

## University Assessment Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2015; 12:00 – 2:00 PM  
Student Resource Center Conference Room

### Minutes

**Members Present:** Loukia Dixon, Susan Imes, Kim DeTardo-Bora, April Fugett, Carla Lapelle, Asad Salem, Andrew Gooding, Doug Nichols, Larry Sheret, Caroline Perkins, Maribea Barnes, Marty Laubach, Lori Howard, Edna Meisel, John Yaun, Nicki LoCascio, Tim Melvin, Mary Beth Reynolds.

**Members Absent:** Paula Lucas, Rex McClure, Karen McComas, Sherri Smith, Sherri Stepp, Student Representative (TBD)

### Agenda Items

1. **Introductions and Announcements:** Following lunch, the meeting started with introductions. No announcements were made.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the December 15, 2014 meeting were unanimously approved as submitted.
3. **Quick Updates**
  - **Assessment Day Update:** This year we continued the practice of not cancelling classes on Assessment Day. Assessment Day now incorporates many assessments that occur during the spring semester. Spring assessment activities concluded the day after the University's "official" Assessment Day with prize drawings on the Memorial Student Center Plaza. Tim Melvin worked with the Campus Activities Board and WMUL, whose announcer announced the winners of each drawing. Winners also were contacted via email and posted on the Assessment Day website. During spring 2015, Assessment Day activities included:
    - **Senior Assessments** – A total of 140 graduating seniors completed senior assessments (97 the CLA+ and 43 Marshall's senior assessment). Mary Beth Reynolds thanked Kim DeTardo-Bora, Marty Laubach, and all of the other capstone instructors who asked their classes to complete senior assessments. Mary Beth thanked the members of the Assessment Committee for encouraging people to do this, noting that this was the best representative sample the senior assessments have had to date.
    - **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** – Freshmen and seniors completed this survey. The survey was launched in late February and was still open at the time of the meeting. Reported response rate was 22%.
    - **Senior Interviews** – The Office of Career Services interviewed 168 graduating seniors. Mary Beth said that these interviews are important because she is working with Denise Hogsett (Director of Career Services) and they hope to begin sending out very short alumni surveys during academic year 2015 – 2016. The alumni surveys will be sent out six months after graduation. They will ask about graduates employment and further education. However, to obtain adequate response rates, we must have current email contact information for alumni. Denise is getting that information from students who complete senior interviews. Future plans are to try to get this information on graduation applications. Edna Meisel said that the College of Education and Professional Development is talking about conducting

alumni surveys to fulfill Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards. She asked if we would have already surveyed their students. Mary Beth cautioned that the university has not begun this process yet and that she will be sure everyone knows as soon as this process begins. She advised Edna that, until then, the COEPD should go ahead and survey their alumni. Marty Laubach asked if we have considered sending these out through Facebook. Mary Beth said we have to figure out if we can do these in a non-anonymous way.

- **Graduation Surveys** – Students completing associate and bachelor’s degrees and undergraduate certificates complete these surveys each term. Mary Beth announced that the response rate for academic year 2014-2015 currently stands at 34%. She said she would close these out in about a week.
- **Graduate Degree Program Surveys** – We sent these surveys to graduate students and received between 670 and 675 responses. The survey includes Likert Scale items that link to the Marshall University Degree Profile.
- **Campus-Wide Surveys** – We have campus-wide survey results posted on the Assessment Day website from 2010 to the present. Mary Beth also said that results for offices that have been giving these surveys for a number of years continue to show more positive results and student comments each successive year.
- **Departmental Activities** – Academic Departments and Student Offices completed assessment activities and their student participants were included in Assessment Day prize drawings.
- **Annual Assessment Report Update** – Mary Beth thanked the members of the Assessment Committee for reviewing degree and certificate programs’ annual assessment reports. Mary Beth would like to form a subcommittee to review the rubric again. She asked that members of the committee think about this. She would like about four people to work on the rubric. Mary Beth said that there are some programs that have done a good job of developing their assessment plans, which includes specifying assessment measure and developing rubrics. However, the rubric for assessment measures is written in such a way that reviewers are unsure how to score the plan if it has not been implemented. Mary Beth also noted that there is confusion about the meaning of complementary assessment measures. Loukia Dixon brought up the issue of indirect versus direct measures; that there isn’t really a place for the results of indirect measures. Mary Beth said indirect measures can be used, but their results must be reported separately by using an addendum. Mary Beth also said that different types of assessments (even if both are direct) might result in different outcomes, which combining results (as we’re doing with the current assessment reporting structure) would mask. We realize that this is a problem we need to fix. Mary Beth wonders if the word “detailed” plan for improvement should stay in Level 3 for the feedback loop. In some cases, the results do not lend themselves to a detailed plan. Perhaps we should simply say, “A plan for improvement.....” Larry Sheret felt that the plan does not have to be verbose to be detailed. Caroline Perkins suggested changing the word “detailed” to “specific.” Mary Beth explained the method she used to arrive at final rubric scores before she sent feedback to programs. She said that she sends reviewers’ feedback to programs, but does not include the names of the reviewers. This, hopefully, keeps the comments anonymous.
- **High Impact Project Update (April Fugett)** – April Fugett brought the committee members up-to-date regarding the High Impact Practice Project. In fall 2015, we will have learning communities where randomly selected freshmen will be enrolled in two classes together (one FYS and one partner course). She reported that we have three sets of partner pairings who have

spent the past semester working on their courses, identifying a common theme and this summer they will work to align their content and bring in some co-curricular activities. She said that we have begun the pre-enrollment process to generate the students for those courses; June enrollment is complete and we are working on getting the July/August enrollment finalized. Mary Beth said that the main reason for this project is that our NSSE data have shown that, by the senior level, our students have had better experiences than students at our Carnegie Peer institutions in engaging in high impact practices. However, we do not do as well with our freshmen and we identified learning communities as an area we would like to improve. Research shows that students report deeper learning, better outcomes, and more engagement when they engage in high impact practices, leading us to believe that earlier engagement in these practices, i.e. at freshman level, might help to improve student outcomes. Mary Beth acknowledged the participation of Housing and Residence Life in the co-curricular aspect of this project. Marty asked about making service learning a university graduation requirement. April said that, although the Service Learning Program is growing, the percentages of faculty who are using service learning are not at the point where we could sustain this as a requirement at this time. She suggested that Marty discuss this with Kristi Fondren, who is the Director of Service Learning. Mary Beth said that service learning has been shown to be one of the most powerful high impact practices. Marty wondered out loud whether starting a discussion about the advisability of service learning becoming a university requirement might encourage greater faculty participation. Andrew Gooding suggested starting a pilot for service learning before moving forward. Asad Salem said that Engineering will be conducting a pilot of service learning in the fall and will be looking for ideas as to how to assess the service learning project. Marty suggested that he and Asad meet to discuss this, and include Kristi Fondren in the meeting.

- **HLC Assurance Argument Update** – Mary Beth said that David Hatfield is continuing to write the assurance argument.
- **CT Syllabi Update** – Mary Beth said she had communicated with departments about making sure that the outcomes on the CT syllabi aligned with the outcomes of the Marshall University Degree Profile.
- **Employer Find Update** – Mary Beth is working on data the university received from HEPdata Employer Find. HEPdata gets the data for us from Linked-In accounts, in much the same way that Marty had suggested we might use Facebook.
- **Program Review Update** – Every program is continuing at current level or with additional resources except for the MA Degrees in Art and Spanish, both of which were discontinued due to the decisions of their respective faculties.
- **General Education Assessment** – We are starting our general education assessment next week.
- **Syllabus Review** – Mary Beth said she didn't think it was reasonable to conduct annual assessment report evaluations in the fall, so she suggested that the committee return to the practice of completing syllabus reviews in the fall and annual assessment reviews in the spring.

#### 4. General Discussion

- **Program Assessment Best Practices – Departmental Sharing (Loukia Dixon, Kim DeTardo-Bora, and Marty Laubach)** –
  - Loukia Dixon talked about the process the Communication Disorders' Department used to convert its data collection from paper to electronic format. Carrie Childers, one of Loukia's colleagues in the department, introduced the use of an Excel Spreadsheet. She took all of the rubrics and developed a way to calculate scores for the various levels of each trait of each learning outcome. Loukia also developed a timeline for each assessment and for

- faculty to turn in results. Loukia said it was easier for them to assess each outcome each year. This allows people to establish a routine. Mary Beth said that now that we have the online assessment report portal it is our expectation that, if programs have assessments embedded in courses that they teach on an annual basis, they will report those assessment results annually. Loukia said that her program found that it wasn't until they assessed with a certain type of assessment that they were able to see whether or not it was working. Loukia said it has taken them about two years, but now they feel more comfortable with the assessment plan they have developed.
- Kim DeTardo-Bora said the Criminal Justice faculty decided to collect assessment data, which is collated at the program level using an Excel spreadsheet, at the end of each semester. After the information is collated, Kim sends it to the faculty so that all will be involved in interpretation of the results. She reported that this process has been very helpful and has resulted in rubric revision as well as program improvements. She has worked with faculty to use the rubrics appropriately, encouraging them to use rubrics for grading as well as program assessment. Kim suggested a refresher at the university level about this process. Kim and Loukia discussed using SharePoint to store data. Mary Beth suggested using the summary box to include an analysis of longitudinal results over a number of years. Mary Beth asked if people find that there is still confusion between grades for classes and assessment of student learning in degree programs as she suspects that some programs report assessment results by checking student grades. She opined that it is important to have a system that captures program assessment results at the time that students are being assessed.
  - Marty Laubach said his department should get the award for the most improvement. Marty shared a handout regarding the assessment in Sociology and Anthropology. He explained the process of how his department developed its assessment plan. They started with the expected outcomes they expected of students at graduation. Giving these to students who expressed a desire to know how and where in the program they would practice and achieve these outcomes helped to convince faculty within the program that these outcomes were important to students. The Sociology/Anthropology program now has each student complete a capstone portfolio consisting of a capstone paper (with metacognitive reflection), three other papers (one from theory, one from methods, and a best paper of the student's choice), a senior thesis, resume, CV and letters to potential employers. Program faculty assess each portfolio using a scale that ranges from "unsatisfactory" to "exemplary." At the end of this process, the faculty examine whether students are reaching capstone level on the program's outcomes. Faculty discuss results during an annual assessment retreat. Marty also said that he collects assessment results for all students enrolled in courses that the program uses for program assessment. After the class with embedded assessments, faculty circle level students are at and enter the results into an access spreadsheet. The department's secretary then compiles the information.
  - **Co-Curricular Assessment (Carla Lapelle and John Yaun) –**
    - John Yaun described the assessment that Housing and Residence Life (H&RL) does by emphasizing that, in a time of declining financial resources, it is important to justify that expenditures make a difference in the lives of students. To that end, he believes that the assessment that occurs in H&RL must involve more than a tabulation of the number of students who attend events; it must demonstrate what students have learned from those events. About five years ago, Marshall's H&RL staff created student learning outcomes that guide what the unit does. The assessment that H&RL completes analyzes various aspects of

- its programming. H&RL assesses efforts around sustainability, diversity, student learning and development, faculty in residence, academic mentors, its residence hall association, its chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary, and its residence directors' course. H&RL's assessment methods are primarily surveys, such as those developed by Educational Benchmarking (EBI). However, H&RL also has used student evaluations of programs and has used focus groups. John discussed exploring the use of a pre-posttest methodology to expand in the direction of direct assessment of student learning. John and his staff are currently looking at the methodology used by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to see if Marshall can implement similar measures. John also discussed H&RL's Living/Learning Communities. Next steps are to analyze data to see what programs are working, which need to be improved, and to share this information with the campus community. John said that he feels it's very important to tell the story about why living in residence halls makes a difference in students' success at Marshall. H&RL is getting ready to hire an Assistant Director of Student Initiatives, who will assume responsibility for the bulk of assessment in the unit. Larry Sheret asked what the major advantage was to living on campus. John said that first year students living on campus do better academically than first year students living off campus. H&RL runs GPA reports every semester, so it has direct data to verify this assertion. H&RL is working with Mike McGuffey to compare graduation rates between students who live on campus versus those who live off campus.
- Carla Lapelle reported on assessment in Student Affairs (SA). She said that SA has adapted its learning outcomes from those developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Higher Education. In the past, each program within SA has evaluated itself, but the current focus of assessment is on the division of Student Affairs as a whole. Carla said that, historically, process assessment has occurred more than outcomes assessment. She has asked each program within SA to identify one area in each domain that it primarily addresses. When this task is complete, SA will collate the information to see if the division is accomplishing the outcomes it has outlined. In terms of assessment, she said that some programs administer pre- and posttests, while others such as the Counseling Center surveys students who come in every five weeks. Other centers assess reflective writing and others use interviews and observation to assess outcomes. Another assessment strategy is to assess the outcomes of students who take leadership roles in planning and implementing SA's events.
  - **Additional Business:** Susan Imes asked what programs/interventions Marshall makes available for commuter students. John said there used to be a commuter student lounge and that students are invited to stay on campus during finals week. Additionally, H&RL has started a commuter student involvement plan. However, he allowed that there has not been an organized, sustained effort to involve commuter students on campus. Carla said that some institutions have turned to off-campus offerings, such as movie passes, which help to show commuters that the university is interested in them. Marty asked about what services we offer for single parents. He noted that many students have jobs and are supporting others (not just children). John said that future plans are to have apartments on campus for non-traditional students. Susan asked if these students could live on campus year-round and John said some of the dorms are currently year-round. There was additional discussion concerning possible interventions for non-traditional students.

**The meeting was adjourned around 2:00 PM.**

Assessment Committee Minutes: May 12, 2015

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Beth Reynolds*

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