

March 8, 1999

CHANCELLOR'S MEMORANDUM: CM-C-13.00-03/99

TO: Members, Council of Presidents

FROM: Adam W. Herbert, Chancellor

SUBJECT: State University System Student Assessment of Instruction

AUTHORITY: Sections 240.245 (1) and 240.253 (4), F.S.
Board of Regents, January 20 and May 16, 1995

POLICY/PURPOSE: Provides policy and procedures for the State University System Student Assessment of Instruction.

POLICY

Implementation of the State University System Student Assessment of Instruction (SUSSAI) was approved by the Board of Regents at its January and May, 1995, meetings. The purpose of the SUSSAI is to provide for student assessment of instruction using eight characteristics which will be common throughout the SUS, and to make the summary results for each assessed class section available to students and the general public. Summary results are to be made available no later than the end of February of each year for assessments conducted during the previous calendar year.

The results are also to be used by the university as part of individual faculty evaluation. Each university may gather additional information from students regarding their assessment of instruction for purposes of faculty evaluation. Any additional information collected is to be considered limited access records in accordance with Section 240.253 (1), F.S., and therefore not subject to the provisions of this Memorandum.

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

The following introductory statement and eight common characteristics comprise the SUS Student Assessment of Instruction.

Using a scale of Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor, please assess your instructor's performance on the following eight characteristics:

1. Description of course objectives and assignments
2. Communication of ideas and information
3. Expression of expectations for performance in this class
4. Availability to assist students in or out of class
5. Respect and concern for students
6. Stimulation of interest in the course
7. Facilitation of learning
8. Overall assessment of instructor

In addition to results on these eight assessment characteristics, the following identification information is to be provided for each class section to which the SUSSAI is administered:

- Course title and number
- Section number
- Instructor name
- Department/School
- Year and semester
- Class enrollment
- Number of students responding to the instrument

A standard reporting format (Attachment A) which includes the summary results of the assessment and identification information will be completed for each class section. SUSSAI summary results will be available for inspection and copying under the provisions of the Public Records Act, Section 119.07, Florida Statutes. Copies should be provided to the Florida Student Association and the United Faculty of Florida offices at each university, and a copy placed in the main library.

A "Guide for Interpreting Results" (Attachment B) has been developed to assist the user of SUSSAI summary information. This "Guide" is to be made available to those individuals who request results for one or more class sections.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Each university will have in place written guidelines and related policies as described below to implement the SUSSAI.

1. All class sections taught by a faculty member at the university during the academic year, including those taught by adjuncts and graduate assistants, are to be assessed using the SUSSAI, with the exception of those courses which may be described in university policy consistent with paragraph four (4) below.
2. Graduate courses are to be treated in the same manner as undergraduate courses. No blanket exclusion may be made for them.
3. The method of assessment for sections taught by more than one instructor is to be included in the written guidelines and related policies.
4. Courses or class sections may be excluded from assessment by university policy consistent with the following considerations:
 - a. courses involving individual instruction such as independent study, internship, and practicum;
 - b. courses or class sections involving types of instruction that occur outside of traditional classroom and/or laboratory settings for which these assessment items would not be appropriate; and
 - c. class sections for which the number of respondents to the instrument is so small as to make the results of limited statistical usefulness.
5. The university will describe in its policies the method for gathering accurate course enrollment data for purposes of reporting this information in the standard format (Attachment A).
6. Administration of the instrument.
 - a. The SUSSAI is to be administered during the final three weeks of scheduled instruction, but not before the official "Drop" period has ended.
 - b. The SUSSAI is to be administered during a class session in which no examination is scheduled, and students shall be given no less than fifteen (15) minutes for explanation and completion of the instrument.
 - c. The instructor is not to be present while the instrument is being administered.

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**STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTION**

Attachment A

SUMMARY REPORT

Instructor's Name (Last name, first initial)

Year and Semester

No. Students Enrolled

Course Name

Course and Section Number

No. Responding

Department/School

% of Response

| ITEMS | STUDENT RESPONSES (in percentages) (See Key below) | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | E | VG | G | F | P | NR |
| (1) Description of course objectives and assignments | | | | | | |
| (2) Communication of ideas and information | | | | | | |
| (3) Expression of expectations for performance | | | | | | |
| (4) Availability to assist students in or out of class | | | | | | |
| (5) Respect and concern for students | | | | | | |
| (6) Stimulation of interest in course | | | | | | |
| (7) Facilitation of learning | | | | | | |
| (8) Overall rating of instructor | | | | | | |

Key to responses: E = Excellent; VG = Very Good; G = Good; F = Fair; P = Poor; NR = No Response

(Revised 3/8/99)

**STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF INSTRUCTION
GUIDE FOR INTERPRETING RESULTS**

WHAT IS THIS REPORT? This report contains results of student assessments of instructors at the University for the calendar year ____ spring and fall semesters. This information provides you with one source of information for selecting courses. Also helpful in your decision-making would be a meeting with your academic advisor, examining course syllabi, and talking with instructors.

WHICH COURSES WERE EVALUATED? This report includes undergraduate and graduate courses taught during the spring and fall semesters of the year indicated above. Certain courses or class sections were excluded based upon their nontraditional structures and limited enrollments.

HOW ARE THE TABLES INTERPRETED? Tables in this report summarize students' responses to eight standard characteristics contained within the assessment instrument. For each course or class section listed, the percent of students reporting Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, or Poor are shown for each characteristic, as well as the percent not responding to each characteristic.

In addition, the following course information is provided: Department, Course Title and Number, Section Number, Instructor Name, Semester and Year, and Course Enrollment.

HOW CAN THESE DATA BE USED? Students should be careful and thoughtful when interpreting these data. First, if not enough students responded to provide an adequate representation of all students enrolled in a class, the data will be less meaningful. Further, these data may reveal as much about the diversity of learning style preferences found in university classrooms as they reveal about the diversity of student reactions to instructors' different teaching styles.

Though students are good sources of some types of information about instructors, research has also shown that students' assessments of instructors can be influenced by a number of factors outside of an instructor's immediate control. These factors can include class size (small classes tend to be rated higher than large classes), course level (upper-level courses may be rated higher than lower-level courses), discipline (courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences tend to receive higher ratings than courses in Engineering, Math and the Sciences), instructor rank (faculty tend to receive higher ratings than graduate teaching assistants), and students' reasons for enrolling in the course (elective courses tend to receive higher ratings than required courses). Readers should consider such influences when reviewing the data in this report.

Most importantly, readers should remember that simplistic numerical comparisons between courses or instructors are not recommended. For example, in a class having 20 respondents, each student's opinion will have a weight of 5%; in a class with 200 respondents, however, each student's opinion will have a weight of only one-half of 1%. Similarly, one instructor may be rated Excellent by 74% of his or her students and a second instructor may be rated Excellent by 68%; this difference may not have statistical significance or practical importance when selecting courses. In short, these student assessments are not validated measures of teacher effectiveness; comparisons and conclusions about the relative skill of different instructors should never be based solely on this limited information.