

Course Evaluations and Mercury Annual Report 2009-2010

1. Course Evaluation Advisory Group (CEAG)

- Chair: Laura Winer, Associate Director, TLS;
- Instructors: Robert Bracewell, Faculty of Education; James Brawer, Faculty of Medicine & Alfred Jaeger, Desautels Faculty of Management;
- Academic unit heads: Kevin Wade, Chair, Dept of Animal Science; Bruce Lennox, Chair, Dept of Chemistry; Andre Costopoulos, Associate Academic Dean, Faculty of Arts;
- Student representative: Rebecca Dooley, VP Academic, SSMU;
- Departmental liaison staff members: Nancy Czemmel, Faculty of Law & Amber Saunders, Faculty of Engineering;
- Resource members: Evelina Balut, ISR Portfolio Manager & Tommy Chan, Programmer, ISR; Effi Kaoukis, (Sept 2009–Jan 2010) replaced by Pierre-Andre Vungoc (Feb – May 2010), Learning Technology Consultant.

The CEAG worked with TLS to:

- develop strategies and instruments to increase student participation,
- aid instructors and administrators in the interpretation of results,
- increase the number of instructors participating in the dissemination of results,
- advise on other TLS activities related to Mercury and the course evaluation system in general.

2. 2009-2010 Goals and Results

- I. Increase student participation.
 - In 2009-2010, there was a 3% increase in the overall response rate for the fall term and a 2% increase for the winter term in comparison to 2008-2009.
- II. Increase the number of instructors giving permission to disseminate results
 - In 2009-2010, 159 instructors (of the 274 who accessed the permission form) gave permission for their results to be made available to the McGill community. This represents an increase of 22% from the previous year. Currently, 896 instructors have given permission while 491 have refused. The remaining instructors have not accessed the form.
- III. Support academic unit heads, instructors and tenure committees in the interpretation of results.
 - Work continues on developing written guidelines for interpretation. Currently we are conducting an empirical analysis of McGill data to help contextualize the recommendations from the literature.

3. 2010-2011 Goals

- I. Continue to increase student participation.
- II. Increase the number of instructors giving permission to disseminate results.
- III. Support academic unit heads, instructors and tenure committees in the interpretation of results.
- IV. Revise the course evaluation policy and work through consultation process.
- V. Implement pilot project on extended course evaluation dates and analyze results.

4. System Updates

In 2009-2010, the following system enhancements were implemented with support from ISR:

1. Instructors can now grant permission to disseminate results on a course-by-course basis rather than having to select all or none of their courses.
2. Students may now “opt-out” of evaluations for any course by clicking the “Decline Course Evaluation” button for each one. They then no longer receive reminders; they may also provide comments as to why they do not wish to complete the questionnaire for that course. This gives us more accurate participation statistics as well as providing insights into reasons why students do not participate. For fall 2009 and winter 2010, there were respectively 909 (1.9% of total submissions) and 1429 (3.5% of total submissions) unique opt-outs.

For 2010-2011, the following system enhancements will be implemented:

1. Clearly identify the questionnaire that was used for each course (e.g., lab/lecture, undergraduate/graduate) for departmental means in text reports and graph reports.

5. Participation data

	Fall 2009	Winter 2010
Students involved	29,423	28,154
Courses evaluated	2,371	2,506
Instructors involved	1,835	1,944
Overall response rate	48%*	44%*

*excluding opt-outs

6. Paper saving

Mercury provides an entirely paperless system for data collection, eliminating the need for the approximately 96 boxes of paper (480,000 sheets) previously used to prepare course evaluation packets each year.

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

<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/courseevaluations/mercury/reports/>
