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STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING SUBCOMMITTEE

November 11, 2013

TO: The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)

FROM: Luther Strayer, Chair, FAC Student Evaluation of Teaching Subcommittee

SUBJECT: Recommendation on the Continuation of Online Student Evaluations

ACTION REQUESTED: That FAC submit the following recommendation to the Executive Committee and Academic Senate on the continuation of online student evaluations

BACKGROUND:

At its meeting on November 6, 2013, the 2013-4 FAC Student Evaluation of Teaching Subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend that the University continue online course evaluations from Fall 2013 onward. The Subcommittee encourages faculty to accept this move first and foremost because it has been mandated by 07-08 BEC 14 that the University develop and adopt systems and policies that provide for efficient and effective online student evaluations of teaching at CSUEB. In addition, the Student Evaluations of Teaching subcommittee of FAC has determined that a decisive move to online evaluations is merited and that initial and current testing has shown the online system to be stable and effective.

This testing does indicate that initial response rates are lower than paper, however the scoring remained similar and anecdotal evidence strongly indicates that response rates increase with faculty support/encouragement. We expect that as online student evaluation becomes embraced as part of our campus culture, response rates will improve and likely exceed those of the current paper system.

Other reasons that that support a move away from the current paper system, which requires physical handling of *every* completed evaluation form by at least a few individuals. The current (beta) system places the evaluation into the hands of students (via computer/tablet/phone/etc.), where it can be completed outside or preferably inside of class with the enthusiastic support and class time supplied by faculty. This simple step of placing it directly in the hands of the student is likely to increase response rate and communicate to them that the University is responsive to their life- and learning styles and interaction with social media, with an evaluation tool that is relevant, with customizable questions that may be tailored to programs and courses. It will be accessible off campus and asynchronously (allows students absent on day evaluations are done in class to participate, with potentially instant data reduction and results that will provide much more timely feedback to faculty. Finally, the cost of paper forms, their shipping and storage is counter to the culture of sustainability and frugality at CSUEB.

The SET subcommittee strongly recommends that the University provide to Department Chairs the average University-level ranking data for comparison and maintenance of quarterly base-lines and tracking overall response trends. The SET recognizes also that during the transition period from paper to online evaluations, response rates may decline. This is of particular concern for junior faculty in process of earning tenure and promotion. The

subcommittee acknowledges both the utility of student evaluation data and that that data is only a part of the information needed to understand the instructional achievement of faculty.

ExCom - other referral (dated November 1, 2013):

> At the meeting on October 29, Excom discussed the progress that FAC has made on student evaluations of teaching, the new CBA mandate to evaluate all courses, and the move to online evaluation forms. We also discussed a variety of methods for enhancing teaching and learning such as peer classroom visitations, formative holistic evaluations, student evaluations of teaching that emphasize student learning, and sharing of best practices for online, hybrid, and on-ground teaching.

> Following this discussion, Excom voted to charge FAC to find ways to encourage departments to develop enhanced methods to evaluate teaching and instructional achievement, a charge that need not be restricted to tenure-line faculty.

Significant points from the PowerPoint presentation by Donna Wiley to the Academic Senate on October 8, 2013:

Response rates for online evaluations were lower than for traditional paper evaluations; however, response rates vary by department

There were no significant differences in rating levels when online course evaluations were used in place of paper course evaluation for same course and instructors

Use of communication tools, including planned website, and development of culture of online evaluations should increase participation rates

Pertinent References:

Anderson, J., Brown, G. and Spaeth, S. (2006) "Online Student Evaluations and Response Rates Reconsidered." *Innovate: Journal of Online Education*. available from https://rugby.ou.edu/content/dam/provost/documents/evaluations/evaluate-Online-Student-Evaluations-and-Response-Rates.pdf

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Ravenscroft, M. and the University Leadership Council. (2009) Online Student Course Evaluations: Strategies for Increasing Student Participation Rates." *Custom Research Brief*. available from http://averia.unm.edu/IdeaNextStep/Resources/OnlineStudentCourseEvaluationss_20090508.pdf

The IDEA Center. (2012) "Best Practices for Online Response Rates." website: http://www.theideacenter.org/OnlineResponseRates (20 Nov 2013)

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