

**Oklahoma State University
Annual Assessment Report, 2000 – 2001**

Executive Summary

Entry-Level Assessment

The purpose of entry-level assessment is to assist academic advisors in making placement decisions that will give students the best possible chance of academic success. Three methods assess a student's readiness for college-level coursework at OSU: scores from ACT subject tests, results from a predictive statistical model called Entry Level Placement Analysis (ELPA), and scores from COMPASS (ACT's Computer Adaptive Placement and Support System) placement tests. ELPA is a multiple regression model that uses high school grades, high school class rank and size, and ACT scores to predict student grades in entry-level courses. The predictions are based on the success of past OSU freshmen with similar academic records. All new students are assessed using ACT subject area and composite scores (or SAT equivalent) and results of ELPA. Students scoring below the designated ACT cutscores (19 in each subject area) and with predicted grades from ELPA of less than "C" in a particular subject area are recommended for remedial coursework. Students may waive a remedial course requirement by passing a COMPASS test. All students undergo entry-level assessment prior to enrollment.

In 2000-2001, entry-level assessment was conducted for all admitted and enrolled new freshmen and new transfer students with fewer than 24 credit hours (n=3,606). After all entry-level assessment was completed in 2000-2001, 614 enrolled new students (17.0% of the total number enrolled) were recommended to take at least one remedial course. Additional entry-level assessment studies conducted in 2000-2001 included the *CIRP Freshman Survey* and the *College Student Inventory*.

Minor changes were made to the entry level assessment process in 2000-2001. The regression equations used in entry-level placement analysis were revised to incorporate high school curricular data into the predictive models.

General Education Assessment

The purpose of assessment of general education at OSU is to evaluate student achievement of institutionally recognized competencies in general education, including communication, analytical, and critical thinking skills. OSU students typically take general education courses throughout their undergraduate program. For this reason, the process is no longer referred to as 'Mid-Level Assessment' because assessment of general education focuses on student attainment of competencies in general education throughout the undergraduate curriculum and not necessarily at the mid-point of students' careers.

In 2000-2001, the General Education Assessment Task Force pilot tested the use of institutional portfolios to assess student achievement of one general education learner goal. An institutional portfolio is a collection of students' work, produced throughout the curriculum, that is used to evaluate students' achievement of a particular learning outcome. For example, the 2001 institutional portfolio consisted of examples of students' writing that were randomly selected assignments from a variety of OSU courses; these writing 'artifacts' were evaluated to assess students' skills in written communication. Faculty members evaluate the students' work using uniform scoring criteria that measure the extent to which students demonstrate proficiency with respect to the learning outcome being considered. Separate portfolios will be used to evaluate different general education learning outcomes.

The Task Force pilot tested this process in 2001 by developing and evaluating an institutional portfolio to assess students' skills in written communication, one of the general education learner goals. Examples of students' work that demonstrated skills in written communication were randomly selected assignments from 26 OSU general education and upper division classes. Five pieces (artifacts) of students' work were randomly selected from a single class assignment from each class (i.e., each artifact was produced by a different student). The task force developed and tested a scoring rubric to evaluate the artifacts in the portfolio. The final rubric consisted of a 5-point scale with descriptors for each of the five levels; a score of '5' indicated superior communication skills. The final evaluation process required that three reviewers assess and score each artifact independently, and then the reviewers met to develop consensus scores for each artifact.

A total of 86 randomly selected students participated in general education assessment in 2000-2001, although the process was transparent to these students. The final portfolio contained 86 artifacts of students' work that were used for assessment of the skills in written communication (some artifacts were dropped from the initial portfolio because the types of assignments did not lend themselves to this assessment). Information on the students' work that identified the students was eliminated after minimal demographic information was collected from institutional records for analysis purposes. Because information on particular students is not retained, the process does not allow student tracking. Rather, the process is aimed at providing a holistic assessment of students' achievement of the learner goals for general education.

Results from the pilot test were summarized, but the small sample size prevented extensive or conclusive analysis. Overall, 65% of artifacts received a score of 3 (the mid-point) or higher, and 98% of the artifacts received a score of 2 or higher. The frequency of scores of 3 or higher was highest for seniors and lowest for freshmen, suggesting maturity of writing skills with year class. In the future, data collection will allow more extensive analysis, including comparison of scores among colleges, degree programs, year classes, and other factors.

The Task Group was encouraged by the process and by the results. In 2002, they propose to develop three institutional portfolios. One portfolio will be used to assess skills in written communication (adding to the data collected in 2001), and new portfolios will be developed to assess student skills in oral and graphical communication and to evaluate students' skills in problem solving in the areas of mathematics and physical and natural sciences.

Program Outcomes Assessment

Every degree program at OSU, including undergraduate and graduate degrees, is required to have a program outcomes assessment plan and to submit annual reports describing assessment activity. The plans and reports are prepared according to the organizational level that best suits each program; annual program outcomes assessment reports, therefore, may be submitted by colleges, schools, departments, or by individual degree programs depending on the organizational level that faculty from these programs have elected.

Academic units use a variety of methods to assess student-learning outcomes. The most commonly used assessment methods for undergraduate programs reported in 2000-2001 were:

- Capstone course projects, papers, presentations evaluated by faculty
- Senior projects & presentations
- Professional jurors or evaluators to evaluate projects, portfolios, exhibits, or performances

- Course-embedded assessments & Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)
- Exams – local comprehensive exams, local entry-to-program exams
- Exams – standardized national exams, certification or licensure exams,
- Exit interviews
- Internships – evaluations from supervisors, faculty members, student participants
- Portfolios - reviewed internally or externally
- Student competitions - intercollegiate
- Surveys - alumni
- Surveys - employers / recruiters
- Surveys – students, esp. seniors
- Surveys – faculty
- Tracking enrollment data, student academic performance (GPA in particular courses), degree completion rates
- Alumni employment tracking

In addition to these outcomes assessment methods, the Office of University Assessment coordinates alumni and student surveys and provides program-specific results to academic units for use in program outcomes assessment. Academic units use results of these surveys for program outcomes assessment.

Graduate programs reported the following outcomes assessment methods *in addition to* the methods described above:

- Qualifying exams
- Theses / dissertations / creative component papers, projects, presentations, and defenses
- Comprehensive exams
- Tracking research activity / publications / professional presentations / professional activity

Uses of assessment results are unique to each program but can be generally categorized as sharing assessment information with faculty members, developing curriculum changes, as needed, in response to assessment findings, and using assessment results to justify curriculum changes have recently been implemented. The most commonly cited uses of assessment results in 2000-2001 were:

- Changes in course content
- Addition / deletion of courses
- Changes in course sequences
- Changes in degree requirements or degree sheet options
- Development of tutorial and academic services for students
- Justification of past curriculum changes and to show program improvement resulting from those changes
- To further refine the assessment methods or to implement new assessment methods
- Changes in advising processes
- To facilitate curriculum discussions at faculty meetings, curriculum committee meetings, and faculty retreats
- Changes to student facilities such as computer labs and science labs
- Development of program-based websites to provide students with academic and program information

Student and Alumni Satisfaction Assessment

Several surveys were conducted in 2000-2001 to assess student and alumni satisfaction, including the *2001 Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs*, the *2000 National Survey of Student Engagement*, and the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory* (Tulsa campus only).

The *2001 Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs* was conducted to evaluate career tracks, continued education, and general satisfaction of recent OSU alumni, and to assess achievement of program outcomes as perceived by alumni. A total of 677 telephone interviews (a 37% response rate) were completed with OSU graduate program alumni who graduated in calendar years 1995 and 2000. An estimated 65% of the survey participants were living in Oklahoma and 35% were living out of state. Ninety-six percent of alumni reported that they were satisfied with their overall educational experience at OSU. Alumni survey data were summarized for each academic program for use in program outcomes assessment. The survey's Common Questions addressed employment, continued education, and general satisfaction. Participating academic programs also developed program-specific survey questions for their alumni.

OSU participated in the *2000 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)*, an initiative of the Pew Charitable Trusts that is nationally coordinated by the Indiana University Center for Post-Secondary Research & Planning. A total of 516 OSU seniors and first-year students participated in this survey in spring 2000 and results were available in fall 2000. OSU student data were compared with data from 13,507 students from 41 other U.S. Research I and II institutions. The survey primarily targeted issues related to how students spend their time and what they gain from attending college. Part of the survey, however, specifically addressed student satisfaction with their educational experiences. NSSE results indicated that OSU excels in terms of providing a supportive campus environment, fostering quality relationships for students within the academic community, and general satisfaction of the student body. The University plans to participate in this survey again in 2002.

The OSU-Tulsa Office of Academic Affairs coordinated the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory* for the Tulsa campus. This is the first year of formal assessment of student satisfaction for OSU students who are primarily on the Tulsa campus. A total of 213 self-selected students from the OSU-Tulsa campus participated in the survey. These students reported higher degrees of satisfaction with Instructional Effectiveness, Safety and Security, Registration Effectiveness, Concern for the Individual, Campus Climate, Support Services, Service Excellence, Student Centeredness, and Responsiveness to Diverse Population when compared to peer institutions. They also reported a lower degree of satisfaction with Campus Life when compared to peer institutions. OSU-Tulsa has taken several steps to enhance student satisfaction although students reported higher levels of satisfaction with most issues when compared to peer institutions. These developments are primarily in the areas of academic advising, registration processes, campus life and student centeredness, and instructional effectiveness. Future assessment efforts will focus on the impact of these developing programs on students' educational experiences.

Graduate Student Assessment

Graduate student assessment is considered a part of the Program Outcomes Assessment conducted in each academic unit. Graduate student assessment methods, numbers of students assessed, results of assessments, and changes that occurred or are planned as a result of graduate program outcomes assessment are described and summarized in the section on Program Outcomes Assessment.

In addition to the graduate student assessment that occurs in each academic program, the Office of University Assessment also conducted a Graduate Program Alumni Survey in 2001. Results of this survey were provided to the Graduate College and each academic program received a summary of their alumni responses. The Graduate College and Assessment Office also coordinate an online Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey in alternate years; this survey is aimed at currently enrolled graduate students and will be conducted again in 2002.

What's New in Assessment at OSU in 2000-2001:

- *Review of Outcomes Assessment Programs.* The most significant new development in assessment at OSU in 2000-2001 was the Assessment Council's new process of reviewing outcomes assessment programs for each academic unit. The reviews facilitate program outcomes assessment by providing information and recommendations to academic units about their assessment programs. In 2000-2001, the Council reviewed and provided constructive feedback regarding assessment efforts in 26 academic units. The reviews have resulted in revised assessment plans, new assessment initiatives, and better outcomes assessment reporting.
- *OSU Assessment Presentations at National Conferences.* OSU is increasingly represented on programs for national assessment conferences. In June 2001, two OSU presentations were given at the American Association of Higher Education's National Assessment Conference. Paul Bischoff (History Department), Nigel Jones (School of Architecture), and Julie Wallin (Office of University Assessment) presented, "Developing and communicating general education learner goals at a large public university," and Alfred Carlozzi (Graduate College), Julie Wallin, and Pamela Bowers (Student Affairs) presented "Using campus-wide resources to develop, implement, and use results from an online graduate student satisfaction survey."
- *Developing an Institutional Portfolio to Assess General Education.* The General Education Assessment Task Force has implemented and pilot tested a holistic, university-wide approach to assessing general education using institutional portfolios. This year, the task force developed and pilot tested an institutional portfolio to evaluate students' skills in written communication. The results of the written communication skills assessment will be shared with the Assessment Council, General Education Advisory Council, Instruction Council, and Academic Affairs leaders.
- *Assessment Meetings with OSU Administrative Leaders.* Dr. John Vitek, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Julie Wallin, Director of University Assessment, met with all OSU Deans and Department Heads in fall 2000 to discuss roles and responsibilities regarding assessment, the purpose of assessment, assessment expectations, and the status of OSU's assessment program. The meetings were part of a campus-wide effort to increase awareness of assessment as a tool for self-study and program development.
- *OSU Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs.* The Office of University Assessment coordinated a university-wide survey of alumni of OSU graduate programs in 2000-2001. The survey provided data on careers, continued education, and satisfaction of alumni of OSU graduate programs who received their degrees in 1995 or 1999. A total of 677 telephone interviews were completed from a target population of 1,835 alumni, a response rate of 37%.
- *OSU-Tulsa Student Satisfaction Survey.* The OSU-Tulsa campus conducted its first formal evaluation of student satisfaction in spring 2001. The Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory was used to evaluate student satisfaction with a variety of topics related to academic experiences and student services. The survey results will be used in developing student programs and services on the rapidly growing OSU-Tulsa campus.

Additional information about these developments is available from the OSU Assessment Program Website at www.okstate.edu/assess.