

# **Survey of Assessment Culture – Administrators Scales**

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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)<sup>1</sup>. 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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.

# **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 <u>not</u> 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



- 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



- *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

Assessment is expected as part of my institution's continuous 0% 79% 21% Q5\_1 improvement process. Q13 8 69% 24% Assessments of programs are typically connected to student learning. My institution is structured in a way that facilitates assessment 66% 24% Q13 11 practices focused on improved student learning. Senior leaders (i.e. President or Provost) have made clear their 66% 28% Q13\_2 expectations regarding assessment. Q13\_9 Assessment is an organized, coherent effort at my institution. 66% 21% 66% 24% Q5 10 Assessment processes yield evidence of my institution's effectiveness 66% 24% Q5\_4 The purpose of assessment is clearly understood at my institution. 10 Q5\_6 66% 24% Assessment is emphasized as part of the institutional culture. 109 Discussions about student learning are at the heart of my institution's 59% 24% Q5\_9 17 assessment effort. 55% 24% 013 12R There is no systematic approach to assessment at my institution. 219 Q5\_7R 28% 48% 24% Assessment efforts do not have a clear focus

Disagree Agree No response

- 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.



#### Items for Sharing of Data Scale

Disagree Agree No response



- 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



#### Items for Use of Data Scale

Disagree Agree No response



- 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 ٠ 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.

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- Normative Purpose of Assessment has the second highest scale mean and the second lowest standard ٠ 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%	21%	24%
Q19_1R	The majority of colleagues at my institution perceive assessment as focused on compliance requirements.	59%	17%	24%

# II. All survey items

## Administrators responses to all items Disagree Agree No Response

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_8F	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_7F	Assessment efforts do not have a clear focus.	28% 48%	24%
Q5_2F	Assessment is an exercise primarily for compliance purposes.	38% 41%	21%
Q5_3F	The purpose of assessment depends largely on who is asking	38% 41%	21%
Q5_5F	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_1	0 Assessment results are available to faculty by request.	7% 66%	28%
Q13_1	1 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_5	R 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_1	5 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_1	3 There is a common language for engaging in assessment.	21% 55%	24%
Q13_1	4 Budgetary decisions are tied to assessment results.	24%	28%
Q13_0	${\sf R}~$ Assessment is primarily the responsibility of faculty members.	31%	21%
Q15 Q15_9	Senior leaders speak favorably of assessment.	7% 66%	28%
Q15_2	R 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_3	R Student assessment results are not regularly shared.	31%	24%
Q15_7	The way we speak about assessment at my institution inspire	31%	24%
Q15_8	Administrators consistently share assessment data with facul	28% 41%	31%
Q15_0	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
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Q17	Q17_1	Decisions are made using assessment data.	
	Q17_10	Change occurs more readily when supported by assessme	
	Q17_6R	Administrators use assessment to punish faculty members.	
	Q17_2R	Assessment results are used to scare employees into com	
	Q17_8R	There is pressure to reveal only positive results from asse	
	Q17_4	Assessment data are used to identify to what extent stude	1
	Q17_5	Assessment results are used for improvement.	1
	Q17_3	Assessment data are regularly used in official institutional	389
	Q17_7R	Assessment results are criticized for "going nowhere" (i.e.,	31
	Q17_9	Senior leaders (i.e. president, provost, vice presidents) us	349
Q19	Q19_15	Assessment is a "good thing" for my institution to do.	
	Q19_1	I am not convinced that assessment is necessary.	
	Q19_2	The majority of colleagues at my institution perceive asse	1
	Q19_21	Without assessment, my institution would suffer.	
	Q19_6R	I engage in assessment because I am afraid of what will h	
	Q19_1	Assessment is perceived as a punishment (i.e., something	
	Q19_17	The majority of faculty at my institution assess their own c	
	Q19_18	The majority of faculty at my institution participate in prog	
	Q19_1	The majority of faculty at my institution resist doing asses	
	Q19_5	The majority of faculty members are eager to work with ad	1
	Q19_1	Assessment is a threat to academic freedom.	1
	Q19_20	Assessment results are meaningful to most faculty at my i	1
	Q19_4R	The majority of colleagues at my institution are afraid of a	1
	Q19_12	The majority of faculty members genuinely believe assess	1
	Q19_3R	If assessment was not required I would not be doing it.	2
	Q19_8R	It is difficult to get the majority of faculty and staff to supp	1
	Q19_1	The majority of faculty members do not care about assess	2
	Q19_22	I am told what assessments I must conduct.	24
	Q19_7R	Assessment is a "necessary evil" in higher education.	31
	Q19_9	Assessment processes are clearly understood by a majorit	28
	Q19_1	The majority of faculty at my institution are content to not	31
	Q19_1R	The majority of colleagues at my institution perceive asse	59%



## **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

