



TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Committee Meeting: 8/6/2003
Westin La Cantera Resort Hotel, San Antonio
Board Meeting: 8/7/2003
U. T. Health Science Center - San Antonio

Cyndi Taylor Krier, Chairman
H. Scott Caven, Jr.
Judith L. Craven, M.D.
Robert A. Estrada
James Richard Huffines

	Committee Meeting	Board Meeting	Page
Welcome and Opening Remarks	<i>3:30-4:30 p.m.</i> <i>Chairman</i> <i>Krier</i>		
1. U. T. System: Discussion of faculty hiring, student enrollment, and issues related to the beginning of the academic year	Discussion <i>Dr. Sullivan</i>	Not on Agenda	70
2. U. T. Brownsville: Approval of M.S. in Physics	Action <i>Dr. Sullivan</i>	Action	70
3. U. T. El Paso: Approval of Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences	Action <i>Dr. Sullivan</i>	Action	71
4. U. T. Pan American: Approval of M.S. in Occupational Therapy	Action <i>Dr. Sullivan</i>	Action	73
5. U. T. System: Requested expansion of degree planning authority and revised Mission Statement for U. T. Arlington	Action <i>Dr. Kerker</i>	Action	74
6. U. T. System: Student learning assessment - conceptual framework	Report <i>Dr. Reyes</i>	Not on Agenda	84
Adjourn			

1. **U. T. System: Discussion of faculty hiring, student enrollment, and issues related to the beginning of the academic year**

REPORT

Dr. Teresa A. Sullivan, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, will lead a discussion concerning faculty hiring, student enrollment, and issues related to the beginning of the academic year.

2. **U. T. Brownsville: Approval of M.S. in Physics**

RECOMMENDATION

The Chancellor concurs in the recommendation of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and President García that authorization be granted to establish a Master of Science in Physics at U. T. Brownsville; to submit the proposal to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for review and appropriate action; and to authorize the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to certify on behalf of the Board of Regents that relevant Coordinating Board criteria for approval by the Commissioner of Higher Education have been met. In addition, the Coordinating Board will be asked to change the Table of Programs for U. T. Brownsville to reflect authorization for the proposed degree program.

Upon approval by the Coordinating Board, the next appropriate catalog published at U. T. Brownsville will be amended to reflect this action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Program Description

The proposed program will have two main tracks, either 30 semester credit hours plus thesis, or 36 semester credit hours of coursework and completion of a major research project. For admission, students will need to possess a bachelor's degree in physics from an accredited institution or possess a bachelor's degree in mathematics, chemistry, or engineering with advance undergraduate coursework in classic mechanics, quantum mechanics, classical electrodynamics, and mathematical physics.

Program Quality

The U. T. Brownsville Department of Physics and Astronomy currently has 11 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty that will be directly involved in teaching and advising students in the proposed program. In addition, the department has five postdoctoral research associates who will help teach and guide students with research related projects. Three new faculty will join the department in 2004, one of which will have partial support from the U. T. Dallas NanoTech Institute.

During the current fiscal year, faculty within the department have obtained \$6.7 million in grant awards that will help support the research experience of students in the various physics programs.

Program Cost

The main resources for the proposed program are already in place. The existing faculty, grant funding, and agreements with U. T. El Paso and U. T. Dallas are sufficient to support the program. Existing National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) support for students will be \$350,000 per year for the next five years. Existing support for faculty, equipment, and postdoctoral associates will continue at \$700,000 per year for five years. Funding is also currently in place for clerical and staff support.

3. **U. T. El Paso: Approval of Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences**

RECOMMENDATION

The Chancellor concurs in the recommendation of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and President Natalicio that authorization be granted to establish a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences at U. T. El Paso and to submit the proposal to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for review and appropriate action. In addition, the Coordinating Board will be asked to change the Table of Programs for U. T. El Paso to reflect authorization for the proposed degree program.

Upon approval by the Coordinating Board, the next appropriate catalog published at U. T. El Paso will be amended to reflect this action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Program Description

The proposed program is designed to respond to the growing demand for doctorally-trained professionals in health-related fields and to address critical health research needs in Texas, especially those related to the U. S.-Mexico border region. Administered by the College of Health Sciences, the program will consist of at least 48 semester credit hours beyond the master's degree. Graduates will have a strong background in the core knowledge areas of health sciences, as well as mastery of a chosen area of specialization. The program will emphasize the depth of learning that results from interaction among and between multiple health fields, rather than segmented or sequential exposure to individual health fields.

Program Quality

There are 23 current faculty members in the College of Health Sciences who are members of the graduate faculty and will teach and supervise students in the proposed program. These faculty have demonstrated research and publication records. In FY 2002, the College of Health Sciences received over \$2.4 million in new grant awards. These extramural funds will provide support and research opportunities for graduate students enrolled in the proposed program.

Program Cost

Estimated expenditures for the first five years of the program are \$1,843,957. This includes \$600,000 for new faculty positions, \$630,000 for additional teaching and research assistant positions, \$260,000 for additional staff, \$125,000 for program administration, and \$228,957 for equipment, library resources, facilities renovation, and supplies. U. T. El Paso will commit \$624,544 of existing resources in addition to \$1,219,413 in formula funding to finance the first five years of the program.

4. **U. T. Pan American: Approval of M.S. in Occupational Therapy**

RECOMMENDATION

The Chancellor concurs in the recommendation of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and President Nevárez that authorization be granted to establish a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy at U. T. Pan American; to submit the proposal to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for review and appropriate action; and to authorize the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to certify on behalf of the Board of Regents that relevant Coordinating Board criteria for approval by the Commissioner of Higher Education have been met. In addition, the Coordinating Board will be asked to change the Table of Programs for U. T. Pan American to reflect authorization for the proposed degree program.

Upon approval by the Coordinating Board, the next appropriate catalog published at U. T. Pan American will be amended to reflect this action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Program Description

The proposed Master of Science in Occupational Therapy will be an entry-level master's program, preparing practitioners for entry-level licensure and is not considered an advance master's degree. The program will require 71 semester credit hours of classroom and practical study. The program curriculum is designed to comply with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist. Graduates of the program will be eligible to take the ACOTE certification examination and apply for licensure.

Program Quality

The current Occupational Therapy program at U. T. Pan American is accredited by ACOTE, and the faculty and resources of the current program will be utilized in the new program.

Program Cost

Estimated increased expenditures for the first five years of the program are nominal. Funding currently available to the bachelor's-level program will be reassigned to the new master's-level program. Revenues will increase slightly due to increased formula funding.

5. **U. T. System: Requested expansion of degree planning authority and revised Mission Statement for U. T. Arlington**

RECOMMENDATION

The Chancellor concurs in the recommendation of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the presidents of the academic component institutions that proposed changes to the institution Mission Statement for U. T. Arlington (Pages 75 - 76) and the Table of Programs for U. T. Arlington, U. T. Brownsville, U. T. Dallas, U. T. El Paso, U. T. Pan American, U. T. Permian Basin, U. T. San Antonio and U. T. Tyler (Pages 75 - 83) be approved and forwarded to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for consideration.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Texas Education Code Section 61.051(e) requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to review public university Mission Statements and Tables of Programs every four years. These documents broadly describe the academic mission of each institution and the academic fields and degree levels that are appropriate to the mission. The Table of Programs specifically describes the current degree granting authority of each institution and those academic fields and degree levels within fields that each institution has the authority to plan for future degree offerings. Coordinating Board approval of new degree programs involves two steps: gaining planning authority for a program via the Table of Programs and submitting an acceptable proposal.

The four-year cycle of review is due for the academic component institutions of The University of Texas System. Changes to Mission Statements and Table of Programs must be approved by the Board of Regents prior to submittal to the Coordinating Board for consideration.

Changes to the U. T. Arlington Mission Statement are comprehensive and, therefore, not displayed in congressional style. The current Mission Statement, approved by the U. T. Board of Regents in 1999 is on Page 76.

**The University of Texas at Arlington
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority and
Changes to Mission Statement**

Visual & Performing Arts: Planning Authority for a Master's in
Visual & Performing Arts.

In addition to the requested degree planning authority, U. T. Arlington requests approval of the following mission statement to fulfill the conditions of their most recent SACS accreditation.

**PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT TO FULFILL THE CONDITIONS OF
SACS ACCREDITATION**

The University of Texas at Arlington is a comprehensive research, teaching, and public service institution whose mission is the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence. The University is committed to the promotion of lifelong learning through its academic and continuing education programs and to the formation of good citizenship through its community service learning programs. The diverse student body shares a wide range of cultural values and the University community fosters unity of purpose and cultivates mutual respect. We take pride in the University's growth and accomplishments during more than one hundred years of service in North Texas and in our current status as the second largest component of The University of Texas System.

As a University, we affirm our commitment to the following objectives:

- The University is committed to comprehensive programs of academic research. This research effort requires attracting and retaining scholars who promote a culture of intellectual curiosity, rigorous inquiry, and high academic standards among their fellow faculty and the students they teach.
- The University prepares students for full, productive lives and informed and active citizenship. To that end, we have developed undergraduate and graduate curricula and classroom practices that engage students actively in the learning process. Outside the classroom a wide range of student organizations and activities contribute to the learning environment. Our service learning program offers students the opportunity to supplement their academic study with internships in a variety of community settings, testing their skills and aptitudes and challenging their values. State-of-the-art teaching technologies, distance education, and off-site instruction afford access to off-campus as well as traditional students. Non-degree certificate and continuing education programs offer practical, aesthetic, and intellectually stimulating opportunities for community learners, for individual courses or a sustained program of study.

- The mission of a university can be achieved only when its students, faculty, staff, and administrators value and promote free expression in an atmosphere of tolerance, responsibility, and trust. The University regards these attributes as prerequisites for any community of learners and vigilantly strives to maintain them.
- Mindful of its role as a resource to the community, locally, nationally, and internationally, the University continually seeks partnerships with public and private concerns in order to advance the economic, social, and cultural welfare of its constituencies. We serve the needs of the North Texas community by sponsoring public lectures and academic symposia, as well as artistic, musical, and dramatic productions.

CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The University of Texas at Arlington is to pursue knowledge, truth and excellence in a student-centered academic community characterized by shared values, unity of purpose, diversity of opinion, mutual respect and social responsibility. The University is committed to life-long learning through its academic and continuing education programs, to discovering new knowledge through research and to enhancing its position as a comprehensive educational institution with bachelors', masters', doctoral and non-degree continuing education programs.

**The University of Texas at Brownsville
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority**

Public Administration & Services:	Planning Authority for Master's degrees in Public Policy and Administration, and Social Work.
Law & Legal Studies:	Planning Authority for a Master of Arts in Juvenile Justice.
Visual & Performing Arts:	Planning Authority for a Master's in Music.
Conservation & Renewable Nat. Resources:	Planning Authority for a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science.
Computer & Information Sciences:	Planning Authority for Master of Science degrees in Computer Science and Software Engineering.
Physical Sciences:	Planning Authority for a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ph.D. in Physics, and a Master of Science in Physics.
Parks, Rec., Leisure, & Fitness Studies:	Planning Authority for Bachelor's and Master's in Arts in Hospitality Management.
Business Mgmt. & Admin. Services:	Planning Authority for a Master's in Accountancy.
Education:	Planning Authority for a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ed.D. or Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction.
Health Professions & Related Sciences:	Planning Authority for a Master of Science in Physician Assistant, and Master's in Speech-Language Pathology.

**The University of Texas at Dallas
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority**

Communications:	Planning Authority for a Master's and Bachelor's in Communications.
Foreign Languages & Literatures:	Planning Authority for a Bachelor's in Foreign Languages & Literatures.
English Language & Literature Letters:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in English Language & Literature Letters.
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies.
Social Sciences and History:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Social Sciences and History.
Visual & Performing Arts:	Planning Authority for a Master's and Ph.D. in Visual & Performing Arts.

The University of Texas at El Paso
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority

Architecture & Related Programs:	Planning Authority for a B.S. in Architecture and a Master's in Urban Planning.
Communications:	Planning Authority for Master's degrees in various areas of Communication, including Journalism and Mass Communication and Communication Technology such as web development and distance education.
Computer & Information Systems:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Computer Science.
Education:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction.
Engineering:	Planning Authority for Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering.
Law & Legal Studies:	Planning Authority for Undergraduate and Master's programs.
English Language & Literature/Letters:	Planning Authority for Ph.D. in Comparative Literature.
Biological/Life Sciences:	Planning Authority for Ph.D.s in Biosystematics and Ecology.
Mathematics:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Computational Science (applied math).
Physical Sciences:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Chemistry.
Psychology:	Planning Authority for Ph.D.-level studies in Applied and Experimental Psychology.
Social Sciences & History:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Regional Development.

**The University of Texas - Pan American
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority**

- Engineering:** Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Industrial/Manufacturing Engineering, a Master's in Engineering/Industrial Management, and a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering and Computer Engineering.
- English Language & Literature/Letters:** Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in English Composition, and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.
- Health Professions & Related Sciences:** Planning Authority for a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences, a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ph.D. in Biomedical Life Sciences, and a Master's in Physician Assistant.
- Physical Sciences:** Planning Authority for a Master's in Chemistry and Physics.
- Social Sciences & History:** Planning Authority for a Master's in International Studies.

**The University of Texas of the Permian Basin
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority**

Communications:	Planning Authority for a Master of Arts in Communication.
Engineering:	Planning Authority for Bachelor's degrees in Control Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, and Industrial Technology.
Public Administration and Services:	Planning Authority for Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Public Administration.
Visual and Performing Arts:	Planning Authority for a Master's degree in Visual Arts.
Education:	Planning Authority for a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ph.D. program in Educational Leadership.

Removal of restrictions in program areas where the institution offers one or more degrees to allow for additional planning.

**The University of Texas at San Antonio
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority**

Architecture and Related Programs:	Planning Authority for a Bachelor's in Construction Sciences.
Education:	Remove limitations to allow full planning authority in the field of Education.
Engineering:	Remove limitations to allow full planning authority in the field of Engineering.
Biological/Life Sciences:	Remove limitations to allow full planning authority in the field of Biological/Life Sciences.
Mathematics:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics and a Ph.D. in Statistics.
Physical Sciences:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Chemistry.
Psychology:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Psychology and a Ph.D. in School Psychology.
Public Administration and Services:	Planning Authority for a Ph.D. in Public Policy, a Master's of a Social Work degree, and a Bachelor's in Urban Studies.
Social Sciences and History:	Remove limitations to allow full planning authority within the field and include planning authority for a Ph.D. in Anthropology, a Ph.D. in Political Science and a Ph.D. in Sociology.
Business Management and Administrative Services:	Formally recognize that the university already offers a Ph.D. in business with concentrations in accounting, finance, organizational behavior and information systems and grant unlimited planning authority within the field.

**The University of Texas at Tyler
Requested Expansion of Degree Planning Authority**

Conservation & Renewable Nat. Resources:

Planning Authority for a Bachelor's in Environmental Science Studies.

Philosophy:

Planning Authority for a Bachelor's in Religious Studies.

Business Mgmt. & Admin. Services:

Request permission to examine the feasibility of a Ph.D. in Human Resource Development.

Education:

Planning Authority for a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Component, Ph.D. in Educational Administration.

Engineering:

Planning Authority for a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, and a Master of Science in Civil Engineering.

Engineering-Related Technologies:

Planning Authority for a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management.

Health Professions & Related Sciences:

Planning Authority for a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ph.D. in Clinical Exercise Physiology, and a Cooperative, with one or more U. T. Components, Ph.D. in Nursing.

6. **U. T. System: Student learning assessment - conceptual framework**

REPORT

Dr. Pedro Reyes, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, will brief the Board of Regents regarding the student learning assessment - conceptual framework. A summary report and PowerPoint presentation are attached on Pages 85 - 95.

The University Of Texas System Student Learning Assessment Conceptual Framework

Background

During the Fall 2000 semester, the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents requested that The University of Texas System implement a plan to assess student knowledge and skills developed in general education programs and other academic programs across the System. The Chancellor and the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs have emphasized the importance of including the assessment of student learning within the overall U. T. System accountability framework. Therefore, this model will be proposed as a System-wide activity for the academic components of U. T. System.

This document will be shared widely to gather input and share plans with all stakeholders. This document includes:

- I. The Purpose and Assumptions
- II. Definition of Competency-based Assessment
- III. Definition of the General Academic Program
- IV. Definition of a Design and Method
- V. Consultation and Communication
- VI. Timeframe

I. The Purpose and Assumptions

At the U. T. System level, the purpose of learning assessment is to promote quality, comparability, and information that support policy development. Also, embedded in this purpose is the fulfilling of a public duty to report the effectiveness of our programs to critical stakeholders. For example, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) requires that general education programs be evaluated. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires assessment of institutional effectiveness, in which student outcomes must be assessed. And the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), a collaborative organization of the regional accrediting agencies, has initiated projects that begin with an assumption that student outcomes should be related to resources and infrastructures throughout universities, not academic programs alone.

At the institutional level, the purpose of assessment is to give faculty and administrators information that they can use to improve student learning. Faculty have always assessed individual students in their courses, but until recently few institutions attempted to assess what students learned as a result of their academic programs. Academic assessment asks the question, "How do we know whether students have learned what we attempted to teach them after they have taken our courses?" Effective academic assessments can determine whether academic programs are accomplishing what they intend to

accomplish; and, if not, the assessments help make appropriate curricular or pedagogical adjustments so that students' academic success can be increased.

Thus, faculty must specify the learning outcomes for their programs. These learning outcomes are defined as the specific knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that students should have acquired after having taken the curriculum that has been designed for them.

For learning assessment to work well, we are proposing a set of principles for institutions to follow. These principles have been adopted from a list provided by the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE).

1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its practice begins with and enacts a vision of the kind of learning we most value for students. Thus educational values should drive not only what we chose to assess but also how we do so.
2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time. Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but also what they can do with what they know. It involves knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Thus, assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration.
3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Thus, assessment is a process that pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.
4. Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Information about outcomes is of high importance. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way about curricula, teaching, and the kind of student effort that led to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; such knowledge helps us improve the whole of their learning.
5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Improvement is best fostered when it entails a linked series of activities over time. This means tracking the process of individual

- students or cohorts of students; it may mean collecting samples of student work or using the same instrument year after year.
6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved. Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Faculty play an especially important role, but assessment's questions cannot be fully addressed without participation by librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals beyond the campus (alumni, trustees, employers) whose experiences can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards of learning.
 7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about. Assessment must produce evidence relevant parties find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions they need to make. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with questions of decision makers, that involves them in gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.
 8. Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public. There is a compelling public stake in education. We have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation-to ourselves, our students, and society-is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.

II. Definition of Performance-based Assessment

With the advent of information technology, access to learning opportunities is greater now than ever. And postsecondary organizations are not the only ones providing such learning opportunities. In fact, other organizations have made significant inroads by providing performance-based learning opportunities. It is now possible for sophisticated consumers to obtain skills through different modes of instruction and different times for delivery. Therefore, university leaders have begun to develop programs that can articulate the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to learn and the competencies required for the application of learned curriculum.

Performance-based initiatives are important to communicate to students which competencies are important for them to attain and the extent to which their learning experiences are meeting those expectations. These initiatives are also important to communicate to employers or the general public what students know and are able to do. In the next section, we define some of the critical concepts related to performance-based

assessment. These concepts have been defined elsewhere by other task forces working on performance-based initiatives.

Key Concepts in Performance-based Assessment

The following definitions of key concepts have been taken from “Report of the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative Working Group (2002).”

1. Traits and characteristics are the foundation for learning, the innate make-up of individuals on which further experiences can be built.
2. Skills, abilities, and knowledge are developed through learning experiences, broadly defined to include formally organized postsecondary education learning processes.
3. Competencies are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles that have currency in relation to the task for which they are assembled.
4. Demonstrations are the results of applying competencies. It is at this level that performance can be assessed.

In higher education, we typically talk about knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies as being one and the same. For example, we speak of competent mathematicians and knowledgeable mathematicians. Yet, skills and knowledge are acquired through learning experiences; the different combinations of skills and knowledge one has acquired in a given program define the competencies an individual possesses. These competencies are acquired through integrative learning experiences provided by academic programs. Finally, different competencies are combined to perform or carry out a task. To put it simply, competencies are complementary phenomena that combine skills, abilities, and knowledge.

Performance-based assessment insures that students attain specific knowledge, skills, and abilities important in whatever field they are studying. Using competencies requires the understanding of three components:

1. A description of the competency;
2. A means of assessing the competency; and
3. A standard by which someone is judged to be competent.

Typically, curriculum panels of faculty define competencies. The assessment of competencies is accomplished through different methods, including standardized tests, evaluations of student work or portfolios; the standards for judging competence is often set by a master panel of faculty. This process leads to standardizing student outcomes. This process also leads to clarifying the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities students

are expected to achieve; the process also helps develop concrete curricular changes, competencies, and performance measures for students.

III. Definition of the General Academic Program

The initial charge from the Board of Regents indicated that we should begin with improving the quality of our undergraduate experience. If this is the initial purpose, then we should focus on the so called “general program or the core curriculum.” Thus, institutional representatives should define the competencies to be accomplished in this core curriculum. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has defined the core curriculum for all state colleges and universities (1998). Thus, we will use such a framework to begin defining the general academic program. This core curriculum includes five areas:

Communication (composition, speech, modern language)

The objective of a communication component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to communicate effectively in clear and correct prose in a style appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

Mathematics

The objective of the mathematics component of the core curriculum is to develop a quantitatively literate college graduate. Every college graduate should be able to apply basic mathematical tools in the solution of real-world problems.

Natural Sciences

The objective of the study of a natural sciences component of a core curriculum is to enable the student to understand, construct, and evaluate relationships in the natural sciences, and to enable the student to understand the basis for building and testing theories.

Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts

The objective of the humanities and visual and performing arts in a core curriculum is to expand students' knowledge of the human condition and human cultures, especially in relation to behaviors, ideas, and values expressed in works of human imagination and thought.

Social and Behavioral Sciences

The objective of a social and behavioral science component of a core curriculum is to increase students' knowledge of how social and behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions among individuals, groups, institutions, events

and ideas. Such knowledge will better equip students to understand themselves and the roles they play in addressing the issues facing humanity.

IV. Design and Method

In order for the U. T. System to promote quality and inform policy development, the design most appropriate is a longitudinal design with multiple observations. The unit of analysis should be set at the individual level. Thus, institutions must define the academic program, its goals, students who comprise that program, and the outcomes or competencies to be assessed. In our case, the general program is the first two years of student experiences with the core curriculum.

The data collected should be similar across institutions and collected every year. That is, the method, definitions, and metrics should be similar. This will allow for analysis across institutions. Moreover, the institution should collect data from every member of the student population or a random sample of students in the academic program. If a random sample is used, the institution should collect data on some stratified basis to allow for representation of subgroups in the population.

A data set should be maintained and updated every year both at the institutional level. This will allow institutional representatives to provide instant analysis for accrediting organizations, for System accountability purposes, and for program improvement.

Analytical Approach

Value-added assessment is a tool for gauging how much students gain in academic achievement in a given program, i.e., how much “value” has been added to the students by their general program. By aggregating student gains to the institution level, value-added assessment can be used to evaluate academic programs regardless of differences among entering students. The major assumption in this approach is the comparison of students’ current achievement to their own past performance and aggregating learning gains at the institution level. For instance, one can use the students’ entering ACT or SAT scores on writing, mathematics, and critical thinking skills as the first data point and a test of college academic skills administered at the end of the sophomore year as the second data point. Once we have two data points on the same student, a learning gain can be computed for such a student. The statistical tool is known as Henderson’s mixed model, which is an advanced form of analysis of variance.

V. Consultation and Communication

Given the new focus of the assessment program, we need to create a new group (or reappoint the current members) of institutional leaders overseeing the assessment of student learning in each campus. This group should be given a new charge to initiate faculty discussion on developing a set of competencies for students to master in the

general program. Representation shall include faculty, staff, and students from component institutions.

Collect and share information about U. T. System student learning assessment work on a web page as we move forward in this endeavor. Link this page to other sources that will serve as benchmarks.

Develop a process to communicate with policy makers and other stakeholders to gather input and broader support within the community.

VI. Proposed Timeframe

July 2003	Conceptual Framework reviewed by working group
August-Sept. 2003	Completed set of competencies for core areas
November 2003	Implementation of new assessment program
December 2003	Preliminary data collection and analysis
January 2004	Draft of the Report for the U. T. System
May 2004	Final Report for Board review and action

The University of Texas System Student Learning Assessment Project

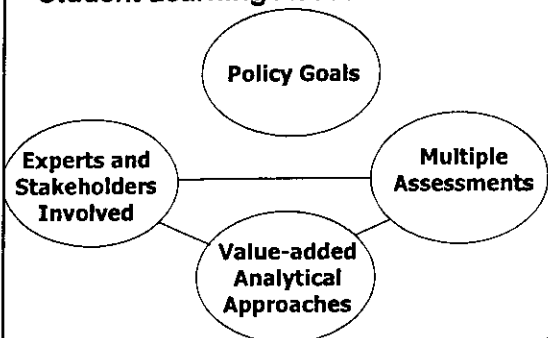
Academic Affairs Committee
August 6, 2003

San Francisco Chronicle

"It's an embarrassment that we
can tell people almost anything
about education except how
well students are learning."

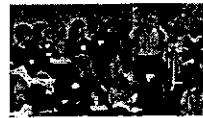
Patrick M. Callan, National Center for Public
Policy and Higher Education

The University of Texas System Student Learning Assessment Model



Policy Goals

- Performance Improvement
- Accountability



Multiple Assessments

- *Outcomes Measures*
 - Evidence of what students have learned or can do
- *Process Measures*
 - Evidence of effective educational activity by students and institutions

Outcomes Measures

- Standardized, nationally normed



Academic Profile

Standard Form

- Covers the full range of skills in one test
- Contains 108 multiple choice questions
- Administered in 120 minutes
- Generates total and content area scores for both individuals and groups
- Provides demographic data
- Allows for locally-written questions

Academic Profile

Abbreviated Form

- Covers all skills in one test
- Contains 36 questions
- Administered in 40 minutes
- Generates total scores for both individuals and groups
- Generates content area scores for groups only
- Provides demographic data
- Allows for locally-written questions

Four Areas of Assessment

Assesses Academic Skills in:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| ■ College-Level Reading | 25% |
| ■ Critical Thinking | 25% |
| ■ College-Level Writing | 25% |
| ■ College-Level Mathematics | 25% |

Skill Scores

Skill Scores (Norm-Referenced Scaled Scores)

- Critical Thinking
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics

Context Scores

Context Scores (Norm-Referenced Scaled Scores)

- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences

Proficiency Classifications

Proficiency Classifications (Criterion-Referenced)

- Reading
- Critical Thinking
- Writing
- Mathematics

Proficiency Levels vs. Proficiency Classifications

Proficiency Level

- Specific set of competencies expected of students
- Progressive difficulty
- "Level 1" (least difficult) through "Level 3" (most difficult)

Proficiency Levels vs. Proficiency Classifications

Proficiency Classification

- Measure of how the student/group performed at each proficiency level
- "P" (Proficient), "N" (Not Proficient), or "M" (Marginally Proficient, if insufficient evidence to classify student/group as either "P" or "N")

Defining Reading Proficiency Levels

Reading – LEVEL 1

- Recognize factual material explicitly presented in a passage
- Understand the meaning of words/phrases in the context of a reading passage

Defining Reading Proficiency Levels

Reading – LEVEL 2

- Synthesize material from different sections of a passage
- Recognize inferences derived from material in a passage
- Identify accurate summaries of a passage
- Understand and interpret figurative language
- Discern main idea, purpose, or focus of a passage

Defining Critical Thinking Proficiency Levels

Critical Thinking – LEVEL 3

- Evaluate competing causal explanations
- Evaluate hypotheses for consistency with known facts
- Determine relevance of information for evaluating an argument or conclusion
- Determine whether an artistic interpretation is supported by evidence contained in a work

Defining Critical Thinking Proficiency Levels

Critical Thinking – LEVEL 3 (continued)

- Recognize the salient features or themes in a work of art
- Evaluate the appropriateness of procedures for investigating a question of causation
- Evaluate data for consistency with known facts, hypotheses, or methods
- Recognize flaws and inconsistencies in an argument

Process Indicators

Evidence that students and institutions are engaged in educationally purposeful activities



Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

Level of Academic Challenge

Active & Collaborative Learning

Student-Faculty Interaction

Enriching Educational Experiences

Supportive Campus Environment

Policy Uses

- ACCREDITATION – Reliable documentation of performance for accountability requests
- INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT – Measure student growth and program effectiveness
- BENCHMARKING and TREND ANALYSIS – Demonstrate program improvement over time
- Educating the public about what matters to student learning and educational effectiveness