

Over the past several years, the Faculty Senate has had a subcommittee trying to work on issues with the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) forms and process. The change several years ago to require that students either complete or opt out of the evaluations in order to see their grades as soon as they were posted was suggested by this subcommittee. Since that time, we have continued to work on finding a suitable instrument to use and to develop procedures for its implementation. Our primary goals throughout our work have been to increase the response rates so that the results are useful and to make sure that the questions are providing suitable information that could be used by faculty to improve their teaching. We were also constrained by the fact that any instrument we use is going to be applied to annual evaluations and P&T decisions, so we wanted to ensure that the instrument would not penalize faculty when applied in that way. We have examined a number of instruments that are available through various organizations and we have opted not to use those due to the fact that they generally are very good for the improvement of teaching, but they are not intended as tools for decisions like P&T. Based on our work, we recommend revision of the current SEI instruments used by Clayton State as the best way to achieve our goals. With this in mind, the committee submits the following recommendations:

1. Combine the course and instructor evaluations and reduce the total number of questions. This will address both goals, because the longer the evaluations are, the lower the response rate is likely to be. In addition, many questions between the two instruments are redundant, raising questions about their usefulness. See the suggested list of final questions for the specifics. The committee is aware that part of the reason for switching to two evaluations was to address courses with multiple instructors. By having students complete only one course evaluation and a separate evaluation for each instructor the number of questions was reduced. However, by removing redundant questions and combining the two instruments into one, all students will complete fewer evaluations and fewer questions than are required under the current system. There are only three questions that are not related to the specific instructor (questions 15-17) so this is the only "extra" work that students in classes with multiple instructors will have to complete, which we think is reasonable. Because questions 15-17 address only the course, those could be excluded from the reports that are returned to faculty as part of the evaluation summaries they receive each semester.
2. Reduce the number of sections that are evaluated for each faculty member. We recommend that we return to requiring two sections be evaluated per faculty member each semester (with the sections chosen by the faculty member's supervisor in consultation with the faculty member). More evaluations may be done as agreed upon by the faculty member and his/her supervisor as they think necessary. This would reduce the number of evaluations that students are required to submit, again making higher response rates likely. We also think it will improve the quality of the data we receive, because students are more likely to take evaluations seriously if they are limited in number.
3. We recommend that the use of this new instrument be implemented in the Fall semester of 2012. Because the changes are minor, we feel that this will give sufficient time for the overall process to be adjusted (although this depends on the workload of the individuals responsible for programming this system, so the timeline may need adjustment based on other work that they must complete). By starting in the Fall of 2012, any faculty who must submit portfolios for P&T will have at least two semesters worth of evaluations from the modified SEI, so they should have sufficient data to allow them to address any changes that occurred as we moved to the new system. However, because the "new" questions are still based on the SEI we currently employ, we do not anticipate major changes in the faculty members' scores as a result of this change.

Respectfully submitted 4/XX/2011

SEI subcommittee of Faculty Senate

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