

Report of the FSU Teaching Evaluation Committee

27 April 2020

Members for 2021–2022, as posted at

<http://facsenate.fsu.edu/standing-faculty-senate-committees/teaching-evaluation-committee>

2019-2022

Jon Ahlquist, Arts and Sciences, Chair

Lynne Hinnant, Communication and Information

Jack Fiorito, Business

2020-2023

Sarah Eyerly, Music

Radha Modi, Social Sciences and Public Policy

Qiong Wu, Human Sciences

2021-2024

Laura Bell, Teaching

Rhea Lathan, Arts and Sciences

Rose Skepple, Education

Ex officio:

Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement

Coordinator of Instructional Development

Coordinator of Assessment Services

Representative of Center for the Advancement of Teaching ← Added by vote of Faculty Senate on 17 November 2021

In April 2021, the Teaching Evaluation Committee (TEC) voted on the question, should all future teaching evaluations be performed online only? The vote was eight (8) votes for "online only" and one (1) vote for "online or paper, at the instructor's choice." On 20 October 2021, TEC chair Jon Ahlquist reported this vote to the Faculty Senate meeting as new business. Following discussion, the Faculty Senate wanted more information. A motion was passed to continue online evaluation for Spring 2022. This would give time to the Office of Distance Learning (ODL), which is responsible for carrying out the teaching evaluations, to prepare a presentation for Spring 2022 with a more thorough justification for the proposed online change.

At the Faculty Senate's meeting on 20 October 2021, Ahlquist also submitted requested bylaws changes that:

- (i) a representative of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching be added as an ex officio member of the TEC, and
- (ii) ex officio members be listed explicitly as nonvoting members.

At the next month's meeting on 17 November 2021, the Faculty Senate approved these bylaws changes.

Following the motion of 20 October 2021, Ahlquist met with ODL head Robby Fuselier several times to serve as a sounding board as Robby Fuselier organized his presentation about online teaching evaluations. Fuselier also sought ways to address the concerns of those faculty senators who had experienced a decreased student response since evaluations had been forced online by the COVID pandemic.

On 23 March 2022, Jon Ahlquist and Robby Fuselier presented the Faculty Senate with a proposal backed by statistics that all future teaching evaluations be conducted online. (See attachment.) As Fuselier's statistics showed, teaching evaluations were voluntarily moving online prior to the pandemic, and the student response rate for FSU as a whole was actually increasing. Even with online evaluations, instructors could still schedule teaching evaluations during class, with students completing the evaluations using a laptop computer or smartphone. He also planned an advertising campaign to motivate students to participate.

Online evaluations also simplify the "chain of evidence" that must be maintained to guarantee the integrity of the teaching evaluation process, while being possible within the greatly reduced resources at Robby Fuselier's disposal. These resources are not sufficient to continue paper evaluations. When students type their free-response answers rather than use handwriting, they maintain a higher degree of anonymity. Other universities are overwhelmingly using online evaluations, and FSU is one of the last to offer paper. Robby Fuselier promised to further ODL's advertising campaign to increase student participation and would gladly meet with any concerned instructors to help them achieve the increased response that FSU as a whole has experienced with online evaluations. The Faculty Senate voted on this proposal and approved it.

Submitted by Jon Ahlquist, 13 July 2022.

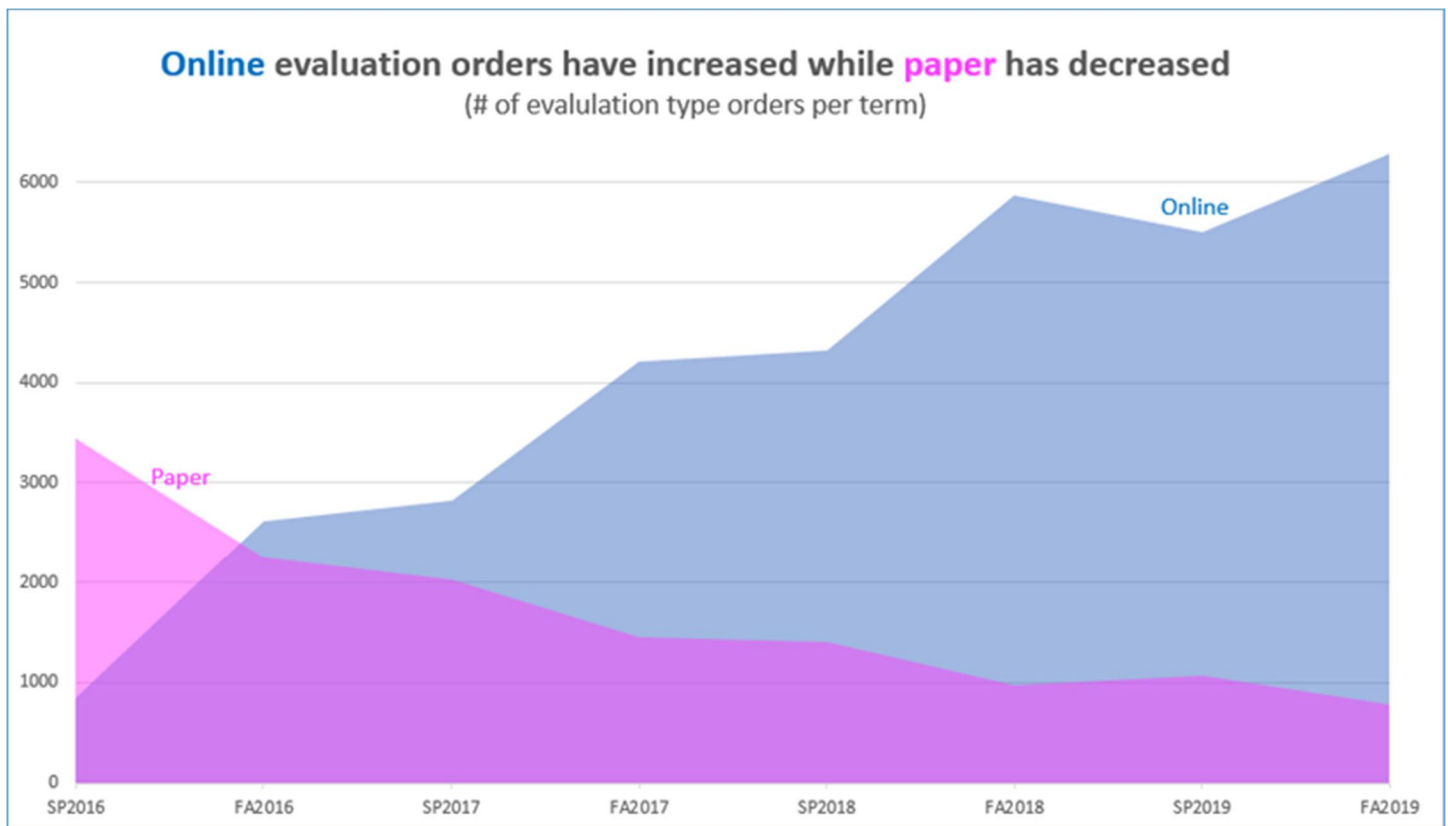
Proposal for Teaching Evaluations

Jon Ahlquist and Robert Fuselier

In Spring 2021, the Teaching Evaluation Committee voted to support a request from the Office of Distance Learning (ODL) and the Office of Faculty Development & Advancement (FDA) that FSU move to “online only” course evaluations. This is motivated by increasing use of online evaluations at FSU and the closure of the ODL Testing Center, which facilitated the paper course evaluation process.

At the Faculty Senate meeting on 20 October 2021, the Faculty Senate voted to continue online course evaluations in Spring 2022 and requested a proposal to be presented in Spring 2022 that addresses concerns of instructors whose student response rate has decreased with online evaluations during COVID. What follows is a response to that request.

First we present context. FSU is the only Research 1 (R1) university known to the ODL Director, Mr. Fuselier, that has not shifted exclusively to online course evaluations. Even before the online course evaluations necessitated by COVID, FSU’s teaching evaluations were voluntarily shifting online. As the graph below shows, in Spring 2016, approximately 800 courses/sections had online evaluation requests and 3500 had “paper” requests. By Fall 2019, online evaluation requests had voluntarily grown to over 6000 courses/sections while paper requests had declined to about 800.



The graphs on the next page for 2019 show that, for the university as a whole, the response rate is higher with online course evaluations than with paper course evaluations. In Fall 2019, not quite 25,000 responses were on paper. Although dwarfed by over 160,000 online responses, processing 25,000 sheets of paper is still a lot, requiring more careful handling than machine scoring of multiple-choice exams.

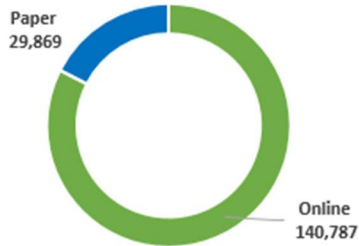
Average of Response Rate Spring 2019



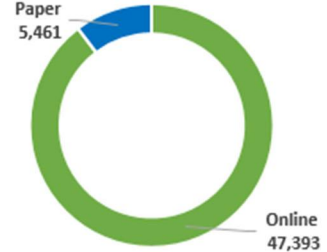
Average of Response Rate Summer 2019



Total Orders/Students Spring 2019



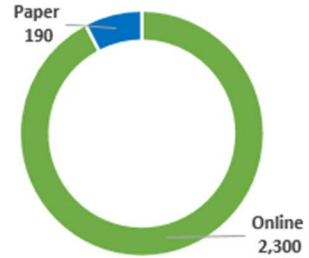
Total Orders/Students Summer 2019



Total Courses Spring 2019



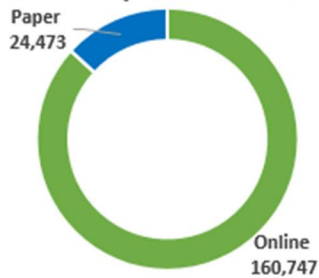
Total Courses Summer 2019



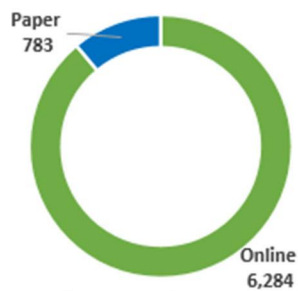
Average of Response Rate Fall 2019



Total Orders/Students Fall 2019



Total Courses Fall 2019



Not all classes have experienced an increased response rate, though. Here it is important to recognize that the shift to online evaluations has also involved a shift to students completing the course evaluations outside of class anytime during the last two weeks of the semester. However, nothing prevents an instructor from informing students that class time will be dedicated to course evaluation on a particular date during the last two weeks of the semester. Students can be asked to bring a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to class to complete the evaluation. The instructor can make the usual announcement to the class about the importance of the course evaluation process and can then leave the room. Students can then use class time to complete the course evaluation. The procedure is the same as with paper evaluations and avoids having to identify a student to collect the papers, seal them in an envelope, and find a campus-mail drop-off point. We recognize that a small number of students do not own portable technology, but they can be excused to take advantage of computers located in the libraries and computer labs located throughout campus.

Mr. Fuselier notes that a return to paper would require a reinvention of the process last used 2.5 years ago plus a special budget allocation from the Provost to restaff the Testing Center evaluation unit. We regard a return to paper as merely postponing the inevitable shift online, one that would entail great cost and effort. (Recall that FSU is the only R1 university known to Mr. Fuselier that has not shifted course evaluations entirely online.)

Therefore, our proposal is that FSU permanently shift to online-only course evaluations, as recommended by the Teaching Evaluation committee's vote in Spring 2021. Instructors concerned with low response rates can allocate class time to complete course evaluations, just as they did in the past with paper but now electronically. Further, Mr. Fuselier is happy to strategize with instructors and departments who are not among the larger group that has experienced a higher response rate through online evaluations. ODL is already at work on an outreach campaign to increase the response rate for everyone.