

## **Administration of the Student Evaluation of Instruction Instrument (SEI) in Online Courses**

SEI data must be gathered in accordance with policies that appear in the *Faculty Handbook* whether a course is taught online or is taught face-to-face. It is of great concern to the Faculty Evaluation Review Subcommittee (FERS) of the Faculty Senate that these policies may not have been followed by the Office of Distance Education in recent years. (Relevant excerpts from the *Handbook* appear at the end of this document).

### **Recommendations:**

1. Section 4-6.B.3, Schedule of Student Evaluations, sets aside the rotation schedule for collection of data. FERS recommends that a procedure be developed to ensure that the Office of Distance Education can identify which online faculty members require evaluation by the SEI in a given semester. One suggestion is to forward this concern to either the Deans Council or to the Chairs' Council. This would also ensure that department chairs are aware of the need to incorporate online course SEI data into annual evaluation reports.
  
- 2). The SEI data for courses taught online must be incorporated into the Chairs' Annual Evaluation Reports which are distributed to faculty members for their signatures between April 15 and May 1. (Please see the Typical Calendar of Events for Annual Evaluations, Section 4-13.A and Preparation of Student Evaluation Reports, Section 4.6.B.4). Therefore, SEI data gathered by the Office of Distance Education in spring semester courses must be provided to department chairs no later than **April 1.**
  
- 3). To ensure that data are collected at an approximately equivalent point in the fall semester, it is recommended that SEI data gathered by the Office of Distance Education in fall semesters be collected in November. It is further recommended that these data be provided to department chairs no later than about **December 1.** These data must be available to first-year faculty for discussion and incorporation into their renewal portfolios that are due to department chairs in mid-January. In addition, SEI data may fulfill a formative purpose for all faculty members, so timely dissemination is critical.
  
- 4). As is noted in the *Handbook* policies, faculty may not be given access to their SEI data by department chairs until the semester is over and all course grades have been submitted. To ensure uncontaminated data, it is equally important to ensure that online students not be allowed to complete the SEI after they have received their final course grades.
  
- 5). SEI data should be provided to the chair of the department who is responsible for performing the annual evaluation of that faculty member ONLY. Normally, this is the chair of the department where the faculty member holds rank. If a department chair is teaching an online course, SEI data for his/her course should be provided to the dean of the department chair's school or college.
  
- 6). Graduate course assessments are conducted according to procedures approved by the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate. These data are used to assess courses and cannot be used to evaluate faculty. FERS recommends that the Graduate Council and/or Faculty Senate insert a description of this process for collecting graduate course evaluations in the *Faculty Handbook*. The current *Handbook* (Section 4-6.B.2) states only "Graduate courses are evaluated following procedures approved by the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate. These procedures can be found in the Graduate *Faculty Handbook*." However, the webpage for

the School of Graduate Studies merely states that the *Graduate Faculty Handbook* is “Coming soon!” Given the continuing confusion over procedures related to the collection of these course data, as well as their purpose, it might be useful to have this information more readily available to faculty and to those who are responsible for evaluating faculty. Collection of these data for online courses should mirror data collection procedures used for face-to-face courses.

Relevant excerpts from the *Faculty Handbook*:

#### **4.6.B.1 Policies for Student Evaluation**

All course instructors (full-or part-time faculty, department chairs, or administrators who teach) are evaluated by students in all their classes. Full-time faculty are evaluated during one semester of each academic year and part-time faculty are evaluated each semester. The Student Evaluation of Instruction Form must be approved by the Senate of the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate (see Figure, Section 4-12.D). A department may add up to five supplementary items or scales to this form without approval from the Senate. Alternatively, a department may develop a substitute Student Evaluation of Instruction Form in lieu of the general form. The Senate of the Student Government Association and the Faculty Senate must approve any alternate forms.

#### **4-6.B.2 Collection Procedures for Student Evaluations**

Instructors being evaluated by students must employ the following evaluation procedures. First, the class is to select a student who will distribute the forms, collect the completed forms, place them in an envelope, and return the sealed envelope to the department secretary. Second, the faculty member must be absent from class while the evaluations are completed. Third, the faculty member being evaluated must not tabulate the student evaluations. Fourth, the faculty member must not receive any report on his or her evaluations until grades for the current semester have been submitted; verbatim evaluation statements will be transcribed when possible. Faculty members are encouraged to conduct student evaluations at the beginning of a class session, to allow students adequate time to complete them.

Student evaluation of graduate instruction follows the same procedures as in undergraduate instruction. Graduate courses are evaluated following procedures approved by the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate. These procedures can be found in the *Graduate Faculty Handbook*.

#### **4-6.B.3 Schedule of Student Evaluations**

All first-year faculty are to be evaluated by students in both fall and spring semesters. Other faculty members are to be evaluated once a year on the following schedule:

Academic years that begin in odd-numbered years (e.g., fall, 1995-spring, 1996)  
Faculty whose last names begin A-M are evaluated in the fall semester  
Faculty whose last names begin N-Z are evaluated in the spring semester

Academic years that begin in even-numbered years (e.g., fall, 1996-spring, 1997)  
Faculty whose last names begin N-Z are evaluated in the fall semester  
Faculty whose last names begin A-M are evaluated in the spring semester

#### **4.6.B.4 Preparation of Student Evaluation Reports**

A quantitative summary of the ratings in each course is prepared as soon as possible and transcripts of student comments are prepared when possible. The faculty member being

evaluated must not prepare the quantitative summary or the transcript of comments. The department chair must retain the raw Student Evaluation of Instruction Forms for as long as these may be required for future evaluation reviews.

After grades have been submitted, the faculty member receives copies of the quantitative summaries and copies of the transcribed student comments if available. The faculty member may examine the original comments in the department chair's office.

The department chair prepares the Student Evaluation Report, based on both undergraduate and graduate student evaluations, to be included in the annual Chair's Evaluation Report, by summarizing in a narrative the quantitative summaries and individual comments given by students.