



Assessment Culture Evaluation (ACE) Survey Report

Prepared for WSCUC Reaffirmation Evidence

California State University, Sacramento

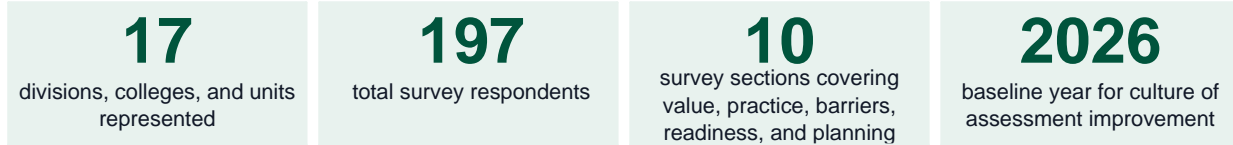
17 divisions, colleges, and units | 197 respondents | May 2026

SACRAMENTO STATE

Our Hive, Our Home

Executive Snapshot

The ACE Survey shows a campus community that values assessment, but needs stronger infrastructure to convert local practice into a sustainable culture of evidence and improvement.



Core evaluative finding

Sacramento State has many assessment practices already in place, but those practices are unevenly supported. The evidence points to a need for clearer expectations, stronger feedback loops, centralized evidence storage, visible leadership engagement, and a practical share-back and planning-forward process with units.

What the evidence says

High personal value

Most respondents personally value assessment and see its connection to student success, equity, service quality, and program improvement.

Uneven infrastructure

Assessment practice is present, but evidence storage, feedback loops, expectations, and workload support vary substantially by unit.

Documentation fragility

Many units report documenting as they go, while also scrambling when evidence is requested, a sign of reactive systems.

Leadership visibility gap

Respondents often distinguish personal value for assessment from confidence that senior leaders visibly engage results.

Readiness with support

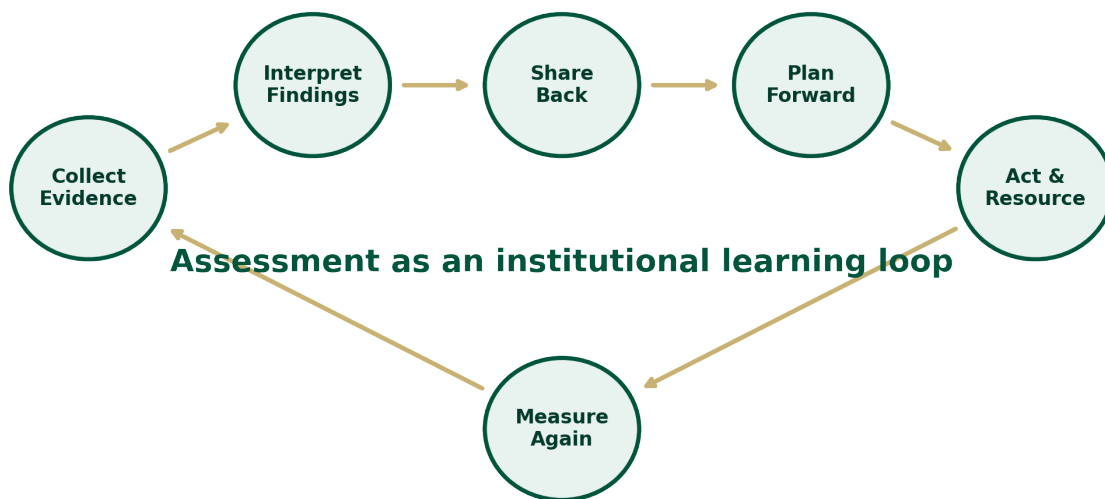
Most units describe themselves as moderately ready for WSCUC, suggesting strong foundations but a need for polish, coordination, and clarity.

How this evidence report is designed

This redesigned report is structured to support WSCUC evidence use. It moves beyond description of survey responses by connecting findings to institutional learning, risks, and recommended improvement actions. The format follows a simple evidence trail: data source -> finding -> interpretation -> action -> next monitoring step.

<p>Evaluative, not merely descriptive</p> <p>Each major finding is interpreted for what it reveals about institutional capacity, coordination, and improvement.</p>	<p>Evidence-to-action logic</p> <p>Findings are translated into recommended routines, not just listed as perceptions or complaints.</p>
<p>WSCUC-aligned framing</p> <p>The report foregrounds institutional quality, student success, cultures of evidence, and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Comparable report practice</p> <p>The structure draws from recent public WSCUC reports that use appendices, evidence inventories, and clear action narratives.</p>

Evidence trail used in this report



Bottom line

The ACE Survey is best understood as a baseline diagnostic and a trigger for a recurring share-back and planning-forward cycle.

Survey scope and method

The 2026 ACE Survey gathered cross-divisional perspectives on assessment culture at Sacramento State. It covered demographics, value of assessment, knowledge of assessment, assessment practice, challenges and needs, successes, assessment culture and readiness, priorities and planning, engagement, and open feedback.

Population	17 divisions, colleges, and units across academic and non-academic areas.
Responses	197 respondents contributed to the aggregate report.
Purpose	Identify strengths, barriers, readiness, support needs, and opportunities for stronger assessment infrastructure.
Use	Serve as a baseline for share-back conversations, unit planning, evidence management, and university-level coordination.

Important interpretive note

The ACE Survey is not a comprehensive audit of every assessment activity at Sacramento State. It is a cross-sectional culture and capacity scan. Its value is strongest when used to identify patterns, surface risks, select improvement priorities, and design follow-up conversations with divisions and units. This makes the survey especially useful for WSCUC evidence because it documents not only what Sacramento State is doing, but what the institution is learning about the conditions needed to make assessment meaningful and sustainable.

Findings dashboard

A compact view of the survey findings, interpreted for institutional learning and improvement.

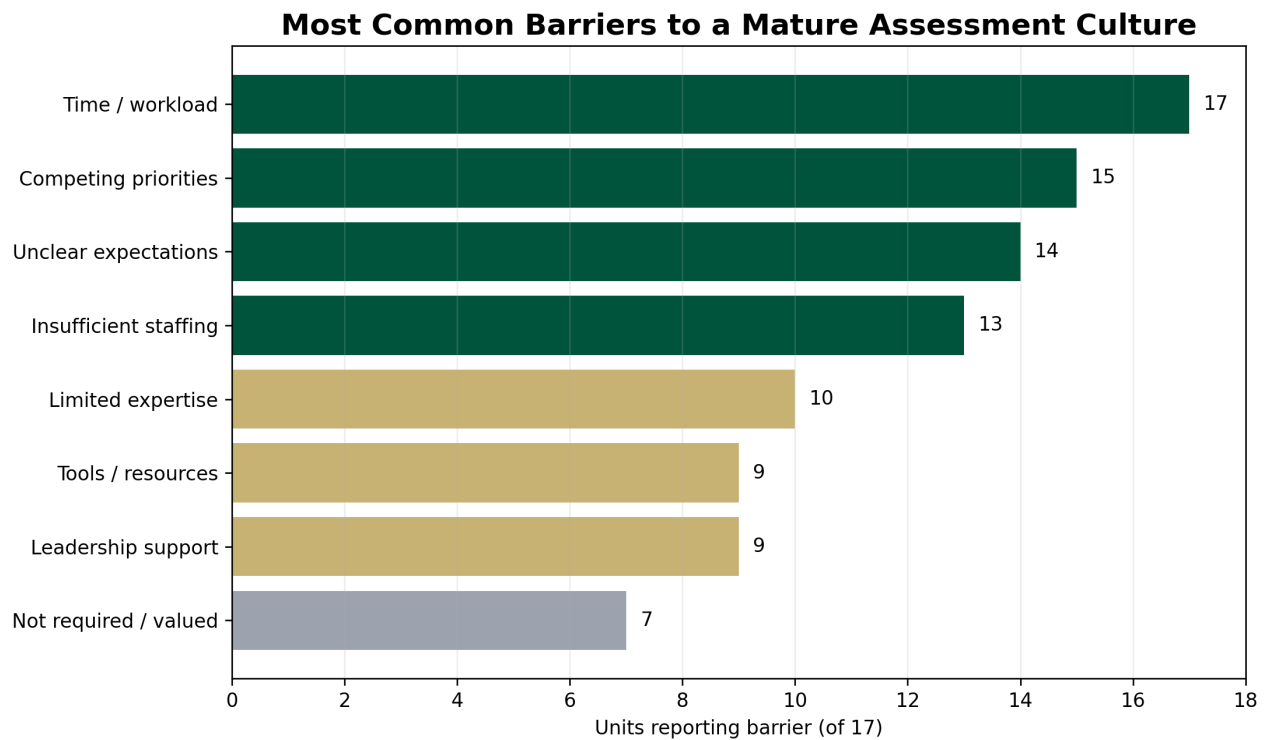
Dimension	Evidence pattern	Institutional meaning
Value	Most respondents personally value assessment.	The campus has motivational capital to build on.
Leadership	Leadership support perceptions are mixed to negative.	Visible use of evidence by leaders is a culture-change priority.
Workload	Time and workload are universal barriers.	Assessment must be resourced, not treated as volunteer labor.
Expectations	Unclear expectations are reported across 14 of 17 units.	Templates, examples, rubrics, and feedback are urgent infrastructure needs.
Documentation	Evidence storage is fragmented.	Institutional memory is vulnerable when evidence lives with individuals.
Use of results	Units collect data but fewer use it systematically.	The university needs stronger closing-the-loop routines.

Overall diagnosis

Assessment at Sacramento State is not absent; it is uneven. The central institutional challenge is to convert decentralized activity into a coherent learning system with clearer expectations, visible leadership use, integrated evidence storage, and reliable feedback to units.

Barrier analysis: where culture stalls

The strongest barriers are not philosophical resistance to assessment. They are structural: time, workload, competing priorities, unclear expectations, staffing, and lack of common systems.



Interpretation

- Time and workload were reported by all 17 units, showing that meaningful assessment cannot mature without attention to labor and capacity.
- Unclear expectations were nearly as widespread, which suggests the first improvement step should be practical templates, examples, timelines, and feedback.
- Tools and evidence storage problems are not technical details; they affect institutional memory, readiness, and the ability to demonstrate improvement to WSCUC.

Capacity is uneven across units

Knowledge of assessment varies dramatically between and within units. Some areas have advanced assessment knowledge because of external accreditation, discipline-based data practices, or strong local champions. Other areas, especially some non-academic divisions, have less familiarity with institutional learning outcomes, program learning outcome alignment, and assessment vocabulary.

Strengths to leverage

COB, COE, ECS, ASI Children's Center, and other externally accredited units bring mature assessment practice. Library, IRT, People & Climate, and Student Affairs bring applied service-assessment and data-use capacity. Expert champions exist in many units and can support mentorship and peer learning.

Risks to address

Capacity varies too heavily on individual champions. Knowledge of institutional learning outcomes is uneven, especially outside Academic Affairs. Data analysis ability and evidence interpretation vary widely.

Evaluative implication

The university should treat capacity-building as an infrastructure issue, not merely a training issue. Training matters, but it will not solve the problem unless paired with leadership structure, evidence systems, workload support, and feedback routines.

Capacity asset	How to use it
External accreditation units	Use as exemplars for closing-the-loop evidence and documentation discipline.
Assessment champions	Create a community of practice and mentoring structure.
Library, ECS, ABA pilots	Use share-back and planning-forward process as a scalable model.

Evidence storage is the hidden readiness risk

The survey identified a recurring contradiction: many units report that they document as they go, but also report scrambling to find or create evidence when accreditation or review requests arise. This is one of the most important findings because it shows that documentation practices are active but not yet institutionally reliable.

Documentation pattern	Units most affected	Why it matters
Document as we go, but scramble at review	SSIS, A&L;, Student Affairs, Athletics	Suggests activity exists, but retrieval and synthesis are weak.
Evidence well-organized, multiple people know where it is	ASI, CCE, COB, University Library	Shows a model for resilience and shared ownership.
One person is the sole keeper of evidence	A&L;, HHS, SSIS, Student Affairs	Creates risk when personnel change or deadlines compress.
No centralized location	SSIS, A&L;, HHS, UGS/OGS, NSM	Undermines continuity and consistent reporting.
Unsure what counts as evidence	Athletics, IRT, HHS, COE, People & Climate	Signals a need for examples and clear criteria.

Recommended institutional move

Develop a common evidence architecture for each unit: annual assessment reports, data files, action plans, meeting notes, closing-the-loop examples, and follow-up results. The tool can be SharePoint or another platform, but the folder logic should be standardized and expected.

Successes to preserve and scale

The ACE Survey also documents substantial assessment success across the institution. The highest-value successes share several features: dedicated attention, external accountability, meaningful data use, collaboration, and a visible connection between evidence and decisions.

<p>External accreditation backbone</p> <p>ABET, CTC, AACSB, NAEYC, NASAD, CACREP, and other external reviews provide structure, deadlines, and evidence-rich practice.</p>	<p>Dashboard and utilization data</p> <p>Institutional Research, Student Affairs, IRT, and other units use dashboards and operational data to guide service improvements.</p>
<p>Unit-specific inquiry</p> <p>University Library, People & Climate, and CCE examples show the value of focused questions and localized share-back.</p>	<p>Curricular/service changes</p> <p>COB, NSM, SSIS, A&L, and others report changes informed by assessment findings.</p>

Representative examples from ACE responses

Unit/area	Assessment success named in ACE
ECS	ABET reaccreditation granted through 2032; strong industry advisory board participation.
University Library	DEI self-assessment audit; user-centered website redesign via focus groups; evidence-based decisions when hours were cut.
COB	External focus groups with industry informed curriculum changes; AACSB closing-the-loop cycle.
People & Climate	Training needs focus groups led to new programs and strengthened response capacity.
ASI	NAEYC accreditation maintained, CO audit passed, and documentation culture appears strong.

Readiness: foundations are present, polish is needed

The dominant WSCUC readiness response across units is moderately ready - need some support. That pattern is encouraging because it suggests the institution has a foundation to build from. It is also instructive because readiness gaps appear to be less about whether assessment exists and more about whether evidence can be found, interpreted, returned to units, and used consistently.

Engagement is an opportunity

Most respondents describe themselves as willing or somewhat willing to participate. This suggests that Sacramento State can move assessment culture forward if it reduces friction and gives people evidence that their work matters.

Improvement hypothesis

- If units receive clearer expectations and templates, then assessment reports will become more comparable and less burdensome.
- If leadership visibly uses findings, then assessment will feel less performative and more consequential.
- If evidence storage is centralized, then WSCUC readiness and institutional memory will improve.
- If results are shared back with units, then assessment will better support planning and continuous improvement.

Recommendations: build the learning system

The recommendations below translate ACE findings into changes that would strengthen WSCUC readiness and day-to-day institutional effectiveness.

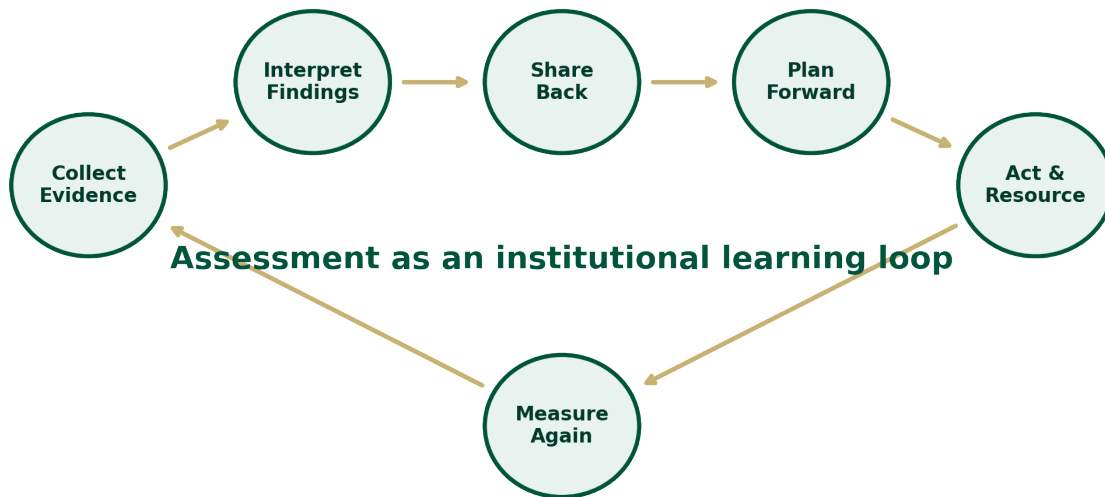
1	<p>Establish dedicated assessment leadership Create a credible campus-level point of contact with faculty experience who can coordinate expectations, feedback, templates, and communities of practice.</p>
2	<p>Build a template and example library Provide clear models for course, program, administrative, co-curricular, and accreditation-aligned assessment so units know what good evidence looks like.</p>
3	<p>Align external accreditation with campus assessment Recognize ABET, CTC, AACSB, NAEYC, and other rigorous external processes through an attestation pathway to reduce duplicate work.</p>
4	<p>Create a centralized evidence platform Adopt a standard architecture for storing reports, data, actions, artifacts, and follow-up evidence to reduce leadership-transition risk.</p>
5	<p>Support assessment labor Address the universal time/workload barrier through release time, assigned time, staff support, and deadline alignment.</p>
6	<p>Make the feedback loop visible Return feedback to units, publish an annual Assessment in Action summary, and publicly recognize assessment-informed change.</p>

Additional implementation priorities

7	Fix timing and annual rhythm Move reports away from summer-only deadlines or create a fall submission option so faculty can engage while on contract.
8	Differentiate training Offer foundations, data analysis, closing-the-loop, and assessment leadership tracks with asynchronous options.
9	Engage senior leadership visibly Ask deans and vice presidents to identify assessment-informed decisions and incorporate evidence use in planning forums.
10	Include lecturers and part-time faculty Create compensated mechanisms for lecturers and adjunct faculty to participate in assessment conversations and evidence interpretation.
11	Use external accreditation as a model Treat externally accredited programs as exemplars of cycle discipline, evidence storage, advisory input, and improvement documentation.
12	Create an annual Assessment in Action report Publish a concise annual report that shows what was learned, what changed, what remains unresolved, and what will be monitored next.

From survey report to institutional learning

The ACE Survey should not sit as a static evidence artifact. Its highest value will come from a structured share-back and planning-forward process, similar to the model Sacramento State has used in the Library Culture and Needs Assessment and has extended through pilot work with Library, ECS, and ABA.



Stage	Purpose
1. Prepare	Customize the unit conversation using ACE findings, local context, and relevant strategic priorities.
2. Share back	Return findings to the unit in a constructive, non-punitive format that invites interpretation.
3. Make meaning	Ask what confirms current practice, what surprises the unit, and what evidence is missing.
4. Plan forward	Identify two to three priority actions, evidence needed, timelines, and ownership.
5. Align	Connect unit actions to division plans, institutional strategy, WSCUC Standards, and CSU priorities.
6. Monitor	Revisit progress, document changes, and include results in annual assessment evidence.

Intended outcome

A repeatable improvement routine that helps units use evidence to clarify needs, make decisions, document change, and communicate how assessment improves student learning, student success, and institutional effectiveness.

Alignment with WSCUC expectations

WSCUC expects institutions to demonstrate quality, accountability, student success, institutional effectiveness, and cultures of evidence and improvement. The ACE Survey supports that expectation by documenting Sacramento State's current assessment culture and by identifying concrete next steps to make assessment more useful and sustainable.

WSCUC emphasis	How ACE contributes evidence
Culture of evidence and improvement	Identifies where data are collected, where evidence storage is fragile, and where closing-the-loop routines need strengthening.
Student learning and success	Surfaces capacity issues that affect program assessment, learning outcomes alignment, and co-curricular assessment.
Institutional effectiveness	Shows cross-divisional barriers and supports needed to improve administrative, academic, and student-facing assessment practice.
Quality assurance	Provides a baseline to monitor whether annual assessment, program review, external accreditation, and unit-level assessment become more coherent.
Transparency and accountability	Creates a basis for share-back conversations, public evidence inventories, and clearer reporting of changes made from evidence.



Prioritized action roadmap

The following roadmap organizes the recommendations by sequencing logic. Some actions can be started immediately; others require policy, resource, or technology decisions. The goal is not to create a new bureaucracy, but to create dependable routines that make assessment easier, clearer, and more useful.

Timeframe	Priority action	Evidence of progress to monitor
0-6 months	Name accountable assessment leadership and publish 2026-2027 assessment calendar.	Role identified; calendar posted; communication sent to units.
0-6 months	Develop template library and sample evidence packets.	Templates published; examples posted; training sessions scheduled.
0-6 months	Create share-back plans for participating ACE units.	Meeting schedule; unit-specific summaries; priority actions documented.
6-12 months	Pilot standardized evidence storage architecture.	Common folders; unit evidence inventories; migration plan.
6-12 months	Align external accreditation and annual assessment expectations.	Attestation process drafted and tested with accredited units.
12-18 months	Publish Assessment in Action report.	Report includes findings, actions, changes, unresolved gaps, and next cycle priorities.

Appendix A: Survey sections and summary findings

The ACE Survey covered ten sections designed to understand both assessment activity and assessment culture.

Survey sections

Demographics | Value of assessment | Knowledge of assessment | Assessment practice | Challenges and needs | Assessment successes | Assessment culture and readiness | Priorities and planning | Engagement | Open feedback

Survey area	Finding
Value	Strong personal commitment, but weaker confidence that leaders act on results.
Knowledge	Advanced pockets of expertise alongside uneven familiarity with ILO/PLO alignment and assessment methods.
Practice	Course evaluations, surveys, utilization tracking, accreditation reports, program review, and PLO assessment are common but unevenly integrated.
Challenges	Time, workload, unclear expectations, staffing, and evidence fragmentation dominate.
Successes	External accreditation, dashboards, industry input, focus groups, and unit-level assessment have driven improvements in several areas.
Readiness	Most units are moderately ready and need support rather than starting from zero.
Engagement	Most respondents are willing to participate if assessment is meaningful and supported.

Appendix B: Examples of assessment assets

ACE identified several areas of existing practice that can be used as institutional exemplars or starting points for peer learning.

Asset or example	Why it matters for institutional learning
Library Culture and Needs Assessment	Demonstrates a practical five-stage process: planning, co-construction, data collection, share-back, and planning forward.
ECS / ABET	Shows how external accreditation can produce disciplined evidence cycles and industry-informed improvement.
ABA pilot work	Extends assessment culture building into administrative operations and service effectiveness.
People & Climate focus groups	Demonstrates stakeholder feedback leading to new training and support practices.
ASI documentation culture	Shows what shared evidence ownership and organized documentation can look like.
IR dashboards	Provide a foundation for consistent, accessible, longitudinal evidence that can support unit-level planning.

Scale-up principle

The most promising institutional strategy is not to impose a single model everywhere. It is to identify strong local practices, translate them into flexible templates, and build a university-level infrastructure that helps units adapt them to their context.

References and evidence sources

- Sacramento State University. Assessment Culture Evaluation Survey Analysis 2026. May 2026. Internal evidence report.
- Sacramento State University Library. Workplace Culture & Needs Assessment Results 2023. Internal evidence report.
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- WASC Senior College and University Commission. 2023 Handbook of Accreditation. <https://www.wscuc.org/handbook2023/>
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- University of California, Davis. 2024 WSCUC Accreditation Review. <https://wasc.ucdavis.edu/2024-review>
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Appendix A. Survey Instrument and Question Domains

The ACE Survey was administered using a customizable template that each participating division, college, or unit could adapt to its context. The shared template provided a common structure for understanding assessment culture while allowing units to add discipline-, accreditation-, or function-specific items. This design supports campuswide comparison without flattening important local differences in academic, co-curricular, administrative, and auxiliary assessment practice.

Evidence-use note: The instrument was designed to identify how assessment is valued and practiced, surface support needs and barriers, gauge WSCUC readiness, and inform planning for program improvement, strategic alignment, and resource allocation.

Core ACE Survey Domains

Domain	Purpose / Evidence Function
1. About You / Demographics	Identifies respondent role, unit, years at Sac State, and local context for interpreting responses.
2. Value of Assessment	Examines whether assessment is perceived as valued by leadership, local areas, and individual respondents.
3. Knowledge of Assessment	Assesses knowledge of assessment principles, learning outcomes, standards, data collection, and data analysis.
4. Practice of Assessment	Documents current assessment activities, evidence storage, documentation habits, evidence readiness, ownership, and frequency.
5. Successes	Identifies assessment successes and whether units document the baseline, change, and results.
6. Needs	Surfaces supports needed for stronger assessment practice, such as time, training, tools, templates, and staffing.
7. Challenges	Identifies barriers such as time constraints, limited expertise, competing priorities, unclear expectations, and resource limitations.
8. Culture and Readiness	Invites units to characterize their assessment culture stage and readiness for WSCUC reaffirmation.
9. Priorities and Planning	Asks respondents to identify top assessment priorities for the next improvement cycle.
10. Engagement	Assesses willingness to participate in or champion future assessment work.
11. Open Feedback	Gathers qualitative feedback on strengths to preserve, one change that would improve assessment culture, and additional comments.

Source note: The domains above are summarized from the ACE Version 1.0 customizable template used as the common starting point for unit-specific instruments.

Appendix B. Respondent Coverage by Division / Unit

The table below summarizes the verified respondent counts from the unit-level ACE Survey Analysis files provided for this evidence appendix. These files account for 193 unit-coded responses across 17 participating divisions, colleges, and units. The narrative body of the report may refer to the broader survey as approximately 197 responses; the table below reflects the unit-coded analysis files available for submission as evidence.

Division / College / Unit	Respondents (n)	Share of Unit-Coded Responses
Administrative & Business Affairs (ABA)	6	3.1%
Associated Students, Inc. (ASI)	11	5.7%
Athletics	1	0.5%
College of Continuing Education (CCE)	17	8.8%
College of Business (COB)	3	1.6%
College of Education (COE)	8	4.1%
College of Arts & Letters (A and L)	43	22.3%
Division of the President	5	2.6%
College of Engineering and Computer Science (ECS)	16	8.3%
College of Health & Human Services (HHS)	5	2.6%
Information Resources & Technology (IRT)	9	4.7%
College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics (NSM)	2	1.0%
Division of People and Climate	5	2.6%
Student Affairs	9	4.7%
College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS)	29	15.0%
Office of Undergraduate / Graduate Studies (UGS/OGS)	15	7.8%
University Library	9	4.7%
Total unit-coded responses	193	100.0%

Interpretive Data Note

The respondent distribution is intentionally uneven because the survey was used as an exploratory diagnostic rather than a statistically representative campus climate survey. The distribution nonetheless provides useful evidence about assessment culture across academic colleges, administrative divisions, Student Affairs, auxiliaries, the Library, and specialized units. For WSCUC purposes, the evidence is most useful when paired with the report findings and the planned share-back process: results will be returned to participating units so each unit can interpret its own data, identify improvement priorities, and determine what documentation, support, and follow-up evidence are needed.

Evidence Archive Recommendation

For submission, the evidence archive should include: (1) this ACE Survey Report; (2) the ACE Version 1.0 customizable template; and (3) the unit-level ACE Survey Analysis files. If a data dashboard or survey export is available, it should be retained internally to verify respondent counts and support future longitudinal comparison.