

University Assessment Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 25, 2012; 9:00 – 10:30 AM
Drinko 402 (Huntington); GC 134 (South Charleston)

Minutes

Members Present: Celene Seymour, Louis Watts, Loukia Dixon, Paula Lucas, Sherri Smith, Larry Sheret, Rex McClure, Andrew Gooding, Caroline Perkins, David Pittenger, Marty Laubach, Bill Pierson, Nicki LoCascio, Mary Beth Reynolds

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Members Absent: Wayne Elmore, Aja Smith, Maribea Barnes, Corley Dennison, Karen McComas, Sherri Stepp, JMC representative (TBD)

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Chris Swindell, Doug Nichols

Agenda Items

1. The meeting began with an **introduction of members**.
2. The **minutes of the April 27, 2012** meeting were approved as submitted.
3. **Review of Assessment Data:**
 - Mary Beth Reynolds shared that Marshall University's "value-added" on the *Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)* has been at the "near expected" level for the past three years. Mary Beth discussed the analysis she's done to see how well Marshall's student samples have matched the student cohorts from which they were drawn. She said that, although, the profiles of freshman and senior samples each year have matched each other fairly well, our samples consistently have been academically stronger than their respective student cohorts. To try to draw a more representative sample, we administered a freshman performance task to all freshmen attending Week of Welcome (WOW) in August. We were able to do this because Sherri Smith and a group of faculty working on projects for first-year seminar (FYS) developed a series of *CLA*-type performance tasks after attending a *CLA Performance Task Academy* this past summer. The WOW committee, under the direction of Corley Dennison and Sherri Stepp, organized the administration of this assessment to all freshmen, with five UNI 100 sections randomly selected to complete the *CLA* exam itself. An analysis of the fall 2012 *CLA* sample showed that it was representative of the entire cohort in terms of ACT/SAT scores, high school GPA, age, gender, race, college enrollment, and enrollment in the Honors College. Mary Beth shared that she would like to administer a similar assessment to seniors on Assessment Day this coming April. There was discussion about how students could be required to attend. Rex McClure suggested having more than one Assessment Day. Sherri Smith pointed out that attendance at WOW was not required, but that enough students participated that we were able to draw a random representative sample for the *CLA*. She suggested that, if an Assessment Day Senior Performance task is presented in such a way that a majority of students participate, we should be able to get the sample we need.

- Mary Beth shared with the group that the improved result Marshall University saw for freshmen participating in the *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* in the spring of 2011 (the year of the introduction of the new core) remained in the spring of 2012. These were significantly improved ratings among freshmen regarding their experiences in the benchmark areas of *Level of Academic Challenge* and *Active and Collaborative Learning*. She noted that Marshall's freshman performance in the areas of *Level of Academic Challenge* remained (as last year) commensurate with that of freshmen at our Carnegie peer institutions. However, our overall response rate (22%) was significantly lower than that of our Carnegie peers (25%). This difference was explained by the significantly lower freshman response rate (16% as compared to 22% for Carnegie peers), as our senior response rate (27%) was identical to that of our Carnegie peers. Although we can't be sure, freshman response rate may have been depressed because of the large number of other surveys we have asked freshmen to complete. Mary Beth invited members to read the NSSE results in more detail at <http://www.marshall.edu/assessment/surveydata.htm>.
- Based on an analysis of 2011 – 2012 annual assessment reports, Mary Beth reported an improvement in the number of programs that “closed the loop,” i.e. programs that used the results of assessment of student learning data to make improvements in their programs. Specifically, 45% of programs scored at highest (3) or close to the highest (2.5) level in this area, as compared to 24% the year before, with the mean score for all programs rising from 1.77 to 1.97.
- Mary Beth reported that this year Marshall is piloting an abbreviated program review document for programs that have external professional accreditation. The reason for this is that these programs prepare comprehensive self-studies and undergo site visits through their accrediting organizations on specified schedules. Therefore, we have reduced some of the program review reporting to reduce redundancy between these processes.
- Before discussing a proposal to revise Marshall's Core Domains of Critical Thinking and proposed language for outcomes students should achieve in each domain by the time they graduate with a Bachelor's Degree from Marshall University (i.e. Marshall University's proposed Baccalaureate Degree Profile) Mary Beth and Sherri Smith summarized the work that had gone into the project and acknowledged Assessment Committee members who have been involved in this work (Larry Sheret, Nicki LoCascio, Loukia Dixon, Sherri Smith, Maribea Barnes, Rex McClure, Karen McComas, and Chris Swindell). They explained that these individuals had worked with fifteen additional faculty members (Jennifer Sias, Markus Hadler, Pat Conlon, Dick Drass, Andrea Criss, Karen Mitchell, Janet Dozier, Janet Dooley, Mary Jo Graham, Pam Mulder, Joan St. Germain, Brent Patterson, Robert Ellison, Chris LeGrow, and Chris Green) to recommend revisions to the core domain names, to write assessment rubrics for each, and to specify a series of recommended outcome statements for each domain at the baccalaureate level. Mary Beth told committee members that she would like to have this proposal to the Faculty Senate by the end of October, but that it would need to be considered by the Budget and Academic Policies Committee first. However, before proceeding, she felt it was important to receive feedback from (and the endorsement of) the University Assessment Committee.

Committee members requested clarification regarding several aspects of the proposal, including how it, if passed, would affect critical thinking (CT) courses already approved

by the General Education Council, how it would affect the mapping programs had already done among their course, program, and Lumina Foundation's *Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)* outcomes, and how the proposed rubrics might be used at the program level. The consensus was that the recommended changes to Marshall's Core Domains of Critical Thinking broadened, rather than restricted, the domains, suggesting that significant changes to already approved CT courses would not be necessary. If Faculty Senate approves the proposal, the domains' outcomes will become Marshall University's outcomes at the baccalaureate level, making it necessary for programs to map their outcomes to those of the University's Degree Profile. However, Sherri Smith reminded the Assessment Committee that one reason many programs gave for not mapping to the Civic Learning and Quantitative Fluency Areas of Learning of the *DQP* was that the language of those outcomes was too restrictive. She pointed out that the language of the outcomes proposed as part of Marshall's Degree Profile is much broader and that this should lead to easier mapping among course, program, and university outcomes. The rubrics, which will not be part of the official proposal, will not be mandated for use by departments, but rather would be used at an institutional level to assess university outcomes.

Several members recommended that we develop a document that clearly articulates the rationale for the proposal. Marty Laubach emphasized that this rationale needs to incorporate how each part of the testing of the *DQP* had informed the proposal. Mary Beth agreed to re-work the proposal to include this language and send it to Assessment Committee members. She asked that they give her recommendations for changes, with a vote of approval within one week.

- We postponed discussion of the General Education Assessment Repository (GEAR).
 - Mary Beth asked that all members review spring 2012 Graduation Survey Results, available at <http://www.marshall.edu/assessment/surveydata.htm>.
 - Mary Beth discussed holding workshops to address the Master Syllabus Policy. She said that we would like for all faculty use the newly approved BOG Syllabus policy when preparing spring syllabi.
 - Mary Beth reported that workshops for the Open Pathways Demonstration Project will run each Friday in October. There will be two per Friday. She said that programs should create rubrics for the rest of their program outcomes. They should use rubrics they created last spring (for two of their program outcomes) to collect and analyze data from their identified program assessments this fall. This report will be due on February 1 and it, along with a report that will be submitted in May of 2013, will take the place of the annual assessment report that was submitted on December 15 in previous years.
 - Discussion of Assessment Day 2012 Results was postponed until the next meeting.
4. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds

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