CS 3.3.1.1 Monitoring Report
Texas Tech University

A request for a Monitoring Report was issued after the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting on December 6, 2015. The Report needs to address Standard 3.3.1.1 and the Trustees’ recommendation that, “The institution should demonstrate in its monitoring report that it has a completed cycle of assessment and that its revised assessment process results in actionable data that informs improvement.” This Report responds to the following recommendation.

The institution provided evidence that program assessment plans had been revised to incorporate measurable expected program outcomes, including student learning outcomes. A new process had been implemented; however, since the revised process is new, the institution is not able to provide a completed assessment cycle to demonstrate that the revised process resulted in actionable data to inform improvement actions. The institution should demonstrate in its monitoring report that it has a completed cycle of assessment and that its revised assessment process results in actionable data that informs improvement.

Texas Tech’s University Response:

Texas Tech University (TTU) strengthened institutional effectiveness (IE) through a reorganization of the IE team structure in January of 2015. The programmatic process by which programs perform assessment did not change. TTU operating policy, OP 10.13, requires all academic programs to complete an assessment cycle that leads to improvements in programs; however, prior to the restructuring of IE there was limited program assessment feedback that led to a wide variation in the quality to which the assessment cycle was closed. With the new IE structure, final review of program assessment and feedback to each degree program was centralized, thus strengthening the IE process through the application of clear and consistent requirements and programmatic feedback during an entire IE cycle.

TTU has completed one assessment cycle under the new assessment process structure. This report provides detailed evidence of the completed cycle. The revised IE process, described below, results in actionable data that informs improvement at the degree program-level, and thus, TTU is in compliance with CS 3.3.1.1.

I. Revised and Improved Institutional Effectiveness Process

In Spring of 2015, TTU implemented a revised and improved IE structure, beginning with the hiring of a Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (Provost Organization Chart). Texas Tech’s commitment to IE is evidenced at the university’s Progress Portal website, which outlines the university’s goals and objectives for achieving a culture of continuous improvement (IE Portal). The university’s IE team has oversight from the Office of the Provost, and is facilitated by the Office of Planning and Assessment (OPA) (OPA website).
A pivotal goal of Texas Tech’s revised improved institutional effectiveness process is “to provide centralized oversight and assistance to all TTU academic and non-academic units with annual feedback regarding assessment and evaluation of continuous improvement efforts.” To support this goal, TTU is committed to providing assessment feedback to degree program coordinators and department chairs, who are responsible for conducting assessments, reporting assessment evidence, and developing plans for improving student learning within degree programs.

At Texas Tech, each degree program is expected to meet the following assessment-related requirements on a regular, systematic schedule, typically annually in the fall semester or as specified by the program. This programmatic assessment cycle, which did not change with the new IE structure requires:

- Three to five (typically) student learning outcomes (SLO)
- Two assessment methods per SLO, with a balanced approach of direct and indirect assessment methods
- Uploading of assessment per the program’s rotation schedule
- Developing of action(s) for improvement, where relevant
- Follow-up action(s) that documents the effect on SLOs from previous action(s) for improvement

For academic assessment prior to the IE revision, i.e. academic years prior to 2014-2015, feedback to the degree programs was provided at the college level; assessment reports were submitted to OPA, which acted as a data repository. Prior to the IE revision, degree program assessment was conducted using an internal rubric, but feedback was limited (link to UTSA rubric). As a result of the restructuring of IE in early 2015, a revised IE process was implemented that included the development of a closed loop feedback process that was put in place utilizing a Program Assessment Rubric (PAR), (link PAR). The purpose of centralized feedback based on the PAR was to clearly communicate TTU’s expectations for degree program assessment and to provide consistent, substantive, and constructive feedback to each degree program as a means to strengthen assessment and help move all program assessment toward high-impact practices. In addition, since the IE revision, OPA staff are regularly consulting with department chairs and degree program coordinators to encourage assessment activity that respects the academic identity of each degree (link to chair notes document).

Centralized feedback utilizing the PAR was implemented in the middle of the 2014-2015 academic year. Degree program assessment reports for the 2014-2015 year, which are typically due at the beginning of the following academic year, reflect several changes due to the PAR based feedback, particularly in student learning outcomes and assessment methods. The first academic year with a fully implemented centralized PAR based feedback was the current academic year, 2015-2016.

*Program Assessment Rubric (PAR)*
There are four components to the PAR, each reflecting key assessment components: student learning outcomes; assessment methods; results; and actions for improvement. Each of the four components act as its own feedback loop (i.e., information flows to the degree program for each component, is revised/explained by the program, returned and repeated if necessary).

- **Student Learning Outcomes** - All degree programs are expected to have three to five (typically) outcomes that specifically measure student learning.
- **Assessment Methods** - Each outcome requires two methods of assessment that are measurable and related to the outcome. Assessment methods must reflect a balanced approach of direct and indirect assessment methods.
- **Results** – Assessment results must demonstrate critical reflection and analysis, so that the results can be used to improve student learning.
- **Actions for Improvement & Follow-Up** - Each program is required to document how results were used (or are planned to be used) to make improvements to student learning within the program. TTU does not require Actions for Improvement or Follow-up documentation for every result, but there should be evidence that quality improvements are regularly made.

**PAR Evaluation and Scoring Procedures**

A first iteration of the PAR was used to evaluate 2014-2015 academic assessment reports (Link to 14-15 PAR). Based on feedback from degree program coordinators, the PAR was modified in 2015-2016 (Link to 15-16 PAR). This modification resulted in slight variations to both the rubric and scoring procedures. Specifically, the revised method allowed: 1) degree programs to deviate from 3-5 learning outcomes as prescribed by the university, and 2) modified the scoring procedure so that degree programs could easily interpret feedback regarding their overall assessment activities.

Each degree program was evaluated on the four components (student learning outcomes; assessment methods; results; and actions for improvement), using a scale of 1-4, ranging from “initial” through “highly developed.” Within each component area, multiple aspects were evaluated. For example, within the component area of “student learning outcomes,” the student learning outcome statement itself is one aspect and measurability is the second. Within the component area of “methods,” the existence of multiple assessment methods is the first aspect, type of assessment (direct or indirect) is a second, and success criterion is the third.

After each PAR component area was scored, averages were calculated ranging from 1-4. Additionally, qualitative feedback on each PAR component was provided to each degree program coordinator (Links to 15-16 PAR reports). Qualitative feedback was focused on how to make improvements to each program’s assessment plan for the subsequent year, and specific areas of the assessment cycle that need to be strengthened. If an assessment consultation is recommended, a statement is provided to the degree program coordinator (Links to 15-16 PAR reports).
II. Samples of a Completed Assessment Cycle for Academic Year 2015-2016

Hyperlink to TracDat Report
Hyperlink to PAR

III. Conclusion

The evidence described above highlights that the assessment process at Texas Tech, which has now completed one full cycle under the revised process, results in actionable data that informs improvement, and is therefore in compliance with CS 3.3.1.1. Implementation of the Program Assessment Rubric (PAR), coupled with directed assessment feedback, has culminated in more robust assessment planning and assessment results that inform improvement. As a result of these impactful practices, Texas Tech asserts its compliance with CS 3.3.1.1.