2017 Faculty Survey on Assessment Knowledge. Experience, and Needs
Prepared by Kate Sullivan, in collaboration with Cathy Thomas

In the Spring of 2017, the A-Team distributed a survey to faculty aimed at collecting information around their: 1) **knowledge of assessment practices**; 2) **experiences with assessment activities** at Lane or elsewhere; and 3) **perceived needs around resources** to facilitate future assessment work. Seventy-four faculty members completed the survey: 31 PT respondents; 43 FT; 36 in the Transfer area; 23 in Career/Technical (CTE); 9 in non-credit; 5 in other areas, including the library, College Now (dual enrollment faculty), and Adult Basic and Secondary Ed.

The aggregate number of responses represents 14.8% of the total faculty at LCC, according to Spring 2017,[1] figures (20% FT; 10.8% PT). This sample size is adequate for statistical purposes. Disaggregated numbers, however, especially in terms of PT faculty, do not offer a sufficient sample size. Thus, although we are sharing information about percentages generated via our survey tool, we would caution readers that information about the individual groups—FT vs. PT Transfer, FT vs. PT CTE—may not be representative of Lane's faculty, overall.

We would further like to indicate that we recognize a voluntary survey does not a random sample make; however, the mechanism for distribution (an announcement in *The Weekly* that ran for a month; reminders at a series of coffee talks and at spring conference; six email announcements delivered via the all-faculty Groupwise listserv) and the collection tool (an anonymous google forms survey) offer, perhaps, a more balanced sampling than more directed outreach efforts would garner. Given that we cannot generalize the responses to *all* faculty at Lane, we view our survey results as a snapshot of faculty experiences, attitudes, and needs, rather than a representation of what the faculty body, at large, knows, does, and wants. To this end, when we refer to "faculty" in this report, we mean "faculty who responded to our survey," whether or not we have included such a designation in every reference.

Institutional Researcher Cathy Thomas parsed the results and produced a robust set of data charts available here. The survey tool itself is available here. Thomas disaggregated the data in the following ways: first, she provided a summary of all faculty responses; then she separated out faculty who teach in the transfer areas versus those who teach in career and technical areas. She further refined the data along the following axes: full time faculty versus part time; within the categories of transfer and CTE, she disaggregated FT and PT faculty. This categorization confirmed some of our assumptions about divergences between FT and PT faculty, revealed one surprising finding, and allowed us to see one interesting and unexpected pattern (I will get to the unexpected elements shortly). Figures included in this report are derived from Thomas' text.
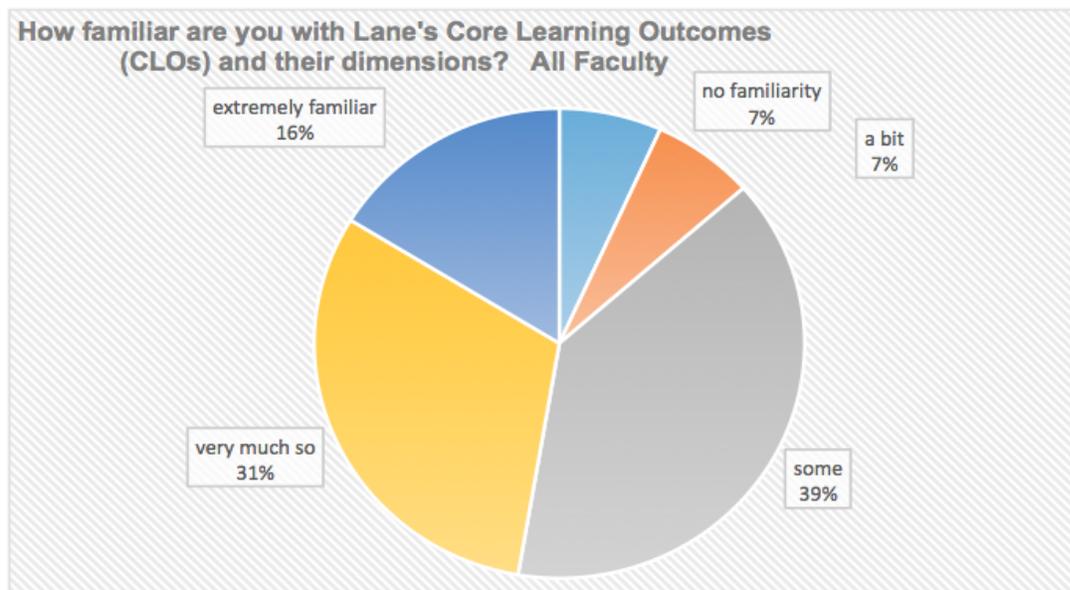
---

[1] 213 FT faculty; 286 PT Faculty, as of spring 2017.

# Trends in Regards to Knowledge and Experience with Assessment Activities

Familiarity with Assessment Activities and Terminology

We were heartened to see that a significant portion of faculty who responded to the survey have familiarity with assessment methods and terminology. For instance, in response to the question, "how familiar are you with Lane's Core Learning Outcomes and their dimensions?" 47% of faculty were either "very" or "extremely" familiar, an additional 39% expressed that they had "some" familiarity, while 14% had "no" or "a bit." Similarly, the overwhelming majority of faculty respondents indicated that they understood what rubrics are and the differences between direct and indirect assessment methods, between assessment efforts and grading, and the distinction between formative and summative assessment (72%, 82%, 83%,and 70% respectively, consider themselves to have at least "some" familiarity with this terminology). Faculty were less sure about the concepts of validity and reliability, and what signature assignment and artifacts are.

How familiar are you with Lane's Core Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and their dimensions?

How familiar are you with Lane's Core Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and their dimensions?   All Faculty

extremely familiar 16%
no familiarity 7%
a bit 7%
very much so 31%
some 39%

How familiar are you with various terminology related to assessment?

How familiar are you with various terminology related to assessment?
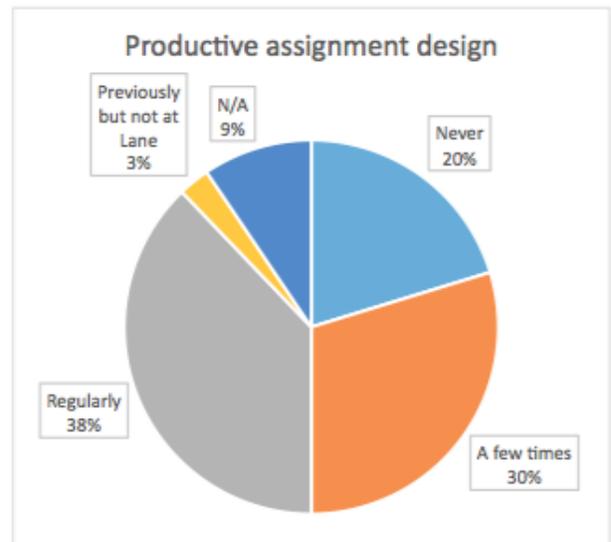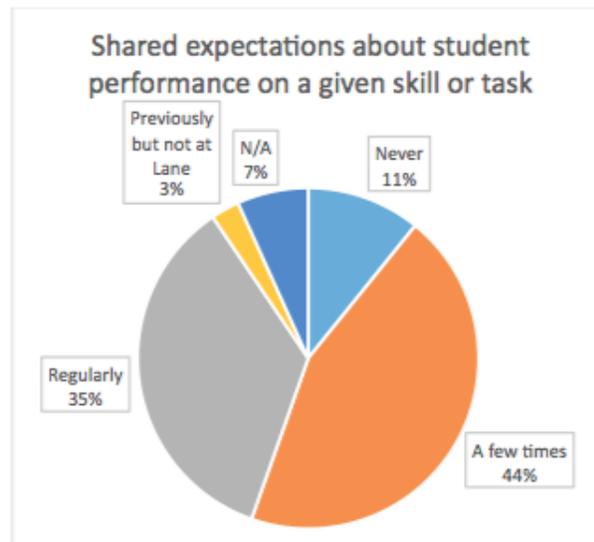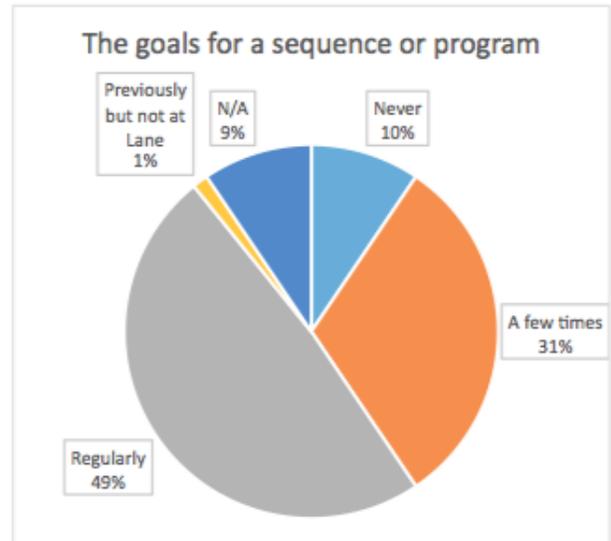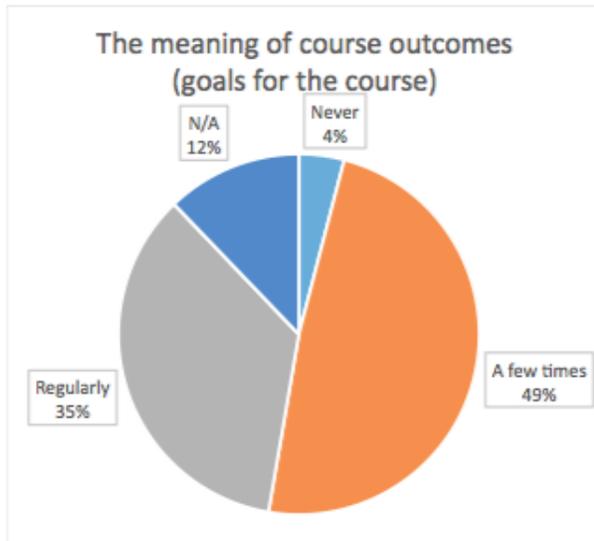All Faculty
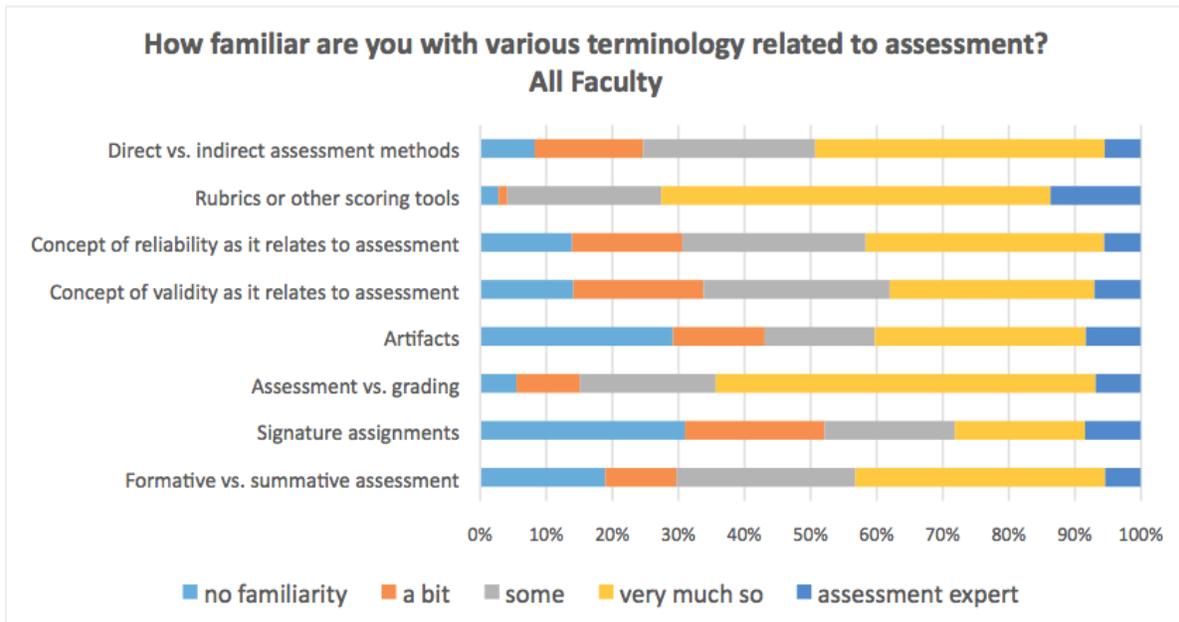
We suspect that the lack of familiarity with the phrases "signature assignment" and "artifact" are just that: a lack of comfort with the terminology but not the concept. We've reached this determination after examining faculty responses about common practices: over 80% of faculty who responded have used a shared assignment or test/quiz question, which indicates a degree of comfort with signature assignments and artifacts in actual practice. However, we are mindful that many faculty, in the words of one respondent, feel as if assessment terminology is akin to "speaking Greek"; in particular, faculty working in CTE fields may find academese off-putting, so we need to be careful to explain terms and work towards shared understanding.
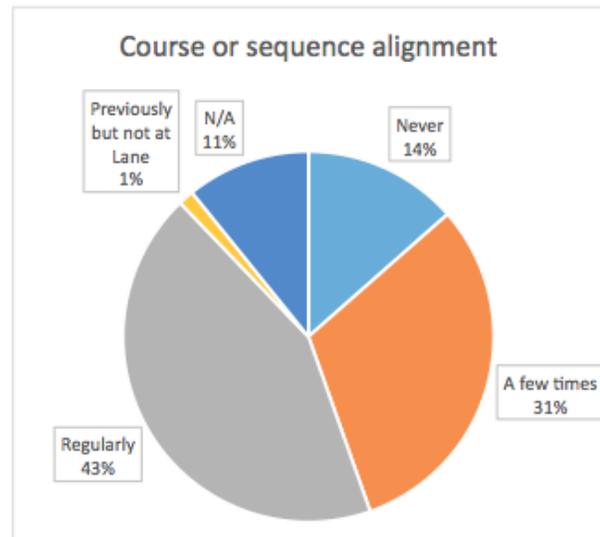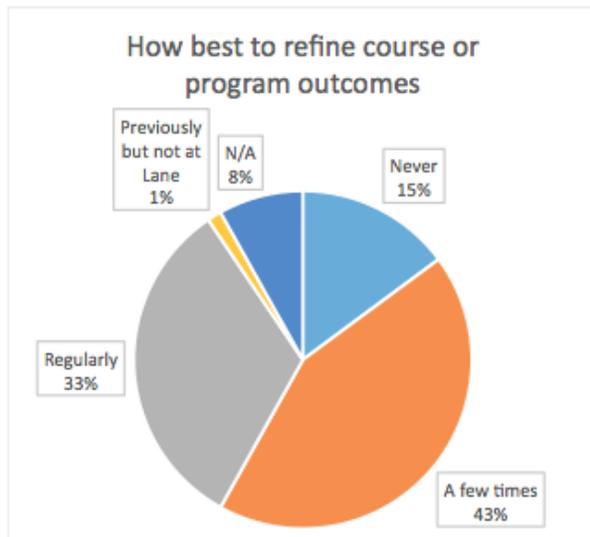
Familiarity and Practice with Activities that Lay the Groundwork Assessment

We have also been pleased to note that the vast majority of faculty who responded regularly collaborate on practices that lay the groundwork for future assessment work in that they hold conversations with peers around: the meaning of course outcomes (84%); the goals for a sequence or course (80%); how to refine course and/or program outcomes (76%); and course or sequence alignment (74%). Over half of respondents have participated in disciplinary conversations with colleagues around effective assignment design (68%), expectations about thresholds for student performance on a given skill or task (79%), and how to communicate effectively with students (74%). Additionally, 77% of faculty collaborate with peers to review and update curricula or review proposed changes with colleagues (78%).

Do you hold conversations with colleagues teaching the same course or in a shared program/discipline around:
Responses include All Faculty.

The meaning of course outcomes (goals for the course)

- N/A 12%
- Never 4%
- A few times 49%
- Regularly 35%

The goals for a sequence or program

- Previously but not at Lane 1%
- N/A 9%
- Never 10%
- A few times 31%
- Regularly 49%

Shared expectations about student performance on a given skill or task

- Previously but not at Lane 3%
- N/A 7%
- Never 11%
- A few times 44%
- Regularly 35%

Productive assignment design

- Previously but not at Lane 3%
- N/A 9%
- Never 20%
- A few times 30%
- Regularly 38%

Do you hold conversations with colleagues teaching the same course or in a shared program/discipline around:
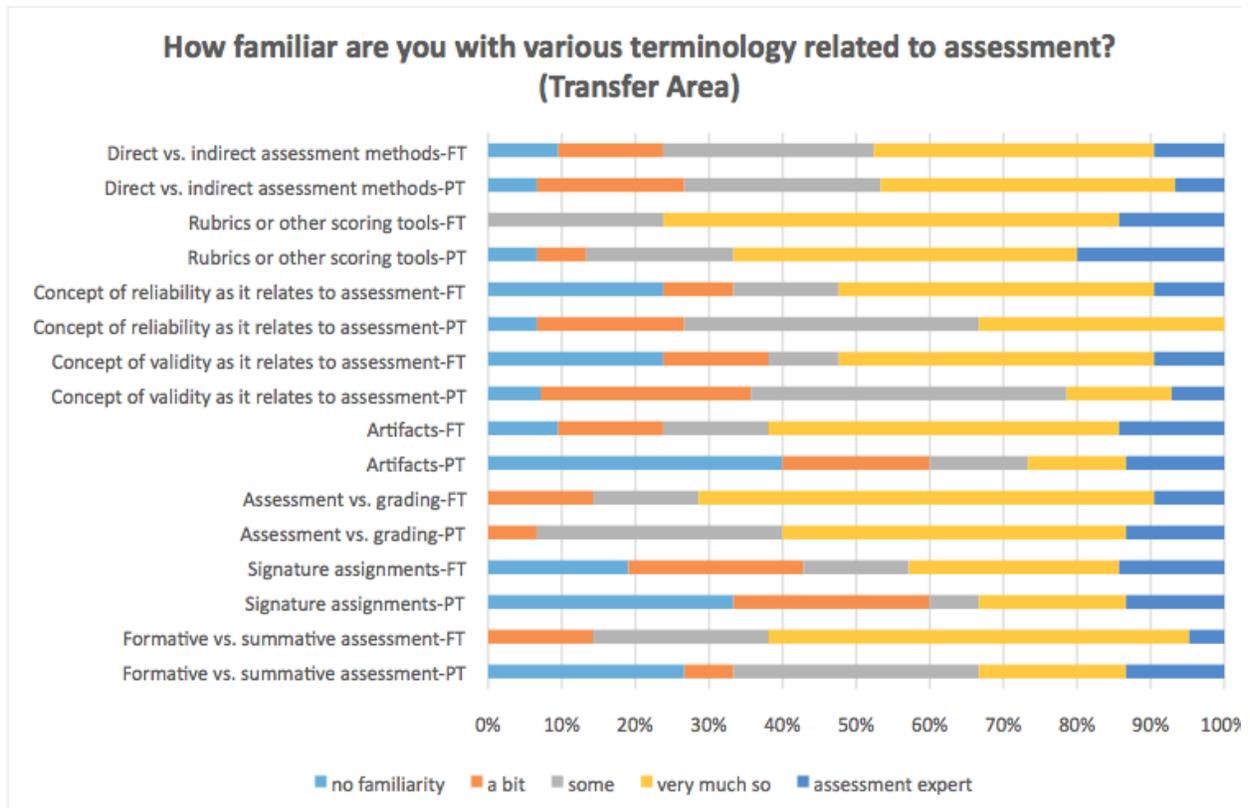**Responses include All Faculty.**

Research-based pedagogical approaches

- Previously but not at Lane 5%
- N/A 7%
- Never 24%
- A few times 31%
- Regularly 33%

How to communicate effectively with students

- Previously but not at Lane 0%
- N/A 11%
- Never 15%
- A few times 31%
- Regularly 43%

How best to refine course or program outcomes

- Previously but not at Lane 1%
- N/A 8%
- Never 15%
- A few times 43%
- Regularly 33%

Course or sequence alignment

- Previously but not at Lane 1%
- N/A 11%
- Never 14%
- A few times 31%
- Regularly 43%

As we might expect, FT faculty teaching in the transfer and CTE areas have greater[2] facility with terminology than PT faculty teaching in the same areas do. For instance, all of the FT faculty who responded to our survey have at least a bit of familiarity with rubrics or scoring tools while 6% of PT transfer faculty and 11% of PT CTE faculty have no familiarity with this terminology. The situation with curricular and assessment practice is bit muddier, however: in several areas, FT CTE faculty have less experience with collaborative approaches to revising/refining curriculum than their PT peers do. Specifically, FT CTE faculty fare worse than PT C/T faculty

---

[2] The two areas where PT faculty have more understanding are the concepts of reliability and validity.

in holding conversations about: the meaning of course outcomes, the goals of a sequence or program, shared expectations for student performance on a task or skill, research-based pedagogical approaches, how to communicate effectively with students, and how to refine course or program outcomes. This trend continues with these practices: using a shared assignment or test/quiz, holding a grade norming session, generating data about from norming sessions, discussing capstone or culminating student projects, collaborating with colleagues to review and revise curriculum or using data to revise curriculum. The only areas where FT CTE faculty responses indicate more experience than their PT peers are the use of placement scores or prerequisites for courses, and course/sequence alignment. An important caveat here, though, is that the number of PT CTE respondents is very low, so, at most, we note that these data are interesting and it would be prudent to utilize the same questions in the future, so as to determine if the trend in responses in 2017 is born out in future iterations of the survey, or if these responses are an anomalous blip
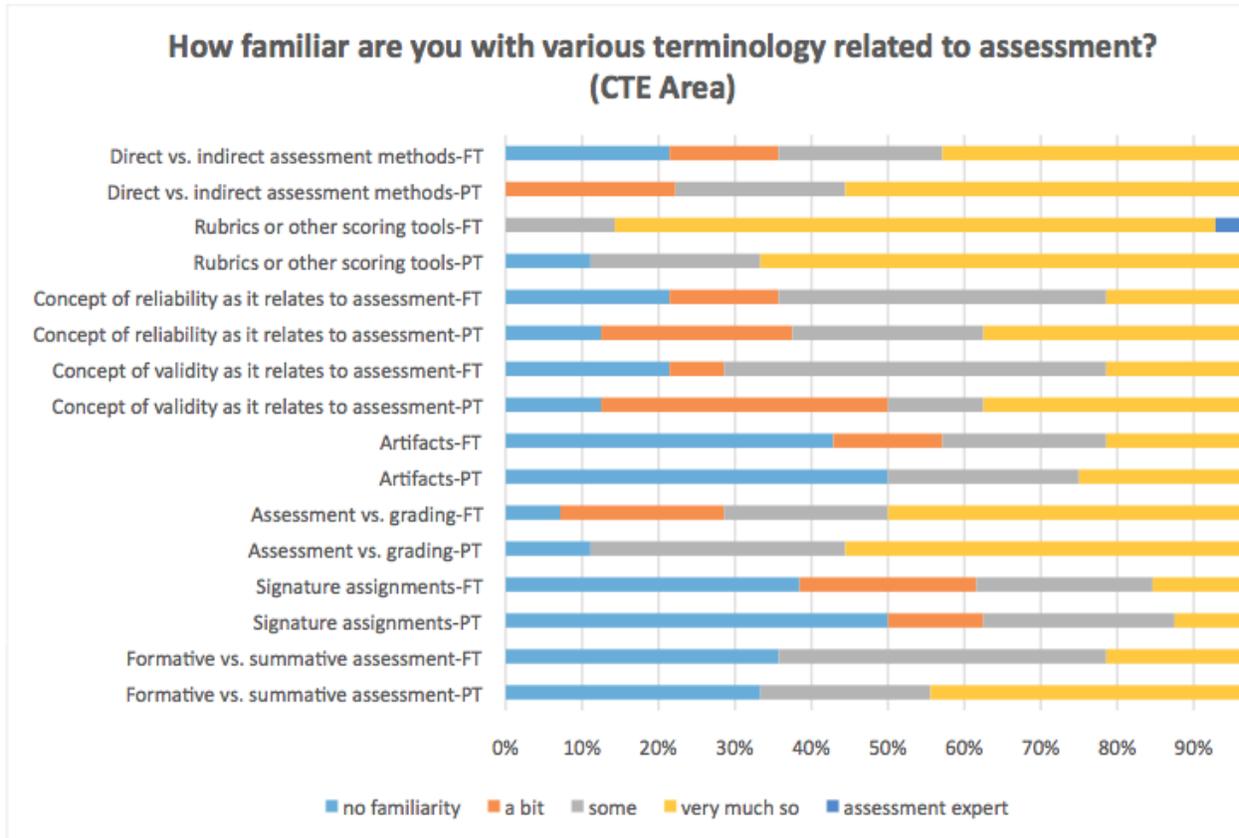

How familiar are you with various terminology related to assessment? (Transfer Area)

How familiar are you with various terminology related to assessment? (CTE Area)


However, faculty are not regularly engaging in the assessment of actual student artifacts--the norming/evaluation of student work, the generation of data from norming/evaluation sessions, or discussions of capstone or culminating student projects (41%, 46%, and 40%, respectively, have never done so). .

Held a grade norming or evaluative and collaborative session examining student work
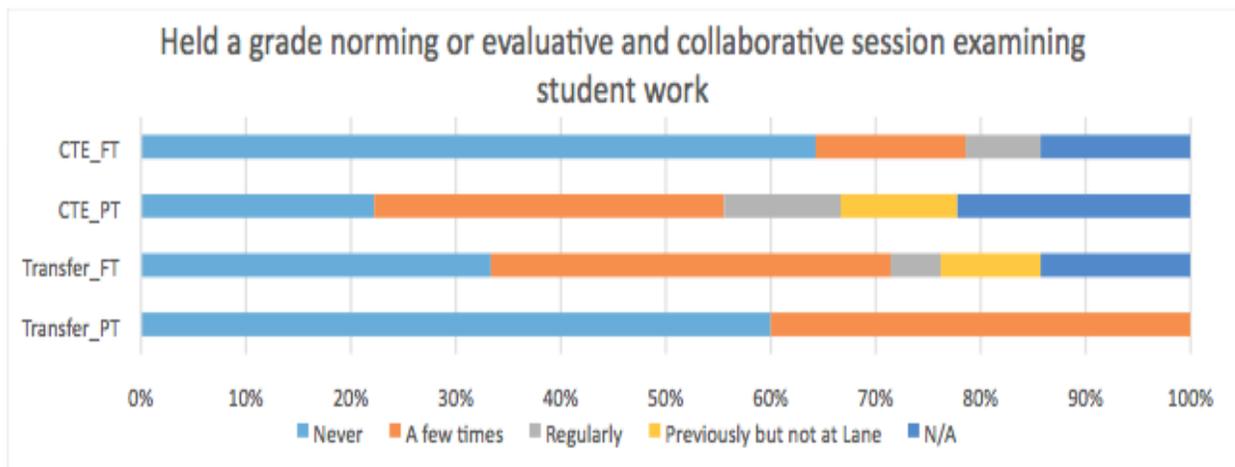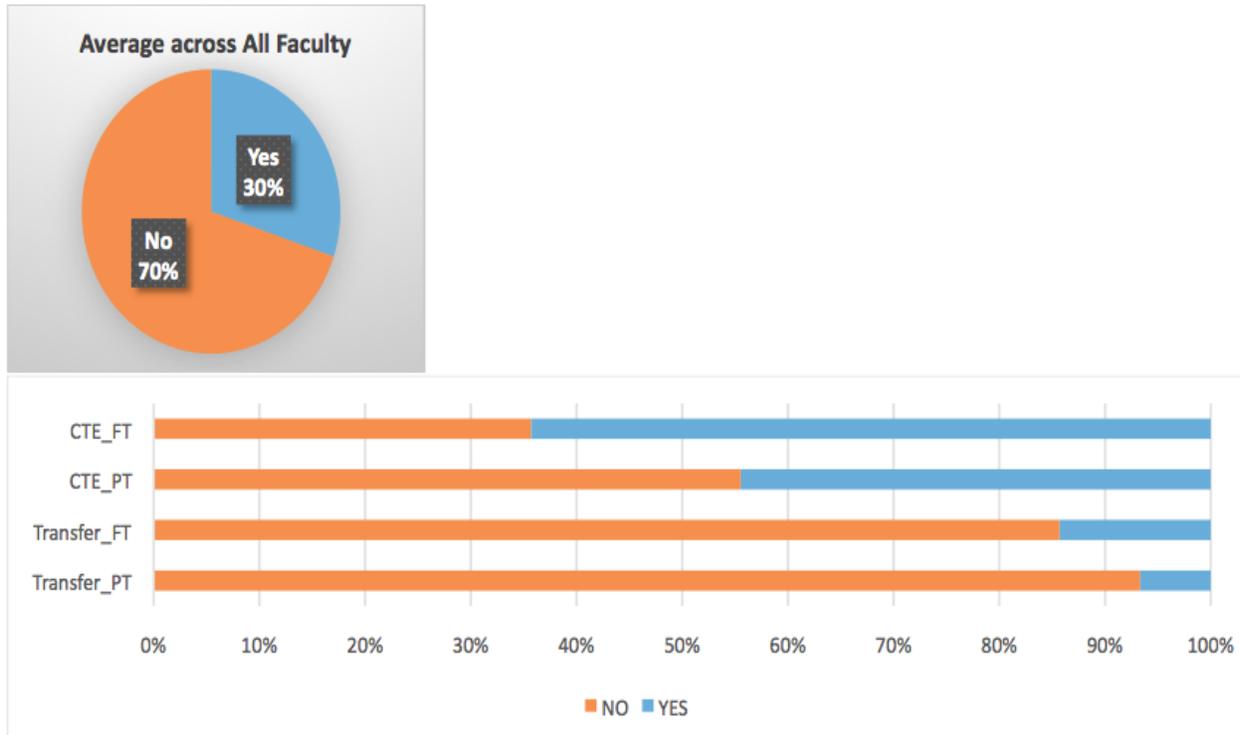
This lack of collaborative evaluation of student work is especially concerning in the transfer areas, where the majority of faculty do not draw on external evaluative metrics (83%) nor external advisory groups (90%) to assess student performance. The situation is a bit better in CTE, where around 40% of faculty indicate that their students are evaluated via exams or external metrics, and around 53% rely on the input of groups such as advisory boards or internship mentors to evaluate student performance. These findings confirm what our recent (Summer 2016) warning from the Northwest Commision on Colleges and Universities called out: we have not, heretofore, engaged in systematic and widespread evaluation/assessment of student learning

Do your students complete exams or other evaluative metrics for external accrediting groups?
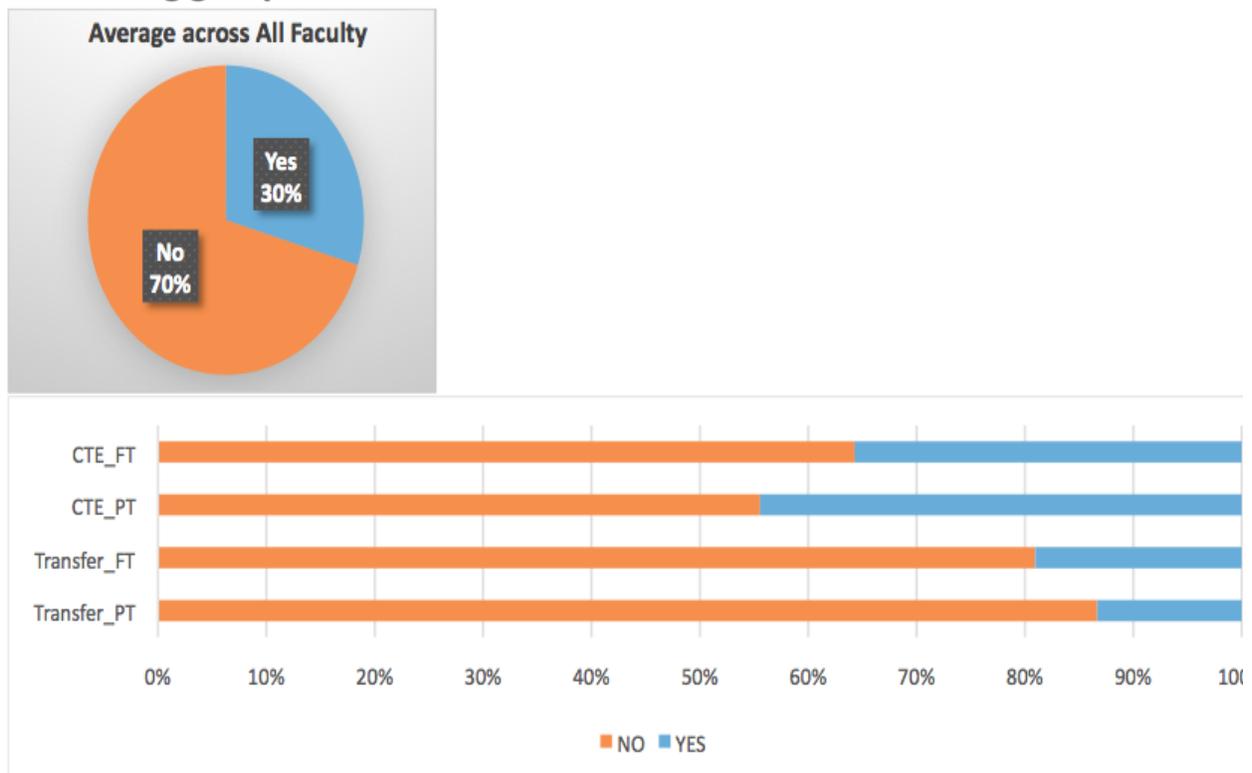
Do you solicit feedback on student performance or student work from external groups (e.g., an advisory board or internships?)

Average across All Faculty

Yes 30%

No 70%

CTE_FT

CTE_PT

Transfer_FT

Transfer_PT

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ NO ■ YES

Assessment Needs

The third section of our survey invited faculty to indicate which of the following emphases and supports are necessary for moving forward with assessment work within a department or program:

      a. Reassignment time for faculty to coordinate assessment efforts;
      b. Help with mapping Core Learning Outcomes to course- and program-level learning outcomes;
      c. Assistance with the development of course-level student learning outcomes;
      d. Funding for assessment projects;
      e. Coaching from A-Team or the Faculty Coordinator of Student Learning, Curriculum, and Assessment'
      f. Professional Development opportunities around assessment.

As we expected, (a) reassignment time and (d) funding[3] were called out as "essential" (13%, 12%), "very important" (20%, 20%), or "important" (26%, 31%) for undertaking assessment work. Interestingly, (f) faculty professional development came in a close third in the "essential"

---

[3] Around 75% of respondents indicated that funding for projects was "essential," "very important," or "important," a figure that parallels the results of a 2013 faculty survey on CLOs and assessment, available here.

category (7%), deemed "very important" (15%) "important" (17%), and "somewhat" (8%), with only 5% of respondents indicating that FPD was "not important at this time" for assessment work.[4]

The two areas that were viewed as less important were (e) coaching from the A-Team and (c) assistance with the development of course-level outcomes, although both are still perceived valuable (62% and 58% of faculty indicate these supports are "important," "very important" or "essential").
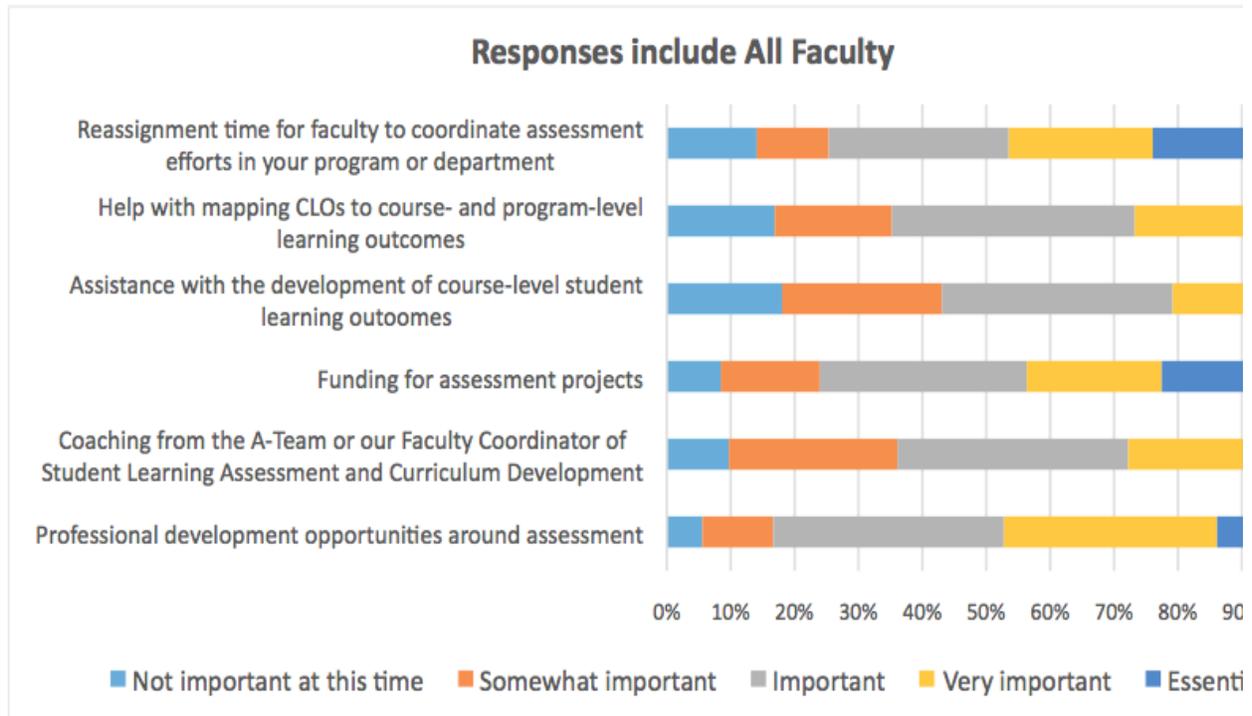
Prose comments at the end of the survey mirrored the numeric data; in particular, PT Faculty lament the lack of time and support—"paid meeting time," comment #12 —to collaborate with peers. Indeed, of the sixteen prose comments, half of them deal with challenges of workload, the exigencies created by the ratio of PT to FT faculty, and the lack of financial support for faculty undertaking assessment work (#s 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13,14, & 15). Perhaps the most pointed and illuminating of the comments is one that reveals a level of disenfranchisement experienced by PT faculty, disenfranchisement that translates into real costs in terms of course alignment, quality teaching, and student learning. Is it worth reading in full:

> *In the areas that I said were "not important", I said that because I THINK that full time faculty in my department are actually doing those things right now. I would like to add however, that I only "THINK" this is happening. Part-time faculty only hear about important developments like these by accident or when the dean*

---

[4] In contrast, 12% of faculty view reassignment time as not important as this time, while 8% see funding for projects as not important.

casually mentions it in one brief sentence during a meeting. This is a serious issue, as part-time faculty have no idea what's going on in our department in terms of articulating course outcomes, yet we provide the overwhelming majority of the instruction in our department. I would like to see a weekly or at least monthly update on work being done by the dean or the lead team, so that we know what is going on.

The Need for Professional Development Activities
We were somewhat surprised to see that respondents viewed professional development, overall, as the most necessary support for assessment. However, faculty participants in Tammy Salman's Spring 2017 course on assessment identified the same need, and several of the prose comments (# 5, 7 and 16) at the end of the survey echo these sentiments. Further, the experiences of A-Team chairs and CLO Coordinators dovetail with this finding: we have often been taken aback at faculty's lack of facility with assessment theories, methods, and practices, but given our over-reliance on PT faculty, who may be juggling employment at several agencies or institutions across Lane County, this lack of facility is not surprising.

A few of the comments reveal misapprehension and misunderstanding about the direction of A-Team's efforts to improve assessment at Lane, a phenomenon that underscores the need for more and better outreach and administrative support for our work. Specifically, response #3 articulates a concern about inauthentic pedagogy emanating from calls for assessment. Over the past few years, the A-Team has worked tirelessly to make sure that assessment projects, while necessarily adhering to a shared sequential process and utilizing a common structure for evaluation of student work, develop out of a program or department's needs and interests and serve both teaching and student learning.

A second comment, #11, offers a critique of assessment not tied to course goals but to institutional mission. We suspect that such a sentiment stems from a misunderstanding about the role of CLOs in the assessment of student learning. Given that CLO mapping functions as both an alignment and a translation endeavor--the latter, an attempt to connect the disparate course- and program-level outcomes into a shared language that we can use to demonstrate students are meeting our general education learning objectives—we recognize that we need to do a better job of helping faculty understand that their own learning objectives should drive their assessment efforts. CLO maps will allow us to generate data about student learning at an institutional, rather than the course-or program level, and demonstrate mission fulfillment for our accrediting agency.

Two comments—#s 1 and 10— align very closely with the sentiments of A-Team members over the past few years. Lane, as an institution, needs to develop a clear and transparent plan for assessment and communicate its goals to faculty and other stakeholders. Further, the relationship between program review, professional development, curriculum development funding, and assessment should be clarified. Comment #1 also suggests that A-Team has endorsed a model of program review that ties assessment efforts to future program funding, which is an inaccurate assumption. We do recognize, however, that faculty do not always

understand how closely intertwined assessment of student learning is with program review and that most institutions marry these efforts. Connected to this issue is the comment (#10) about the necessity of access to institutional data and limitations placed on faculty access. We fully agree with this respondent's call for more access.

Conclusion

We were pleased at the number of faculty responses; we feel that, overall, the results of the survey confirm A-Team's observations about assessment efforts at Lane and foreground important areas for future work. We were also happy with the number of respondents, which, although somewhat modest at 14.8% (74 respondents out of 499 faculty members at Lane in spring of 2017), represents a larger percentage of faculty than the 11.5% who responded in 2013 (76 responses from 658 Faculty).[5] If we wish to confirm this snapshot (and determine if the discrepancies between FT and PT Faculty responses in CTE represent a trend), we will need to utilize the same questions and the same assessment tool.

Finally, we would like to echo sentiments expressed in the 2017 A-Team Synthesis Report and reiterate the fact that the college needs to dedicate additional resources to develop an appropriate infrastructure to support faculty work on assessment. These resources will necessarily include funding and reassignment time for the creation of assessment tools—rubrics, surveys and other indirect measures—as well as compensation for artifact scoring sessions. Without such support, our recent momentum, most likely, will not be sustained.

---

[5] Faculty numbers have fallen significantly from 2013 to now. In 2013, Lane employed 255 FT and 403 PT faculty; as of spring 217, the figure is 213 FT and 286 PT.

Addendum A-- Sixteen Prose Comments in response to the prompt, "If your needs are not indicated above (or if you have anything else you'd like to share), please explain below"

1. Just as a comment - I think we are at a point at Lane where we need a more clearly articulated statement about the role of assessment occurring in an ongoing, developmental process on a department level (with CD/assessment funding and prof. dev. funds on a program or discipline basis) VS an administratively, top-down mandated level of program assessment occurring in a formal Program Review process. Based on Faculty Council minutes, A-Team web link statements, and the Program Review handbook, assessment in a Program Review process will be tied into future program funding (and in some cases, a program's very existence.)

2. there needs to more examples available on our website or like a moodle group so we can see examples of CLOs and how to put them into the course. I think faculty connections is a great way to help instructors as well. I think that student evals can help shape how some classes are taught.

3. My concern with assessment is that it will lead to forced and inauthentic pedagogy, which was my experience at a previous institution that was beginning to work on systematic assessment. It is critical to proceed with assessment in ways that allow for pedagogical flexibility and creativity. I also think that it's incredibly important that assessment emerges from the ground up rather than the top down, and that it is an inclusive rather than exclusive process. I am concerned by the lack of collegiality and trust in faculty that I see evidenced at Lane and believe that the drive towards assessment risks exacerbating these issues.

4. In my subject, most instructors are part-time. This makes discussion of assessment and evaluation difficult.

5. Here in the Library, we have a need to create assessments that link to outcomes in assignments, and also to CLOs and the ACRL Framework for Info Literacy. We have a need for librarians who value these assessments :) Our Library has not had a "culture of assessment" for many years (if ever); we are embarking on creating more explicit linkages between our work and CLOs, and currently working with the Writing Center to develop materials for writing instructors to use to promote info literacy in their courses.

6. My work happens in an area of overwork in the form of classes that have "enhanced enrollment." The added students make added work that makes it less likely for me and my colleagues to engage in meaningful, collaborative work in improving course-level and program-level assessment. We need to have the College return classes that my colleagues and I teach to reasonable and workable levels.

7. I don't know what most of this jargon means. I'm part time. I'm from industry not academia. You're speaking Greek to me. If you want participation and personal investment (no clue what the academic-jargon is for that) from us non-academia-speakers, you're going to have to bridge this ENORMOUS cultural divide. Or just keep doing what we've always done and wonder why things don't change. I'm part time. I just

teach. And when I want to know how my students feel about things, I ask them. Then I see if I can make changes that solve any problems they're having. I'm a rather simple soul.

8. When part-time faculty are moved around from course to course and level to level, we are not able to spend time ensuring that a course matches well with other courses in sequence, implements CLOs, or share with other teachers about the validity and reliability of assessments. Our efforts are focused on knowing the material well enough to teach it and that the tests cover what we covered in class (at the very least).

9. I think that reassignment time is more important than additional funding because faculty are already over worked and cannot create time out of thin air to attempt an important, but time consuming, project.

10. Ready access to institutional data is critical. At other institutions, I have been given either direct access to certain data or give some simple way to request it from the institution. At Lane, there does not seem to be a specific method by which to request such information and most of the information that full-time faculty (or at the very least program coordinators) should be able to directly access and query has been purposefully made inaccessable. The rationale I've been given is that some staff and administrators are concerned that giving us such access is a violation of FERPA. It isn't. I can say, however, that not giving us ready access makes it impossible to effectively manage our programs, engage in retention efforts, and conduct assessment.

11. Course assessments have to be directly connected to course goals, objectives and outcomes. They should not address institution mission goals like becoming a lifelong learner!

12. Just having time for faculty to meet would make a big difference. Most of us are part-time and we used to have some paid meeting time. That has been eliminated. As a result, our coordination/collaboration/shared wisdom and learning suffers. Likewise, students also pay the price. Can't expect faculty trying to scrape a living from working several part time jobs in various locations to meet regularly without pay.

13. Funding for adjuncts to participate is very seldom addressed. Most of us have more than one job and it's difficult to participate.

14. In the areas that I said were "not important", I said that because I THINK that full time faculty in my department are actually doing those things right now. I would like to add however, that I only "THINK" this is happening. Part-time faculty only hear about important developments like these by accident or when the dean casually mentions it in one brief sentence during a meeting. This is a serious issue, as part-time faculty have no idea what's going on in our department in terms of articulating course outcomes, yet we provide the overwhelming majority of the instruction in our department. I would like to see a weekly or at least monthly update on work being done by the dean or the lead team, so that we know what is going on.

15. I do a lot of assessment of student performance, but it is time consuming. We are not provided the time or acknowledgment of how difficult it is. If a majority of our classes are being taught by contingent faculty, the problems of assessment will not get better and any improvements will be minimal.

16. Having only been at Lane for a few years, I am still surprised at how little some faculty know about assessment methods and effective curricular design (interrelated topics). It's as if many faculty regard assessment and curriculum issues as something extra instead of a necessary part of being a teaching professional. Obviously, my colleagues care deeply about their students, but some seem to define their jobs very narrowly. Why don't we have more professional development opportunities that help faculty collaborate with colleagues in their departments and work together to improve curriculum, learn methods of assessment, and improve our teaching? Perhaps our professional development funding could fund such activities.