

Colleagues,

Recently, the Faculty Affairs Team (FAT) of the Faculty Senate informed you and sought your input concerning changes being contemplated with regard to the purpose (i.e., summative to formative) and administration (totally online) of the Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI). The benefits that will accrue from this change to a completely online system include:

- The online system will be substantially more sustainable, flexible, and automated than paper forms.
- An online system will allow faculty to provide their course sections with additional items constructed by the individual faculty member.
- Reports could be made available six weeks sooner than the current distribution.
- Student anonymity will still be protected and enhanced.
- More of the system will be automated so there will be less need to “check course information” each semester, thereby saving a considerable amount of time.

Based on feedback from faculty, the transition to total online assessment will begin in fall 2013 using the current SAI with the ability for faculty to add customized questions. There will be NO more paper SAI after summer 2013. Faculty may choose to use SAI results received through summer 2013 in their teaching effectiveness evaluations (2013-2014) as is currently practiced. In the fall 2013, through the FAT, the leadership of Academic Affairs, and in consultation with Faculty Senate and UFF-FGCU Chapter, the current SAI (Student Assessment of Instruction) will be transformed and redesigned from a summative evaluation to a formative tool: the Student Perception of Instruction (SPoI). SPoI will be administered entirely online beginning with the fall 2014 semester.

What does it mean to move from a summative (SAI) to a formative (SPoI) approach seeking student input to enhance teaching effectiveness?

The introduction of SPoI represents a major paradigm shift in transitioning from SAI results that have been a judgmental appraisal of teaching effectiveness to one that informs the professional development of faculty in the delivery of instruction. Rather than depending upon SAI-derived numerical scores for the evaluation of instruction, faculty will be encouraged to use feedback from SPoI to effect improvements in the future delivery of instruction. Although the current 20 items will be maintained next year, they will be supplemented by items that you can customize to your satisfaction and specific needs. Open-ended items for student response will be welcome.

Consequently, while the original Likert categories of poor through excellent will be initially retained for the current 20 items, assigned numerical scores (1-5) will no longer be used to compute a mean for the responses to an item or utilized in teaching evaluations. During the course of next academic year, the Teaching, Learning, Assessment Initiative (TLAI) will coordinate efforts with Faculty Senate and College faculty to redesign the instrument to enhance its utility (e.g., items for an instrument applicable to online instruction will be created). The expectation is that faculty will use the results of SPoI to make changes (e.g., to be described in the PDPs) to the delivery of instruction that results in future improvements. Faculty will then provide evidence of their success when being assessed for annual reviews and promotion portfolios.

Faculty feedback expressing concern about diminished student response rate in any shift to online SPoI is acknowledged. Part of the work over the coming academic year will include coordinated efforts among Faculty Senate, College faculty, and TLAI to explore and establish best practices for ensuring meaningful SPoI response rates.

Implications for current promotion and retention criteria and processes

Because the shift will require some transition, effective with fall 2014, use of SPoI results in the assessment of teaching effectiveness will be at the discretion of each faculty member pending changes to the FPED and related College documents. Implementation of the new SPoI will give faculty members the option to explain in their PDPs and annual reviews how they collected, analyzed and used the data to enhance their teaching. Furthermore, deans, department heads and chairs will be advised and supported with mentoring and training as to how to evaluate faculty in this new formative process. Individual college evaluation and promotion documents will have to be revised accordingly as well.

It is my conviction that this change will fundamentally change and improve the manner in which teaching effectiveness is assessed and enhanced at FGCU. It will place student input in a fully constructive rather than critical context and enable faculty to focus on rigor, innovation, and improvement in the classroom, without apprehension. This is certainly in keeping with the ethos of FGCU with regard to the primacy of instruction in our mission, and complements a myriad of collaborative initiatives already launched by faculty and administrative leadership to the benefit of faculty and students alike.

Regards,

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Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs