

THE ECHO

CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

Class evaluations go online

By Aaron Hilf
Echo Staff Writer

With the semester coming to an end, students at California Lutheran University can look forward to taking part in the new and improved course evaluation program.

"We have been working to transfer the written process into an online one," Assessment and Educational Effectiveness Director Halyna Kornuta said.

For many schools in the area and around the state, students are asked at the end of each semester to take part in course evaluations programs to help better the teachers' understanding of their class and curriculum.

These evaluations help mold the future classes by getting real feedback from students.

In the past, the evaluations have been done entirely by hand and have depended on students in more ways than necessary.

"I didn't mind them," said Michelle Schwartz, a junior at CLU. "They get very tedious and sometimes you don't see the benefit."

Students have not only been responsible for filling out the evaluations, but also to ensure they were done in an allotted time given during class.

With the initiation of this new process, students will have more freedom in the completion of their evaluations and will feel more comfortable being honest in their answers.

"Some students we talked to felt uncomfortable being very honest in their evaluations," Kornuta said. "With this new program they won't have to worry about that due to the complete anonymity of it."

Course Evaluations are now ONLINE!!!

1. Check your CLU email starting 2 weeks before end of semester. Email Subject Line: CLU Course Evaluation.
2. Complete an evaluation for each course taken this semester; then submit.
3. After grades are posted, professors and departments see anonymous feedback and use it to make changes.
4. That was easy!

California Lutheran UNIVERSITY
Experience Success

If you have any questions please contact Karissa Faulconer at Kfaulco@callutheran.edu

The evaluations will no longer be done by hand during class, but on your own, through your MyCLU home page. The new process will look similar to other CLU online programs and will be very easy and self-explanatory to use.

The old evaluation process was reviewed by faculty and staff in 2007. The Teaching and Learning Committee, led by Dr. Deborah Erickson, was not sold on the idea of a manual process and believed there were better options out there.

"The current system was not serving faculty, administration, or students effectively," Kornuta said.

With the help of CLU's information and technology department, the committee began exploring new ways to improve the process. Through articles and interviews with other universities, they landed on the idea of an online process.

Shortly after, the IT department built a prototype which was given out to two test classes and came back with outstanding results.

"We received a higher response rate in a classroom that was given a specified time," Kornuta said. "However, overall it seemed to work much better and faster."

One of the primary concerns of the committee when looking into new programs was being able to get the data back to the teachers as quickly as possible.

Kornuta and Karissa Faulconer, administrative assistant of academic affairs, believe the new program will be able to give professors results four times faster than the

pen and paper process, making it possible for teachers to adjust their techniques for the following semester.

"It was very inefficient and ineffective," Kornuta said. "Now, we will be able to cut down the hugely manual process and make results available quicker."

Like many great ideas however, there are some down sides to this new online format.

The main problem is the fact that teachers and staff now depend more on students to take time out of their busy finals week to complete these forms.

During the pilot program, one class was taken to a computer lab to complete it, where another was given an e-mail to be completed at their discretion. The response rate was much higher in the class that was given lab time.

"I'm not sure how effective they will actually be," Schwartz said. "I don't think everyone will bother or care to help improve their past classes."

CLU is trying to offset this problem by dedicating a specific week where teachers can book computer labs to complete their evaluations.

Only time will tell the outcome of this new program but for now it seems to work, not only by getting the information out quicker, but by once again showing this campus' commitment to going green by getting rid of a wasteful paper process.

From Dec. 3 edition of The Echo. Reprint permission given