As the Office of Planning and Assessment closes its activities for the 2015 calendar year, we have identified several goals for each of OPA’s primary areas of responsibility. This report presents contextual information on each of OPA’s primary areas of responsibility, and also describes how the office’s changing in

**Faculty Credentialing**

In 2009, the Office of Planning and Assessment began its work with faculty credentialing through the adoption of DigitalMeasures (DM). The original intention of DM was to electronically generate the faculty roster for the 2014 Compliance Certification Report. Elaina Cantrell Robinson was hired to lead the campus-wide adoption of DM. Elaina’s responsibilities have included collaborating with IT on DM maintenance issues, ensuring HB 2504 compliance, and offering professional development. The use of DM was instrumental in demonstrating compliance with SACSCOC for the 2015 reaffirmation. Since its adoption, many academic departments have found DM very valuable and have requested the use of faculty data for additional purposes, such as the Faculty Experts Guide and the 18 Doctoral Characteristics Survey.

As OPA’s charge has expanded over the past few years, so have the expectations for leadership. Managing and implementing DM is no longer the singular role that OPA plays with faculty credentialing-related issues. OPA assists with the management of digital and hardcopy transcripts, provides feedback on policy revisions, and has been tasked with using available resources for assisting colleges and departments with faculty annual review.

As TTU moves into a new phase of institutional effectiveness, the role of OPA and faculty credentialing will also evolve. DM will be expected to be a more collaborative resource. Policy issues with tenure, promotion, and hiring will require a data-driven approach. Departmental budget requests will need to be data-driven and grounded in research and assessment. New and emerging technologies will require a DigitalMeasures interface and OPA will need to provide institutional decision-making guidance.

**Goal** - OPA has the following spring 2016 goals for faculty credentialing and faculty issues leadership:

- Jennifer Hughes has begun a regular and rotating schedule of meeting with all department chairs on campus. Each meeting is documented with comments. Elaina Robinson follows up with each chair to discuss faculty issues and DM usage. **This**
process needs to be enhanced during the spring 2016 semester with more robust documentation and consultation materials. While the meetings are mostly informal, the presentation of materials and explanation of departmental expectations needs to be more formalized.

- As the use of DigitalMeasures increases and as new and emerging issues arise, it is more important than ever to provide an environment where institutional investment is nurtured. **The development of a DigitalMeasures Advisory Committee would allow OPA to gather meaningful feedback and provide timely information to college level representatives, but would also allow for a decentralized leadership strategy, consistent with TTU’s general approach to IE functions.**

- Finally, the use of data within DigitalMeasures needs to make an evolutionary leap. **Advocating for institutional use of data for the DM Directory is critical to advance TTU’s institutional effectiveness infrastructure.** Ongoing reporting on faculty-related SACSCOC standards, such as CS 3.5.4, are necessary. Continued collaboration with the Provost Office and IT on decision-making and policy revisions to tenure, promotion, and hiring should develop, specifically in relation to data sources such as Academic Analytics and ORCID.

**Degree Program Assessment**

During the 2005 SACSCOC reaffirmation cycle, TTU was placed on probation after several unsuccessful attempts to remedy non-compliance with CS 3.5.1. The primary strategy for responding to the non-compliance finding was the development of the Office of Planning and Assessment and the full, institution-wide implementation of TracDat. TracDat was selected by a committee of institutional representatives and was immediately rolled out with the explicit expectation that all academic units on campus would identify Student Learning Outcomes and report to those outcomes annually. By the Fifth Year Interim Report, TTU had adequately demonstrated that it was gathering data on student learning outcomes.

In preparation for the upcoming Monitoring Report on CS 3.3.1.1, the Provost's Office and OPA have already begun a prolific and comprehensive set of strategies to improve the quality of student learning assessment and its subsequent reporting procedures. The strategies that have been implemented include a rigorous evaluation of all submitted assessment reports, the deployment of TracDat 5, and an exhaustive consultation plan.

**Goal-** While the specifics of the Monitoring Report requirements are still unknown, **OPA believes the recently developed strategies will meet all SACSCOC requirements. However, the strategies do require a significant amount of consultation during the spring 2016 semester:**

- Consultation efforts will begin with a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of all recently revised degree program accounts. These analyses will be shared with department chairs and degree program coordinators through individualized
consultations. Each consultation, like the chair meetings, needs to remain informal with high-quality resources and presentation of data.

- A robust TracDat 5 Training schedule will need to be developed and offered. Institutional opinion about TracDat varies, and there has been discussion about the discontinuation of TraDat. However, it is again important to note that SACSCOC was pleased with TracDat’s representation of data. The concern was with the documentation of improvement actions at the degree program-level. TracDat 5 offers many enhancements that we believe will improve the frustrations many have had with the software. The office will continue its commitment to software training throughout the spring 2016 semester.

- Assessment data gathered through the evaluation process will be evaluated using OPA’s updated assessment rubric. The literature-based rubric ensures that all degree programs are analyzed fairly.

- To further improve the degree program evaluation process, OPA will pilot an Assessment Collaborative in the spring 2016 term. The Assessment Collaborative will utilize faculty peers to evaluate accounts and provide feedback.

Institutional Assessment

Over the course of OPA’s existence, OPA has administered numerous locally and nationally developed assessments. Each administration requires OPA to develop an administration plan, gather and prepare required materials including incentives, administer the instrument in either courses, online, or in testing facilities, and write a report based upon results. These reports have been used for multiple purposes including General Education/Core Curriculum, SACSCOC, and strategic planning.

The history of OPA’s role with institutional assessment has developed over time. OPA was originally tasked with administering assessments selected by external stakeholders. However, OPA has demonstrated that its expertise with institutional assessment administration and analysis has secured its ongoing involvement with all forms of institutional assessment activity, including methodological design and reporting.

Of all the activities with which OPA is engaged, institutional assessment allows for the most flexibility and adaptability, as each new year brings forth new institutional priorities and initiatives. There are, however, certain assessments that will be administered every year, but the goals for each administration are regularly altered and adjusted based on the previous year’s success.

Goals- In light of the evolving nature of OPA, the following spring 2016 goals reflect the leadership capacity that exists within OPA:

- OPA will administer two assessments in spring 2016. The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) has been administered for a number of years. These data are used primary to support general student learning in support of Core Curriculum
activity. In the Spring 2016 term, the Writing Skills and Math Modules will be administered in various courses. Genevieve Durham-DeCesaro is assisting with instructor recruitment for these two modules. Also, the Online Senior Assessment (OSA) will be administered. The OSA was locally developed by the Core Curriculum Committee to measure student learning under the “old core.” The new core has very different objectives. However, administration of the OSA will be valuable from a comparative perspective of student learning.

- Raiders Engaged gathers faculty and staff outreach and engagement activity to support strategic planning objectives. The 2015 administration will not be complete until the middle of January, but it appears that it was very successful, including the loading of data into DigitalMeasures accounts. However, there are still significant modifications needed to the instrument and to the administration plan. During the spring 2016 semester, these modifications need to be addressed to ensure that a timely roll out of the 2016 instrument occurs. This will include supporting the newly developed Outreach and Engagement committee, working closely with IT, and getting 2015 data reported and disseminated quickly.

- OPA has working closely with TTU Worldwide eLearning over the past few months to develop an effective assessment strategy. This includes supporting them on degree program assessment, which will occur in TracDat. It also includes administering the CLA+ as a measurement of critical thinking skills among distance learners as well as other various assessments. The plans developed during the fall 2015 semester need to be institutionalized during spring 2016 to guarantee effective reporting procedures.

- In addition to effective administration of institutional assessments, OPA needs to be more proactive with leadership. Institutional assessments provide an excellent opportunity for strategic planning goals. By providing planning committees with meaningful data, working closely with Institutional Research, and simply being available for various consultations to executive administration and various departments, OPA can demonstrate its expertise in dynamic and valuable ways.

Core Curriculum

The Office of Planning and Assessment has worked closely with general education and the Core Curriculum since OPA’s inception. The original charge of OPA, in fact, was directly related to probationary status from SACSCOC for Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, General Education Assessment. Over the past few years this collaboration has continued through the use of TracDat for archiving student learning information, administration of institutional assessments for documentation to the state for the Core Curriculum, and implementation of student learning iPortfolios.

Goals- Under the new Core Curriculum, OPA will have an increased role of providing assessment expertise and documentation of assessment evidence. The following goals align with OPA’s institutional effectiveness charge:
• Continued support of institutional assessment and the documentation of general student learning will always be a cornerstone of OPA’s contribution to the Core Curriculum. However, as OPA moves forward it will be more important than ever to ensure that data are used for more than reporting and provide a meaningful source of information to the decision-making process. **In addition to reports that are generated and accessed through the OPA webpage, more robust and comprehensive analysis that educates executive leadership should be produced.**

• Documentation of Core Curriculum data has historically not been managed well. Data were collected independently and stored in the Provost’s Office. The only official documentation was the annual update to the State, which only summarized findings. Moving forward, a more reliable method must be employed. OPA has developed a TracDat structure for

• The implementation of the iPortfolio is the most significant development in institutional assessment in recent memory. iPortfolios allow for an form of authentic and dynamic assessment that is unmatched. The value to students is also unmatched. iPortfolios continue through spring 2016 with the pilot group of 166 students, but spring 2016 will be busy for iPortfolio implementation as it must prepare for moving into year two, a critical year for determining its success. Below are benchmark achievements for iPortfolios for the spring of 2016:
  - Finalize assessment rubrics and begin assessment of uploaded documents;
  - Develop strategies for student involvement;
  - Incorporate additional programs for the second year of iPortfolios;
  - Assist with the development of degree program use with pilot group;
  - Secure funding options for future use.

**Strategic Planning**

Prior to 2005, strategic planning reporting at Texas Tech University was handled through a strategic planning site referred to as SPAR. When TTU was placed on probationary status following the 2005 SACSCOC review, a new system was implemented that was designed to better track unit and area contributions toward university strategic priorities. This was managed through TracDat in OPA. There were mixed reviews about the effectiveness of this process. While it did manage data more effectively, there was criticism that it was far more complicated than necessary. Ultimately, the biggest downfall to the process was that the data reported did not, in fact, reflect a mature planning process. This was realized with the initial SACSCOC submission when we were found non-compliant with Core Requirement 2.5- Institutional Effectiveness. However, it is likely that the greatest obstacle was not the software nor the process, but rather the institutional support for ensuring quality reporting.

After being found non-compliant with CR 2.5 after the initial SACSCOC submission, TTU quickly developed an Institutional Effectiveness infrastructure. Supplemental documentation was
requested and TTU was found compliant by the time reaffirmation status was announced in December 2015 with no requests for monitoring. Despite the success TTU was able to have with addressing CR 2.5, the expectations for a mature IE structure are still developing. Many of the proposed strategies have already begun including a collaboration with IT on a IE portal, the evaluation process for degree program reporting identified earlier, and a handbook that will outline the expectations. But a true, philosophical and pragmatic IE structure is yet to be determined.

Additionally, Texas Tech University is currently drafting a new institutional strategic plan that will focus on and carry us through the 100 Year Anniversary of Texas Tech University. A select committee of individuals is developing the draft with limited institutional involvement. The purpose for this approach is because of the imperative to complete the draft by the February Board of Regents Meeting. OPA has provided limited support and supplemental resources, but the role of OPA is currently on an as needed basis. Once the plan is finalized there will be an expectation that over the course of a couple of years, colleges and then departments must all develop their own internal strategic plan that aligns with the new university plan. OPA will play a significant role in the process of compliance and with the development and subsequent reporting of unit and area plans, but the specifics of that activity have yet to be discussed.

Goals- In the meantime, the Office of Planning and Assessment will be involved with aspects of strategic planning. The two primary areas of contribution are with the Academic Area Institutional Effectiveness Committees and the ASSU/ASSSU Institutional Effectiveness Committee:

- **Academic Area IE Committee**- Each college is expected to establish independent IE committees to review internal processes and developments of college level strategic plans. OPA will provide support to these committees. The specific role will be determine by Darryl James and the individual IE committees.

- **ASSU/ASSSU IE Committee**- A single ASSU/ASSSU IE Committee will be established to review reports and develop reporting processes. OPA will facilitate this committee. The spring semester will largely be focused on establishing the specific charge of the committee.

SACSCOC

The central role of the Office of Planning and Assessment, despite is value driven goal of improving the culture of assessment across the institution, is to manage the 10-year reaffirmation process. OPA recently completed its first full reaffirmation leadership role successfully with full reaccrreditiation and limited requests for monitoring. In the course of its short existence, OPA has evolved from a small staff of individuals doing the task-centered work of managing documentation to a verified representative of the Provost Office with a reputation of leadership and competence. OPA no longer facilitates reaffirmation, but leads the university through the process.
Goal- As OPA prepares for all required Monitoring Report submissions and the Fifth Year Interim Report in 2020, there are many new areas of leadership required by the office. Below is a short list of responsibilities that have emerged over the last two years where OPA is expected to provide additional leadership moving forward:

- **Fifth Year Interim Report** - The Fifth Year Interim Report is due in 2020. OPA is already preparing for this report in numerous ways. Technology infrastructure will be developed. An early comprehensive review of required standards will be prepared. A proposed structure for addressing standards will be completed. And all new initiatives will be thoroughly documented.

- **Monitoring Report** - TTU has yet to receive the specific actions required to address the two standards we will be required to address in a Monitoring Report which relate to degree program assessment and the QEP. However, it is expected that requirements for more mature assessment processes will be central to the findings. OPA has already addressed throughout this document how this will be addressed.

- **Substantive Change Documentation** - OPA has taken a stronger leadership role this year with notifications for Substantive Changes and potential Substantive Changes. This will continue through the spring and beyond. A goal for the spring is to further develop a data management system and to identify strategies for educating the campus community of the requirements of SACSCOC related to changes in programs.

- **Accreditation Across Campus** - OPA began this process a number of years ago informally, but with the original CCR to SACSCOC it became important for a more formalized process to be implemented. This spring OPA will need to continue to develop processes and educational opportunities related to disciplinary specific accreditations.

- **QEP Assessment** - OPA will continue to assist the QEP Steering Committee and the QEP Director (once hired) with many areas of responsibility. OPA will manage a number of the assessments including administration and reporting. Additionally, OPA will provide administrative assistance when requested.

- **Transcript Management** - As mentioned earlier, OPA has helped establish a process for managing and storing hard copies of faculty transcripts. While the future for the requirements for hardcopy transcripts is uncertain, it is necessary to have processes in place to store them. OPA will continue to assist in this process.

**General OPA Developments**

In addition to the spring 2016 goals that are easily classified under primary OPA activities, there are a number of goals that OPA has that will further develop goals that have already been identified:

**Goal** - OPA looks forward to an institutional effectiveness structure that will allow greater authority. However, it will be even more important than ever to develop a culture of
assessment and not a culture of compliance. To maintain an institutional environment that feels positively about assessment, OPA will need to continue to develop outreach and educational activities:

- **Texas Tech Assessment Network (TAN)-** Now that we are past the most recent reaffirmation process, returning to a TAN format that develops the community of assessment professionals seems appropriate. OPA has heard some feedback that this is the desire of TAN attendees as well.

- **OPA Newsletters-** OPA regularly distributes a newsletter with information, assessment spotlights, and highlights. This will continue to be an important aspect of OPA in 2016.

- **Certification in Assessment-** To ensure that everyone on campus has access to the most important information about assessment, OPA is developing a series of two minute training videos. To capitalize on this, OPA is developing an assessment curriculum with various levels of expertise that individuals can gain with institutional assessment.

- **Assessment Consultations-** OPA regularly provides various forms of assessment consultation. However, over the past year or two, these consultations have been limited due to the primary focus of reaffirmation. In 2016, OPA would like to use the IE emphasis as an opportunity to return to providing consultations across the institution.

- **Annual Report-** In 2016 OPA will produce its first Annual Report. The report will highlight major accomplishments as well as activity that many may be unfamiliar with. The report should be available by Spring Break.

- **Assessment Glossary-** The OPA website is constantly undergoing revisions, updates, and enhancements. While it is unclear what all will be done over the next few months with the website, OPA does intend to include an assessment glossary that will assist the institution with operational definitions.

**Goal-** Under the institutional effectiveness structure, OPA will need to make various organizational changes to meet the needs of OPA, the Provost Office, and Texas Tech University:

- **OPA Strategic plan-** In 2015 OPA developed its first strategic plan. The plan includes goals that are outlined with each Weekly Report. In 2016, OPA will review the plan and make needed updates based on current and requested activity.

- **Staffing and Organizational Chart-** There will be OPA staffing changes in 2016. OPA will use this opportunity to realign various responsibilities to optimize effectiveness.

- **Excellence in Assessment-** OPA will partner with the IE team to submit an application for the Excellence in Assessment Award to College Portrait. If awarded, this would represent the significant amount of work that has taken place over the past few years.
Goal- Finally, to make sure that OPA and its professional staff that make up OPA remain not only institutional assessment leaders, but regional and national leaders in assessment, there are many opportunities that can be explored over the next few months:

- West Texas Assessment Conference- OPA will continue to co-host the WTAC in October 2016. In spring 2016, OPA will be busy with making initial preparations.

- Student Achievement Data- OPA will continue to partner with internal stakeholders to represent student learning nationally.

- Policy Analysis- OPA has already begun the work of becoming local experts on higher education issues that affect the entire institution. This work will continue in spring 2016 with a monthly Policy Analysis Paper submitted with the final Weekly Report of each month.

- Publications- Finally, OPA has plans to submit journal entries for at least four topics beginning in spring 2016. The topics will cover ePortfolios, Distance Education, and Outreach and Engagement.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the conclusion of the reaffirmation process for 2015 did not mean that things are going to slow down any for the Office of Planning and Assessment. If anything, the fairly narrow focus of reaffirmation has been transformed into a need for OPA to emerge as a true institutional leader. Greater demands are expected with reaffirmation in 2025 and many changes need to be addressed now. OPA would also like to ensure that the 2025 reaffirmation is not defined by the overcoming obstacles, but by the demonstration of Texas Tech’s excellence within higher education. However, as OPA develops it is important for us to not simply be defined as the office that manages a single event that occurs every ten years, but is defined by its ongoing contribution to Texas Tech University through quality improvement, data-driven decision-making, and faculty and staff support.

While OPA has demonstrated that it has been able to meet this challenge already, moving forward there is the expectation that OPA’s increased role with institutional leadership could strain resources. Adapting to the new challenges will require the ongoing support of and collaboration with central leadership.