

University Assessment Committee Meeting

Friday, January 18, 2013; 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM
Shawkey Room

Minutes

Members Present: Wayne Elmore, Loukia Dixon, Adam Fridley, Bill Pierson, Karen McComas, Maribea Barnes, Paula Lucas, Nicki LoCascio, Marty Laubach, David Pittenger, Chuck Bailey, Larry Sheret, Andrew Gooding, Celene Seymour, Caroline Perkins, Sherri Smith, Corley Dennison, Mary Beth Reynolds

Ex-Officio Members Present: Chris Swindell, Doug Nichols

Members Absent: Rex McClure, Louis Watts, Sherri Stepp

Ex-Officio Members Absent: None

Agenda Items

1. The meeting began with an introduction of members.
2. The minutes of the September 25, 2012 meeting were approved as submitted.
3. Review of Open Pathways Demonstration Project
 - Mary Beth Reynolds shared the following information:
 - Gayle Ormiston, Karen McComas, and Mary Beth gave a presentation at the Assessment Institute in Indianapolis in October 2012. The presentation was entitled, "First steps in the development of Marshall University's Degree Profile." Mary Beth reported that the presentation's evaluations have been received and they were very positive.
 - Dr. John Immerwahr, the Senior Researcher and Public Engagement Specialist at *Public Agenda* will be on Marshall's campus at the end of January to conduct some focus groups regarding faculty involvement and opinions regarding the Lumina Foundation's *Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)*.
 - The *National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)* has asked Marshall for an article to feature in one of its upcoming newsletters. Mary Beth noted that Marshall has submitted an article, which she will share with committee members upon publication.
 - Peter Ewell, a nationally recognized leader in assessment research, is writing a paper on the Lumina Foundation's *DQP* and has asked permission to use what Marshall is doing as an example, so we will be featured in his work.
 - Most programs have completed the first three steps of Activity 3 of the Open Pathways project. Mary Beth asked that committee members remind people in their respective colleges that February 1 is the deadline to submit data for two program learning outcomes.
 - The plan to use Qualtrics to help programs collect assessment data was discussed. Mary Beth noted that only deans, chairs, and program faculty who

teach courses in which program level assessments are embedded will have access to their respective assessment “surveys” in the Qualtrics system. Each survey will include the outcome rubric/s and faculty will be asked to mark the rubric level achieved by each student (for each trait on the rubric). Mary Beth said that faculty will be asked to include the 901 # for each student assessed. She explained that the reason for this request is that it will give Marshall the opportunity to link various types of assessment data, e.g. program assessments, general education assessments, *NSSE*, *CLA*, etc. Analysis will not occur at the student level, but in aggregate. This data collection system will allow us to draw random samples of students to track across data points. Comparing the same student samples across data points will provide a more meaningful snapshot of how are students are performing than would the same analysis that did not allow us to be sure we are comparing performance of the same students over time. There was discussion about providing flexibility in data reporting, especially if programs had developed databases on their own. Mary Beth said this was possible, as long as no FERPA rules were violated and all information was maintained in a secure database. There was some concern expressed that the Qualtrics system would prove cumbersome for faculty to use. Marty Laubach noted that the Open Pathways project is based on some assumptions which are not valid across all programs, namely that students take courses in a linear fashion. Andrew Gooding said that, if programs enroll RBA students in courses with assessment points, he would appreciate receiving assessment data on those students.

- Doug Nichols gave update on the readiness of data entry portal on the Open Pathways website.
- Mary Beth reviewed the data entry portal and showed how each steps builds on the previous step, resulting in an automatically generated assessment report. She clarified that, for program-level assessment, assessment reports are based on performance of majors only. However, she suggested that, for programs that teach large numbers of non-majors, it would be valuable for those programs to track performance of non-majors.
- Andrew Gooding asked who had access to the Open Pathways program data collection site and Doug replied that it was open access. Paula Lucas thanked Doug for the help he had given her. She encouraged others to share with their colleagues that they should contact Doug if they need help.

4. Update on proposal for Marshall University’s Baccalaureate Degree Profile.

- Mary Beth thanked everyone who worked on this project, noting that feedback received at the last Assessment Committee meeting significantly strengthened the proposal. She said there have been over 75 people at Marshall who have either directly contributed to the Degree Profile proposal or with whom we have discussed the proposal. She noted that we specifically invited all faculty senators to discussions regarding the proposal. The proposal will be on the January 31 Faculty Senate Agenda. Mary Beth showed the committee members where they could find the proposal on the assessment website. www.marshall.edu/assessment/LearningOutcomes.aspx

5. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

- Mary Beth announced that *NSSE* will launch on Tuesday, February 26, with the last reminder sent on Tuesday, April 9. She also directed committee members to a handout she distributed earlier in the meeting. She pointed out some highlights:
 - Since the implementation of the Core Curriculum in fall of 2010 freshman *NSSE* scores have increased significantly in benchmark areas of *Active and Collaborative Learning* and *Level of Academic Challenge*.
 - Marshall's freshmen have scored significantly higher than freshmen in all three of our comparison groups (Writing Consortium, Carnegie Peers, all institutions that participated in *NSSE*) on items that represent "Deep Approaches to Learning." These *NSSE* questions ask students about their level of involvement in their education.
 - *NSSE* items on which our students scored significantly higher than students at institutions in our Writing Consortium show that our students are doing a lot of writing, making class presentations, etc.
 - *NSSE* items on which students scored significantly lower than students at institutions in our Writing Consortium show weaknesses in civic engagement and freshman students completing foreign language coursework.
 - The Multiyear Benchmark Report shows change over time.
 - Response rates for freshmen have been low. We will work to increase these this year.
 - An analysis of how Marshall's *NSSE* results align with what we have discovered through our testing of the *DQP* shows civic learning to be a weakness at Marshall. Analytic Inquiry is a relative strength. Sherri Smith shared that the Center for Teaching and Learning is developing an application for the optional Carnegie Classification for Civic Engagement. She feels that Marshall has about a 60% chance of receiving this classification. She noted that the process of applying is onerous and will require us to establish an infrastructure we don't already have. It will enable us to aggregate data from multiple offices.

6. Syllabus Evaluations – assignments and discussion

- Mary Beth reminded committee members that, a few years ago, we asked colleges to assume responsibility for syllabus evaluation. Results were that some colleges, but not all, completed this task. It has been recommended that, with the Faculty Senate and the Board of Governors adopting the New Master Syllabus policy, the University Assessment Committee resume the responsibility of evaluating syllabi. However, Mary Beth suggested that, as the date for full implementation of the new policy is fall 2013, we are not ready to begin this process yet, but rather should do an initial "audit" of syllabi using a checklist she has provided. The purpose of this initial audit is to identify colleges and/or programs where faculty might be in need of further explanation or help in implementing the new policy. Committee members were asked to audit 20 syllabi each. Mary Beth asked that these be submitted by February 15.
- Loukia Dixon suggested that everyone on the committee remind his or her constituents to upload their syllabi to MU-BERT.

7. Program Assessment Reports – assignments and discussion

- Mary Beth distributed assessment report assignments. She showed members how to access these reports from the assessment webpage. She also reviewed the rubric to be used and asked that committee members finish their reviews by March 15.

8. Assessment Day – discussion regarding plans for April and future plans

- Assessment will be held on April 3
- Mary Beth provided information on plans for Senior Assessments. She noted that several FYS faculty have worked with Sherri Smith to develop *Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)* type performance tasks to be used in FYS. One of the tests developed was given to new freshmen who attended Week of Welcome (WOW). We will assess a random sample of these this summer. FYS instructors used another performance task as a final exam in FYS. We will analyze where students begin (WOW baseline) and where they are at the end of FYS. We will give the WOW test to seniors on Assessment Day and will compare their performance with that of freshmen. Mary Beth explained how this process will work on Assessment Day – each college will be responsible for making room arrangements and securing proctors. From eligible students, Mary Beth will randomly assign between 100 and 120 students to take the actual *CLA* exam as their senior assessment. She will arrange rooms and proctors for the *CLA*. Mary Beth reported that we just got our freshman *CLA* report from fall. She noted that the freshman sample was representative of the entering class in terms of mean high school GPA, entrance abilities (as measured by ACT and SAT), gender, race, Honors College membership, and College membership. Overall, our sample scored in 29th percentile compared to students in other schools that participated in *CLA*. Since we tested these students during WOW rather than during the first two months of the fall semester, it represents our first true baseline. She emphasized that it is important that we have a representative sample of our seniors and noted that the purpose of senior assessment is to help Marshall evaluate how well it is meeting student needs. It is not to assess individual students.
- Following this, there was some discussion about the difficulty of getting seniors to come on Assessment Day to complete the Senior Assessment.
- Future Plans for Assessment Day: Corley said that for Assessment Day 2014 classes will not be cancelled. Assessments will be embedded into classes. Faculty assessment activities would happen on another non-class day.
- Assessment Day Student Focus Groups – Two years ago we had focus groups that focused in the question, “What makes a good classroom learning experience?” Mary Beth suggested that it might be a good idea to revisit that topic this year to see if progress had been made. Adam Fridley felt that this topic would be beneficial to the student body.
- Mary Beth announced that the Steering Committee for Open Pathways project is going to Chicago at the end of February and there may be more information regarding Assessment Day activities based on information we obtain at this meeting.

9. General Education Assessment

- Summer Plans using GEAR – this item was not addressed.

10. Graduation Survey Results – summer and fall 2012 – launch date for spring 2013

- Mary Beth shared graduation survey response rates for summer and fall of 2012. She announced that we will be sending out spring graduation surveys around the middle of March.

11. Discussion of *Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)*

- Mary Beth showed committee members Marshall College Portrait, which we complete as part of the *Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)*. She invited assessment committee members to review the data on the portrait. She specifically pointed out where we report *CLA*, *NSSE*, and students' future plans (data come from our graduation surveys).

12. Additional Business

- There was no additional business.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds

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