



## Friday at the Center: May 20, 2005

### Increasing Course Evaluation Participation

All faculty recently received an email informing them of the scheduled activation on May 30 of the on-line course evaluation system for this quarter. During the period from May 31 through Jun 6 (when students fill out their evaluations), how can you motivate them? In April, I asked all instructors who had a 62 percent or higher completion rate last quarter to share their strategies for success. Here are some of the results:

The most successful strategy, producing the highest response rate, was utilized by four people who offered their classes extra credit points if over a certain percentage of the class completed the evaluation. By going into your Banner account, you can check the response rate at any time during the final week of class and report to your class on the current percentage of participation. (You can not, however, tell who has filled out an evaluation and who has not.) One faculty member offered extra credit on the exam if the final response rate was 95%, another made the target 100%. These targets may be a little high. A third offered 5 points on the final quiz if the response rate was 85% by the last day of class. If you set 85% for the goal and achieved it, you would have a response rate comparable to the old paper system, so that seems reasonable.

An alternative but related strategy was to ask students to sign a statement at the final exam indicating that they had completed the evaluation. Under this honor system, those who signed were given extra credit points on the final. The instructor who used this strategy found that the number of students who signed up roughly equaled the percentage of participation as reported in Banner.

The second most successful strategy was talking about the process in class several times, encouraging students to participate, and explaining how it was helpful. Some directly connected the completion of the evaluation with the content of the course. For example, one person reported, "I announced it in class and asked them to take time to do it. I framed it by saying something like

- a. Part of their development as Christian leaders is to learn to evaluate others.
- b. My classes are better this year because of students who evaluated me in previous years.
- c. My course will be even better next year if they take the time to evaluate me.

Another said, "I reminded the students twice in class, I sent them an e-mail. I gave them a couple of examples in class of how I had used past evaluations to change the class to its current design." One adjunct wrote, "I think that what worked in encouraging my students to complete the online evaluation form was reminding them in our last four classes of how important this was for me, for SPU and for them. For me, because this is another good way for them to let me know what I can do to improve my classes, for SPU because it goes through all the trouble to creating this online format for the benefit of the whole SPU community, and for them, the students, because they need, as Christian adults, to be accountable and responsible in everything they do and this is a good way to put in their contribution to this effort."

I appeared at Student Senate on Monday to ask the student leaders to assist in encouraging student participation. A few students told me that their instructors had never mentioned the on-line evaluations, so they did not think they were important. Others talked about how gratified they were to learn about how specific courses had been improved because of their input.

## **CCCU International Forum**

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities invites proposals for breakout sessions at the **CCCU International Forum on Christian Higher Education**, to be held on March 30-April 1, 2006. The deadline for submitting proposals is June 15, 2005. Topics can include any of the following:

1. Trends, issues, and/or challenges on Christian college campuses and leaders (examples may include: admissions and enrollment, hiring for mission, faculty development, leadership development, cost and quality issues, creating welcoming climates for people of color, adult education and non-traditional students and more.)
2. Panels addressing the nature and future of Christian scholarship in the academy, the challenge of cultural and cross-cultural engagement for student learning, pedagogy in the Christian academy, service-learning, and other topics which would engage audiences in conversations about the nature of our work as Christian educators.
3. Panels which explore how campuses are addressing one or more of the following six themes which are a part of the CCCU's Advancing Intercultural Competencies:
  - Internationalization
  - Gender Equity
  - Race and Ethnicity
  - World Religions
  - Human Sexuality
  - Serving the Disenfranchised

Details and an online submission form can be found at <http://www.cccu.org/forum/rfp>.

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