## Survey of Assessment Culture - Administrators Scales <br> 04/15/2020

This document provides a summary of the results of the Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture, focusing on the five separate scales derived from its items. In Fall 2019, survey administrators at Sam Houston State University invited 45 administrators from Southeast Community College to participate in the survey; 29 of them participated for a response rate of $64 \%$. The scales were created and validated by Dr. Matthew Fuller and colleagues as described in Fuller, Skidmore, et al (2016) ${ }^{1}$. Each scale consists of multiple individual survey items.

The scales in the Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture survey were validated by Fuller et al (2016) using factor analysis. Factor analysis is a statistical technique for identifying underlying (unobserved / latent) characteristics that are difficult to measure (in this case 'assessment culture'). These analyses are achieved by grouping responses to multiple survey items that are correlated with each other. Fuller and colleagues identified five factors in the Administrators Survey of Assessment Culture. Those five factors, which are described later in the document, are:

- Compliance or Fear Motivators
- Faculty Perceptions
- Normative Purpose of Assessment
- Sharing of Data
- Use of Data

Respondents indicated how much they agree or disagree with each statement on a scale from 1 to 6 as shown in Table 1. Some items are stated in such a way that agreeing with the statement reflects a positive sentiment (e.g., I like chocolate), whereas agreeing with others indicates a negative sentiment (e.g., I dislike vanilla). The latter type of items were reverse coded in calculating the scale scores so high scores always correspond with positive sentiments (e.g., I do not dislike vanilla).

Table 1. Response set for survey

| Value | Text |
| :---: | :--- |
| 1 | Strongly disagree |
| 2 | Disagree |
| 3 | Only slightly disagree |
| 4 | Only slightly agree |
| 5 | Agree |
| 6 | Strongly agree |

Calculating the scale scores involved the following steps:

1. Identify items associated with each scale. The items included in each scale are detailed on the following pages.
2. Reverse code responses for specific items, as noted earlier. These items are denoted with an ' $R$ ' at the end of the variable name.
3. Calculate the average of the resulting scores for the items in the scale.
4. The resulting scale scores will range from 1.00 to 6.00 with higher scores representing a more positive sentiment for that factor.
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## Single scale results

This section of the report provides results for each scale. For each scale, the following content is provided:

- Brief description of the scale provided by Fuller et al (2016).
- The distribution of scale scores with average (mean) score and standard deviation.
- The list of items included in the scale along with item-specific results.
- Notes about the results.

Because the item-specific results are complicated, the following provides an overview of what these charts include and how to understand them.

- These charts provide the items included in the scale presented in descending order of percent of positive sentiment.
- Three values are provided for each item: green bars indicate the percent who agreed with the statement; dark grey indicates the percent who disagreed; and light grey are those who either did not respond or neither agreed nor disagreed.
- The axis in the first column of results splits the positive sentiments (right of axis) from the negative sentiments (left of axis).
- Since some items are reverse-coded, agreeing is not necessarily a positive sentiment. The image below provides two examples.
- For Q5_3R, 67\% of respondents disagreed (indicated by dark grey) that "the purpose of assessment depends largely on who is asking for assessment results" and 31\% agreed with the statement (indicated by green). Because this item is reverse-coded, disagreement is a positive sentiment so disagreement (dark grey) is displayed to the right of the axis and agreement (green) to the left.
- For Q19_10, 67\% of respondents agreed (green) that "change occurs more readily when supported by assessment results" and $18 \%$ disagreed (dark grey). Because the item is not reverse-coded, agreement is displayed to the right of the axis and disagreement is displayed to the left.



## Compliance or Fear Motivators Scale

Compliance or Fear Motivators scale focuses on participants' level of agreement with items pertaining to motivations to participate in assessment activities.


Items for Compliance or Fear Motivators Scale
Disagree Agree No response


Some notes about these data:

- The Compliance or Fear Motivators Scale had the lowest mean score of all five scales, which indicates that education about the purpose of assessment at SCC would be valuable.
- As a whole, the scale focuses on compliance and fear motivators, but these results suggest that respondents believe SCC's assessment efforts are more motivated by compliance than by fear. The items with the highest levels of agreement (Q5_5R, Q19_1R) specifically ask about compliance, while the item with the lowest level of agreement (Q19_4R) focuses on fear.
- At least $20 \%$ of respondents did not provide a response to any item. This pattern is consistent with all items in the survey, which could reflect either that they do not have enough information to respond or that they were not engaged in the survey process.


## Faculty Perceptions Scale

Faculty Perceptions scale was composed of six items measuring faculty perceptions of how administrators felt about assessment.


Items for Faculty Perceptions Scale
Disagree Agree No response


Some notes about these data:

- Faculty Perceptions Scale has the highest mean score and the lowest standard deviation, which indicates overall positive sentiment and that scale scores are densely centered near the mean.
- These results indicate that administrators participate in assessment to improve student learning, but also that administrators believe that faculty members care about assessment and participate to increase student learning.
- More than one-quarter of respondents did not provide a response to any item. This pattern is consistent with all items in the survey, which could reflect either that they do not have enough information to respond or that they were not engaged in the survey process.


## Normative Purpose of Assessment Scale

Normative Purpose of Assessment explored the perceived organizational approach to assessment efforts within the institution.


Items for Normative Purpose of Assessment Scale
Disagree Agree No response

| Q5_1 | Assessment is expected as part of my institution's continuous improvement process. | 0\% | 79\% | 21\% |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Q13_8 | Assessments of programs are typically connected to student learning. | 7\% | 69\% | 24\% |
| Q13_11 | My institution is structured in a way that facilitates assessment practices focused on improved student learning. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
| Q13_2 | Senior leaders (i.e. President or Provost) have made clear their expectations regarding assessment. | 7\% | 66\% | 28\% |
| Q13_9 | Assessment is an organized, coherent effort at my institution. | 14\% | 66\% | 21\% |
| Q5_10 | Assessment processes yield evidence of my institution's effectiveness. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
| Q5_4 | The purpose of assessment is clearly understood at my institution. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
| Q5_6 | Assessment is emphasized as part of the institutional culture. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
| Q5_9 | Discussions about student learning are at the heart of my institution's assessment effort. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
| Q13_12R | There is no systematic approach to assessment at my institution. | 21\% | 55\% | 24\% |
| Q5_7R | Assessment efforts do not have a clear focus. | 28\% | 48\% | 24\% |

Some notes about these data:

- The Normative Purpose of Assessment Scale has the second highest mean score of all five scales indicating positive general sentiment
- The histogram shows moderate negative skew, in this case because positive scores are densely packed close to the mean, while negative scores are more widely distributed (wider left tail).
- Most of the individual items that make up the Normative Purpose of Assessment Scale have generally positive sentiment, most scoring at $60 \%$ positive or higher.
- The two items with the most negative sentiment indicate that many administrators believe assessment efforts do not have a clear focus and lack a systematic approach, which may be an area for intervention.
- At least $20 \%$ of respondents did not provide a response to any item. This pattern is consistent with all items in the survey, which could reflect either that they do not have enough information to respond or that they were not engaged in the survey process.


## Sharing of Data Scale

Sharing of Data explored participants' perceptions regarding how data were shared with faculty and within the institution in general.


Some notes about these data:

- The Sharing of Data Scale has a mean score of 4.0 and the standard deviation has the largest standard deviation of the five scales. This pattern is evident in how spread out the histogram is and the wide range of outcomes.
- The majority of administrators indicated positive overall sentiment, however, one quarter of the scale scores are less than or equal to 3 , suggesting some negative perceptions of how assessment data gets shared.
- At least $17 \%$ of respondents did not provide a response to any item. This pattern is consistent with all items in the survey, which could reflect either that they do not have enough information to respond or that they were not engaged in the survey process.


## Use of Data Scale

Use of Data pertained to participants' perceptions of how data were used at their respective institutions


Some notes about these data:

- The Use of Data scale has the second lowest mean score and the second highest standard deviation. The histogram shows positive scores are widely distributed, however negative scores are densely distributed around the $2.5-3.0$ range.
- The combination of a low mean scale score and a wide variety of outcomes suggests that this area has room to make substantial improvements.
- At least $20 \%$ of respondents did not provide a response to any item. This pattern is consistent with all items in the survey, which could reflect either that they do not have enough information to respond or that they were not engaged in the survey process.


## Comparison of all scales

This section provides an overview of all five scales and how they compare. When evaluating these results, it is important to pay attention to both the average (i.e., mean) scale score as well as the shape and relative symmetry of the distribution of scale scores with the average as the midpoint. In short:

- Compliance or Fear Motivators has the lowest scale mean and likely has the greatest potential for improvement.
- Faculty Perceptions has the highest scale mean and the lowest standard deviation, which suggests there are very consistent results among administrators.
- Normative Purpose of Assessment has the second highest scale mean and the second lowest standard deviation. This indicates consistent, positive results.
- Sharing of Data has the largest standard distribution of the five scales, which indicates a wide range of responses.
Use of Data has the second lowest scale mean and has following chart shows the distribution of scale scores as a histogram (light grey) and the overall average scale score (dark grey). The histograms show the number of respondents within the stated range for the individual scale scores.

When evaluating these results, it is important to pay attention to both the average (i.e., mean) scale score as well as the shape and relative symmetry of the distribution of scale scores with the average as the midpoint. In short:

- Compliance or Fear Motivators has the lowest scale mean and likely has the greatest potential for improvement.
- Faculty Perceptions has the highest scale mean and the lowest standard deviation, which suggests there are very consistent results among administrators.
- Normative Purpose of Assessment has the second highest scale mean and the second lowest standard deviation. This indicates consistent, positive results.
- Sharing of Data has the largest standard distribution of the five scales, which indicates a wide range of responses.
- Use of Data has the second lowest scale mean and has the second highest standard deviation among the five scales.

Administrators survey - distribution of scale scores


Some implications for these results include:

- The areas of relative strength, as indicated by their higher average scores, are Faculty Perceptions (mean=4.6) and Normative Purpose of Assessment (mean=4.5).
- The combination of a low average scale score and a distribution that skews even lower for Compliance or Fear Motivators suggest that this area would be ideal for intervention.
- For the remaining two scales Sharing of Data and Use of Data, the majority of administrators report generally positive sentiment, however there is also a sizable minority of administrators whose scale scores fall at or below 3.0 ( $25 \%$ for Sharing of Data; $39 \%$ for Use of Data).


## Appendix

## I. Selected Items

## Administrators responses to selected items

Disagree Agree No Response

| Q17_1 | Decisions are made using assessment data. | 7\% | 72\% | 21\% |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Q13_9 | Assessment is an organized, coherent effort at my institution. | 14\% | 66\% | 21\% |
| Q17_4 | Assessment data are used to identify to what extent student learning outcomes are met. | 14\% | 66\% | 21\% |
| Q5_11 | My institution is more effective at its mission because of assessment. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
| Q5_4 | The purpose of assessment is clearly understood at my institution. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
| Q19_19R | The majority of faculty at my institution resist doing assessment. | 7\% | 62\% | 31\% |
| Q13_7 | Official institutional communications encourage assessment of student learning. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
| Q15_1 | Assessment results are regularly shared throughout my institution. | 24\% | 59\% | 17\% |
| Q5_9 | Discussions about student learning are at the heart of my institution's assessment effort. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
| Q13_12R | There is no systematic approach to assessment at my institution. | 21\% | 55\% | 24\% |
| Q19_12 | The majority of faculty members genuinely believe assessment supports student learning at my institution. | 17\% | 52\% | 31\% |
| Q13_14 | Budgetary decisions are tied to assessment results. | 24\% | 48\% | 28\% |
| Q13_6R | Assessment is primarily the responsibility of faculty members. | 31\% | 48\% | 21\% |
| Q19_22 | I am told what assessments I must conduct. | 24\% | 48\% | 28\% |
| Q15_3R | Student assessment results are not regularly shared. | 31\% | 45\% | 24\% |
| Q15_7 | The way we speak about assessment at my institution inspires colleagues to get involved in it. | 31\% | 45\% | 24\% |
| Q19_7R | Assessment is a "necessary evil" in higher education. | 31\% | 45\% | 24\% |
| Q19_9 | Assessment processes are clearly understood by a majority of the faculty and staff members at my institution. | 28\% | 45\% | 28\% |
| Q15_5 | Administrators consistently share assessment data with faculty members. | 28\% | 41\% | 31\% |
| Q15_6 | Institutional constituents request assessment results. | 28\% | 41\% | 31\% |
| Q17_3 | Assessment data are regularly used in official institutional communications (e.g., speeches, publications, etc.). | 38\% | 41\% | 21\% |
| Q17_7R | Assessment results are criticized for "going nowhere" (i.e., not leading to change). | 31\% | 41\% | 28\% |
| Q5_2R | Assessment is an exercise primarily for compliance purposes. | 38\% | 41\% | 21\% |
| Q19_16R | The majority of faculty at my institution are content to not know what assessments are occurring. | 31\% | 38\% | 31\% |
| Q17_9 | Senior leaders (i.e. president, provost, vice presidents) use assessment results in public ways (i.e., speeches, marketing .. | 34\% | 34\% | 31\% |
| Q15_4 | Assessment success stories are formally shared throughout my institution. | 45\% | 31\% | 24\% |
| Q5_5R | Assessment for accreditation purposes is prioritized above other assessment efforts. | 55\% | 1\% | 24\% |
| Q19_1R | The majority of colleagues at my institution perceive assessment as focused on compliance requirements. | 59\% | \% | 24\% |

## II. All survey items

## Administrators responses to all items

Disagree Agree No Response

| Q5 | Q5_1 | Assessment is expected as part of my institution's continuou | 0\% | 79\% | 21\% |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Q5_12 | Students learn better because of assessment. | 7\% | 69\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_10 | Assessment processes yield evidence of my institution's effe.. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_11 | My institution is more effective at its mission because of ass.. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_4 | The purpose of assessment is clearly understood at my instit.. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_6 | Assessment is emphasized as part of the institutional culture. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_8R | Assessment is conducted based on the whims of the people i.. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_9 | Discussions about student learning are at the heart of my ins.. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_7R | Assessment efforts do not have a clear focus. | 28\% | 48\% | 24\% |
|  | Q5_2R | Assessment is an exercise primarily for compliance purposes. | 38\% | 41\% | 21\% |
|  | Q5_3R | The purpose of assessment depends largely on who is asking. | 38\% | 41\% | 21\% |
|  | Q5_5R | Assessment for accreditation purposes is prioritized above ot.. | 55\% | 21\% | 24\% |
| Q13 | Q13_3 | I can name the office at my institution that leads student ass.. | 3\% | 76\% | 21\% |
|  | Q13_4 | I can name the office at my institution that leads assessment.. | 7\% | 72\% | 21\% |
|  | Q13_1 | It is clear who is ultimately in charge of assessment. | 7\% | 69\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_8 | Assessments of programs are typically connected to student I.. | 7\% | 69\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_10 | Assessment results are available to faculty by request. | 7\% | 66\% | 28\% |
|  | Q13_11 | My institution is structured in a way that facilitates assessme.. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_2 | Senior leaders (i.e. President or Provost) have made clear the.. | 7\% | 66\% | 28\% |
|  | Q13_5R | Assessment is primarily the responsibility of administrators. | 10\% | 66\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_9 | Assessment is an organized, coherent effort at my institution. | 14\% | 66\% | 21\% |
|  | Q13_15 | Evidence-based change at my institution is likely. | 21\% | 59\% | 21\% |
|  | Q13_7 | Official institutional communications encourage assessment .. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_1. | There is no systematic approach to assessment at my institut.. | 21\% | 55\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_13 | There is a common language for engaging in assessment. | 21\% | 55\% | 24\% |
|  | Q13_14 | Budgetary decisions are tied to assessment results. | 24\% | 48\% | 28\% |
|  | Q13_6R | Assessment is primarily the responsibility of faculty members. | 31\% | 48\% | 21\% |
| Q15 | Q15_9 | Senior leaders speak favorably of assessment. | 7\% | 66\% | 28\% |
|  | Q15_2R | Assessment results are not intended for distribution. | 17\% | 62\% | 21\% |
|  | Q15_1 | Assessment results are regularly shared throughout my instit.. | 24\% | 59\% | 17\% |
|  | Q15_8 | Colleagues at my institution speak positively of assessment. | 24\% | 52\% | 24\% |
|  | Q15_3R | Student assessment results are not regularly shared. | 31\% | 45\% | 24\% |
|  | Q15_7 | The way we speak about assessment at my institution inspire.. | 31\% | 45\% | 24\% |
|  | Q15_5 | Administrators consistently share assessment data with facul.. | 28\% | 41\% | 31\% |
|  | Q15_6 | Institutional constituents request assessment results. | 28\% | 41\% | 31\% |
|  | Q15_4 | Assessment success stories are formally shared throughout .. | 45\% | 31\% | 24\% |

## Administrators responses to all items Disagree Agree No Response

| Q17 | Q17_1 | Decisions are made using assessment data. | 7\% | 72\% | 21\% |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Q17_10 | Change occurs more readily when supported by assessme.. | 0\% | 72\% | 28\% |
|  | Q17_6R | Administrators use assessment to punish faculty members. | 0\% | 72\% | 28\% |
|  | Q17_2R | Assessment results are used to scare employees into com.. | 7\% | 69\% | 24\% |
|  | Q17_8R | There is pressure to reveal only positive results from asse.. | 3\% | 69\% | 28\% |
|  | Q17_4 | Assessment data are used to identify to what extent stude.. | 14\% | 66\% | 21\% |
|  | Q17_5 | Assessment results are used for improvement. | 17\% | 59\% | 24\% |
|  | Q17_3 | Assessment data are regularly used in official institutional.. | 38\% | 41\% | 21\% |
|  | Q17_7R | Assessment results are criticized for "going nowhere" (i.e.,.. | 31\% | 41\% | 28\% |
|  | Q17_9 | Senior leaders (i.e. president, provost, vice presidents) us.. | 34\% | 34\% | 31\% |
| Q19 | Q19_15 | Assessment is a "good thing" for my institution to do. | 0\% | 72\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_1.. | I am not convinced that assessment is necessary. | 3\% | 69\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_2 | The majority of colleagues at my institution perceive asse.. | 10\% | 69\% | 21\% |
|  | Q19_21 | Without assessment, my institution would suffer. | 3\% | 69\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_6R | I engage in assessment because I am afraid of what will h .. | 3\% | 69\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_1.. | Assessment is perceived as a punishment (i.e., something. | 7\% | 66\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_17 | The majority of faculty at my institution assess their own c.. | 0\% | 66\% | 34\% |
|  | Q19_18 | The majority of faculty at my institution participate in prog.. | 3\% | 66\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_1.. | The majority of faculty at my institution resist doing asses.. | 7\% | 62\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_5 | The majority of faculty members are eager to work with ad.. | 14\% | 62\% | 24\% |
|  | Q19_1.. | Assessment is a threat to academic freedom. | 14\% | 59\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_20 | Assessment results are meaningful to most faculty at my i.. | 14\% | 55\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_4R | The majority of colleagues at my institution are afraid of a.. | 17\% | 55\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_12 | The majority of faculty members genuinely believe assess.. | 17\% | 52\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_3R | If assessment was not required I would not be doing it. | 21\% | 52\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_8R | It is difficult to get the majority of faculty and staff to supp.. | 17\% | 52\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_1.. | The majority of faculty members do not care about assess.. | 21\% | 48\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_22 | I am told what assessments I must conduct. | 24\% | 48\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_7R | Assessment is a "necessary evil" in higher education. | 31\% | 45\% | 24\% |
|  | Q19_9 | Assessment processes are clearly understood by a majorit. | 28\% | 45\% | 28\% |
|  | Q19_1.. | The majority of faculty at my institution are content to not .. | 31\% | 38\% | 31\% |
|  | Q19_1R | The majority of colleagues at my institution perceive asse.. | 59\% | 17\% | 24\% |

## III. Additional Scale Descriptive Statistics

The table below displays descriptive statistics for each of the administrator scales. Standard deviation is a measure of how widely dispersed the scores are. A low standard deviation indicates that scores are densely distributed close to the mean. A large standard deviation indicates that scores are dispersed at a wider range. Because not every administrator completed the survey, the results here are based on a sample. We then use sample results to estimate the population mean. The confidence intervals are estimates of the range of the population mean.

|  | Average score | Scale standard deviation | Lower bound (95\% confidence) | Upper bound (95\% confidence) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Compliance or Fear Motivators Scale | 3.4 | 0.9 | 3.0 | 3.8 |
| Faculty Perceptions Scale | 4.6 | 0.5 | 4.4 | 4.8 |
| Normative Purpose of Assessment Scale | 4.5 | 0.8 | 4.1 | 4.8 |
| Sharing of Data Scale | 4.0 | 1.1 | 3.6 | 4.5 |
| Use of Data Scale | 3.9 | 1.1 | 3.5 | 4.4 |

## IV. Analysis of missing data

There were 29 administrators who began the survey. The number of missing values for survey items ranged from $5-10$. Due to the small number of survey respondents, missing data can represent a substantial proportion of the outcome ( 10 missing values out of 29 respondents is $34.5 \%$ ). Because this survey has a small number of respondents and relatively high proportion of missing values, it is important to use caution when making inferences about the population of administrators at SCC.

Count of missing values by question number



[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ Fuller, Matthew B., Skidmore, Susan T., Bustamante, Rebecca M., Peggy C. Holzweiss. Empirically Exploring Higher Education Cultures of Assessment. The Review of Higher Education. Volume 39. Number 3. Spring 2016. pp. 395-429.

