

Texas A&M International University
Academic Oversight Committee Minutes

October 25, 2023

1. Welcome Dr. Brooks-

Dr. Brooks, Dr. Prieto and Dr. Viloría discussed the importance of student course evaluations in relation to the PNT process, and faculty evaluations. It is important to note that we agreed that Dr. Viloría would request a meeting with Dr. Wilkinson to inquire about the department specific questions that are available via AEFIS as per Dr. Arenaz. Our plan is to obtain a copy of the questions, share these questions with faculty senate and individual departments for further discussion. Dr. Viloría has already requested a meeting with Dr. Wilkinson.

Related to peer observations there are some concerns: (limited time to conduct observations, faculty academic discipline needs to be aligned to the content being observed) and the observation instrument to be used.

We propose that the timeline for course evaluations be set at two weeks.

Related to the Student Government request to conduct midterm evaluations, we concluded that we do not need to do this at this time since our current student evaluation process includes students who have withdrawn from the course.

As far as making faculty course evaluations publicly available- which was another Student Government request, we do not support this request.

2. Office Institutional Assessment, Research and Planning - Planning a promotional campaign with student government, and the Public Relations Office to get more students to participate in the student evaluation process.

Dr. Viloría will ask Dr. Wilkinson about the outcome of these discussions.

3. TAMU system schools use student evaluations

[https://assessment.tamu.edu/Courses/Student-Course-Evaluations-\(1\)](https://assessment.tamu.edu/Courses/Student-Course-Evaluations-(1))

We reviewed the TAMU course evaluation system. It is based on AEFIS, runs for two weeks and has an opt in option for mid-term course evaluations that is private and results generated are given to faculty directly.

Old Business

4. Courseleaf Syllabus discussion (See Dr. Houston's' Notes)

Members Present: Juan Garcia, Dr. Hayley Kazen, Dr. Sean Maddan, Triana Gonzalez-Valdez, Celina Calderon, Carlos Vallarta, Dr. Kate Houston (sub for Dr. Lourdes Vilorio).

Date & Location: October 11th 2023, ZSC 224

Meeting was called to order at 11am by Juan Garcia who introduced the committee and gave an overview of the administrative changes that have occurred at TAMU since the committee was initially formed. In particular, this initiative was brought to TAMU by Dr. Mitchell who has since retired and was being overseen by Dr. Lindberg who has since stepped down from his Associate Provost role. Dr. Sean Maddan was introduced as being Dr. Lindberg's replacement on the committee.

The following topics were discussed at the meeting:

1. Overview of the SYL system and justification.

SYL is a template for course syllabi across campus. It was enquired as to the need for the system and Juan Garcia explained the inconsistencies in faculty submissions of syllabi – with some being 2 pages long to others being 50 pages. Often syllabi are missing vital information that is required for public reporting by the State of Texas, which delays our compliance while Faculty are contacted to supply the information. This system will provide convenience for Faculty (see below section on the SYL interface), and help to ensure timely compliance for TAMU with State reporting requirements, while also providing a consistent experience for students. SYL will fulfill tasks already being completed, but it is anticipated it will do so in a more efficient way.

There then followed a detailed demonstration of SYL using an existing syllabi from Spring 2023 to demonstrate the user interface.

2. The SYL Interface a. The faculty interface is still undergoing testing, so this information represents what was demonstrated at the meeting and subtle changes may still occur between now and roll out. SYL will present as a website that faculty log in to. SYL will “talk to” the registrar's office such that it will pre-populate with courses faculty are assigned to teach for any given semester, as soon as the schedule for that semester has been finalized. Faculty will click into their particular course and SYL will automatically populate the schedule with their information (name, office location, email address, department, rank etc). SYL will also populate the course meeting times, dates and locations. In addition, all university, college and department/program policies will automatically populate in the syllabus. The schedule will be pre-populated with course meeting times, days and dates. Because SYL “talks to” the University calendar, if a course meeting falls on a day/time when the University is closed, SYL will automatically add that information to the course schedule. However, every single field of information that is pre-populated (except policies which are likely to be locked by the institution) are open for editing. You just click on the field, click an edit button and the field opens for you to edit the information. While there will be fields of the template that are fixed and must appear in each syllabus, there will be others that can be filtered in and out as the faculty member wishes. Once completed, the faculty member confirms the syllabus is finalized and it becomes stored in the system. Then all department admins need to do is run a query in

the system and it will pull all the information they need for State reporting requirements. No more emailing PDFs or admins assistants having to go through each syllabus and find the information they need and individually copy it into an excel file. Finally, if faculty teach the same course in multiple

semesters they can access a repository of their previous syllabi and just get SYL to update the course times and locations etc instead of having to start from scratch each time. Also hoping to have the ability for faculty to save syllabi they re-use often as a boilerplate file making it even easier to update each semester. The syllabus will also be available to registrar's office for public reporting and compliance. Registrar can pull information directly from the system instead of having to wait for emails to come in from department admins before they can upload information – further streamlining the process. There is not currently integration between the SYL system and Blackboard, so faculty would need to PDF their syllabi and upload the PDF to Blackboard. But the SYL company is currently working on integration with Blackboard and is hoping to launch that as a next phase of their development.

3. Stages

Currently in development stage for SYL at TAMIU where major changes can still be made. Next phase is production where minor changes can be made but the major stuff (e.g. fields needed for each template) are set. Previous committee recommended 5 templates, discussion ensued about whether 5 templates are still required. It was argued that faculty could benefit for separate templates for face-to-face vs. online as some fields that we need for face-to-face don't make sense for the online environment (such as meeting locations, days and times) and some online classes follow a shortened semester format. Discussion also focused on whether a QM template would be needed separate to a regular course online template (i.e. if an online course is not QM certified). E-Learning are planning a separate meeting to discuss this as a QM template is not one of the 5 that were originally submitted to SYL.

SYL representative made it clear that TAMIU needs to settle on the number of templates before launch as if we decide to cut down on number of templates at a later time, any syllabi using those "to-be-cut" templates would be permanently deleted from the system.

4. Timetable for Rollout

Due to changes in the composition of the committee, the planned roll-out of SYL is under revision. Initially, it was planned for a pilot test in Wintermester 2023. Current timeline is for a pilot test in Maymester 2024. Maymester is a good time to pilot this given the low number of courses offered in Maymester, leading to a smaller group of faculty using SYL who can have ease of access to support staff as they navigate it for the first time. Trainings for SYL will be offered to all faculty in Spring 2024, with the aim for full roll out being Fall 2024. Please note these timelines are tentative and may be subject to change as the committee continues to meet and learn more about the system.

5. Meeting Adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at Noon.