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Valerie Osland Paton serves as Vice Provost for Planning and Assessment at Texas Tech University, leading institutional effectiveness in administrative and academic affairs. She supervises the Office of Planning and Assessment, Academic Support and Facilities Resources, and the Quality Enhancement Plan/TTU Ethics Center. Dr. Paton represents Texas Tech as the institutional liaison to SACSCOC, member THECB Peer Accountability Group for Value Added, member of the Executive Committee for the Council on Engagement and Outreach of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, and Sponsoring Partner for the National Outreach Scholarship Conference.

In addition, Dr. Paton serves as a faculty member in the higher education graduate program in TTU's College of Education. Her research interests include higher education policy and practice, engagement, planning and assessment. She has served as co-PI for a Hispanic Serving Institutions STEM grant with El Centro College, and the Trinity River Audubon Center; and PI for a Title III Strengthening Institutions Grant.

Her academic preparation includes a B.A. in American Studies from San Jose State University, a M.A. Counseling Psychology from Santa Clara University, and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Southern California.



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July 22, 2010



Output Measures:

Retention – Fall to Fall – 1-year and 2-year

Graduation and Persistence – 4, 5, 6 year

First-time, Full-time

Same Institution

Other Texas Institutions

Graduation of students completing at least 30 SCH at a 2-year college

IPEDS Common Data Set uses 6 year Graduation Rate for first-time, full-time students at the same institution

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Accountability System documents Outputs:

How many students persist?

How many graduate?

How many degrees are issued by an
institution?

These measures are most appropriate for full-
time students

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Student Learning is an Outcome Measure:

- Measurement of change in student growth and development over several years
- *Much more difficult to measure with accuracy*

What did the student *learn* during college?

What *skills* do they possess?

What difference does it make in the
workforce?

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Examples of *Learning* include:

Core knowledge - What students know about
Communication, Math, Life & Physical
Science, Humanities, Arts, U.S. History,
Government & Political Science, Social and
Behavioral Science

Subject matter expertise - Engineering, Business,
Teaching, Agriculture, Biology, Chemistry,
Interior Design, etc.

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Examples of *Skills* include what student can do:

College-level competencies

Critical thinking

Communication

Empirical & quantitative

Teamwork

Social and personal responsibility

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Multiple measurements gathered over time:

At entrance or transfer:

College Learning Assessment (CLA)

Placement examinations (mathematics, chemistry, foreign languages)

Embedded assessment in introductory, required courses (not grades)

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At mid-point or Junior year:

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

California Critical Thinking Skills Test

Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (Science, Math, Reading, Writing)

Embedded assessment in major courses (not grades)

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At graduation:

- Capstone courses, senior projects and theses
- Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)
- Graduating Student Survey
- College Senior Survey
- Online Student Assessment

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After Graduation - Alumni:

- 1, 3, 7-year Alumni Survey
- Employer Surveys
- Alumni Focus Groups

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Allow institutions to implement their “best practices” for assessing student learning for their student populations

Significant expertise at the institutional-level in measuring growth and development over time due to:

- Regional accreditation requirements (SACSCOC)
- Discipline-based accreditation requirements (ABA, NCATE, AACSB, ABET, NAAB, etc. Texas Tech has more than 70 discipline-based accreditors)

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Avoid easy solutions:

Multiple measures taken over time are necessary to describe student growth and development.

Single metrics create misleading information and have problematic implications for a robust higher education system that serves a diverse population.