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## Interdepartmental Correspondence Office of the Provost

20 October 2005

TO: College, School, and Campus Deans; Department Chairs and School Directors

FROM: Paul L. Gaston, Provost. *Paul L. Gaston*

SUBJECT: Student Survey of Instruction (SSI)

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Effective with the Fall semester 2005, the *Student Survey of Instruction (SSI)* replaces the *Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)*, which has served as the University's formal measure of faculty teaching effectiveness since 1989. Faculty Senate approved the implementation of the SSI (see attached) at the February 2004 Senate meeting. Following Senate approval, a subcommittee of the Educational Policies Council was charged with the assignment of overseeing implementation of the SSI. The work of that subcommittee has been completed with the assistance and facilitation of the Office of Administrative Computing Services. Therefore, the purpose of this memo is to review procedural guidelines governing implementation of the SSI by all academic departments/schools and regional campuses at the end of the Fall semester.

Please distribute copies of this memo and the enclosed materials to faculty in your respective units, and provide the opportunity to discuss the SSI implementation in the departments/schools/regional campuses with the appropriate faculty advisory bodies *prior to Thanksgiving Recess (November 23, 2005)*.

- SSIs should be completed by students in each course section during the last two weeks of the regular semester—for the Fall 2005 that is between Monday, November 28, 2005 and Saturday, December 10, 2005.
- SSIs should *not* be administered during Final Exams Week.

In addition, I wish to reaffirm the importance of following the SSI policy and procedures as explicitly as possible. Consistent application of the procedures is important so that survey results may be compared appropriately within specified norming groups.

The procedures for administering the SSI are basically those followed for administering the SEI with minor adjustments to reflect the difference in the SSI format. The success of surveying student reactions to the learning experience, as you know, depends upon both faculty and students taking the process seriously and following the procedures as described. The "Instructions" to the SSI state:

The results of this survey will be used by the instructor to improve the class and by department, college, and university committees to evaluate the instructor, curriculum, equipment, and facilities for this class. As you answer the following questions, please note that some questions are about the *instructor* and some questions are about the *instruction*.

The guidelines and procedures developed for the SEI and now, by transition, for the SSI are intended to ensure the integrity of the process by which evaluating the instructor and the instruction of each course section reflects the importance the University assigns to the continued improvement of the student learning experience. Deviations from the guidelines and procedures, such as faculty not leaving the room or making disparaging remarks about the SSI process, tend to undermine student trust in the stated purposes and purported outcomes of the survey.

As a brief reminder, the salient features of the SSI common to all campuses are:

1. All class sections are to be evaluated each semester, including summer sessions.  
(Exceptions must be approved by the Department Chair/School Director/Campus Dean, acting upon a recommendation from the Faculty Advisory Committee. The opportunity for all students to respond and to participate in the evaluation process of instructor and instruction is an important purpose of the SSI initiative and should be considered when considering exceptions).
2. The Student Survey of Instruction provides nineteen (19) standard items which will be used throughout the University
3. Individualized norms (based upon norming groups already identified by academic units and campuses) will be available for each department/school/campus respectively.
4. The standardized answer sheet that has been used in the past for recording SEI responses will be provided and used for SSI responses.
5. The SSI is broken into (7) sections: (a) Student Information; (b) Student Comment and Learning; (c) Course Organization; (d) Evaluation Process; (e) Instructor Characteristics; (f) Physical Facilities, (e) Equipment, and Technology; and (g) Summary Question.
6. Unit/Campus additional questions can also be included and normed. (These additional questions have been developed by academic units in the Spring 2005.)
7. A standard administrative procedure is included for instructors, for student volunteer monitors, and for department/school/campus offices.
8. Student anonymity is assured.
9. Uniform scaling is used throughout the University.
10. Administrative Computing Services supports the analysis programs.
11. Two copies of the SSI summary sheet for each course, containing the appropriate department norm, will be provided.

The initial use of the SSI in the Fall 2005 may require certain adjustments in the implementation of the policies and procedures delineated in the attached materials. Such practical implications can be addressed initially through the Chairs and Directors Council and the Academic Administrative Council. Please keep a record of specific problems or problem areas that arise in your respective units so those issues may be discussed more broadly and addressed appropriately before the end of the Spring 2006.

I would like to thank the Faculty Senate and our faculty colleagues whose review of the student evaluation of instruction process has contributed significantly to the improvement of one mode by which the University monitors the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of the learning experience.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Enclosures

Student Survey of Instruction  
Instructions for Departmental Office  
Instructions for Campus Office  
Instructions for Class Instructor  
Instructions for Class Monitor

c.

E. Thomas Dowd, Chair, Faculty Senate

## Student Survey of Instruction

### Help Memo

#### Administrative Computing Services Kent State University

##### A. Introduction to Student Survey of Instruction

The Student Survey of Instruction (SSI) program provides a university-wide system for the evaluation of classroom instruction and student learning. At the end of each semester, students grid their responses to a standard set of questions on specially printed survey-response forms. The survey-response forms are computer-read; summary reports for each class section are printed automatically. The reports provide feedback on the character and quality of instruction as perceived by the students. The advantages of the University SSI program include a standard set of questions and response form, an efficient mechanism for processing the forms, and timely well labeled reports.

The SSI response forms are available from the Administrative Computing Center located on the first floor of the main Kent State University Library. The standard university items are printed on both sides of the forms, with **additional department/school/campus questions** appearing on separate sheets provided by the departments/schools/regional campuses. Space is provided for additional student comment in each of the major sections of the survey.

Each course within a department/school or offered at a regional campus is to be assigned to a **norming group**. A norming group is a collection of similar courses to be summarized together. A norming group may be all LER courses, undergraduate courses, graduate courses, or any other grouping appropriate to the department. **Summary reports** are printed for each norming group. In addition, the norming group results are printed on the instructor's reports. This allows the instructors to compare their results with the rest of the courses in the respective norming group.

Each department/school/campus has the option of asking up to fifteen (15) additional questions. These questions usually address other areas of the course, teaching materials, labs, etc. not addressed by the standard university items. Additional questions can be used for the entire department or different questions can be assigned for each norming group.

When the completed response forms are returned to the department/campus office, a Control Sheet is filled out for each class section. The **control sheet identifies the section call number** to the computer. Only the call number needs to be gridded on the Control Sheet. All forms for the department/school/campus are brought to the computing center for processing. Administrative Computing Center personnel will notify the department when the reports are ready.

Keep in mind that each department/school/campus is processed separately and no mechanism exists for comparing one department with another. Further, there is no mechanism for comparing courses with the same departmental designation across campuses. The answer sheets and reports are returned directly to the individual department/school/campus.

The remainder of this help memo describes the Student Survey of Instruction (SSI) system in greater detail.

## **B. Departmental Considerations for Using the SSI**

Before the SSI is administered, the department must decide if it will use norming groups with or without additional questions. It is the responsibility of the department to send a list of the courses for each norming group and any additional questions to the Office of the Provost before the evaluations are processed. This information will be forwarded to Administrative Computing Services so appropriate changes can be made to generate the reports.

## **C. Norming Groups**

Each course within the department should be assigned to a norming group. A norming group is a collection of similar courses to be summarized together. A norming group may consist of all LER courses, undergraduate courses, graduate courses, or any other grouping appropriate to the department. Summary reports are printed for each norming group. In addition, the norming group results are printed on the instructor's reports. This allows the instructors to compare their results with the rest of the courses in their respective norming group.

It is the responsibility of the department to send a list of the courses for each norming group to the Office of the Provost. The norming group information will be entered into the computer by Administrative Computing Services. The computer will then automatically assign each class section to the correct norming group. Keep in mind that *each course may be assigned to only one norming group*. If no norming groups are specified, all courses will be normed together.

If a department/school/campus adds new courses or changes the norming groups in any way, be sure to forward that information to the Provost's office so files can be updated.

## **D. Additional Questions**

Each department has the option of asking up to fifteen (15) additional questions. These questions usually address areas of the course, teaching materials, labs, etc. not addressed by the standard university items. Additional questions can be used for the entire department or different questions can be assigned for each norming group. Those differences must be communicated to the Provost's office for appropriate recording with Administrative Computing Services. In any event, if a department elects to use additional questions, that list must be sent to the Office of the Provost before the evaluations are processed. If a department/school/campus changes the additional questions in any way, be sure to forward that information so the processing files can be updated.

## **E. Assembling and Distributing Packets**

Pick up sufficient SSI answer sheets for your department from the Administrative Computing Center. If the department/school/campus has additional questions, those questions need to be provided on a separate sheet of paper in addition to the SSI response form.

**Prepare envelopes for each class section. Include an adequate number of *SSI response forms*, a copy of the class instructor instructions, and a copy of the monitor instructions. Write the instructor's name and section call number on the outside of the envelope. Distribute the envelopes to the instructors.** If students will be evaluating multiple instructors for the class, create a separate envelope for each instructor.

## **F. Classroom Administration**

The instructor should assign a responsible student to monitor the evaluation and return the response form envelope to the department. Students should be instructed to write the section call number on the answer sheets in the space provided in the upper right-hand corner of the SSI response form for reference.

If the students will be evaluating multiple instructors for the class, the response forms must be returned to the department office in separate envelopes for each instructor.

## **G. Filling out the Control Sheet**

When the evaluations are completed, the envelopes are returned to the department/school/campus office. Fill out a brown control sheet for each class section. The control sheet identifies the section number to the computer and visually separates the answer sheets for each class.

Grid the section call number in Option Block 5 of the control sheet. Be sure to use a number 2 pencil. The section number from the control sheet is used to identify all answer sheets in class. If the section number is wrong, the entire class will be processed incorrectly. Use the lowest section number of 4/5, 4/5/7, and 6/7 split level courses. All student responses forms will be evaluated together for the class.

Print the instructor's name in the NAME area of the control sheet. It is not necessary to grid the name as the instructor's name is read from the section master file on the computer. If you do grid the name, that name will override the section master and be printed on the reports.

If there are multiple instructors for the class, fill out a control sheet for each instructor. In this case, be sure to grid the instructors' names so that the correct names are printed on the reports. Be sure to grid the same section number for each instructor.

The norming groups are preprogrammed by the Administrative Computing Center so that norming information does not need to be gridded on the control sheets.

## **H. Assembling the Student Response Forms**

Remove the response forms from the envelopes, separate out all instruction sheets and extraneous papers. Make sure the forms are oriented in the same direction with the section call number in the upper right-hand corner. Check over the answer sheets. Blank forms should be removed. Forms gridded in pen cannot be read unless they are gone over using a Number 2 pencil. Place the completed control sheet on top of the answer sheets.

**Do not place the response forms in an envelope or paper clip the sheets.** Place the forms in a single stack with each class section on top of each other. The stack must be arranged with a control sheet on top, followed by the answer sheets for that section, followed by the control sheet for the next section, etc. The sections do not need to be arranged in any particular order. The reports will be sorted automatically.

## **I. Submitting the Forms for Processing**

When all the section response forms for the department are ready, bring the single stack of forms to the Computing Center for processing. Administrative Computing Services will notify the department when the processing is completed and the answer sheets and reports are ready for pick up. Please note that evaluations are not processed during finals week so that final exams and grades can be processed as quickly as possible.

## **J. Distributing the Reports**

Two copies of the reports will be printed and returned to the departments. The reports are sorted by instructor name. One copy should be returned to the instructor and one copy retained in the instructor's personnel file.

Responses on the questionnaires should be made available for the instructor to review the written comments.

3/15/94; revised 10/20/05 for Student Survey of Instruction implementation.

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## STUDENT SURVEY OF INSTRUCTION Instructions for Departmental Office

1. **Departmental representative** should pick up SSI questionnaire forms from Administrative Computing Services. He or she should also:

- Prepare envelopes with an adequate number of questionnaires for each section, one copy of the Instructions for Class Instructor, and one copy of the Monitor Instructions. The course Call Number and Norming Group should be written legibly on the outside of the envelope.
- Distribute envelopes to instructors by the 12<sup>th</sup> week of classes in the Fall and Spring semesters and by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of five-week summer sessions (7<sup>th</sup> week for eight-week summer session courses).
- After student monitor returns envelopes to the departmental office, ensure that all forms are oriented with the "Call Number" in the upper right-hand corner, and remove blank questionnaires and instruction sheets.
- Complete a CONTROL SHEET for each section: write and grid the **Departmental Account** number; under the **Scoring Procedure** section grid the STUD EVAL. bubble; and under the **Option Blocks** section, complete Item 5 CLASSBOOK CALL NUMBER. The Instructor's name should be written on the control sheet but it need not be gridded.
- The forms should not be in envelopes, stapled, or paper clipped. The stack of forms should have the control sheet on top, then the questionnaires for that section, then a control sheet for the next section, and the those questionnaires, and so on. When materials for all sections are ready, a single stack should be delivered to Administrative Computing Services for processing.

2. **Administrative Computing Services** will notify the Department when the processing is complete and the questionnaires and the summary sheets are ready for pick up.

3. **Department chair/school director** then distributes one of the summary sheets for each section to the instructor. Departments will also make provision for the instructors to read any comments written on the questionnaires or provided in response to additional departmental questions. The second copy of the summary sheets is to be placed in the departmental personnel files of tenure-track faculty and full-time non-tenure track faculty. Departments may decide about the disposition of summary sheets and questionnaires for graduate assistants, teaching fellows, and part-time faculty.

4. **Summary sheets** should be retained permanently in the personnel files. **Questionnaires** for should be stored by the department, school, or campus office for a minimum period of five years. Faculty should be aware that SSI summary sheets will be available to them and to appropriate review committees as data and documentation for institutional personnel processes such as reappointment, tenure, promotion, and "merit" reviews for tenure-track faculty, and three-year performance reviews for full-time non-tenure track faculty.



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## STUDENT SURVEY OF INSTRUCTION Instructions for Campus Office

1. **Campus representative** should pick up SSI questionnaire forms from Administrative Computing Services. He or she should also:

- Prepare envelopes with an adequate number of questionnaires for each section, one copy of the Instructions for Class Instructor, and one copy of the Monitor Instructions. The course Call Number and Norming Group should be written legibly on the outside of the envelope.
- Distribute envelopes to instructors by the 12<sup>th</sup> week of classes in the Fall and Spring semesters and by the 4<sup>th</sup> week of five-week summer sessions (7<sup>th</sup> week for eight-week summer session courses).
- After student monitor returns envelopes to the departmental office, ensure that all forms are oriented with the "Call Number" in the upper right-hand corner, and remove blank questionnaires and instruction sheets.
- Complete a CONTROL SHEET for each section: write and grid the **Account Number**; under the **Scoring Procedure** section grid the STUD EVAL. bubble; and under the **Option Blocks** section, complete Item 5 CLASSBOOK CALL NUMBER. The Instructor's name should be written on the control sheet but it need not be gridded.
- The forms should not be in envelopes, stapled, or paper clipped. The stack of forms should have the control sheet on top, then the questionnaires for that section, then a control sheet for the next section, and the those questionnaires, and so on. When materials for all sections are ready, a single stack should be delivered to Administrative Computing Services for processing.

2. **Administrative Computing Services** will notify the Campus when the processing is complete and the questionnaires and the summary sheets are ready for pick up.

3. **Campus Dean** then distributes one of the summary sheets for each section to the instructor. Campuses will also make provision for the instructors to read any comments written on the questionnaires or provided in response to additional campus questions. The second copy of the summary sheets is to be placed in the campus personnel files of tenure-track faculty and full-time non-tenure track faculty. The Campus may decide about the disposition of summary sheets and questionnaires for part-time faculty. It is recommended that a copy of the summary sheets be sent from the campus to the academic department/school of which the regional campus faculty is a member.

4. **Summary sheets** should be retained permanently in the personnel files. **Questionnaires** should be stored by the department, school, or campus office for a minimum period of five years. Faculty should be aware that SSI summary sheets will be available to them and to appropriate review committees as data and documentation for institutional personnel processes such as reappointment, tenure, promotion, and "merit" reviews for tenure-track faculty, and three-year performance reviews for full-time non-tenure track faculty.

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## STUDENT SURVEY OF INSTRUCTION (SSI) Instructions for Class Instructor

1. The Student Survey of Instruction questionnaire is to be completed by students in your class during the last two weeks of classes. It should not be administered during Final Exam week. (Please consult with the Department Chair/School Director/Campus Dean for additional information or instructions as to time and procedures for evaluation.)
2. Fifteen (15) minutes of class time should be set aside for this activity.
3. Ask a student volunteer from the class to administer the Student Survey of Instruction questionnaires. Give the student the packet with the "Instructions for Monitor" and the SSI questionnaires.
4. After giving the monitor the instructions and questionnaires, you (the instructor) ***should leave the room. Make no comments*** about the evaluation except that students are asked to complete it.

Thank you for assistance and cooperation.

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## STUDENT SURVEY OF INSTRUCTION (SSI) Instructions for Student Monitor

Thank you for agreeing to administer the *Student Survey of Instruction (SSI)* questionnaire for this class. Please follow these instructions carefully.

1. Pass out the questionnaires and ask the students to complete them with a **NUMBER 2 PENCIL**.
2. Remind the class to fill in the **Call Number** in the top right-hand corner of the survey.
3. Also, please remind the class to respond to the items on the front **and** the back of the survey, along with any additional questions that are provided by the department.
4. At the end of 15 minutes—sooner if everyone is finished—place all questionnaires (even blank copies), these instructions, and any additional comment sheets in the envelope. Seal the envelope.
5. After class immediately return the envelope to the department, school, or campus office.

Thank you! Your assistance is appreciated!