

University Assessment Steering Committee
Summary Note # 36
Meeting Date February 20, 2006

Attending: Patrick Benton (Aviation, Interim Chair); Judah Ari-Gur (CEAS); Maira Bundza (Libraries); Clement Burns (Grad Studies Council); Sue Brodasky (Institutional Effectiveness); Marianne DiPierro (Grad College); Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness); Bruce Ferrin (HCOB); Rand Johnson (A&S); Hossein Mousavinezhad (AAUP); Suzie Nagel (DOSA); Deborah Newson (EUP); Peter Parker (CEAS); Dave Reinhold (USC); Zoann Snyder (A&S); Tyler Watson (Sindecuse)

Absent: Josephine Barry-Davis (International); Kathy Cummings (EDUC); Kelly Daniels (GSAC); Betty Dennis (College Academic Advisors); Meg Dupuis (A&S); Lin Foulk (Fine Arts); Linda Ickes (DOSA); Jim Leja (H&HS)

Guest: Toni Woolfork-Barnes (FYE); Keith Hearit (Lee Honors College); Lisa Paulius (Physics)

The meeting was called to order by Interim Chair P. Benton at 2 p.m.

- 1) B. Ferrin made a motion to approve Summary Note #35. The motion was seconded by D. Reinhold, motion approved.
- 2) First Year Experience Program Assessment: Guest T. Woolfork-Barnes gave an overview of the First Year Experience (FYE) Program, which incorporates the orientation program, the fall welcome program, and the first year seminar. She provided a draft report on assessment and asked committee members to dispose of it following the meeting. Preliminary numbers show that over 90% accomplished the intended result. Discussion was held regarding the phrasing of the questions on the survey and how the data was being reported. T. Woolfork-Barnes went on to report that the FYE program was expected to pilot with 650 students but ended up with 173 who actually participated. Thirty sections of FYE seminar were offered, with 30 faculty representing all colleges. It was anticipated that courses registration would be coordinated by cohort group; however it did not happen that way due to prescribed program course outlines. B. Ferrin asked if faculty interested will be solicited again this fall, to which T. Woolfork-Barnes responded that an e-mail has already gone out to deans asking for their recommendations and anyone interested can contact the FYE office at 7-2387. She expressed that the goal for Fall 2006 will be 2000 students participating. J Ari-Gur asked about the FYE program goal. T. Woolfork-Barnes indicated that ultimately it is retention, to build the number of students returning each fall. Discussion was held regarding the class structure and the potential to extend the students into grad school. T. Woolfork-Barnes cautioned against colleges and departments developing their own programs and segmenting students. When asked if the cohort groups are continuing to meet through the Spring semester, she indicated that she had opted not to do so because not enough students showed interest.
- 3) Higher Learning Commission Assessment Workshop Report: K. Hearit and L. Paulius presented for the HLC Assessment Workshop team. Other members of the team were Meg Dupuis, Bassam Harik, Gil Sinclair, and Brian Wilson. They reported on the following items learned:
 - HLC focus on general education
 - Points universal to assessment
 - New criteria that overlap
 - Five areas with student learning
 - Future preparation
 - Integrity.

They went on to state that there was a big shift in focus onto the future, not just the data, but what is being learned and how that results in changes. It is crucial to have consistency from the mission statement in relation to course work. There should be a natural flow of assessment upward into the mission statement and must be able to demonstrate the outcomes. HLC is looking for a strong commitment from the University leadership for assessment; it has to become part of budgeting. Assessment should be carried out at all levels of the University, not just the

academic units, and should enhance student learning. HLC encouraged changing the culture on campus, providing a process of inquiry, looking for ways to assess and improve. Assessment information needs to flow in both directions and close the feedback loop, thus initializing change in accordance to the data. HLC's single largest cause of focused visits is failure to close the feedback loop. HLC stressed that sites don't need to assess everything at once; it is better to focus on one area at a time. The team will put forth their recommendation in terms of general education with a focus on writing. M. Bundza asked who would be making that decision for a Universitywide focus. K. Hearit explained that HLC felt it should be a faculty driven process. The workshop team anticipates initiating a pilot study for assessing baccalaureate writing, followed by a full assessment of writing. Assessment results will be shared with the faculty senate, assessment committees, and policy makers in order to provide the feedback loop. The team felt that WMU has done a great job, compared to other universities represented at the workshop; we just need to keep the momentum going. Questions were raised regarding closing the feedback loop in relation to the grad program and undergrad program review process. L. Paulius stressed the difference between assessment and evaluations – keep a firewall between the two. Discussion was held.

4) Reports:

- a. E. Evans reported that she has issued an invitation to Doug Eder for a campus visit, to which he indicated he would provide some possible dates by mid March. Students have received the second invitation to participate in NSSE; however the response is lower than expected. Dates have yet to be announced for FSSE. P. Benton will lead a ten-person delegation to the North Carolina State University Assessment Symposium from WMU with five presentation teams including Maira Bundza, Linda Ickes, Paul Vellom, Joyce Kubiski, and Kathy Cummings. The teams have been asked to give a preview of their presentations to the campus on March 29. A handout was provided of important dates from the Provost Office.
 - b. P. Benton reported on the Assessment-At-A-Glance handout which was developed per the committee's request. He asked about dissemination. M. Bundza suggested having S. Brodasky add it to the assessment and toolbox websites. P. Benton asked S. Brodasky to forward the document to the committee electronically and for all suggestions to be returned to S. Brodasky with further discussion to be held at the next meeting. P. Benton provided a handout summarizing the issues brought forward for the roundtable discussions. P. Parker raised concern about departmental assessment plans and annual assessment reports not being aligned with accreditation agency reports, and the need to tie all reports to the accrediting agencies' requirements. B. Ferrin noted that in his recent work with the HCOB departments he has explained to them that once they are over the hurdle of loading assessment plans into TracDat the process will be less painful. If we had known what TracDat looked like prior to writing the plans, the plans would have been written differently. The Committee endorses those units that have external accreditation to review those reports and make whatever changes are necessary in the assessment plans. P. Parker suggested making this a clear message during the roundtables. E. Evans agreed that this should be a primary workshop topic. P. Benton asked for suggestions of format to be e-mailed to him. The schedule of the meetings with the dean was provided, noting next month will be T. Greene and G. Wegenke.
 - c. RACT Chairs - no report.
- 5) Sub-Committee Report: Z. Snyder reported for the subcommittee and provided a handout of the five questions being supported. E. Evans made a motion for them to be forwarded to the deans in preparation for the meetings. Discussion held. B. Ferrin seconded, motion approved.

The meeting was adjourned by Interim Chair, P. Benton at 3:59 p.m.