



University Assessment Committee Meeting
Date: Monday, December 16; Time: Noon – 2:00 PM
Location: Memorial Student Center John Spotts Room (MSC 2E37)

Minutes

Members Present: Yi-Po Chiu (via telephone connection), Karen McComas, Marty Laubach, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Paula Lucas, Trish Gallagher, Sarah-Frances Lyon, Ralph McKinney, Tim Melvin, Susan Midkiff, Adam Russell, Larry Sheret, Chris Sochor, Henning Vauth, Nicki LoCascio, Lori Thompson, Pam Holland and Carrie Childers (for Loukia Dixon), and Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Absent: Omar Attarabeen, Asad Salem, Rayshawn Eastman, April Fugett, and Loukia Dixon

1. **Lunch, introductions and welcome to new members:** The meeting started with lunch, followed by introductions. Mary Beth Reynolds welcomed guests Pam Holland and Carrie Childers (both representing Loukia Dixon) and relatively new member Lori Thompson, who is representing the Graduate Council.
2. **Approval of minutes from the May 14 and September 9, 2019 meetings:** Marty Laubach moved, and Sara-Frances Lyon seconded, approval of May 14 minutes and Marty moved, and Tim Melvin seconded, approval of September 9 minutes. Both sets of minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Subcommittee Reports:**
 - **Co-Curricular Assessment (Sarah-Frances Lyon, Rayshawn Eastman, Trish Gallagher, Loukia Dixon, Marty Laubach, and Adam Russell):** Sarah-Frances Lyon explained that she and Rayshawn Eastman have been working on a co-curricular curriculum for the past year. The central theme of this curriculum is *The Herd Experience*. The goal for students who matriculate at Marshall is to help them feel a sense of belonging and pride in their association with Marshall University. To assess student learning as part of the *Herd Experience*, Sarah-Frances and Rayshawn have created a rubric with four learning goals and between twelve and fifteen outcomes and a plan to assess student achievement of these goals/outcomes. The plan currently consists of three assessments. For the first goal, *One of the Herd*, Student Affairs created an incentive plan in conjunction with UNI classes, where students who attend a prescribed number of events receive points and, based on point totals, are entered into drawings for various prizes. Rather than receiving credit for simply attending an event, students also write reflection papers for their UNI classes on what they learned from attending the event. Sarah-Frances and Rayshawn have developed a plan to compare student involvement data from fall 2018 with data from fall 2019 in terms of both student involvement and student learning as a direct result of that involvement. Preliminary data suggest that, based on the addition of the incentive program, student involvement has increased. The next step of this analysis will be to compare results among subgroups of students, e.g. those who live on campus versus off campus, those who enter Marshall with college credit due to having taken dual credit or AP courses while in high school.

Sarah-Frances noted that many student organizations have been entered into a software program named *HERDLink*. Through attendance sheets or swiping into events, this program can track attendance. The next data analysis Student Affairs and Housing and Residence Life hope to conduct is to see if there is a “sweet spot” for student involvement. In other words, while students who are involved in campus activities may earn higher grades and be more likely to progress through college than students who are not at all involved, there may be a breaking point where too much involvement can negatively impact students’ grades.

Sarah-Frances reported that Student Affairs and Housing and Residence Life also have started some pre/post-tests to measure the goal *Social Responsibility* for participants following some of their events. Mr. Will Holland, Director of Community Outreach, has piloted these assessments and, based on early results, has found that students want to understand the *why* (i.e. the learning outcomes they are expected to achieve) behind activities in which they are asked to participate. Mr. Holland reported significant increases in students’ understanding of community engagement following these pilot activities aligned to the goal of *Social Responsibility*.

The third assessment, in its early development, will assess students’ development of *Ethical Leadership* skills. Sarah-Frances presented some preliminary thoughts about plans to assess this goal.

- **Alumni Outcomes (Omar Attarabeen, April Fugett, Susan Midkiff, Paula Lucas, YiPo Chiu, and Adam Russell):** Adam Russell said that our primary goal is to increase response rates for the undergraduate and graduate alumni surveys. To date, response rates has been around 25% for undergraduate and 15% for graduate alumni surveys. Adam reported that the Office of Assessment and Quality Initiatives has already implemented some of the subcommittee’s suggestions. These include offering incentives (Alumni T-Shirts) for the alumni surveys sent in fall 2019. Other recommendations included improving communication methods through partnering with University Communications or the Alumni Association to let our alums know when to expect surveys; identifying best practices elsewhere; asking for this information on the graduation surveys too (note: we are already doing this). Mary Beth noted that we follow the recommendations of the National Association of Colleges and Employers’ (NACE) *First Destination Survey* to send the alumni survey to graduates of Marshall six to twelve months post-graduation.

Two final methods of improving response rates were discussed – texting graduates rather than sending them emails and obtaining information directly from academic departments. After comments from Karen McComas and others regarding the increase in response rates with texting over email for other university projects, Mary Beth and Adam said they would investigate this method of survey dissemination further. Finally, Mary Beth will do a quick inventory to see which academic departments are reporting employment rates on their websites.

- **General Education Assessment (Karen McComas, Chris Sochor, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Nicki LoCascio, and Adam Russell):** Kim DeTardo-Bora made the following recommendations on behalf of the General Education Subcommittee. The subcommittee recommended that the Office of Assessment and Quality Initiatives (OAQI) establish either Blackboard Organizations or MS Teams for CT, FYS, Writing Intensive, Multicultural, International, Community-Based Learning, and Capstone courses, and for Week of Welcome (WOW). These organizations can be

used for efficient assessment results and other information sharing among group participants. The subcommittee further recommended that the OAQI create brief summative reports or infographics to be shared within these organizations. These reports will help with the feedback loop, i.e. help organization members identify weaknesses that might inform pedagogical or curricular modifications to improve student learning. The reports also could be used to recruit new faculty members to teach these course types. The subcommittee's third recommendation was to create a repository of documents and resources. These documents might include excellent student work and faculty assignments as exemplars, effective assessment practices, rubric development tips, up-to-date research on assessment practices, Blackboard links, and other resources. Discussion board forums, spotlights of faculty or programs also could be included. Karen McComas suggested that many of the organizations suggested for creation already have directors or coordinators (e.g. Writing Intensive, Community-Based Learning, and FYS courses) and the General Education Council could be responsible for CT, Multicultural, International, and perhaps Capstone courses.

- **National Survey of Student Engagement and Assessment Day (Tim Melvin, Ralph McKinney, Larry Sheret, Henning Vauth, Asad Salem, and Adam Russell):** Tim Melvin reported that this subcommittee primarily focused on strategies to incentivize participation among students and to publicize events. He recommended publicizing both NSSE and Assessment Day surveys and other activities through the Council of Chairs (chaired by Michael Castellani, Chair of Chemistry) and through Kateryna Schray, Interim Director of Student Success. The subcommittee also recommended that we partner with University Communications to get some nice graphics to put into *HERD Happenings*. Nicki LoCascio mentioned the importance of the Office of Assessment and Quality Initiatives sharing *NSSE* findings with colleges.

4. Other Business

- **Newsletter:** Adam Russell will take charge of publishing an assessment newsletter, with a goal of having the first publication ready by January 2020. We would like to feature assessment in one academic department in each newsletter, with the first being the English department. We have chosen English to be first because it is using Blackboard Outcomes for both the assessment of its degree programs (BA and MA) and for its general education composition assessment. The January newsletter also will also feature NSSE. Adam said he will work with Megan Archer from University Communications to develop and disseminate the newsletter. Lori Thompson told us that we can store newsletters, as well as other assessment documents and reports, in Marshall Digital Scholar. Adam requested other suggestions from the committee regarding newsletter content.
- **National Survey of Student Engagement:** Mailing Schedule (February 26, March 3, March 9, March 17, April 6). Incentives will be one Apple Watch, three \$100 VISA gift cards, two \$50 VISA Gift Cards, two \$25 VISA Gift Cards, and five \$10 Amazon Gift Cards. Students must complete survey by April 7 to be eligible for prize drawings. Prize Drawings will be held on April 9.
- **Capstone Assessment:** Mary Beth Reynolds asked committee members to encourage all baccalaureate degree programs in their colleges to have capstone instructors use Blackboard to align senior capstone projects to the capstone outcome and to have students submit senior capstone projects using the assignment tool in Blackboard. Chris Sochor said he would try to make a list of capstones by department and he said he is willing to align capstone projects to the capstone outcome if instructors wish. He can also assist in directions for student uploads.

Henning Vauth asked what to do with the Music capstone as it consists, in part, of a recorded musical performance. He noted that students do a written portion as well. There was some discussion about the difficulty a non-musician might have in assessing a musical performance; however, Marty Laubach pointed out that the summer assessment team assesses artifacts for critical thinking or inquiry and analysis and (for written work), written communication. To that end, the purpose is to assess more general (rather than discipline-specific) aspects of student performance at the time of graduation. Karen McComas pointed out that written documents can be used to show what students have learned about the performance.

Mary Beth pointed out that this year we will give all faculty submitting capstone assignments and student artifacts a choice between our using AAC&U's Critical Thinking or Inquiry and Analysis rubrics. Marty said it would be valuable if faculty would provide some criteria that summer assessment team can use. He asked that, in their project descriptions, faculty point out how the project relates to Marshall's Baccalaureate Degree Profile Outcomes.

Marty noted that he (and he suspects other instructors) allow students to submit multiple iterations of capstone work in Blackboard. This allows him to provide feedback on early drafts. He wondered if it might be possible for an early draft (rather than the final project) to be pulled for university-wide assessment. Chris indicated that, in a regular sample pull, any iteration uploaded to Blackboard and aligned to the capstone outcome could be included in the assessment sample. However, he said that the preliminary drafts can be submitted as a first (and separate) assignment, with the final project being created as a second (and separate) assignment. The point is that only the final iteration of student work (second assignment) should be aligned to the capstone outcome.

- **APS Meeting for Deans and Chairs on January 7: Corbly 332 and 330:** Mary Beth noted briefly that all chairs and deans have been invited to learn more about Academic Performance Solutions (APS), which is part of our platform with Education Advisory Board (EAB) in early January. The purpose of this training will be to use the platform for efficiency in course scheduling. There will be more information about this at future meetings.
- Larry Sheret announced that there were more than 1,000 downloads a day from Marshall Digital Scholar in 2019.

The meeting adjourned around 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds