

ASSESSMENT CLIMATE SURVEY REPORT

April, 2016

The Assessment Climate Survey was designed and conducted by John Stevenson, with substantial collaborative help from Elaine Finan and Michele Martel in Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation (SLOAA) in the Office for Advancement of Teaching and Learning. The conclusions and recommendations are those of the author.

What was the survey about?

The purpose of the survey is to look at progress in the University's implementation of program-level student learning outcomes assessment, and give guidance for future policies. Chairs' perceptions were chosen as a particularly useful indicator of that progress, because chairs play a bridging role between the expectations of the administration and the concerns and workload pressures of the faculty in their departments. The chairs also have a particular interest in the quality of the outputs from their departments, including the teaching-learning mission-related outputs, as reflected in the Academic Program Review requirements.

The design of the survey is based on a developmental framework for stages of organizational capacity for learning outcomes assessment: (1) denial ("It's a passing fad"); (2) external demand ("The administration says we must; give us the time and resources or do it yourselves"); (3) tentative commitment ("Leaders are committed and some of us are too"); (4) full-scale effort ("Most of us accept the necessity and there are policies and resources available to help"); and (5) maintenance and refinement ("We see the value and regularly use the results at all organizational levels").

Content of the survey is organized into six major domains: (1) chairs' personal attitudes toward assessment; (2) institution-wide faculty norms regarding the value of assessment; (3) leadership commitment; (4) infrastructure support for assessment; (5) department-level implementation; and (6) university-wide implementation. A final item addresses chairs' perception of how far URI has come in the development of a useful, sustainable assessment system, using the 5-stage model described above.

As an organization developing the capacity to conduct and learn from program-level assessment of student learning outcomes, URI is investing resources and implementing policies for assessment. The survey gives us something with which to benchmark our progress over time and identify strengths and weaknesses in our overall progress. The findings can inform policy and resource allocation decisions as we go forward.

What was done?

The survey was administered as an online survey to all URI department chairs (and the directors of department-equivalent academic programs) in Fall 2009, Fall 2012, and again in Fall 2015. In 2009, 30 of 51 responded (58.8%); In Fall 2012, it was 36 of 61 (59.0%); and in 2015 it was 28 of 49 (57.1%).

The original 2009 survey consisted of 37 Likert-scale items (with response choices ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree); seven items were added for the 2012 version for a total of 44 structured items; and in 2015 still further revisions were made, leading to a total of 51 structured items (see Table 1 for this version of the instrument). An open-ended space for qualitative comments was provided in all three years.

What was found?

Table 1 presents the item-by-item results for all three years, providing the percents of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed to each item and noting statistically significant changes when those were found. The items are grouped into the six domains described above, which are intended to summarize major indicators of progress in development of program assessment capacity. Qualitative comments are also included.

Statistical significance tests (ANOVAs) at the item level provide evidence of forward progress on some important issues. Chairs responding in 2015 are less likely to agree that faculty fear possible negative consequences of assessment (item #9), and more likely to agree that faculty value transparency (item # 10), have adequate time provided for assessment (item #20), and that the university is defining, measuring, and reporting university-wide learning outcome objectives on a regular basis (item # 47).

Item-level results also provide cause for concern. In 2015 there is significantly lower agreement that college deans recognize and support assessment (item # 14), that the administration keeps track of assessment activities and results (item # 19), and that programs that do not comply with assessment reporting requirements will receive negative consequences (item # 22).

Figure 1 presents results for the six summary indices, with means calculated on the basis of relevant items available for all three time points (averaging agreement with positively worded items and disagreement with negatively worded items, which are denoted as “reverse keyed” in Table 1) for each of the *a priori* domains. The **Appendix** provides some statistical information about the domain scales, including Cronbach’s Alpha reliabilities and inter-scale correlations.

Only one of the domain-level patterns of change over time achieves statistical significance in one-way analyses of variance: chairs’ perceptions of faculty norms supportive of assessment have gone up significantly in 2015. Looking at patterns over time it is clear that chairs consistently view the value of assessment for their own departments as relatively high and believe infrastructure support for assessment is going steadily up. Significant item-level changes reported above are consistent with those trends, and several item level analyses in the Infrastructure Support domain also approach significance in the positive direction.

However, there is reason to maintain our focus on enhancing forward movement: Leadership Commitment remains the lowest domain score and has continued a downward trend from past administrations. The significant item-level changes within that domain exemplify the negative trend.

Figure 2 shows what the chairs thought about URI’s current stage in the establishment of program-level assessment. The modal response is “External Demand”, with administrative leaders requiring faculty compliance to meet that demand. In a Discriminant Function Analysis, perception of Leadership Commitment is the strongest statistical predictor of chairs’ view of where URI is developmentally.

What Can We Conclude?

I see both good news and bad news in these findings. First, it is important to note that there are some important limitations: the sample sizes are small (limiting chances for statistical significance), the return rates are less than ideal (just under 60%, not too bad for this type of survey), and there is a high turnover in those responding to the survey from year to year (less than 20% responding in 2015 were sure they had previously taken the survey). Nevertheless, I believe this information can provide valuable insight into the state of the institution with regard to program assessment and lead to constructive action steps to improve the educational experience of our students and the confidence of our faculty in the quality of their degree programs.

Here is some of the **good news**:

- Chairs' personal views of the role of assessment in their departments remains consistently the most positive domain, and they continue to see the level of implementation within their own departments positively as well.
- Infrastructure Support, including things like training, models for what is expected in reports, clear policies for reporting, an office providing many forms of assistance, and a helpful website, is the third highest domain and shows a steady positive trend over time. We appear to be on track for providing what is needed to make assessment both feasible and useful.
- Chairs' view that faculty norms are supportive of assessment has made a significant upward jump in the 2015 results. More chairs agree that faculty value transparency, including open discussion of learning outcomes; fewer agree that their colleagues believe that assessment is unrelated to a concern for student learning or that faculty resist assessment due to fear of negative findings. This suggests that chairs did see the institution moving toward more acceptance of the necessity of engaging in these activities. The perception that the institution is committed to the goal of having every student graduate with abilities and values consistent with the mission and strategic plan went up ten points between 2009 and 2012, and continued upward in 2015.

These findings suggest that our University is making real progress in establishing the value of assessment within programs, increasing the acceptance by faculty that assessment is going to happen and can be helpful rather than dangerous, and providing the sorts of structural support that can make these activities meaningful and sustainable.

But there is also some **bad news**:

- Leadership Commitment remains the lowest domain score and has continued a downward trend from past administrations. Significant item-level changes (in deans' support, administrative tracking, and lack of negative consequences for non-compliance) exemplify that negative trend.
- Chairs' modal view of URI's current stage in the establishment of program-level assessment is "External Demand", with administrative leaders requiring faculty compliance to meet that demand.

When we used Discriminant Function Analysis to investigate which of the Domain Scores were most predictive of the choice each chair made about what stage our assessment process was in, perception of Leadership Commitment was the strongest statistical predictor of chairs' view of where URI is developmentally. Rather than judging the institution's progress on the basis of the work done in their own department, the campus-wide faculty acceptance, or the improving infrastructure support for assessment, chairs apparently view the commitment of administrative leaders as the best indicator of how "mature" our assessment system is. That finding is consistent with published work on what it takes to truly institutionalize learning outcomes assessment in higher education. Although infrastructure support for assessment can enable assessment (and we are moving in the right direction for that), leadership commitment to motivate assessment as an internally useful process is the key to a sustained quality-improvement system.

It is gratifying to see that chairs believe in the value of assessment for their own undergraduate and graduate students, confirm a sense that faculty norms are moving in the right direction, show more awareness of policies promulgated by the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC), and recognize gains over time in the practical help offered by SLOAA. However, there is not a comparable sense that the administration genuinely values this work and will provide the recognition, resources, and incentives to demonstrate that valuing. Qualitative comments included with Table 1 reinforce this conclusion.

Based on the national literature, I believe this lack of perceived leadership can undermine the good work that has been accomplished as faculty question whether putting real collaborative effort and thought into this work is necessary. Apparently chairs' sense of the intrinsic worth of the activity reflects their perception of the campus leadership's expectations. For a majority, the view seems to be, "Yes, we have to do it, but we don't have to take it seriously – it's just one more pointless bureaucratic chore."

What Implications Do These Results Have for Future Action?

The institutional structures that provide necessary policy clarity and help for making the work manageable and meaningful are making progress and can continue to enhance policies, awareness, and infrastructure supports, extending actions they have already taken.

- LOOC can continue to recognize good work on assessment by honoring departments annually.
- LOOC can host forums for displays of that good work, offering further opportunities for celebration, and also for emulation.
- Model assessment reports can be featured on the Assessment website, particularly:
 - those that show how curricular and/or pedagogical changes resulted from assessment, and led to improved learning outcomes over time
 - those that show how existing ways of examining student work can efficiently be used for the additional purpose of addressing program-level outcomes
- SLOAA can identify programs that consistently fail to produce adequate reports and support them in overcoming whatever barriers have stalled their participation.

- The effectiveness of the peer review process for giving programs feedback on their assessment reports can be evaluated and enhanced.
- LOOC and SLOAA can use the data from annual peer reviews of assessment reports to continue improving the available resources and training opportunities in a targeted way.
- Where possible new technologies that make assessment easier can be introduced, with the necessary support for successful adoption.
- Funding (mini-grants) can be offered to support the work of turning assessment findings into program (curriculum, pedagogy) changes with re-assessment – and presented as models for others to learn from.
- Policies supportive of growing transparency for assessment processes and results, enabling constructive conversations among faculty, with students, and with stakeholders beyond the university such as parents, potential employers, and legislators, can be developed and implemented by LOOC.

The need for clear and emphatic demonstrations of the importance and internal utility of assessment from the Provost's level, and clear recognition of the usefulness of the process by college deans, backed by essential resources, is evident. Attention to how assessment is used for faculty reflection and degree program improvement, recognition of models for good work, relevance in the Academic Program Review process, and clear messages about the consequences for non-compliance will all help to show leadership commitment.

- Academic Program Review can make the importance of learning outcomes more salient, and more central in deans' follow-up discussions with departments after self-studies are done.
- Individual faculty who take leadership roles and make substantial contributions to departmental and/or university-wide assessment deserve to have this recognized in meaningful ways, including annual review (with support for those who wish to make assessment activity part of their scholarly pursuits), summer recontracting, as well as explicit recognition of the value of their leadership in public forums.
- Emphasis on the importance and internal utility of assessment can be amplified from the Provost's level. The administration's commitment to the intrinsic value of the assessment process is essential if a culture of assessment is to be nurtured and sustained. We all need to move from a mentality of assessment as "reporting on outcomes" to "data-informed conversation, reflection, and action directed at how to best serve our students and our mission."
- Clear recognition of the usefulness of the process by college deans, backed up by essential resources, can flow from that commitment. Communication of consequences for non-compliance with assessment policies can also demonstrate that commitment.
- Alignment of program assessment with college and university-wide priorities calls for a new institution-wide effort with leadership from the top. Learning outcomes and assessment priorities can be explicitly linked to the strategic planning and resource allocation processes in colleges and at the Provost's level. Mini-grants and other means of support can help departments to move in the direction of greater alignment, but administration leadership is crucial.

I look forward to continuing the conversation, and hope reflection on the data reported here can be part of the process of advancing the University's teaching-learning mission.

Table 1. Assessment Climate Survey Results Comparing 2009, 2012, and 2015

2009 N=30 2012 N=35 2015 N=28	ITEM	% Agree + Strongly Agree			Re-verse Key*
		Fall 2009	Fall 2012	Fall 2015	
I. Personal attitude toward assessment					
	1. Assessment of learning outcomes for our majors is very important.	75.8	66.7	60.7	
	2. Assessment of learning outcomes does not yield useful results.			25.0	X
	3. General education outcome objectives are complementary to our objectives for the major.	44.8	61.1	60.7	
	4. Assessment should be the job of the administration, not the faculty.	17.2	25.7	21.4	X
	5. Assessment of student learning outcomes is here to stay.	65.5	51.4	71.4	
	6. We faculty need to keep checking ourselves to improve the chances that our students graduate with the skills and attitudes we believe they need.	93.1	80.5	96.4	
II. Institution-wide faculty norms					
	7. Most departments here are now taking assessment seriously.	34.5	38.9	28.6	
	8. Most faculty on this campus believe assessment is unrelated to genuine concern for student learning.	53.6	61.1	46.4	X
	9. Many faculty resist assessment because they fear negative assessment findings that could damage individuals or programs.	65.5 ^a	63.9 ^a	21.4 ^b	X
	10. At this institution, faculty highly value transparency, including open disclosure of our students' learning outcomes.	20.6 ^a	22.2 ^a	32.1 ^b	
	11. The faculty at this institution are committed to the goal of having every student at the university graduate with abilities and values consistent with our university's mission and strategic plan.	41.3	51.5	57.1	
	12. At this institution, assessment of student learning outcomes has become a highly valued, consistently practiced, aspect of our culture.	3.4	5.7	14.3	

*Reverse Key = Denotes items that are re-scored in the opposite direction when calculating domain scores (not relevant for the agreement %s reported here, which are original).

^{ab} Super-script letters indicate significant differences between years (e.g. ^{a, b} indicates that these two values are significantly different at the p<.05 level).

III. Leadership commitment				
13. The administration supports assessment, from the Provost on down.	44.8	38.9	42.9	
14. Our college dean/associate recognizes and supports the value of assessment.	83.3 _a	63.8	50.0 _b	
15. Our college dean/associate dean discusses our departmental assessment reports with us.			21.4	
16. There are no rewards or incentives for chairs or program directors participating in assessment.	75.8	81.7	85.7	X
17. There are no incentives for faculty to participate in assessment (e.g. annual review recognition).	79.3	91.7	75.0	X
18. There are few administration-provided resources for assessment.	72.4	83.3	64.3	X
19. The administration keeps track of programs' assessment activities and results.	24.1 _a	42.9 _a	21.4 _b	
20. Adequate time is provided for those who are asked to do the work of assessment.	10.3	11.1	14.3	
21. Programs that excel at assessment are formally recognized at the institution-wide level.			3.6	
22. Departments that choose not to assess their programs will experience negative consequences.	64.3 _a	50.0 _a	35.7 _b	
IV. Infrastructure support				
23. Faculty and chairs have easily accessible opportunities to learn about how to conduct useful assessment.	37.9	33.3	35.7	
24. Expectations for what is to be done and reported for program assessment are clear.	20.7	27.8	21.4	
25. A clear policy for a 2-year cycle of assessment reporting is now in place.		47.3	57.1	
26. There is adequate training provided for those who are asked to do the work of assessment.	10.3	25.0	25.0	
27. There are models for what is expected in an assessment report.	34.5	31.5	42.9	
28. The two-year reporting cycle works well for my department.		25.0	7.1	
29. Departments receive useful feedback on our assessment reports.		33.4	21.4	
30. There is an office on campus that provides assistance of many kinds for assessment.	55.2	75.0	78.6	
31. There is a helpful website on campus addressing assessment progress and expectations.	27.5	41.7	46.4	
32. There is a policy-setting committee to guide assessment on this campus.	31.0	47.2	35.7	
V. Department-level implementation				
33. My department has workable assessment plan(s) for our undergraduate program(s).	77.7 _a	55.5 _a	67.9 _b	
34. My department has workable assessment plan(s) for our graduate degree program(s). (Please skip if not applicable for your department.)		11.4 _a	71.4 _b	
35. Our majors are aware of our department's learning objectives.	48.2	37.1	17.9	

36. My department has conducted and reported one or more rounds of assessing learning outcomes for our undergraduate major(s).	72.4	88.6	89.3	
37. My department has conducted and reported one or more rounds of assessing learning outcomes for our graduate major(s). (Please skip if not applicable for your department.)			61.9	
38. My department uses assessment results in strategic planning.	51.7	38.9	39.3	
39. Faculty in my department have discussions about our students and our hopes for them in the context of assessment.	48.3	47.2	57.1	
40. My department has changed our curriculum design (requirements, courses, course content, etc.) in response to assessment results.	58.6	41.7	28.6	
41. My department has made changes in how courses are taught (pedagogy) and what is covered in them on the basis of assessment results.			39.3	
VI. University-wide implementation				
42. A majority of undergraduate majors across the campus have now gone through at least one cycle of assessment – reporting - program revision (sometimes termed “closing the loop”).	31.0 _a	50.0 _b	37.0	
43. A majority of graduate majors across the campus have now gone through at least one cycle of assessment – reporting - program revision.			32.0	
44. Departments share ideas with other departments/programs for meaningful, manageable assessment.			10.7	
45. Strategic planning at the university level uses assessment results.	3.7	11.5	3.6	
46. Learning outcomes for degree programs are aligned with the broader missions of colleges and the institution.			28.6	
47. University-wide objectives for students’ learning outcomes are specified, measured, and reported on a regular basis.	3.3 _a	0.0	10.7 _b	
48. Our general education program has clear, measurable outcome objectives.	14.3	11.5	14.3	
49. General education addresses important learning goals at this institution.		64.7	46.4	
50. My department is willing to contribute to the assessment of general education.		31.4	39.3	

51. In which stage in the development of learning outcomes assessment would you judge that URI is?

Denial: 3.6%

External Demand: 50%

Tentative Commitment: 39.3%

Full-scale Effort: 7.1%

Maintenance and Refinement: 0.0%

52. This survey was previously administered to department chairs/directors in October 2009 and October 2012.

Do you believe you took the survey at that time?

	Yes	Not Sure	No
2012	25.7	17.1	57.1
2015	17.9	35.7	46.4

Open-ended responses

Fall 2015 Comments

- Assessment of a program takes time and effort. Workload plans need to reflect this or you will continue to get resistance and limited assessments. Everyone is asked to more with less. This is another of those activities that takes time to conceptualize, implement and use, incentives are sorely lacking.
- Graduate programs that already report learning outcomes for purposes of being professionally accredited should be able to substitute these reports for grad student learning outcomes assessment process at URI
- The university must recognize programs that already have rigorous external accreditation, and not duplicate requirements internal for these programs.
- We have gone from "why should we? ... the administration never uses the results", to understanding that the feedback could be informative for us.

The primary obstacle for those of us who would embrace assessment is time. We are all strapped and over committed without adequate workload release flowing to us to learn how to do this and then carry it out.

Administrations across the country have grown, in part, to address increased workloads due to increased responsibilities and complexity of their work. But some of this work flows down to the chairs and to the professors, who are increasingly asked to strengthen everything that they do with the accompanying extra workload (more research, more external funding, improved teaching, more outreach - all more evidence - based). New offices are created and administrators are hired to assist. The professors and chairs however are denied workload time or additional staff within the colleges and departments to do all of this effectively.

At a time that we are asked to improve teaching and strengthen research, would you expect professors to now give up research and instructional time to also attend to robust and meaningful assessment? In the daily and yearly triage process, I am guessing that assessment might get short shrift unless we get more help.

So yes, we agree that assessment is important. And yes we would value the feedback - it would be very helpful in assisting us to improve teaching and learning outcome and informative to curricular changes. Until these workload challenges are addressed, it remains a struggle to adequately attend to assessment.

- While I think assessment has the potential to be useful, at URI it falls on chairs or program coordinators, with no additional resources at the department level to gather data, track students, analyze data, etc. Thus, we try to put as little into it as possible, and our data reflect that.
- We do assessment because we are told we must do it. Most faculty believe our time and resources are better spent actually teaching, advising, learning. But since URI is now a corporate institution run by bean counters, we will do the minimal amount required to satisfy their politically motivated requirements of us.
- In most answers with "Neither Agree nor Disagree" the response should be interpreted as "I don't know".
- I think the current assessment process is more suited to secondary education and unduly complex. You could use the SLO in IDEA and have each dept specify them a bit and map those to particular courses. The IDEAs can then be used to measure student perceptions and specific exercises used to measure "actual" accomplishment.

Fall 2012 Comments

- I believe that this process has been poorly planned, instituted, and managed. It was only done because of the Board Of Governors and the Office of Higher Ed (particularly a few individuals that were the "champions/experts" on this); and now the office and board are being disbanded. This may be a good time to take a fresh look at this costly and unnecessary process as currently implemented. I feel that it is waste of time and has done nothing to improve the quality of education. The traditional measures of assessment have worked well in the past. I have recommended on several occasions that outcomes assessment is a responsibility of the administration, with faculty input. Many schools use post-graduation surveys to measure outcomes, particularly employment rates, acceptance rates to graduate school, etc. CCRI does this and produces an excellent report for each of the programs, that informs strategic planning. I feel that my suggestions were not taken seriously. The jargon of educational research is unfamiliar to most faculty in other disciplines, and little has been done to effectively educate faculty to this process.
- some 4 answers are due to accredited programs in my department, not URI program assessment
- The assessment is absolutely a waste of time! No one is interested in it. no one wants to make changes based on the outcome.
- Having been intimately involved with departmental assessment, I consider it a joke and a fraud perpetuated by politicians and administrators with little actual value. It impinges upon faculty governance, demeans faculty and treats us like children. We do it to keep the suits happy- but we minimize its impact on us. No one wants to do it and we do the minimum necessary to get a stamp of approval from what ever useless agency is currently overseeing the process.
- With all due respect to those who support this process...The process of assessing and also of assessing the assessment (of the assessment) is extremely frustrating to faculty because we are overstretched already, and spending time on this administrative activity, which feels largely driven by motive and jargon that we do not choose, understand or feel relates to our field gets in the way of us doing our real job: teaching and research. In theory it has positive aspects, but in reality/practice it feels like an enforced waste of time for most of us. We do appreciate that Elaine is making a difference in terms of consistency and effort to reach out to us.
- The primary problem is that faculty do not have the time to design, conduct, track, and interpret these assessments.

- I think that outcomes assessment as practiced at URI, with top down mandates and no funding to support the actual assessment process at the department level besides small mini-grants, will not result in useful data that guides improvements in student learning.
- Hard to fill out this survey for the University, since I only know about the assessment conditions that obtain in my college.
- In most cases, my checking of "3" means "don't know"
- I am concerned that assessment is becoming another "no child left behind" burden on our colleges resulting in our not seeing the forest for the trees.
- Would prefer to meet with the committee responsible for this report than to take time to write anything useful here. I hope my responses convey enough of my views to make this unnecessary. In a word, most faculty I have contact with consider assessment as being promulgated and practiced at URI to be an incomprehensible and onerous activity that wastes our time and energy without having a genuine impact on what and how we teach. Note that where I checked "3" in the survey it often meant I didn't have enough info to answer the question and/or 2d with its premise. You might consider convening a group of people to discuss the survey or the results as I have more to convey but don't want to take time to write it.
- I wish that there was some real chance for interaction on a meaningful level to discuss what kind of assessment is really most useful for the students. We already assess the performance of the faculty.
- Top-down assessment: meaning the top offices should assess themselves, too?
- I find the whole learning outcomes assessment should be somehow incorporated into the strategic planning process so we are not filling out so many different sets of goals and objectives. In addition, there are many goals worthy of addressing which we cannot do because of insufficient faculty resources (like in the area of college-level writing). How do we create meaningful learning outcome plans if the university does not provide the resources to accomplish them? It kind of invalidates the whole reason for doing them in the first place.

Fall 2009 comments

- you can interpret most of my "3" responses as "don't know"
- Developing and distributing an expectation and outcomes set of statements is valuable for all departments. I am not really convinced that a good assessment tool (better than the grades that we assign or the success our students achieve by the jobs they attain) has been produced.
- As a dept chair getting my faculty to take seriously and participate actively in assessment activities has been extremely difficult; hence, this colors many of my responses. Further, although help was available in the early stages of assessment, it was inconsistent and much was irrelevant to our programs (i.e., the original forms and examples). Follow-up help this year has been good but faculty have had neither time nor energy nor will nor incentive to participate actively apart from general 4ment that assessment might be important. I conclude that this generation of faculty have not been socialized into recognizing its importance nor shown a straightforward way to conduct it, either by example or training. Finally, I suspect the lack of perceived consequences for not doing assessment is a key factor in my inability to persuade the faculty - or myself - to carry it out in an effective and timely manner.
- We are a graduate only program that is accredited. Where the item asked about undergraduates, I typically chose 3 as I don't know.
- My department does not teach any courses. My knowledge comes from teaching in the other department in my college.
- There are pockets of goodness: in particular, a few specific departments, SLOAA, and the amazing support work begun by Judith Swift as Interim Vice Provost. However, the new Provost has not once mentioned student learning outcomes, nor has he indicated

that assessment matters at all to him. If we didn't think it was important for our students, we'd follow his lead stop doing it. None of the initiatives coming out of his office are connected to student learning outcomes in any way; they just seem to be neat ideas he dreamed up, disconnected from and counter to the work so many of us have been trying to do for so many years. Our Dean only cares about making sure that each of her departments is checked off, no matter how perfunctory their efforts. She continues to reward those who have not yet complied with more incentives. Those of us who do it, get NOTHING from the administration for our efforts -- no reward, no recognition. We do it for the students, and most of the time we do it for free on top of our already back-breaking loads. We do it because we believe it does matter, despite the signals sent to us by the administration.

- The hardcopy and digital graduation portfolio, required of all majors, is a major aspect of our assessment program. It took us about 10 years to put this in place and use it for assessment purposes.
- Some people find it natural and some people find it annoying. The people who find it annoying wait until the last minute to act. I think we should be given a specific timetable that departments can use as a guide. There should also be an opportunity to invite someone from the assessment office to the department to give a workshop or join a work session. I have noticed that every proposal that has to go through channels here at URI needs to include assessment in the justifications for request. So, I know it is important.

Figure 1.

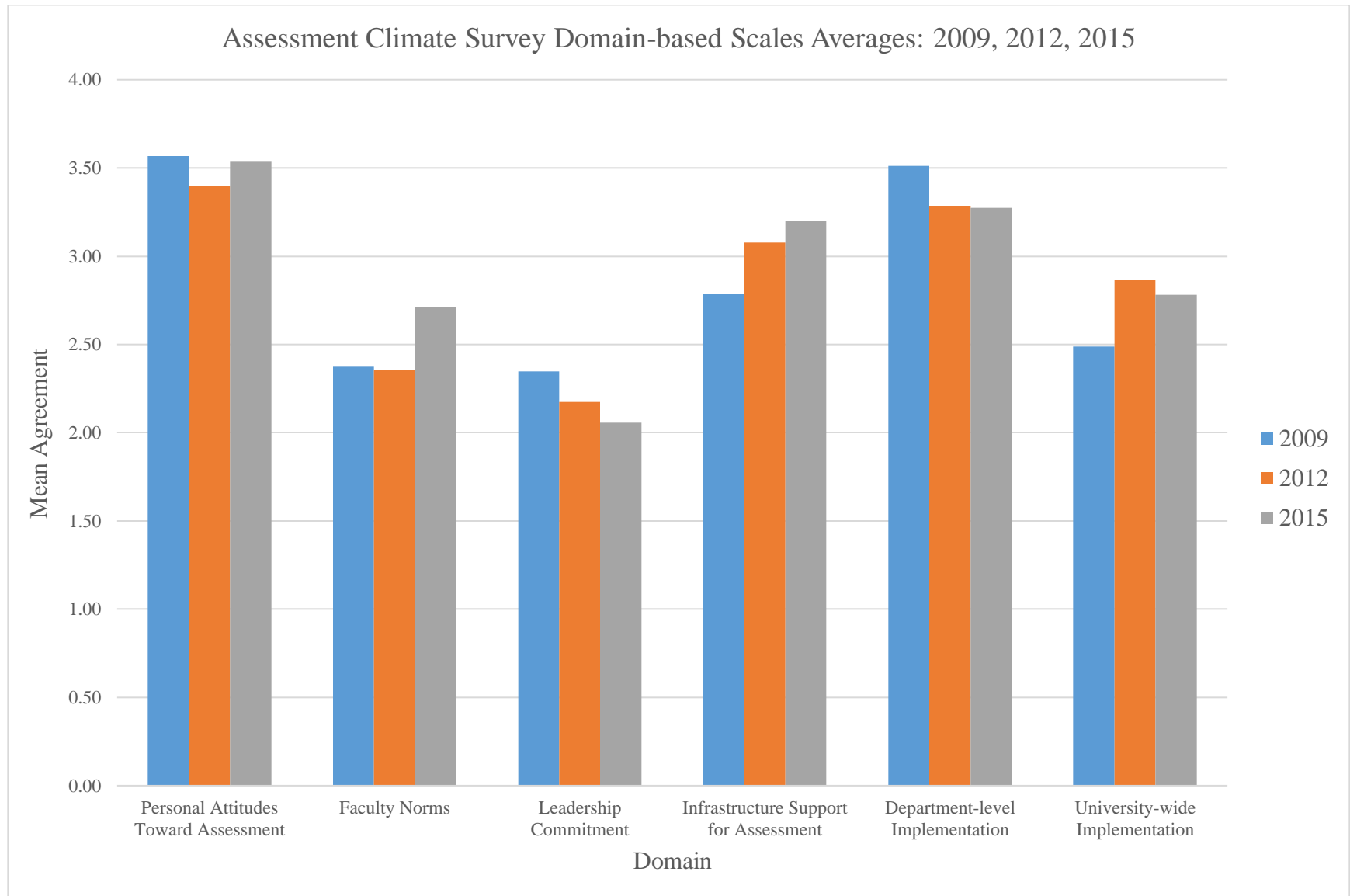


Figure 2.

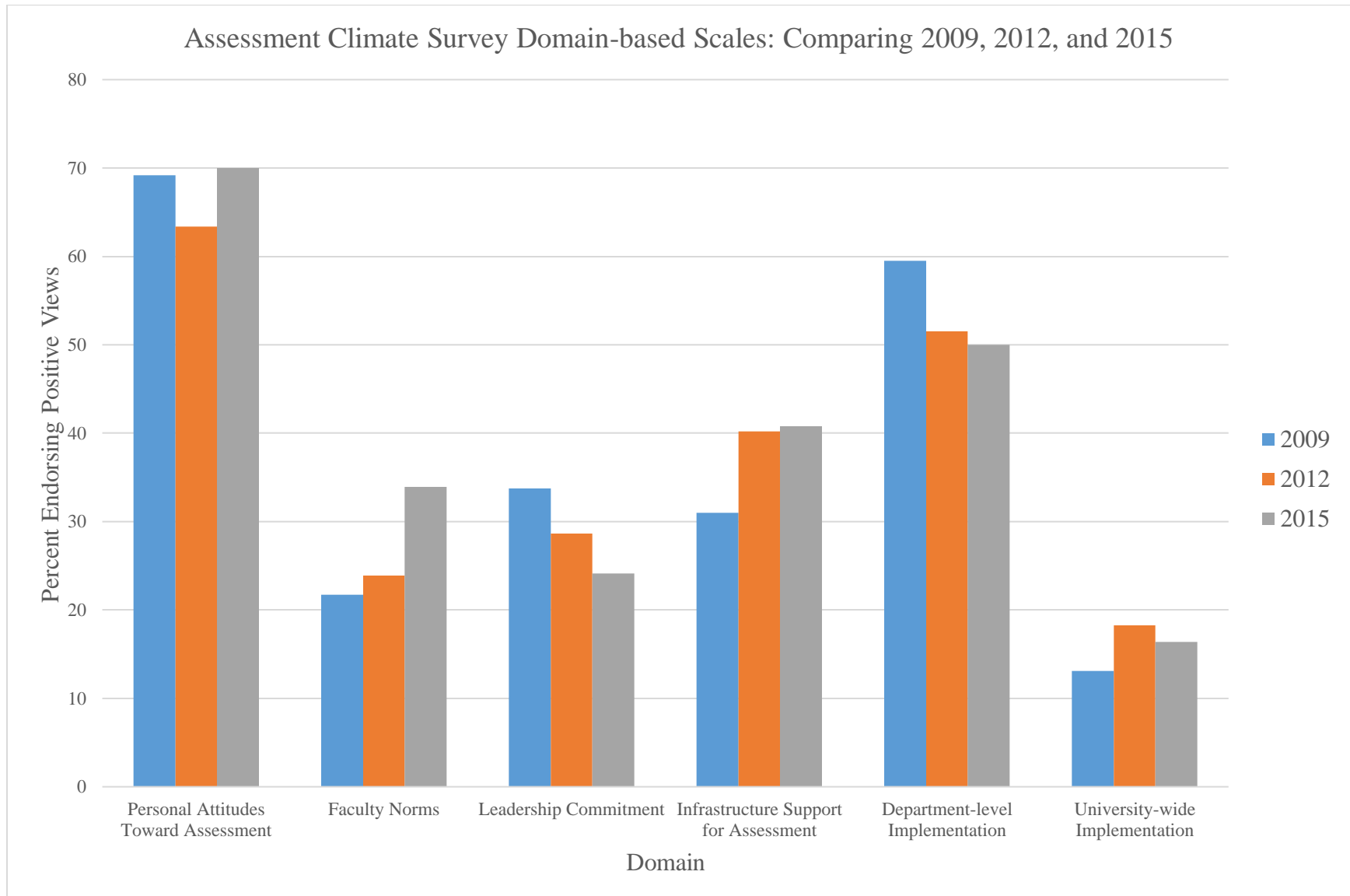
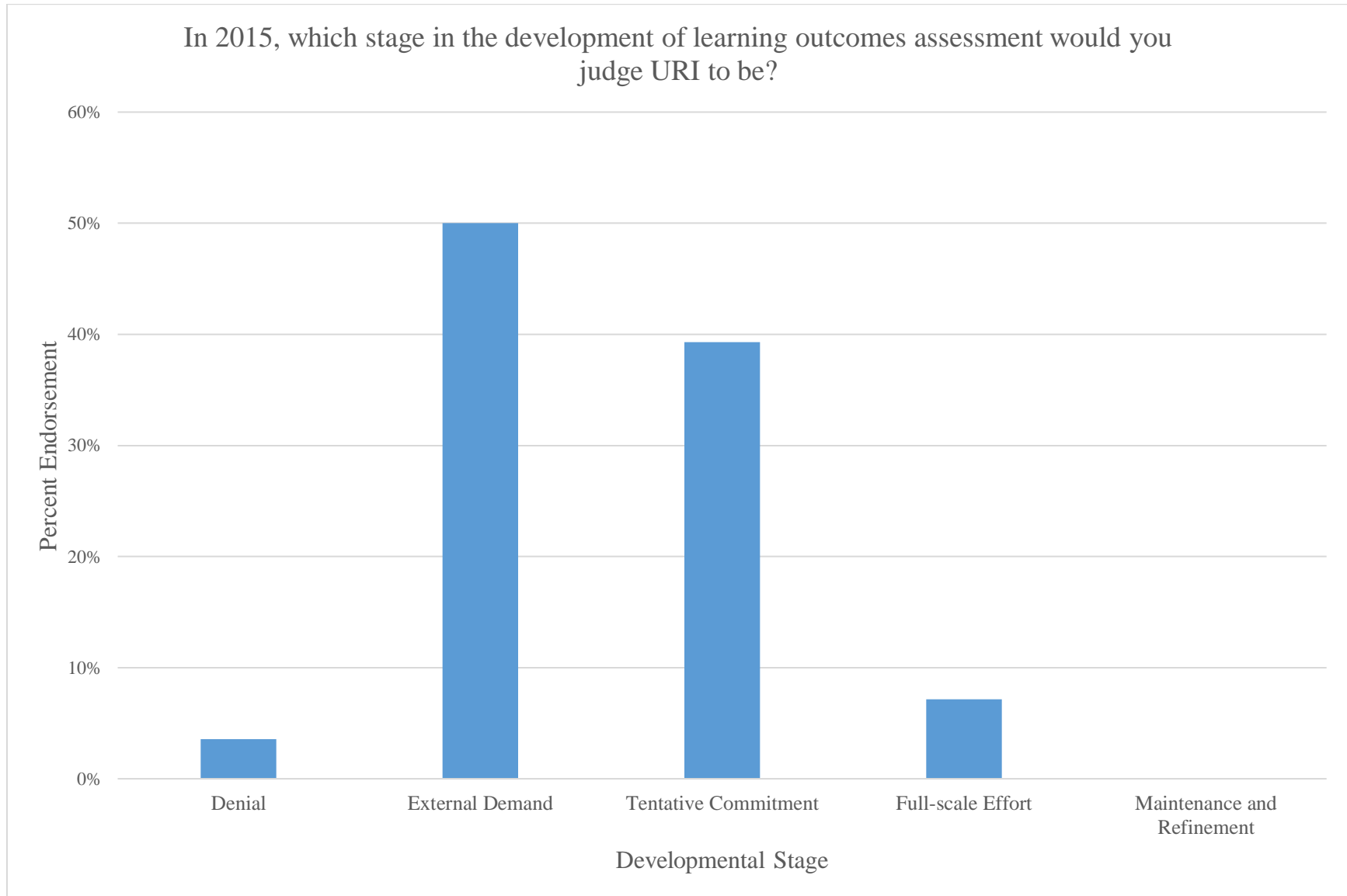


Figure 3. Assessment Climate Survey: Responses to Question 51



APPENDIX
Assessment Climate Domain Scales
Properties and Correlations for 2015 Sample (N=28)

2015 Scale		No. of Items	Mean	S.D.	Alpha	Inter-scale Correlations				
						FN	LC	IS	DI	UI
PA	Personal Attitude toward Assessment	6	3.34	.674	.694	.590**	.353	.523**	.538**	.619**
FN	Faculty Norms	6	2.71	.561	.677	-	.231	.432*	.354	.331
LC	Leadership Commitment	10	2.21	.555	.747		-	.532**	.097	.639**
IS	Infrastructure Support for Assessment	10	3.07	.554	.814			-	.204	.526**
DI	Department-level Implementation	9	3.29	.726	.785				-	.168
UI	University-wide Implementation	5	3.10	.783	.581					-

* p<.05

** p<.01

Significance of Change over Time

Scale	Mean Agreement*			F	df	p<
	2009	2012	2015			
Personal Attitude toward Assessment	3.57	3.40	3.54	.501	91	n.s.
Faculty Norms	2.37	2.36	2.71	3.94	91	.023
Leadership Commitment	2.35	2.17	2.06	1.98	91	n.s.
Infrastructure Support for Assessment	2.78	3.08	3.20	2.22	91	n.s.
Department-level Implementation	3.51	3.29	3.27	.891	91	n.s.
University-wide Implementation	2.49	2.87	2.78	3.98	91	.022

*Calculated for items included at all 3 time points.