

**Assessment Coordination Committee
on Outreach and Community/Public Service**

**Report to the Assessment Oversight Committee
April 20, 2016**

The Assessment Coordination Committee on Outreach and Community/Public Service met on Wednesday, April 20, 2016 in Humanities 247, at 2:00 p.m. Members present included Lynn Alexander, Ross Dickens, Brian Donavant, Patty Flowers, Landy Fuqua, Rich Helgeson, Stephanie Kolitsch, Desireé McCullough, Joey Mehlhorn, Victoria Seng, Cynthia West, and Todd Winters.

The Committee began by examining strengths and weaknesses of the departmental reports on outreach that were submitted in March. Identified strengths included:

- All departments reported community/public service activities for their faculty.
- Many departments have already identified activities that could be considered outreach.

The Committee identified several weaknesses and challenges in the reports. These include:

- In some reports, outreach is not separated from scholarly activity.
- There is a lack of consistency in how outreach, community service, and public service is defined.
- A lot of groups outside of academic departments have not been tracking outreach and community/public service activities.
- Service and outreach are not identical; there has not been a distinction between service and outreach.
- Statements such as “faculty will exceed expectations” are unclear; reports do not include what these expectations are, so it is difficult to determine what “exceeding expectations” means.

To address these weaknesses and challenges, the Committee made several recommendations:

- UT Martin needs an institutional definition of outreach that differentiates between outreach and service. Questions to be considered include whether the activity in question includes direct contact with external constituents, whether involvement in the activity is based on a person’s expertise, and whether the activity in question involves a professional group.
- In considering the institutional definition of outreach, UT Martin should consider efforts already underway at the UT System level that address outreach for the system. At this time, the UT System has a working group on outreach that is endeavoring to create a system-level definition of outreach and define major areas of outreach for the various campuses to consider. As of April 20, the drafted system-level defined purpose of outreach is “*UT collaborates with individuals and organizations to build relationships, co-create knowledge, discover, and help implement solutions that improve the quality of life in Tennessee and beyond.*” Suggested major areas of outreach include economic development and job creation; healthy living; civic responsibility; education; environmental; cultural and artistic experience; and global responsiveness. Committee members expressed concerns with some of the system-level distinctions between

outreach, service, and other activities but recognized that the System's efforts are still a work in progress. UT Martin's definition should support the System's definitions and areas of outreach but should also reflect campus values and commitments.

- Uniform templates should be used in reporting outreach and community/public service efforts. At this time, one template that allows faculty to report outreach, community and public service, and research efforts and another template that allows institutional-level outreach and community/public service efforts to be documented have been developed. These templates will be implemented with the May 2016 reporting period and will be re-evaluated in 2016-17 to determine whether the templates documented the data we need to be considering.
- Once an institutional definition of outreach has been determined, faculty and staff will need training on determining what "outreach" is for UT Martin in order to fill out the templates correctly.

The Committee identified institutionally-supported outreach, community, and public service activities that should be monitored in order to meet institution and system-level expectations. These include:

- REED Center
- Children's programs including the Infant Stimulation Program, Healthy Start, and Healthier Beginnings
- WestStar
- McWherter Institute
- Center of Excellence for Experiential Learning in the Agricultural Sciences
- Chairs of Excellence (two in business and one in agriculture)
- Internship Programs in academic units
- Athletics
- Extended Campus and Online Studies non-degree programs
- UT Martin's partnership with the Northwest Tennessee Entrepreneur Center, especially activities organized and/or sponsored by UT Martin
- UT Martin's partnership with the Northwest Tennessee STEM Hub, especially activities organized and/or sponsored by UT Martin
- the STEM Center operated by the Department of Educational Studies
- Student Life (especially community service through various student organizations)
- Governor's School for the Humanities
- Governor's School for Agriculture

The Committee elected Dr. Lynn Alexander to act as its representative on the Assessment Oversight Committee that will be meeting this summer to review the reports of all five Assessment Coordination Committees.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.