



**Lumina Foundation for Education
 Proposal of Concept to Modify Elements of the Oregon DQP Project (Grant 7978)**

In 2012 the Lumina Foundation awarded a three-year grant in the amount of \$789,000 to Oregon’s seventeen community colleges and seven public universities to test a statewide application of the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). August 31, 2014, will mark the end of the second year of the Project. As noted in its 2013 Interim Report, a number of unanticipated governance issues and changes in leadership have significantly impacted fulfillment of the Project’s ambitious goals and objectives, particularly those for the second and third years of the grant. Nonetheless, the Project enjoyed success in accomplishing two of its primary objectives: 1) Engaging Oregon administrators, faculty, and staff in intra- and inter-institutional discussions of the meaning of the degrees offered by their institutions; 2) Developing a robust Project website. Further, the DQP framework has served as an effective catalyst for discussions on the identification and alignment of student learning outcomes at course, program, and degree levels.

Another important issue impacting the progress of the Oregon DQP Project is the engagement of Oregon institutions with other national initiatives focusing on identification, alignment, assessment, and or transportability of student learning outcomes. With the introduction of the DQP framework as the last such initiative, differences of terminology and similarity of purposes of those projects created a sense of confusion and paralysis, rather than understanding and application. Consequently, after a promising start the Project is experiencing a loss of momentum in progressing toward achievement of its original objectives. Comments from Project colleagues indicate that given the amount of time remaining in the grant and the impact of overarching governance issues that developed during the first year of the grant, continuing work that focuses on the original Project goals and objectives will produce—at best—marginally diminishing returns on the investment of effort and funding. Thus, to leverage, extend, and amplify the outcomes from the Project, a modification is proposed for the third year of the grant. The following is a general description of concept being proposed. Should this concept be favorably received, a more detailed proposal will follow.

The revised Project proposes to draw upon and expand the academic work undertaken with faculty in the Oregon DQP Project by engaging student services colleagues—most notably registrars—in an investigation of the opportunities and barriers in going beyond the recording of course grades to transcribing achievement of student learning outcomes. As a side note, this is not a new interest in Oregon. Transcribing was an area of focus included with the original Oregon proposal for the DQP Project, but withdrawn at the request of Lumina Foundation staff. Attention to transcribing student learning outcomes comes at a good time in Oregon, given increased interest in proficiency learning in dual credit programs and credentialing of student

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knowledge gained from prior or experiential learning. This proposed investigation holds promise to address those topics in an effort to enhance student progression and completion.

Not only is transcribing learning outcomes achievement an under-investigated area of practice, it is also a topic that must ultimately be addressed in becoming more forthcoming with meaningful evidence of actual student achievement. The transcript has historically been used to document student educational pathways and report summary judgments of learning at a macro (i.e., course) level. However, as currently configured it provides little information on the intended learning outcomes for those courses or student achievement of learning outcomes embedded in them. Given the heavy internal and external reliance on course transcripts, it is unlikely they will be replaced in the near future as the primary means of documenting student learning. Thus, the proposed modification seeks to use the third year of the Oregon DQP grant to explore ways to enhance, augment, and extend the course transcript as an evolutionary process, rather than a revolutionary one.

The overall intent of the proposed refocusing of the grant is to investigate opportunities and barriers to providing more meaningful and useful documentation of achievement of student learning outcomes. Among a number of other considerations is an examination of limitations of current student information systems, specifically their scope and capacity to accumulate, store, and retrieve more granular data on student learning. A number of institutions have expressed interest in participating in this study. If authorized by the Lumina Foundation, the Oregon DQP will complete the second year of the grant with the current focus, provide a report to the Lumina Foundation on Oregon's use of the DQP framework, and provide feedback on DQP 2.0. Concurrently it will make immediate preparations to begin the third year of the grant focused on transcribing of student learning outcomes achievements. A small cadre of community colleges and universities (5-7 institutions in total) will be selected for participation. They will include a range of institutions from those engaged in collaborations to improve student articulation and mobility among and between associate and baccalaureate institutions to those seeking to extend institution-centric work on student learning outcomes to transcribing/reporting achievement of those outcomes. In addition to their work on the DQP, some of those institutions will leverage the results of their work with related national initiatives (WICHE Interstate Passport, AAC&U LEAP and Quality Collaborative initiatives, etc.)

A variety of increasingly detailed strategies to transcribing student learning achievement will be examined. One option is to simply include a list of generic degree, program, and/or course learning outcomes on a traditional transcript. Another option is to tailor individual transcripts by listing intended learning outcomes for specific courses taken by the student. This has the potential to leverage recent work by the Oregon community in establishing a database of course-level learning outcomes. A third option is to include notations reflecting achievement/non-achievement of learning outcomes at the course, program, and/or degree levels. A fourth option is to include a level of proficiency of achievement of learning outcomes at the course, program, and/or degree levels. Finally, the use portfolios will be explored as a means to expand traditional documentation of student achievement and provide direct evidence of student work and accomplishments.

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The revised focus for the grant also has the potential to address a number of areas of practice. For example, heightened interest in streamlining student progress toward completion has focused on recognizing students' prior experiential learning. Efforts of the revised project to explore ways to provide evidence of smaller granularity of student learning achievement will provide a better mechanism to identify and report student learning obtained through alternative means as well as traditional coursework.

Moving forward with the revised focus for the grant will require some changes in structure and leadership. These matters have been anticipated and addressed in preliminary planning. The proposed project will not require funding beyond the financial support allotted previously for the Oregon DQP Project.

The purpose of this inquiry is to gauge the interest of the Lumina Foundation in funding the third year of the Oregon DQP Project with a focus on transcribing achievement of student learning outcomes. Clearly this paper provides only a brief overview of concept. If favorably received, specific information on the revised Project plan, timelines, objectives, budget, engagement, and dissemination activities will be included in the April 2014 Interim Report.

The Project leadership believes the proposed transcribing project has significant potential to benefit Oregon community colleges and universities in carrying forward the work initiated by the DQP and similar Lumina Foundation-funded grants. It also believes this refocused effort supports the interests of the Lumina Foundation in shifting from student learning intentions from student learning results.