



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Office of the Provost

Office of Planning & Assessment

Institutional Effectiveness Weekly Report *Update on Excellence in Assessment Application* **March 15, 2019**

The Office of Planning and Assessment reports its weekly activities and contributions toward Texas Tech University's institutional effectiveness efforts and departmental objectives.



OUTCOME 1: The Office of Planning and Assessment will contribute to Texas Tech University's ongoing compliance with all external accrediting agencies and State of Texas mandates.

The weekly report for March 15, 2019 presents a first draft of the Excellence in Assessment (EIA) application. The EIA award is sponsored by the Voluntary System of Accountability, and the deadline is May 6, 2019. There isn't a monetary amount attached to the award, nor is there a fee for applying. The application mandates that institutions provide responses to six domains, and the draft that follows includes domains 1-3. The suggested word limit for the application is "between 1500 and (no more than) 2500 words." We welcome Dr. James' feedback on the application.

Introduction to Texas Tech University's Assessment Context: From SACSCOC Probation to EIA Applicant Institution

Over the past decade, Texas Tech University (TTU) has been actively working to strengthen student learning outcomes assessment across all of its colleges and 200+ degree programs [Link to program inventory]. In 2008, Texas Tech held a probationary status with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) for failure to assess the university's core curriculum [Link to letter informing probation]. Since 2008, the institution has created a dynamic infrastructure that supports continuous improvement in degree program assessment [Link to OPA website].

Our 2019 EIA application seeks to provide evidence of TTU's cornerstone commitment to NILOA's Transparency Framework. We actively utilize this framework on our public website [Link to OPA website], in formal and informal communications with faculty [Link to PAR PowerPoint], and in our own Institutional Effectiveness handbook [Link to IE handbook]. In our EIA application, we hope to demonstrate the significant shift in our institution's commitment to assessment. The remainder of this application follows the guidelines prescribed in the EIA application packet.

Domain 1. Student Learning Outcome Statements

As discussed in the Introduction section of the EIA application, Texas Tech created an infrastructure that supports continuous improvement in all degree programs. This infrastructure is co-led by three TTU offices: the Office of Planning and Assessment (OPA), the Office of Institutional Research, and the Office of the Provost [Link to Progress Portal highlighting IE team]. This infrastructure was established in late 2014, at a point in our university's history when TTU was still "growing" its assessment culture. Since our institution's SACSCOC probation, the collaborative efforts of these three offices have led to the university's significant shift in assessment practice.

Institutionally, TTU student learning outcome statements are framed around three core values:

Guiding Values

1. First, Texas Tech University is committed to developing student learning outcome statements that are **reflective of skills, knowledge, and competencies students will gain while enrolled in their specific degree program(s)**. Some student learning outcome statements have been deemed **marketable skills**, which is a State of Texas initiative that aims to make students aware of the marketable skills embedded in their academic programs. [Link to marketable skills report]
2. Second, all Texas Tech University undergraduate degree programs **share a core curriculum** as identified as part of the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC), established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The purpose of TCC assessment is to improve student learning in these TCC objectives: Communication; Mathematics; Life and Physical Science; Language, Philosophy, and Culture; Creative Arts; American History; Government/Political Science; and Social and Behavioral Sciences. The student learning outcomes for these objectives are assessed for all students enrolled in core courses [Link to core curriculum report].
3. Finally, Texas Tech University is **committed to transparency**, by sharing each degree program's student learning outcome statements on a public website [Link to Students and Parents page].

Guiding Value 1. Identification of Marketable Skills in Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes.

By 2030, the State of Texas will require each institution to identify marketable skills within its degree programs [Link to marketable skills THECB edict]. As an institution, we are positioning ourselves as a leader in the State by emphasizing our commitment to assessing marketable skills [Link to Jennifer's 2018 LEAP presentation and Craig's 2019 LEAP presentation]. Additionally, we have developed a webpage [Link to OPA Marketable Skills page] and a report that analyzes all degree-program learning outcomes and their linkage to the marketable skills initiative.

Guiding Value 2. *Shared Core Curriculum Assessment.*

While TTU does not have common student learning outcomes across degree programs, Texas Tech is proud of its shared learning outcomes in the Core Curriculum. As these reports demonstrate, assessment methods are appropriately unique to each particular objective [Link to 17-18, 16-17, and 15-16 reports]. Furthermore,

Guiding Value 3. *Committed to Transparency.*

Texas Tech has developed a mechanism for sharing student learning outcome statements on a webpage specifically designed for students and parents. These student learning outcome statements are summarized by college and degree program. The Office of Planning and Assessment also publishes the assessment methods for these student learning outcome statements as well as testimonials from students regarding how the skills they have gained from their degree program have benefitted them.

Domain 2. Campus-level Assessment Plan

Texas Tech University has a formal process that requires all degree programs to submit an assessment report on October 1 [Link to timeline and OP]. In each degree program's assessment report, TTU expects the program to report assessment findings, methods, actions for improvement, and evidence of improvement [Link to degree program handbook].

At the end of the October 1 reporting cycle, results are analyzed and an executive summary is written [Link to executive summary]. This report is shared with degree program coordinators, department chairs, and members of the Provost's Office. Primarily, the report is used as a tool to promote continuous improvement within a degree program and to give the degree program quantitative and qualitative feedback on the "state of assessment" within the program [Link to PAR reports from each College].

Domain 3. Institution-level Assessment Resources

Texas Tech University is committed to providing resources for faculty and staff that encompass a wide range of assessment needs: degree program assessment, faculty credentialing, regional accreditation, discipline-specific accreditations, institutional effectiveness, and graduate program review. The following areas outline the primary areas of resource materials, a short

description of resources available, and a link to the primary, centralized location for training resources in that area.

Degree Program Assessment- Texas Tech is committed to providing high-quality training to all faculty and staff. Throughout the academic year, OPA offers a number of formal training sessions on software use and compliance expectations through a partnership with the university's teaching and learning center [Link to TLPDC]. In addition to formal training sessions, OPA also maintains a catalog of training videos and print materials [Links to YouTube trainings, PDF print materials]. The OPA staff also routinely offer customized training opportunities for faculty and staff in their offices.

Faculty Credentialing- While the EIA designation is specifically dedicated to student learning, the role of faculty credentialing is a significant aspect of Texas Tech's comprehensive commitment to assessment. To ensure that department chairs have robust and relevant faculty credentialing information resources, OPA provides formal training opportunities, print and electronic materials, and on-demand training sessions [Link to all DM training materials]

Regional Accreditation- Texas Tech University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC). To maintain a high level of engagement with our accreditor's assessment requirements, OPA manages a webpage with assessment resources that are specific to our upcoming Fifth-Year Interim Report. [Link to Fifth-Year Interim website].

Discipline-Specific Accreditations- Texas Tech University maintains nearly 50 discipline-specific accreditations. At each major SACSCOC reporting cycle, TTU is required to submit evidence of these affiliations. On an annual basis, OPA staff routinely update and monitor the individual status of each accreditor, and this information is provided as a resource to the university community [Link to Accreditation Across Campus webpage].

Institutional Effectiveness- Institutional Effectiveness (IE) is becoming the umbrella term for nearly all of the activities that are subsumed in the Office of Planning and Assessment. One of the hallmark features of Texas Tech's commitment to institutional effectiveness is the feedback process we provide to degree programs. Each degree program receives an annual Program Assessment Rubric (PAR) report, which is an individualized report that communicates the degree program's strengths and areas of opportunity [Link to example PAR reports from each College]. Additionally, an executive summary report is also prepared for the Office of the Provost [link to Executive Summary].

Graduate Program Review- Texas Tech University routinely conducts graduate program reviews on a six-year cycle. This process is mandated by the State of Texas and TTU's Graduate School operating policy [Link to statute on this and the Graduate School's OP]. The Office of Planning and Assessment is a collaborative partner with the Graduate School, and we supply assessment data as part of the graduate program's exhaustive review.

