

University Assessment Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 10, 2016: 12:00 – 2:00 PM
Student Resource Center Conference Room

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

Members Absent: Susan Imes, Maribea Barnes, Edna Meisel, Andy Hermansdorfer, and Sherri Smith (ex-officio)

Agenda Items

1. The meeting began with lunch, followed by introductions.
2. Minutes of the January 26, 2016 meeting were approved with the addition of Andrew Gooding, Kim DeTardo-Bora, and Karen McComas and one spelling correction for Andy (Any to Andy) Hermansdorfer. Minutes were approved with these changes.
3. Specific Discussion Items
 - Blackboard Outcomes:
 - General Education – Mary Beth Reynolds said that we are in the process of transitioning general education assessment from GEAR to Blackboard Outcomes. Doug Nichols described this process of transition, explaining he has already loaded Marshall University's Baccalaureate Degree Profile (BDP) outcomes into Blackboard and that GEAR will be retired after summer 2016. He noted that we are currently running a pilot program of Sociology and FYS courses, where instructors have created assignments and aligned these to university outcomes. Students will submit their work using the Blackboard Assignment tool. Student artifacts will be copied to Blackboard Outcomes, from which random samples may be drawn for later assessment. Doug explained that we will develop a survey, which we will send to all faculty teaching courses that would have required GEAR uploads in fall 2016. This will allow us to identify the types of Blackboard training faculty need in the fall. Faculty who use the Blackboard Assignment Module likely will need only instructions (as all they will have to do is align their former GEAR assignment to the appropriate BDP outcome/s); faculty who use Blackboard, but do not use the Assignment Module will need more training regarding use of the Assignment Module; and faculty who do not use Blackboard at all will need the most intense training. The staffs of the MU Online Design Center, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Assessment Office will cooperatively develop the training, which will be delivered by the MU Online Design Center staff. Our goal is to have all faculty who teach FYS, CT, service learning, writing intensive, multicultural, and international courses using the Blackboard Assignment Module for student submissions of work for assignments that have been aligned to one or more BDP outcomes by spring 2017. Marty Laubach asked about including capstones projects in university-wide assessment. Mary Beth said she would like to solicit volunteer instructors willing to have students submit capstone projects using the Blackboard Assignment tool in spring 2017. She talked about piloting assessment of capstone projects using AAC&U Critical Thinking and Written Communication Value rubrics. The advantages to this practice would be that students care

- about capstone work much more than they care about their performance on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) or on Marshall's generic senior assessment. Aligning capstone projects either to AAC&U Value rubrics or to BDP outcomes might have the added benefit of having programs critically examining the appropriateness and rigor of their capstone projects. The major benefit of using the AAC&U Value Rubrics is that we could report these assessment results in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), which might eventually negate the need to administer the CLA+.
- Degree Program Possibilities – Doug explained that degree program outcomes also can be loaded into Blackboard and, in the same way that instructors can align their assignments to the BDP outcomes, they also can align assignments to their degree program's outcomes. However, the limitations of Blackboard are such that, at the present time, any degree program wishing to use Blackboard in this fashion needs to ask Doug to enter their outcomes into the system. Once this is done, student work from aligned assignments can be copied into Blackboard Outcomes, random samples drawn for assessment, and results reports created. Doug discussed creating a standardized form that he can use to enter program outcomes and/or accreditation standards into the system. He also noted that programs can complete curriculum mapping, i.e. align program outcomes with program courses, within Blackboard. Students also can create electronic portfolios within Blackboard.
 - Core Curriculum Review: Mary Beth provided a short handout regarding the Core Curriculum Review and told Assessment Committee members that she welcomes their input into the review process of content. Marty Laubach reported on a section of the review he is conducting where he and his subcommittee will compare students native to Marshall with transfer students on variables such as overall GPA, GPA in upper-level courses at Marshall, timely graduation, and prevalence of withdrawing from Marshall. This generated discussion regarding potential confounding variables, e.g. the differentiation between Core I and Core II courses. Asad Salem and Caroline Perkins opined that, at least for Core II courses, it is likely that transfer students bring with them content that is similar to that offered at Marshall. Karen McComas extended Marty's assertion by saying that we were analyzing data to establish the value of Marshall's general education core at a time when the Higher Education Policy Commission is emphasizing transferability of credits among WV's institutions of higher learning. Caroline said she would be interested in being on Marty's subcommittee to examine the data. Andrew Gooding suggested adding UNI 100 to the analysis. Larry Sheret reported on a study from Arizona, which found that students who completed their first two years at a Community and Technical College (CTC) had higher GPAs and better retention rates than students who began their studies at four-year institutions. However, he noted that it appeared this might have been the case because CTCs provided more support for students. He noted that Marshall provides many of these supports, so findings may be different here. After further discussion, we determined that, in addition to Marty Laubach, Mike Smith, April Fugett, and Jill Underhill (from the Core Curriculum Review Committee), Caroline Perkins would join Marty's subcommittee. There was some final discussion about the value to examining high schools of matriculating freshmen and the value (or otherwise) of dual credit coursework.
 - Excellence in Assessment – Sponsored by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Research (NILOA), American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA): Tim Melvin talked about AAC&U's Excellence in Assessment criteria and application. He said we would like to establish a committee during academic year 2016-2017 to

investigate the feasibility of developing an application for this designation. Since the application emphasizes the importance of assessing student learning from the course through the University level, we think it is important that we revisit the mapping we are doing between program and university outcomes, at least at the undergraduate level. Mary Beth suggested that we might also look at syllabus with the possibility of mapping course to university outcomes. This suggested generated discussion, however, with several people feeling that the syllabus might not be the best vehicle for this mapping. Alex O'Donnell said that students are primarily interested in grades and their eventual degrees. He opined that, if we want students to know learning outcomes, it must be a faculty-led initiative where there is some incentive for students to know the learning outcomes, e.g. require students to reference course learning outcomes in exams or course projects. We will form a subcommittee in fall 2016 to work on the Excellence in Assessment application.

4. Quick Updates (4 minutes each)

- Annual Assessment Review for academic year 2014-2015 – Mary Beth thanked committee members for their evaluations of assessment reports and said she had sent feedback to all degree programs that submitted reports.
- Syllabus Review for spring 2016 – Mary Beth thanked everyone who submitted syllabus reviews and asked committee members who had not done so yet to please do so. She said that she and Tim would collate results this summer and send feedback to faculty. She also noted that Tim would review CT syllabi this summer for the Core Curriculum review.
- CLA+/Senior Assessment – Mary Beth thanked everyone who either encouraged faculty in their colleges or who volunteered students in their capstone classes or to complete the CLA+/Senior Assessments. She noted that we had roughly 200 students participate.
- Summer Baseline/FYS/Senior Assessment – Mary Beth announced that we'll start summer assessment on Monday. Marty Laubach and Kim DeTardo-Bora are Assessment Committee members who will participate on the Summer Assessment Workgroup.
- High Impact Practice Learning Community Assessment – Mary Beth reported that 51 students completed the project last fall and we are preparing to start another in fall 2016. She thanked Karen McComas for facilitating a HIP Faculty Learning Group during fall 2014.
- Assessment Day 2016 – All survey results have been sent to respective offices, posted online, and campus-wide survey results have been posted. We disseminated 84 Assessment Day prizes in 2016.
- Assessment Showcase – Tim said he'd been researching other institutions who have Assessment Showcases. He's found that these take various forms, ranging from poster sessions to one-on-one discussions. Mary Beth suggested that everyone think about the possibility of initiating an Assessment Showcase at Marshall. We can learn a lot from each other, but we need to figure out the best way to share. Karen suggested that Tim put together a proposal and we advertise this to programs.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds, Associate Vice President
Assessment and Quality Initiatives