

Adopted: November 1, 2016

**ACADEMIC SENATE
Of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-821-16

**RESOLUTION ON PROCEDURES FOR
ONLINE STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION**

- 1 WHEREAS, Starting Fall 2016 student evaluation of instruction at Cal Poly shall occur
- 2 by means of an online system implemented through staff in the Academic
- 3 Personnel Office; and
- 4
- 5 WHEREAS, The efficiencies of the online student evaluation of instruction system
- 6 would be best achieved by standardizing timelines for opening and closing
- 7 the evaluation period across the university rather than at the college or
- 8 program level; and
- 9
- 10 WHEREAS, The past practice of conducting student evaluations prior to final exam or
- 11 final assessment may be continued with the online system; and
- 12
- 13 WHEREAS, Encouraging participation from students remains a significant priority as
- 14 the campus transitions into the online system; therefore be it
- 15
- 16 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate adopt the attached “Procedure for Conducting
- 17 Student Evaluation of Instruction” as the official procedure for online
- 18 student evaluation of instruction starting Fall 2016, and be it further
- 19
- 20 RESOLVED: That this procedure shall be included in subsequent revisions of university
- 21 personnel policy documents that cover student evaluation of instruction,
- 22 and be it further
- 23
- 24 RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate require the Faculty Affairs Committee to report
- 25 to Academic Senate no later than Fall 2017 on response rate data for
- 26 student evaluation participation in academic year 2016-2017 for
- 27 advisement on further changes to these procedures.

Proposed by: Faculty Affairs Committee
Date: October 10, 2016

Procedure for Conducting Student Evaluation of Instruction
Effective Fall 2016

- 1) Evaluations for courses occur during the last week of instruction.
 - a) The last week of instruction and final exam week are defined by the official academic calendar.
 - b) For courses whose official final assessment is during the last week of instruction according to the academic calendar (e.g. labs or activities with their own final exam or assessment), their evaluation period may be the penultimate week of instruction according to the academic calendar.
 - i) Requesting the earlier timeline for the evaluation of courses with early final assessments should occur by means of standard procedures of scheduling evaluations as determined by the office of Academic Personnel and communicated to the relevant college and/or program department staff.
- 2) The evaluation period opens the Sunday immediately prior to the last week of instruction and closes at the end of the last day of the last week of instruction.
 - a) Students will be allowed to complete their evaluations during this period.
 - b) This period may be adjusted on an ad hoc basis to accommodate for academic holidays.
- 3) Students shall receive notifications by email on the day the evaluation period opens, and at appropriate intervals until the evaluation period closes.
 - a) The initial email explains the evaluation procedure, includes links to all the classes which the student may evaluate, and indicates that the evaluation period has opened.
 - b) Subsequent emails follow at appropriate intervals until the student has formally submitted evaluations for all classes with scheduled evaluations.
 - i) What would count as appropriate intervals should balance any positive effect reminders have on response counts and the potential negative effect of badgering students with emails they may come to ignore.
 - c) For students who still have remaining evaluations to complete, a final email notification would occur on the day the evaluation period closes.
 - d) Other modes of notification (e.g. notifications within the portal) may be implemented as they become feasible.
- 4) Faculty shall receive by email a response rate report for their evaluated courses partway through the evaluation period.
 - a) Faculty are encouraged to announce to their classes that the evaluation period is underway.
 - b) Faculty are encouraged to address questions from students about the nature of the evaluation process clarifying the role of student evaluations in processes of faculty review.
 - c) Faculty may at their discretion reserve time in class for students to complete the evaluation on the student's own computer, phone or tablet.
 - i) Faculty shall comply with any college level procedures about how to implement student evaluations in their classrooms.
 - ii) Whenever practical realities require faculty to remain in the classroom (e.g. lab safety requirements), completion of the evaluation outside of class time is preferable.

Background About the Pilot of Online Student Evaluation of Instruction

The 2015-2016 pilot of the online student evaluation of instruction included programs from each college at Cal Poly. The faculty in the programs that volunteered to participate in the pilot agreed to uniform evaluation procedures that would comprise an approximation of existing practices across colleges. The acknowledged compromises in this uniform procedure included the following:

- Insensitivity to the practice of conducting lab/activity evaluations prior to their final assessment occurring during the last official week of instruction.
- Commencing with the evaluation period earlier in the quarter than many faculty would prefer the evaluation to occur.

The participating faculty judged the efficiencies of uniformity to be worth these compromises. Now that the pilot is over and full university implementation is on hand we have an occasion to revisit these procedures.

During and after the pilot the software for the online system has been updated and our ability to configure the software used to implement the evaluations has increased. We now have the ability to implement different timelines for opening and closing the evaluation periods for broad categories of courses (viz. allowing programs to select lab/activity courses as meriting an earlier evaluation timeline than courses whose evaluation occurs in final exam week). We can now resolve the compromises of the procedure used during the pilot. To implement such a change right at the start of the university wide rollout of the online system requires prompt action by the Academic Senate. That is the function of this resolution. The procedure proposed by this resolution adequately resolves the compromises of the procedure used in the pilot. In the absence of immediate Senate action to adopt a new procedure, the procedure used during that pilot would continue to be implemented in the Fall 2016 university wide rollout of the online system.

The provisions of the proposed procedure were shaped by broad consultation with faculty, deans, associate deans, and program and college staff. In late Spring and throughout Summer 2016 Ken Brown (Faculty Affairs Committee chair) met with the college councils of CLA, CSM, CENG, CAED, and CAFES, with an associate dean of OCOB, and with chairs and staff from every program in CLA and several in CSM and CENG (with a few more meetings forthcoming). The key staff from the Office of Academic Personnel (most notably, Jen Myers) attended nearly all of these meetings to clarify the procedural matters and keep staff apprised of details about their crucial role in this project. These meetings offered chairs and heads from each program to provide their feedback on the implementation of the online system, both its apparent benefits and shortcomings as it was implemented in the pilot. Ken Brown also led a session at the Academic Senate Fall Conference Retreat presenting information about the pilot of the online program, describing the procedures used during the pilot, and offering alternative procedures, and soliciting feedback on ideas for alternative procedures. The procedure proposed in this resolution was shaped by all this feedback. The proposed procedure was then supported unanimously by the attending members of the Faculty Affairs Committee at their meeting on 9/30/2016.

As we move forward with this online system, we should take note that the percentage of students completing the evaluations is markedly lower with the online system than with the paper system. A drop in response rates has been reported by other CSU campuses that have moved to online systems, and so this drop is not unexpected. Many faculty have responded to these lower response rates with significant concern. After the Senate Retreat some faculty in STAT and OCOB offered their assistance in examining response rate data, and some faculty in OCOB offered to propose that in their college a control study be conducted by running an alternate evaluation timeframe than the rest of the campus. This resolution requires FAC to report back to the Senate by Fall 2017 with an assessment of data about the implementation of the online system in 2016-2017. Adopting a procedure for implementing the online system for Fall and continuing using it through the academic year would allow for a better basis of assessing response rates given that the paper system experienced significant quarterly fluctuations in response rates. If OCOB agrees, allowing them to run a control study by sticking with the procedure as used during the pilot may help us gather better data for future revisions to this procedure. *Discere Faciendo!*

**Prior Procedure for Conducting Student Evaluation of Instruction
Used During the 2015-2016 Pilot of the Online Student Evaluation System**

The following is an account of the procedure used during the 2015-2016 pilot of the online system. It is here formatted to correlate with the proposed policy attached to **RESOLUTION ON PROCEDURES FOR ONLINE STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION** for purposes of easy comparison. Were that resolution not passed, this procedure from the pilot would continue as an interim procedure indefinitely until some official statement of procedure supersedes it.

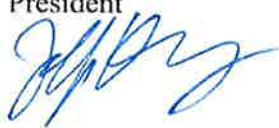
- 1) Evaluations for courses occur during the last two weeks of instruction, as determined by the academic calendar.
- 2) The evaluation period opens the Sunday immediately prior to the last week of instruction and closes at the end of the last day of the last week of instruction.
 - a) Students will be allowed to complete their evaluations during this period.
 - b) This period would be adjusted on an ad hoc basis to accommodate for academic holidays.
- 3) Students shall receive notifications by email on the day the evaluation period opens, and at appropriate intervals until the evaluation period closes.
 - a) The initial email explains the evaluation procedure, includes links to all the classes which the student may evaluate, and indicates that the evaluation period has opened.
 - b) Subsequent emails follow at appropriate intervals until the student has formally submitted evaluations for all classes with scheduled evaluations.
 - i) What would count as appropriate intervals should balance any positive effect reminders have on response counts and the potential negative effect of badgering students with emails they may come to ignore.
 - c) For students who still have remaining evaluations to complete, a final email notification would occur on the day the evaluation period closes.
 - d) Other modes of notification (e.g. notifications within the portal) may be implemented as they become feasible.
- 4) Faculty shall receive by email a response rate report for their evaluated courses partway through the evaluation period.
 - a) Faculty are encouraged to announce to their classes that the evaluation period is underway.
 - b) Faculty are encouraged to address questions from students about the nature of the evaluation process clarifying the role of student evaluations in processes of faculty review.
 - c) Faculty may at their discretion reserve time in class for students to complete the evaluation on the student's own computer, phone or tablet.
 - i) Faculty shall comply with any college level procedures about how to implement student evaluations in their classrooms.
 - ii) Whenever practical realities require faculty to remain in the classroom (e.g. lab safety requirements), completion of the evaluation outside of class time is preferable.

MEMORANDUM
Cal Poly | Office of the President



To: Gary Laver
Chair, Academic Senate

Date: November 14, 2016

From: Jeffrey D. Armstrong
President


Copies: K. Enz Finken
M. Pedersen
A. Liddicoat
D.K. Brown

Subject: Response to Academic Senate Resolution AS-821-16
Resolution on Procedures for Online Student Evaluation of Instruction

I am pleased to approve the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution. I agree that this new online student evaluation of instruction system will increase efficiency and standardize the process across all the colleges.

Please express my appreciation to the Faculty Affairs Committee for their attention to this important curricular matter.