

Department and Program Assessment:
A Survey of WMU Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Prepared for the University Assessment Steering Committee
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Executive Summary

Department and Program Assessment: A Survey of WMU Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) administered a survey in the 2007-08 academic year to ascertain assessment perceptions, impact, practices, and concerns. A 38 item survey was distributed electronically via the Internet. A total of 566 surveys were completed by 287 faculty, 231 staff and 47 administrators. Data were analyzed by the total number of responses, by position (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators), and by faculty years of service.

Awareness and Familiarity

About two-thirds of faculty and administrators and 42 percent of staff have “high” familiarity with department/program assessment activities. However, 27 percent of staff report “no to low” awareness. Sixty-nine percent or more of faculty at WMU six or more years have a “high” awareness of department/program assessment activities compared to 47 percent of the one to five year group. New faculty orientation should include information on department/program assessment activities.

Administrators have the greatest awareness about the methodology used for their departmental or program assessment plan. More than half of staff reported “no or low” awareness. One-fourth or more of faculty in each year of service group have “no to low” awareness of the methodology employed.

Almost half of all respondents report “no to low” familiarity with assessment impact reports. About half of administrators report “high” familiarity compared to one-third of faculty. This suggests that impact reports might be mostly an administrative function with relatively low faculty involvement. Since the impact report is intended to serve as an input in developing curricula and programs that enhances student learning, it is recommended that methods be explored that would increase faculty familiarity and ownership of impact reports.

Only 10 percent of all respondents reported “high” familiarity with the mission of the University Assessment Steering Committee. Seventy-four percent of staff and 62 percent of faculty reported “no to low” familiarity. More than half (58%) of all respondents have “no to

low” knowledge about the assessment expectations of the North Central Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Administrators have the highest level of familiarity (37%) followed by faculty at 17 percent.

TracDat has the “lowest” familiarity (79%) followed by COGNOS (58%) and iWebFolio (43%). COGNOS has the “highest” percentage of familiarity at 22 percent followed by iWebFolio at 17 percent. One of the primary reasons for acquiring iWebFolio and TracDat was to assist and enhance assessment at Western. The UASC should consider ways to increase familiarity and utilization of these assessment tools.

Fifty-five percent of administrators and 54 percent of faculty knew about WMU sponsored assessment discussions and forum. Only 29 percent of staff knew about these events with newest faculty least knowledgeable about these assessment offerings. Those who answered “no” were asked if they would have attended these discussions or forums if they knew about them. Almost two-thirds responded “no” including 70 percent of staff and 59 percent of faculty. Seventy percent of faculty at WMU 11 or more years responded “no” and more than half (53%) of the newest faculty group.

Fifty-one percent of administrators and 49 percent of faculty have heard about WMU sponsored assessment guest speakers. Only 28 percent of staff knew about these events. Newest faculty were least knowledgeable about these guest speakers. Those who answered “no” were asked if they would have attended these guest speaker forums if they knew about them. At least two-thirds of faculty, staff, and administrators responded “no.” Seventy-nine percent of faculty at WMU 11 or more years and 73 percent of those in the 6 to 10 year group would not have attended these guest speaker events. However, more than half of the newest faculty would have participated in these events.

Importance and Impact

More than three-fourths of all respondents gave a “high” rating for the importance of assessing student learning outcomes. This included 87 percent of staff, 72 percent of faculty, and 69 percent of administrators. More than 90 percent gave a rating of “moderate” or “high” importance. This is a very positive finding and validates the university wide assessment efforts that have been intensified since 2002. The newest faculty gave the highest percentage of “high” importance responses at 85 percent.

Three-fourths rated the benefits to the curriculum from their assessment plans as “moderate” to “high” with 40 percent rating benefits as “high.” This is a very positive finding. The newest faculty gave the greatest percentage of “high” responses.

Forty percent of all respondents have a “high” awareness of the results of their assessment plan. One-third have “no to low” awareness of these results. This includes more than half of the staff and about a quarter of the faculty and administrators. Methods for disseminating results should be examined. Faculty at Western the longest have the highest percentage of “high” responses followed by those in the 6 to 10 year group.

Responses are evenly divided across the continuum as to if department/assessment plans are an administrative directive that fulfills requirements not related to faculty day-to-day concerns. A higher rating indicates a greater belief that this statement is true. Faculty have the greatest percentage of “high” responses at 40 percent followed by administrators at 36 percent. This is an interesting finding considering previous items that highly rated the importance of assessing student learning outcomes, and benefits to the curriculum, departments, and programs. Faculty in the “11 or more years” group have the highest degree of agreement with this statement.

Ninety-two percent believe that assessment impact reports have “moderate” to “high” accuracy with more than half (52%) rating accuracy as “high.” Faculty have the highest percentage of “high” responses at 58% followed by administrators at 48 percent. More than half of faculty in each year of service group rated accuracy as “high.”

The usefulness of impact reports has lower overall ratings than accuracy. About one-third rate them “highly” useful and another 47 percent “moderately” useful. Staff have the greatest percentage of “high” responses at 44 percent, followed by faculty at 34 percent. Only 26 percent of administrators rated usefulness as “high” which merits further inquiry. There were significant differences in years of service with 55 percent of the newest faculty giving “highly” useful ratings compared to 30 percent for those in the 11 or more group and only 24 percent for the 6 to 10 years group. This variance across groups warrants further study.

Convenience and ease-of-use of the assessment impact reporting process had lower ratings than the other impact report items. One-third gave a “high” rating and 22 percent a “none to low” rating. More than one-fourth of faculty and administrators gave a “none to low” rating. The impact reporting process should be examined to determine how it can be simplified.

Involvement and Support

Forty-nine percent have a “high” commitment to their program’s assessment activity and 28 percent are “moderately” committed. The greatest percentage of “high” responses were from administrators (62%) followed by faculty and staff at 49 percent. One-quarter of staff and one-fifth of faculty have “no to low” commitment. Twenty-four percent indicated a “high” time investment in their assessment plan, 40 percent a “moderate” investment and 36 percent “no to low” time investment. Staff have the highest percentage of “no to low” time investment at 44 percent compared to 31 percent for faculty and administrators.

Forty percent indicated “no to low” requests to contribute to their department or program assessment plan methodology. Thirty-six percent indicated a “high” level of request. Almost two-thirds of staff have “no to low” while 52 percent of administrators and 50 percent of faculty have “high” requests. The longer faculty were at Western, the higher the percentage of requests to contribute to the plan’s methodology.

Seventy-five percent of all respondents believe that faculty are “moderately” to “highly” involved in assessment. Staff and administrators have about twice the percentage of “none to low” responses than faculty. This discrepancy in perception merits study. There is considerably less belief that staff are involved in assessment. Almost half (46%) indicated “no to low” involvement while 21 percent rated staff involvement as “high.” Percentages of “high” responses by staff and administrators are more than twice those of faculty. These differences in perception warrant further inquiry.

The majority of respondents (41%) indicated “no to low” support from their Dean in the implementation of their assessment plan. About one-fourth indicated “high” support and one-third “moderate” support. Faculty have the highest percentage of “none to low” responses (45%) followed by staff (40%). Half of faculty at WMU 6 or more years responded “none to low” compared to 30 percent of the 1 to 5 years group. The perceived or actual lack of support by Deans warrants attention.

More than one third (36%) report a “high” amount of discussion between chairpersons and departments or programs about assessment efforts. One quarter stated that communication is “high” among colleagues while only 17 percent rated communication between Deans and departments/programs as “high.” “No to low” communication was rated at 55 percent for Deans, 42 percent for colleagues, and 37 percent for chairpersons. These findings indicate that there is

considerable room for improvement in communication between stakeholders at all levels about assessment efforts.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents did not attend any assessment seminars or training at WMU. Almost one-third (31%) attended these events. Administrators had the highest rate of attendance at 55 percent compared to 37 percent of faculty and 19 percent of staff. Attendance at assessment events was much higher by faculty at WMU six or more years than newer faculty.

Fifty-four percent do not want a University assessment office with a director and staff. This sentiment is highest among faculty at 64 percent followed by administrators at 59 percent. However 61 percent of staff would like to see such an office established. Having a dedicated assessment staff person in the College's Dean's office is viewed much more positively than a University assessment office. Fifty-eight percent responded "yes." The majority in all groups support the creation of this position.

Almost two-thirds (63%) responded positively to faculty receiving course release time to facilitate assessment activities. Seventy-three percent of faculty and 61 percent of administrators responded with a "yes" while staff were evenly split on this question.

Respondents were asked to "list two or more resources or activities, in order of priority, that they would like to see made available to the faculty to inform, educate, or promote the culture of assessment at WMU." A total of 596 comments were made. A content analysis was performed that yielded a plethora of ideas that were presented in eight categories: discussions, training and education, resources and incentives, methodology and practices, assessment impact and processes, accreditation, curriculum, and communication and information.

Highlights and Recommendations

Among the most positive findings are:

- More than three-fourths of all respondents gave a "high" rating for the importance of assessing student learning outcomes.
- Most faculty, staff, and administrators believe that assessment plans have benefited their curriculum and their department or program.
- Forty-nine percent have a "high" commitment to their program's assessment activity and 28 percent are "moderately" committed
- Ninety-two percent believe that impact reports have "moderate" to "high" accuracy.

- Almost one-third (31%) attended assessment seminars or training at WMU.
- Having a dedicated assessment staff person in the College's Dean's office is viewed much more positively than a University assessment office. Fifty-eight percent responded "yes."
- Almost two-thirds (63%) responded positively to faculty receiving course release time to facilitate assessment activities.

Recommendations based on findings from this report include:

- New faculty orientation includes information on department/program assessment activities.
- Explore methods that would increase faculty familiarity and ownership of impact reports.
- Consider ways to increase familiarity and utilization of iWebFolio and TracDat.
- Examine methods for disseminating results of department/program assessment.
- Determine why newer faculty rate the usefulness of impact reports much higher than faculty at WMU 6 or more years.
- The impact report process should be examined to determine how it can be simplified.
- Explore difference in perception regarding the involvement of faculty and staff in assessment.
- Investigate the perceived or actual lack of support for assessment activities by Deans.
- "No to low" communication about assessment efforts was rated at 55 percent for Deans, 42 percent for colleagues, and 37 percent for chairpersons. This indicates that there is considerable room for improvement in communication between stakeholders about assessment efforts.

**Department and Program Assessment:
A Survey of WMU Faculty, Staff, and Administrators**

Western launched its most comprehensive and systematic effort for assessing student learning outcomes with the establishment of the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) in November, 2001. A formal assessment plan was implemented by the UASC in 2002 which has been continually revised and strengthened. Assessment at Western is guided by the accreditation criteria established by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Most germane to assessment is HLC’s Criterion 3a which states “The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.”

The UASC administered a survey in the 2007-08 academic year to ascertain assessment perceptions, impact, practices, and concerns of faculty, staff, and administrators. These data allow the UASC to gauge Western’s compliance with Criterion 3a and initiate changes as necessary in preparation for the next North Central reaccreditation in 2010.

A 38 item survey was developed that contained 3 demographic questions, 34 fixed response questions and one open-ended question. The survey was distributed electronically via the Internet. Data were tabulated in Excel and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. A total of 566 surveys were completed. Tables in this report present frequencies first followed by percentages in parentheses.

Demographics

Table 1 has the affiliation of respondents. The largest affiliation was in Arts and Sciences followed by Education. Twenty-two percent were not affiliated with the ten academic units and departments or choose to not identify themselves by unit.

Table 1: Affiliation

What is your affiliation? (N=564)	Arts and Science	78 (14)
	Aviation	14 (3)
	Business	31 (6)
	Education	61 (11)
	Engineering	39 (7)
	Health/Human Services	22 (4)
	Fine Arts	41 (7)
	Honors College	2 (<1)
	Graduate College	6 (1)
	Student Affairs	47 (8)
	Other	123 (22)

Table 2 is the respondent's position at WMU. The largest group was faculty followed by staff and administrators.

Table 2: Position

What is your position? (N=565)	Faculty	287 (51)
	Staff	231 (41)
	Administration	47 (8)

Table 3 contains years of employment at Western. The largest number has been at WMU for 16 or more years followed by 1 to 5 years. Table 4 has years employed by position with percentages read down rather than across. The largest percentage of staff respondents have been at WMU 1 to 5. The largest percentages of both administrators and faculty have been at Western 16 or more years.

Table 3: Years Employed at WMU

How long have you been employed at WMU? (N=565)	1 to 5 years	159 (28)
	6 to 10 years	140 (25)
	11 to 15 years	98 (17)
	16 or more years	168 (30)

Table 4: Years Employed by Position

Years	Faculty	Staff	Administration
1 to 5 years	75 (26)	73 (32)	11 (23)
6 to 10 years	73 (25)	54 (23)	13 (28)
11 to 15 years	53 (19)	38 (17)	7 (15)
16 or more years	86 (30)	66 (29)	16 (34)

The remaining items are grouped into three categories: awareness and familiarity, importance and impact, and involvement and support. The discussion of findings is first followed by the table containing the data. Tables contain data for the entire sample, for each position, and for faculty stratified by years of service at Western. All percentages are read across rather than down. The six point scale used on the survey was recoded to three values, "none to low," "moderate," and "high."

Awareness and Familiarity

This section contains 13 items that assess awareness and familiarity with assessment plans, procedures, programs, tools, and activities.

About two-thirds of faculty and administrators have “high” familiarity with department/program assessment activities compared to 42 percent of staff. A very low percentage of faculty and administrators report “none to low” awareness compared to 27 percent of staff.

Sixty-nine percent or more of faculty at WMU six or more years have a high awareness of department/program assessment activities compared to 47 percent of the one to five year group. New faculty orientation should include information on department/program assessment activities.

Table 5: Familiarity with Department Program Assessment Activities

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate your familiarity with your department/program assessment activities? (N=566)	89 (16)	164 (29)	310 (55)
Faculty	23 (8)	80 (28)	182 (64)
Staff	62 (27)	73 (32)	96 (42)
Administration	4 (9)	11 (24)	31 (67)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	10 (13)	30 (40)	35 (47)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	4 (6)	16 (22)	52 (72)
Faculty - 11 or more years	9 (7)	34 (25)	95 (69)

Administrators have the “highest” awareness of assessment methodology followed by faculty. More than half of the staff reported “no or low” awareness. There is a positive relationship between faculty length of service and awareness with those at WMU the longest having the greatest awareness of assessment methodology. One-fourth or more of faculty in each year of service group have “no to low” awareness.

Table 6: Aware of Department/Program Assessment Methodology

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what degree have you been made aware of your department/program assessment methodology? (N=560)	173 (31)	147 (27)	240 (42)
Faculty	45 (16)	77 (27)	162 (57)
Staff	119 (52)	65 (28)	45 (20)
Administration	9 (20)	5 (11)	32 (70)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	24 (33)	17 (23)	32 (44)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	14 (19)	20 (27)	39 (53)
Faculty - 11 or more years	28 (20)	32 (23)	78 (57)

Almost half report “no to low” familiarity with assessment impact reports. Only one-fourth have “high” familiarity. About half of administrators report “high” familiarity compared to one-third of faculty. This suggests that the impact report might be mostly an administrative function with relatively low faculty involvement. Since the impact report is intended to serve as an input in developing curricula and programs that enhances student learning, it is recommended that methods be explored for increasing faculty familiarity with impact reports.

There is a negative relationship between years at WMU and “no to low” awareness. Almost half of faculty in the 1 to 5 year group reported “no to low” familiarity compared to 40 percent for the 6 to 10 year group and 37 percent for those at Western the longest. The 6 to 10 year group had the “highest” familiarity.

Table 7: Familiarity with Department/Program Assessment Impact Report

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate your familiarity with your department/program assessment impact report? (N=566)	271 (48)	151 (27)	144 (25)
Faculty	118 (41)	75 (26)	94 (33)
Staff	136 (59)	67 (29)	28 (12)
Administration	17 (36)	8 (17)	22 (47)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	37 (49)	17 (23)	21 (28)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	29 (40)	16 (22)	28 (38)
Faculty - 11 or more years	52 (37)	42 (30)	45 (32)

Only 10 percent of all respondents reported “high” familiarity with the mission of the University Assessment Steering Committee. Seventy-four percent of staff and 62 percent of faculty reported “no to low” familiarity. Administrators have the “highest” level of familiarity with the UASC’s mission. The majority of faculty in all three years of service groups have “no to low” awareness of the mission. The newest faculty have the highest percentage of “low” familiarity followed by those at Western the longest. The 6 to 10 year group has the “highest” familiarity with the UASC’s mission. This is an interesting finding in that the UASC has been in existence for six years.

Table 8: Familiarity with the Mission of the University Assessment Steering Committee

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
What is your familiarity with the mission of the UASC? (N=558)	363 (65)	135 (25)	60 (10)
Faculty	174 (62)	71 (25)	37 (13)
Staff	170 (74)	48 (21)	11 (5)
Administration	19 (41)	15 (33)	12 (26)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	43 (58)	19 (26)	12 (16)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	32 (44)	22 (30)	19 (26)
Faculty - 11 or more years	67 (49)	46 (33)	25 (18)

IWebFolio implemented in 2004 is an electronic portfolio management system for organizing and archiving a plethora of materials such as text documents, graphics, and sound and video clips. TracDat was also installed in 2004. It is a comprehensive assessment tool for managing the assessment process. COGNOS employed in 2005 is a web-based mechanism for analyzing data and constructing reports. The Committee to Oversee General Education (COGE) established in 1993 is a standing committee of the Undergraduate Studies Council. Among its charge is to evaluate the success of the general education curriculum in meeting its goals.

“No to low” familiarity is 79 percent for TracDat, 68 percent for COGE, 58 percent for COGNOS, and 43 percent for iWebFolio. COGNOS has the “highest” percentage of familiarity at 22 percent followed by iWebFolio at 17 percent. Of particular concern is the “low” familiarity with iWebFolio and TracDat as these were purchased with the goal of assisting and enhancing assessment at Western. It is recommended that the UASC consider ways to increase familiarity and utilization of these assessment tools.

Table 9: Familiarity with iWebFolio, TracDat, COGNOS, and COGE

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
iWebFolio (N=558)	331 (43)	131 (24)	96 (17)
TracDat (N=556)	442 (79)	73 (13)	41 (7)
COGNOS (N=561)	333 (58)	112 (20)	116 (22)
COGE (N=558)	383 (68)	92 (17)	83 (15)

Administrators have the “highest” familiarity with iWebFolio, TracDat, COGNOS, and COGE. Sixty-five percent of administrators, 51 percent of staff, and 28 percent of faculty have “moderate” to “high” familiarity with COGNOS.

Fifty-one percent of faculty and 57 percent of administrators have a “moderate” to “high” familiarity with iWebFolio. Less than one-fourth of faculty have a “moderate” to “high” familiarity with TracDat compared to 39 percent of administrators. Fifty-two percent of administrators, 36 percent of faculty and 22 percent of staff have “moderate” to “high” familiarity with COGE.

Table 10: Familiarity with iWebFolio, TracDat, COGNOS, and COGE by Position

		0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
iWebFolio	Faculty	142 (50)	87 (31)	56 (20)
	Staff	169 (75)	29 (13)	28 (12)
	Administrators	20 (44)	15 (33)	11 (24)
TracDat	Faculty	220 (78)	44 (16)	20 (7)
	Staff	194 (86)	19 (8)	12 (5)
	Administrators	28 (61)	10 (22)	8 (17)
COGNOS	Faculty	206 (72)	49 (17)	30 (11)
	Staff	111 (49)	49 (21)	69 (30)
	Administrators	16 (35)	13 (28)	17 (37)
COGE	Faculty	183 (64)	51 (18)	50 (18)
	Staff	179 (78)	29 (13)	21 (9)
	Administrators	21 (48)	11 (25)	12 (27)

Faculty in the 6 to 10 year group have the highest familiarity with iWebFolio, TracDat, and COGNOS. This is interesting in that iWebFolio and TracDat were available in Fall 2004, COGNOS started in the Spring of 2005.

Table 11: Faculty Familiarity with iWebFolio, TracDat, COGNOS, and COGE by Years at WMU

		0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
iWebFolio	1-5 years	43 (58)	19 (26)	12 (16)
	6-10 years	32 (44)	22 (30)	19 (26)
	11 or more years	67 (49)	46 (33)	25 (18)
TracDat	1-5 years	60 (81)	12 (16)	2 (3)
	6-10 years	50 (69)	12 (17)	10 (14)
	11 or more years	110 (78)	20 (15)	8 (6)
COGNOS	1-5 years	60 (80)	12 (16)	3 (4)
	6-10 years	48 (67)	13 (18)	11 (15)
	11 or more years	98 (71)	24 (17)	16 (12)
COGE	1-5 years	62 (83)	9 (12)	4 (5)
	6-10 years	47 (65)	16 (22)	9 (13)
	11 or more years	74 (54)	26 (19)	37 (27)

More than half (58%) of all respondents are not familiar with the assessment expectations of the North Central Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Only 15 percent reported “high” familiarity. Administrators have the “highest” familiarity (37%) followed by faculty at 17 percent. Seventy-two percent of staff report “no to low” familiarity. Faculty at WMU six of more years have the “highest” familiarity with these assessment expectations. Seventy-six percent of the newest faculty have “no to low” familiarity with the HLC assessment expectations.

Table 12: Familiarity with Assessment Expectations of the North Central Higher Learning Commission

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
What is your familiarity with assessment expectations required by the North Central Higher Learning Commission? (N=561)	328 (58)	149 (27)	84 (15)
Faculty	145 (51)	91 (32)	49 (17)
Staff	165 (72)	47 (21)	17 (7)
Administration	18 (39)	11 (24)	17 (37)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	56 (76)	13 (18)	5 (7)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	30 (41)	26 (36)	17 (23)
Faculty - 11 or more years	59 (43)	52 (38)	27 (20)

Forty-four percent of all respondents had knowledge about WMU sponsored assessment discussions and forum. This includes 55 percent of administrators and 54 percent of faculty. Only 29 percent of staff knew about these events. Newest faculty are least knowledgeable about these assessment offerings.

Those who answered “no” to this item were asked if they would have attended these discussions and/or forums if they knew about them. Responses are in Table 14 below. Almost two-thirds responded “no” including 70 percent of staff and 59 percent of faculty. Seventy percent of faculty at WMU 11 or more years responded “no” and more than half (53%) of the newest faculty group.

Table 13: Heard About Assessment Discussions and Forums

	Yes	No
Have you heard about any of the round table discussions and forums about assessment that have occurred at WMU? (N=566)	249 (44)	317 (56)
Faculty	156 (54)	131 (46)
Staff	66 (29)	165 (71)
Administration	26 (55)	21 (45)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	31 (41)	44 (59)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	44 (60)	29 (40)
Faculty - 11 or more years	81 (58)	58 (42)

Table 14: Would Have Attended Assessment Discussions and Forums

	Yes	No
Would you have attended discussions and forums if you knew about them? (N=311)	112 (36)	199 (64)
Faculty	53 (41)	76 (59)
Staff	49 (30)	112 (70)
Administration	10 (48)	11 (52)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	20 (47)	23 (53)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	16 (55)	13 (45)
Faculty - 11 or more years	17 (30)	40 (70)

Forty-one percent of all respondents have heard about WMU sponsored assessment guest speakers. This includes 51 percent of administrators and 49 percent of faculty. Only 28 percent of staff knew about these events. Newest faculty are least knowledgeable about assessment guest speakers.

Those who answered “no” to this item were asked if they would have attended these guest speaker forums if they knew about them. Responses are in Table 16 below. At least two-thirds of faculty, staff, and administrators responded “no.” Seventy-nine percent of faculty at WMU 11 or more years and 73 percent of those in the 6 to 10 year group would not have attended these guest speaker events. However, more than half of the newest faculty would have participated in these events.

Table 15: Heard About Assessment Guest Speakers

	Yes	No
Have you heard about the guest speakers that have come to WMU to talk about assessment? (N=566)	230 (41)	336 (59)
Faculty	140 (49)	147 (51)
Staff	65 (28)	166 (72)
Administration	24 (51)	23 (49)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	28 (37)	47 (63)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	41 (56)	32 (44)
Faculty - 11 or more years	71 (51)	68 (49)

Table 16: Would Have Attended Guest Speaker Events

	Yes	No
Would you have attended guest speaker events if you knew about them? (N=332)	110 (33)	222 (67)
Faculty	46 (32)	97 (68)
Staff	57 (34)	109 (66)
Administration	7 (30)	16 (70)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	24 (52)	22 (48)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	8 (27)	22 (73)
Faculty - 11 or more years	14 (21)	53 (79)

Importance and Impact

This section contains eight items on the importance and benefits of assessment, knowledge about assessments results, and the utility and accuracy of impact reports.

More than three-fourths of all respondents gave a “high” rating for the importance of assessing student learning outcomes. This included 87 percent of staff, 72 percent of faculty and 69 percent of administrators. More than 90 percent in all three groups gave a rating of “moderate” or “high” importance. This is a very positive finding that reflects positively on the university-wide assessment efforts that have been intensified since 2002. The newest faculty gave the highest percentage of “high” importance responses at 85 percent. However, around two-thirds of faculty at WMU six years or longer rated assessing student learning outcomes as “highly” important.

Table 17: Importance of Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate the importance of assessing student learning outcomes? (N=560)	42 (7)	84 (15)	434 (77)
Faculty	26 (9)	55 (19)	204 (72)
Staff	12 (5)	19 (8)	198 (87)
Administration	4 (9)	10 (22)	31 (69)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	4 (5)	7 (9)	64 (85)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	7 (10)	19 (26)	46 (64)
Faculty - 11 or more years	15 (11)	29 (21)	94 (68)

Three-fourths rated the benefits to the curriculum from their assessment plans as “moderate” to “high” including 40 percent who rated these benefits as “high.” This is a very positive finding. Forty-seven percent of administrators, 44 percent of staff, and 37 percent of faculty rated the benefits as “high.” The newest faculty gave the greatest percentage of “high” ratings followed by those at WMU 11 or more years. As can be seen in table 19 below, benefits to the department or program are rated similar to the curriculum item. These data demonstrate that most faculty, staff, and administrators believe that assessment plans have benefited their curriculum and their department or program.

Table 18: Benefits to the Curriculum from Assessment Plans

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate the benefits to your curriculum as a result of your assessment plan? (N=552)	143 (26)	184 (34)	225 (40)
Faculty	78 (27)	101 (35)	106 (37)
Staff	55 (25)	70 (31)	98 (44)
Administration	10 (23)	13 (30)	20 (47)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	10 (14)	31 (42)	33 (45)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	28 (39)	23 (32)	21 (29)
Faculty - 11 or more years	40 (29)	47 (34)	5 (37)

Table 19: Benefits to Department/Program from Assessment Plans

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate the benefits to your department/program as a result of your assessment plan? (N=556)	137 (24)	144 (34)	231 (42)
Faculty	81 (29)	93 (33)	110 (39)
Staff	46 (20)	79 (35)	100 (44)
Administration	10 (22)	16 (35)	20 (44)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	11 (15)	24 (32)	39 (53)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	30 (42)	20 (28)	22 (31)
Faculty - 11 or more years	40 (29)	49 (36)	49 (36)

Forty percent of all respondents have a “high” awareness of the results of their assessment plan. One-third have “no to low” awareness of these results. This includes more than half of the staff and about a quarter of the faculty and administrators. Methods for disseminating results should be examined. Faculty at Western the longest have the highest percentage of “high” responses followed by those in the 6 to 10 year group.

Table 20: Made Aware of Results of Department/Program’s Assessment Plan Effort

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what degree have you been made aware of the results of your department/program’s assessment plan effort? (N=560)	200 (36)	137 (24)	223 (40)
Faculty	66 (23)	69 (24)	149 (53)
Staff	123 (54)	60 (26)	46 (20)
Administration	11 (24)	8 (17)	27 (59)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	24 (33)	17 (23)	32 (44)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	14 (19)	20 (27)	39 (53)
Faculty - 11 or more years	28 (20)	32 (23)	78 (57)

Responses are evenly divided across the continuum as to if department/assessment plans are an administrative directive that fulfills requirements not related to faculty day-to-day concerns. For this item, a higher rating indicates a greater belief that this statement is true. Faculty have the greatest percentage of “high” responses at 40 percent followed by administrators at 36 percent. This is an interesting finding considering previous items that highly rated the importance of assessing student learning outcomes and the benefits to the curriculum, departments, and programs. Faculty in the “11 or more years” group have the “highest” degree of agreement with this statement.

Table 21: Administrative Directive

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what degree do you believe that your department/program assessment plan is an administrative directive that fulfills some requirement not related to day-to-day faculty concerns? (N=546)	171 (32)	197 (35)	178 (33)
Faculty	74 (26)	95 (34)	113 (40)
Staff	81 (37)	90 (41)	48 (22)
Administration	16 (36)	12 (27)	16 (36)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	24 (33)	28 (38)	21 (29)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	19 (27)	20 (28)	32 (45)
Faculty - 11 or more years	31 (23)	47 (34)	60 (44)

Tables 22 through 24 contain data on assessment impact reports. Ninety-two percent believe these reports have “moderate” to “high” accuracy with more than half (52%) rating accuracy as “high.” Faculty have the highest percentage of “high” responses (58%) followed by administrators (48%). More than half of faculty in each year of service group rated accuracy as “high.”

The usefulness of impact reports has lower overall ratings than accuracy. About one-third rate them “highly” useful and another 47 percent “moderately” useful. Staff have the highest percentage of “high” responses at 44 percent, followed by faculty at 34 percent. Only 26 percent of administrators rated usefulness as “high” which merits further exploration. There were significant differences in years of service with 55 percent of the newest faculty giving “highly” useful ratings compared to 30 percent for those in the 11 or more group and only 24 percent for the 6 to 10 years group. This variance across groups warrants further study.

Convenience and ease-of-use of the assessment impact reporting process had the lowest overall ratings in this three item cluster. One-third of all respondent give a “high” rating and 22 percent a “none to low” rating. Staff had the greatest percentage of “high” responses with 37 percent followed by administrators at 30 percent and faculty at 29 percent. More than one-fourth of faculty and administrators gave a “none to low” rating. The impact reporting process should be examined to determine if aspects can be simplified.

Table 22: Accuracy of Impact Report Contents

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate the accuracy of the impact report contents? (N=232)	18 (8)	93 (40)	121 (52)
Faculty	11 (8)	48 (34)	82 (58)
Staff	5 (8)	33 (52)	25 (40)
Administration	2 (7)	12 (44)	13 (48)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	1 (3)	11 (36)	19 (61)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	5 (13)	9 (24)	24 (63)
Faculty - 11 or more years	5 (7)	28 (39)	39 (54)

Table 23: Usefulness of Impact Report Contents

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate the usefulness of the impact report contents? (N=233)	39 (17)	110 (47)	84 (36)
Faculty	30 (21)	64 (45)	48 (34)
Staff	4 (6)	31 (49)	28 (44)
Administration	5 (19)	15 (56)	7 (26)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	6 (19)	8 (26)	17 (55)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	8 (21)	21 (55)	9 (24)
Faculty - 11 or more years	16 (22)	35 (48)	22 (30)

Table 24: Convenience and Ease-Of-Use of Assessment Impact Reporting Process

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How do you rate the convenience/ease-of-use of the assessment impact reporting process? (N=232)	52 (22)	107 (46)	73 (32)
	40 (28)	60 (43)	41 (29)
Faculty	5 (8)	35 (56)	23 (37)
Staff	7 (26)	12 (44)	8 (30)
Administration			
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	6 (19)	13 (42)	12 (39)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	12 (32)	16 (42)	10 (26)
Faculty - 11 or more years	22 (31)	31 (43)	19 (26)

Involvement and Support

This section contains 13 items that gauge commitment and efforts, support and discussion among stakeholders, participation at assessment events, and institutionalizing assessment facilitation.

Forty-nine percent have a “high” commitment to their program’s assessment activity and 28 percent are “moderately” committed. The greatest percentage of “high” responses were from administrators (62%) followed by faculty and staff at 49 percent. One-quarter of staff and one-fifth of faculty have “no to low” commitment. Newest faculty have the highest percentage of “high” responses at 54% compared to 47 percent by faculty at Western six or more years.

Table 25: Commitment to Your Program’s Assessment Activity

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
What is your commitment to your program’s assessment activities? (N=556)	122 (22)	157 (28)	277 (49)
Faculty	56 (20)	89 (31)	138 (49)
Staff	60 (26)	57 (25)	110 (49)
Administration	6 (13)	11 (24)	28 (62)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	12 (16)	22 (30)	40 (54)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	17 (24)	21 (30)	33 (47)
Faculty - 11 or more years	27 (20)	46 (33)	65 (47)

Forty percent have a “moderate” time investment in their assessment plan and 36 percent indicated “no to low” time investment. However, 24 percent have a “high” investment in their plan. Staff have the highest percentage of “no to low” time investment at 44 percent compared to 31 percent for faculty and administrators. Faculty with 6 to 10 years or service have the greatest percentage of “high” responses.

Table 26: Workload Time Investment in Department/Program Assessment Plan

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
What is your workload time investment in your department/program assessment in a typical academic year? (N=560)	202 (36)	224 (40)	134 (24)
Faculty	87 (31)	131 (46)	67 (24)
Staff	101 (44)	75 (33)	53 (23)
Administration	14 (31)	18 (40)	13 (29)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	25 (33)	34 (45)	16 (21)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	20 (27)	33 (45)	20 (27)
Faculty - 11 or more years	42 (31)	64 (47)	31 (23)

Forty percent indicate “no to low” requests to contribute to their department or program assessment plan methodology. Thirty-six percent indicated a “high” level of request. Almost two-thirds of staff have “no to low” requests to contribute. Fifty-two percent of administrators

and 50 percent of faculty have “high” requests. The longer faculty were at Western, the higher the percentage of requests to contribute to the plan’s methodology.

Table 27: Contribute to Department/Program Assessment Plan Methodology

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what extent have you been asked to contribute to your department/program assessment plan methodology? (N=559)	221 (40)	136 (24)	202 (36)
Faculty	65 (23)	76 (27)	143 (50)
Staff	146 (64)	48 (21)	34 (15)
Administration	10 (22)	12 (26)	24 (52)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	27 (37)	19 (26)	28 (38)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	15 (21)	19 (26)	39 (53)
Faculty - 11 or more years	23 (17)	38 (28)	76 (56)

Seventy-five percent of all respondents believe that faculty are “moderately” to “highly” involved in assessment. Staff and administrators have about twice the percentage of “none to low” responses than faculty. This raises an interesting discrepancy that merits study. Forty percent of faculty and administrators indicate “high” involvement by faculty. There is little difference in the percentage of “high” responses by faculty by years of service. Twenty-one percent of the newest faculty responded “none to low” compared to 14 percent of the faculty with 6 to 10 years of service.

Table 28: Faculty Involved in Assessment

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what extent are faculty involved in assessment? (N=543)	136 (25)	201 (37)	206 (38)
Faculty	47 (17)	121 (43)	112 (40)
Staff	74 (34)	68 (31)	75 (35)
Administration	15 (33)	12 (27)	18 (40)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	15 (21)	29 (41)	27 (38)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	10 (14)	33 (47)	28 (39)
Faculty - 11 or more years	22 (16)	59 (43)	57 (41)

Compared to faculty, there is considerably less belief that staff are involved in assessment. Almost half (46%) indicated “no to low” involvement whereas 21 percent believe

that staff involvement is “high.” The percentages of “high” responses by staff and administrators are more than twice those of faculty. Only 13 percent of faculty believe that there is “high” participation in assessment by staff. These differences in perception warrant further inquiry. There is an inverse relationship between years of service groups and “high” responses. Twenty percent of the 1 to 5 year group gave “high” responses compared to 9 percent by the 11 or more years group. Sixty-seven percent of the 6 to 10 year group indicated “none to low” staff involvement.

Table 29: Staff Involved in Assessment

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what extent are staff involved in assessment? (N=531)	245 (46)	173 (32)	113 (21)
Faculty	147 (56)	83 (32)	33 (13)
Staff	79 (36)	77 (35)	66 (30)
Administration	19 (42)	13 (29)	13 (29)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	33 (47)	24 (34)	14 (20)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	47 (67)	15 (21)	8 (11)
Faculty - 11 or more years	67 (55)	44 (36)	11 (9)

The majority of respondents (41%) indicated “no to low” support from their Dean in the implementation of their assessment plan. About one-fourth indicated “high” support and one-third “moderate” support. Faculty have the highest percentage of “none to low” responses (45%) followed by staff (40%). Half of faculty at WMU 6 or more years responded “none to low” compared to 30 percent of the 1 to 5 years group. The perceived or actual lack of support by Deans warrants attention.

Table 30: Dean Provided Support for Implementation of Department/Program Assessment Plan

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
To what degree has your Dean provided support for the implementation of your department/program assessment plan? (N=532)	217 (41)	176 (33)	139 (27)
Faculty	120 (45)	99 (37)	49 (18)
Staff	88 (40)	60 (27)	72 (33)
Administration	9 (21)	17 (40)	17 (40)

Faculty - 1 to 5 years	21 (30)	34 (49)	14 (20)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	32 (49)	27 (41)	7 (11)
Faculty - 11 or more years	67 (50)	38 (29)	28 (21)

More than one third (36%) report a “high” amount of discussion between chairpersons and departments or programs about assessment efforts. One quarter stated that this communication is “high” among colleagues and 17 percent rated the communication between the Dean and the department/program as “high.” “No to low” communication was rated at 55 percent for Deans, 42 percent for colleagues, and 37 percent for chairpersons. This indicates that there is considerable room for improvement in communication between stakeholders about assessment efforts.

Table 31: Discussions about Assessment Efforts

	0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
How much discussion has there been between your Dean and your department/program about your assessment efforts? (N=540)	298 (55)	150 (27)	92 (17)
How much discussion has there been between your Chairperson and your department/program about your assessment efforts? (N=548)	202 (37)	149 (27)	197 (36)
How much discussion has there been between you and other colleagues in your college about assessment efforts? (N=554)	234 (42)	181 (33)	139 (25)

Administrators rated the degree of communication between the Dean and department/program much “higher” than faculty or staff. Thirty-seven percent of administrators rated the communication as “high” compared to 18 percent by staff and just 12 percent by faculty. Fifty-six percent of faculty, 57 percent of staff, and 39 percent of administrators rated communication by Deans as “none to low.”

Forty-two percent of faculty rated communication with the chairperson as “high” as did 51 percent of administrators and only 26 percent of staff. Fifty-two percent of staff rated this communication as “none to low” which is almost double the percentage by faculty and administration. This raises questions about how staff are being engaged and utilized in the assessment process.

Thirty-two percent of faculty and 35 percent of administrators rated the degree of communication among colleagues in their college as “high.” However, only 14 percent of staff gave “high” ratings for colleague communication. Fifty-seven percent of staff rated colleague

communication about assessment as “none to low” compared to 33 percent by faculty and 30 percent by administrators. These stark differences in perception should be explored.

Table 32: Discussions about Assessment Efforts by Position

		0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
Dean	Faculty	152 (56)	85 (32)	33 (12)
	Staff	128 (57)	54 (24)	41 (18)
	Administration	18 (39)	11 (24)	17 (37)
Chair	Faculty	75 (27)	90 (32)	116 (42)
	Staff	115 (52)	49 (22)	57 (26)
	Administration	12 (27)	10 (22)	23 (51)
Colleagues	Faculty	92 (33)	101 (36)	90 (32)
	Staff	128 (57)	64 (29)	32 (14)
	Administration	14 (30)	16 (35)	16 (35)

There is considerable similarity between years of service groups on the degree of discussion among stakeholders. The greatest difference is with chairpersons in that 37 percent of the newest faculty rated this as “none to low” compared to 24 percent of the 11 or more years group and 21 percent of the 6 to 10 year faculty.

Table 33: Discussions about Assessment Efforts by Years of Service

		0 -1 (None to Low)	2-3 (Moderate)	4-5 (High)
Dean	Faculty - 1 to 5 years	36 (51)	26 (27)	9 (13)
	Faculty - 6 to 10 years	41 (62)	20 (30)	5 (8)
	Faculty - 11 or more years	75 (56)	39 (29)	19 (14)
Chair	Faculty - 1 to 5 years	27 (37)	19 (26)	28 (38)
	Faculty - 6 to 10 years	15 (21)	25 (35)	31 (44)
	Faculty - 11 or more years	33 (24)	46 (34)	57 (42)
Colleagues	Faculty - 1 to 5 years	27 (36)	26 (35)	22 (29)
	Faculty - 6 to 10 years	21 (30)	26 (37)	24 (34)
	Faculty - 11 or more years	44 (32)	49 (36)	44 (32)

Sixty-nine percent of respondents did not attend any assessment seminars or training at WMU. Almost one-third (31%) attended these events. Administrators had the highest rate of attendance at 55 percent compared to 37 percent of faculty and only 19 percent of staff. Attendance at these assessment events was much higher by faculty at WMU six or more years compared to newer faculty.

Table 34: Attend Assessment Seminars or Training at WMU

	Yes	No
Did you attend any seminars or training on the subject of assessment at WMU? (N=565)	177 (31)	388 (69)
Faculty	107 (37)	179 (63)
Staff	43 (19)	188 (81)
Administration	26 (55)	21 (45)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	18 (24)	57 (76)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	32 (44)	40 (56)
Faculty - 11 or more years	57 (41)	82 (59)

Fifty-four percent do not want a University assessment office with a director and staff. This sentiment is highest among faculty at 64 percent followed by administrators at 59 percent. However 61 percent of staff would like to see such an office established. Newest faculty are more positive about creating this office with 47 percent indicating “yes” compared to 31 percent by the 6 to 10 years groups and 32 percent by those at WMU 11 or more years.

Table 35: University Assessment Office with Director and Staff

	Yes	No
Should there be a University Assessment Office with a director and staff? (N=549)	254 (46)	295 (54)
Faculty	99 (36)	179 (64)
Staff	136 (61)	88 (39)
Administration	19 (41)	27 (59)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	34 (47)	39 (53)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	22 (31)	48 (69)
Faculty - 11 or more years	43 (32)	92 (68)

Having a dedicated assessment staff person in the College’s Dean’s office is viewed much more positively than a University assessment office. Fifty-eight percent responded “yes” to this item. There are similarities in responses by position with the highest percentage of “yes” by staff followed by administrators and faculty. The majority in all groups support the creation of this position. Two-thirds of the 6 to 10 year group responded “yes” as did 55 percent of the newest faculty. Those at WMU 11 or more years were evenly split on this item.

Table 36: Staff in Dean’s Office for Assessment

	Yes	No
Should there be a staff person in your College’s Dean’s office whose primary responsibility is to your College’s assessment activities? (N=545)	317 (58)	228 (42)
Faculty	155 (56)	123 (44)
Staff	135 (61)	85 (39)
Administration	27 (59)	19 (41)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	40 (55)	33 (45)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	48 (67)	24 (33)
Faculty - 11 or more years	67 (50)	66 (50)

Almost two-thirds (63%) responded positively to faculty receiving course release time to facilitate assessment activities. Seventy-three percent of faculty and 61 percent of administrators responded with a “yes” while staff were evenly split on this question. Eighty percent of the newest faculty responded affirmatively as did 71 percent of the 11 or more years group and 70 percent of those at WMU 6 to 10 years.

Table 37: Course Release Time for Assessment Activities

	Yes	No
Should faculty in your department/program that facilitate your assessment activities be given course release time? (N=545)	343 (63)	202 (37)
Faculty	205 (73)	76 (27)
Staff	109 (50)	108 (50)
Administration	28 (61)	18 (39)
Faculty - 1 to 5 years	59 (80)	15 (20)
Faculty - 6 to 10 years	50 (70)	21 (30)

Faculty - 11 or more years	96 (71)	40 (29)
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Suggestions

Respondents were asked to “list two or more resources or activities, in order of priority, that you would like to see made available to the faculty to inform, educate, or promote the culture of assessment at WMU.” A total of 596 comments were made. A content analysis was performed in multiple stages. First, comments that were insidious or tangential were eliminated. Second, data were analyzed to determine if there were substantial differences between what respondents identified as their first priority and their subsequent suggestions. There were considerable similarities in suggestions regardless of the order they appeared. Third, suggestions from faculty, staff, and administrators were compared. Differences were not significant. Fourth, the frequency of a suggestion was considered. No suggestion was cited so often that they merited special mention. Based on the results of this analysis, suggestions are presented together. These suggestions should serve as a springboard for further discussion and exploration.

Categories were created for the placement of suggestions. There is some overlap in these categories and several suggestions could be placed in multiple categories. The final categories are: discussions, training and education, resources and incentives, methodology and practices, assessment impact and processes, accreditation, curriculum, and communication and information.

Discussions

Numerous topics and formats were suggested. Many of these can occur at little or no cost. Topics and formats suggested:

- Implement suggestions made in the assessments on the "grassroots" classroom level.
- Speaker attending faculty meeting to talk about interpreting results
- A talk on assessment at my department.
- Brown-bag lunches for faculty to share departmental best practices.
- Facilitated discussion of development and revision of department plans -- not information about how to do it, but a consultant to lead us in the task.

- College-wide roundtable on assessment strategies.
- Information provided to Chair and then discussed during faculty meetings informing all staff what this is about.
- Individual college visits from UASC
- UASC general meetings.
- A member of the Provost's office to talk to us about assessment, without the familiar, you need to do this or we may eliminate your program.
- How to use assessments to gain extra resources.
- Meet with HR representatives from industry.
- Critical, informed discussion of effects to apply standardized testing to assessment.
- Information on methods used at comparable universities.
- Mandatory workshop about assessment philosophy (i.e., goals, objectives, connection to learning outcomes).

Training and Education

Many topics were suggested for faculty development workshops. Several stated that these workshops should be available to full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty as well as staff and administrators. Topics suggested are:

- Who needs to know what, when do they need to know it, and why?
- A better understanding of the difference between assessment (for the purposes of curriculum and program improvement) and evaluation of students (for the purpose of assigning a grade), even when a single activity might serve both purposes.
- Clear rationale for assessment of student learning.
- An overview on the power of assessment.
- Implementing assessment.
- Developing learning objectives.
- How to organize for “millennial” students.

- Linking learning objectives to course materials.
- Types of assessment.
- Clear and easy directions on how to incorporate assessment in courses.
- Correct process of assessment.
- How to assess real maturity, philosophical and emotional growth - not just skills in reading and writing.
- Using collected data for department improvement.
- Validity of assessment measures and data.
- Demonstrations by exemplary departments.
- iWebFolio (some noted that if you don't use it, you lose it)
- ABET training.
- Linking tenure criteria weight directly to assessment measures.

Electronic media suggestions included:

- On-line modules that "walk" someone through the role of assessment in the larger university.
- The "minimalist guide" to assessment.
- On-line Assessment Guide.
- Web-based tutorials.
- Brief, clear explanation of assessment process and requirements via email.
- Visual Demonstrations.

Resources and Incentives

The most frequently cited needed resource was increased faculty and staff to conduct assessment. Additional time is required for coordination, implementation, analysis, and reporting. Suggestions for resources and incentives are:

- Increased program funding for assessment.
- Faculty and staff release time.
- Dedicated departmental faculty and clerical staff to facilitate assessment process.
- Departmental committee to look at program assessment with workload or other incentives given.
- Course load reduction for department-level coordinator.
- Recognize that staff conduct assessment and give them access to resources.
- Graduate assistantships.
- Travel funds to professional association meetings related to assessment.
- Funding to purchase assessment books and materials.
- Grants for larger assessment efforts.
- Financial support for exit surveys of students.
- Continue assessment demonstration grants.
- Funding and staff assistance in starting new assessment programs.
- New position to organize assessment activities in the Dean's office.
- Coordinator position in Provost's Office.
- Value assessment work in tenure and promotion.
- Incentives for student participation.
- Recognition by Deans of those that engage in assessment.

- Awards for achievement in assessment.
- Recognition for department and UASC committee members.
- A Center for Teaching and Learning
- A central office of assessment.
- A "center" where resources could be found and activities held that are well publicized.
- An assessment/quality control office.
- Central clearing house for assessment ideas.
- Fund Writing Center to give faculty help in ensuring students get opportunities to learn what they're being tested on.
- Employ assessment experts at the department level who can teach/train/help faculty do direct assessment and who will assist with all levels of tasks for implementing assessment.
- A specialist on assessment who faculty can call upon for further explanation regarding assessment.
- Web based real-time help.
- Available help with statistics.

Methodology and Practices

Many respondents believe that assessment can be strengthened and more efficient by using common approaches and sharing best practices. Suggestions are:

- Common assessment items for all programs.
- Coordinate so there is one assessment process instead of a new one every year.
- Assessment should focus on continuous improvement.
- Performance-based assessment techniques.
- Foster an intentional community of communities

- A system that issues reports in WORD and keeps historical data and prior plans.
- Uniformity between departments for keeping record of various data that is not kept by Banner
- Office Coordinators maintain databases; this is vital to the program's survival.
- On-line detailed results from previous semester.
- Alternate assessment options.
- Use a different name than "assessment."
- A flow chart for assessment reports.
- On-line access to advisee records.
- Conduct formative from summative assessments.
- Assessment needs to be authentic, based in deep and contextualized learning experiences in courses.
- A clear distinction between internal and external assessment.
- IWebFolio should be used in conjunction with another type of portfolio (e.g., electronic, paper)
- If iWebFolio is university wide, it needs to be implemented in every area before intern teaching in various education majors, not just at the end of intern teaching.
- Software programs that make it easier to conduct assessment of each course.
- Use SAMPI.
- Acquire useful software tools for ABET.
- Harmonize UASC and ABET assessment.
- Querying of alumni on program effectiveness
- Develop and use rubrics or grids for assessment.
- Assessment should begin with admissions of students to develop a true pre/post analysis.
- Use pretest and posttest examinations.

- A TracDat that allows assessment by program rather than department.
- Assess the contribution of the culture of intercollegiate athletics to the academic mission of the university.
- Fully inform faculty of the benefits of growing their own assessment instead of buying canned tests that have been critiqued by national organizations and nationally recognized assessment experts.
- Include staff in the assessment.
- All faculty should be involved in assessment, not just one person.
- Send surveys out to companies that employ WMU students as interns.
- Web based assessment tracking
- Better use of the Evaluation Center in assessment.
- Survey disabled and non-traditional students.

Assessment Impact and Processes

There is a need to demonstrate that assessment efforts produce positive benefits to various stakeholders. The process of assessment needs to be monitored to assure that systems are functioning efficiently and results are disseminated in a reasonable time period. Suggestions on impact results and assessment processes are:

- Provide examples of how higher administration uses assessment activity to improve university structures, functions and services
- A report by President Dunn about the benefits of assessment efforts to WMU.
- Presentation of assessment success cases that quantitatively show an unequivocal improvement in a program resulting from assessment
- An across-the-board demonstration of results.
- Charts that compare assessment results.
- Show linkages between University mandates to assessment outcomes.
- Linkage between assessment results and decision making at the Dean and Provost level.

- Demonstration by University and College administration that they are listening to individual department assessments results.
- Prove usefulness in terms of improved student learning.
- Describe outcome-based decision making related to assessment activities.
- Show how assessment data is used by administration.
- A university-wide assessment report.
- Report on how other departments use assessment.
- Information on how other Universities do assessment.
- Faster turnaround of assessments.
- More frequent availability of assessment results.
- Utilization of assessment data for strategic planning.

Accreditation

Some respondents want to increase the linkage between assessment and accreditation requirements. More information about accreditation was also raised. Suggestions include:

- Integration of university assessment requirements with accrediting requirements.
- A description of external demands for assessment.
- Understanding of multiple licenses/certifications required in the College of Education.
- More information circulated about HLC assessment expectations.
- Learn how to tie assessment to accreditation.

Curriculum

A frequent outcome of assessment is curriculum change. Suggestions include:

- Common objectives for all courses (60 percent)
- Guided reflection time to modify assignment grading.

- Have sessions for like-minded people who are willing to try things in their classes. There have been recent attempts in this direction.
- Make it easy to change the curriculum so that we can respond to assessment results. Changing the curriculum is a cumbersome process.

Communication and Information

- Develop a dynamic website for this and implement RSS feeds for your news items so I know what and when things are happening
- An assessment website.
- A general student profile of discipline preparation in the high schools.
- Courses previously taken by students in class.
- Increased accessibility to older assessment results and rubrics.
- NSSE data.
- What universities that are leaders in assessment are doing.
- Physical samples of assessments.
- Widespread availability of NCA/NCATE reports.
- Assessment needs to be part of a critical campaign like The Western Edge.
- A guide explaining all the committees.
- Email announcements and updates.
- Campus-wide publications about the goals and methodology of the assessment happenings here.
- Regular assessment updates.

Highlights and Recommendations

Among the most positive findings are:

- More than three-fourths of all respondents gave a “high” rating for the importance of assessing student learning outcomes.
- Most faculty, staff, and administrators believe that assessment plans have benefited their curriculum and their department or program.
- Forty-nine percent have a “high” commitment to their program’s assessment activity and 28 percent are “moderately” committed
- Ninety-two percent believe that impact reports have “moderate” to “high” accuracy.
- Almost one-third (31%) attended assessment seminars or training at WMU.
- Having a dedicated assessment staff person in the College’s Dean’s office is viewed much more positively than a University assessment office. Fifty-eight percent responded “yes.”
- Almost two-thirds (63%) responded positively to faculty receiving course release time to facilitate assessment activities.

Recommendations based on findings from this report include:

- New faculty orientation includes information on department/program assessment activities.
- Explore methods that would increase faculty familiarity and ownership of impact reports.
- Consider ways to increase familiarity and utilization of iWebFolio and TracDat.
- Examine methods for disseminating results of department/program assessment.
- Determine why newer faculty rate the usefulness of impact reports much higher than faculty at WMU 6 or more years.
- The impact report process should be examined to determine how it can be simplified.
- Explore difference in perception regarding the involvement of faculty and staff in assessment.

- Investigate the perceived or actual lack of support for assessment activities by Deans.
- “No to low” communication about assessment efforts was rated at 55 percent for Deans, 42 percent for colleagues, and 37 percent for chairpersons. This indicates that there is considerable room for improvement in communication between stakeholders about assessment efforts.