Dear Faculty Members,

I would like to announce a new initiative this year to increase student response rates on the Electronic Course Evaluation (ECE) called the "70 by Spring" campaign.

Working with Susan King, I have approved a few incentives. First, students who complete all their course evaluations online will be entered in a raffle at the end of the fall semester for a free 3-credit course (one winner). There will also be raffles held for USM Bookstore gift cards (25 winners) for students who complete their evaluations. Finally, there will be a prize awarded to the two academic programs (one graduate, one undergraduate) with the highest ECE response rates.

Even though the Office of Academic Assessment distributes several reminder notices to students and faculty members during the course evaluation time period, we are asking faculty members personally to remind and encourage students to complete the online course evaluations for courses and to mention the raffle incentives.

According to national best practices for boosting online response rates, faculty involvement is the key. Listed below are some recommended tips and strategies that have been successful at other universities and college campuses:

1) Faculty can obtain high response rates by allowing a few minutes during class time for students to complete the online course evaluation on their mobile devices (phones, Ipads, or laptops). The link to the course eval will be on the student email notices. This is the easiest and most direct method for increasing response rates.

2) Faculty can offer course participation points or extra credit to students if their overall course evaluation response rate is at least 70% (which works for both online and live courses). Course response rates can be monitored during the course evaluation time period using the faculty portal. One professor who tried this method with his own student survey received a 91% response rate.

3) Faculty can add custom (course-specific and/or reflective) items to the course evaluation, which makes the evaluation a more meaningful learning instrument for students. An email is sent to the faculty members shortly before the evaluation time period instructing them when and how to add such items. This is my favorite method because asking students to reflect on their own experience in and of the class makes completing the course evaluation a learning experience. Combined with #2, #3 can turn the course evaluation into a brief but meaningful closing activity.

4) Faculty can explain (via class announcements and/or putting a blurb in their syllabi) that student feedback is valued and that completing the course evaluation is an opportunity to assist with course and program improvement. Incentives are offered by the institution as a way of showing our appreciation to students for their input. Students want to know that their voices are heard and their opinions valued.
Finally, we remind students that their individual responses on the course evaluation are confidential; i.e. their secure log-in information (Mainestreet) is separated from their responses when they complete the evaluation. All student responses are summarized by course and given to instructors only after all final grades are posted (per AFUM guidelines).

For more details about the Electronic Course Evaluation process and the course evaluation time periods for the fall semester, please see the ECE webpage (listed below). If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Academic Assessment office.


**Our goal is to obtain a 70% student response rate by the end of the spring semester.**

Thank you in advance for making a renewed effort on electronic course evaluations this year!

Best,
Jeannine and Susan

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