

East Central University
OSRHE Annual Assessment Report for 2006-2007
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 2006-07 academic year, a total of 724 beginning freshmen were evaluated. Of this number, 449 beginning freshmen (unduplicated count) or 62% of all beginning freshmen, had at least one ACT subject score below 19. Of this latter group, 288, 40% of all beginning freshmen, were identified as needing at least one zero-level course to remediate academic skills deficiencies. Ninety-seven, 13% of all beginning freshmen, had more than one academic skills deficiency.

About 91% of the entering freshmen qualified to take college-level English. Approximately 66% of this cohort qualified to take a college-level math course while about 88% qualified to take reading intensive college-level course work. About 96% qualified to take college-level science courses. The placement distributions for English and Reading are comparable to the average placements for the 2001-02 through 2005-06 freshman classes (2001-06). The placement distributions for Mathematics and Science improved over the previous five-year average with fewer students required to take the remedial course.

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. The performance of 2006-07 beginning freshmen in four zero-level courses required to remediate skill deficiencies in these subject areas, when compared to the combined results for 2001-06 through 2005-06, shows the pass rates for zero level English, math and science were significantly lower. The pass rate for zero level reading was significantly higher than the 2001-02 through 2005-06 average pass rate.

For college level classes taken by the freshman class of 2006-2007, entry-level assessment and placement worked best for English Composition I (ENG 1113). Students with Math ACT subject scores of 19 or higher ("N" Cohort) and the "C" cohort also do relatively well in Survey of Math (MATH 1413). However, a subject ACT score of 19 or higher does not appear sufficient to guarantee consistent success in College Algebra (MATH 1513), the Reading Courses Group, or in the Science Courses Group. Given the difficulty of the test-exempt "N" cohort in achieving the 70 percent C or higher performance goal, it is probably unrealistic to expect the same level of performance from the other placement cohorts. Furthermore, the data provide further evidence why entry-level assessment and placement at ECU has not significantly improved the retention

rates of the freshman classes. Given the poor academic backgrounds of many entering freshmen, the remediation offered at ECU is not sufficient in many cases to provide some students with the skills necessary to succeed at the college level.

Mid-Level (General Education) Assessment

ECU assessed nine student outcomes for six academic skill areas during 2006-07. These outcomes covered critical thinking, library skills, oral or expressive communication, reading, math skills, and written communication. During 2006-07, 373 students took one of the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) multiple-choice sections on Math (153), Critical Thinking (121), or the CAAP Writing Essay(80) as part of the course requirements for UNIV 3001, the general education capstone course. The test was administered to all UNIV 3001 students. This is the first time ECU has used CAAP, so longitudinal data is unavailable.

Students received 50 course points (one letter grade) for completing the assigned section of the exam. For a one-hour course this strategy does not appear to induce meaningful participation on the part of many students. Only 53% of the students taking the Critical Thinking Exam indicated they “tried their best” or “gave moderate effort”. The corresponding percentage for the Math Exam was 23%. In addition, 75% of the students taking the Math Exam did not answer the motivation question, compared to 47% for Critical Thinking. The 2006-07 cohort’s relative performance varied by subject. ECU students as a group scored below the national average by 15% of a standard deviation in Critical Thinking and by 42% of a standard deviation in Math. On the other hand, ECU students scored higher than the national average by 33% of a standard deviation on the Writing Essay. These differences are not statistically significant. A review of the graduation and retention rates of students who took either the College BASE or the CAAP during the last five academic years shows that 85% of those examined have either graduated from ECU or are still enrolled at ECU. This combined graduation/retention rate is more than twice the average six-year graduation/retention rate for the institution. The data continue to show that students who took the College BASE/CAAP have developed the academic skills necessary to complete a degree program.

Program Outcomes Assessment

During 2006-07, 1282 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 Administration Program upon review of ETS MFAT made a number of changes in the past year. First, the pre-requisites for BUS 4303, the capstone course in which the standardized test is administered, were changed. Beginning Spring 2007 students must take the

course during their last semester. Further, the prerequisites for Principles of Marketing and Principles of Management were changed to include ECON 2003 Principles and Problems of Economics. Faculty expect these changes to have a small but positive impact on scores as early as 2008.

- The Elementary Education Program plans to continue to offer study sessions each semester. Tutoring programs and practice material will be made available to students. Also, constructed response formats will be implemented in education courses. Faculty believe that the changes that implemented to improve student scores in subtest one will also increase scores for subtest two.
- The Art Program is actively engaged in remedial activities and increased testing in many courses. Preliminary action is underway 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 on written senior statements prompted the faculty to include more written responses in course work throughout the major. The students' average oral senior critique and exit interviews score would not indicate a need for change, but subtle indicators have prompted the department to include more critical readings and oral presentations throughout the major.
- The History Program continues to encourage students to take HIST 3883: Topics in History before taking more than six hours of advanced level courses. The History faculty plan to include more short writing assignments in classes that are similar to the constructed response questions on the OSAT. Department meetings have led to the decision to implement internal tests which cover the outcomes for the subject area tests. While the exact assignments for the next annual assessment report have not been selected, the questions to be answered have been defined by faculty. Each faculty member will report cohort results for assignments in their courses as they relate to the new content outcomes.
- The Math Program has instituted a number of changes in the prerequisite structure. In an effort to improve OSAT scores and to improve students' proficiency at writing mathematical proofs the department will no longer offer MATH 3093 Introduction to Theorem Proving and Number Theory by independent study. In Spring 2006, the department eliminated the students' performance on an expository paper assessment component in order to increase amount of time spent focused on writing of mathematical proofs in Math 3715 Linear Algebra in an effort to increase student performance on the writing of mathematical proofs.

Student Satisfaction Assessment

During the Spring 2007 semester, the Assessment Center collected data on the satisfaction of currently enrolled students by surveying 316 students using the ACT Survey of Student Opinions. This sample consisted of general education course sections and upper-level course sections selected by programs going through program review. The 2006-07 results show ECU students still rate most items higher than the public college sample. The rating for "flexibility to design your own program" exceeds the public college norm by the largest amount. Several of the ratings fell significantly below the public college norm. These are "purposes of student activity fee use", "campus bookstore", and "campus media". 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. "Student union" received the highest average rating of items under campus facilities.

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, "job placement services", and "career planning 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. The item of relatively high importance with the highest rating in the relatively high satisfaction section was "student health/wellness services". Dr. Richard Rafes, our new president, has initiated a number of positive changes in Student Services during the 2006-2007 academic year consisting of reorganization of existing units and numerous staff changes in the student services area.. Also a new Vice President for Student Development was hired. It is expected that the results of these changes will be reflected in next year's Student Opinion Survey results.

Graduate Student Assessment

Seven hundred and twenty-eight graduate students were assessed during the 2006-07 academic year using the Certification Exam for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE), the Oklahoma State Subject Area Test, the Oklahoma Teacher Certification Test for School Counselors, the State Elementary Principals Exam, the State Secondary Principal Certification Exam, the National Counselor Preparation Exam, the Rehabilitation Counselor Certification Exam, locally developed comprehensive exams, internships, practicums, portfolios, and various constituent surveys. The mean score on the National Counselor Preparation Exam - Counseling Program was 75.26. Only four students completed the exam, with two passing. The national average is 80. The pass rate on the CEOE for School Counseling graduate students exceeded 86 percent in all areas. 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. Twenty-Six graduate students enrolled on probationary status.