

April 13, 2011

To: The Faculty, School of Liberal Arts

From: The SLA Teaching and Advising Committee: Dennis Bingham (Chair), Archana Dubé, Johnny Flynn, Gina Sanchez Gibau, Daniela Schuvaks Katz, Kevin Robbins; Robert Aponte, Agenda Council representative; Amy Jones Richardson, administration representative

In response to the Faculty Assembly's charge to the Teaching and Advising Committee to report to Faculty Assembly on the causes of this year's delays in returning the Fall 2010 Student Evaluation results and to make recommendations to prevent such delays in the future, we submit the following:

I. On March 25, the committee conducted a special fact-finding meeting to which we invited Bill Stuckey of Technical Services, Neale Chumbler, Chair of Sociology and, since January 3, 2011, Director of the Survey Research Center, and Acting Dean for Academic Affairs Enrica Ardemagni. Bill Stuckey handles the scanning of the completed evaluation forms. These are then sent for analysis to the Survey Research Center (SRC), which returns the results for each section to the Dean's Office for sorting them back into their individual envelopes and disseminating these to the departments.

This past year's timeline:

Jan. 14 (Fri.): The scanned data is submitted by the School to SRC.

Jan. 17 (Mon.): Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; campus closed.

Jan. 24 (Mon.): FARs due (a week later than in recent years).

Jan. 31 (Mon.): SRC returns the results to the Dean's Office.

Jan. 31, 6 p.m. to Feb. 3 (Thurs.) at 5 p.m.: IUPUI closed due to the Ice Storm of 2011.

Feb. 14 (Mon.): Dean's Office returns the results to the departments.

Summary of the Issues. The problems included the fact that forms go too late to the School for scanning to be done before Winter Break. Obviously, Jan. 14—the Friday of the first week of Spring classes—is much too late for the scanned evaluation data to be going out for analysis, when FARs are due only 10 days later (and when the Martin Luther King Day holiday is included in that 10-day period). For a number of years, until approximately 2007, the analysis was performed by David Bivin of Economics, who, with a graduate assistant, worked during Winter Break in order to get the reports produced and delivered early in Spring semester.

The School of Liberal Arts will have handled 50,000 Student Evaluation forms in 2010-2011, including Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters.

The Student Evaluation process involves a great deal of piece work. The job of sorting the blank forms, labeling envelopes, and putting the forms in them takes approximately forty hours and is

done by work/study students. You'll note that this part of the job has already been completed for Spring semester.

Bill Stuckey's office could work faster if it began scanning forms as they come in, instead of waiting for all forms to arrive, which has been the practice.

Survey Research Center (SRC). The Survey Research Center is operating with a skeleton crew; it now has one full-time employee, Anne Mitchell, whereas in 2006 it had five.

Neale informed us that the Survey Research Center is paid \$5,000 per academic year for producing a student evaluation report for each section. Records of these procedures of processing the Student Evaluation results have not been kept.

Neale Chumbler reported, "for a calendar year (which includes Summer), we carefully calculated that it would cost \$11,104. . . The detailed breakdown of costs are: 1) Spring 2011 --- \$2688; 2) Summer 2011 --- \$4043; 3) Fall 2011 --- \$4373."

Pre-SRC. Before the SRC began doing this job, circa 2006-2007, it was performed for many years by Economics professor David Bivin, a statistician who received a yearly course release in compensation. He met the FAR deadline by working with a graduate assistant during the Winter Break.

Other Units at IUPUI. Some units, including the Herron School of Art and the Honors Program, work with the Scanning Office of the Testing Center in the Union Building. However, we learned that the Testing Center is being downsized and is not accepting new contracts. The majority of schools at IUPUI we surveyed do their student evaluations processing "in house."

The Quality of the Survey Instrument. Enrica and others encouraged the faculty to "rethink the quality of the instrument"--the Student Evaluation form itself. The SLA faculty created a uniform evaluation instrument circa 1990. (Before that, individual departments had conducted their own evaluations.) In the twenty-plus years since the evaluation form was adopted, it has undergone minor revisions four times. [According to Bill Stuckey, the most recent amendment occurred in 2010, when an "n/a" column was added.] While promotion and tenure guidelines go through a review nearly every year, and the makeup of our student body has changed continually, SLA has essentially not changed its evaluation instrument in two decades.

THE COMMITTEE MAKES THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Funding. There is a need for proper funding for every step in the Student Evaluation process. The weight of importance placed on the evaluation reports, both in what the individual teacher learns from students about his/her teaching and in how the evaluations are used in the salary and tenure and promotion processes is sorely mismatched by the lack of commitment to the process by the institution. This must change.

A new survey form. There is the need for a new instrument. The committee’s project for 2011-2012 is to take control of the Student Evaluation process, on behalf of the faculty. We will solicit volunteers to serve on a task force that, working with the Committee, will fashion a new survey form. We seek faculty in the School from all levels—tenured, tenure-track, lecturers, and adjunct—to comprise the School of Liberal Arts Task Force on the Student Course Evaluation. We already have data from other units at IUPUI, among them Herron, Math, Honors, and Engineering, as well as reports of how the process works at other, similar institutions around the country.

It must become policy that the new instrument is re-evaluated periodically, for example, a review every three to five years.

Timetable. As with the funding recommendation, the proposed timetable is made on the assumption of using the existing form for the time being. Changes in funding or procedures, if any, which a new survey form might necessitate, will be considered in due course.

The Committee recommends the following deadlines for completed forms:

	Fall	Spring	Summer I	Summer II
Forms due from classes to depts.:	Penultimate Mon. of class (e.g., 12/5/2011)	Penultimate Mon. (e.g., 4/25/2011)	Final class meeting (e.g., 6/22/2011)	Final class meeting (e.g., 8/8/2011)
Forms due from depts.:	Last day of classes (e.g., 12/12/2011)	Last day of classes (e.g., 5/2/2011)	Day grades are due (e.g., 6/24/2011)	Day grades are due (e.g., 8/10/2011)
Scanning performed:	By final pre-break staff day (e.g., 12/22/2011)	Two weeks after due (e.g., 5/16/2011)	Two weeks after due (e.g., 7/11/2011)	Two weeks after due (e.g., 8/24/2011)
Analysis due to School:	Ten days after staff break ends (e.g., 1/13/2012)	After two weeks (e.g., 5/31/2011)	After two weeks (e.g., 7/25/2011)	After two weeks (e.g., 9/8/2011)
Reports per sections to depts.:	After a week (e.g., 1/20/2012)	After a week (e.g. 6/7/2011)	After a week (e.g., 8/1/2011)	After a week (e.g., 9/15/2011)

Faculty Annual Report (FAR) Deadline. The Fall-to-Spring turnaround, however, even with the new deadlines, leaves virtually no margin for error. Therefore, the Committee recommends that FAR deadlines be set for the final Monday of January. In 2012, that would be Jan. 30.

Graduating Student Surveys. The surveys of graduating students, which were also late this year, and performed in a new format, had for years been administered, with the results tabulated and recorded, by the Teaching and Advising Committee. The committee currently has no role in the surveys, a state of affairs we will re-evaluate in the coming year. We will work to ensure that these surveys, which are so important in gauging long-term teaching outcomes and effectiveness, provide to faculty the most useful and complete information possible.