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## University Assessment Executive Summary Plan

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

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## **HLC Accreditation Evidence Document**

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University



## 2016 UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PLAN

Southwestern Oklahoma State University

## **PREFACE**

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University Assessment Plan documents processes for evaluating student achievement. The plan results from inventory and documentation of assessment measures which were already in place and measures added to complete assessment of goals and objectives, as well as measure student outcomes. Revisions reflect changes made due to results of assessment and program revisions.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Southwestern is one of six regional universities in the Oklahoma system of higher education. The University consists of a main campus at Weatherford and an additional location at Sayre. There are three undergraduate colleges which offer Associate, Baccalaureate and Master's degree programs: Arts and Sciences, Professional and Graduate Studies, and Associate & Applied Programs. In addition to a very broad array of Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees include Business Administration, Management, Education, Music, Health Informatics and Information Management, Community Counseling, School Psychology, and Nursing. In the College of Pharmacy, we offer the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.). Associate degrees include the Associate in Science and Associate in Applied Science degrees.

A comprehensive plan for assessment was begun by formation of the University Assessment Committee in September 1991. University-wide representation of faculty and administrators provided input for assessment plan development and implementation. Academic assessment is an ongoing process for all academic units.

The Assessment plan describes policies and procedures for entry level, general education, degree program outcomes at all levels (associate, bachelor, master, and professional), student engagement, and overall satisfaction with University programs and services. Faculty decisions drive all phases of the assessment process as indicated in the following descriptions by the categories named above.

The Assessment Center serves as an assessment data clearing house and provides assessment services for the University by administering, collecting, and disseminating surveys and reports as well as analyses to faculty, students, and administrators. The Assessment Center also serves as a testing, evaluation, and survey center for the University.

The focus of assessment at Southwestern is on student learning and academic achievement. Faculty use many methods to evaluate the levels of student learning. In addition, factors indicating student success are examined: percentages of entering freshmen who complete degrees; student grade reports, student and alumni reported satisfaction levels; number of graduates employed in their fields of study; the number of graduates reporting that they were significantly challenged in their course work; and the number of graduates who report satisfactory employment.

Assessment practices produce many benefits. One is that the process itself causes faculty to examine their views of learning and how they plan to measure student achievement. Another is that the practice

enhances teaching, makes student learning more visible, and produces a means of demonstrating overall effectiveness of the institution.

## **ENTRY LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

The primary purpose of entry level assessment is to ensure that Southwestern is providing opportunities for all students to succeed by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, learning gaps, and providing relevant placement, counseling, and learning experiences. The following objectives form the basis for entry level assessment:

- Allow students a greater opportunity for success by ensuring that they have necessary proficiencies for collegiate-level work in English, Mathematics, and Reading.
- Improve the chances of success by providing guidance for incoming freshmen as they formulate personal and professional goals, and by providing academic assistance.
- Review student success levels by monitoring testing, learning gaps, retention/attrition factors and achievement levels as reported by faculty.

### **Means of Assessment**

Evaluation of entering freshmen serves to ascertain whether their basic academic skills are adequate for success in collegiate-level courses or if remedial courses are necessary. Enrolling freshmen who have ACT subject scores below 19 have the following opportunities:

- Students must sit for the Computerized Placement Tests (CPTs), which are second level placement exams in English, Math, and Reading.
- Students who do not pass CPT testing may complete a diagnostic test which identifies learning gaps in the area(s) of deficiency.
- Students who complete diagnostic testing may enroll in discipline specific learning modules which help students advance learning in English, Math (Arithmetic or Elementary Algebra), and/or Reading.
- Students may retake the CPT placement exam after completing the learning modules. Faculty recommended cut scores are used as a determinant for placement in the three disciplines. Modifications in the process are made as deemed necessary.
- Students who do not pass the placement exam(s) must enroll in remedial or co-requisite courses (English, Math, or Reading).

### **Population**

All incoming freshmen on both campuses are evaluated by the criteria described above. Open admission exists at the Sayre Campus; however, placement parameters mirror those of the Weatherford Campus.

## **Analysis and Findings**

Methods for identifying needs of incoming students are examined and modified according to findings. Student entry data, placement scores, diagnostic scores, and performance in learning modules will be evaluated to determine student needs, learning gaps, and academic interventions. In addition to entry data, student success rates in various classes will be monitored as a benchmark for determining the efficacy of both placement criteria and student academic assistance. The Assessment Committee considers data from tracking studies to determine whether additional revisions should be recommended. Currently all students admitted who do not meet regular admission criteria are automatically enrolled in a required study skills course. When a student achieves the placement benchmark score or completes student skills courses they will be appropriately advised and placed in college courses.

## **GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT**

The general education curriculum offers a focused approach to general studies. All general education courses support one or more of the five overall purposes of the program: (1) proficient skills in communication (including computer literacy and technology); (2) competency in scientific and quantitative reasoning; (3) appreciation of fine arts, history, and the humanities; (4) knowledge of social and cultural processes and institutions; and (5) achievement of intellectual and professional aptitudes. Additional outcomes and criteria are contained within the description of the purposes as stated in the University's catalog. Those outcomes require students to think logically, creatively, collaboratively, and critically.

### **Means of Assessment**

Assessment of a general studies program is a complex undertaking. Measuring academic achievement in diverse disciplines such as the sciences and the arts requires a variety of methods. Faculty implement curriculum-embedded assessments in general education courses. Full implementation of the curriculum-embedded process in general education courses leads to continuous refinement of course objectives, teaching methods and materials, and evaluation of measures. In addition to course embedded assessment, a standardized assessment measure is given to freshman and seniors to assess proficiency in Math, Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking. The process is as follows:

- Faculty formulate common learning objectives and assessment for each general education course.
- Faculty teaching the general education courses review their assessment data to determine whether levels of student achievement meet learning expectations. They determine whether

their collected data support their requests for modifications and forward reports for each course to the General Education Committee.

- The General Education (GE) Committee analyzes faculty reports of student achievement measured by curriculum-embedded assessments and standardized exams on an annual basis. The GE Committee also reviews modifications of course objectives to ensure that objectives lead to the achievement of the goals of the General Education Program as well as support the University's mission. Recommendations, based on data, are then forwarded to the Associate Provost and to the Assessment Center for dissemination through various report format
- Annually, freshman and seniors are given the ETS Proficiency Profile exam. The General Education Committee analyzes the results of student achievement of entering freshman and graduating seniors, and makes recommendations for continuous improvement of learning in Math, Writing, Reading, and Critical Thinking. Recommendations, based on student results, are then forwarded to the Associate Provost and to the Assessment Center for dissemination through various report formats.

## **Population**

All students who are enrolled in general education courses participate in assessment of academic achievement. Freshman and Seniors take ETS Proficiency Profile test annually. Freshman will complete the Proficiency Profile test in the fall semester during the freshman orientation course. Seniors will complete the test in a spring senior capstone course or faculty designated upper division course. Student entry and exit performance will be tracked annually. Student motivation and achievement will be encouraged through achievement awards.

## **Analyses and Findings**

Faculty, the General Education Committee, and the Assessment Committee will review the General Education University Assessment Report. They will share responsibility for reporting recommendations for General Education assessment revisions to the University administration, and identify learning needs for students and student sub-groups. Also included within this line of responsibility are any recommendations for teaching and program changes based on General Education assessment results.

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

### **Mission**

The mission of Southwestern Oklahoma State University, a member of the Regional University System of Oklahoma, is to provide educational opportunities, research, scholarly and creative activities, and service in a safe, accessible, nurturing learning environment that meets the needs of the state and region and contributes to the educational, economic, and cultural environment. SWOSU provides traditionally strong programs of study leading to a variety of degrees, from associate to doctoral degrees. The University's areas of study, nationally accredited programs, general education curriculum, service and experiential learning activities, and participation in student activities and

organizations provide students with opportunities to obtain skills, knowledge, and cultural appreciation that promote achievement by students and alumni.

## **Assessment of Degree Programs**

The purpose of outcomes assessment is to measure academic achievement in the degree programs at the four levels: associate, bachelor, master, and professional. Program assessment measures student learning and the effectiveness of academic programs. Each degree program is guided by program outcomes and objectives. Student learning is evaluated by faculty through a variety of assessment measures. Stated program goals and objectives and measures are included in the university comprehensive assessment plan.

### **Means of Assessment**

Due to the diversity of Southwestern's degree programs, several assessment methods are employed. They include: course-embedded assessment, discipline specific standardized testing, structured exit interviews, focus groups, Major Field Tests (MFT), senior projects, shows and performances, graduating student surveys, portfolios, national registry and licensing exams, national and state competency/certification exams, internship evaluations, capstone projects, and program specific exit examinations and surveys. The methods of evaluation and assessment are determined by faculty within each of the disciplines.

Program survey of graduates by departments at all degree levels provides data concerning program quality, academic advisement, quality of instruction, and preparation for employment.

### **Population**

All students participate in formative and summative assessment.

### **Analysis and Findings**

Assessment data collected by academic departments will be utilized by the faculty to assess student achievement, curricula, and programs. Faculty will provide summary assessment results and report program changes to the Assessment Center for inclusion in reports for both internal and external purposes. Faculty will submit recommendations for program revisions to the University administration and report findings and changes in program reviews. Survey data collected and analyzed by the academic departments and the Assessment Center are transmitted to appropriate University units and included in internal and external reports. Revisions and refinements of qualitative, quantitative, formative, and summative assessment measures are ongoing, which are noted in the Annual Student Assessment Report.

## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT**

Student satisfaction and engagement assessment at Southwestern provides a collection of evidence regarding students' qualitative views of their University experiences. The data are used to provide a basis for planning improvements of programs and services.

## **Objectives**

- Elicit information from students at entrance, during, and completion to assess services, programs, instructional quality, and self-reported student achievement.
- Provide opportunities for student input concerning their University experience to create indicators of strengths, challenges, and needs.
- Capture the experience of all degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students.

## **Means of Assessment**

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was first introduced in 2008. To complement the NSSE student result, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was added and implemented for the first time in Spring 2016. The NSSE and FSSE will be given every other year to freshman, seniors, and faculty. The Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI) replaced the ACT's Survey of Student Opinions in 2007. The SSI is implemented every other year and given to sophomores, juniors, and graduate students.

## **Analysis and Findings**

Surveys administered by the Assessment Center provide data that are collected, analyzed, and reported internally and externally by the Assessment Center. Data obtained through surveys, interviews, etc. are used to assess University strengths, challenges, and needs. Institutional staff value student and alumni input. The Assessment Center will disseminate survey results to all academic and university units and all reports will be made available on the Assessment Center webpage.

## **ASSESSMENT BUDGETS**

The Assessment Center will annually provide the following information regarding assessment fees and expenditures they include: assessment fees, assessment salaries, distribution to other departments, operational costs, and total expenditures. The results will be included in the annual university assessment report.

## **ASSESSMENT OF THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

The various facets of the University assessment program are examined annually by the University Assessment Committee and the General Education Committee to determine whether appropriate processes are being utilized and considers the following questions:

The various facets of the University Assessment Committee and the General Education Committee to determine whether appropriate processes are being utilized and considers the following questions:

**Entry Level:** Are the ACT, CPT, Diagnostic test, and learning modules providing reliable means of placement in English, mathematics, reading, and science courses with the present cut scores? Is there a meaningful correlation between the entry level scores and grades in respective courses?

**Mid-Level:** Do the curriculum-embedded assessment measures and standardized assessment results provide adequate information for determining student achievement and whether outcomes goals for general education are being met? Are means of assessment suitable to revisions in the general education curriculum?

**Program Outcomes:** Are goals and objectives stated for each major? Do the assessment components specifically measure program goals and objectives? Is there evidence that data obtained from overall assessment of the major are being used by faculty in planning curriculum and instructional modifications? Do departmental exit interviews and survey data provide valid and useful information?

**Student Engagement and Satisfaction:** Do survey instruments elicit valid, reliable data concerning student perceptions of campus services, facilities, and academics? Is information being requested at reasonable times? Have changes been made as a result of reporting aggregate data to respective administrators? Are there additional types of information needed? Are there better ways of obtaining data?

Open communication and coordination among decision makers will provide documentation for assessing the University assessment program.

## UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES

**Assessment Committee** -- Recommends policies and procedures for testing and assessment of student academic achievement and student satisfaction. Committee members include the Chair of the General Education Committee, the Chair of the Department of Language and Literature, the Chair of the Department of Mathematics, the Dean of Students, the Director of Assessment, the Director of Counseling and Assessment at the Sayre campus, the President of the Student Government Association and, with three-year term limits, one additional representative from the College of Arts and Sciences, three representatives from the College of Professional and Graduate Studies, one representative from the College of Pharmacy, and one representative from the College of Associate and Applied Programs. One additional student shall be included in the committee serving a one-year term. The Chair of the committee is appointed by the Provost from the membership. The Associate Provost serves as an *ex officio* member.

**General Education Committee** -- Evaluates current offerings, makes recommendations, and reports to the Provost. The committee is composed of eight faculty members: three Professional and Graduate Studies; three Arts and Sciences; one Pharmacy; and one Sayre Campus. Committee members serve three year terms. Members of the committee are nominated by the Dean of each college and appointed by the Provost. Up to two student members are appointed by the Student Government Association who serve annually. The Chair is elected by the committee. The Provost and Associate Provost are *ex officio* members.