

November 7, 2008

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

# Assessment Committee Meeting

Ed Gross Room – Harless Dining Hall

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**Meeting called by:** Mary Beth Reynolds

**Members Present:** Loukia Dixon, Janet Dooley, Janet Dozier, Michelle Duncan, Pat Gebhart, Dan Holbrook, Matt James, Rex McClure, Richard McCray, Cal Meyer, Caroline Perkins, David Pittenger, Marybeth Reynolds, Celene Seymour, Judy Silver, Louis Watts,

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Frances Hensley, Sherri Smith, Karen Barker (Recording Secretary)

**Members Absent:** Ed Bingham, Bill Pierson

## Minutes

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**Agenda item:** Approval of Minutes from October 2, 2008

**Discussion:** Minutes were approved as submitted.

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**Agenda item:** Updates on syllabus decisions from October meeting

**Discussion:** A. The revised syllabus evaluation checklist is available on the assessment website at [http://www.marshall.edu/assessment/assessment\\_forms.htm](http://www.marshall.edu/assessment/assessment_forms.htm). The form is now fillable online and can be submitted via email.

To use:

1. Open the document and “Save As” with a new name (for example – professor’s last name\_course no)
2. Click to the right of the areas marked *Course Name, Course Number and Instructor’s Name*. This will bring up a shaded area in which you can type. Clicking on the boxes beside the syllabus contents will mark them with an X. Click just below *Reviewer’s Comments* to access that section.
3. Re-save the document and send to Marybeth ([reynoldm@marshall.edu](mailto:reynoldm@marshall.edu)) as an email attachment.

B. A webpage with the required policies has been created and is located at [http://www.marshall.edu/assessment/assessment\\_forms.htm](http://www.marshall.edu/assessment/assessment_forms.htm), just below the syllabus evaluation checklist.

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**Agenda item:** Syllabus review discussion and questions

**Discussion:** Discussion centered on ways to increase the number of syllabi that are posted to MU BERT. General consensus seemed to be that Department/Division Chairs are the most appropriate people to review syllabi for several reasons. They are more qualified to assess whether the learning outcomes and course objectives are appropriate for specific courses. Additionally, Chairs have more influence with faculty by virtue of their position than does either the Assessment Committee or the Office of Assessment and Program Review. As the Council-of-Chairs representative, Caroline agreed with this consensus; however, she brought up the fact that some Chairs do not require their faculty to post syllabi due to a perceived threat to academic freedom. Sherri suggested distinguishing between two types of syllabus assessment: (1) The committee should *evaluate* individual syllabi (with summative feedback going to the individual professor) only for BOG syllabus requirements. (2) For syllabus items that the Assessment Committee recommends (but does not require), the committee should identify trends across the university (and perhaps across colleges) with regard to syllabus/course design, and then make faculty development recommendations to CATL to help faculty members improve syllabi.

Caroline also indicated that some of the requirements may be seen as inappropriate for some disciplines. In addition, she pointed out the difficulty with enforcing faculty to update their syllabi with missing items. Marybeth suggested that if the responsibility for reviewing syllabi is shifted to the Chairs, that the Assessment Committee adopt a review process similar to that of the Graduate Council.

Another discussion point was the issue of how important learning objectives are in a syllabus. Cal mentioned that there seems to be some confusion with regard to the differences between objectives and outcomes and how to clearly identify them. Janet mentioned the difficulty in wording outcomes so that they meet both the guidelines required by accrediting bodies and the University’s expectations. Fran suggested having the Provost talk to the UAC about his vision for syllabi.

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**Agenda item: Subcommittee reports**

**Discussion:** *Survey Revision* – The subcommittee proposed eliminating the Graduating Senior Survey and incorporating the department/college level questions into a survey that is completed after the student graduates. A letter from the Assessment office, stating that the students' Chair would be contacting them via email about a survey, would be included with the students' diplomas. The Chairs would then send the request, along with the link to the survey after each graduation cycle. She requested feedback on the proposed survey that was included in the meeting packet. Caroline indicated concern that moving to an electronic format would reduce the response rate. Celene asked that a question about the libraries be included on the survey.

*General Education Assessment* – Janet reported that the International and Multicultural committees are being combined. They would like it to be comprised of a representative from each college. The charge for this committee would be to redefine the objectives of this component and to develop appropriate assessment measures.

*Program Assessment and Assessment Day* – Marybeth presented a revised *Primary Traits Analysis* for discussion. Cal raised the issue of having objectives dictate assessment as opposed to assessment dictating the objectives in regard to requiring indirect measures to achieve a top score when direct measures are more appropriate. Marybeth asked Cal and David to reword the level 3 rubric and send to her over the next few days.

*Feedback Loop* – Sherri distributed a handout summarizing the work of this subcommittee. Please see attached.

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**Agenda item: Future meetings**

**Discussion:** January 22: 3:30 – 5:00 (Drinko 349 and ACC211 MUGC) Snacks provided  
February 27: 12:00 – 2:00 (TBA) Lunch provided  
March 19: 3:30 – 5:00 (Drinko 349 and ACC211 MUGC) Snacks provided  
April (TBA) Lunch provided

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## ***Meeting Adjourned***

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Respectfully Submitted,

***Karen Barker***

Karen Barker  
Recording Secretary