

**University Assessment Committee Meeting
Monday, September 28, 2015: 3:30 – 5:00 PM
John Spotts Room**

Minutes

Members Present: Paula Lucas, Mindy Allenger, Lori Howard, Edna Meisel, Maribea Barnes, Karen McComas, Caroline Perkins, Larry Sheret, Asad Salem, Andrew Gooding, Marty Laubach, Britt Frye, Alex O'Donnell, Tim Melvin, Doug Nichols, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Loukia Dixon, Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Absent: Sherri Smith, Sherri Stepp, Nicki LoCascio, Andy Hermansdorfer, Susan Imes

Agenda Items

1. **Introductions:** Members introduced themselves and the committee welcomed new members Mindy Allenger from the Center for Teaching and Learning, Britt Frye, representing Housing and Residence Life, and Alex O'Donnell, representing Student Government.
2. **Announcements:** Mary Beth told members that Academic Affairs is conducting a High Impact Practice Project to test the efficacy of involvement of new freshmen in carefully designed learning communities that involve participation of student cohorts in paired courses that share common themes and assignments. She noted that Assessment Committee members Karen McComas and Britt Frye are both involved in this project. She announced that the next evening students in one pair of courses (Jennifer Sias' FYS course and Donna Sullivan's Sociology course) are giving a public presentation of Robert Reich's documentary *Inequality for All*. Britt Frye is providing snacks for the event. She announced that the film screening will be followed by a Town Hall discussion the following week. Mary Laubach said that one of the panelists will be a professor who teaches Ayn Rand and another member will be a professor who teaches Karl Marx.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** After a short discussion, minutes of the May 12, 2015 meeting were approved as submitted.
4. **Quick Updates**
 - **Higher Learning Commission Site Visit:** Mary Beth reminded everyone that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Site Visit was set to occur on October 12 and 13. She reviewed the website that Academic Affairs has established to provide the University community with information regarding the visit. She told members that the site visit schedule has not been finalized and she encouraged members of the committee to attend all open sessions that are of interest to them. She also encouraged all members to read Marshall's Assurance Argument, which was available on the website. She reminded committee members that the Open Pathway's accreditation model, which Marshall follows, emphasizes continuous improvement. We are now at the end of this process and have submitted a complete assurance argument and federal compliance report to the HLC. Our site visit team has now reviewed our assurance argument and will meet with university constituencies during the upcoming site visit in October. After this visit, they will write a comprehensive evaluation report with recommendations concerning Marshall's compliance with the criteria for accreditation. Their report will be forwarded to the HLC's Institutional Actions Council, which will meet to determine Marshall's final reaffirmation recommendations. Beginning in 2016-2017, we must again begin contributing evidence to an

evidence file and in 2020 we must submit another assurance argument for review (with no site visit). In 2020-2021, we will begin a new quality initiative, which should run for about two years. That will be followed by another comprehensive assurance argument, federal compliance report, and site visit in 2025-2026. Mary Beth told the committee that the site visit team has requested examples of various types of course syllabi. Our MU-BERT syllabus upload feature has been very helpful in being able to comply with these requests. Among the syllabi requested were those for courses with critical thinking, multicultural, and international designations.

- **Highlights and questions concerning the 2014-2015 report:** Mary Beth asked if there were specific questions about this report. Larry Sheret asked how the library assessment falls into the University report. Mary Beth said she would add the library report to the comprehensive report. She said that each section of the report begins with an executive summary. General Education Assessment Reports begin with the previous year's recommendations and how they have been addressed, followed by the current year's assessment procedures, ending with recommendations for the following year. Mary Beth would like to begin to apply this to all sections of the comprehensive yearly reports, but this has not occurred yet. She made some remarks about the section that summarized Marshall's *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* results, noting Marshall's improvements in the area of *Academic Challenge*, which has been consistent since the implementation of the Core Curriculum. She noted that the responses of Marshall's freshmen regarding their participation in various high impact practices partially informed our decision to test the efficacy of participation in carefully designed learning communities on student learning and success. She noted a weakness in quality of interactions that needs further exploration.

5. Specific Discussion Items

- **Annual Assessment Report Review:** Mary Beth explained that, after careful consideration, she feels that we should return to our practice of evaluating annual assessment reports in the fall of each academic year and course syllabi in the spring. She distributed copies of the current rubric (aka as "Primary Traits Analysis") and a draft of a suggested revision, prompting discussion among committee members. Several changes were made based on committee feedback. Mary Beth suggested using the revised rubric, as amended by the committee, this fall and then allow members to make suggestions after completing fall assessments. There was a discussion about having programs that teach a lot of service courses expand assessment from majors only to all students enrolled in assessment point courses. However, there was not consensus on whether or not this should be done, prompting Mary Beth to suggest that every program should continue with the process that works best for them. Next, Mary Beth explained to the committee the process for accessing assessment reports from the Assessment SharePoint site. Mary Beth distributed assignments and offered to review this process or have a rubric norming session with new committee members or with anyone on the committee who would like to attend. The due date for these evaluations was set before Thanksgiving, preferably by November 15.
- **Certificate program assessment:** Mary Beth said that we are now asking for assessments of certificate programs, so some committee members may have certificate program assessment reports to evaluate.
- **CLA+/Baseline Assessment – fall 2015 update and plans for CLA+/Senior Assessment – spring 2016:** Mary Beth told committee members that she will ask capstone instructors again this spring to consider asking their students to complete the *CLA+* or Senior Assessment. She said that using this strategy last spring resulted in the most representative sample we have had to date.

- **State Assessment Workshop and General Education (GEAR) Assessment Next Steps:** Marty Laubach described the General Education Assessment Conference that he, Jennifer Sias, Anita Walz, Robin McCutcheon, and Mary Beth Reynolds attended in mid-September. In attendance were faculty from all of West Virginia's four and two-year public higher education institutions. Marty said that he found that Marshall was ahead of many other institutions in the state in terms of what we are doing with assessment. All institutions were asked to choose one institutional learning outcome upon which they wished to focus and Marshall chose its Intercultural Thinking outcome. Marty said that, after discussion, Marshall's team decided that the two traits "own culture" and "other cultures" should be combined. The reason for this is that when a student reflects on other cultures it is often in comparison to her own. He noted that we also are discussing whether or not the performance levels of our Intercultural Thinking rubric should be continuous, rather than categorical, in nature. If the latter, it is possible for a student to score at a high level without demonstrating proficiency at lower levels. So, Marty suggested taking the "capstone outcome," i.e. what you want the student to do at the time of graduation, and make that the trait or "performance indicator," to use ABET language, and make the performance level expectations continuous. The final issue the Marshall group discussed was the problem of incommensurability. Marty noted that terminology used by one discipline is often not used by others. He suggested that we must review the learning outcomes and expand terminology in such a way that the outcome and rubric is usable for members of all disciplines. Mary Beth said that Marty, Anita Walz, and Robin McCutcheon have agreed to serve on a subcommittee looking at the Intercultural outcome and rubric and asked if anyone else was interested in serving. Caroline Perkins and Asad Salem volunteered to serve.
- **Information Literacy Assessment Results:** Larry Sheret provided an overview of the library's Information Literacy assessment results. He noted that they tested three groups of students; the first to provide a baseline measure, the second to provide a basic measure, and the third to provide a capstone measure. For baseline, tested students were from First Year Seminar, Digital Forensics, and Information Assurance courses. Larry noted that these students set the baseline high. Overall, results showed that many students enter Marshall University with high levels of proficiency in Information Literacy and that capstone performance varies among disciplines. Results showed citing sources to be a strength among Marshall's seniors, while weaknesses included knowing how to select the best search strategy and integrating new with old knowledge. Overall, students also performed poorly in identifying the nuances between primary and secondary sources.
- **Co-Curricular Assessment Update:** Britt Frye, who is Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives in Housing and Residence Life, provided the committee with a report on how student learning and success is assessed in the residence halls. He noted that the academic mission of institution is their mission. Part of the responsibilities of his position is to oversee living/learning communities. Although most are major-specific, others are associated with the University's TRIO programs. These communities have courses together and are housed in the same space. He noted that Willis Hall soon will become solely an Honors hall. He described the Faculty in Residence program, which now consists of five faculty members who live in the dorms and provide some programming for students. He said that Housing and Residence Life has a residential curriculum. Staff are educators and residence hall assistants are peer educators. Their programming focuses on Intercultural thinking and is organized into three tiers; first year tier, second year tier, and advanced tier. The curriculum is based on standards that inform Student Affairs practice, specifically those of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. Housing and Residence Life staff assess students' relationships with peers,

their learning, self-management, personal interactions, alcohol and drug use, and overall experience on campus. They are currently analyzing the results of these assessments.

- **Core Curriculum Review:** Mary Beth briefly said that a review of the core curriculum will be conducted in the spring. She was not sure what the exact role of the Assessment Committee will be, but will update everyone in December.
- **Additional Business:** The next meeting was set for Monday, December 14 at noon.

The meeting was adjourned around 5:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds

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