

University Assessment Steering Committee
SUMMARY NOTE: Meeting #31 – Monday, June 20, 2005
www.wmich.edu/popa/uac

Present: Judah Ari-Gur (Engineering and Applied Science) Sue Brodasky (Institutional Effectiveness); Maira Bundza (University Libraries); Brad Dennis (University Libraries); Marianne DiPierro (Graduate College); Meg Dupuis (Arts and Sciences); Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness); James Leja (Health and Human Services); Steve Malcolm (Arts and Sciences); Dave Reinhold (Arts and Sciences); Guest: Brian Wilson (Arts and Sciences, GERT Chair)

Absent: Josephine Barry-Davis (Education); Patrick Benton (Aviation); Gary Bigelow (Arts and Sciences); Sandra Blanchard (Engineering and Applied Sciences); Susan Caulfield (COGE); Kathy Cummings (Education); Bruce Ferrin (Business); Lin Foulk (Fine Arts); Ralucca Gera (GSAC); Linda Ickes (DOSA); James Kiddle (Arts and Sciences); Linda Lumley (Sindecuse); Suzie Nagel (DOSA); Deb Newson (Extended University Programs); Peter Parker (Engineering and Applied Sciences); Shavonne Petts (WSA); Zoanne Snyder (Arts and Sciences)

The meeting was called to order by chair, S. Malcolm, at 2:09 p.m.

1. There was a motion by M. Bundza to approve the committee summary notes from meeting #30, seconded by M. Dupuis. Motion approved.
2. Chair of the newly formed General Education Review Team, Brian Wilson, reported on their first meeting. The team's charge was prepared by Provost Delene and presented at the first meeting. It outlined a three-action approach to the review: 1) to compare WMU to other models, 2) to review the assessment work completed by the General Education Assessment Committee and 3) to assess the annual instructional costs for each general education area. At the next meeting they will review the models, looking at the number of credit hours required and other such items. The following meeting E. Evans will present about the General Education Assessment Committees preliminary data and reports. At the third meeting J. Gilchrist will speak to the economic issues. B. Wilson stated that the report to the Provost is due as of December 2005. S. Malcolm questioned the purpose for the formation of this team. B. Wilson noted that the Provost indicated that it is to improve the quality of general education at WMU. D. Reinhold asked if they will be reviewing the quality of the instructors, in terms of who is teaching the majority of general education courses (i.e., graduate assistants, part time faculty) and review their training. B. Wilson indicated that yes that is a key issue. Discussion was held. B. Wilson went on to explain that the team would also like to find out what students think of the general education criteria, does WMU do a sufficient job in articulating why these courses are required. He was unable to find any specifics online. Discussion was held. J. Ari-Gur questioned how they will separate the cost of students who are required to take the courses and those who are taking it electively. B. Wilson replied that J. Gilchrist will be addressing that issue in the future. S. Malcolm asked why the deadline for the report was so early, what is driving it, and suggested waiting until the General Education Assessment Committee has submitted their results. M. Dupuis noted that the last of the California Critical Thinking Skills testing was completed in Spring 2005 and the final area assessment were also completed in Spring 2005; thus the summary reports are currently being written. E. Evans added that the summary reports will be completed by the end of July at which time a sub-committee of the General Education Assessment Committee will be convened to write a conclusion statement by mid September. She added that the General Education Assessment Committee's focus has been assessment of the current general education program while the General Education Review Team will be focusing on the structure of general education at WMU. J. Ari-Gur asked if general education is mandated by accreditation. E. Evans cited criterion 4 and noted the paraphrased language in the charge. M. DiPierro asked how WMU's general education compares to other universities models according to the research done by B. Wilson. B. Wilson indicated that WMU is right down the middle of those he has reviewed. He went on to offer to address the committee again with further update at a future meeting.
3. RACT Chair Reports:
 - a) J. Leja reported, in the absence of D. Newson, that a revised plan for Blindness and Low Vision has not been submitted. He added that his position as chair of Blindness and Low Vision will begin on July 1, and following that date he will meet with the RACT to address the changes that will need to be made.

- b) B. Dennis reported on the last plan for review by this RACT which is Educational Studies. The RACT recommends approval. Discussion was held. There was a motion by E. Evans to approve the plan, seconded by D. Reinhold. Motion approved.
- 4. E. Evans reported on the applications for this year's Faculty Assessment Award Fellows. She gave an overview of the six applicants indicating that two had been asked to submit additional budget narratives, two had been asked to re-submit their proposals with additional information as requested by the sub-committee, and two had been declined. Two came back with their budget narratives, one withdrew, one re-submitted. She asked the committee for approval of funding for Aviation, HPER, and Counselor Testing. The Primary Investigators are Lisa Whittaker from Aviation, Evelyn Winfield from Counseling, and Jody Brylinsky from HPER. There was a motion made to approve by M. Dupuis, seconded by J. Leja. Motion approved. E. Evans reported that the notice of the awards will be forwarded to the PI's. Also, the fellows from last year will be invited to continue their participation in the monthly meetings. J. Leja asked if there is a formal feedback loop for the awards, to which E. Evans outlined the public presentations that are held each spring and further explained that the past year's recipient's power point presentations from that meeting are posted on the website.
- 5. E. Evans reported:
 - a) The HLC committee is working on the final stages of the public draft and will begin dissemination on July 18. She gave an outline of the report topics and noted that once the report is made public the committee will be accepting comments from which appropriate edits will be made. It then goes to the HLC for a read through, and advice will be returned to WMU. The final report will be submitted to HLC in late September.
 - b) The Deans' Annual Assessment Reports have all been submitted. At the September meeting she will present the Deans' reports along with the cover memos from each department Chair.
 - c) The date for this year's IUPUI Assessment Institute is October 24 and 25, 2005. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will support three to four participants to attend the conference. Please e-mail S. Brodasky if you are interested.
- 6. S. Malcolm reported:
 - a) Reviewed his experience on the UASC at the time of its inception, noting that at the start of this initiative he was unsure whether faculty would embrace the notion of "culture of assessment." However, he is pleased to see now that many units on campus are embracing this culture and that the initiative is likely to be productive.
 - b) With the completion of the Deans' Annual Assessment Report he proposed the formation of an ad-hoc Sub-Committee. He reported that in his work on the departmental assessment report and working with the templates he noticed that there is not an option to include graphs or data. Therefore the data had to be interpreted/analyzed subjectively to be effective in the report. How can we link the culture and engage faculty in writing the reports? Discussion was held. The sub-committee would gather feedback from those involved in producing the reports. Is this process improving the programs' plans? Are the tools in place helping in that improvement or are they a hindrance? M. Dupuis responded that she has found TracDat to be limiting; she believes her department is the only one in Arts and Sciences who has its plan in TracDat. She finds it difficult to fit things in the pre-defined boxes and have it relate to other boxes. While she understands that it is designed to identify areas where outcomes do not match objectives, it is restrictive and tends to be the tail wagging the dog. Discussion was held. S. Malcolm asked that if the committee is in agreement to form a sub-committee he will solicit membership via e-mail and they will meet throughout the fall semester and ultimately produce a report by the end of the December in order to provide additional guidance prior to the call for next years Deans' Annual Assessment Reports.
- 7. Other:
 - a) D. Reinhold raised a question regarding the document provided by the provost at the chairs' retreat, outlining the graduate program review process. He expressed concern with the use of assessment materials and possible punitive actions. He feared that faculty would identify the assessment process as being used for justifying program cuts and he did not want assessment information used in that process. He went on to state that he has already invested a lot of effort in convincing his department that assessment is not punitive, and this could undermine his efforts

as well as those of this committee. He expressed that he felt strongly that assessment information should not be used in this review process. Discussion was held. There was a motion by M Dupuis to have S. Malcolm draft a letter on behalf of the committee to the Provost requesting the elimination of assessment as criterion for the graduate program review process. J. Leja suggested including reference to summary notes from the committee wherein L. Delene expressed the same sentiment. The motion was reiterated: S. Malcolm, as chair of the UASC, will draft a letter to the provost requesting that assessment not be used as criterion for the graduate program review process, based on historical documentation of the committee. M. DiPiero disagreed with the idea that assessment could be excluded from the review process. She stated that she feels it is an essential part of internal review which is specifically what needs to happen in this process. D. Reinhold noted that there are eight other criteria being used for this one point of the plan and omitting assessment should not alter an internal review process. He went on to say that the letter should also express that the committee is not opposed to the graduate program review, just this one point. With the motion amended to read: S. Malcolm, as committee chair, will draft a letter to the provost, while the UASC supports the graduate program review, based on the historical documentation, the committee is requesting assessment not be used as a criteria. Motion approved with one abstention by E. Evans.

- b) M. Dupuis questioned if the committee needs to solicit assessment plans from Women's Studies and Environmental Studies. S. Malcolm noted that Environmental Studies already has an approved plan. Discussion held regarding the list of departments required to submit. S. Brodasky, working with the matrix developed by B. Wertkin, was asked to verify that all plans called for are in process or have been approved.
- c) M. Bundza reported that the new division ATIS has indicated that they will be purchasing Survey Solutions software campus wide, which should help create unified survey tools.
- d) J. Leja questioned his representation on UASC as his term on the Graduate Studies Council has expired. E. Evans noted that the Graduate Studies Council will be solicited to nominate a new representative. However, J. Leja may remain on the committee through his term as a College of Health and Human Services representative.

8. The following schedule of meeting dates was provided and room 3150 Schneider Hall was requested:

Monday, September 19, 2005 – 2 to 4 p.m.

Monday, October 17, 2005 – 2 to 4 p.m.

Monday, November 21, 2005 – 2 to 4 p.m.

Meeting adjourned by chair, S. Malcolm, at 3:45 p.m.