

Course Evaluation Solution

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE, A LARGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVING MORE THAN 12,000 FULL-TIME STUDENTS, PROVIDES POST-SECONDARY DIPLOMA, CERTIFICATE AND DEGREE PROGRAMS WITH A STRONG VOCATIONAL FOCUS. THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY AND HEALTH STUDIES ACCOUNTS FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE-THIRD OF THE COLLEGE'S TOTAL ENROLLMENT. TO HELP ENSURE THE RELEVANCE AND HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF ITS HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION-RELATED PROGRAMS, THE SCHOOL PROMOTES THE USE OF IN-CLASS PAPER COURSE EVALUATIONS. CENTENNIAL COLLEGE NOW USES CLASS CLIMATE FROM SCANTRON IN ITS PURSUIT OF MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AND THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

Challenge

- Low instructor participation rates
- Inconsistent implementation
- No successful method of summarizing and reporting data
- Administrating, collecting and processing across three campuses

The Centennial College School of Community and Health Studies had a long history of using course evaluations to allow students the opportunity to provide feedback to their instructors. However, they lacked an end-to-end solution for conducting these surveys. The school encountered too many barriers - affecting both instructors and support personnel - with the system they had in place.

“The major obstacle we faced in implementing course evaluations was the ability to take completed questionnaires and perform the necessary data extraction and summarization,” states Alan Hare, Manager of School Operations, School of Community and Health Studies. “As such, we were unable to obtain useful objective information from the mountain of raw data contained in the questionnaires.”

The School of Community and Health Studies is spread across three campuses. This presented a challenge when it came to administering, collecting and processing evaluations. It also made communicating consistent prompts and instructions to all participating instructors difficult.

Also, the school's instructor participation rates were low. One reason for this was that instructors viewed the process as complicated and thought it would require too much of their time. There were also various barriers in place, affecting both time and effort, which hampered the support personnel's ability to process, produce and distribute reports. If some instructors were not able to receive timely feedback they'd choose not to participate in the process.



Solution

- Improved system support enables increased participation
- Consistent prompts and instructions make the process easy and understandable
- Comprehensive reports emailed directly to instructors ensure timely feedback
- Implementation uses existing networked infrastructure, reducing the load on support personnel

Centennial implemented Class Climate on their networked college web server, with scanning devices located in each school office. Questionnaires are produced using the cover sheet method by each office's staff, and batch reports are emailed on a daily basis to instructors.

The entire survey system is easily managed by the existing support staff as part of their normal workload, without any additional resources. Each semester's course information is set up via a data import, and access to the system is fully controlled, ensuring privacy. Program review and accreditation processes are wholly supported.

"Program accreditation reviewers love the summary information that is provided," states Ellen Bull, Chair, Interprofessional Education and Allied Health at Centennial. "It gives overviews of student feedback with privacy and confidentiality built into the reports."

The college uses Class Climate to administer a thorough email communication program to instructors, providing the appropriate prompts and instructions to guide them through the survey process. Also, instructors across all campuses receive comprehensive reports of each survey directly to their email.

"Class Climate provides a quick and easy way for teachers to get concrete feedback for reflection and professional development plans," says Bull. "Teachers who have been teaching for a long time are given information that may be new to them because Class Climate asked questions in a clearer, more organized format."

Results

Over the course of one year, from Winter 2008 through Winter 2009, Centennial College saw its average program response rate increase from 50% to 65%. The increase in participation rates is expected to continue as the process gains support through positive word of mouth within the academic instructor group.

"What encourages us is the steadily increasing uptake, within our school, of Class Climate as a significant tool supporting reflective practice and improving individual teacher performance," says Hare.

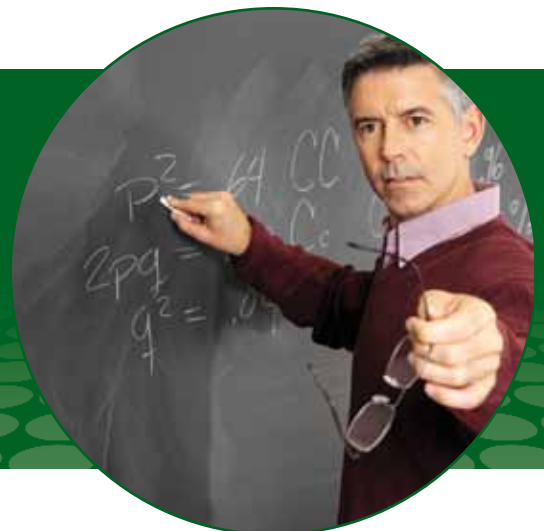
Of even greater significance to the college is Class Climate's ability to collect and report relevant information. "What we actually accomplished was to take the existing questionnaires in various departments and add data analysis and summarization, which did not exist before," states Hare. "We are able to turn data into information."

"Class Climate provides a consistent, standardized tool for students to provide the feedback necessary for obtaining reliable and valid data for research, accreditation and program review processes," says Dr. Sandra Murphy, Dean, School of Community and Health Studies. "It also allows faculty to receive the feedback they need for performance review and professional development, so that they may develop their teaching expertise."

Centennial College has enjoyed such success with Class Climate as a full service course evaluation solution that they are looking to expand its usage. The college is currently looking into using the survey management system to conduct online surveys for distance learning courses and as a survey tool for applied research projects.

"CLASS CLIMATE PROVIDES A CONSISTENT, STANDARDIZED TOOL FOR STUDENTS TO PROVIDE THE FEEDBACK NECESSARY FOR OBTAINING RELIABLE AND VALID DATA FOR RESEARCH, ACCREDITATION AND PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESSES."

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Please visit us at www.scantron.com for a complete overview of Class Climate's system requirements or call us at (800) 722-6876 for more information.