

Grand Valley State University

LIFT

(Laker Impressions of Faculty Teaching)

Workbook

Version 1.0, February 2016

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Key Points in This Document

- “LIFT” stands for “Laker Impressions of Faculty Teaching”, and it is set up to collect student impressions. It is an online system that students and faculty can access via tablet, smartphone, laptop or desktop computer.
- LIFT includes survey forms for several types of classes. Units will determine which survey to utilize for each of their classes.
- Surveys will be available to students through the online system when there are ten regular class days (two weeks) left in the semester, and will close the Sunday night before Monday of Finals Week.
- Instructors are expected to set aside 15 minutes of class time for students to complete the surveys.
- Details are available in this document and at www.gvsu.edu/lift, including training videos posted to the web site.

1. About the LIFT system

1.1 “LIFT” stands for “Laker Impressions of Faculty Teaching”, and it is set up to collect student impressions, powered by *IASystem*¹, which was developed and is made available by the University of Washington. LIFT includes several survey forms that can be utilized for specific courses (see Appendix), but all forms include four standard questions seeking a summative response from students. After two pilot programs in 2015, the LIFT system was implemented across the Grand Valley campus starting with the Winter 2016 semester.

1.2 LIFT is an online system that students and faculty can access via tablet, smartphone, laptop or desktop computer. LIFT includes a mobile interface that will work on most mobile devices.

1.3 During 2014 and 2015, UAS and the Office of the Provost agreed to a set of procedures regarding the implementation and delivery of the LIFT system. These approved procedures have been collected in this document. This document will be updated from time-to-time by the LIFT Advisory Committee in consultation with UAS and the Office of the Provost.

1.4 Information about the LIFT system, including this Workbook, can be found at www.gvsu.edu/lift. Included on the web site is a Frequently Asked Questions page: www.gvsu.edu/lift/faq-8.htm.

2. LIFT Advisory Committee

2.1 The LIFT system is managed campus-wide by an advisory committee appointed by the Provost, except for a representative from ECS that is appointed by the Chair of ECS. The committee responds to policy and procedures questions from members of campus. Administrative details are the responsibility of the Office of Institutional Analysis.

2.2 Current committee membership (as of February 2016):

Philip Batty, Chair (Institutional Analysis)

Ed Aboufadel (Office of the Provost)

Katie Clark (Information Technology)

Barb Ellis (Biology, PSS)

Paul Leidig (School of Computing and Information Systems, Unit Head)

Jonathan Hodge (Mathematics, ECS Rep)

Rachael Passarelli (Institutional Analysis)

3. Selection and Modification of Survey Forms

3.1 LIFT includes survey forms for several types of classes (see Appendix). Units will determine which survey to utilize for each of their classes, and that determination must be done by the eighth week of the semester. Normally, all sections of a course that are taught in the same

¹ www.iasystem.org

format (e.g. face-to-face, hybrid, online) will use the same survey, and the choice of surveys would not change from semester to semester.

3.2 LIFT surveys can be modified in that up to eight additional questions (combined total from colleges, department, and/or individual faculty members) can be added to the surveys that are selected by departments. However, for now, none of the standard questions can be modified. The LIFT Advisory Committee is available for consultations on the appropriateness of questions and the implementation on *IASystem*.

3.3 Departments or schools that select additional questions to be added to all (or most) surveys may request customized versions of LIFT forms with those questions included. The request should be sent to the Office of Institutional Analysis at least three weeks prior to the initial date the survey is to be used. Each department or school can have up to three custom LIFT surveys.

4. Courses and Instructors of Record

4.1 Surveys are mandatory for all course sections and every instructor of record (which may be a person in a regular teaching, research, or professional library position; or an adjunct faculty member, which includes visiting faculty, affiliate faculty, and part-time instructors), with the following exceptions:

- a. For courses with ten or fewer students enrolled, surveys will be optional², with the decision made by the Unit Head.
- b. For team-taught courses, units may create localized plans to survey only some of the faculty involved.

4.2 All instructors of record will begin to use the new surveys effective January 2016. Extra questions can be added to address particular performance issues, if needed. For pre-tenure faculty or other faculty close to a personnel decision over the next three years (until January 2019), there may be compelling reasons to continue using current forms. In those cases, the affected faculty member, the Unit Head and the Dean jointly decide whether to use the new surveys or to continue to use prior forms (if they are available). The decision should be documented in writing.

4.3 Departments or schools that have course sections for which the student-instructor pairings are not accurately recorded in Banner must make special arrangements with the Office of Institutional Analysis to arrange for LIFT surveys to be set up with correct pairings. It is the department or school's responsibility to provide the correct pairings in a usable format no less than 3 weeks before the surveys are expected to begin.

² This recommendation is informed by this discussion on the IASystem web page: <http://iasystem.org/features-benefits/decision-making/>, along with recognition that student surveys from one- or two-student independent studies are usually non-informative.

5. Administration of the Surveys at the End of the Semester

5.1 Communications to remind instructors and students, with specific dates, will be sent out by the LIFT system. For instance, for each course to be surveyed, the instructor of record will receive an e-mail as soon as the dates and survey form have been assigned by the department LIFT Coordinator. Between the initial notification and the starting date for student invitations, instructors can review surveys, add questions, and request adjustments to administration dates. During the survey period, the system will send out e-mails to instructors and to students.

5.2 Students will access surveys only by using the Internet links that are in the e-mails they receive. Instructors should not post their own access links to Blackboard or send them out by e-mail, because these links will not work for students.

5.3 For students who are also faculty or staff employees of the university, your employee network credential will allow you to access the surveys of the courses you are enrolled in. (Note: This is different than during the Fall 2015 pilot of LIFT.)

5.4 By default, surveys will be available to students through the online system when there are ten regular class days (two weeks) left in the semester, and will close the Sunday night before Monday of Finals Week. (As indicated on the *IASystem* web site, evaluations open at 7:00AM on the start date selected and close at 11:59PM on the end date selected.) During Fall semester, because of the Thanksgiving break, surveys will open on the morning of the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, with the exception of semesters when there are two weeks after Thanksgiving. During Winter semester, the surveys will open on the morning of the Monday of the second to last week of classes.

5.5 Robust response rates are important, and UAS has endorsed a target response rate of 70% for LIFT surveys. Real-time completion rates will be reported to faculty via e-mails during the survey period, and faculty can also log on to the system to see this information. To encourage high response rates:

- a. Instructors are expected to set aside 15 minutes of class time for students to complete the surveys. (More details can be found in the next paragraph.)
- b. While not endorsed nor discouraged by UAS, if a faculty member decides to assign extra credit to individuals for completing the survey (while maintaining academic integrity), department PSS will be able to provide a list of students who have complete a particular survey once the survey period is over (and provided at least 5 students responded).

5.6 *Important: Instructors are expected to set aside 15 minutes of class time for students to complete the surveys.* Instructors should schedule a specific time in each course and remind students to bring a device that day to complete the survey. (Campus wireless should be available in all classrooms. If instructor has issues with Wi-Fi in their classroom, they should submit a trouble ticket to IT Helpdesk early in the semester.) Short, one-minute informative videos will be available for instructors (at www.gvsu.edu/lift) to play in class either the day of the evaluation or one or two class periods before students complete the surveys. The videos touch on subjects

such as what kind of feedback is constructive, what is appropriate or not in written comments, and how the results are used by the University.

5.7 Instructors should not be in the room while the students are completing the surveys.

5.8 Students will also be able to access the surveys outside of class time, so students who are absent on the day surveys are given, or do not have a portable device, would still have the opportunity to complete the surveys. The PSS LIFT Coordinator in each unit can adjust the administration dates for individual course surveys.

5.9 Responses are confidential in the sense that GVSU faculty, staff, and administrators will not see names attached to responses. However, student access to the LIFT system requires authentication into our campus systems via password. Instructors and department staff will not be able to identify student responses; only the chief campus system administrator has the ability to access back-end data. The unit's LIFT Coordinator can generate a list of students who have completed the survey once five or more students have participated.

5.10 Students will not be able to access surveys after the end of the survey period. There are no exceptions to this policy. Students also cannot see or change their responses once they are submitted (i.e. after student clicks the final "Submit" button).

5.11 Nobody at GVSU can link an individual student to a particular survey response, either during or after the survey period.

5.12 This informative chart is inspired by one from the University of California at Irvine:

Type of Information	Available to Instructors		
	During Survey Period	After Close of Surveys	After Grades Are Posted
Survey Results	NO	NO	YES
Response Rates	YES	YES	YES
Participant List	NO	YES (if 5 or more – ask Dept LIFT Coordinator)	YES (if 5 or more – ask Dept LIFT Coordinator)

6. Use of Data and Reports

6.1 Reports will be available to faculty after the deadline for final grades has passed and may be obtained by logging on to the LIFT website. Reports can be downloaded as PDF files.

6.2 The following was agreed to by UAS and the Provost: The complete report from each course will be available to the course instructor and the Unit Head. The complete report from each course will be available to other unit faculty, college personnel committees, and administrators, under the following conditions:

- a. Only the course instructor may request that unfairly prejudicial comments be redacted. The decision to do so will be made by the Unit Head, or a standing or *ad hoc* committee in the unit. This provision is intended to cover offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic, and other personal comments, and is not intended to exclude from the file negative comments directly related to the teaching of the course. A department decision not to remove specific comments may be appealed to the Dean of the College.³
- b. The use of written student comments in evaluation (personnel and merit) should be informed by the idea that such data has limitations. Evaluators are directed to give appropriate weight to other measures of teaching effectiveness, and to seek to corroborate what is reported in comments with other evidence. In evaluations, student comments should illustrate points supported by other evidence.⁴

6.3 During 2015, UAS agreed to a number of recommendations from the USETI task force regarding the use of the LIFT reports in faculty evaluation procedures. These recommendations (and a final report from USETI) are available on the USETI web site⁵, but no *Faculty Handbook* or *Administrative Manual* language has been proposed as of January 2016. Members of faculty governance plan to re-engage with these issues during 2016-17, after the LIFT system is completely implemented on campus.

6.4 Among the issues addressed in these recommendations were:

- Weighting of the results in the LIFT reports in faculty evaluation
- Minimum response rates for use in merit and personnel decisions
- Use of information from reports
- Establishing a campus-wide benchmark for the summative questions

6.5 Note: requests for additional reporting data will be coordinated by the Office of Institutional Analysis. Department PSS will not be responsible for handling requests for longitudinal data.

³ This provision is in place at the University of Minnesota, and the language for this item is derived from language in one of their policy documents.

⁴ This kind of language is used in policy documents from the University of North Dakota, the University of Arizona, and the University of Minnesota.

⁵ www.gvsu.edu/USETI

7. **Appendix: Description of Available Survey Forms**

- ~~A – Small Lecture / Discussion~~ (This *IASystem* form has been replaced with the GVSU Form A below.)
- B – Large Lecture (Designed for traditional lecture courses.)
- C – Seminar / Discussion (Designed for classes that include a minimal amount of formal lecturing by the instructor.)
- D – Problem Solving (Designed for classes teaching problem-solving or heuristic methods.)
- E – Skill Acquisition (Designed for classes in which students get "hands on" experiences, such as courses in clinical nursing, foreign languages, and social-work field experience.)
- F – Quiz Section (Designed for discussion sections that are usually taught by graduate teaching assistants, in conjunction with a lecture class taught by a regular faculty member.)
- G – Lectures / Assignments (Designed for use in large lecture classes which rely heavily on homework problems and a textbook.)
- H – Lab (Designed to evaluate lab classes generally taught in conjunction with classes in the sciences.)
- ~~I – Distance Learning~~ (This *IASystem* form has been replaced with the GVSU Distance Education Form below.)
- J – Clinical / Studio (Designed to evaluate instruction provided through clinical or hands-on experience rather than traditional academic coursework.)
- K – Project / Studio (Designed for courses in which students work autonomously or in small groups to produce artistic, graphic, or other products.)
- L – English as a Second Language (Designed for use with English language learners.)
- M – Study Abroad (Designed for use in courses taught abroad.)
- X – Educational Outcomes (Designed to be used across all course types.)

- GVSU Form A – Small Lecture / Discussion (Designed for lecture courses with the opportunity for discussion.)
- GVSU Distance Education Form – Form approved and required by the GVSU Online Education Council

More details about these forms can be found at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/lift/lift-forms-7.htm>