

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty

FROM: John H. Frederick
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs



SUBJECT: Student Course Evaluation Completion Rate

DATE: August 21, 2013

UTSA and its faculty have always valued the feedback provided by students regarding the quality of instruction at UTSA. Interestingly, a committee formed by the Faculty Senate to compare response rates and responses across the former in-class form and the online format, reported that regardless of format, courses with higher response rates also tended to have higher course ratings.

To ensure that we receive the full benefit of student perspectives, we are making a special effort to increase the student course evaluation completion rate. Toward this end I asked a task group representing the Faculty Senate, the Office of the Provost, and Student Government, to identify some strategies for increasing this rate. The task group recently submitted a report suggesting several strategies, many of which could be implemented by faculty as early as this coming semester. I strongly encourage you to adopt one or more of them:

1. Placing a statement in the course syllabus indicating that professors use feedback provided by students in course evaluations to improve their teaching and that it is used by the University as one factor in evaluating the instructor's effectiveness. This strategy appears to be an important factor in increasing student participation in completion of course evaluations. The results of a survey completed by UTSA faculty with high completion rates in classes of various sizes indicate that faculty believes this factor helps explain those completion rates in their classes.
2. Encouraging use of extra credit or points for completion of course surveys. This strategy appears to be strongly correlated with high rates of student completion of course surveys. The most common approach is for this credit to equal 1% of a student's grade. Another approach is to give 1% credit for class participation which includes completion of course evaluations. Faculty will be provided a list of students who have completed course evaluations for their courses at the end of the course evaluation process and in time to use in their grading before the end of the semester. The report of the task group supports the idea that some form of extra credit or credit for participation helps attain high course evaluation completion rates.
3. Reminding students to complete the course surveys at various points during the process.

The task group made additional recommendations regarding how various offices at UTSA can assist in this project. The full report, including all recommendations is available on the Provost's website at http://provost.utsa.edu/home/docs/Course_Evaluation_Task_Group.pdf