



Memorandum

To: Dave Reinhold

From: Captain Dave Powell, Dean

Date: August 25, 2010

Subject: College of Aviation Annual Assessment Report

The 2009 – 2010 College of Aviation annual assessment report is structured around the three (3) questions provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

A. What activities have the college undertaken to help departments with assessment?

Over the past several years, assessment duties have been handled by Professor Benton and Faculty Chair Sinclair, due to a vacancy in the associate dean position. With the hiring of Dr. Thompson in November 2009, the overall responsibilities for assessment are now under a single position. This will provide for better coordination amongst the various assessment duties and participants.

The college recently submitted its application for accreditation reaffirmation to the Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI). Since the last reaffirmation of WMU aviation programs, AABI has changed to an outcomes-based accreditation model. Assessment, in the full sense of a complete cycle, plays a significant role in AABI accreditation. The college will prepare its self-study review during the 2010-2011 academic year. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate the current approved assessment plan for reliability, validity, and overall effectiveness.

In the 2009 report, the college indicated that it did not have an assessment component for areas related to student advising. Creation of that aspect of assessment was begun by the newly hired director of student advising. Unfortunately, the director has now left WMU and the assessment process was not completed. We anticipate completing that process during fall 2010 under the new director of advising who began in June 2010.

B. Based upon the departmental reports, what strengths and opportunities for improvement exist within the college with respect to assessment? Specific examples of both strengths and opportunities for improvement would be helpful here.

Assessment strengths: a variety of assessment data was collected during the 2009-2010 academic year. The current approved plan assesses a wide range of constituents and is designed to provide format and



summative feedback into the system. The college was one of the pilot programs for ICES-online during spring 2009. Almost all of the instructors used the new ICES online system and overall response from students seemed to be comparable with the old paper system. The biggest advantage is that instructors are able to view the results much faster than previously, when we were beholden to an external agency to carry out the statistical analysis and collation of comments. This of course means that changes to course content and/or delivery can be made almost immediately in response to feedback from ICES.

During the coming year it is planned to carry out a restructuring of our Industry Advisory Board. In its current form, many of the members are spread to far and wide to be effective in providing feedback and curriculum review on a regular basis. Thus it is hoped to encourage membership from more locally situated businesses to supplement those who are limited by distance in their effectiveness.

Assessment issues: a lack of overall coordination of assessment has existed due to the lack of a central point of responsibility (associate dean). That has been remedied but will not reach full effectiveness until the 2010-2011 assessment cycle. The feedback mechanisms and dissemination of assessment data need to be improved, with some assessment data being collected but not properly reviewed and acted upon. As an example, the senior survey was conducted but the results not yet disseminated and the student advising assessment components were not completed due to staff turnover.

C. What assistance to the college would be helpful to address the opportunities for improvement identified in B above? If there are any other areas where assistance would help beyond those identified from the opportunities for improvement mentioned in B, please feel free to comment on those.

While the aviation programs contain program and course learning outcomes, the move to outcomes-based accreditation will be a significant change in course and program assessment, collection and analysis of data, and clearly defined feedback mechanisms. To support this, assistance from the university providing professional development of assessing outcomes-based programs for faculty and leadership would be valuable. This can include attending specific workshops or bringing in an expert (internal or external) for a workshop specific to the college's needs.

The college of Aviation is fully supportive of complete assessment of our programs, services, and operations. During the 2010-2011 academic year, with the self-study process and improved coordination of college assessment being handled by the associate dean, we anticipate moving assessment to a higher, and more effective, level in the college of Aviation.