

Academics Committee Meeting, Feb 19 2004

Attendance:

Jeff Bergthorson
Julie Fry
Julie Liu
Allen Drummond
Amir Sadjapour

Teaching Awards:

One nomination so far this term
There was an article in the newsletter
Amir updated acad website to have link to teaching awards, updated list of previous winners
Will post fliers today

Everhardt Lecture Series

First was yesterday, attendance was somewhat small (~ 50 people)
Speaker was happy with attendance and talk
Need to do more fliers, bigger, more color
Next time: will send fliers to acad committee members to post next time
Next ELS is Mar. 10, Melinda Kellogg, 4 pm Lees-Kubota

Course Reviews

Jeff met with Kathryn Hsu, was chair of undergrad academics committee
Discussed how course reviews could be better
Only one not in: question about the honor code, because undergrads opposed to a question – they are concerned that if people report lots of cheating, it will be used to eliminate open book take home exams, etc.
Course review system will allow changing questions, so in the future if GRB wants to change they can
System will be searchable
Will be designed by outside consultant (funding exists)
15 questions – attached
question of anonymity will still need to be addressed – whether only aggregate statistics will be posted?
Clickable links for TA and faculty teaching awards
Should have the capability to “turn on” specific questions, i.e., if it is a lab class
Faculty and TA names should automatically be on the form
Registrar will be in charge of compiling this data and publishing
System should be in place for editing survey that includes grad students and undergrads and faculty, not just registrar.
Will best sent a hotlink, some way to make sure people only take the survey once
Scott Fraser (faculty) wanted to have midterm and final survey responses. Seems too frequent to us – may cause survey fatigue, adversely affect our results because people won't want to fill out the final surveys then.

Jeff will meet with Q: Council on Undergraduate Education Feb. 27, 2 pm, 112 Parsons-Gates to discuss course reviews. If you're interested in going contact Jeff.

Amir

Teaching awards announcement will be in Tech, too.

Has asked undergrads to publicize

Course Reviews:

The purpose of these reviews is to:

- 1) Provide information to students when choosing courses
- 2) Provide feedback to TAs on how to improve their teaching skills
- 3) Provide feedback to faculty on the course and their teaching

A preliminary questionnaire would look like:

General Questions:

1. The overall quality of the course
2. How much did you learn?
3. Was the course well organized?
4. Did the course content match the description in the catalog?
- the catalog description should be attached to the survey (pop up window?)
5. What was the average number of hours per week spent on this class, outside of the classroom?
6. Were tests and problem sets educational/relevant to the course? 7. What percentage of lectures did you attend? 8. How often did you attend office hours?

A. Free form response on course quality.

Faculty:

9. Please rate the overall quality of the instructor.
10. The instructor clearly presented the material.

If you would like to nominate this faculty member for a teaching award, please click this link

B. Free form response on faculty.

TAs:

11. Please rate the overall quality of this Teaching Assistant. 12. The TA had good comprehension of the subject material and was prepared for office hours.
13. The TA was accessible and enthusiastic.
14. The TA communicated ideas clearly.
15. The TA graded fairly.

If you would like to nominate this TA for a teaching award, please click this link

C. Free form response on TAs

Questions for core/undergrad classes only:

16. Were review sessions useful?
17. If no review sessions, would you have found them useful?

Question for lab classes only:

18. Was the equipment in good working order?
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We also want to define the capabilities/features that should be included in the provided software, this is detailed below.

CAPABILITES/FEATURES

Registrar should be able to send reminders to all students in a particular course to take the survey.

-Including those who are auditing a class.

Ability to include weblinks - would allow someone to be directed to the teaching award site if they want to nominate a TA, for example.

Data should be accessible - the system should allow:

a) Ability to search for data on a course from the past X years.
b) Ability to search for data on a specific faculty member for the

past X years.

c) Ability to search for data on a specific TA for the past X years.

d) These searches should allow for wildcards so that a search could be made for all classes in a specific option.

- for example, search for all chemistry classes by searching for Ch* in the search by course number box.

System must be able to include questions 11-15 (and possibly C) for multiple TAs.

ie: name of TA 1
questions 11-15
free form response C

name of TA 2
questions 11-15
free form response C
etc.

System must allow for:

-the number of questions to be easily editable.

-the text of questions to be easily editable.

-the type of response (1-5 or simply yes or no) to be variable

for

each question. The scale (disagree-agree or low-high) should

be

variable for each question.

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

The Registrar would be in charge of operating the system and compiling/editing the data. They will produce an online publication of the data.

-Registrar would be responsible for editing free-form responses.

There should be a system developed for making updates to the questionnaire that includes the registrar, faculty and both Graduate and Undergraduate students.

PUBLICATION/DISTRIBUTION OF DATA

Data will be compiled as an average of numerical responses for the course, faculty and TA.

Free form responses will be compiled and edited for course, faculty and TA.

ANONYMITY

All data must be stripped of UID information within the software package so that it cannot be traced to specific respondent by the faculty or the Registrar, etc.

FREQUENCY OF SURVEYING

It has been suggested that the survey be administered at both the midterm point and after the course.

The GSC Academics committee suggests administering the survey only at the end of a class due to:

- Difficulty in getting data to faculty before class is finished
- Data compilation and publication would be complicated by double responses (both midterm and final)
- Over-surveying the students could lead to reduced response rates (survey fatigue)

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS (FLOWCHART)

Registrar sets date that survey will commence

System creates custom survey for each course that includes the Course number, faculty name and has question for every TA assigned to the course

System notifies each student registered to a class that they are required to fill out a review by a certain date

Students fill out survey for each class they are enrolled in

System reminds students who have not filled out a review every few days until they complete the review or a final deadline passes.

System compiles the data from the numerical/bubble scored questions into averages and stores it by Class, Faculty and TA (could be multiple TAs, each with their own information)

System compiles free form responses into a text file for the class, faculty and each TA.

Registrar edits the free form responses if required.

Data is sent to the option representative/division chair, faculty member, and TAs for the class.

Data is made available online, searchable by class, faculty, or TA (as detailed earlier)