MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Associate Deans, Chairs and Directors, Academic Affairs

FROM: Susan L. Caulfield, Chair – University Assessment Steering Committee
        David Reinhold, Associate Provost – Assessment and Undergraduate Studies

DATE: September 24, 2015

SUBJ: Dean’s Report on Assessment of Student Learning, 2012-2015

The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC), in conjunction with the Office of Assessment and Undergraduate Studies (OAUS), has prepared a reporting form for this year’s dean’s report on assessment of student learning within the units of their respective colleges for the time period of July 1, 2012 through June 20, 2015.

One of the summary findings from the Academic Program Review and Planning process was that there is a high variability in the quality of the assessment of program student learning outcomes. To move this forward, the dean’s report on assessment will request information that will further probe the quality of the assessment of program student learning outcomes. This is part of the continuous program improvement process that all programs need to follow to improve overall quality as well as meet HLC criteria.

During the 2014-15 academic year, UASC revisited its guidelines and policies, providing clarity on a number of items, including the dean’s report on assessment of student learning. While this report is coordinated by the OAUS, primarily because of OAUS’s responsibility for reporting on WMU’s activities with regard to HLC assessment criteria, the reporting form itself was created by the UASC and will be reviewed by the UASC, as the UASC reports directly to the provost on findings from assessment reports.

Considerable attention was paid to what information might best serve the programs themselves, the deans, the UASC and the OAUS. The end result is a different report from past cycles (these are done every three years), one we hope will prove useful to the different constituents and provide useful data for our next review with the Higher Learning Commission. Please note that the expectations for this report may build on, but should not replicate the two questions about assessment of student learning that were included in the Academic Program Review and Planning process. Indeed, the two questions in the APR&P form were for planning, not assessment of student learning, purposes.

The attached document provides an overview of the assessment process itself, with a diagram of that process, as well as an overview of what is required in this year’s report. This overview (first page) precedes two tables. Each table must be completed for each program (major, minor, certificate, masters or doctorate). This is a change from past cycles, where departments were asked to report on the department, rather than specific programs. The UASC has intentionally determined a need to gather data at the programmatic level, to better understand the extent to which WMU is actively engaged in the assessment of student learning process.

Please encourage your departments to be succinct in their responses. Please note there is a section for the dean’s office to provide a summary of assessment progress per program.

Should you have any questions about this process, please contact either of us and we will work with the members of UASC and OAUS to provide you needed assistance. Thank you.