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ACADEMIC NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL EDITION

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May 22, 1969

At a recent meeting the Academic Council voted to endorse the report of a joint faculty-student committee recommending adoption of teacher-course evaluation procedures. Since this is a matter of considerable interest to all faculty members, the Committee report explaining the objectives and administration of the evaluation process is reproduced below:

(TEACHER-COURSE EVALUATION) *File*

A Teacher-Course Evaluation Process has been developed by a faculty-student committee representing the Academic Council and the Associated Students of Western Kentucky University. The purpose of the Process is to provide an evaluation of each course, its methods and techniques, and the teacher. The evaluation will be of help to the instructor for the future organization of the course and to the student in selecting courses most beneficial to him in light of his educational program.

The student members of the Teacher-Course Evaluation Committee developed the following objectives for the process:

1. To provide concrete information on course content and course requirements with which the student can choose courses on other than an arbitrary basis.
2. To provide the student with information regarding teaching methods and techniques which will assist him in selecting teachers.

3. To obtain student opinion on the value and necessity of courses which can be used by the administration as data in determining curriculum requirements.
4. To provide faculty members with student opinion of their effectiveness in the hope that it will result in beneficial changes in instruction.
5. To provide the student with a legitimate medium which gives him the feeling of direct participation in shaping the academic life of the University.

These objectives were kept central in the formulation of the process.

It is the Committee's belief that the evaluation should be viewed by students, instructors, and administrators as being at an elementary stage in its development. Therefore, the evaluation should be voluntary, with authorized students administering the evaluation in courses in which the instructors give permission. Furthermore, the total results of the evaluation will be made known only to the instructor. The responses to key questions (specified later in this report) will be summarized for student purposes. Administrative personnel, including department heads, will not be given responses for individual instructors. In courses with multiple sections and three or more instructors, a total summary of the responses could be requested by department heads.

The evaluation questionnaire consists of twenty-six questions in addition to questions eliciting background information (name of teacher, classification of student, grade point standing of student, and course call number, department, and semester taken). The twenty-six questions are grouped into three areas: (1) questions designed to evaluate only the course; (2) questions designed to evaluate the methods and techniques; and (3) questions designed to evaluate the teacher as a teacher. The Committee has spent many hours devising the questions, utilizing the services of several faculty members especially trained in behavioral science and educational research.

Great care has been exercised in formulating the questions in order that they be concerned only with those aspects of a course which were deemed important by the Committee. Each question has been tailored to a specific aspect. The Committee is confident that the questions are valid. It should be noted that one specific aspect -- how easy is the course and how easy a grader is the instructor? -- was purposefully deleted by the

Committee as not properly falling within the legitimate purposes of the process.

In a cover letter of explanation, the students will be asked to evaluate the course as rationally as possible, putting aside any animosities that might exist. The student will be requested to be fair, both to the instructor and to future enrollees in the course by answering the questions as honestly as possible.

As already noted, the individual instructor will be given the summaries of the responses for each question. The responses by students in multiple sections taught by an instructor will not be lumped together. As noted, the participation of the instructor is voluntary. If the instructor elects to participate, about fifteen minutes of the class's time will be required.

Through a Committee which will oversee the publication of a brochure or the publication of a page of information in the campus newspaper, the student will be given the following information about a course: (1) name of course; (2) name of professor; (3) group for which the course is most suitable (major, non-major, both); (4) level of student which the course best suits (freshmen, sophomore, etc.); (5) number of tests given; (6) method employed in testing (essay/objective); (7) how soon the tests are returned; (8) method of course presentation (lecture/discussion); (9) number of term papers required; (10) appropriateness of the textbook; (11) understandability of the text; and (12) the value of the laboratory to the course.

As a matter of information it should be noted that each student will answer the evaluation questionnaire by hand-punching his responses on porta-punch IBM cards. If the student is not able to respond to a particular question, he will not punch a response to that question. The cards will be summarized by computing the mean for each question.

Because the process is in its exploratory and testing stage, students will be provided only with selected information as already noted. To permit comparisons in response patterns over several years, the cards will be retained and stored under the supervision of the Computer Center. The cards will not be released at any time for analysis by administrative personnel. Faculty members will be designated to assist in the tabulation of the information. Student representatives will be given only the specified information.

It is the belief of this Committee that the purposes and effectiveness of the evaluation process should be reviewed after several (three or four) semesters. At that point, permission of the administration to use and/or receive future information can be considered. However, all information gathered at this point will be regarded as "Confidential" except for specific student information.

It is the hope of the Committee that both faculty and students will benefit through the use of the process. Instructional methods, course content, and philosophy can all be improved. Students will be better able to chart their educational program.