

## CourseEvalUM – Project Update – March 2018

### Accomplishments:

The CourseEvalUM Team completed the following initiatives since the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester:

- **Merge reporting:** Instructor and administrator reports for some past terms were updated to aggregate cross-listed and shared-lecture sections into a single report. This “section merging” is now available in reports for Fall 2015 and later. We also applied a consistent naming convention to reports as we updated them, which should make it easier for users to find reports of interest.
- **Civility in comments:** IRPA, Faculty Affairs, and the Provost crafted new language for the evaluation questionnaire with the intent of discouraging inappropriate comments. The text was implemented for Spring 2018 and reads:

“In order to help instructors and administrators best use your feedback to improve teaching and learning at the university, please be thoughtful and constructive when writing comments. Inappropriate or offensive comments do not reflect the civil engagement we value as an institution, and they are generally not effective in stimulating improvements to instruction. Should any comments take the form of actual threats, they will be forwarded, with the student’s identifying information, to campus police for threat assessment.”
- **Infrastructure for administrator report access:** To prepare for future system functionality that dynamically assigns administrators to reports for their units, we worked with our Division of IT colleagues to design and implement new data structures. Once the new functionality is available and implemented, which is targeted for summer 2018, we will be able to grant requests for administrator report access within days instead of weeks or months.
- **System upgrade testing:** A new version of Blue became publicly available in November 2017. We tested the software and identified significant concerns with report viewing and data synchronization. Therefore, we were not able to perform an upgrade in January 2018 as planned. We continue to work with the vendor to diagnose and resolve these issues.
- **Training:** Eowyn participated in an “expert” certification camp hosted by the vendor for our course evaluation system, Blue. Her time with the vendor also allowed her to provide feedback about opportunities we see to improve the system.
- **Early Spring 2018 opening:** We launched the Spring 2018 project on February 16 (less than two weeks after schedule adjustment ended -- our earliest launch ever!), allowing us to evaluate even more courses being taught outside the typical 16-week semester.

### Current and Near-Term Plans:

During the Spring and Summer 2018 terms, we plan to undertake the following projects:

- **Update remaining reports** (2014-2015 academic year) to aggregate cross-listed and shared-lecture sections and apply report naming conventions

- Continue to analyze pilot data for the **student-facing textbook question** that was introduced in Summer 2017
- **Migrate user documentation** for faculty and staff from the IRPA website to the [CourseEvalUM Help Center](#)
- **Test beta versions** of system upgrades from the vendor. We hope to upgrade the production environment in late May, after Spring evaluations close.
- **Implement new administrator report access functionality**, assuming the May upgrade proceeds as planned
- Assess the **feasibility of “preliminary instructor reports”** that could be released to instructors much earlier but would not include grade distributions or department/college averages
- Update logic to **include even more courses taught in non-standard terms in our evaluation projects**, including BMGT EMBA courses and those using the new 12-week academic calendar.

Once we complete these initiatives, we will pursue the following enhancements previously prioritized by the Advisory Group:

- **Summary reports:** reports that summarize evaluation results at the university, college, and department levels
- **Trend reports:** reports that display evaluation results for a given instructor across multiple semesters

#### **Other Updates:**

- **University Senate:** Mike continues to participate (along with Advisory Group members Doug Roberts, Joe Sullivan, and Kaci Thompson) in the Senate APAS working group on course evaluations. The group has been pursuing extensive information gathering from a wide range of constituents and is likely to soon move toward identifying possible recommendations. Mike plans to ask that the Advisory Group have an opportunity to provide feedback on proposed recommendations.

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