Online Course Evaluation Feasibility Study at SF State
Executive Summary

Description of SF State's process

In Spring 2010, the Academic Senate's Student Affairs Committee (SAC) was charged to begin a feasibility study related to using online delivery of Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness at SF State. The SAC drafted and later modified a timeline that would and did result in a recommendation by the end of Spring 2011.

The committee agreed that the process would adhere to the following guiding principles used for other decision-making processes at SF State:
- 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

Participants

The SAC Chairpersons, Kate Hellenga (PSY, 2009-10) and Bridget McCracken (Staff Representative, 2010-11), and Academic Technology staff member, Kevin Kelly, worked with SAC and other stakeholders from the following campus constituencies:
- Academic Senate
- Dean of Faculty Affairs
- Department Chairs
- CFA and CSUEU
- student representatives from Associated Students, Inc.
- staff from Disability Programs and Resource Center, and Academic Technology

Goals

The following needs were defined by the Student Affairs Committee in 2010:
- **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.

- **Cost effectiveness and improved efficiencies for faculty, students and staff—**
  - Improved efficiencies for faculty:
    - Faster turnaround provides faculty with more time to redesign courses based on feedback, if applicable.
    - Increased number & improved quality of written (qualitative) feedback provide better ideas for redesign, if applicable
    - 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.
  - Improved efficiencies for staff:
    - Based on the cost per student for one college ($1.17) to conduct paperbased, the estimated cost for the entire campus is $125,000 per semester or $250,000 per year. This does not include the summer session. Online course evaluations have the potential to streamline these work processes and eliminate the cost of paper and printing.

Timeline

- Spring 2010
  - Committee **created needs statement** (see Goals above)
  - Committee **created user requirements**—user considerations, pedagogical considerations, and technical considerations
- Summer 2010
  - Academic Technology **conducted an environmental scan** of CSU and non-CSU campuses
  - Academic Technology **completed a literature review** of articles related to online course evaluations and their use, specifically focusing on response rate, evaluation scores, and student satisfaction
- Fall 2010
  - Committee **refined needs statement** (see Goals above)
  - Human Resources **conducted an informal Meet & Confer** with CFA and the Dean of Faculty Affairs
  - Academic Technology staff **compared ~20 potential online course evaluation solutions**
- Winter 2011
  - Academic Technology staff **narrowed list of ~20 potential online course evaluation solutions** to 5 finalists
- Spring 2011
  - Committee **hosted vendor demos** for five finalists (March 2011)
    - Sessions were advertised at Academic Senate, Student Affairs Committee, ETAC, CTFD Advisory Board and various departmental meetings
    - Sessions were recorded with CourseStream for those who could not attend

- o Disability Programs and Resource Center staff **conducted accessibility studies**
- o Academic Technology staff **conducted a high-level resource analysis** related to technical feasibility, specifically related to integration with iLearn
- o Committee **met on April 20 to select a solution** to select tool for pilot
  - Discussed pros and cons of each finalist
  - Synthesized findings and made the following recommendations
    - Only 2 of 5 finalists are accessible, only one of those two integrates with iLearn
    - SF State should use Scantron Class Climate
- o Committee **announced its recommendation** at May 10, 2011 Academic Senate meeting
- Summer 2011
  - o SAC and Academic Technology with consultation from faculty research experts, Dr. Jeffery Cookston, PSY and Dr. Sheldon Gen, PA, **developed methodology** for Fall 2011 pilot study
  - o Academic Technology staff **worked on integration with iLearn**
  - o Academic Technology staff **developed training and best practices**
  - o Academic Technology and the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate **facilitated a technical assessment** with 3 courses over summer session
- Fall 2011
  - o Executive Committee of the Academic Senate will **execute a communication strategy** to build awareness within the campus community regarding the pilot
  - o Research participants will **use online tool to facilitate student evaluations** of teaching effectiveness
  - o Faculty researchers will **conduct post-intervention focus groups** with students, faculty, and staff (e.g., AOCs)
- Winter 2012
  - o Faculty researchers will analyze results
- Spring 2012
  - o Committee will **present result findings** to Academic Senate
  - o Committee will **host a Tech Town Hall meeting** to announce results to campus in Spring 2012