

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Summary Notes for Meeting, 3:00 – 5:00PM, February 18, 2002

Present: Linda Delene (Committee Chair, Vice Provost, Academic Planning and Assessment), Ariel Anderson (Teaching, Learning, and Leadership), Gus Breyman (Director, DCE Lansing Campus), Katharine Cummings (Teaching, Learning and Leadership), Beth denHartigh (Disabled Student Services), George Fierro (College of Aviation), Damodar Golhar (Haworth College of Business) Joyce Kubiski (Art), Linda LeBlanc (Psychology), Lynn Lee (Trio Programs), Stephen Malcolm (Biological Sciences), Bettina Meyer (University Libraries), Hossein Mousavinezhad (Electrical and Computer Engineering), Robert Peters (School of Public Affairs and Administration), Galen Rike (Waldo Library), Diane Swartz (Division of Student Affairs), Martha Warfield (Division of Multicultural Affairs). Absent: Mozdeh Bruss (Family and Consumer Services), Raymond E. Cain, Jr. (Aviation Sciences), Eileen Evans (The Graduate College), Darryl Salisbury (CELCIS), Daniel Stauffer (Health, Physical Education and Recreation), Edmund Tsang (College of Engineering and Applied Sciences), Elton Weintz (History), and Robert Wertkin (Social Work).

The meeting summary for the January 22, 2002 committee meeting was accepted. Linda asked committee members to take the work of assessment seriously in the months ahead as there is plenty of “heavy lifting” to do in order to develop and explain assessment at WMU.

Initial committee discussion centered on the use of assessment findings as a measure of faculty teaching effectiveness. At least two members of the Committee expressed the view that information about the assessment of student learning within each course would be useful in individual promotion and tenure reviews. While recognizing that any such change is subject to collective bargaining and outside the scope of the committee, discussion ensued about the advisability and merits of this approach. Delene indicated that in terms of national assessment research and programs elsewhere that this was not done. It is primarily the disciplinary faculty who, after evaluating the material, determine what course content, course sequences, or delivery methods should be improved as a result of such general assessment information. Other members of the committee expressed reservations about co-mingling assessment of programs and student learning outcomes with the evaluation of individual faculty teaching outcomes. It was agreed by most committee members that this separation must be preserved and respected at WMU.

Delene advised the Committee that most assessment initiatives are not subject to the provisions of the human subjects review board stipulations. This is true because most assessment programs and related information are for internal use, program improvements, and internal decision-making only. However, if assessment programs and subsequent reports are undertaken solely or primarily for purposes of external publication and research, then approval through the HSIRB process must be secured in advance as would be done for any other research study involving the use of human subjects.

Discussion then turned to the initial draft of an assessment plan for WMU, which had been distributed earlier. Several suggestions for improvement to the draft were made, for example, to make explicit the relationship between department level and university level assessment activities, to add a section for university-wide assessment initiatives, and to consider the assessment of resources at WMU. It was also requested that an electronic version of the initial draft be sent to all members of the committee to facilitate their suggestions for other improvements. It was suggested that all additional recommendations for change be sent directly to Delene by mid-March. The Committee will consider a second draft at its April meeting. The draft plan then approved by the Committee will be widely circulated within WMU during September and October of 2002 for comment and further advice, with a goal of formalizing a final plan by December of 2002.

Other items discussed included exit interviews for departing students and in particular, departing freshmen from the University. Swartz briefly reviewed the Texas A&M project using an instrument

published by ACT. Swartz and Delene will draft a brief concept paper on this initiative and the process that might be used to implement such a program at WMU for the Committee's review and consideration during its April meeting. Additionally, Katharine Cummings provided a DRAFT outline of a process by which the assessment of General Education could be considered. Katharine cautioned that this was preliminary document yet to be reviewed and approved by COGE. There was some discussion on the relationship between undergraduate educational goals in the catalog and the goals for general education, as well as the separate objectives for each of the seven areas of general education.

The next meeting of the Committee will be at 3:00PM, Tuesday, March 12, 2002. The meeting was adjourned at 4:50PM.

**RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL
WEB-AVAILABLE ASSESSMENT INFORMATION and MATERIALS**

University sites with developed assessment plans, policy, programs, and reports available on the web are the following ten institutions. *Please note* that you may have to search each individual site to find material about assessment, for example, under academic affairs, planning, institutional research, assessment, or strategic planning. Assessment information has a variety of "homes" in different institutions.

Ball State University at bsu.edu (BEST in CLASS NATIONALLY)

George Mason University at gmu.edu

Kent State University at ksu.edu

Louisiana State University at lsu.edu

New Mexico State University at nmsu.edu

Texas A&M University at tamu.edu

The University of Arizona at Arizona.edu

The University of Montana at umt.edu

The University of North Carolina at unc.edu

The University of Wisconsin at wisc.edu