

CHAPTER 2

Historical Development

The terms “change” and “growth” could be used to describe the history of what is now Southeastern Oklahoma State University. On March 6, 1909, the Second Oklahoma Legislature approved an Act designating Durant as the location of a normal school to serve the following 12-county region: Atoka, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Latimer, LeFlore, Love, Marshall, McCurtain, McIntosh, Pittsburg, and Pushmataha (see Chapter 5, p. 38). Southeastern State Normal School began accepting students on June 14, 1909. Its original purpose was educating teachers for the public schools of Oklahoma. The early program of instruction consisted of four years of high school and the freshmen and sophomore college years. The first sessions of the school were held in temporary quarters pending the completion of Morrison Hall in January, 1911. The two-year graduates were awarded life-teaching certificates. In 1921 the name was changed to Southeastern State Teachers College. Also, rather than continuing merely as a normal school, the institution began offering baccalaureate degrees in education. The primary function remained that of teacher education and the degrees of Bachelor of Arts in Education and Bachelor of Science in Education were authorized.

In 1939 the purpose and name of the institution again were changed to Southeastern State College. New programs led to two newly authorized non-education degrees: Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science. In 1954 the curriculum was expanded by the addition of a graduate program leading to the Master of Teaching degree. In 1969 the name of this degree was changed to Master of Education. On August 15, 1974, the name of Southeastern State College was changed to Southeastern Oklahoma State University by an Act of the Oklahoma State Legislature. Since 1974 Southeastern, through institutional reorganizations, has continued to diversify. Presently there are four academic schools: Arts and Sciences; Business, Education and Behavioral Sciences, and the School of Graduate Studies.

Ninety-four years have passed since Southeastern first opened its doors. In addition to changes of name and designated tasks, the resources, faculty, physical plant, and financial resources have expanded. Where originally 39 faculty members taught education courses to 324 students, today 142 faculty members instruct 4200+ students. The University has 45 buildings on 175 acres valued at \$ 41,484,807. Today the University employs a total of 405 faculty, staff, and support personnel. Therefore, Southeastern is one of the largest employers in Bryan County and southeastern Oklahoma.

At present, Southeastern also offers programs at three higher education centers located in Ardmore, Idabel, and McAlester, Oklahoma. In addition to these three locations, the Masters of Business Administration also provides portions of the MBA to three additional sites located at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma; the McAlester Army Ammunition plant in Savanna, Oklahoma; and at Carl Albert State College in Poteau, Oklahoma. The University also instructs 123 students in Aerospace studies at Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City, Oklahoma.

Membership Affiliations

As an outward sign of the institution's commitment to growth and commitment to offering programs of quality, Southeastern Oklahoma State University is a member or an affiliate of many educational organizations. Southeastern is affiliated with The Higher Learning Commission and holds memberships in the following:

American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
American Association of Higher Education
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs, National American
College Theatre Festival
National Association of Foreign Student Affairs
National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA)
National Association of Schools of Music
National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
National Business Education Association
National Collegiate News Syndicate
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
National Safety Council
Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Preparation
Oklahoma State Department of Education ^{1,2}

Accreditation History

Southeastern Oklahoma State University shares an interrupted history of accreditation with several Oklahoma higher education institutions. Southeastern retained membership in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools from 1922 through 1934. However, according to Boggs,³ political interference and a lack of resources for all six state teachers colleges and two junior colleges created a climate for lost accreditation. It was not until 1949 that the North Central Association granted reaccreditation to Southeastern. Since then Southeastern has maintained continuous accreditation. In 1974, Southeastern was accredited as a master's degree-granting institution.

In recent decades comprehensive evaluations have led to some concerns on the part of the North Central Association visiting Evaluation Team. In 1984 the Evaluation Team recommended renewal of accreditation with provisions for a focused evaluation to be conducted in 1986-1987. This visit would focus on the concerns expressed over institutional progress relative to administrative structure, planning processes and program review processes. Following the 1993 Comprehensive Visit, a focused visit was recommended for 1998. The 1993 Evaluation Team voiced a continuing concern in the area of shared governance. The Worksheet for Statement of Affiliation Status⁴ noted that a Focused Evaluation would be required during the 1998-99 Academic Year. The wording contained on the Statement of Affiliation was as follows:

A visit to be scheduled in 1998-99 focused on the demonstration of full implementation of governing process operating with clearly defined structures, formulated through policies and procedures that provide for faculty and administrators to exercise oversight for all educational offerings. The governance process should integrate the activities in program review, assessment, and institutional planning with the responsibility of the faculty for the development of curricula, approval of all curricular offerings of the institution, and the evaluation of the effectiveness and currency of curriculum.

In both focused visits, the Evaluation Teams concluded that the University had made excellent progress in the areas of concern.

Evolution in Assessment and Program Review

Recent changes relative to assessment and program review should be mentioned. In Fall 1996, based upon the North Central Steering Committee recommendation, the process for assessment and program review became primarily the responsibility of faculty. The mechanism for action first occurred in Fall 1997 when assessment and program review were delegated to the Institutional Research and Assessment Committee (IRAC, the former Institutional Research and Planning Committee). This newly structured committee, comprised of a faculty majority and an administrative and student minority, began to take charge of the assessment and program review process. In that academic year, the committee members evaluated departmental Program Outcomes Assessment Reports. Members also surveyed department chairs regarding assessment and program review. The committee issued its First Annual Report indicating that modifications were made to programs as a result of assessment and program review.⁵

In the subsequent years the IRAC improved the processes for assessment. In 1998-1999, assessment plans and reports were distributed to committee teams. The teams were asked to identify the one or two best plans in each school. Discussion began in that year regarding some type of incentive for programs with effective assessment and reporting processes. In 1999-2000 the Program Outcomes Assessment Report Form was modified to include information indicating the connection between the assessment plan, assessment results, program changes and modifications, and faculty involvement in the process. The committee members met briefly with the department chairs to provide feedback and recommendations on their departmental reports. The 2000-2001 academic year marked the first year in which a monetary reward was offered to departments with the best assessment reports. Also on March 7, 2001, the IRAC planned and hosted the first Assessment Day to educate and inform faculty about assessment. In 2001-2002 the committee began planning for a visit by Dr. Cecilia Lopez of the Higher Learning Commission on the next Assessment Day.⁶ This visit occurred on October 2, 2002.

The University-wide assessment organization changed again in Fall 2002. On November 13, 2002, the Faculty Senate approved the division of the IRAC into the Organized Research and Program Review Committee (ORPRC) and the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC). Primary duties of the ORPRC include the review, evaluation, and feedback on academic programs as a part of the formal process of program review. Primary duties of the IAC include

making recommendations for improving assessment and related duties of reviewing assessment plans and reports.⁷

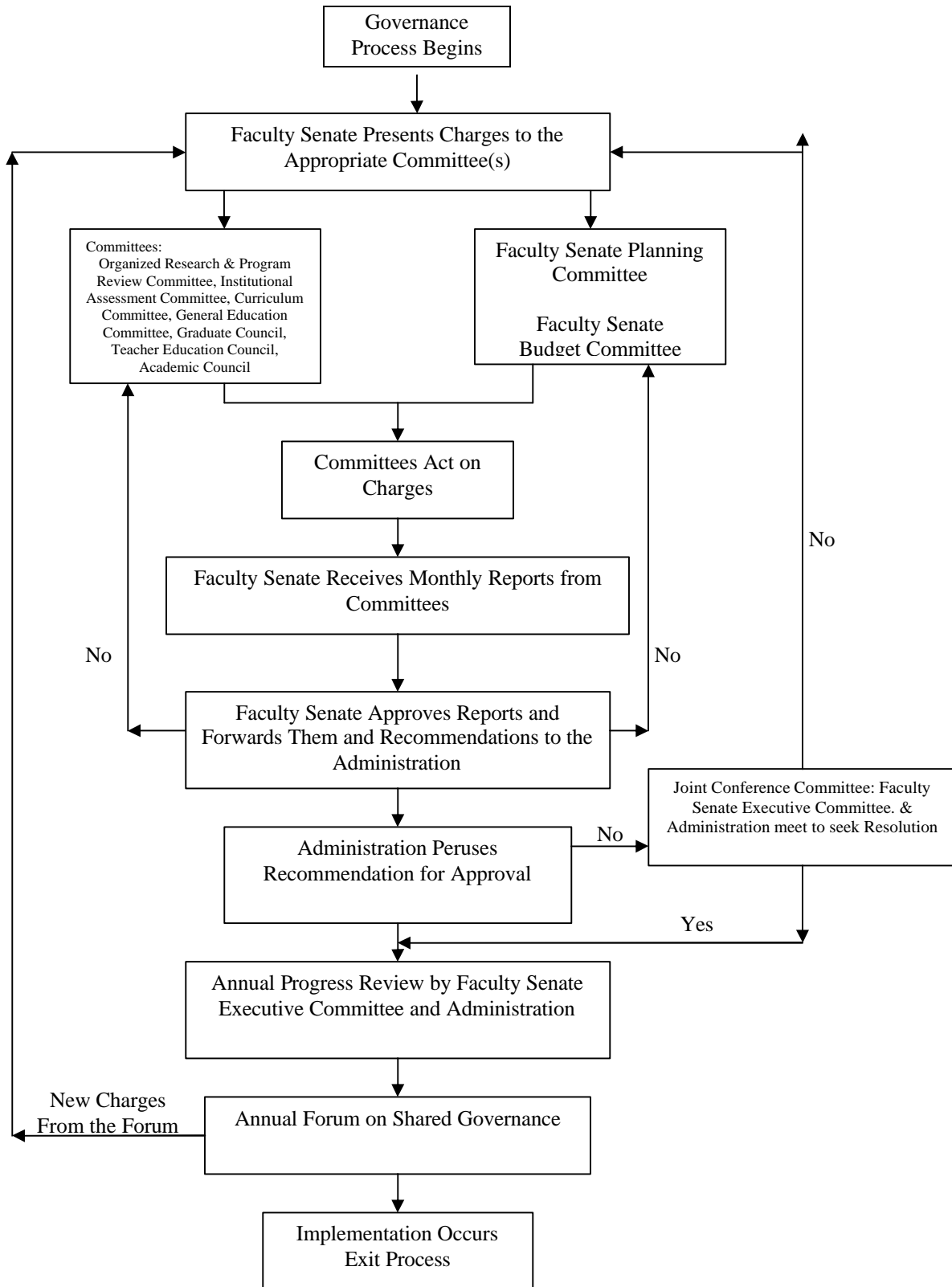
Actions to improve assessment continue at SOSU. On July 5, 2001, Dr. Charles Weiner was appointed as the Director of Assessment. Shortly thereafter, he formed the Assessment Group with representatives from each of the Schools and the General Education Committee and the School of Graduate Studies.⁸ These representatives have met on a bi-weekly basis to discuss, plan, and evaluate assessment for their respective areas. They are the knowledgeable leaders of assessment processes for the University.

Evolution of Shared Governance

Significant changes have occurred in the area of shared governance that have included faculty involvement in general education requirements, expansion of the role of the Faculty Senate in University committee structure and processes, changes in budgetary processes to include formal budget hearings, and the Annual Forums on Shared Governance commencing with the first one on August 26, 1998. These changes and events are noted in Appendix A to the 1998 Self-Study Report For A Focused Evaluation.⁹

The Forum on Shared Governance cannot be overstated or underestimated in its importance to the shared governance process. The Forum has been a constant voice for the faculty to be able to communicate with the administration on issues of importance. Issues can be formulated by both the Faculty Senate and the administration. Issues are presented and form the framework for discussion. The governance process is represented by flowchart 2.1 which delineates the governance process. If an agreement is not reached, then a Joint Conference Committee is convened to seek resolution; if the issues are resolved, then it continues to move through the system. The Joint Committee is responsible for seeking alternative solutions and or compromises to the issue(s). If resolution(s) was not obtained, the issue(s) is returned to the Faculty Senate for discussion and dissemination to the appropriate committees. Once the issues have been resolved, either moving through the process or in a Joint Committee, The Forum for Shared Governance is the culmination of the shared governance process. The Forum provides a question-and-answer period for each topic. The outcomes of the Forum serve as the foundation for developing charges to standing committees for the ensuing year (as delineated in the flow chart, 2.1). For the agreed upon issues, implementation occurs.

Chart 2.1



Strategic Planning

In 1997 the administration and faculty started a new strategic planning process. A vision statement, major initiatives, and goals were developed. University-wide representatives, over 100 strong, attend all-day strategic planning sessions at the University's Massey Building in downtown Durant. Dr. Edward Penson has been the consultant to lead this process each year. This process has been continued, evaluated and refined annually to perfect the dynamic nature of Southeastern and to reflect the philosophy of the faculty and administration. The following statements are included because initiatives and goals symbolize the actions of shared governance at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. Southeastern's Vision states the following:

*By 2005, Southeastern Oklahoma State University will be the leading regional university for quality higher education in Oklahoma and northern Texas. The University will continue to exemplify an innovative and responsive spirit that nurtures excellence in the education of its students. Southeastern will respond effectively to changing technologies, economics, and demographics. Innovative partnerships with regional constituencies will be one of Southeastern's hallmark achievements.*¹⁰

The vision statement for Southeastern also includes major initiatives and strategic goals. These initiatives and goals are as follows:



FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS

MARKETING

Each January, Southeastern will implement changes in its Marketing Plan.

ENROLLMENT

By 2005, Southeastern will increase its enrollment to optimum capacity (4,500 – 5,000 students).

RENOVATION/EXPANSION

By 2002, Southeastern will refine a five year campus master plan to enhance its student-centered learning and living environment.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

By 2003, Southeastern will implement a technology plan that promotes educational excellence and that enhances all aspects of University life.

COLLABORATION

By 2002, Southeastern will implement collaborative processes with internal and external constituencies to promote research, active learning, and partnerships.

Vision 2005

By 2005, Southeastern will be the leading regional university for quality higher education in Oklahoma and northern Texas.

The University will continue to exemplify an innovative and responsive spirit that nurtures excellence in the education of its students. Southeastern will respond effectively to changing technologies, economics, and demographics. Innovative partnerships with regional constituencies will be one of Southeastern's hallmark achievements.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

- Individual attention to students
- Active learning and internship experiences
- Total development of students
- Effective use of technology
- Economic development, scholarship, and culture
- Private funding for University excellence

**SOUTHEASTERN: A University
that Nurtures Excellence**



(Vision 2005 will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.)

Mission Statement Development

This Mission guides the student learning, decision-making, and budgetary considerations on campus. During the summer of 2001, the mission statement was revised, as were the scope and function statements. These changes came from combined efforts of administration, faculty, staff, and students. The current mission statement (page 1) was approved April 12, 2002, by the Board of Regents Oklahoma Colleges. The mission statement of Southeastern is as follows:

Southeastern Oklahoma State University provides an environment of academic excellence that enables students to reach their highest potential. By having personal access to excellent teaching, challenging academic programs, and extracurricular experiences, students will develop skills and habits that promote values for career preparation, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning.¹¹

Scope and Function

The major emphasis at Southeastern continues to be a quality undergraduate education. The University offers an array of baccalaureate-level programs that prepare students for a changing society. In addition, selected graduate level programs are provided to serve the needs of the region. In fulfilling its mission, Southeastern fosters the region's cultural opportunities, economic growth, environmental quality, scientific and technological progress, as well as social and personal well being. Consistent with Southeastern's mission and regional focus, the University concentrates on achieving the following objectives:

For students Southeastern will do the following:

1. Provide an opportunity to succeed through a challenging, learner-centered academic environment.
2. Offer an undergraduate foundation in the liberal arts and sciences, with an emphasis on integrating critical thinking, communication skills, and appropriate technological applications into the curriculum across all disciplines.
3. Provide a general education program that familiarizes students with major areas of scholarship.
4. Provide professional, academic, and career-oriented undergraduate and graduate programs to meet the changing needs of the workforce.
5. Provide for a non-academic experiences environment which fosters the development of personality, social living, and effective citizenship.
6. Present a system of governance that provides reliable information and, as appropriate, involves the students in the decision-making process.
7. Actively recruit traditionally under-represented students and offer scholarship programs to attract students of various socio-economic levels.

For the faculty and staff Southeastern will do the following:

1. Provide opportunities for professional development.
2. Use assessment to improve student learning and effective teaching.
3. Adhere to well-defined organizational structures, policies, and procedures.
4. Adapt to a changing higher education environment.
5. Administer a system of shared governance that provides dependable information to the institution's constituencies.
6. Nurture a campus community responsive to the needs of a diverse population.

For the region Southeastern will do the following:

1. Provide in-service instruction for educators and other professionals needed to make Southeastern competitive in national and world markets.
2. Continue its historical preparation of quality educators for Oklahoma.
3. Provide advanced graduate studies and research in areas of particular strength and need for the region and the state of Oklahoma.
4. Provide opportunities for global awareness.
5. Share human, academic, and technological resources with schools, industries, and public agencies through economic development, partnerships, and outreach activities.
6. Serve as a cultural, artistic, and information center.

(For more information on this Mission Statement and Criterion I see Chapter 5, p 37)

Summary

This chapter serves to summarize the history of accreditation at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. It also offers some background information to subsequent chapters as the University community conducts its self-study in preparation for the accreditation visit in November 2003.

During the last decade, faculty and administration have united to form a vision of growth and change for Southeastern Oklahoma State University. The University community has responded to the opportunity to change. Positive steps have been taken to improve the quality of programs and to include and to unify the efforts of faculty and administration in the life of the University.

References

- (1) 1998 Self-Study Report for A Focused Evaluation (1998). Durant, Oklahoma (*see file folder #2*)
- (2) Academic Policies and Procedures Manual, section 1.4 (*see file folder #1*)
- (3) Boggs, James H. A History of Governance at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater: 1992, p. 25 (Sited in the Self-Study Report For Continued Accreditation September 1, 1993). (*see file folder #3*)
- (4) Statement of Affiliated Status (*see file folder #5*)
- (5) 1998 Self-Study Report For A Focused Evaluation (1998). Durant, Oklahoma (*see file folder #2*)
- (6) Institutional Research and Assessment Committee Minutes as archived on the SOSU website under Faculty Committees (www.sosu.edu/st/committees/irac/IRAC)
- (7) Minutes of the Faculty Senate, November 13, 2002 (www.sosu.edu/st/senate/minutes)
- (8) Memo from President Glen D. Johnson, July 5, 2001 (*see file folder #4*)
- (9) 1998 Self-Study Report for A Focused Evaluation (1998). Durant, Oklahoma (*see file folder #2*)
- (10) Vision 2005 (*see file folder #6*)
- (11) Mission Statement, Scope and Function Purposes/Objectives (*see file folder #7*)