

**Faculty Senate  
Executive Committee**  
Wednesday, January 18, 2012  
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Adelbert Hall, Room M2

AGENDA

12:00 p.m.	Approval of Minutes from the December 8, 2011 Executive Committee meeting, <i>attachment</i>	G. Chottiner
12:05 p.m.	President's Announcements	B. Snyder
	Appeals for Support Directed to Academic Communities <i>attachment</i>	B. Snyder
	Provost's Announcements	B. Baeslack
12:15 p.m.	Chair's Announcements	G. Chottiner
	New 5-year Academic Calendar <i>attachment</i>	G. Chottiner
12:30 p.m.	Committee on Undergraduate Education: Study Abroad Procedures <i>attachment</i>	L. Parker
12:40 p.m.	Report from Committee on Information and Communications Technology	R. Muzic
	IT Services for Emeriti and Retired Faculty <i>attachment</i>	R. Muzic
1:00 p.m.	Course Evaluations <i>attachment</i>	G. Chottiner
1:20 p.m.	Faculty Senate Meeting Agenda	G. Chottiner



Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
Minutes of the January 18, 2012 meeting  
Adelbert Hall, Room M2

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Jessica Berg	Robin Dubin	Alan Rocke
Richard Buchanan	Christine Hudak	Barbara Snyder
Gary Chottiner	Alan Levine	Sorin Teich
David Crampton	Joseph Mansour	Liz Woyczynski

**Committee Members Absent**

Bud Baeslack	Georgia Wiesner
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**Others Present**

Ray Muzic

**Call to Order and approval of minutes**

Professor Gary Chottiner, chair, Faculty Senate, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. The minutes of the December 8, 2011 meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee were approved as submitted.

**President's Announcements**

President Barbara Snyder said that Provost Bud Baeslack was meeting with the National Secretary of Energy Stephen Chu, who was on campus to tour Case Western Reserve engineering labs focused on energy-related research.

President Snyder said that her office receives many solicitations each year, directed to university communities across the country, soliciting support for various social justice causes around the world. The Executive Committee discussed the possibility of posting such solicitations for individuals in the Case Western Reserve community to respond as they wished but decided that since there is no viable means for the university to verify the claims or ascertain the merit of all solicitations that the university should decline to disseminate or endorse any such solicitations. President Snyder said that her office will respond accordingly to such solicitations received in the future.

President Snyder also announced that the tuition waiver benefit for faculty members had been extended from eight to ten years after death or retirement from Case Western Reserve University.

**Chair's Announcements**

Prof. Gary Chottiner, chair, Faculty Senate, said that Prof. Jill Barnholtz-Sloan, chair of the School of Medicine Faculty Council, had met recently with the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Compensation to discuss the School of Medicine's proposed salary review plan. Prof. Alan Levine, past chair, said that the School of Medicine *ad hoc* committee, also chaired by Prof. Barnholtz-Sloan, would meet with the dean of the School of Medicine shortly to discuss the dean's assessment of the *ad hoc* committee's proposed changes to the School of Medicine's salary review plan. Prof. Gary Chottiner said the Faculty Senate by-laws instruct the Faculty Senate

Committee on Faculty Compensation to review "...the guidelines and policies for faculty compensation for each school and college considering issues of comparability in policies across units...", and the Faculty Senate will review the School of Medicine plan at the appropriate time.

Prof. Chottiner said that the Faculty Senate Committee on Graduate Studies is reviewing: a proposal to improve mentoring for graduate students (forwarded to the senate by UCITE on behalf of faculty who completed the Mentors Fellows program), the early-entry master's agreement with non-U.S. institutions, and the definition of a credit hour. The Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education is considering a proposal to allow CWRU Army ROTC students to receive six additional credits for courses taken on the CWRU campus during their first two years of study. Prof. Bill Leatherberry is working with the General Counsel's Office to make the final edits needed to the grievance procedures in the Faculty Handbook.

The Faculty Handbook instructs members of the Executive Committee to report yearly on faculty concerns from their constituent faculties. Prof. Robin Dubin, chair-elect, who co-chaired the *ad hoc* committee that amended the Faculty Handbook to include such instructions, said the *ad hoc* committee intended such reports to be a means to improve communications between the faculty executive committees in the constituent faculties and the Faculty Senate. Faculty who serve as school representatives on the Executive Committee also serve as *ex-officio* members of their faculty executive committees in their constituent faculties. Prof. Chottiner said that, unless there were unusual concerns in a given year, these yearly reports to the Executive Committee would usually be brief oral reports.

#### **New 5-year Academic Calendar**

Prof. Gary Chottiner introduced the updated, proposed 5-year calendar for Fall 2012 through Spring 2017. The Faculty Handbook requires that the academic calendar be approved annually by the Faculty Senate for transmittal to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee agreed that to have the proposed 5-year calendar reviewed by the Faculty Senate.

#### **Committee on Undergraduate Education: Study Abroad Procedures**

Prof. Gary Chottiner reintroduced the proposed study abroad procedure that would require Case Western Reserve undergraduate students to study the language of the host country while studying abroad. Prof. Chottiner clarified that this proposal would replace the requirement that students complete four semesters of language classes before studying abroad. The proposal was included in the Final Report of the Undergraduate Education Abroad/International Experience Working Group to the International Planning Committee and approved by the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education. The Executive Committee agreed to have the proposal reviewed by the Faculty Senate.

#### **Report from Committee on Information and Communications Technology**

Prof. Ray Muzic, chair, Faculty Senate Committee on Information and Communications Technology, reported on the committee's activities this year, including its review of the current priority initiatives in Information Technology Services. The Executive Committee asked Prof. Muzic to present the ITS priorities to the Faculty Senate, with participation by ITS administrators. The committee's report is attached to these minutes.

#### **IT Services for Emeriti and Retired Faculty**

Prof. Muzic presented the proposed edits to the Faculty Handbook, as written by the Faculty Senate Committee on Information Technology, that allow only emeriti faculty (retired faculty who have an ongoing relationship with Case Western Reserve) to retain full access to all the IT services accessible to faculty. The Executive Committee agreed to have the Faculty Senate review the resolution. The proposed resolution is attached to these minutes.

**Course Evaluations**

Prof. Gary Chottiner introduced the summary on concerns regarding course evaluations. There was some discussion about the pros and cons of allowing others to see students' comments rather than just the numerical ratings for each course. A previous proposal to change the course evaluation instrument was abandoned after it stalled in faculty senate Executive Committee deliberations over related concerns such as participation rates and the intended use of course evaluation data. The Executive Committee recommended that the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE) develop a comprehensive proposal for improvements to course evaluations and the Executive Committee assured the FSCUE that their proposal would be reviewed by the Faculty Senate. A document describing potential improvements and the history of past attempts to revise course evaluations is attached to these minutes.

**Approval of the Thursday, January 26, 2012 Faculty Senate meeting agenda**

The agenda for the January 26 faculty senate meeting was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

APPROVED  
by the  
FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



ELIZABETH H. WOYCZYNSKI  
SECRETARY OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY

### Five Year Academic Calendar (2012 – 2017)

<b>FALL</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>
Registration (and Drop/Add) Begin (UG)	Apr 9	Apr 8	Apr 7	Apr 6	Apr 4
Classes Begin	Aug 27	Aug 26	Aug 25	Aug 24	Aug 29
Late Registration Fee (\$25) Begins	Aug 28	Aug 27	Aug 26	Aug 25	Aug 30
Labor Day Holiday	Sep 3	Sep 2	Sep 1	Sep 7	Sep 5
Late Registration and Drop/Add End	Sep 7	Sep 6	Sep 5	Sep 4	Sep 9
Deadline Credit/Audit (UG)	Sep 7	Sep 6	Sep 5	Sep 4	Sep 9
Fall Break	Oct 22/23	Oct 21/22	Oct 20/21	Oct 19/20	Oct 24/25
Mid-Term Grades Due (UG)	Oct 22	Oct 21	Oct 20	Oct 19	Oct 24
Deadline for removal of prev. term "I" grades (UG)	Nov 9	Nov 8	Nov 7	Nov 6	Nov 11
Deadline Credit/Audit (G)	Nov 9	Nov 8	Nov 7	Nov 6	Nov 11
Deadline for Class Withdrawal and P/NP (upperclass UG)	Nov 9	Nov 8	Nov 7	Nov 6	Nov 11
Registration for Spring Begins (UG)	Nov 12	Nov 11	Nov 10	Nov 9	Nov 14
Thanksgiving Holidays	Nov 22/23	Nov 28/29	Nov 27/28	Nov 26/27	Nov 24/25
Deadline for Class Withdrawal and P/NP (first year UG)	Dec 7	Dec 6	Dec 5	Dec 4	Dec 9
Deadline for removal of prev. term "I" grades (G)	Dec 7	Dec 6	Dec 5	Dec 4	Dec 9
Last Day of Class	Dec 7	Dec 6	Dec 5	Dec 4	Dec 9
Reading Days	Dec 10, 14	Dec 9, 13	Dec 8, 12	Dec 7, 11	Dec 12, 16
Final Exams Begin	Dec 11	Dec 10	Dec 9	Dec 8	Dec 13
Final Exams End	Dec 19	Dec 18	Dec 17	Dec 16	Dec 21
Final Grades Due by 11:00 am	Dec 21	Dec 20	Dec 19	Dec 18	Dec 23
Fall Awarding of Degrees	Jan 18 (2013)	Jan 17 (2014)	Jan 16 (2015)	Jan 15 (2016)	Jan 20 (2017)
<b>SPRING</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Registration (and Drop/Add) Begin (UG)	Nov 12 (2012)	Nov 11 (2013)	Nov 10 (2014)	Nov 9 (2015)	Nov 14 (2016)
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	Jan 21	Jan 20	Jan 19	Jan 18	Jan 16
Classes Begin	Jan 14	Jan 13	Jan 12	Jan 11	Jan 17
Late Registration Fee (\$25) Begins	Jan 15	Jan 14	Jan 13	Jan 12	Jan 18
Late Registration and Drop/Add End	Jan 25	Jan 24	Jan 23	Jan 22	Jan 27
Deadline Credit/Audit (UG)	Jan 25	Jan 24	Jan 23	Jan 22	Jan 27
Mid-Term Grades Due (UG)	Mar 11	Mar 10	Mar 9	Mar 7	Mar 13
Spring Break	Mar 11-15	Mar 10-14	Mar 9-13	Mar 7-11	Mar 13-17
Deadline for removal of prev. term "I" grades(UG)	Mar 29	Mar 28	Mar 27	Mar 25	Mar 31
Deadline Credit/Audit (G)	Mar 29	Mar 28	Mar 27	Mar 25	Mar 31
Deadline for Class Withdrawal and P/NP (upperclass UG)	Mar 29	Mar 28	Mar 27	Mar 25	Mar 31
Open registration for Summer Begins (UG)	Apr 1	Mar 31	Mar 30	Mar 28	Apr 3
Open registration for Fall Begins (UG)	Apr 8	Apr 7	Apr 6	Apr 4	Apr 10
Deadline for Class Withdrawal and P/NP (first year UG)	Apr 29	Apr 28	Apr 27	Apr 25	May 1
Deadline for removal of prev. term "I" grades(G)	Apr 29	Apr 28	Apr 27	Apr 25	May 1
Last Day of Class	Apr 29	Apr 28	Apr 27	Apr 25	May 1
Reading Days	Apr 30/May 1	Apr 29/30	Apr 28/29	Apr 26/27	May 2/3
Final Exams Begin	May 2	May 1	Apr 30	Apr 28	May 4
Final Exams End	May 9	May 8	May 7	May 5	May 11
Final Grades Due by 11:00 am	May 11	May 10	May 9	May 7	May 13
University Commencement	May 19	May 18	May 17	May 15	May 21
<b>SUMMER</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Classes Begin	Jun 3	Jun 2	Jun 1	Jun 6	Jun 5
Independence Day Holiday	Jul 4	Jul 4	Jul 3	Jul 4	Jul 4
Classes End	Jul 29	Jul 28	Jul 27	Aug 1	Jul 31
Final Grades Due 12:00 noon	Jul 31	Jul 30	Jul 29	Aug 3	Aug 2
Summer Awarding of Degrees	Aug 16	Aug 15	Aug 14	Aug 19	Aug 18

The FSCUE reviewed the attached proposals for changes in some administrative procedures related to semester and year study abroad. These proposals grew out of a USG resolution from April 2008, a discussion document prepared by Shegbo Wang and Jeff Wolcowitz in May 2010, and most recently the Final Report of the Undergraduate Education Abroad/International Experience Working Group to the International Planning Committee.

### **Language Study**

On the recommendation of the FSCUE Academic Standing Subcommittee, the FSCUE voted on Tuesday, December 20, 2011 to approve the proposal as follows:

***Students studying in a single location for at least a semester will take a course that advances their skills in a language of the host country during each semester of study abroad, provided such courses are available. Students participating in study abroad experiences that are comparative in nature and visit several sites within the same semester should not be required to include language study in their academic programs, recognizing that the goals of these programs are different from those of programs focused on a single site.***

### **Multiple sites**

On the recommendation of the FSCUE Academic Standing Subcommittee, the FSCUE voted on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 to approve the proposal as follows:

***Students who wish to study abroad for two semesters in different locations will be allowed to do so.***

## Context

Mr. Lev Gonick, Vice President, Information Technology Services and Chief Information Officer, consulted the Faculty Senate Committee on Information and Communication Technology (FSCICT) regarding ITS support for retired (non-emeritus) faculty. The committee discussed the matter during two meetings. The intention was to recognize the value the University places on faculty as well as the University's contractual obligations for software and subscriptions while maintaining cyber security. The committee discussed the fact that free email accounts are available from more than one source, and ITS provides a means for CWRU former faculty members to forward CWRU emails to a non-CWRU address so that they can receive email from whoever might attempt to contact them via their CWRU e-mail address.

Additionally, the committee advocated that the University continue to provide full ITS support for faculty members with emeritus status. This places the ITS-support decision in the hands of the CWRU faculty and the Provost, while respecting possible contractual obligations. The Provost also maintains an emeritus faculty list which facilitates account maintenance and security.

## Resolution

Whereas the FSCICT was consulted for its advice regarding the ITS policy for retired faculty,

Whereas a faculty member who retires (without emeritus status), takes a position elsewhere or otherwise separates himself/herself from the university is no longer an employee of the University,

Whereas emeritus status connotes continued engagement in the Case Western Reserve University community, and

Whereas the decision regarding emeritus status is made by the CWRU faculty and the Provost,

Therefore be it resolved

Faculty members who are granted emeritus status or who are judged by the Provost to be legitimately in the process of obtaining this designation, retain the same ITS access to IT support and software as that afforded to regular, full-time faculty members. Those who retire or who for any other reason leave the University, are no longer afforded these services, but may establish forwarding of their University email to an alternative email provider of their choice.

Revision to the CWRU Faculty Handbook

From

Pg

92 [http://www.case.edu/president/facsen/frames/handbook/pdf/2011FacultyHandbook4\\_2011.pdf](http://www.case.edu/president/facsen/frames/handbook/pdf/2011FacultyHandbook4_2011.pdf)

(Underline denotes insertion.)

In addition to the privileges associated with retirement, CWRU emeritus faculty are generally awarded other perquisites, some of which include free parking when space is available, personal tuition waiver privileges, the use of CWRU libraries and some other facilities, listing in the university directory, being invited to various faculty functions, the same access to IT support and software as that afforded to regular full-time faculty; etc. Office space may be provided depending on the needs of the Department or School. Faculty members who retire (without emeritus status), take a position elsewhere or are otherwise separated from the University, may establish forwarding of their Case email.

September 25, 2011

The forward progress of humankind in the last centuries has been fueled, more than any other factor, by increasing access to information, more rapid exchange of ideas, and in most parts of the world, universal education.

Freedom of education and freedom of information are integral to freedom of thought. Few advances have been made for humankind which were not preceded by new ways of looking at our world and new schools of thought.

So it is particularly shocking when despots and dictators in the twenty first century attempt to subjugate their own populations by attempting to deny education or information to their people.

Not only is it futile in the long term, it makes them appear fearful of the very age they live in, and haunted by the new thinkers in their midst.

Perhaps the most glaring example of this fear today is the denial of higher education to the members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran – a peaceful religion with no political agenda, which recognizes the unity of all religions.

In 1987, after being barred by their government from Iranian universities because of their faith, the resourceful Baha'i community in Iran organized the Baha'i Institute for Higher Learning, a decentralized network of teachers delivering college level classes in kitchens and living rooms across Iran. Baha'i professors and administrators who had also been banned from their universities for their faith were joined by courageous Muslim academics who would risk their careers and even imprisonment to support the network and teach the youth.

Taught by accredited professors, the quality of the coursework has been recognized and accepted for credit by more than fifty universities outside of Iran, allowing the BIHE students to continue with graduate work abroad. This creative solution has lifted the lives of thousands of Baha'i students who would otherwise have been denied meaningful careers.

On May 21, 2011, the BIHE came under attack when Iranian officials raided thirty Baha'i homes and arrested over a dozen of its teachers and administrators. Those arrested were neither political nor religious leaders. They were lecturers in subjects that included accounting and dentistry, who today face the prospect of decades in prison. The crime with which they are charged – delivering higher education to Baha'i youth.

The suppression of education in Iran is not limited to those of the Baha'i Faith. Other Iranian youth have been expelled from universities for their beliefs or for holding viewpoints determined to be counter to the ruling party, including pro-reform views. Iranian officials have forbidden new delivery of and are in the process of rewriting the course content of twelve social sciences on the university curricula -- including law, philosophy, management and political science – to make them more closely align with their own interpretation of the Islamic faith. They have stated that up to 70% of the course content in the social science will be rewritten by government officials.



We believe it is important to recognize that these actions are neither the result of or dictated by the Islamic faith. One need only look at the Dark Ages of Europe or the Spanish Inquisition to see that Iranian Ayatollahs are certainly not the first to use religion as the cloak to attempt to forcibly suppress ideas and knowledge that they fear could threaten their power. The rich philosophical and artistic Iranian traditions, the contributions of Iranian scholars worldwide, and the actions of the Muslim community members who have aided and supported the BIHE, are testament to the fact that the actions of their leaders are no reflection of the Muslim faith or the many good-willed Muslims in Iranian communities.

And while we believe that both historically and in today's "wired" world it is futile to suppress the quest for knowledge, there are many in Iran whose lives are being threatened or damaged by the attempt. They need our support.

We call on the international academic community to come to the aid of those whose lives are being subjected to these oppressive laws.

Specifically we, the undersigned, ask that the international academic community:

1. Call on the government of the Iranian Republic to release unconditionally and drop charges against the BIHE educators currently under arrest and facing charges related to their educational activities.
2. As academic leaders, administrators and professors, register through any possible channels in the Iranian academic community their disagreement with and disapproval of any policy which would bar individuals from higher education based on their religious background or political persuasion, or which would remove or corrupt any established fields of study from a university curricula for religious or political reasons.
3. Encourage their own universities to review the educational quality of the BIHE coursework for possible acceptance of its credits, so that those who have had the benefit of its programs can continue at higher levels of study.
4. As possible, offer available online university level curricula, through scholarships if needed, to students in Iran who would otherwise be deprived of the right to higher education or who, due to government limitation on social sciences, would not have a full array of educational options available to them in their own county.

Thank you for your support.

With warm regards,



Archbishop Desmond M. Tutu, O.M.S.G, D.D., F.K.C.  
Anglican Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town  
1984 Nobel Peace Prize recipient



President José Ramos-Horta  
President of East Timor  
1996 Nobel Peace Prize recipient



# ***DRAFT***

## **COURSE EVALUATION PROPOSAL**

*March 25, 2011, revised December 20, 2011*

*drafted by Alan Levine, Gary Chottiner, and Don Feke*

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This document describes potential changes to the course evaluation form and process to address concerns raised by CWRU faculty and students.

### **Key Recommendations**

1. Adopt the set of course evaluation questions recommended by the *ad hoc* Committee on Course Evaluations in spring 2008.
2. Provide instructors, departments and the schools/college the option to augment the standard evaluation instrument by adding custom questions.
3. Provide statistical analysis of the data to check the validity of the results for each course and help users extract appropriate conclusions from the responses.
4. Better accommodate evaluations of graduate student teaching assistants.
5. Improve response rates with a variety of techniques.
6. Make student comments available to the university community.

To fully appreciate these recommendations, one should understand the current course evaluation system, appreciate its history including recent efforts to make significant modifications, and be aware of the extensive literature concerning course evaluations. We have included some of this information, or links to it, within this document and in the appendices.

- I. History and current status of the course evaluation system at CWRU.
  - II. Recommendations of the ad hoc Committee on Course Evaluations, dated April 4, 2008, which includes proposed questions.
  - III. Report of the UUF ad hoc Committee on Teaching and Course Evaluations, dated April 15, 2003.
  - IV. Incentives that have been considered to enhance student participation.
  - V. Miscellaneous Issues
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## **Key Recommendations**

### **1. Adopt the new set of course evaluation questions recommended by the *ad hoc* Committee on Course Evaluations in spring 2008.**

Course evaluation data is used for several purposes.

- a. Students may use course and instructor evaluations when they choose which courses to take.
- b. Teaching evaluations, which includes letters from individual students and reports from class visits by senior faculty as well as data from the online course evaluation system, are used in the promotion and tenure process.
- c. Instructors use this data to evaluate and improve their own teaching.
- d. Department chairs, deans and other administrative offices use this data to evaluate teaching of individuals and departments. This can have an effect on curriculum, teaching assignments and salary.
- e. Instructors, including graduate student teaching assistants, applying for positions at other institutions may use these evaluations in support of their applications.

The current course evaluation instrument (*see Appendix I*) has been in use since the mid-1980's. It includes a mix of questions that attempt to address the various purposes for which this data is used. However, this instrument includes some arguably inappropriate questions such as asking *students* to evaluate an *instructor's* command of his or her subject.

Faculty members have repeatedly voiced concerns about the use of this instrument in promotion and tenure cases. The current set of questions was not designed for this specific purpose. In contrast, the new set of questions was designed with great care and, while it can be used for any of the purposes listed above, focuses, for reasons that are explained later, on the use of these evaluations for promotion and tenure decisions.

Resources used by the *ad hoc* Committee on Course Evaluations to design the new form included the following.

- Consultations with Prof. Mike Theall, Youngstown State University, (<http://www.tltgroup.org/about/TLTGFriends/theall.htm>), a national expert on the development and use of course-evaluation instruments. Prof. Theall has edited, published or presented over 250 books, monographs, papers, presentations, workshops, or webinars on college teaching, faculty evaluation and development, teaching improvement, and organizational development.
- Consultation with CWRU faculty expert in the development and use of survey tools (e.g., *Dr. Kyle Kercher, formerly a member of CWRU's Department of Sociology*).
- "How to" monographs on developing an accurate and meaningful course-evaluation instrument, such as "*Developing a Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System*" by R. A. Arreola (*Anker Publishing, 2000*).
- Examination of a number of course evaluation instruments in use at other universities and available online.

- Review of various reports and studies about course-evaluation methodologies and use of course-evaluation results, found online.

Implementation of the new questions has been recommended by the University Undergraduate Faculty (UUF) based on feedback from its four constituent undergraduate schools, the Faculty Senate Committee on Undergraduate Education (FSCUE), Undergraduate Student Government (UGS) and the Graduate Student Senate (GSS). However, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee twice declined to proceed with implementation due to concerns that the evaluation questions did not address the full range of topics upon which teaching could be assessed and because of various other issues (*such as participation rates*) that are addressed in other key recommendations of this document.

The *ad hoc* Committee on Course Evaluations considered the Executive Committee's earlier feedback on the range of topics but disagreed with the concept of expanding the default questions. Since data from the course-evaluation instrument are to be used for multiple purposes, including promotion and tenure files, the *ad hoc* Committee held that the course-evaluation questions should not stray beyond the universal expectations about teaching that are expressed in the Faculty Handbook (*i.e.*, "*a dedication to effective teaching*"). Consequently, the *ad hoc* Committee felt that any questions that did not apply as "effective teaching" practices for every individual faculty member should not be included among the set of common course-evaluation questions.

That said, we propose to address the concern about the range of topics with key recommendation #3, which is to implement the course evaluation system's capability of incorporating custom questions developed by an individual instructor, a department or a school for their courses. Details of this recommendation are discussed later.

The Faculty Senate could, if it wishes, further alleviate concerns about the use of course evaluations for promotion and tenure purposes by charging its Committee on Faculty Personnel with developing appropriate guidelines. This should not delay the move to a new evaluation instrument that is almost certainly better suited for this purpose. While some faculty members have argued that students' evaluations should not be used at all for promotion and tenure decisions, it's impractical to prevent such use and these course evaluations arguably supply better data compared to a few letters from hand-picked students or a few class visits by senior faculty. It's important, however, that this data be used in context, which includes the particular courses which were taught (*including audience, size, etc.*), how these courses compare to other *comparable* courses, and the statistical validity of the data. Other elements of this proposal address such concerns.

## **2. Provide instructors, departments and the schools/college the option to augment the standard evaluation instrument by adding custom questions.**

The electronic course evaluation system has the flexibility to incorporate additional questions at a course-by-course or higher level, suggested by individual instructors, departments or entire schools or the college. In fact, the WSOM has already added a question for their courses. This option has not been widely advertised because it is not ready for widespread use. The system currently relies, in terms of technical support, on one individual in ITS who devotes a fraction of his time to this effort.

Before moving to widespread use, we should consider establishing guidelines about the number and type of individual questions that may be added at the school, department, and instructor level. The use of additional questions must be done carefully so they do not invalidate the results from the core set of questions. In fact, the proposed instrument arguably contains too many questions as it stands, and this might be a factor in lower-than-desired completion rates. Rather than not respond at all, students might be encouraged to respond to the most critical questions on the instrument, their overall evaluation of the course and of the instructor.

Additional resources will be needed in order to carry out this recommendation. A process will be required for reviewing newly proposed questions to ensure they conform to any guidelines that are established. Staff time will be required to add questions into the course-evaluation system, or alternately, these staff could be responsible to train other (*department or school-level*) administrative staff to upload additional questions.

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### **3. Provide statistical analysis of the data to verify the validity of the results and to help users extract appropriate conclusions from the responses.**

There are two different aspects to this issue. One is a basic test of whether enough data has been collected from a course to justify use of the information for important decisions. This is not only a question of the number of responses and/or the fraction of students in a course who respond, but also whether those students who do respond represent an appropriate sample of the students in the course. Ideally we would collect additional demographic data on the students submitting their course evaluations (*e.g., male/female, domestic/international, GPA, expected course grade*), without revealing this information to the instructor since it could put students' anonymity at risk. A statistical analysis for each course could then determine whether the set of students who chose to submit course evaluations was a representative sample. This rigorous analysis would identify which sets of course evaluation results ought to be reliable, and which are not.

Analysis of correlations between the expected course grade and students' likelihood of completing an evaluation and the score's they enter on those evaluations would be particularly helpful in supporting or dispelling faculty concerns that students who earn lower grades are more likely to complete a course evaluation.

A second concern is our current limited analysis of the data. Most people focus on the final numerical rating of the course and the instructor, but it's possible to provide the user with much better information and with the opportunity to perform their own analysis of the raw data. Techniques such as factor analysis <http://www.psych.cornell.edu/darlington/factor.htm> can be used to help identify which elements of teaching correspond to high or low overall rankings. We suggest that campus experts in statistics work with our Office of Institutional Research, UCITE, and the relevant Faculty Senate committees to determine how we might make better use of our course evaluation data on an institutional and individual level.

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### **4. Better accommodate evaluations of graduate student teaching assistants.**

Undergraduate Student Government has requested that students be able to review TA's as well as the instructor(s) of record for each course. Graduate students and faculty have also

requested improvements in this aspect of the course evaluation process. The current system already allows the instructor of record to add a TA to the course evaluation, or even to substitute the TA's name for the instructor-of-record's name. An email is sent to each instructor a few weeks before the evaluation system is opened to students asking the instructor to check the accuracy of the records and inviting the instructor to make changes such as this. However, this capability is not as widely used as possible. One problem is the variety of ways graduate TA's are used in courses. For example, in the introductory physics labs, each TA is responsible for half of a laboratory section and this doesn't correspond to the course evaluation system's breakdown of course responsibility.

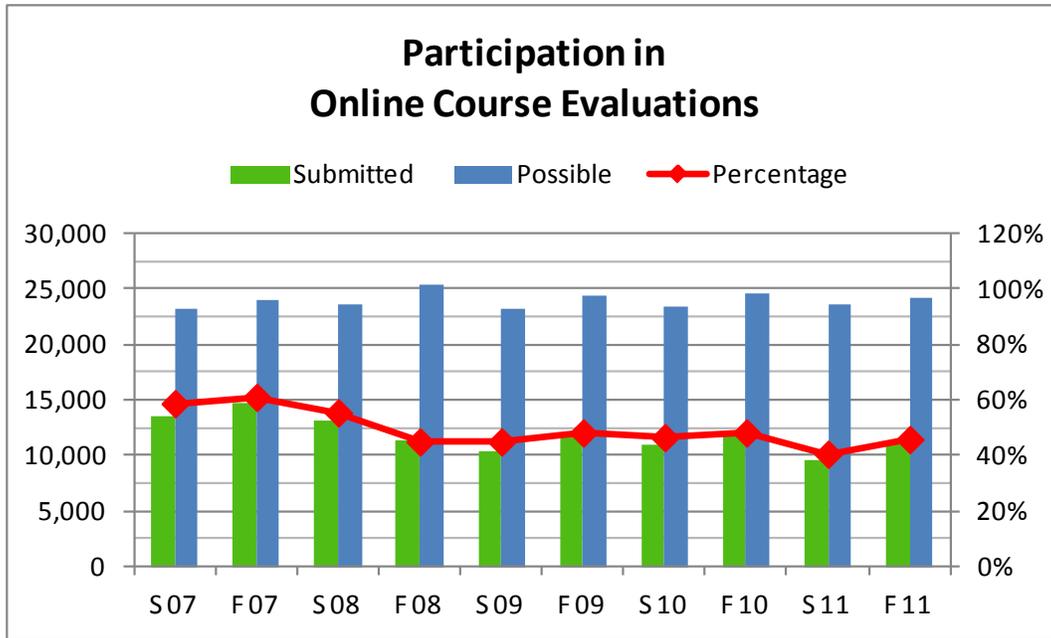
In fact, it's not always obvious how the course evaluation system determines who should be evaluated based on the variety of roles instructors may be assigned in SIS - primary instructor, secondary instructor, TA and grading proxy - although grading proxies clearly should not be evaluated by students. Another concern is whether the common questions on the evaluation instrument apply to TA's in their various roles: for example, TA's rarely set grading policies.

It may be necessary to institute a parallel process for evaluating TA's, with a different set of common questions and with a different mechanism of identifying who should be evaluated. We suggest that the appropriate student, staff and faculty senate committees work together to identify how this could best be handled. As an interim measure, the capabilities of the current system should be better advertised and explained.

## **5. Improve response rates with a variety of techniques described in detail below.**

As explained in Appendix I, course evaluations began as a student-led initiative to aid students in choosing courses. If this was still their only purpose, the faculty would probably not be as concerned about low participation rates. In fact, it has been argued that many students at CWRU have less interest in course evaluations because, compared to students at other types of institutions, they have fewer options in choosing their courses and instructors in any given semester. Our overall participation has stabilized at 40 – 45%, which is comparable to other institutions that do not use very strong incentives (*such as withholding final course grades until the evaluation is completed*) to boost participation rates for an online evaluation.

Faculty concerns about participation rates the past few years have concentrated on changes in the pattern of participation that accompanied the transition in spring 2007 from paper, in-class evaluations to an on-line system. A portion of the current 40-45% participation rate comes from courses for which faculty formerly did not hand out the paper forms. Most faculty members who did routinely administer the paper-based course evaluations in their classrooms have seen a significant drop in participation rates. The historical rate of participation for the paper-based instrument was approximately 61% (*which represents an average between those instructors who insured an 80-90% response rate by administering course evaluations during a class meeting, and those who chose not to administer course evaluations and thus received 0% participation*). CWRU's experience with participation rates mirrors those of other institutions which transitioned from a paper-based to an online course evaluation process.



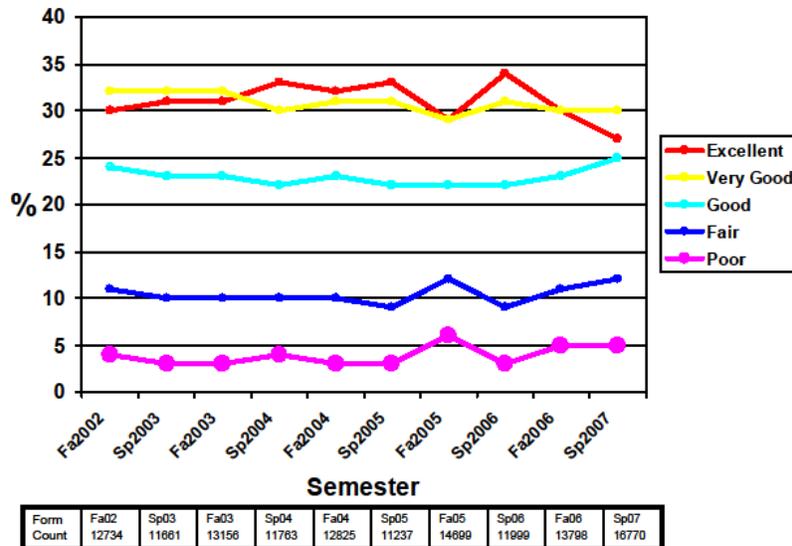
Associated with concerns about lower participation rates is concern that those students who do participate are more likely to be those who are particularly upset with some aspect of a course, including perhaps their expected final grades. Students who enjoyed the course may also be more likely to participate but those who have no deep feelings about the course may not bother to complete the online form. This may skew the data. While some rigorous studies contradict this assertion, the belief is still prevalent and not only at CWRU. The following two paragraphs are excerpts from articles (*whose links no longer function*) that seem to bolster this argument.

A new study of students at the University of Northern Iowa and Southeastern Oklahoma University has found that about one-third of students said that they had been untruthful on faculty evaluations they submit at the end of courses, *The Des Moines Register* reported. While students admitted to fudging the truth both to bolster professors they liked and to bring down those they disliked, the latter kind of fabrication was more common.

The stakes are even higher in classes where instructors dumb down their classes or inflate grades to boost the odds that students will like them. The practice is widely acknowledged by professors and has been studied by researchers, including Duke University statisticians who found professors who give better grades get higher marks on evaluations.

However, data from our own course evaluation system would seem to undercut concerns about a correlation between participation rates and evaluations. One can compare responses of the earlier paper and more recent electronic systems using data posted at <https://www.case.edu/courses/evals/evals.html>, including <https://its-services.case.edu/course-evals/summary-reports/>. The chart below was constructed using data from the paper forms while the table below it was compiled by considering all courses evaluated with the electronic process in fall 2010.

Overall Course Evaluation Results Over Time  
Item 17 – The Course



From the electronic, on-line system in 2010

**NA:** Not Applicable. **P:** Poor. **F:** Fair. **G:** Good. **VG:** Very Good. **E:** Excellent.

	NA	P	F	G	VG	E
Your overall rating of the course.	0%	6%	12%	23%	29%	30%
Your overall rating of the instructor	3%	5%	8%	17%	22%	36%

Response count: 11851

The following table compares the two course evaluation systems.

	P	F	G	VG	E
<b>Fall 2006-paper</b>	5	11.5	23.5	30	30
<b>Fall 2010-electronic</b>	6	12	23	29	30

The average 'grade' for *instructors* in fall 2010, if we set  $E = A = 4.0$  as in a normal grading rubric and account for the 3% NA category, is 2.60, a B- or C+. 58% of CWRU instructors earn a very good or excellent while 13% receive scores of fair or poor. Comparing the *course* evaluations of fall 2006 to fall 2010 (*the former were estimated from the plot*) it's hard to argue that there has been any significant change in the distribution of responses associated with the change from paper to an electronic system. In fact, any other result would be surprising given a response rate of nearly 50%. Expert research suggests that participation rates similar to those achieved at CWRU are adequate to get meaningful results. For example, McGill University ([http://www.mcgill.ca/files/tls/online\\_course\\_evaluation\\_report.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/files/tls/online_course_evaluation_report.pdf)) found that there was no significant difference in the mean or shape of the distribution of ratings when comparing online to paper-based results. Cornell University (<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=20018437&site=ehost-live>) found no difference in course-evaluation results between paper and online surveys, even though the participation rate was lower using the online instrument. Similar results were found with Brigham Young University (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tl.122>). A more recent study undertaken in Ontario (<http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Student%20Course%20Evaluations.pdf>) provides additional confirmation. Many other studies about the reliability of online course evaluations can be found online as well.

Important surveys routinely use results derived from response rates much smaller than 50%. Obtaining course-evaluation results from a proper sample of students (*e.g., male/female ratio, expected course grade, freshman/sophomore/junior/senior ratio, domestic/international ratio*) is likely more important than the overall response rate. Part of key recommendation #3 is to do just this.

Even though it is doubtful that a 50% response rate invalidates the data, it's still clearly desirable to increase participation as much as possible, without adopting policies that may cause other problems. The current online system encourages participation by repeatedly sending reminders to students who have not yet completed the process. Students have complained about these reminders, sometimes using threatening language, including threats to complete the evaluations with purposely misleading, negative responses. As an example, the course-evaluation administrators received an email from one of our first-year students that contained a threat that he would “*submit a course-evaluation that nobody at CWRU would ever want to receive*” and foul language (*that we should all "f\*\*\* off" about course evaluations*). This student was referred to Student Affairs for follow-up. Another student wrote to say he and many other students were offended to be asked to submit course-evaluations because we are asking him to do work but didn't give him any tangible reward for doing so. Many students see the value they gain from course-evaluations to not be worth the few minutes of effort it takes to submit them. It's a hard sell to such students.

Any system of punishment used to coerce participation may lead to an increase in such behavior. In any case, it's not obvious that students should be penalized if they prefer not to participate, particularly if CWRU faculty are not willing to elevate the importance of course evaluations commensurately. Below we list some methods we propose in order to increase participation. Appendix IV provides a more extensive list of punishments and awards that could be considered and includes reasons for rejecting some of them, for now at least.

Students are more likely to complete course evaluation forms if they believe that this information is important to them, personally, to the institution in general and to the faculty being evaluated. There is wide variability in the extent to which each is perceived to be true.

Students can use this data when choosing courses they will take but many CWRU students have few options in selecting courses and instructors, particularly in their first year. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students may be as likely to use Rate My Professors (<http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/>) where students can post and view unadulterated comments about instructors or CourseRank (<https://www.courserank.com/cwru/main>) Over 1000 CWRU students have accounts on this latter site. In addition to course-evaluation information, CourseRank provides students with typical grade distributions seen in the courses. CourseRank advertises around campus - they have even hung large banners. By comparison, the university course evaluation system can seem difficult to use and is missing colorful comments that students appreciate and sometimes find more useful than numerical scores.

### **SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING RESPONSE RATES**

- a. Course evaluation data should be more easily accessible to students when they are choosing courses so that they do not have to navigate a separate, complex web site to access the information they want; is an instructor and/or course rated highly or poorly by other students. The link to SIS course and instructor information that students see when setting up their schedules should also include simple access to course evaluation data for that course and instructor.
- b. The importance of course evaluations to faculty should be elevated, in the expectation that the value of course evaluations will be conveyed to students.
  - i. The treatment of course evaluation results in Faculty Activity Reports is uneven in the different schools and the college. We should encourage the schools to have all faculty review and enter their individual data on their FAR's, and make certain the chairs review this information. This is already done in some schools and departments, but not all.
  - ii. Rather than require that faculty, chairs, deans and the provost go to <https://www.case.edu/courses/evals/evals.html> and navigate through the system to access the information they need, a report should be sent to each individual and their supervisor at the end of each semester informing each faculty member of the results of that semester's process. Chairs and Deans should be sent reports on the teaching of their faculty, including summary reports showing how each department compares to other departments in that school/college.
 

Much of the work in preparing such reports can be automated but it will require some human capital to establish and maintain this system. The same is true for certain other suggestions in this document, such as enabling the addition of supplementary questions at various levels. The necessary funds will likely have to be identified by the Provost.
  - iii. Instances in which teaching evaluations have made a difference in hiring, promotion and tenure, and salary decisions should be made known (*in general terms, without details that could identify the people involved*). This might combat the sense among students and faculty that teaching, and therefore teaching evaluations, doesn't matter.
- c. Faculty should be supported in the use of techniques they can use (*individually or at a department or school level*) to enhance participation. Appendix IV provides a complete

list of incentives that we have considered but we suggest that we initially focus on the following.

- i. Rewards for a high class completion rate take advantage of individual self-interest and peer pressure. One of the authors of this document has tested rewards of food (*large chocolate bars*) and of an easy ‘gift’ question on the last exam if 90% of the class completed the evaluation. Both rewards worked although repeated reminders were required that the class was just short of earning their reward.  
  
Prizes to only a few individuals, such as iPod's, are less effective since only a few students will win a prize and many won't be interested in it. Rewards could also take the form of a contribution to a charity or student group for each response but this is also unlikely to motivate everyone in a class. In any case, faculty and students can be creative when it comes to the preferred form of motivation, and it might be best to invite the class to suggest their preferred reward. In fact, this was the method used to determine the award described in the preceding paragraph. It's easy to imagine our students competing to earn these awards in multiple classes if they become common.
- ii. Faculty can still require that students complete a custom, paper evaluation form in class, and therefore insure very high participation rates with questions that address their specific concerns. (*A some point, it might be possible to have students complete forms electronically in class, but this is not yet generally practical.*) However, those instructors may need to assume responsibility for proper handling of the forms and tabulation of the results. The university system that formerly handled these tasks for everyone is defunct, would be expensive to revive and maintain, and had its own problems, such as security of the results. There are known instances of the completed paper forms being handled inappropriately, egregiously so in some cases.  
  
That said, we should investigate whether it is practical to provide limited technical support for faculty who wish to use paper forms in their classes. This could entail OCR hardware and software and perhaps secure collection of forms outside the class, so that students are assured that the instructor will not see the results until grades are submitted. The software library does, in fact, include Snap 10 software that can be used for such surveys; the scanning option that would simplify collection of data from paper forms costs \$250 but could be used at a department or school level.
- iii. Advertise the course evaluation process more effectively during the periods when students can complete these forms. We currently place ads in the Observer and send out email reminders but we could also make use of banners and posters, the plasma screen TV system, *etc.* The Observer could be invited to write articles on course evaluations, which would hopefully emphasize their importance. USG has sent out their own letters of encouragement in the past and we should work with USG to make this a routine practice.
- d. Point out to students that, if they feel the evaluations are too time-consuming, they are encouraged to at least respond to questions 10 and 19 that ask for overall recommendations of the course and instructor. Some may argue that this will diminish responses to the many other useful questions, and this is likely true. We should decide

which on balance is better, higher participation rates or more complete forms from those who do participate.

- e. Include in the course evaluation instrument the option “I choose not to evaluate this course”. This tactic is believed to entice more students to enter the system, and the hope is that once they are in, they will decide to complete the evaluation anyway. It also provides students with a mechanism to end the stream of email reminders they are sent and it provides an affirmative measure of students who actively prefer not to review a course and who aren't simply too busy or inattentive.

## **6. Make student comments available to the university community.**

Undergraduate Student Government has forwarded to the faculty senate a formal request that the written comments that students may include with their evaluations be made available to the entire CWRU community. Currently only the course instructor can see these comments; they are not accessible anyone else, including department chairs. Many faculty members view this as a controversial request, even though students routinely post and view unedited comments that can be seen throughout the world at Rate My Professors - <http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/>. USG did volunteer that inappropriate language should be removed before comments are posted but this requires policy decisions and human resources that appear to make such editing impractical.

We are hesitant to advise that this issue be pursued because of the resistance it's likely to elicit from some faculty members and a concern that this single issue could derail the implementation of other changes. That said, it is worth considering this request carefully and not reject it out of hand. There are several points that must be considered.

- As mentioned above, students routinely post completely unedited comments at RateMyProfessors and other web sites. This arguably diminishes the importance of the official CWRU course evaluations and may be a factor in low participation rates.
- Written comments are often more useful than numerical scores or may augment the information conveyed by those scores.
- Department chairs and deans should have access to these comments so they can properly evaluate the teaching for which they have a measure of responsibility.
- As professionals, we are expected to police our own ranks. Department faculty should have access to this information so they can properly evaluate the teaching of their colleagues.
- Presumably, faculty and the vast majority of our students are mature enough to discount an occasional offensive comment. Offensive reviews are likely to reflect on the author at least as much as on the instructor, particularly if it's the exception.

There are several strong arguments for expanding access to these comments to the entire university community. Failing that, the senate should at least consider providing access to department chairs. The counter-arguments appear to rest mostly on possible embarrassment to instructors who do a poor job of teaching or encounter, as all of us will at some point, frustrated, angry or poorly performing students.

There is a potential method of tempering the comments that students submit. This would be to lift the veil of anonymity associated with these evaluations. It's not desirable to do this as a

routine matter since that will temper the comments too severely and students will often encounter the same instructor later in their career. However, if it was technically possible (*which is not currently the case*\*), we could allow instructors to refer inappropriate or threatening comments to select people, such as a Vice Provost or Associate Dean, and/or to the Academic Integrity Board, who could have the authority to identify the source of the comment and provide appropriate discipline. A change such as this might convince students to be more careful, but no less honest, in their written comments. Comments would not be routinely reviewed but an instructor could request a review for a comment that appears to justify more scrutiny for reasons of safety or bigotry. It would be helpful to have USG endorse such a policy and perhaps they or the Academic Integrity Board could be involved in the process of handling cases of concern.

A simpler and less controversial alternative would be to give instructors, or perhaps anyone on campus, the right to request that certain offensive comments be removed. It would not be necessary to identify the author, although a process for such requests would have to be put in place.

\* Identifying individual students is not currently possible. Once the student hits “send” the data goes into the system and all identifiers are completely stripped. However, it’s possible this could be changed in the future and we could in any case inform students that inappropriate and/or threatening comments MAY make them subject to administrative action.

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## APPENDIX I

### **I. History and current status of the course evaluation system at CWRU**

The history of course evaluations at CWRU (*actually the Case Institute of Technology*) dates back to the 1960's when course evaluations were conducted by students and the results were published underground for the purpose of helping other students choose courses to take. Recognizing the value of course evaluations, the administration took over the management of course evaluations in the 1970's. Faculty/student committees were periodically convened to review and update the course-evaluation instrument. The current set of course-evaluation questions in use were developed in the mid 1980's.

Up until the spring 2007 semester, course-evaluations were a paper-based process. Toward the end of each semester, instructors were sent course evaluation forms with a set of instructions on how to administer the evaluations. For example:

- (1) course evaluations were to be given sometime during the last two weeks of the course;
- (2) instructors were not to be present in the room while course evaluations were being conducted;
- (3) a student volunteer from the class was to collect course-evaluation forms, seal them in two envelopes (*one envelope for ratings questions, one for the free-text response questions*) and deliver them to the department office;
- (4) ratings questions were to be delivered to Undergraduate Studies for tallying;
- (5) after final grades were submitted, the free-text responses were to be delivered directly to the faculty members without anyone (*like the department chair*) viewing the comments.

It was impossible to enforce these instructions and the integrity of the course-evaluations was sometimes questioned. Also, it was often several months before the course-evaluation results were available.

In 2006, it became clear that CWRU's budget did not allow printing of more course evaluation forms or maintenance/replacement of the optical scanning equipment. An online process was developed by the CWRU's ITS division with oversight by the Office of the Provost and Undergraduate Studies. The features and advantages of the on-line system include:

1. A high level of security and anonymity
  - it is not possible to associate a particular course-evaluation dataset with an individual student
2. The on-line system is fully customizable
  - allows a hierarchical structure of questions
    - core questions, common to all course-evaluation forms
    - school-level questions, common to all courses taught by that school
    - department-level questions, common to all courses taught by that department
    - course-level questions, designated by the instructor

- authority to view results can be assigned to different populations or combinations of groups
    - all
    - students
    - faculty
    - administration
  - accommodates and differentiates between multiple instructors (identified individually in the on-line instrument)
  - results can be viewed without delays due to processing time
3. Ease of access to the system
- course evaluation questions (students)
    - direct link emailed to students in reminder messages
    - Webstart portal
  - course evaluation results
    - individual anonymous results (faculty) archived, accessible online, immediately at the close of the semester.
    - statistical summaries (all) archived on web, maintained by Undergraduate Studies
  - open/close dates, view results date, can easily be changed
  - when open for evaluations to be submitted, faculty can monitor the progress of course evaluations being submitted

Note that the online system allows all of the policies about course evaluations to be enforced. Also note that not all of the features of the current system (*i.e., that course evaluations can be customized by school/department/course*) are currently being utilized.

Because no new set of questions has been approved by the faculty, the set of questions used in the online course evaluation system is identical to the one used in the preceding paper-based questionnaire. The paper form copied below can be seen more clearly at <https://www.case.edu/courses/evals/bubbleform.pdf>

**INSTRUCTION EVALUATION FORM**

**DIRECTIONS:** 1. Use a #2 pencil only. 4. Erase changes clearly.  
 2. Fill in course and section. 3. Limit your marks to the space provided.  
 3. Fill circles completely. 5. Gray marks will result in erroneous tabulation.

DEPT. CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COURSE No. \_\_\_\_\_ SECTION \_\_\_\_\_ SEMESTER: FALL 12 \_\_\_\_\_; SPRING 13 \_\_\_\_\_

1. How does this course fit into your academic program?

Required by my major  
 Option or technical elective in my major  
 Required by concentration or sequence  
 Option in concentration or sequence  
 Open elective

2. What is your current standing at the University?

Freshman  
 Sophomore  
 Junior  
 Senior  
 Graduate student

3. Given your background, how would you rate the price of the course?

Very low  
 Rather low  
 Moderate  
 Rather high  
 Very high

4. Given your background, how would you rate the work load of the course?

Very heavy  
 Rather heavy  
 Moderate  
 Rather light  
 Very light

Indicate your level of agreement as to achievement of the following objectives of a well-taught course. Use the following ratings: (S) - strongly agree, (A) - agree, (N) - mixed feelings, (D) - disagree, (SD) - strongly disagree, (NA) - not applicable. Use "N/A" for items that are not applicable, or for which "mixed" applies to you, or for which you have no response.

5. The instructor has an effective command of reading this subject. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

6. The instructor's expectations of what I should be learning are clear to me. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

7. The instructor is able to motivate students' learning of the subject. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

8. The course stimulates critical thinking. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

9. Students are informed of their progress in a timely manner. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

10. Assignments are well-suited to students outside of class time. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

11. The course provides a variety of assignments. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

12. Assignments are well-suited to students outside of class time. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

13. The course provides a variety of assignments. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

14. Assignments are well-suited to students outside of class time. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

15. The course provides a variety of assignments. (S) (A) (N) (D) (SD)

For items 17-20, use the following ratings: (S) - excellent, (VG) - very good, (G) - good, (F) - fair, (P) - poor, (NA) - not applicable.

17. Your overall rating of the course: (S) (VG) (G) (F) (P) (NA)

18. Your overall rating of the instructor: (S) (VG) (G) (F) (P) (NA)

19. Your overall rating of the teaching assistant (if applicable): (S) (VG) (G) (F) (P) (NA)

20. Your overall rating of the laboratory (if applicable): (S) (VG) (G) (F) (P) (NA)

Use the remaining space to write any specific comments you have that would help to improve instruction in the course.

Data from the current system are available at <http://www.case.edu/courses/evals/evals.html>. Information is available by instructor/course and parsed in various ways, such as department by department, schools, 100-level, and SAGES. A typical set of data is shown below.

EVALUATION OF COURSES

FALL, 2006

\* COURSE NAME : XXXX XXX

SECTION: 11

\* INSTRUCTOR : XXXXXX

1. HOW DOES THIS COURSE FIT INTO YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM

MAJOR REQUIRED: 72%    TECH IN MAJOR: 6%    CORE REQUIRED: 3%  
 MINOR OPTION : 6%    OPEN ELECTIVE: 13%

2. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT STANDING IN THE UNIVERSITY

FRESHMAN : 69%    SOPHOMORE : 13%    JUNIOR : 6%  
 SENIOR : 9%    GRADUATE : 3%

3. RATE THE PACE OF THE COURSE

VERY FAST : 9%    RATHER FAST : 22%    MODERATE : 63%  
 RATHER SLOW : 6%    VERY SLOW : 0

4. RATE THE WORK LOAD OF THE COURSE

VERY HEAVY : 3%    RATHER HEAVY : 9%    MODERATE : 66%  
 RATHER LIGHT : 22%    VERY LIGHT : 0

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT:

(SA) STRONGLY AGREE, (A) AGREE, (M) MIXED FEELINGS,  
 (D) DISAGREE, (SD) STRONGLY DISAGREE

	% OF NO. EVAL.					
	SA	A	M	D	SD	NA
	===	===	===	===	===	===
5. INSTRUCTOR HAS AN EFFECTIVE COMMAND	59	19	13	3	3	3
6. INSTRUCTOR SPEAKS AND WRITES CLEARLY	19	47	22	9	3	0
7. EXPECTATIONS OF INSTRUCTOR ARE CLEAR	38	38	22	0	3	0
8. COURSE PROCEDURES CLEARLY EXPLAINED	38	41	3	13	3	3
9. ABLE TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS	50	28	19	0	3	0
10. ENCOURAGING QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS	78	16	3	0	3	0
11. COURSE STIMULATES CRITICAL THINKING	44	34	13	6	3	0
12. PROPER LEARNING ATMOSPHERE PROVIDED	69	31	0	0	0	0
13. STUDENTS ARE INFORMED OF THEIR PROGRESS	31	44	13	6	6	0

14. GRADING IS DONE FAIRLY	59	34	0	3	3	0
15. ADEQUATE ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE	41	44	13	0	3	0
16. TEXTBOOK/CLASS MATERIAL ARE USEFUL	59	34	3	0	3	0

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO INDICATE THE OVERALL RATING:

(E) EXCELLENT, (VG) VERY GOOD, (G) GOOD, (F) FAIR, (P) POOR

	% OF NO. EVAL.					
	E	VG	G	F	P	NA
	===	===	===	===	===	===
17. THE COURSE	41	22	22	9	6	0
18. THE INSTRUCTOR	50	31	9	6	3	0
19. THE TEACHING ASSISTANT (IF APPLICABLE)	16	9	13	6	6	50
20. THE LABORATORY (IF APPLICABLE)	6	0	0	0	0	94

\*\* COURSE FORM COUNT : 32

## Appendix II

### Recommendations of the ad hoc Committee on Course Evaluations, dated April 4, 2008, which includes proposed new questions.

#### MEMORANDUM

To: UUF Executive Committee  
Undergraduate Student Government  
Graduate Student Senate  
Faculty Senate Executive Committee

From: Donald L. Feke, Vice Provost

CC: Jerold S. Goldberg, Interim Provost  
Lynn Singer, Deputy Provost

Date: April 4, 2008

Subject: Course Evaluation Questions

This Spring, an *ad hoc* Committee on Course Evaluations<sup>1</sup> has been responding to a charge to develop and recommend a new set of core questions for use in the University's course-evaluation process. This Committee was formed following a UUF resolution to terminate the course-evaluation questionnaire currently in use. Criticisms about the existing questionnaire have focused on the lack of validity of some questions, the lack of clarity of others, and the omission of certain types of questions.

Attached is a draft set of questions proposed by the *ad hoc* Committee, which is now being circulated for feedback and comment. These questions were developed based on the Committee's review of course-evaluation instruments in use at other universities, writings of an expert in the design of course-evaluation instruments, and an assessment of our own local needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the *ad hoc* Course Evaluation Committee include: Sarah Busch (graduate student), William Deal (College of Arts and Sciences), Sara Douglas (School of Nursing), Donald Feke (Committee chair), Carynne Fox (undergraduate student), Alex Hamberger (undergraduate student), Christine Hudak (School of Nursing), Marshall Leitman (College of Arts and Sciences), James McGuffin-Cawley (Case School of Engineering), Lucas O'Donnell (graduate student), and Renee Sentilles (College of Arts and Sciences).

Since these questions would be used for the evaluation of all undergraduate and graduate courses, feedback is being solicited from the UUF as well as the undergraduate and graduate student government bodies. Also, since course-evaluation data are commonly used in faculty promotion and tenure files, input is requested from the Faculty Senate. We would appreciate receiving advice on the content, clarity, and scope of the set of questions prior to the end of the Spring '08 semester. If additional time would be needed to generate proper feedback, please let me know.

I would be happy to provide additional information about the methodology or deliberations of the Committee, or answer any questions you may have about the course evaluation process.

### Core Questions for CWRU Course Evaluation Process

- Notes: (1) The course-evaluation survey is to be delivered on-line.
- (2) For courses with multiple instructors, questions in the **ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING** category (#3-10) would appear once for each instructor.
- (3) Course instructors would have access to anonymous individual responses to questions 1-20 plus responses to the free-text questions located at the end of the survey.
- (4) Statistical summaries of the results for questions 1-20 would be posted on the web.
- (5) Core questions would be used to evaluate all courses. Individual schools, departments, or instructors may be able to add up to five additional ratings questions to customize the survey to their own needs.

----- Core questions for course evaluation start here -----

1) What is your current status at the University?

- Undergraduate, enrolled at CWRU for two or fewer semesters
- Undergraduate, enrolled at CWU for three or four semesters
- Undergraduate, enrolled at CWRU for five or six semesters
- Undergraduate, enrolled at CWRU for seven or more semesters
- Graduate Student – Masters degree program
- Graduate Student –Doctoral degree program

2) How does this course fit into your academic program?

- Required course
- Elective course

**ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING** (regarding <<instructor name>>)

3) The instructor is an effective teacher:

- Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

4) The instructor communicates clearly:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

5) The instructor is prepared for class:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

6) The instructor delivers a well-organized course:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

7) The instructor encourages questions and class participation:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

8) The instructor treats students respectfully:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

9) Adequate assistance from the instructor is available to me outside of class time:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

Agree

Strongly Agree

10) Your overall rating of the instructor:

Poor

Fair

Good

Very Good

Excellent

### **ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING**

11) The course objectives are clear:

Not Applicable

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Mixed Feelings

- Agree
- Strongly Agree

12) Course procedures (assignments, tests, grading) are clearly explained:

- Not Applicable
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Mixed Feelings
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

13) The procedure for grading is fair:

- Not Applicable
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Mixed Feelings
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

14) Feedback (on assignments, papers, tests, etc.) is helpful:

- Not Applicable
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Mixed Feelings
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

15) Feedback is received in a timely manner:

- Not Applicable
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Mixed Feelings
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

**ASSESSMENT OF THE COURSE**

16) How would you rate the pace of the course?

- Very fast
- Rather fast
- Moderate
- Rather slow
- Very slow

17) How would you rate the work load of the course?

- Very heavy
- Rather heavy
- Moderate
- Rather light
- Very light

18) The course stimulates critical thinking:

- Not Applicable
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Mixed Feelings
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

19) Your overall rating of the course:

- Not Applicable
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent

20) I attended class:

\_\_\_ Frequently

\_\_\_ Sometimes

\_\_\_ Rarely

Free response prompts

Please provide comments on the teaching within this course:

Please provide comments on the course itself:

What additional constructive feedback can you offer the instructor(s) that might help improve the class?

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1. UUF voted to abolish the current course evaluation system in 2003 after the report of Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching and Course Evaluations report in April 2003. This report outlined a series of steps that could be taken to revise the evaluation process.

2. A new Ad Hoc Committee (not a FS committee) on Course Evaluation (spring 2008) recommended new course evaluation questions that were circulated for feedback and comment. Input was provided from the FS Committee on Graduate Studies, FS Committee on Faculty Personnel and Faculty Senate Executive Committees and the Faculty Senate. The input is attached, and these are the summaries of the discussions from meeting minutes:

**Nov 11 2008 FSEC minutes Discussion of Course Evaluation Form**

Prof. Alan Levine, chair of the graduate studies committee, presented the committee's feedback about the proposed course evaluation form. Feedback concerned the order and format of the questions, how new and innovative teaching styles are measured, and the need to increase the number of surveys completed. Prof. Levine will present the feedback to Don Feke, vice-provost for undergraduate education, with the survey to be further discussed at the next faculty senate meeting.

**Nov 24 2008 Faculty Senate Discussion of Course Evaluation Form**

Prof. Alan Levine, chair of the graduate studies committee, presented the proposed new course evaluation form and the feedback from the graduate studies committee and the executive committee. Don Feke, vice-provost for undergraduate education, clarified that this form is

intended, at this time, for the evaluation of just undergraduate classes. There was discussion about how the survey protects students' anonymity in small classes, if the survey should reflect or lead innovations in teaching, and if the survey should evaluate or develop faculty teaching skills. The participation level of the overall number of students has gone up since the survey went online 3 semesters ago. The percentage of students per classroom who complete the survey has gone down in a few cases. Faculty Senate feedback will be considered and incorporated as possible.

### 3. Resolution from USG:

On Tuesday, January 19th, 2010, The Undergraduate Student Government General Assembly passed Resolution 19-09 recommending that the written comments of students on course evaluations be disclosed to the student body.

The rationale behind the course evaluation legislation is that students are not provided with enough information when it comes to courses. This legislation requests that the written comments of students on course evaluations be made available for viewing by all students allowing them to make more informed decisions when selecting courses. In addition, comments would be filtered to protect the character of the evaluated faculty.

### 4. Feb 2010 College of Arts and Sciences Executive Committee endorsed this **MOTION**:

*The Executive Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences endorses the creation of a university ad hoc committee to review and evaluate the current system of online student course evaluations.*

## **Course Evaluation Benchmarking**

### **From Emory University**

#### **Report of Course Evaluation Instruments and Procedures**

### **From Peer Institutions**

**by Carolyn Denard, Associate Dean ( March 5, 2009)**

1. Most schools (Duke, Vanderbilt, Wash U, NYU, U Chicago) have devised their own form.
2. The hybrid form with some questions borrowed from and templates developed by the IDEA Center can be useful and allow institutions to have "the best of both worlds".
3. By adding "learning outcome" questions to the faculty and student form, Duke has provided a helpful way of providing data for the SACS assessment right into the course evaluation process.
4. Most schools have made the transition to online, even realizing the potential for lower response rates, and they have suggested ways to intervene to counteract the initial low

response numbers of online forms. The data management positives of the online form far outweigh the negative benefits of the lower response rate.

5. All schools, except Chicago, allow students access to the results without the narrative comments. Chicago allows narrative comments, but the dean edits out the offensive and extreme comments before posting.
6. Most schools have not done reliability tests of their questions, but they do make deliberate attempts to have the faculty and /or designated committee approve each question.
7. Most schools agree that the online evaluation is the least time consuming administratively and provides the most accessible data and is the most cost effective.
8. Many argued that the online data was just as reliable as the paper data.
9. While all of these schools make their data accessible to students online, some schools allow faculty to opt out of online access to the results. ( See Duke and University of Chicago)

## Appendix III

### **Report of the UUF ad hoc Committee on Teaching and Course Evaluations, dated April 15, 2003**

This committee made three recommendations, all of which were approved at the UUF General Meeting in May 2003. These included: (1) cease using the course-evaluation questionnaire in use at that time and develop a reliable course-evaluation instrument; (2) establish guidelines for peer review of teaching and mentoring; and (3) require that course objectives be included on the syllabus for all courses. Note that CWRU still uses the same set of questions that the UUF voted to discontinue. This report also details the flaws perceived with the current set of questions used in the course-evaluation questionnaire.

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### **UUF *Ad Hoc* Committee on Teaching and Course Evaluations**

Report to the Executive Committee of the UUF April  
15, 2003

## **1 Preliminaries**

### **1.1 About these Recommendations**

This report presents certain broad recommendations to the Executive Committee of the UUF together with some suggested steps for immediate continued action. Some of our recommendations echo those of the previous *ad hoc* committee report. Since our recommendations may have sweeping consequences, especially in terms of institutional commitment, it is appropriate that the Executive Committee of the UUF, and the UUF itself, accept our basic premises and suggestions before taking additional action. Our summary recommendations appear below followed by suggested action steps to be taken over the summer and early fall, provided the Executive Committee of the UUF approves. More detailed rationale and discussion follow.

### **1.2 The Charge to the Committee**

1. To review the history and past recommendations on course evaluations and teaching at CWRU.
2. In the context of undergraduate education, to articulate and expand on the need to evaluate individual faculty teaching as specified in the Faculty Handbook.

3. To formulate recommendations to the UUF for the evaluation of individual faculty teaching in the undergraduate setting.
4. To formulate recommendations to the UUF on the scope and use of any data collected regarding the evaluation of individual faculty teaching.
5. To identify and articulate undergraduate student needs for useful and timely evaluation of undergraduate courses.
6. To formulate recommendations to the UUF for mechanisms and instruments to carry out the evaluation of undergraduate courses.
7. To formulate recommendations to the UUF for mechanisms and instruments to compare individual student perceptions of the learning experience in a course with the stated objectives of the course.
8. To formulate additional recommendations to the UUF on other ways to enhance communication among faculty, students and administrators with regard to undergraduate courses and undergraduate teaching.

### **1.3 Composition of the Committee**

- Alice Bach (Religion)
- Lisa Damato (Nursing)
- Doug Detterman (Psychology)
- Don Feke, Co-Chair (Vice Provost for Planning and Assessment, Chemical Engineering)
- Marshall Leitman, Co-Chair (Mathematics)
- Ryan Novince (Undergraduate Student, Freshman)
- Julie Petek (Undergraduate Studies)
- Elijah Petersen (Undergraduate Student, Senior)

### **1.4 Methodology**

The Committee met six times during the Spring, 2003. After reviewing the charge to the Committee and the report of the previous *ad hoc* committee (Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Establish a Policy on Course Evaluations, Spring 2000), we discussed those broad areas

our recommendations would address. Mainly our discussion focused on statistically based student evaluations and assessment of teaching effectiveness. The committee then gathered, read, and discussed some items culled from the extensive literature on course evaluations in order to assess the nature and scope of the available material. In this context, some members of the committee attended a UCITE presentation on the subject given by Mike Theall from Youngstown State University, an established

expert in the field of course evaluations. One member (MJL) visited Theall in Youngstown to explore further additional questions raised by the committee. There was substantial and lively debate on all the issues raised in this report.

## 2 Executive Summary

### 2.1 Summary Recommendations

**Student Questionnaire** CWRU should develop, produce, implement, and maintain its own psychometrically sound instrument to assess student perceptions of their learning environment and educational experience. Use of the current mark-sense questionnaire should be phased out as the new instrument is prepared and introduced. *If it is decided not to implement the substance of the Committee's recommendations with regard to the questionnaire, the default recommendation is to discontinue use of the current questionnaire.*

**Peer Review of Teaching and Mentoring** Establish and promulgate uniform faculty recommended guidelines for peer review of teaching and mentoring, including faculty recommended guidelines for the creation, maintenance and interpretation of instructor maintained teaching portfolios.

**Course Objectives** Descriptions and syllabi of undergraduate courses shall be accompanied by general overall course objectives.

### 2.2 Suggested Action Steps for 2003

1. Collect and prepare sample questions for use in a statistically based student questionnaire.
2. Adopt specific guidelines for the administrative use and interpretation of statistical data in decisions on promotions, tenure, and salaries.
3. Adopt specific guidelines on the preservation and protection of instructor privacy and promulgation of appropriate portions of any survey results in the wider university community and in public.
4. Investigate whether schools other than undergraduate would like to have courses incorporated into the student survey process.
5. In view of the current and emerging information technology capabilities on campus, investigate web-based mechanisms for ongoing feedback.
6. Assess software, hardware, and personnel needs necessary for CWRU to develop and maintain its own student survey. Investigate whether CWRU's Center for Institutional Research (CIR) can take on the responsibility of managing an ongoing student survey.

7. Establish guidelines and mechanisms to ensure that students are cognizant of course objectives.
8. Identify the university resources necessary to produce, implement, and maintain a course and teaching evaluation program as recommended by the committee.

### 2.3 Timeline

Following is a highly provisional timeline for implementing the committee's recommendation to produce a new student questionnaire. This timeline does not address those recommendations not related to the questionnaire.

**Summer 2003** Initiate some of those action steps listed above which could be carried out without full UUF approval, namely items 1, 4, 5, and 6.

**Fall 2003** No order is implied in the following, except that if the first does not take place, the process terminates.

- Debate and approval by the UUF of a program based on the committee's recommendations.
- UUF and Faculty Senate jointly begin to establish guidelines governing the use and interpretation of data collected to maintain CWRU's standard of a *dedication to effective teaching*.
- Secure university commitment of resources to continue and maintain the project.
- Identify and retain the services of a qualified consultant to manage the process of developing a statistically based, psychometrically sound student evaluation system.
- Student, faculty, and administrators participation in developing the questionnaire begins.

**Spring 2004**  $\beta$ -test questionnaire produced and administered.

**Summer 2004** Analysis of  $\beta$ -test.

**Fall 2004** Modified  $\beta$ -test continues and is analyzed.

**Spring 2005** Again, no order is implied.

- First, qualified use of the new questionnaire.
- Fine-tune the instrument.
- Faculty Senate affirms guidelines for use and interpretation of statistical data in relation to decisions mandated in the Faculty Handbook.

**Fall 2005** New questionnaire fully phased in.

## 3 Rationale and Discussion

## **3.1 Student Course and Teaching Evaluations**

### **3.1.1 A New Instrument**

The Committee strongly believes that the current course and teaching evaluation questionnaire (Instruction Evaluation Form #1783), together with the uses to which the collected data are put, no longer meets the needs and aspirations of CWRU. The current survey should be discontinued. In its place we recommend that a psychometrically sound instrument be developed and maintained to meet our unique requirements. (See 3.1.4 and 3.3.1) Any such questionnaire must be properly designed, tested, and normed so that the results obtained are statistically meaningful. In addition, the faculty should establish uniform guidelines to govern its use.

Requirements were organized into three (possibly overlapping) categories organized by the anticipated use of the data collected: Administrative (Assessment), Faculty (Feedback), and Student (Information). These categories may not be exhaustive; e.g. those concerned with enrollment management or public relations might want to make use of such a vehicle. (See the comments in 3.1.5 regarding the NSSE Survey.)

**Administrative Data** from a subset of questions would be used to inform those decision making processes with respect to promotion, tenure, and individual salary decisions. Data from the complementary set of questions should be explicitly excluded from these processes. Clear guidelines must be prescribed in advance for the interpretation of these data. Since the mandate to evaluate individual faculty members is within the purview of the faculty (See the Faculty Handbook), the guidelines for interpretation of data in this context should be endorsed by the Faculty Senate.

Another subset of questions may be reserved for performance evaluation of departments or other instructional units. Statistical in nature, they should not be used to evaluate individual faculty performance.

Questions in this category (Administrative) should be uniform over all instructional units. Furthermore, they should be relatively stable over time so that longitudinal data can be collected and interpreted. (This comment does not apply to the initial testing and norming process)

**Faculty** The questionnaire should contain questions designed to provide feedback for individual instructors. Data and results from these questions are regarded as private; they must be returned directly to the individual instructors and not disseminated or promulgated in any way. Anonymous narrative comments, such as those currently collected, fall in this category. Collection and use of such narratives should be entirely

at the discretion of the instructor.

**Student** Students need information about individual courses and instructors so that they can make informed choices. Questions in this category should be based on their desiderata. An attempt should be made to separate course information from instructor information, so that a useful database can be constructed.

### **3.1.2 Paper vs Web-based Forms**

The previous recommendation was to retain the paper format for basic data gathering and use the web for local ongoing faculty feedback. This Committee concurred with this recommendation and its rationale.

### **3.1.3 Development of a New Questionnaire**

A useful psychometrically sound questionnaire must be professionally developed, normed, and tested. This means that resources must be devoted specifically for this enterprise. There are off-the-shelf nationally normed instruments that can be purchased (e.g. from ETS and Kansas State University). However, CWRU should have its own custom made survey. As CWRU strives to develop its own unique place in the world of higher education, the Committee believes that a “one size fits all” product is not appropriate. Once the process is initiated, it would take about a year for  $\beta$ -testing and norming and another year for fine-tuning

and adjusting. Data collected during the  $\beta$ -test will not be used for any evaluative purpose, but some data collected in the second phase may possibly be of use. Thus, there would be an expected two-year period from inception until useful valid results are available. CWRU has the benefit of faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills to help in this development process. However, the Committee recommends that an external consultant be selected to manage and coordinate the overall process.

### **3.1.4 Transition**

If there is a decision and a commitment to develop a new questionnaire as proposed, there will be a one to two year transition period before the new instrument is in place. The current mark-sense questionnaire should continue to be used until the new one is ready, provided guidelines are in place for its use and interpretation. Suggested forms for obtaining anonymous student narrative comments should be available to download from the web. Their use should be entirely at the discretion of the instructor.

### **3.1.5 Maintenance of the Survey**

CWRU has a new Center for Institutional Research (CIR). Any statistically based vehicle for evaluation will require, packaging, piloting, and, most importantly, continuous maintenance. The CIR may be best placed to carry out some or all of these tasks. The CIR currently uses instruments

such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). If we develop our own evaluation form, it can be tailored to provide supporting data which may correlate with NSSE results and others. Such a combined effort is a further argument for having the CIR manage the evaluation job.

### **3.1.6 Long Form and Short Form**

Two forms should be developed — a long and a short form. Instructors, or perhaps instructional units, would decide when to use the long form in place of the short form. The long form should be used with sufficient frequency to give the students adequate information. The short form would contain questions whose data would be used administratively for assessment purposes. Confidential in nature, these data would not be disseminated in any other way. Included would be universal questions specifying (1) instructor, (2) course, (3) course level, (4) required *vs* elective course, etc. Clear and precise guidelines from the faculty for the forms' use and interpretation will help prevent abuses. The long form would incorporate the questions of the short form as well as: (i) questions designed to give feedback to individual instructors; (ii) questions designed to give feedback to their instructional units; and (iii) questions designed to give useful information to students. Information from a long form can be distributed so that administrators get only those data common with the short form, heads of instructional units also get those data which provide global information about their unit, instructors get all the data, including those specific to them and their course which can be used to improve and fine-tune their efforts, and students get data about the course and the instructor enabling them to make informed choices. This kind of parallel processing is easily implemented, given sufficient resources.

## **3.2 Teaching Evaluation**

### **3.2.1 The Problem**

The task of evaluating teaching effectiveness is particularly challenging. There is an extensive literature on this subject, a portion of which was reviewed by the committee. Indeed, the very definition of *teaching effectiveness* is problematic, although many claim to know it when they see it. Some references in the literature assert that there is no commonly held definition. Others say that teaching effectiveness is a measure of how well and how much the students learn in relation to the syllabus, course description, and stated objectives for the course. Our grading system at CWRU is predicated on the assumption that the instructor who renders judgment is the final arbiter of student achievement in a course. In the context of relating student learning and teaching effectiveness, the literature on statistically based evaluations presents a positive correlation between students' perceptions of a course and the grades given in that course in one special circumstance. (See W. E. Cashin, "Student Ratings of Teaching: The Research Revisited" [http://www.idea.ksu.edu/papers/pdf/Idea\\_Paper\\_32.pdf](http://www.idea.ksu.edu/papers/pdf/Idea_Paper_32.pdf))

) This circum-

stance is that of a multi-section course, taught by several different instructors, with a common syllabus and, importantly, a common, independently graded, final examination. In this narrow circumstance it might be reasonable to conclude that if instructor (A) has significantly higher ratings than instructor (B) then (A) was more effective than (B) in that course. There are many *caveats* to the interpretation of these data. In any case, few courses (if any) at CWRU meet these criteria. Since the CWRU standard is a *dedication to effective teaching*, (Faculty Handbook Part One, F, 1, (ii)) it is possible to develop questions which may help to assess this virtue; e.g., “The instructor came to class on time,” or “The instructor provided a useful syllabus,” or “The instructor set clear objectives for the course.” It is recommended that, in addition to any statistically based instrument, all instructors maintain a portfolio of material they, or their instructional unit, deem appropriate to demonstrate their dedication and teaching effectiveness (as they see it).

In the context of *dedication to teaching effectiveness*, there is a consensus that students will be more satisfied with a course if information beyond a mere syllabus is made available in a timely manner. They should like to know the objectives that the instructor or the instructional unit has set for a given course. Further, they should like to have some idea of the grading policy and the workload. The latter might include such things as: the anticipated number of tests, quizzes, papers required; required reading; class format (lecture, large lecture, teamwork, studio, lab), etc. In any case, it should be possible to gather statistical data which (one hopes) will positively correlate with how well students perceive this was done. Results from these can be combined with the recommended instructor maintained teaching portfolio, peer reviews, etc.

### **3.3 Acceptance**

#### **3.3.1 Faculty Buy-In**

For an evaluation system to engender substantial participation, faculty acceptance is crucial. If not, the process will be tainted or not used at all. If faculty accept the process as useful and valid, this attitude may be transmitted to the students and they will provide better data. To get voluntary acceptance, faculty must believe the process produces valid results and, even more importantly, they must be absolutely confident that the data collected will not be used punitively or abused in any way. To reach this level of confidence it may be necessary to have the entire process endorsed by the Faculty Senate. Indeed, those aspects which relate specifically to this issue could be incorporated in the Faculty Handbook and, thus, become part of the contractual relationship between the Faculty and the University.

Another necessary component in achieving faculty buy-in is to involve faculty extensively in the process of formulating the questions. There are ways to manage this process so that there is wide input converging to a short list of well-refined questions.

### **3.3.2 Administrator Buy-In**

It is necessary to involve those administrators who will eventually use the results of data collected through the student survey in the process of formulating it. It should be emphasized that not all data collected are appropriate for promotion, tenure, or salary decisions. Moreover, data deemed inappropriate for such decisions are not to be used administratively.

### **3.3.3 Student Buy-In**

If Faculty and Administration demonstrably accept the entire process, it is expected that students will also accept it. As for the faculty and administration, students, through their student government, must also participate in formulating the questions. To enhance credibility, class time should be used to complete the questionnaire, with sufficient time allotted for the process.

### **3.3.4 Support**

Information which provides feedback to instructors may not be of much use without some sort of support structure. CWRU has UCITE which can help instructors use, on a confidential basis, the data gathered to improve their results if they choose to take advantage of the service.

## Appendix IV

### Incentives that have been considered to enhance student participation

Note: Items highlighted in yellow are already in use at CWRU

#### Beneficial Practices Neutral to the Student

1. Advertise: Place banners and posters around campus; place ads in the *Observer*. Utilize the plasma-screen televisions throughout campus to explain the significance of course evaluations and encourage students to submit their evaluations.
2. Reminders: Periodically send email reminders (with embedded links to the on-line course evaluation system) about the importance of evaluations. Messages (in class, or via email) from faculty explaining the importance of course evaluations and asking their students to submit them are believed to be more effective than emails from a provost/dean or automated reminders from the course-evaluation system itself.
3. Make it easy: For example, during the course-evaluation period, have an alert or reminder (with embedded link) pop-up anytime a student accesses the university's network.
4. Visibility of results: The higher the visibility of the results, the more likely students may be willing to participate in the process. Make course evaluation results, including written comments, prominent to the university community. Note that if written comments are to be made public, they would need to be edited (for coarse language or inappropriate comments about the instructor's gender, age, appearance, clothing, etc.). Could faculty be given the option to post a response alongside the students' comments?
5. Include the option "I choose not to evaluate this course" as one of the options within the course-evaluation instrument. This tactic is believed to entice more students to enter the system, and the hope is that once they are in, they will decide to complete the evaluation anyway.
6. Establish a charity incentive. For example, CWRU could agree to donate \$1 (or whatever amount) for every course evaluation submitted to a charity of the students' choice. Students might rally behind such a cause.
7. Some students claim ignorance about where to find course evaluation information. Placing a link to this site on the page where students enroll in courses for the next semester would make the program more visibly useful and could encourage participation.

### Rewards to the Student for Submitting Evaluations

1. Allow students the opportunity to earn extra credit if participation in course evaluations is high. For example, the faculty member could say that if the participation rate reaches 80% for his/her class, an extra credit question will appear on the final exam.
2. Faculty may award extra-credit points for submitting course-evaluations. (A 1% bonus to the final grade is believed to be sufficient to entice students to submit their evaluations.)
3. Offer giveaways and prizes (a large prize – e.g., an iPod, a scholarship, or travel funds to attend a conference, or many smaller prizes – e.g., food vouchers, bookstore credits, etc.) which are raffled to students who submit evaluations.
4. Set up an incentive (e.g., \$1 or 50¢ per submitted evaluation) to fund a new student event/project at the students' discretion.
5. Give students registration priority if they properly submitted course evaluations for the prior term.

### Penalties to Students for Not Submitting Evaluations

1. **Annoying email reminders continue.**
2. Count submission of course evaluations as a required part of “class participation” or some other assignment, which, if uncompleted, can adversely affect the students' grades.
3. Course evaluation results are not made available to students unless the student has submitted his/her evaluations. (*Weakness of this penalty: A student can ask a friend to open course evaluation results for viewing.*)
4. Have grades posted as “Incomplete” until evaluations are submitted.
5. Delay the receipt of final grades (e.g., for a week or longer or forever) unless course-evaluations have been submitted. (*Several schools use of form of this disincentive. Within the past year, Harvard adopted this practice, and the result was a significant jump in participation. However we are warned that adopting this practice at CWRU would cause problems after the fall semester with the process of considering students for separation.*)
6. Undo a student's registration for the subsequent term, unless course-evaluations have been submitted. (*This would be an extreme tactic, as students might lose a spot in a limited- enrollment course which they need to graduate or keep on sequence in their major.*)

## **Appendix V MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES**

1. The idea of returning course evaluations to student control has been broached. There are some advantages to this idea but there are many reasons to resist such a change.
    - a. The "tenure" of students is relatively short, there will be rapid turnover in the students who run the process, and year-to-year consistency will suffer. If, in any given year, course evaluations are given short shrift, it will be difficult to recover in subsequent years.
    - b. Course evaluations are now used for critical decisions, such as promotion and tenure, and fairness requires the data come from a quality course evaluation process.
    - c. Faculty are likely to hold a student-controlled evaluation in lower regard than one controlled by the central administration and the faculty itself, and are therefore less likely to use this data to improve their teaching.
    - d. Course evaluations are arguably more important to faculty than they are to students, since this information is invaluable in judging and improving our teaching and making important personnel decisions.
    - e. Most universities like CWRU have course-evaluations administered centrally. This doesn't make it right, but it does suggest this is an appropriate model and it makes it easier to compare data at CWRU to data at other institutions.
    - f. If "carrots" or "sticks" tied to course grades are to be implemented for increasing participation rates, faculty involvement is critical.
-