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August 19, 2019

Interim President Joseph Harroz
University of Oklahoma
66O Parrington Oval
Norman, OK 73019-3073

Dear Interim President Harroz:

The interim report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. The staff analysis of the report is attached.

On behalf of the Higher Learning Commission staff received the report on general education assessment. No further reports are required.

The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2022– 2023.

For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Accreditation Processes Manager, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is Steph Brzuzy (sbrzuzy@hlcommission.org); (800) 621-7440 x 1206

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION



STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: August 19, 2019

STAFF LIAISON: Steph Brzuzy

REVIEWED BY: Steven Kapelke

INSTITUTION: University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Dr. Joseph Harroz, Interim President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION AND SOURCES: An interim report is required by 6/1/2019 on general education assessment.

This interim report derives from the Team Report of the institution's 2017 Open Pathway Assurance Review. The report should show the creation of a GE assessment plan and specification of a process for implementation.

It is suggested that the assessment plan include the following:

- articulation of expected student learning outcomes;
- criteria expected for identifying achievement of the outcomes;
- means/methods of assessment;
- how the assessment information will be used; and
- timeline for assessing the learning goals/outcomes.

REPORT PRESENTATION AND QUALITY: The University of Oklahoma (OU) interim report is presented in a carefully written, well-organized narrative supplemented with a range of supporting materials contained in the appendices. These include, among other documents, the OSRHE Undergraduate Degree Requirements Policy, the Alignment of OU GE SLOs and OSRHE Gen Ed Core [standards], and the Alignment of OU GE Distribution and OSRHE GE Outcomes. Indications are that the report is comprehensive and candid.

REPORT SUMMARY: Following a brief introductory section ("Background Information"), the University's interim report is presented in four parts, each corresponding to one report requirement identified by the Higher Learning Commission. These four parts are noted as Interim Report Requirements in the document.

Report Requirement #1: This section of the OU report centers on the efforts of the institution in the development of its revised general education assessment system/procedures. Here the report describes briefly the work of the General Education

Assessment Workgroup (GEAW), which was formed by the Provost to address HLC concerns and craft recommendations for the Provost with regard to general education assessment. The report states that the Office of the Provost provided funding for GEAW’s work; this included participation in a two-day HLC General Education workshop in February 2019. A permanent working group of faculty members will be appointed to oversee implementation of the new assessment plan in Fall 2019. This group will function as a subcommittee of the Provost’s Advisory Committee on General Education Oversight (PACGEO).

Report Requirement #2: In this section of the report, the document outlines the link between the University’s general education distribution requirements and the Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education’s (OSRHE) expectations for general education. Citing specific OSRHE policies (3.15.5-A and 3.15.6) of the Regent’s *Policies and Procedures Manual*, the OU report refers the reader to the report’s appendix, where two maps verify the alignment of both distribution requirements/OSRHE expectations and OU distribution requirements and OSRHE learning outcomes. The second of these tables is shown below.

Alignment of OU General Education Distribution Areas and Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education (OSRHE) General Education Outcomes

| OU General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) | Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education General Education Learning Outcomes | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| | Appreciating and understanding diverse cultures and heritages. | Mastering multiple modes of inquiry, reasoning, and critical thinking. | Effectively analyzing and communicating information. | Recognizing the importance of creativity and values to the human spirit. | Understanding relationships within nature and science. | Developing responsible, ethical, and engaged citizens. | Promoting lifelong learning, wellness and personal enrichment. | Adapting to a constantly changing global society. |
| 1 SYMBOLIC AND ORAL COMMUNICATION (3-6 courses, 9-22 hours) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| 2 NATURAL SCIENCE (2 courses, 7-8 hours) | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| 3 SOCIAL SCIENCE (2 courses, 6 hours) | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 4 HUMANITIES (4 courses, 12 hours) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 5 SENIOR CAPSTONE (1 course, 3 hours) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 6 UPPER DIVISION COURSE (1 course, 3 hours) | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | |

Report Requirement #3: This section of the report is divided into sub-sections (A through E), each addressing one feature of the institution’s general education assessment plan. In order, these sections are as follows:

- a) *Articulation of expected student learning outcomes*
- b) *Criteria expected of identifying achievement of the outcomes*
- c) *Means/methods of assessment*
- d) *How the assessment information will be used*
- e) *Timeline for assessing the learning goals/outcomes*

Each of these sub-sections contains additional information pertaining to that specific feature of the general education assessment plan. For example, sub-section A lists the “broad categories” of student learning objectives (SLOs) for general education. These are shown below.

1. *Communication Skills*
2. *Technology and Information Literacy*
3. *Critical Analysis and Scientific Reasoning*
4. *Quantitative and Numerical Analysis*
5. *Community, Culture, and Diversity*
6. *Arts and Humanities*

Each of the sub-sections is developed in similar fashion with, for example, part C, providing a list of actions undertaken by GEAW in response to information gleaned from the General Education Assessment Survey, which was administered to faculty teaching general education courses in a range of disciplines. Among the items on the list are specific details pertaining to direct and indirect measures of assessment that will be employed. Sub-section D indicates how assessment data will be used, and E sets forth a timeline describing the implementation of the general education assessment plan, with pilot courses “*covering two SLOs starting Fall 2019 and running to the end of Fall 2020.*”

Report Requirement #4: This section of the report comprises an outline of the activities undertaken by the University in implementing the general education assessment plan, beginning in March 2019 with the announcement of the two SLOs to be assessed during AY2019-2020, and identifying the courses in which this work would take place. The timeline includes the scoring of “*signature assignments collected during spring and fall of previous academic year,*” with each team assessing “*the previous academic year’s two SLOs using selected general education courses.*” This activity will take place in mid-May every year and be followed by a “*Post assessment debriefing session...*”

The annual schedule culminates in early October when the Chair of the PACGEO Assessment subcommittee and the Director of Academic Assessment distribute the following Spring’s faculty development events calendar.

REPORT ANALYSIS: The University of Oklahoma interim report provides evidence showing that the institution has made discernable progress with regard to general education assessment. The report itself is well constructed and well documented; the institution is to be commended on the quality of the report—in both the narrative and its supporting materials.

More specifically, the document describes in clear terms the steps taken by the University in developing its general education assessment plan, and the measures it has taken and will take in the implementation of the plan. The institution’s actions in the creation of the plan included the formation of the General Education Assessment Workgroup (GEAW), which provided a functioning “infrastructure” for the University’s efforts in this area.

The report notes also the establishment of general education learning outcomes (SLOs), as shown in the Report Summary section above, and the “*Means/methods*” through which these outcomes will be assessed. The evidence presented indicates that the institution’s SLOs are in alignment with the OSRHE learning outcomes, as reflected

in the curriculum maps provided in the report's appendices. The SLO categories are shown in the Report Summary section above and developed more fully in the OU document contained in the appendices. The excerpt below shows the Communication Skills category, with its general description and "Communication Skills Performance Indicators."

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

PROPOSED STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Learning Outcomes by Category:

1. **Communication Skills:** *Students will clearly and effectively communicate knowledge and ideas in written, oral, and visual/spatial forms appropriate to the general education subject area. They will engage with their audiences by actively reading, listening, reflecting, and responding to and delivering messages using a variety of formats.*

Communication Skills Performance Indicators: students will:

- a) Demonstrate proficiency in listening, speaking, writing, and reading.
- b) Explain how the context in which a message is communicated influences its interpretation.
- c) Apply appropriate form and style to effectively and respectfully engage audiences using a variety of media.
- d) Write using a multi-step process of planning, critiquing, editing, and revising.

The curriculum maps included in the appendices are generally, thorough and precise, as reflected in the table below, which shows the mapping for the second learning outcome (SLO)—in the category of Technology and Information Literacy.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME (SLO) CATEGORY: **Technology and Information Literacy**

Students will demonstrate effective use of technology for communicating, researching, organizing, storing, accessing, and presenting information. They will locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material from a variety of sources, and will format and document material in a manner appropriate for the general education subject area.

| Technology and Information Literacy Skills Performance Indicators | Additional Info for each Performance Indicator | Selected General Education Courses | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | BIO 1114 Intro Zoology | MATH 1473 Math-Critical Thinking | P SC 1113 American Federal Government | SOC 1113 Intro to Sociology | PSY 1113 Elements of Psychology | CHEM 1315 General Chemistry |
| a) Use technology as appropriate for the general education subject area. | The course: <i>Introduces (I), Reinforces (R), or Provides Mastery (M)</i> Direct Assessment Methods | I | I | | I | I | |
| b) Recognize unethical and illegal use of information, including copyright and privacy issues. | The course: <i>Introduces (I), Reinforces (R), or Provides Mastery (M)</i> Direct Assessment Methods | I | | | | | |
| c) Identify appropriate sources of information for academic work. | The course: <i>Introduces (I), Reinforces (R), or Provides Mastery (M)</i> Direct Assessment Methods | I | I | I | | | |
| d) Accurately cite a variety of sources, including electronic, visual, and print media. | The course: <i>Introduces (I), Reinforces (R), or Provides Mastery (M)</i> Direct Assessment Methods | I | | I | I | | |
| e) Use cited information to support ideas, hypotheses, and conclusions. | The course: <i>Introduces (I), Reinforces (R), or Provides Mastery (M)</i> Direct Assessment Methods | I | I | I | I | I | I |

In responding directly to HLC report requirements, the report also provides an annual timeline of general education assessment activities, with the specific actions/initiatives to be undertaken at specific points in the assessment “calendar.” Although this section of the report is somewhat unclear as to the resolution of activities undertaken during AY2018-2019, the overarching schedule is laid out in precise terms and should serve the institution well moving forward.

Analysis Concluding Statement: The University of Oklahoma has complied in every respect with the HLC report requirements. The institution has made substantive changes and improvements in the development and implementation of its general education assessment procedures. As described in the report, these procedures should serve the Universtiy well in creating, gathering and analyzing assessment data in its general education programming. The HLC acknowledges the institution’s efforts to date and will not require additional reporting on this topic.

However, given that this set of procedures has just recently been developed and is in the process of being fully implemented, the University must give continued attention to its efforts in this area. (Please see the Staff Finding section below.) OU should assume that the HLC Peer Review Team that conducts the institution’s AY2022-2023 Comprehensive Evaluation will examine carefully the organization’s continued progress in this area—and in particular with regard to the ongoing collection of general education assessment data and their usage in the improvement of student learning.

STAFF FINDING:

Note the relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s): Core Component 4.B pertaining to general education assessment.

Statements of Analysis (check one below)

Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

Evidence is insufficient and a HLC focused visit is warranted.

STAFF ACTION: Receive the report on general education assessment. No further reports are required.

The institution’s next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2022– 2023.