

**SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT REPORT**  
**2016-2017 Reporting**

Southwestern Oklahoma State University regularly participates in multiple institutional assessment measures. Beginning with this 2016-2017 year, results of the administration of these measures are reviewed by Southwestern's Assessment Committee and sub-committees in an effort to help our institution advance student learning and completion. Below are comments and recommendations for the purpose of continuously improving the satisfaction and success of Southwestern students.

**ALUMNI SURVEY**

Although the response rate has decreased over the years, some strengths are that Southwestern's facilities were highly rated, and graduates consider their degree from SWOSU a good investment.

**Recommendations:**

1. Career services
  - a. Increase students' awareness of services available for those seeking employment (see Q8).
  - b. Provide services to alumni to help them advance in their careers/employment.
2. Academic Departments, Encourage graduates to maintain contact with professors/advisors.
3. Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Retention Management Coordinator
  - a. Expand Graduate Assistant advisors (offered through Office of Retention Management) to assist with schedule building for students' enrollment. This will allow faculty advisors to focus on discussing career and employment with students
  - b. Create advising center(s) to free faculty advisor's time to provide career/employment guidance to students.
4. Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, increase student involvement in organizations.
5. Assessment Center
  - a. Increase response rate, perhaps through electronic distribution.
  - b. Follow-up with respondents who are not employed in area related to their SWOSU degree to determine if SWOSU can affect this outcome.
  - c. Add a question to determine in what areas Southwestern could offer continuing education.
  - d. Continue with plans to administer survey more frequently.
6. ITS, provide alumni with perpetual SWOSU email address.
7. General Education Committee, add basic business courses for all students such as a course that would help all graduates succeed is FINAN 3353 Personal Financial Planning. Two more courses that would be valuable for any graduate who will manage their own business are ACCTG2213 Principles of Financial Accounting and FINAN3343 Business Finance.

## **CO-CURRICULAR ASSESSMENTS**

### **Strengths:**

1. Campus community has become more aware of the counseling services available and more individuals are taking advantage of it. Counseling services have added contract counselors and graduate assistants to accommodate the workload. In addition, SWOSU received a grant for administering the Healthy Mind Study.
2. The creation of a multicultural graduate assistant position helps serve the Hispanic population and allows for a more seamless transition between admissions and enrollment for traditionally underserved ESL students.
3. A higher number of career assessments were completed during Freshman Orientation.
4. Campus Safety has incorporated new tools such as fingerprint kits, tourniquets, quick clot kits, Narcan (emergency treatment of an opioid overdose), and active shooter and self-defense programs. Campus Safety also added a new officer position, new rifles, and new rifle grade vests.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. Limited literature related to SWOSU available in Spanish.
2. Limited information on potential internship and field experiences.
3. Low response rate on the Student Satisfaction Inventory.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Prepare a strategic plan based on the results of the Healthy Minds Study.
2. Continue to diversify accessibility for other underserved populations.
3. Increase opportunities to participate in internship or field experiences.
4. Increase awareness of the Student Satisfaction Inventory for a higher response rate.

## **DEGREE OUTCOMES AND RETENTION**

Future review is expected to be valuable when there are multiple years of data in this format.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Institutional Research will track the internal movement of students through student advisor changes, which will indicate major changes and add more reliable retention data.
2. Student Affairs and Academic Advising & Retention Management Counseling will increase student support services for underserved student population:
  - a. Tie to Degree Outcomes by Program. How might under-represented students be better served by major?
  - b. Look at ethnicities by major. Are there specific needs per student population?
3. Counseling Services will provide data points related to financial stress and resilience/coping utilizing the Healthy Mind Survey. Resulting data may be analyzed to design retention strategies.

## **ETS PROFICIENCY PROFILE**

The test and its ability to provide information required to make potential changes was reviewed:

### **Strengths:**

1. Since this is a standardized exam:
  - a. There is assurance that results are objective and that the comparison between the scores of incoming and outgoing students are useful for identifying potential strengths and weaknesses in our programs.
  - b. There is assurance in the comparison of SWOSU results with other schools in Oklahoma and in the nation.
2. There is potential for more meaningful and statistically relevant data if the Standard Form is administered rather than the Abbreviated Form of the test.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. The Abbreviated Form is miniature version of the Standard Form
2. The Abbreviated Form of the test limits the ability to correlate student scores because it does not provide information about individual students.

### **Recommendations:**

Pursuit of excellence in teaching by examining student progress and outcomes requires meaningful, statistically significant data. The committee recommends the following to obtain this data:

1. The Standard Form of the test should be used in place of the Abbreviated Form.
2. The exam should be administered to all incoming freshmen, graduating seniors, and to those graduating from 2 + 4 degree programs.

## **EXIT SURVEYS**

This review was directed toward the administration of the pilot of the exit surveys. Future years will include review of student feedback.

### **Strengths:**

1. Ability to reach a large number of students.
2. Comprehensive and multi-faceted questions.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. Very small sample size.
2. Wording of the questions.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Update the wording of one or more questions.
2. Contact students in a more timely manner.
3. A link to the survey could be added to the graduation application confirmation email.

## **GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE ASSESSMENTS**

The assessment reports of World History, College Algebra, and Wellness and Exercise Applications were reviewed.

### **Strengths:**

1. General Education Learner Outcomes are clearly identified for each course reviewed. Each course reviewed addressed between 3 and 5 items from the GELO list.
2. Method of assessment is given and in most cases the percentage of students passing the learner outcome is provided.
3. Ways to constructively use the collected assessment data is listed.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. It is unclear whether the percentage of students who passed the learner outcomes is based on the number of students who took the assessment or based on the total enrollment in the course.
2. For courses that rely on a pre-test and post-test assessment, there was no baseline given for the improvement.

### **Recommendations:**

Departments responsible for the GE Reports are encouraged to provided enough information to contextualize the Quantitative Data described in the report.

## **INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY**

Academic Advising and International Student Affairs were reviewed.

### **Strengths:**

1. Academic Advising for Scheduling/Degree Program
  - a. Rated Satisfactory to Very Good in both Quality of Service (2.35) and Communication (2.38).

- b. Positive comments: "The majority of faculty advisors are excellent." and "Academic Advising and Retention Management does a great job."
  - c. <http://www.swosu.edu/administration/retention/holds.aspx> from the Retention Management website provides information on how to address various holds.
  - d. The Office of Retention Management has hired and trained nine Graduate Assistants to assist various academic departments with their academic advising loads. This initiative should assist academic departments with high advisee ratios to assist with time-intensive tasks such as proactively contacting students and reminding advisees of upcoming dates on the academic calendar.
  - e. Advisor training is available through the Office of Retention Management by request for departments.
2. International Student Affairs
    - a. Rated Satisfactory to Very Good in both Quality of Service (2.51) and Communication (2.60).
    - b. The Department of International Student Affairs was established over the last five years and has resulted in increased international student recruitment.

**Weaknesses:**

1. Advising for Scheduling/Degree Program
  - a. In comparison with other areas, it was rated as one of the weaker ones.
  - b. Report Suggestions:
    - "Create an advising system where the best advisors provide academic advising services."
    - "Faculty need assistance with enrolling students in math remediation courses."
    - "Increase the number of advisors for undeclared students."
    - "Increase support for the Academic Advising office."
    - "Provide more workshops on academic advising."
    - "Provide release time for faculty who advise a high number of advisees, especially those that teach a full load."
    - "Advisors who share majors should communicate more effectively with each other."
  - c. Meeting Discussion:
    - Faculty are overwhelmed with a large number of advisees.
    - Students receive information, but are still unsure (such as, how to resolve "holds").
    - The Advisement Handbook is not adequate training for Advisors.
  - d. When faculty advise a student outside the department, the student may not always be getting correct information.
  - e. Students seem hesitant to speak to their Advisor, especially if they have trouble contacting him/her.
2. International Student Affairs
  - a. In comparison with other departments, it we rated as one of the weaker ones.
  - b. "The majority of the sample verbalized their concern for the International Students and the need for increased services for their orientation to the campus, academic programs, and the community." (2017 Institutional Effectiveness Survey Summary Report).

- c. Report Suggestions:
  - “Ensure international students can understand course lectures.”
  - “Transfer students should complete the student orientation course.”
  - “International Student Affairs should help the students transition to the campus and community.”
  - “Increase out-of-town weekend activities for international students.”
- d. Meeting Discussion:
  - Students start class late (days or a week or more).
  - Students are not always understanding content.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Advising for Scheduling/Degree Program
  - a. Change the wording of “advisee” to “student.”
  - b. Allow Administrators and other staff to train and become certified Advisors to help relieve the load of faculty advisement.
  - c. Faculty with a small advisement loads may volunteer to assist with advising in another department.
  - d. Invite Administrative Assistants for advisement.
  - e. Establish an Advisement “Help Center” staffed with Graduate Assistants to prevent students need to bounce from office to office.
  - f. Freshman Orientation could include more information regarding advisement.
  - g. When advising a student outside the department, the advisor should consult with faculty in the department of the student’s major.
  - h. Electronic advisement could be utilized:
    - Email
    - Online
    - Zoom (Zoom training suggested, and would be well worth it).
  - i. Enhance the Advisement Handbook with additional advisor guidance:
    - Details on how to resolve the various “Holds.”
    - Contact information for resolving specific “Holds.”
    - Checklist of advisement
    - A reference flyer for students with same information.
    - The Office of Retention Management plans to add advising information for faculty on the Faculty commons section of Canvas.
    - Share Advisement “best practices.”
    - Coaches let instructors know when students will miss class for a game.
2. International Student Affairs
  - a. New Student Orientation should be required (offered every semester) that includes information specific to international student needs.
  - b. Deadline should be enforced for when international students must start attending class.
  - c. Classes could be recorded for students to have access for review. Graduate Assistants could help with the recording process.
  - d. Instructors could make notes available.
  - e. A faculty committee should be in place for how to best assist international students.

## **NATIONAL/FACULTY SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE & FSSE)**

Strengths and downward data trends were reviewed:

### **Strengths:**

1. Our Freshman appreciate effective teaching practices.
2. The First-year respondents rated SWOSU higher relative to other Oklahoma schools in the following areas:
  - a. Talked about career plans with a faculty member.
  - b. Instructors provided feedback on a draft or work in progress.
  - c. Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework.
  - d. Summarized what was learned in class or from course materials.
  - e. Instructors used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points.
3. Seniors rated SWOSU higher relative to other Oklahoma schools in the following areas:
  - a. About how many courses have included a community-based service-learning project.
  - b. Quality of interactions with other administrative staff and offices.
  - c. Extent to which courses challenged to do the best work.
  - d. Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information.
  - e. Talked about career plans with a faculty member.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. The First-year respondents rated SWOSU lower relative to other Oklahoma schools in the following areas:
  - a. Emphasis on attending campus activities and events. (Freshman Orientation mandates attending one.)
  - b. Quality of interactions with students.
  - c. Including diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments.
  - d. Connecting learning to societal problems or issues.
  - e. Emphasis on attending events that address important social/economic/political issues.
2. Seniors rated SWOSU lower relative to other Oklahoma schools in the following areas:
  - a. Working with other students on course projects or assignments.
  - b. Completing a culminating senior experience.
  - c. Working with a faculty member on a research project.
  - d. Spending more than 10 hours per week on assigned reading.
  - e. Being assigned more than 50 pages of writing.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Include more of diverse perspectives in course discussions and assignments.
2. Increase number of assignments that require more than 50 pages of writing.
3. Increase number of requirements for students to attend and think critically about:
  - a. Undergraduate research
  - b. Student art and design exhibitions
  - c. Senior recitals

4. Mandate more cultural events and a diversity unit in the Freshman Orientation course.  
(Being deployed Fall 2018)

## **STUDENT SATISFACTION INVENTORY**

### **Strengths:**

The results of the SSI given to Sophomores, Juniors, and Graduate students in 2016 reveal that SWOSU was above the national average in student satisfaction in all but two areas. Overall, 17 areas showed improvement.

### **Weaknesses:**

Living conditions in the residence halls and bookstore staff being helpful were the only two areas that fell short of the national average. The University Bookstore known as the Follett Bookstore often fails to provide the student with the information needed to buy books and are not helpful. As a staff member I have found that information posted to the class schedule is often late, inaccurate or not at all.

### **Recommendations:**

Since the survey in 2016, the newly designed Black Kettle Hall is now available with several entertainment options and stylish upgrades for privacy and comfort. Director of Residence life should be aware of adverse conditions in the dorms and rectify or update as needed. The University Bookstore known currently as Follett should work harder with the instructors to acquire the information needed for students to purchase books and then post required materials on the course schedules.