



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

November 2, 2015

CATHERINE KOSHLAND
Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education

Subject: Addendum to 1987 Recommendations for Administering & Analyzing Course Evaluations

Dear Cathy,

On October 19, 2015, Divisional Council (DIVCO), responding to your letter of September 11, 2015, reviewed the Addendum to the 1987 Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations (hereafter, the 1987 Recommendations).

DIVCO endorses, subject to the points listed below, the changes that are contained in boxes in the five-page proposed revision to the 1987 Recommendations (the document with the September 2015 date; hereafter the five-page document).

DIVCO desires the following additional changes to the five-page document:

1. In the box, on page 1 of the five-page document, please add to the end of the paragraph: "Changes to the bank of questions will be done in consultation with and require the approval of the Academic Senate's Committee on Teaching, its Committee on Educational Policy, and its Budget and Interdepartmental Relations Committee."
2. In the box, on page 2 of the five-page document, at the end of the third paragraph in that box please add, "Individual instructors are free to change such custom questions as often as they deem appropriate."
3. In the last box, on page 5 of the five-page document, please change "eight years" to a "at least 15 years." This last change reflects that the time from certain threshold academic personnel reviews to the next (*i.e.*, from Associate to Full, Full to Step VI, or Step VI to Above Scale) can be longer than eight years. Indeed, DIVCO saw no reason not to replace "for a period of eight years" to "indefinitely" other than a possible budgetary one.
4. In the last box, on page 5 of the five-page document, please change the end of the last sentence to "... purposes indefinitely."

5. There are some typographical errors in the original 1987 Recommendations, which should be changed:
 - a. Because it completes the phrase “it is recommended that,” there should be no “s” at the end of “includes” at the bottom of the third page.
 - b. Please change the sentence following to “If summaries indicate less than a two-thirds return rate of ...”

Additionally, in your letter of September 11, you ask, “Please inform us how the Academic Senate would like to make decisions regarding the revision and updating of the Question Bank (*i.e.*, which Senate committee/s should have oversight of the question bank, how often review should take place, how proposed changes should be submitted by departments)?” Point #1 above answers some of those questions. The frequency of reviewing the bank itself—as opposed to changing individual departmental questionnaires—was not addressed explicitly, although DIVCO’s sense is that we should be open to changes. Proposed changes should be submitted to the Division chair, for review by the relevant committees.

DIVCO had some other concerns about online evaluations, about which we would welcome your timely comments:

- How will we be ensuring sufficiently high response rates?
- One tool to encourage higher rates is to ask students to bring laptops to the last day of class; yet some students may not have access to a laptop. To what extent will online questionnaires be easily doable on smartphones?
- What analytics are being used to ascertain the best strategies for ensuring high response rates?
- Regarding students’ responses, would it be possible to include analytics that include demographic breakdowns of the data? For instance, allow an analysis by whether students were lower or upper division? Majors or non-majors? What they anticipated their final grade would be (assuming a question to that effect is asked)?
- How does this Addendum fit with the proposed new policy on Teaching Dossiers?

Although not discussed at DIVCO, I will use this opportunity to also inquire whether analytics will be done that might permit us to determine biases in evaluations (*e.g.*, against say women faculty or members of under-represented groups)? Such information would be of great use for ensuring fairness in academic personnel reviews and important to our other efforts at creating an inclusive and equitable Berkeley.

Finally, I forward the reviews received from the individual Senate committees asked to respond to your September 11 request.

Sincerely,



Benjamin Hermalin
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Schneider Distinguished Professor of Finance & Professor of Economics

Encls. (4)

cc: R. Jay Wallace, Chair, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
Hans Sluga, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Donna Jones, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Glynda Hull, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy
Lisa Alvarez-Cohen, Chair, Graduate Council
David Presti, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Molly Vitorte, Office of the Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education
Sumei Quiggle, Associate Director staffing Committee on Courses of Instruction
Aimee Larsen, Manager, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
Diane Sprouse, Senate Analyst, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation, and Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Barak Krakauer, Senate Analyst, Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council

October 1, 2015

CHAIR BENJAMIN HERMALIN
BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Addendum to 1987 Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the addendum to the campus's 1987 recommendations concerning the administration and analysis of student course evaluations; the addendum includes revisions to the recommendations that deal specifically with online evaluations. We respond primarily to the question posed by Catherine Koshland, Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education, regarding "how the Academic Senate would like to make decisions regarding the revision and updating of the Question Bank (i.e., which Senate committee/s should have oversight of the question bank, how often review should take place, [and] how proposed changes should be submitted by departments)."

Among other things, the revised recommendations address how online questionnaires might be customized to serve the needs of departments and schools. The revisions make it clear that there is a group of questions that must be posed to all students, including the key question posed in the 2002 memo by Jan de Vries, then-Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Faculty Welfare, which reads as follows: "Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor?" Beyond the core group of questions, departments and schools are invited to develop their own forms; once the template is set, it becomes "fixed and the default for [the] department or school." Subsequent changes are permissible in connection with an Academic Program Review, but must otherwise be approved by the Vice Provost for the Faculty and the Committees on Teaching, Educational Policy, and Budget & Interdepartmental Relations.

We find ourselves in substantial agreement with these revised recommendations, which we take to incorporate implicit guidelines concerning the timing and submission of revisions to departmental templates. Insofar as revisions to templates are ordinarily allowable only as part of an Academic Program Review, their submission will coincide with the timing of such reviews, and involve consultation with the Academic Senate committees that participate in the Program Review process. We agree that more frequent revisions should be allowed only on an exceptional basis, and with the approval of the Vice Provost for the Faculty and the Academic Senate committees that are mentioned on p. 2 of the revised recommendations. It is important, for our purposes, that student questionnaires should involve relatively consistent sets of questions from year to year, something that contributes to their value to us as one basis for assessing the quality of teaching and identifying trends in an instructor's performance in the classroom over time.

One additional concern we have pertains to the retention of student course evaluation data. In the section “Retention of Evaluation Data,” the proposed revisions state that the “Course Evaluations service should provide evaluation data access to departments['] and schools’ designated personnel for a period of eight years.” We would recommend a longer minimum retention period, of 15 years. This time span is often crucial in the review of Lecturers who are recommended for Continuing Appointment only after 12 semesters of teaching; they often teach one course per year, and the full span of their teaching at Berkeley thus can cover 12 years or more. Likewise, a longer retention period would be helpful in the review of ladder-rank faculty, particularly those who have been at the Associate level for extended periods of time, or those rising in the ranks between Professor, Step VI, and Above Scale, a cumulative advancement which normally requires 13 years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Jay Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

R. Jay Wallace
Chair

RJW/al



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

October 15, 2015

PROFESSOR BENJAMIN HERMALIN
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

*Re: Addendum to 1987 Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student
Course Evaluations*

CEP discussed the revised Addendum to the 1987 Policy for the Evaluation of Teaching (for Advancement and Promotion) submitted by VC Cathy Koshland on behalf of the Online Evaluation of Courses Steering Committee at its Oct. 7, 2015 meeting. CEP appreciates the revisions represented by this draft as well as the Steering Committee's continued guidance on the online evaluation of courses. CEP offers the following comments:

(1) VC Koshland asked "which Senate committee/s should have oversight of the question bank, how often review should take place, how proposed changes should be submitted by departments." CEP believes that the three senate committees (BIR, CEP, and COT) currently listed on the second paragraph on page 2 of the revised Recommendations are the relevant ones to approve changes in a department's or school's questionnaire. Furthermore, because COT has participated regularly in vetting questions for the question bank and weighing in on the intricacies of other details about online evaluations, CEP strongly feels that the task of approving changes to questionnaires should be the responsibility solely of COT.

(2) Another issue that emerged from the CEP meeting discussions concerned the process for changing specific questions and the overall timing of this process. CEP feels that it will be critical that the Steering Committee protect the flexibility and ease of the procedures used in allowing departments and faculty to change specific questions within the online evaluations. If the process for changing/adding questions is too onerous, cumbersome, and lengthy, that flexibility will certainly be lost, along with faculty interest in taking advantage of the affordances of the online system. CEP believes that departments and schools should have the flexibility to change their questions more frequently than during program reviews, which occur only every 8 to 10 years. CEP strongly felt that certain sets of questions be allowed to be changed as often as each semester if desired and appropriate for evaluating the pedagogy of a given class. We understand that the intent in using program reviews as the default opportunity to

Addendum to 1987 Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations – CEP Comments Page 2

revise questionnaires is to make sure that advancements and promotions within departments are equitable by virtue of comparisons across faculty being made on the basis of the same questions. However, CEP believes that such comparisons of faculty teaching, at least as far as end-of-term evaluations are concerned, will continue to be based on the single required question that focuses on overall teaching effectiveness, which is the question in online evaluations that will remain invariant across the campus.

(3) CEP is aware that in earlier conversations with COT, staff and faculty who supported the creation of the online system had a vision that all evaluations across campus would include one required question on teaching effectiveness, a group of questions taken from a bank of standard questions for each department to choose among, and the opportunity to craft unique questions by instructors for individual courses. CEP is curious about why that approach has been tabled, if it has.

(4) The procedures for administering online student evaluations provide an in-class option, which seems a sensible way to increase response rates. However, one CEP member was concerned that this option would disadvantage students who don't own a laptop computer and would therefore make it less likely that they would participate. This concern is a good reminder that access to technology is still not equal to all students across campus and that instructors should be alert to disincentives that arise from lack of access. Because student ownership of cell phones seems ubiquitous, one potential approach to solve this issue is to develop a mobile phone app that would allow students to easily connect to and use the online evaluation system via their cell phones.

With best regards,



Glynda A. Hull, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

GH/lc

Oct. 13, 2015

From Senate Committee on Courses of Instruction

Re: Student Course Evaluations

At its meeting on Oct. 9, COCI reviewed the new recommendations for administering and analyzing student course evaluations.

Committee members individually voiced a number of questions:

- (1) Can online evaluations really be made effective or will they inevitably lead to a decline in the number of responses as well as the quality of assessment?
- (2) Will individual instructors be able to add/drop supplementary questions or only departments?
- (3) Has there been any investigation of the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the various existing evaluation systems on Campus?

Beyond these individual opinions the Committee strongly endorsed the recommendation that students need to be asked to supply more information about themselves, if the evaluations are to be properly assessed. Among the questions students should be asked:

1. Status: Freshman, sophomore, junior, senior?
2. Major or intended major?
3. Transfer student?
4. Course taken as requirement/ breadth requirement?
5. GPA?
6. Expected final grade for the course? Some departments report strong correlation between this and the tone of the evaluation

Hans Sluga,
Chair of COCI



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October 15, 2015

BENJAMIN HERMALIN
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

RE: Comments on Addendum to Recommendations for Online Course Evaluations

Dear Chair Hermalin,

At its meeting on September 21, Undergraduate Council reviewed the draft Addendum to Recommendations for Online Course Evaluations. The committee was in favor of the proposed changes, and determined that they would help clarify the process of course evaluations. The committee also found it appropriate that changes to the question bank should be sent to the Budget and Interdepartmental Relations Committee, the Committee on Educational Policy, and the Committee on Teaching.

The committee found the first paragraph on the second page, which begins with the sentence “Online questionnaires may be customized in two ways...” to be somewhat out of place, however. This paragraph seems to be general advice about developing questions, rather than part of a statement of policy about administering evaluations. The committee recommends removing this paragraph, and providing it instead as part of a separate document or cover letter that provides guidance about the questionnaires.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David E. Presti".

David E. Presti
Chair, Undergraduate Council