

Course Evaluations and Mercury Annual Report 2010-2011

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, FAES; Bruce Lennox, Chair, Dept. of Chemistry, Faculty of Science;
- Academic Administrator: Andre Costopoulos, Associate Academic Dean, Faculty of Arts;
- Student representative: Peter Li, Senator, Faculty of Science;
- Departmental liaison staff members: Nancy Czemmell, Faculty of Law; Amber Saunders, Faculty of Engineering;
- Resource members: Evelina Balut, ISR Portfolio Manager; Tommy Chan, Programmer, ISR; Pierre-Andre Vungoc, Learning Technology Consultant, TLS.

The CEAG worked with TLS to:

- revise policy on course evaluations and submit to Senate for approval;
- 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. 2010-2011 Goals and Results

- I. Revise policy on course evaluations and submit to Senate for approval.
 - The revised policy was approved by Senate on 23 March 2011. The substantive changes were: require evaluation of teaching assistants and provide option for evaluation period to extend to the end of the exam period.
- II. Increase student participation.
 - In 2010-2011, there was a 2% increase in the overall response rate for the fall term and a 2% increase for the winter term in comparison to 2009-2010.
- III. Increase the number of instructors giving permission to disseminate results
 - In 2010-2011, 489 instructors (of the 780 who accessed the permission form) gave permission for their results to be made available to the McGill community. This represents an increase of 55% from the previous year. Currently, 1,385 instructors have given permission while 553 have refused. The remaining instructors have not accessed the form.

- IV. Support academic unit heads, instructors and tenure committees in the interpretation of results.
 - o 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. 2011-2012 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. Implement the new course evaluation policy approved by Senate; including the mandatory TA evaluations and the extended dates option for the University;
- V. Develop and disseminate guidelines for instructors and academic administrators for interpretation of results;
- VI. Disseminate the various analyses on course evaluation data at the University.

4. System Updates

For 2011-2012, 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;
- 2. Teaching assistants (TAs) will be able to log in Mercury and retrieve their own course evaluation results;
- 3. Student opt-outs will be included in the response rates;
- 4. Mercury liaisons will be able to identify on their departmental summary page what questionnaire is attached to each course and if there are any TA(s) assigned to these courses.

5. Participation data

	Fall 2010	Winter 2011
Students involved	30,511	28,995
Courses evaluated	2,480	2,506
Instructors involved	1,894	2,004
Overall response rate	50%*	46%*

*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/>