

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS :
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FACULTY SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

May 7, 2013

At the request of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE) considered a variety of issues related to student course evaluations. The FSCUE Curriculum Subcommittee drafted an initial set of recommendations which was reviewed and amended by FSCUE members of the 2012-2013 academic year. As background to its discussions, FSCUE reviewed the following documents: (1) "DRAFT

instructors, departments, schools, Undergraduate Studies (through FSCUE) or Graduate Studies (through the Faculty Senate Committee on Graduate Studies) is able to add additional questions to the evaluation instrument to address special considerations relevant to their missions, while being respectful of students' time when adding questions. A draft evaluation form with a common set of questions for all courses is attached.

FSCUE recommends that students be asked to complete any questions assessing teaching for each course instructor, including Teaching Assistants, who also meet regularly with students to cover new material or review course material. Rosters of Teaching Assistants can be collected from the relevant departments.

2) Access to the Results

FSCUE recommends that all evaluation data, including responses to free-text questions (which are currently accessible to course instructors) be made available to those responsible for the staffing of courses, such as department chairs and program directors.

The committee recommends, however, that we continue to share only the statistical summaries of the common questions with the broader CWRU community.

3) When Students Complete Evaluations

FSCUE recommends that evaluations be open to students during the last two weeks of classes until the date and time that final grades are due for the semester according to the University Registrar's Five Year Academic Calendar.

4) Improving Participation

Peer institutions use a variety of positive incentives to encourage students to complete evaluations. FSCUE recommends that the university consider putting such incentives into place (for example, a lottery to reward prizes to students who have completed all course evaluations).

FSCUE further recommends that a student's final course grade not be posted until he or she has submitted an evaluation for that course, but that all remaining grades be posted when the last final grades are due.

5) Resources to Support the Evaluation Process

FSCUE recommends that resources be devoted to helping faculty make effective use of the information collected through the evaluation process (through the University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education).

To facilitate the process of adding questions to the basic evaluation form, FSCUE recommends that a library of questions be developed from which faculty can select appropriate questions and place them electronically on the forms for their courses.

FSCUE recommends that the evaluation process be adapted to a range of electronic devices (phones, tablets, etc.) to facilitate completion of the evaluations and encourage participation

FSCUE recommends that the interface of the evaluation system, including data reporting, be reviewed and updated to reflect the state of the art.

FSCUE recommends that resources be devoted to developing baseline measures (e.g., correlations between evaluations and grades) and assessing the impact of changes to the course evaluation system. (e.g. participation rates).

FSCUE recommends that the university facilitate a user-friendly, voluntary midsemester evaluation process, perhaps electronically, so that students can provide feedback during a course and faculty can make adjustments before the end-of-semester evaluation period.

For example, you might comment on the instructor's:

- x Clear communication of goals, content, and procedures of the course.
- x Preparation for class
- x Provision of opportunities for student questions and discussion.
- x Timely and effective feedback on assignments, papers, exams, etc.
- x Effective use of class time

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