

# OSU - Okmulgee

## ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

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A product of the OSU-Okmulgee Assessment Committee

<http://www.osu-okmulgee.edu/iar/>

### Change is Coming! Change is Coming . . .

- **What change? Why change?**
- **Why now?**
- **What is Assessment? How Is It Used?**
- **How Do We Do Change?**
- **An Assessment Committee?**
- **What Does It Do?**
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- **Training**

“No one likes change except a wet baby”. But change is one thing you can count on besides death and taxes<sup>1</sup>. And major change has come to OSU-Okmulgee.

As students search for the best education value they can afford, deciding just what and how students learn is very important in attracting students to OSU. The group on campus that is probably best equipped to make these decisions is those who see students every day. More than faculty, this includes administrative assistants, support staff, cafeteria and maintenance staff – anyone who deals with students. Others see and hear things from students instructors never would. *Everyone’s ideas are important and valuable in the work ahead.*

The idea behind this change we’re making. Everyone will contribute to creating a

<sup>1</sup> “. . .but in the world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes.” Ben. Franklin, 1789

campus and curriculum that fit students’ learning needs and goals. Many colleges have already done this and it works very well.

OSU – Okmulgee has wanted to make this change for the last 10 years. But, budget crises, funding cuts, hiring freezes. etc., forced us to take postpone this, and some other pretty good changes.

#### So, Why Now?

NCA accredits our campus. Like Good Housekeeping their approval says we are educating our students correctly. Accreditation guarantees students that they can get a worthwhile education here. It also says that degrees granted at OSU-Okmulgee are really ‘worth something’.

This Fall, NCA made a regular evaluation visit. They pointed out that we need some major work on assessing how well our students are really learning.

Because we must have most of that new system in place by January 2004, the issues of planning and assessment have become very important.

This then, is a golden opportunity to do what we had planned anyway without waiting another 10 years.



### What IS Assessment? How Is It Used?

First of all, assessment is not a ‘fix-all idea’ that will disappear after a few years. Assessment will be ongoing and continue as we adapt to changing realities. Every employee will get assessment results every time data are collected. The results will be used to change and improve everyone’s job, the curriculum and whatever else we can to improve learning on campus. Also, and this is important, NCA requires that assessment results be a basis for budget decisions and fund allocation. Now if this involves money, you know its a serious item.

So what is Assessment? Faculty/Staff driven assessment is a very liberating idea. Its ‘the worker bees’ decide exactly what success is and exactly how to measure it.

### So, How Do We Do This?

First we decide exactly what success is! You can’t measure something you can’t define. What exactly do we want students to learn? Will skills and knowledge they get here fit in to their future careers? Will they be served by an OSU-Okmulgee education in the future? How can we prove to everyone that they actually got the skills and knowledge? Sure, the reputation of our graduates speaks strongly to this, but how do we prove our success with this year’s class?

Next come Mission Statements that may seem just a bit ridiculous. We all know why we’re here, right? Maybe not. Putting our mission into a few sentences usually shows that not everybody has exactly the same idea of what we’re about. We need agreement on our mission before we can define successful.

After mission statements, its time to see what success will look like in each unit. What does each unit need to accomplish to fulfill its mission? And what does success look like?

After everyone in a unit understands the unit’s mission and goals, it will be up to smaller and smaller groups to decide what they need to do and exactly what they will call success.

Eventually, the process comes right down to the individual. As the process moves to smaller groups it becomes more personal. It becomes more important that each person get involved to make sure they can live with the results.

Well, what about making the assessments themselves? Who figures out how to do that? Assessment design happens in two places – your job site and the Assessment Committee. And you will be trained on just how to do that.

### The Assessment Committee

Change is good if it makes things better. And to see if things are better, you have to be able to measure, or assess, the results of change. Since the whole process is Faculty/Staff driven, there is now an Assessment Committee composed only of faculty.

They will: coordinate activities between units; come up with a single campus-wide method for collecting and analyzing data; arrange and provide for needed training; collect, verify and analyze data and publish the results; advise staff and administration on any assessment issues. But, there are some things the committee will NOT do.

## Committee No No's

The committee will neither tell you how to do your job nor what methods to use in measuring success. They will not judge the data they collect. No 'bad' or 'good' or '7 on a scale of 1 to 10'. They will, however, encourage everyone to use a variety of methods so all types of learners can shine. Deciding the 'goodness' and meaning of results is up to those responsible for change – you and your unit leaders.

The committee won't make decisions for you nor will they do your work. You and your co-workers decide what success is, what is needed to increase success and how you will go about making the needed change.

The committee is not an arm of the administration. In fact, talking to a committee member is a great way to get your ideas and concerns on assessment across without ex-

posing yourself, should you feel that is a problem. And last, but not least, the committee will not design the assessment process without listening to you! You'll get periodic newsletters so you will know just what is going on. You are always free to talk to any member of the committee but the folks on the Communication Subcommittee are especially ready to listen. They are interested, willing to listen and have thick skins! Tell us what you think, short of referring to the circumstances of our birth. Remember, this is our new way of doing business so you will have to live with the results of assessment for some time to come.

For more information on the process, your part in it and the present state of the work, go to:

<http://www.osu-okmulgee.edu/iar/>



## Double Dipping

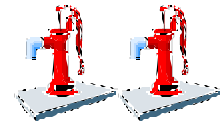


As part of a "System Strategic Plan", Dr. Schmidly wants each OSU campus, unit and program of study to have Mission Statements, Goals and Assessment Strategies. *Hmmm*, sound familiar? Well, not only are we well ahead of the other

campuses on this but, the OSU deadlines are further out than those from NCA. So the System Strategic Plan will be a non-event for most of us. Its "business as usual" for us here.



## Double Dipping II – The Sequel



To avoid future problems, training originally scheduled for the week of May 12 week was delayed so we could host Mary Chicoine, the consultant working on the System Strategic Plan. Speaking on Wednesday, May 14 at 11:00 am and 12:30 pm in Covelle Hall s went over the OSU

Strategic Plan and how we can make our results fit both OSU's and NCA's needs. If you missed the talk, find an Assessment Committee member and be sure to view the video of her presentation. If you don't, you may well contract a case of REFSS (Redoing Everything For Stillwater Syndrome).

## And, Speaking of Training ...

Assessment training on campus will be given in three doses. Below are the sessions and what they will cover. But be aware!! What you see is subject to change!



### I. Strategic Goals, Outcomes, Competencies and Other Inventions

- 1) Developing confidence in using the Assessment process
- 2) The history and rationale behind the Assessment Process
- 3) Special terms of Strategic Planning and Assessment – meanings and use.
- 4) How to construct easily measured Unit and Program Objectives.
- 5) How to construct measurable competencies that enable students to meet Program and Unit Objectives.

### II. Developing Assessment Measures

- 1) The types of assessments, the advantages and best uses of each.
- 2) How to identify and construct effective assessments of competencies and objectives.
- 3) How to determine what documentation is needed in support of your assessments.

### III Data, Reporting and What the Results Mean for You.

- 1) How to use appropriate forms and reporting formats
- 2) How to analyze the results you will receive from the committee
- 3) How to use the assessment results to recommend Unit and Program Changes.
- 4) How to use the results in improving your individual performance and effectiveness.

See your unit leader or the website for times and place. <http://www.osu-okmulgee.edu/iar/>