

## Framing Language regarding Course Evaluations

*Developed by the CSUSM Faculty Center in partnership with Institutional Planning & Analysis*

The following language may be used or adapted by instructors for insertion into class syllabi and/or communications with students regarding course evaluations.

### More formal language – Long version

Near the end of the course, you will have an opportunity to complete a course evaluation. Course evaluations are an important part of the education process. It is critical that students complete them for several key reasons. Firstly, it gives students a voice in sharing their perspectives and empowers their learning experiences. This helps future students since professors use constructive feedback to improve their courses. In addition to general improvements, professors often introduce new readings, lessons, and assessments to evolve the course; so student feedback helps them learn what is working/not working or ways they can make the course elements more impactful.

*(It may be helpful to provide a specific example of how evaluations have influenced specific changes in the course you are teaching here).*

I encourage students to share their experience in an honest and open way. However, feedback that is specific to aspects of the course (readings, lessons, lectures) is the most helpful. The more focused and practical the feedback, the easier it is to implement and make actual changes to the course. Furthermore, research shows that student evaluations can be biased based on the demographics of the instructor (such as gender identity, race). This bias most often appears in comments about general feelings about the class or about the instructor's personality, therefore comments about specific aspects of teaching or the course content are the most helpful.

### More formal language – short version

Near the end of the course, you will have an opportunity to complete a course evaluation. Course evaluations are an important part of the education process, in that they give students a voice in sharing their experiences and perspectives about the class. This helps future students since professors use constructive feedback to improve their courses. Feedback that is specific to aspects of the course (readings, lessons, assignments) is the most helpful. The more focused and practical the feedback, the easier it is to implement and make actual changes to the course.

### Informal language – Long version

I understand we are all busy and oftentimes in classes (especially online classes) students skip doing the end-of-semester course evaluations. This can be due to the time they take, and students, generally, not seeing the value in them. But they are extremely important!

**What are they?** Course evaluations are a measure of the student experience in their classes. They are used by professors and the university to improve courses.

**Why should you do them?** Firstly, it gives students a voice in sharing their perspectives and empowers their learning experiences. This helps future students since professors use constructive feedback to improve their courses. In addition to general improvements, professors often introduce new readings, lessons, and assessments to evolve the course; so student feedback helps them learn what is working/not working or ways they can make the course elements more impactful.

**How do I complete them?** Students will be informed by the university or the instructor about how to complete the course evaluations. Feedback that is specific to aspects of the course (readings, lessons, lectures) is the most helpful. The more focused and practical the feedback, the easier it is to implement and make actual changes to the course. Furthermore, research shows that student evaluations can be biased based on the demographics of the instructor (gender, race). This bias most often appears in comments about general feelings about the class or general comments about the instructor's personality, therefore comments about specific aspects of teaching or the course content are the most helpful.

**When do I complete them?** Course evaluations are given during the last two weeks of the course, prior to finals.

### Informal language – Short version

I understand we are all busy and oftentimes in classes (especially online classes) students skip doing the end-of-semester course evaluations. But they are extremely important! Course evaluations give students the opportunity to share their perspectives about a given class, and the feedback is used by professors and the university to improve the learning experience. As you are completing the course evaluation, please keep in mind that feedback that is specific to aspects of the course (readings, lessons, assignments) is the most helpful, and general feedback or comments about personality are less helpful.