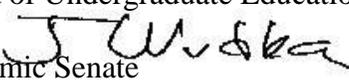




February 23, 2016

To: Steven Brint, Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education
From: Jose Wudka, Chair, Academic Senate 
Subject: Proposal Regarding iEval Forms

Dear Steve,

During their February 8 meeting, Executive Council considered the revisions to the iEval forms as proposed by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Council was sensitive to the need to revisit these forms periodically to consider the possibility of improving them as course-quality measurements.

A variety of reviewers informed Council as to the advisability of implementing the changes in the proposal. After reviewing these reports and some discussion, Council reached the following conclusions:

- Council decided against changing the scale from 5 to 7 points. There was consensus that the added gradations would not improve the quality of the measure, but instead introduce a measure of randomness.
- Council decided in favor of removing specific reference to electronic resources, but did not support adding separate items that would make reference to resources of this type. It was felt that such additions could introduce a bias against courses that do not utilize such resources.
- Council decided against removing the items related to student behavior.
- Council decided against removing items related to instructor behavior and course materials.
- Council decided in favor of removing the items where the text of the question is unspecified.

I would like to thank you and your office for initiating this review.



December 17, 2015

To: Jose Wudka, Chair
Riverside Division

From: David Lo, Chair
Graduate Council

RE: Request for Review: Changes to iEval

At the December 10th Graduate Council meeting the Council discussed the request to consider five changes to student teaching evaluations; our response is listed below. In general, there was broad agreement that the number of questions in iEval forms is far too numerous to promote reliable and attentive responses from students, and that the total number should be reduced to approximately ten questions, focused only on specific issues of instructor performance and success in achieving learning objectives.

1) Consider expanding the number of choices on Likert scale from five to seven.

The Council unanimously disagreed with expanding the number of choices from five to seven on the Likert scale. The addition of more points on the scale might provide the potential for more range in the metrics, but there was general agreement that this did not actually provide any specifically useful new information and would instead promote a false sense of precision.

2) Consider rewording the current item about supplemental materials to exclude specifically electronic resources and, at the same time, adding one or two items specifically to address the use of this kind of technology in the classroom.

The Council was in favor of rewording the current item about supplemental materials to exclude specifically electronic resources and, at the same time, adding an item specifically to address the use of this kind of technology in the classroom. This will make it easier to get more specific information on the use of teaching materials.

3) Consider removing most or all of the items related to student behaviors and attitudes. (Assuming that data from these items will not be disaggregated nor used in a more refined way.)

The Council felt it could be important to continue the inclusion of student behaviors and attitudes on the evaluation but suggested putting those questions in another section of the evaluation so that numbers are not misinterpreted. Responses from questions such as these may provide information on the classroom environment but might not be appropriately tied to faculty

teaching ability and so it should be explicit that this is not an assessment relevant to merit and promotion reviews.

4) Consider removing some items about instructor behavior and course materials.

The Council was not in favor of removing items about instructor behavior and course material, as these might be considered among the questions most relevant to the instructor's performance.

5) Consider removing the five items where the text of the question is not provided.

The Council agreed that it made sense to remove the five items where the text of the question is not provided. This option seems to be rarely used since the evaluations are automated electronic surveys and information generated from such specialized questions might not help in overall course evaluations.



Qualtrics Survey Hosting Service

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Survey Best Practices

Implementation of an effective survey can be complex. Issues such as developing valid questions, identifying adequate sample sizes and implementing other best practices should all be taken into account as you develop your survey. To provide some basic assistance, we have put together some Best Practices.

However, you may wish to consult with other campus resources before, during and/or after your survey implementation. If so, we encourage you to click on [Survey Resources](#).

[General Guidelines](#)[Tips for Effective Questions](#)[Tips for Effective Sampling and Response Generation](#)

General Guidelines

The Qualtrics Survey Hosting Service will only be helpful if used carefully. Simply sending surveys to everyone will soon train people to delete every survey message they receive. Be discerning in your decision to survey campus stakeholders; do not simply send to everyone. Remember, you are one of dozens, if not hundreds, of people using this tool to collect information.

- Response rates to web surveys typically range from 30-60%.
- Select only classifications of students, faculty, staff or customers that are appropriate for the topic of study.
- Select the smallest sample size that meets your needs. The figure may be smaller than you think. There are different formulas for calculating sample size. [Creative Research Systems](#) provides a sample size calculator.
- Track which individuals have responded, and only send reminders to those who have not yet completed the survey.
- Be respectful of those who do not wish to participate. If someone requests to be removed from follow-up mailings, please remove them.
- As with any research conducted on campus, federal human subject regulations may apply. You should contact the [UW Institutional Review Board](#) and review any other relevant policies before implementing your survey.
- For assistance with sampling, weighting, instrument and question design, construction of data sets and other survey management needs, you can contact [University of Wisconsin Survey Center](#) or consult our other [Survey Resources](#).

Tips for Effective Questions

- A survey question should contain only a single concept so that you can

define what you're measuring. Don't use a compound statement such as "The training environment was comfortable and the right temperature." These are two different ideas.

- Use a 5-point likert scale unless there is a compelling reason otherwise. The 5 values should be both clear and distinct from each other. The 'distance' between the values should be as 'equal' as possible since the variables are treated as interval data (e.g., you would not use a likert such as 'never', 'seldom', 'occasionally', 'often', 'always' - 'seldom' and 'occasionally' are too similar)
- Yes/no questions should, to the extent possible, only have two options—yes and no. For instance, the question "Do you work outside the home," the values should not be: Yes, Yes, but only part-time, No. This is a guideline; there are some times when "I don't know" or "Not applicable" are appropriate.
- Think how a question will look in the final report, both visually and with respect to text. Text answers for a single question should be consistent so that when they are listed in a table, they will be easy to read. For example, if the question is "To what extent do you use cell phones?" The possible answers read: "Cell phones are not used, Cell phones are used at least weekly, Cell phones are used every day, etc." rather than "We do not use cell phones, Cell phones are used at least weekly, Every day, etc."
- Use options such as "don't know" and "not applicable" sparingly, otherwise it gives respondents an easy way to skip past a question.
- Use page condition (branching) questions as sparingly as possible. They can be more difficult to implement and tend to make analysis more error prone. On the other hand, they allow respondents to skip sections that are not relevant to them.
- For "Check all that apply" and "Select up to three responses" questions, keep the list from getting too long. No more than 10 answers is a good guideline. Use "check all that apply" if you want to know everything that applies, and use "select up to three" if you want to get a sense of priority. It's sometimes useful to ask a respondent's "top priority," so that that choice can be singled out for analysis. If there is a "does not apply" answer, this should be listed first so that people don't waste time reading the rest of the list.
- Use "other" as often as necessary as a possible response, but use discretion when giving the option to "describe other (optional)." Only use that option for important information as it takes more time for the respondent to complete and adds additional information to analyze in the final data set.

Tips for Effective Sampling and Response Generation

- Sending surveys to everyone will soon train people to delete survey messages unread. Be discerning in your decision to survey campus stakeholders; do not simply send to everyone.
- Select only classifications of participants that are appropriate for the topic of your study, (e.g., full-time vs part-time employees). Select the smallest sample size that meets your needs. The figure may be smaller than you think. [Creative Research Systems](#) provides a sample size calculator.
- Response rates to Web surveys typically range from 30-60%.
- Track which individuals have responded, and send reminders to only those

who have not yet completed their survey.

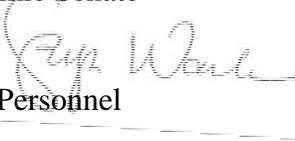
- Be respectful of those who do not wish to participate. If someone requests to be removed from follow-up mailings, please remove him/her.
- Send out email links to the Web survey in the late morning or early afternoon. If notices are sent out late in the day or at night, they won't be viewed until the following morning, a time when users tend to delete non-essential emails first.
- For additional assistance with survey design and implementation, visit the [Survey Resources](#) page.



COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL

January 6, 2016

To: Jose Wudka
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Georgia Warnke, Chair 
Committee on Academic Personnel

Re: Changes to iEval

The Committee on Academic Personnel discussed the proposed changes to iEval.

- 1) The proposal recommends expanding the number of choices on the Likert scale from five to seven. CAP disagrees with this recommendation. A five-point scale mirrors a normal grading rubric and is sufficient to express a student's evaluation of the course. A seven-point scale is confusing and requires students to try to distinguish between numerical scores with no clear distinctions. A review of appointment files indicates that other institutions use a five-point scale similar to our current one.
- 2) The proposal suggests rewording the current item about supplemental materials to exclude specifically electronic resources while, at the same time, adding one or two items to address the use of this kind of technology in the classroom. CAP disagrees with this recommendation. It intrudes on issues of pedagogy and insinuates that professors not using electronic media are not good teachers. CAP recommends removing question #18 stating "Supplementary material (e.g. films, slides, videos, demonstrations, guest lectures, iLearn, web pages, etc) were informative".
- 3) The proposal suggests removing most or all of the items related to student behavior and attitudes. CAP supports consolidating some of these questions to reduce their number. However, it does not recommend eliminating these questions entirely as they set the framework for a student's evaluation and may also help identify the student's initial expectations about the course.
- 4) The proposal suggests removing some items about instructor behavior and course materials. With regard to question 6, "instructor was prepared and organized," CAP recommends removing one of the words; either prepared or organized.
- 5) The proposal suggests removing the five items where the text of the question is not provided. CAP supports this suggestion.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

January 28, 2016

TO: José Wudka, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Jason Weems, Chair
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Review of the Proposed Revisions to the iEval Survey Form

The CHASS Executive Committee discussed the “iEval as a Tool to Collect Student Evaluations of Teaching: Current Issues and Possible Improvements” report at the regular meeting on January 13, 2016. The committee evaluated all of the report’s recommended changes. Of these, we unanimously support expanding the choices on the Likert scale from five to seven (recommendation 1, p.5). We also support the removal of the five items where no text of the question is provided (rec. 5).

While the committee did not come to a strong conclusion on the issue of supplemental materials versus electronic resources (rec. 2), several felt it important that a question about supplemental materials not be *replaced by* one on digital resources. Both of these categories are important and we should not encourage a format that only values the digital. The committee was confused by the discrepancy between the report’s discussion (p.4) and its recommendation (p.5) regarding questions related to instructor behavior (rec. 4). While p.4 suggests “eliminating or splitting” questions that tie together multiple concepts concerning instructor quality, the final recommendation mentions only “removing some items.” We think the criteria in question need to be studied further to determine what (if anything) should be removed.

Most importantly, the committee unanimously and powerfully disagrees with the proposal to remove “most or all items related to student behaviors” (rec. 3). While the report justifies such action by stating that the data is not sufficiently disaggregated to be of use, we challenge this assertion. While it would be useful to have this data expressed in more detail, we find great value in it now. Even at a broad level, information about student attitudes toward the course is vital for contextualizing the classroom experience. Multiple committee members assert that this is some of the most meaningful and heavily used data provided by the evaluations. It helps faculty to understand how their teaching is impacting the attitudes of (sometimes overtaxed, under-committed, or disinterested) students. It also plays an important role contextualizing the evaluations in relation to merit and promotion cases—where they are

key components of a faculty file. Finally, removing these questions on student commitment strikes us as deeply contradictory to the interactive, discussion-centered, and “flipped classroom” teaching methods currently promoted at UCR. To work, these methods demand student engagement and active participation. We feel that it sends a wrong message to remove questions that speak to student involvement, as it implies that all responsibility lies with the instructor.

Jason Weems, Chair

UCR CHASS Executive Committee

From: [Iryna Ethell](#)
To: [Cherysa P Cortez](#)
Cc: [Jose Wudka](#); [Senate](#)
Subject: Re: Request for Review: Changes to iEval
Date: Monday, January 25, 2016 10:50:31 AM

TO: Jose Wudka, Chair
Academic Senate, Riverside Division

FROM: Iryna Ethell, Chair
SOM FEC

RE: Changes to iEval

1. SOM FEC committee's recommendation is that a 5-point scale is sufficient to evaluate course and the instructor and there is no compelling evidence to change the evaluations to a 7-point scale. Committee voted in favor of shorter evaluations, but recommended to include better descriptors for the prompts. It's more important how the prompts are phrased and what are the distinctions between the numbers, which is more effective way to use the scale. However, some questions should be somewhat redundant and overlap (good way to gage if students are paying attention to the questions). The information should be used to determine whether students are engaged during the evaluation. SOM also uses a 5-point evaluation form with only 8 questions.
2. Committee agreed that questions about the use of supplemental materials are old and should be reworded taking into account technological advances in recent years.
3. Committee recommends keeping questions about student's attitude. In particular a question whether students attended class or learned the course material by viewing recorded lectures. The information should be used to filter the responses from students that did not attend the class regularly and therefore were not engaged in all activities.
4. Committee agreed to remove questions related to instructor's behavior.
5. Committee agreed that supplemental material questions (section D) should be removed.

Iryna Ethell, PhD
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January 29, 2016

TO: Jose Wudka, Chair
Riverside Division

FR: Srikanth Krishnamurthy, Vice Chair
Executive Committee, Bourns College of Engineering

RE: Review of the iEval Tool

The BCOE Executive Committee reviewed the iEval as a Tool to Collect Student Evaluations of Teaching: Current Issues and Possible Improvements.

The committee discussed the recommendations provided. Here is a summary of the discussions.

1. The committee was ambivalent on recommendation #1.
2. With respect to recommendation #2, the committee felt that it would penalize faculty for doing the best that they could do with the tools and electronic resources each assigned classroom provided. In other words, if a faculty member was assigned to a venue that lacked such equipment, the feedback obtained could possibly reflect poorly on that faculty member. These matters are really beyond a faculty member's control.
3. For recommendations 3-5, the committee was in agreement with each item.



COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE

February 1, 2016

To: Jose Wudka
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jennifer Hughes, Chair 
Committee on Faculty Welfare

Re: Proposed changes to iEval

The Committee on Faculty Welfare met on January 19, 2016 to discuss the proposed changes to iEval and does not support the recommendations. The Committee noted that the proposal does not address who is requesting the proposed changes nor does the proposal contain any evidence to demonstrate that the system is broken. It is unclear what problems have been identified and how the proposed recommendations are designated to solve each issue. The Committee feels that tinkering with a fundamentally flawed and ineffective system does nothing to address the real issues of bias as the current method of student evaluations do not demonstrate a true reflection of the instructor. The Committee considered the five recommendations listed within the proposal and had particular reluctance about removing items listed in recommendations 3 and 4.