

## Context: Faculty Decision-making Guiding the Student Feedback on Instruction (SFI) over the Past Six Years

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The college transitioned from a course evaluation survey on paper to an online version in **2012** using the CourseEval software after an earlier pilot with faculty members on the West campus. Initially this idea of using a new system was raised because the technology used to process the paper surveys was not capturing all of the responses received. Later it also became clear that the data and reporting features offered online provided many more tools for faculty members to use over time. Carl Creasman and a subcommittee of other faculty members reviewed and revised the questions in **2013**. Part of this revision included a literature review, a review of other instruments, and a college-wide faculty survey to determine the categories of questions the faculty members wanted and the kinds of questions to be asked. Students were also surveyed to learn more about their perceptions and experiences.

**The faculty subcommittee made changes to the SFI** based on a survey of students (N=433) and faculty (N=403) after an initial pilot of the questions over 18 months. In **2015** the final version of the questions were aligned with the “Essential Competencies of a Valencia Educator” because they are at the heart of faculty practice and to enable Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA) candidates to organize and present their work using the SFI as a possible source of data (see link below to a list of the questions used college-wide). The name of the survey was changed to our present-day: “Student Feedback on Instruction” (SFI).

**While faculty members worked together to define the questions they were also considering and making decisions.** For example, other institutions were interviewed to learn more about their policies and practices related to withholding grades until survey completion in order to increase response rates. Valencia College faculty members collectively decided this would not be done at the college. The calendar for opening and closing the survey was piloted and determined by faculty in alignment with the part of term; there was robust discussion of how long to leave it open (for example whether to leave it open until grades posted). The current practice was determined by faculty members and shaped by the semester calendar so there would be three launches, thus reducing the number of messages sent to students and faculty members. See these related updates from the Faculty Association regarding the subcommittee recommendations and decisions:

- Faculty Association Pres. Deidre Holmes-Dubois (2013) <http://tiny.cc/DHolmesDuboisArticle> and
- Faculty Association Pres. Carl Creasman (2015) <http://thegrove.valenciacollege.edu/faculty-governance-updates-february-2015-2/>

**Several other important steps taken over the past several years.** Workshops and handouts were developed and offered by the office of Institutional Assessment to support the meaningful use of the tool and data. In **2013** faculty members wrote a script for others to use when introducing the SFI to their classes (see an attached). A regular report of response rates by campus and program was developed and is still in use – now with student demographics and mode of teaching offered (it is accessible online: “The Presidents’ Dashboard – SFI Response Rates”).

**The Office of Instructional Technology (OIT)** helped the college to move the data into Banner so that the college can use the results in reporting and analysis with Institutional Research when appropriate; the data are routinely updated. They also increased their support for deans’ assigning permissions to program chairs who need to view the results. From **2015** onwards the use SFI results were more deliberately structured into the process for the deans’ evaluation of faculty members as well as the tenure review process.

In **2015** an expanded version of the SFI was implemented for the evaluation of the New Student Experience (NSE) aligned with the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The School of Nursing added its own coordinator to oversee the administration and use of the data specific to nursing to better support their accreditation processes. A version translated into Spanish was provided in **2016** for faculty members to explain the purpose to students as needed. A handout outlining tips from faculty members and deans for improving response rates was developed in **2017**.

Our current response rate has grown to about 30% which is reasonable compared to other institutions with an optional survey, but it does not meet the goal of 50% set by faculty members in 2013. There is no official policy on offering extra credit as an incentive; faculty members did not want to mandate an approach and so it is up to the individual to decide. CoursEval provides a feature that allows student to select “send proof” to their instructors that they completed it (the results are not sent with the notification). The survey results are released after faculty members have submitted their grades.

In **2017** a faculty – staff subcommittee developed materials to support faculty use of formative assessment (in Canvas). In the spring and summer of **2018** a small committee of OIT staff, faculty, and administrators took steps to evaluate our current program against newer products, but this review was put on hold in 8/2018 due to organizational changes (this will possibly be resumed in the near future). This is my recollection drawing on Faculty Association records. The main SFI questions can be found here: <https://valenciacollege.edu/academics/analytics-and-planning/institutional-evaluation/surveys/documents/SFI-CoursEval-Survey-Questions.pdf>

**The most recent faculty and staff efforts to improve the use of the SFI are described here:**

<https://valenciacollege.edu/about/governance/learning-council/work-plans.php> including resources to support the use of formative assessment and steps taken to address the implicit bias possible in the responses of students and of the interpretation of results. It is sometimes difficult to tell the story of the way that this work has unfolded as the college continues to grow and change. Without a doubt the deliberative discussion, evidence-based decision-making, and continued stewardship led by the Faculty Association in creating today's current SFI is true to Valencia College's collaborative culture.