

February 4, 2011

Dear Carola,

I chair the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Surveys. Our committee will brief the senate during its meeting on Thursday, February 10.

Our report will focus on our review of HOP 2.12, Student Evaluations of Instruction. The current version of the policy, posted January 13, 2011, is at:

<http://utsa.edu/hop/chapter2/2-12.html>

Section A of the policy describes procedures relating to the surveys.

Below is Section A of the policy as amended by my committee. Notes are in brackets.

- A. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will organize and oversee administration of the student evaluations of teaching
 1. The survey will be administered during the fall and spring semesters. [The HOP currently states, "The survey will be administered each semester."]
 2. Faculty may choose to be evaluated during the summer terms, but the survey results will not be used for performance evaluations. [This is a new item.]
 3. The Faculty Senate has oversight over any modifications to the survey format or process.
 4. Only organized classes with five or more students will be surveyed. [Minor change.]
 5. Evaluations will be conducted after two-thirds of the semester has been completed. [Minor change.]
 6. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will administer the survey, in accordance with University policy.
 7. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will provide summaries of the survey results to each faculty member whose classes are surveyed.
 8. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will provide summaries of the quantitative results to each Department Chair for the faculty in the department, for use by the Chair, the Dean, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President, and appropriate faculty advisory committees. Student comments will be released to the instructor only. [The last sentence relating to student comments is not in the current policy.]
 9. Survey results will be retained by the Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness.

The current text of Section A is appended to the bottom of this report.

Our committee wrestled with three issues:

(1) The first was whether surveys should be required during summer terms (in addition to fall and spring semesters). The committee decided that surveys should not be required during

summer terms (see above, (A)(1)(2)). The logic was that faculty have 9-month appointments during fall and spring and that surveys should be required for this period only. Prior versions of the HOP have required surveys during fall and spring only.

(2) Another issue was whether faculty who teach during the summer could choose to have surveys administered during summer terms. The committee decided that faculty who teach during the summer could choose to have surveys administered in the summer—but that the results should not be used for performance evaluations (see (A)(2)). Its reasoning was that feedback from the summer could be used to improve teaching but, since faculty are appointed during fall and spring, only fall and spring results should be used for performance evaluations.

(3) A final issue was whether student comments should be released to chairs and deans. The committee decided that student comments should not be released to chairs and deans but be released to instructors only (see (A)(8)). This decision was based in part on faculty concerns about the privileged nature of student comments and how “outlier” comments might influence evaluations. The decision is also consistent with past practice.

Our report next week will focus on the three issues described above. Thanks for all your hard work on behalf of the senate and the faculty.

Best,
Tom

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Associate Professor of Psychology

Appendix **Section A, HOP 2.12, as Currently Posted in the HOP**

A. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will organize and oversee administration of the student evaluations of teaching

1. The survey will be administered each semester.
2. The Faculty Senate has oversight over any modifications to the survey format or process.
3. All organized classes with five or more students will be surveyed.
4. Evaluations will not be conducted before two-thirds of the semester has been completed.
5. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will administer the survey, in accordance with University policy
6. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will provide summaries of the survey results to each faculty member whose classes are surveyed.
7. The Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness will provide summaries of the survey results to each Department Chair for the faculty in the department, for use by the Chair, the Dean, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President, and appropriate faculty advisory committees.

8. Survey results will be retained by the Office of the Vice Provost for Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness.