Motion: The Faculty Senate recommends UCA purchase and use SmartEvals for our online student evaluation system.

Background

After reviewing three online course evaluation systems, IDEA, Iota Solutions (MyClassEvaluations)and SmartEvals, I formed a committee to review two of them through a web demonstration and a conference call, and we brought one representative from SmartEvals on to campus. The rep met with our IT staff, a group of about 30 faculty, and a group of chairs, Associate Deans and Deans. Surveys were distributed to the latter two groups:

- 75% recommended switching to this system
- The other 25% responded "not sure" or "need more information." Mainly, concerns were cost and skepticism that any system could increase student response rates.
- Everyone felt that this system would be an improvement over the current one
- Everyone felt that the kinds of data this system would provide would be useful

Our IT staff feels that this system is user-friendly, secure, and manageable, and they recommend it.

Cost

We pay $9,000 yearly now for Survey Dig, which is incapable of integrating data, calculating statistics, prompting students, or putting data into instructor-friendly usable formats.

UCA would pay $14,995 a year if purchased on a 4-year contract ($19,995 yearly otherwise).

Help Sessions

Because this evaluation system has many features faculty have not used before, help sessions will be offered in January and February if faculty would like a walk-through of their own evaluations. In addition, the company offers YouTube demonstartions and a company rep can be contacted at any time for help.

Recommendation

Given the many more functions that SmartEvals can provide us, the likelihood of increased student response rates, the ability to survey targeted groups at any time, and the cost, I recommend we purchase this system.

Committee

I will propose a Student Evaluation Committee whose charge will be to review and vet questions and make recommendations on who can do and see what. This includes such policies as who can add questions to the evaluation, if there would be a question limit, if questions would have to go through a committee, who can see individual results, if any question or set of questions should be made public or accessible on the portal, etc. In the meantime, we will use the questions currently in use minus any redundant background questions (such as class rank), and continue the practice of all chairs and deans having access to all of their faculty evaluations.