

East Central University
OSRHE Annual Assessment Report for 2004-2005
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 2004-05 academic year, 59 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 (40%), followed by reading (13%), English (9%), and science (6%). The courses and pass rates for students who enrolled in remedial courses were Fundamentals of English (79%), Intermediate Algebra (62%), Developmental Reading (86%), and Concepts in Science (100%).

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 except for MATH 1413. The students in the second cohort performed better than the students in the third cohort in the two math courses and reading.

For the freshman class of 2004-05, ECU's cut scores appeared to be effective in ENG 1113. However, the cut scores were not as effective for the other subject areas. The "C" cohort in MATH 1413 did meet the 70 percent grades of C or higher performance goal outperforming the "N" cohort for the same subject 73% to 61%.

Mid-Level Assessment

ECU assessed nine student outcomes for six academic skill areas during 2004-05. 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. Three hundred seventy-two students were assessed using the CBASE and 213 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 University Assessment Committee also assessed Written Communication skills.

The 2004-05 cohort had an overall average score of 259 on the CBASE multiple choice. Overall, the 2004-05 cohort's performance was lower than the students taking the exam in the same format during the 2001-02, 2002-03, and 2003-04, academic years. The difference in the composite score from the

peer group average is due to the significant differences in the average Math score (23 points), Science (26 points), and Social Studies (24 points). This large difference in these scores raises questions concerning the CBASE testing format, student motivation, and the fit between the exam and general education courses' content.

In 2004-05, ECU students' overall performance on the "writing" multiple choice section of the test was 3 points below the average for the 2003-04 ECU students, and 6 points below students in the 2001-04 CBASE 1:1 peer group. The ECU students tested during 2004-05 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 53 ECU students during Spring 2005. One ECU student received a score of one. Nineteen ECU students received two's, 29 ECU students received three's, and four 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. Data from 133 students were made available to the University Assessment Committee for evaluation of written communication skills. Their findings suggest that there is a need to focus more on written communication in General Education courses.

The 2004-05 ACT Alumni Survey respondents indicated their education at ECU made slightly less of a contribution to their personal growth in "writing effectively," compared to past ECU alumni respondents and respondents in the public college sample. Forty-four percent of respondents indicated that ECU had contributed "very much" to their personal growth in "Writing Effectively". The 2004-05 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 2004-05, ECU students' overall performance on the CBASE "reading" section was 7 points lower than 2003-04 ECU students, three points higher than 2002-03 ECU students, and 14 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, more ECU students than in 2003-04 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 2004-05 survey respondents indicated their education at ECU made about the same contribution to their personal growth in "Recognizing Assumptions, Making Logical Inferences, and Reaching Correct Conclusions" as past ECU alumni and the respondents in the public college sample. Personal growth contributions to "Defining and Solving Problems" were higher than past ECU alumni and the public college sample. ACT Alumni Survey data indicate ECU's alumni are 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 2004-05, ECU students' overall performance in General Mathematics was 33 points above the average for 2003-2004 ECU students, 3 points above the average for 2002-2003 ECU students, and 23 points below the 2001-04 CBASE 1:1 peer group. ECU 2004-2005 students overall performance in Algebra was 28 points above the 2003-2004 ECU students, 16 points above 2002-2003 ECU students, and 25 points lower than the 2001-2004 CBASE 1:1 peer group. The 2004-05 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 2004-05, 1,358 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 Elementary Education program in order to better prepare candidates seeking admission to the teacher education program, has purchased content software for the computer lab in the Education Building. By reviewing this material before the Oklahoma General Education Test, the students will increase their scores on that instrument and increase knowledge as well. Passing this test is one way to show the student has sufficient knowledge to be admitted to the teacher preparation program.
- In History, all professors now require research papers, annotated bibliographies, or book reviews in their upper division courses. The department must now do a better job of advising students to take the seminar course as sophomores.
- The Environmental Health Science faculty are investigating the use of additional writing assignments and oral presentations to provide a broader basis for assessment.
- 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 the Medical Technology program, Genetics has implemented daily quizzes and stricter admittance standards which apparently have resulted in higher scores on the ACAT in Biology.
- In the Communications program, the senior project has become one of the mainstays of Mass Communication assessment. Faculty have decided to add an additional video project to the course syllabus to bring students into compliance with professional production standards and to meet the performance goal.

Student Satisfaction Assessment

In 2004-05, ECU administered the ACT Survey of Student Opinions (SSO) and ACT Alumni Survey (AS), collecting 480 responses from currently enrolled students and 213 responses from alumni who graduated within the past five years.

The results of the ACT Survey of Student Opinions show ECU students still rate most items higher than the public college sample. The rating for “availability of courses when you want” exceeds the public college norm by the largest amount. None of the ratings fell significantly below the public college norm. Overall, the students responding to the survey indicated they were more satisfied with the ECU college environment than the average public student is with their college environment. “Class size relative to the type of course” received the highest average rating of all items.

In the academic category, the average survey response for 2004-05 was about the same as the 2000-04 average ECU response. However, the average significantly exceeded the average for the public college sample. Survey items receiving relatively high and significant ratings, compared to the public college sample, were “instruction in your major field”, “course content in your major field”, “attitude of faculty toward you”, “preparation for your future occupation”, “class size relative to type of course” “value of the information provide by your advisor”, “flexibility to design your own program”, “availability of your advisor”, “variety of courses offered”, and the “testing/grading system”. “Out of class availability of your instructor” exceeded the public college norm, but the difference was not statistically significant.

In the admissions category, the average survey response for 2004-05 was below the 2000-04 average ECU response, but it exceeded the average for the public college norm. However, the differences were not statistically significant. The rating for “availability of financial aid information prior to enrolling” fell below the public college norm, but the difference was not statistically significant.

In the university rules and regulations category, the average survey response for 2004-05 was below the 2000-04 average ECU response. “Personal security/safety at this campus” significantly exceeded the public college norm. The rating for “purposes of student activity fees” fell below the public college norm, but not by a statistically significant margin.

In the university facilities category, the average survey response for 2004-05 was about the same as the 2000-04 average ECU response and significantly exceeded the public college norm average. Survey items receiving relatively high and significant ratings were “student union”, “laboratory facilities”, “general condition of buildings and grounds”, “study areas”, and “availability of student housing”.

In the registration category, the average survey response for 2004-05 fell below the 2000-04 average ECU response but exceeded the public college norm average. Survey items receiving relatively high and significant ratings were “availability of courses when you want” and “general registration procedures”. The rating for the “academic calendar for this college” was slightly higher than the public college sample, but the difference was not significant. The rating for “billing and fee payment” was slightly below the public college norm.

In the general category, the average survey response for 2004-05 also fell below the 2000-04 average ECU response but exceeded the public college norm average. Survey items receiving relatively high ratings were “racial harmony on this campus”, “opportunities for student employment”, “concern for you as an individual”, “student government”, and “attitude of the college non-teaching staff”. “Opportunities for involvement in campus activities” exceeded the public college sample by the smallest amount. No survey item fell below the public college norm.

In the college services category, the average survey response for 2004-05 fell below the 2000-04 average ECU response but was also lower than the public college norm average. The difference, however, is not

significant. Survey items receiving relatively high and significant ratings were “parking facilities and services”, “academic advising services”, “student health insurance program”, and “student health/wellness services”. “Financial aid services”, “job placement services”, “college sponsored tutorial services”, “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. Two items, “financial aid services” and “job placement services”, were of above-average importance (higher than 3.0) with relatively low satisfaction ratings. The item “day care services” was of least importance with the lowest relative satisfaction. Items of relatively high importance with highest ratings in the relatively high satisfaction section were, “parking facilities and services”, “academic advising services”, and “student health/wellness services”.

Graduate Student Assessment

Three hundred sixty-nine graduate students were assessed during the 2004-05 academic year using the Oklahoma State subject Area Test (OSAT), the Oklahoma Teacher Certification Test (OTCT), 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 was one hundred percent. For 2004, the ECU mean score on the National Counselor Preparation Exam was 79.37 lower than the national mean of 91.05. 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.