

July 12, 1020

Tom Kent
College of Arts and Sciences
Western Michigan University

Dear Tom:

The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) subcommittee would like to thank you and Associate Dean Susan Stapleton for taking time out of your busy schedules on April 22 to talk with us about the current state of assessment in the College of Arts and Sciences. We also want to thank you for your honest evaluation of the current status of assessment. The subcommittee appreciated your comments and feel we have a much better grasp of the state of assessment in the college. Your comments, along with others from your colleagues in other colleges, will help the UASC move assessment forward at Western Michigan University.

This letter is intended to be a review of the discussion we had this past spring. It outlines the successes and challenges of the college with regard to assessment and includes areas that you suggested the UASC could help. We will be working with you in the future to address those areas in which you expressed the need for help.

Strengths of the College:

- The college has several departments that have made tremendous strides in assessing student learning (history for example). These can serve as examples for those departments that are struggling.
- The college has established a college assessment award.
- The college has acknowledged that assessment needs to be part of their strategic plan and should be tied to the overall planning process.
- A College of Arts and Sciences assessment day has been requested with the help of UASC.

Opportunities for the College:

- The college may think about additional incentives to help establish a culture of assessment.
- The college, with the help of the UASC, should help faculty realize that they already assess and that there is help in accomplishing the next step of documenting that process.
- The college curriculum committee can emphasize the importance of question 10 on the curriculum change form when proposals are discussed.
- The planning process could be moved from the fall to the spring to help incorporate assessment in a timely fashion for the academic year.

Opportunities for UASC:

- The UASC can provide more feedback on issues and events dealing with assessment such as the Assessment in Action Day. This feedback should be positive and constructive, not simply critical.
- There seems to be confusion within the college about the definition of assessment. The UASC should do more to emphasize that assessment refers to measuring student learning.
- The UASC should find additional ways to celebrate and acknowledge the good assessment practices already in place on campus. This acknowledgement should come from the president whenever possible.
- The UASC can help engage faculty in the process by helping reduce the task driven notion of the process.

Once again, the UASC subcommittee would like to thank you for your willingness to talk openly and frankly about the state of assessment within the College of Arts and Sciences. Please let us know if you think we have misinterpreted anything that occurred during our discussion and we will revise the letter accordingly. We look forward to working closely with the college in the future to improve the assessment efforts.

Sincerely,



Dave Reinhold

Kathy Cummings

Pat Benton

Brad Dennis

cc: Susan Stapleton, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Alex Enyedi, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences