Student Senate Policy Proposal: Online Course Evaluations

Student Senate
The University of Kansas
August 2015

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Mission:

To improve and supplement the student course-evaluation system, to provide a resource for academic planning and student success, to help promote accurate and meaningful course evaluation feedback, and to increase the sustainability of the University.

Problem:

In terms of academic planning and success, it is common for students to inquire as to the efficacy of a certain professor. Currently, this either happens through word of mouth within a degree program, or through the decidedly non-academic resource, Rate My Professor, where anyone around the world, student or otherwise, can express their often-pejorative opinion, and where one of the qualities that instructors are rated on is “Easiness.” If students were given access to a part of our University’s course evaluation, they would be more likely to use that as a resource for their academic planning, and would not rely on other, less trustworthy methods.

Some studies have shown that when students are given evaluations in class, they may be hurriedly completed, either by limited time allowed or by their own impatience; research also shows that response rates vary greatly depending on the time of day in which they are given. (Stark) (Crooks) If the course evaluations were to be online there might be a decrease in the response rate, (Johnson) (Avery) but it would allow for more valuable feedback due to the ability to complete it in their own time. (Avery) (Anderson) (Donovan) Additionally, if evaluations were to be completed more intentionally and more deliberately, it would allow for the multi-faceted benefit of better use in tenure decisions, in pedagogical improvement, (Avery) (Marlin) and - when utilized by students - in greater student achievement ¹ and higher retention rates.

In regards to sustainability, theoretically, if about 20,000 undergraduate students, taking five courses each, fill out a one to two page course evaluation each semester, we are using about one half of a million pieces of paper each year to support our current system of in-person paper evaluations. Meanwhile, six ii of the other Big XII Schools have all or most of their evaluations online.

History:

Past attempts to move course evaluations online and to publish all or part of the evaluations for use of the student body have been met with both success and contention.

¹ Students are more likely to choose a class with a professor that is known for investing in their students, (Wilhelm) and students are more likely to work harder for professors when they feel they are invested in. (MacDonald)

ii Iowa State University, Oklahoma University, Oklahoma State University, Baylor University, Texas Tech University, University of Texas
In January of 1996, The University Daily Kansan ran a front-page article on Senate’s efforts to open student evaluations to the student body. (Kennedy) It was the opinion of some staff at the time that Student Senate was misguided.

However, in September of the next year, the Senate Executive Committee (SenEx) presented an endorsement that would provide students with a professor information sheet for all faculty that would include “topics covered by the course, the style in which the class is taught, the estimated amount of students in the class, the text used, and cost of the required texts.” It was officially stated:

> SenEx endorses the principle that it is to the advantage of students and faculty for students to make informed decisions when selecting courses ... This will enable student to better understand the dynamics of the course(s), as well as the faculty member’s expectations of student performance. (Appendix 2.1)

It is unclear however, what came of that proposal, if it was implemented, and what success it had, if any.

Five years later, in September of 2002, Student Body President Jonathan Ng and other senate members passed a resolution to “investigate opportunities to expand the available online information about courses and faculty, in order to inform and better prepare students.” (Appendix 2.2) Later, in 2003, it seems that that this initiative did not have backing from faculty as expressed in an email by past Provost Shulenburger.

Most recently, in 2014, Student Body President Morgan Said and members of executive staff presented a similar proposal of a supplemental course evaluation that students would take online and whose results would be published for their utilization. Faculty Senate requested that there be more time and research built into our proposal so that it could be more fully formed.

It is our hope that, learning from the past successes and failures, we can work together to build a robust platform for students that allows them to achieve without infringing upon the rights and privacy of faculty.

**Proposal:**

**Improvement:**

It is our hope to improve the course evaluation process for the utilization of the faculty by moving the evaluations online. Research has shown that when evaluations are moved online, the responses are in general more valuable and more thought out. (Crooks)(Anderson)(Donovan) Course evaluations play a significant role in tenure and promotion decisions, so it is important to improve their worth, however possible.
We will be working with Julie Loats and Laura Diede in the Center for Online and Distance Learning to expand their efforts and to advocate for a wider implementation of online course evaluations.

Although response rates are a significant concern, the CODL has not seen a significant drop. Laura Diede said that for paper evaluations, the average response rate is around 70%, and in her work with online evaluations – both for online and in-person classes – response rates have been around 60%iii.

Moving evaluations online will also allow for more flexibility for departments to individualize their evaluations and get information that is more specific to the things that they want to know. Online evaluations also prevents faculty from having to give up valuable class time in the last weeks of the semester.

**Supplementation:**

The supplemental section will have the express purpose of being published for student utilization in selection of their courses. This will be tested within a select few schools or departments for further study. (Please see: Timeline) We hope to establish a site within myKU portal that contains course evaluation results from previous academic semesters based on a select few questions that are asked universally and are appropriate for student’s use, and which students are qualified to answer. We know from meeting with Bob Lim, the CIO, that this will be feasible within our technical capacity as a university. Our goal is to eventually have all applicable course evaluations online and to have them all combined with the published section for student utilization.

We do not propose any change to the content of the current course evaluations used for promotion and tenure purposes. This would only be a supplementation to the original evaluation, with both being administered online, and students would only have access to this additional portion. The questions to be asked will be approved by an appropriate university governance committee.

We propose a mixture of about five quantitative, and about four qualitative questions for this student-accessible supplementation.

The quantitative questions would be on a 1-5 scale, with one (1) being strongly disagree, and five (5) being strongly agree. With the desire to make the published questions as valuable as possible for the student body, we propose that some of the questions asked should be:

- The instructor provided useful feedback about exams, projects, and assignments.
- The instructor demonstrated respect for students and their points of view.
- This course was valuable overall and I am now prepared for subsequent courses (if applicable).

---

iii From email correspondence with Laura Diedie on September 28th, 2015.
The instructor was engaging and supportive.
The instructor was readily available for office hours or individual meetings.

The qualitative questions would be answered from a drop-down menu of possible responses. In this way, we make sure that students can make their opinions heard without resorting to vulgar or demeaning language. Some potential questions could be:

- A study method that worked best for me in this specific course was ...
  - (Potential answers: reading from the textbook, going into office hours, working in a group of peers, working with TAs, private tutoring, etc.)

- One of the most effective parts of this course for me was:
  - (Potential answers: the lecture formatting, the feedback given from homework/quizzes/essays, the instructor's availability to meet with me outside of class)

- One thing that would have improved my success in this course for me was:
  - (Potential answers: more feedback from the instructor, greater participation in class, more materials provided by the instructor, more opportunities to review or work with instructor/s)

- On average, I read the textbook for __ hours/week, studied for __ hours/week, and worked on homework for __ hours/week.\(^{iv}\)
  - (Potential answers for each: N/A, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

All of these questions are directed to personal experience and therefore, students will be qualified to answer.

There are also some questions that we would like for professors to answer and would be made available on the same platform as the published responses from students. This would essentially be a condensed form of the syllabus that would be made available when classes are being selected. Some of those questions would be:

- My expectations for students in my course are:
- You can expect to spend approximately $____ on the materials for this course.
- The delivery of my course instruction will be:
- The assessment of my course instruction will be:
  - E.g. tests, essays, practicums, etc.
- My grading policies are:
  - E.g. determination of curves, weighting of different assignments and test, etc.

These questions were proposed based on the idea that they would provide the most valuable feedback when used in selecting courses. They will better match learning preferences with teaching styles, help to plan finances, and help with time management. It is our hope that in prompting questions such as these and in providing their responses, students will be more aware of the factors that determine their success and achievement.

We also recommend having a statement on the site where evaluations are published asking students to think critically about the results; past students may have disliked the class.

\(^{iv}\) Research shows that if a course's rating in difficulty will not dissuade students from taking it (Wilhelm)
because they did not put in the necessary work, or perhaps it didn’t apply to their major. Students are generally aware of these discrepancies, but it would be good to mention them outright.

**Logistics:**

**Distribution** – This optional evaluation would be available on Blackboard two weeks before the end of the semester.

**Incentive and Dissemination** – We hope to incentivize this course evaluation by an early (or non-delayed) release of grades, or by restricted access to evaluation results if they did not participate. There are some universities who do not incentivize at all while others will not release grades until they are completed. In any case, incentives can significantly increase participation. (Anderson) Due to turn over and natural changes, evaluation results should be online and searchable for 4-5 years. After that, they should be archived and taken off the online system.

**Publication** – Students will be able to access previous course evaluation feedback on their -myKU portal under the Advising tab. The evaluations will be searchable by professor name and by course number.

**Scope** – This proposal will only apply to undergraduate courses with 6 or more students enrolled after the no-drop date. Evaluations will only be published for faculty, not graduate students or teaching assistants. By the suggestion of Dr. Andrea Greenhoot in the Center for Teaching Excellence, professors who make a substantial change in their course, such as flipping their classroom, can opt out of having evaluations be published for one year. This will prevent a year of transformation from defining a professor for subsequent years, and will help reduce the trepidation they may feel in making a substantial change in their lecture format.

**Confidentiality** – security is paramount to the success of this proposal. The office of the CIO ensures that evaluations will not be released to professors before the end of the semester. Additionally, by the suggestion of Dr. Tamara Durham, students will be able to opt out of filling out the published section of the evaluation and will be able to opt out of having their responses published.
Timeline:

In the interest of having a smooth transition and allowing time to work out unforeseeable faults and kinks, we propose a limited trial period, followed by a multidisciplinary evaluation, followed by a subsequent expansion, revision, or termination of the program.

- **Fall Semester 2016:**
  - Phase One
  - The trial period would begin once everything is completed on the legislative and technical side, and once there is a significant educational movement amongst both students and faculty as to the existence of this program in their applicable courses. During this time we will also work to digitize course evaluations on an opt-in basis.

- **Fall Semester 2017:**
  - Phase Two
  - Student Senate and University governance will work together to establish an ad hoc evaluation committee that will conduct focus groups and interviews to review the effectiveness of the new evaluations.

- **Spring Semester 2017:**
  - Phase Three
  - The evaluation committee will propose subsequent action to be taken. They will also look into the process of moving evaluations online and how to best expand this across the university.

- **Fall Semester 2018:**
  - Phase Four
  - The proposed changes will be implemented into the program, if it is to be continued, and it will be expanded across all applicable courses, and departments will be further encouraged to move their evaluations online.

**Cultural Impacts:**

When we make a change to the access of information that students have, it is important to consider the implications. That is, we must think about how this will impact the teaching culture at KU and the effects it will have on the student body. One of the worst things about
Rate My Professor is that it encourages grade inflation and choosing classes based on easiness, not value. It is our hope that we will incentivize healthy and supportive pedagogy with a new resource such as this.

For students, we hope to encourage and incentivize effective study methods and time management. For professors and instructors, we hope to encourage and incentivize the providing of feedback, assurance that a course will properly prepare students for subsequent courses, to be engaging and supportive, and to make themselves available to their students.

**Institutional Leadership:**

Online Faculty Evaluation is common amongst Big XII Schools and many of our peer institutions. It is a far more sustainable practice for a university, and allows students more time to be able to carefully respond to the questions on all their evaluations.

The act of making faculty evaluations publicly available is less common, but has been met with success at Harvard University, Boston University, MIT, Stanford University, Dartmouth University, Vanderbilt University, University of Florida, Florida State, University of Colorado-Boulder, Texas Tech, and the University of Virginia.

However, what we are proposing is bolder and has more of a focus on student success and improved retention rates than many of these universities. This allows for The University of Kansas to act as a leader, not only in the Big XII, but also across the country.

**Case Study:**

The University of Florida “GatorRater”

Leaders within the University of Florida began their plan to change the course evaluation system in January of 2007. They started with a beta test of online evaluations in the spring and were specifically for online classes and other volunteers. In the fall of 2009, the Provost’s office requested to scale the process to the entire university. Their subsequent rollout program was designed as such:

- **Phase One:** assign technical responsibility of internal IT resources. Meet with key stakeholders and hold student focus groups; introduce the program and solicit their input.
- **Phase Two:** develop training and information for users of the program. Provost announces to all faculty and staff the possibility of all evaluations moving online.
- **Phase Three:** select several colleges to participate in the first all-online pilot program. Select based on willingness to work with the current program, suggest change, accept possibility of bugs in system, and to assign an evaluation administrator. Data will be collected on response rates and system load-testing will occur.
• Phase Four: the pilot system will be evaluated, and changes implemented. If expanded, at least four more colleges will move to new system.
• Phase Five: analyze system efficacy again and add remaining colleges to the system.

The GatorRater uses a common evaluation form that has the ability to add up to 10 customized questions for each college. All colleges are required to provide the results for the universal questions. If evaluations are conducted outside of the online system, the college is required to upload the results. Results will be online for 10 years and will be archived off-line for at least five years. Instructors or administrators can download results in a paper form for personal use and for faculty files used in promotion and tenure decisions. Each college appoints an administrator who is responsible for checking the accuracy of the instructor data, release dates, and for coordinating with and on behalf of their college.

The public has access to the core 10 questions that are universal on all of the evaluations. The results are listed in terms of percentage of each rating (1 through 5), the mean score, and the standard deviation. Results are searchable by both instructor and by course. Students do not have access to the college-specific questions nor the written responses. (Note: graduate student evaluations are not published due to confidentiality)

After implementing the program, there was an overall drop in response rate. Between 2009 and 2010 (when the program was being tested) there were changes in response rates ranging from +4.7% to -33.3% with an average around -12% overall.\(^v\) This was expected from the start, but the results were practically identical, with online scores within 0.1 of paper, which was determined to be “of limited practical significance.” (Appendix 1.3) A study by The Journal of Economic Education found similar results. (Avery) \(^9\) However, some professors found that if they allowed for time in class to fill out the evaluation they had a higher response rate, one as high as 92%. (Appendix 1.3)

Results are not incentivized by extra credit or by a delay of grades.\(^vi\) Some professors choose to have course-wide incentives. As their educational campaign expanded, students have utilized the data base far more. Overall, the new system has saved the university tens of thousands of dollars and has been met with approval by the faculty and professors. (Johnson)

In terms of sustainability and finances the University of Florida saved almost $400,000 in the first year of the program and about 15,000 sheets of paper per college for an estimated total of 220,000 sheets of paper saved. (Appendix 1.4) It is important to note however, that

\(^v\) “Evaluation Response Rate Comparison for Early Adopter Colleges Fall 2010 (Online) Compared to Fall 2009 (Paper)”. UF Office of Institutional Planning and Research. http://tss.it.ufl.edu/Data/Sites/54/media/evals/documents/file09-10evalresponseratebydept.pdf

the majority of the savings came from diverting the hours that are spent inputting all of the paper Scantrons to compile the data.

Benefits:

In regards to sustainability, a fully online evaluation system will save the University thousands in paper and ink costs every year, as well as reduce our carbon footprint.

It is not the desire of this administration to hurt the reputation of any professors or to allow students to select only the easiest courses in their academic planning. On the contrary, we believe that with a resource such as this, students will feel less compulsion to post on Rate My Professor, where anyone can access the results, as opposed to this KU-only resource. And although response rates are likely to decrease, especially in the first few years of implementation, with proper incentive this may be negligible. (Anderson) It will be under the jurisdiction of University Governance and Administration to determine if there should be incentive, and if so, what it should be. This decision will have a heavy impact on the success of this proposal, if implemented.

Questions that reveal the cost required, the teaching style of a professor, or the best study method, better allows for students to be able to plan their finances, and to pick the course that best fits their individual needs. Additionally, by drawing attention to the way one learns best, it will encourage students to think critically about what will work for them in future courses.

We also believe that by giving students access to a part of the evaluation, and in moving the evaluation to an online format, it will encourage students to spend more time and effort in filling it out, and will give more valuable feedback both for their own usage as well as in the private usage for tenure and promotion decisions. (Crooks)(Anderson)(Donovan) Research administered by Student Senate last year shows that 93% of students take the evaluation seriously, and 84% say they would use former semester evaluation data when determining what class to take. (Appendix 2.3) Additionally, a study by the Journal of Higher Education showed that students commit time to give fair and accurate evaluations, but they feel the information is rarely used by administrators. (Marlin) This new evaluation process will give students a feeling that the evaluations have merit and are worth their further attention.

Such individualization, we believe, will lead to greater student success, higher retention rates, and students that are more pleased with their academic experience at KU. (Crooks) A study by the American Psychological Association found that students will with access to past evaluations would be more likely to select a highly rated course, even if it required more work. (Coleman)(Wilhelm) This program will hopefully assist students in selecting classes with intention and in getting the most value for their ever-rising cost of education.

By working together, faculty and students, we believe we can better the University of Kansas as a whole.
Citations:


Draper, Larry. "Course Content Data Sheet." Message to David Shulenberger. 3 Nov. 1997. E-mail. [See: Appendix 2.1]


Appendices

1 - University of Florida background

1.1 - University of Florida Evaluation page
### University of Florida results page

**Instructor: Green, James Gordon**

Instructions: To view an evaluation for a specific course and term, click on the "View" link in the left-hand column of the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Sect</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Showing 1 to 10 of 64 entries

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**Course: DENG250C (Pain Control in Dent)  Section: 4300  Instructor: Green, James Gordon**

**Responses: 64 out of 80 (80%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Omitted</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. Description of course objectives and assignments</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>32.81</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Communication of ideas and information</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>26.56</td>
<td>67.19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expression of expectations for performance in class</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>29.69</td>
<td>67.19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Availability to assist students in or out of class</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>29.69</td>
<td>67.19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Respect and concern for students</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>29.69</td>
<td>65.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.58</td>
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<td>6. Stimulation of interest in course</td>
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<td>1.56</td>
<td>4.69</td>
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<td>70.31</td>
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<td>0.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Facilitation of learning</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>29.69</td>
<td>65.63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Overall assessment of instructor</td>
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<td>1.56</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>28.13</td>
<td>67.19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.63</td>
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</table>

* Evaluation Scale:
  1. Poor
  2. Below Average
  3. Average
  4. Above Average
  5. Excellent
What the Research Says

- Average return rates for paper are 66 – 75%
  - Realistic university-wide goal for online systems
- Online return rates do not typically reach this level
  - Average is around 50%
- High degree of consistency in scoring patterns between paper and online evaluations
- Mean scores for both groups are very consistent, online within .1 of paper which is of limited practical significance.

What Works

- Have students complete evaluations during class time
  - I got a pretty high response rate from [my] students because I told them to bring their laptops and I sent those who didn’t have laptops to the SOE labs for the last portion of a class period. In other words, I made them do it during class! It was a big group, but most of them have laptops and our labs could easily handle those who didn’t have them.

  -- School of Education course with 73 of 79 responding
1.4 – University Wide Savings for UFL in first year of program

- Approximately 3923,00 paper scantron forms weren't produced or purchased (~$16,075)
- About 17,750 9 x 12 manila envelopes for processing evaluation packets weren't purchased by departments (~$1,430)
- Around 3360 person hours of feeding scantron forms into scanners eliminated for the Office of Academic Technology (~$22,500)
- And roughly an average of 89.2 person hours per academic department (approximately 200) have been reduced to 9.6 hours per department. (~15,916 hours available for other responsibilities and ~$292689 salary dollars saved)

Calculate paper not used for printing out reports.

| Sections  | 9999 |
| Courses   | 4000 |
| Departments | 200 |
| Colleges  | 15   |

**Paper for one department**

| College | 1 |
| Department | 1 |
| Courses | 20 |
| Sections | 50 |
| **Total** | 72 |

**Paper for all departments**

| 14399 |

Most are duplicated for distribution

| 10799.25 |

Cases of paper for fall and spring

| 2.15985 |

**Scantron Purchase Data**

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<tr>
<td>2008-09 Two Year Purchase</td>
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<td>2009-10</td>
<td>139,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>934000</td>
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<td>Average Annual Cost</td>
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<td>2010-11</td>
<td>75000</td>
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<td>Change</td>
<td>392000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The University of Kansas

University Governance
University/Faculty Councils
Senate Executive Committee (Sen Ex)
Faculty Executive Committee (Fac Ex)
Judicial Board

November 3, 1997

TO: David Shulenburger, Provost
FROM: Larry Draper, president, University Council
RE: “Course Content Data Sheet”

The attached “Course Content Data Sheet” was approved by University Council on 10/23/97 and is being forwarded to you for implementation.

As you may recall, Council approved the principle for such an information sheet at its meeting on 9/25/97 when it passed the following motion and requested that SenEx draft the data sheet:

SenEx endorses the principle that it is to the advantage of students and faculty for students to make informed decisions when selecting courses. This is becoming particularly important to students as the costs of higher education escalate. For this reason and for its pedagogical merit, SenEx proposes that a tool be provided to students through which faculty members communicate essential information about the courses they teach. This will enable students to better understand the dynamics of the course(s), as well as the faculty member’s expectations of student performance. The course profile would also include additional information on the topics and main ideas to be covered, the faculty members teaching style, grading policies, estimated class size, and information regarding the required text(s) including costs of texts.

Please let me know if Governance may be of further assistance with this important project. We hope you will continue to keep us informed on the steps you take to establish the mechanism for distribution of the information.
September 27, 2002

Andy Knopp, Business Senator
Johanna Maska, Nunemaker Senator
Jonathan Ng, Student Body President
Loren Malone, Student Body Vice President
Catherine Bell, Student Executive Committee Chair
Trisha Shrum, Student Rights Committee Vice Chair
Scott McKenzie, College of Liberal Arts & Science Senator
Amy Cummins, Graduate Senator
Scott Wellnitz, Student Rights Committee Member
Jenny Prohaska, Nunemaker Senator
Amanda Flott, Student Rights Committee Member
Tyler Longpine, University Affairs Committee Member
Karen Keith, Holdover Senator
Michael Roessler, Graduate Senator
Brian Thomas, University Affairs Committee Member
Kit Brauer, Holdover Senator
Shannon Snapp, Off-Campus
Michael D. Johnson, Graduate Senator
Maggie VI Beedles, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Senator
Janea Hostetter, Nunemaker Senator
Shannon Bell, Panhellenic Senator
Margaret Perkins-McGuinness, CCO Co-Director
Adam Rich, ASHC Senator
Drew Thomas, Off-Campus Senator
Tiffany Lopez, Business Senator

A PETITION URGING INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXPANSION OF ONLINE COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

1 WHEREAS, the preamble to Student Senate Rules and Regulations states, “KU Student Senate shall work to enhance the learning experience of all KU student both in and out of the classroom,” and that “Student Senate shall work to build a vital and thriving University community encompassing students, faculty, staff, and administration,” and

2 WHEREAS, when determining their semester schedules, students endeavor to make wise decisions, and, through the advising process and other means, faculty and staff members assist students in planning their course selections, and
WHEREAS, students could make use of additional and expanded resources, such as current, precise information about prospective courses and faculty members, to equip themselves better with information necessary to help them prepare for meeting course expectations and resolving discrepancies between learning styles and teaching styles, and

WHEREAS, the increasing development of online resources could help to ease the strains that enrollment and drop/add processes can place on instructors and students, and

WHEREAS, the university can build on the basis of the online University Timetable of Classes and other on-line enrollment-related functions, and one valuable resource that could use updating, steady support, and expansion is the KU's Course Content website, and

WHEREAS, expanding academic information available online would contribute to the university’s educational mission; and projects and services actively contributing to KU’s educational mission should be maintained and strengthened.

THEREFORE BE IT PETITIONED by the University of Kansas Student Senate here assembled that we urge the University Senate Executive Committee to investigate opportunities to expand the available online information about courses and faculty, in order to inform and better prepare students.
2.3 – KU Student Opinion Survey Data Regarding Course Evaluations (Spring 2015)
Note: this survey was distributed to the entire student body. 498 of our peers responded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92.57%</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unanswered</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you complete a course evaluation last semester?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92.57%</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unanswered</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you answer the course evaluation seriously and take your time when filling one out?

I would use former semester evaluation determining what classes to take at KU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>48.39%</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>35.83%</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>18.72%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2.03%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2.29%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unanswered</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 – KU Student Senate Opinion Survey Data Regarding Course Evaluations (Fall 2015)
Note: this survey was distributed only to KU Student Senate. 53 of our members responded.

For Current Evaluation System:

Have you filled out a course evaluation?

- Yes: 98%
- No: 2%

Did you take your time to fill it out with thoughtful feedback?

- Yes: 92%
- No: 8%
For Online Evaluations:

Of those surveyed, 20.7% had filled out an online evaluation during their time at KU. Of those, 82% said they had a positive experience or that it was comparable with the paper evaluations they had received.

Some people with negative feedback said:

*I prefer the handwritten ones because I'm not certain that I actually got around to filling it out since it was simply emailed to me. But perhaps if I knew it was going to be published I would want to make the effort to fill it out.*

*[If I recall correctly, our professor just sent us out the link and I completely forgot to fill it out. While evaluations are extremely important … it is typically an email you would overlook considering the fact that everyone is rushing to complete projects and prepare for finals as the*
semester draws to a close. I think the way to go would be to make them online, but have students complete them IN CLASS, rather than just send out an email to everyone outside of class.

Others with positive feedback stated:

I was able to take my time and really think about what I wanted to say.

I've only filled out online ones for my online classes, and I find them much easier than written ones to fill out thoroughly and with substantial feedback.

Online applications provide convenience to complete the evaluations on a student's own time; however, I'm more inclined to compete one if it's presented to me during my class time.
Some who have used Rate My Professor said:

_I use RateMyProfessor so that I can know what to expect when going into a course, but it rarely sways my decision on taking a class - it is all about the time it is offered and if I can fit it in my busy schedule!

I think the online evaluations project a more negative view of courses and professors than is actually the case. It seems that on the sites, only people with vendettas against a professor actually take the time to fill out an evaluation. There is also no confirmation of whether the evaluator was a student in the course and no information as to what their performance in the class was.

_I like Rate My Professor. It at least gives me an idea of what I'm getting myself into.

I use it for classes that I am required to take that aren't part of my specific major. For instance, a management class when I'm an accounting major. I do that because I need to focus more on my major classes and would rather have an easier teacher for the classes I have to take just to graduate.

Rate My Professor has been extremely helpful to me. I think things like this are absolutely valuable. Why would we not allow students to hear from other students on how best to learn? We're all here to learn, and everyone can benefit from third party course evaluation systems or publicized course evaluations.

_It has helped me get a sense of the professor and class before I enroll

_I use rate my professor and it has helped every time. If you take the information with the knowledge that not all students are looking for the same type of professor I find it very valuable.

(Data was collected, synthesized, and presented by Tomas Green)