

University Assessment Steering Committee  
Summary Note #60  
March 23, 2009

Attending: Patrick Benton, chair (Aviation), Marilyn Kritzman (AAUP), Sue Brodasky (OIT), Maira Bundza (International Programs), Laura Darrah (DOSA), Mariam Konate Deme (Arts and Sciences), Marianne DiPierro (The Graduate College), Eileen Evans (Institutional Effectiveness), Lin Foulk (Fine Arts), Kevin Knutson (Academic Advising), Kristin Lagerquist (Institutional Effectiveness), Dave Reinhold (Undergraduate Studies Council), Cari Robertson (Sindecuse), Lynnae Stankus (DOSA), Karen Stokes (Assessment in Action), Gwen Tarbox (GSC), Yvonne Unrau (Health and Human Services), Muhammad Razi (Business)

Absent: Ari-Gur, Bragolone, Cummings, Eckel, Malcolm, Newson, Pritchett

Guest: Provost Tim Greene

UASC Chair Benton, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. He asked for committee approval of summary note #59. With some suggested revisions that Lagerquist will make, summary note #59 was approved (Tarbox/Darrah). Benton then introduced Provost Greene.

UASC Plan for the next 5 years (agenda)

UASC presented a list of discussion topics and questions to Provost Greene, related to the University Plan and Timetable (future of assessment) and UASC's role in future assessment. Questions UASC provided to the Provost follow:

1. How do you think the UASC fits into the University's faculty governance structure currently? Should it change as we move into the future?
2. How can academic affairs help provide greater emphasis on faculty assessment work in terms of promotion and tenure review or other faculty reward structures?
3. Based on the recent survey of faculty and staff at WMU, a perception exists that there is little support from deans for assessment. How can deans be encouraged to support, recognize, and lead assessment work and contributions?
4. How can the University provide additional resources for on-going assessment activities (for example, commercial surveys, testing, professional development, etc)?

Provost Greene opened his presentation by saying that UASC has been given a hard task as he has noticed that faculty does not like to be measured and assessment does not appear to be a high priority to many on campus. Assessment is viewed as a chore. He would like to see faculty “buy into” assessment and take a leadership role in assessment on campus; Faculty Governance. However, he asked the question, how do we interweave faculty and assessment? 1. Because, assessment is not going to go away and 2. It’s faculty prerogative to do assessment. The Provost suggested that UASC should speak to John Jellies (Faculty Senate) in order to get Faculty Senate and UASC together in assessment efforts.

Next, Provost Greene mentioned that he would like faculty at WMU to view assessment as a method to improve the learning process as well as the teaching process. He asked the committee, how do we get more faculty interested in assessment? The Provost suggested that UASC can help the University in increasing faculty interest by 1. Continuing assessment educational activities and 2. Helping to raise awareness of assessment by defining what assessment is, explaining the value of assessment, and by providing concrete examples of assessment in changing what’s going on around campus, for example, changes in curriculum. Having said this, he then asked UASC to consider, how can UASC increase awareness? What additional education and training can we give to faculty and staff? And, how to we assess knowledge of assessment on campus?

Benton asked Provost Greene, How can the committee convince WMU Deans that assessment on campus is a high priority? The Provost commented that, this task is the responsibility of the Provost and Dr. Evans and that assessment is constantly brought up to the Deans. Reinhold suggested that faculty on campus should be rewarded for their assessment efforts and that we should promote faculty ownership of assessment on campus. Tarbox mentioned that perhaps assessment procedures should be included in departments as a common procedure and changes as a result of assessment should be written up by departments with a focus on outcomes. As issues are addressed how is assessment being folded in? Evans commented that we need to increase the engagement of WMU Deans and ask them how they have supported assessment in each of their colleges. Provost Greene remarked that perhaps WMU Deans need professional development in assessment in order to educate them on assessment. Reinhold brought up the issue that there is no clear definition of assessment on campus – assessment at WMU should focus on student learning – student learning should be the “main” word not assessment. Tarbox suggested that assessment at WMU should be a process as well; assessment should come first and then makes changes based on the results.

Kritzman suggested that perhaps one way to make faculty think about assessment is to have them include learning objectives on course syllabi – she wondered if there was anything in writing on campus to support that idea. Provost Greene said that depends on the department and that he would like to see the University post syllabi of record with outcomes on the web. Benton mentioned that the Higher Learning Commission is under the assumption that course syllabus do have course objectives listed. The Provost then suggested that perhaps there should be a conversation with the Graduate and Undergraduate Councils to find out why WMU doesn't have syllabi of record and curriculum maps. Provost Greene pointed out that in his opinion, there's a starting point and a stopping point of assessing what students have learned at WMU – however, we don't assess the environment (world) as it effects student learning and the world has changed, further more, how do we assess the product three to four years in the future? He mentioned that the role of UASC in assessing the environment is to determine what affects learning and how do we disseminate that information?

Provost Greene then asked, when was the last time that assessment was on the Faculty Senate agenda? Evans mentioned that the UASC chair submits an UASC Annual Report to Faculty Senate in April and in three years no one has asked about assessment. The Provost stated that the University needs to spend more time on communicating and encouraging assessment – he suggested that UASC communicate the assessment message to every avenue available by presenting assessment awards and recognizing individuals. Evans mentioned that currently UASC has the Assessment Excellence Award program and that Tarbox and DiPierro are working on an assessment award for graduate students. Knutson raised the issue that if we truly want to cultivate a culture of assessment on campus that we need not only money, but also a balance of time to conduct assessment activities. Tarbox added that faculty on campus view assessment as a separate activity – it would be better if the University integrated assessment into everything and communicate how assessment is valued – this should be part of the educational process. The Provost commented that assessment fell when we stopped treating faculty as educators. He then asked the question, do we have a seminar in assessment for part-time faculty and doctoral students? Tarbox continued that the University needs to embrace change and assessment is change. Faculty fear change because they don't want academic freedom transferred to the University – even though it may be for betterment of the institution. Provost Greene said that he encourages the University community to try new things – the vision is your vision of how things should change. He mentioned that he will try to get WMU Deans more engaged in assessment. Provost Greene excused himself at 3:00 p.m.

## Graduate Research on Assessment Program

Tarbox reported that she and DiPierro are currently in the process of gathering data and asking how students are involved in assessment on campus. There has been good interest and support for this program thus far. Tarbox and DiPierro will have a proposal for the committee in April.

## Naming of Reviewers for the 2009-10 Faculty Assessment Grant Program

2009-10 Faculty Assessment Grant applications are due to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by April 15, 2009. The following UASC members will be application reviewers: Benton (Aviation), Cummings (Education), Darrah (DOSA), Evans (Institutional Effectiveness), and Razi (Business).

## 2009 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Workshop

DiPierro provided an update on the planning of the 2009 SoTL Workshop and passed around workshop posters for UASC to view. The workshop will be held Friday, May 29, 2009 in the College of Health and Human Services. This year, forty people will be invited, including WMU faculty, staff, administrators, and doctorate students. There will be three breakout sessions that will be repeated twice and the keynote speaker is Kathleen McKinney, Illinois State University.

## AAC&U conference on General Education Assessment

Reinhold attend the AAC&U General Education, Assessment, and the Learning Students Need conference February 26 – 28, 2009 in Baltimore. He reported on the presentations he attended and provided a brief explanation of each. Presentations Reinhold attended follow:

1. Sustaining Assessment Efforts Across the Curriculum
2. The Role of Assessment in Furthering Student Engagement, Inclusion, and Achievement
3. Assessing Instructional and Curricular Practices in General Education
4. Faculty Learning Communities: Developing Faculty Buy-In and Generating Useful Assessment Strategies at the Same Time
5. Building a Campus culture to Assess 300 General Education Courses
6. Challenges in Utilizing Standardized Instruments for Improving General Education
7. PGA vs. GPA: Evaluating General Education Curriculum and Measuring Student Learning Using Alternative Assessment Tools (PGA = Personal Growth Assessment)
8. General Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: From Conception to Implementation

Some ideas and suggestions that Reinhold brought back from the conference include:

- WMU develop an assessment handbook to give to all departments
  - Use University Libraries to increase “information literacy”
  - Develop a faculty fellowship program in General Education Assessment
  - Create a rubric so that faculty are more willing to do assessment
  - Create Faculty Learning Communities to develop assessment tools
  - Put learning outcomes on syllabus – General Education classes
  - Increase communication with faculty and keep faculty involved: open forums, etc....
  - Have a workshop/orientation on assessment for General Education faculty
  - Assess how students have achieved objectives and increase student awareness of outcomes/syllabus
  - Conduct Program and General Education assessment at the same time
- Reinhold stressed the need to get faculty involved in assessment and to let them develop ownership of assessment. However, how does UASC go about this and where do we go from here? To increase information literacy it was suggested that Diana Sachs of University Libraries attend an UASC meeting. It was also suggested that UASC may want to meet with COGE – Committee to Oversee General Education and get a member from that committee on UASC. This motion was passed (Knutson/ ? ).

Evans reported that the Assessment in Action Committee has taken on Phase II in the reconstruction of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness web site – headed by Kathy Cummings. Lagerquist completed Phase I. The charge of the Assessment in Action Committee is to provide an extensive and user friendly web site on assessment. Reconstruction of the assessment web site will be based on the review that Bunzda completed.

Benton reported the following:

1. Benton reported on the ad hoc committee for graduate information and alumni tracking. Alumni surveys are used as an assessment tool by many departments so an effective collection method and an accurate data base would be useful. The committee will have a recommendation report completed in April.
2. Benton presented a draft of the 2009 UASC Annual Report. He asked that the committee review the report and provide comments within a couple of days before the report goes to Faculty Senate.
3. Benton asked for volunteers to form a RACT to review Lee Honors College Assessment Plan. The following members will serve on the RACT: Reinhold,

Benton, and Kritzman. Benton will send copies of the assessment plan to RACT members.

Evans asked the committee next to focus on the next steps for UASC. The following list was compiled as potential UASC conversations for the next five years:

1. Invite John Jellies of Faculty Senate to an UASC meeting for informational purposes only. UASC will ask the question, how can Faculty Senate help UASC bring assessment to the forefront?
2. Define and give examples of assessment
3. Academic Department Accountability – assessment of outcomes
4. Assessment of General Education

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.