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Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations Delivered Online through the Berkeley Course Evaluations Service, from the Online Evaluation of Courses Steering Committee (September, 2015)

A Supplement to the Original Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations, Committee on Teaching and Academic Senate (April, 1987)

NOTE: Only boxed sections indicate additions to the original text. All other sections remain the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AND ANALYZING STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

(adopted from **Evaluating Teaching: Handbook of Ideas** by the Office of Educational Development)

Student course evaluations (or students ratings) are one source of data about teaching. Although departments may use any type of evaluation form to obtain student opinion, since 1975 it has been required that students numerically rate each instructor on the following question:

"Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor?"

Scale of 1-7, 1 indicating not at all effective, 4 indicating moderately effective and 7 indicating extremely effective.

It is recommended that departmental evaluation forms give students the opportunity both to numerically rate instructors and to comment narratively on instructors' performance.

Frequency of administration. Every course should be evaluated by students each time it is offered. Evaluation data from each course should be included in the dossier for personnel review, with the following exceptions: New assistant professors may choose not to have data from their first year of teaching reported, and experienced faculty members teaching new or experimental course for the first time may decide to omit evaluation data from their review.

NEW:

Considerations for Departmental Implementation of Online Evaluation of Courses:

In order to improve the quality and reliability of campus-wide course evaluation data, departments and schools that opt-in to the online course-evaluation service are strongly encouraged to adopt items from the Course Evaluations Service's bank of questions.

Online questionnaires may be customized in two ways. First, departments and schools can choose from the question bank the subset of questions they wish to ask. Second, departments and schools may develop department/school custom items for their forms. There can be one questionnaire for faculty and a different one for GSIs. The department template for all instructors of record must include the campus-wide questions required by the Academic Senate.

Once a department or school questionnaire is created, it becomes fixed and the default for that department or school. Changes to the questionnaire are permissible as part of an Academic Program Review process, but are otherwise not permitted without prior approval of the Vice Provost for the Faculty and the Committees on Teaching, Educational Policy, and Budget & Interdepartmental Relations.

Individual instructors (ladder and non-ladder faculty and GSIs) have the option through the online service to add custom questions to inform their own teaching. Custom question response data shall not be shared beyond the individual instructor.

The Course Evaluations Service ensures that evaluation data are de-identified to protect the anonymity of individual students prior to release to instructors and other department or school personnel.

The sharing of instructor evaluation reports with students and other members of the campus community remains delegated to individual departments and schools. These evaluation reports may be identifiable by course and associated instructor, but student data shall always remain de-identified to protect the anonymity of individual students.

Procedures for administering student evaluation forms. Departments have the prerogative to determine the nature of their questionnaire, but procedures for administering forms should be fair and standardized across campus, and systematic efforts should be made to obtain student evaluations of courses. A recommended procedure is described below:

A set number of blank evaluation forms are distributed to each faculty member for each class.

Sufficient class time is designated for students to fill out questionnaires (evaluations are best not distributed at the final exam, when students have other things on their minds, but rather during the last two weeks of the term).

Students are informed about the purpose of the evaluation.

The instructor designates a student from the class (or a staff person) to supervise the evaluation.

Students complete the questionnaires while the faculty member is absent from the room.

The designated student (or departmental staff person) collects the evaluation forms and places them in an envelope, noting on the outside the instructor's name, the course number, the total number of students present, the total number of forms collected and the date. The student then signs the envelope and files it with the department.

The responses are summarized (using a computer, if possible, for quantitative questions) by the staff or designated group and made available to the instructor only after final grades have been submitted.

Summaries of the numerical ratings and qualitative comments are maintained in secure departmental files.

NEW:

Procedures for Administering Online Student Evaluation Forms

Communication to students: The Course Evaluations Service sends regular reminder messages to students to complete evaluations and about the importance of evaluations. Nonetheless, individual instructors are strongly encouraged to remind students about completing evaluations and their importance.

Evaluation Window: Online evaluations should be conducted during the last three weeks of instruction (inclusive of RRR week) and should be concluded prior to final examinations.

Designating In-Class Time: Individual instructors may offer students in-class time to complete online course evaluations at their own discretion. If in-class time is allowed, the instructor should be absent from the room, and give explicit directions to the students to complete their evaluations while being respectful of their classmates' privacy.

Procedures for analyzing student evaluation forms. Whether the data are summarized by hand or by computer, it is recommended that:

The summary includes the number of completed questionnaires upon which the summary data are based and the percentage of class enrollment represented by the data. If summaries indicate less than two-thirds return of student evaluations, an explanation for the missing data must be included.

Data be summarized separately for each offering of each course. (Aggregating data for several different courses may obscure differences in teaching effectiveness for various kinds of instruction and may raise questions of proper weighting of the responses in each course. Aggregating data for several offerings of the same course may obscure long-term trends toward increased or decreased student satisfaction.)

If there are fewer than 10 student questionnaires for a course, they should not be summarized but simply included in the dossier. Student questionnaires from independent reading courses or seminars with small enrollments may be accumulated over several terms and summarized when their numbers are sufficiently large.

If there are more than 10 student questionnaires, for questions that are quantifiable, the summary should include:

- a. frequency distribution of student ratings for each item;
- b. average response, specified as either the mean, mode, or median
- c. departmental norms (averages) or comparison norms on key items for courses of a similar size, level, and kind of instruction (e.g., laboratory seminar, lecture, studio).

If there are more than 10 student questionnaires, for questions that are qualitative, the responses (or a representative sample in large classes) should be summarized by the departmental staff or designated group in such a way that the full range of comments as well as their preponderance is accurately represented.

Departments should retain raw student evaluation data for three years for all faculty; summary information (including statistical data and syntheses of open ended responses) should become a permanent part of the teacher's file.

Department chairs should meet with faculty members whose ratings are significantly below departmental norms to advise them of ways they might improve their teaching and to inform them of the campus resource for instructional improvement, the Office of Educational Development.

NEW:

Procedures for Analyzing Online Student Evaluation Forms

In addition to meeting the standards set by the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate around standardized reporting, departments are encouraged to utilize the Course Evaluations Service's

advanced analytical capability to provide more comprehensive evidence of teaching effectiveness. Instructors are encouraged to use this data to interpret student feedback in ways that can better improve teaching.

In accordance with [University Policy on Minimum Class Size](#), evaluation reports should be considered carefully to protect student confidentiality of responses if fewer than:

1. 12 are enrolled in a lower-division course
2. 8 are enrolled in an upper-division course
3. 4 are enrolled in a graduate-division course

NEW:

Retention of Evaluation Data

The Course Evaluations service should provide evaluation data access to departments and schools' designated personnel for a period of eight years. Relevant data shall remain identifiable by course and associated instructor for academic personnel review purposes during this period.

Non-Identifiable Data: Data that have been de-identified of any associated instructors may be retained for institutional planning and analysis purposes beyond eight years.