NWCCU Accreditation
Revised Core Theme 1: Undergraduate Education
December 28, 2011

Description of Revisions Undertaken Since Year 1 Report

Undergraduate education objectives and indicators have been revised to capture the fundamental conditions that allow OSU to fulfill its mission of producing baccalaureate graduates prepared for today’s professional and societal challenges. In addition to demonstration of mission fulfillment, revisions also aim to produce useful data that will aid the university in determining actions and interventions to improve learning and success for all undergraduates.

Objective 1 has been revised to capture the essential conditions for earning a degree (admissions, financial means and course access) and to provide a finer-grained analysis of the degree to which OSU serves various student demographics equitably and in alignment with state demographics.

Objective 2 has been modified to focus on the educational quality of undergraduate degree programs. Whereas the Year 1 indicators demonstrated the existence of assessment processes and infrastructure, this version focuses on the actual outcomes of the assessment process by presenting the degree to which students achieve learning outcomes in the two primary curricular components of undergraduate degrees: the degree program (the major) and the Baccalaureate Core general education program. Experiential learning is increasingly valued by degree programs as a high impact educational practice that allows students to apply classroom learning to real-world situations, so an indicator revealing student participation rates has been added as a contributing factor to overall degree program quality.

Objective 3 focuses on the academic-support, well-being, and campus-climate conditions that allow OSU students to overcome difficulties and, ultimately, persist to degree. While not comprehensive of the full support landscape at OSU, the indicators align with what OSU and national sources (e.g. NSSE, NACADA, ACHA/NCHA) indicate correlate with student success. Student usage rates and student perception of service quality have been included wherever possible. Data linked to student demographics have been included wherever possible to measure alignment with OSU’s land grant value of equity of access and participation.

Objective 1.1: Provide broad and continuing access to university degrees for the people of Oregon and beyond.

Institutional Indicators:

1. Applicants, admits and first-time enrolls (including admit rate and yield rate) by Oregon resident, out-of-state, international and by campus (Corvallis, Cascades, Ecampus, DPP). For Oregon and out-of-state, disaggregate data by ethnicity, gender, age category, urban-rural status, and first generation-college status.
2. Oregon resident enrollment participation rate by relevant Oregon demographic group. First-time degree seeking per recent high school graduate by ethnicity, urban-rural status, economically disadvantaged. Cascades area high school graduates by Cascades enrollment. Ecampus-only Oregon resident degree seekers by Oregon population over age 25.

3. Access to key milestone courses commonly required for majority of majors. Actual capacity offered per required capacity based on enrolled majors of sophomores. For Baccalaureate Core, similar ratio, but course capacity is determined by specific Baccalaureate Core categories characteristics such as Speech and Synthesis. Required capacity is based on corresponding class-level enrollments (e.g. freshman for Skills, sophomore for Perspectives), adjusted for majors that take core courses in first two years versus those that take such courses throughout degree program.

4. Measurement of degree to which student financial need is met through non-loan-based aid

5. OSU 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time degree seeking students and the graduation rate gap between under-represented minorities and overall rate.

6. Degrees earned by gender, ethnic group, urban-rural status, first-generation status, E-campus, Cascades, transfer and DPP students, and OSU mission areas.

Rationale:
Objective 1 defines the essential accessibility components for students to earn bachelor’s degrees at OSU: admission to the university, the means to afford educational expenses, and access to required courses to complete undergraduate degree programs. As the state’s land grant university, OSU strives to attract and graduate an undergraduate student body reflective of the diverse dimensions of today’s society, so this set of indicators focuses on student data according to key categories of personal attributes, geographic origins, and higher education backgrounds. Access to courses in a timely manner and access to financial aid without excessive accumulation of debt and are crucial conditions for students to persist to degree completion. Overall, OSU’s educational resources should allow undergraduates to attain degrees in a timely manner within six-years (for students who enter as freshmen). Degree attainment data should reflect equity across student demographics and geographic origins, as well as across OSU’s various platforms and locations for delivering academic programs that serve students who are unable to enroll full-time at the Corvallis campus from the start of their studies to completion. Objectives 2 and 3 address in detail the quality of educational and support programs that contribute to OSU’s goal of providing an excellent teaching and learning environment for undergraduates to successfully complete baccalaureate degrees.

Objective 1.2: **Provide rigorous and effective degree programs**

Institutional Indicators:
1. Depth and quality of student learning measured by results of full-cycle assessment in degree programs (outcomes defined, learning assessed, curriculum...
improved, cycle repeated): achievement of key program outcomes and enactment of curricular improvement plans. Assessment cycle will establish targets at the program level for achieving learning outcomes (e.g., % of student reaching satisfactory level as defined by the program; summative measures of student performance through evaluation of student portfolios).

2. Outcomes of periodic Curriculum Council program reviews as measures of the relevance and rigor of degree programs’ curricula.

3. Depth and quality of student learning in the Bacc Core measured by student learning outcomes achievement and enactment of curricular improvement plans. First cycle will establish targets for achieving learning outcomes within each Bacc Core category.

4. Participation rates in academic experiential learning — research, internships, service learning, global learning — with targets established in the first year.

Rationale:
Objective 2 encompasses the quality of degree programs that lie at the foundation of OSU’s undergraduate education program. Excellent undergraduate programs produce graduates with the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to contribute productively to professional, civic and personal realms. The requisite disciplinary and liberal education knowledge, skills and abilities are captured collectively in the learning outcomes of degree programs and the Baccalaureate Core. Curriculum Council reviews evaluate the overall shape and scope of degree program curricula and include site-visits by disciplinary peers external to OSU. Measuring student learning against these established learning outcomes provides evidence of educational program effectiveness. Findings from student learning assessments inform adjustments to curricular design and teaching methods leading to student learning improvements over time. National research demonstrates positive educational outcomes for students who participate in experiential learning, and OSU academic programs value experiential learning as important opportunities to apply and extend curricular learning to real-world settings and important preparation for post-college growth and careers.

Objective 1.3: Provide a supportive and healthy learning environment beyond the classroom for student success and development at all levels.

Institutional Indicators (wherever possible student data should be disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, age category, urban-rural status, and first generation-college status):
1. Participation rates in first-year experience courses and percent retention of first-year experience course participants versus those that did not complete a first-year experience course
2. Percent of first-year students living in a campus residence hall during their first year of college and first-to-second-year retention rates of on-campus versus off-campus first-year students
3. Student-to-academic-advisor ratios and rate of student usage of MyDegrees by class year
4. Percent of students utilizing academic support resources in key gateway courses and final course grades of student users compared to non-users in same courses
5. Corvallis campus student engagement in out-of-classroom behaviors that help to address major factors negatively affecting academic performance:
- Percent of student body using Student Health Services per year and percent of student users of SHS rating quality of care good/excellent
- Percent of student body using CAPS per year; percent of student users of CAPS rating quality of care good/excellent; percent of CAPS student users completing the academic year in good academic standing compared to overall student population.
- Number of accommodations implemented per year via DAS and percent of DAS student completing the academic year in good academic standing compared to overall student population.
- Percent of students using RecSports/Dixon or McAlexander Fieldhouse and percent of students who report meeting the Physical Activity and Public Health Recommendations for Adults compared to a normative sample

6. NSSE Enriching Educational Experiences and Supportive Campus Environment benchmarks

Rationale:
Objective 3 comprises academic and student-affairs services and programs that support student success for students with diverse backgrounds and needs. While not comprehensive, these services and programs represent national best practices in foundational student services and reflect OSU priorities in student support. High-quality delivery of these services and programs produce conditions conducive to teaching and learning excellence from matriculation to graduation. First-year experience courses and academic advising provide students critical guidance in learning to identify and utilize university resources and opportunities. Housing, academic support resources, health and counseling services and disability access services will help students to identify, prevent and overcome difficulties that arise within academic and personal realms. Student participation and ratings of quality provide evidence of the accessibility, usefulness and relevance of these services and programs. The NSSE benchmarks provide a holistic snapshot of support and services that undergird students’ ability to persist to degree and achieve academic excellence.