University Assessment Committee Meeting
Monday, October 31, 2016: 2:00 – 3:30 PM
John Spotts Room: Memorial Student Center 2E37

Minutes

Members Present: Karen McComas, Carrie Childers (for Loukia Dixon), Nicki LoCascio, Mindy Allenger, Asad Salem, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Maribea Barnes, Glenn Anderson (liaison to Graduate Council), Larry Sheret, Marty Laubach, Britt Frye, Sherri Stepp, Doug Nichols (ex-officio), Tim Melvin, and Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Present at Make-Up Meeting: Alex O'Donnell, Paula Lucas

Guest: Kristen Huff

Members Absent: Caroline Perkins, Andrew Gooding, Andy Hermansdorfer, Susan Imes, Edna Meisel, and Sherri Smith (ex-officio)

<u>Agenda Items</u>

1. The committee welcomed new member Glenn Anderson (liaison to the Graduate Council) and guest Kristen Huff, a member of the MU Online Design Center.

2. Minutes from the May 10, 2016 meeting were approved as submitted.

3. **Specific Discussion Items**
   - **Blackboard Outcomes**: Mary Beth Reynolds introduced this topic by saying that Tim Melvin sent out a survey in September to all faculty teaching courses that previously required uploads to the General Education Assessment Repository (GEAR). The purpose of the survey was to determine each faculty member's current level of Blackboard use. Kristen Huff described the Blackboard training sessions she and her colleagues have been offering to faculty to help them align assignments to Baccalaureate Degree Profile (BDP) outcomes in Blackboard as they had previously done in GEAR. Mary Beth noted that this fall semester is a Blackboard "training" semester and that we would like to have all faculty teaching FYS, CT, MC, INTL, WI, and SL courses ready to align the assignment they use for university assessment to the appropriate BDP outcome/s by spring. Kristen demonstrated how to make alignments to University outcomes using a pull-down menu within the Blackboard Assignment Module. Mary Beth asked committee members to let their colleagues know that if they need to do GEAR uploads, they should start using the Blackboard Assignment tool and if they don't know how to do this, they should contact Kristen for training.

     Kristen also noted she and Doug Nichols are working with a few degree programs (e.g. English, Criminal Justice, Counseling, Early Childhood Education, Pharmacy, Library, etc.) to enter their degree program outcomes into Blackboard, making it possible for courses within degree programs to align assignments to degree program outcomes as well as to BDP outcomes. Mary Beth explained that, after assignments are created and mapped to appropriate outcomes in the Blackboard Assignment Module, faculty can proceed to use their own rubrics to evaluate student work. However, when the assignment is aligned to a BDP (or degree program)

outcome, clean copies (with no instructor comments or grading) can be pulled into the Blackboard Outcomes Module. These artifacts are stored in Blackboard Outcomes and, at a later date, random samples can be drawn for university and/or degree program assessment. Mary Beth noted that Blackboard Outcomes will not take place of assessment portal for degree programs, but that it does provide us with the capability of comparing results of different types of assessments.

Mary Beth discussed the possibility of a pilot submission of selected capstone artifacts in the spring. She asked committee members to solicit volunteers from spring capstone instructors who would be willing create assignments in Blackboard that align to some of the university's BDP outcomes and/or to the Critical Thinking and Written Communication Value Rubrics from the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and to ask their students to submit their capstone work into Blackboard. This would allow us to test use of this system to assess authentic student work. If we are able to successfully do this using the AAC&U Value Rubrics previously mentioned and eventually expand this into a representative sample, we could use this assessment (instead of our current CLA+/Senior Assessments) for reporting in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA).   Although Mary Beth said she realized that this might be a daunting undertaking, she opined that capstone projects will likely reflect what students know and are able to do more accurately than the CLA+ or our generic senior assessments.

In response to a question from Maribea Barnes regarding types of files that can be uploaded to Blackboard and Blackboard's storage capacity, Kristen said Blackboard uses a streaming media server so that students can upload multimedia files and that drop boxes also can be created for students.   She suggested that capstone instructors contact her with questions.

Mary Beth asked about non-academic units using Blackboard. Kristen said that organizations must be created within Blackboard and enrollments managed by creators. Britt Frye said that Housing and Residence Life staff have used the organization function within Blackboard. Marty Laubach suggested that this might be useful for co-curricular organizations within academic units. Kim DeTardo-Bora shared that she and her faculty have used Blackboard for organizations in the Criminal Justice program.

- **CLA+/Senior Assessment**: Mary Beth noted that we will need to do the CLA+ again this year, but plan to transition to a biannual administration of the CLA+/Senior Assessment after this year. She thanked committee members for working with colleagues to require (or themselves requiring) seniors in their capstone classes to complete the CLA+ or Senior Assessment. She asked for this cooperation again in spring 2017. She noted that, as in the past, she and Tim will organize the CLA+/Senior Assessment administration.

- **Mapping Undergraduate Program to BDP outcomes**: Mary Beth introduced this topic by explaining that, in working with the Summer Assessment Team for the past several years, a mutual decision has been reached that, rather than encouraging faculty to choose outcomes/traits based on performance levels for their assignments, they should write assignments that align to the BDP outcomes approved by Marshall's Faculty Senate in January 2013. The original rubrics, where performance level descriptions were essentially a series of different outcome statements, have been discontinued and each BDP outcome's traits have been extended to performance indicator statements that either extend, in a logical way, the Faculty Senate approved outcome or repeat verbatim the faculty senate approved outcomes

that align with each trait. In May/June 2016, the Summer Assessment Team evaluated student artifacts that aligned to three of the BDP outcomes (Information Literacy, Integrative Thinking, and Metacognitive Thinking). They revised the rubrics in such a way that each has five performance levels that are continuous in nature, ranging from "0" (essentially showing no evidence of meeting the outcome) to "4" (representing an exemplary level of achievement). In making the rubric revisions, they recommended some wording changes to the **Information Literacy** and **Metacognitive Thinking** Outcomes. Specifically, they recommended that the **Information Literacy** Outcome, which originally was "Students will **revise** their search strategies to find appropriate research tools, **integrate** relevant information from reliable sources, **question** and **evaluate** the complexity of the information environment, and **use** information in an ethical manner" be revised as follows, "Students will **employ** appropriate research tools, **integrate** relevant information from reliable sources, **question** and **evaluate** information and its sources, and **cite** sources in an academic manner."   Based on their experience evaluating student work, the Summer Assessment team determined that it was not possible, given summative artifacts from an assignment, to assess the outcomes highlighted in yellow because these outcomes represent a *process*, which would have to be assessed either by reading multiple revisions of a work or through a student's metacognitive reflection. On the other hand, the changes highlighted in green could be reliably demonstrated in the student's final project. In contrast to the changes recommended for the **Information Literacy** Outcome, the Summer Assessment Team recommended only a minor change to the **Metacognitive Thinking** Outcome. This outcome was originally written as "Students will **evaluate** the effectiveness of their project plan or strategy to determine the degree of their improvement in knowledge and skills." The Summer Assessment Team recommended that it be revised to read, "Students will **evaluate** the effectiveness of a project plan or strategy and their improvement in knowledge and skills." Note that the Summer Assessment Team recommended the deletion of the words "to determine the degree of" and the addition of the word "and." There were no changes recommended for the Integrative Thinking Outcome. After some discussion the committee voted unanimously to draft a recommendation for these changes to be sent to Faculty Senate for approval.

- **Excellence in Assessment**: Tim Melvin updated committee members regarding the "Excellence in Assessment" application 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).   He noted that universities with successful applications can be recognized on two levels; the first as having excellent assessment practices and the second as having maintained excellent assessment practices for a period of at least five years (sustained excellence). He reviewed the major points of the application. Kim DeTardo-Bora and Karen McComas volunteered to be part of a subcommittee to further study the feasibility of Marshall's preparing an application for this recognition and to identify other key stakeholders for involvement in this process. The application deadline is late April 2017.

- **Academic Year 2015-2016 Assessment Report Review Assignments**: Mary Beth distributed degree and certificate program annual assessment report evaluation assignments to committee members. The procedure and rubric used for these evaluations will be the same as last year and committee members can access the reports and rubric in the annual assessment SharePoint site. Due date for these evaluations was set at February 1, 2017.

- **Assessment Day 2017**: Tim briefly described our efforts to enhance visibility of Assessment Day activities during the past couple of years by working with the Campus Activities Board. He said he would like to assemble a small group of individuals consisting of faculty, staff, and students to work with him in planning Assessment Day activities this year. Britt Frye and Sherri Stepp volunteered to work with Tim on this project.

4. **Quick Updates**
   - **2015-2016 University Assessment Report**: Mary Beth sent out this report before the meeting. She asked committee members to share information with their colleagues and noted that future plans are to begin disseminating a shorter newsletter at least annually, but preferably semi-annually.

   - **Academic Quality Section of Marshall Compact**: Mary Beth announced that Marshall's Compacts, which are comprehensive reports we must submit each year to the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) are available on Academic Affairs' website www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs. She noted that the Office of Assessment and Quality Initiatives is responsible for reporting on the Academic Quality Comprehensive Plan and that, each year, we receive feedback from HEPC reviewers on each section of the Compact. Feedback regarding our Academic Quality report was very positive last academic year.

   - **High Impact Practice (HIP) Learning Community Project**: Mary Beth thanked Karen McComas for her help with this project and announced that, as of the time of the meeting, we have 46 students still enrolled in each of three paired course sets. Results from last year's HIP Learning Community showed that, although students with high school grade point averages lower than 3.25 were more likely to withdraw from Marshall than were those with high school grade point averages equal to or higher than 3.25, those in the former group were more likely than matched controls to remain at Marshall and to finish the academic year with higher Marshall grade point averages. There was no difference between the latter group and their matched controls on these variables. So, it appears that the HIP learning communities have the potential for a positive impact on students who are at-risk for leaving Marshall. Mary Beth also noted that this fall's paired classes had involved their students in some worthwhile co-curricular experiences.

   - **Core Curriculum Review**: Mary Beth asked committee members to read and provide her with feedback on the Core Curriculum Review, which is now available in a SharePoint site. She acknowledged the contributions of numerous committee members. She especially thanked Marty Laubach and Mike Smith for their work on developing a statistical logistic regression model to predict the impact of the Core Curriculum on students' overall grade point averages at Marshall, on the likelihood of their graduating, and the likelihood of their leaving Marshall without degrees. Marty noted that this model controlled for many factors, such as demographics, high school GPA, combined ACT, residence (WV, metro, non-resident), etc.

     Marty shared the following conclusions with committee members:
     - Taking courses in Core II Communication Studies added 0.146 and taking Core I FYS added 0.04 to overall GPA.
     - Using a logistic regression model, Marty determined that the following course types increased the probability of students graduating from Marshall by these percentages: Core I FYS (8.4%), Core II Communication Studies (8.11%), and Core II Humanities (21%).

- o Using a logistic regression model, Marty determined that that the following course types decreased the probability of students leaving Marshall without a degree by these percentages: Core I FYS (20%), Core II Composition (16%), Core II Communication Studies (22%), Core II Humanities (21%), and Core II Social Sciences (25%).

   Karen McComas pointed out that this information has implications for advising, i.e. students might be well served by taking high impact core classes earlier, rather than later, in their tenure at Marshall. Marty said that several people have reviewed his process, but that he welcomes additional review and that more data mining can be done. For example, he opined that it might be beneficial to conduct further analysis by West Virginia counties or high schools. He asked committee members to review the detailed information from his analysis, which appears in Appendix XV of the Core Curriculum Review. Mary Beth further asked committee members, after reading the entire Core Curriculum Review, to share with her implications for action not currently mentioned, or to share any other suggestions they have that might strengthen the review.

5. Additional Business:

   - Britt Frye announced that Housing and Residence Life had a new director, Mistie Bibbee. He said they are currently working to align their Living/Learning Communities with best practices from AAC&U. They have met with Sherri Smith, Associate VP for Academic Affairs and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, to look more closely at the course alignment of some of their students enrolled in these communities. For example, they noted that most of the freshmen living in the Science Living/Learning Community are enrolled in BSC 120 and CHM 211, but that most are enrolled in different sections of these courses. They will work with Sherri to see if they might be able to intentionally enroll students in the Living/Learning communities in the same sections beginning in fall 2017. This has the potential to promote bonding, shared studying, and an enhanced sense of community for new freshmen. They also are investigating how their assignment system can communicate with students' academic advisors.

   - Sherri Stepp said University College is currently wrapping up assessment of UNI 100. She reported that Week of Welcome assessments went well and that they have added a drug prevention program. Mary Beth took this opportunity to remind committee members that Marshall has a university-wide license to Qualtrics. She encouraged members to contact Tim and to encourage their colleagues and students to contact Tim if they want to use Qualtrics to send surveys for assessment purposes. Tim mentioned that he has been conducting Qualtrics training sessions and encouraged members to contact him about scheduling these sessions. Sherri noted that she used Qualtrics for UNI 100 evaluations. UNI 100 instructors asked students to complete these evaluations in class using their smart phones, resulting in 1,100 completed evaluations, which was more than a 60% response rate.

   - Larry Sheret reported on the library's assessment of Information Literacy. He said that capstone students and FYS students completed the baseline (as well as the advanced) assessments. He noted that the FYS students answered 45% of the advanced questions correctly, whereas capstone students answered 55% correctly.   He said that he sees most improvement on the advanced section of the assessment between freshman and sophomore year. He said that, if advanced concepts are not explicitly taught, students don't learn them (and don't seem to have a need to do so).

- Maribea Barnes reported that the School of Art and Design is working on its new BA in the Arts Degree program. Right now they are determining capstone projects for individual disciplines.

- Mindy Allenger and Karen McComas reported that the staff of the Center for Teaching and Learning remain busy with many activities for faculty. Mindy has been working with the MU Online Design Center. Karen said that the Center has noted the recommendations from the Summer Assessment Team regarding the need for aligning assignments and is incorporating these suggestions into the CTL's faculty course development workshops. She said she may call on people to help facilitate some workshops in the spring. She noted that Kateryna Schray is facilitating a faculty learning community on Integrative Thinking that will likely inform changes in the Critical Thinking Workshop. One change to this workshop that has already been implemented is that it is now delivered in a two-day (rather than one-day) format. Karen said that this new format has had a positive impact on helping participants to thoughtfully align assignments with BDP outcomes.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 P M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds