

# Course Evaluation System Update

Council of Academic Leaders

Jonathan Vieker

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# Goals for This Talk

- ➊ Review recent efforts to improve course evaluation system
- ➋ Share the current plan
- ➌ Gather feedback and answer questions

# A Note on Terminology

- *Survey instrument*: the actual questions to which students respond.
- *Software platform*: the software tool that delivers the survey instrument, collects responses, and generates reports.
- *System*: the combination of survey instrument and software platform, taken as a whole.

# A Recent History

- Pre-Spring 2024: course evaluations handled at departmental level. Survey content and design varies widely. Some problematic questions.
- Spring 2024: Provost Freedman convenes committee to review Truman's course evaluation processes with four goals:
  - ① Align with current best practices
  - ② Minimize unconscious bias in responses
  - ③ Remain consistent yet flexible across disciplines
  - ④ Meet the needs of faculty, staff, and students
- Spring 2024: Committee delivers recommendations
  - A standardized survey instrument with accompanying guidelines (e.g. no paper evals).

# A Recent History

- Spring 2025: ITS delivers new system
- Summer 2025: New system piloted
- Fall 2025: Concerns raised:
  - 4 custom questions per department (old system allowed custom questions at the course section level).
  - Disruption of longitudinal data collection
  - Edge cases: block courses, team-taught courses, etc.
  - Question #11: “The instructor was open to different approaches to, or interpretations of, the subject matter.”

# Current Plan

- Fall 2025: use the old system as-is
- Spring 2026: use the old software platform with new survey instrument
  - Templates will be provided for customization
    - Custom questions can be added at the course section level
  - All course sections are expected to be evaluated.
  - (Likely minus Question #11)

# Why We Think This Is a Good Plan

- The old software platform is well-understood, supported by existing processes, and adapted to edge cases.
- The new survey instrument is aligned with best practices, minimizes unconscious bias, and is consistent yet flexible.
- Together, the system should meet the needs of faculty, staff, and students

# Feedback and Questions

- What concerns do you anticipate from your faculty?
- What challenges have we not have considered?
- What kind of support or communication would be helpful?



# Conclusion

- Please send questions, concerns, or recommendations to [vieker@truman.edu](mailto:vieker@truman.edu).
- Thank you!

## Appendix: New Survey Instrument (1/2)

- ① I would recommend this course to others. (Likert)
- ② I would recommend this instructor to others. (Likert)
- ③ The instructor provided clear and meaningful feedback. (Likert)
- ④ The instructor communicated effectively. (Likert)
- ⑤ The instructor was approachable. (Likert)
- ⑥ Graded material was returned in a timely manner. (Likert)
- ⑦ The course's workload and requirements were appropriate for its level. (Likert)
- ⑧ On average, how many hours per week did you spend on coursework outside of class? (series of ranges)

## Appendix: New Survey Instrument (2/2)

- ➊ The course had clearly articulated learning objectives. (Likert)
- ➋ The course activities helped me meet the course's learning objectives (Likert)
- ➌ The instructor was open to different approaches to, or interpretations of, the subject matter. (Likert)
- ➍ The instructor effectively organized and facilitated learning activities. (Likert)
- ➎ The instructor treated students with respect. (Likert)
- ➏ What changes could improve this course? (Open-ended)
- ➐ What specific aspects of this course most aided your learning? (Open-ended)

## Appendix: SPOT Committee Membership

- Dr. Joanna Hubbard, Associate Professor of Biology
- Dr. Kevin Minch, Associate Provost
- Sal Niemeyer, student
- Alexis Peterson, student
- Dr. Dana Vazzana, Professor of Mathematics, Dir. APDC
- Jonathan Vieker, Asst. VP, IE and Assessment
- Dr. Karen Vittengl, Professor of Psychology