

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
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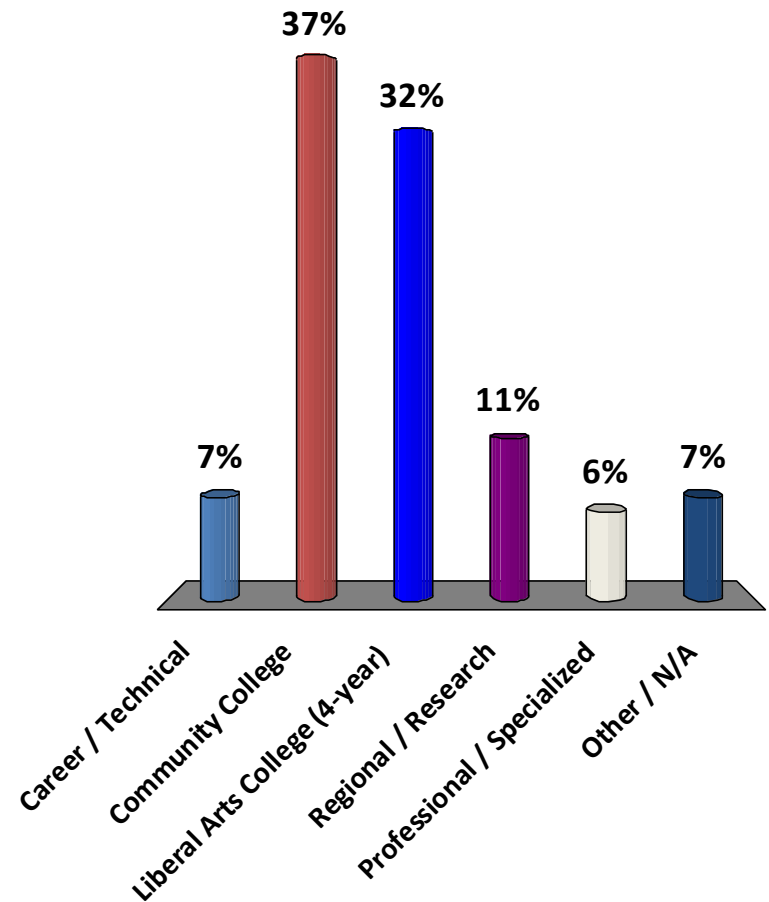
Assessment's Not My Job!

Engaging Staff in Co-curricular Assessment

Erika Beseler Thompson
Jeremy Penn, Ph.D.

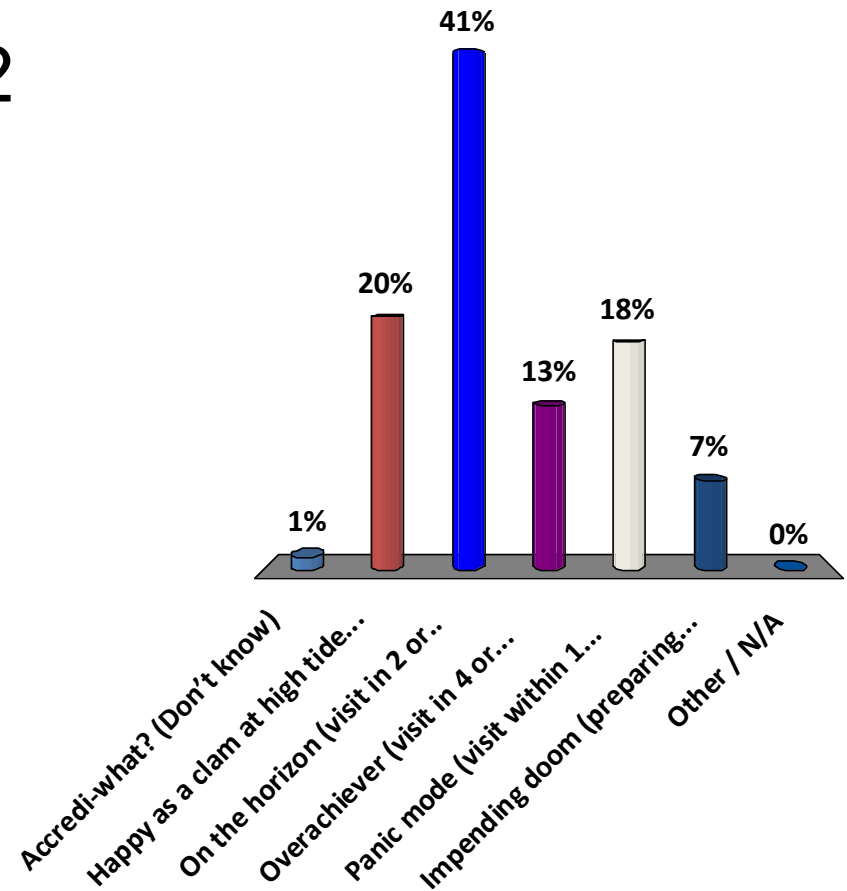
Please select the response that best describes your institution.

- A. Career / Technical
- B. Community College
- C. Liberal Arts College (4-year)
- D. Regional / Research
- E. Professional / Specialized
- F. Other / N/A



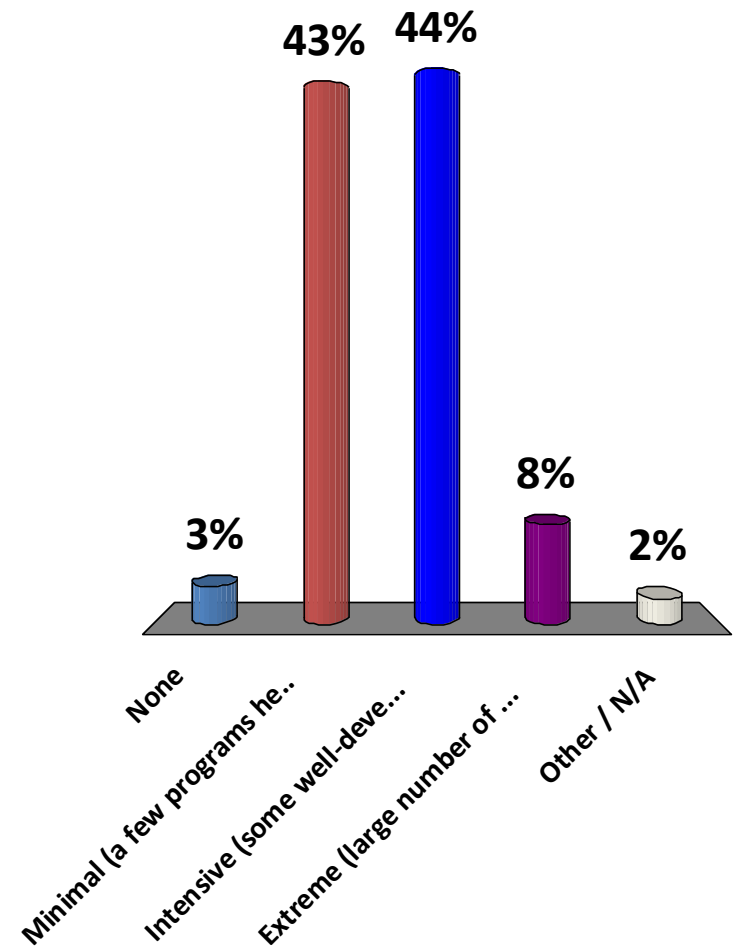
- A. Accredi-what? (Don't know)
- B. Happy as a clam at high tide (completed in last 12 months)
- C. On the horizon (visit in 2 or 3 years)
- D. Overachiever (visit in 4 or more years)
- E. Panic mode (visit within 12 months)
- F. Impending doom (preparing for follow-up)
- G. Other / N/A

Where is your institution in the accreditation cycle?



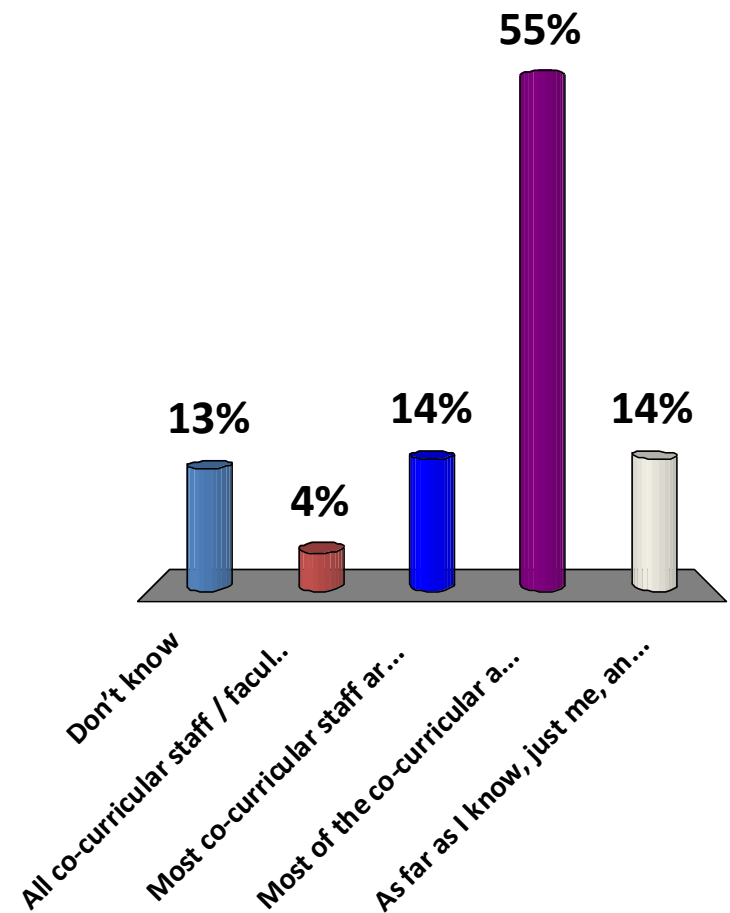
- A. None
- B. Minimal (a few programs here and there)
- C. Intensive (some well-developed co-curricular programs)
- D. Extreme (large number of complex and deep co-curricular programs across the institution)
- E. Other / N/A

What level of co-curricular programming do you have at your institution?



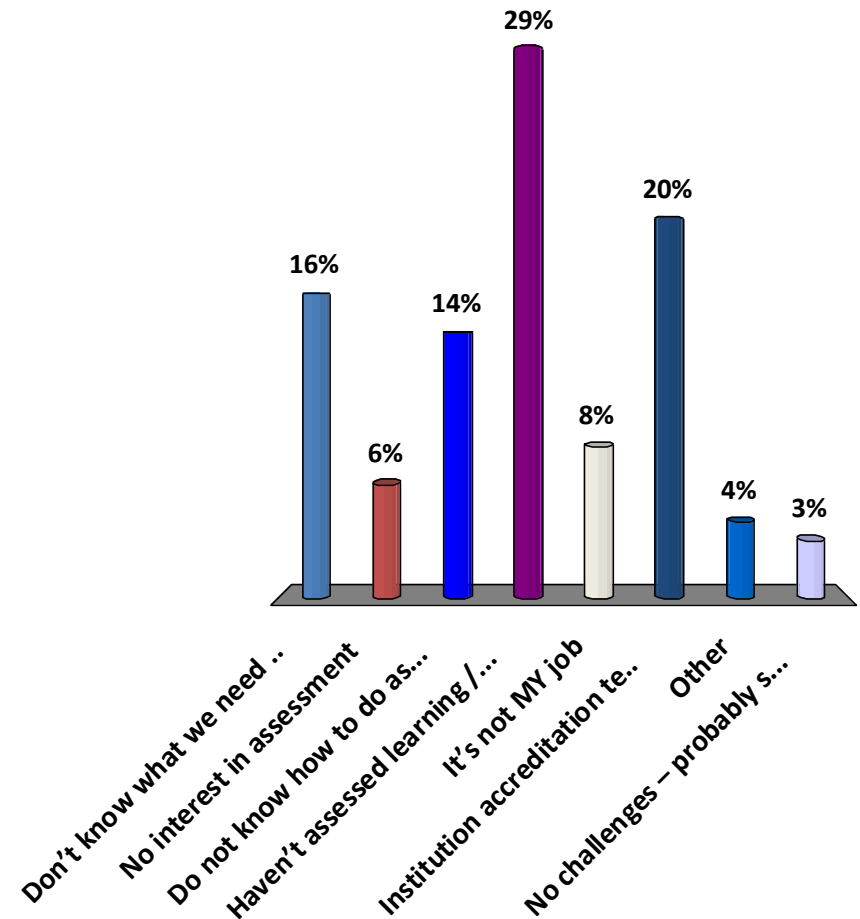
- A. Don't know
- B. All co-curricular staff / faculty are highly engaged in assessment
- C. Most co-curricular staff are engaged in assessment but there could be improvements
- D. Most of the co-curricular assessment is done by a few people
- E. As far as I know, just me, and if that is all we have to show for it we are in big trouble

How would you describe your co-curricular assessment culture?



- A. Don't know what we need to be doing
- B. No interest in assessment
- C. Do not know how to do assessment
- D. Haven't assessed learning / development but have attendance / satisfaction data
- E. It's not MY job
- F. Institution accreditation team lacks understanding of co-curricular programs
- G. Other
- H. No challenges – probably shouldn't be here!

In order, what are the top challenges you face in writing 3E (enriched environment) and 4B (co-curricular assessment)? (Select all that apply)



Core Component 3E

The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and **contribute to the educational experience** of its students.
2. The institution **demonstrates any claims it makes** about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

Core Component 4B

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

2. The institution **assess achievement** of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and **co-curricular programs**.
3. The institution **uses the information** gained from assessment to **improve student learning**.


VanDerLinden and Cope (2014)

- Session at last year's conference
- Reviewed assurance arguments from Pathways pilot groups
- Institutions tended to:
 - Count number of clubs, participants, etc.
 - Rely heavily on NSSE
 - **Little evidence on the VALUE of these activities on student learning**

What's the problem?

- Lack of assessment experience and training among S.A. practitioners
- “It’s not my job” – negative assessment disposition and lack of ownership
- Lack of understanding of co-curricular programs among accred. team
- **Assessment focuses on inputs rather than outcomes**

Addressing Challenges

- Institutions' accreditation teams need to understand co-curricular programs
- S.A. programs need to include assessment of student learning 
- Results of assessment need to be communicated effectively and used for improvement

Assessment Experiences, Expertise, and Needs Survey

Study was intended to:

- Determine assessment dispositions of Student Affairs staff
- Determine current levels of assessment expertise and support
- Identify topic areas, delivery modes, and audiences for assessment-related professional development

Survey Development

Student Affairs Assessment Competency

Areas: (NASPA & ACPA, 2010)

- **Basic:** terminology, data collection, connection to learning outcomes
- **Intermediate:** design data collection methods and instruments, educate colleagues
- **Advanced:** lead assessment efforts, use results in institutional decision-making

Survey Development

- **Assessment Experience and Opinions:**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

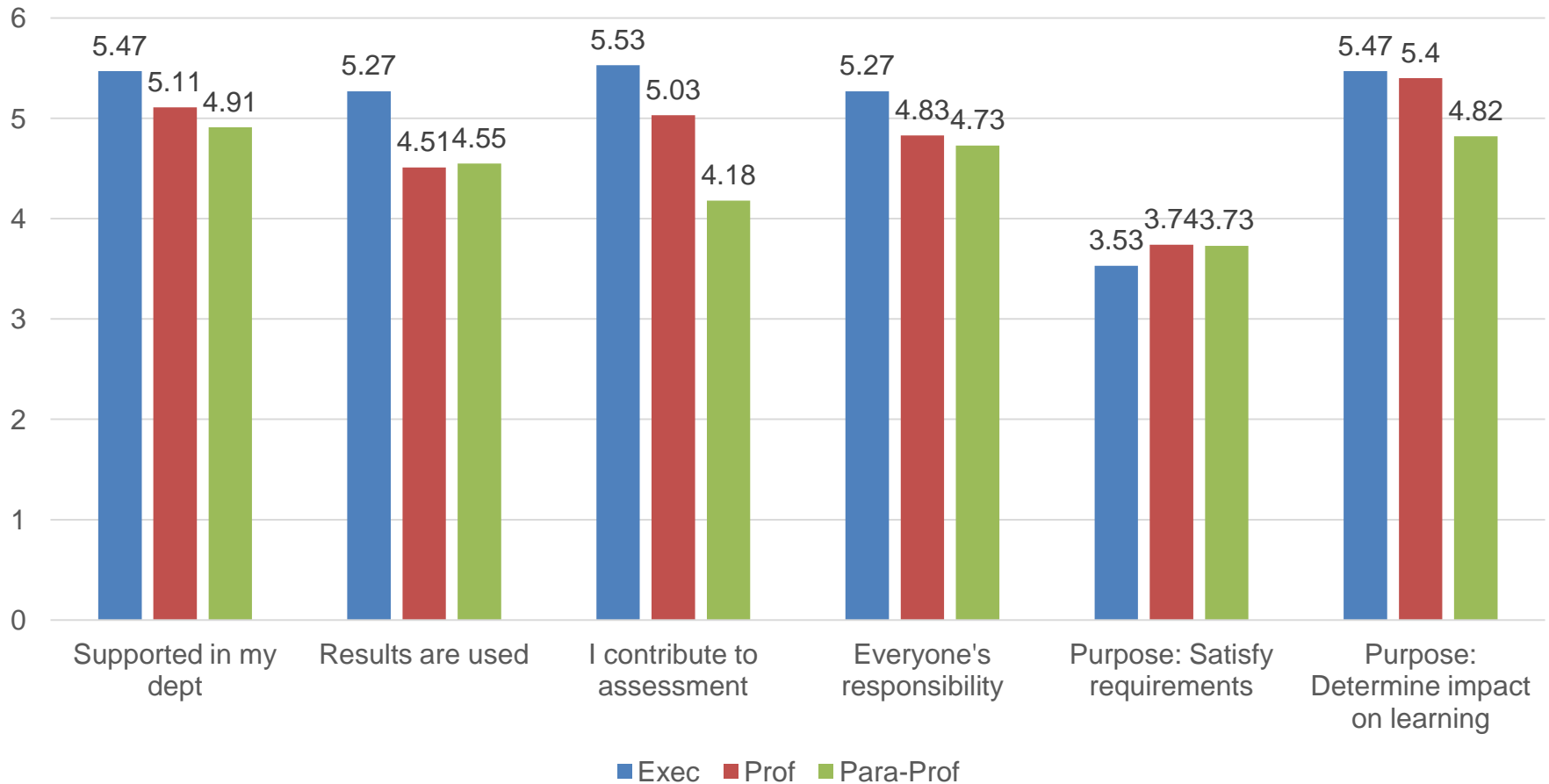
- Assessment efforts are supported in my program/department
- Assessment is regularly conducted in my program/department
- Assessment results are used for decision-making in my program/department
- I contribute to assessment activities in my program/department
- I do not have time to do assessment
- I incorporate assessment directly into my work
- Assessment is everyone's responsibility
- The primary purpose of assessment is to justify requests for resources
- The primary purpose of assessment is to satisfy division and university requirements (e.g., assessment reporting, accreditation)
- The primary purpose of assessment is to determine the impact of programs and services on student learning

Methods

- Administered electronically in spring 2014
- Student Affairs Staff (N = 229)
 - Executive: 89% (n = 17 of 19)
 - Professional: 56% (n = 58 of 103)
 - Paraprofessional/Office support: 39% (n = 42 of 107)

Results and Implications: Assessment Disposition

Level of Agreement
(1=strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)

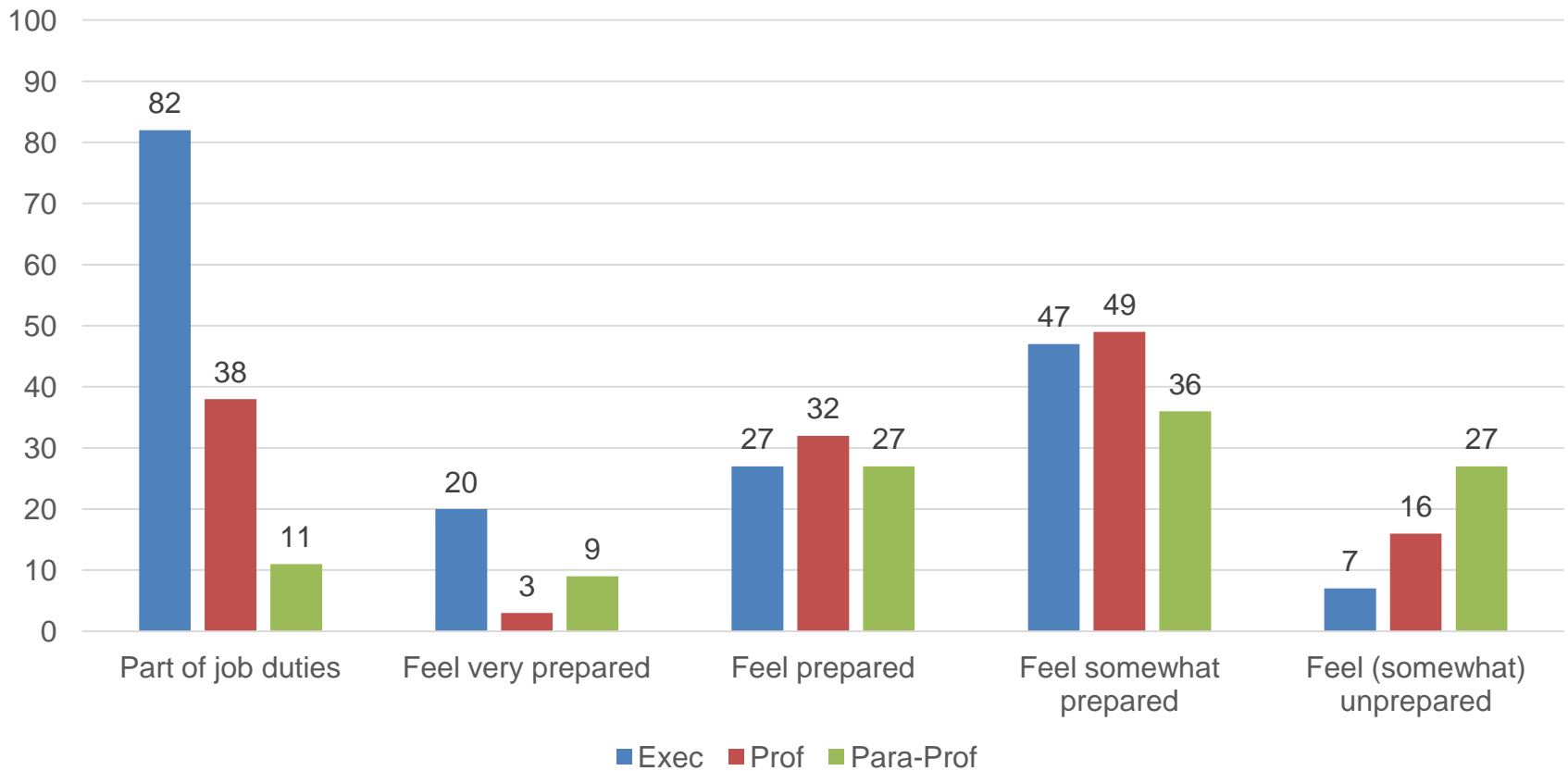


Results and Implications: Assessment Disposition

- Assessment is critical and is “everyone’s responsibility”
- Purpose: determine impact of programs on student learning; decision-making
- Major concerns: not enough time (exec band); lack of follow-through (prof & para-prof bands)
- **Recommendation:**
 - Increase involvement of professional staff to alleviate workload on executive staff

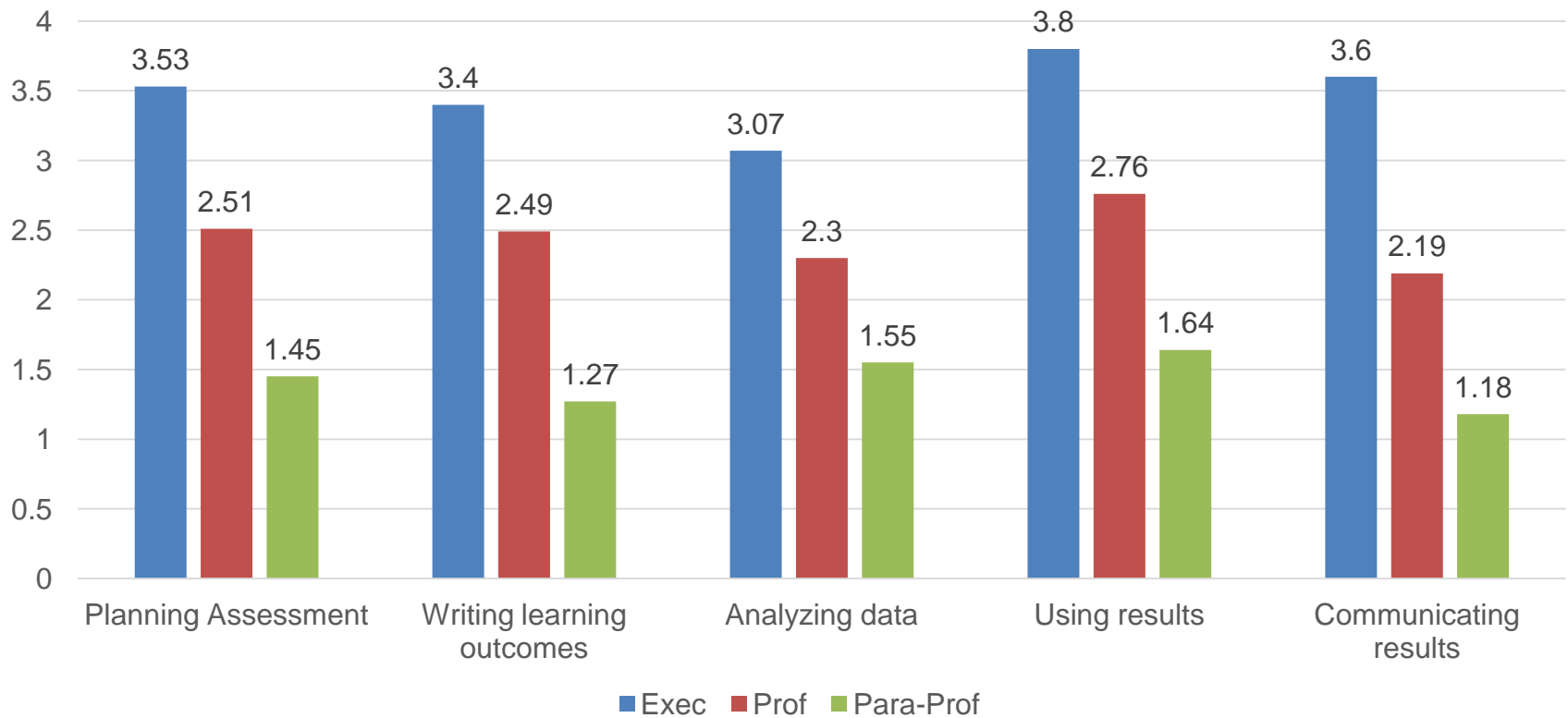
Results and Implications: Assessment Engagement and Expertise

Responsibility and Preparation



Results and Implications: Assessment Engagement and Expertise

Level of Engagement (1= no participation; 2= participate with assistance; 3 = plan or assist others; 4 = lead efforts)



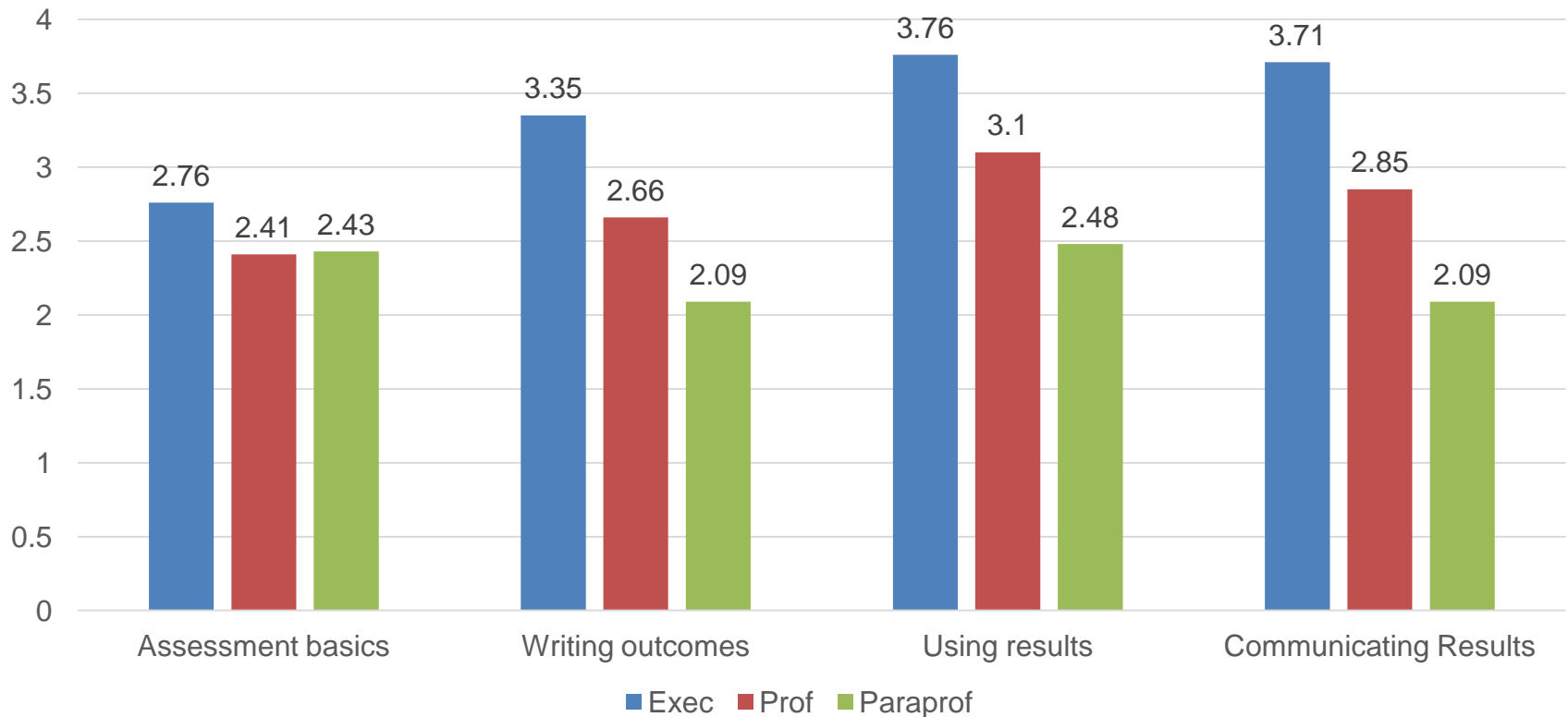
Results and Implications:

Assessment Engagement and Expertise

- Engagement and expertise across bands: highest in executive band
- Uncertainty about responsibility for assessment (not official job duty)
- Only 38% felt “prepared” or “very prepared”
- **Recommendations:**
 - Incorporate assessment in wider array of official job descriptions
 - Encourage or require participation in professional development activities for those responsible

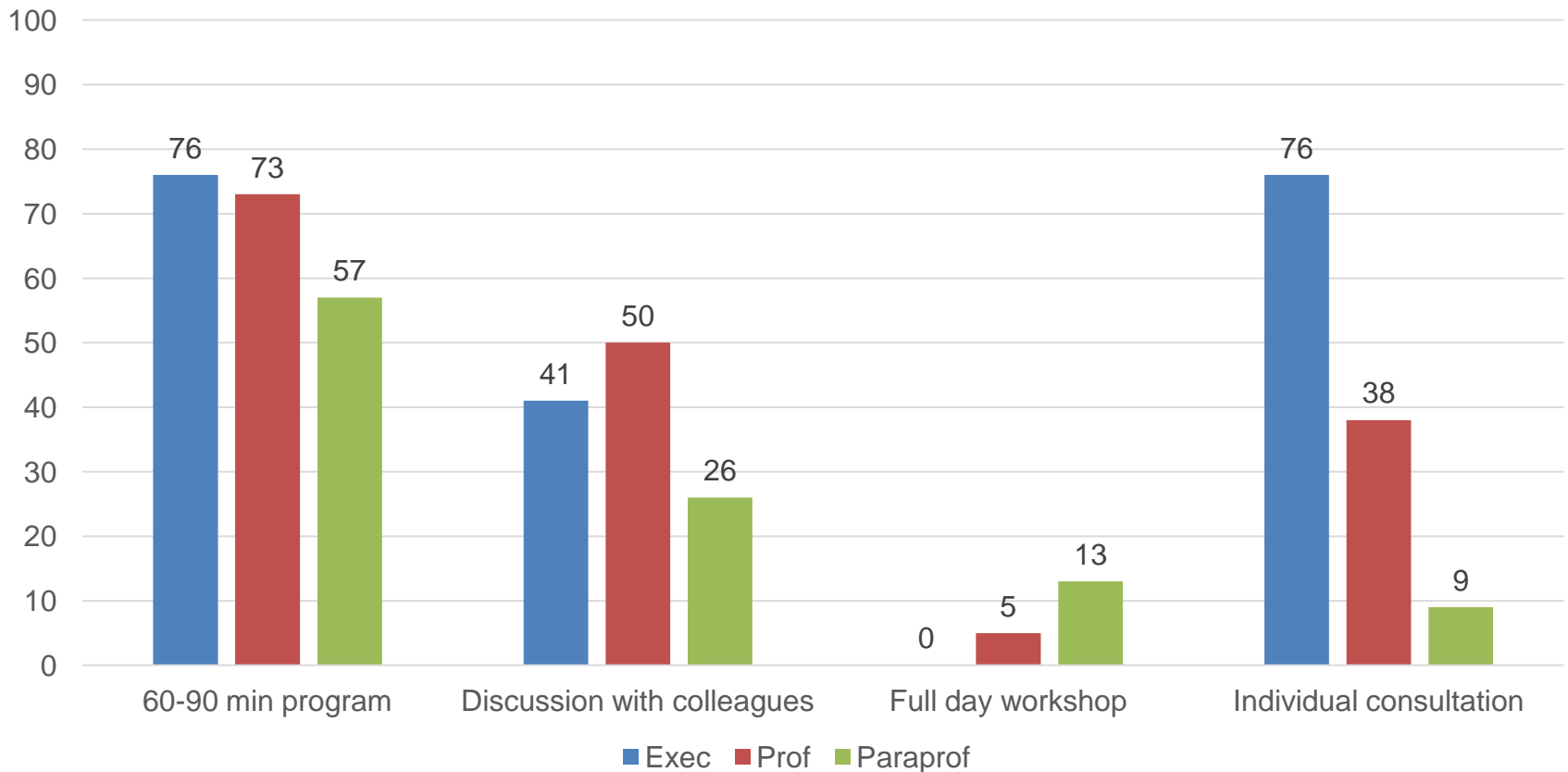
Results and Implications: Staff Development Needs and Interests

Topic Interest Levels
(1 = not at all interested; 4 = very interested)



Results and Implications: Staff Development Needs and Interests

Format Interest Levels



Results and Implications:

Staff Development Needs and Interests

- Major interest areas: using results for improvement and communicating results
- Training preference: 60-90 min. in-person training and discussion with colleagues most popular
- **Recommendations:**
 - Share assessment summaries, including recommendations/changes
 - Offer a variety of training opportunities
 - Identify assessment coordinator in each department

NDSU Action Steps

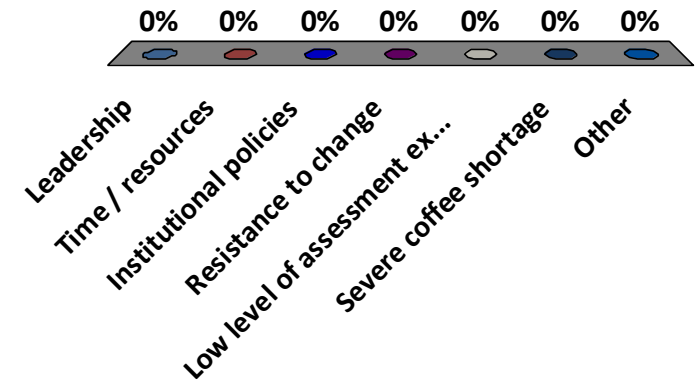
- Identify “champions” and formalize responsibility for assessment
- NDSU Student Affairs Assessment Academy
- Student Affairs Assessment Committee
- Online modules and “just-in-time” training
- Campaign to share feedback the division has received and improvements that have been made

Action Plan Development

- Current Assessment Culture in Co-curricular Programs
 - Barriers
 - Action Plan to understand culture
- Opportunities to Build Engagement in Co-curricular Assessment
 - Implementation Challenges
 - Action Plan to increase engagement and overcome challenges

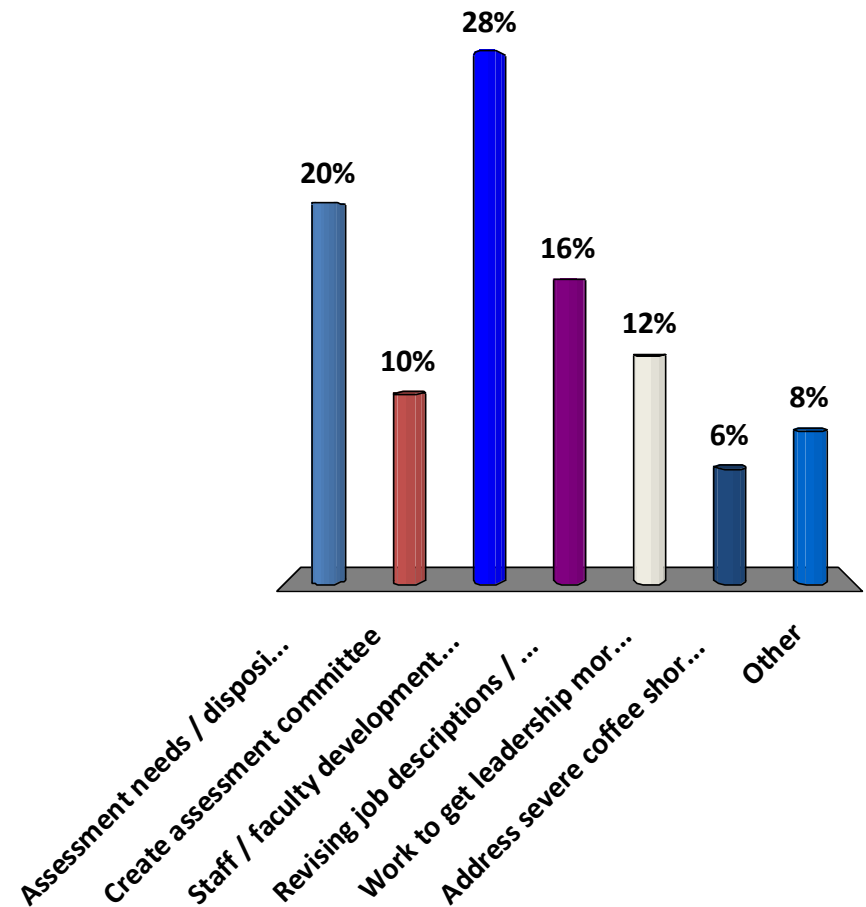
What implementation challenges do you face? (Select all that apply)

- A. Leadership
- B. Time / resources
- C. Institutional policies
- D. Resistance to change
- E. Low level of assessment expertise
- F. Severe coffee shortage
- G. Other



What are your TOP 3 priorities for taking action? (Select in order)

- A. Assessment needs / dispositions survey
- B. Create assessment committee
- C. Staff / faculty development on assessment
- D. Revising job descriptions / policies
- E. Work to get leadership more involved
- F. Address severe coffee shortage
- G. Other



Recommendations

- Educate your accreditation team on co-curricular programs and learning
- Consider implementing a similar study
- Tailor assessment-related professional development to staff needs
- Include assessment responsibilities in job descriptions
- Require learning assessment on assessment reporting templates

Resources

- www.ndsu.edu/vpsa/assessment

 @NDSU_SA_Assess

- Materials available on HLC website
- Erika.Beseler@ndsu.edu
- Jeremy.Penn@ndsu.edu

References

- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and American College Personnel Association (ACPA). 2010. *ACPA and NASPA professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners*. Washington, DC: Authors.
- VanDerLinden, K., & Cope, M. (2014). *Assessing the co-curriculum: Implications for addressing core component 3.E./4.B*. Presentation at the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference: Chicago, IL.