

# Assessment for Improvement: Faculty Perceptions of Institutional Participation in Assessment by Field

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# Background

## Premises

- Student learning is improved through assessment when institutions and faculty work together (Priddy, 2007)
- Faculty and campus leaders often differ in opinions of what students should learn and how it should be measured (Palomba, 2001)
- Professional degree programs are more easily able to tie faculty classroom practices to institutional assessment efforts (Ewell, 2008)

## Questions

- What shapes faculty perceptions of institutional assessment efforts?



- How do faculty perceive institutional involvement in assessment?
- How do those perceptions vary by field?



# Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

- Annual survey of faculty members at baccalaureate-granting institutions in the spring
- Institutions choose faculty to be surveyed and all responses are kept anonymous
- FSSE 2009: Items on assessment
  - 46 institutions
  - 3,377 faculty respondents

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement 2006  
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Demo version: responses will not be recorded.

During the *current* academic year, about how many times have you participated in teaching improvement activities of the following types?

	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Individual consultations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Classroom observations with feedback	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings with a small group of colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Web-based instructional programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus-wide forums	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conference sessions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Items on Assessment

1. To what extent is your institution involved in student assessment efforts?
2. How effectively does your institution disseminate the findings of its assessment efforts to faculty?
3. In general, how useful to you are the findings from your institution's assessment efforts?
4. To what extent are results from your institution's assessment efforts used to inform the following?
  - a. Institutional activities aimed at improving teaching and learning
  - b. Your department's activities aimed at improving teaching and learning



# Respondents

## 3,377 faculty members

- 44% Women
- 75% White
- 92% US Citizens
- 72% had a doctorate
- 63% did not teach grad students

## Rank and Employment Status

- 12% PT lecturer/instructor
- 10% FT lecturer/instructor
- 28% Assistant professor
- 25% Associate professor
- 25% Full professor

## Discipline

- 34% Arts & Hum
- 7% Biology
- 12% Business
- 9% Education
- 5% Engineering
- 14% Physical Science
- 18% Social Science
- 12% Business
- 3% Nursing

# Methods

- Descriptive statistics
- Scale using 5 survey items ( $\alpha = 0.84$ )
- Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM)
- DVs
  - Individual Items
  - Combined Scale
- IVs
  - Demographics
  - Rank and Employment Status
  - Course Load
  - Field

# Faculty Perceptions

## To what extent is your institution involved in student assessment efforts?

Arts & Humanities	75%
Biology	73%
Physical Sciences	71%
Social Sciences	70%
Business	80%
Education	80%
Engineering	80%
Nursing	79%

*Note.* Percentages represent those who responded “Quite a bit” or “Very much”

# Faculty Perceptions

## Usefulness of institution's assessment findings...

Arts & Humanities	26%
Biology	26%
Physical Sciences	27%
Social Sciences	30%
Business	43%
Education	41%
Engineering	35%
Nursing	42%

*Note.* Percentages represent those who responded 4 or 5 on a scale (5="Very useful")



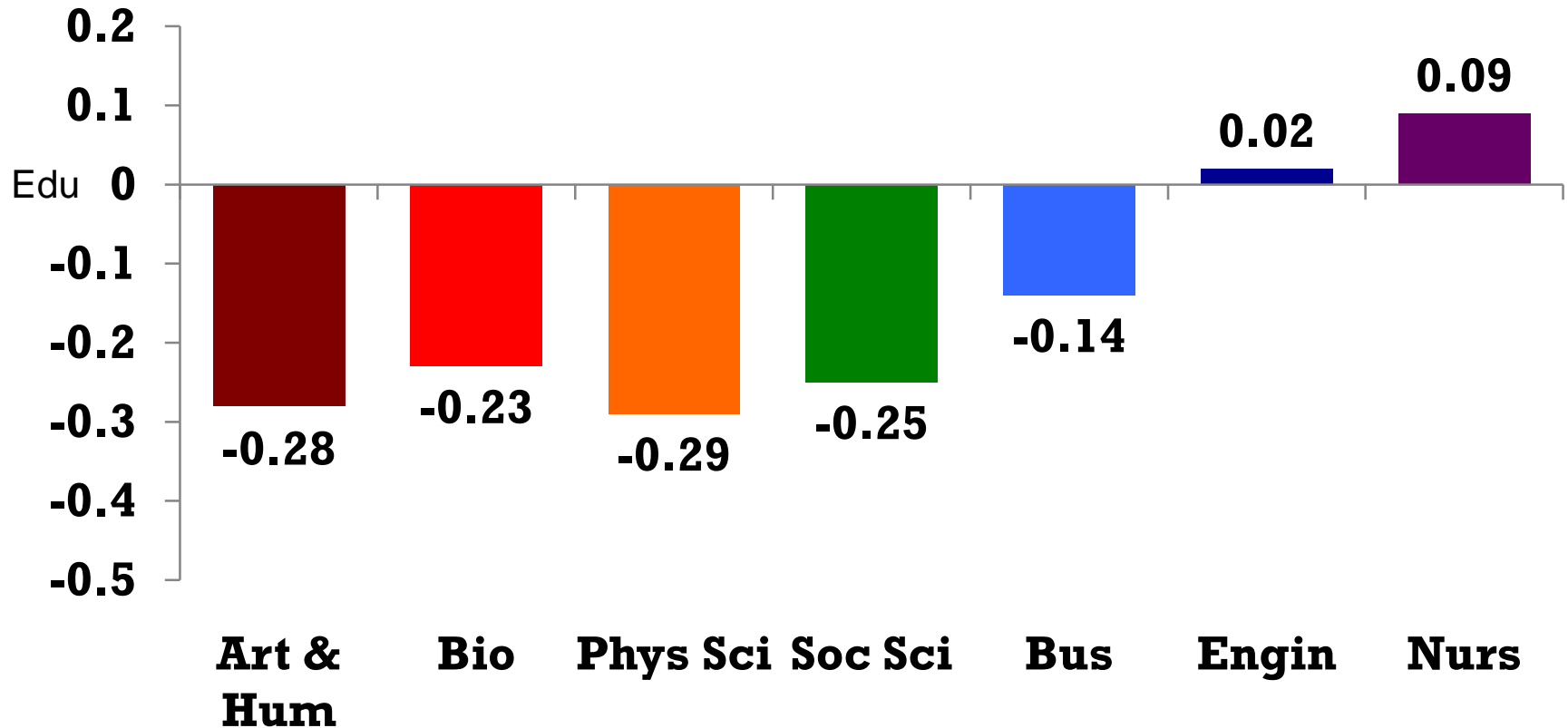
# Faculty Perceptions

## Institutional assessment findings used to inform your department's activities ...

Arts & Humanities	45%
Biology	44%
Physical Sciences	42%
Social Sciences	42%
Business	56%
Education	58%
Engineering	50%
Nursing	69%

*Note.* Percentages represent those who responded “Quite a bit” or “Very much”

# Faculty Perceptions of Assessment by Field



*p* < .001 for all arts and science fields

# Recommendations

- Institutional commitment to promoting the value of assessment initiatives and findings
  - Seek institution-wide consensus on assessment goals
  - Faculty collaboration on projects regarding departmental and institutional effectiveness
  - Create platforms for faculty to share personal assessment efforts
  - Target inconsistencies for improvement
  - Allow for disciplinary variations
- Explore the connection between discipline-specific accreditation processes and faculty assessment practices

