



Texas Southern University
Assessment Plan 2010-2013

Unit Assessment Plan

School of Law

Introduction

Texas Southern University's Mission

Texas Southern University is a comprehensive metropolitan university. Building on its legacy as a historically black institution, the university provides academic and research programs that address critical urban issues and prepare an ethnically diverse student population to become a force for positive change in a global society.

In order to achieve this mission, Texas Southern University provides:

- quality instruction in a culture of innovative teaching and learning
- basic and applied research and scholarship that is responsive to community issues
- opportunities for public service that benefit the community and the world.

Texas Southern University's Vision

Texas Southern University will become one of the nation's pre-eminent comprehensive metropolitan universities. We will be recognized by the excellence of our programs, the quality of our instruction, our innovative research, and our desire to be a contributing partner to our community, state, nation, and world.

Accreditation Standards

Accreditation by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS) Commission on Colleges signifies that the institution: (1) has a mission appropriate to higher education, (2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and (3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives.

Source: The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement, 5th edition

Goal 1 Assessment Plan 2010-11 to 2012-13

1 Goal Description

Goal 1

Develop and enhance students' foundational lawyering skills.

2 SLO Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

SLO 1.1

Students will accurately synthesize, formulate, and apply principles of law to resolve a legal issue.

SLO 1.2

Students will organize and express ideas with precision, clarity, logic and economy.

3 Metric

Metric 1.1

Uniform pre-post practice MPT (Multistate Performance Test) administered to 1L class.

Metric 1.2

Uniform 1L Lawyering Process spring semester writing project.

4 Target 2010-11

Target 1.1

Statistically significant improvement on post test scores; median score of 3 or better based on standard MPT scoring rubric.

Target 1.2

Median score of score 3 or above on project rubric using normalized grading.

5 Findings 2010-11

Findings 1.1

Average median pre-test score: 1.70.

Average median post-test score: 2.33.

Average median post- test score of 2.33 does not meet target goal of 3.00.

Findings 1.2

Project evaluation results show average overall median score for the project to be 2.83, slightly below the target score of 3.00.

Students scored 3.00 on Legal analysis component, 3.00 on factual analysis component and 2.50 on organization and format, which was below the 3.0 target

6 Action Plan 2010-11

Action Plan 1.1

Based on 2010-11 Findings

Continue work in Lawyering Process on teaching students' synthesis skills by developing more targeted assignments; provide students with multiple opportunities to develop MPT tested skills of legal analysis, information synthesis, and factual analysis in years two and three in doctrinal courses such as Business Associations and Appellate Litigation; provide students with pre-test workshops on how to organize and approach MPT testing.

Action Plan 1.2

Below target results due primarily to scores on the organization/format component; on other writing project criteria student performance met the target. Below target results for O/F could be attributed to fact that students did not produce advance drafts of this project for comment and feedback; such feedback is routinely given for other writing projects. In addition, students showed significant improvement in organization/ format criteria on a separately administered pre-post MPT examination. No major changes anticipated; will continue to monitor students' progress in this area. Continue to work with students in 2nd yr Appellate Litigation and Advanced Legal writing.

7 Target 2011-12

Target 1.1

Statistically significant improvement on post test scores; median score of 3 or better based on standard MPT

scoring rubric.

Target 1.2

Median score of 3 or above based on project rubric using normalized grading.

8 Findings 2011-12

Finding 1.1

Average median pre-test score: 2.

Average median post-test score: 2

Above results do not represent statistically significant growth from pre-test to post-test.

Average median post-test score of 2.0 does not meet target goal of 3.00.

(Note: lack of significant growth could be due to issues with testing protocols)

Finding 1.2

Students' average overall median score for the project was

3.0, which meets target score of 3.0. Graders gave only one overall score for legal analysis this year - did not evaluate separate factual analysis and organization/format skill-sets.

9 Action Plan 2011-12

Action Plan

1.1

Work in Lawyering Process on developing students' factual analysis, legal analysis, synthesis, and writing skills. Provide students with multiple opportunities to develop MPT tested skills of legal analysis, information synthesis, and factual analysis in years two and three in doctrinal courses such as Business Associations and Appellate Litigation; provide students with pre-test workshops on how to organize and approach MPT testing. Refine MPT testing protocols.

Action Plan

1.2

Will work to develop more uniform standards for project administration. LP professors will continue to work with students on skill development: clear writing; document formatting; legal analysis, proper assessment and application of facts; integration of information from multiple sources. In the second year, students in appellate litigation will have these skills reinforced, and in addition, more complex application of these skills will be introduced in the context of appellate practice. Project to coordinate Appellate Litigation with Lawyering Process I and II is underway.

10 Target 2012-13

Target 1.1

Statistically significant improvement on post test scores; median score of 3 or better based on standard MPT scoring rubric.

Target 1.2

Median score of 3 or above based on project rubric using normalized grading.

11 Findings 2012-13

Finding 1.1

Average median pre-test score:2

Average median post-test score:2

The results do not represent statistically significant growth from pre-test to post test. The median post-test score of 2 does not meet the target goal of 3.

Finding 1.2

Students' average overall median score for the project was 3.0. This average median score of 3 meets the target goal of 3.0.

12 Action Plan 2012-13

Action Plan

1.1

Continue work in Lawyering Process on developing studentsâ factual analysis, legal analysis, synthesis, and writing skills. Provide students with multiple opportunities to develop MPT tested skills of legal analysis, information synthesis, and factual analysis in years two and three in doctrinal courses such as Business Associations and Appellate Litigation; provide students with pre-test workshops on how to organize and approach MPT testing.

Refine MPT testing protocols.

Action Plan

1.2

Will work this year to develop more uniform standards for project administration.

LP professors will continue to work with students on skill development: clear writing; document formatting; legal analysis, proper assessment and application of facts; integration of information from multiple sources. In the second year, students in appellate litigation will have these skills reinforced, and in addition, more complex application of these skills will be introduced in the context of appellate practice. Project to coordinate Appellate Litigation with Lawyering Process I and II is underway.

13 Additional Reference Documents

R.1.1

Description of Multistate Performance Test (MPT)

The MPT tests the applicantsâ ability to use fundamental lawyering skills in a realistic situation. Applicants are given a file and a library and are instructed to complete a task that a beginning lawyer should be able to accomplish, including drafting legal documents. The test is designed to evaluate competence in fundamental skills that lawyers are expected to demonstrate regardless of the area of law in which the skills arise. The MPT requires examinees to 1) sort detailed factual materials and separate relevant from irrelevant facts; 2) analyze statutory, case, and administrative materials for applicable principles of law; 3) apply the relevant law to the relevant facts in a manner likely to resolve a clientâs problem; 4) identify and resolve ethical dilemmas, when present; 5) communicate effectively in writing and 6) complete a lawyering task within time constraints. (test description from National conference of Law Examinersâ website)

R.1.2

Description of Spring Semester Writing Project (Client Letter)

During the spring semester of Lawyering Process, students were required to draft a client letter in a hypothetical child custody dispute (best interest of the child standard was at issue). The studentsâ letters were evaluated using a form of course embedded assessment. Lawyering Process professors reviewed the studentsâ letters and assigned project grades. Afterwards, three external evaluators (all practicing lawyers) were asked to review the letters using the following performance measure: legal analysis (evaluating the studentsâ skill and competence in synthesizing and/or integrating multiple cases, integrating clientâs facts with the law, and using the analysis to provide advice and counsel). Students received scores ranging from 1 to 5 on this performance measure. A score of 1 represented limited competency; 5 represented a high degree of competency. This performance measure is aligned with key Lawyering Process learning outcomes, as well as performance skills tested on the Multi State Performance Test, a component of most state bar examinations.

[Clent Letter Raw Data Spring2012.Ref.doc.1.2](#) [XLS 73 KB 5/3/13]

[Client Letter Analysis Spring2013](#) [DOC 63 KB 7/31/13]

[Client Letter Charts.Spring 2012.Ref.doc.1.2\(Jones\)](#) [XLS 295 KB 5/3/13]

[MPT 2012 Scores w charts Ref Doc 1.1\(Jones\) \(2\)](#) [XLS 53 KB 5/3/13]

[TSU SACS Assessment Project - Law School Reference Documents - Goal 1](#) [MSG 319 KB 7/25/12]

Goal 2 Assessment Plan 2010-11 to 2012-13

1 Goal Description

Goal 2

Prepare students for success on the bar examination.

2 SLO Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

SLO 2.1

Students will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental legal principles in several core legal fields of practice by effective employment of those principles to solve legal problems written by experts and designed to test competent deployment of those principles.

SLO 2.2

Students will demonstrate ability to competently analyze and resolve legal problems and issues by correctly applying generally fundamental accepted legal principles to bar examination hypotheticals.

SLO 2.3

Students will demonstrate ability to write a competent bar examination essay under timed test conditions.

3 Metric

Metric 2.1

Student scores on the Uniform 1L Comprehensive Final Examination.

Metric 2.2

Overall Texas Bar Exam Pass Rate.

Metric 2.3

Final exam grades in Bar Essay Writing Course.

4 Target 2010-11

Target 2.1

On 80% of the law school's five comprehensive exams the first year class will achieve a median raw score of 60% (36 of 60).

Target 2.2

75% overall first time bar pass rate for the July Texas bar exam.

Target 2.3

80% of students show significant improvement on pre-post bar examination questions; and 80% achieve a 75% or better on the final examination.

5 Findings 2010-11

Findings 2.1

On 80% of the law school's five comprehensive exams, the first year class achieved an average median raw score of 62.91% (37.75 out of 60) â results exceed the target set for this metric.

Findings 2.2

66.7% overall first time bar pass rate for the July 2011 Texas bar exam. Pass rate represents a decrease from the July, 2010 results and was below the 75% first time bar pass rate set for this metric.

Findings 2.3

Average median score on comprehensive final was 147/250 (59%). 8% of students scored 75% or better, on the final, which was below target. Pre-post data was not collected.

6 Action Plan 2010-11

Action Plan 2.1

Continue collaboration between faculty, Center for Legal Pedagogy, Academic Support, and Assessment Department to develop additional strategies for teaching rule proof sequences, including development and use of rule-proof templates; continue work with students in the 1L academy; continue 1L tutoring program; continue use of classroom turning point âresponderâ technology to augment and enhance student learning re: legal content.

Action Plan 2.2

Conduct comprehensive bar assessment to ascertain reasons for the 2011 decrease in bar passage. Continue to refine Texas bar essay and MBE courses through implementation of assessment protocols; continue to monitor 1L progress on comprehensive final examination; continue to monitor tutoring program; continue to support teaching enhancement grant program â give feedback to faculty on program results; train faculty on developing student learning outcomes and course assessment; implement pre-post MPT testing to enhance studentsâ ability to apply law to facts.

Action Plan 2.3

Produce detailed and enhanced rule templates for bar essay course. Review and set measurable metrics of competence re: identifying and applying rule templates. Disseminate revised rule templates to tenure track faculty teaching bar essay courses for review and comment.

7 Target 2011-12

Target 2.1

On 80% of the law schoolâs five comprehensive exams the first year class will achieve a median raw score of 63% (38 of 60).

Target 2.2

75% overall first time bar pass rate for the July Texas bar exam.

Target 2.3

80% of students show significant improvement on pre-post bar examination questions; and achieve a 75% or better on the final examination.

8 Findings 2011-12

Finding 2.1

On 80% of the law schoolâs comprehensive exams, the first year class achieved an average median raw score of 62.50% (37.50 out of 60) - results are very close to the target goal of 63%

Finding 2.2

64.7% overall first time bar pass rate for the July 2012 Texas bar exam. Pass rate is slightly lower than 2011 (66.7%), and is below the 75% first time July bar pass rate set for this metric.

Finding 2.3

18% of students scored 75% or better on this final, which represented an improvement over 2011, but below 80% target. Pre-post data was not collected.

9 Action Plan 2011-12

Action Plan

2.1

Continue collaboration between faculty, Center for Legal Pedagogy, Academic Support, and Assessment Department to employ strategies for teaching rule proof sequences, including development and use of rule-proof templates; continue work with students in the 1L academy; continue 1L tutoring program; continue use of classroom turning point âresponderâ technology to augment and enhance student learning re: legal content; continue support for faculty development in teaching.

Action Plan

2.2

Continue to refine Texas bar essay and MBE courses through implementation of assessment protocols; continue monitoring 1L progress on comprehensive final examination; continue monitoring tutoring program; continue to provide workshops for faculty on developing student learning outcomes and integrating bar assessments into coursework; continue with pre-post MPT testing to enhance studentsâ ability to apply law to facts. Review recruiting practices to ensure admission of larger cohort of top students. Review scholarship policies.

Action Plan

2.3

Develop pre-post testing protocols for Spring 2013. Continue use of detailed rule templates; review and set

measurable metrics of competence re: identifying and applying rule templates. Continue to work with tenure track faculty to ensure integration of rule templates into courses in which professors are teaching bar essay subjects.

10 Target 2012-13

Target 2.1

On 80% of the law school's five comprehensive exams the first year class will achieve a median raw score of 66% (40 of 60).

Target 2.2

75% overall first time bar pass rate for the July Texas bar exam.

Target 2.3

80% of students show significant improvement on pre-post bar examination questions; and achieve a 75% or better on the final examination.

11 Findings 2012-13

Finding 2.1

The median score on 80% of the law school's comprehensive exams was 38.75. This score was slightly below the target of 40(out of a possible 60)

Finding 2.2

79.23% overall first time bar pass rate for the July 2013 Texas bar exam. The pass rate is much improved in comparison to the July 2012 rate (64.7%), and is above the 75% first time July bar pass rate set for this metric.

Finding 2.3

Pre-post data was not collected. The class median score was 60% (180/300). This was below the target of 80%.

12 Action Plan 2012-13

Action Plan

2.1

Continue collaboration between faculty, Center for Legal Pedagogy, Academic Support, and Assessment Department to employ strategies for teaching rule proof sequences, including development and use of rule-proof templates; continue work with students in the 1L academy; continue 1L tutoring program; continue use of classroom turning point responder technology to augment and enhance student learning re: legal content; continue support for faculty development in teaching.

Action Plan

2.2

Continue to refine Texas bar essay and MBE courses through implementation of assessment protocols; continue monitoring 1L progress on comprehensive final examination; continue monitoring tutoring program; continue to provide workshops for faculty on developing student learning outcomes and integrating bar assessments into coursework; continue with pre-post MPT testing to enhance students' ability to apply law to facts. Review recruiting practices to ensure admission of larger cohort of top students. Review scholarship policies.

Action Plan

2.3

Develop pre-post testing protocols for Spring 2013. Continue use of detailed rule templates; review and set measurable metrics of competence re: identifying and applying rule templates. Continue to work with tenure track faculty to ensure integration of rule templates into courses in which professors are teaching bar essay subjects.

13 Additional Reference Documents

R.2.1

Report of the results of first year common examination for academic year. Report generated by TMSL consultant, Dr. Steven Klein.

Other
TMSL Strategic Plan.

Description of Uniform Comprehensive Final Examination

TMSL adopted the first year uniform examination system to simulate the testing format of courses tested nationally on the Multistate Bar Examination. The examination system consists of sixty multiple choice questions drafted by the four professors currently teaching first year courses in civil procedure, contracts, criminal law, property and torts. The professors organize the drafting process and review and revise draft questions in consultation with each other.

The completed exams are administered in two hour blocks to all first year students. The raw scores of all students (how many out of the sixty questions did each student get correct) are recorded on scantrons, and the scantrons are forwarded to an expert statistical consultant for additional analysis.

R2.2

Description of the Texas Bar Examination

The Texas Bar Examination is a three-day, multi-part professional licensure examination administered under the authority of the Texas State Supreme Court. It consists of four parts: The Multi-State Performance Test (MPT), the P&E Examination, the Multi-State Bar Examination (MBE), and the Texas Essay Examination.

• The MPT tests the applicants' ability to use fundamental lawyering skills in a realistic situation. Applicants are given a file and a library and are instructed to complete a task that a beginning lawyer should be able to accomplish, including drafting legal documents. The test is designed to evaluate competence in fundamental skills that lawyers are expected to demonstrate regardless of the area of law in which the skills arise.

• The P&E examination consists of 40 short-answer questions covering both Texas civil procedure and evidence and Texas and federal criminal procedure and evidence.

• The Multi-State Bar Examination is a 200 question multiple choice test that evaluates the applicant's ability to apply fundamental legal principles and legal reasoning to analyze given fact patterns.

• The Texas Essay Examination tests the applicant's ability to write clearly and concisely, to recognize and understand the importance of key facts, and recognize issues and applicable principles of law in order to analyze legal hypotheticals.

Other

TMSL Strategic Plan; Texas Board of Law Examiners's Bar Exam Report; ABA Standards.

R2.3

Analysis of common final examination results of final exam for all sections of Spring 2011 Bar Essay course
TMSL Bar Study Data.

Other

TMSL Strategic Plan; Texas Board of Law Examiners's Bar Exam Report; ABA Standards.

Description of Bar Essay Writing course

The Bar Essay Writing course provides instruction on the essay writing component of the Texas Bar Examination. Students are required to write a series of practice essay examinations based on released bar questions and hypotheticals that simulate actual bar exam questions. Students are evaluated on their ability to write a comprehensive, cogent essay under timed test conditions. The final examination for spring semester 2012 consisted of six bar exam type essay questions worth 50 points each, for a total of 300 points.

[Bar Essay Scores Sp and Fall 2013 Ref 2.3](#) [XLS 28 KB 9/4/14]

[Bar Essay Scores Spring 2013 Ref 2.3](#) [XLS 39 KB 5/15/14]

[BarEssayScores Spring2012 BEW_SP12_Final Exam Scores Ref.doc.2.3](#) [XLS 39 KB 5/3/13]

[First Year Uniform Comprehensive Exam 2012 Ref doc.2.1](#) [PDF 6,822 KB 5/3/13]

[First Year Uniform Comprehensive Exam 2013 2.1](#) [PDF 1,504 KB 3/11/14]

[Texas Board of Examiners Bar Pass Rate July 2013 Ref 2.2](#) [PDF 418 KB 3/12/14]

[Texas State Board of Examiners Bar Pass Stats Ref doc2.2](#) [PDF 1,548 KB 5/3/13]

[TSU SACS Assessment Project - Law School Reference Documents - Goal 2](#) [MSG 3,817 KB 7/25/12]

Goal 3 Assessment Plan 2010-11 to 2012-13

1 Goal Description

Goal 3

To prepare students for success in the legal profession.

2 SLO Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

SLO 3.1

Students will demonstrate competence in drafting an array of standard legal documents or pleadings.

SLO 3.2

Students will be able to appropriately interview a client.

3 Metric

Metric 3.1

Scores on the Multi-State Performance Test (MPT is a component of the Texas Bar Examination).

Metric 3.2

Uniform clinic client counseling exercise.

4 Target 2010-11

Target 3.1

25% median score on MPT portion of July Texas bar examination.

Target 3.2

(not assessed)

5 Findings 2010-11

Findings 3.1

21.61 median score on MPT, representing an increase of 6 points over the July 2010 results, but slightly below the target of 25%.

Findings 3.2

(not assessed)

6 Action Plan 2010-11

Action Plan 3.1

Continue MPT testing with feedback in Texas Practice course; administer MPT test during 1L student orientation; emphasize MPT skill development in Lawyering Process course, including document drafting and related skills of evidence evaluation, fact gathering, case synthesis, inductive and deductive reasoning, analogical reasoning and rule application. Continue systematic development of MPT skill-sets in Lawyering Process course. See action plan for SLO 1.1, above.

Action plan 3.2

Assessment is currently being developed based on national clinical studies best practices data. First assessment planned for Fall 2012.

7 Target 2011-12

Target 3.1

25% median score on MPT portion of July Texas bar examination.

Target 3.2

(not assessed)

8 Findings 2011-12

Finding 3.1

8.3 median score on MPT for the July 2012 Texas bar represents a decrease from the July 2011 median of 21.61 and is significantly below the target of 25%.

Finding 3.2

(not assessed)

9 Action Plan 2011-12

Action Plan

3.1

Continue MPT testing with feedback in Texas Practice course; administer MPT test during 1L student orientation; emphasize MPT skill development in Lawyering Process course, including document drafting and related skills of evidence evaluation, fact gathering, case synthesis, inductive and deductive reasoning, analogical reasoning and rule application. Continue systematic development of MPT skill-sets in Lawyering Process course.

First cohort of students to participate in MPT study will take the bar in July 2013. Will carefully monitor MPT test results to determine whether student performance has increased.

Action Plan

3.2

Assessment is currently being developed based on national clinical studies best practices data. First assessment planned for Spring 2013.

10 Target 2012-13

Target 3.1

25% median score on MPT portion of July Texas bar examination.

Target 3.2

90% of civil law clinical students achieve rubric score 4 or above on skills oriented exercise, using normed grading.

11 Findings 2012-13

Findings 3.1

The median score on the MPT for the July 2013 Texas bar was 27.16. This score represents a substantial increase from the July 2012 median of 8.3. This median score is also above the target of 25%.

Findings 3.2

42% of clinical students who participated achieved an average rubric score of 4 or above

12 Action Plan 2012-13

Action Plan

3.1

Continue MPT testing with feedback in Texas Practice course; administer MPT test during 1L student orientation; emphasize MPT skill development in Lawyering Process course, including document drafting and related skills of evidence evaluation, fact gathering, case synthesis, inductive and deductive reasoning, analogical reasoning and rule application. Continue systematic development of MPT skill-sets in Lawyering Process course.

First cohort of students to participate in MPT study will take the bar in July 2013. Will carefully monitor MPT test results to determine whether student performance has increased.

See action plan for 1.1.

Action Plan

3.2

Assessment is currently being developed based on national clinical studies best practices data. First assessment planned for Spring 2013.

13 Additional Reference Documents

TMSL Bar Study Data.

Other

TMSL Strategic Plan; Texas Board of Law Examiners's Bar Exam Report; ABA Standards.

1. American Bar Association's Skills and Ethics in the Practice of Law; 2. Achieving Excellence in the Practice of Law: A Lawyer's Guide w/ Practice Checklists (ALI/ABA publications).

R.3.1

Description of Multistate Performance Test

The MPT measures the bar applicant's abilities to perform tasks that are common in the practice of law. In a typical MPT a senior partner give the applicant a synopsis of the client's problem, a case file containing extensive facts (in the form of depositions, transcripts of testimony, client interview notes, etc.) and a library contain a set of cases. The applicants are then asked to draft a document addressing the problem. The documents can include a brief (both persuasive an objective) a client letter, a motion to the court, or other legal documents.

[Copy of BarResults July 2012 Names GradeBreakDownLS Mean-Median-FSignificance Ref.doc.3.1](#) [XLSX 25 KB 5/3/13]

[July 2013 Texas Bar MPT Median Score Ref doc. 3.1](#) [XLS 28 KB 5/15/14]

[TSU SACS Assessment Project - Law School Reference Documents - Goal 3](#) [MSG 296 KB 7/25/12]

