

Voluntary System of Accountability Student Learning Outcomes Task Force

Summary Note #2: December 7, 2007

Attending: Roberta Allen (Business Information Systems), Benjamin Brown (student), Marcia Feters, chair (Education), Sandra Glista (Speech Pathology and Audiology), Kevin Knutson (Arts and Sciences), Lisa Kruse (Sociology), Jonathan Pugh (Institutional Effectiveness), Vladimir Risukhin (Aviation), Pam Rooney (Business Information Systems) **Absent:** Heidi Egloff (student), Fred Sitkins (Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering), Zoann Snyder (Sociology), Joyce Walker (English)

Feters called the meeting to order at 10:12 A.M.

1. Approval of **Summary Note #1** (11.09.07): Task force approved note as written.
2. Availability of **sample tests**:
 - A sample CLA test is available at <http://cla.cae.org> (Pugh has access instructions).
 - WMU has requested multiple sample copies of MAPP and CAAP for a review period of 90 days.
 - If only one copy of a test is available, it will be kept in a secure resource room.
3. **Feedback** on tests from peers and colleagues:
 - Kalamazoo College:
 - Paul Sotherland of K College has administered CLA and would recommend it.
 - Most difficult part is motivating students to take the test: K College provided incentives.
 - Glista to post details from conversation with Sotherland under e-learning channel “Discussions” tab.
 - WMU:
 - Task force is likely to meet some built-in opposition to CAAP because of colleagues’ past experience of the test.
 - Format of tests:
 - MAPP and CAAP are multiple-choice tests.
 - MAPP has an essay option.
 - CLA is more focused on critical thinking and writing.
 - Colleagues may not be comfortable with assessing writing through multiple choice.
 - Task force is encouraged to continue discussion via Blackboard Vista.
4. Update on **Blackboard Vista** platform:
 - Useful one-stop location for URLs, documents, and discussion.
 - Task force will be notified via e-mail when new items are posted.
 - Pugh to post useful URLs under “Web Links” tab:
 - www.act.org/caap/clients.html (Institutions using CAAP)
 - www.cae.org/content/pdf/School_List_0708.pdf (Institutions using CLA)
 - www.kzoo.edu/ir/cla.html (CLA at Kalamazoo College)
 - www.teaglefoundation.org (includes a primer).
 - Pugh to request list of institutions using MAPP.
5. **Web seminars**:
 - December 5 seminar:
 - Looked at aspects of CLA test and their implications for VSA.

- Questions included departmental dissatisfaction and incentives: participation is voluntary, so how does an institution make the longitudinal test effective?
- Slideshow soft copy will be posted under “Local Content” on Vista.
- CLA requires a relatively small pool of students (100) but can be administered to multiple groups across the institution.
- CLA’s good qualities include that it’s anonymous (students are more likely to want to participate).
- December 12 seminar:
 - Task force members are encouraged to participate.
 - Slideshow soft copy will be posted under “Local Content” on Vista.

6. Further **discussion**:

- Incentives:
 - Money and time are the two big issues, particularly in a longitudinal study.
 - Cash is likely to be the most effective incentive.
 - Finding an incentive isn’t difficult, but paying for it is another thing: true administrative costs need to be calculated.
 - Rewarding each participant (e.g., with a cap and gown or parking pass) might prove prohibitively expensive. A prize draw is likely to be more feasible.
 - Another option is to make the incentive larger when the student takes the test again as a senior.
 - The large influx of transfer students in year two brings into question the reliability of the data.
 - Moral incentives:
 - Participation represents service to the University.
 - Research on millennial students confirms that they are service-oriented.
 - Participation is one way of increasing the value of a student’s degree.
 - Faculty motivation and incentives are also issues.
 - Exit interviews/tests:
 - Task force may consider revisiting the senior exit exam that was discontinued in the ’90s. Understanding why it was abandoned (expense, level of difficulty, etc.) may be instructive.
 - Most departments already conduct a form of exit interview/test (usually for accreditation purposes).
- Protection of data:
 - Protection of the student’s privacy is key.
 - Students need not sign a release because the data is returned in aggregate form.
 - Task force will need to establish that test companies have proper safeguards in place to protect the data.
 - Delaware study brought up similar questions, as did ICES.
- Findings and final recommendation:
 - Task force will emphasize that this is an assessment issue, not evaluation.
 - Findings will be presented in two-column format for discussion by Faculty Senate and other groups, one option having been eliminated (with reasons why).
 - Task force will collect feedback from constituents and then make its recommendation.

7. **Next meeting**: Friday, January 25, 9 A.M. to 10:30 A.M., Room 3150, Schneider Hall.

Fetters adjourned the meeting at 11:26 A.M.