University Assessment Committee Meeting
MSC John Spotts Room / Noon – 2:00 PM
May 8, 2018

MINUTES

Members Present: Tina Allen, Loukia Dixon, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Andrew Gooding, Marty Laubach, Fred Mader, Karen McComas, Tim Melvin, Doug Nichols, Larry Sheret, Sherri Stepp, and Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Absent: April Fugett, Maribea Barnes, Amy Saunders, Susan Imes, Nicki LoCascio, Paul Lucas, Caroline Perkins, Asad Salem, and Maddy Parker

Guests Present: Kristen Huff and Paula Kaplan

1. **Approval of Minutes**: Andrew Gooding moved to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2018 meeting and Loukia Dixon seconded the motion. After some discussion and clarifications, the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. **Blackboard Outcomes Update** – Kristen Huff – Mary Beth Reynolds introduced Kristen Huff and Paula Kaplan. Kristen updated the group on Blackboard Outcomes and Analytics. She noted that some programs are using Blackboard Outcomes (e.g. English and Counseling) for their program assessments and also described some programs that are working to put all courses online. Kristen said that Online Learning set a goal to have accreditation standards entered for at least five more programs into Blackboard Outcomes this academic year and that they accomplished this goal by October 2017. She said that Online Learning has added at least ten sets of accreditation standards, which will allow programs to align assignments to these standards, making it possible to assess student work in Blackboard. Another goal for Online Learning was to get the campus to 50% grade center usage. She said we have achieved approximately 48% usage, raising the percentage of usage approximately 13% between spring 2016 and spring 2018. Loukia Dixon noted that some courses listed in Communication Disorders are clinical courses. Despite the fact that each section has an official instructor for a small number of students, student grades are determined through a consensus of multiple instructors. Therefore, it is next to impossible to use the Blackboard grade center to record these grades, possibly skewing the percentage of use statistics. Kristen pointed out that the numbers have been pulled in the same way over time, which allows Online Learning to see the growth. However, the committee noted that it will be almost impossible to achieve 100% usage and that, at some point, there may need to be an analysis of how many courses are unique in that using the grade center doesn't make sense for them. There was further discussion on the ease of aligning assignments to outcomes entered into Blackboard Outcomes (whether they be program or university outcomes), with the possibility of creating large repositories of assignments from which samples of artifacts can later be drawn for assessment.

3. **Accessible Syllabus Template** – Paula Kaplan – Paula shared the latest information regarding procedures for making syllabi accessible to students with visual impairments who use screen readers to access written documents. She provided a number of details regarding how to accomplish this using the *Styles* features of the Word template and provided information regarding

the methodology for creating tables in documents so that students using screen readers will know what information the tables contain. Andrew Gooding asked about using the templates provided on the Assessment webpage and Paula noted that, if people use the templates, they should "remove existing format" when copying and pasting information from another document. When including links, it's important to include meaningful text, i.e. to not simply provide the link. The reason for this is that the screen reader will read exactly what is on the document. Paula agreed that precise templates do not need to be used, i.e. faculty will still be able to customize their syllabi; however, they will need to make them accessible. She acknowledged, however, that although we will begin to implement this process during academic year 2018-2019, it will take time to fully implement it across campus. Mary Beth will work with the Online Design Center to provide training for faculty this coming academic year. Paula also discussed acquisition of a new feature in Blackboard called "A11y." This is a tool designed to help make digital content more accessible. One example of how this might happen is when students enter a course, they will have the option of selecting an alternative format for uploaded material.   For example, A11y will tag PDF documents to make them accessible.

4. **Assessment in Student Affairs** – Tim Melvin – this past semester Tim has had ongoing meetings with Cedric Gathings, Nick Wright, and Crystal Leigh to revamp Student Affairs' assessment plan and processes. Together, Tim and the staff of Student Affairs created new outcomes and a vision that they hope will be drafted and approved within the next few weeks. Once this happens, Tim and the Student Affairs' Leadership Team will work with each of the units within Student Affairs to align its outcomes to the main Student Affairs outcomes and to the outcomes of Marshall University's Baccalaureate Degree Profile (BDP). Discussion is also ongoing concerning best practices for embedding assessments into Student Affairs' programming.   Tim has added an icon for each of the BDP's domains to the Assessment webpage and Student Affairs plans to use these in their programming so that students will know to which university domain the particular activity in which they are engaged aligns. Tim said that Student Affairs hopes to have its first round of assessments in fall 2019. Karen McComas suggested that engaging in an exercise to develop outcomes might help inform programming within Student Affairs.

5. **Spring Course Syllabi Assessment (LCOB, COLA, CITE, COS)** – Mary Beth reminded those who have not completed their course syllabus assessments to get those to her as soon as possible.

6. **2017-2018 Assessment Reports** – Mary Beth asked committee members to remind people that assessment reports are officially due on May 18, with the final due date being September 14. She also told committee members that Doug is moving to Florida and therefore leaving Marshall. Mary Beth was joined by the committee in expressing thanks to Doug for all of the support he has given us over the years.

7. **2017-2018 Program Review Outcomes and 2018-2019 Program Review Plans** – Mary Beth passed out the outcomes of the program reviews from last year. She also thanked Tina Allen, who coordinated the review of graduate reviews on the graduate council. She noted that we now conduct five-year reviews of both degree and certificate programs.

8. **Watermark Plans** – Mary Beth told the committee that, for the time being, we will continue to use the assessment portal. Unless other arrangements have been made, all 2017-2018 assessment reports should be submitted through this portal. However, we are currently negotiating with a company called Watermark to purchase a license to their planning solution. If we are successful in this endeavor, we will begin to use this platform for our 2018-2019 assessment reports and for program reviews submitted in fall 2019. More updates on this will follow in fall 2018.

9. **Summer Assessment Plans** – We are getting ready to start summer assessment work. This will be our first summer to do an assessment of capstone projects. Will use what we have this year and then expand next year.

10. **Additional Business** – We briefly discussed Assessment Day (# of responses to surveys are down) and our response rates to the *National Survey of Student Engagement* appear to be only 20% for this past year. We congratulated Kim DeTardo-Bora, who just finished her sabbatical and has successfully revised a book written with two colleagues from Criminal Justice.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds