

# **ADVANCEMENT SECTION**

## **REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT**

TO  
Southeastern Oklahoma State University  
Durant, Oklahoma

November 3-5, 2003

FOR  
  
The Higher Learning Commission  
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

### **EVALUATION TEAM**

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## **ADVANCEMENT SECTION**

### **I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE INSTITUTION**

#### **A. History and Environment.**

Southeastern Oklahoma State University has a rich history of change and growth since its founding in 1909 by the Second Oklahoma Legislature as a normal school to serve the southeastern corner of the state. Today the University offers baccalaureate degrees in 46 fields, 5 master's degrees and 6 post-graduate certificates. Its mission has broadened as has the scope of its programs since its founding and today the campus includes 45 buildings on 175 acres that is valued at \$41,484,807. The University today enrolls 4,200 plus students taught by 142 full-time faculty and supported by a total of 273 staff, and support personnel.

In addition to the main campus in Durant, the University offers courses and programs at three higher education centers located in Ardmore, Idabel, and McAlester, Oklahoma. The Masters in Business Administration 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.

#### **B. Planning and Shared Governance.**

The campus environment is fairly typical of regional state-supported universities. However, the sense of collegiality and community that seems to permeate the Southeastern campus has been fostered and encouraged by its leadership team and the open and inclusive nature of its recent forays into planning and shared governance.

#### **C. Community and Alumni Support.**

The University's leadership team has emphasized regional and community service, which has led to improved relations with the University's service region. Recently this was evidenced by the donation of six endowed chairs to the School of Business by one of the region's premier financial institutions.

## II. CONSULTATIONS OF THE TEAM.

### **The team offers the following as advice and consultation to the University:**

- A. The University should separate the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity functions from the Human Resource function. The Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity function should report directly to the President.
- B. Training for Adjunct/Program Faculty. The Team suggests that a consistent and regular training/orientation program for adjunct and part-time faculty be developed and implemented.
- C. The University should retain its commitment to support for the Institutional Research and Assessment Office. The Team suggests that the University follow-up on its commitment to add an Institutional Research Officer and continue its support of University-wide assessment activities.
- D. The campus should consider transforming the Master of Technology degrees to Master of Science programs. The University nomenclature for the technology master level degrees was encouraged in the past by the Oklahoma Regents of Higher Education. However, the team ascertained in an interview with the Chancellor of the Regents that the Regents would consider approving the Master of Science. The University now has in place the faculty and course work to offer the Master of Science and the team recommends the nomenclature to reflect this reality.
- E. A comprehensive strategic plan for Information Technology should be completed incorporating existing initiatives. The Team suggests that the University develop and implement a comprehensive information technology plan. The team also suggests that the institution fully develop initiatives currently in place to develop a strategic plan for Information Technology.
- F. The University should consider the merger of academic departments to achieve fiscal economies.
- G. The University should encourage and support initiatives that focus on faculty and staff development.
- H. The University should study the possibility of cost savings by combining or merging administrative offices.
- I. External and internal communications should use uniform and consistent logos and protocols that clearly identify Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

### **III. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PROGRESS, AND/OR PRACTICES**

**The team notes that Southeastern Oklahoma State University has made progress in many areas and deserves recognition for extraordinary documented accomplishments over the past ten years:**

- A. The strategic planning process is commendable in its development and the efforts to move forward with the plan demonstrate a commitment to continued campus-wide engagement in the process. The development of a university-wide strategic planning process and subsequent campus-wide efforts to move forward with the plan demonstrate a continued commitment. The Team notes that one result of the strategic planning initiative is the perceived improvement of the lines of communication between faculty and staff and central administration, in particular, the Office of the President.
- B. The faculty and staff are dedicated to the mission of the university and demonstrate concern for the success of the university in the achievement of its goals to provide access to higher education in its service region. Interviews with faculty and staff revealed a deep commitment to the University and the region served by the University.
- C. Strong leadership from the Office of the President has positively impacted the campus in governance, planning, outreach and fund raising. The Team notes significant strides made in increasing external funding, improving faculty governance procedures, developing a strategic planning initiative, and enhancing outreach activities.
- D. The University's planning process has and continues to recognize the importance of its support for the University in its service region and in the Durant community.
- E. The Team recognizes the history of partnerships between the university and the community in areas including education, cultural activities, and business development. Interviews with alumni and local community leaders revealed a strong desire to continue existing partnerships with the institution and develop new areas of collaboration. As an example, a large gift by a local community leader to the School of Business was solicited and is being utilized to assist the School of Business in attracting and retaining faculty as they seek specialized accreditation in business.

- F. The University is commended for its progress in the recent deployment of technology in support of its mission. The University has recently developed a cycle for the refreshment or replacement of computers and has made progress in the deployment of technology in support of its mission. There has been significant progress achieved towards the development of a technology blueprint and plan.
- G. The decision to join the NCAA Division II has stabilized the athletic program and its membership in the Lone Star Conference has provided enhanced participation opportunities for students of both genders.
- H. The faculty has made significant progress toward a culture of assessment and self-evaluation designed to optimize the learning environment.
- I. The University has made progress in serving Native American students and in increasing faculty and staff from: the Native American community.
- J. The University's faculty has demonstrated a level of commitment to the Assessment of Student Learning in the Academic Major areas that is commendable.

## ASSURANCE SECTION

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**ASSURANCE SECTION****I. Context and nature of visit****A. Purpose of Visit:**

The purpose of the visitation was to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the application of Southeast Oklahoma State University for continued accreditation at the baccalaureate and master's level.

**B. Institutional Context:**

Southeast Oklahoma State University was founded on March 6, 1909 by the second Oklahoma State Legislature as a normal school to serve the counties in southeastern Oklahoma. In 1921, the institution was renamed Southeastern State Teachers College and became a four year college. In 1939, the mission of the institution was expanded to include the Bachelor of Arts Degree in addition to the Bachelor of Science in Education. At this time the name changed to Southeastern State College.

In 1954, the Master of Teaching degree was added and its title was changed to Master of Education in 1969. In 1968 the College's mission was changed to include programs in business, technology, aviation, and conservation. In that year the institution was designated the primary, state supported, regional post-secondary College for southeastern Oklahoma. In 1974, the College's name was changed to Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

Since 1974, the University has continued to grow and adjust its programs to meet the needs of its region and the state of Oklahoma. Its current 46 bachelor degree and 8 master degree programs are organized under three Schools, the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, and the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

The University's location in the southeastern corner of Oklahoma has resulted in a close linkage by geography and tradition with the region of north central Texas.

**C. Unique Aspects of Visit:**

None

**D. Sites or Branch Campuses Visited:**

The University offers residence credit courses at three regional Higher Education Centers: E. T. Dunlap in Idabel, the University and College Center of Ardmore, and the Wanda L. Bass Higher Education Center in McAlester.

Team-members visited the Center of Ardmore. A tour of the Center showed excellent facilities. In addition to state funding from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education private donors and foundations support each center.

The University collaborates with each community and other post-secondary institutions in the planning of courses, delivery of programs at each Center. Each Center's Director and administrative staff manage the day-to-day operations while the cooperating institutions provide instructional personnel. The academic programs and hiring of faculty derive from the University and departmental faculty of each school are involved in the approval of faculty who teach at the Centers.

#### **E. Distance Education Reviewed:**

Distance education at the University includes both interactive televised synchronous delivery and asynchronous on-line delivery. The delivery and receipt of interactive courses are coordinated by the Department of Continuing Education. The selection of courses and faculty to teach on-line is under the administration of the academic departments and schools. Interactive courses are currently taught by 18 departments. On the average, fourteen to eighteen courses are broadcast live from Southeastern each semester and between 2-8 are received.

In addition to the Higher Education Centers in Ardmore, Idabel, and McAlester, Interactive Educational Television (IETV) courses are delivered to several local high schools as well as McAlester Army Ammunition Depot and Tinker Air Force Base. The University currently receives courses via IETV from East Central Oklahoma University, Tinker Air Force Base, and Choctaw Nation. In addition courses are periodically delivered to the University from the University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Oklahoma.

The team had an opportunity to view interactive classrooms on campus and at Ardmore and found the technology to be current and adequate to the needs of the University.

On-line courses are available at the University and are offered through the academic departments and schools in conjunction with the Office of Telecommunications. As with live, interactive courses, faculty approved at the level of the appropriate academic department teaches the on-line courses. Currently, a little over 30 courses are offered asynchronously on-line and well over 200 courses use on-line supplemental opportunities available through the University's Blackboard server.

## **F. Interactions with Institutional Constituencies:**

### **Executive Management**

Chancellor *of* the State Regents *of* Higher Education  
Regional Member *of* the Board *of* State Regents *of* Higher Education  
Member *of* the Board and Secretary *of* the Board *of* Regents *of* Oklahoma Colleges President  
President's Staff  
Vice President for Business Services  
Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Vice President for Student Services  
Chief Development Officer (Advancement and Alumni Relations)  
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean *of* the School *of* Graduate Studies  
Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Information Technology  
Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management and Marketing  
Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences  
Dean of the School of Business  
Dean of the School of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
Dean of Students

### **Faculty**

Faculty Senate  
Faculty Open Meeting (approximately 35 in attendance)  
Faculty Members on Institutional Assessment Committee  
Faculty Members on Assessment Specialist Group  
Faculty Members on the General Education Council  
Faculty Members *of* the Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee Faculty Department Chairs  
of School of Arts and Science Departments Faculty Department Chairs of School of Business  
Departments  
Faculty Department Chairs of School *of* Education and Behavioral Sciences

### **Management and Staff**

Director of Assessment  
Academic Advisor, Ardmore Higher Education Center  
Director of Ardmore Higher Education Center (Employed by AHEC) Director of Athletics  
Director of Career and Placement Services  
Director of the Educational Opportunity Center  
Director of the Counseling Center  
Director of the Library

**Library Staff**

Director of Student Health Services  
Director of Student Support Services  
Director of Talent Search  
Director of Upward Bound  
Director of Academic Advising and Outreach Center  
Director of Student Financial Aid  
Director Learning Center  
Director Office of Admissions & Recruitment Services Registrar  
Director Student Support Services  
Academic Counselor/Tutor Coordinator  
Director of Human Resources  
Director of the Physical Plant  
Director of Security and Safety  
Multicultural Coordinator  
Director Office of Diversity  
University -Cc5htroller  
Staff Association Officers (Luncheon Meeting)  
Staff Association Open Meeting-approximately 20 in attendance

**Students**

Student Government Association (11 students from majors listed)

Aviation (3)  
Occupational health and safety  
Management  
Psychology and sociology  
Communication (2)  
Music education  
Elementary education  
Business

Student Members of Various Aforementioned Committees

Officers of the Student Government Association

Random Lunch with Student Athletes (5 students from majors listed)

Occupational health and safety (2)  
HPER  
Business  
Undecided

**Community and Alumni Leaders** (from areas listed)

Chamber of Commerce  
Mayor of Durant, Oklahoma  
Office Economic Development  
Chair of Board, First National Bank of Durant

City Manager

Alumni and Foundation Board (Luncheon meeting with the entire team)

**G. Principal Documents, Materials, and Web Pages Reviewed:**

**SEOSU Self-Study Documents**

Self-Study Report for Continued Accreditation

Basic Institutional Data Report

Undergraduate Catalog

Bulletin of the School of Graduate Studies

Academic Policies and Procedures Manual

Student Code of Conduct

University View Book and other recruitment (department and program) brochures

NCA Self-Study Survey

Student Government Association Meeting Minutes

Architectural Needs Statement and General Plan for New Student Center

**SEOSU Administrative Documents**

University Financial Statements and Audits, 2001 and 2002

University Budgets

Basic Institutional Data Forms

Vision 2005-Institutional Strategic Planning Document

    Mission and Vision statements

    Strategic Goals and Major Initiatives Statement

Job Descriptions of Various Staff and Administrative Officers

Grants (Various Proposals and Awards)

Performance Appraisal Form

Computers and Related Technology Growth Plan

Enrollment Management Reports, 1994-2002.

Noel-Levitz Consultants' Reports (Enrollment Management and Retention)

Admission Policies

Various Campus Program Brochures, such as the writing, outreach, health, counseling, career placement and testing centers, admissions and financial aid, TRIO Programs, Multicultural Support Services, Diversity, and safety booklets.

Diversity Reports

2003 Annual Report

Affirmative Action Reports

Staff Files in Human resources Office.

**SEOSU Internal Academic Review and Assessment Documents**

Advisement Evaluation

Academic Planning and Resource Allocation Policy

Program Evaluation Survey

Retention and Graduation Rates  
Student Teaching Course Evaluation Form  
Teacher Education Services Supporting Documentation  
Curricular Changes since 1993  
General Education Assessment Reports  
Academic Plan  
Articulation Agreements  
Minutes of the Faculty Senate  
Enrollment Management Reports, 1994-2002  
Noel-Levitz Consultants' Reports  
Admission Policies  
General Education Questionnaires  
Faculty Senate Questionnaire  
Articulation Agreements  
Academic Record and Transcript Guide  
Current Student Records in Registrar's Office

### **SEOSO Websites**

Web pages for various academic programs and student support services, academic majors and programs, advising center, campus housing, food services, student life, calendar of events, etc. See [www.sosu.edu](http://www.sosu.edu).

## II. COMMITMENT TO PEER REVIEW

### A. Comprehensiveness of the Self-Study Process:

A fifteen-member steering committee, which included a steering committee coordinator, led the self-study process at SOSU. Various subcommittees were created to contribute to the writing of the 11 chapters of the self-study. The self-study timeline included 35 months of preparation, and engaged the entire university community, including those who were not on committees and subcommittees. However, in talking to students during the campus visit, there seemed to be little student involvement in the self-study process.

### B. Integrity of the Self-Study Report:

The SEOSU Self-Study document reported changes at SOSU since the last accreditation visit in 1993, and the focused visit in 1998 to look at the institution's system of shared governance and its relationship to assessment and planning. In addition, the Self-Study addressed the Five Criteria for Accreditation and the 24 General Institutional Requirements. Each chapter of the Self Study provided a summary and conclusions, which clearly defined the institutional strengths and weaknesses. The resource room provided an appropriate range of materials to support information in the self-student document. The team found the Self-Study to be useful and generally well done. The Self-Study represented fairly the current state of the University, its plans for the future and the document appears to have been well received on campus. The team found no evidence to impugn the integrity of the Self-Study report.

### C. Capacity to Address Previously Identified Challenges:

#### 1. Institutional Capacity to Address and Resolve Previously Identified Challenges:

The team considers the efforts of the institution to respond to previously identified challenges to have been commendable, but lacking with respect to General Education as noted in item #2 below.

#### 2. Inadequately Resolved Challenges:

The team notes that the Assessment of the General Education Program has not been adequately addressed. Recommendations concerning this reality as well as a rationale for this finding and specific recommendations follow (See Section V-C, 3, a and b and Section VI-C of this Assurance Report below).

### D. Notification of Evaluation Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment:

Requirements were fulfilled. No third party comments were received. The team

verified that notification efforts were substantive and an adequate amount of time was provided for the receipt of third party comments.

### **III. COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS**

The team reviewed the required Title IV compliance areas and the student complaint information.

#### **Comments:**

The procedures for handling complaints are well organized and promulgated in numerous brochures, handbooks and publications. Due process and appropriate disposition of issues raised in complaints is guaranteed. Written evidence as well as interviews supports the reality that the University appears to assiduously adhere to its procedures.

### **IV. AFFIRMATION OF THE GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

Based on the team's efforts to validate the Self-Study document and the process that generated the document, the Team confirms that the University continues to meet each of the twenty-four General Institutional Requirements.

#### **Comments:**

Wording in the undergraduate catalog should be changed to reflect the new title of the Commission, The Higher Learning Commission. The graduate catalog contains the correct wording.

## V. FULFILLMENT OF THE CRITERIA

### A. CRITERION ONE

The institution demonstrates that it has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

#### **Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**

##### **1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

- a. On April 12, 2002, the Board of Regents of Oklahoma Colleges reaffirmed Southeastern Oklahoma State University's mission to offer quality undergraduate education as well as fostering regional cultural opportunities, economic growth, environmental quality, scientific and technological progress and social and personal well-being.
- b. This mission was developed with campus-wide input as a part of a planning process, which also involved community and regional leaders. Formal criticism of drafts occurred at the level of the Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and the Staff Association prior to the final presentation to the Regents by the University's President.
- c. Team members conversations with campus personnel, students, and representatives of the alumni and community confirmed that the newly revised mission statement has been well received by both campus and off-campus constituencies. .
- d. A University conducted survey in the fall of 2002, showed that only about 55 percent of those responding realized that the mission statement had been recently revised. However, over 70 percent of those responding approved of the mission statement and claimed a working knowledge of it.
- e. The University's mission statement has been circulated widely on campus through fliers, brochures, and e-mail. It appears in both undergraduate and graduate Catalogs and is on the University's website.

**2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention:**

None noted.

**3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up:**

None noted.

**Recommendation of the Team**

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

**B. CRITERION TWO**

The-institution demonstrates that it has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

**Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion****1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

a. The faculty and staff are dedicated to the mission of the University and demonstrate concern for the success of the University in the achievement of its goals to provide access to higher education in its service region.

b. The University and the community continue to benefit from the historical partnerships in education, cultural activities and business development. Notable examples include the endowment of five faculty Chairs in the School of Business, support for residence hall renovations provided by the Choctaw Nation and community support for the Ardmore Higher Education Center.

c. Strong leadership from the Office of the President has positively impacted the campus in governance, planning, outreach and fund raising.

d. Under the leadership of the Provost, the campus revised faculty hiring practices in 1999. Searches are now conducted nationally with the expectation that candidates will have the terminal degree in hand prior to assuming their faculty responsibilities.

e. The University has recognized that many of its students arrive under-prepared academically. To meet this challenge, an array of new and reorganized support programs have been implemented to both encourage college preparedness (i.e., GEAR UP) and success once enrolled, including creation of an Academic Advising and Outreach Center in 2001 that centralized advising services for newly enrolled students and a freshman college success course for undecided and academic at-risk students.

f. The Library serves as a resource for both the campus and community. It is a regional depository and review center for State of Oklahoma adopted textbooks and a Government Document Repository. Over the last five years the Library has made a concerted effort to assemble a suite of web-based electronic resources that include 45 databases and full-text access to over 2500 periodical titles.

g. The campus has an appropriately deployed network and other IT resources in support of academic and administrative activities. In 2001, the former Computing Services Department was reorganized into seven functional areas reporting to the Assistant Vice President for Information Technology. The network backbone was recently upgraded to gigabyte capacity and an aggressive replacement plan ensures that laboratory and faculty computers can handle the latest applications.

## **2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention:**

a. Budget constraints of the last three years have resulted in the loss of a critical mass of full-time faculty in some program areas, threatening program quality. In some cases, the lack of full-time faculty has delayed development of graduate programs in high demand areas (for example, Occupational Safety and Health).

b. The University should continue to address the under-representation of African Americans and Hispanic Americans on the faculty and staff.

c. The physical facilities of the University are unwelcome to persons with disabilities as reflected in the lack of signage, automated entry doors, ramps and elevators.

## **3. Evidence that demonstrates that the criterion needs institutional attention:**

None Noted

### **Recommendation of the Team:**

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up is recommended.

## **C. CRITERION THREE**

The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

### **Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion**

#### **1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

a. The academic units have utilized periodic program review as an important

strategy for curricular and program revision. This process led to the merger of the School of Science and Technology and the School of Arts and Letters, forming the School of Arts and Sciences in 2000, and major curricular realignments such as those implemented by the Aviation Sciences Institute, also in 2000.

- b. Southeast Oklahoma State University has made important strides toward a culture of assessment and self-evaluation to optimize the learning environment. The appointment of a Director of Assessment in 2001 was an important milestone, signifying the institution's commitment to the assessment of student learning. An annual reporting and feedback process facilitated by the Director and the Institutional Assessment Committee ensures on-going assessment. A group of faculty assessment specialists plays an important role in assisting departments with their assessment efforts.
- c. The campus has made considerable progress in the deployment of technology in support of student learning in the last four years. This effort has been facilitated by the creation of a grant-supported Center for Instructional Development and Technology that works closely with faculty on incorporation of technology into the instructional program.
- d. The University is committed to serving as the cultural center for southeast Oklahoma through a well conceived suite of programs ranging from theater to recitals, symposia and visual arts. These programs often involve students and are open to the community.
- e. Community leadership recognizes the importance of these efforts through the provision of significant financial support for major cultural events.

2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention:

- a. While the University has made strides toward a culture of assessment of student learning, efforts appear uneven. Assessment is in the formative stage in many programs and still others have not begun development of formal assessment plans.
- b. The University relies on competent part-time and adjunct faculty to deliver a significant part of its instructional program, yet there is little institutional attention paid to this important resource. Especially important is the need to develop and implement a system of formal evaluation and feedback for this group that parallels that used for full-time faculty.

**3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and commission follow up:**

- a. Several University units beyond the three Schools impact on student learning, yet no evidence was provided that assessment plans are in place for student services, academic support services and the library.
- b. General education was noted as an area in need of attention in the report of the 1993 review of Southeast Oklahoma State University. While the University did develop a timeline for action and some significant attention and activity was directed to this concern, the University continues to face challenges in connection and assessment of its stated outcomes for student learning in the general education program. There is a need for a clearer articulation of course content with anticipated outcomes. The University's general education council and the recently appointed Director of General Education face the challenge of working with academic departments and units to insure that the stated goals are addressed in course content and appropriately assessed.

**Recommendation of the Team:****Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; Commission follow-up recommended:**

- (1) Progress report on the development of assessment plans for student services, academic support services, and the Library. **June 30, 2007**
- (2) Monitoring report on a fully developed and implemented of assessment for General Education. **June 30, 2007.**

**D. CRITERION FOUR**

The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

**Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion:****1. Evidence that demonstrates that the criterion is met:**

- a. The strategic planning process is commendable in its development and the efforts to move forward with the plan demonstrate a commitment to continued campus-wide engagement in the process.
- b. The University in its planning process has and continues to recognize the importance of its support in its service region and community.

- c. The University has made progress in serving Native Americans students and in increasing faculty and staff from the Native American community.
- d. The decision to join the National Collegiate Athletic Association at the Division II level has stabilized the athletic program. The University's membership in the Lone Star Conference has provided enhanced participation opportunities for students of both genders.

**2. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention:**

- a. The University is challenged by the reality of limited resources necessitating that staffing strategies be developed that encourage the strategic alignment of full-time faculty positions and other resources in the context of those priorities.
- b. As a part of its strategic planning process, the University should carefully examine all academic program offerings with a view toward prioritizing programs and allocating resources in the context of those priorities.
- c. The University should develop a comprehensive enrollment management plan with special attention to students of color, especially African Americans and Hispanic Americans.
- d. Deferred maintenance of physical facilities remains a challenge for the campus.

**3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up:**

None noted

**Recommendation of the Team**

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

**E. CRITERION FIVE**

The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

**Salient Evidence of Fulfillment of Criterion****1. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion is met:**

- a. Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) is well liked and respected by its various constituencies, including members of the campus community and the community at-large. Constituents noted that SOSU is not only a regional, "top-notch" institution, but that the university also plays a vital role in providing cultural activities for the community. SOSU appears to have good relationships with various entities within the surrounding communities, thus providing opportunities for students, faculty, staff and community residents to form a number of educational partnerships.
- b. Numerous publications pertinent to policies and procedures exist, and are readily available to interested parties. These documents were also reviewed by the evaluation team, including, but not limited to, undergraduate and graduate catalogs, faculty, staff and student handbooks, annual reports, financial statements and recruiting materials. Materials indicate that SOSU publicizes accurate and appropriate information about its accreditation affiliations, academic programs, costs, academic and nonacademic policies and procedures and support services. Further, the University's publications appear to accurately reflect the institution and its operations, programs and services. The university's web site is updated and provides useful information.
- c. There are well- outlined dispute policies and resolution processes for students, faculty and staff, and mechanisms in place by which everyone is informed of these policies and procedures. Comments from campus groups indicated that there is a shared governance process in place, which is much improved over previous years.
- d. The Student Government Association (SGA) has a structure that is easily understood and easy to follow. The SGA is to be commended for its level of engagement and documentation of meetings and other records.
- e. In the self-study, SOSU has engaged in a number of campus-wide surveys to evaluate its programs and services, promoting that it is inclusive of all stakeholders. These surveys demonstrated the progress had occurred in a number of areas previously viewed as concerns including shared governance, gender and salary equity issues.
- f. Business matters and routine business transactions at SOSU appear to be handled with honesty and integrity.

- g. SOSU currently competes at NCAA Division II level, which has stabilized the athletic program and made it possible for the University to join the Lone Star Conference. Interviews, comments from faculty, students and staff and review of documents indicate that the program operates with integrity.
- h. The Office of Diversity and the Office of Multicultural Affairs are to be commended for their work in the services they provide for students, faculty and staff, as well as the design and implementation of cultural diversity programs on campus and in the community. Both offices also compile a diversity report highlighting and documenting their program and services.

The university's commitment to diversity is evident in the creation and support of these offices, and its recent hire of a new academic advisor to target recruitment and retention of Native American undergraduates.

## **2: Evidence that demonstrates the criterion needs institutional attention:**

- a. The director of human resources at SOSU also handles matters of equal opportunity and affirmative action for the campus. These matters include both formal and informal complaints related to discrimination and sexual harassment. It is not clear what percentage of time is devoted to each position. The University needs to develop a more comprehensive system for documenting complaints and resolutions in the areas of equal opportunity and affirmative action.
- b. The University has not named an ADA compliance officer. The director of a grant-funded program assists with intakes and assessments for students with disabilities, but is not considered a compliance officer by the University. It appears that accommodation requests from faculty and staff have been temporary, as a result of injury, usually, and are handled through the human resources office on an individual request basis.
- c. In 2000-2001, SOSU established the Office of Diversity, which employs a halftime director. The office works closely with departments on campus, such as human resources, the multicultural office and other services, and it serves to lead and coordinate equity and diversity initiatives. Although the director works closely with the human resources office and search committees to seek diverse applicant pools, SOSU has not been successful in attracting African American and Hispanic faculty and staff, despite its close proximity to nearby Dallas.
- d. Personnel files should be centralized in one office and standardized formats should be developed for each category of employees. A random inspection of personnel files in the Office of Human Resources revealed a number of inconsistencies in the personnel records of professional staff. Faculty records

are kept in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, while staff records are kept in the human resources office. In examining staff records, many did not contain degree verification for positions requiring a degree. There did not appear to be a set period of time established to conduct performance evaluations. Some files were missing performance evaluations, although skilled and clerical staff appeared to have performance evaluations completed more regularly than professional staff. Some files did not contain employment applications and other pieces of information to complement the hiring package, such as resumes or vitas and letters of reference. A seamless and complete personnel file system should be developed and implemented.

**3. Evidence that demonstrates the criterion requires institutional attention and Commission follow-up:**

None noted.

**Recommendation of the Team:**

Pattern of evidence sufficiently demonstrated; no Commission follow-up recommended.

## VI. ACCREDITATION RELATIONSHIP

### ACCREDITATION RELATIONSHIP:

#### A. CONTINUED ACCREDITATION

**Next Comprehensive Visit:** **2013-2014.**

**Rationale:** In the last decade, Southeastern Oklahoma State University has achieved much. A faculty generated culture of assessment and self-evaluation is present and initial results are apparent in an improved learning environment. In addition, the University's progress in implementing advanced technological classrooms and laboratories is commendable. The University's strategic planning process is supported by all campus constituencies and has informed and guided decisions regarding priorities in the allocation of resources. External funding has grown for research, scholarships, and most recently for endowed faculty chairs. Alumni and community support appears to be strong. The University and its service region continue to benefit from historical partnerships in education, cultural activities, and business development.

The team validated a very well done Self-Study through extensive interviews, meetings, and the review of pertinent documentation. The team concludes that the University meets each of the 24 General Institutional Requirements for Accreditation. Leadership from the Office of the President has positively impacted the campus governance structure and process, planning, outreach, and fund raising. The weight of evidence in leadership, governance, resource allocation, and planning indicates that Southeastern Oklahoma State University has the institutional processes and personnel in place to warrant another ten-year accreditation cycle.

#### B. DEFINERS OF RELATIONSHIP

1. **Degree level: Masters**  
*Retain Original Wording*
  
2. **Ownership: Public**  
*Retain Original Wording*

3. **Stipulations: None**  
Retain original wording
4. **New Degree Sites:** No prior Commission approval required for offering existing degree programs at new sites in Oklahoma.

C. **COMMISSION FOLLOW-UP**

**Progress Report: 2006-2007.** Assessment Plans for Student Services, Academic Support Services, and the University Library. **Filed by June 30, 2007.**

**Rationale and Expectations:** The team recognizes and commends the accomplishments of University in the area of the assessment of student learning. Most the effort in this achievement is focused within the Academic Departments and Schools. However, the team notes a general absence of similar efforts in the important academic and direct instructional support areas of the University. While the evaluation of student learning outcomes is at core of formal assessment, the Team also notes that substantive reviews in support areas should accompany the formal assessment of student learning.

The team recommends that a Progress Report be filed with the Higher Learning Commission no later than **June 2007** which demonstrates that the Student Services, Academic Support Services and the University Library have developed processes or a process for establishing goals and assessing progress that parallels the existing assessment plan for student learning outcomes. The team expects that these plans will have been developed with appropriate constituent input, including but not limited to faculty and students; that these plans will have received internal and, if appropriate or necessary, external approval (s) by the **Spring of .2006** and that an initial implementation has occurred by the **Spring of 2007.**

**Monitoring Report:** 2006-2007. Detailed Monitoring Report Documenting a Fully implemented Plan of an Assessment for General Education. **Filed by June 30, 2007.**

**Rationale and Expectations:** The team notes that the University has yet to develop or implement an Assessment Plan for General Education. The team also notes that in 1993 the Commission listed this area as a concern. In the intervening years, the team finds that little attention has been paid to this previously stated concern, except as mandated by the University Board of Regents. This mandate resulted in a goal setting exercise, rather than an assessment plan. The University continues to face challenges with respect to connecting and assessing its stated outcomes for student learning in the General Education Program. There continues to be a need for a clear articulation of course content with anticipated outcomes in the program.

The team expects that this **Monitoring Report** will address the aforementioned concerns and be filed with the Commission no later than June **30, 2007**. The team anticipates and expects that this report will demonstrate a clear connection between goals for the General Education Program and course content. The team also expects that by the above date a plan for the assessment of the General Education Program will have been developed and initially implemented and the results shared with appropriate internal constituencies, and if appropriate external constituencies. The team expects that these results will be incorporated into the **Monitoring Report**.