

University Assessment Steering Committee
Summary Note # 47
Meeting Date: May 21, 2007

Attending: Patrick Benton, chair (Aviation), Sue Brodasky (Institutional Effectiveness), Maira Bundza (Intl. Program Studies), Megan Buwalda (WSA), Kathy Cummings (EDUC), Laura Darrah (DOSA), Marianne DiPierro (Grad College), Meg Dupuis (A&S), Ed Eckel (Libraries), Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness), Bruce Ferrin (HCOB), Lin Foulk (Fine Arts), Linda Ickes (DOSA), Kevin Knutson (A & S), Peter Parker (CEAS), Carie Robertson (Sindecuse), Karen Stokes (ex-officio, TracDat)

Absent: Ari-Gur, Bigelow, Cockrell, Dennis, Mousavinezhad, Nagel, Newson, Snyder, Tarbox, Unrau

Guest: Diane Anderson, Vice President for Student Affairs

The meeting was called to order by Chair Benton and Summary Note #46 was approved (Cummings/Parker). Benton provided a year-end summary of UASC work and thanked the members of the UASC for their service throughout the year. In addition, Benton thanked Cummings and Brodasky for their work in facilitating the PATHS series, Stokes for her work with TracDat and iWebfolio, Bundza for her work with developing the document on assessment resources, and Bundza, Ickes, Brodasky, and Stokes for their work in developing an assessment newsletter. Parker and Robertson were thanked for their efforts in developing the awards program. Cockrell, Unrau, and Snyder were thanked for their work with the assessment grants, the RACTS were thanked for the work they accomplished in bringing the final two assessment plans forward during the year, and Evans was thanked for her support of the work of the UASC.

New members were introduced. It was noted that the UASC had provided a brief orientation for the new members prior to the start of this meeting.

RACT reports: Benton reported that the Arts & Sciences RACT had tentatively approved the assessment plan from Mathematics. Snyder and Dupuis had indicated approval but noted that some members of the RACT had not had the opportunity to review the plan. The plan was tabled until all members of the RACT have reviewed the plan (Benton/Ferrin). Cummings presented the review of the assessment plan from Blindness and Low Vision studies. The plan was approved based on the recommendation of the RACT (Cummings/Bundza). DiPierro asked about the process for forming RACTs and pointed out that she had been involved in the RACT working with BLVS prior to the current year. She suggested that continuity in RACT membership might benefit the process. Benton pointed out that UASC members volunteered for RACTs during the first meeting of the year. Ferrin asked about benchmarks and criteria in assessment plans and suggested that UASC encourage departments to develop or clarify benchmarks/criteria in their plans.

Evans reported on the fellows program for 2007-08. The review committee recommended that Lynn Nations-Johnson be funded for a project involving the assessment of intern teachers. The recommendation was approved (Cummings/Bundza).

Benton reported that changes to the university's curriculum review forms had moved to the Faculty Senate. The revision was tabled by the Senate due to questions about some of the proposed changes. However, the changes reflecting assessment issues were not questioned by the senate. Benton also noted that he had submitted the annual report to the Senate.

A draft of the criteria for the "assessment excellence awards" was shared. UASC members discussed the criteria for the awards and the process by which awards would be decided. The draft proposal calls for a cash award for an individual and a plaque for a department or unit. The individual award focuses on peer-reviewed scholarship related to assessment. It was noted that the first bullet under criteria for the individual award is required while the subsequent criteria are separated by "or." The next draft of the award criteria will clarify the relationship among the three bulleted items. In addition, the third bullet will be changed to remove the word "positive," to avoid the appearance that the award can only be given to individuals who report positive assessment results. UASC members suggested that "negative" assessment results may be as

helpful as positive results to program improvement. The committee will continue to develop the “nuts and bolts” of the award process, with the intention of making the first awards in Spring 2008. The committee requested that UASC members send their suggestions to Sue Brodasky who will forward them to the committee.

Evans discussed the federal “negotiated rule making,” noting that Secretary Spellings will choose the representatives from accrediting bodies who participate in the negotiations. The Department of Education has indicated that accreditation agencies will be expected to focus on student learning outcomes.

Bundza reported on the assessment newsletter to disseminate assessment-related information to the campus. “Assessment Matters” will be distributed electronically each month. The newsletter committee will prepare a sample newsletter and share it with the UASC for comment.

Stokes reported on the TracDat/iWebfolio advisory board and noted that the board assisted with preparing the orientation session for new UASC members. She also discussed the new version of TracDat which will be available for WMU in August. Prior to the August release, Stokes and others on campus will have the opportunity to work with the new version. UASC members suggested that some departments are not using TracDat because the university continues to accept narrative documents for annual assessment reports. Stokes and Cummings described elements of the new version that should make it easier for departments to manage the process of assessment as well as store the results of assessments.

Ickes presented information about an externally-funded assessment project to redesign a career exploration course. She provided examples of the use of assessment results to directly impact curriculum. Program improvements were highlighted along with changes in assessment results.

Vice President Anderson spoke about assessment efforts within the Division of Student Affairs (DOSA). She listed the 14 departments that comprise DOSA, noting the diversity among those departments. She outlined a new strategic priority plan for DOSA. Anderson and her leadership team will be meeting to operationalize the strategic priorities. She indicated that the leadership team understands the value of assessment and its importance in assuring that DOSA programs are responsive to students. Evans suggested that the UASC would welcome a brief report after the DOSA leadership has completed its work.

Benton adjourned the meeting (Parker/Buwalda).