

University Assessment Steering Committee  
Summary Note #51  
January 28, 2008

Attending: Patrick Benton, chair (Aviation), Sue Brodasky (Institutional Effectiveness), Maira Bundza (International Programs), Kathy Cummings (EDUC), Laura Darrah (DOSA), Vincent Desroches (A&S), Edward Eckel (Libraries), Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness), Bruce Ferrin (HCOB), Lin Foulk (Fine Arts), Kevin Knutson (Arts & Sciences), Deb Newson (EUP), Peter Parker (CEAS), Dave Reinhold (A&S, Undergrad Studies Council), Carie Robertson (Sindecuse), Zoann Snyder (A&S), Karen Stokes (ex-officio, TracDat), Yvonne Unrau (CHHS).

Absent: Alsaud, Ari-Gur, Buwalda, DiPierro, Ickes, LeBlanc, Tarbox

Benton called the meeting to order and asked for approval of Summary Note #50. Note was approved (Evans/Parker).

Cummings described the upcoming PATHS session on “assessment for learning.”

Snyder reported on the work of the committee overseeing the “Voluntary System of Accountability” (VSA). The committee is currently determining which of the three tests will be used at WMU as part of the VSA. Some concerns about the use of a standardized test have been raised, although it was noted that the committee is charged with choosing a test rather than determining whether a test should be used.

Eckels reported on the workshop related to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) that will be held on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Speakers will include David Malik from IUPUI and Edmund Tsang and Betsy Aller from the College of Engineering. It was agreed that a “hold the date” announcement should go out soon. Graduate students will be permitted to attend if space is available at the workshop.

Knutson discussed the survey on assessment being distributed as part of the periodic review of WMU’s assessment system. The survey will be administered online and will be available for approximately two weeks.

Reinhold was asked to discuss his new role as Director of Undergraduate Studies. He indicated that he has four major responsibilities: Curriculum manager, oversight of general education, First Year Experience programs, and implementation of the “Edge.” Reinhold will continue to work with UASC and will assist with the further development of plans to assess general education. Evans thanked Reinhold for his willingness to take on the important leadership role for undergraduate education at WMU.

Evans reported on the application process for the assessment grants. The applications are available online and the deans have been reminded about the opportunity for faculty to receive support for working on assessment projects. She also distributed a press release for the excellence awards and asked for written feedback from the committee. Evans has met with most of the academic deans and discussed their annual assessment reports with them. She provided the deans with letters from UASC and from the provost. Evans has reviewed all the college assessment reports and prepared comments for the provost. Her comments included an indication of whether the college efforts had been satisfactory or unsatisfactory in the past year and described the changes planned for the future. Changes include the use of information from SAIR about assessment-based curriculum changes, the use of TracDat for all reports starting in Spring 2009, and the launch of the assessment excellence awards to recognize individuals and programs.

Knutson suggested that increased efforts in assessment require increased resources including human resources. Evans responded that the associate deans responsible for assessment in the colleges should meet to discuss strategies for helping departments with their assessment efforts. Evans also discussed a special edition of the Prism to focus on assessment activities and results.

Ferrin and Parker discussed some of the challenges for faculty who engage in assessment-related activities. It seems difficult for faculty to include assessment within their priorities because assessment tends to fall within the broad category of “service” activities. Evans suggested that the topic be addressed in greater detail at a future UASC meeting because it is a perennial concern.

Evans announced that WMU will have a presentation at this year’s NCSU assessment conference. She also noted that Lee Honors College is working on an assessment plan and that CASP has prepared an assessment plan. She distributed an article on Bloom’s Taxonomy and the “MCAT Myth.”

Budza asked whether the university has a system for coordinating the surveys that go out to faculty. No one knew of any coordination system.

The meeting adjourned at 3:06 (Parker/Knutson).