MSC Survey Findings: An Overview

Five surveys were administered:

- Pilot Study Institution Evaluation of the Sampling Plan Development Process: response rate: 37%
- Pilot Study Sampling Feedback Survey: response rate: 69%
- Pilot Study Evaluation Survey: response rate: 59%
- Pilot Study Faculty Evaluation Survey: findings based upon responses from 150 full- and part-time faculty
- Pilot Study Scorer Evaluation Survey: response rate: 52%

A number of lessons learned and important findings can be ascertained from the pilot study survey results. Results (from all of the surveys except the Pilot Study Scorer Evaluation Survey) are summarized in this report.

Sampling
MSC respondents overall found the sampling documents provided to participating institutions – the sampling parameters, suggested sampling methods, the sampling planning and evaluation matrix, and the sampling FAQ – to be helpful. The need for earlier and wider distribution of finalized documents and the provision of model sampling plans were noted as a means to enhance MSC support of the sampling planning and implementation process.

Institution sampling teams generally found the first two stages of the sampling planning process to be the most helpful: submission of their sampling plan to the sampling subgroup and receipt of feedback from the sampling subgroup regarding the details of their plan. For many institution respondents, the third step - resubmitting a revised plan- seemed redundant and unnecessary.

45% of the institutions spent 10 hours or less on the sampling process with an additional 25% spending between 11 – 15 hours. The other 30% of the institutions exceeded 15 hours. It is likely that in further implementation rounds, the time allocated to the sampling process will be reduced as institutions develop more refined sampling plans and become more practiced in implementation of their plans. Aside from the time cost involved, institutions incurred minimal additional out-of-pocket costs related to the sampling process.

In developing an institution sampling frame, 45% of campuses began with identifying eligible students while 25% started with identifying courses where most eligible students were likely to be enrolled. The remaining 30% of campuses began with faculty. Allowing campuses the flexibility to develop and implement their own sampling plan as opposed to adhering to an externally developed set of sampling procedures resulted in 75% of the campuses indicating they were able to adhere to their submitted sampling plan. Additionally, institutions in general indicated their sampling experience will prove helpful in developing sampling plans for other campus based projects.

The following challenges are noteworthy:

- quantitative literacy was the student learning outcome that proved to be the most challenging for institutions with respect to obtaining an appropriate sample of student work and meeting the targeted minimum sample size;
- faculty willingness to participate and submit assignment instructions and corresponding student work was by and far the greatest impediment to generating a sample that met the targeted minimum sample size and the general course, student and faculty parameters to ensure a representative sample; and
the predominance of group work as opposed to individually completed work products, particularly at four-year institutions, contributed to the difficulty in meeting minimum targeted sample sizes for each outcome.

The most prominent strategy suggested for engaging faculty was to increase the opportunity for faculty to participate in professional development activities including assignment design workshops, local scoring sessions, scaffolded assessment workshops, general informational sessions about the MSC project and the importance of assessment for teaching and learning, and small, cross-disciplinary learning communities or communities of practice. Soliciting the support of the Academic Affairs Office was noted as well as leveraging accreditation requirements as a means to engage faculty.

**Professional Development**

60% of responding institutions sponsored or participated in an assignment design workshop and approximately 58% facilitated discussions with groups of faculty and/or staff. 28% of the respondents indicated their institutions either facilitated or participated in an orientation to the MSC pilot project while another 60% participated in or sponsored a rubric calibration session. Lastly, 40% of responding institutions had a session on the design and use of the VALUE Rubrics. Of these noted professional development activities, almost 54% found the assignment design workshop to be the most useful and 72% indicated it would have been helpful to have offered more of these workshops. Additionally, 36% of the responding institutions indicated having more calibration or rubric training sessions would have been helpful while 15% indicated it would have been helpful to have an orientation session.

SHEEO sponsored 7 project webinars on several topics including assignment design, sampling, and data management among others. Ninety percent of respondents viewed one or more of these webinars and overall found them to be useful. Seventy-nine percent indicated additional webinars would not be helpful. Additionally, 3 assignment design YouTube Videos were created. Forty percent of the respondents or others on the respondent’s campus viewed one or more of the presentations. Of those who viewed the YouTube presentations, over 87% found them helpful.

59% of faculty respondents indicated they attended at least one professional development activity. Faculty respondents that attended in-person professional development activities expressed a high degree of satisfaction with these workshops. Of those who attended a calibration or rubric training sessions, 94% found it helpful or very helpful. Of those who attended an assignment design workshop, 94% found these workshops to be helpful or very helpful. Of those who participate in facilitated small group faculty and/or staff discussions, 96% found these to be helpful or very helpful. For those who attended workshops on the design and use of the VALUE rubrics, 89% found them to be either very helpful or helpful. And, of those who attended an overview of the MSC pilot study, 87% found it helpful or very helpful. Conversely, very few faculty respondents viewed the host of professional development webinars available. This may be because they did not anticipate benefiting from the Webinars or because they did not know the webinars existed or had other educational activities which were given a higher time-use priority.

**Assignments and Corresponding Student Artifacts:**
The MSC chose to establish broad assignment parameters to ensure the appropriateness of assignments for assessment using the VALUE rubrics. Anecdotal evidence suggests the level of detail and guidance provided in the assignment parameters may need to be expanded. For example, the MSC did not anticipate student work submissions in a language other than English. Scorers were not able to score student work submissions that were not in English.
Approximately 45% of the faculty submitted student work and the corresponding assignment instructions to institution leads in hard copy. This significantly increased the time cost of de-identifying and uploading student artifacts and corresponding documents into the VALUE Database.

Campus Benefits
Institution respondents noted a variety of benefits from participation in the MSC pilot study. The most commonly noted benefits included moving campus-level assessment initiatives forward (75%) and informing sampling processes for future assessment projects (63%). Additionally, 53% of institution respondents believed participation was a means to respond to accountability expectations. 63% of the respondents noted that the opportunity for faculty and professional staff to participate in a national rubric training event was a benefit from participation. Other reported benefits included increasing the number of faculty either actively engaged in the assessment of student learning (45%) or drawn in to discussions and/or collaborations around the assessment of student learning (55%), raising faculty and administrative awareness of student learning outcomes (38%), informing campus-level calibration and scoring practices (38%), and informing faculty practice around intentional assignment design (48%). Receipt of actual institution scores and affirmation of the aspiration to improve the quality of student learning were noted by 23% and 35% of the institutions respectively.

Campus Challenges
On the whole, institutions encountered four main challenges: obstacles related to the collection of student artifacts from faculty, inability to collect as many work samples as desired/envisioned, difficulty recruiting faculty participants, and challenges with uploading student work and related documents. To a lesser extent, challenges related to the de-identification of student work and the creation of the CSV demographic file were cited. 13% of the institutions indicated financing pilot study related activities was a challenge and 23% found communicating with faculty about the project challenging. Very few institutions reported faculty governance concerns, IRB or student consent challenges.

Faculty Benefits and Time Commitment
67% of faculty indicated that participation in the MSC pilot study will inform their future teaching plans. More specifically, 55% of faculty indicated participation would impact future assignment design/redesign, 58% indicated participation in the pilot study generated new ideas on how to improve teaching and learning in his/her classroom, 28% indicated s/he would rethink how his/her assignments are scaffolded, 17% indicated participation will impact his/her course design, and 19% indicated participation will lead to changes in his/her classroom pedagogical approach.

Faculty noted a number of benefits from participation in the MSC pilot study. 54% of faculty respondents indicated a noted benefit from participation in the pilot study was the opportunity to work with other faculty while 52% also indicated they gained a better understanding of the VALUE rubrics and their use. 53% indicated they have an enhanced understanding of assessment based upon authentic student work while another 39% indicated they gained expertise in assignment design.

For 90% of faculty respondents, the time cost of participation in the pilot study (designing or redesigning assignment instructions, completing the assignment coversheet, and submitting student work) was 8 hours or less. 83% committed 2-5 hours while an additional 7% committed 6-8 hours to these pilot study activities. Only 3% of the faculty allocated 12 or more hours toward participation.

MSC Funding and Project Time Costs
The predominant use of MSC funds was to support faculty development workshops or to stipend faculty participants. The other main use of funds was to finance administrative costs. For 60% of the institutions, no additional funds over and above those provided by the MSC were contributed to finance professional development activities. For 66% of the institutions, no additional funds over and above
those provided by the MSC were contributed to finance the collection, de-identification and uploading of artifacts and related documents.

73% of institution leads – during an average month – allocated between 6 to 20 hours to the administration of the MSC pilot study with 20% allocating less than 5 hours, 33% allocating between 6 and 10 hours. Only 8% of institution leads indicated they allocated more than 20 hours per month toward administration of the pilot study.

Time costs for collecting, de-identifying and uploading student work and related documents were more significant than monetary costs. 69% of the institutions allocated 30 hours or less to collect student while 31% allocated over 30 hours. The average number of hours allocated to the collection of student work was 25. 61% of the institutions allocated 30 hours or less to de-identifying student work with 31% allocating 40 hours or more to this activity. The average number of hours allocated to de-identification of student work was 29. 58% of the institutions allocated 10 hours or less to uploading student work while 17% of institutions allocated between 11 and 20 hours to uploading activities. The remaining 25% allocated over 20 hours to uploading student work. **Hardcopy submission of assignment instructions and student artifacts were a major contributing factor to the institution’s time cost related to the collection and de-identification process.**

**Procedures and Guidelines for IRB Approval**

Institutions indicated they did not face any challenges with respect to IRB procedures. 38% of the institutions went through a campus-level review, 25% went through a state-level review, and 43% did not apply for IRB approval (2 institutions went through both a campus and state-level review). 70% of the institutions did not obtain student consent while three institutions out of the 40 respondents (7.5%) did obtain written student consent and nine institutions (22.5%) notified students providing an option to opt out.

**Suggestions Related to Survey Findings:**

1. Create and distribute a sampling handbook prior to the start of the next phase of the project. The sampling handbook should contain the following documents and information:
   - sampling parameters,
   - detailed sampling methods, expanding upon the use of a stratified sampling process and the importance of generating a backup sample,
   - specific examples of successful sampling strategies implemented by both two- and four-year campuses
   - sampling FAQs
   - sampling Planning and Evaluation Matrix
   - template for the CSV file and a list of the student demographic variables to be collected

2. For the implementation phase of the MSC, keep in place the first two stages of the sampling planning process – institution submission of their draft plan and the provision of feedback from the sampling subgroup. It is recommended the requirement of submission of a finalized sampling plan be dropped.

3. The pilot study and sampling survey revealed the greatest challenge to generating a representative sample of student work and successful pilot study participation was faculty willingness to contribute assignment instructions and corresponding student work. Therefore, it is recommended the MSC and each respective state participant facilitate and encourage ongoing professional development activities at the campus and state levels. Assignment design and scoring/calibration workshops were noted as particularly helpful in engaging faculty. Specific
attention should be given to offering workshops that address how to effectively embed quantitative literacy and corresponding quantitative literacy assignments more broadly across the curriculum.

4. To assist in engaging faculty in institution-wide assessment, it is suggested that there be discussions among campus administrators and related faculty unions centered on the implications of assessment initiatives at the institution and state level for academic freedom, faculty evaluation, faculty workload and collective bargaining agreements. Assurances that assessments of student learning do not and will not impinge upon academic freedom and are not a back door to faculty evaluation must be provided.

5. To assist in engaging faculty in the project and to increase faculty opportunity to participate in professional development activities that support student learning assessment, more and earlier communication with faculty about the available MSC resources (such as project descriptions, webinars and YouTubes) is needed.

6. In order to reduce the time cost associated with collection, de-identification and uploading of student work products, it is recommended that institutions require electronic submission of student work either via email, flash or thumb drive, or through a learning or assessment management system.