

**UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT STEERING COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2006
Patrick Benton Chair**

The purpose of this report is to highlight the major accomplishments and activities of the University Assessment Steering Committee for the period of May 2005 through April 2006.

Plans Approved The UASC approved several assessment plans during the period. Plans were approved for the following units: Public Affairs and Administration, Medieval Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, and Foreign Languages and Literatures. This brings the total number of plans approved to 67 with four plans remaining for approval. In addition, assessment of General Education remains to be defined; however work in this area continues with a newly formed committee which will consider how WMU will go about assessing general education.

Assessment Reports The first annual assessment reports were completed and reviewed by the UASC. Many good things were reported and the committee felt that the University made excellent progress in its assessment efforts. As a result of the reports, the committee invited all of the deans to meet with the committee to discuss their colleges' assessment activities, faculty and student engagement in the process, and ways in which the UASC can help in the assessment process.

Higher Learning Commission Members of the UASC met with the HLC visiting team during the mandated focused visit in November. The function of the UASC, recent accomplishments, and the annual reports were among the topics discussed at the meeting. The consultant-evaluators were satisfied and impressed with the work of the UASC and felt that WMU is on the right track.

Outreach Activities The committee has developed a one page document entitled "Assessment-At-A-Glance" that attempts to define assessment in the simplest terms and to help drive home the concepts of assessment while at the same time demystifying the process. It is intended to help relieve the apprehension and stress that may be associated with assessment by defining it as a self-improvement process rather than a faculty evaluation tool.

A round table discussion was held in April for all assessment committees, faculty, and staff who wished to attend. The objective was to have an open discussions, exchange ideas, and share experiences about the assessment process. The discussion was well attended and received very positive

comments. Many of the attendees suggested that more of these discussions be held in the future.

A sub-committee of the UASC has been formed to plan future events including additional panel discussions, guest speakers and other activities to make assessment a pervasive notion throughout the University.

UASC Members Attend Conferences/Workshops UASC members attended the IUPUI (Indianapolis) assessment conference and the North Carolina State University assessment symposium. Four presentations were given at NCSU by WMU groups. Members were also participants in the Higher Learning Commission “Assessment as a Core Strategy” conference and the American Council on Education “International Learning Outcomes Assessment” workshop.

Assessment Grants Three grants were awarded for assessment research this year. The grants went to Jody Brylinsky, HPER; Lisa Whittaker, Aviation; and Elaine Phillips and Evelyn Winfield, University Counseling and Test Center. This has been a valuable program which has aided in the development of assessment techniques and process and furthered the understanding of assessment. The grant program continues this year.

UASC Chair Change During the past year the University Assessment Steering Committee has had a change of chairperson as a result of the resignation of Steve Malcolm. Patrick Benton (Aviation) served as interim chair beginning in January and was elected as chair at the April UASC meeting.