

UAS Task Force on Implementation of Universal Student Evaluations of Teaching (USETI) Report to ECS, February 26, 2015

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Previous Motions

In January 2014, the following motion was passed by UAS:

The university should adopt a standardized measure of student evaluations of faculty teaching that meets contemporary standards for reliability and validity in psychometric measurement. The measure should yield both quantitative and qualitative results. The university should also adopt a standardized platform for administration of the measure (e.g., online software). The measure and platform should be used in all units and colleges. Units and colleges may employ additional instruments separately from the university standard.

In November 2014, the following motion was passed by UAS:

UAS directs USETI to develop implementation plans for the IASystem, using as many of the forms in that system as make sense and seeking input from stakeholders on campus.

About IASystem

IASystem was initially developed in the 1980's, and is implemented and made available by the University of Washington. Faculty, students and administrators were consulted and then potential items were critiqued relative to a specific course taught or taken by faculty and students. The IASystem is not one form but a set of forms developed for different types of classroom instruction. The IASystem does have four items that are common across all versions. The summative evaluation is based on these four overall items and the formative evaluation can be based on item sets that are available and constructed for different types of instruction or items can be selected individually by instructors.

IASystem is an online system, where students log on to complete surveys. The actual surveys are confidential, but survey reports are generated. We can decide who has access to those reports – faculty, Unit Heads, Deans, etc. Data are stored on the IASystem servers, and GVSU will be able to extract the data for our own storage and analysis.

The web site for the system is: <http://iasystem.org/>

USETI's Timetable for Implementing IASystem

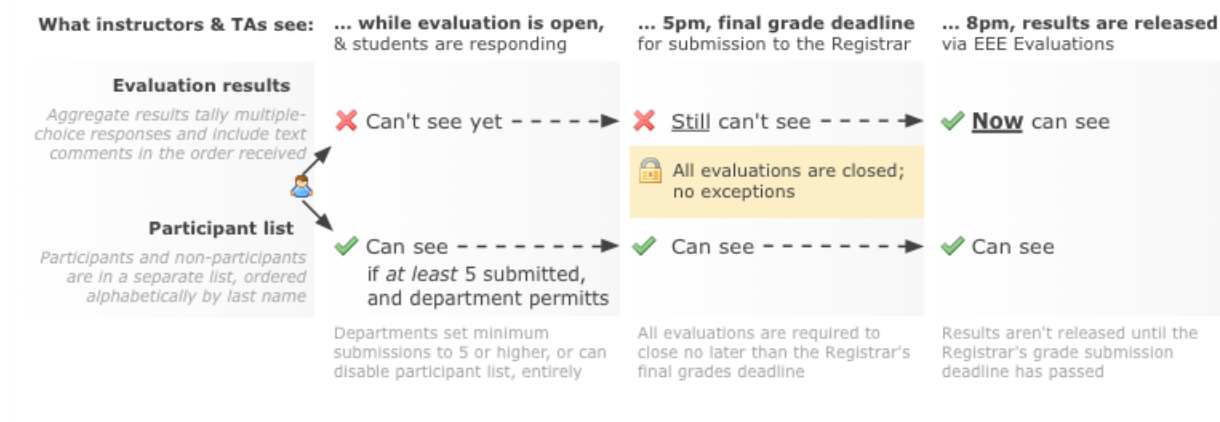
December 2014 & January 2015	Divide tasks into three subcommittees (Delivery, Implementation, Personnel). Webinar with IASystem. Develop first set of recommendations for ECS.
February 2015	Set up a pilot study with one unit (Dept. of Statistics) to understand distribution of responses and response rates, and implementation logistics. Finalize first set of recommendations for ECS (on delivery, management). Develop survey for Unit Heads and other stakeholders on campus.
March 2015	First set of recommendations considered by ECS. Develop second set of recommendations for ECS. Implement survey of stakeholders on campus. Work on details and logistics of pilot study.
April 2015	Run pilot study. UAS to approve first set of recommendations?
May/June 2015	Management group determined by this time. Set up IASystem for university use. Use results of pilot study to inform and finalize second set of recommendations. Begin work on videos.
July/Aug 2015	Begin intensive communications to prepare the campus for use of IASystem starting Winter 2016. (e.g, faculty fora).
September 2015	Second set of recommendations considered by ECS (on implementation, personnel). Continue communications with the campus community. Identify units for a second pilot in November (more units, more types of courses (e.g. online)) to ensure system is set up properly.
October 2015	UAS to approve second set of recommendations? If necessary, final round of recommendations developed by USETI.
November & December 2015	Final semester that old surveys and forms are used. Run second pilot study. If necessary, final round of recommendations to ECS.
January-March 2016	Ensure that the system is ready for April 2016. Continued communications. Management group handles special requests. Videos complete by Spring Break 2016.
April 2016	Campus completes evaluations using IASystem and approved procedures.

First Set of Recommendations

1. **Management of the system.** We recommend that the Director of Institutional Analysis (currently Philip Batty) will lead a management group for the system, with technical support from Information Technology. We envision the management group to be small, but should include a representative from the Provost's office, a representative from UAS, a Unit Head, and a member of the Professional Support Staff. As the last two will be focused on implementation of the system in individual units, it will be important to have their perspective. The management group would respond to policy and procedures questions from members of campus.
2. **Procedures.** We recommend that a complete "Procedures" document be developed that would be updated and maintained by the management group. This document would include this set of recommendations.
3. **Availability of evaluation forms.** We recommend that the evaluation forms will only be available through an online system, and students will complete the forms on a tablet, smartphone, laptop or desktop computer. IASystem includes a mobile interface that will work on most mobile devices.
4. **Procedure to administer forms to ensure robust response rates.** In order to ensure robust response rates, we recommend that faculty will set aside 15 minutes of class time for students to complete the evaluations. Faculty 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.) Faculty should not be in the room while the students are completing the evaluations.
5. **Student access to forms.** We recommend that students will also be able to access the forms outside of class time, so students who are absent on the day evaluations are given, or do not have a portable device, would still have the opportunity to complete the forms.
6. **Length of time forms can be accessed.** We recommend that forms 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 7AM on the start date selected and close at 11:59PM on the end date selected, and we can identify the time zone.) During Fall semester, given the Thanksgiving break, forms would open on a Wednesday in the morning. (Unless there is a semester when there are two weeks after Thanksgiving.) During Winter semester, on a Monday in the morning. Communications to remind faculty and students, with specific dates, will be written by the management group.
7. **Informing students about evaluations.** We recommend that a set of short videos (two to five minutes long) will be created to inform students about student evaluations of faculty – what kind of feedback is constructive, what is appropriate or not in written comments, and how the results are used by the University. These videos could be shown

in class before instructing students to complete the evaluation, either the day of the evaluation or one or two class periods beforehand. Louie the Laker and Pres. Haas could be featured in these videos. A separate video will be created just for faculty. (Two possible options for creating these videos: University Communications, or Justin Melick of I.T. who has been hired to develop internal communications of this type.)

8. **Confidentiality of student responses.** Responses are confidential in the sense that GVSU faculty, staff, and administrators will not see names attached to responses. However, student access to the evaluation 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 instructor or Unit Head can see the list of students who have completed the survey once five or more students have participated. We recommend that a graphic similar to the one below from the University of California at Irvine will be created for the GVSU community. (An article on improving response rates indicates that knowing that evaluations are anonymous can help with response rates.)



Current Members of the USETI task force:

Edward Aboufadel (Mathematics, USETI Chair); Marty Abramson (Education); Philip Batty (Institutional Analysis); Katie Clark (Information Technology); Jon Jellema (Provost's Office); Michael Kurley (Graduate Student); Marie McKendall (Management); Christine Rener (FTLC); Neal Rogness (Statistics); Christine Smith (Psychology); Scott St. Louis (Student Senate); Ayana Weekley (Brooks College).

Members from 2014 who are no longer on USETI: Brian Lakey (Psychology); Laura Kapitula (Statistics).

Appendix: Charges from March 2014

In March 2014, when USETI was created, we were charged with the following. The items marked in yellow will be discussed in this report. Items marked in green have been addressed previously. Unmarked items will be addressed in a future report.

- A. Make recommendations for policies regarding SETs, with due consideration of the following factors:
 - 1. Administration policies
 - a. What should the standard time window be for which the evaluations will be conducted?
 - b. Should every faculty member at every rank in every class be evaluated? If not, who should be evaluated when?
 - 2. Usage in the personnel process
 - a. Which portions of the evaluation should be formative? Which portions should be summative?
 - b. How should SETs be weighted in assessing teaching quality?
 - c. What minimum response rates are necessary in order to use the SETs for personnel decisions?
 - d. What confidence intervals are necessary in order to use the numbers gleaned from the quantitative portion of the SETs for personnel decisions?
 - e. How should the data be normed?
 - 3. Policies for data security
 - a. Who should store the data?
 - b. Who should be able to access the data?
- B. Make recommendations for a standardized measure, with due consideration of the following factors:
 - 1. Reliability and validity
 - 2. Applicability to all levels, disciplines, pedagogies
 - 3. Necessary support structures
 - a. Online vs. in-class
 - b. Data storage
 - c. Report generation
- C. Make recommendations for an implementation plan, with due consideration of the following factors:
 - 1. A policy for mid-review faculty
 - 2. A campaign to obtain meaningful response rates

In addition, meetings with faculty during August 2014, as well as our own deliberations, raised other questions for USETI to consider. A list was provided in our October 2014 report. As an example: The idea of “confidential but not anonymous” evaluations could be explored, where students’ names would be attached to their evaluations, in case a Unit Head or administrator needs to follow up on concerns, but the names would not be shared with the faculty being evaluated. Having students attach their names to evaluations may also encourage students to respond carefully.