

Dear faculty colleagues,

Student course evaluations are an important tool for the improvement of teaching and student success. The collective bargaining agreement also requires the use of these student surveys in faculty evaluations. With the wide range of recent changes, including modality, the transition to Canvas, and the ongoing impact of the pandemic, reviewers should consider the context when evaluating these survey results. Also please note that [training](#), developed by the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Faculty Center, will soon be required to help mitigate the impacts of implicit bias in these instruments.

Over the coming year, the administrative home for student course evaluations will begin a transition back to the division of Academic Affairs. We recognize that course evaluations are closely tied to curricular assessment, faculty hiring, and the RTP process, and this will ensure that oversight and administration of this important function will reside within our division moving forward. We thank our colleagues in Institutional Planning & Analysis (IP&A) for their diligent support of this process. IP&A and the Office of Planning & Academic Resources will work together to ensure a smooth transition over AY 2022-23 with no disruption in service. For the time being, information about the course evaluation process remains on the IP&A [website](#).

Online administration of course evaluations will continue in AY 2022-23 with attention toward improving student engagement and response. This past Spring, we reviewed and updated all course evaluation communications, held an opportunity drawing for Amazon gift cards to incentivize student participation, and worked to promote course evaluations via social media channels and the CSUSM CougarBot. Although response rates showed limited improvement, we plan to continue these strategies for Fall 2022 to see whether further progress can be made. In addition, IP&A and IITS recently completed an upgrade of our Class Climate evaluation software, which will offer improved functionality for online evaluations. Most importantly, this allows us to pursue an integration with Canvas that should give students the ability to access their evaluations through direct links within the LMS, and faculty the ability to view their response rates in near real time—two features that have been highly requested.

Concurrently, efforts by Academic Senate to critically examine the purpose, content, and use of student course evaluations at CSUSM are ongoing. As many of you are aware, the Senate convened a [task force](#) to evaluate and recommend changes, as needed, to reduce bias and increase effectiveness of student evaluations based on a review of relevant research literature and best practice. The work of this task force began over the Summer and will continue through the Fall semester. The Office of the Provost is committed to ongoing consultation with Academic Senate and looks forward to learning from this task force as we work together to make the course evaluation process more effective for students and faculty at CSUSM.

Best regards,
Carl

Carl Kemnitz
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs