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
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>79%</td>
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*Note.* Percentages represent those who responded “Quite a bit” or “Very much”
## Faculty Perceptions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Business</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>42%</td>
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*Note.* Percentages represent those who responded 4 or 5 on a scale (5=“Very useful”)
Faculty Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional assessment findings used to inform your department’s activities ...</th>
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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