



PINNACLE
EVALUATION SERVICES

Kim Pearsall
Title III Project Director
Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City
900 N. Portland Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73107

September 18, 2012

Dear Kim,

I appreciate the opportunity to evaluate the status and progress of the Title III project titled *Expanding Access to High-Demand STEM Programs* at OSU-Oklahoma City.

The attached report provides a summary of observations and findings during the evaluation visit, much of which was discussed throughout the evaluation process. Overall, the project has made excellent progress toward accomplishing year one activity objectives, and compliance documentation is exemplary. By all indications, the project is off to a wonderful start!

I would also like to add that I appreciate the warm hospitality extended to me by you and your staff as well as the organized and efficient manner in which all pertinent evaluation material was presented and made available.

If you would like to discuss any of this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Patricia R. Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "W".

Patricia Reyes Walker
Pinnacle Evaluation Services

**Evaluation Report
OSU - Oklahoma City
September 17, 2012
PO Award #: P031A110187**

On-site Evaluation Conducted by Patricia Reyes Walker of Pinnacle Evaluation Services

Introduction

Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City (OSU-OKC) is a two-year degree-granting institution serving as an extension of the main OSU campus located in Stillwater, OK. Once operating primarily as a technical training center, the institution has evolved into a comprehensive community college offering 34 Associate of Applied Science degree programs, seven Associate of Science degree programs, and one Bachelor of Technology degree along with several certificate programs.

OSU-OKC has witnessed overwhelming enrollment growth in recent years and now serves more than 8,000 students each fall semester. Limited physical space and overrun classrooms coupled with an overwhelming commitment to its mission, “*to prepare individuals to live and work in an increasingly technological and global community*” led this institution to explore alternative methods of course delivery.

OSU-OKC is nearing the end of the first year of a five-year Strengthening Institutions Program titled ***Expanding Access to High-Demand STEM Programs***. Patricia Reyes Walker of Pinnacle Evaluation Services conducted an on-site visit on September 17, 2012 to evaluate the compliance of the project with applicable Department of Education policies and procedures and to review the institution's progress toward achieving annual project objectives.

The Title III project has an overall focus of improving student access and success via the following interrelated components:

- 1) *Redesign and Expanded Distance Learning Courses:* A series of high demand courses will be converted to distance delivery over the five year project. Beginning with general education STEM courses and proceeding with high demand technology-related courses, the project schedule calls for online conversion of five courses each of year of project years 1-4 with pilot testing of revised courses the year following redesign.
- 2) *Develop Online Support Services:* The project will systematically design, develop, pilot test, evaluation and modify a series of online support services including online readiness assessment, orientation, tutoring, registration, library resources, and advising. Once fully developed, new online services will be institutionalized into the OSU-OKC's regular operating structure.

The project's two major components are further supported and facilitated by comprehensive faculty/staff development activities as well as enhancement of the institution's technological infrastructure. OSU-OKC submitted this Title III application in 2010 but was not funded until the 2011 competition during a "fund down" cycle by the U.S. Department of Education. As such, and considering that the institution decided to fund a few of the initiatives originally included in the grant application, some small modifications were necessary in project year 1. More specifically, costs of renovation of an area to house a Faculty Resource Center (included in original grant proposal) were absorbed by the institution. Other minor adjustments to the project timeline were necessary due to the delay in securing federal funds.

As is common with Title III projects in their first year of operation, OSU-OKC

experienced some delays in identifying and selecting individuals to fill all project positions. However, the project is now fully staffed (see table at right) and staff is to be commended for their diligence, hard work, and

OSU-OKC Title III Project Staff		
		Start Date
Kim Pearsall, Project Director	50%	10/1/2011
Ginger London, Activity Coordinator/ Online Student Services Developer	100%	4/9/2012
Andrea Stone, Instructional Designer	100%	3/26/2012
Nancy Dallman, Administrative Asst.	100%	1/3/2012
Various faculty members working on course development and evaluation	Stipends	Spring 2012

determination to ensure that year 1 objectives were met despite the limited time in which staff were on board.

OSU-OKC's Title III project has had a highly successful first year. In accordance with the major project components listed above, the project has achieved the following major milestones thus far:

- ✓ Project staff have instituted a highly effective method of project implementation that is inclusive of the following committees and work groups:
 - *Title III Planning & Implementation Committee* - consists of representatives from all major institutional divisions, meets quarterly and provides overall guidance and assistance with all aspects of project implementation.
 - *Title III Core Team* - consists of all Title III staff members and selected individuals from institutional offices with a substantial role in the development work associated with accomplishing annual objectives. In addition to project staff, the team includes the OSU-OKC staff from the distance education, institutional research, instructional technology, and business offices.
 - *Title III Project Workgroups* - various teams of individuals directly involved in specific project activities such as online best practices, faculty development, webpage design, and online student services have been formed, meet regularly, and serve to assist project staff in their efforts to accomplish project objectives.

- *Internal Monitoring Team* - representatives from Academic Affairs, Student Services, Finance and Operations, Information Services, as well as faculty and student representatives meet quarterly to review project activity and evaluate progress toward achieving project objectives.
- ✓ A comprehensive Title III Policies and Procedures manual has been developed to assist with staff training and facilitate effective project administration.
- ✓ To ensure project staff remain focused on project activities and timelines, a customized Performance Agreement has been developed for each staff member and executed by both the employee and the Title III Project Director upon hiring. This document outlines the various activities, duties, responsibilities, and task timelines required of each staff member in conjunction with project objectives. Staff performance against these requirements is routinely monitored and evaluated.
- ✓ A Title III OSU-OKC Online College Best Practices and Benchmarks and Title III OSU-OKC Course Certification Rubrics has been developed and utilized for faculty training.
- ✓ Faculty development activities have been designed by Title III staff, and faculty have participated in extensive individual, group, face-to-face, and online training sessions focused on best practices in distance learning strategies.
- ✓ The level of increased faculty knowledge has been analyzed and evaluated utilizing pre/post test instruments.
- ✓ Appropriate technology inclusive of classroom use hardware/software to facilitate online course development and pilot testing has been identified, purchased, and made available to participating faculty via a checkout program.
- ✓ Five general education STEM courses (BIOL 1303, BIOL 1515, GEN 0104, GEN 0204, PHYS 1204) have undergone revision for conversion to online delivery methods.
- ✓ An online course webpage and portal have been developed and are accessible via the main OSU-OKC webpage.
- ✓ Software programs for development of online tutoring, online orientation, and online readiness assessment have been identified and/or purchased and installed.
- ✓ Upon completion, new online services will be accessible via the main OSU-OKC web portal.

Basic Compliance Issues

At the time of the evaluation visit, all approved **personnel** positions were filled. The percent of time devoted to the project as noted in personnel contracts corresponds to the personnel structure as outlined in the grant application. Copies of personnel contracts (payroll action forms) were available during the evaluation visit. These documents do include a Title III project title for each grant-funded position as well as the percentage of time for which an individual is employed on the Title III project. However, project staff is encouraged to confirm that working staff titles correspond to those approved in the original grant application. Likewise, staff should ensure that job descriptions for each Title III position correspond to those included in the grant application and/or to formal revisions requests approved by the institution's assigned U.S. Department of Education program officer.

Resumés for all staff members are available in the Title III office. The majority of project staff meet or exceed the specific requirements of their position. It is recommended that OSU-OKC review all Title III staff resumés to ensure that each project staff member meets the minimum qualifications of his/her position as stated in the approved grant or subsequent approved revision requests, including the minimum degree requirements and years of experience in particular areas.

Current grant staff is a combination of new employees and employees who previously held other positions within the institution. Those who have moved into Title III positions from other areas of the institution have been released from a portion of their previous duties, and this is clearly and comprehensibly described in narrative memos to project file thereby providing evidence of **non-supplanting**. All grant **staff are paid on**

par with other college staff performing comparable duties and receive the same benefits and salary increases as other institutional personnel.

All staff members do complete regular **time and effort (T&E) reports**, and these are signed and dated by the employee submitting the report and by the Title III Project Director. The Project Director's time and effort report is signed by her supervisor.

To document development work being accomplished, each Title III staff member completes a **regular progress report (combined with the T&E report)**. Progress reports are inclusive of appropriate and sufficient additional documentation and/or information to provide evidence of development work.

All Title III-funded stand-alone **equipment** and **supplies** (e.g., computers, monitors) are inventoried when purchased and tagged. Project staff have developed a highly efficient inventory system that is consistent with EDGAR 74.34 regulations and inclusive of an online faculty technology "checkout" process that is linked to the Title III inventory system providing an immediate update to the project's inventory.

Project staff complete the standard institutional **travel requests** as required by OSU-OKC. In addition, all individuals who travel on Title III funds are required to complete detailed **travel requests (pre)** and **travel reports (post)**. Each of these forms is tied to the approved annual activity objectives as necessary. All individuals traveling on Title III funds are required to 1) demonstrate how the travel will contribute to accomplishing that year's objectives and upon return, and 2) complete a travel report summarizing the knowledge and/or information gained from the travel experience, how this knowledge will contribute to accomplishing objectives and how it will be disseminated to pertinent individuals. Conference agendas, handouts, or similar

documentation are attached to each travel report as appropriate.

The Title III Office maintains monthly records of **budget** expenses and regularly compares them to the project budget. The Project Director monitors encumbrances, expenditures, and balances and signs off on all financial transactions. A comprehensive set of **budget notes** detailing any deviation from the approved grant has been developed. The Title III Project Director maintains regular communication with the institution's main campus business office in Stillwater, OK and receives notifications of federal draw downs on behalf of the project. Purchase order requests describe purchased items, and linkages to grant objectives are noted in writing whenever possible.

A minimal amount of unspent year one funds (approximately \$15,000) is expected to be carried over into year two. OSU-OKC project staff will provide a detailed spending plan for use of carryover funds into year two of the project in the year two Annual Performance Report.

Title III project staff maintain documentation to support on-going internal project **evaluation**. Title III staff, as well as all steering committees and workgroups previously described, meet regularly to review and reflect upon activities in progress, activity unknowns, and project management. In addition, the Project Director meets regularly with OSU-OKC administrators to maintain open lines of communication and keep the institutional communities abreast of all activity within the Title III Project.

Basic Compliance Recommendations.

- It is recommended that project staff review all staff employment contracts, resumés, and job descriptions to ensure these are in accordance with information contained in the approved grant proposal and/or subsequent revisions approved by the institution's assigned U.S. Department of Education program officer.

- When considering an expenditure that is different from those listed in the original application, the Project Director should verify that the expenditure is justified (based on approved objectives for the year), allowable (according to EDGAR and OMB Circulars), and reasonable (in light of other necessary expenses for the project year). Explanations should be included in the budget notes.
- Project staff is encouraged to continue to review U.S. Department of Education rules and regulations governing the operation of federal grant programs as noted in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) handbook as well appropriate Office of Management and Budget (OMB circulars) in order to continue to maintain compliance with all federal requirements.

Progress and/or Accomplishment of Annual Objectives:

Year One Objectives	Progress to Date/Evidence of Completion
<p><i>1. By Sept. 2012, participating faculty/staff demonstrate a 50% increase in knowledge of online/web-based instructional design, teaching strategies, and technology, as measured by pre/post tests.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A 22-page comprehensive manual titled OSU-OKC Online Best Practices complete with mission statement, strategic goals, action items, and evaluation benchmarks has been established to guide faculty development and facilitate effective learning in an online environment. ➤ Faculty training activities inclusive of short "Technology Thursday" sessions, formal multi-day face-to-face classes, self-paced online sessions, as well as group and individualized sessions have been developed, scheduled, and carried out. ➤ Faculty (5) selected for revision of targeted courses (5) received a minimum of 40 hours of instruction in preparation for effective online course revision. ➤ Additional faculty members have participated in selected training sessions. ➤ Pre- and post- tests to evaluate level of knowledge of online learning best practices were developed. The pre-test was administered to all participating faculty prior to participation in training sessions. At the time of the evaluation visit, the post-test was being administered and responses to date indicated an average of 53% increase in knowledge.

<p>2. By Sept. 2012, curricula for 5 General Education STEM courses newly converted to web-based delivery; syllabi 100% complete and ready to pilot.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A comprehensive rubric titled "<i>Cowboy Quality Online Course Evaluation</i>" was developed following extensive research and analysis of best practices. ➤ The following courses have undergone (or are in process) conversion to online delivery utilizing the newly developed/adopted rubric: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BIOL 1303: Principles of Biology ▪ BIOL 1515: Human Anatomy & Physiology ▪ GEN 0104: Developmental Math I Pre-to-Intro Algebra ▪ GEN 0204: Developmental Math II Intro-to-Intermediate Algebra ▪ PHYS 1204: General Physical Science ➤ Classroom capture systems have been installed in appropriate classrooms, and additional technology is available to faculty via a checkout system. ➤ Syllabi and course modules for online courses have been developed and are available for review both in hard copy and via the institution's webpage. ➤ Tutor.com has been selected as the software program to best provide online tutoring support for newly revised online courses.
<p>3. By Sept. 2011, at least 85% of students participating in pilots of Online Readiness Assessment and Online Orientation report satisfaction with these services at an overall average of 3.5 (or higher) on a 5 point scale.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The new online orientation system is being built in house in a multi-phase system. Phase One has been completed and is currently accessible via the "Online Orientation" link on the OSU-OKC eCampus webpage. ➤ A survey to measure student satisfaction with Phase One has been developed and was being administered at the time of the external evaluation visit on September 17, 2012. A total of 59 student responses had been received with an average satisfaction rating of 4.10 on a 5 point scale. ➤ The second phase of online orientation development will include comprehensive video helpguides with descriptions of the Online Classroom (Desire2Learn) format. Helpguide

	<p>topics include Navigating Your Course, Using the Content Area, Using the Dropbox, Contacting your Instructor, Using Grades, Using Discussions, and Taking Quizzes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Information gathered from student surveys will be utilized to guide development of Phase One and further refine the entire online orientation process. ➤ Extensive research of existing online readiness assessment tools has been conducted, and the possibility of developing a program in house has been analyzed. ➤ The Title III Workgroup for this project has concluded that the most appropriate software program to measure online readiness of students is <i>SmarterMeasure</i>. ➤ Communication with software vendors has begun and as of the time of evaluation, the institution was in the process of purchasing <i>SmarterMeasure</i>. ➤ Plans call for the purchase of an initial package of 500 assessments and a custom interface to be utilized for pilot testing. ➤ Once installed, <i>SmarterMeasure</i> will be customizable and allow for the incorporation of a student satisfaction survey within its use and functionality. ➤ Student access to <i>SmarterMeasure</i> will be primarily via the OSU-OKC main eCampus web portal.
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Summary:

The OSU-OKC Title III project enjoys an overwhelming degree of support from all areas of the institution and this resonates in the high degree of positive influence the project is having across all academic and student service divisions. Additionally, the exemplary leadership of the Title III Project Director and the dedication and qualifications of all project staff in concert with institutional support have facilitated

significant progress and attainment of year one project objectives despite the short time that the project has been fully staffed. By all indications, this project is well on its way to strengthening the institution's ability to expand access to quality educational programming and student services.