

TO: <<FullName>>, Department Chair, <<Department>>

FROM: Martha L. A. Stassen, Associate Provost, Office of Academic Planning & Assessment (OAPA)
<<Liaison>>, EEP College/School Liaison

CC: <<NAME, Dean, SCHOOL/COLLEGE>>
Carol Barr, Senior Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education

SUBJECT: Spring 2018 Departmental EEP Follow-Up

Thank you for your department's help in launching the campus's Educational Effectiveness Plan (EEP) process. While there were a few glitches along the way (including an online submission system that did not work as smoothly as the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment –OAPA– had hoped), department responses have been strong and have provided the campus with a wealth of information about how departments are currently using evidence to improve their educational practices, and how they plan to build on their efforts to inform their EEP inquiry. In this memo we provide you with an overview of the initial EEP results campus-wide, offer formative feedback on your department's proposed plan, and outline EEP next steps. To generate this information, staff in OAPA reviewed all the EEP proposals and coded the responses to identify major themes in departments' Student Learning objectives (SLOs), current educational improvement activities, and proposed Inquiry foci. In addition, OAPA staff met with each of the EEP College and School Liaisons to review the departmental plans and identify areas for support and guidance.

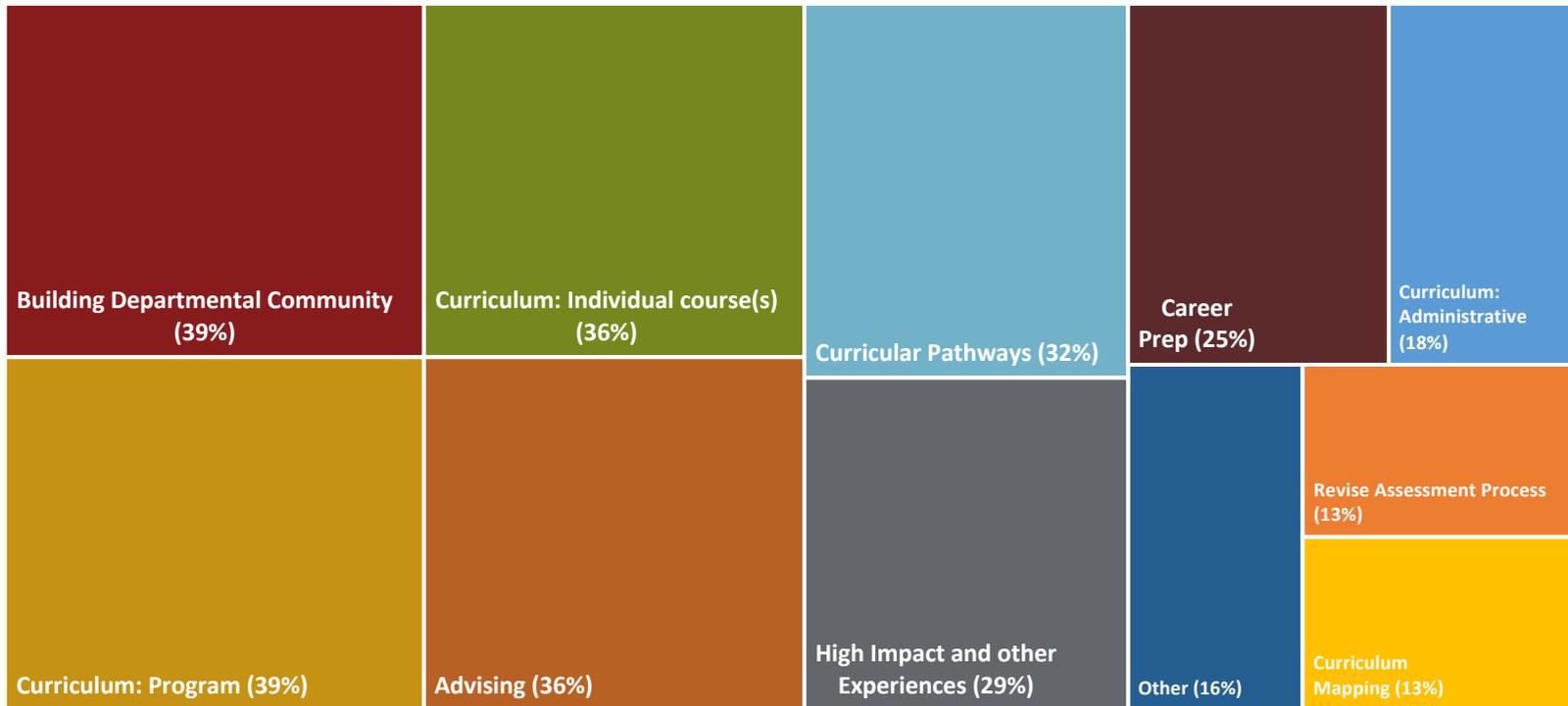
EEP Responses: An Overview

As a reminder, the UMass Amherst's Educational Effectiveness Plan (EEP) provides departments with an ongoing structure for conducting systematic inquiry into the effectiveness of their efforts to support student success. The results of departments' EEPs will contribute to departments' AQAD self-studies, their unit and budget planning efforts, and their responses to disciplinary accreditation requirements. In addition, the expectation is that the EEP will help the University enhance its student learning assessment efforts.

The spring 2018 EEP responses demonstrate the degree to which departments are already using evidence to inform educational practices. The graph below summarizes the range of changes and actions departments have already taken to improve students' experiences in the department. It is encouraging to see both the range of actions taken and the extent to which these actions align with Strategic Planning priorities.

Spring 2018 EEP Reporting: Departments Report Making Evidence-Based Changes in a Variety of Areas to Improve Students' Learning Experiences

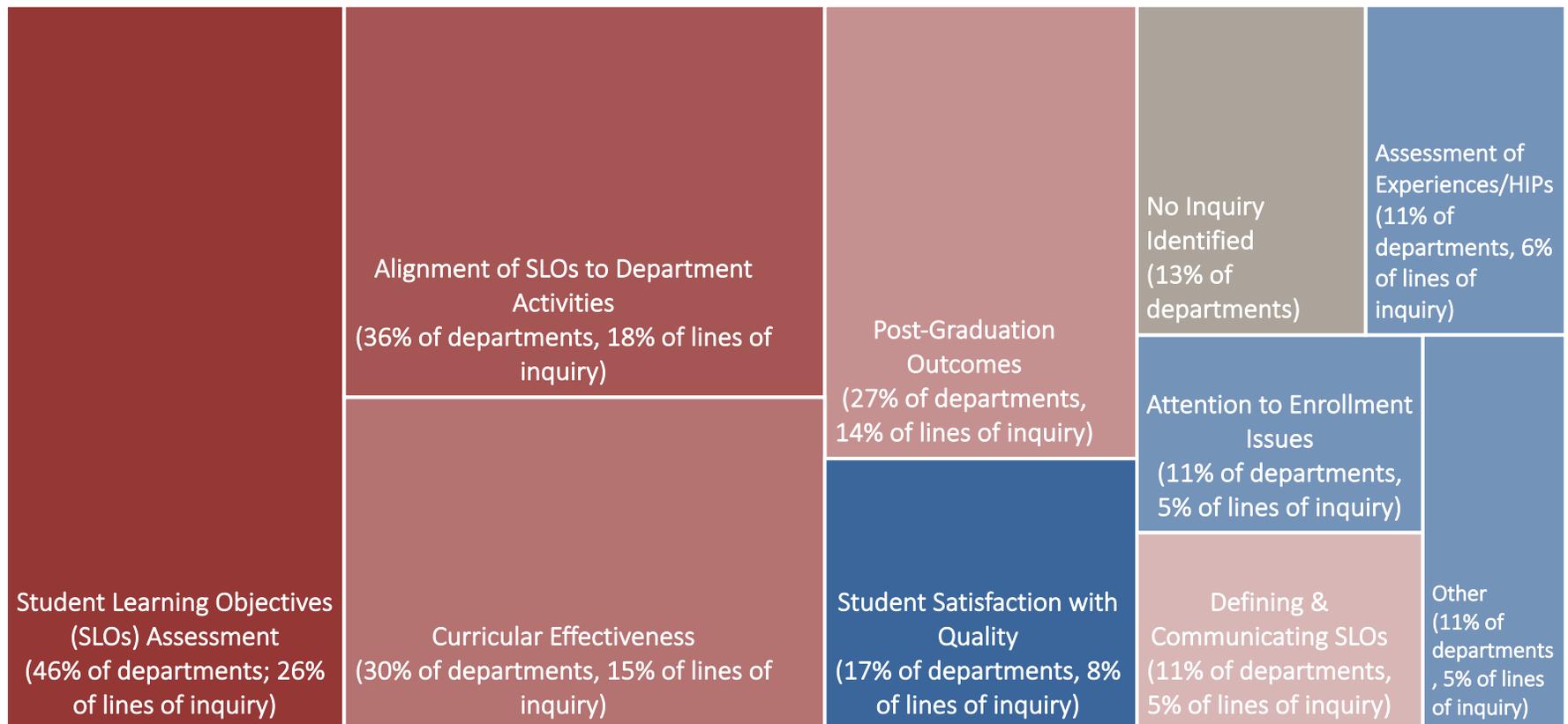
(% of Departments reporting each, N=56 Departments; Departments could identify more than one area)



This next graph summarizes departments' proposed areas of EEP Inquiry. Note the high proportion of inquiry topics that directly address student learning assessment elements (those topics in various shades of maroon). These findings suggest the promise of EEP in helping to move the campus forward in its department-based student learning assessment priorities, as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Predominant EEP Inquiry Foci (Spring 2018): Student Learning, Outcomes, and Curricular Effectiveness

(NOTE: Includes all inquiry foci identified; many departments identify more than one line of inquiry. (Total: 56 Departments, 111 Lines of Inquiry)



[DEPARTMENT] EEP Feedback and Next Steps

<<INSERT DEPARTMENT FORMATIVE FEEDBACK PARAGRAPH(S) >>

This feedback is offered in the spirit of helping you pursue an inquiry focus and process that can be most useful and informative to you and your department. In some cases we have specifically suggested you consult with OAPA and we encourage you to follow-up by contacting oapa@umass.edu. Of course, OAPA and <<your EEP Liaison>> are also happy to work with any other department upon request.

The EEP process calls for developing a regular 2-3 year EEP progress report/check-in cycle for departments, with the first group of departments checking in for the first time in spring 2019 ([see the schedule here](#)). After your initial progress report/check-in, we will identify an ongoing 2-3 year cycle based on a variety of factors including AQAD and Accreditation schedules, departmental progress on EEP, and other department and college/school factors.

FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE: Send responses to oapa@umass.edu.

1. Please review the edited summary of your EEP response at <<link to department's Box>>. Contact OAPA with any edits you have to this summary (send edits as attachment, use "track changes"). **NOTE:** OAPA will make these summaries publicly available on its website on **Friday, September 7th** in concert with the release of the University's NEASC self-study.
2. To facilitate future communication regarding EEP information, is there someone else from your department (in addition to the department chair) who serves a coordinating role for EEP (e.g., Director of Undergraduate Studies, Chair of Curriculum Committee, etc.,) and should be included in future EEP communications? If so, please send the name and contact information for this individual to OAPA. All EEP-related information will be sent both to the Chair and to the additional EEP contact.

EEP Next Steps

We have also received formative feedback from departments about the EEP process. We are currently working on responding to the following requests/suggestions:

1. The Qualtrics format for reporting EEP plans had a number of challenges and didn't allow for the kind of easy departmental access to their responses that we had hoped. We need to find a better method for collecting, storing, and providing easy access/editing to departments to their responses.
2. Make it easier for departments to provide EEP information at the major/program level, not just the department level.
3. Departments identified the following areas where they would like additional help in collecting evidence: alumni information (14 departments); conducting focus groups (13

departments); major-specific surveys (10 departments); Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) survey (5 departments).

Please share with OAPA any other feedback and suggestions you have.

Again, thank you for your participation and contributions to the EEP process.