Report of Open Pathways Quality Initiative

June 15, 2013

Marshall University

Part 1: Goals and Results

Original Project and Its Goals

In April 2011 Marshall University received an invitation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association to test the Lumina Foundation's *Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)*. In her letter to Dr. Stephen Kopp, dated April 1, 2011, Dr. Sylvia Manning, President of the HLC, stated, "The opening paragraph of the Lumina Foundation's document makes the claim the 'A Degree Profile – or qualifications framework – illustrates clearly what students should be expected to know and be able to do once they earn their degrees – at any level. This Degree Profile thus proposes specific learning outcomes that benchmark the associate, bachelor's and master's degrees – which constitute the great majority of postsecondary degrees awarded by U.S. colleges and universities – regardless of the student's field of specialization.'" She explained that Marshall University, in concert with other institutions, would be asked to test that claim.

Marshall University began this process with several goals in mind. They were:

1. To use the *DQP* to help us critically examine our expected outcomes for students in each degree program and at each degree level.
2. To examine the extent to which the broad areas of learning, and degree appropriate outcomes outlined in the *DQP*, align with outcomes expected of students who graduate with Associate's, Bachelor's and Master's degrees (in each degree program) from Marshall University.
3. To examine the reasons for lack of alignment between Marshall's and the *DQP*'s degree expectations, where lack of alignment is identified.
4. To point out where the *DQP* does not include outcomes Marshall University faculty think are necessary for the well-educated Marshall graduate at each degree level.
5. To provide feedback to the HLC and to the Lumina Foundation for the purpose of improving the *DQP*.
6. To develop a degree profile unique to Marshall University.

Important Background Information

Prior to receiving the Higher Learning Commission's invitation to test the *DQP*, Marshall University had been engaged in re-examining university-level learning and re-imagining a curricular alignment that would enable students to achieve those outcomes. This process resulted in outcome and curricular revisions that occurred along the following timeline:

1. **2008:** Marshall University's Faculty Senate adopted seven core domains of critical thinking: aesthetic/artistic thinking, scientific thinking, ethical/social/historical thinking, abstract/mathematical thinking, multicultural/international thinking, oral/written/visual communication, and information/technical literacy.
2. **2010:** Marshall University's Faculty Senate approved a new core general education curriculum. This curriculum consisted of two parts (Core I and Core II). Core I included an interdisciplinary first year seminar (FYS) and two courses in the disciplines that emphasized critical thinking (CT). FYS introduced students to the related nature of the core domains of critical thinking and

included several other learning outcomes. These outcomes were somewhat, although not perfectly, aligned to some of the university's core domains.

FYS Course Outcomes	Definition	Marshall's Core Domains of Critical Thinking	Level of Alignment
Representations	Communicating information through a variety of media/genres (i.e. music, video, art, writing).	Oral/Written/Visual Communication Aesthetic/Artistic Thinking	Two corresponding domains
Reasoning	Evaluating or forming conclusions, judgments or inferences.	Mathematical/Abstract Thinking Scientific Thinking Ethical/Social/Historical Thinking	Three corresponding domains
Cultural Judgment	Understanding why people think the way they think.	Multicultural/International Thinking	One corresponding domain
Information Literacy	Finding/accessing relevant information and using it in an ethical and legal manner.	Information/Technical Literacy	One corresponding domain
Reflection	Understanding how you learn, building awareness of your learning process.		No corresponding domains
Relationships among Core Domains (Integrative Thinking)	Making connections and transferring skills across and between varied disciplines and situations (and the core domains).		No corresponding domains

As part of Core I, students also were required to complete two courses that had been designated as critical thinking (CT) courses. Faculty who taught CT courses completed a day and a half CT faculty development workshop and each course was approved by the University's General Education Council. To receive a designation of CT, each course chose one of the University's domains of critical thinking as its primary emphasis and included at least one more domain for secondary emphasis. Additionally, each course addressed at least three of the five FYS outcomes (representations, reasoning, cultural judgment, reflection, and information literacy).

As part of their general education requirements, all students also were required to complete 25-hours of coursework in the traditional general education disciplines (6 hours in composition, 4 hours in physical or natural sciences, 3 hours each in oral communications, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and fine arts). This menu of courses was designated by each academic college.

Additionally, all of Marshall University's degree programs had assessed student performance in learning outcomes for a number of years and each degree program, as mandated by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), completes a comprehensive program review once every five years.

Description of Marshall University's Quality Initiative (including project changes, results, people involved and resources used)

Marshall tested the *DQP* through activities in three levels of assessment; degree program, general education, and course levels. Timelines for and results of the quality initiative at each level are summarized below.

Activities Involving Marshall's Degree Programs

Marshall's quality initiative (as tested by its degree programs) was divided into several activities, with intervening analyses. All activities involved the Open Pathways Project Steering Committee, the Academic Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Faculty of each degree program. The Online Systems/Web Developer for Academic Affairs developed a website dedicated to Marshall's Quality Initiative, along with an online reporting system for use by degree programs. This site can be accessed at muwww-new.marshall.edu/hlcopenpathways/. The project's activities are described below.

1. **Activity 1: From January – March 2012** each degree program at Marshall University (at the associate, bachelor's and master's levels) chose *approximately* three – five pre-undergraduate capstone or pre-graduate culminating experience courses that it deemed **essential** in providing its students the necessary early practice to enable them to demonstrate mastery of the program's learning outcomes in the program's undergraduate capstone or graduate culminating experience. These are the courses in which early program-level assessments are embedded. The results of these assessments, spread over the designated early to mid-level courses, allow programs to evaluate the development of students' competencies as they progress toward their capstone or culminating experiences. For each course the program selected, it mapped the course learning outcomes to the appropriate program learning outcomes and to **each** broad area of learning and degree-appropriate outcome in the *DQP* that its course and program outcomes addressed. Programs used this mapping as a diagnostic tool to determine the appropriateness (or otherwise) of their outcomes at both the course and program levels. If they deemed changes were needed, the changes were made.

2. A**ctivity 2: From March – May 2012** each degree program updated its assessment plan and other information to help test the *DQP*. This information was provided in three steps.
    - **Step 1A**: Each program provided its learning outcomes as they were initially articulated, then provided any revisions made to these outcomes, explaining why the revision had (or had not) been made.
    - **Step 1B**: As in Activity 1, each program mapped its outcomes to the broad areas of learning and degree-appropriate outcomes of the *DQP*. Using courses mapped in the first activity, plus its undergraduate capstone or graduate culminating experience course (and additional courses or other learning experiences it deemed necessary for this purpose), each program specified a **minimum of two assessment points for each** learning outcome, the **first** occurring at an early to mid-point in the program and the **second and final** occurring as part of the undergraduate capstone or graduate culminating experience. Some programs argued that they could not conduct final assessments of student achievement for all of their program's learning outcomes in

their capstone/culminating experience courses. In these cases, final assessment points occurred in a combination of the former and other appropriate late-program courses or other learning experiences.

- **Step 1C**: In addition to specifying **where** there assessments would occur, each program noted the specific **assessment(s)** it would use for each outcome at each assessment point and the benchmarks they expected their students to achieve at each assessment point.
- **Step 2A**: Each program indicated any of the *DQP*'s broad areas of learning to which none of its outcomes aligned and why its outcomes did not align to these areas of learning.
- **Step 2B**: Additionally, each program specified broad areas of learning (if any) that its program addressed that were **not** part of the *DQP* in its current form. Programs explained why they felt these particular areas of learning were important for students in their programs.
- **Step 3**: Each program chose **two** of its learning outcomes and created descriptive, analytic assessment rubrics for each. Rubrics were intended to allow programs to show qualitative changes in student performance between assessment point 1 and the final assessment point in the program. However, what programs chose to name performance levels was left up to their discretion.

3. **Summer 2012 Faculty Workgroup:** A group of four faculty and a member of the Open Pathways Steering Committee met for two and one-half weeks during summer 2012 to evaluate the project. The group reported its findings in a comprehensive report, submitted to the Higher Learning Commission, in August 2012. This report recommended specific changes to help guide the project during academic year 2012 – 2013. These included a recommendation to adopt a common set of names for rubric performance levels across campus and to agree on performance benchmarks for each assessment point (at each degree level). The Workgroup recommended that the following names be used for performance levels because two of these performance levels (milestone and capstone) correspond to performance level names used across the country in the *Value Rubrics,* which have been developed and *validated* by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U; Rhodes, 2010). The Workgroup recommended using "Introductory" for the first performance level because the definition of AAC&U's "Baseline" did not fit our purposes. Finally, the Open Pathways Steering Committee recommended that the final performance level be named "Advanced" to signify what we might expect of graduate students.
    - **Level 1 = Introductory Benchmark:** The Workgroup suggested that this level identify a beginning level of skill or knowledge that one would expect of a student taking his or her introductory courses in an associate or baccalaureate degree program. The Steering Committee recommended that this level serve as the expected performance level (benchmark) for the first assessment point in associate degree programs.
    - **Level 2 = Milestone Benchmark:** The Workgroup suggested that this level be used to signify that skill or knowledge development that had moved beyond the introductory level. The Workgroup recommended that the milestone level be the expected level of performance (benchmark) for associate degree programs' final assessment point and the Steering Committee recommended that it be the benchmark for baccalaureate programs' first assessment point. The Steering Committee recommended that the

language used to describe this level of performance match the language of the outcomes for an associate's degree.

- **Level 3 = Capstone Benchmark:** The Workgroup suggested that this level be the expected level of performance for the final assessment point for baccalaureate degree programs and the Steering Committee recommended that this be the benchmark for the first assessment point for master's degree programs. The Workgroup recommended that the language used to describe this level of performance match the language of the outcomes for a baccalaureate degree.
- **Level 4 = Advanced Benchmark:** The Steering Committee suggested that this level be the expected level of performance for the last assessment point for a master's degree and that the language used to describe this level of performance match the language of the outcomes for a master's degree.

The 2012 Summer Committee's full report can be accessed at muwww-new.marshall.edu/hlcopenpathways/files/2012/08/2012HLCOpenPathwaysReport.pdf.

4. **Activity 3:** From August 2012 – May 2013, degree programs completed and modified assessment rubrics using the recommendations from the summer and Steering Committees, updated their assessment plans, collected, reported, and analyzed data for academic year 2012 – 2013. To do this, each program followed these steps.
    - **Fall 2012:** Programs completed college and program missions.
    - **Fall 2012:** Programs explained how their missions supported their college's mission and that of Marshall University.
    - **Fall 2012:** Programs entered program outcomes, course (or other activities) in which assessments would be embedded for assessment points 1 and 2.
    - **Fall 2012:** Programs entered specific assessments for each point and indicated the appropriate benchmarks.
    - **Fall 2012:** Programs completed and submitted assessment rubrics for all program outcomes by **December 15.**
    - **February 2013:** Programs reported and analyzed results for at least two program outcomes. Assessments were completed during the fall 2012 semester.
    - **May 2013:** Programs reported and analyzed results for the remaining program outcomes. Assessments were completed during the spring 2013 semester.
    - **May 2013:** Programs completed an overall analysis and submitted final assessment reports for academic year 2012 – 2013.

Activities Involving Marshall's General Education Program

December 2011 – January 2013: In tandem with the degree program testing of the *DQP*, a workgroup of 21 faculty and a three-person Core Domain Steering Committee (one faculty member and two administrators) used the *DQP* as a diagnostic to examine the university's core domains of critical thinking with the intention of more clearly defining the graduation expectations for all Marshall graduates, **regardless of major**, at the baccalaureate degree level. The following steps were taken to accomplish this purpose.

1. **December 2011 – February 2012:** Interdisciplinary groups of faculty reviewed each of Marshall's seven domains of critical thinking. Each Faculty Workgroup consisted of three individuals (21 individuals across seven workgroups). Each group was composed of faculty from

different academic colleges and all of Marshall's academic colleges were represented across the seven groups. Each group used the *DQP* and Bloom's Taxonomy (as revised by Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to make suggested modifications (or not) to each domain, to determine essential traits for the domain, to articulate four gradually increasing performance levels for each trait, and to determine expected outcomes for students receiving baccalaureate degrees, regardless of major.

2. **February – June 2012:** The Core Domain Steering Committee reviewed the work submitted, suggested revisions, and recommended that the naming of performance levels be standardized to agree with the recommendations for degree program rubrics.

3. **August – October 2012:** The Core Domain Steering Committee shared its revisions with the Faculty Workgroups, with the University Assessment Committee, with the General Education Council, and with members of the university's Faculty Senate, and made further revisions based on feedback received from these groups.

4. **November 2012:** The Core Domain Steering Committee asked faculty senators to share the proposal for the Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile with (and to request feedback from) their colleagues.

5. **December 2012:** The proposal for the Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile was approved to be sent to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee by the Budget and Academic Policies Committee.

6. **January 2013:** The Faculty Senate unanimously approved the Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile. Full information regarding this profile can be accessed at muwww-new.marshall.edu/assessment/LearningOutcomes.aspx. (Please click on the hyperlink for each domain to access its assessment rubric).

Activities Involving Assessment at the Course Level

1. **September 2011:** Marshall's provost established a Master Syllabus Taskforce consisting of six members. Members included members of the Quality Initiative Project Steering Committee, as well as additional faculty and administrators. Taskforce members recommended adding a table to each syllabus showing the following relationships.

Course Student Learning Outcome	**How students will practice each outcome in this course**	**How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this course**	**List program learning outcomes to which this course outcome aligns**	**List DQP outcomes to which this course outcome aligns**
Students will	[List relevant learning activities here – e.g. group work, discussion, in-class exercises, chapter reviews, low-stakes writing, practice presentations, etc.]	[List assessments – papers, projects, presentations, exam questions – that evaluate mastery of this particular outcome]		

2. **October 2011:** Two faculty from each academic college participated in syllabus development workshops. During these sessions, they revised existing course syllabi using this new format.

3. **April 2012:** Faculty Senate approved a modified Master Syllabus Policy. Some faculty argued that not all courses directly tied to learning outcomes for degree programs, so the last two columns were eliminated from the final master syllabus.

Course Student Learning Outcome	How students will practice each outcome in this course	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this course
Students will	[List relevant learning activities here – e.g. group work, discussion, in-class exercises, chapter reviews, low-stakes writing, practice presentations, etc.]	[List assessments – papers, projects, presentations, exam questions – that evaluate mastery of this particular outcome]

4. **August 2012:** Marshall University's Board of Governors approved the Master Syllabus Policy.

5. **Academic year 2012 – 2013:** The Master Syllabus Policy was implemented, with full implementation expected by fall 2013.

Part 2: Significant Findings

We reported the initial findings from our project in the report we submitted to the Higher Learning Commission in August 2012. This report can be accessed at http://muwww-new.marshall.edu/hlcopenpathways/files/2012/08/2012HLCOpenPathwaysReport.pdf. Its most important results are highlighted below.

I Results: Academic Year 2011 – 2012

Degree Programs

Following **Degree Program Activity 1**, only 20% of course outcomes were modified as a result of mapping to the *DQP*. When we implemented **Activity 2**, we requested more specific information about program outcomes. We asked programs to give us reasons why they had (or had not) modified their program level outcomes based on their analysis from mapping to the outcomes of the *DQP*. In this activity, changes were reported to 54% of the program outcomes. Of this percentage, 38% of the program outcomes underwent substantive modifications.

Of 92 degree programs that completed **Activity 2**, only 43 (47%) reported aligning to **all** broad areas of learning included in the *DQP*. The *DQP*'s broad areas of learning to which programs most frequently did not align were civic learning (34%) and the intellectual skills of quantitative fluency (27%) and engaging diverse perspectives (26%).

Programs also were asked to specify broad areas of learning that they felt to be important for their students that are not part of the *DQP* as it is currently configured. Thirty-three of the 92 (36%) programs that completed this step indicated that they addressed one or more such areas of learning. Areas of learning mentioned most frequently were Ethical Learning (12 programs; 13%), Teamwork/Collaboration/Leadership (9 programs; 10%), and metacognitive

reflection/lifelong learning (3 programs; 3%). Most other areas mentioned were deemed by the committee to be part of *Specialized Knowledge* or another area of learning already articulated in the *DQP*.

General Education

A proposal for a Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile was developed by an interdisciplinary group of faculty. The proposal consisted of recommended updates to the core domains of critical thinking, newly articulated outcomes specifying what students are expected to know and be able to do upon graduating with a baccalaureate degree, and assessment rubrics describing four levels of performance for each outcome trait.

Course Level

A suggested syllabus template that included explicit linkages between course outcomes and how each would be practiced and assessed in the course was developed and tested by 16 faculty (two from each of Marshall's eight academic colleges).

A **Master Syllabus Policy** was approved by the University's Faculty Senate in April 2012.

II Results: Academic Year 2012 – 2013

Degree Programs

Ninety-seven programs were scheduled to participate in **Activity 3**. As of June 4, 2013 67 (69%) have completed all parts of Activity 3, 27 (28%) have partially completed the activity, and 3 (3%) have not completed any part of Activity 3. The University Assessment Committee reviewed submissions for the fall 2012 semester. During summer 2013, final submissions for academic year 2012 – 2013 will be reviewed and feedback given to each program regarding their progress to date, with recommendations for improvements in their assessment plans and procedures.

General Education

The proposal to revise Marshall's core domains of critical thinking, and to adopt baccalaureate level learning outcomes for each, received further revision as it was reviewed by the original Faculty Workgroups, the University Assessment Committee, the General Education Council, and faculty senators. The proposal was adopted by the Faculty Senate and signed by the university's president in January 2013. The chart below shows how we used the *DQP* in this process and the rationale for revisions made to our original domains. As one can see in the chart below, we started with our domains of thinking, studied the *DQP*, found intersections (and there were many), retained the domains we felt were important for our institution, and incorporated important information from the *DQP*. Our process is described in the table below.

DQP Domain	Original Marshall Domain	Revised Marshall Domain	Rationale for Revision	Learning Outcome
Communication Fluency	Oral/Written/Visual Communication	Communication Fluency	Marshall's idea of this domain has not changed – it still should include the three aspects of communication. Since the outcome will make this explicit, we argue that the term "communication" in the domain is sufficient to encompass all aspects of communication.	Students will **develop** cohesive oral, written, and visual communications **tailored** to specific audiences.
None	Aesthetic/ Artistic Thinking	Creative Thinking	This area of learning is not part of DQP, but is an important part of Marshall's Core Domains. As currently written, though, the domain is too discipline-specific. We argue that the proposed name, "creative thinking" expands this domain to include all disciplines across campus.	Students will **outline** multiple divergent solutions to a problem, **develop** and **explore** risky or controversial ideas, and **synthesize** ideas/expertise to **generate** innovations.
Civic Learning	Ethical/Social/ Historical Thinking	Ethical and Civic Thinking	While civic learning is part of the DQP, ethics is not – and consensus from the MU community during the testing of the DQP was that it's important to explicitly include ethics across all degree programs. We argue that the DQP language of civic learning is still useful because it is broader, but inclusive of, social and historical thinking. Finally, in testing the DQP, we found that a significant number of programs did not align to Civic Learning. Therefore, we have written our outcome to be broader than that of the DQP.	Students will **determine** the origins of core beliefs and ethical principles, **evaluate** the ethical basis of professional rules and standards of conduct, **evaluate** how academic theories and public policy inform one another to support civic well-being, and **analyze** complex ethical problems to address competing interests.
Use of Information Resources	Information/ Technical Literacy	Information Literacy	Consensus from the MU community during the testing of the DQP was that "use of information resources" is an	Students will **revise** their search strategies and **employ** appropriate research tools,

			important learning domain. We propose to change MU's current name from "information/technical literacy" to "information literacy" because the latter suggests the level of analysis and evaluation in which students should engage to critically examine information sources.	**integrate** relevant information from reliable sources, **question and evaluate** the complexity of the information environment, and **use** information in an ethical manner.
Broad, Integrative Knowledge	None	Integrative Thinking	Although this is an element we propose be added to Marshall's Domains, we argue that it was implicitly included before, in both FYS and CT course designs. The addition of this domain simply makes its inclusion explicit.	Students will **make connections** and **transfer skills** and **learning** among varied disciplines, domains of thinking, experiences, and situations.
Engaging Diverse Perspectives	Multicultural/ International Thinking	Intercultural Thinking	Marshall faculty have expressed a commitment to multicultural and international learning at least since the inception of the "Marshall Plan" in the early 1990s. It continues to be a priority, e.g. the INTO project. However, we noted that a large number of Marshall's Degree Programs did not align to this DQP area of learning. Therefore, we have defined the Marshall Domain's outcome much more broadly than was the "Engaging Diverse Perspectives" outcome in the DQP.	Students will **evaluate** generalizations about cultural groups, **analyze** how cultural beliefs might affect communication across cultures, **evaluate** how specific approaches to global issues will affect multiple cultural communities, and **untangle** competing economic, religious, social, or geographical interests of cultural groups in conflict.
Analytic Inquiry	Scientific Thinking	Inquiry Based Thinking	In the testing of the DQP, there was consensus from MU's programs that analytic inquiry, which we argue broadly corresponded to MU's "scientific thinking" domain, is an important domain of thinking. Our current proposal	Students will **formulate** focused questions and hypotheses, **evaluate** existing knowledge, **collect** and **analyze** data, and **draw** justifiable conclusions.

			modifies the DQP language because "analytic" suggests only one element of inquiry. Likewise, MU's current domain name, "scientific," suggests a narrowly defined method of inquiry.	
None	None	Metacognitive Thinking	We propose adding this domain of thinking based on input from Marshall faculty.	Students will **evaluate** the effectiveness of their project plan or strategy to **determine** the degree of their improvement in knowledge and skills.
Quantitative Fluency	Abstract/ Mathematical Thinking	Quantitative Thinking	A significant number of degree programs did not map to the Quantitative Fluency outcome in the DQP. Yet, the domain of "Abstract/Mathematical" thinking was included as part of Marshall's original Core Domains and there is national consensus that quantitative fluency is an essential skill. Therefore, we developed the MU outcome to be more broadly stated than the ones in the DQP. The recommended domain name change from the original MU Core Domain wording to that of the DQP is recommended to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of this domain.	Students will **analyze** real-world problems quantitatively, **formulate** plausible estimates, **assess** the validity of visual representations of quantitative information**,** and **differentiate** valid from questionable statistical conclusions.
Applied Learning	None	None	Not explicitly included in our proposed Degree Profile. However, most assessments, especially at the capstone level, will require application.	N/A
Specialized Knowledge	None	None	Specialized Knowledge will be part of the outcomes of each degree program and, therefore, will differ among degree programs. However, it is expected that students will use specialized knowledge to demonstrate the domains of critical	N/A

			thinking.	

The adoption of the Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile will result in important changes to our delivery and assessment of general education. Beginning fall 2013, FYS course outcomes will be the outcomes that correspond to the domains of Information Literacy, Intercultural Thinking, Inquiry-Based Thinking, Integrative Thinking, and Metacognitive Thinking. Likewise, CT course outcomes will map directly to university outcomes. The exact number of outcomes for CT courses is still to be determined by the University's General Education Council.

Course Level

The Mater Syllabus policy was approved by Marshall's Board of Governors in August 2012. The University Assessment Committee conducted a review of 285 syllabi from across campus in the spring of 2013. 149 (52%) of these syllabi included linkages between outcomes and how each would be practiced, and assessed, in the course. An additional 18 (6%) syllabi had at least two of these three linkages. One hundred eighteen (41%) syllabi did not contain this information. We plan to conduct syllabus development workshops with targeted groups of faculty this fall. Some faculty who use the master syllabus have told us that thinking through the linkages among course outcomes and how they will assess each **and** how they must design their courses to provide students ample opportunities to practice the outcomes have resulted in much more intentional course design.

III Overall Results

As the Quality Initiative Steering Committee reflected on this project and studied feedback from a survey completed by faculty on Assessment Day 2013 (full Assessment Day Survey results can be accessed at muwww-new.marshall.edu/hlcopenpathways/files/2013/05/Open-Pathways-Assessment-Day-Survey-Results.pdf), several themes emerged. These included:

1. The importance of **intentionality** in designing student learning experiences.
    - The procedures we put into place to test the *DQP* heightened everyone's awareness of the importance of **intentionality** in designing student learning experiences.
    - The required linkages among course outcomes and how students practice and instructors assess these outcomes in the master syllabus template has resulted in faculty more intentionally designing student learning experiences within courses.

2. The importance of widespread **participation** in the project.
    - The procedures we put into place to test the *DQP* fostered wide faculty participation in this project. We offered numerous workshops to help guide faculty through each degree program activity and representatives of virtually every degree program on campus (all members of some academic departments) attended these workshops.
    - Faculty representatives from across campus participated in revising the core domains of critical thinking/university outcomes.
    - Faculty representatives from across campus participated in testing the master syllabus template.
    - Faculty and students from across campus participated in "Campus Conversations." These conversations, held over the past two years, have engaged faculty and students in

discussions geared toward improving the academic experience at Marshall. Topics have included discussion of these three books:

- Arum, A., & Roska, J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Zull, J. E. (2002). *The art of changing the brain: Enriching the practice of teaching by exploring the biology of learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Palmer, P. J., & Zajonc, A. (2010). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

3. The importance of providing **structure** to degree programs as they tested the *DQP.* Preliminary feedback suggests that the structure used in testing the *DQP* helped some programs identify the need to
   - Revise curricula.
   - Expand students' capstone experiences.
   - See the connections among courses that lead to the learning outcomes expected of students in their programs.
   - Reevaluate assessment tools.
   - Make program outcomes more explicit for students.
   - Make the relationship between course and program outcomes more explicit for students.
   - Establish consistency of outcomes across course sections.
   - Use assessment results to improve their programs (formative).

4. The importance of the quality initiative in helping the university to improve **academic quality** and **enhance its standards**. Some individuals noted that the "real benefits" to higher education of have a *DQP* include that a *DQP*
   - Encourages comprehensive review of the curriculum.
   - Provides a vehicle for higher education to achieve excellence.
   - Has the potential to improve the student learning through setting clear expectations and encouraging self-reflection.

5. The importance of **connecting students' learning experience** to expectations of the Marshall University Degree Profile. This should entail a move away from "covering" material to providing students with meaningful opportunities to practice the skills the university deems important, as articulated in its Degree Profile. This, in turn, should increase the amount of active learning in which students and faculty engage.

IV Future Plans for Marshall's Quality Initiative

Although testing the *DQP* allowed us to make significant progress in strengthening teaching and student learning at Marshall University, *this effort is still in its infancy*. Below, we outline future plans in this regard.

Degree Programs

1. **Fall 2013**: All baccalaureate degree programs will map their program learning outcomes to the learning outcomes of the Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile. Using the rubrics developed for each of Marshall's Core Domains of Critical Thinking, Associate and Master's Degree programs will map their outcomes to the domain outcomes at the milestone and advanced levels. In a procedure similar to that we used to test the *DQP*, programs will either modify outcomes to achieve the program to university outcome mapping or supply a rationale as to why they do not map to particular university outcomes. This mapping will allow the university to aggregate assessment results from multiple programs to university-level outcomes.

2. **Academic year 2013 – 2014**: Programs will continue to assess student learning using course embedded (or other appropriate) authentic assessments to assess program learning outcomes. Data will be collected at a minimum of two assessment points per outcome. Faculty teaching courses with program-embedded assessments will record results for each student (in the program) in an online reporting system. Data reporting will occur each semester, according to the assessment plan the program has developed, i.e. course embedded assessment data will be reported according to the time of the course rotation. This system will allow each program to make comparisons in student learning, not just between two assessment points in a given academic year, but across selected assessment points across multiple years. This will allow tracking of the learning of specific student cohorts over time. Additionally, it should result in sustainability for program and university assessment.

3. To encourage and enhance continued wide faculty participation in assessment of student learning, one day in May will be set aside as an "Assessment Day" for faculty. This Assessment Day will occur after final grades have been submitted for the spring semester. The purpose of the day will be for faculty to analyze program assessment data for the previous academic year (and previous years if relevant), determine strengths and weaknesses in student learning, and determine plans for improvement. It will be important for each member of the academic department to assume a role in implementing the improvement plan. Following this meeting, the program's yearly assessment update will be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs, which will provide feedback to each program by the beginning of the next term.

General Education

1. Marshall has developed an online repository for authentic artifacts completed by students in general education courses. During **summer 2013** a group of faculty is assessing a sample of artifacts from FYS against our newly adopted rubrics for the Marshall University Baccalaureate Degree Profile. Our intention is to expand this assessment to artifacts from CT courses and other courses required in the University's general education curriculum.

2. **Beginning summer 2012**, all incoming freshmen who attended Marshall's Week of Welcome (WOW) completed either the *Collegiate Learning Assessment* (*CLA*) or a Marshall produced performance task. Both tasks evaluate students' abilities to write effectively, analyze arguments, solve problems, and evaluate information. These outcomes map to Marshall's domains/outcomes of Communication Fluency, Inquiry-Based Thinking, and Information Literacy. **Beginning spring 2013**, all seniors who participated in the University's student

Assessment Day completed either the *CLA* or the same Marshall problem solving task that freshmen had completed during WOW. Currently a group of faculty is blindly assessing Marshall's performance artifacts from both of these administrations. We will compare results between freshmen and seniors and correlate them with our institutional *CLA* results. We intend to continue this practice on a yearly basis.

3. We will investigate aggregating results from program assessments that map to university outcomes to determine the extent to which the university's outcomes continue to be reinforced in the programs' curricula.

4. An important next step in this process is to consider and map co-curricular activities to the Marshall University Degree Profile.

Course Level

1. The University Assessment Committee will evaluate syllabi to provide feedback for faculty and determine targeted groups for syllabus development workshops.

2. Although not part of the current policy, the summer 2012 Faculty Workgroup recommended that, when courses are part of a degree program, and therefore support degree program outcomes, faculty be encouraged to map their course outcomes to those of their programs. The appropriate venue for this mapping (syllabus, university catalog, program website or some combination of these) remains to be determined. The Faculty Workgroup was in agreement, however, that it is important for students to know what they are expected to know and be able to do upon graduation and that they should know how each university requirement will help them to achieve these goals.

Part 3: Recommendations to the Lumina Foundation

Based on Marshall's assessment of the *DQP* during academic year 2011 – 2012, the summer 2012 Faculty Workgroup made the following recommendations to the Lumina Foundation in the report we sent to the Higher Learning Commission in August 2012.

1. We believe that the language of the outcomes renders many of the areas of learning too narrowly defined. Specific examples of this are *Broad Integrative Learning* where, rather than discussing the integration of (connections among) various disciplines and learning domains, examples narrowly define "my field and one other." This also occurs in the *Intellectual Skill* of *Communication Fluency* where the ability to communicate "in more than one language" is mentioned. Although many programs interpreted this language broadly, others felt that it meant what it said and felt that most of our student communicated well only in English.

2. We believe that the area of learning titled *Civic Learning* is too narrowly defined. We believe that its current language is not inclusive enough to encourage mapping across multiple disciplines. We recommend that the language of *Civic Learning* be broadened and we further recommend that this area explicitly include *Ethics*.

3. We recommend that *Metacognitive Reflection*/*Lifelong Learning* be added to the *DQP* as an additional *Intellectual Skill.*

4. We recommend that the description of the *Intellectual Skill* of *Quantitative Fluency* be broadened to include *Symbolic Logic* because *Modeling/Systems Thinking* is often a precursor to quantitative analysis.

5. We recommend the intellectual skill of "communication fluency" be broadened to explicitly include visual, as well as oral and written communication.

6. A number of programs at Marshall noted that *Teamwork/Collaboration/Leadership* were important for students in their programs.

Marshall University's Quality Initiative Steering Committee further recommends that the Lumina Foundation consider the following items as it revises the *DQP*.

1. We recommend the development of a parallel *DQP* for pre-collegiate education, i.e. for K – 12.

2. We recommend that the revised *DQP* emphasize the continuous improvement nature of an assessment model.

3. We recommend that the Lumina Foundation consider that a *DQP* offers a viable accountability framework for higher education.

4. We recommend that the Lumina Foundation clearly articulate the theoretical construct that underpins the whole fabric of the *DQP*.

References

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