

OSU-Oklahoma City Self-Study

Summary and Request for Continued Accreditation

OSU-Oklahoma City has a clear mission to provide students with educational experiences and support services that prepare students to live and work in a technological, multicultural society. The campus mission statement is strongly supported by its institutional planning documents and processes, which are supported by all campus units and functions.

The ultimate goal of the self-study was to help campus employees take a careful look at OSU-Oklahoma City, analyzing its strengths and challenges, in order to improve programs and services for students and other constituents. In order to accomplish this goal, all campus employees were invited to participate in the self-study process, both in the research and writing of the document. Speaking engagements and events were scheduled to keep employees motivated, and the results were positive. The result of the self-study is a better understanding of the campus and its future.

The self-study celebrates important strengths of OSU-Oklahoma City.

- Its well-organized strategic planning and budgeting cycle that receives input from the entire campus. This is truly a participatory process with all units and functions on campus providing input via their individual plans submitted for consideration as the annual agency plan is drafted.
- Many strong and growing programs, supported by external advisory committees and with satisfied students, graduates, and employers. OSU-Oklahoma City has a new group of degrees that promise tremendous growth and potential for the local and national economy.
- The eagerness of the campus and its administration to utilize new technology. In the classroom, throughout the campus and as new program and career fields, OSU-Oklahoma City is bringing students and constituents along with it into a bright future.

OSU-Oklahoma City turned a challenge from the 2000 site visit into a strong suit for the 2010 site visit team. The Office for Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Assessment of Student Learning Committee, and Assessment Academy Committee combined efforts to reinvigorate the campus assessment process, involving more faculty from different divisions.

Another challenge was addressed by hiring additional faculty and staff to serve campus constituents that continue to grow both in number, ethnicity and racial diversity. In addition, money was spent to improve facilities and fund impressive technology upgrades including large scale computer lab and classroom renovations and additional campus buildings. All of these improvements occurred while maintaining robust community ties and excellent relations with campus constituents.



The self-study also revealed several important challenges and OSU-Oklahoma City welcomes an opportunity to examine them during the upcoming visit.

- The campus needs to develop additional programs and services to address the needs of its welcome and growing ethnic minority population.
- The campus needs a written plan for faculty/staff development. While ample training does occur, it occurs in many different areas on campus that do not necessarily work in coordination with one another under a comprehensive plan.
- The campus needs more full-time faculty. While OSU-Oklahoma City acknowledges the need to rely on adjunct faculty for teaching, it also understands full-time faculty better serve students' needs in the long-term.
- Campus assessment committees need to continue working on mid-level assessment of student learning.
- The campus needs more classroom space. While one new building will be built in 2009 primarily for the Science & Engineering Division's Wind Turbine Program, finances pose a challenge when considering renovating existing spaces or building new spaces for general classroom use.

OSU-Oklahoma City embraces an opportunity to grow from the self-study experience and already has plans in place to address a few of these challenges. The Faculty/Staff Development Committee, for example, is considering a written plan for training that involves multiple contributions across campus, and the assessment committee work begun by the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Assessment of Student Learning Committee, and the Assessment Academy continues.

This summary provides a broad overview of the self-study, but it also offers a glimpse into the future of OSU-Oklahoma City. The campus sees itself as a future-oriented organization, a learning-focused college, a connected institution, and a distinctive school of higher learning.

OSU-Oklahoma City is a Future-Oriented Organization

OSU-Oklahoma City cares very much about the future of its students, faculty, and staff, and its own future as an institution of higher learning. Because of this, it engages in extensive planning tied to the institution's mission statement and scans local, national, and global environments. The goal is to respond accurately with the greatest positive impact, offering or deleting programs and services.

Looking to the future, OSU-Oklahoma City has invested a substantial amount in upgrading facilities and bringing the latest in instructional technology on campus for the benefit of student learning. Staying on the cutting edge of technology both improves the teaching/learning processes, and helps prepare students for a technologically-advanced workplace.

OSU-Oklahoma City is a Learning-Focused College

OSU-Oklahoma's primary goal is to educate students. To help insure the future of its students and constituents and develop them as life-long learners, the institution offers continuing education and non-credit classes and events and utilizes new technologies to engage and communicate with them. This task is made easier by the prevalent belief among faculty and staff that life-long learning is key to future success.

Educating students, however, only completes part of the job of a responsible higher education institution. A responsible college also assesses whether or not students learn, what they learn, and how instruction can better facilitate learning, among other things. OSU-Oklahoma City has made significant strides in the assessment of student learning since the 2000 site visit.

Learning on campus is supported by The Learning Center, the Library, various tutoring programs, several federal grant supported programs, and the Information Services department. Another means of supporting learning is through faculty development, and substantial financial investments have been made in the last 10 years to see that faculty have ample development opportunities both on and off-campus.

The campus also provides co-curricular educational opportunities for students interested in expanding their worldview, accomplished through numerous clubs, travel opportunities, and public service. Substantial human and fiscal resources are dedicated to supporting student learning each academic year, and OSU-Oklahoma City continually seeks means for improving these services.

OSU-Oklahoma City is a Connected Institution

OSU-Oklahoma City is deeply imbedded in the community. Through numerous Academic Program Advisory Committees, partnerships with large businesses, and cooperative agreements with many other schools, the college recognizes the importance of serving others through its mission to educate students. Students, faculty, and administrators embrace a culture of service to the community, documented in the self-study by countless hours of community service. Many of those service opportunities occur through various Student Services offices, such as clubs in Student Life or The Learning Center. Other opportunities occur through the classroom with service learning projects, volunteerism, clean-up days around Oklahoma City, and annual fundraisers for the United Way and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

OSU-Oklahoma City holds partnerships with many colleges, universities, and businesses in order to better serve students and the public. Students are able to move seamlessly from one school to another, and they are able to serve practicum and clinical hours in prestigious businesses while gaining valuable experience. Others are able to gain employment in these same businesses after graduation because owners or supervisors are so impressed with their performance.



OSU-Oklahoma City is a Distinctive School of Higher Learning

The organizational mission of OSU-Oklahoma City is clear and includes statements of vision, values, function, philosophy, and core values. These statements are published in campus documents and can be easily provided to anyone who asks or looks for them online. Most importantly, the organizational mission guides the operations of the campus as it grows new programs and looks for new ways to serve its students, faculty, staff, and the community.

One of the challenges from the 2000 site visit was the ratio of diversity between faculty and staff and the student population. OSU-Oklahoma City has used the self-study process and tremendous outreach programs to increase campus student diversity to over 34% and faculty/staff diversity to 17%. While the ratio seems inequitable, a 17% faculty/staff ethnic and racial minority ratio is in line with the campus service area. Complimenting these efforts to increase diversity among personnel, numerous training and development opportunities have also been offered to help campus employees increase their understanding and appreciation for each other.

Finally, OSU-Oklahoma City is accountable to those it serves. It shows integrity in its planning and budgeting processes, and it shows accountability in the area of student learning with reporting structures to oversight agencies. OSU-Oklahoma City's strong sense of integrity and deep sense of pride come from its willingness to practice continuous environmental scanning – its own lifelong learning commitment – examining its processes, searching for strengths and challenges, learning new ways and making improvements where necessary.

OSU-Oklahoma City, committed to students, staff, faculty, administrators, and constituents, is leading by example, asking “What’s Next?” and “Why Not?” as it propels itself into the future.

Conclusion

The self-study process has given OSU-Oklahoma City ample opportunity to examine its values and processes, look at strengths and challenges, make adjustments where possible, and make plans for future change. OSU-Oklahoma City has fully embraced its mission as a technical university, developing programs and services benefitting students and the local and global community. This self-study presents evidence that OSU-Oklahoma City meets, and in many cases exceeds, the criterion requirements set forth by the Higher Learning Commission for Continued Accreditation. Campus administrators, faculty, staff, and students welcome the site evaluation team's examination and feedback as it will add value to what OSU-Oklahoma City does well and help improve services to constituencies. With much excitement and anticipation, we look forward to another 10 years of unqualified accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association!