

STUDENT EVALUATIONS AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
PROCEDURAL MANUAL



STUDENT EVALUATIONS AT WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

Western Carolina University uses an on-line course evaluation system, *CoursEval*[™], for gathering and disseminating the results of student evaluations. The process and procedures for student evaluations are the same across the campus so that data collected can be as uniform as possible. These policies and procedures are outlined in this short handbook. It is recommended that all faculty review this document. Student evaluations are often referred to by the acronym **SAI** (Student Assessment Instrument). This term refers to the on-line evaluations done using the *CoursEval* system. SAI data are an integral part of the reappointment, tenure, and promotion process at WCU.

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History and Background

Student Assessment Instruments are important to both faculty and administrators. The work involved with reviewing and implementing an online process was considerable.

Previous SAIs used Scantron sheets as evaluation tools. The software system used for this function became increasingly unreliable and finally obsolete. Additionally, the University of North Carolina's General Administration mandated that all system universities create a uniform mechanism for measuring performance.

A WCU SAI task force formed and agreed with the GA mandate: compiling university-wide data on student evaluation of instruction would be useful. Any new SAI would need to demonstrate uniform and universal bases for evaluation. The task force also recognized that WCU was offering a greater diversity of courses than in the past. SAIs would need to be able to work for many different types of courses and to offer enough flexibility to address the distinctive aspects of WCU's many departments and programs.

The Faculty Senate investigated the SAI issue and generated a list of standardized questions to be used in course evaluation. As a result, 12 different form types of SAI questions were created. These form types applied to different types of courses. This system satisfied the two goals outlined by the task force. A resolution adopting these 12 "master" questions was passed by the Faculty Senate in 2005.

A task force was then created to review online course evaluation systems available through current software used on campus. Online evaluation systems provide a uniform system for gathering course evaluation information (thus meeting the GA mandate). The task force determined the logistics of online course evaluation and investigated three potential solutions: WebCT/WebCat, Banner, and Ultimate Survey. For logistical reasons (privacy, customization, product support, etc.), these solutions were deemed as not feasible options.

A new task force was created to investigate outside vendors that could provide online SAI systems. This task force selected Academic Management System's product *CoursEval3*. A pilot program was conducted in Spring 2007 and included five volunteer departments: Psychology, Political Science, Applied Criminology, Marketing and Business Law, and Chemistry & Physics. The results were evaluated to determine the utility and efficacy of the online system. Upon review, the pilot project was successful and implementation was recommended for campus-wide use.

CoursEval became open to all faculty and all departments as of the 2008 – 2009 academic year. Response rates have steadily increased and the University conducted a full validation study to ensure that the results of these evaluations provide faculty, administration, and departments with the necessary information. Oversight of the *CoursEval* process is now shared among Academic Affairs, the Office of Institutional Research, and the Faculty Senate.

Evaluation Forms

Sections

The form is divided into five major sections reflecting the “seven dimensions of teaching” as described in the *Faculty Handbook*:

- Organization and Clarity
- Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation
- Rapport and Respect
- Feedback and Accessibility
- Student Perceptions of Learning

Each section contains four statements. These statements vary by course format. Response categories follow a Likert-type format with response options of:

Strongly Agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / N/A

A typical set of questions used for the “Standard Course” form is below:

Organization and Clarity

- My instructor is well prepared for class meetings.
- My instructor explains the subject matter clearly.
- My instructor clearly communicates course goals and objectives.
- My instructor answers questions appropriately.

Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation

- My instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course.
- My instructor presents the subject in an interesting manner.
- My instructor stimulates my thinking.
- My instructor motivates me to do my best work.

Rapport and Respect

- My instructor helps students sufficiently with course-related issues.
- My instructor is regularly available for consultation.
- My instructor is impartial in dealing with students.
- My instructor respects opinions different from his or her own.

Feedback and Accessibility

- Assessment methods accurately assess what I have learned in this course.
- Grades are assigned fairly.
- The basis for assigning grades is clearly explained.
- The instructor provides feedback on my progress in the course on a regular basis.

Student Perceptions of Learning

My instructor advances my knowledge of course content.

My instructor promotes my understanding of important conceptual themes.

My instructor enhances my capacity to communicate effectively about the course subject matter.

My instructor encourages me to value new viewpoints related to the course.

To see all the formats and the questions being used in each format please refer to the following website <http://www.wcu.edu/8356.asp>.

Form Types

The WCU Faculty Senate adapted the twenty statements from the Standard Course form to suit the variety of courses being taught across campus. If a faculty member is dissatisfied with the Standard Course form, there are eleven other possible formats including:

- [Activities Course](#)
- [Hybrid Course](#)
- [Independent Research Course](#)
- [Internship, Practica, and Clinical Course](#)
- [ITV-Delivered Course](#)
- [Laboratory Course](#)
- [Lecture/ Lab \(Project\) Course](#)
- [Lecture/ Lab \(Traditional\) Course](#)
- [Online Course](#)
- [Seminar Course](#)
- [Standard Course](#)
- [Studio-Performance Course](#)

Click on the links to see the statements available for each format.

The Standard Course form is the default option for student evaluations. Should a faculty member desire to implement another assessment form for a course, he or she should consult with his or her department head prior to the beginning of every term.

Timeline

For courses with a 15 week duration:

The SAI period shall begin on the Sunday three weeks before the beginning of finals week and close on the Sunday one week prior to the beginning of finals week, thus SAIs will be open for two weeks.

For courses with duration less than 15 weeks and greater than four weeks duration:

The SAI period shall begin on the Sunday two weeks from the end of classes and close on the Sunday of the final week of classes, thus SAIs will be open for one week.

For courses with duration less than four weeks and greater than or equal to two weeks:

The SAI period shall begin on the day five class periods from the last class period and close prior to two (including the last class) class periods from final class period, thus SAIs will be open for 60 hours.

For courses with duration less than two weeks:

The SAI period shall begin three (including the last class) class periods from the last class period and close prior to one class period from final class period, thus SAIs will be open for at least 48 hours.

The Division of Academic Affairs issues the dates when *CoursEval* will be open before each semester begins. Faculty are strongly encouraged to put these dates on syllabi as it helps both students and instructors remember opening and closing dates of assessments.

CoursEval Specifics

What Students Receive and See

CoursEval will be open when approximately 80% of the course is completed. During this period, email notifications will be sent to students' Catamount email accounts indicating that course evaluations are now open. Students are also sent emails notifying them when and how to log-on to the *CoursEval* system. The University will also have banners, flyers, and billboards displayed on campus that encourage student participation in the program. Figures 1 – 3 illustrate student views of *CoursEval*.

Course Evaluation Announcement

Western Carolina University
Undergraduate and Graduate

Dear Roland,

Please use the information in this message to access our Course Evaluation site and complete the course and faculty evaluations available to you.

** We welcome your feedback on the course and the instructor. Please be aware that, because this is a course that has five or fewer students in it, your professor may be able to determine from whom your comments came. In this course, as in all courses regardless of their size, your instructor will not see your comments or ratings until after final grades have been submitted.**

If for any reason you are unable to use the log-in buttons to the right, please use the following:

Your User Name is: rdeschain
Your password is the same password that is normally associated with this user name.
(For students, this is the password you use to log in to MyCat. For employees, this is the password used to log in to Outlook through the Internet.)

Here is the link. (You may need to copy and paste this into your browser.)
<http://courseval.wcu.edu>

If you experience difficulties, try clearing your browser of cookies/temp files; in Internet Explorer you can go to Tools, Delete Browser History, and delete the Temporary Internet Files and Cookies.

If you are still experiencing difficulties, email wcuourseval@email.wcu.edu for assistance. Please include your 92# and a description of the problem.

Course Number	Course Name	Instructor(s)	Available Until
MTH 119	Introduction to Algebra	Dean, Edward	04/19/2009
ENG 233	Themes in Early American Literature	Walker, Susanna	04/19/2009
HIS 212	Colonial Latin America	Deppreart, Aaron	04/19/2009
PHI 310	Modern Asian Thought	Andolina, Jack	04/19/2009

If you have problems logging in please reply to this message or click [here](#).

Login Information

User Name: rdeschain
Password: {Use your account password}

Login Now

If clicking the button above does not take you to the Survey Site, enter the URL found at the bottom of this message into your browser's address box.

Support email: wcuourseval@email.wcu.edu
Link to Site: <https://www.ams-host2.com/etw/crseval.asp?i=51>



Figure 1. Initial email to students.

Survey List

Click the 'Open Survey' button to view a survey questionnaire. Buttons with green pages indicate you have begun completing the survey, but have not finished.

2009 Spring - Internship - 3/15 - 3/22 Survey				
Course Name	Course Number	Instructor(s)	Submission Deadline	Open Survey
Clinical Practicum III	NSG486B2 81	B. Garner	03/22/2009	

2009 Spring - Standard Lecture - 3/15 - 3/22 Survey				
Course Name	Course Number	Instructor(s)	Submission Deadline	Open Survey
Nursing Science III	NSG486B2 81	B. Garner	03/22/2009	

Figure 2. Student view of the CourseEval website.



Test survey for training (200810 2008)

Course Information

Course Name: TR101 01 - CourseEval Training
Department: Training
Instructor: Mr. Cat Mount

If you have questions or comments about this survey, click [\[here\]](#) to send a message to the survey administrator.

* Standard Course Form
Mount, Cat A

Organization and Clarity (Mount, Cat A)

To mark all questions in this section as Not Applicable, click here: [\[icon\]](#)

1) My instructor is well prepared for class meetings.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

2) My instructor explains the subject matter clearly.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

3) My instructor clearly communicates course goals and objectives.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

4) My instructor answers questions appropriately.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

[Save Progress](#)

Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation (Mount, Cat A)

To mark all questions in this section as Not Applicable, click here: [\[icon\]](#)

5) My instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

6) My instructor presents the subject in an interesting manner.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

7) My instructor stimulates my thinking.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree Not Applicable

8) My instructor motivates me to do my best work.

Figure 3. Student view of survey.

Open-Ended Questions

The SAI also contains a section with the following two open-ended questions:

1. Describe the best aspects of this course.
2. Describe changes that could be made to improve the course.

Students have a text box in which to respond to these questions.

Unlike the scaled answers, these open-ended responses are viewable only by the specific faculty, dean, and department head. These open-ended responses may be included in reappointment, tenure, promotion, and annual evaluation documents. The inclusion of open-ended responses is at the discretion of individual faculty.

The open-ended questions were selected to provide **formative** information, i.e. be constructive in helping faculty to continue to improve teaching. Faculty may choose to use them as part of the **summative** evaluation, however, that is not the primary purpose.

What Faculty Members Receive and See

An email is sent to the faculty member alerting him/her that *CoursEval* is open (Figure 4). Approximately half way through the *CoursEval* period, a second email is sent to the faculty member indicating the percentage of students that have responded at that time (Figure 5). At this point, it is appropriate to remind students of the importance the *CoursEval* process and encourage them to participate.

Course Evaluation Announcement

Western Carolina University
Undergraduate and Graduate

This message is notification that **course evaluations are now open to students** for the following courses:

Course Number	section	Course Name	Survey Close
MTH 119	1264	Introduction to Algebra	04/19/2009
MTH 223	0344	Linear Algebra	04/19/2009
MTH 433	1234	Explorations in Abstract Algebra	04/19/2009

If you have problems logging in please reply to this message or click [here](#).

Login Information

User Name: rdeschain
Password: {Use your account password}

Login Now

If clicking the button above does not take you to the Survey Site, enter the URL found at the bottom of this message into your browser's address box.

Experience has shown that faculty members who encourage their students to participate in evaluations obtain a significantly higher response rate than those who do not. Please take a moment to discuss the evaluation with your class and encourage them to participate in the process.

Thank you!

Course evaluations will be available for faculty review at the end of the term. In you have any questions or experience any difficulties, please contact wcuourseval@email.wcu.edu or call 828-227-3042.

Support email: wcuourseval@email.wcu.edu
Link to Site: <https://www.ams-host2.com/etw/cseval.asp?i=51>

CoursEval³

Figure 4. First faculty notification that *CoursEval* is open.

Course Evaluation
Western Carolina University
Undergraduate and Graduate

Announcement

This is a CoursEval update. If your response rates are lower than you would like, please remind your students about the evaluations and ask them to participate. Thank you!

Evaluations for these courses will be closing on: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Course Number	section	Course Name	Expected	Received
MTH 119	1254	Introduction to Algebra	102	72
MTH 223	0344	Linear Algebra	58	37

Course evaluations will be available for faculty review at the end of the term. In you have any questions or experience any difficulties, please contact wccourseval@email.wcu.edu or call 828-227-3042.

Login Information

User Name: rdeschain

Password: {Use your account password}

If clicking the button above does not take you to the Survey Site, enter the URL found at the bottom of this message into your browser's address box.

Support email: wccourseval@email.wcu.edu
 Link to Site: <https://www.ams-host2.com/etw/crseval.asp?i=51>

Figure 5. Email to the faculty indicating response rate.

After Final Grades Have Been Submitted:

After grades are submitted, emails will be sent from *CoursEval* notifying faculty that evaluations are ready for review. The email contains password and user name information.

The Following Semester:

Evaluations from a given semester will be available for one academic year. Faculty are encouraged to print out results for collegial review portfolios.

Getting Results

After final grades have been recorded, a last *CoursEval* email will be sent to the faculty member indicating evaluation results are available. Faculty will go to the *CoursEval* site and enter their personal user name and password. These are usually the same as the Outlook passwords (i.e. not 92 numbers). Once logged into the system the following screen (Figure 6) should appear:

Western Carolina University Undergraduate and Graduate

Reports Other Help Log Out Home

Evaluation Reports Cat Mount

Survey Type: Standard Survey Year: Show All Survey Period: Show All Survey Status: Closed Survey: Show All

View: Comparative Hide Private Q's

Survey Name	Year	Period	Course Number	Course Name	Responsible Faculty	Close Date	Resp. Rec'd	Resp. Exp.	% Rec'd	Include
Test survey for training	2007	200710	TR101 01	CATeval Training	Mount, Cat A	10/19/2007	5	5	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Test survey for training	2009	200910	TR101 01	CoursEval Training	Mount, Cat A	03/23/2009	5	5	100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2 records found.

Figure 6. Summary Screen on CoursEval for survey results.

To view course results, click on **VIEW REPORT** in the upper right-hand corner of the table on the screen. This opens a new window that lists the results for each course instructed that semester. It should look similar to the following report (Figure 7):

Course: TR101 D1 - CoursEval Training
Instructor: Mr. Cat Mount

Department: Training
Resp. Rec'd / Expected: 5 / 5

* Standard Course Form
Organization and Clarity

	Responses				Individual				
	[8A]	[A]	[D]	[8D]	Med.	Mode	S.D.	N	Mean
Q1 My instructor is well prepared for class meetings.	3	1	0	1	4	4	1.17	6	3.2
Q2 My instructor explains the subject matter clearly.	4	1	0	0	4	4	.40	6	3.8
Q3 My instructor clearly communicates course goals and objectives.	2	2	1	0	3	3,4	.75	6	3.2
Q4 My instructor answers questions appropriately.	2	2	1	0	3	3,4	.75	6	3.2

Responses: [8A] Strongly Agree=4 [A] Agree=3 [D] Disagree=2 [8D] Strongly Disagree=1

* Standard Course Form
Enthusiasm and Intellectual Stimulation

	Responses				Individual				
	[8A]	[A]	[D]	[8D]	Med.	Mode	S.D.	N	Mean
Q5 My instructor is enthusiastic about teaching this course.	4	1	0	0	4	4	.40	6	3.8
Q6 My instructor presents the subject in an interesting manner.	2	3	0	0	3	3	.49	6	3.4
Q7 My instructor stimulates my thinking.	2	3	0	0	3	3	.49	6	3.4
Q8 My instructor motivates me to do my best work.	1	4	0	0	3	3	.40	6	3.2

Responses: [8A] Strongly Agree=4 [A] Agree=3 [D] Disagree=2 [8D] Strongly Disagree=1

* Standard Course Form
Rapport and Respect

	Responses				Individual				
	[8A]	[A]	[D]	[8D]	Med.	Mode	S.D.	N	Mean
Q9 My instructor helps students sufficiently with course-related issues.	4	1	0	0	4	4	.40	6	3.8
Q10 My instructor is regularly available for consultation.	2	1	1	0	3	4	.83	4	3.3
Q11 My instructor is impartial in dealing with students.	2	2	0	1	3	3,4	1.10	6	3.0
Q12 My instructor respects opinions different from his or her own.	2	3	0	0	3	3	.49	6	3.4

Responses: [8A] Strongly Agree=4 [A] Agree=3 [D] Disagree=2 [8D] Strongly Disagree=1

* Standard Course Form
Feedback and Assessability

	Responses				Individual				
	[8A]	[A]	[D]	[8D]	Med.	Mode	S.D.	N	Mean
Q13 Assessment methods accurately assess what I have learned in this course.	2	3	0	0	3	3	.49	6	3.4
Q14 Grades are assigned fairly.	4	1	0	0	4	4	.40	6	3.8
Q15 The basis for assigning grades is clearly explained.	3	2	0	0	4	4	.49	6	3.8
Q16 The instructor provides feedback on my progress in the course on a regular basis.	2	2	1	0	3	3,4	.75	6	3.2

Responses: [8A] Strongly Agree=4 [A] Agree=3 [D] Disagree=2 [8D] Strongly Disagree=1

* Standard Course Form
Student Perceptions of Learning

	Responses				Individual				
	[8A]	[A]	[D]	[8D]	Med.	Mode	S.D.	N	Mean
Q17 My instructor advances my knowledge of course content.	3	2	0	0	4	4	.49	6	3.8
Q18 My instructor promotes my understanding of important conceptual themes.	1	4	0	0	3	3	.40	6	3.2
Q19 My instructor enhances my capacity to communicate effectively about the course subject matter.	2	3	0	0	3	3	.49	6	3.4
Q20 My instructor encourages me to value new viewpoints related to the course.	3	2	0	0	4	4	.49	6	3.8

Responses: [8A] Strongly Agree=4 [A] Agree=3 [D] Disagree=2 [8D] Strongly Disagree=1

Faculty: Mount, Cat A

Question: Describe the best aspects of this course.

Response Rate: 80.00% (4 of 5)

- 1 The instructor explains concepts really clearly and always has time to meet after class.
- 2 I have learned so much from this class.
- 3 I really like the writing assignments.

4 This is one of the best courses that I have ever taken at Western. The instructor is really helpful and does everything possible to help us learn the material. I like the format of the tests, even though I really have to spend lots of time studying - I feel like it's worth it. I like the assignments. The grading seems fair and reasonable. I feel like the instructor pushes me to do my best work. I think I will even be able to use some of the assignments in a portfolio when I go to job interviews.

Faculty: Mount, Cat A

Question: Describe changes that could be made to improve the course.

Figure 7. Typical detailed CoursEval report.

Scaled Responses

Results are broken down into the five major categories of the Student Assessment Instrument. Faculty will be able to see how many students Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) or N/A with each of the five categories provided in the evaluation form. These qualitative responses are then converted into their numerical equivalents as follows:

Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

To the right of the number of responses received in each category, a table provides the median, mode, standard deviation, the N, and the mean for each category and for the course as a whole (Figure 8).

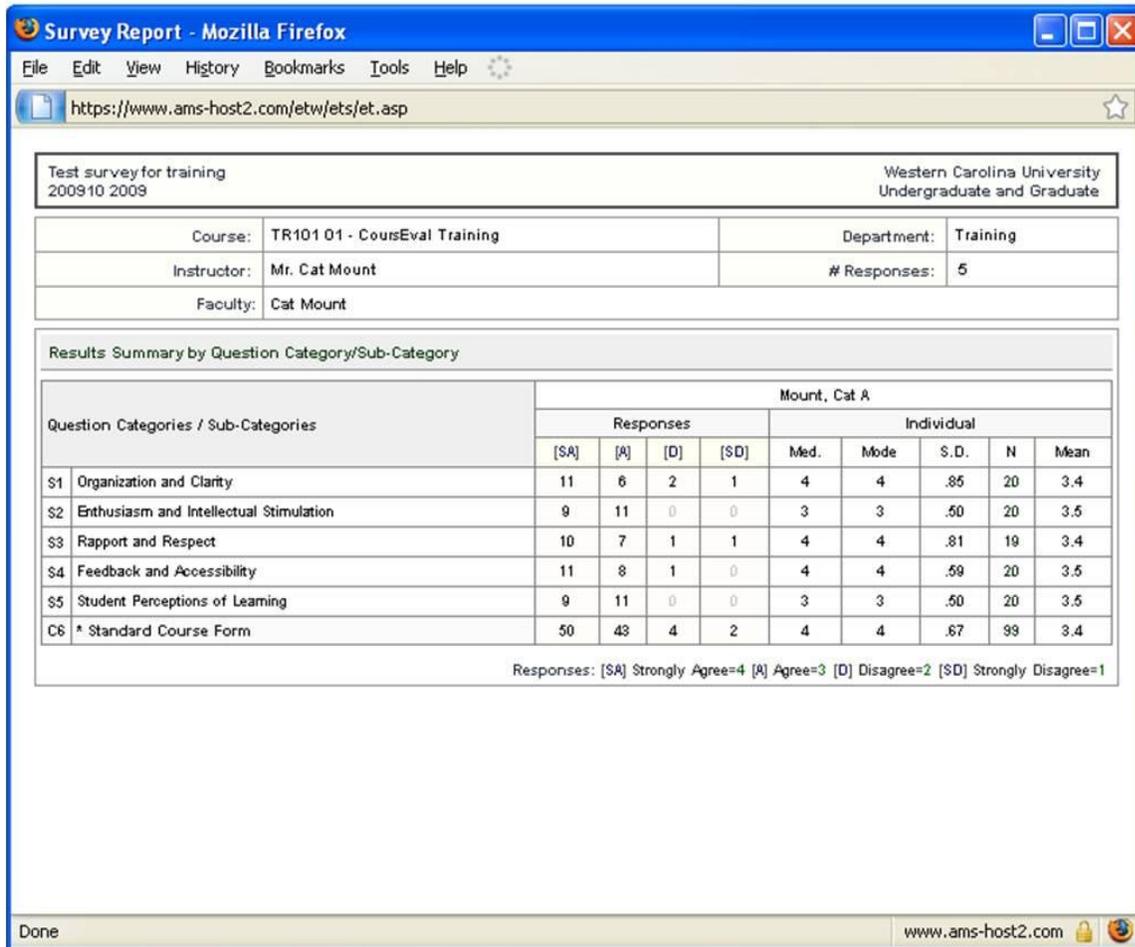


Figure 8. Summary CoursEval report.

Each category -labeled S1, S2, etc. - represents four individual questions. To get result breakdowns by individual question, return to the main results page. In the upper right-hand corner, there is a drop-down menu (Figure 9) labeled **REPORTS**. From this menu, click on **DETAILED RESULTS**. One can also view the **OVERALL REPORT** (See instructions under Open-Ended Responses below)

To print results, look to the upper right-hand side of the Main Screen for the word “PRINT” (Figure 10). This will open a new window with a printable version of the report.

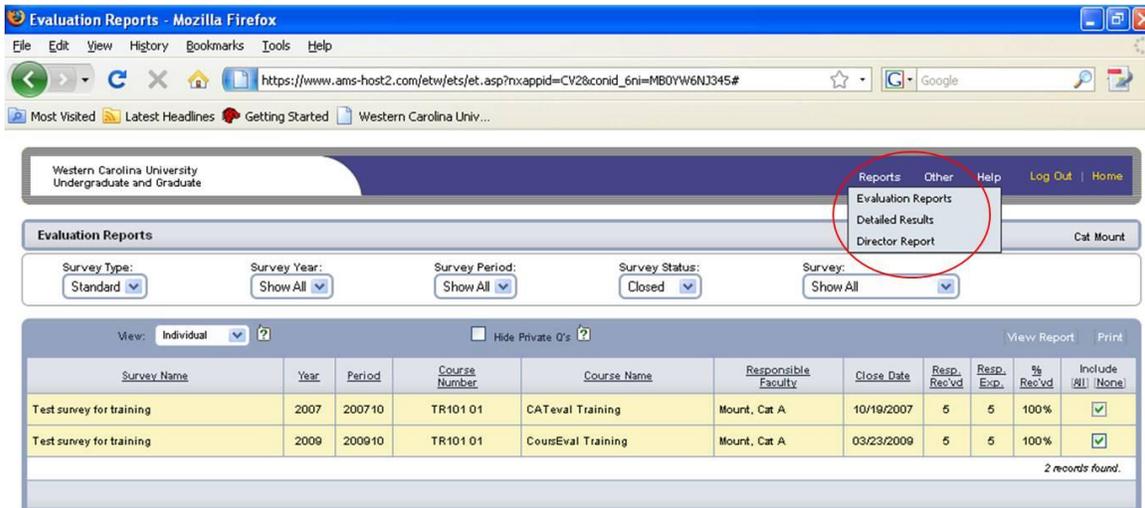


Figure 9. Retrieving reports from main results page.

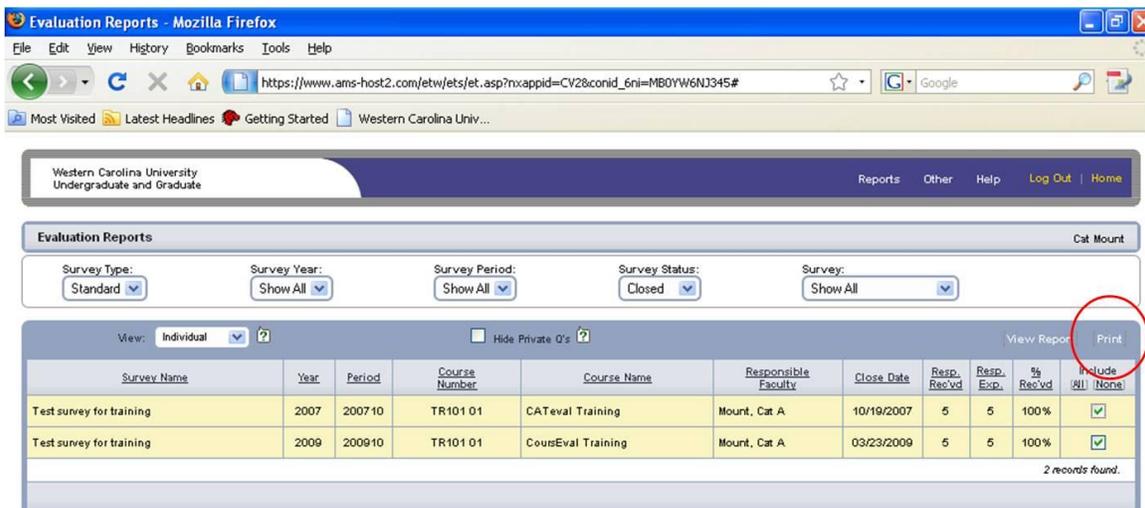


Figure 10. Main results page.

Faculty should include these reports in reappointment, tenure, and promotion documents as well as annual faculty evaluation dossiers. The exact format for including information in these documents may vary by department and college.

Open-Ended Responses

To access student responses to open-ended questions, click on the box marked **OVERALL REPORT** at the opening page (Figure 11). By clicking this, a full report can be viewed (including scaled and open-ended responses) for each individual class. Color charts are also provided. The responses to the open-ended questions follow the scaled responses on this report. They appear in individual text boxes (Figure 12).

Western Carolina University
Undergraduate and Graduate

Individual Reports

Year: Show All Term: Show All Survey: Test survey for training

Course	Course Name	Department	Year	Assessed Individual	Res	Overall Report
TR101 01	CourseEval Training	Training		Mount, Cat	5	

Figure 11. Individual course report page.

My instructor advances my knowledge of course content.	3.6	4.0	4	.49	-	-	2	3	5	0	5
My instructor promotes my understanding of important conceptual themes.	3.2	3.0	3	.40	-	-	4	1	5	0	5
My instructor enhances my capacity to communicate effectively about the course subject matter.	3.4	3.0	3	.49	-	-	3	2	5	0	5
My instructor encourages me to value new viewpoints related to the course.	3.6	4.0	4	.49	-	-	2	3	5	0	5

*N/A responses indicate that the participant felt they did not have the information or experience required to respond to a question.

Faculty: Mount, Cat A
Question: Describe the best aspects of this course.
Response Rate: 80.00% (4 of 5)

- The instructor explains concepts really clearly and always has time to meet after class.
- I have learned so much from this class.
- I really like the writing assignments.
- This is one of the best courses that I have ever taken at Westem. The instructor is really helpful and does everything possible to help us learn the material. I like the format of the tests, even though I really have to spend lots on time studying - I feel like it's worth it. I like the assignments. The grading seems fair and reasonable. I feel like the instructor pushes me to do my best work. I think I will even be able to use some of the assignments in a portfolio when I go to job interviews!

Faculty: Mount, Cat A
Question: Describe changes that could be made to improve the course.
Response Rate: 80.00% (4 of 5)

- I wish the tests were more spread out over the semester.
- We cover too much material in a short time.
- The syllabus is confusing. Other than that, I can't really think of anything. This professor is excellent, and I would definitely recommend this course to my friends.
- Nothing.

Figure 12. Open-ended student responses.

Frequently Asked Questions

From Students

- *Why are student evaluations of faculty important?*
Student evaluations are important for two reasons. First, individual instructors can and do use student evaluations to improve their teaching. Second, student evaluations are used as one of several factors in judging the teaching component in reappointment, tenure, and promotion, as well as salary determinations.
- *What if I don't want to evaluate my courses?*
While students are strongly urged to complete course evaluations, the process is voluntary.
- *Will my evaluations be confidential?*
All evaluations are kept strictly confidential.
- *When are the evaluations shared with faculty?*
Faculty are only allowed access to the evaluation after all grades for the course have been posted.
- *Can I see past evaluations of WCU faculty?*
Access to past evaluations is not available.

From Faculty

- *How does the use of online course evaluation systems like CoursEval affect response rates?*
This answer depends a great deal on how the program is administered; the [bibliography](#) of this manual has suggested readings. Variation in response rates exist. Most research indicates that the initial phases of implementing an online course evaluation system will result in lower response rates than traditional paper systems (the average is approximately 30%; WCU had a pilot response in the mid-40's). It is expected that response rates will improve over time for online evaluation methods.
- *What can I do to improve response rates?*
Faculty can help increase response rates by announcing to students the change in the evaluation system and leading a discussion in class on how their evaluations are used by the individual faculty members and the University. The University will be using a variety of methods to inform students about the new *CoursEval* system including banners, posters, and radio announcements on WVCU-FM. In some departments administrative staff or department heads may visit classes to make announcements to the classes.

Computer labs are available on campus and faculty can reserve time to facilitate evaluations as a class. Again, reminding students and identifying 'time lines' on the syllabi are beneficial. It is not acceptable policy to provide extra credit or incentives to students for participation in the evaluation process.

- *How will the use of CoursEval affect the quality of student responses?*
 Available evidence indicates that no difference occurs in quantitative ratings (comparing online and in class written evaluation formats), and that written comments (both positive and negative) tend to be longer in online evaluations than on evaluations filled out by hand in class.
- *How will I know if my students have filled out an evaluation?*
 Faculty members receive a midpoint report by email during the evaluation period. The reports indicate the number of students who have yet to fill out the evaluations, but will not identify individual students. Similar reports will go to department heads, deans, and other stakeholders.
- *How long do students have to complete the evaluations using CoursEval?*
 The evaluation period will last from 2 weeks to one day depending on the length of the course and takes place near the end of the course. For the more usual 15 week courses, for example, course evaluation occurs in the two weeks prior to the last week of classes.
- *What will be done with the evaluation results once they have been entered? Who gets to see them?*
 Currently, the information is stored by Academic Management Systems, the company that hosts *CoursEval*. The information will be accessible to the same people that get to see faculty paper-based evaluations, i.e. individual faculty, department head, dean, and other stakeholders. It will also be made available to the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, but that data will be compiled and distributed without attribution to individual instructors. Faculty will be able to read student responses and view summary reports ([sample reports](#)) after the evaluation period ends and grades are posted.
- *How do I know to which type of student assessment instrument (SAI), i.e., lecture, lab, seminar, etc., my course is assigned?*
 Each course is initially assigned the standard course format as the default SAI instrument. It is the responsibility of each faculty member to review the tool and select the appropriate SAI form for his/her individual course subject to the review of his/her department head who has the responsibility to enter the selected form into the system. The form selected for each course shall be made available to the faculty member teaching the course prior to its implementation.

- *Do I have to use CoursEval? Can I use supplementary evaluations?*

Yes to both questions. The UNC PACE evaluation process has identified the paper-based course evaluation system as an expense that can be reduced dramatically through the use of technology. Thus, the paper system is no longer operational at WCU and there are no other options available. Also, with the growing number of courses being taught online, these evaluations are the only option.

Faculty are invited to supplement the data from the online evaluation forms with other instruments; however, the costs of such supplements will be borne by the department or the individual faculty member.

Questions or Problems

What do I do if I have a problem with or question about CoursEval?

If the problem is largely **technical** in nature (login problems, difficulty viewing certain screens, or problematic software installation), contact WCU's Office of Assessment which administers the *CoursEval* system.

Contact Information:

Dr. Melissa Canady Wargo
Director of Assessment
H.F.R. Administration Building 450
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723
(828) 227-3082
Email: wargo@email.wcu.edu

If the problem or question relates to using the data **to improve teaching** scores, faculty are urged to discuss the matter with the appropriate department head. The Coulter Center is also available to the faculty member for guidance and assistance.

Contact Information:

Dr. Anna McFadden
Director and Professor
Office: Hunter 182
Phone: 2093
E-Mail: amcfadden@email.wcu.edu
Web page: <http://paws.wcu.edu/amcfadden>

Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, H., Cain, J., Bird, E. (2005) "Online Student Course Evaluations: Review of Literature and a Pilot Study." *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* 2005; 69 (1) Article 5.

The literature review revealed several studies that found no statistically significant differences between delivery modes. Two also noted that students provided more comments in the online forms. Response rates varied widely. The University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy, driven by the faculty's desire for more timely return of results (3-4 months typically), launched a pilot study of online evaluations in 3 courses. The response rates for the 3 courses were 85%, 89%, and 75%. The 9 courses using the paper forms averaged an 80% response rate (consistent with the 2 previous years also about 80%). The comments on the online forms were more frequent and longer than the paper forms. Students liked the online form better than the paper form and thought they could provide more effective and constructive feedback online.

Ballantyne, C. (1999). *Improving University Teaching: Responding to Feedback from Students*. In N., Zepke, M., Knight, L., Leach, and A., Viskovic, (Eds.), *Adult Learning Cultures: Challenges and Choices in Times of Change*. Wellington, Australia: WP Press, pp. 155--165.

A survey of students at Murdoch University, in Western Australia, indicated that while they felt student surveys were extremely important, their main concern was what happened to them and whether staff made any use of the information.

Ballantyne, C. (2000, November). *Why survey online: A practical look at issues in the use of the internet for surveys in higher education*. A paper presented at the annual conferences of the American Evaluation Association, Honolulu, HI From Murdoch University.

Discusses issues, advantages, exclusive approach, and buy-in of online surveys.

Ballantyne, C. (2003). *Online evaluations of teaching: An examination of current practice and considerations for the future*. In T.D. Johnson & D.L. Sorenson (Eds.), *New Directions for Teaching and Learning: Online Student Ratings of Instruction*. 96, 95-102.

Discusses anonymity, confidentiality, authentication, differences between online and paper-based rating surveys, costs, and future use of online course rating.

Bullock, C. D. (2003). *Online collection of midterm student feedback*. In T.D. Johnson & D.L. Sorenson (Eds.), *New Directions for Teaching and Learning: Online Student Ratings of Instruction*. 96, 95-103.

Discusses the Evaluation Online (EON) system and faculty opinions and suggestions for the online midterm feedback system at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Carini, R.M., Hayek, J.C., Kuh, G.D., & Ouimet, J.A. (2003). [College student responses to web and paper surveys: Does mode matter?](#) *Research in Higher Education*, 44 (1), 1-19. Retrieved September 17, 2003.

Examined the responses of 58,288 college students to 8 scales involving 53 items from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to gauge whether individuals respond differently to surveys administered via the Web versus paper. Multivariate regression analyses indicated that mode effects were generally small. However, students who completed the Web-based survey responded more favorably than paper on all 8 scales. These patterns generally held for both women and men, and younger and older students.

Cates, W.M. (1993). A small-scale comparison of the equivalence of paper-and-pencil and computerized versions of student end-of-course evaluations. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 9 , 401-409.

This study compared responses to two versions (online and paper-based) of an end-of-course evaluation instrument completed by graduate students. No significant difference was found in favorableness of composite ratings between the two formats. Individual items were found to be highly correlated on the two instruments with almost identically high reliability.

Clark, S. J., Reiner, C.M., & Johnson, T.D. (2005). Online course-ratings and the personnel evaluation standards. In D.D. Williams, M. Hricko, & S.L. Howell (Eds.), *Online Assessment, Measurement, and Evaluation: Emerging Practices, Volume III* (pp. 61-75). Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.

The chapter outlines some of the most salient advantages and challenges of online student evaluations of teaching within the context of how they relate to the Personnel Evaluation Standards set forth by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The authors also provide suggestions for successful implementation of online evaluation systems.

Cody, A. (1999). [Evaluation via the web](#). *Teaching and Education News*, 9 (6). University of Queensland. Retrieved September 17, 2003.

Reports on the pilot study of the online TEVAL (teaching evaluation) system used at the University of Queensland.

Cummings, R. and Ballatyne, C. (1999). "Student feedback on teaching: Online! On target?" Paper presented at the Australian Society Annual Conference, October, 1999.

Murdoch University School of Engineering ran a pilot in 1999 of online course evaluations using the same form online as on paper. Students found the online form easier, faster, and felt it offered greater anonymity. The school has a 50% mandate for response rate in course evaluations. Typically paper evaluations had a 65% response rate. The online pilot averaged 31% with 4 of the 18 courses over the 50% mandate. The response rate range was a wide 3% to 100%. Because the pilot was inadequately promoted, some faculty didn't know they were using online forms and didn't adequately prepare students. Students noted that they felt no pressure to fill out the online evaluations. The investigators concluded that the quality of responses was the same because they received the same amount of comments online which is what is used most from the evaluation form.

Dommeyer CJ, Baum P, Chapman KS, Hanna RW. "An experimental investigation of student response rates to faculty evaluations: The effect of the online method and online treatments." Paper presented at Decision Sciences Institute; Nov. 22-25, 2003; Washington, DC.

The College of Business And Economics at California State University, Northridge did a study with 16 professors to see how the method of evaluation affects response rate and if online treatments (incentives) affect the response rate. Each professor taught 2 sections of the same undergraduate business course. The same form was used in both methods. Instructors were randomly assigned into 1 of 4 groups using different incentives: 0.25% grade incentive for completion of an online evaluation (4 courses), in-class demonstration on how to do the online evaluation (2 courses), if 2/3 of the class submitted online evaluations students would receive their final grades early (2 courses), or a control group (8 courses). The online evaluations averaged a 43% response rate and the paper evaluations averaged 75%. Looking at just the control group, their average response rate was 29%. In the individual cases the incentives had the effect of increasing response rate (grade incentive 87% response rate, demonstration 53%, and early final grade 51%).

Donmeyer, C.J., Baum, P., & Hanna, R.W. (2002). College students' attitudes toward methods of collecting teaching evaluation: In-class versus on-line (Electronic Version). *Journal of Education for Business*, 78 (1), 11-15.

Study of students' attitudes in 16 classes showed lower response rate for online evaluations and revealed students' frustrations with the system. Suggestions are offered for improving the on-line evaluation process.

Donmeyer, C.J., Baum, P., Hanna, R.W., Chapman, (2004). Gathering faculty teaching evaluations by in-class and online surveys: Their effects on response rates and evaluations. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 29 (5), 611-623.

Fraze, S., Hardin, K., Brashears, T., Smith, J., Lockaby, J. (2002) "The Effects Of Delivery Mode Upon Survey Response Rate And Perceived Attitudes Of Texas Agri-Science Teachers." Paper presented at the National Agricultural Education Research Conference, December 11-13, Las Vegas, NV.

Texas Tech University studied 3 modes of surveying a random group of Texas Agri-Science teachers. The 3 modes were e-mail, web, and paper. No significant difference in the reliability of the responses was found. However the response rates were 60%, 43% and 27% for paper, web and e-mail respectively.

Handwerk, P., Carson, C., and Blackwell, K. (2000). "On-line vs. paper-and-pencil surveying of students: A case study." Paper presented at the 40th Annual Meeting of the Association of Institutional Research, May 2000 (ERIC document ED446512).

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro did a study of using an online version of a feedback survey for determining why students selected or did not select Greensboro. They found the online version generated more comments though had a lower (26%) response rate than the paper version (33%). No significant difference was found in the response content between the two methods.

Hardy, N. (2003). Online ratings: Fact and Fiction. In T.D. Johnson & D.L. Sorenson (Eds.). *New Directions for Teaching and Learning: Online Student Ratings of Instruction*. 96, 31-38.

Ongoing research at Northwestern University that helps dispel some common misconceptions about online student ratings.

Hmieleski, K. Barriers to online evaluation: Surveying the nation's top 200 most wired colleges. (2000). Unpublished report. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Troy, NY.

Hmieleski, K. & Champagne, M.V. (September/October, 2000). [Plugging into course evaluation](#). *The Technology Source*. Retrieved June 29, 2001.

Lists disadvantages of paper-based systems, advantages of online systems. Promotes feedback-and-refinement process.

Hoffman, K.M. (2003). Online course evaluation and reporting in higher education. In T.D. Johnson & D.L. Sorenson (Eds.), *Online Student Ratings of Instruction, New Directions for Teaching and Learning*.

Results of a national survey indicating an increase in the use of the Internet for student ratings of instruction. [Information on practices at other universities](#). (1998). Retrieved on October 12, 2001 from University of Calgary, Universal Student Ratings of Instruction Web site. <p class="bib_review">Lists information for 9 universities on the status of their student ratings in 1998.

Johnson, T.D. (2001, September). Online student ratings: Research and possibilities. Invited plenary at the Online Assessment Conference, Champaign, IL.

Johnson, T.D. (2003). Online student ratings: Will students respond? In T.D. Johnson & D.L. Sorenson (Eds.), *New Directions for Teaching and Learning: Online Student Ratings of Instruction*. 96, 49-60.

Reports on a case study focusing on the response rates for Brigham Young University's online evaluation system. The author identifies factors that influence response rates and suggests strategies to increase student participation.

Johnson, T.D. & Sorenson, D.L. (Eds.) (2003). *New directions for teaching and learning: Online student ratings of instruction*, 96. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This issue of NDTL examines current practice and deals with various issues surrounding online student ratings of instruction including the increase in use of the Internet, common misconceptions, psychometric properties, response rates, online reporting of results, costs, online collection of midterm student feedback, and considerations for the future.

Layne B.H., DeCristofor J.R., McGinty D (1999). "Electronic versus traditional student ratings of instruction." *Res Higher Educ.* 1999; 40:221-32.

At a southeastern university 66 courses made up of 2453 students did a comparison of response effects between paper-and-pencil and online using the same form. Half did online and half did paper-and-pencil forms. The online response rate was 47% and the traditional group was 60%. Also, 76% of the online forms provided comments compared to 50% of the traditional forms. No significant difference was found in methods.

Liegle, J. and McDonald, D. (2004). "Lessons Learned From Online vs. Paper-based Computer Information Students' Evaluation System" Paper (refereed) presented at 21st Annual Information Systems Education Conference.

Georgia State University College of Business ran a voluntary pilot from 2002 to 2003 using an identical online version of their paper course evaluation form in the Department of Computer Information Systems. Faculty feared an online form would yield lower scores and lower response rates. In particular, the fear was that few students would submit online evaluations, poor students would "take revenge" on the faculty and good students wouldn't bother. The paper form had a 67% response rate and the online form had an 82% response rate. This likely due to the fact that the CIS department had easy access to computer labs for students to take the evaluations online. Using a question on teacher effectiveness, the study found no significant difference between the methods. Good students participated in the same numbers and weaker students did fewer online evaluations.

Matz, C. (1999). "Administration of web versus paper surveys: Mode effects and response rates." Masters Research Paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (ERIC document ED439694).

In a survey of academic reference librarians in North Carolina, Matz found no significant difference in response contents between the methods used. The online form had a 33% response rate and the paper form had a 43% response rate.

McCormack, C., Applebee, A., & Donnan, P. (2003, July/August). [Opening a can of worms: A conversation about the ethics of online student evaluation of teaching](#). The Technology Source. Retrieved August 18, 2003.

Monsen, S., Woo, W., Mahan, C. Miller, G. & W. "Online Course Evaluations: Lessons Learned." Presentation at The CALI Conference for Law School Computing 2005.

Yale Law started online course evaluations in 2001 with a less than 20% response rate. The current 8-question form is run by student representatives and has a 90% response rate. Students cannot see their grades until they fill out the evaluation. Northwestern University School of Law started online course evaluations in 2004. So far they have a 68% response rate which compares to a 70-80% paper response rate. Northwestern is against using any penalties (withholding information from a student until they fill out an evaluation). The University of Denver Sturm College started online course evaluations in 2002 with a pilot of 10 courses. The pilot had an 83% response rate. Continuing into 2003 the pilot expanded to 80 courses (with an 81% response rate) and then expanded to all of their offerings (with a 64% response rate). Currently they maintain a response rate around 70%. Duke Law started online course evaluations in 2003 when their scantron machine broke and the expense of replacing was too great. They proposed a goal of 70% response rate and used the same form online. The first term averaged a 66% response rate (with 29% of the 82 courses reaching the 70% goal). In spring 2004 the average was 60% (with 30% of the 119 courses reaching the 70% goal). In fall 2004 the average was 52% (with 8% of the 93 courses reaching the 70% goal). In spring 2005, after dropping non-law students from the pool, the

average was 67% (with 41% of the 117 courses reaching the 70% goal). The school is considering several penalties for failure to fill out an evaluation – withholding registration, withholding grades, or withholding free printing.

Norris, J., Conn, C. (2005). “Investigating strategies for increasing student response rates to online-delivered course evaluations.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education* 2005; 6 (1) p13-32 (ProQuest document ID 975834871).

This paper reports the findings of 2 studies done at Northern Arizona State University. The first study looked at historic data from 2000-2002 to examine student responses to online course evaluations in 1108 course sections. This group had an average response rate of 31%. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to 50 faculty in the group to explore what strategies improved response rate. These results informed the second study on 39 online course sections and 21 sections of a required freshman face-to-face course. The second study used some basic strategies (no penalty strategies) in the implementation of the online course evaluations: 2 weeks before the end of the course the URL to evaluation was posted in the course management system, an announcement containing a statement of course evaluation value and due date was sent in a method appropriate to the class (email, online syllabus or discussion board), and a reminder email was sent 1 week before the class ended containing the URL and due date. The 39 online course sections averaged a 74% response rate and the 21 face-to-face courses averaged a 67% response rate. In addition, 11 sections of the face-to-face course used paper evaluations and received a 83% response rate. These suggestions are very similar to the emerging findings from the TLT Group’s BeTA project.

Sax, L., Gilmartin, S., Keup, J., Bryant, A., and Plecha, M. (2002). Findings from the 2001 pilot administration of Your First College Year (YFCY): National norms. Higher Education Research Institute, University of California.

The YFCY distributed its survey that assesses student development during the first year in college using 3 methods: online, online or paper, and paper. In a pool of 57 schools, 16 used the alternative methods of distribution. The study found no significant difference in responses between the methods. The response rate overall was 21%. The online only method response rate was 17% and the online or paper group had a 24% response rate.

Schawitch, M. (2005) “Online Course Evaluations: One Institute’s Success in Transitioning from a Paper Process to a Completely Electronic Process!” Presentation at the Association for Institutional Research Forum, June 2005.

The Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology piloted an online course evaluation in 2002 with a small group of faculty. Over the academic year the pilot had a 70% response rate. 77% of students preferred the online mode and faculty reacted positively to the pilot. In 2003 the entire campus adopted the online form. Over the 3 terms, the online evaluations had response rates of 86%, 78% and 67%. In 2004 the 3 terms had 75%, 71% and 67%. Historically paper evaluations had an 85-87% response rate. They are investigating various incentive possibilities.

Thorpe, S. (2002) “Online Student Evaluation of Instruction: An Investigation of Non-Response Bias.” Paper presented at the 42nd Annual Forum of the Association of Institutional Research, June 2002.

Drexel University studied whether significant differences exist in student responses to course evaluations given on paper and online in 3 courses. Response rates in the 3 classes for paper and online (respectively) were 37% and 45%, 44% and 50%, 70% and 37%. In comparing students who responded to the evaluations across the 3 courses the study found that women were more likely than men to respond, students who earned higher grades were more likely to respond, and students with a higher overall GPA were more likely to respond. For two courses the online evaluations had a slightly higher average item rating. For the other course 2 significant differences were found: students doing the online evaluation were less likely to participate actively and contribute thoughtfully during class and to attend class when compared to the paper evaluation group. But the responses overall were not significantly different.

These annotations were compiled by Scott Krajewski, Augsburg College,
krajewsk@augsborg.edu and by OnSet: Online Student Evaluation of Teaching in Higher
Education portal.

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