Approved University Student Course Evaluations (SCEs)

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Dear Faculty Colleagues,

Yesterday our Council of Academic Deans & Directors (CADD) approved two changes related to the administration and use of University student course evaluations (SCEs). Both changes were prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated swift and substantive changes to our faculty's teaching in Spring 2020. And both changes were recommended to CADD by a Provost-appointed task force of faculty and academic administrators who worked quickly but deliberately. The two changes are summarized below:

#1: Temporary Revision to the University Student Course Evaluation Form/Questions
For all _remaining_ Spring 2020 course evaluations (the vast majority of which were scheduled to be released April 25, but were postponed due to deliberation on this issue), the standard University-wide survey is being amended to exclude the Likert-scale questions and include only open-ended/narrative response questions that better enable students to express the breadth of their experiences with the transition to remote learning in their Spring 2020 courses.

- All courses that were originally designed as web-based courses are **excluded** from this change.
- **The amended survey will be released on Wednesday, April 29** for all courses that did not already have their SCEs released (the SCEs for most full-semester courses will be the new, amended version).
- All students will still have the **full 18-day period** during which they can complete the remaining SCEs; all remaining Spring SCEs will be closed on **May 17**.

More details about the revised SCE questions can be accessed here.

#2: Policy Prohibiting the Use of Spring 2020 Course Evaluation Data in Rank/Promotion, Tenure, Merit, and Related Performance Reviews.
The Deans and I also approved a new policy that prohibits – _unless a faculty member grants explicit consent_ -- the use of most student response data from Spring 2020 SCEs for annual merit increase reviews, promotion and tenure reviews, and related evaluations of teaching. Again, faculty may, _at their discretion_, choose to include such SCE response data in their dossiers, portfolios or other materials submitted for any such review.

This policy governs only faculty with primary appointments in colleges/schools/centers reporting to the Provost, and excludes SCE data from courses that were originally established as fully web-based courses. For details, please consult the full policy, available here.

I'll close with this reminder: As detailed in SLU's policy governing the administration of SCEs and the use of SCE response data (available on the Provost's website, and accessible here), **the primary purpose of end-of-term SCEs is to solicit feedback from students that informs faculty efforts to improve their**

course designs and pedagogy. Faculty, chairs, and deans should be working toward limited use of SCE data in their evaluations of teaching, instead emphasizing many of the other strategies for the evaluation of teaching that our colleagues in the Reinert Center have been advocating and can help you implement. Please consult them for assistance.

If you have questions about any of these changes, please contact your Dean or Associate Provost Steve Sanchez (steven.sanchez@slu.edu).   Again, my thanks for all you have done in Spring 2020 to keep student learning at the forefront of your work. Your efforts are well-recognized and greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Chester Gillis, Ph.D.
Provost