August 29, 2016

Dear Faculty and Administrators:

As the University prepares to begin the Fall 2016 semester, we’d like to provide an update on enhancements being made to CourseEvalUM, the University’s online course evaluation system. CourseEvalUM leverages a commercial product called Blue by eXplorance. Over the past year, we have made a number of enhancements to meet campus needs, including:

- Improved data infrastructure – new database structures have been created and tested, which will allow us to automate data feeds to the system. By spending less effort on manual data management, we can focus more on improvements requested by users.
- Large-lecture reporting – sections that are part of a large-lecture grouping will now be reported in a single report. This is being piloted for Summer 2 2016 reports, with plans for a full implementation in Fall 2016.
- Response rate dashboard – since Summer 2 2016, instructors have been able to use an on-demand, visual interface within CourseEvalUM to see response rate information for sections they teach.

Before Fall 2016 evaluations begin, we will implement a system upgrade. This will enable several critical improvements to the fall semester’s course evaluation process:

- Changes to student registrations and teacher assignments will be automatically applied to the system nightly, allowing for the most up-to-date class rosters to be used when evaluations launch.
- Evaluations will open and close on a rolling basis using logic that is automatically applied based on the section’s duration and end date. This will especially improve handling of non-standard sections.
- Teachers will be assigned the Instructor or TA questions that correspond to their teaching role for each section they teach. Being an instructor in one section will no longer trump being a TA in another section.
- Instructors will be able to view TA reports for sections they teach in which a TA is assigned.
- The “look and feel” of the user interface has been improved, including the ability to search report titles from the user’s dashboard.
- Sections with fewer than five students enrolled will be evaluated, but reports for these sections will not be generated (to protect student anonymity). We hope that collecting these evaluations could allow us to provide reports aggregated over multiple terms in the future. Courses identified as Individual Instruction will continue to be excluded from evaluation.

We are committed to continue making improvements to CourseEvalUM to meet campus needs. During the Fall semester, we will continue to work with the vendor to identify solutions for some of the most critical needs, including:

- Student access to course evaluation results
- Departmental and college summary reports for administrators
- Improved reporting for cross-listed courses

Thank you for your support and patience as we pursue these improvements.

Sincerely,

CourseEvalUM Team

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