January 18, 2012

To: Faculty Senate  
From: Student Interaction Committee (Kari Morgan, Chair)  
Re: Student Evaluations of On-line Teaching Evaluations

Last January (2011), our committee was charged with the task of soliciting student feedback regarding online teaching evaluations. Our committee developed and deployed a survey during spring semester of 2011.

The results of the survey are attached. If you would like to see the responses to the open-ended questions please contact me at kmorgan@uwyo.edu.

Based on our committee’s review of the results, we offer the following suggestions:

- Communication to students regarding the importance of faculty evaluations is essential, regardless of setting. We have concerns about how effectively this message is transmitted in the online setting. Students need to understand the value of their opinions, and how the information that they share is used by faculty members and administration. Discussion on how to create a positive University culture regarding evaluation should continue.

- We believe that the dialogue regarding the role of teaching evaluations (online or on campus) should also continue. In particular, the impact of online evaluations on untenured faculty may be a topic for further exploration.

- It may be useful to investigate other models of online evaluation from other universities. For example, there are universities that withhold grades until evaluations are completed. We are not advocating for or against this policy, rather, simply noting that there may be other options to explore based on the experiences of faculty at other Universities.

Please also note the following cautions regarding the survey results and online teaching evaluations in general:

- Not all colleges are utilizing online formats to administer teaching evaluations. Some colleges/departments still administer evaluations in the classroom.

- Evaluations are administered differently across colleges and departments. Furthermore, since this survey was administered, processes have continued to change and evolve.

- Response rates varied significantly by college.