

University Assessment Steering Committee
Summary Note #56
October 27, 2008

Attending: Patrick Benton, chair (Aviation), Judah Ari-Gur (CEAS), Sue Brodasky (Instructional Technology), Maira Bundza (International Programs), Kathy Cummings (EDUC), Laura Darrah (DOS), Edward Eckel (Libraries), Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness), Lin Foulk (Fine Arts), Deb Newson (EUP), Muhammad Razi (for Palmer, HCOB), Dave Reinhold (Undergrad Studies Council), Gwen Tarbox (GSC)

Absent: Bragolone, DiPierro, Konate Deme, Ickes, Knutson, Kritzman, Lagerquist, Robertson, Stokes, Unrau

Benton called the meeting to order and asked for approval of Summary Note #55. After several corrections were suggested, Cummings offered to revise the notes and bring them to the November meeting.

Benton reported on the Awards Ceremony. Brad Dennis from University Libraries received the first annual award for his article concerning implementation of LIBQual. His article will be available on the Institutional Effectiveness website. It was noted that Susan Hatfield was the featured speaker at the award luncheon. She provided information on developing objectives and engaging in campus-wide assessment activities. Benton encouraged the UASC members to attend next year's award ceremony.

Two PATHS sessions have been held this semester. The first session was held in the College of Health & Human Services and focused on rubrics for assessment. The second session was held in the College of Arts and Sciences and was titled "Assessment: What is It Good For?" Benton reported on the HLC kick-off event featuring Andrew Lutten-Whyte. The powerpoint slides from Dr. Lutten-Whyte's presentation were distributed.

Reinhold reported on the pilot implementation of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) exam this fall. Administration of the CLA provides necessary information for WMU's participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). One hundred incoming students were selected to take the exam and were given a small monetary incentive to participate. WMU will receive the results of the test within the next few months. The CLA will also be administered to 100 graduating seniors in the Spring. The purpose of the testing is to provide information about the "value added" from a student's education at WMU. Reinhold noted that the CLA does not attempt to assess all aspects of a student's education. Instead, it emphasizes several aspects of our general education program: writing skills, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning. Evans indicated that WMU will pilot the test for two years before posting results on the university's website. Reinhold offered to provide more detailed information about the test and its administration if departments or programs would like to learn more.

Evans excused herself to attend another meeting.

Benton distributed copies of Wertkin's report on the 5-year review survey. UASC members should read the report and provide Benton with 3-5 major themes or

recommendations from the report. Information should be emailed to Benton no later than November 14th. He will summarize the information and present it to the UASC meeting in November.

Benton asked for comments about the status of UASC within the university, noting that UASC continues as an ad hoc committee rather than as a committee or council of the Faculty Senate. It was noted that the role of UASC is both benefitted and limited by its ad hoc status, with the ability to define itself according to the guidelines set forth in the university's assessment plan developed in 2003. Malcolm noted that the UASC should make itself redundant through the integration of assessment activities within all aspects of the university's work. Several members suggested that UASC should report directly to the president. It was also suggested that the current president should clearly state his support for assessment efforts throughout the university. Questions were raised about the relationship between the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the UASC. Discussion included questions about whether UASC serves/supports OIE or whether OIE supports UASC. It was suggested that a subcommittee be developed to examine the role of UASC and perhaps revise the university's assessment plan. Benton closed the discussion noting that the group will continue to consider the future role of UASC at subsequent meetings. He asked each UASC member to re-read the assessment plan document they were given when they joined the UASC. The document is also available from the Institutional Effectiveness website at: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/myPublicPlan.pdf>

Cummings suggested that the brainstorming activity listed in the agenda should be postponed because of the questions raised in the previous discussion. The committee members agreed to postpone the activity.

Cummings discussed a question from one of the academic colleges about the annual assessment reports. Some colleges would prefer to base their report on a calendar year rather than an academic year in order to use the Spring term for data analysis. Cummings moved that the UASC recommend to the provost that colleges be permitted to determine whether to use a calendar year or academic year. Reports from the colleges to the Provost would continue to be submitted on August 1st. Tarbox seconded the motion and, following additional discussion, it was approved.

Brodasky provided a report on the "Assessment In Action" subcommittee. She provided additional information about the PATHS sessions and discussed an issue raised at the first session this fall. Some participants in the session had stated confusion about the relationship between their department Assessment Plans and the periodic Academic Program Plans. Cummings is developing a diagram to assist in explaining the relationship between the two. She will also include information about their relationship to accreditation. Brodasky asked Cummings to talk about the five aspects of organizing that seem to be a good fit with the TACT groups' work for the year. Cummings listed the following activities for organizers: Motivation, Education, Agitation, Animation, & Technical Support. She suggested that the assessment efforts on campus could use these five activities to assist in developing the "culture of assessment" that we have been

discussing. Brodasky concluded her report with information about the upcoming assessment newsletter.

The meeting adjourned by acclamation. (not to be confused with acclimation!)