



University Assessment Committee Meeting  
MSC John Spotts Room / Noon – 2:00 PM  
December 17, 2018

## MINUTES

**Members Present:** Henning Vauth, Paula Lucas, Loukia Dixon, Maddy Parker, Ralph McKinney, Chris Sochor, Rayshawn Eastman, Asad Salem, Larry Sheret, April Fugett, Nicki LoCascio, Sarah-Frances Lyon, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Andrew Gooding, Marty Laubach, Tim Melvin, and Mary Beth Reynolds

**Members Absent:** Omar Attarabeen, Susan Lanham, Yi Po Chiu, Karen McComas, Trish Gallagher

- 1. Approval of Minutes:** Paula Lucas moved to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2018 meeting and Larry Sheret seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes after the correction of one typo.
- 2. Discussion regarding the necessity of always having planned actions following analysis of assessment results:** Marty Laubach argued that, if a program meets one of its program outcomes, it should not be required to articulate a planned action for that outcome. Larry Sheret countered by saying that he feels there's always room for improvement. Marty, however, feels that if we make it a requirement that all programs have an action plan for each outcome, we may get relatively meaningless plans if the results don't point directly to a specific need for improvement. Mary Beth suggested that, as we review the new Watermark Assessment Report template, some of Marty's concerns may be allayed.
- 3. Watermark Demonstration:** Mary Beth told everyone that the Assessment Office had input all assessment plans that were in the Open Pathways portal into the assessment plans within Taskstream by Watermark. She proceeded to demonstrate each part of the Watermark Assessment template and answered committee members' questions. She said that, in January, she would connect each degree and certificate program with faculty who would be responsible for entering results, planned actions, and status reports for each of these programs.

Ralph McKinney pointed out that the program creates a revision log each time someone inputs or revises data. He said that this is an important feature that would be helpful to accredited programs. Mary Beth also noted that Taskstream by Watermark allows the use and separate reporting of results from multiple measures per outcome and that measures may be direct or indirect. Ralph noted that communicating assessment results with the faculty is critically important. Mary Beth will put together and disseminate written directions to guide faculty when inputting information into the system. Mary Beth also said that we will ask all undergraduate degree and certificate programs to map their outcomes to those of Marshall's Baccalaureate Degree Profile. Tim Melvin pointed out that Watermark also includes standards for most major accrediting organizations in its system and that we will make appropriate accreditation body standards available for mapping to degree programs that are accredited by these organizations. Marty Laubach asked why you might want to hide an outcome (an editing choice for program outcomes). Mary Beth said she didn't know, but it might be done for ease of reading a report if only some outcomes are assessed in a particular year. The template has a mapping function that allows programs to indicate where, in their curriculum,

each of their outcomes is introduced, practiced, and finally assessed. Mary Beth suggested that the term practiced should designate the place where an assessment point 1 would be completed, and assessed should designate where assessment point 2 (or the final assessment) would be conducted. We discussed whether or not these were the appropriate terms to designate these assessment points. Ideas discussed included reinforced or applied (assessment point 1) and achieved (assessment point 2). We discussed the fact that these terms would need to apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs. Marty suggested that accelerated Master's programs might need at least three assessment points.

Mary Beth also pointed out that, to determine whether or not the benchmark was met for a particular measure, we need to be more precise with our benchmarks than simply saying the benchmark was "milestone" or "capstone" level performance. A discussion followed regarding how to determine what percentage of your students you expect to score at a particular (e.g. milestone) level with Ralph suggesting that this decision must be based on data on actual student performance and the consensus of faculty. He noted that, during each assessment cycle, it's important to keep building proficiency, i.e. continue to challenge students to meet higher and higher performance levels.

Ralph asked about uploading actual student artifacts to the results section of the report. The consensus was that a summary of results was more appropriate here; however, for accrediting bodies it is often necessary to have examples of student artifacts available for inspection. Mary Beth suggested that placing program outcomes into Blackboard and having faculty align key program level assessment assignments to the appropriate outcomes will result in the ability to maintain an artifact repository in Blackboard.

Henning Vauth asked if outcomes are correlated to grades. This resulted in a discussion regarding the difference between using student performance to assess the efficacy of a degree program and assessing student performance for grading purposes. Henning asked if we could write up an explanation of the difference between grading and assessment. Mary Beth promised to follow-up on this request.

4. **West Virginia Higher Education Assessment Summit:** Tim Melvin noted that with a grant from the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) Marshall, in collaboration with West Virginia University, planned and executed a statewide Assessment Summit on November 7 and 8 in Charleston. Rayshawn Eastman and Sarah-Frances Lyon worked on a plan to connect assessments of student learning in Student Affairs and Housing and Residence Life. Rayshawn discussed some of the differences between curricular and co-curricular assessment. He used English as an example, saying that an English program might have a student learning outcome that addresses writing proficiency, which can be easily measured. He said that, when planning assessment of student learning in the co-curriculum, professionals must be intentional in specifying what students will learn as a result of engaging in co-curricular activities. He noted that Housing and Residence Life has a curriculum, whereas Student Affairs does programming. During the spring 2019 semester, Rayshawn said that Student Affairs will work with Housing and Residence Life to create a curriculum for Student Affairs. In preparation for this, Student Affairs will examine the literature on student learning in the co-curriculum, work with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to examine various pieces of student data, and run focus groups to help them to construct a curriculum for Student Affairs. Tim noted that this plan will be submitted to the HEPC by the end of the spring semester.
5. **Blackboard Outcomes Update:** Chris Sochor had to leave the meeting early; however, he had provided notes that were included in the agenda. These included that Blackboard will be down for

maintenance starting at 5:00 on December 20 and lasting until approximately noon on December 21. During this period, updates will be installed that should fix widespread errors that faculty and students have been receiving when they are in the middle of an assessment, grading, or adding content. The update should also allow us to use Ally for more tools in Blackboard, so it will help when creating text as content in courses. Every new distance course moving forward will use the accessible course syllabus format. Also, every new distance education course moving forward will use the accessible course syllabus format. Ralph McKinney also provided some information from Chris. He noted that the fall 2018 semester was extended to December 26 for grade appeals and final submissions. He said that instructors should notify Chris to leave course templates open for students who currently have not completed their fall courses so that these courses will remain open for assignment submissions.

6. **Spring 2019 Syllabus Reviews:** Mary Beth said we will review syllabi from colleges we did not review in spring 2018 in spring 2019.
7. **Accreditation Updates:** Asad Salem said that he will submit an initial ABET accreditation request for the Electrical/Computer Engineering (BSEE) by June 2019. Ralph McKinney noted that the health undergraduate programs have started a journey toward accreditation in the health fields. This accreditation will be in addition to AACSB accreditation. He also said that the Princeton Review ranked Marshall's MBA program as one of the better programs for its value. And, while it's still the Lewis College of Business, the programs within the college have now been designated the Brad D. Smith Undergraduate and Graduate Schools of Business. Paula Lucas reported that the College of Education and Professional Development's CAEP visit in October went well and that they will receive a final report from the executive committee in April or May 2019.
8. In closing, Tim Melvin said that the new assessment website should become active sometime after the first of the year.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Beth Reynolds*