage with the DQP outcomes.

4. Oregon universities have been working with LEAP outcomes for several years. They are open to the DQP and they are looking for synergy and connection between the two. Although they are finding some alignment, they are also finding significant differences. They are asking the question: Is there or should there be direct alignment between the DQP and LEAP? If there is not direct align, they hesitate to get involved in the DQP work, for fear it will be redundant and conflicting with LEAP. The Core Group needs to spend some time discussing and addressing this issue and needs to incorporate it into future video or face-to-face conversations with institutions

Learning from the Oregon Process

1. Because institutions are connecting their DQP work within their own institutions, the scope of work has varied from institution to institution. This organic approach was successful in getting institutions involved with the project, but has taken time and resulted in less progress than anticipated. While successful for institutional engagement, this organic process won't work as well when institutions move to horizontal alignment and vertical integration conversations and work. Expectations for these components of

the project need to be more clearly stated and communicated in the October 2013 conference.

2. One university and one community college have included students in the DQP discussion. More needs to be done to include additional students in discussions on what they think about the DQP and its usefulness to them.

3. Institutions receive a small stipend for active participation in the project. For a variety of reasons, the first year funds were distributed well after institutions started work on their work plans. Institutions have asked that institutional funds be distributed early in the year. The Core Group will take action to ensure funds for subsequent years of the project are distributed early in the respective years of the project.

4. A succinct description needs to be developed that clearly communicates the scope and purpose of the Degree Qualifications Profile. The word "Qualifications" is sometimes misinterpreted as standardized, prescriptive requirements for a degree, rather than a framework that incorporates local control and decisions. In short we suffer from the absence of an "elevator speech." The Core Group needs to continue to work at ways to quickly articulate the value and purpose of the DQP and its application to the Oregon DQP project.

5. The DQP has noble aspirations and admirable goals. However, without a clear and convincing rationale, clarity of relationships with similar initiatives, significant incentive, or forceful mandate it is hard to get institutional constituencies to engage in this work. Lacking this impetus the DQP can lead to initiative fatigue and be perceived as yet another external intrusion into academic affairs/freedom with little, if any, relevance to the core of their work.

6. A statewide cross-institutional and cross-sector collaboration of twenty-four autonomous institutions is a complex, substantial, and challenging undertaking even under ideal circumstances. A number of factors contribute to the challenges facing the Oregon DQO. Not the least of which is a significant turnover of key project leadership. The project also encountered a heavy dependence on institutional in-kind contributions to support intra-institutional work on the Oregon DQP. It also became clear that Lane Community College is contributing a considerable amount of in-kind financial, operational, and staff resources to support the Oregon DQP. It is not clear that Lane Community College, or any other institution or agency, will be able to take on some or all of those responsibilities necessary to sustain the project. Coupled with pending changes in the governance structure for Oregon's community colleges and universities and potential shifts in institutional priorities, a heavy reliance on in-kind institutional resources to support the project—particularly support staff and institutional financial resources (beyond the stipend paid for project participation) to encourage and support intra-institutional and inter-institutional engagement—has had, and may continue to have, an appreciable impact on the speed and extent of progress in achieving the project's objectives.

Section VI: Sustainability
Because the DQP is being woven into the fabric of higher education in Oregon, it will be sustained, as long as it has value. At a presentation to the Oregon State Board of Education

(the governing board for community colleges) there was strong support for the work being done by the Oregon DQP, and an urgent sense of need to better define Associate and Baccalaureate degrees in Oregon. This aligns with the work with K-12 to adopt Common Core State Standards. This work supports the state's 40-40-20 goal and the ongoing work in Oregon higher education. The participating institutions and statewide offices are supporting this work through the dedication of time and effort from faculty, staff and administrators. As committed participants, the colleges and their state-level Oregon University System (OUS) and Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) staff will continue support for the structure of the Oregon DQP.

Currently there is a framework for degree requirements and course articulations among community colleges and OUS institutions that is managed by the CCWD Commissioner's office and the OUS Chancellor's office; and through institutional level agreements. By connecting the Oregon DQP framework to these efforts, the work will be sustained. Once the DQP framework is created and tested, the foundation is available to expand it into all disciplines.

Section VII: Financial Report

The Lumina Foundation funded the Oregon DQP project with a three-year grant of $789,000. The term of the grant is from September 1, 2012, through August 31, 2015. Expenditures to date are within budget limits reviewed and approved by the Oregon DQP Core Group and the Lumina Foundation. Grant funds were used to: contract with Ron Baker and Carol Schaafsma as consultants at .4 FTE each to serve as the co-coordinators for the project; employ Matthew Danskine, DQP as the project web developer to develop a robust Oregon DQP website; support one state-wide in-person conference and two video Oregon DQP conferences; reimburse the co-coordinators and conference speakers for travel expenses related to the conferences; and distribute institutional disbursements to institutions participating in the Oregon DQP Project.

The Lumina Foundation approved one minor budget modification to move funding for the two co-coordinator consultants from "personnel" to "outside services." It also approved the creation of a "contingency" line item in the budget. The agreement with the Lumina Foundation includes in-kind contribution of $510,000 from the Oregon DQP over the three-years of the grant. Total in-kind contributions in the amount of $198,000 have been reported to date.

The Oregon DQP Interim Budget Report is submitted under separate cover by Lane Community College, the fiscal agent for the grant.

_____   March 29, 2013
Connie Green, Principal Investigator   **Date**