



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII*
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Academic Senate of Hawai'i Community College

Resolution #2017-1

Resolution on Implementation of Course Evaluation System

Effective Date: Month, Day 2017

Background/Rationale:

A mandatory implementation of the University of Hawai'i System's Course Evaluation System (CES) was announced by the UH System President in a memo dated March 8, 2016. Among significant changes from the current eCAFE evaluation, the CES would increase accessibility via mobile technology, automatically evaluate all credit courses, distribute full results to department/division chairs, and distribute "aggregated" results to "others on campus according to campus-specific policies and procedures."

In ensuing discussions with ITS and other representatives, there have been two primary explanations given for these changes: 1) student complaints that they cannot currently give feedback on certain classes or that feedback is not viewed beyond the instructor level; 2) the intent to use the instrument previously used for instructor evaluations to also evaluate curriculum and program effectiveness for accreditation and other purposes.

First, on the issue of student complaints, we agree that expanding accessibility via mobile technology and automatically assessing 100% of credit courses will improve students' ability to "provide meaningful feedback on all their courses." We support those changes.

We do not, however, see benefit to students in the immediate reporting of Tiers I-IV to department/division chairs. Students with legitimate academic grievances on our campus should be directed to follow procedures outlined in the Student Academic Grievance Policy (HAW 5.101). Otherwise, students can be informed that evaluations are primarily a tool for faculty learning and improvement and that their comments will be viewed by others as part of the established review process. As described in the President's memo, "[CES] allows students to provide feedback on their learning experiences which faculty



can use to inform their teaching practices, to evaluate new teaching methods and techniques, and to demonstrate teaching effectiveness.”

In appropriate contexts for faculty evaluation (including lecturer rehiring decisions, contract renewals, and tenure and promotion assessments), student evaluations may contribute to evaluating teaching effectiveness, per existing procedures governing faculty evaluation, which are established at the campus level and with Faculty Senate oversight (see BOR 9.203 and BOR 1.210). Because evaluation by individual department/division chair each semester is not part of our campus’s procedures for faculty evaluation, it is inappropriate to give these individuals immediate access to confidential evaluation materials every semester. Furthermore, delivering decontextualized student evaluations to a rotating group of individuals serving as division/department chairs each semester seems counterproductive to the greater goal of teaching improvement. We fear it may discourage teaching innovation.

Second, in response to the argument that the changes to eCAFE will allow administrators to evaluate curriculum or program effectiveness, we have deeper concerns. Primarily, we question whether the same instrument used to gather data for teaching improvement and faculty evaluation can also provide a sound, valid measure of student learning and/or program/course effectiveness. For comparison, we note the extensive and varied practices that our departments and programs currently use to measure effectiveness, including exit exams, department-wide assessment using pre- and post-tests, writing samples and portfolios of student work, regular evaluations by outside experts in our fields, and system-wide and national comparisons of our students’ and graduates’ success on standardized tests, license exams, transfer to 4-year colleges, employment, and other measures of goal achievement.

Per BOR Policy 1.210, “duly authorized campus faculty organizations” (in this case, the HawCC Faculty Senate), have the “responsibility to speak for the faculty on academic policy matters such as . . . the initiation, review, and evaluation of . . . instructional and academic programs.” For this reason, any plans to evaluate program effectiveness or satisfy accreditation recommendations via this instrument must be evaluated by our Faculty Senate.

Finally, given our college’s many small programs and courses taught exclusively by single instructors, our campus-specific distribution procedures must ensure that uses of this survey for secondary purposes (such as program review or accreditation requirements)



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do not result in inappropriate and out-of-context evaluations of individual instructors. Instructor confidentiality must be protected in the sharing of data for any such analysis.

Therefore, in the interests of collegiality and the spirit of *Kauhale*, we present the following resolutions:

Resolved, that individual course evaluations by students shall remain the property of the individual instructor of record and shall not be forwarded to division/diversity chairs without written permission from the instructor of record.

Resolved, HawCC faculty shall design and select all questions to be used for purposes of department/division/course/instructor evaluations (Tiers II-IV). For the Tier I ("Campus") level questions, the HawCC Faculty Senate shall design and select questions, working in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. No additional questions shall be added to the survey by ITS or system level administration.

Further resolved, that any sharing of student evaluation results from Tiers I-III in "aggregated form" be conducted in a way that protects instructor confidentiality.

Supporting documents:

1. **March 8, 2016 Memo from UH President David Lassner**
2. [HAW 5.101 Student Academic Grievance Policy](#)
3. [UH BOR Policy RP 1.210](#)
4. [UH BOR Policy EP 9.203](#)