



OFFICE OF  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

# **Office of Assessment & Academic Program Review**

## **State of Assessment Report**

**Summer 2022**



## Academic Unit Assessment Impact

### New Analysis Approach

The University of New Mexico's Office of Assessment & APR (OA/APR) designed a new analysis process for academic unit assessment to align with national standards and facilitate understanding of how institutional assessment impacts teaching and learning at UNM. The office explored peer institution models and best practices defined by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) to assist in developing this analysis system.

The OA/APR collected 202 assessment reports across colleges, schools, and branches in AY 21-22. These reports included:

- 969 student learning outcomes (SLOs), encompassing 1,711 verbs and 1,665 content areas,
- 919 selections of alignment to UNM's learning goals,
- 943 assessment measures reported,
- 181 reports of program changes as a result of assessment,
- 176 reports of assessment revisions, and
- 183 reports of communication methods regarding assessment results

Each of these data sets were analyzed to assess information about UNM's academic programming, instructor beliefs, student learning, and common metrics/measures used. This new information will assist in creating a more streamlined assessment process across UNM with a new annual report format and communications to promote greater assessment engagement.

### Methods

202 academic assessment reports submitted from almost all academic units, including the following colleges, schools, and branches:

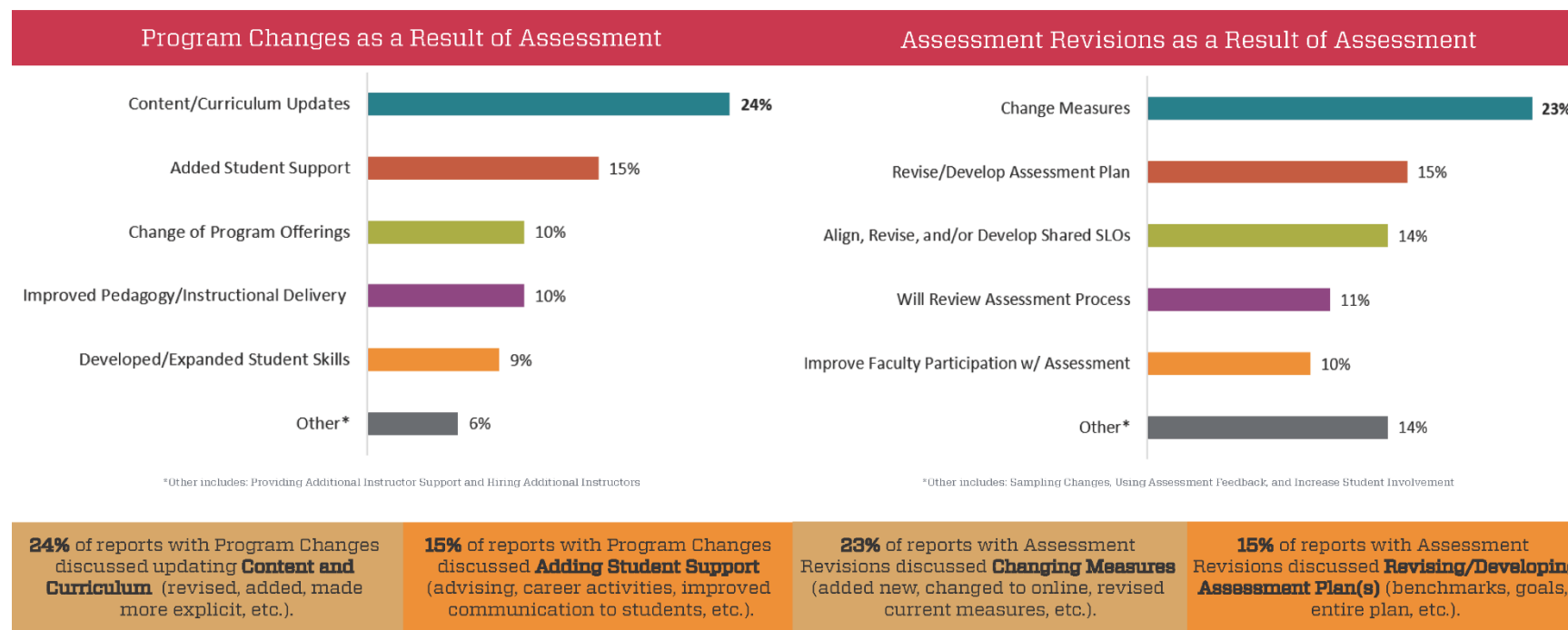
- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| • Anderson School of Management                       | • College of Arts & Sciences        |
| • College of Education & Health Sciences              | • College of Fine Arts              |
| • College of University Libraries & Learning Sciences | • UNM Gallup                        |
| • Honors College                                      | • School of Architecture & Planning |
| • School of Engineering                               | • School of Medicine                |
| • University College                                  | • UNM Valencia                      |

The OA/APR quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed this robust set of data. To assess impact and instructor beliefs regarding student learning, the OA/APR hired two graduated students to assist in the analysis of these reports. Both graduate students underwent FERPA and assessment training. Each graduate student coded SLOs, assessment results use, and ways that programs communicate about assessment. Each graduate student also tallied selected UNM learning goals within each report. While coding, the graduate students provided qualitative notes regarding their coding process, along with themes and patterns that emerged. The OA/APR compiled the coded data and qualitative notes. The quantitative results and qualitative responses are provided below.

## Results



## Institutional Assessment Impact

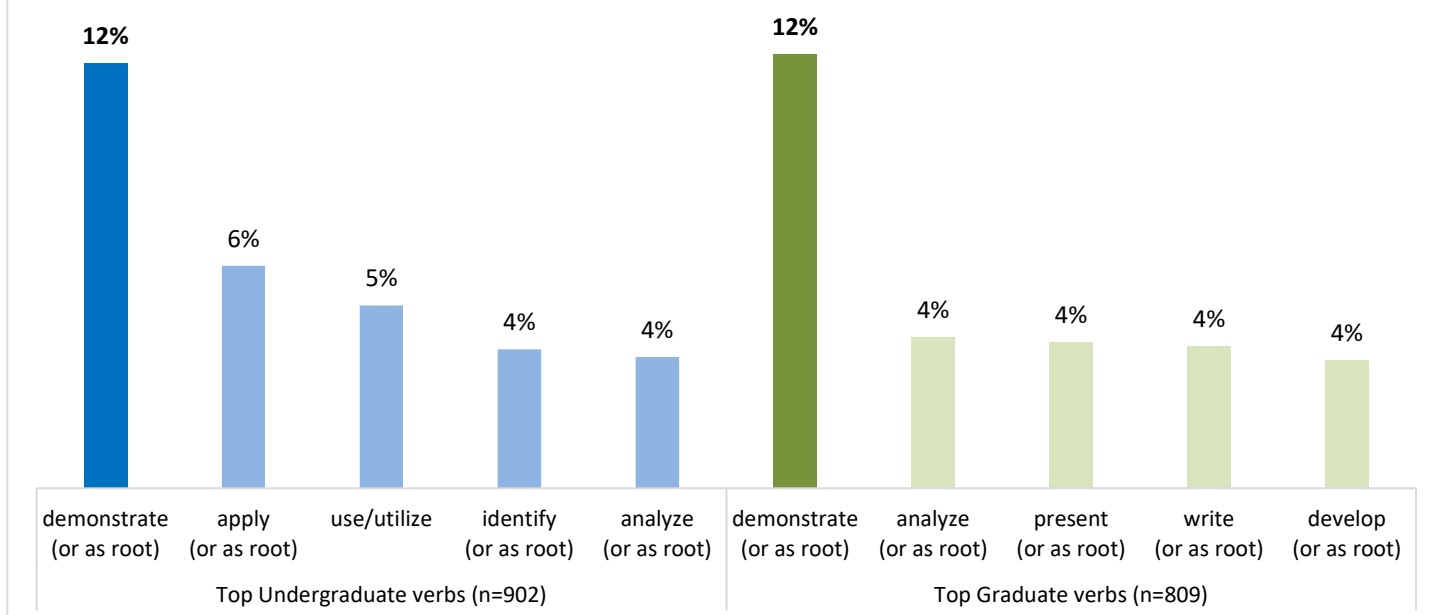


The University of New Mexico · Albuquerque, NM · 505.277.3330 · [assess@unm.edu](mailto:assess@unm.edu) · [assess.unm.edu](http://assess.unm.edu)  
Office of Assessment & Academic Program Review · Dere Smith Hall Room 220

\*\*One report can include multiple Program Changes and multiple Assessment Revisions; percentages therefore are distinct from one another and do not add up to 100%.

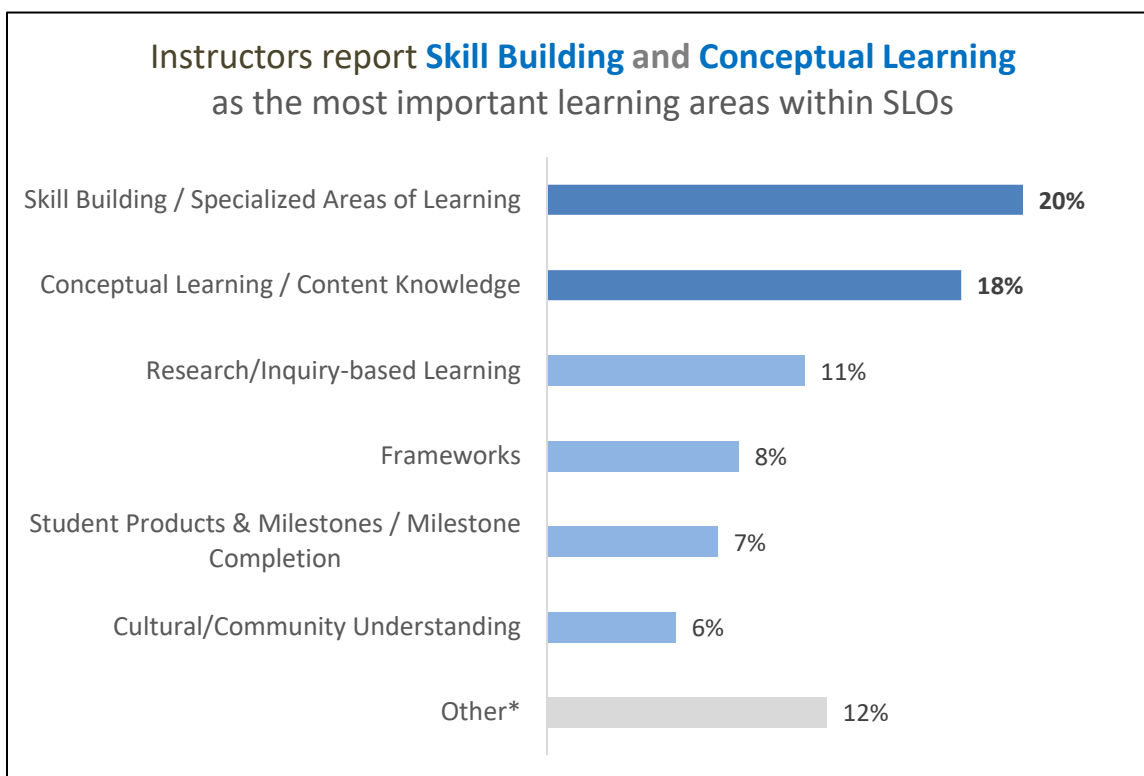
### *Instructor beliefs about student learning*

"Demonstrate" is the most frequently measured student behavior in both **Undergraduate** and **Graduate** SLOs.



Out of 1,711 verbs, *demonstrate* and *apply* are the two most common behaviors stated in SLOs between undergraduate and graduate instructors. The top five verbs for both undergraduate and graduate levels shows a strong indication of instructor beliefs of higher order thinking as a top expectation of learning outcomes, with the exception of *demonstrate* as a lower order thinking behavior. Additionally, of the **top 22 verbs** across both levels (appearance of 20+ times), 73% are higher order thinking (e.g. *apply*, *analyze*, *develop*), whereas only 27% are lower order thinking (e.g. *complete*, *explain*, *understand*, *communicate*, *describe* and *write*). As such, instructor beliefs regarding student standards and success are based greatly on the performance of higher order thinking. This shows the importance of instructor beliefs regarding student standards and success and also the development of higher order thinking in our student populations.

### *Instructor beliefs about student learning*



\* "Other" includes themes of Collaborative Learning, Problem Solving, Ethics, Technological learning, Experiential learning, and Responsibility

\*\*One SLO can include multiple Content Areas; percentages therefore are distinct from one another and do not add up to 100%.

There were 1,665 Content Areas reported within the SLOs reported, falling into 12 themes. Findings show that instructors focus on **Skill Building** (ideas, affective learning, strategies etc.) and **Conceptual Learning** (understanding, facts, fundamental info etc.) most frequently when identifying and measuring student learning outcomes. These instructor beliefs validate UNM's learning goals of Knowledge and Skills and evidence how highly valued these top two areas of student learning are in both graduate and undergraduate work.

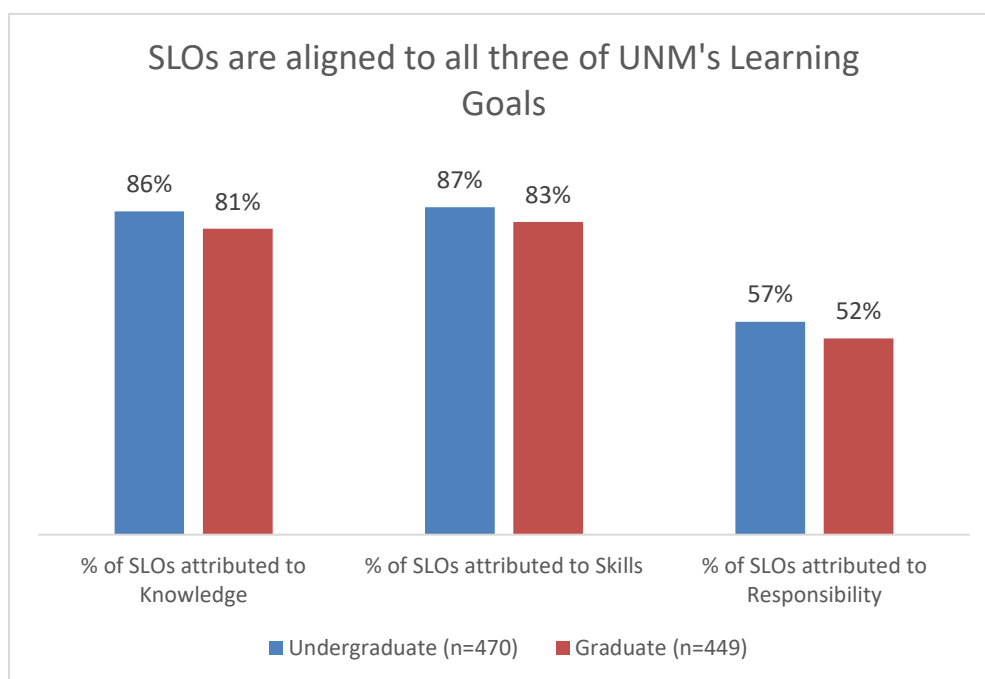
These results also indicate what instructors hold most important about student learning. While 25% of instructors who submitted assessment reports centered student behaviors on products of learning (dissertations, conference presentations, papers and projects, job placement, theses, etc.), 75% of instructors situated the process of learning (experiential, attaining knowledge, practicing a skill, etc.) as the focal point.



## SLO Content Area Results Word Cloud Representation



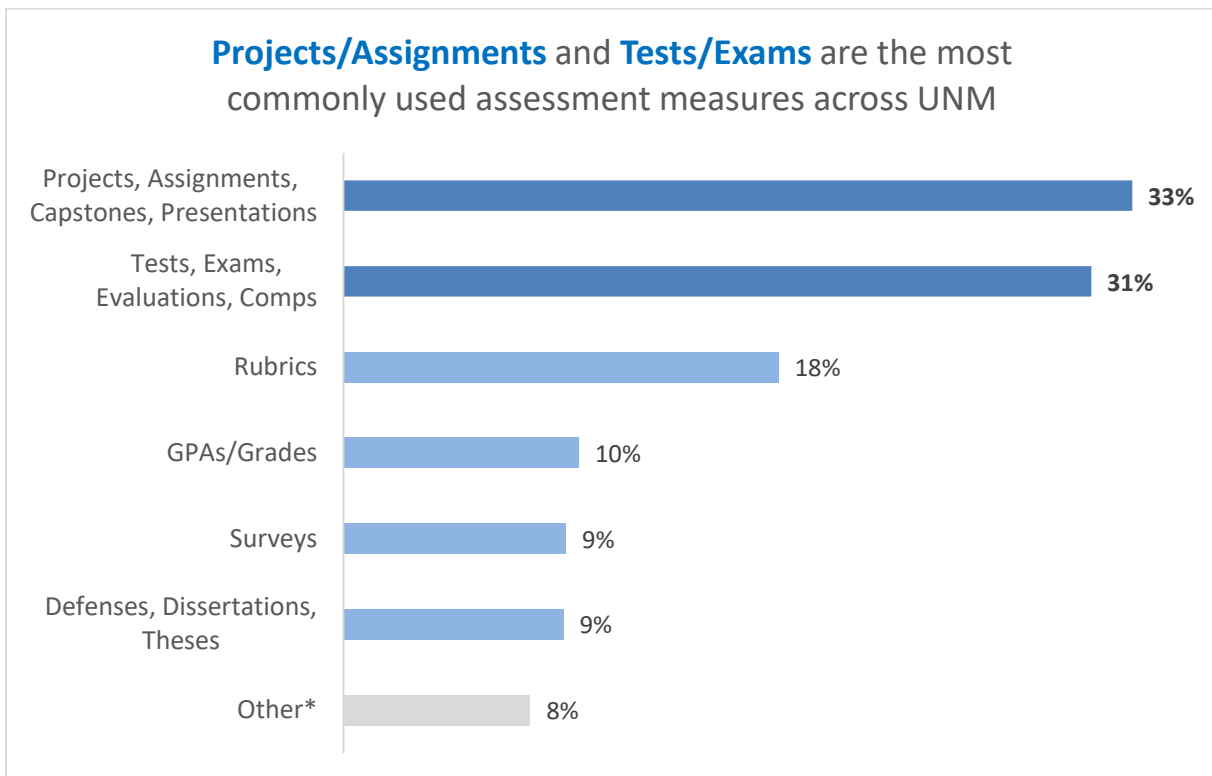
## UNM Learning Goals



\*\*One SLO can relate to multiple UNM LGs; percentages therefore are distinct from one another and do not add up to 100%.

The Office of Assessment & APR analyzed UNM's Learning goals in each assessment plan and report to understand their role within instructor beliefs and the institution at large. Both **skills** and **knowledge** were evidenced as the top goals instructors assess. The goal of **responsibility** fell to last place of the three goals, but at 57% it is being measured in the majority of SLOs. The tallying of these goals illustrates the fundamental importance of UNM's goals embedded in student learning across the university and degree programming.

### *Assessment Measures*

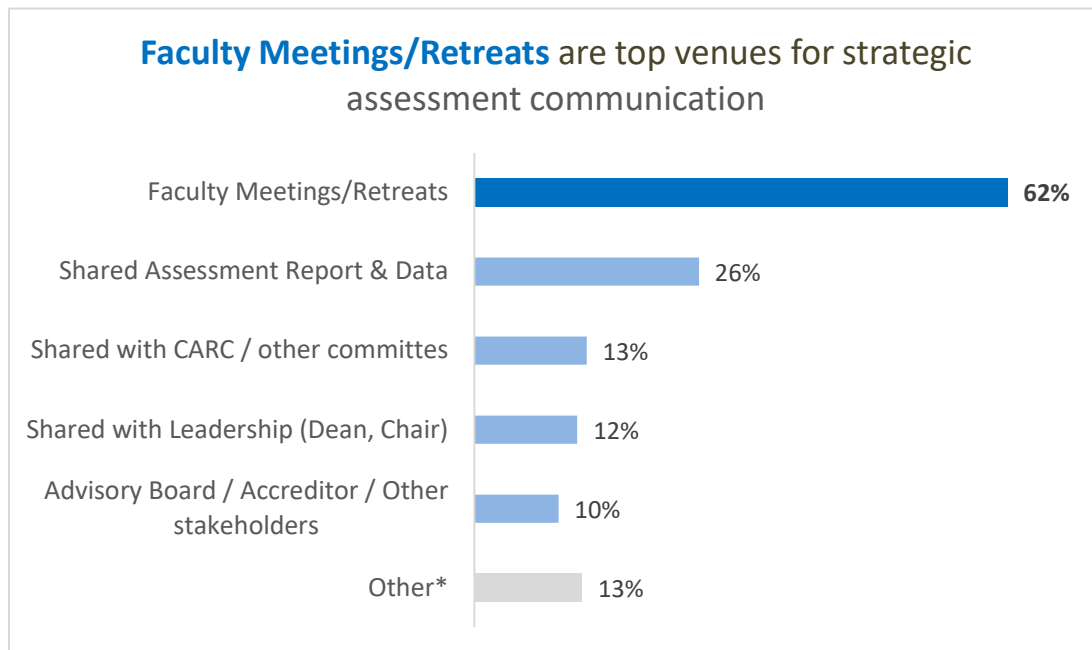


\* "Other" includes: Post-Grad Success, Observations, Class Discussions/Participation, Professional Activities, Research Proposals/Publications, and Training Completion/Graduations;

\*\* One SLO can include multiple measures; percentages therefore are distinct from one another and do not add up to 100%.

**Projects/assignments** (essays, reports, portfolios etc.) and **tests/exams** (skills tests, licensures, course exams etc.) were most common across all 943 reported measures. Graduate level measures tended to focus on program milestones and summative assessments while undergraduate measures focused on a combination of formative and summative measures to measure student learning behaviors.

## Assessment Communication



\*"Other" includes: Shared with Students, Graduate Trainings/Meetings, and Posted on Websites.

\*\*One report can include multiple Communication Methods, therefore percentages are distinct from one another and do not add up to 100%.

Across 183 reports, **faculty meetings/retreats** were by far the most discussed means of assessment communication reported by instructors. Yet external stakeholders, students and unit leadership were the least communicated to regarding assessment information.

## Participation

The colleges, schools, and branches listed above also submitted a state of assessment narrative and maturity rubric, resulting in an 85% participation rate (n=11/13). This represents a decrease in the Maturity Rubric participation rate compared to last year. As UNM Taos is in the process of revising their assessment plans, their campus did not submit a state of assessment narrative or maturity rubric this year, and are not in this tally, nor in the below rates on individual submissions of unit assessment reports.

**In AY20-21, academic assessment submissions for all degree programs at main and branch campuses (without Taos) decreased 6.5% overall with a 60.3% submission rate.**

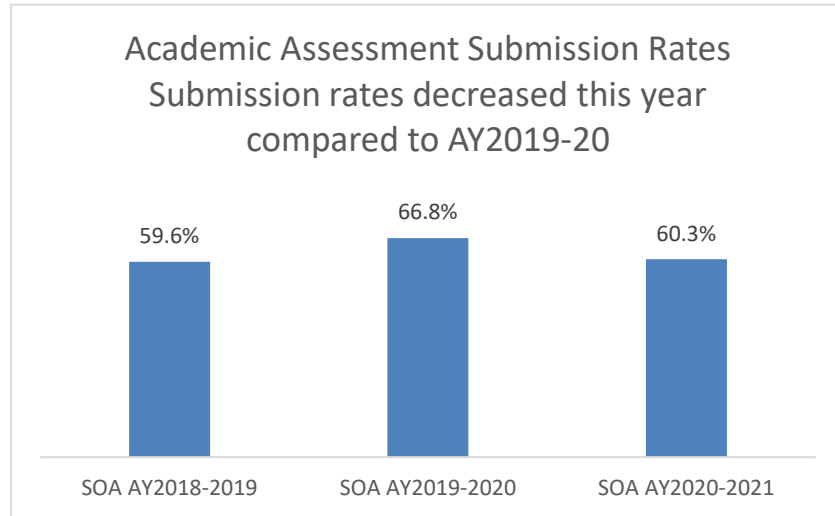
- Undergraduate Submissions: 59.0%; **a 12.6% decrease from last year**
  - Undergraduate Submissions (Main Campus): 69.4%; **a decrease of 3.1% from last year**
  - Undergraduate Submissions (Branch Campuses\*): 42.9%; **a decrease of 21.4% from last year**



- Graduate submissions: 61.9%; *the **same** participation as last year*

*\* Not including Taos*

A review of academic assessment participation over the past three academic years reveals that AY2019-20 had the highest submission rates across all programs. Workshop offerings, new data and messaging about university-wide assessment impact as well as campus collaborations have been established to increase assessment engagement.



## **Review of a Sampling of Program Level Assessment Plans & Reports**

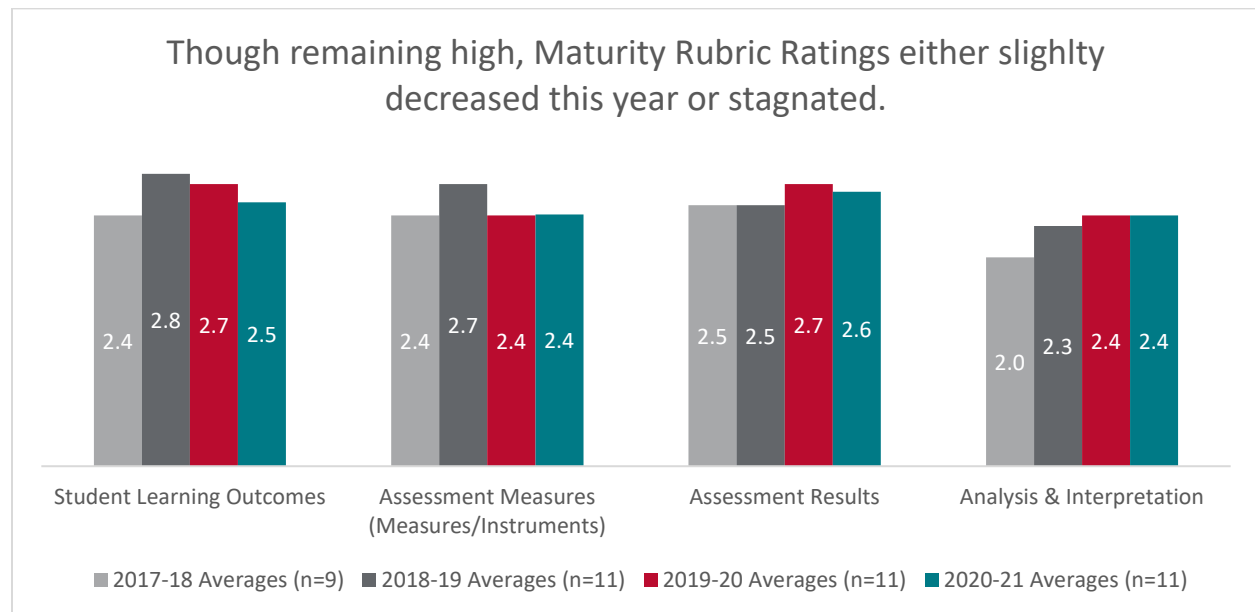
OA/APR provides annual feedback to all college/school/branch's regarding their assessment practices and reports. The AY 20-21 overarching themes and patterns include:

- Overall achievement scores (course grades & GPA) are being utilized as a measurement tool for specific learning behaviors causing misalignment in the assessment process
- Excellent examples of closing the loop and continuous improvement
- Poor alignment between measures and results whereas results are not tied to some of their stated measurement tools
- Benchmarks are set too high or too low resulting in low student success rates
- Report sections are incomplete (e.g., results use were not described)
- SLO's overly broad or task/objective oriented instead of outcome based (e.g., "Students will participate in a research conference" yet there is no focus on what students will gain from this participation in terms of learning behaviors)

## **Maturity Rubric**

The maturity rubric asks college/school/branch representatives to rate their unit's overall assessment maturity in four distinct dimensions:

- Student Learning Outcomes
- Assessment Methods (Measures/Instruments)
- Assessment Results
- Analysis & Interpretation



Individual college/school/branch self-assessment averages ranged from 1.25 to 3.0.

## **Review of College/School/Branch Narratives**

The OA/APR analyzed the State of Assessment narrative data provided by each college, school, and branch using a qualitative software program (Atlas.ti). There were a total of six overarching codes emerging from these academic unit responses:

### ***Assessment strengths***

- Faculty are actively seeking assessment resources
- Curricular reviews and changes are occurring
- Increase in individual maturity rubric ratings as a result of high-quality assessment
- Employment of a mix of direct and indirect and/or formative and summative assessments
  - Improvement in analysis and what we do with it

### ***Assessment challenges***

- SLO development and measurement struggles
- Covid fatigue is real/Remote instruction took a toll on folks
- Faculty do not see the value of assessment (outside of accreditation)
- Staff & faculty turnover

- Branch instructors in particular believe assessment is not part of their workload
- When not meeting benchmarks, there is a lack of intentional/concrete strategies

#### *Graduate assessment*

- Reports tend to be limited to measures of Comprehensive Exams and Dissertations
- Master's and Ph.D. programs are utilizing the same SLOs
- Consistent with assessment throughout Covid years
- Revising or developing new assessment plans

#### *Next steps for colleges/schools/branches*

- SLO and measure alignment: Design surveys and rubrics to map to outcomes
- Modifying internal assessment timelines
- Review assessment processes to have actionable data
- Get leadership more engaged
- Offer workshops, talks and more communications regarding assessment

#### *Support needed from the OA/APR*

- Continue workshops
- Continue regular communications/reminders
- Learn how to assess across more classes without creating more work for faculty
- Present to larger faculty forums regarding assessment

#### *Suggestions for the OA/APR*

- Request to attach appendices to assessment reports
- Develop infographic on the SLO report assessment cycle to prevent faculty confusion