Oklahoma State University

Executive Summary
2007 – 2008 Assessment Report

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Entry-Level Assessment

Three primary methods are used for entry-level assessment at Oklahoma State University (OSU): the ACT, a locally-developed predictive statistical model called Entry Level Placement Analysis (ELPA), and the ACT Computer Adaptive Placement and Support System tests (COMPASS). The first stage of entry-level assessment is the ACT subject area test scores; an ACT subscore of 19 or above (or SAT equivalent) automatically qualifies a student for college-level coursework in that subject area. The ACT Reading subscore is used to indicate readiness for courses in reading-intensive introductory courses in Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Economics, and Philosophy. The second stage of entry-level assessment is ELPA; it 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. Students scoring below a 19 on the ACT subject area test *and* with predicted grades from ELPA of less than "C" in a particular subject area are recommended for remedial coursework. All first-time OSU students are assessed using the ACT and ELPA prior to enrollment. The third level of assessment is the COMPASS placement tests; students who are not cleared for enrollment in college level courses via their ACT scores or ELPA results may waive a remedial course requirement by passing a COMPASS test. Students who are missing ACT information or high school grade information needed for ELPA may also take the COMPASS placement test to waive a remedial course requirement.

In 2007-08, entry-level assessment was conducted for all admitted and enrolled new freshmen and new transfer students with fewer than 24 credit hours (n=3,642). After all stages of entry-level assessment were completed, 349 new students (9.6 % of the total number enrolled) were recommended to take at least one remedial course. Of these, 35 (1.0 %) were recommended to enroll in remedial English; 289 (7.9 %) needed remedial math; 113 (3.1 %) needed remedial science, and 33 (0.9 %) were recommended to enroll in a course focused on reading and study skills. (Note: some students are required to take remedial courses in more than one subject area.)

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey is an additional entry-level assessment used at OSU. The CIRP Freshman Survey is a university-wide survey that is conducted in alternate years and provides information about characteristics of entering freshmen. The CIRP is conducted in even numbered years; results of the 2006 CIRP are available on the UAT website.

General Education Assessment

OSU's assessment program uses three primary tools to evaluate student achievement of the expected learning outcomes for general education and the effectiveness of the general education curriculum: (1) institutional portfolios, (2) university-wide surveys, and (3) a general education course content database. Each of these three methods is aimed at evaluating expected student learning outcomes that are articulated in the *OSU General Education Courses Area Designations - Criteria and Goals* document. Revisions to this document were approved in 2004, to facilitate

more effective assessment of student learning goals. General education assessment is also guided by the university's mission statement and the purpose of general education as articulated in the OSU catalog.

Institutional Portfolios directly assess student achievement of the primary learner goals for general education. Separate portfolios are developed to evaluate each general education learner goal, and each portfolio includes students' work from course assignments collected throughout the undergraduate curriculum. Faculty members (including assessment committee members and additional faculty members involved in undergraduate teaching) work in groups to evaluate the work in each portfolio and assess student achievement of the learner goal by using standardized scoring rubrics. The results provide a measure of the extent to which students are achieving OSU's expected general education competencies.

In 2007-08, three institutional portfolios were used to evaluate students' critical thinking skills, written communication skills, and knowledge, skills and attitudes about diversity. The portfolios include student work from OSU students from all classes (freshmen through seniors) and disciplines. Each 'artifact' of student work in the institutional portfolios is evaluated by a team of faculty reviewers and scored using a 5-point rubric, where a score of 5 represents excellent work. The results of the critical thinking assessment indicate that 69% of students received a score of 3 or higher. The results of the written communication skills assessment indicate that 31% of students received a score of 3 or higher. Results of the diversity assessment indicate that 52% of students received a score of 3 or higher. Complete information about all general education assessment is provided on the UAT website at uat.okstate.edu/assessment.

The web-based General Education Course Database is used to evaluate how well each general education course is aligned with the expected learning outcomes for the general education program. Instructors are asked to submit their course information online via a web-based form, and the General Education Advisory Council reviews the submitted information during regular course reviews. Instructors identify which general education learning goals are associated with the course and describe course activities that provide students with opportunities to achieve those learning goals. The database provides a tool for summarizing general education course offerings and evaluating the extent to which the overall general education goals are met across the curriculum.

OSU has elected to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year. The VSA was developed to promote accountability and stewardship, measure educational outcomes, and provide assessable and comparable information using the College Portrait online reporting template. As a VSA participating institution, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) was administered as a computer-based test at the OSU Testing Center during the 2007-2008 academic year to evaluate students' critical thinking and written communication skills. Randomly sampled students, stratified by college, received an e-mail invitation to participate. 136 first-year freshman completed the instrument during the Fall, 2007 semester and 110 graduating seniors completed the instrument during the Spring, 2008 semester. Results of the CLA will be reported in the 2008-2009 annual report.

OSU's general education assessment methods are aimed at holistically evaluating student achievement of general education outcomes and critically evaluating the curriculum itself by evaluating how each course incorporates general education learner goals. Institutional portfolios and university-wide surveys are implemented such that student participants are anonymous; therefore, these methods do not permit tracking individual students into future semesters. Information from general education assessment is presented annually to the General Education

Advisory Council, Assessment Council, Instruction Council, and Faculty Council. The process has generated attention to student learning, general education outcomes, and encouraged discussions about how individual general education courses provide opportunities for students to develop general education knowledge and skills. Eight years after implementation, these assessments are yielding interesting results and influencing change at several institutional levels.

Program Outcomes Assessment

All OSU degree programs, including undergraduate and graduate programs, must have an outcomes assessment plan and must submit an annual assessment report describing assessment activity. Assessment plans and reports may be submitted by colleges, schools, departments, or by individual degree programs, depending on the organizational level that faculty from these programs have elected to use for assessment. The Assessment Council, including College Assessment Coordinators, periodically reviews all assessment plans and reports; the schedule for these reviews supports the Academic Program Review (APR) process. Since documentation of the use of assessment results for program development is requested for the APR process, the Assessment Council reviews and provides feedback on outcomes assessment one year in advance of each program's participation in Academic Program Review. In January 2008, programs that will participate in APR in Spring 2009 were provided with feedback about their program learning outcomes assessment, based on reviews conducted by the Assessment Council.

Academic units use a broad range of methods to assess student achievement of the learning outcomes articulated in assessment plans, and these are described in detail in the individual assessment reports submitted by each unit. The most commonly used program outcomes assessment methods reported in 2007-08 were:

- Capstone or other course projects, papers, presentations evaluated by faculty or by outside reviewers
- Senior-level projects & presentations
- Course-embedded assessments & classroom assessment techniques
- 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

- Projects, portfolios, exhibits, or performances – evaluated by professional jurors or evaluators
- Surveys – alumni
- Surveys – employers / recruiters
- Surveys – students, esp. seniors
- Surveys – faculty
- Enrollment data, student academic performance on selected assignments, student participation in extracurricular activities related to the discipline, degree completion rates, time-to-degree completion
- Alumni employment tracking

Graduate programs reported the following *additional* outcomes assessment methods:

- Qualifying exams
- Theses / dissertations / creative component papers, projects, presentations, and defenses

- Comprehensive exams
- Research activity / publications / professional presentations / professional activity

In addition to these outcomes assessment methods, the Office of University Assessment and Testing provides program-specific results of alumni and student surveys to academic programs so that faculty may use this information for program outcomes assessment.

In keeping with the guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association and the policy of the OSU Assessment Council, faculty are encouraged to develop effective program outcomes assessment methods that will provide meaningful information for program development. The Assessment Council reviews of outcomes assessment programs show that many degree programs are satisfactorily implementing their assessment plans and using assessment results for program development and improvement. Academic units are encouraged, but not required, to use assessment methods that may provide comparison of student performance with statewide or national norms. Programs that use such assessments report their findings in their individual annual outcomes assessment reports, available on the UAT website at uat.okstate.edu/assessment.

The number of individuals who participate in each outcomes assessment method within each academic unit is shown in Table 12.1. Methods are described in greater detail in the individual assessment reports submitted by each academic unit, available on the UAT website. Since the same students may be assessed by multiple methods, the reporting process may not provide an accurate count of the total number of students that participated in outcomes assessment. Outcomes assessment reports demonstrate that academic programs use multiple assessment methods and a majority of students within each program participate in outcomes assessment measures. The total number of individuals who participated in all assessment methods includes multiple counts of the same students - because students participate in multiple methods - and may include non-students. For example, the 'number of individuals assessed' in an alumni or employer survey would include numbers of alumni or employers, respectively, rather than current students.

Uses of assessment results are unique to each program but can be generally categorized as sharing assessment information with faculty members, developing curriculum changes in response to assessment findings, and using assessment results to justify curriculum changes that have recently been implemented. The most commonly cited uses of assessment results in 2007-08 were:

- Changes in course content
- Addition / deletion of courses
- Justification of past curriculum changes and to show program improvement resulting from those changes
- Refinement of the assessment methods or to implement new assessment methods

- Changes in course sequences
- Changes in advising processes
- Facilitate curriculum discussions at faculty meetings, curriculum committee meetings, and faculty retreats
- Changes to student facilities such as computer labs and science labs

Student and Alumni Satisfaction Assessment

Satisfaction surveys are conducted to evaluate student and alumni perceptions of academic and campus programs and services, and the results are used in developing and improving those programs and services. The surveys complement program outcomes assessment because they are designed to provide feedback from students and alumni for use in continuous quality improvement in academic and student programs.

Alumni surveys are conducted every year at OSU; undergraduate program alumni and graduate program alumni are surveyed in alternate years. The surveys are intended to identify institutional strengths and areas for improvement as perceived by recent graduates; to track the careers and continuing education of recent OSU graduates; and to evaluate achievement of learning outcomes as perceived by alumni from individual academic programs. The alumni surveys target alumni who are 1- and 5-years post-graduation. The surveys were historically conducted as telephone interviews; beginning in 2007-08 they are conducted as online surveys and as telephone interviews for those alumni who could not be reached by e-mail. The survey covers employment, continued education, and general satisfaction. Also, individual academic programs may include program-specific questions in the questionnaire for their program alumni; these data are used in program outcomes assessment as well as assessing alumni satisfaction. Alumni surveys have become a cornerstone of assessment at the university-, college- and program-level by providing regular feedback from OSU graduates about their perceptions of their educational experiences at OSU and the impact of those experiences on career and personal development.

The 2008 OSU Survey of Alumni of Undergraduate Programs was conducted to provide data to gauge perceptions of various aspects of the undergraduate programs and services and to identify areas where improvements may be needed. The target population for this survey was alumni of undergraduate programs who completed their degrees in calendar years 2002 and 2006. The total of alumni in the target population was 6,861. The survey was administered as an online survey and as a telephone interview. The OSU office of University Assessment and Testing conducted the survey interviews in January through April of 2008, coordinated data collection, summarized data and prepared the reports. A total of 1407 surveys were completed online by alumni, and 1141 alumni participated through a telephone interview, resulting in a 37% response rate. The group of respondents included 856 alumni who had received an undergraduate degree in 2002, and 1692, in 2006.

Results of selected survey items indicate that 94% of 2002 and 92% of 2006 undergraduate alumni are very satisfied / satisfied with their overall educational experience at OSU; 92% of both 2002 and 2006 undergraduate alumni said their graduate studies had prepared them very well or adequately for their current position.

Approximately 92% of 2002 and 84% of 2006 undergraduate alumni reported that they are employed. Most 2002 and 2006 alumni reported they are employed by large corporations (33%). Other alumni employers reported are small businesses or corporations (26%), educational institutions or organizations (18%), non-profit organizations (5.9%), federal government (5.2%), state government (4.8%), and local government (2.3%). 3.6% reported being self-employed. The median salary range for 2002 undergraduate alumni was $45,000-$54,999/year and for 2006 undergraduate alumni, $35,000-$44,999/year.

Graduate Student Assessment

Student outcomes assessment in graduate programs is part of Program Outcomes Assessment and is reported in that section of this report. In addition, the Office of University Assessment and Testing periodically conducts a Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey, and conducts the Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs in odd-numbered years. These university-wide assessments provide university- and program-level assessment information about graduate students. A Survey of Alumni of Graduate Programs will be conducted in 2008-09, following the established cycle.

In Spring 2008, the Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey (GSSS) was conducted to assess graduate students' satisfaction with, and perceptions about, various aspects of their academic experience - the quality of their academic program, relationships with faculty and advisors, support and resources provided by the department and the university, and interactions with the Graduate College and the Graduate and Professional Student Government Association (GPSGA). The GSSS was administered as an internet-based survey by UAT in March 2008. Surveys were completed by 1,735 of the 3,820 graduate students enrolled at the Stillwater and Tulsa campuses - a response rate of 45%.

More than 90% of students indicated they were very or generally satisfied with computing and library resources available to them. Between 85% and 90% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with availability of their advisor and advisor's willingness to spend the time with them that they need, their relationships and interactions with program faculty, overall program quality, and overall experience as a graduate student. 71% were generally or very satisfied with the availability of course offerings in their program, and 68%, with research facilities, equipment and lab space.

More than 75% of respondents indicated that they were very or generally satisfied with departmental preparation and guidance for their role of teaching assistant (if applicable), and with the helpfulness of Graduate College staff. 67% of students indicated that financial support such as assistantships and scholarships were somewhat or readily available in their department; 73% of students with a graduate assistantship indicated that their financial package was adequate or somewhat adequate in meeting financial needs.