



University Assessment Committee Meeting  
MSC John Spotts Room / 2:00 – 3:30 PM  
October 12, 2018

## MINUTES

**Members Present:** Susan Lanham, Susan Tusing (for Henning Vauth), Loukia Dixon, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Sarah-Frances Lyon, Andrew Gooding, Rayshawn Eastman, Paula Lucas, Ralph McKinney, Tim Melvin, Larry Sheret, Trish Gallagher, Omar Attarabeen, Chris Sochor, Mary Beth Reynolds

**Members Absent:** April Fugett, Yi-Oi Chiu, Marty Laubach, Nicki LoCascio, Karen McComas, Asad Salem, and Maddy Parker

**Guests Present:** Susan Midkiff

- 1. Welcome to New Members:** We extended a special welcome to new members Susan Lanham, Sarah-Frances Lyon, Rayshawn Eastman, Ralph McKinney, Trish Gallagher, Omar Attarabeen, and Chris Sochor and to guests Susan Tusing (sitting in for Henning Vauth) and Susan Midkiff.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** Andrew Gooding moved to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2018 meeting and Loukia Dixon seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- 3. Program Review Update:** Mary Beth reminded committee members that each degree and certificate program conducts a comprehensive self-study once every five years. This review, in accordance with WV code, is mandated by the WV Higher Education Policy Commission (for degree programs). She noted that undergraduate programs are reviewed by the Faculty Senate's Academic Planning Committee, whose recommendations are reviewed and voted on by the full Senate. Graduate programs are reviewed by the Graduate Council. Following these reviews, all programs are reviewed by Marshall's provost, president, and Board of Governors. Annually, the Assessment Office submits a report of these reviews and final recommendations for each program to the WV Higher Education Policy Commission. Dr. Susan Lanham, the Graduate Council member who is coordinating reviews of graduate programs, will serve as its liaison to the Assessment Committee this year. Mary Beth also told committee members that this is the last year we will submit reports in Word; next year we will begin using an online submission platform and will be able to review the reports using this platform as well.
- 4. Assessment Report Review Assignments:** Mary Beth next explained the process the committee uses to review annual assessment reports each fall. She reviewed the rubric, which the Assessment Committee updated last year and will be used for the first time this fall. The rubric now has a fourth column, which will allow us to evaluate the "continuous improvement feedback loop," i.e. to evaluate the extent to which programs followed up on planned actions from the previous year's report. Mary Beth also demonstrated the process committee members will use to access the reports from the Assessment SharePoint site. Using a sample program assessment report, she noted how each report section aligns with one or more columns of the rubric. Larry Sheret asked about programs that say they're meeting all of their goals and therefore need no improvement. The consensus of the committee was that, even if students are meeting the program's learning goals,

there is always something in a program that can be improved and programs should reflect upon this. Loukia Dixon said that sometimes programs identify a need revise learning outcomes and the measures they used to assess student learning. She noted that programs may not assess the learning goals/outcomes during this time of reflection and revision of outcomes. Mary Beth noted that there is a need to improve the assessment process as well as student learning within the programs. Committee members suggested that, when a program is undergoing a major revision of its learning outcomes, it should note this in its report. Mary Beth asked that assessment evaluations be completed by December 1 or at least by the next meeting, which will be at noon (with lunch) on Monday, December 17.

- 5. General Education and Capstone Assessment Updates and Future Plans:** Mary Beth shared the executive reports from the summer assessment team's general education assessments. Assessments show that Marshall's students improve their critical thinking skills from a baseline assessment to the end of FYS. The Summer Assessment team also assesses artifacts from various general education assessment courses. Last year, they compared outcomes using both Marshall's rubrics and AAC&U Value rubrics. Mary Beth noted that the AAC&U rubrics are nationally normed. Results of the 2018 summer assessment found that more artifacts aligned to traits of AAC&U rubrics than to Marshall's rubrics (especially with Quantitative Thinking). For Creative Thinking, the AAC&U rubric differentiated level of learning between 100/200 and 300/400 level courses better than the MU rubric. The Summer Assessment team also completed its first comprehensive assessment of capstone projects using the AAC&U Value Critical Thinking and Written Communication rubrics. In total, they assessed 172 unique artifacts aligned to critical thinking and 167 aligned to written communication. We hope to increase the number of capstone projects submitted to the pool for assessment in 2019.
- 6. Important Findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):** Mary Beth shared an analysis of our NSSE results from 2008 through 2018. She noted that, in 2008, we had identified challenges in the benchmark area of *active and collaborative learning* among Marshall's freshmen and seniors. Since that time, we have continued to track our NSSE results. Beginning in spring 2011 (the year we implemented the core curriculum) we noted that our first year student responses were commensurate with those in the top 50% of NSSE institutions in the benchmarks area of *level of academic challenge*. That persisted in 2012. In 2013, NSSE updated the survey. The updated survey made it easier for us to track progress because the former benchmark areas were converted to themes and subdivided into engagement indicators. From 2013-2018, freshmen and seniors continued to show strength, scoring at levels commensurate with the top 50% and, for some engagement indicators, commensurate with the top 10% of NSSE institutions for the theme *academic challenge*. Mary Beth also shared the NSSE items that align with each of the NSSE benchmarks (for 2008-2012 surveys) and themes/engagement indicators (for the 2013-2018 surveys).
- 7. Marshall University Strategic Plans for University and for Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Updates:** Mary Beth encouraged members to talk to representatives from Faculty Senate, Chairs, Deans, Classified Staff Council.
- 8. Student Affairs Assessment Update:** Tim Melvin reported that this past spring, at the request of Vice President for Student Affairs Cedric Gathings, the Assessment Office began to work closely with the Office of Student Affairs. In spring 2018 Cedric, Director of Sorority and Fraternity Life Nick Wright, and Tim began to brainstorm to create a mission, vision, four student domains with attached outcomes. This fall Dr. Rayshawn Eastman, whose background is in assessment, joined Student Affairs as Assistant Dean for Development. Student Affairs has formed an assessment

committee consisting of all unit directors. The Student Affairs Assessment Committee is currently working to create outcomes for each unit and to align those outcomes with the standards of NASPA (National Association of School Personnel Administrators).

- 9. Update on Blackboard Outcomes, Accessible Syllabus:** Christ Sochor provided an update of both Blackboard Outcomes and support available to help faculty produce accessible written materials. He said we have implemented Blackboard Ally, which provides detailed information to assist faculty in developing accessible documents. Chris said that workshops will be available in spring 2019 regarding producing accessible materials.
- 10. Spring 2018 Course Syllabus Evaluation Summary:** Mary Beth said we reviewed one syllabus per faculty member in the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Science, Business, and Information Technology and Engineering. Most of our faculty included the required elements from the BOG policy on their syllabi. The elements that we have been following since 2014 are now at 90% compliance except course description from the most recent catalog and assessment grid. Mary Beth explained that it is important to include the catalog description on each syllabus as a check to make sure the catalog description is kept up-to-date. She said it is acceptable to also include a longer, more detailed course description.
- 11. Watermark Update:** Mary Beth told the committee that we're working to get all of the programs' assessment plans into Taskstream by Watermark. We will use this platform for annual assessment reports beginning with academic year 2018-2019.
- 12. Additional Business:** Mary Beth recognized new committee member Sarah-Frances Lyon, who is leading the assessment efforts in Housing and Residence Life. Paula Lucas noted that the professional education unit in the College of Education and Professional Development will be having its onsite visit from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditors in two weeks. Mary Beth reported that Marshall's HLC Additional Location visit report was very positive.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Beth Reynolds*