



SF STATE



## ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

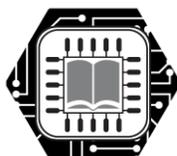
FEASIBILITY STUDY PROJECT PLAN AND DRAFT REPORT

This feasibility study project plan contains background information about previous online course evaluation efforts at SF State, an outline of the project, and a draft report to which information will be added throughout the project.

San Francisco State University

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December 6, 2011 - Version 8



**ACADEMICTECHNOLOGY**  
*advancing education with technology*

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## ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS: FEASIBILITY STUDY

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Before discussing adoption or implementation, SF State began a feasibility study in AY 2009-10 to answer overarching questions about potential benefits, risks, and other implications of using online tools to conduct course evaluations.

### PROJECT BACKGROUND: PREVIOUS RELATED WORK AT SF STATE

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SF State began listing fully online classes in the Class Schedule in Fall 2000. The campus started online course evaluations for MKTG 431 in Fall 2003, when the instructor began the first large section HyFlex course using CourseStream (lecture capture). In Spring 2006, SF State conducted online evaluations for several instructors in the College of Business, most of whom were also using CourseStream to accommodate extremely large class sizes or many sections of the same course. This was a much larger effort, since it was the first time that multiple instructors were involved.

The process was cumbersome, requiring people from the College, the Testing Center, Academic Technology, and the Division of Information Technology to perform separate tasks related to a) identifying the courses to be evaluated through an online process, b) setting up an online environment for collecting data via CGI script, c) managing the data collection process, d) harvesting, analyzing and disseminating the data, and e) other tasks. As a result, the College of Business has offered faculty the option to use an online course evaluation solution since 2007.

### CALL FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY

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In late Fall 2009 and throughout Spring 2010, the Academic Senate Student Affairs Committee (SAC) began to study the advisability and feasibility of moving SF State to an online course evaluation model. The SAC Chair asked Academic Technology for assistance with the effort. Certain guidelines for the study include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The SAC is considering an investigation of the course evaluation delivery method only.
- The campus-wide, standardized course evaluation questions are not part of the study.

## SF STATE TECHNOLOGY SELECTION PROCESS

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### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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#### The SF State Online Course Evaluation Tool Recommendation Process:

- Demonstrates rigor in research
- Is transparent and accessible to the SF State community
- Enables representative constituents to contribute according to their areas of expertise
- Demonstrates a clear relationship between the needs of the users and the functionality of the proposed tools
- Upholds SF State’s values, especially in terms of accessibility for all

### DRAFT REPORT OUTLINE & REVISED TIMELINE

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<i>Description of Task</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Status</i>
1. Needs Statement	Spr 2010	SAC Proposes, AT Revises	Completed
2. Definition of Terms	Spr 2010	AT Proposes, SAC Revises	Completed
3. Research Methodology a. Literature Review b. Pilot study	a. due 9/14/10 b. Fall 2011	AT Proposes, SAC Revises	a. Complete b. Methodology completed, soliciting participants
4. SF State Governance Structure: a. Roles, Responsibilities & Decision-making authority	Spr 2010	AT Proposes, SAC Revises	Roles and responsibilities defined
5. Campus User Requirements & Input: a. Students, Faculty, CFA, Administrators, etc	Spr 2010	AT Proposes, Stakeholders provide input, SAC Revises	Requirements completed



6. Environmental Scan: a. Other universities b. Industry Analyst Perspective	a. due 09/14/10 b. due 09/14/10	AT	Completed
7. Potential Solutions a. Complete comparison matrix b. Review comparison c. Select top 2-3 vendors	a. Fall 2010 b. Fall 2010 c. Fall 2010	AT submits, SAC reviews	Completed
8. Vendor Presentations	Scheduled by 02/18/11 Take place by 03/11/11	AT Initiates, AT/SAC & Campus Stakeholders Attend	Completed
9. Case Studies	due 04/18/11	AT	Completed
10. Accessibility Studies	due 04/01/11	AT Initiates, DPRC Conducts	Completed
11. High Level Resource Analysis a. Technical feasibility b. Use and support	a. due 04/01/11 b. due 04/01/11	AT Proposes, SAC Revises	Completed
12. Pros/Cons of Each Finalist	due 04/15/11	AT & SAC Collaborate	Completed
13. Tech Hall Meeting	Spr 2012	SAC Initiates, AT Facilitates	Pending completion of pilot study and implementation decision
14. Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations	Spr 2012	AT Proposes, SAC Confirms	Not started

## DRAFT REPORT

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### NEEDS STATEMENT

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Campus stakeholders have identified issues with the traditional, paper-based, in-class course evaluation delivery method currently used at SF State. These include the high staff cost of administering the traditional evaluations, the high financial and environmental cost of using paper survey instruments, and the need to provide an accessible, and equivalent, course evaluation method for students with disabilities and students enrolled in online courses.

This proposal explores the potential of online course evaluations as a way to address the issues stated above by providing a more cost-effective, efficient, environmental, accessible, and equitable campus solution that adds value to the student, faculty, and staff experience at SF State.

- **Cost effectiveness and improved efficiencies** for faculty, students and staff. Based on the cost per student for one college (Behavioral and Social Sciences) to conduct print-based, end-of-semester course evaluations, the estimated cost for the entire campus is \$125,000 per semester or \$250,000 per year. Online course evaluations have the potential to streamline these work processes and eliminate the cost of paper and printing. Faculty could find efficiencies in their workload by being able to perform longitudinal studies on their own teaching evaluations, and securely access their own prior evaluation data easily and securely for use in RTP and other processes.
- **Accessibility for students with disabilities** – The current print-based course evaluation system requires that certain students and faculty members with disabilities receive assistance to complete them, thereby denying their right to anonymity and discouraging their participation in this valuable activity. Online course evaluations would provide increased access to the evaluation process for students and faculty with disabilities.

- **Parity for fully online classes** – Since Fall 2000, when the campus began listing fully online classes in the Class Schedule, there has not been a standard methodology for performing course evaluations. Several solutions have been documented:
  - The department mails print-based evaluations to online students via U.S. Postal Service
  - Instructors work with campus units (Academic Technology, Division of Information Technology, Testing Center) to set up a work-around solution
  - Instructors, departments, or colleges set up their own online evaluations using free or for-fee anonymous survey tools
  - No course evaluation is conducted

Online course evaluations could provide an equivalent course evaluation processes for students and faculty participating in face-to-face and online courses.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

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The following terms are operationally defined for the purposes of this feasibility study:

- **student evaluation of teaching effectiveness** – official term for course evaluation
- **course evaluation** – end-of-semester assessment of instruction, performed each semester by students in every section
- **online course evaluation** – a technology-enabled implementation of the course evaluation process administered in an online environment
- **traditional course evaluation** – a paper-based implementation of the course evaluation process administered in the physical classroom

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### *Literature Review*

Members of the Academic Senate, the Senate Student Affairs Committee, and the California Faculty Association have raised three primary concerns regarding an online implementation of course evaluations—response rates, evaluation scores or ratings, and student satisfaction. In order to address these specific concerns about the online delivery of course evaluations, Academic Technology staff members conducted a review of over fifty research articles and pieces of related literature (See References section, below).

### **Response rates**

Overall, studies that researched differences in response rates between online and traditional course evaluation methods generated different results, with the majority finding lower response rates for online respondents.

- In eight studies, response rates for online course evaluations were lower than traditional methods (Fidelman, 2007; Donovan, Mader, & Shinsky, 2006; Lovric, 2006; Online CTE Project Team, 2005; Collings & Ballantyne, 2004; Dommeyer, Baum, Hanna, & Chapman, 2004; Frazee, Hardin, Brashears, Smith, & Lockaby, 2002; Matz, 1999).
- In three studies, response rates for online course evaluations were at least as high, or roughly the same, as traditional methods (Avery, Bryant, Mathios, Kang, & Bell, 2006; Goodman & Campbell, 1999; Cates, 1993). Avery, Bryant, Mathios, Kang, & Bell (2006) found that while response rates for online course evaluations were lower at the beginning, they reached the same levels as paper evaluations over time (three years). Goodman & Campbell (1999) found that, if promoted properly, the online system was capable of producing quite acceptable response rates.
- In two studies, response rates for online course evaluations were higher than traditional methods or considerably higher (Norris & Conn, 2005; Thorpe, 2002).

Specific audiences were identified as more or less likely to respond to online evaluations. It is important to note that some of these studies are ten or more years old, and may not represent student demographics at the time of this feasibility study.

- **Gender:** Two studies suggested that women respond at greater rates than men regardless of survey method used (Thorpe, 2002; Underwood, Kim, & Matier, 2000).
- **Ethnicity:** One study suggested underrepresented minority students generally respond at lower rates than Whites, Asian-Americans, and International students, regardless of the survey method used (Underwood, Kim, & Matier, 2000).
- **Academic performance or Grade Point Average (GPA):** Four studies found that students with higher GPA were more likely to respond online (Layne, DeCristoforo, & McGinty, 1999), and students with a low GPA or poor academic performance were less likely to respond online (Avery, Bryant, Mathios, Kang, & Bell, 2006; Thorpe, 2002; Layne, DeCristoforo, & McGinty, 1999).
- **Grade level:** Layne, DeCristoforo, & McGinty (1999) found that sophomores were more likely to respond online, while seniors were least likely to respond online.

Several studies described specific strategies to improve response rates:

- **Reminders:** Average student response rates increased for online evaluations when reminders were implemented (Norris & Conn, 2005; Robinson, White, & Denman, 2004).
- **Financial incentives:** Robinson, White, & Denman (2004) described strategies to increase response rates, including a \$50 gift certificate in a lottery drawn from students who completed evaluations.
- **Academic incentives:** Response rates increased when grade incentives were used (Dommeyer, Baum, Hanna, & Chapman, 2004) or extra credit was given in specific courses like Astronomy (Robinson, White, & Denman, 2004). Lovric (2006) stated that students were promised that the exam questions for the oral part of the exam would be posted on the web if they participated in the online evaluation.

- **Evaluation interface design:** Dillman, Tortora, Conradt, & Bowker (n.d.) reported that the evaluation design affects the response rate. A simpler interface improved response rates.
- **Greater guarantee of anonymity:** Oliver & Sautter (2004) found that providing a greater guarantee of anonymity to students was a likely factor contributing to an increase in response rates for online submissions.

### **Evaluation scores (ratings)**

Overall, studies that researched differences in evaluation scores between online and traditional course evaluation methods, or the influence of the delivery method on evaluation scores, found no significant difference between the methods.

- In the six studies that investigated evaluation scores, no significant difference was found between mean scores from online course evaluations and mean scores from traditional evaluation methods (Avery, Bryant, Mathios, Kang, & Bell, 2006; Donovan, Mader, & Shinsky, 2006; Gamliel & Davidovitz, 2005; Dommeyer, Baum, Hanna, & Chapman, 2004; Thorpe, 2002; Cates, 1993). Response rates had no effect on evaluation scores.

With respect to students using an online evaluation tool that allowed written feedback, several studies found significant increases in the quantity of written comments, the quality of these comments, or both.

- Three studies found that students using an online course evaluation tool submitted more comments than those using a traditional method (Donovan, Mader, & Shinsky, 2006; Kasiar, Schroeder, & Holstad, 2002; Layne, DeCristoforo, & McGinty, 1999).
- Three studies found that students using an online course evaluation tool submitted more substantive student comments, as defined by more words per comment, or more descriptive text for instructor improvement (Donovan, Mader, & Shinsky, 2006; Kuhlmann, 2004; Collings & Ballantyne, 2004).

## **Student satisfaction**

Studies that investigated student satisfaction showed that students found it easy to complete and submit the evaluation (Kasiar, Schroeder, & Holstad, 2002; Ravelli, 2000), or preferred the online format (Online CTE Project Team, 2005).

## **Additional findings**

Beyond the three key areas of concern, other findings about the use of online course evaluation tools emerged as relevant for the SF State feasibility study.

- **Decreased staff workload:** Staff workload was decreased when using an online course evaluation system (Online CTE Project Team, 2005; Kasiar, Schroeder, & Holstad, 2002).
- **Reduced use of paper:** Theall & Franklin (2002) showed that the use of technology dramatically reduced the amount of paper used and simplified the distribution of forms and collection of data. It saved time, money, and paper.
- **Increased cost savings:** Six different studies described significant cost savings by using online survey tools (Anderson, Cain, & Bird, 2005; Online CTE Project Team, 2005; Ballantyne, 2004; Hardin, Brashears, Smith, & Lockaby, 2002; Kasiar, Schroeder, & Holstad, 2002; Theall & Franklin, 2001). A study by a campus with 5,000 students in Spring 2010 stated a specific savings of \$100,000 per year through reduced printing and paper costs (Online CTE Project Team, 2005).

Anderson, Cain, & Bird (2005) conducted a literature review on this topic and found:

- Advantages of an online approach include: (1) provides rapid feedback; (2) is less expensive to administer; (3) requires less class time; (4) is less vulnerable to professorial influence; (5) allows students as much time as they wish to complete; and (6) allows students increased opportunities to evaluate faculty members.
- Disadvantages to the online approach include: (1) requires computer access; (2) is perceived as less accurate by faculty who are unfamiliar with online methods and who

prefer the traditional in-class paper version; and (3) elicits lower student response rates in some cases.

### *Pilot*

As part of the feasibility study, SF State will conduct a pilot in Fall 2011 with courses taught by full professors who are teaching multiple sections of the same course.

### **Pilot Methodology:**

See Appendix A for an excerpt of the Sacramento State Online Course Evaluation pilot methodology. The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate will propose a methodology for a pilot at SF State. A draft of the proposed methodology is in Appendix B.

## SF STATE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

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### *Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision-making Authority*

**Student Affairs Committee:** The responsibility of the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) is to define and recommend to the appropriate body institutional policy as it affects students, including but not limited to the following areas: student life services; advising and counseling; testing and student learning; Student Union; financial aid; foreign students and other special groups; health services; housing; student government; student conduct and student justice. SAC shall also concern itself with instructionally related University activities such as intercollegiate athletics, publications and Creative Arts productions.

1. SAC has a primary responsibility to bring before the Academic Senate, the Associated Students, or the Administration, wherever appropriate, policy matters in the area of student life. It will be responsible for defining, recommending and periodically reviewing policy in the realm of student life in order to provide additional direction to those charged with administering institutional policy.

2. SAC will receive recommendations and opinions from other established bodies and committees on possible institutional policy regarding student affairs.

SAC membership is composed of a minimum of seven members of the Academic Senate; Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and five students, one each representing freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, graduates. Student committee members shall be elected by the Associated Students Legislature.

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~senate/committee/structure1.html#SACcharge>

**Executive Committee of the Academic Senate:** The Executive Committee consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, two members at large, the chairs of the standing committees, the immediate past chair, and the members of the Academic Senate CSU. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for preparing the agenda, for advising the Chair regarding the conduct of Senate business, and for such additional duties as the Academic Senate may assign. The At Large Members of Ex Com served as project leaders during AY 2011/12. These members are Bridget McCracken and Barbara Holzman.

**Executive Technology Board:** The ETB defines the technology vision and strategy for SF State. The ETB reviews campus technology initiatives, projects, policies, and procedures; aligns technology priorities with budget and resource conditions; provides input on the agenda for ETAC and CTC; and makes recommendations to the University Provost and the Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer regarding campus technology programs and initiatives. ETB members are appointed and charged by the University Provost and the Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer. The ETB convenes quarterly, or as needed. ETB members for the 2010/2011 academic year include: Chief Information Officer; Dean of the College of Science and Engineering; Dean of Business; AVP Academic Resources; AVP Enrollment Management; University Advancement Associate Director; Director of Academic Technology; Executive

Director of Division of Information Technology; Information Security Officer; and Chair of ETAC.

**Educational Technology Advisory Committee:** ETAC represents University faculty and advises the ETB on policy and plans for the academic uses of technology. As part of the advisory process, ETAC acts as a liaison between University faculty, administrators, students, staff, and other technology committees, with respect to all aspects of technology related to supporting effective teaching, learning, research and community service. ETAC membership consists of a faculty member from each College appointed by its Dean, and a representative appointed by the unit head of each of the following units: the Library, Academic Technology, the Division of Information Technology (DoIT), and the Academic Senate. ETAC meets monthly during the academic year. Annually a faculty member is elected to serve as Chair for an academic year. The Chair of ETAC serves as the ETAC liaison to the ETB.

**Campus Technology Committee:** The CTC represents University departments and units and advises the ETB and administration on technology proposals and the implementation of technology initiatives. The CTC is charged by the ETB as a working and organizing committee to identify and address campus-wide technology needs, professional development opportunities, and potential technology initiatives. By collecting input and providing feedback to the ETB on technology-related projects, proposals and policies, the CTC explores opportunities that optimize the benefits of technology investments to support the educational mission of SF State. CTC members represent their departments, act as liaisons to other departmental staff regarding campus technology issues, collaborate with colleagues within their department and across campus to share best practices, and work with Academic Technology, the Division of Information Technology, and others across campus on implementation of systems and solutions defined via the technology governance process.

The CTC meets monthly and is co-chaired by the Director of Academic Technology and the Executive Director of DoIT, each of whom will serve as the CTC liaisons to the ETB. The CTC

is composed of representatives from each college, the library, administrative and auxiliary units on campus as appointed by the appropriate college dean or unit head.

**Academic Technology** (AT) is the SF State administrative unit responsible for supporting and advancing effective learning, teaching, scholarship, and community service with technology. To do this, AT actively collaborates with other campus partners to provide universally accessible solutions, and it researches, implements, promotes, and evaluates innovations and best practices. AT is contributing its expertise to the Senate Student Affairs Committee to help explore an appropriate technological implementation for the course evaluation policy, as approved by the Student Affairs Committee and the Senate.

## CAMPUS USER REQUIREMENTS & INPUT

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### *Basic Requirements – Summary*

The Student Affairs Committee (SAC) generated the following basic requirements through brainstorming sessions at SAC meetings and via e-mail messages. These requirements will be vetted by additional campus stakeholders to ensure that they are complete. The list immediately below provides an overall list of the requirements, which are then described in more detail in the following subsections (further below).

- Course evaluation survey preparation
  - The evaluation template should start with the standard set of campus-wide questions for the summative course evaluation completed by students
  - College deans or appointed designees should be able to add college-level questions for all courses in the college
  - Department chairs (or AOCs) should be able to add department-level questions for all courses in the department
  - Instructors should be able to add course-specific questions for any courses that they teach
- Course evaluation survey invitation
  - The college should be able to send an e-mail to each student in each course-- meaning that students will get one invitation for each course in which they are enrolled--to invite them to complete the evaluation. This could be automated (last day of semester minus X days).



- The college should be able to send a second reminder e-mail to those students who have not completed one or more evaluations yet. This could also be automated (last day of semester minus Y days, where  $Y < X$ ).
- Course evaluation survey completion
  - Student entries should be anonymous, even though they are credited for submitting each evaluation
  - Evaluation form should collect both quantitative and qualitative data.
  - Students should only be able to complete the survey once for each course.
- Course evaluation survey reporting and data security
  - Only the people who are allowed to see the paper-based evaluation results should be able to see the online results. E.g., deans and department heads should only see results for professors they supervise
  - Instructors should not be able to see results until after grades are submitted (e.g., 24 hours after)
  - Should be able to analyze results demographically, by department, or by faculty
  - Student names should never be collected
  - Vendor should meet or exceed FERPA regulations
  - Personal data should be kept separate from evaluation data

### ***Course evaluation survey preparation***

The following categories, subcategories, and fields are for determining technical specifications. They do not cover placement of the evaluations (e.g. display on the webpage) or other user interface considerations. Instructors and/or staff members will enter the desired information when preparing course evaluations.

Required fields to be determined in conjunction with or by appropriate campus constituents.

- The evaluation template should start with the standard set of campus-wide questions for the summative course evaluation completed by students
- College deans or appointed designees should be able to add college-level questions for all courses in the college
- Department chairs (or AOCs) should be able to add department-level questions for all courses in the department
- Instructors should be able to add course-specific questions for any courses that they teach

### ***Course evaluation survey invitation***

- The college should be able to send an e-mail to each student in each course--meaning that students will get one invitation for each course in which they are enrolled--to invite them to complete the evaluation. This could be automated (last day of semester minus X days)

- The college should be able to send a second reminder e-mail to those students who have not completed one or more evaluations yet. This could also be automated (last day of semester minus Y days, where  $Y < X$ )

### *Course evaluation survey completion*

- Student entries should be anonymous, even though they are credited for submitting each evaluation
- Evaluation form should collect both quantitative and qualitative data
- Students should only be able to complete the survey once for each course

### *Course evaluation survey reporting*

- Only the people who are allowed to see the paper-based evaluation results should be able to see the online results. E.g., deans and department heads should only see results for professors they supervise
- Instructors should not be able to see results until after grades are submitted (e.g., 24 hours after)
- Should be able to analyze results demographically, by department, or by faculty
- Student names should never be collected
- Vendor should meet or exceed FERPA regulations
- Personal data should be kept separate from evaluation data

## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

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### *Other California State University (CSU) Campuses*

Of the twenty-two CSU campuses other than SF State, sixteen responded to an informal survey about the using an online delivery method of course evaluations. Thirteen of sixteen (81.25%) responding CSU campuses are using or piloting online course evaluation tools.

#### **CSU Sacramento**

CSU Sacramento has conducted its own study and has shared documentation with SF State.

### ***Other Universities***

Campuses across the United States that have investigated and implemented online course evaluation solutions include, but are not limited to, Yale University (CT), Marquette University (WI), SUNY Orange, Eastern University (PA), University of Michigan, Rice University (TX), Brandeis University (MA), UC San Diego, and Stanford University. Basic information and relevant links, when available, about these universities' online course evaluation research and online course evaluation solutions are listed below:

### **Yale Online Course Evaluations**

Yale Online Course Evaluation FAQ: <http://classes.yale.edu/help/itg/occe/faq.htm>

Student motivation strategy: Students at Yale must complete, or actively decline to complete, online evaluations for their courses in order to have early access to online reports of term grades from the Registrar's Office.

Yale Committee on Teaching, Learning, and Advising – Online Course Evaluation decision process documents: <http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/teaching-learning-advising>

- November 2002 recommendation to move to online course evaluations in response to weaknesses in the previous system.
- January 2007 report on the online course evaluations considers system a success on the whole, reaching and maintaining 80% response rates and providing "more and better information to instructors (Yale College Committee on Teaching and Learning, 2007, p.2). The same report provided site design recommendations for improvement.
- March 2007 report of proposed changes to online course evaluation system.

**Eastern University**

Online Course Evaluation (OCE) system:

[http://www.eastern.edu/centers/ir/Teacher\\_Course\\_Evaluation.html](http://www.eastern.edu/centers/ir/Teacher_Course_Evaluation.html)

Term-based courses with three or more registered students are evaluated using the Online Course Evaluation (OCE) system. Shortly before the course ends, OCE emails students through their Eastern email account to inform them that the evaluation period has begun, and to provide a link to the evaluation website. Students have two weeks to complete the evaluation.

Evaluation results are available to instructors and department chairs/program directors only after grades for the course have been officially submitted to the Registrar.

**Stanford University**

Online Course Evaluations: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/course-evals>

The Office of the University Registrar manages the course evaluation process through the Online Course Evaluation system on behalf of the Deans in these schools: Earth Sciences, Education, Engineering, Humanities and Sciences, School of Medicine and MLA program.

**University of California, San Diego**

Course and Professor Evaluations (CAPE) Online: <http://www.cape.ucsd.edu/>

UC San Diego's Course and Professor Evaluations (CAPE) is a "student run organization that administers a standardized evaluation of UCSD's undergraduate courses" (<http://www.cape.ucsd.edu>). The site has tips on increasing response rates.

## **Marquette University**

Marquette Online Course Evaluation System (MOCES): <http://www.marquette.edu/oira/ceval/>

Data from presentation to their Academic Senate Committee on Teaching: Marquette's internal study showed the same average mean scores (instructor ratings) for the combined four core questions for both traditional and online evaluation methods (Riley, MacBride, & Levy, 2009, slide 11).

## **SUNY Orange**

FAQ for faculty and students: <http://www.sunyorange.edu/ir/olcourseeval/faq.shtml>

SUNY Orange uses CourseEval, The site has tips on increasing response rates and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page for students and faculty.

## **University of Michigan**

Course Evaluation (Teaching Questionnaires) page: <http://www.umich.edu/~eande/tq/>

Site contains links to pilot study information and taskforce recommendations. Recommendations included stipulations that implementation should ensure student anonymity, seek to improve response rates, and discontinue the use of paper questionnaires to reduce confusion between results from different evaluation methods.

## **Rice University**

ESTHER (Employee and Student Tools, Help, and Electronic Resources):

[http://registrar.rice.edu/students/esther\\_FAQs/](http://registrar.rice.edu/students/esther_FAQs/)

Article about the Rice University course evaluation process:

<http://the.ricethresher.org/news/2005/11/11/courseevaluations>

The article states that switching to an online system made it more convenient for students, elicited more thoughtful comments, and saved money. Rice University is investigating incentives to increase response rates.

### **Brandeis University**

Charge to Course Evaluation Committee: <http://www.brandeis.edu/provost/adhoc/course-evaluation.html>

Course Evaluation page: <http://www.brandeis.edu/course-eval/>

Research results are not public. Findings discussed over the phone:

- No statistical differences in evaluation scores.
- Response rates initially dropped after they moved from paper-based evaluation process. They have tried strategies such as awarding prizes for participation. They have experienced partial success by telling faculty how many students have completed evaluations, so they can encourage the class to fill them out. Some instructors are asking students to bring laptops and giving them time in class to do it. Brandeis is considering waiting to release grades and allowing students "early access" on a per class basis after submitting evaluation. [NOTE: Yale does this.]

### **Lingnan University (Hong Kong)**

Some advantages of doing online course evaluation: Reduced printing and paper costs, reduced time for survey administration and data processing, and flexibility in administration without the need to schedule class time for course evaluation, more time for students to give thoughtful comments, greater flexibility for formative evaluations.

### ***Industry Analyst Perspective***

Extensive searches identified no industry analysis documentation for online course evaluation solutions.

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

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Academic Technology staff members analyzed potential solutions against the requirements defined by the Student Affairs Committee, in consultation with Academic Technology, and vetted with other faculty, staff, student, and administrator stakeholders. The potential solutions fall into three categories:

- **Buy:** Pay third-party, commercial vendors for solutions (hosted or non-hosted)
- **Use:** Use free, third-party solutions (hosted or non-hosted)
- **Build:** Modify and host existing open source solutions, or build and host new solutions from scratch

### *Buy - 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Vendor Solutions*

#### **Class Climate by Scantron**

<http://www.scantron.com/classclimate/>

- Campuses using Class Climate
  - CSU East Bay
  - CSU Fullerton
  - Humboldt State University
  - CSU San Bernardino (pilot)
  - CSU San Marcos

#### **CoursEval by Academic Management Systems (AMS)**

[http://www.academicmanagement.com/products/course\\_eval.php](http://www.academicmanagement.com/products/course_eval.php)

- Campuses using CoursEval
  - CSU Channel Islands
  - SUNY Orange

#### **CourseResponse by Digital Measures**

<http://www.digitalmeasures.com/>

**OnlineCourseEvaluations.com by Gap Technologies**

<http://service.onlinecourseevaluations.com/>

- Campuses using CourseResponse
  - San Francisco State University – College of Business

**Snap Surveys by Snap Surveys, Ltd.**

<http://snapsurveys.com>

- SF State owns a site license to this survey tool

**EvaluationKIT by EvaluationKIT, LLC**

<http://www.evaluationkit.com/>

**eCourseEvaluation by eCollege**

<http://www.ecourseevaluation.com/>

**IDEA Online by IDEA Center (Kansas State)**

<http://www.theideacenter.org/node/5>

**Web eVal by One45 Software, Inc.**

[http://www.one45.com/products/complete\\_me.htm](http://www.one45.com/products/complete_me.htm)

**WebFocus by Information Builders**

<http://www.informationbuilders.com/products/webfocus/index.html>

**iWay Software by Information Builders**

<http://www.iwaysoftware.com/>

### **Instructor and Course Evaluation System (ICES) by OJC Technologies**

<http://ojctech.com/projects/ices-online>

- Campuses using ICES
  - University of Illinois

### ***Use – Free 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Applications***

#### **Free Assessment Summary Tool (FAST) by Mount Royal College**

<http://getfast.ca> (mature 1<sup>st</sup> generation product); <http://toofast.ca> (2<sup>nd</sup> generation product)

#### **Student Assessment of Learning Gains by E. Seymour et al**

<http://salgsite.org>

- Campuses using SALG
  - San Diego State University (recommended for online courses)

### ***Build - Open Source Solutions***

#### **Flashlight Online by TLT Group**

<http://www.tltgroup.org/Flashlight/flashlightonline.htm>

- Campuses using Flashlight
  - CSU Fresno
  - CSU Sacramento

There is a fee associated with joining the TLT Group to gain access to this tool.

[NOTE: March 2011 – TLT Group announced that Flashlight would no longer be available to campuses.]

## Course Evaluation modules by Moodle

Moodle is the software application that SF State uses for iLearn, the campus learning management system. Moodle offers three options—**Questionnaire** module, **Survey** module, and **Feedback** module—that may serve as an online course evaluation system.

- Campuses using a Moodle module
  - Idaho State University (Feedback module)
  - Saint Martin’s University
  - CQ University (Australia)
  - University of Bath (UK)

## *Build – Locally built solution(s)*

### Various homegrown solutions

- Campuses using solutions built by their campus
  - CSU Dominguez Hills
  - CSU Monterey Bay
  - Cal Poly Pomona
  - San Diego State University

## VENDOR PRESENTATIONS

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Based on the established user criteria as well as some technical criteria, Academic Technology staff members narrowed over twenty potential vendors down to seven. AT and the Student Affairs Committee then invited the seven finalists to make presentations to stakeholders at SF State. Five of the seven agreed to visit SF State to make a live presentation or make a presentation via a web conferencing tool. These vendor presentations were conducted on March 10 and 11, 2011. The presentations were recorded using SF State's lecture capture solution, CourseStream. Links to the presentation recordings and feedback surveys are listed below:

***Vendor finalist presentations – dates, recordings, and feedback surveys***

**CourseResponse by DigitalMeasures – Thursday, 03/10/2011, 2:00 – 3:00 pm**

- Review recorded presentation about Course Response by Digital Measures  
<http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/7df35043-59d2-47c3-a9a8-8e97d202ab02>
- Submit feedback about Course Response by Digital Measures  
<https://www.toofast.ca/takesurvey.php?SurveyID=4636>

**Class Climate by Scantron – Thursday, 03/10/2011, 3:30 – 4:30 pm**

- Review recorded presentation about Class Climate by Scantron  
<http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/3f9d25df-bd10-4247-95d2-55c5eb9ce446>
- Submit feedback about Class Climate by Scantron  
<https://www.toofast.ca/takesurvey.php?SurveyID=4637>

**Online Course Evaluations by Gap Technologies – Friday, 03/11/2011, 10:30 – 11:30 am**

- Review recorded presentation about Online Course Evaluations by Gap Technologies  
<http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/f1fc79ca-94c9-437e-9187-ff59bc3dd6b5>
- Submit feedback about Online Course Evaluations by Gap Technologies  
<https://www.toofast.ca/takesurvey.php?SurveyID=4638>

**SmarterSurveys by Smarter Services – Friday, 03/11/2011, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm**

- Review recorded presentation about Smarter Surveys by Smarter Services  
<http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/28df34a8-3a48-496a-8f40-552c7351552e>

- Submit feedback about Smarter Surveys by Smarter Services  
<https://www.toofast.ca/takesurvey.php?SurveyID=4639>

**CoursEval by ConnectEDU – Friday, 03/11/2011, 1:30 – 2:30 pm**

- Review recorded presentation about CoursEval by ConnectEDU  
<http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/b688ac90-6e6d-4545-b28f-c162e9b0f3bf>
- Submit feedback about CoursEval by ConnectEDU  
<https://www.toofast.ca/takesurvey.php?SurveyID=4640>

**CASE STUDIES**

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Sacramento State provided SF State with its Senate Proposal to carry out a pilot using the TLT Group's Open Source tool, Flashlight Online. Since that time, Flashlight went through organizational changes, requiring Sacramento State to go through its own investigation of online course evaluation solutions.

**ACCESSIBILITY STUDIES**

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The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) began an accessibility study of the five vendor finalist candidates after the vendor demo presentations on March 10 and 11, 2011. The DPRC completed the study in April, and the results were used by the Student Affairs Committee during its deliberations.

***Accessibility Assessment Overview***

The goal of this evaluation was to assess if students using assistive technology can access the surveys produced by five different online Course Evaluation tools. All surveys tested were provided by the companies. Testing was performed using a shortened manual assessment

procedure based on [SF State Web Accessibility Standards](#). Additional testing was performed using the screen reader JAWS.

Testing showed that none of the provided surveys are fully compliant with SF State Web Accessibility Standards. Three of the surveys were completely unusable by screen reader users. Two surveys had accessibility issues, but were usable.

### ***Detailed Outcomes***

#### **Class Climate by Scantron**

*ClassClimate* is DPRC's recommended system from an accessibility standpoint. *ClassClimate* surveys provide labels, which are necessary for the screen reader users to understand the questions and answer options. However, labeling could be improved. Work is also needed on the alternate text for images, color contrast, JavaScript barriers and correct use of structural elements.

#### **CourseResponse by DigitalMeasures**

*CourseResponse* is DPRC's second choice with respect to accessibility. Surveys are labeled and are accessible to screen reader users. However, they have other accessibility issues that need to be addressed. Compared to *ClassClimate* the additional accessibility issues of *CourseResponse* are more serious.

#### **CoursEval by ConnectEDU**

DPRC cannot recommend CoursEval since the surveys do not use labels. Without labels a survey is completely inaccessible to screen reader users. In addition to the label issues, the surveys have other major accessibility issues.

The company says that they are aware of their issues and that they are trying to remediate them. They are working with CSU Channel Islands on the accessibility issues.

### **Online Course Evaluations by GAP Technologies**

DPRC cannot recommend *Online Course Evaluations* since the surveys do not use labels. Without labels a survey is completely inaccessible to screen reader users. In addition to the label issues, the surveys have other major accessibility issues.

### **SmarterSurveys by SmarterServices**

DPRC cannot recommend *SmarterSurvey* since the surveys do not use labels. Without labels a survey is completely inaccessible to screen reader users. In addition to the label issues, the surveys have other major accessibility issues as noted in the table below.

### *Accessibility Comparison Matrix*

	<b>Class Climate</b>	<b>CourseResponse</b>	<b>CoursEval</b>	<b>OnlineCourse evaluations</b>	<b>SmarterSurveys</b>
Labels provided	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Alt Text provided	No	No	No	No	No
JavaScript Barriers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enough Color Contrast	No	Yes	No	No	No
Structured Data Tables	N/A, Layout tables only	Yes	N/A	No	No
Correct structural elements	No	No	No	No	No
VPAT	Yes	Yes Provided	Yes	Yes Provided	Yes Provided



Voluntary Product Accessibility Template	Provided		Provided		
Conclusion	Most accessible survey	2 <sup>nd</sup> best accessible survey	Completely inaccessible. Know about their issues and working on it.	Completely inaccessible.	Completely inaccessible.
<b>Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## HIGH-LEVEL RESOURCE ANALYSIS

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### *Technical feasibility*

Academic Technology (AT) began a technical feasibility study of the five vendor finalist candidates after the vendor demo presentations on March 10 and 11, 2011. AT completed the study and the results were used by the Student Affairs Committee during its deliberations.

### *Use and Support*

Academic Technology began a technical feasibility study of the five vendor finalist candidates after the vendor demo presentations on March 10 and 11, 2011. AT will complete the study by April 1, so the results may be used by the Student Affairs Committee during its deliberations.

### **Considerations**

*Time constraints* (The sooner a tool needs to be released, the less feasible)

Needs to be available for users to use by November 1, 2011

- Trainers / Support learn about products from administrator, faculty, and student perspective in September 2011
- Training faculty, administrators in October 1, 2011 to November 4, 2011
- Administrators need to setup site (surveys, default questions, etc) by October 14, 2011?
- Administrators or Faculty need to setup evaluations by November 6, 2011
- Faculty / Dept Admin may begin deploying evaluations starting November 7, 2011
- Evaluations can be available from December 1 to December 12

*Staff resource constraints* - The fewer staff resources, the less feasible the project becomes.

- Other projects
  - CSU Shared Codebase
  - Icarus Build of iLearn
  - J-Build of iLearn
  - Clicker roll-out

- Who will be available to work
  - Assume at most 1 software developer, 1 systems administrator, 1 support staff member

*Requirements* (i.e., Scope) - The more work a tool needs to undergo to meet requirements, the less feasible it is.

- Authentication
  - Does it need Shibboleth?
  - Does it need LDAP?
  - If use internal authentication, then requires more support
- LMS Integration
  - Does it need LMS integration?
  - How tightly integrated does it need to be?
- Hosting
  - Do we need to setup a site for OCE?
  - Do we need documentation
  - How will we communicate with faculty?
- Communication methods
  - Email
  - RSS
  - Phone
  - Face-to-face
    - Do we need to collect data, metrics? What data will we need to analyze for the pilot study?

*Quality* (This one is probably more about how much we're willing to tolerate)

- Does the tool work?
- Does it do what we need it to do?

- What are the use cases?
- Has someone actually tried all the use cases?

### *Questions*

- What are the various workflows for course evaluations?
- Who are the stakeholders? Are they different people (roles) for different depts? colleges?
- Do workflows prescribed by the various applications increase or decrease the work for each stakeholder?

The above questions are relevant for technical feasibility because the follow-up questions include:

- Will AT need to simplify workflows for various stakeholders?
- Will AT need to customize the integration / tool to meet user's needs?

### **CourseEval by ConnectEDU**

Web Site: <http://www.connectedu.com/products-courseeval.html>

CourseStream: <http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/b688ac90-6e6d-4545-b28f-c162e9b0f3bf>

- Cleanest looking interface of all options
- Current version in use for 7 - 8 years
- 8 employees working on CourseEval
- 225 institutions use CourseEval (ranging from 350 to 60,000 students) - about half self-host
- Free Pilot Program for 1 semester
- Originally designed for medical schools. References to rotations still exist

### *Hosting options*

- Campus hosted
  - 3 updates (major releases) a year
  - Currently using version 3
- Vendor hosted
  - Data center in Andover, Massachusetts
  - Claims to never lost data

### *Platform*

- Moving to .NET

### *Scalability*

- Threshold in the 10,000s, negotiating with campus up to 100,000
- Run several load tests
- Had larger schools test?
- Claim 1,000 concurrent users

### *Reliability*

- Support claims to have documentation on redundancy and other “techie” details
- Vendor-host does daily backups, can lose up to 24 hours of data
- Can recreate db with transaction logs

### *Moodle Integration*

- Do they offer Moodle plugin: Yes
  - Augsburg College uses Moodle plugin
  - link of surveys open
  - Plugin is a block that makes a simple call to their RPI, which returns HTML
- Do they offer API to create more seamless integration:
  - Presume the API allows for pulling surveys list for user

- They have what they call RPI, Remote Portal Interface, http request that returns XML
- Access to all evaluations students need to take, or remaining evaluations students need to take
- How far does integration go?

#### *Ease of Use*

- For Dept Administrators:
  - Variety response rate data to deal with response rate problems
- For Instructors:
- For Students:
  - Can see response rate

#### *Accessible*

- Claim accessible, but will do more changes (they think can do better) for version 4

#### *Support*

- Do not support users (students, faculty)
- Only Supports System Manager (1 appointed person on campus)
- Available email and cellphones on weekends, via phone on weekdays

#### *Technical Feasibility Summary*

Short-term (With respect to getting this system up for Fall 2011 pilot)

- They have a FREE pilot program

#### **Smarter Surveys by Smarter Services**

Web Site: <http://www.smartersurveys.com/default/>

CourseStream: <http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/28df34a8-3a48-496a-8f40-552c7351552e>

- 11 employees, 11 year old company
- Offering surveys for 3 years
- ~300 universities as clients, est ~25% to 35% using in full campus deployment
- 800,000 students or surveys (total? to-date)

#### *Hosting options*

- Vendor hosted

#### *Platform*

- N/A

#### *Scalability*

- University of Phoenix generated thousands of requests to load test; can get copy of report

#### *Reliability*

- Primary data center in Birmingham, Alabama
- Redundancy in Alabama
- Redundant system in Huntsville (switchover takes 15min)

#### *Moodle Integration*

- Do they offer Moodle plugin: No
  - Suggests self-registration process; post link in moodle, user registers, and uses system (don't know why this was brought up -- sounds like a made up answer to fulfill the criteria in script)
- Do they offer API to create more seamless integration:

- Read-only API
- Can get list of surveys from API
- Links go to their system
- Can create integration with API, but do not have one already
- Offers custom programming - willing to produce custom solutions w/in months if not urgent at no cost; implied cost if needed more urgently
- Willing to augment API to suit needs

### *Ease of Use*

- For Dept Administrators:
- For Instructors:
- For Students:
  - All or nothing: questionnaire must be completed in one sitting
  - Are there processes for remediation of problems with user computer or browser (e.g., browser crash)

### *Accessible*

- Done extensive testing with University of Phoenix and made changes as result
- Willing to make any other changes as a result of our testing

### *Support*

- Options to support completely internally, have point person contact their support, or refer users to their support
- No additional charge for support
- Claim that response is quick; on weekends, may have max 2 hour turnaround

### *Technical Feasibility Summary*

Short-term (With respect to getting this system up for Fall 2011 pilot)

- There is no pre-built Moodle Integration. If Moodle Integration is necessary, will need to develop one.
- Their team seems really responsive, so getting a system up and running in a short period of time could be possible -- Direct access to a developer is a positive. However, if Shibboleth authentication is a requirement, that may take some time since they admitted to not having any experience with Shibboleth -- this would require our team to work closely with their team (us, them, DoIT) and help build their Shibboleth competencies up.

#### Long-term

- They are small company, with potentially little experience supporting campuses our size, let alone hundreds of campuses our size

#### **OnlineCourseEvaluations.com by Gap Technologies**

Web Site: <http://service.onlinecourseevaluations.com/>

CourseStream: <http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/f1fc79ca-94c9-437e-9187-ff59bc3dd6b5>

#### *Hosting options*

- Vendor hosted, possibility of providing dedicated server on-site, but maintained by vendor
  - Servers in Buffalo, switchover to Florida in 5 minutes
  - mentioned other large school clients (University of Buffalo (28,192), Carnegie Mellon (5,705), Colorado State University - Pueblo (5,145))

#### *Platform*

- Windows
- asp.net / sql server

### *Authentication*

- Can we use Shibboleth?
- Can we use LDAP?
- Do we have to upload a file of users, enrollment? 1 file per university? 1 file per college? 1 file per course?

### *Scalability*

- 600,000 evaluations per semester for 120 universities

### *Reliability*

- 2 redundant servers
- backup to off-site servers ~every 15 minutes<sup>2</sup>
- willing to install dedicated server for large campuses

### *Moodle Integration*

- Do they offer Moodle plugin:
- Do they offer API to create more seamless integration:
- How far does integration go:

### *Ease of Use*

- Aesthetically poor, does not look inviting to use
- Seems like presenter doesn't even like the tool he's selling
  
- For Dept Administrators:
- For Instructors:
- For Students:
  - Students can save and complete later, if admin setup for that option

### *Support*

- Prefer students contact local technical support first
- Support available: 8AM EST to 7PM EST, 4 customer support staff
- Can purchase 24/7 support, presenter does not recommend (“Not worth your money”) - \$750/year

### **Class Climate by Scantron**

Web Site: <http://www.scantron.com/classclimate/>

CourseStream: <http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/3f9d25df-bd10-4247-95d2-55c5eb9ce446>

- Their user manual is 494 pages - its good that they have a manual; is it bad that its THAT long?
- Only 1 administrator account that must be shared. Cannot create more?
- CSU Northridge, Fullerton, San Bernardino uses
- General Tech support available, unlimited support
- Does not offer support to students

### *Hosting options*

- Campus hosted

### *Platform*

- Windows
- Mysql/Apache

### *Scalability*

- Dependant on our systems
- Will provide information on load testing on software

### *Reliability*

- Dependant on our systems

### *Moodle Integration*

- Do they offer Moodle plugin:
  - They apparently have a Moodle Integration. Have not seen nor evaluated it yet
- Do they offer API to create more seamless integration:
  - There is a SOAP API to pull specific data from the system
- How far does integration go

### *Ease of Use*

- For Dept Administrators:
- For Instructors:
- For Students:

### *Support*

### *Technical Feasibility Summary*

Short-term (With respect to getting this system up for Fall 2011 pilot)

- May take more time than other systems because it will require time to install and setup the system and then train faculty and staff to use
- Does not currently support Shibboleth, may take time to coordinate with their dev and our systems to implement Shibboleth, if it is a requirement
- May be the most expensive solution considering the work that we have to put into it get is up and running, in addition to the cost of licensing, and then the cost of support and training -- perhaps prohibitively expensive for a pilot

#### Long-term

- No long-term assessment

#### **CourseResponse by Digital Measures**

Web Site: <http://www.digitalmeasures.com/CourseResponse/>

CourseStream: <http://coursestream.sfsu.edu/ess/echo/presentation/7df35043-59d2-47c3-a9a8-8e97d202ab02>

- 30 employees
- 12 years in operation
- Suggest setting evaluation window to 2 weeks

#### *Hosting options*

- Vendor hosted
  - All campuses on same cluster, divided logically
- No self-hosted option

#### *Platform*

- Java based
- Sun hosted servers

#### *Scalability*

- 500,000 user accounts
- 300 clients

#### *Reliability*

#### *Moodle Integration*



- Do they offer Moodle plugin? No. Presenter mentioned that a link can be made to the service.
- Do they offer API to create more seamless integration: Working on WebServices, but not currently available
- How far does integration go:

#### *Ease of Use*

- Language so terse, forces faculty & admins to either get training or trial an error before deploying evaluation
- Workflow
  - Admin asks for new instrument (Not certain what an instrument is)

#### *Support*

#### *Technical Feasibility Summary*

Short-term (With respect to getting this system up for Fall 2011 pilot)

- They support Shibboleth
- Tool is not intuitive, may require extensive training of faculty and staff, in addition to support
- Development to make more usable is not option
- No LMS integration
- API is currently unavailable, but they have one in the works. Probably not available in time for a Fall 2011 pilot.

Long-term

- No long-term assessment

## PROS/CONS OF EACH FINALIST

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The Student Affairs Committee met April 19, 2011, to outline the pros and cons of each vendor finalist. The committee made a recommendation to use Scantron Class Climate for the Fall 2011 feasibility study. A technical assessment was conducted in Summer 2011.

## SUMMER 2011 TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

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The Academic Senate's Student Affairs Committee (SAC) recommended using the Scantron Class Climate system for a Fall 2011 pilot. The committee also agreed that a Technical Assessment would be conducted in Summer 2011 to review the functionality of the selected product and the process required to deploy it for SF State courses. Three faculty members participated the Technical Assessment, using three Summer session courses as a basis for the review. The Class Climate software used for the assessment was hosted by CSU Fullerton and did not include integration with iLearn, the SF State Learning Management System. A total of 64 students were enrolled in participating courses from which 30 responses were collected from students.

## TECH TOWN HALL MEETING

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Pending Fall 2011 feasibility study

## SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Pending Fall 2011 feasibility study

## APPENDIX A:

# SACRAMENTO STATE PILOT STUDY METHODOLOGY

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### *A proposed Pilot Study*

The ECETF proposed pilot study was designed using feedback from Human Resources, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Faculty Senate, and ECETF discussions. In particular, the proposed design was created to include important elements, such as:

1. No evaluations used in this pilot study will be part of any faculty member's file
2. Maximize representation of faculty from as many colleges as possible
3. All faculty participants volunteer to participate
4. No faculty participants are allowed if their RTP document precludes the use of non-paper and pencil evaluations, or mandates the inclusion of all course evaluations in their RTP file,
5. Include representation of small, large, seminar, and activity classes
6. Select a sufficiently large enough sample to address issues of generalizability.

*Study Protocol.* The design of the study is such that selected faculty participants will self identify classes to be evaluated for the fall 2009 semester in an electronic format. These evaluations will serve as the estimate for values in the experimental condition. For comparison purposes, faculty teaching evaluation scores in the experimental condition will be compared to evaluation scores by the same faculty member teaching the same class in semesters that shall not exceed four semesters prior to semester in which they are participating in the pilot study. In the

event that a faculty has taught the same class multiple times in the last four semesters, the most recent teaching of the class will serve as the control comparison.

*Methodology.* A stratified sample of faculty will be used. The courses will be selected based on the type of course (lecture, seminar/discussion, activity and lab), the size of class (25 or less and over 25 students) across six colleges. Because the College of Engineering requires all of their classes for all faculty to be evaluated, no College of Engineering Faculty are used in the proposed pilot study (see Table 2 for a display of the distribution of courses offered in fall 2008 by type, size and college).

Table 2. Distribution of courses offered by types across colleges in Fall 2008

Class Size	Course type	College						
		ALS	BUS	ED	HHS	NSM	SCI	Total
<= 25	1 lecture	410	15	98	72	110	78	783
	2 seminar	24	3	2	14	7	7	57
	3 activity	256	0	0	116	11	5	388
	4 lab	273	13	188	174	184	113	945
	Total	963	31	288	376	312	203	2173
	%	44.3%	1.4%	13.3%	17.3%	14.4%	9.3%	100.0%
over 25	1 lecture	503	184	123	244	197	351	1602
	2 seminar	10	34	3	3	1	4	55
	3 activity	76	0	0	64	9	5	154
	4 lab	11	0	31	5	44	10	101
	Total	600	218	157	316	251	370	1912
	%	31.4%	11.4%	8.2%	16.5%	13.1%	19.4%	100.0%
<b>All</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1563</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>4085</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This design will require the use of 40 classes for the experimental condition so the sample size will be about 1% of all classes. The selected classes are intended to match the distribution of all classes of each college by size and type in fall 2008 in order to better represent

the population. In particular, the proposed classes for Arts and Letters (n = 16), Business (n = 3), Education (n = 4), Health and Human Services (n = 7), Natural Sciences and Mathematics (n = 5), and Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (n = 5) is proposed for inclusion in this study (see Table 3).

Table 3. Class selection by College for proposed pilot study.

Pilot Model								
		ALS	BUS	ED	HHS	NSM	SCI	Total
<b>&lt;= 25</b>	1 lecture	3	1	1	1	1	1	8
	2 seminar	2						2
	3 activity	3			1	1		5
	4 lab	3		2	2	1	1	9
	Total	11	1	3	4	3	2	24
	%	45.8%	4.2%	12.5%	16.7%	12.5%	8.3%	100.0%
<b>Over 25</b>	1 lecture	2	1	1	2	1	2	
	2 seminar	1	1					
	3 activity	1			1			
	4 lab	1				1	1	
	Total	5	2	1	3	2	3	16
	%	31.3%	12.5%	6.3%	18.8%	12.5%	18.8%	100.0%
<b>Target</b>	Grand Total	16	3	4	7	5	5	40
	%	40.0%	7.5%	10.0%	17.5%	12.5%	12.5%	100.0%
<b>Sample Size</b>	40 sections							0.98%
Check	Match Small Class	1.5%	2.7%	-0.8%	-0.6%	-1.9%	-1.0%	
	Match Large Class	-0.1%	1.1%	-2.0%	2.2%	-0.6%	-0.6%	
	Total Match	1.7%	1.4%	-0.9%	0.6%	-1.3%	-1.5%	

A comparison analysis will be conducted between the online and paper evaluations for the same faculty member. The outcomes are (1) student response rate and (2) the mean score of student rating for each faculty. The Chi-Square Test and T-Test will be used to determine

whether there are differences between the paper and electronic evaluations. A conclusion could be reached that electronic evaluations are equally effective as paper evaluation if there are no significant difference between the two formats in terms of response rates and mean rating scores. All data will be analyzed by the Office of Institutional Research.

Recruitment of faculty was solicited through an e-mail in May 2009 to department chairs asking for faculty volunteer participants. This initial request yielded approximated 40 faculty volunteer members. After applying the volunteer requirements some faculty volunteers were deemed ineligible. To complete the needed 40 faculty participants, volunteer participant recruitment was and continues to be undertaken by ECETF members.

*Method of deployment.* This pilot will build upon the experience and practice of delivering electronic course evaluations at Sac State using the software, Flashlight. Version 2 of Flashlight offers many security features that alleviate the concerns mentioned earlier. Flashlight uses SSL, which is the current commercial standard to protect data by encryption over the internet. Access to the survey databases is limited to authorized personal only by means of a username and password. The data center that physically contains the survey database is physically secured and data is backed up nightly should the need arise to restore information. Student anonymity is maintained as the system does not associate the student identifiers with the data results. The evaluation delivery process will be as follows:

1. A participant list will be provided by the Task Force to ATCS.
2. Existing course evaluations will be converted to an electronic format.
3. Respondent pools will be created for each survey, including student email addresses.
4. A template message (describing how the evaluation will be delivered) will be provided to each faculty member that can be sent to each student or posted in SacCT.

5. Course evaluations will be sent by email message to each student and the message will include a unique url (each student receives a distinct url). The evaluation will be available for a 2 week period.
6. Midway through the evaluation period, an email reminder will be sent to each student who has not completed the evaluation.
7. The evaluation data will be sent to the authorized department contact. Evaluation data will also be provided to the OIR for the purposes of this report. No evaluation data will be provided prior to faculty submitting their final grades.

*Data storage.* The original data set will be held by Academic Technology & Creative Services (ATCS), and a digital copy will be provided to the Office of Institutional Research (OIR). All data will be reported in aggregate form. No connection between individual faculty members and any of the teacher evaluation ratings will be reported. Further, only the Directors of OIR and ATCS will be privy to a complete data file that links faculty with their teaching evaluation ratings.

## APPENDIX B: DRAFT METHODOLOGY FOR PILOT STUDY OF THE ONLINE DELIVERY OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AT SF STATE

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### ABOUT THE PILOT STUDY

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This proposed pilot study was designed by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) using feedback from Human Resources, Academic Senate Executive Committee, Faculty Senate, Educational Technology Advisory Committee (ETAC), Campus Technology Council (CTC), Academic Technology (AT), and Executive Technology Board (ETB) discussions. In particular, the proposed pilot study design was created to follow certain principles, such as:

- Demonstrates rigor in research
- Is transparent and accessible to the SF State community
- Enables representative constituents to contribute according to their areas of expertise
- Demonstrates a clear relationship between the needs of the users and the functionality of the proposed tools
- Upholds SF State's values, especially in terms of accessibility for all

### *Values Statements*

- For faculty, online course evaluation solutions offer the potential for true accessibility for faculty with disabilities; parity for faculty teaching classes delivered as online, hybrid flexible (HyFlex), or hybrid offerings; an increased number and improved quality of qualitative student feedback; and more timely access to evaluation results to guide course redesign according to the feedback.
- For students, online course evaluation solutions offer the potential for true accessibility for students with disabilities; parity for students taking courses delivered as online, hybrid flexible (HyFlex), or hybrid offerings; and convenience to all students.
- For staff, online course evaluation solutions offer the potential for improved efficiencies, including time and cost savings, in facilitating the student evaluation of teaching effectiveness process.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this study is to explore a) the feasibility of using an online delivery method for student evaluations of teaching effectiveness, and b) the technical capacity of SF State to deliver student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in an online format. As part of the feasibility study, this pilot will research the validity of literature review findings (see summary below) related to three core areas—response rates, evaluation scores or ratings, and student satisfaction. Some of the literature review articles were conducted by less diverse institutions or before recent technology advances. Therefore, it is important to validate these findings as they pertain to the diverse faculty and student populations at San Francisco State University using 21<sup>st</sup> Century technologies.

### ***Research Questions***

The following research questions form the foundation for the study:

1. Can SF State facilitate the online delivery of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness in a manner comparable to the traditional, face-to-face delivery of student evaluations?
2. Can SF State maintain process integrity when conducting the student evaluation of teaching effectiveness through an online delivery method, as compared to the traditional, face-to-face method?
3. Can SF State maintain process security when conducting the student evaluation of teaching effectiveness through an online delivery method, as compared to the traditional, face-to-face method?
4. Do differences based on student demographics, such as ethnicity, gender, class level, and academic performance, influence students' decisions about completing evaluations of teaching effectiveness when using either traditional or online delivery methods?

The study recognizes that the traditional, face-to-face process of conducting student evaluations is not ideal. It offers the same or similar opportunities for loss of security and/or integrity as the online process, including but not limited to the following:

- Students not enrolled in a particular class may gain access to the survey for that class.
- Students who do not regularly attend a particular class may complete an evaluation of teaching effectiveness for that class.
- Students may engage in misconduct or collusion during the completion of student evaluations.

Therefore, this study will make comparisons to the traditional face-to-face process as a nonequivalent control group.

## LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

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With respect to online tools used to deliver course evaluations, the rate of their adoption has increased since the late 1990s. As support for this statement, sixteen of the twenty-two CSU campuses other than SF State responded in 2010 to an informal survey about the using an online delivery method of course evaluations. Thirteen of sixteen (81.25%) responding CSU campuses were using or piloting online course evaluation tools at the time.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted as part of the feasibility study process. In response to three primary concerns initially raised about online delivery of course evaluations—response rates, evaluation scores or ratings, and student satisfaction. Academic Technology staff members conducted a review of over fifty research articles and pieces of related literature. The literature review revealed the following findings related to the three concerns:

- There are differences in online and traditional course evaluations, with a) lower response rates for online respondents and b) that response rates rise to previous response levels over time.
- The average ratings for faculty are similar with online and traditional course evaluations. Studies that researched differences in evaluation scores between online and traditional course evaluation delivery methods, or the influence of the delivery method on evaluation scores, found no significant score differences in mean scores between the methods regardless of response rates.
- Students are satisfied with both methods. Studies that investigated student satisfaction showed that students found it easy to complete and submit the evaluation, preferred the online format, or both.

The entire literature review will be made available as part of the feasibility study documentation shared via the Academic Senate website: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~senate/committee/online-eval/>.

## METHODOLOGY

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### ***Research Design***

The design of the study is such that faculty participants were asked to participate if they are full professors whom are teaching multiple sections of the same course the Fall 2011 semester. The experimental condition will be one section of the course will be offered in the online environment. For comparison purposes, mean faculty teaching evaluation scores in the experimental condition will be compared to mean evaluation scores by the same faculty member teaching the same class in the Fall 2011 semester where the evaluations are offered in the paper based tradition.

### ***Population and Sample***

According to guidelines provided by the California Faculty Association, a stratified sample of faculty from multiple departments will be used. The class sections will be selected to include variety with respect to the following:

- a) type of course (CS mode),
- b) enrollment size (30 or less and over 30 students),
- c) class level (lower division undergraduate, upper division undergraduate, and graduate),
- d) typical class level of students who normally take those classes (frosh, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate)

This design will the use of ten course with two class sections per instructor for the experimental condition so the sample size will be 48% of all eligible for participation classes and 0.56% of all classes. The selected classes are intended to provide as representative a sample as possible to address generalizability to the campus population as a whole. The participating departments will a) offer a variety of class types, sizes, and student class levels, b) offer sufficient numbers of sections to include one control groups, and c) indicate willingness to conduct the pilot study. Recruitment of faculty holding the rank of full professor will be solicited in Spring and Summer 2011 via e-mail messages to the department chair(s) and/or the faculty members themselves asking for volunteer participants.



Below is a listing of the course involved in the Fall 2011 pilot.

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>CS Mode</b>
Mar	ECON 615.01	Mathematical Economics	20	13	Technical activities and laboratories
Mar	ECON 615.02	Mathematical Economics	20	13	Technical activities and laboratories
Blecha	ECON 630.01	Econometric Theory	20	13	Technical activities and laboratories
Blecha	ECON 630.02	Econometric Theory	20	13	Technical activities and laboratories
Oshaugh -nessy	ACCT 303.01	Accounting for Financial Analysis	38	4	Discussion
Oshaugh -nessy	ACCT 303.02	Accounting for Financial Analysis	38	4	Discussion
Franz	ACCT 305.02	Cost Accounting	38	3	Lecture-composition, counseling, case study
Franz	ACCT 305.04	Cost Accounting	38	3	Lecture-composition, counseling, case study
Eng	DS 110.04	Calculus with Business Applications	54	4	Discussion
Eng	DS 110.05	Calculus with Business Applications	54	4	Discussion



Azoury	DS 412.09	Operations Management	54	4	Discussion
Azoury	DS 412.11	Operations Management	54	4	Discussion
Gillotte-Tropp	ENG 709.01	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading Writing	14	4	Discussion
Gillotte-Tropp	ENG 709.02	Seminar in Teaching Integrated Reading and Writing	14	4	Discussion
Waksler	ENG 420.01	Intoduction to the study of Language	68	3	Lecture- composition, counseling, case study
Waksler	ENG 420.02	Introduction to the study of Language	68	3	Lecture- composition, counseling, case study
Li	MATH 227.01	Calculus II	40	4	Discussion
Li	MATH 227.02	Calculus II	40	4	Discussion

### ***Data Collection***

In addition to analyzing responses to the campus-wide, quantitative and qualitative core questions for the Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness, this study will also a) conduct post-evaluation surveys with student, faculty and staff participants, and b) facilitate focus groups with student, faculty, and staff participants.

### *Data Analysis*

A comparison analysis will be conducted between the online and paper evaluations for the same faculty member. The outcomes are (1) student response rate and (2) the mean score of student ratings for each faculty. Chi-Square will be used to test differences in response rates based on assignment group and *t*-test will be used to determine whether there are differences between mean scores of student ratings collected via paper and electronic evaluations. A conclusion could be reached that electronic evaluations are equally effective as paper evaluation if there are no significant differences between the two formats in terms of response rates and mean rating scores.

### METHOD OF DEPLOYMENT

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This pilot will build upon the experience and practice of delivering course evaluations at SF State, as well as the experience and practice of delivering online course components, activities, assessment strategies, and entire courses. The selected course evaluation software must meet the user requirements defined by campus stakeholders through the Student Affairs Committee. Access to the survey database(s) will be limited to authorized personnel only, by means of a username and password. The data center that physically contains the survey database must be physically secured and data must be backed up should the need arise to restore information.

Student anonymity will be maintained, as the selected system will be required to keep the student identifiers separate from the data results. The evaluation delivery process will be as follows:

1. A participant list will be provided by the Task Force to AT.
2. Existing course evaluations will be converted to an electronic format.
3. Respondent pools will be created for each survey, including student email addresses.
4. A template message (describing how the evaluation will be delivered) will be provided to each faculty member that can be sent to each student or posted in iLearn, the campus learning management system based on Moodle.
5. Course evaluations will be sent by email message to each student and the message should include a unique URL (i.e., each student receives a distinct URL).

6. The evaluation will be available for the same period of availability as dictated by the traditional course evaluation process.
7. Midway through the evaluation period, an email reminder will be sent to each student who has not completed the evaluation.
8. The evaluation data will be sent to the authorized department contact. Faculty anonymity will be maintained with respect to both past and present results reports so that reviewers will not be able to associate results with specific instructors. No evaluation data will be provided to faculty prior to submission of their final grades.

### ***Data Storage***

Academic Technology (AT) will hold the original data set, and a digital copy will be provided to the Project Leaders. All data will be reported in aggregate form. No connection between individual faculty members and any of the teacher evaluation ratings will be reported. Further, only the Directors of AIR and AT will be privy to a complete data file that links faculty with their teaching evaluation ratings.

### **DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS**

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As part of the feasibility study plan, the findings will be shared through presentations to the Academic Senate and various other campus committees, and by posting the results on the project website as part of a comprehensive report. The researchers will also share results with CSU statewide Academic Senate and Directors of Academic Technology.

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