



University Assessment Committee Meeting
Date: Friday, October 6, 2023; Time: 9:30 – 11:00 AM
Location: Drinko 138

Minutes

Members Present: Nandini Manne, Kim DeTardo-Bora, Loukia Dixon, Ralph McKinney, Tim Melvin, Paula Lucas, Larry Sheret, Susan Tusing, Alyssa Hudson, Diana Adams, Isaac Lairson, Adam Russell, Mary Beth Reynolds

Members Absent: Brian Hoey, Andy Hermansdorfer, Marty Laubach, April Fugett, Ginger Boles

1. We started with introduction of members, especially welcoming our new members, Dr. Nandini Manne, representing the School of Pharmacy; Ms. Alyssa Hudson, representing the Student Body/Student Government; and Ms. Dianna Adams, representing the Online Design Center.
2. Dr. Ralph McKinney made a motion, seconded by Dr. Susan Tusing, to approve the minutes of the May 1, 2023, meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.
3. HLC Quality Initiative Update <https://www.marshall.edu/hlc-qj/>. Dr. Mary Beth Reynolds provided an update on the ongoing HLC Quality Initiative entitled, “Building a stronger and more inclusive Marshall community.” She noted that Carter G. Woodson Professor of Journalism, Burnis Morris, gave the inaugural presentation to kick off the quality initiative’s second year. He spoke about his book, *Carter G. Woodson: History, the Black Press, and Public Relations*. While the theme of the quality initiative’s first year was “complexities of identity,” the theme of this second year is “building bridges.” Mary Beth also noted that, under the leadership of Dr. Kateryna Schray, the Diversity Dinner groups have been well attended and attendees are providing feedback regarding what they are learning through our Qualtrics’ surveys, which they access via QR codes.

We have seven students in the Diversity Living/Learning Community this year – two sophomores and five freshmen. Dr. Georgiana Logan is their faculty mentor and she and Mary Beth are meeting with the students five times this semester. At our third meeting (September 27) special guests Professor Burnis Morris and JMC Department Chair, Dr. Rob Quicke, were special guests. Professor Morris led a discussion about his book on Carter G. Woodson and Dr. Quicke talked to the students about podcasting, as they have expressed an interest in making podcasts on issues of diversity.

Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Feon Smith-Branch, Professor David Cartwright, and Mr. Eugene Lacey, we are continuing to engage Marshall students (six this year) as near-peer mentors for high school HSTA club students at Huntington and Cabell Midland High Schools. We have also begun our second year supporting a student intern at the Fairfield Community Development Corporation.

We hope to partner with Zurich Insurance Company to examine Marshall’s policies for bias. This analysis may be followed by an internal review. Additional plans include continuing our student climate survey and launching a similar survey for faculty and staff.

Plans are to try to support additional speakers in the spring. Books for campus-wide reading in spring will be *The Harlan Renaissance: Stories of Black Life in Appalachian Coal Towns* by William H. Turner and *Solito: A Memoir* by Javier Zamora.

4. Program Review Updates: Mary Beth shared information regarding changes to program review. These changes are in response to the updated rules outlined in HEPC Series 10: Program Review and Planning. The new guidelines call for the reports to cover, at minimum, three major areas. These areas are *quality of program outcomes*, *external demand for the program*, and *cost of program delivery*. Mary Beth noted that a Task Force consisting of representatives from Faculty Senate, the Graduate Council, Academic Affairs, Institutional Research and Planning, and the Chief Financial Officer have provided input into the decisions we have made for program review elements, with primary discussion centering on the methodology for determining the cost of each program. Mary Beth noted that all programs without programmatic accreditation will continue to have external peer reviews (i.e., reviewed by faculty in their disciplines from universities) as well as internal reviews within Marshall University. At the end of these processes, all program chairs and deans meet with Provost Mukherjee to discuss their programs, recommendations, and next steps. Following all levels of review, the university makes recommendations regarding each program, which are presented to the university's Board of Governors for approval. Following this, the university sends a final report to the WV Higher Education Policy Commission.

During the program review discussion, Mary Beth noted that we are currently having some difficulty with Academic Performance Solutions (APS), a software provided by EAB that we are using to count program enrollments, persistence, and graduation numbers. Although the enrollments appear to be correct, APS uses an algorithm that requires students to be enrolled in the semester before it will look to see if they have graduated. This caused their counting of our graduates to be incorrect for many programs because, especially for graduate programs, students who are completing theses or dissertations may graduate in a term when they are not officially enrolled in coursework. This may also happen if students receive grades of "incomplete" in courses and do not graduate until they have completed the work necessary to change the "incomplete" to a letter grade from A to F. This made it impossible for us to use APS data for persistence metrics, challenging our ability to proceed with annual health checks until this issue is resolved. Several members of the committee stated opinions about the practice of only reporting four and six-year graduation numbers. Larry Sheret opined that some students cannot graduate in this timeframe because they have to work and therefore must complete their degrees by going to school part-time. We noted that, although we value every graduate at Marshall, research has shown that the longer a student remains in college, the more expensive it is for that student in the long run. Therefore, the university will continue to work on year-over-year persistence, with a goal for most undergraduate students to complete their degrees in four years (optimal), or at least within six years of matriculation.

5. Assessment report discussion and assignments: Mary Beth reviewed the rubric we use to assess each degree program's annual assessment reports each year. She noted that these reports, and the University Assessment Committee's evaluation of them, are important in helping programs to improve their pedagogy and curricula to enhance student learning. Several of the committee's members explained to new members how assessment of learning is different than simply giving individual students grades on their assignments and exams, which ultimately lead to a grade for the course. Assessment of student learning examines the outcomes students are expected to achieve by the end of their degree programs and student performance is aggregated across all students to determine what elements of the program may need to be strengthened to improve student

learning. Mary Beth offered to meet with new members and/or offer a session to review the process of reviewing and scoring assessment report. She said she would send out review assignments within the next couple of weeks.

6. HLC 2025-2026 Comprehensive Visit Planning: Dr. Susan Tusing, who represents the College of Arts and Media on the committee and is serving as a faculty fellow to provide leadership in compiling the information needed for Marshall's next HLC comprehensive evaluation, updated the committee on her progress. She noted that five criterion committees met during summer 2023. These committees submitted documentation (aka evidence) needed to show that Marshall is meeting the criteria for accreditation. Susan is currently working on writing a draft assurance argument and will update the committee later on any "holes" we find in our ability to provide evidence that we meet all accreditation requirements.
7. Summer Assessment – Baseline/FYS, Core Curriculum (Information Literacy, Integrative and Metacognitive Thinking), Capstone-results: Mary Beth provided a brief overview of the results of this past year's general education assessment, noting that Dr. Kim DeTardo-Bora and Marty Laubach are members of the Summer Assessment Team. She also acknowledged Ms. Diana Adams for her support during this process. In general, our evaluation of Marshall's student artifacts shows they are performing at an acceptable level. This is true both for artifacts aligned to baccalaureate degree profile outcomes and capstone assessments. However, for the first time in ten years, we did not see any significant improvement in our first-year students' critical thinking skills between a baseline assessment upon matriculation and the assessment given at the end of their First Year Seminar on Critical Thinking.
8. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – Spring 2024: Mary Beth noted that Marshall participates in NSSE every two years and that our first year and senior students will receive this survey in spring 2024.
9. Newsletter-Quality Initiative, Program and Core Curriculum Assessment, NSSE: We will produce a newsletter soon. More information will be forthcoming.

10. Announcements

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Reynolds

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