

WASC All-Campus Survey – Final Results August 22, 2008

The WASC steering committee administered an all-campus on-line survey in spring, 2007, to complete its background research for selecting themes or lines of inquiry for the WASC re-accreditation process. The data were analyzed for that purpose during summer 2007 and key findings were used in developing the institutional proposal and the milestones and work plan for spring, 2008 through the educational effectiveness visit and review in fall 2011. The key findings are provided in full as appendices to the proposal (see Appendix 20, Initial survey findings: Exhibits B, C, D; and Appendix 22, Initial survey findings: Exhibit V.)

Of greatest importance to proposal development were issues that the campus community rated **very important, but not done well**. The analyses that brought these **“Urgent”** issues to light employed the largest possible base denominator in order to avoid inflating the percent responding **Urgent**. That is, only those who rated neither importance nor how well were excluded from the denominator to calculate the percent responding **Urgent**. Those who rated one of them, either importance or how well, remained in the base.

The final results reported here, on the other hand, seek to illuminate the sharpest contrasts across responses. They include not only the distribution of **Urgent** responses but also the distributions of **Great, Problem, Strength, and Modal** responses (see definitions key below.) Therefore, a stricter definition of the base or denominator for each item was employed. First, all non-responses, whether to both how important and how well or only one of them, were excluded. Second, ratings of not important, regardless of how well, were also excluded. Ratings of not important were so rare as to function only as noise in the distribution of joint responses.

A total of seven tables are provided to illuminate patterns of responses in multiple ways. The data are so rich that they deserve a meandering path through all of these perspectives before settling on a particular conclusion for a campus constituency, a theme, or an item within a theme. One can compare the distributions of Urgent and Great (Tables 1 & 2) to make sure there are no items with high percents of both (there aren't) and to locate constituency disconnects, or items rated Urgent by one group but great by another. One can also confirm whether a rating of Great (for example) has solid backing, i.e. it also shows up as a high percent Strength, and it may even be the modal response. The same holds true for Urgent and Problem and Modal ratings of particular items. Modal ratings by themselves are not sufficient, since responses often converge in the hard-to-interpret middle (for example, Somewhat Well + Somewhat Important.)

But reinforced by the other tables, modes of Great or Urgent really stand out. The first four tables, then, can be used to verify and deepen the findings of each one of them.

First and foremost, they confirm the earlier findings about what is most important to our campus community, in terms of re-examination and improvement in the near future. Our WASC institutional proposal captured the most “Urgent” items across constituencies and across all items for students in particular. There is no contradictory information revealed by the distribution of “Great” or “Strength” patterns in these new tables. Second, other items not included as part of the WASC proposal will be interesting to various standing committees or groups on campus.

Two more tables display distribution patterns by type of joint response across all 48 survey items and across items within each of the six themes. From them we can observe differences across constituencies in overall volume of Urgent or Great items, or Problems v. Strengths. For example, administrators are more likely to rate items as Urgent compared to other constituencies (averaging 7.4 Urgent responses out of the total of 48.) Students, on the other hand, are more likely to rate items as Great compared to the others (averaging 7.3 Great responses out of 48.)

Finally, Table 7 displays the numbers of valid responses, or those counted in the base for percent distributions of joint responses, per item per respondent employment category. It is important to the quality of the data received that respondents are comfortable picking and choosing which items they wish to respond to. In other words, high numbers of non-responses are not necessarily surprising and they may have some benefit since they are preferable to a forced-choice “fake” answer. Valid responses are reduced for items that a given employment category may understandably know less about, which is also useful information about the validity of the data. In general, the items under the theme “Campus Community and Partnerships” had the highest percents of non-response across all employment categories.

Definitions Key:

Urgent = Not Well + Very Important

Great = Very Well + Very Important

Problem = Not Well + Very or Somewhat Important

Strength = Very Well + Very or Somewhat Important

Modal = Most popular joint response (one of the above or some other combination as specified on the table)

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