

# A CALL TO ACTION AT OSU:

## Building a Case for Holistic Admissions Assessment with Non- Cognitive Measures

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Presenter:

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# Session Outline

- The Oregon State Context
- Research basis
- Implementation
- Training
- OSU Data/Results
- Q&A



# Why consider noncognitive assessment?

- Enrollment growth → selective admissions
  - Capping discussions
- Affirmative action challenges/Diversity
  - Pre-Michigan
- Limitations of traditional admission criteria
- Data for Oregon State Students
- Already partially in use for Scholarships & Appeals



# College Board\* / OSU Data

(Correlation with 1<sup>st</sup> Yr OSU GPA; R-Squared Values)

	<u>AfAm</u>	<u>APA</u>	<u>Hisp</u>	<u>NatAm</u>	<u>Cauc</u>	<u>Total</u>
HS	0.08	0.14	0.12	0.18	0.14	0.15
GPA	0.12	0.28	0.15	0.38	0.29	0.28
SAT	0.09	0.15	0.07	0.12	0.10	0.13
	0.04	0.23	0.004	0.17	0.15	0.14
GPA+	0.14	0.23	0.19	0.30	0.20	0.23
SAT	0.15	0.37	0.17	0.46	0.33	0.31

\* Answers in the Toolbox, 1985



# Current Issues

- Restriction of Range
  - Tests
  - Grade Inflation
- Diversity
- Three Musketeers Problem
  - Range of Abilities



# Sternberg

- **Componential**

Ability to interpret information hierarchically in a well defined and unchanging context. Standardized tests.

- **Experiential**

Ability to interpret information in changing contexts, be creative. Standardized tests DO NOT measure.

- **Contextual**

Ability to adapt to a changing environment, ability to handle & negotiate the system. Standardized tests DO NOT measure.



# Noncognitive Variables

- Self- Concept
- Realistic Self- Appraisal
- Handling System/Racism
- Long- Range Goals
- Leadership
- Strong Support Person
- Community
- Nontraditional Learning



# Applications

- Admissions
  - **Castañeda v. U Cal**
    - Raised the question of noncognitive variables as an alternative approach.
  - **Farmer v. Ramsay**
    - Court ruled in favor of allowing Univ. of Maryland to use noncognitive variables in admitting students to medical school. Plaintiff is appealing judgement.
  - **Grutter (Law) & Gratz (UG) cases- U Michigan**
    - Court ruled against undergraduate school, for Law school. UG assigned 20 pts/1/5 of guaranteed decision, Law School used more of a holistic approach
    - Diversity in admissions is a compelling interest for admissions, it's how you assess it.
- Retention
- Financial Aid
  - Gates Millennium Scholars
  - Washington State Achievers
- Program Evaluation
- Teaching



# Implementation: Development of the Insight Resume

- Sub-committee established
- Questions development
  - Sedlacek research
    - Question editing
    - Testing of draft
    - 75-100 word limit
    - Spelling/grammar issue
    - Culturally competent (ex. “leadership” ?)



# Implementation

- Pilot yr & 2<sup>nd</sup> yr paper appl process
  - Retained paper process for paper appls reduced to approx. 20%
- Second Year – Web process, auto enter scores into banner database
  - Ease of use, decreased reader time
  - Greatly decreased file process work for Communication Team
    - OSU Admissions meets on 85% of files, a 2 week turnaround on complete files to Letter of Admission



# Insight Resume

## Questions

- Leadership/group contributions: Describe examples of your leadership experience in which you have significantly influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time. Consider responsibilities to initiatives taken in or out of school.
- Knowledge in a field/creativity: Describe any of your special interests and how you have developed knowledge in these areas. Give examples of your creativity: the ability to see alternatives; take diverse perspectives; come up with many, varied, or original ideas; or willingness to try new things.



# Insight Resume

## Questions

- Dealing with adversity: Describe the most significant challenge you have faced and the steps you have taken to address this challenge. Include whether you turned to anyone in facing that challenge, the role that person played, and what you learned about yourself.
- Community service: Explain what you have done to make your community a better place to live. Give examples of specific projects in which you have been involved over time.



# Insight Resume

## Questions

- Handling systemic challenges: Describe your experiences facing or witnessing discrimination. Tell us how you responded and what you learned from those experiences and how they have prepared you to contribute to the OSU community.
- Goals/task commitment: Articulate the goals you have established for yourself and your efforts to accomplish these. Give at least one specific example that demonstrates your work ethic/diligence.



# Scoring Guide

- The scoring guide is the key to an accreditation audit or legal challenge.
- **Testing**
  - By sub-committee
  - By specific groups
- **Consultation on expansion**
  - 1-3 range adopted
    - Training
    - # and variety of scorers
    - Simplicity of use
    - Importance of score sheet score definitions
- **OSU Vet Med School**
  - Adopted expanded scale
    - Addressed admission accreditation issue



# Training

- Previously Dr. Sedlacek required, now Director fully trained as lead trainer
- Quarterly/Annual feedback forums
  - Results provided ongoing supported by data
    - Individual IR reader stats
    - Overall stats
    - Open discussion on IR's
      - Concerns, scoring difficulties, etc.
- Train for Cultural Competency
  - On campus resources and external trainers
- Discoveries within IR's
  - Personal biases: aware, keeping in check, opt out
    - Difficulty of embracing breath of diversity



# Training

- Setting the Rules and Expectations for Readers
  - Training is required
  - Set expectation on turnaround time
  - Honor System
    - Reader opt out due to personal conflict
  - Know and provide readers with details
    - Estimated read time per piece
    - Time commitment required
    - Number of reads per piece
      - Variance amount to default to addl read
    - Yearly cycle expectations
      - High and low cycles
  - Records maintenance

# Training, cont.

- Scoring Process
  - Informing readers on how to obtain reads
    - Online
      - Automatic feed into your SIS
    - Opting out procedure
    - Providing feedback to readers
      - Quarterly Feedback Forums
      - List serve
      - Cultural Competency Training

# Training, cont.

- How to read resumes/written admissions assessments holistically
  - Always read entire piece first
    - Have a concept of the entire piece and the person
    - Award value no matter where it appears
  - Assigning Numeric Value (1-3 system)
    - 3 = active role and reflection
    - 2 = anything of substance, awareness, role
    - 1 = didn't answer the questions, wasn't based on their experience, or doesn't describe any direct experience
  - “When in doubt, move to the middle”
  - Reader Bias
    - Knowing/admitting/recognizing!
    - Keeping in check/avoiding assumptions/labeling
      - “The Halo Effect”
      - “The Violin Test”
      - “The Paper Boy Scout”
      - “Cheerleader does not equal ditzy!”

# Issues, Uses, Outcomes...

- Admissions appeals process
  - Appeals committee
  - Student Services more proactive, earlier
- Scholarship selection
- Disclosure of disabilities, special needs
- Disclosure of criminal activities
- Student Services referral
  - New brochure at point of admission
  - Support Retention



# Additional Influences:

- **Developed Graduate Education Course**
  - CSSA (College Student Services Administration Program)
  - Research component
  - Variable credit
  - Possible Thesis being discussed
  - Great way to add diversity of reader pool
- **OSU College of Engineering**
  - Attended Campus training in Nov. for use in College Scholarship awarding for Fall 2007
- **OSU Vet School**
  - Accreditation issue with Admissions assessment
    - Scoring subjectivity issue
    - Inconsistent application
- **OSU University Honors College**
  - Considering possible use for College acceptance



# Additional Influences:

- **Trained OSU Academic Learning and Success Center**
  - Electronic view access to prep for student issues
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- **Other Campuses:**
  - Trained WSU Vancouver Campus
    - Evolve into full 4 year campus
    - Permission from Pullman
    - Personal Statement Questions
  - Central Missouri State University Admissions Appeals process
  - Discussion on personal affects with Harvard Law School
  - Will be implemented at WSU Pullman campus Fall 2007
  - Used in part at University of British Columbia Business School
  - In discussion for implementation at DePaul University



# OSU Data/Results

- **First Year Retention data**

- Increase in retention 10% per point
  - "...a one unit increase on the IR is associated with a 10.1% increase in odds of retention." Dr. Alix Gitelman, Associate Professor of Statistics, Oregon State.
- New student diversity increased
  - 2004-05: Enrolled 557 new SoC
  - 2206-07: Enrolled 615 new SoC (9% increase)
- GPA increased new
  - 2003-04 Average GPA: 3.45
  - 2006-07 Average GPA: 3.49
  - Scholarship awarding improved (Kate Peterson, Asst. VP Enrollment, OSU)
    - Renewals are up since using non cognitives
    - IR is given equal weight to GPA & standardized test scores

- **Admissions Appeals**

Year of Appeal	2005-06	+2004-05	2003-04
# admitted & enrolled	61	90	76
Success rate of admit*	85%	70%	63%
% of success rate for SoC**	31%	23%	22%
% of deny of total appeals***	55%	52%	39%

+New Admissions requirements began.

+Appeals committee was approved to use holistic & IR in admit decisions

\*Success rate is measured by retention of appeal admit from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> year in good academic standing

\*\*SoC (Students of Color) success rate increased by 9% in two years

\*\*\*More appeals denied initially, with committee making better decisions for students who succeeded at OSU, based on more information about the student.

# OSU Data/Results Continued:

- **Support assistance**
  - Stronger referrals for academic & personal support
- **Earlier connections**
  - Stronger bonding of student to OSU
  - New service programs and courses
- **HIG Results**
  - “...in addition to the Hispanic Initiative, ....the IR helped in admitting more students to support program on campus.” Javier Cervantes, Director of Hispanic Programs at Oregon State.
    - 1998: 432 Hispanic Students at OSU
    - 2006: 775 Hispanic Students at OSU, + 142,
- **Greater cooperation and partnerships across campus for student success**
  - Academic Success Center
  - Educational Opportunities Program
  - Academic Advising at the College Level



# Learn more on the OSU Web site.

<http://oregonstate.edu/admissions/firstYear/requirements.html>,

click on “More Information”





# Thank you!

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# Resources

- **Sedlacek, W. E. (2004).** *Beyond the big test: Noncognitive assessment in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.  
To purchase: <http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/>
- **Sedlacek, W. E. (in press).** The case for noncognitive measures. In W. Camara and E. Kimmel (Eds.). *Choosing students: Higher education admission tools for the 21st century.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- **A comprehensive list of Dr. Sedlacek's publications may be found at:**  
<http://www.umd.edu/Diversity/General/Reading/Sedlacek>
- **Information on OSU's process may be found at:**  
<http://oregonstate.edu/admissions/2004req/2004profile.html>

