

University Assessment Steering Committee
Summary Note #59
February 23, 2009

Attending: Patrick Benton, chair (Aviation), Maira Bundza (International Programs), Laura Darrah (DOSA), Marianne DiPierrro (Grad College), Edward Eckel (Libraries), Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness), Lin Foulk (Fine Arts), Marilyn Kritzman (AAUP), Kristin Lagerquist (Institutional Effectiveness), Steve Malcolm (A & S), Deb Newson (EUP), Dave Reinhold (Undergrad Studies Council), Cari Robertson (Sindecuse), Gwen Tarbox (GSC), Lynnae Stankus (DOSA), Muhammad Razi (Business).

Absent: Ari-Gur, Bragolone, Brodasky, Cummings, Konate-Deme, Ickes, Palmer, Stokes, Unrau

Substitute: Tammi Roberts for Kevin Knutson

UASC Chair Benton called the meeting to order and introduced Lynnae Stankus who has replaced Kristin Fouts as a representative for DOSA. He asked for approval of Summary Note #58. It was approved (Evans/Bundza).

Evans reported that the Faculty Assessment Grant guidelines are now available online and that the deadline for this year's applications is 4-15-09. An article announcing the guidelines and deadline appeared in WMU News. She also reported that the current (2008-09) Faculty Assessment Grant Fellows are focusing on mixed methods assessment and will invite Victoria Janson, Coordinator of Research Compliance to their next meeting. Evans asked for the committee's advice regarding the advertisement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) in the next issue of Assessment Matters. This is an issue because the workshop is invitation only. Eckel and Bundza moved that it would be okay as those who receive Assessment Matters are the same folks who will be invited to the workshop. Evans also reported that the American Association of Colleges and Universities announced two new studies on assessment. The first focuses on national level efforts of student learning and program improvement. The second study is called the Alliance for New Student Learning Leadership and focuses on higher education accountability and transparency.

Benton reported that the HLC, criterion 3 subcommittee may be calling on UASC for expertise in assessment in different areas. He also reported that the Honors College assessment plan review is coming up and that it may be necessary to form a RACT. Benton then discussed that HLC committees recommend that all units/departments display an url or link on their websites based on assessment. This topic will be discussed at length at a later time. Kritzman informed the group that some folks are in the process of redesigning their websites so we should discuss this sooner than later. Evans asked that Cummings send her an email about this recommendation (assessment url/link).

Eckel provided an update on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) workshop. It will be held on 5-29-09. At the last SOTL meeting the day's schedule was finalized and break out sessions were discussed. Some topics discussed for breakout sessions include what does quality SOTL look like, brainstorming SOTL research, and finding SOTL research. Forty folks will be invited to the workshop this year and there

will be posters like last year. Benton suggested that posters be brought into an UASC meeting so they can be distributed.

The next topic on the agenda was the Graduate Research on Assessment Program that was introduced as new business in January. Tarbox and DiPierro presented a draft document with their proposal. Two types of assessment awards that are applicable to both masters and doctoral level students was presented to the group. The first award is folded into existing awards and is faculty nominated. There would not be a cash award, just acknowledgement. The second proposed award is application driven and does have a financial incentive. To quote the said proposal both awards intersect with the University and the UASC mission. Both will further academic excellence and intellectual inquiry as well as provide a fertile outlet for students and faculty to engage in assessment scholarship that benefits the institution, respective departments and their research interests, as well as individual students as they cultivate opportunities for career potential. Malcolm raised a concern that the awards would be based on assessment for its own sake rather than focusing on program improvement. Tarbox mentioned that WMU graduate students should be aware of research and assessment and help to foster a culture of assessment. Faculty and students should form an alliance in order to use assessment to improve programs. Evans mentioned that Mark Wheeler and the Graduate Studies Council should not be bypassed in approving the proposed program. Tarbox suggested that she and DiPierro work on the criterion and eligibility guidelines to present to UASC in March. She suggested that this may make the committee more comfortable with the proposed new program. Tarbox also mentioned that she would provide examples of projects that have already been completed. Moved Kriztman/Tarbox.

UASC plan for the next five years. Benton announced that Provost Greene has been invited to attend the next meeting in March. He handed out a document with talking points to be reviewed by the committee. A discussion then took place regarding the proposed talking points and then it was decided that our questions to the Provost should be succinct and to the point. Tarbox created two questions that the committee agreed would be good talking points 1. What specific initiatives regarding assessment have you encouraged with Deans and Chairs. How does this reflect your view of assessment at WMU? 2. Based on paragraph 5a, in the UASC committee handbook, what is the UASC role in the future? It was also suggested that the Provost be provided with a brief background of UASC and its charge. The agreement is that Provost Greene would be given 5a to review. Benton will send a letter inviting the Provost to the March meeting and will include the revised questions/talking points.

UASC responses to Deans Annual Assessment Reports. Benton handed out letters with responses to each college's report. He gave a detailed explanation of each paragraph. The committee took about five minutes to review the letters. A few grammatical errors were pointed out by the group. Malcolm asked the question of what good are these responses if there is no follow up? A discussion then evolved that the group would like to see some follow up – are colleges doing what they said they were going to do? Perhaps making a check list for each report would help in the follow up process. Make accountability part of the report in the future. Maybe UASC should make it a policy to

send something out in the spring in order to remind colleges – this is also a good time to implement resources. Maybe it would be beneficial if the group broke up into groups to review each assessment report, rather than having the entire committee review each report. This way more time could be spent doing an in depth evaluation and it would be less overwhelming for committee members. It was also mentioned that UASC is late with its review as report evaluation may no longer hold true. It was determined that the letters would be sent out for now and changes to policies/procedures related to the above will be discussed. It was also mentioned that TracDat training is available by contacting Karen Stokes.

Bundza announced that a WMU International Review Survey will be sent to faculty senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15