Course Evaluations

Policy summary
Fort Lewis College values quality in the courses and instruction it offers its students. Student evaluation of academic courses are one of the ways the College assesses student learning experiences, maintains and improves teaching performance of faculty and enhances the quality of courses.

Policy Statement

1. Student evaluation of the effectiveness of academic courses and the course instructor's teaching of that course shall be administered at Fort Lewis College for all courses and course sections.

2. The purpose of student evaluations shall be used for assessing the teaching performance of the course instructor, assessing the value of a course, and assisting members of the faculty in improving teaching performance and the quality of the course.

   A. Student evaluations shall not be treated as the sole measure of a course instructor's teaching performance or the value of a course.

3. Each course evaluation will be conducted through the College's online course evaluation system and will include the College's standard survey questions.

   A. Course evaluations shall be administered through the online course evaluation system for all courses except 299 and 499 courses.

4. Any exceptions to policy statement 3.A must be authorized by the Dean (or equivalent) and communicated to the designated survey manager at least one week prior to the start of the evaluation period.

5. Each academic department, program, or course instructor may develop additional survey questions to be included in the online course evaluations for their department or specific courses.

   A. Department chairs (or equivalent) must submit department and instructor specific questions or modifications of department/instructor specific questions to their designated survey manager at least one week prior to the start of the evaluation period.

   B. Course instructors are encouraged to develop and use formative evaluation tools during the course of a semester to assist in mid-course improvements in instruction and student learning.

   C. Academic departments may administer additional measures to evaluate the effectiveness of a course and a course instructor's teaching of that course, however these additional measures may not be used in lieu policy statement 3.

6. Course evaluations shall be administered online during the last two weeks of the fall and spring semesters, prior to the start of final exams.

   A. Online course evaluations for accelerated and summer courses will be administered during the last week of the month in which the course ends.

   B. A dean (or equivalent) may request an alternative or additional evaluation period.

7. Students currently enrolled in the course shall complete the course evaluation anonymously.

8. Course instructors shall be able to view course evaluation response rates during and after the evaluation period, however names of students who have or have not completed evaluations will not be made available.

9. Course evaluation reports shall be available online to the appropriate course instructor, department chair (or equivalent) and dean (or equivalent) on the date that final grades are viewable to students.
Reason for Policy

This policy provides guidelines for implementing uniform procedures across campus to increase response rates, ensure data integrity, and improve reporting of course evaluations as a means for maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience.

Responsibilities

For following policy: Course Instructors and Academic Department Chairs

For enforcement of policy: Deans

For oversight of policy: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

For notification of policy: Policy Librarian

For procedures implementing policy: eLearning Office

Definitions

Academic Department: includes department, program, School and Faculty without departments

Department Chair: (or equivalent)” includes Chair, Director, Associate Dean and Coordinator

Courses: shall mean all undergraduate and graduate courses listed in the WebOPUS Course Schedule for the term.

Course Evaluations: refers to the end-of-course process of evaluation conducted by the College’s online course evaluation system.

Course Evaluation Reports: shall mean the results both numerical and written comments collected by the online course evaluation system.

Course Instructor: refers the name(s) listed as instructor(s) of a course in the WebOPUS Course Schedule for the term.

Procedures

Revised June 15, 2016

1. Administration of the Online Course Evaluation system
   A. The College currently uses an online course evaluation system called EvaluationKit.
   B. The system is jointly administered and supported by the eLearning Office and the Information Technology Services Office.
   C. Each School has a designated Survey Manager who is responsible for:
      i. Adding the College standard survey questions to new courses in their schools
      ii. Modifying, adding and maintaining department and instructor designed questions
      iii. Managing roles for department chairs (or equivalent)
      iv. Assisting deans, department chairs (or equivalent) and course instructors with viewing and running course evaluation reports
      v. At the request of the dean, removing courses from the course evaluation system that should not be evaluated
      vi. Communicating requests from the dean to the eLearning Office regarding changes to course evaluation periods, course instructor names, etc.

2. Course Evaluation Period
   a. The standard course evaluation period for 14 week courses will be the last two weeks of the semester prior to the start of final exam week.
   b. The evaluation period for accelerated courses, courses less than 14 weeks and summer courses will be the week prior to the course end date.
   c. Dean’s (or equivalent) requests to modify the course evaluation period shall be made to the eLearning Office at least two weeks prior to the start of the evaluation period.
   d. The eLearning Office shall be responsible for ensuring that the course evaluation period is configured in the system.
   e. The eLearning Office in cooperation with Information Technology Services Office is responsible for uploading courses, instructors and enrollments into the course evaluation system.

3. Content
   a. The course evaluation shall consist of:
      i. Required: College standard survey questions.
ii. Eight rating scale questions with corresponding open-ended comments. Rating scale = Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Somewhat Agree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1).

- The instructor is well organized.
- Course standards are clearly communicated in the course syllabus.
- Feedback on examinations/graded work is valuable.
- The instructor is available during posted office hours.
- The instructor effectively delivered the course content.
- The instructor uses teaching techniques that help me learn.
- The instructor fosters a positive learning environment.
- This course inspires me to learn more about the topic (i.e., independent learning).

iii. Optional: Department and Instructor developed questions

4. Student Access to Course Evaluations
   a. At the start of an evaluation period, students shall receive an email message containing links to their online course evaluations via their campus email address and pop-up announcements within the learning management system.
   b. Students who have not completed the course evaluations will receive reminder emails about every 2 days during the evaluation period.
   c. Students may retake course evaluations during the evaluation period only.

5. Instructor Access to Course Evaluations
   a. One week prior to the start of the course evaluation period, instructors will receive an email announcement stating the start of the course evaluation period and with instructions for adding 3 custom questions to their course evaluations.
   b. At the start of an evaluation period, course instructors shall receive an email message to let them know that the evaluation period has begun.
   c. Course instructors will receive one to two additional reminder emails during the evaluation period.

6. Course Evaluation Reports
   a. On the day that student grades are made available via WebOPUS course instructors, appropriate department chairs (or equivalent) and deans will be able to access the online course evaluation reports.
   b. Annual archives of course evaluation reports will be maintained by Academic Affairs.

Revision History

Online Course Evaluations policy approved November 6, 2013. Policy revised, with change of title to Course Evaluations policy to consolidate and clarify the purpose and processes for the administration of student course evaluations, align with changes in Faculty Handbook (September 2014), and comply with official policy format. Revised procedures for this policy were approved June 15, 2016.