

University Assessment Committee Meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 2014; 2:00 – 4:00 PM
MSC Room 2W22

Minutes

Members Present: April Fugett-Fuller, Larry Sheret, John Yaun, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Vanessa Keadle, Sherri Stepp, Nicki LoCascio, Tim Melvin, Doug Nichols, Rex McClure, Carrie Childers (for Loukia Dixon), Karen McComas, Andrew Gooding

Members Absent: Maribea Barnes, Paula Lucas, Caroline Perkins, Sherri Smith, Lori Howard, Asad Salem, Marty Laubach (on sabbatical), Student Representative (TBD)

Agenda Items

- 1. Introductions:** Mary Beth Reynolds called the meeting to order. The meeting started with introductions, with welcomes extended to new members April Fugett-Fuller, representing the Center for Teaching and Learning, John Yaun, representing Housing and Residence Life, and Tim Melvin, representing Academic Affairs. We also welcomed Carrie Childers, who attended the meeting for Loukia Dixon, representing the College of Health Professions.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the May 16, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.
- 3. HLC Assurance Argument:** Marshall's HLC site visit is scheduled for October 12 and 13, 2015. Mary Beth explained that Marshall participates in the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Open Pathways accreditation process and that the reaffirmation process now occurs in a couple of steps. Step 1 is a quality initiative (improvement project). Marshall's quality initiative was testing the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). The results of our quality initiative has already been reviewed by HLC peer reviewers and approved. Step 2, in which we are currently engaged, is writing assurance argument. This argument will consist of a short narrative, supported by evidence, demonstrating that Marshall meets the HLC's five criteria for accreditation. These criteria are 1) mission, 2) integrity, 3) teaching and learning: quality, resources, and support, 4) teaching and learning: evaluation and improvement, and 5) resources, planning, and institutional effectiveness. Mary Beth informed the committee that there were five criterion workgroups that spent the summer assembling evidence for the assurance argument. Dr. David Hatfield, Associate Professor of English, is currently writing the argument and should have a draft ready for initial review in December. Mary Beth also explained the process of online submission the HLC is now using.
- 4. Spring Syllabus Review Results:** Mary Beth thanked everyone for reviewing syllabi, 360 of which were assigned for review. Of these, four were discarded because they were for courses that did not require syllabi (i.e. seminars, internships, etc.). That left 356 syllabi for review; however, of those, 83 were not uploaded to BERT, leaving 272 syllabi for evaluation. The percentage of syllabi uploaded was fairly consistent across colleges, with the exception of CITE, which uploaded at a lower level than other colleges. Also the School of Medicine did not upload syllabi to BERT. The required item missing most frequently from syllabi was the assessment grid. Only 58% (up from 52% in spring 2013) of syllabi included the full grid (learning outcomes and explanations of how each

would be *practiced* and *assessed* in the course). Only 76% of syllabi included the link to university policies (although many that did not include this link listed policies individually). Mary Beth noted that the reason why syllabi ask for a course description “from the catalog” is in an effort to ensure that programs keep their course catalog descriptions current; i.e. if program faculty feel a need for a change, that change should not just go on the syllabus, but should go through the university process to be updated in the catalog. This practice also helps to maintain consistency across multiple sections of a given course. Mary Beth emphasized that it’s fine to include both the catalog course description and an expanded description. The COEPD and COS were the two colleges missing the assessment grid most often.

Regarding disseminating the results, Mary Beth proposed sending a uniform email to everyone whose syllabus was evaluated. This email would inform the faculty member that s/he would soon receive a check sheet indicating required syllabus elements that were either present or absent on her/his syllabus. The email would assure the faculty member that this sheet would not be shared with anyone else. The email also would highlight general information, such as the importance of including key items and how to upload syllabi to BERT. Mary Beth said she would take specific reviewer names off the evaluations before sending. Upon request, Mary Beth will send each Assessment Committee member his/her reviews for approval before sending them to faculty. Karen McComas said that the CTL works with people on curriculum alignment and encouraged us to refer people to the CTL for help with the grid (or with any other syllabus element).

- 5. Collegiate Learning Assessment+ (CLA+) Results:** For new members, Mary Beth explained what the CLA+ is. She reported that, during academic year 2013-2014, Marshall had 116 usable freshman scores and 47 usable senior scores. The CLA+ is categorizes student scores into four areas (below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced). Marshall’s mean freshman performance was at the basic level and our mean senior performance was at the proficient level. Marshall’s value-added estimate was at the expected level, and has been the case for a number of years.

Some discussion ensued regarding strategies to increase our senior sample size. Mary Beth related many strategies that have been tried over the year, emphasizing that, regardless of size, it is important for the sample to be as representative of the target population as possible. Larry Sheret suggested trying to sample by classrooms, thus ensuring a certain degree of randomness. Mary Beth proposed that we reach out to capstone instructors and ask for volunteers to make participation in the senior assessment a course requirement. Mary Beth would conduct (or arrange to have conducted) the assessments, if the instructors would require their students to attend one of the assessment sessions. She explained that, due to the requirements of the CLA+ for institutional assessment purposes (to calculate a valid “value-added” only seniors who matriculated as Marshall students should take the CLA+) she would arrange for students who did not qualify (i.e. transfer students) to take an alternative Marshall senior assessment. Andrew Gooding said part of potential faculty objections would be lessened if faculty members could choose day and it would be voluntary. Mary Beth encouraged committee members to go to the assessment website and read the entire CLA+ report.

- 6. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):** Mary Beth discussed some highlights from NSSE results, especially Marshall’s student responses to items mapping to High Impact Practices (HIP). Mary Beth pointed out that, compared with other universities in our Carnegie classification, we do well in HIPs. For example, Marshall’s seniors outperformed seniors at peer institutions in terms of

the number who reported engaging in research with faculty. She also noted that research has shown research with faculty to contribute significantly to students' perceptions of deep learning. For freshmen we would like to improve the extent to which they engage in service learning and learning communities. However, our 2014 results showed that we have improved in this area. Mary Beth encouraged committee members to study results NSSE and of graduation surveys, which are on the Assessment website.

- 7. Annual Assessment Reports:** Mary Beth foresees some changes in the timing of the committee reviewing annual program assessment reports. She explained that, historically, degree programs submitted annual assessment reports the December following the academic year covered. As an example, assessment reports for academic year 2007-2008 were submitted in December 2008. The University Assessment Committee reviewed them at the beginning of the spring semester of 2009 and Mary Beth provided feedback to each program by April 2009. This process was disrupted when we used the 2011-2012 academic year to complete our Quality Initiative. Each associate's, bachelor's, and master's program (except those in the School of Medicine) revised its assessment plan during that year. Actual data collection and full assessment reporting resumed during academic year 2012-2013. Since we now have the online assessment reporting portal, which allows program to import their plans each year and simply update results, analysis, and planned actions annually, we have asked programs to submit yearly reports by mid-May of the year in which they collected data.

In an effort to review these reports and get feedback to programs in a more timely fashion, Mary Beth proposed that the Assessment Committee begin to use the fall semester for annual assessment report review (and review a sample of course syllabi in the spring). However, there is a complication and that is that, historically, the Assessment Committee has only reviewed undergraduate assessment reports, with the Graduate Council reviewing those at the graduate level. Unlike the Assessment Committee, however, the Graduate Council must evaluate graduate five-year program reviews each fall and Mary Beth doubts it would be able to review assessment reports simultaneously. She has asked the Assessment Committee's Graduate Council liaison, Dr. Lori Howard, to ask the Graduate Council how it would feel about the University Assessment Committee reviewing all of the annual assessment reports, graduate as well as undergraduate. If the Graduate Council agrees to this, we have another complication. We have historically had three readers (two Assessment Committee members plus Mary Beth) for each assessment report. Taking on the responsibility of reading graduate assessment reports would double our workload. However, if we reduced the number of readers for each report to two (one Assessment Committee member and Mary Beth), we could keep the workload the same as before. After some discussion, we decided to go this route (if the Graduate Council agrees to this proposal) and decided that, if Mary Beth can get reports to readers by November 1, we would set a deadline of January 31 for reviews to be complete. Larry Sheret also asked committee members to consider encouraging their colleagues to use the information literacy assessment as a complementary measure to other information literacy assessments given in their programs. He encouraged members to contact him if instructors would like to embed this assessment in one of their courses.

- 8. General Education Assessment Reports and Next Steps:** Mary Beth described the process of general education assessment used during the past summer. A group of nine faculty reviewed randomly pulled, de-identified assessments completed by matriculating freshmen during Week of Welcome (2013) and exiting seniors during the spring of 2014. They also reviewed FYS exams

completed by the sample of matriculating freshmen. Finally, they assessed work samples that students uploaded to Marshall's General Education Assessment Repository (GEAR) from FYS and from courses carrying multicultural (MC), international (I), writing intensive (WI), and service learning (SL) designations. Mary Beth said that reviewers made several recommendations to improve this process. One recommendation was that, for GEAR uploads, instructors designate what level (introductory, milestone, capstone, or advanced) at which they expected their students to perform. She noted that the rubrics were written as a series of outcome statements that describe expected performance at different points in the curriculum. For this reason, it is possible for assignments to be written in such a way that it is not possible for students to demonstrate higher levels. This led to a discussion as to what level we should expect at the end of "general education." There was some sentiment that we should minimally expect "milestone" level performance at this point, with "capstone" level performance expected at the completion of the degree, but members pointed out that students often complete general education courses during their Junior and Senior years. Additionally, courses with MC, I, WI and SL designations occur at all levels. Mary Beth also introduced the idea of writing more specific scoring rubrics for each outcome statement at the "milestone" and "capstone" levels.

9. **Assessment Day and Senior Assessments:** Please see item 5 for plans regarding senior assessments. Regarding other Assessment Day plans, Mary Beth suggested doing activities during the month before Assessment Day and, on Assessment Day itself having a social event in conjunction with prize drawings.

10. **AAC&U High Impact Practice Workshop Report:** April Fugett-Fuller told the group about the HIP project we will be engaging in during the next two years. We will be investigating the proportional impact of HIPs on minority or special groups. We are currently identifying hub FYS courses and plan to build learning communities around those. The learning communities will identify issues that are important, not only to students at Marshall, but have global implications as well. The project itself will begin in the fall of 2015, but we are gearing up for it this year. Another group of Marshall faculty and staff that includes Sherri Smith, Maurice Cooley, Mike Smith, Kateryna Schray, and Laura Stapleton are participating in a Higher Learning Commission's Student Success Academy. They are currently mining existing Marshall data to see which factors are most predictive of students staying at Marshall.

11. **Update from Units:**
 - Karen McComas reported that the Center for Teaching and Learning is continuing the faculty learning community on the scholarship of teaching and learning. Additionally, it has introduced new learning communities; one on the pedagogy of undergraduate research, a second on visual thinking, and a third on creativity in course design. Karen shared that the learning community on the pedagogy of undergraduate research currently has six highly engaged members. As previously noted in the minutes, faculty/student research has been shown to be an especially powerful HIP in which students can engage.
 - Rex McClure shared that the College of Business (COB) will be up for reaccreditation in annual year 2015-2016. The COB has completed the first step of this process already.
 - Carrie Childers shared that the CD Department has moved all of its scoring onto SharePoint so that all faculty members can record outcomes on SharePoint. They have programmed an excel file in SharePoint to do the calculations needed. Then, when all results have been entered,

Carrie and Loukia Dixon enter the results into Marshall's assessment portal. Mary Beth asked Carrie if she would be willing to share their process with interested faculty from other units sometime in the future.

- Sherri Stepp reported that Vanessa Keadle is working with their staff to assess their 1,700 UNI 100 students through focus groups and paper surveys. They also are assessing the UNI 100 facilitators and peer mentors. Mary Beth reported that Vanessa also is working with student organizations to map their activities to Marshall's outcomes. This is part of an effort to initially assess the effect of Marshall's co-curricular activities on student outcomes.

12. Additional Business: None

The meeting was adjourned around 4:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds

Mary Beth Reynolds