

**Strengthening a Culture of Assessment:
Continuous Improvement Through
Faculty Engagement and Institutional
Learning**



INTRODUCTION

Sacramento State's annual assessment process supports continuous improvement in student learning through the systematic evaluation of Baccalaureate Institutional Learning Goals (BILGs), Graduate Learning Goals (GLGs), Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). Institutional assessment policy requires academic programs to maintain multi-year assessment plans, collect annual assessment data, identify areas for improvement, and document how findings are used to strengthen student learning and program quality. Academic programs rely on annual assessments to make informed decisions about improvements to their curricula.

This report discusses the following:

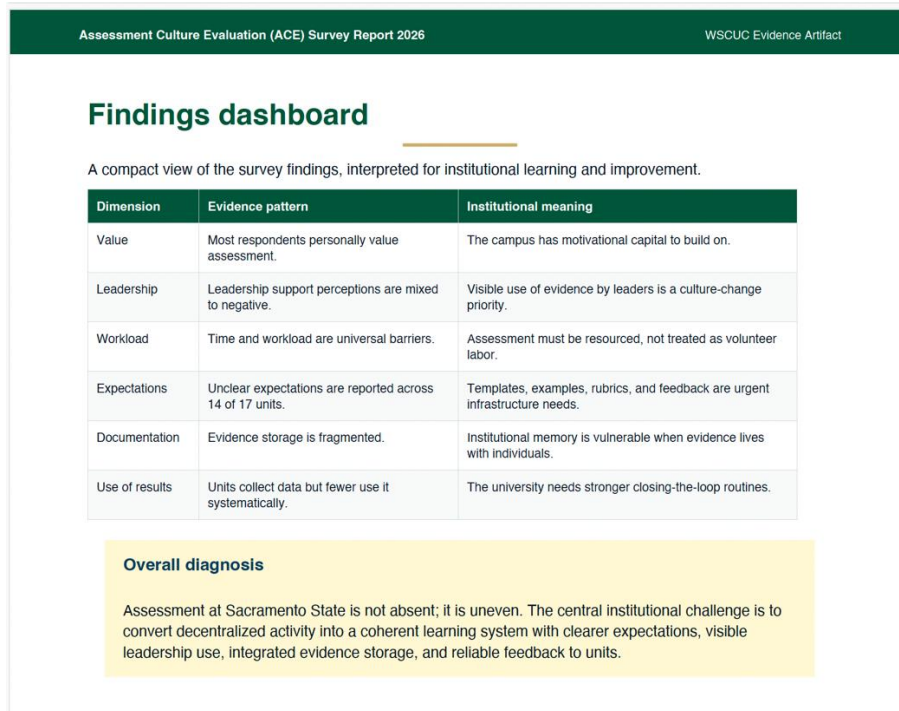
- University-wide assessment culture and climate surveys
- Institutional support of academic annual assessment
 - Office of Academic Program Assessment
 - Center for Teaching and Learning
- AY 2024-2025 annual assessment reports
- AY 2025-2026 annual assessment reports
- Proposal to revise the university-wide annual assessment process

ASSESSMENT CLIMATE EVALUATION (ACE)

As part of the reaccreditation institutional reporting process, Sacramento State evaluated the effectiveness of its current culture of assessment through the [Assessment Culture Evaluation \(ACE\) Survey](#), a comprehensive campus-wide assessment of institutional assessment practices and readiness. The survey included 197 respondents representing 17 colleges, divisions, and administrative units, providing a broad perspective on assessment across academic and non-academic areas. The ACE Survey established a baseline of institutional capacity by examining assessment knowledge, practices, barriers, leadership support, evidence management, and readiness for continuous improvement.



Graphic 1: Assessment Culture Evaluation (ACE): Findings dashboard



Survey findings indicate that assessment is broadly valued throughout the institution, with respondents recognizing its importance for improving student learning, student success, service quality, and institutional effectiveness. At the same time, the survey identified opportunities to strengthen the assessment infrastructure by improving evidence management, clarifying expectations, enhancing feedback mechanisms, increasing leadership visibility, and providing greater support for assessment activities. The findings suggest that Sacramento State possesses a strong foundation for assessment but would benefit from more coordinated institutional systems that make assessment processes more consistent, sustainable, and meaningful across units. Importantly, the ACE Survey was designed not as a one-time climate assessment, but as the beginning of an ongoing institutional learning cycle. The report recommends a structured process of sharing results with participating units, collaboratively interpreting findings, developing action plans, implementing improvements, and monitoring progress over time. This continuous improvement framework aligns closely with WSCUC's emphasis on evidence-informed decision-making, institutional effectiveness, and the regular use of assessment findings to guide planning and resource allocation.

The survey also documented numerous institutional strengths that provide a solid foundation for future work, including successful external accreditation processes, effective use of institutional dashboards and operational data, evidence-informed curricular and service improvements, and exemplary assessment practices within several academic and administrative units.

Graphic 2: Assessment Culture Evaluation (ACE): Recommendations

Assessment Culture Evaluation (ACE) Survey Report 2026		WSCUC Evidence Artifact
Recommendations: build the learning system		
The recommendations below translate ACE findings into changes that would strengthen WSCUC readiness and day-to-day institutional effectiveness.		
1	Establish dedicated assessment leadership Create a credible campus-level point of contact with faculty experience who can coordinate expectations, feedback, templates, and communities of practice.	
2	Build a template and example library Provide clear models for course, program, administrative, co-curricular, and accreditation-aligned assessment so units know what good evidence looks like.	
3	Align external accreditation with campus assessment Recognize ABET, CTC, AACSB, NAEYC, and other rigorous external processes through an attestation pathway to reduce duplicate work.	
4	Create a centralized evidence platform Adopt a standard architecture for storing reports, data, actions, artifacts, and follow-up evidence to reduce leadership-transition risk.	
5	Support assessment labor Address the universal time/workload barrier through release time, assigned time, staff support, and deadline alignment.	
6	Make the feedback loop visible Return feedback to units, publish an annual Assessment in Action summary, and publicly recognize assessment-informed change.	

Building upon these existing strengths, the report outlines a strategic roadmap that includes developing centralized evidence systems, expanding assessment training, strengthening leadership engagement, supporting assessment workload, and creating annual mechanisms for documenting assessment-informed improvements.

The ACE Survey demonstrates Sacramento State's commitment to cultivating a mature culture of assessment by systematically evaluating its own assessment practices, identifying opportunities for growth, and establishing an evidence-based framework for ongoing institutional learning. As a baseline measure, the survey provides an important mechanism for monitoring future progress while reinforcing the University's commitment to continuous quality improvement and student success.

ASSESSMENT CULTURE SURVEY

As part of the reaccreditation institutional reporting process, Sacramento State evaluated the university's climate regarding assessment involving faculty, staff, students, and department chairs. Findings revealed broad support for assessment as a tool for improving curriculums and student success, with most respondents indicating a willingness to engage in assessment activities. At the same time, respondents identified several institutional challenges, including

limited staffing, inconsistent feedback structures, workload concerns, and the absence of a centralized faculty-led assessment infrastructure. Participants also noted variability across units in how assessment findings are used to inform planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement. The university treats these findings as an opportunity to strengthen its campus-wide culture of assessment. In response, Sacramento State has begun implementing efforts to restore a more coordinated and faculty-centered assessment process (please see the Moving Forward section for more details).

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

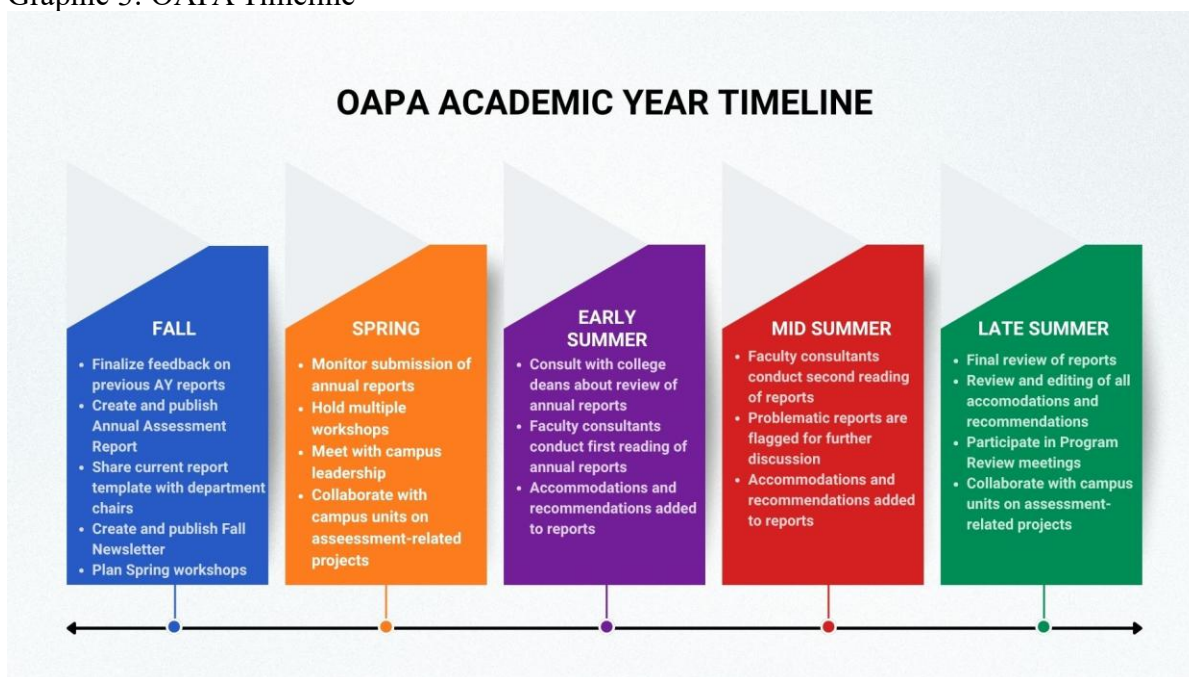
Office of Academic and Program Assessment (OAPA)

Historically, Sacramento State’s academic assessment efforts were coordinated through the Office of Academic Program Assessment (OAPA), a faculty-led unit that provided substantive feedback on annual assessment reports, facilitated faculty workshops, and supported campus-wide assessment practices. In 2019, responsibility for annual assessment shifted to the Office of Academic Excellence under the leadership of the Associate Vice President for Academic Excellence, while the Center for Teaching and Learning expanded faculty development efforts through Faculty Learning Communities focused on assessment practices, Canvas-based assessment collection, and the use of assessment data to support student success. Despite these structural changes, academic programs continued to engage in annual assessment activities and document “closing the loop” improvements based on assessment findings.

OAPA, under the leadership of a faculty director and assisted by faculty consultants from multiple departments, established a robust process that supported university-wide assessment practices. A typical academic year included directing the collection of annual assessment reports, facilitating workshops, reviewing annual assessment reports, and collaborating with multiple campus units.



Graphic 3: OAPA Timeline



Throughout the academic year, OAPA maintained consistent communication with university leadership and assessment coordinators regarding the timely submission and review of program assessment reports. The annual assessment report template, distributed to academic programs in early fall, provided a robust structure that encouraged programs to thoroughly assess one PLO each year. The template queried programs in four key areas: 1) overview of PLOs assessed; 2) detail of specific PLO assessed including data tables and “closing the loop;” 3) discussion of other assessment activities; and 4) background information about the program. The template was made available to academic units via SharePoint. Faculty consultants engaged in a thorough review of annual reports. The “first reading” made note of the program’s PLOs, rubrics/standards of performance, direct measures/assignments, data tables, assessment plan, and curriculum map. Based on the faculty consultants’ findings and substantive discussions with the entire OAPA team, commendations and recommendations were added to each annual assessment report. The following AY, programs were encouraged to discuss any responses to the previous year’s feedback when completing the annual assessment report template.

At the conclusion of the annual assessment report cycle, OAPA prepared and published a comprehensive Annual Assessment Report analyzing the university’s programmatic assessment efforts. Given changes to the structure of the university’s annual assessment process, the last [Annual Assessment Report](#) was published in 2018 (AY 2017-2018).

Center for Teaching and Learning

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) serves as Sacramento State's central resource for advancing teaching excellence, fostering instructional innovation, and promoting student success through evidence-informed faculty development. Guided by a commitment to inclusive excellence and continuous improvement, the CTL provides faculty with opportunities to strengthen their teaching through professional learning communities, workshops, consultations, research collaborations, instructional technology support, and programs that promote equitable and accessible learning environments. Throughout its work, the Center emphasizes the integration of evidence-based instructional practices, reflective teaching, and the scholarship of teaching and learning as essential components of academic excellence. This report documents these efforts and illustrates how faculty development contributes to institutional effectiveness and student success ([CTL Annual Report 2025-2026](#)).

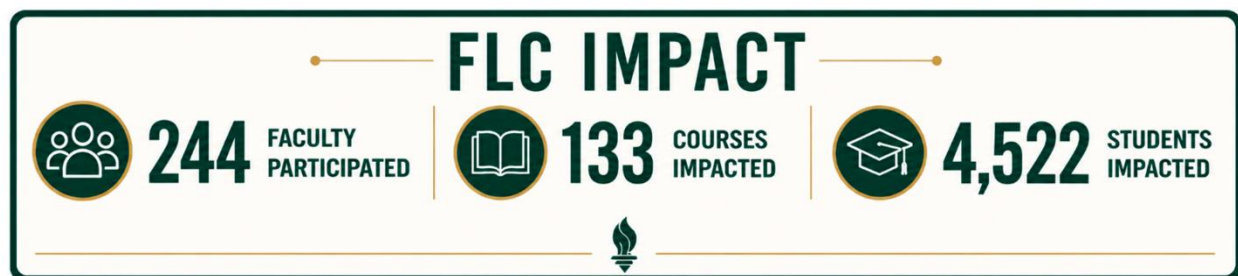
Over the past several years, the CTL has expanded its programming to address emerging institutional priorities, including equity-minded teaching, culturally responsive pedagogy, accessibility, instructional technology, artificial intelligence, and data-informed decision making. Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) have evolved from broad instructional improvement initiatives to sustained professional development experiences that integrate active learning, learning analytics, equity-focused course redesign, culturally responsive teaching, and classroom-based research. Per CTL's 2025-2026 Annual Report, "Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are CTL's signature peer-led professional development programs, advancing instructional innovation, evidence-based teaching, accessibility, equity, and student success through sustained faculty collaboration and course improvement." Through partnerships with academic departments and campus units, faculty participants have implemented innovative teaching strategies, redesigned courses, examined student learning outcomes, and contributed to a growing culture of evidence-based teaching and continuous improvement. These initiatives have encouraged faculty to engage in systematic inquiry regarding student learning while supporting the University's commitment to educational effectiveness and student achievement (CTL Annual Report 2025 - 2026).

2025-26 Highlights

- 244 faculty participated in FLCs
- 109 faculty completed FLCs (the remaining are expected to complete next year)
- 133 courses impacted through evidence-based instructional practices
- 4,522 students benefitted from improved learning experiences



Graphic 4: Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL): FLC Impact (CTL 2025 - 2026 Annual Report)



Recognizing that meaningful assessment extends beyond the collection of student learning data, CTL has intentionally developed faculty learning opportunities that position assessment as an integral component of effective teaching. Through a series of Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs), faculty have engaged in action research, data analytics, classroom assessment, equity-focused inquiry, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). These initiatives have supported faculty in developing meaningful assessment questions, interpreting institutional and classroom data, implementing instructional innovations, and evaluating the effectiveness of those innovations through systematic evidence collection. Rather than treating assessment as a compliance activity, the FLCs positioned assessment as a scholarly process that informs instructional decision making, supports innovation, and contributes to improved student success. Over time, the FLC curriculum evolved to reflect emerging institutional priorities (CTL Annual Report 2025-2026).

Assessment-based FLCs:

- Data Analytics: Data and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Faculty Learning Community (2019–2020)
 - The Data Analytics: Data and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Faculty Learning Community marked an important expansion of Sacramento State's faculty development efforts by explicitly integrating educational assessment with scholarly inquiry. Recognizing the increasing importance of evidence-informed decision making in higher education, the learning community was designed to help faculty use institutional and classroom data to better understand student learning while developing the skills necessary to conduct educational research.
- Equity, Analytics, and Active Learning with ACUE Faculty Learning Community (2020–2021)
 - Building upon the success of the Data Analytics Faculty Learning Community, the Equity, Analytics, and Active Learning with ACUE Faculty Learning Community broadened the scope of faculty development by integrating learning analytics, evidence-based pedagogy, and equity-minded instructional practices. The learning community recognized that improving student success requires not only effective instructional strategies but also careful examination of how those strategies affect different student populations.
- ESCALA Faculty Learning Communities

Summer 2023, AY 2023–2024, and Summer/Fall 2024

- The ESCALA Faculty Learning Communities represent the next phase in the evolution of Sacramento State's assessment-focused faculty development model. While centered on culturally responsive teaching within Hispanic-Serving Institutions, these initiatives extended beyond professional development by embedding systematic assessment into every stage of instructional redesign. Across three consecutive cohorts, faculty participated in intensive professional learning focused on culturally responsive pedagogy, equitable grading practices, and instructional redesign. Participants completed online learning modules, engaged in facilitated discussions centered on Grading for Equity, examined classroom and institutional data, and redesigned course materials to better support student engagement and success.

The Center's assessment initiatives complement Sacramento State's institutional assessment processes by preparing faculty to engage thoughtfully in the assessment of student learning and the use of evidence to improve educational quality. Through sustained professional learning, collaborative inquiry, and classroom-based research, the CTL has helped cultivate a faculty community that views assessment not as a reporting requirement, but as an essential component of teaching excellence and student success (CTL Annual Report 2025-2026).

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Under the leadership of the AVP of Academic Excellence, the annual assessment report template was condensed and queried programs in four key areas: 1) status of the academic program's PLOs, Curriculum Map, and Assessment Plan; 2) learning assessment data related to one or two PLOs; 3) programmatic changes and/or improvements related to Student Success Data (i.e., Admissions, Retention, Graduation, and Career/Future Education); and 4) needed support from Academic Excellence to assist in program level changes.

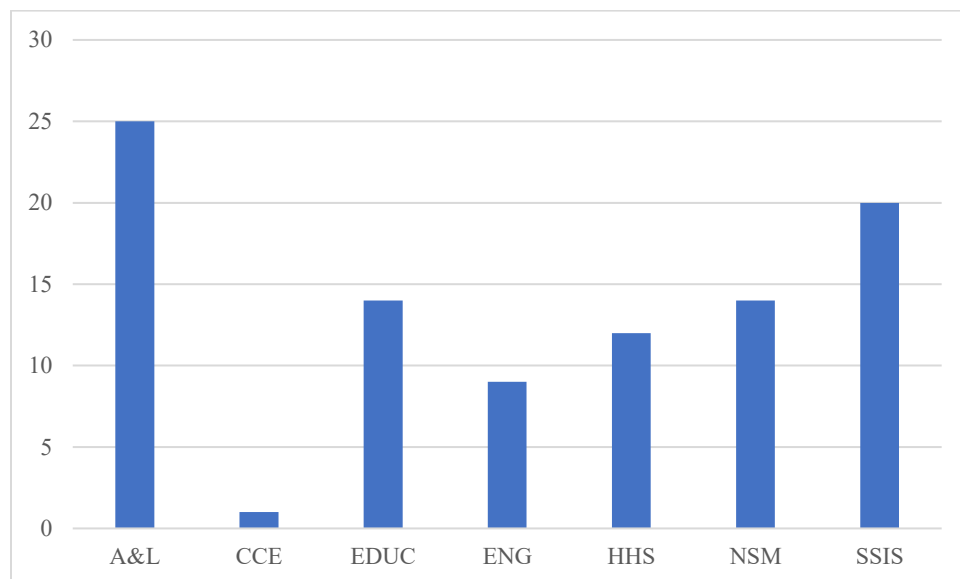
AY 2023 – 2024 Annual Assessment Reports

Overall, 95 degree programs submitted an annual assessment report for the 2023 - 2024 reporting period.

- A&L: 25 reports
- SSIS: 20 reports
- EDUC and NSM: 14 reports
- HHS: 12 reports
- ENG and Computer Science: 9 reports
- CCE: 1 report



Table 1. 2023 - 2024 Annual Assessment Reports by College

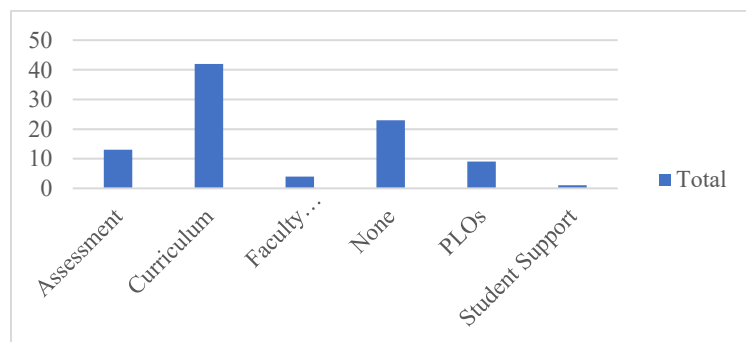


N = 95

Programs often identified multiple assessment-informed improvements within a single annual report and were not asked to rank these actions by priority. The following tables summarize the most commonly reported changes across academic programs. The presentation reflects the frequency with which changes appeared in annual reports and is intended to highlight institution-wide patterns rather than indicate the relative importance of any individual improvement effort.

Programs that engaged in making assessment-based changes and improvements mostly focused their efforts on changes and improvements to their specialized curricula, followed by changes to their assessment processes, and PLOs.

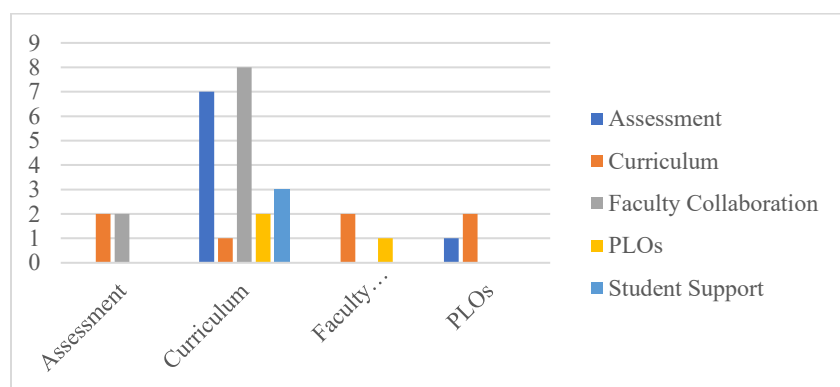
Table 2: 2023 - 2024 Primary Program Changes



N=92

The following chart shows that programs engaged in multiple activities that enhanced the learning environment based on their assessment results. Programs that focused on assessment changes also implemented changes to their curriculum and discussed ways to increase faculty collaboration. Programs that focused on curriculum changes engaged in the most diverse changes and improvements which includes changes to assessment practices, efforts to increase faculty collaboration, changes to PLOs, and creative ways to offer students additional support. Programs that focused on faculty collaboration also implemented changes to their curricula and PLOs. Programs that focused on changes to PLOs also implemented changes to their curricula and identified ways to enhance student support.

Table 3: 2023 - 2024 Multiple Program Changes

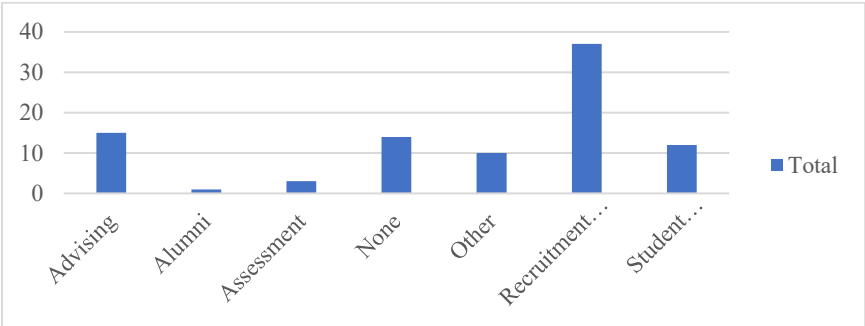


N=31

As requested in the annual assessment report template, programs identified multiple student success improvements across four areas: admissions, retention, graduation, and career/future. The following charts are based on how programs expressed their engagement in activities that strengthened each area. Programs were not asked to rank these actions by priority. The following tables summarize the most commonly reported changes across academic programs. The presentation reflects the frequency with which changes appeared in annual reports and is intended to highlight institution-wide patterns rather than indicate the relative importance of any individual improvement effort.

Thirty-seven programs provided substantive feedback regarding their efforts to bolster recruitment and admissions. This included attending university-sponsored events such as Hornet Day, reaching out to local community colleges and high schools, and advertising their programs across campus. Twelve programs provided ample information regarding their efforts to retain current students through offering additional student support such as, advising, or making curricular changes that provided more opportunities for student engagement. Ten programs discussed other mechanisms to promote student success such as, employing hybrid modalities, creating exit surveys, or making programmatic changes such as, offering new degrees.

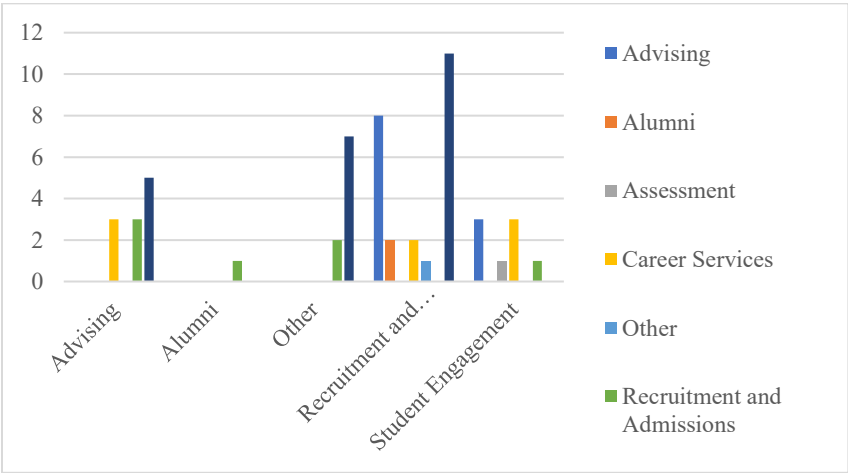
Table 4: 2023 - 2024 Primary Student Success Changes and Improvements



N=92

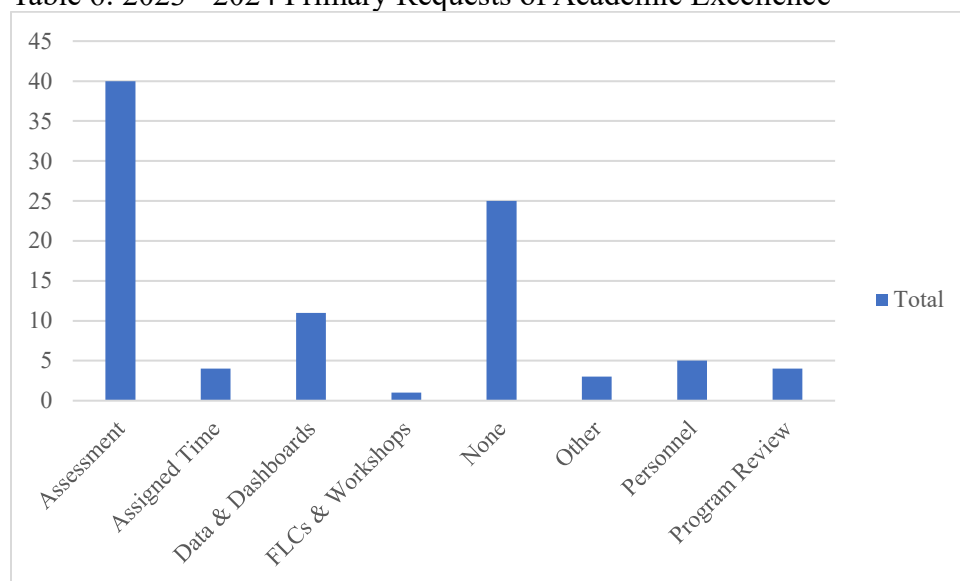
The following chart shows that programs engaged in multiple activities that strengthened student success. Programs that provided substantive feedback regarding their recruitment and admissions efforts engaged in a healthy number of improvements, including increasing advising opportunities, outreach to alumni, connections to career services, and student engagement activities. Programs that provided ample discussion of their student engagement activities also engaged in offering more student advising opportunities, modifying their assessment practices, connecting to career services, and increasing their recruitment efforts. Programs that focused on advising also reached out to career services, amplified their recruitment efforts, and strengthened their student engagement activities.

Table 5: 2023 - 2024 Multiple Student Success Changes and Improvements



N=92

Table 6: 2023 - 2024 Primary Requests of Academic Excellence



N=93

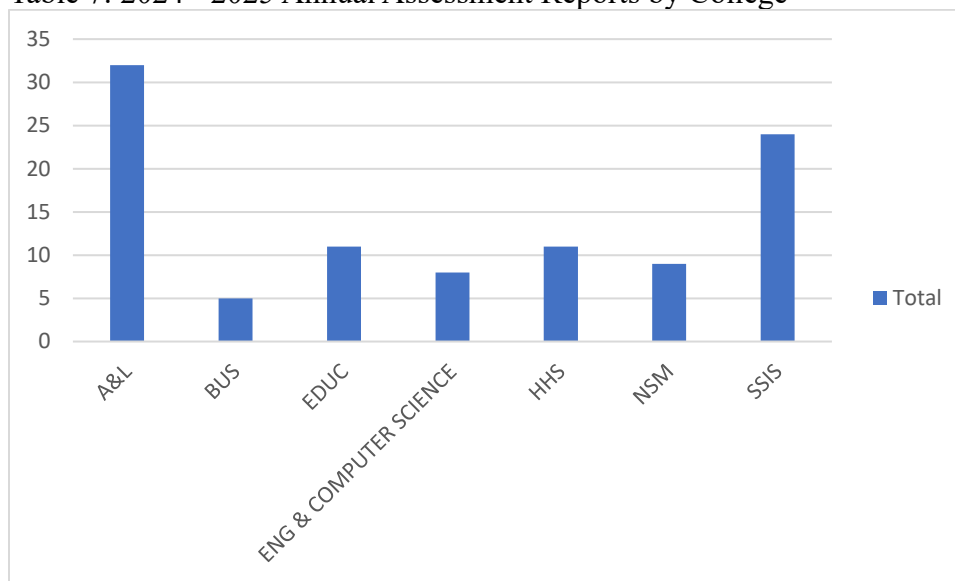
The annual assessment template asked programs what additional support they needed from Academic Excellence. The primary request made by 40 programs was guidance and assistance with conducting annual assessments. Twenty-five programs noted they were not in need of assistance. Eleven programs requested assistance with either collecting data or tutorial help with the university's data dashboards. Other requests included assistance with program review and hiring of personnel.

AY 2024 - 2025 Annual Assessment Reports

Overall, 100 degree programs submitted an annual assessment report for the 2024 - 2025 reporting period.

- A&L: 32
- BUS: 5
- SSIS: 24
- EDUC and HHS: 11(22 total)
- NSM: 9
- ENG & Computer Science: 8
- CCE: 0

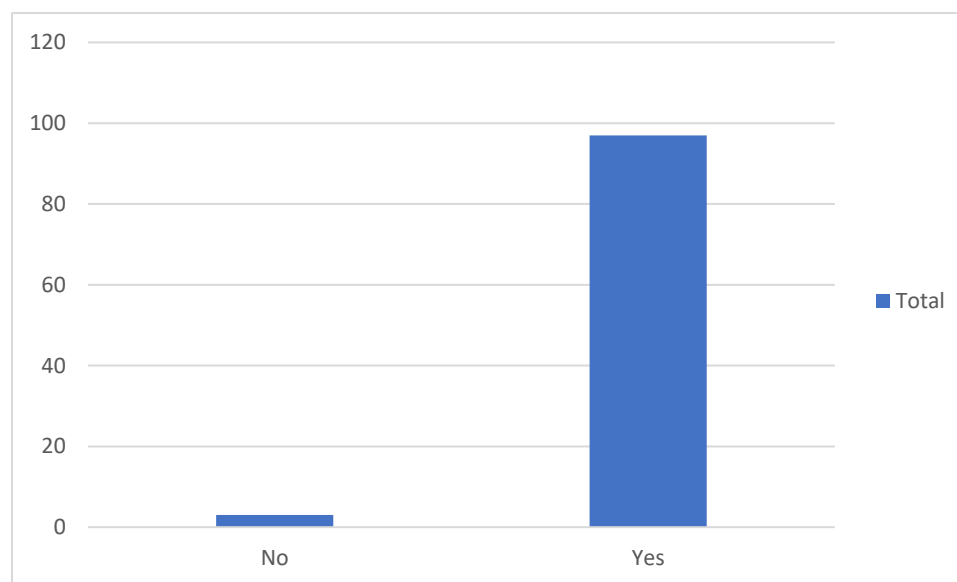
Table 7: 2024 - 2025 Annual Assessment Reports by College



N=100

The 2024 - 2025 annual assessment report template asked programs to list their on-going learning maintenance/improvement efforts for each program learning outcome, and summarize any impact their efforts had on student achievement of that outcome. Further, programs were asked to discuss what was working and what was not working. Overall, 97 programs indicated that they were engaged in maintenance/improvement efforts regarding their PLOs.

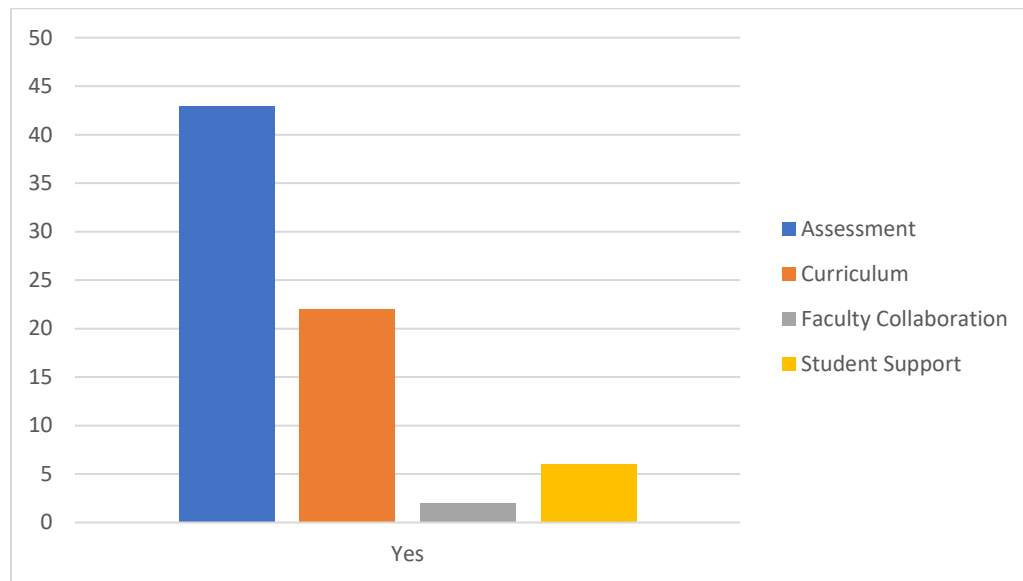
Table 8: 2024 - 2025 Number of Programs Maintaining/Improving PLOs



N=100

In addition to revisions to their PLOs, seventy-three programs noted supplementary improvements across their disciplines. Forty-three programs noted improvements to their assessment practices. Twenty-two indicated revisions to their curricula. Six programs referenced student engagement activities, and two programs discussed strengthening faculty collaboration.

Table 9: 2024 - 2025 Additional Program Changes

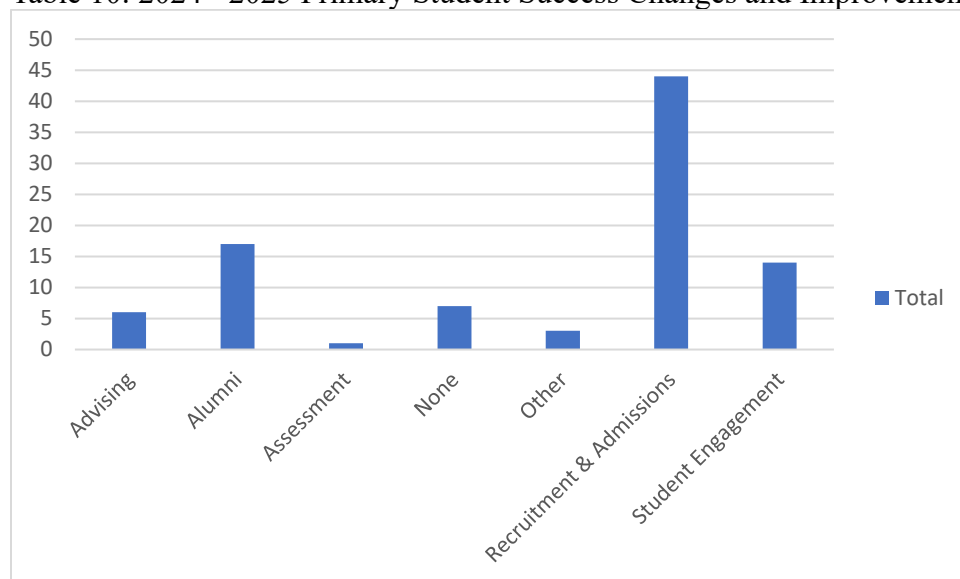


N=73

As requested in the annual assessment report template, programs identified student success improvements across four areas: admissions, retention, graduation, and career/future. The following charts are based on how programs expressed their engagement in activities that strengthened each area. Programs were not asked to rank these actions by priority. The following tables summarize the most commonly reported changes across academic programs. The presentation reflects the frequency with which changes appeared in annual reports and is intended to highlight institution-wide patterns rather than indicate the relative importance of any individual improvement effort.

Forty-four programs provided substantive feedback regarding their efforts to bolster recruitment and admissions. Seventeen programs noted outreach efforts to alumni. Fourteen programs provided ample information regarding their efforts to retain current students through providing more opportunities for student engagement. Six referenced changes in advising opportunities.

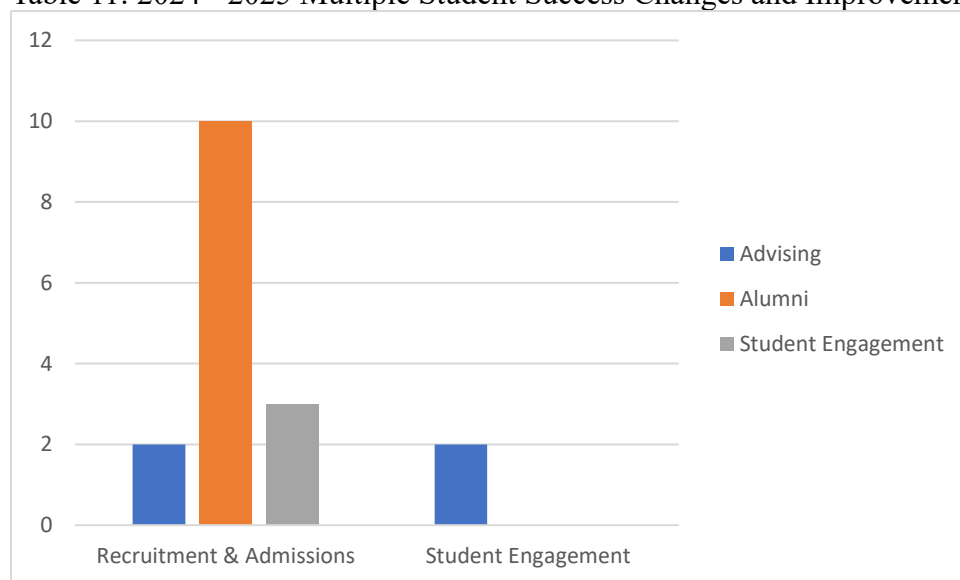
Table 10: 2024 - 2025 Primary Student Success Changes and Improvements



N=92

Similar to the 2023-2024 annual assessment reports, programs engaged in multiple activities to improve student success. The following chart indicates that some programs that focused heavily on recruitment and admissions also strengthened their advising practices, reached out to alumni, and provided more opportunities for student engagement. Similarly, programs that focused heavily on student engagement also improved advising opportunities.

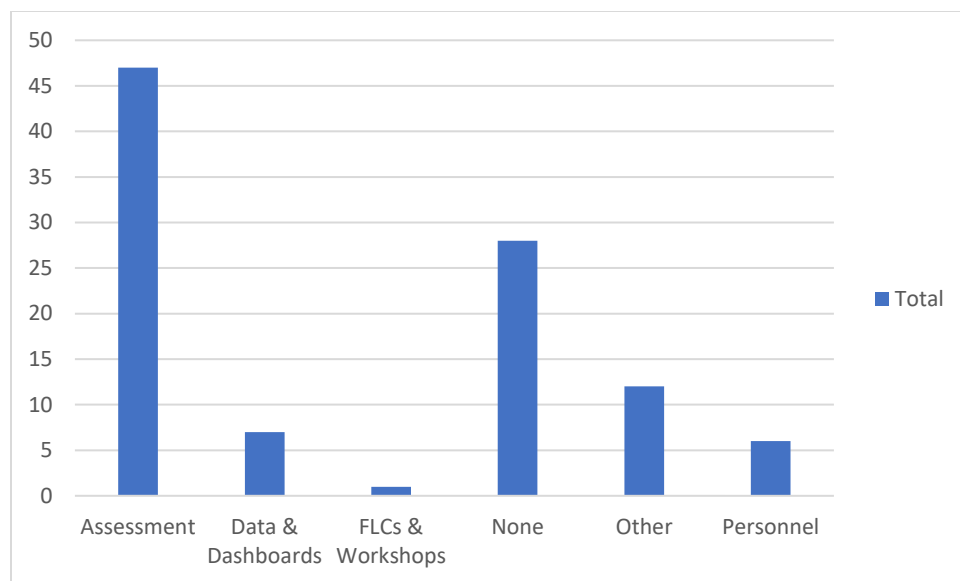
Table 11: 2024 - 2025 Multiple Student Success Changes and Improvements



N=17

The annual assessment template asked programs what additional support they needed from Academic Excellence. The primary request made by 47 programs was guidance and assistance with conducting annual assessments. Twelve programs indicated other types of assistance such as, help recruiting international students, assistance in addressing students' sense of belonging, and increased advertising of university graduate programs. Seven programs requested tutorial assistance with university data dashboards. Six programs requested lines for tenure-track hires.

Table 12: 2024 - 2025 Primary Request of Academic Excellence



N=100

AY 2025 - 2026 Annual Assessment Reports

In 2025–2026, the Office of the Provost led the collection of annual assessment reports using a revised reporting template and renewed institutional expectations regarding annual reporting ([Link to SharePoint Draft Revisions](#)). Annual assessment reports were due by June 30, 2026. Sacramento State will begin review of the reports during summer 2026.

Analysis

The AY 2023 - 2024 and 2024-2025 annual assessment reports indicate strong participation across the university's colleges. Although not indicated in this narrative, the assessment reports included undergraduate and graduate programs, and programs that receive external accreditation. The reports show thoughtful improvements throughout the institution's academic programs. Rather than focusing on singular improvements, programs underscored the value in scaffolding their changes. Revisions and modifications in one area, created the foundation for changes in other areas. For example, programs intentionally revised their curriculums generating a basis for modifications to assessment practices, ultimately positively influencing student success. During both assessment cycles, programs offered substantive discussions of their recruitment and

admissions activities signifying clear attention to enrollment trends. As evidenced in this narrative, programs engaged in thorough reviews, implementing significant changes in assessment, student support, and student engagement. Further, they book-ended their efforts by focusing on increased recruitment activities and substantive outreach to alumni.

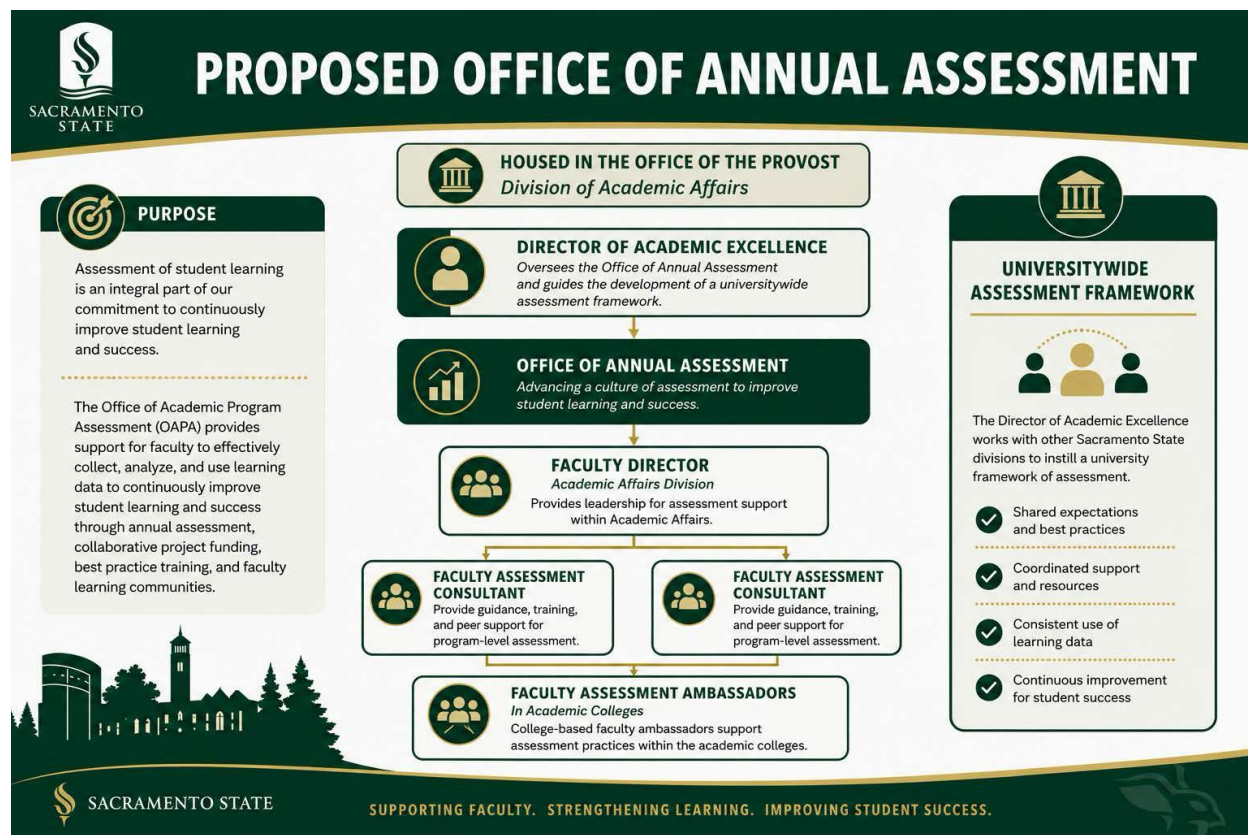
Overwhelmingly, programs requested assistance in conducting annual assessment, indicating the university's commitment to continuous improvement. Other concerns such as personnel requests further speak to the university's desire to conduct high quality assessment work, with sufficient resources and support.

MOVING FORWARD

Sacramento State is currently working to re-establish The [Office of Annual Assessment \(OAPA\)](#). As noted earlier, the ACE Survey and previous annual assessment reports show evidence of the university's commitment to continuous improvement. Yet, without a solid structure, the university-wide culture of assessment has weakened. The reinvigoration of OAPA will help to re-energize the campus community and provide much needed institutional support. Sacramento State values the expertise and experience of its faculty who have a wealth of insight into the effective patterns that advance student success. As noted in the Strategic Plan, a healthy learning environment requires the knowledge and skills of faculty. In addition, to returning to a faculty-led process of annual assessment, the university will continue to rely heavily on the tremendous work of the Center for Teaching and Learning. As discussed earlier, in many ways, CTL filled in the gaps and helped to support assessment efforts during significant institutional changes. In addition, the new annual assessment process will connect better with the university's program review schedule. The [2025-2026 annual assessment questions](#) were redesigned to make annual reporting more useful for program review. Finally, the re-imagined OAPA will generate opportunities to partner with non-academic campus units to design and implement assessment practices.



Graphic 5. Proposed Office of Annual Assessment



As noted in the above graphic, Sacramento State is working toward re-establishing OAPA, housed within the Division of Academic Affairs, and supervised by the Director of Academic Excellence. A Faculty Director will lead OAPA, and will work alongside two Faculty Assessment Consultants, who will engage Faculty Assessment Ambassadors at each college. The university hopes to have the office fully functional by spring 2027.

Overall, Sacramento State is engaged in thoughtful university-wide discourse regarding its assessment efforts. Although much work is needed, the institution is using a wealth of evidence to realign its assessment practices with its mission and values.

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California State University. 2026. *Assessment Culture Evaluation (ACE) Survey Report*. Sacramento, CA: California State University, Sacramento Division of Academic Affairs. Retrieved May 25, 2026 (https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/academic-excellence/accreditations/_internal/_documents/sacramento_state_ace_survey_report_june-2026.pdf).

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