

Teaching Evaluation Committee Annual Report, May 5, 2017

The committee met only twice this year, once formally and once informally. We also held several discussions over email.

The informal meeting happened in Fall of 2016, only a few members of the committee and several staff people at ODL briefed us about the Fall 2016 pilot of the online evaluation system. ODL reported the following details:

- The evaluation system was integrated into Blackboard (and presumably Canvas next year). Consequently, students were reminded that they needed to do evaluations every time they logged in.
- The new evaluation system gives much more flexibility. In particular, it would be easier for instructors, departments, colleges and the university to add customized questions. Sequencing could be adaptive, for example, as student could be asked to give a free text response after giving an extremely high or low rating.

A second meeting, attended by a quorum of committee members happened on Feb 24, 2017. In addition, ODL personal and a representative from the Student Government attended that meeting.

At that meeting ODL presented results that showed that the response rates were slightly higher for the online evaluations than the paper evaluations. (I refrain from using the word significant here, as there was not random assignment.) Furthermore, there were several types of administrative errors not counted in the non-response rate which invalidated the paper surveys. These included, the instructor failing to give the survey. The instructor administering the survey to the wrong class. The students writing the wrong class number or instructor on the form, the proctor failing to put the survey in the campus mail in a timely fashion, and the packet being delayed in the campus mail.

The committee formally decided that (a) we should continue the pilot in an online mode through the summer, and (b) we should make a final decision about the use of online or paper surveys after the results from these pilot were complete.

Additionally, the following ideas were brought up in the discussions, with no formal resolution.

- The committee discussed incentives to complete the forms and penalties for not completing the evaluations. This was tabled as the response rates seemed good without additional incentives/penalties.
- The committee stressed the importance of anonymity in the surveys and instructed ODL to close a loophole in the program which would allow the instructor to see which students had/had not completed the survey.
- The committee discussed the idea of using dynamic ordering rules to prompt students to immediately give a free text explanation for a 1 or a 5 rating.
- The committee discussed the idea of using the official course syllabus to make customized forms for each course. One possibility here would be listing the course objectives and asking the students directly, do you feel that the course helped you to better meet these objectives. [Potential problems here are that many courses have very long lists of objectives.] A second idea was to look at the teaching methods part of the syllabus and only ask about lectures if the course has lectures, discussions if the class has discussions, &c. A major problem with this is that only syllabi produced in the past few years would have the details necessary, so this would

be a long range process. ODL, which manages both the official syllabus database and the evaluation system, was receptive to the idea. One of our members will approach the Curriculum Committee about their thoughts. In any rate this idea is still under discussion and would probably take many years to fully implement.

- The representative of the SGA conveyed that the students were interested in midterm evaluations, when instructors would have more time to make mid course corrections. We discussed the existing TABS survey program. ODL promised to include training material about deploying TABS in Canvas as part of the Canvas training.