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MEMO

University
of Victoria

Date: January 16, 2014
To: Members of Deans Council
From: Catherine Mateer, AVP Academic Planning
CC: John Anderson, Tony Eder, Dave Shaykewich, Paul Stokes, and Teresa Dawson
Re: **New Course Experience Survey (CES) System**

The UVic Senate passed a motion in 2002 to support the development of a Universal Student Ratings of Instruction, now named the Course Experience Survey (or “CES”), to be administered across all credit courses at the university. Further, at its November 4, 2005 meeting, Senate received and reviewed the CES draft instrument and received an update from the implementation task group. As you may recall the University has had a “temporary” system of processing the forms and producing reports university-wide since 2009. There were many constraints and challenges with the temporary system so that, over the intervening years, we have been actively exploring an integrated and secure application that would appropriately meet the needs of our community. In the spring term of 2013 proposals were sent to and approved by the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning, and Senate with respect to implementing a robust, sustainable and secure platform that would support CES collection and longitudinal analysis, with agreement that this would be done through an online collection format. A collaborative CES faculty advisory committee has met regularly, developed and worked through the proposal process, purchased a product and a careful plan has been put in place for implementation.

At this point, we would like to inform the university community that the long-awaited new CES system will be starting in Summer of 2014. Here is a summary of key points of information. We would appreciate your assistance in communicating the following as widely as possible.

1. This (Spring) term 2014 is the last term in which CES will be conducted in its current form and using hard copy paper. Summer term 2014 will be the first term in which the new system will be implemented.
2. The university will move its CES online as part of the implementation process. There are many reasons for this, which have been fully explored with members of our community. These include the following:
 - preserving the full range of report generating capability on which departments currently rely such as the comparator departmental reports, including reports by level;

- ensuring the ability to deliver timely reports;
 - needing to accommodate the increasing number of online courses;
 - having access to much stronger research as to how to maintain response rates;
 - taking advantage of advances in technology that allow many students to record responses securely using hand held devices;
 - responding to the need for much greater flexibility in form and report design; needing to accommodate multiple instructors and team teaching scenarios;
 - responding to the desire of community members to have research questions answered about our CES scores;
 - ensuring the ability to produce longitudinal and tailored reports (for example for one faculty member over 6 years when he/she comes up for tenure);
 - reducing our environmental footprint, storage issues and confidentiality liability;
 - improving security and greater consistency of policy implementation;
 - providing greater access to completing CES forms for some students (e.g. for distance students; some students with disabilities; students with English as an additional language);
 - and substantially decreasing both the costs and staff workload across the three units that currently work to operate the system, as well as in every academic unit across campus that has to administer it.
3. A communications plan is being developed with the assistance of Communications that will engage members of the UVic community in appropriate ways (for example engaging student groups, UVSS and the course unions; developing FAQs for faculty on a website they can access easily when they have a question). In addition, a special meeting of the LTC Communications Lunch group has been scheduled for April 16: 11:30-1PM. The audience for this regular luncheon comprises the departmental administrators who represent the valued key CES liaisons in every academic unit campus-wide.
 4. Appropriate training will be developed and will be available as applicable.
 5. One of the most important aspects will be to communicate clearly to colleagues the crucial role they play in keeping response rates high. We will be drawing heavily on the literature, the positive experiences of the vendor and lessons learned at other institutions to keep our UVic response rates as high as possible.
 6. An independent expert assessment consultant, Professor John Anderson of EPLS, has kindly agreed to analyse the transition to the new system and explore and report upon

research questions that might be of interest/concern to colleagues, such as whether or not the new system has introduced any areas of bias.

7. Many academic units, and some personnel groups, have written over the years to the CES Faculty Advisory Committee looking for increased functionality from our current system. Colleagues have been asked to wait (and have done so very patiently) until the new system is in place to have their issues addressed. As soon as the new system is in place and running smoothly then the committee will undertake to go back through the various suggestions it has received for enhanced functionality to see if, and if so how, they can now be achieved.

Using the existing CES information website, the campus community will be updated regularly regarding the CES transition to an integrated online system, including the development of responses to a collection of Frequently Asked Questions. It is possible Communications will enhance this with additional web materials and connections, but all up-to-date and accurate information will be posted on this site and can be accessed through it at any time. **Please continue to refer to this site for all regular updates and information**
<http://www.ltc.uvic.ca/initiatives/CES.php>