National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

What Are Institutions Spending on Assessment?
Is It Worth the Cost?

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knowledge accountability connection self-reflection educate action understand communicate listen learn access quality innovation success ingenuity intellect curiosity challenge create achievement connection self-reflection understand communicate listen learn access quality innovation success ingenuity intellect curiosity challenge create connection understand communicate listen learn access quality innovation success ingenuity self-reflection knowledge accountability connection self-reflection educate action understand communicate curiosity challenge create achievement self-reflection curiosity challenge create achievement connection self-reflection knowledge accountability understand communicate listen learn access quality innovation success ingenuity intellect curiosity intellect curiosity challenge create achievement knowledge accountability connection self-reflection ity challenge create achievement connection self-reflection understand communicate listen communicate listen learn action understand communicate listen learn access quality inno knowledge accountability connection access quality self-reflection curiosity challenge ngenuity self-reflection educate action understand intellect knowledge accounta owledge accountability connection self-reflection educate action understand com intellect curiosity challenge connection knowledge accountability connection self-ess quality innovation success ingenuity challenge create achievement conne derstand communicate listen learn access quality action create achieve ten learn access quality innovation success educate action communicat e educate innovation success self-reflection knowledge accountability on understand communicate listen learn access quality innovation success ingenuity intellect access quality innovation success self-reflection curiosity challenge create achievement connection self-reflection understand educate action understand communicate listen learn action understand communicate listen learn access quality innovation success ingenuity curiosity challenge create achievement connection self-reflection understand communicate listen learn

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Executive Summary

Assessment activities have proliferated over the last decade at institutions of higher education. While assessment is useful for institutional improvement, this proliferation has in part been due to greater pressures from regional accreditors on institutions to meet assessment requirements. These higher expectations have led to new expenditures on college campuses.

New processes, roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements are fueling a growing market around assessment. Faced with a variety of assessment options that require institutional spending—including jobs, tests, software, tools, resources, training, consultants, and conferences—institutional leaders must decide which expenditures may best aid in fulfilling assessment requirements. At a time when the cost of a college degree is under closer scrutiny, understanding assessment expenditures and the perceived value of their benefits is critical.

In this paper, we discuss a research project aimed at determining how much institutions are spending annually on assessment and whether the perceived benefit is worth the cost. An online survey was administered to assessment professionals across the country to determine institutions' spending in seven expenditure categories related to assessment:

- Assessment resources (national surveys, standardized exams for program and general education assessment, reference books, etc.)

- Salaries and/or stipends for assessment personnel (testing coordinators, statisticians, faculty and adjunct faculty participating in assessment, student workers, etc.)

- Release time for faculty or others directly responsible for assessment

- Training or professional development for assessment (e.g., conference attendance)

- Outside consulting help with assessment (consultant fees and travel expenses, honorariums for speakers, fees for external evaluators, etc.)

- Software to capture, store, and maintain assessment data

- Miscellaneous assessment expenditures (survey-participation incentives, expenses for meetings, institutional faculty grants, etc.)

In addition to presenting overall expenditures by category, we broadly describe the differences in spending between institutions with different enrollments, two-year and four-year institutions, and public and private institutions. Differences in spending appeared to be related to institution size rather than type or control. Smaller institutions reported spending more on assessment per student than larger universities. While the majority of survey participants responded that the cost of assessment was worth the benefit, within our sample, the correlation between overall assessment spending and perceived benefit was not found to be statistically significant. Perceived value appears to be derived more from using the data for improvements than from spending.

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Background

During an era of rising student debt and increasing scrutiny of the cost of a college education, efficacy should be considered in all higher education expenditures, including those necessitated by calls for increased accountability through assessment. Yet the existing research literature offers little guidance on what institutions are currently spending on assessment. Wellman (2010) discussed ways to link resources to measures of student success by comparing cost variables to outputs such as rates of retention, degree completion, and job placement. Swing and Coogan (2010) called for campuses to use cost-benefit analyses when budgeting for assessment. Pike, Kuh, McCormick, Ethington, and Smart (2011) studied the relationship between expenditures, engagement, and learning outcomes. None specifically explored how much is spent directly on assessment efforts. This is especially problematic when one considers the significant reductions in institutional support in the past few years (Hurlburt & Kirshstein, 2012).

There is no doubt that assessment work is becoming woven throughout most aspects of college campuses across the country. Reviewing the literature provides concrete evidence of assessment's increasing importance in higher education (Shavelson, 2007). While assessment has been used for decades as a tool for improving student learning and operational aspects of institutions, the 2006 final report of the Spellings Commission on the Future of Higher Education solidified assessment's place in higher education. Stating, "Postsecondary education institutions should measure and report meaningful student learning outcomes" (p. 24), the report signaled to college campuses that they should begin to enact formal systems for assessment. This report provided further possible direction by suggesting institutions use standardized tests, involve faculty, report results to the public, and compare themselves with other institutions—and also by calling for accrediting agencies to focus on assessment outputs instead of inputs and processes. For campuses to measure and report student learning outcomes, in many cases, meant they had to change, and they needed an immediate increase in expertise, time, and resources to do so.

The assessment movement emerged in the 1980s, as Ewell (2009) documented, and since then has shifted toward accountability to external entities. This shift forced campus faculty and administrators to engage in assessment regardless of whether they viewed it as useful for internal improvement. In essence, assessment became a mandatory expenditure of both time and financial resources.

In a changing assessment environment marked by increased accountability to external entities, the higher education community has experienced the emergence of a market designed to support and enhance assessment with

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multiple avenues for increased expenditures on assessment related activities. This growth can be charted in numerous ways. A quick count of job postings in *Inside Higher Ed* at the end of 2012 yielded over 1,100 that included some aspect of assessment in the position title or job description. This accounted for over 7% of the total postings and included positions ranging from entry level up to president. As assessment responsibilities have worked their way into more and more job descriptions, the amount of tools, services, and software available to assessment officers also has expanded dramatically. As early as 2007, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that large software vendors—on the heels of smaller, newer vendors—were infiltrating the market, providing platforms for capturing and monitoring assessment activities (Jaschik, 2007). Two years later, Hutchings (2009) likewise pointed to the influx of software vendors, identifying 15 options for institutions. A search conducted using Borden and Kernel's (2012) inventory of assessment resources available to institutions revealed 128 instruments; 50 tools and platforms; 35 benchmarking systems and data resources; and 39 projects, initiatives, and services available to institutions for enhancing assessment efforts. In addition to software resources for assessment, many professional development resources for assessment are also now available for purchase. Amazon.com alone has over 3,800 titles for books related to assessment in higher education.

As assessment responsibilities have worked their way into more and more job descriptions, the amount of tools, services, and software available to assessment officers also has expanded dramatically.

Survey of Assessment Professionals

In light of increased assessment efforts coupled with declining resources available to institutions from some traditional sources we sought to determine through a survey of assessment professionals, what is being spent on assessment efforts and the perceived value of that spending at institutions. The survey was developed in 2012, in part, with input from some of the members of the WASC region's Assessment Leadership Academy (ALA) regarding what types of assessment expenditures were occurring at their institutions. The completed survey was then emailed to 2,348 institutional research and assessment professionals obtained from the Higher Education Directory. Participants who completed all seven expenditure questions were included in the analysis. This yielded a 12.5% response rate. As noted in the limitations section, the sample is not representative of each accrediting region and includes fewer larger schools.

The survey was based on the seven categories of expenditures related to assessment listed below and included questions about how assessment data were used and the perceived benefits of the expenditures[1]:

- Assessment resources (national surveys, standardized exams for program and general education assessment, reference books, etc.)

- Salaries and/or stipends for assessment personnel (testing coordinators, statisticians, faculty and adjunct faculty participating in assessment, student workers, etc.)

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[1] The complete survey and a discussion of the study's methodology are included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

- Release time for faculty or others directly responsible for assessment

- Training or professional development for assessment (e.g., conference attendance)

- Outside consulting help with assessment (consultant fees and travel expenses, honorariums for speakers, fees for external evaluators, etc.)

- Software to capture, store, and maintain assessment data

- Miscellaneous assessment expenditures (survey-participation incentives, expenses for meetings, faculty grants, etc.)

General Survey Findings

The presentation of findings in this section is, first, by enrollment range, next, by overall response to each of the expenditure categories, and then, by differences found across institutional groups. The section provides discussion of any differences found in these analyses and concludes with findings related to perceived level of use and benefits.

Enrollment

An average annual per-student expenditure was determined through analyzing enrollment numbers and expenditures across all seven expenditure categories. Respondents were asked to provide both undergraduate and graduate enrollments. These two responses were summed to calculate overall enrollment. Some respondents provided precise enrollment figures, while others provided what appeared to be rounded estimates. To gauge the impact of enrollment size, we calculated the average annual spending per student (see Table 1). Recoding responses[2] to determine total spending indicated that institutions were spending around $160,000 annually on assessment activities. The largest portion of this amount, roughly $108,000, constituted salaries for assessment officers possibly with other responsibilities apart from assessment. The overall average annual spending per student across respondents was $51.

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Table 1. Per-Student Expenditures by Enrollment Range

Enrollment Range	Average Annual Spending Per Student	Number of Respondents
Less than 2,000	$108	61
2,000–5,000	$48	77
5,000–10,000	$22	52
10,000–20,000	$19	32
20,000–40,000	$10	19
Over 40,000	$7	7

[2] To determine total spending, each of the multiple responses was recoded as an average used to determine total spending for the respective category. For example, the range "$5,000 or less" was recoded as $2,500; "$5,000–$10,000" was recoded as $7,500; and so forth. Upper limits of ranges, such as "$75,000 or more" were coded as the lower limit (i.e., $75,000), as there would be no basis for estimating a midpoint for that range. While this decision tends toward underestimating spending, the number of total respondents aligning themselves with the highest range of spending was limited, so a lower estimate seems more likely to approximate the true value in each category. This process of recoding was conducted for each expenditure category, and the recoded spending amounts were summed for each institution. The resulting estimates are inexact and should be regarded cautiously. See Appendix B for a more thorough discussion of limitations.
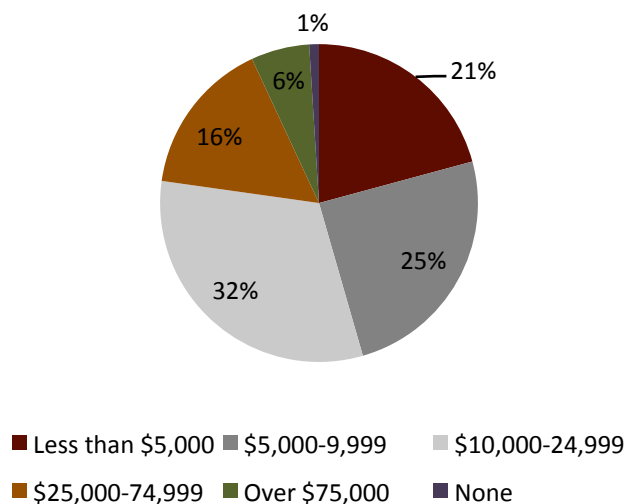
As enrollment decreased, the average amount spent per student clearly increased. Larger institutions, certainly, spent more on assessment; that pattern was obvious and expected. Less expected was the finding that increases in enrollment did not sponsor proportionate increases in assessment spending.

We calculated the average increase in spending from enrollment range to enrollment range for each of the seven spending categories (see table in Appendix C). Because each enrollment range is double the size of the next smaller enrollment range, we could expect that each increase in spending would be 100%—assuming that assessment spending increases proportionately with enrollment size. To the contrary, we found that the average increase in spending for every 100% increase in enrollment was only 29%. Clearly, smaller institutions spent more per student than larger institutions.

Overall Responses by Expenditure Category

The following figures represent expenditures reported in each of the seven spending categories for all study participants. Chart slices represent the percentage of all respondents in each spending range.

Figure 1. Resource Expenditures

Less than $5,000 ■ $5,000-9,999 ■ $10,000-24,999
$25,000-74,999 ■ Over $75,000 ■ None

The assessment resources category includes national surveys, standardized exams for program and general education assessment, reference books, and other miscellaneous items related to assessment. As seen in Figure 1, a vast majority of respondents reported spending $25,000 or less on assessment resources annually, with the majority spending less than $10,000.

Larger institutions, certainly, spent more on assessment; that pattern was obvious and expected. Less expected was the finding that increases in enrollment did not sponsor proportionate increases in assessment spending.

Figure 2: Salary/Stipend Expenditures
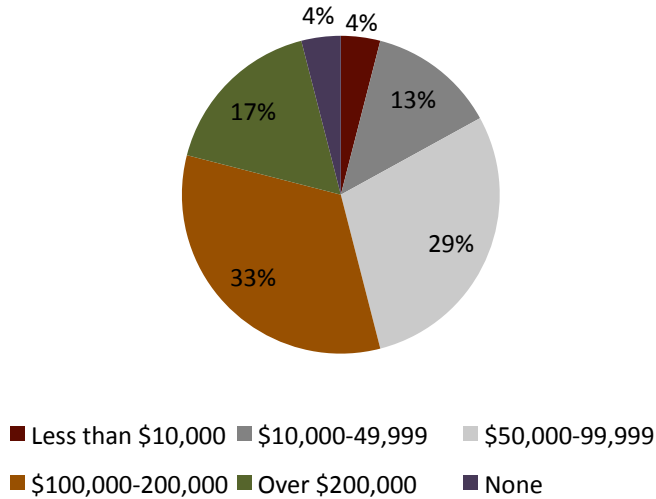
Legend:
- Less than $10,000
- $10,000-49,999
- $50,000-99,999
- $100,000-200,000
- Over $200,000
- None

The majority of respondents reported spending over $50,000 annually on salaries and stipends (Figure 2). Larger institutions reported spending more on salaries and stipends for assessment officers than did midsize and smaller institutions. Roughly 75% of institutions with an enrollment between 10,000 and 20,000 spent $100,000 or more on stipends, while over 90% of institutions with an enrollment over 20,000 spent $200,000 or more a year on salaries and stipends. A majority of institutions with enrollments of less than 10,000 reported spending between $50,000 and $100,000 on stipends and salaries.

Figure 3: Release Time Expenditures

Legend:
- Less than $5,000
- $5,000-9,999
- $10,000-24,999
- $25,000-74,999
- Over $75,000
- None
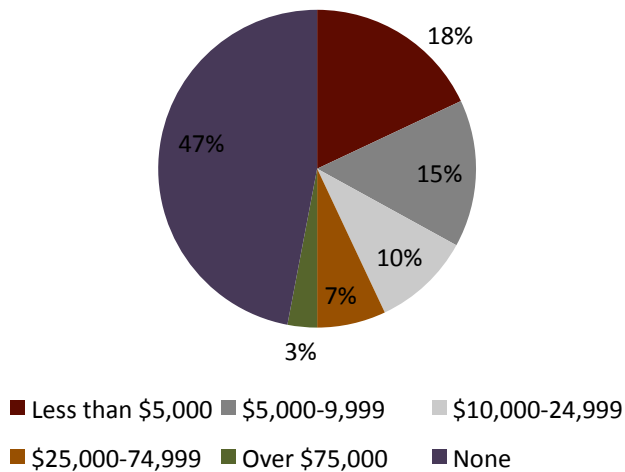
Shown in Figure 3, nearly 50% of all respondents reported that their institutions did not grant release time for assessment efforts, while only 20% of all respondents reported that they spent more than $10,000 per year on release time. Across all enrollment ranges, release time was an uncommon method for compensating those managing assessment efforts.
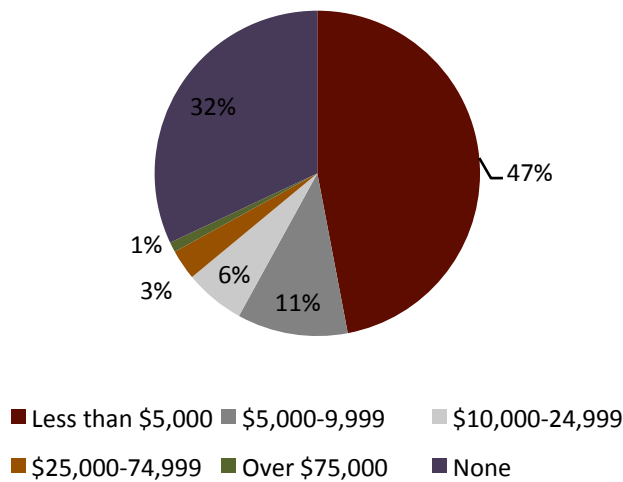
The majority of respondents reported spending over $50,000 annually on salaries and stipends.

Figure 4. Professional Development and/or Training Expenditures

- Less than $5,000
- $5,000-9,999
- $10,000-24,999
- $25,000-74,999
- Over $75,000
- None
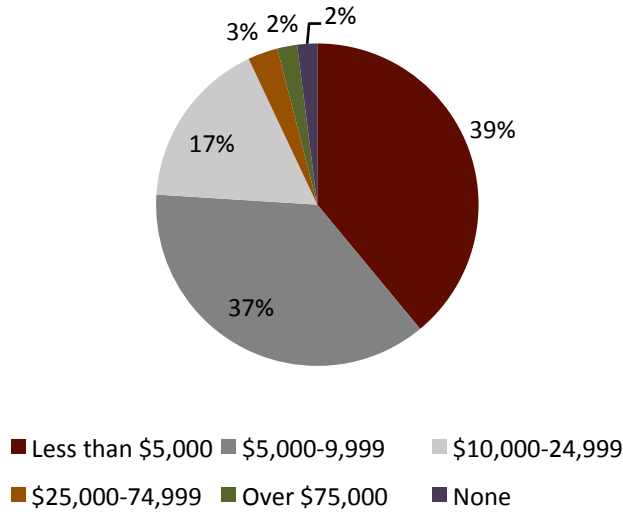
Regardless of enrollment size, a vast majority of institutions spent less than $10,000 per year on assessment professional development and/or training (Figure 4).
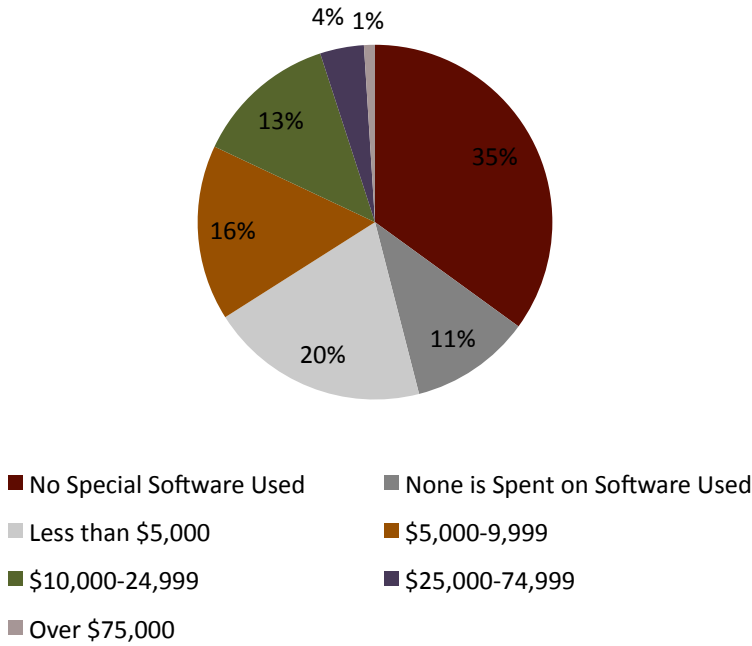
Figure 5. Consulting Service Expenditures

- Less than $5,000
- $5,000-9,999
- $10,000-24,999
- $25,000-74,999
- Over $75,000
- None

Shown in Figure 5, regardless of enrollment size, a vast majority of institutions reported spending less than $5,000 per year on assessment consultants, with 32% of all respondents reporting that they spent none.

Figure 6. Software Expenditures

- No Special Software Used
- None is Spent on Software Used
- Less than $5,000
- $5,000-9,999
- $10,000-24,999
- $25,000-74,999
- Over $75,000

Thirty-five percent of all respondents reported that they did not use software to manage their assessment data, while another 11.5% reported not paying for the software they use (presumably they are managing data in Excel or other widely available programs). A majority of respondents indicated paying to use assessment software; among this majority, most reported spending less than $10,000 per year. Software did not constitute a major portion of assessment spending at most responding universities (Figure 6).

Figure 7. Miscellaneous Expenditures

- Less than $5,000
- $5,000-9,999
- $10,000-24,999
- $25,000-74,999
- Over $75,000
- None
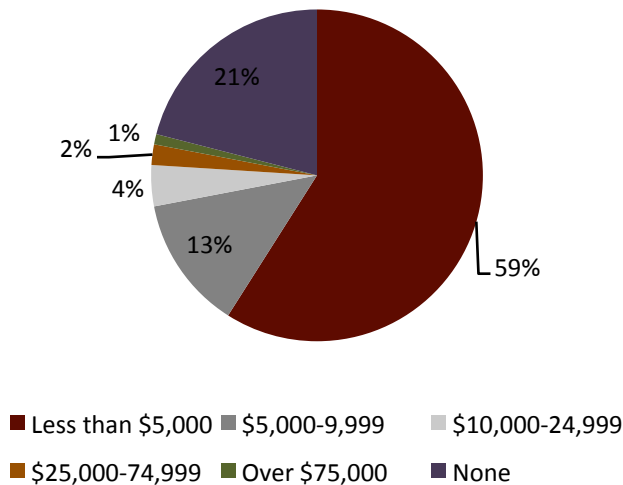
Miscellaneous expenditures represent spending for incentives to participate in surveys, meetings, faculty grants related to assessment and any other expense not included in the other categories. Figure 7 shows most institutions spent less than $5,000 annually.

Differences Across Institutional Groups

Below, we report the overall descriptive findings on the responding institutions along with specific findings of interest regarding patterns of spending for each institutional group by type (i.e., two-year vs. four-year), by control (i.e., public vs. private), and by regional accreditor.

Thirty-one percent of the responding institutions were two-year institutions, while 69% were four-year institutions. Thirty-two percent of two-year institutions spent $5,000 or less on assessment resources, compared to only 18% of four-year institutions. Most two-year institutions indicated spending $5,000 or less on resources, while a majority of four-year institutions estimated assessment resource spending in the $10,000–25,000 range. The most prominent difference in spending was on stipends and salaries for assessment personnel—20% of four-year institutions reported spending over $200,000 annually in this area, compared to only 10% of two-year institutions. Conversely, 14% of two-year institutions spent $10,000 or less on assessment stipends and salaries, compared to only 6% of four-year institutions. Substantial differences were not evident in other areas of spending between these institution types.

The differences in spending between public and private institutions were similar to those seen between two-year and four-year institutions. Fifty-six percent of the responding institutions were public institutions, while 44% were private. Spending over $25,000 per year on assessment resources was reported by 29% of public institutions, compared to only 10% of private institutions. The most commonly reported range of spending on resources for both groups was $10,000–$25,000. Similarly, 22% of public institutions spent over $200,000 per year on salaries and stipends, compared to only 10% of private institutions. No other significant differences were found.

These data support the conclusion that institutional type and institutional control do not significantly impact expenditures. Differences in spending occurred across enrollment ranges regardless of type or control.

> *Thirty-two percent of two-year institutions spent $5,000 or less on assessment resources, compared to only 18% of four-year institutions. Most two-year institutions indicated spending $5,000 or less on resources, while a majority of four-year institutions estimated assessment resource spending in the $10,000–25,000 range.*

Figure 8. Institutional Regional Accreditor
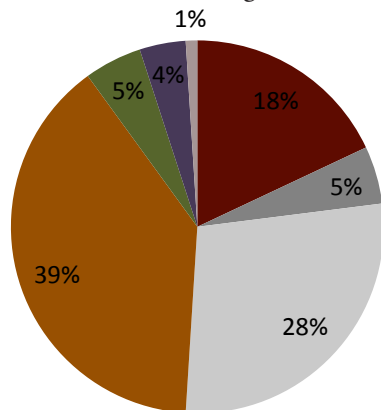
MSCHE NEASC-CIHE NCA-HLC SACS WASC NWCCU Not Reg Accredit

Figure 8 represents the percentage of survey respondents from each accrediting region. Looking strictly at mean spending by region in these findings would be misleading, because some regions had fewer respondents and averages were skewed by the enrollments at the respondents' institutions. Therefore, significant findings related to spending across the regions were not obtainable in these data.

Perceived Level of Use and Benefit

Survey respondents were asked to gauge how their campus uses the data gathered through assessment. Table 2, below, shows that almost half of respondents indicated data were reviewed and improvements had been documented at their institution, while the other half noted varying levels at which data collected through assessment were actually used at their institution.

Table 2 shows that almost half of respondents indicated data were reviewed and improvements had been documented at their institution, while the other half noted varying levels at which data collected through assessment were actually used at their institution.

Table 2. Use of Data for Improvements

Most data collected are reviewed and improvements have been documented	Most data collected are reviewed but few improvements have been documented	Some data are collected and reviewed and improvements have been documented	Some data are collected and reviewed but no improvements documented	Data are not collected
49%	15%	31%	5%	0%

Additionally, respondents were asked if they perceived the amount spent for assessment on their campus was worth the benefits received. As shown in Figure 9, over 71% agreed or strongly agreed that expenditures were worth the benefit.

Figure 9. Perception of Cost-Benefit
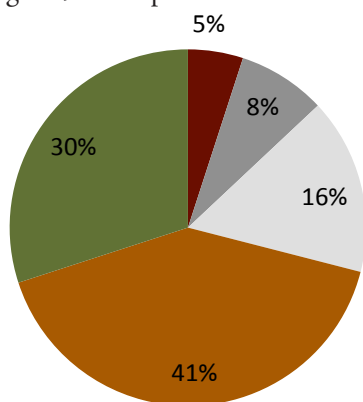
■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

Respondents were provided an opportunity to comment regarding their perception of the benefits of assessment relative to its costs, with 24% explaining in their own words that the benefit was worth the cost shown in Figure 9. One respondent stated, "Our assessment results provide a base from which we can make educated decisions about academic quality and the improvement thereof." Another said, "We are reasonably effective at converting assessment into action. The money we spend on assessment allows for the continuous improvement of the University, which ultimately results in better programming and resources for our students."

Some respondents commented that assessment was worth the benefit for what was spent, while suggesting spending might be inadequate. Some examples of comments reflecting these views include "We don't spend enough, but what we do spend does have some decent benefits" and "We don't spend much so we probably get as much out as we put in."

In general, greater spending did not in itself positively correlate with the perception that assessment benefits were worth the cost. Those who indicated that assessment results had been used to make changes were most likely to agree that what was spent was worth the resulting benefit. This supports the conclusion that satisfaction among university assessment personnel stems not solely from having abundant resources but, rather, from the effective use of what those resources yield.

Recommendations for Further Study

While the results of this study provide basic information about institutional expenditures related to assessment and perceived benefits, little is yet known about how to direct resources toward assessment practices yielding the most benefit. The following are recommendations for further study and practical application:

- Examine institutions' use of assessment data for improvements. Using data to make improvements is a key component of a meaningful assessment process (Allen, 2004; Banta, Jones, & Black, 2009; Banta, Lund, Black, & Oblander, 1996; Driscoll & Wood, 2007). Given the correlation between how survey respondents perceived the cost-benefit of assessment and their response to using data for improvements, it may be important to further investigate how campuses move to this level of engagement with assessment. More research is needed to identify the factors that contribute to campuses using assessment data for improvements. Are there specific assessment-related expenditures that lead to improvements?

- Identify improvements most likely to ensure student success. Even though assessment professionals participating in this survey who documented improvements on their campuses indicated that assessment was worth the cost, do we know whether these improvements—and the resources used to accomplish them—are leading to the student success measures that will ultimately matter? Defining what matters is difficult and likely is multifaceted. Still, institutions are charged with making these determinations. The Spellings report, cited above,

Those who indicated that assessment results had been used to make changes were most likely to agree that what was spent was worth the resulting benefit.

called for a focus on outputs instead of inputs and processes. Answers to this question might have such a focus: Are the improvements leading to successful placement of students after degree completion in either jobs or graduate school?

- Track assessment costs and impacts. There may be value in understanding institutional commitments to assessment through tracking expenditures. Campuses should consider tracking all assessment expenditures, with the long-term goal of identifying those that have greatest impact. For example, if expenditures related to the assessment of biology and chemistry programs lead to improvements in the curriculum that ultimately enhance student performance on the MCAT, these expenditures would likely be considered to have impact. If no change in student performance on the MCAT was realized that way, however, why continue that use of resources?

- Examine per-student assessment costs at smaller institutions. Cost per student for assessment is significantly higher for smaller institutions, as implied in Table 1. While it is possible that efficient assessment places a greater burden on institutions with lower enrollment, it is also possible that smaller institutions elect to engage in more comprehensive and thorough assessment practices, which might necessitate greater use of software and other resources. Additional research is needed to determine if the greater assessment spending by smaller institutions is voluntary. Given that a vast majority of respondents in each enrollment range either agreed or strongly agreed that assessment benefits were worth the cost, further exploration of this area in spending per student seems warranted.

Thoughts for Practitioners

Given the current scrutiny of the cost of a college education, understanding what expenditures exist and what value they bring is critical. To accomplish this, campus practitioners can take steps to determine assessment's value proposition and put these findings into use for future planning. These steps include:

- Compiling your annual expenditures in each of the seven expenditure categories presented here;

- If not already available, determining what ultimately matters for the success of your students and what assessment measures evaluate this;

- Evaluating the costs of these assessment practices and the benefits realized from them, as shown in your student success indicators;

- Determining if the benefits realized are worth the expense; and

- Analyzing differences in campus units and between institutions to determine ways to enhance the assessment process through added value, whether by focusing expenditures or spending differently.

Resources have significant impact on the success of any process, project, or system. It is imperative that assessment planning include thoughtful consideration of resources and their costs. Development of systematic, campus-wide assessment approaches, including intentional budgeting across the seven expense categories presented here and the evaluation of benefits realized, could enhance the success and efficiency of assessment efforts.

Development of systematic, campus-wide assessment approaches, including intentional budgeting across the seven expense categories presented here and the evaluation of benefits realized, could enhance the success and efficiency of assessment efforts.

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Appendix A

Methodology

To begin the process of calculating estimates of what institutions are spending annually on assessment and to gauge the perceived value of the benefits of those expenditures, an online survey was administered to assessment professionals at college and universities across the country. Potential participants were obtained by purchasing an email list of institutional research and assessment professionals from the Higher Education Directory. We sent our survey to 2,348 contacts obtained from the database. In total, 331 of those we contacted responded to the survey request and 293 completed all 7 expenditure questions and were used in the analysis. This yielded a response rate of 12.5%. In describing the data, we reported valid percentages for each question.

Limitations

The absence of statistical significance in these findings raises two points. First, the findings reinforce that the aim of this project was simply to gain initial insight and describe the state of spending in the current assessment culture, not to establish causal relationships between spending and specific outcomes. Second, the breadth of the data does not lend itself to finite conclusions. Providing an overall description of the data for a general audience has proved quite challenging, given the number of queries the data could address. The value of this data set lies in its ability to describe specific areas of spending at specific types of universities. Continued analysis of the data set in response to specific queries will be ongoing.

Lastly, the possibility of response bias should be considered. Not surprisingly, very few of our respondents indicated that their institutions were not actively engaged in assessment practices. Most likely the individuals who responded played a vital role in assessment at their universities, and therefore the data they provided may over-represent the colleges and universities most successful in their assessment endeavors. As a specific example, we should likely not conclude that the average amount of assessment spending at all American universities is around $160,000 per year; rather, we should presume that this amount is a good estimate of average spending at universities sufficiently engaged in assessment to take the time to complete our survey. A true picture of overall spending would be virtually impossible to acquire—underscoring the importance of regarding the data as a general sketch of an elaborate and multifaceted area of higher education spending.

Appendix B

Assessment Expenditures Survey

Demographic Section

1. Position Title

2. Years at this institution

3. Institutional Control (public or private)

4. Religious Affiliation (Yes or No, specify)

5. Institution Type (2-year, 4-year, other)

6. Student enrollment (undergrad, grad)

7. Regional Accreditor (need to add "not applicable" option)
   MSCHE, NEASC-CIHE, NCA-HLC, SACS, WASC, NWCCU

Questions

8. How much does your institution spend annually on assessment resources? (Resources may include national surveys, standardized exams for program and general education assessment, reference books, etc.)

   - ☐ _None_
   - ☐ _Less than 5,000_
   - ☐ _5,000-9,999_
   - ☐ _9,999-24,999_
   - ☐ _25,000-74,999_
   - ☐ _Over 75,000_

9. How much does your institution spend annually on salaries and/or stipends for personnel responsible for assessment efforts? (Include assessment personnel, testing coordinators, statisticians, adjunct faculty who participate in assessment, faculty stipends for assessment, student workers, etc.)

   - ☐ _None_
   - ☐ _Less than 10,000_
   - ☐ _10,000-49,999_
   - ☐ _50,000-99,999_
   - ☐ _100,000-200,000_
   - ☐ _Over 200,000_

10. How much does your institution spend annually on release time for faculty or others directly responsible for assessment efforts?

- ☐ *None*
- ☐ *Less than 5,000*
- ☐ *5,000-9,999*
- ☐ *9,999-24,999*
- ☐ *25,000-74,999*
- ☐ *Over 75,000*

11. How much does your institution spend annually on training or professional development, such as conference attendance, for those directly OR indirectly responsible for assessment efforts?

- ☐ *None*
- ☐ *Less than 5,000*
- ☐ *5,000-9,999*
- ☐ *9,999-24,999*
- ☐ *25,000-74,999*
- ☐ *Over 75,000*

12. How much does your institution spend annually on outside consulting help with assessment? (Include consultant fees and travel, honorariums for speakers, fees for external evaluators, etc.)

- ☐ *None*
- ☐ *Less than 5,000*
- ☐ *5,000-9,999*
- ☐ *9,999-24,999*
- ☐ *25,000-74,999*
- ☐ *Over 75,000*

13. If you use software to capture assessment data, how much does your institution spend annually to maintain it?

- ☐ *None*
- ☐ *Less than 5,000*
- ☐ *5,000-9,999*
- ☐ *9,999-24,999*
- ☐ *25,000-74,999*
- ☐ *Over 75,000*

14. How much does your institution spend annually on miscellaneous assessment-related expenses? (Include incentives for survey participation, meetings, faculty grants, etc.)

    ☐ *None*

    ☐ *Less than 5,000*

    ☐ *5,000-9,999*

    ☐ *9,999-24,999*

    ☐ *25,000-74,999*

    ☐ *Over 75,000*

15. To what extent does your institution use the data collected for assessment purposes to make improvements?

    ☐ 1 = Data are not collected

    ☐ 2= Data collected are not reviewed

    ☐ 3 = Some data are reviewed but no improvements have been documented

    ☐ 4 = Some data are reviewed and improvements have been documented

    ☐ 5 = Most data collected are reviewed but few improvements have been documented

    ☐ 6 = Most data collected are reviewed and improvements have been documented

16. Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: *I believe the amount my institution spends on assessment efforts is worth the benefits we receive.*

    ☐ *Strongly disagree*

    ☐ *Disagree*

    ☐ *Neutral*

    ☐ *Agree*

    ☐ *Strongly agree*

    <u>Text box</u>: *Briefly elaborate on why you chose your response to the previous question.*

Appendix C

Table 3: Comparison of Average Spending Across Enrollment Ranges by Expenditure Category

Enrollment Range	Total Spending	Salaries and Stipends	Resources	Consulting	Training	Release Time	Misc	Software
Less than 2,000	110,164	72,188	11,094	5,159	6,984	4,841	5,159	2,817
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2,000-5,000	140,779	100,494	15,470	3,343	8,404	6,563	3,343	5,482
	28%	39%	39%	-35%	20%	36%	-35%	95%
5,001-10,000	162,406	112,368	16,536	4,636	7,589	8,843	4,636	6,920
	15%	12%	7%	39%	-10%	35%	39%	26%
10,001-20,000	234,688	142,703	34,500	5,743	18,311	12,083	5,743	10,417
	45%	27%	109%	24%	141%	37%	24%	51%
20,001-40,000	250,921	158,696	34,375	6,522	10,978	21,000	6,522	12,292
	7%	11%	0%	14%	-40%	74%	14%	18%
Over 40,000	330,000	192,857	51,429	12,500	17,857	30,357	12,500	12,500
	32%	22%	50%	92%	63%	45%	92%	2%
	24%	**22%**	**39%**	**11%**	**28%**	**46%**	**11%**	**48%**

This table shows average spending in each category by enrollment range (white cells). The red cells show the percentage increase in spending compared to the next smaller enrollment range. Because each enrollment range is double the size of the next smaller enrollment range, the percentage increase from range to range should be 100% if assessment spending increases proportionately with spending. The cells in the final row show the average percentage increase in spending in each category. Across the entire sample, assessment spending increased only 29% for every 100% increase in size of enrollment range.

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NILOA Mission

NILOA's primary objective is to discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.

NILOA Occasional Paper Series

NILOA Occasional Papers are commissioned to examine contemporary issues that will inform the academic community of the current state-of-the art of assessing learning outcomes in American higher education. The authors are asked to write for a general audience in order to provide comprehensive, accurate information about how institutions and other organizations can become more proficient at assessing and reporting student learning outcomes for the purposes of improving student learning and responsibly fulfilling expectations for transparency and accountability to policy makers and other external audiences.

Comments and questions about this paper should be sent to njankow2@illinois.edu.

About NILOA

- The National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) was established in December 2008.
- NILOA is co-located at the University of Illinois and Indiana University.
- The NILOA website contains free assessment resources and can be found at http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/.
- The NILOA research team has scanned institutional websites, surveyed chief academic officers, and commissioned a series of occasional papers.
- One of the co-principal NILOA investigators, George Kuh, founded the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).
- The other co-principal investigator for NILOA, Stanley Ikenberry, was president of the University of Illinois from 1979 to 1995 and of the American Council of Education from 1996 to 2001.
- Peter Ewell joined NILOA as a senior scholar in November 2009.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

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