



# OPA *Offline*

The newsletter of the Office of Planning and Assessment

Promoting institutional effectiveness through planning and assessment

Spring 2010

## House Bill 2504

### Texas Tech's Solution

#### SACSCOC FIFTH YEAR INTERIM REPORT

OPA has begun preparation for the SACSCOC Fifth Year Interim Report. This report is required by our regional accrediting agency, the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). We will be contacting various campus offices to provide information for this report.

TTU is required to provide evidence on how student learning outcomes are measured, and how the institution assesses institutional effectiveness. The Fifth Year Interim report will also provide evidence of core curriculum assessment activities.

When HB2504 was enacted into law Summer 2009, Texas Tech University was fortunate to have DigitalMeasures Faculty Credentialing software in place to meet the requirements of the new law. Several faculty members were involved in the selection process for electronic solutions for academic assessment and faculty rosters for accreditation. After a great deal of research and a detailed vetting process, they selected TracDat and DigitalMeasures, respectively. With the efforts, support, and endorsement of the faculty, Texas Tech has in place a high-end solution for the course and instructor components of HB 2504.

Since last June, a team has been working on the implementation requirements of HB2504. The bill requires *keyword searchable* CV's, syllabi and "a general description of the subject matter

for each lecture or discussion" to be posted within three links of the Texas Tech homepage and to be in place by the seventh day of the Fall 2010 term.

Considering the legislative intent of HB 2504, I recommend three years of data (2007, 2008, and 2009) be entered into DigitalMeasures no later than the end of Spring 2010. This will allow Texas Tech University to begin compliance by August 15, 2010 as required by the bill. Once Faculty's initial data entry is complete, their ongoing upload of activity to DigitalMeasures should



Dr. Valerie Paton

[continued on page 3]

## OPA's 2nd Anniversary

The Office of Planning and Assessment opened its doors February 11, 2008. In the beginning, five staff members, a graduate assistant and two student workers conducted business in ADM171 on a plastic picnic table and a stack of empty computer boxes.

In the following months, OPA also added an Assessment Analyst, Senior Editor for the QEP and additional graduate assistants to support the QEP Task Force chairs. In November 2009, we moved into our new space on the second floor of the Administration Building.

Early in 2010, the Office of Planning and Assessment welcomed Elaina Cantrell, senior administrator to assist TTU with House Bill 2504, Dianne Reyes, senior business assistant to support

staff, Justin Louder, senior administrator for the QEP and Allyson Hall, graduate assistant.



Jennifer Hughes, Elaina Cantrell, Sabrina Sattler, Lisa James, Sam Oswald, Valerie Paton, Dianne Reyes

For more info: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opa/>



#### OPA'S AMAZING STUDENT ASSISTANTS:

Jack Barber,  
Xavier Deleon  
Jasmine Crawford

## QEP/TTU Ethics Center *Quality Enhancement Plan*

The QEP or Quality Enhancement Plan seeks to increase campus learning and commitment to ethical behaviors and issues. In 2005, Texas Tech chose ethics as the QEP or Quality Enhancement Plan theme after an institution-wide assessment, conducted in 2004, identified ethics as a key area of interest on campus. Subsequently, Texas Tech University initiated a campus-wide plan entitled "Do the Right Thing: A Campus Conversation on Ethics." The QEP supports Texas Tech University's mission by helping students develop a personal set of ethical standards to provide guidance for life-long decision-making.

The implementation of Texas Tech's QEP involves students, faculty, and staff and focuses on three key areas – the ethical institution, academic integrity, and ethics in the curriculum.

The successful implementation and completion of the QEP is a requirement of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). For more information, please visit the QEP website: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/qep/>



Justin Louder, Keisha Mckenzie, Yi-hui Lee,  
Xiaoying Yu, Esther Na

## OEMI

### *Outreach and Engagement Measurement Instrument*

In August 2009, the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System adopted Further Outreach and Engagement as one of five strategic priorities. To document activities and progress related to outreach and engagement at Texas Tech University, Texas Tech Health Sciences Center and Angelo State University, the Office of Planning and Assessment facilitated a system-wide assessment through administration of the Outreach and Engagement Measurement Instrument (OEMI) between November 2009 and February 2010. More than 700 faculty and staff from the three institutions have completed all required sections of the instrument.

OPA would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the OEMI. A reception will be held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> for OEMI participants. This event will be co-hosted by the Division of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement, the Office of Planning and Assessment, and the University College.

Visit the OPA Website: <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/opa/>

## CCC

### *Core Curriculum Committee*

The purpose of a core curriculum is to prepare students with skills and knowledge expected of a person with a university education. The Core Curriculum Committee is responsible for establishing program-level Core Curriculum learning objectives and planning their assessment activities. The CCC is organized into nine Core Area Committees, each responsible for a single Core Curriculum component or graduation requirement. The nine Core areas include: Communication (written and oral), Mathematics and Logic, Natural Sciences, Technology and Applied Sciences, Humanities, Visual and Performing Arts and Social and Behavioral Sciences (including the state-mandated U.S. history and government courses). In addition, Texas Tech has added Multicultural and Foreign Language graduation requirements.

The Core Curriculum Committee maintains close liaison with colleges and departments which offer courses in the various core areas and with the Office of Planning and Assessment to provide support with assessing learning outcomes.

For more information on the CCC visit:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/councilscmtes/cc/>

## House Bill 2504 (cont)

require the same time commitment as the maintenance of a CV in a Word document. Faculty who have used DigitalMeasures for the past year report fairly high satisfaction with this solution as a digital repository and archive of their work. One of the benefits of this investment is that reports that are now prepared manually by Colleges (accreditation faculty rosters, annual lists of publications, grants, service, etc.) will be available via queries once faculty have completed their uploads for 2009.

Another requirement of HB 2504 is access to course syllabi and general descriptions of lectures and discussions. Fall 2010 undergraduate "classroom course" syllabi including a general description of subject matter for each lecture/discussion must be uploaded to the respective faculty member's Digital Measures site by September 3, 2010 (the seventh day of the term) and each subsequent term. In October 2009, I met with the Faculty Senate about this requirement and together we discussed several important issues related to syllabi and lecture/discussion descriptions:

- Syllabi should comply with OP 32.06
- Unique intellectual property should be removed
- Undergraduate courses with multiple sections can use a common syllabus
- General, one-line descriptors of the proposed subject matter that is planned for the day of the lecture or discussion should be included in the syllabi. They do not have to be updated if the pace of the class changes as the semester progresses.

The Office of Planning and Assessment and IT will continue to provide training, support, and adaptation of DigitalMeasures to best meet Texas Tech faculty needs.

I welcome your input on how we can work together to achieve this new statutory requirement in a way that honors the time required by our faculty and produces benefits that support other lead TTU initiatives, including documenting the extraordinary scholarship, research, and service efforts of Texas Tech faculty.

Dr. Valerie Paton  
Vice Provost for Planning and Assessment

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## TracDat

TracDat is the software platform that was purchased in 2008 to document student learning outcomes and results. To date, there are 321 degree programs utilizing TracDat. The Office of Planning and Assessment will sponsor two training opportunities this Spring 2010 semester:

**TracDat** Using Action Statements to Document Curricular Improvements

**TracDat** Using Curriculum Mapping

Please check the OPA website for future dates and locations. Thanks to all of you who have submitted results for 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009.

## Assessment Activities

The Office of Planning and Assessment is currently assisting with the administration of various assessment activities on campus. During the Spring 2010 semester, TTU seniors are invited to participate in the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) as well as the TTU-developed Online Senior Assessment (OSA).

Our office is also supporting many of the assessment activities for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of our accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). These assessment activities have at times involved faculty members across campus who graciously offered access to their classes. We really appreciate your support and willingness to participate!

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*The Office of Planning and Assessment wishes to thank all who have participated in activities sponsored by our office during our first two years. Much has transpired during this time as we worked together to move the university through a successful reaffirmation of accreditation and with the recent implementation of our software platforms for faculty credentialing, DigitalMeasures, and academic assessment, TracDat. Our OPA staff appreciates the continual support from Texas Tech faculty and staff.*

Sam Oswald  
Director  
Office of Planning and Assessment



**ASSESSMENT TIME:**  
Sabrina Sattler, OPA  
Staff & Devin DuPree,  
OPA Grad Assistant



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**NEW OFFICE  
SPACE FOR  
OPA:  
Administration  
Building  
Suite 237**

## CLA

### *Scores Show Significant Improvement*

Results from the 2008-2009 Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) of colleges and universities show Texas Tech University seniors performing higher than 89 percent of the 191 four-year undergraduate institutions participating in the 2008-2009 CLA. This indicates a significant improvement in the higher-order thinking skills from freshman to senior years.

Graduating seniors tested in the spring 2009 semester. The CLA measures students' improvement while in college on higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication. The assessment also measures an institution's contri-

bution, or the value added by the institution, to students' development of these competencies.

Texas Tech students' performance on the CLA is one of many measures utilized to inform faculty about the learning gains of students while at Texas Tech. When combined with students' performance in the classroom, students' input on their satisfaction with their learning experiences, and other nationally-normed exams, Texas Tech faculty, administrators and students can work together to improve the learning experience and ensure that students receive the best possible education while at Texas Tech.

Texas Tech participates in the Voluntary System of Accountability, an effort by multiple national education groups to make public information about student academic achievement.

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## OPA

### *Our Mission*

*to promote institutional effectiveness through planning, assessment, findings for improvement, and related resource issues in academic, administrative and institutional environments.*

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