

## Graduate School Evaluation Instrument

The instrument was developed during 2005 with the purpose of obtaining better information regarding the performance of each instructor from the students' perspective. We are aware that their input may not be the most objective from an academic standpoint since we are asking students to inform us about the performance of a topic they may not fully understand and under which they may have had an unfavorable experience unrelated to the instructors teaching and may reflect that on the evaluation.

In spite of this, the evaluation does provide valuable information from the most important segment, our students, and while their opinion may be actually reflecting satisfaction and not quality itself, it does state their mind set without which above all else is the critical factor in bringing in new students each quarter. This lends itself to charges of pandering to students and lowering the bar or dumbing down the program and the potential conflict this obviously presents. While there is merit to these observations they are also focused on the short-term aspect of specific course or instructor evaluations and not on the more important longer term aspect that is provided by the evaluation of the employers who hire our graduates and may have also paid the costs of the degree.

The feedback obtained from the employers through interviews with key executives provides consistency in relevance to the student evaluation results.

The instrument itself was modeled after the one used at San Diego State University, part of the Cal State University system which focuses mainly on the performance of the instructor from the students' perspective. It originally contained ten questions which we have adjusted to gain more information by including other factors such as the level of service provided by the support staff among other issues.

The grading goes from 1 (worst) to 5 (best). The expected or acceptable levels are or achieving a minimum of 4.0 (four) with 4.5 (four point five) or higher being the objective. If an instructor is evaluated below 4.0 he is generally removed from the program. There are cases under which the academic coordinator will take other issues into consideration and may retain the instructor after providing feedback into actions that must be taken in order to elevate the previously obtained result.

Instructors receive their feedback after they have handed in the students' grades and are on occasion interviewed by the program coordinator to provide additional feedback regarding on the aspects which were evaluated as unacceptable and suggest actions to correct them.

Even though the results in the past years have generally been better than the objective, the process of improving the instructors and their performance is an ongoing activity that seeks to find highly qualified instructors that might be a good fit with our mission and objectives.

The complete results are sent out to all the instructors so they can compare themselves against the other instructors in their field and see where they rank.

The evaluation is now going through a transition to a web-based version that is now being used in conjunction with standard paper based evaluations.

The evaluation improvements have been in line with the overall perception of the programs as being of high quality and relevant to students' professional development needs, as well as having the programs ranked among the best in the country.

**The questions included in the evaluation instrument are:**

1. The instructor's knowledge of the subject matter is:
2. The instructor's explaining of the course objectives, goals and evaluation process was:
3. The instructor's ability to communicate the subject matter in a clear and understandable manner was:
4. Overall the evaluation process in regards to the objectives was:
5. The instructors' availability to provide additional guidance outside classroom hours was:
6. The instructor's course organization was:
7. The course materials including books, reading material, presentation, videos and exercises were:
8. The level of interest generated on the topic by the instructor was:
9. The instructors' dedication towards the students learning experience was:
10. My overall grading of this course is:
11. The instructor required the use of information systems databases and library materials (Y/N).
12. Would you recommend this course to a colleague or friend? (Y/N).