



University Assessment Committee Meeting  
Date: Thursday, October 1; Time: 2:00 – 3:30 PM  
Location: Microsoft Teams

### Minutes

**Members Present:** Omar Attarabeen, Fulton Burns, Yi-Po Chiu, Kim DeTardo-Bora, April Fugett, Trish Gallagher, Andrew Gooding, Andy Hermansdorfer, Will Holland, Marty Laubach, Bonnie Lawrence, Nicki LoCascio, Paula Lucas, Sarah-Frances Lyon, Karen McComas, Ralph McKinney, Tim Melvin, Adam Russell, Larry Sheret, Chris Sochor, and Mary Beth Reynolds

**Members Absent:** Loukia Dixon, Asad Salem

1. **Introductions:** Members introduced themselves and we welcomed new (and returning) members (Fulton Burns, Andrew Gooding, Andy Hermansdorfer, Will Holland, and Bonnie Lawrence) to the committee.
2. Marty Laubach moved and Karen McComas seconded approval of the minutes from the December 16, 2019. Tim Melvin moved and Marty Laubach seconded approval of the minutes from the February 7, 2020 meeting. Both sets of minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.
3. **Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Year 4 Review Update:** Mary Beth Reynolds informed the committee that Marshall University's Year 4 assurance review has been accepted by the Higher Learning Commission. This followed a review and recommendation from Marshall's HLC Peer Review Team. She noted that HLC has updated Marshall's information on the HLC website <https://www.hlcommission.org/component/directory/?Itemid=&Action=ShowBasic&instid=1665> to reflect this status.
4. Mary Beth encouraged committee members to review updated Board of Governors policies at this website <https://www.marshall.edu/board/board-of-governors-policies/> and to encourage the faculty and staff they represent to do the same.
5. **University Assessment Report for 2019-2020**
  - **Annual Program Assessment: 2018-2019-** Mary Beth reported that 51 program assessment reports have been received thus far. She said that, while she realizes there is tremendous pressure on everyone due to the pandemic, she asked that members of the committee share with their constituents that it remains important to assess student learning to ensure that our degree and certificate programs are providing the knowledge and skills students need to achieve the learning outcomes set by the programs. She noted that assessment of student learning figures prominently in the HLC's criteria for accreditation and that, although our most recent HLC Peer Review team praised our efforts in assessment, we cannot afford to be complacent.

Assessment must be an ongoing process to ensure continuous improvement in student learning at the university.

- **General Education Assessment: 2019-2020 and subcommittee updates-** Chris Sochor and Adam Russell provided updates on the communication methods we are working on to disseminate the findings of our general education assessments. Chris noted that after creating Blackboard Organizations for several types of general education assessments, e.g. FYS, baseline, multicultural and international courses, CT courses, etc., we decided during the early time of the pandemic that it might be better to convert these organizations to teams within Microsoft Teams. Adam reported that he initially did this, but later decided to follow the advice of Karen McComas, who suggested it would be more efficient to have one team with dedicated channels within that team. So, Adam reported he has created an Assessment Team with the following channels – baseline/FYS, capstone, community-based learning, critical thinking, international, multicultural, and writing intensive. He is also working to convert the lengthy general education assessment reports to shorter, more digestible versions. These shorter reports will be made available within Microsoft Teams in the appropriate channels of the Assessment Team, while the longer reports will remain accessible on the Assessment website at <https://www.marshall.edu/assessment/general-education-assessment/>.
- **Program Review-**Mary Beth quickly noted the 2019-2020 program review results from the report.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)-results update** <https://www.marshall.edu/assessment/national-survey-of-student-engagement/> - Mary Beth spent a considerable amount of time reviewing Marshall's spring 2020 NSSE results and trends over the past six administrations (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2020). She noted Marshall's overall strong performance in NSSE's Engagement Indicators, but also noted that we have areas (e.g. quality of interactions) in which we can improve.
- **Quality Initiative:** Mary Beth mentioned that we are in the process of initial discussions regarding Marshall's upcoming HLC quality initiative. She noted that all institutions who participate in the HLC's Open Pathways accreditation model must complete a quality initiative following successful completion of its Year 4 assurance review. She said that she would provide further updates at the committee's December meeting.
- **Website, Assessment Day, Graduation Surveys-**there was no discussion of this item.
- **Assessment Newsletter-**there was no discussion of this item.
- **Syllabus Evaluations-**Mary Beth noted that the purpose of the syllabus evaluation we conducted in spring 2020 was to audit syllabi of courses with critical thinking (CT), multicultural, and international designations to determine if they were including the appropriate outcomes from Marshall's Baccalaureate Degree Profile (BDP). She noted that CT syllabi were much more likely than were multicultural and international syllabi to do this. She attributed this to Karen McComas, who offers mandatory faculty development for all faculty teaching CT courses. Karen said that she continues to find syllabi with old CT outcomes and reaches out to the chairs and faculty in the offending departments to make them aware of the outcome requirements and faculty development opportunities.

## 6. Assessment Reports

- **Review rubric** – Mary Beth presented an assessment report rubric with some modifications to the one we used last year and asked for feedback from committee members. Karen McComas asked what we meant by “appropriate” action plans are present. She questioned the use of the

word “appropriate” and Mary Beth agreed that perhaps that word was too subjective and should be removed. This led to a broader discussion regarding the necessity of including action plans if the programs felt they were not needed. Marty Laubach said he believed that, if programs had met all their outcomes, they should be free to say that they did not need action plans. Karen suggested that, if this is the case, perhaps faculty might find another way to improve their programs. For example, expected levels of performance (benchmarks) might be raised to challenge students to even higher performance. Mary Beth ended this discussion by encouraging committee members to contact her with other thoughts regarding suggested changes to the rubric.

- **Review assignments** – Mary Beth said that each reviewer would have only three reports to review this year. She said that each report would be available online in a password protected format. She demonstrated the BA in Elementary Education’s report to show committee members how the reports will appear and how to navigate them online. She asked that anyone wishing a refresher on how to assess these reports using the rubric to contact her. She said that reviews should (ideally) be completed by December 14. If meeting this date is not possible, she asked that committee members have the reviews to her at least by the end of January 2021.

7. **Co-Curricular Assessment Updates:** Will Holland shared that Student Affairs has become more intentional about articulating the goals for student learning at the events they sponsor. He noted that students are now given pretests before the events and posttests after. This has allowed staff to evaluate the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes the events were designed to foster. Sarah-Frances Lyon also spoke about some of this semester’s challenges in Housing and Residence Life (HRL). She mentioned that she worked with David Hatfield this summer to map HRL’s Curriculum outcomes to those of Marshall’s Baccalaureate Degree Profile. This semester, the staff have given micro-surveys to students living in university housing to help the staff meet the significant challenges posed by the coronavirus. Sarah-Frances said that students have requested activities such as movie and game nights, and book clubs. She noted that loneliness is a much bigger problem this semester because students are not able to form friendship networks through face to face activities. It has been much more common this year for students to go home for weekends because home is their “normal;” a place where they do not have to always wear masks when leaving personal space.

8. Mary Beth reminded everyone that the next meeting will be on Monday, December 14 at noon.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Beth Reynolds*