

This document provides a summary of the results of the Student Affairs Survey of Assessment Culture, focusing on the four separate scales derived from its items. In Fall 2019, survey administrators at Sam Houston State University invited 80 student affairs staff members from Southeast Community College to participate in the survey; 41 of them participated for a response rate of 51%. The scales were created and validated by Dr. Matthew Fuller and colleagues as described in Fuller and Lane (2017)¹. Each scale consists of multiple individual survey items.

The scales in the Student Affairs Survey of Assessment Culture survey were validated by Fuller & Lane (2017) 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 four factors in the Student Affairs Survey of Assessment Culture. Those four factors, which are described later in the document, are:

- Assessment Communication
- Clear Commitment to Assessment
- Connection to Change
- Fear of Assessment

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

<i>Value</i>	<i>Text</i>
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.

¹ Fuller, Matthew B., & Forrest C. Lane. An Empirical Model of Culture of Assessment in Student Affairs. *Research & Practice in Assessment*. Volume 12. Winter 2017. pp. 18-27.

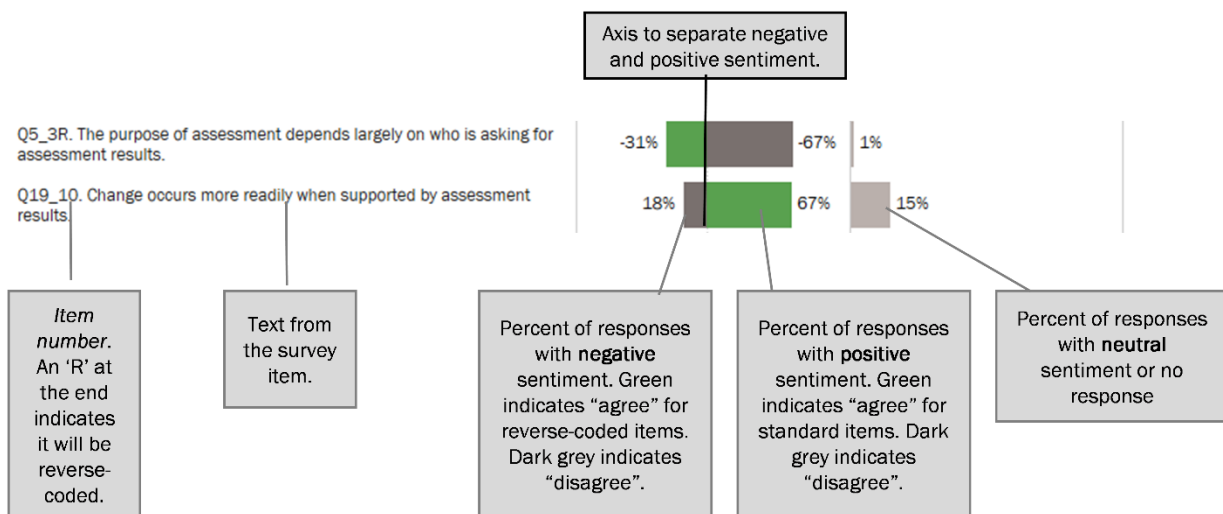
Single scale results

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 & Lane (2017).
- 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.

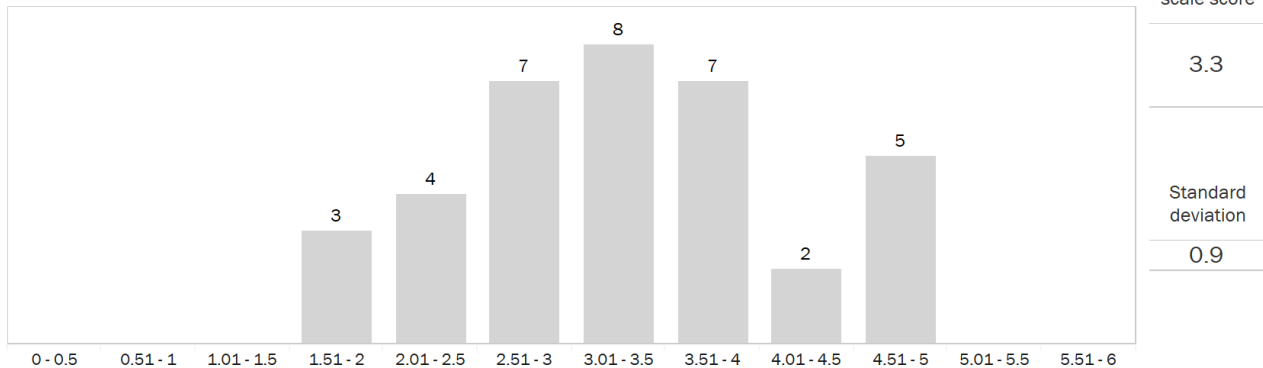
- These charts provide the items included in the scale presented in descending order of percent of positive sentiment.
- Three values are provided for each item: green bars indicate the percent who agreed with the statement; dark grey indicates the percent who disagreed; and light grey are those who 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.



Assessment Communication Scale

Assessment Communication scale focuses on how frequently and how effectively assessment results are shared.

Student affairs survey - distribution of *Assessment Communication* scale scores



Items for *Assessment Communication* Scale

Disagree Agree No response

Item ID	Item Description	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	No response (%)
Q15_2	Official communications encourage assessment of student learning.	29%	49%	22%
Q15_7	Assessment results are available from administrators by request.	17%	49%	34%
Q17_3	Assessment data are regularly used in official communications (e.g., speeches, publications, etc.).	29%	46%	24%
Q17_9	Upper student affairs administrators use assessment results in public ways (i.e., speeches, marketing efforts, media stories, etc.).	32%	46%	22%
Q15_1	Assessment results are regularly shared throughout my division.	44%	39%	17%
Q15_9	Communication of assessment results has been effective.	41%	34%	24%
Q15_4R	Student assessment results are NOT regularly shared with student affairs staff.	54%	32%	15%
Q15_5	Assessment success stories are shared throughout my division.	54%	29%	17%
Q15_10	I am aware of several assessment success stories (i.e. instances of assessment resulting in important changes) in my division.	49%	27%	24%
Q15_6	Student affairs staff consistently receive assessment data from administrators.	54%	22%	24%
Q15_8	Assessment results are regularly requested by student affairs staff in my division.	51%	20%	29%

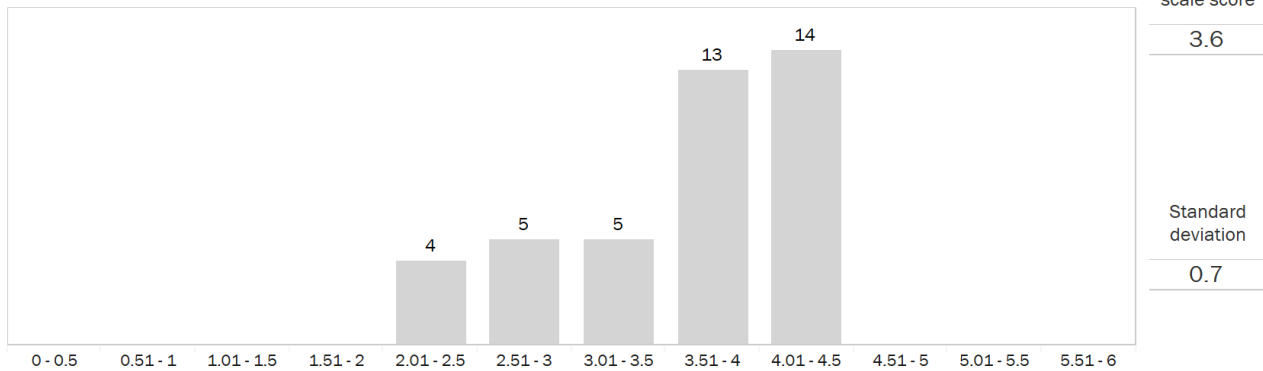
Some notes about these data:

- The *Assessment Communication* scale has the lowest average score (3.3) and the largest standard deviation (.9) of all four scales. These results demonstrate less positive sentiment and a wide range of responses.
- There is a fairly high proportion of missing data on items in this scale. Items in this scale range from 15% to 34% of respondents who did not provide a response. This may be due to many factors, however student affairs staff were more reluctant to answer items in this scale than in the other scales.

Clear Commitment to Assessment Scale

Clear Commitment to Assessment scale focuses on how committed the institution is to assessment and how the institution has implemented assessment practices.

Student affairs survey - distribution of *Clear Commitment to Assessment Scale* scale scores



Items for *Clear Commitment to Assessment Scale*

Disagree Agree No response

Item ID	Item Description	Disagree	Agree	No response
Q5_7R	Assessments do not have clear focus.	27%	73%	0%
Q5_10	Discussions about student learning are at the heart of my division's assessment effort.	27%	71%	2%
Q5_4	The purpose of assessment is clearly understood at my institution.	29%	71%	0%
Q5_6	Assessments of programs are typically connected back to student learning.	29%	71%	0%
Q5_11	Assessment processes yield evidence of my division's effectiveness.	32%	66%	2%
Q27_1	Assessment is emphasized as part of the division's culture.	32%	56%	12%
Q5_1	Assessment is expected as part of my institution's continuous improvement process.	46%	54%	0%
Q13_5	I can name the office at my institution that leads assessment efforts for student learning at my institution.	44%	51%	5%
Q13_3	Upper Student Affairs Administrators have made clear their expectations regarding assessment.	49%	49%	2%
Q15_2	Official communications encourage assessment of student learning.	29%	49%	22%
Q13_1	It is clear who is ultimately in charge of assessment in my division.	51%	46%	2%
Q27_12	Assessment is vital to my division's way of operating.	39%	44%	17%
Q27_6	My division is structured in a way that facilitates assessment practices focused on improved student learning.	41%	41%	17%
Q27_10	Assessment is an organized, coherent effort in my division.	46%	39%	15%
Q27_2R	There is no systematic approach to assessment in my division.	51%	34%	15%

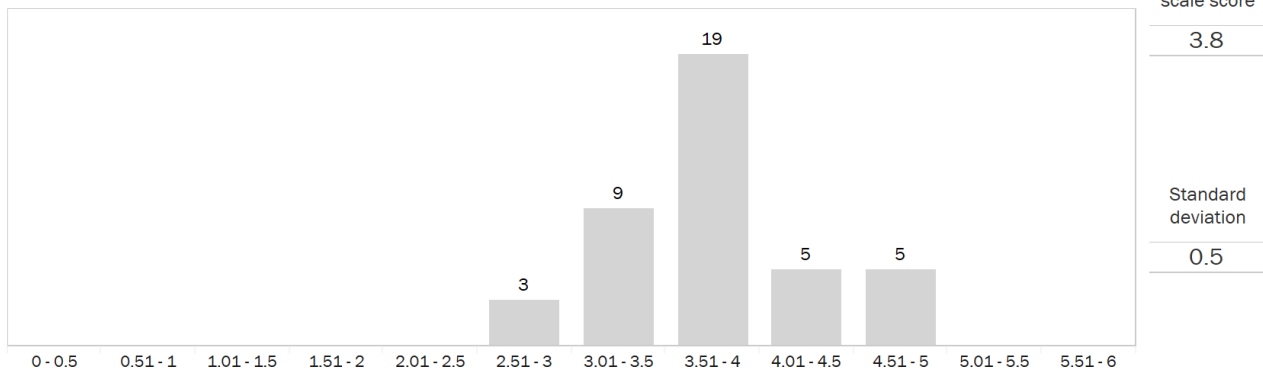
Some notes about these data:

- The *Clear Commitment to Assessment* scale has the 2nd lowest average score (3.6) and the 2nd lowest standard deviation (.7) of all four scales.
- The items with the highest amount of positive sentiment are items related to reasons why assessment efforts are in place (i.e. student learning, evidence of effectiveness). The items with the lowest amounts of positive sentiment focus on how assessment efforts are organized and carried out. This suggests student affairs staff agree with the purpose of assessment, but feel like assessment efforts could be more organized and systematic.

Connection to Change Scale

Connection to change scale focused on how likely assessment results drive change and the institution's decision making.

Student affairs survey - distribution of *Connection to Change Scale* scale scores



Items for *Connection to Change Scale*

Disagree Agree No response

Item ID	Item Text	Disagree	Agree	No response
Q5_6	Assessments of programs are typically connected back to student learning.	29%	71%	0%
Q5_11	Assessment processes yield evidence of my division's effectiveness.	32%	66%	2%
Q5_5R	If assessment was not required, I would not be doing it.	41%	59%	0%
Q17_10	Change occurs more readily when supported by assessment results.	27%	51%	22%
Q17_4	Assessment data are used to identify to what extent student learning outcomes are met.	22%	51%	27%
Q17_5	Assessment results are used for improvement.	29%	49%	22%
Q27_9	A recommended change is more likely to be enacted if it is supported by assessment data.	39%	49%	12%
Q17_1	Decisions are made using assessment data.	32%	46%	22%
Q17_3	Assessment data are regularly used in official communications (e.g., speeches, publications, etc.).	29%	46%	24%
Q17_9	Upper student affairs administrators use assessment results in public ways (i.e., speeches, marketing efforts, media stories, etc.).	32%	46%	22%
Q27_12	Assessment is vital to my division's way of operating.	39%	44%	17%

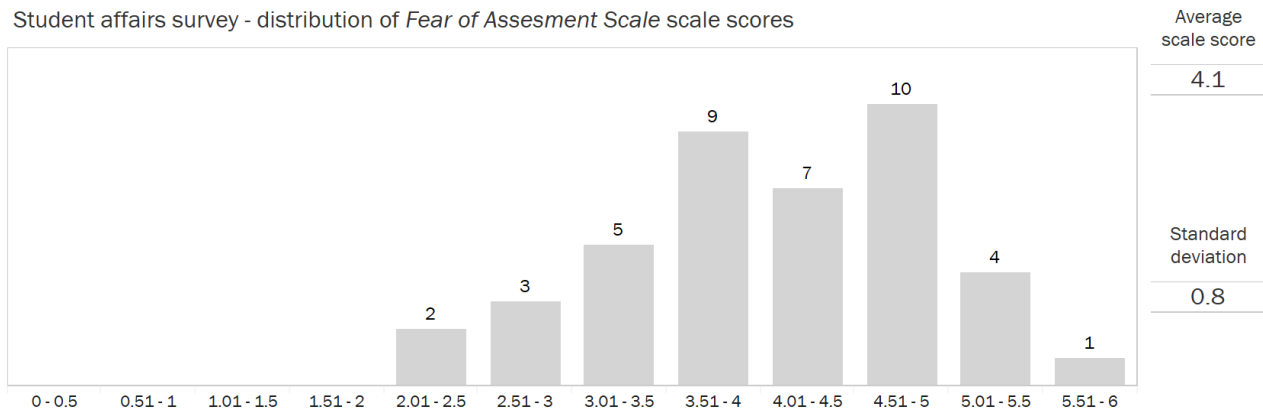
Some notes about these data:

- The *Connection to Change* scale has the 2nd highest average score (3.8) and the lowest standard deviation (.5) of all four scales. These results indicate relatively high positive sentiment and highly consistent results from student affairs staff. Scale scores are densely distributed close to the mean with no extreme scores.
- These results indicate some skepticism that assessment is vital to my division's way of operating (Q27_12) or that upper student affairs administrators use assessment results in public ways (Q17_9).

Fear of Assessment Scale

Fear of Assessment scale explored the extent to which student affairs staff believe that assessment is used for punishment or compliance.

Student affairs survey - distribution of *Fear of Assessment Scale* scale scores



Items for *Fear of Assessment Scale*

Disagree Agree No response

Item ID	Item Description	Disagree (%)	Agree (%)	No response (%)
Q5_9R	Assessment is conducted based on the whims of the people in charge.	22%	78%	0%
Q17_6R	Administrators use assessment to punish student affairs staff members.	10%	66%	24%
Q17_2R	Assessment results are used to scare student affairs staff into compliance with what the administration wants.	17%	59%	24%
Q5_5R	If assessment was not required, I would not be doing it.	41%	59%	0%
Q17_8R	There is pressure to reveal only positive results from assessment efforts.	24%	54%	22%
Q5_8R	Assessment is a "necessary evil" in student affairs.	49%	51%	0%
Q5_2R	Assessment is an exercise primarily for compliance purposes.	51%	49%	0%
Q17_7R	Assessment results are criticized for "going nowhere" (i.e., not leading to change).	34%	37%	29%

Some notes about these data:

- The *Fear of Assessment* scale has the highest average score (4.1) and the 2nd highest standard deviation (.8) of all four scales. The relatively high mean score indicates that student affairs staff do not feel that assessment is used as punishment. The high standard deviation indicates a wide variety of responses and the presence of extreme scores (both positive and negative). There is some evidence however, that student affairs staff feel that assessment is conducted mostly for compliance purposes (Q5_2R).
- Some of the items in this scale suffer from high rates of missing data. This may be due to many factors, however because of the nature of these questions, student affairs staff may be reluctant to provide responses.

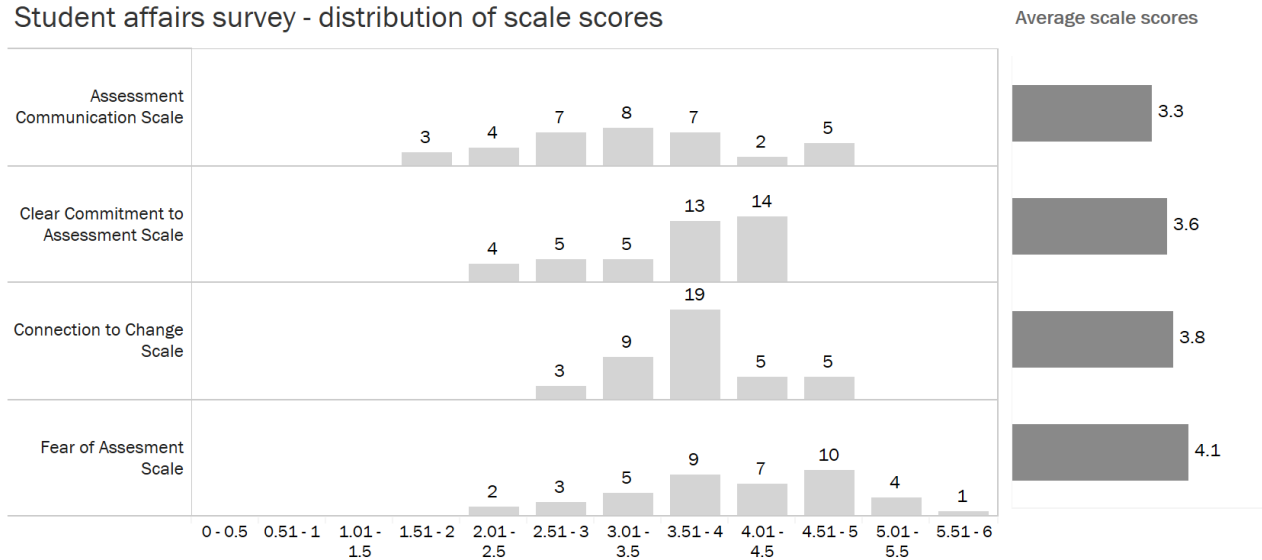
Comparison of all scales

This section provides an overview of all four 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.

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.

Student affairs survey - distribution of scale scores



Some implications for these results include:

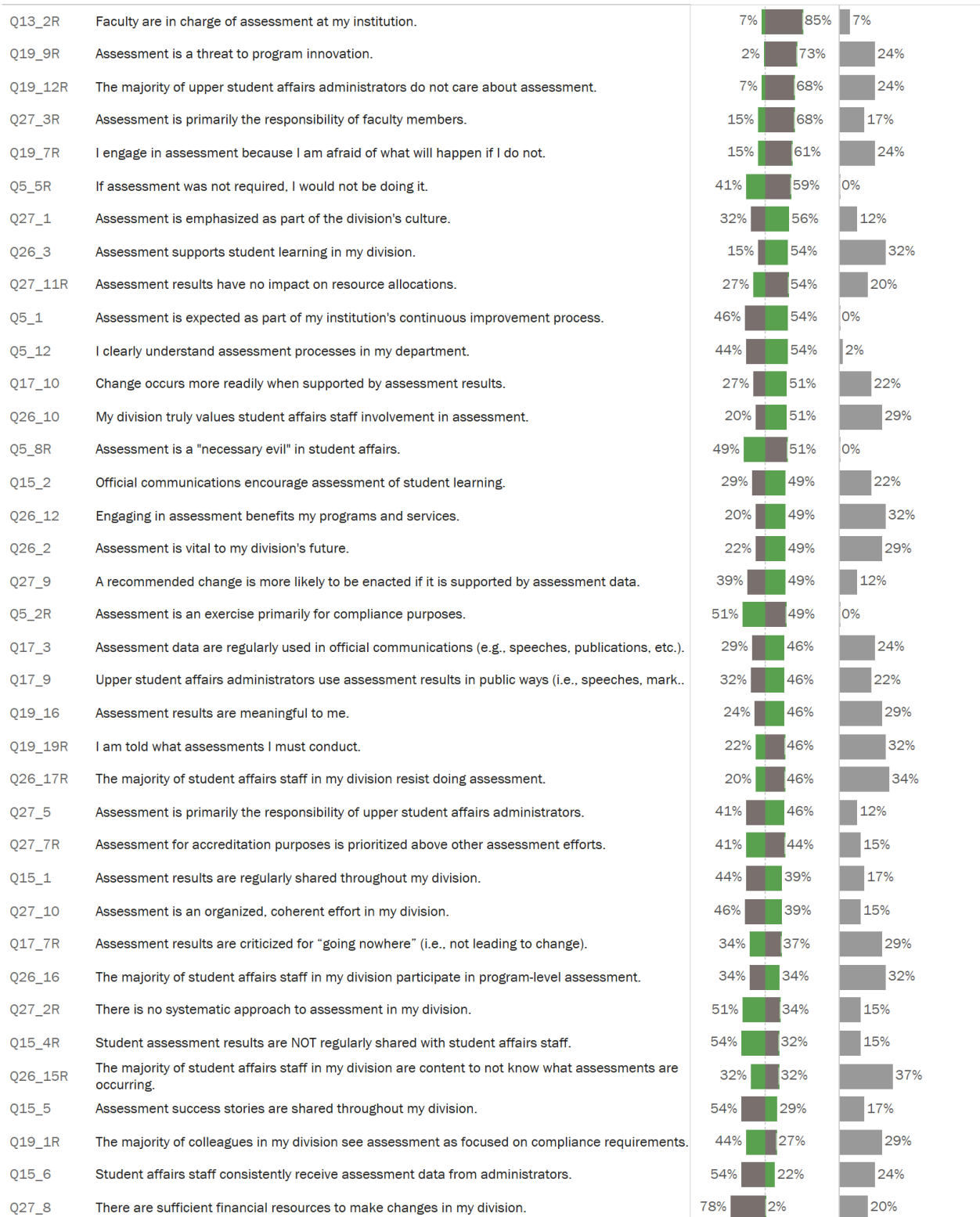
- The areas of relative strength, as indicated by their higher average scores include the *Fear of Assessment* scale and *Connection to Change* scale
- Given the combination of a low average scale and high standard deviation, the *Assessment Communication* scale appears to an area of focus for improvement.

Appendix

I. Selected Items

Student affairs responses to selected items

Disagree Agree No response



II. All survey items

Student Affairs responses to all items

Disagree Agree No response

Q5	Q5_9R	Assessment is conducted based on the whims of the people in charge.	22%	78%	0%
	Q5_7R	Assessments do not have clear focus.	27%	73%	0%
	Q5_10	Discussions about student learning are at the heart of my division's assessment effort.	27%	71%	2%
	Q5_4	The purpose of assessment is clearly understood at my institution.	29%	71%	0%
	Q5_6	Assessments of programs are typically connected back to student learning.	29%	71%	0%
	Q5_11	Assessment processes yield evidence of my division's effectiveness.	32%	66%	2%
	Q5_5R	If assessment was not required, I would not be doing it.	41%	59%	0%
	Q5_1	Assessment is expected as part of my institution's continuous improvement process.	46%	54%	0%
	Q5_12	I clearly understand assessment processes in my department.	44%	54%	2%
	Q5_8R	Assessment is a "necessary evil" in student affairs.	49%	51%	0%
	Q5_2R	Assessment is an exercise primarily for compliance purposes.	51%	49%	0%
	Q5_3R	The purpose of assessment depends largely on who is asking for assessment results.	63%	37%	0%
Q13	Q13_2R	Faculty are in charge of assessment at my institution.	7%	85%	7%
	Q13_4	I can name the office at my institution that leads assessment efforts for accreditation purposes at my institution.	46%	51%	2%
	Q13_5	I can name the office at my institution that leads assessment efforts for student learning at my institution.	44%	51%	5%
	Q13_3	Upper Student Affairs Administrators have made clear their expectations regarding assessment.	49%	49%	2%
	Q13_1	It is clear who is ultimately in charge of assessment in my division.	51%	46%	2%
Q15	Q15_3R	Assessment results are NOT intended for distribution.	20%	59%	22%
	Q15_2	Official communications encourage assessment of student learning.	29%	49%	22%
	Q15_7	Assessment results are available from administrators by request.	17%	49%	34%
	Q15_1	Assessment results are regularly shared throughout my division.	44%	39%	17%
	Q15_9	Communication of assessment results has been effective.	41%	34%	24%
	Q15_4R	Student assessment results are NOT regularly shared with student affairs staff.	54%	32%	15%
	Q15_5	Assessment success stories are shared throughout my division.	54%	29%	17%
	Q15_10	I am aware of several assessment success stories (i.e. instances of assessment resulting in important changes) in my division.	49%	27%	24%
	Q15_6	Student affairs staff consistently receive assessment data from administrators.	54%	22%	24%
	Q15_8	Assessment results are regularly requested by student affairs staff in my division.	51%	20%	29%

Student Affairs responses to all items

Disagree Agree No response

Q17	Q17_6R	Administrators use assessment to punish student affairs staff members.	10%	66%	24%
	Q17_2R	Assessment results are used to scare student affairs staff into compliance with what the administration wants.	17%	59%	24%
	Q17_8R	There is pressure to reveal only positive results from assessment efforts.	24%	54%	22%
	Q17_10	Change occurs more readily when supported by assessment results.	27%	51%	22%
	Q17_4	Assessment data are used to identify to what extent student learning outcomes are met.	22%	51%	27%
	Q17_5	Assessment results are used for improvement.	29%	49%	22%
	Q17_1	Decisions are made using assessment data.	32%	46%	22%
	Q17_3	Assessment data are regularly used in official communications (e.g., speeches, publications, etc.).	29%	46%	24%
	Q17_9	Upper student affairs administrators use assessment results in public ways (i.e., speeches, marketing efforts, media stories, etc.).	32%	46%	22%
	Q17_7R	Assessment results are criticized for "going nowhere" (i.e., not leading to change).	34%	37%	29%
	Q17_11	Assessment results in a fair depiction of what I do as a student affairs staff member.	44%	32%	24%
	Q17_12	Assessment results in an accurate depiction of what I do as a student affairs staff member.	46%	27%	27%
Q19	Q19_9R	Assessment is a threat to program innovation.	2%	73%	24%
	Q19_12R	The majority of upper student affairs administrators do not care about assessment.	7%	68%	24%
	Q19_7R	I engage in assessment because I am afraid of what will happen if I do not.	15%	61%	24%
	Q19_8R	Assessment is perceived as a punishment (i.e., something I regret being assigned).	15%	61%	24%
	Q19_6R	It is difficult to get the majority of administrators to support assessment-based improvement efforts.	15%	59%	27%
	Q19_18R	Upper student affairs administrators use assessment as a form of control (i.e. to regulate division-wide processes).	22%	51%	27%
	Q19_3	The majority of student affairs staff in my division see assessment as improving student learning.	24%	51%	24%
	Q19_13	Assessment is a "good thing" for my institution to do.	27%	49%	24%
	Q19_4R	I am not convinced that assessment is necessary.	27%	49%	24%
	Q19_5	The majority of upper student affairs administrators genuinely believe assessment supports student learning/development in my division.	27%	49%	24%
	Q19_16	Assessment results are meaningful to me.	24%	46%	29%
	Q19_17	I support the ways in which upper student affairs administrators have used assessment in my division.	29%	46%	24%
	Q19_19R	I am told what assessments I must conduct.	22%	46%	32%
	Q19_2R	The majority of student affairs staff in my division are afraid of assessment.	32%	44%	24%
	Q19_10	Assessment processes are clearly understood by a majority of administrators at my institution.	34%	41%	24%
	Q19_11	The majority of student affairs staff are eager to work with faculty.	34%	41%	24%
	Q19_14	I assess programs I lead.	24%	34%	41%
	Q19_15	I assess my department.	27%	34%	39%
	Q19_1R	The majority of colleagues in my division see assessment as focused on compliance requirements.	44%	27%	29%

Student Affairs responses to all items

Disagree Agree No response

Q26	Q26_1	I have a generally positive attitude toward my division's culture of assessment.	7%		61%		32%
	Q26_11R	Assessment is someone else's problem, not mine.	12%		54%		34%
	Q26_20	Without assessment, my institution would suffer.	17%		54%		29%
	Q26_3	Assessment supports student learning in my division.	15%		54%		32%
	Q26_10	My division truly values student affairs staff involvement in assessment.	20%		51%		29%
	Q26_6	Assessment is the right thing to do for our students.	20%		51%		29%
	Q26_12	Engaging in assessment benefits my programs and services.	20%		49%		32%
	Q26_13	Assessment is a "good thing" for me to do.	22%		49%		29%
	Q26_14	Assessment is a "good thing" for my division to do.	20%		49%		32%
	Q26_2	Assessment is vital to my division's future.	22%		49%		29%
	Q26_5	Assessment makes a difference to student learning.	22%		49%		29%
	Q26_7R	I avoid doing assessment activities if I can.	22%		49%		29%
	Q26_17R	The majority of student affairs staff in my division resist doing assessment.	20%		46%		34%
	Q26_8	In general, I am eager to work with upper student affairs administrators.	24%		46%		29%
	Q26_18	Assessment results are meaningful to most student affairs staff in my division.	29%		41%		29%
	Q26_19	Without assessment, my division would suffer.	29%		41%		29%
	Q26_9R	I do not have time to engage in assessment efforts.	32%		39%		29%
	Q26_4	I enjoy engaging in assessment efforts.	34%		37%		29%
	Q26_16	The majority of student affairs staff in my division participate in program-level assessment.	34%		34%		32%
	Q26_15R	The majority of student affairs staff in my division are content to not know what assessments are occurring.	32%		32%		37%
Q27	Q27_3R	Assessment is primarily the responsibility of faculty members.	15%		68%		17%
	Q27_4R	Assessment is primarily the responsibility of student affairs staff.	17%		68%		15%
	Q27_1	Assessment is emphasized as part of the division's culture.	32%		56%		12%
	Q27_13	Upper student affairs administrators are supportive of making changes.	32%		56%		12%
	Q27_11R	Assessment results have no impact on resource allocations.	27%		54%		20%
	Q27_9	A recommended change is more likely to be enacted if it is supported by assessment data.	39%		49%		12%
	Q27_5	Assessment is primarily the responsibility of upper student affairs administrators.	41%		46%		12%
	Q27_12	Assessment is vital to my division's way of operating.	39%		44%		17%
	Q27_7R	Assessment for accreditation purposes is prioritized above other assessment efforts.	41%		44%		15%
	Q27_6	My division is structured in a way that facilitates assessment practices focused on improved student learning.	41%		41%		17%
	Q27_10	Assessment is an organized, coherent effort in my division.	46%		39%		15%
	Q27_2R	There is no systematic approach to assessment in my division.	51%		34%		15%
	Q27_8	There are sufficient financial resources to make changes in my division.	78%		2%		20%

III. Additional scale descriptive statistics

The table below displays descriptive statistics for each of the student affairs 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 student affairs staff member 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.

Scale name	Average score	Scale standard deviation	Lower bound (95% confidence)	Upper bound (95% confidence)
Assessment Communication Scale	3.3	0.9	3.0	3.6
Clear Commitment to Assessment Scale	3.6	0.7	3.4	3.8
Connection to Change Scale	3.8	0.5	3.6	3.9
Fear of Assessment Scale	4.1	0.8	3.9	4.4

IV. Analysis of missing data

There were 41 student affairs staff who began the survey. The number of missing values for survey items ranged from 0 – 17. Due to the small number of survey respondents, missing data can represent a substantial proportion of the outcome (17 missing values out of 41 respondents is 41.6%). 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 student affairs staff at SCC.

Count of missing values by question number

