Guidelines for Administering Student Evaluations

Tenure-track faculty and adjunct faculty are required to complete student evaluations every quarter for each class taught. Faculty completing post-tenure evaluation are required to complete student evaluations for the evaluation quarter and for two quarters prior to the evaluation quarter.

The following information is intended to provide instructors with guidance in selecting the appropriate evaluation method (paper vs. online) and procedures for administering these evaluations. Instructors should consult with their department coordinator or division chair to ensure they are using the appropriate evaluation procedure, which is usually determined by the class setting (i.e. online or face-to-face).

Student Evaluations for Face-to-face and Hybrid Courses:
In most cases, paper evaluations are the preferred method for student evaluations of face-to-face and hybrid classes. Due to the lower response rates of online evaluations, Instruction Cabinet and the Tenure Review Committee strongly encourage the use of paper evaluations for face-to-face and hybrid classes. Tenure-track faculty may be required to use paper evaluations for face-to-face classes because the instructor will need to collect responses from a representative number of students.

Instructors wishing to use online evaluations for face-to-face or hybrid classes should consult with their coordinator or division chair, or if applicable, their working or post-tenure committee. If you do use the online evaluation format for a face-to-face or hybrid course, you should provide time for students to complete evaluations in the computer lab. Once in the lab, show students the site, have them access it, and leave the room, providing 10-15 minutes for students to complete evaluations in the computer lab.

Guidelines for administering face-to-face evaluations:

- In all cases, the instructor must leave the classroom while students are completing the evaluation.
- Only the division approved evaluations should be utilized.
- If possible, someone other than the instructor should administer the evaluation.
- If a volunteer is not available to administer the evaluation, the instructor may hand out the evaluations and ask a student to collect and deliver the evaluations to the faculty secretary or another designated individual.

Student Evaluations for Online Courses:
Evaluations for online courses should be scheduled with the building secretary – these evaluations obviously use the online format. Historically, online student evaluations of courses have yielded fewer responses from students. This lower response rate is problematic, especially when tenure committees and department coordinators pay attention to these data as evidence of teaching effectiveness.
Guidelines for administering online evaluations:

Do not offer credit for evaluation responses. Although there are ethical ways to encourage students to submit their evaluations with the promise of participation points, the Instruction Cabinet and the Tenure Review Committee discourage this practice for the following reasons:

- It can create the impression that instructors will see the evaluations prior to grading.
- “Pay for participation” may impact the validity of the data.

Certain practices can enhance the return rates for online evaluations where their use is appropriate or necessary:

1. **Shorter time period of availability.**
   It sounds counter-intuitive, but when students have weeks and weeks to finish the evaluations, they will put it off and eventually forget. During the last week of classes, before finals, announce the evaluations on a Monday and put a “deadline” on them for Thursday.

2. **Be upfront and honest about what the information is being used for.**
   Tell students that their participation is important because the information helps you be a better teacher and helps the department improve the class for future students.

3. **Include the evaluation in the list of assignments for the class.**
   If your students are accustomed to working through a list of activities for each unit or week of the class, insert the evaluation as simply another activity for that week.

4. **Provide reminders using numbers of completed evaluations.**
   The faculty secretary can get the numbers of students who have completed the evaluations. Posting an announcement such as “15 of you have still not completed the evaluations” can be helpful.

5. **Train students to respond to evaluations throughout the quarter.**
   Get students in the groove of conducting short, formative evaluations earlier in the quarter, maybe weeks 3 and 6. These can be simple surveys (What works? What doesn’t?) that get students in the groove of doing evaluations. The method is more powerful if the instructor responds to the results. (“I see you all found it hard to tell which chapters you’re supposed to read. I’ve added that information in …”).

6. **Offer one “due date” extension.**
   This relates to the impact of the shorter time line. If the deadline is Thursday, make an announcement on Friday that there is one more chance over the weekend to get evaluations in.

7. **Link from the “Announcements” nugget as well as the “Lessons” tab.**
   Include the evaluation in the same way you might inform them about an exam, or about grades that are posted, etc. Multiple exposures to the link are helpful.

8. **Post or link to instructions for students to complete the evaluation.**
   The evaluation form is not terribly complex, but it may help students get through the process of logging in and filling out the form.

Approved by Instructional Cabinet (2/25/2013)