



University Assessment Committee Meeting
Student Resource Center Conference Room/3:00 – 4:30 PM
January 30, 2019

MINUTES

Members Present: Nicki LoCascio, Susan Lanham, Marty Laubach, April Fugett, Larry Sheret, Andrew Gooding, Henning Vauth, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Carrie Childers (for Loukia Dixon who also joined before the meeting's end), Trish Gallagher, Tim Melvin, and Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Absent: Sarah-Frances Lyon, Rayshawn Eastman, Yi-Po Chiu, Paula Lucas, Ralph McKinney, Karen McComas, Asad Salem, Maddy Parker, Omar Attarabeen, and Chris Sochor

- 1. Approval of Minutes:** Nicki LoCascio moved to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2018 meeting and Marty Laubach seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as submitted.
- 2. MUBOG Policy No. AA-14: Course Syllabus:** Mary Beth Reynolds told the committee that the Marshall University Board of Governors (MUBOG) will review all university policies over the next nine months and that the syllabus policy will be on the MUBOG's agenda in April 2019. She asked committee members for feedback regarding the policy as it now stands. After extensive discussion there was a consensus to propose the following changes to the existing policy:
 - Eliminate the requirement to list time and place course meets for asynchronous online courses only.
 - Make it clear that, if an instructor does not have an office at Marshall University, this should simply be noted, with the location of the academic department listed instead.
 - All instructors, including adjunct instructors, should indicate how they will be available to meet with students outside of class, including indicating the office hours (or that office hours are "by appointment" if the instructor's contract does not require office hours).
 - The committee also felt that, especially in the case of online courses, it was acceptable for faculty to specify the method they preferred students use to contact them (e.g. internal Blackboard email or Marshall email).
 - Most members felt that, even if not the preferred method of contact, a phone number should also be included on the syllabus and that if the instructor did not have an office phone, the departmental phone number should be included.
 - That practicum courses be added to the existing list of courses exempt from the syllabus policy.
 - That the current stipulation that each syllabus include "schedule of class sessions and assignments" be amended to "schedule of class sessions and assignments with the amount of detail appropriate to the discipline and course type."
 - That we change the current language, "the instructor must provide each student with a syllabus" to "the instructor must provide each student with access to a syllabus."
 - That we change the current language that says that "Colleges may development more detailed requirements concerning the content of the syllabus" to "Colleges and academic units may develop more detailed requirements concerning the content of the syllabus."

Marty Laubach asked why we need to provide the description from the most recent catalog. Mary Beth explained that the reason for this is to make sure that content and outcomes for each course are the same no matter which instructor teaches the course. And, as content and outcomes change (as they should over time to keep up with latest research, disciplinary change, etc.) those changes need to be made to the university catalog. In the case of very general catalog descriptions, it is acceptable for faculty to first list the catalog description followed by a more detailed description. However, this description should extend, and not be at odds with, the catalog description.

Tim Melvin asked if something regarding the accessibility of the syllabus for students with visual impairments should be included in our policy. Mary Beth asked Carrie Childers if she might raise this issue at the next meeting of the Committee for Students with Disabilities.

- 3. Spring 2019 Syllabus Review Assignments:** Mary Beth explained that we will continue our review of course syllabi by college. Last spring we reviewed syllabi from the Colleges of Science, Liberal Arts, Business, and Information Technology and Engineering. This semester we will review syllabi from the Colleges of Arts and Media and Education and Professional Development.

Mary Beth reviewed the procedures to review syllabi. She demonstrated the process committee members should use to access syllabi through MU-BERT. Under Faculty Information, reviewers should click on link "Electronic Syllabus Submission Review." Only syllabi for spring 2019 should be reviewed; reviewers should choose one syllabus for each faculty member they've been assigned. If that particular faculty member does not have a syllabus uploaded, reviewers should simply note this. It appears that hyperlinks in syllabi work, so if there is a hyperlink to a required element (e.g. class schedule in Blackboard), the syllabus can be checked as having that element present. For purposes of record keeping, Mary Beth asked that reviewers list their name on the review templates, but she assured them that she always removes their names and simply lists "Assessment Committee Reviewer" before sending reviews to faculty members. She also noted that an easy way to find syllabi for a particular faculty member in MU-BERT is to use the "Control + F" function, as the faculty name column cannot be sorted. She asked that reviews (each reviewer has 10 syllabi to read) be completed by the end of the spring semester.

- 4. Student Grading versus Program Assessment:** Mary Beth asked for feedback regarding a statement explaining the difference between student grading and program assessment. She explained that, following the December meeting in which Henning Vauth had asked for more clarity on this issue, Marty Laubach sent her a statement he had developed for his faculty. Using Marty's statement as a starting point, Mary Beth composed the description distributed at the meeting. Marty suggested that we might want to add that if a course has five or six outcomes, students can fail to meet one of these outcomes and still pass the course. Mary Beth said that Dr. Steven Kopp, late president of Marshall University, used to say that every C student should have met the university's outcomes. Mary Beth will make some changes to the current document and distribute it via email for additional feedback from committee members. When we reach a consensus on this document, we will ask that committee members distribute it to their constituents and will add it to the Assessment webpage.
- 5. Watermark Trainings:** Mary Beth noted that the initial trainings went well and that she will soon send out the directions to all users electronically. She noted that Watermark can be accessed through MyMU, but only by people who are connected to the programs. Nicki LoCascio asked that an assessment template for the Honors College be created in Watermark.

6. Assessment Day: Mary Beth noted that we will continue our practice of sending campus-wide surveys, graduation surveys, core curriculum surveys, and graduate degree program surveys as part of “Assessment Day” activities. These surveys will be open from March 11 – April 9 and Assessment Day prize drawings will be held on April 11. She asked committee members to communicate to their areas that we welcome unit assessment activities whether they be focus groups, alumni contacts, surveys, etc. (which also will be included in prize drawings). Mary Beth asked for suggestions about prizes. She noted that we’ve given Apple Watches and iPads in the past. Tim Melvin said that students like iPads, but in some cases they sell them because they already have them. They are more likely to show enthusiasm when they receive Apple Watches as long as the watches are part of the newest series. There was discussion about giving gift cards, which Tim said we will continue to do, but the gift cards must be purchased through the MU Bookstore using an encumbrance.

Larry Sheret asked committee members to let him know of any junior and senior classes in their areas that would be willing to ask their students to complete the library’s information literacy assessment. Mary Beth said that if students complete the assessments before April 11, they can be included in Assessment Day prize drawings. Larry said he needs five or six classes to participate and will send an email to Mary Beth, which she will distribute to committee members.

There was some discussion regarding best practices in collecting alumni outcomes. Currently, the Assessment Office secures only about a 28% response rate to surveys sent to students about six months post-graduation. Discussion ensued as to best ways to involve academic departments in securing this information from their own graduates.

7. Additional Business: Mary Beth announced that the next meeting (which will include lunch) will be held on Tuesday, May 14 at noon.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds