

Course Evaluations and Mercury Annual Report 2018-2019

Course Evaluation Advisory Group (CEAG)

- *Chair:* Laura Winer, Director, TLS;
- *Instructors:* Catherine-Anne Miller, Faculty of Medicine; Tony Mittermaier, Faculty of Science; Shane Sweet, Faculty of Education;
- *Academic unit heads:* Craig Mandato, Faculty of Medicine;
- *Academic Administrators:* Tamara Western, Faculty of Science; Glenn Zabowski, Associate Dean of Students;
- *SSMU representatives:* Sofia Gadbois, SSMU; Claire McPhee, SSMU; Grace Shin, SSMU;
- *PGSS representative:* Vacant;
- *Departmental liaison staff members:* Monica Toribio, Faculty of Medicine; Dianna Wilson-Sirkovsky, School of Continuing Studies;
- *Resource members:* Justin Fletcher, Project Manager (Course Evaluations), TLS; Carolyn Samuel, Academic Associate, TLS.

The mandate of the CEAG is to:

- develop strategies and instruments to increase student participation;
- advise on other TLS activities related to Mercury and the course evaluation system in general.

2018-2019 Goals and Results

Year-specific (2018-2019)

- Sign a contract with a third-party course evaluation management system (CEMS);
 - Signed a contract with Explorance, a Montreal-based company that offers Blue course evaluation management software.
- Create an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the system;
 - Organized a demo of the purchased course evaluation management software for the Course Evaluation Advisory Group;
 - Sought feedback from members of the Course Evaluation Advisory Group when appropriate during the implementation.
- Launch new system for the Summer 2019 courses;
 - Launched the upgraded version of Mercury for all Summer 2019 course evaluations.
- Develop a communications plan to highlight the benefits of the new system to members of the McGill community;
 - Communicated about the Mercury system when appropriate to all relevant stakeholders.
- Collaborate with academic units to improve questionnaire design using the newly-released bank of recommended questions and guidelines for writing course evaluation questions;
 - Published and distributed a new document titled, "Course evaluation questionnaires: Gathering feedback you can act on," which includes a revised bank of recommended questions. The revised bank includes new question categories, such as "Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility" and "Recognition."

- vi. Raise awareness among members of the community about the impact of implicit bias in course evaluations.
 - Published a report on Gender Equity in Mercury course evaluations at McGill.

Ongoing

- vii. Provide support on interpreting results to Chairs, Departmental tenure, reappointment, and promotion committees; University tenure committees; Curriculum committees; instructors; Teaching Assistants; and students;
 - Published a document titled, “Putting student feedback into perspective: A tool for reflection and action” to help instructors reflect on course evaluation feedback and develop a plan to act on student feedback;
 - Provided advice on request.
- viii. Increase overall visibility of policies and resources for instructors, administrators, and students;
 - As a result of ongoing communications, the default period, ending 2 days after the end of the exam period, was used by 63 of 83 units in the Fall and 64 of 84 units in the Winter;
 - To date, 62% of the instructors (of the 3,804 who have accessed the permission form) have given permission while 31% have denied permission to make their results available to the McGill community. The remaining 7% have accessed the form but not registered a decision.
- ix. Increase student participation;
 - Met twice (once per term) with leaders of student associations to encourage participation and obtain feedback on course evaluation issues;
 - In 2018-2019, the response rate stayed the same (within 1.0%) for the Fall semester and decreased by 3% for the Winter semester when compared to 2017-2018.
- x. Continue to address issues related to equity and course evaluations and provide resources to students on how to give constructive feedback;
 - Released and distributed an instructional video titled “Implicit bias in course evaluations: Think before you click!” to help students recognize implicit, unconscious bias and provide constructive feedback.
- xi. Promote the availability of course evaluation results to students when registering for courses.
 - Communicated to students when Fall term course evaluation results became available for consultation.

System Updates

In 2018-2019, we upgraded the Mercury system from a home-built system on Banner/Minerva to a third-party course evaluation management system, Blue by Explorance. Mercury remains the name of McGill's course evaluation system.

Objectives of the system upgrade include:

- To enhance the student experience when completing course evaluations
- To increase student participation rates
- To enhance the tools that faculty members have to interpret and analyze student feedback
- To enhance the tools that academic unit heads have to interpret and analyze their unit's course evaluation data
- To reduce internal McGill IT maintenance costs and efforts to maintain and support a course evaluation solution

A future report will contain a list of new features resulting from the system upgrade.

Participation data

	Fall 2018	Winter 2019
Students involved	32,519	29,945
Courses evaluated	2,584	2,602
Instructors involved	2,054	2,065
Overall response rate	46%	42%

Goals

Year-specific (2019-2020)

- i. Implement new administrative model;
- ii. Review and implement selected new features from the upgraded course evaluation platform.

Ongoing

- iii. Provide support on interpreting results to Chairs, Departmental tenure, reappointment, and promotion committees; University tenure committees; Curriculum committees; instructors; Teaching Assistants; and students;
- iv. Increase overall visibility of policies and resources for instructors, administrators, and students;
- v. Increase student participation;
- vi. Continue to address issues related to equity and course evaluations and provide resources to students on how to give constructive feedback;
- vii. Promote the availability of course evaluation results to students when registering for courses.

For additional information, please consult the full report available at:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/about/reports>