

## **ONLINE FACULTY EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

### **Purpose**

The main purpose of the online faculty evaluation is to improve teaching effectiveness in the online environment. This evaluation form is intended to supplement the other components of the overall faculty evaluation plan (face-to-face course observation, instructor self-evaluation, supervisor evaluation).

All aspects of a faculty evaluation not discussed below are governed by the original Faculty Evaluation Plan.

### **Evaluator and Timeline**

1. Each faculty member who teaches online will be evaluated from January – December (with the exception of 2006, when all online faculty will be evaluated in the Fall semester).<sup>1</sup> Beginning in 2008, all faculty who have received two (2) consecutive satisfactory evaluations for online courses will be placed on a 3-year rotation that parallels that of the face-to-face course observation. (A satisfactory evaluation is defined as a score of 3 or higher on the *Overall Rating* on the *Rating Summary*.) In other words, once an online faculty member has been satisfactorily evaluated online for 2 consecutive years, s/he will then be observed once every three years in the online environment. This observation will coincide with the year of the faculty member's face-to-face course observation, so that the observations can be weighted accordingly on the "long form" version of the instructor evaluation.
2. All program/department chairs are required to have certification (eTeach I and eTeach II); it is preferred that the chair has experience teaching online. As with the face-to-face evaluation, the chair will be responsible for doing in-class observations of all full-time faculty in his/her department. If the department has a lead instructor or other faculty members who have been certified and who are familiar with the delivery system of the course being observed, the chair may delegate the observation to the lead instructor or other online instructor. All deans will be responsible for doing online observations of their program/department chairs. Class selections for online observations should be rotated to eventually cover all courses taught online by the instructor within his or her department. Classroom observations for full-time instructors who teach online as adjuncts for other departments may be arranged by mutual consent.
3. Online course evaluations will be scheduled at a time mutually agreeable for both the observer and the instructor from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> week of the semester (or equivalent dates for a mini-mester).

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<sup>1</sup> The Distance Education Department considers the transition from WebCT 4.1 to WebCT 6.0 to be a clean slate in terms of online teaching; this means that all online faculty, regardless of their experience in 4.1, will be considered "new" online faculty with the implementation of 6.0

The procedure for the observation is as follows:

- 1) The faculty member and observer will sit down together prior to the observation, so that the instructor can show the observer the unit/chapter/module (hereafter called “session”) that s/he will be entering. This is necessary since the students in the course will already understand the course expectations and outcomes for that particular session; the observer should have the same familiarity with the course session as the students.
- 2) The observer will be enrolled as a student in the course for a minimum of two days, or 48 hours. The rationale for this period of time is as follows:
  - i. 1 hour of class time in a 15-week class is  $1/45$  of total class time for a 3-hour course and  $1/60$  of total class time for a 4-hour course.
  - ii. Assuming that 15-week online course is 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 15 weeks, equivalent observation time for a 3-hour course is  $1/45$  of 2520 hours, or 56 hours, or about 2 days; for a 4-hour course, it is 42 hours, again about 2 days.

If the course being observed is a mini-mester, the instructor and the observer will agree to a mathematically equivalent period of time for the observer to be enrolled in the course.

If the instructor wishes for the observer to be enrolled in the course for longer period of time, the observer will participate in the course for a mutually agreed upon length of time exceeding two days.

- 3) The instructor and the observer will sit down within 48 hours after the observation period to discuss what the observer has experienced. At that time, the instructor may elect to show the observer materials that were not available to him/her while enrolled as a student in the course. These materials could include materials hidden from the observer through selective release, e-mails between the faculty member and other students of the course, or archived materials from previous course sessions. In the interests of privacy, all students should be made aware of STC Policy 4713: “Electronic communications are considered to be College property and may be retrieved from storage even though they have been deleted by the sender and the receiver.”
- 4) The observer will share the results of the observation with the faculty member within 10 days of the conclusion of the observation period.
- 5) Additional observations may be conducted by mutual agreement of the observer and the faculty member. If the original observer performs

observations of multiple course sessions, the most recent observation shall be used for evaluation purposes.

4. All faculty members may elect to have a second observation. Each year at the distance educators' meeting prior to classes starting in the fall, the distance education faculty will elect two representatives from each division to comprise a pool of observers. The second observer must have certification (eTeach I and II) AND online teaching experience.

A faculty member requesting a second observation shall choose one of the designated observers from his/her division to conduct the second online evaluation. The second observer will not be given the results of the first evaluation. When a second observation is completed, the dean from the faculty member's division will calculate an average of the two observations and use that average in calculating the score to be used for the online portion of the observation criterion in the *Rating Summary*. The faculty member's dean will consult with the chair and will then conduct the *Final Conference* and develop the *Instructor's Goals and Plan of Action* with the faculty member.

5. The department chair may select full-time instructors who are certified to teach online and who are familiar with the delivery system of the course being observed to observe adjunct faculty who teach online. Faculty members will receive equivalent office hour credit for travel and observation time.
6. Observers will receive mileage according to College procedures.

### **Student Evaluation**

1. Student evaluations will be conducted for every online section during the first two years of instruction online. Once the instructor is on the 3-year observation cycle, s/he may elect to have students in all online courses evaluate the course, but at least one online course per semester must be evaluated by students.
2. These evaluations are conducted online and sent directly to OIRE.

### **The Place of the Online Observation in the *Rating Summary***

Currently, the face-to-face instructor observation form comprises 30% of the *Rating Summary*. For faculty who do not teach online, this will not change.

For faculty who teach online, their online observation and their face-to-face observation will be weighted in proportion to the number of courses taught in each environment.

For instance, if an instructor teaches 6 courses, 2 online and 4 face-to-face, then  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the 30% allotted to observations will come from the score on the online course observation; the other  $\frac{2}{3}$  will come from the score on the face-to-face observation.