

East Central University
OSRHE Annual Assessment Report for 2003-2004
Executive Summary

Entry-Level Assessment

The East Central University (ECU) Assessment Center uses ACT subject scores, ACT COMPASS computerized placement test scores, and other secondary tests to assess the academic skills of entering freshmen. Entering freshmen with ACT subject scores below 19 must pass the related COMPASS module or other appropriate secondary test to enroll in college-level course work in that subject area. The COMPASS modules used to assess students' academic backgrounds in English, mathematics, and reading are Writing Skills, Algebra, and Reading, respectively. The Integrated Process Skills Test II (IPS) is used to assess the students' academic background in science. During the 2003-04 academic year, 57 percent of freshmen admitted had at least one ACT subject score below 19. After secondary testing, the highest proportion of academic skills deficiencies was in mathematics (42%), followed by reading (11%), English (11%), and science (5%). The courses and pass rates for students who enrolled in remedial courses were Fundamentals of English (83%), Intermediate Algebra (69%), Developmental Reading (74%), and Concepts in Science (82%).

The ECU Assessment Center tracked student performance in entry-level college courses by dividing students into three cohorts for each ACT subject area based on their performance on the ACT and secondary placement tests. The first cohort consisted of students who had ACT subject scores of 19 or higher. The second cohort contained students who had ACT subject scores below 19, but passed secondary placement testing. The third cohort contained students who had ACT subject scores below 19 and failed secondary testing. Students in the first cohort generally outperformed students in the second and third cohorts. The students in the second cohort performed better than the students in the third cohort only in the two math courses.

For the freshman class of 2003-04, ECU's cut scores appeared to be effective in ENG 1113 and MATH 1413. However, the cut scores were not as effective for the other subject areas. The "C" cohorts in these subject areas did not meet the 70 percent grades of C or higher performance goal or perform at the same level as the "N" cohort for the same subject. Curriculum and pedagogical changes in the zero-level math courses have resulted in a significant increase in the number of students successfully completing math remediation.

Mid-Level Assessment

ECU assessed nine student outcomes for six academic skill areas during 2003-04. These outcomes covered critical thinking, library skills, oral or expressive communication, reading, math skills, and written communication. To obtain data on student performance on these outcomes, the Assessment Center and the University Assessment Committee used two instruments, the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE) and the ACT Alumni Survey. Four hundred and eight students were assessed using the CBASE and 251 ECU graduates were assessed using the ACT Alumni Survey. The CBASE was administered to students in UNIV 3001, the general education capstone course; they were given 50 points for taking the exam.

The 2003-04 cohort had an overall average score of 267 on the CBASE multiple choice. Overall, the 2003-04 cohort's performance was slightly better than the students taking the exam in the same format

during the 2001-2002 and 2002-03 academic years. However, this was 14 points lower than students in

ECU's CBASE 1:1 peer group - differences of 17 or more points are significant. The difference in the composite score from the peer group average is primarily due to the significant difference in the average Math score (51 points). This large difference in math scores raises questions concerning the CBASE 1:1 testing format, student motivation, and the fit between the exam and general education math courses' content.

In 2003-04, ECU students' overall performance on the "writing" multiple choice section of the test was 10 points below the average for the 2002-03 ECU students, and three points below students in the 2001-04 CBASE 1:1 peer group. The ECU students tested during 2003-04 performed comparably on both sections of the exam to past ECU students and the CBASE 1:1 peer group. The CBASE Writing Test was administered to 56 ECU students during Summer 2004. Nineteen ECU students received two's, 35 ECU students received three's, and two ECU students received four's. No ECU students received ratings of five (good) or six (excellent). The relative performance of ECU's students and the comparison group raises more concern about their motivation to meaningfully participate. It is uncertain how much of the differences in performance between the two groups are due to academic background differences and the quality of instruction.

The 2003-04 ACT Alumni Survey respondents indicated their education at ECU made slightly more of a contribution to their personal growth in "writing effectively," compared to past ECU alumni respondents and respondents in the public college sample. Fifty percent of respondents indicated that ECU had contributed "very much" to their personal growth in "Writing Effectively". The 2003-04 alumni survey respondents also indicated their education at ECU made about the same contribution to their personal growth in "Understanding Written Information" as past ECU alumni respondents and respondents in the public college sample.

In 2003-04, ECU students' overall performance on the CBASE "reading" section was 10 points higher than 2002-03 ECU students, 22 points higher than 2001-02 ECU students, and 7 points lower than the 2001-2004 CBASE 1:1 peer group. The section of the CBASE most closely related to the reading student outcomes is "Reading Critically". On this section and the somewhat related "Reading Analytically" section, fewer ECU students than in 2002-03 performed at the low level.

ECU alumni respondents were more satisfied than the public college norm with their acquired skills related to their ability to "Speak Effectively". The 2003-04 survey respondents indicated their education at ECU made less contribution to their personal growth in "Recognizing Assumptions, Making Logical Inferences, and Reaching Correct Conclusions" than past ECU alumni and the respondents in the public college sample. Personal growth contributions to "Defining and Solving Problems" were also lower than past ECU alumni and the public college sample. ACT Alumni Survey data indicate ECU's alumni are slightly less satisfied than the public college norm with the University's contribution to their personal growth in using the library. Increasingly, students are using online research instead of the library.

In 2003-04, ECU students' overall performance in General Mathematics was 30 points below the average for 2002-2003 ECU students, 43 points below the average for 2001-2002 ECU students, and 56 points below the 2001-04 CBASE 1:1 peer group. ECU 2003-2004 students overall performance in Algebra was 13 points below the 2002-2003 ECU students, 22 points below 2001-2002 ECU students, and 54 points lower than the 2001-2004 CBASE 1:1 peer group. The 2003-04 ACT Alumni Survey respondents indicated their education at ECU made a slightly lower contribution to their personal growth in "Understanding and Applying Math in Daily Activities" and "Understanding Graphic Information" compared to past ECU alumni respondents and respondents in the public college sample.

Program Outcomes Assessment

During 2003-04, 954 students were assessed as part of undergraduate program assessment. Degree programs used a variety of instruments to assess student outcomes, including locally developed exams, standardized tests (such as the ETS Major Field Achievement Tests (MFAT) and the Area Concentration Achievement Tests (ACAT)), portfolios, and various constituent surveys. Licensing and certification tests, such as the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Exam, Oklahoma Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET) Exam, National Council Licensing Exam for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN), and the Certification Exam for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE) were also used. Student performance for many programs met or exceeded performance goals with the majority of students tested either passing the exams or scoring at or above a specified level on these exams. The following are some of the program changes resulting from outcomes assessment:

- The Business/Office Technology program is placing more emphasis in the quantitative areas in appropriate classes as well as consulting with the faculty who teach accounting, management, and economics/finance. This will allow for greater integration of the curriculum.
- As a result of the certification test results and the survey results, the Special Education program will be revising the required course work for Special Education majors during the Fall of 2004. These changes include requiring a course on identification and strategies for students with emotional disorders. The committee will also look at the objectives on “Understanding Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities” and then peruse each special education course syllabi to assure the objectives are being addressed.
- The Physics program plans to continue incorporating the Pittsburgh State University Achievement Tests in Physics in a course all majors take and may allow it to count for more course credit to motivate the students to perform well. The results show a significant improvement over last year and indicate that our efforts to involve more students in research, tutoring, and the physics student organization are succeeding. No physics major from ECU has ever failed the Oklahoma Teacher Certification Exam in Physics.
- The Art program has instituted preliminary action to address weaknesses in the three dimensional area through curricular and budgetary enhancements. Correction is effective in sculpture, but ceramics still needs improvement. Though not alarming, slipping scores prompted the faculty to include more written responses in course work throughout the major. Subtle indicators have prompted the department to include more critical readings and oral presentations throughout the major.
- In Criminal Justice, the new Juvenile Justice Systems text added during this assessment period seems to have contributed to higher ratings. Marked improvement was gained in the legal aspects content area in CRJS 4333 Legal Aspects due to changes in content. An additional positive factor may be employing the District Judge to teach the class. A review of two classes, CRJS 2353 Adult Correctional Systems and CRJS 4413 Correctional Programs and Settings is necessary. Program faculty will review the syllabi of these courses to ensure the objective is addressed. This area needs to be monitored in 2004.
- In Legal Studies the curriculum has been revised to require Legal Systems Application. Communication skills will continue to be stressed in all of the major classes. Courses that stress communication skills were added to the curriculum under “Other Related Work.” Practical paralegal assignments have been increased in the legal specialty classes.

Student Satisfaction Assessment

In 2003-04, ECU administered the ACT Survey of Student Opinions (SSO) and ACT Alumni Survey (AS), collecting 464 responses from currently enrolled students and 251 responses from alumni who graduated within the past five years.

The results for 2003-04 show ECU students still rate most items higher than the public college norm. The rating for “student union facilities” continues to exceed the public college norm by the largest amount. The rating of “residence hall rules and regulations” fell significantly below the public college norm. Overall, the students responding to the survey indicated they were more satisfied with ECU than the average public college student is with their institution of higher education. “Class size relative to the type of course” received the highest average rating of all items.

In the college services category, the average survey response for 2003-04 exceeded the 1998-02 average ECU response but was slightly lower than the public college norm average. The difference, however, is not significant. Survey items receiving relatively high and significant ratings were “financial aid services”, “food services”, “computer support and services”, “parking facilities and services”, “academic advising services”, “student health insurance program”, and “student health/wellness services”. “Job placement services”, “career planning services”, “student employment services”, “college sponsored tutorial services”, “credit by examination program”, “recreational and intramural programs/services”, “honors program”, “college sponsored social activities”, “college orientation program”, “residence hall services and programs”, “cultural programs”, and “day care services” continued to receive relatively low and significant negative ratings

Given the large number of significantly negative ratings in the college services area, it is worthwhile to note the number using these services and the relative importance to students of the services. Three items, “Job placement services”, “career planning services”, and “student employment services” were of above-average importance (higher than 3.0) with relatively low satisfaction ratings. The item “credit by examination program” was of below-average importance with relatively low satisfaction. Items of relatively high importance with highest ratings were, “financial aid services”, “parking facilities and services”, “academic advising services”, “student health insurance program”, and “student health/wellness services”.

Responses to the ACT Alumni Survey were generally positive. All but two survey items received higher ratings in 2003-04 than in the past. The ratings for “Relative quality of education” and “Improved quality of life” fell below both earlier ECU responses and the public college norms. The 2003-04 ratings on the other survey items exceeded the public college norm, which is the performance goal for these items.

Graduate Student Assessment

One hundred seventy-three graduate students were assessed during the 2003-04 academic year using the Certification Exam for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE), the National Counselor Preparation Exam, the Rehabilitation Counselor Certification Exam, locally developed comprehensive exams, internships, practicums, portfolios, and various constituent surveys. The pass rate on the CEOE for school counseling graduate students exceeded 89 percent in all areas. For 2003 the ECU mean score on the National Counselor Preparation Exam was 79.50, slightly lower than the national mean of 84.90. Other assessment data collected to date indicate that most program goals are either being met or close to being met. In addition, alumni and employer surveys show a high degree of satisfaction with ECU’s graduate programs.