

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING AT LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STLC SUBCOMMITTEE ON COURSE EVALUATION APRIL 2009

In January 2007 Senate approved, on the recommendation of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC), a new policy for course evaluation that clarifies the principles governing course evaluation and the protocols for making changes to any aspect of course evaluation. The policy also summarizes the major responsibilities of those groups who participate in the activities outlined. A subcommittee of STLC subsequently engaged representatives from the undergraduate and graduate students, full and part time faculty, and all related administrative units to participate in a thorough examination of student evaluation of courses at Lakehead University. Based on the feedback generated, a plan to review and revise the instrument used at Lakehead University to capture feedback from students regarding courses and instruction was developed and presented to Senate.

The subcommittee consulted with measurement specialists in the development of a process to develop, test, analyze and refine a new and improved course evaluation instrument. In addition, research on student evaluation of teaching and numerous surveys and course evaluation reports from other universities in Canada and the United States were reviewed. The subcommittee worked over the course of the following academic year to draft a new survey designed:

- To allow students the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning experience;
- To provide faculty with formative feedback that they can use in refining their course design, assignment design, assessment techniques, teaching techniques, and interaction with students; and
- To provide summative feedback on teaching performance based on identified domains of assessment for optional use in annual reports, applications for renewal, tenure, and promotion, applications for merit, and nominations for teaching awards.

Feedback on the revised survey instrument was collected during the fall of 2008 from a total of 35 students and five instructors. The students responded overwhelmingly that the draft instrument was a significant improvement over the previous survey. They indicated that the survey provided them with an opportunity to write worthwhile feedback related to the course and instructor, and their learning experience. Feedback provided by the volunteer instructors

included recommendations for changes to the wording of specific questions, and were considered in the subsequent review and revision of the survey.

In a second phase of pilot work, instructors volunteered to pilot the new survey instrument with their classes. A total of 670 course evaluation surveys were collected in 25 classes taught by 16 different instructors. Data from the completed surveys were entered into a data set for statistical analyses using Statistical Analysis Software (SAS[®]). Frequency distributions for each question were generated to highlight the patterns, frequencies and percentage of responses to each categorical option. The data were analyzed using the *Cronbach's Alpha Procedure* to establish an estimate of internal consistency for the survey. Correlation coefficients were generated for use in an exploratory factor analysis to determine if distinct factors (constructs) were identified within the questionnaire.

The Cronbach's alpha for the revised survey indicated strong internal consistency between the items. The factor analysis confirmed that a single, unidimensional latent construct (teaching performance) was identified for the instrument. The results of the data analyses provide us with preliminary evidence that the revised instrument results in valid interpretations given the intended use of the survey. Evidence of validity based on test content, internal structure, response processes, and consequences of testing, along with evidence of reliability, were presented. The qualitative data collected during the pilot work indicated that the new survey provided students with a meaningful opportunity to give feedback on their learning experience. As with any research, there were a number of threats to establishing validity and reliability for the new survey. We acknowledge these in the report as well as offer recommendations for future research.

Based on the work completed over the past two years, the STLC Subcommittee on Course Evaluation at Lakehead University recommends the adoption of the new survey instrument entitled Student Evaluation of Teaching at Lakehead University (Appendix 1). This recommendation is based on professional judgement constructed from evidence provided by extensive preliminary and pilot work.

**Report and Recommendations to the Senate Teaching and Learning
Committee by the Subcommittee on Course Evaluation**

Student Evaluation Of Teaching At Lakehead University

April 8, 2009

1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the findings and recommendations of a subcommittee of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee arising from a review of Lakehead University's process and policy for soliciting student feedback on instruction in courses. Student feedback is a valuable source of quantitative and qualitative data for instructors, both for the purposes of documenting teaching performance and for reflecting on ways to improve one's teaching performance. Students provide a valuable perspective on teaching, and it is also important for them to feel that their instructors and the university value their perspective on their learning experience and their suggestions for improvement. Given that Lakehead University places teaching at the forefront of its mission, it is important for us to value the central role that students can play in helping us to improve our work.

The subcommittee wants to emphasize, however, that student evaluations should not be seen as the sole source of information used by faculty to examine their teaching or to document satisfactory teaching. There are aspects of teaching that students are not well equipped to assess; the committee recognizes that it is also very valuable to have the perspective of those with expertise both in teaching and in the field of study to assess course content, teaching practices, teaching philosophies, alignment of assessment with course objectives, and a faculty member's developing teaching skills and implementation of innovative techniques over time. For that reason, we strongly recommend that faculty members consider preparing a teaching dossier to complement student evaluations, in which faculty can include peer review of their teaching, as well as evidence, explicated by their own narrative reflections, of their commitment to enhancing their students' success in learning.¹

¹ The subcommittee recommends that the Instructional Development Centre be used as a resource for faculty in developing teaching dossiers, and in interpreting their own student evaluations in productive ways. Moore and Kuol (2005) emphasize the importance of providing appropriate resources to help faculty interpret the data from student evaluations so that the outcome is valuable professional development for faculty and an improved learning environment for our students.

2. BACKGROUND

During the 06/07 academic year, a subcommittee of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC) conducted a thorough review and revision of the **Senate Policy On Course Evaluations (Student Satisfaction Survey)**. The review included consultation with the Office of Institutional Analysis and Government Relations, and with the President of the Lakehead University Faculty Association (LUFA) to discuss the policy and the reference to it in the Faculty Agreement. In January 2007, Senate approved, on the recommendation of the STLC, a new policy for course evaluation that clarifies the principles governing course evaluation and protocols for making changes to any aspect of course evaluation. The policy also summarizes the major responsibilities of those groups who participate in the activities outlined.

The Senate Teaching and Learning Committee then proceeded to engage the university at large in a thorough review of all aspects of student evaluation of teaching at Lakehead. A sub-committee of STLC was formed, consisting of Dr. Moira McPherson, Dr. Gillian Siddall, Dr. Donald Kerr and Dr. Timo Tikka. A call went out for undergraduate and graduate students, full and part time faculty, and representatives from all related administrative units to participate in a task force.

Composition of the Task Force on Course Evaluation

Two Undergraduate LUSU Student Representatives

One LUSU Executive Member

Two Graduate Student Representatives

One Part-time Instructor

One Faculty Member Representative From Each Of The Seven Academic Faculties (N=7)

One Representative From The Office Of Institutional Analysis And Government Relations

The Director Of The Instructional Development Centre

The Chair Of The Senate Committee On Teaching And Learning

Director Of Continuing Education and Distributed Learning

One Representative From The Faculty Of Graduate Studies Council

One Representative From Deans Council

One Representative From Student Affairs

Vice-President (Academic) and Provost or Designate

The group met on June 21st 2007 with the stated purpose of generating concrete suggestions to guide the STLC on their revisions of student evaluation of teaching at Lakehead University. Based on the feedback received during the workshop, the subcommittee identified the following objectives for conducting student evaluation of courses at Lakehead:

- To allow students the opportunity to provide feedback on their learning

- experience;
- To provide faculty with formative feedback that they can use in refining their course design, assignment design, assessment techniques, teaching techniques, and interaction with students; and
 - To provide summative feedback on teaching performance based on identified domains of assessment for optional use in annual reports, applications for renewal, tenure, and promotion, applications for merit, and nominations for teaching awards.

As a result of the discussions, the following recommendations for proceeding were proposed.

1. The procedure currently in place for the distribution, collection and analysis should be continued for all courses delivered at Lakehead University until a review and revision of the instrument is complete.
2. A plan to review and revise the instrument used at Lakehead University to capture feedback from students regarding courses and instruction should be developed and forwarded to Senate.
3. Following approval of a new and improved instrument, recommendations regarding the use of the results of the survey and any changes to the procedures for distribution, collection and analysis may be generated and will be brought to Senate.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF A REVISED SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

The sub-committee worked over the course of the following academic year to draft a new and improved survey instrument. The development of a course evaluation instrument is a complex, multi-step process. Numerous surveys from other universities in Canada and the United States were reviewed. Reports from similar committees operating at other Canadian Universities were also considered. The sub-committee also consulted with specialists in measurement and outlined a process to develop, test, analyze and refine a new and improved course evaluation instrument for Lakehead University.

Measurement Construct, Domains and Proposed Questions: Student evaluations of courses at Lakehead University are intended to measure various aspects of an instructor's teaching performance. Based on consideration of the policy governing course evaluations at Lakehead University, sections related to teaching responsibilities in the LUFA contract, and discussions with student, part-time lecturers, faculty, administrators, and various other stakeholders across campus, the sub-committee articulated the following domains associated with

teaching performance: course organization, classroom climate, instructor's performance, student learning, assessment and evaluation, and overall performance. A series of questions were developed to provide information in each of the domains.

Providing an Opportunity to Customize the Lakehead University

Instrument: The subcommittee also discussed an option to provide instructors or Departments/Schools with the opportunity to add additional questions to supplement the set of standard questions on a new instrument. This would allow academic units the flexibility to adapt the instrument to gain feedback on further aspects of teaching that are not covered by the standardized items. Questions would be chosen from an item bank (to be developed following approval of a new survey) containing a wide range of survey items that can be used to obtain feedback on particular discipline areas or unique aspects of a course (e.g. diverse contexts of teaching such as unit content, delivery mode including online and distance education, or resources that might impact on teaching).

Following four months of research and development, the subcommittee once again invited members of the task force to review and discuss the work completed by the subcommittee during a half-day session in May 2008. The purpose of the session was to:

- provide feedback on a draft of a new survey focused on the evaluation of teaching performance (as defined above);
- discuss the process proposed for refining the instrument based on instructor and student feedback, and for collecting and analyzing evidence related to validity and reliability;
- examine an option for providing instructors or units with the opportunity to pose additional questions; and
- provide input on the sub-committee's proposed timeline.

The instrument was revised based on the feedback provided by the taskforce members. The group recommended that an option for providing instructors or units with the opportunity to pose additional questions be explored following the construction and approval of the new survey. An action plan was approved and subsequently presented to Senate June 2008.

4. METHODS FOR THE PILOT ASSESSMENT

Based on research completed by the sub-committee along with the advice of the task force members and measurement experts, the sub-committee outlined a process to assess and refine the draft of the revised course evaluation instrument for Lakehead University.

Pilot - Phase 1: The first phase involved soliciting feedback on the revised survey instrument from students and instructors. The Lakehead University Student Union invited student representatives from a range of academic programs to attend one of two sessions hosted by the STLC. A total of twenty-one students representing different faculties and program year levels took part in two structured group discussions. Students had an opportunity to complete the survey with an unidentified instructor in mind. They were then asked to consider the clarity of instructions and of the specific survey items, and the applicability of all the survey items to their courses. (See Appendix 2 for a list of the questions used to structure discussion). A discussion followed and all of the feedback was recorded.

The survey was also given to an instructor teaching a graduate research methods class. The instructor volunteered to have the class critique, using a “think aloud” interview technique (Billings et al, 2004), the draft survey using the criteria they had been addressing during the course. A summary of the comments submitted by the fourteen students was forwarded to the subcommittee for consideration.

In October 2008 two notices, via Campus Communications, invited volunteer instructors to review the revised survey instrument and provide feedback. Six faculty members from across campus volunteered to participate. A hard copy of the draft survey, along with a brief questionnaire (see Appendix 3 for a list of the questions used to solicit feedback), was sent to those instructors who volunteered. Five responses were submitted back with feedback. All of the feedback and responses to the questionnaire were summarized and filed.

Following an analysis of all of the student and instructor comments, the subcommittee completed another set of revisions on the survey instrument. Changes were made to the wording used in a number of the items and to the instructions provided for completing the questionnaire.

Pilot - Phase 2: In November 2008, a notice was forwarded to the University community inviting instructors and the students in their classes to take part in a pilot of the new survey instrument. The pilot administration of the survey occurred after the administration of the Senate approved (2007) course evaluation instrument. Sixteen instructors volunteered and a schedule was developed to administer the survey to students registered in 25 different courses. The course instructors and all of the students in their courses were provided with a consent form and with a cover letter discussing the pilot study (Appendix 4).

The students were informed that the STLC subcommittee was conducting the pilot study in order to assess the validity and reliability of items included in the revised survey instrument. The invigilator emphasized that their participation was entirely voluntary and the responses provided on the revised survey instrument would be unattributed and handled in a way to ensure anonymity and

confidentiality for both the student and instructor. Student responses would not be used to assess instructor's performance but rather to provide valuable information about the quality of the items included on the survey. The instructor was then asked to leave the room and the students were provided with an opportunity to complete the survey. Students who chose to complete the survey were required to submit a signed consent form along with the completed survey to the invigilator who then separated the surveys and the consent forms into two different envelopes. Steps were taken during the data collection to ensure the classes of completed surveys were not connected to any particular student or instructor.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Feedback was collected from a total of 35 students and five instructors during the first phase of the pilot work. The students responded overwhelmingly that the draft instrument was a significant improvement over the previous survey. They indicated that the survey provided them with an opportunity to write, what they considered, worthwhile feedback related to the course and instructor, and their learning experience. "I was impressed that the new form focused on the quality of instruction as opposed to just the presentation of the course materials." Feedback provided by the volunteer instructors included recommendations for changes to the wording of specific questions and were considered in the subsequent review of the survey.

A total of 670 course evaluation surveys were collected from 25 classes taught by 16 different instructors. Two instructors volunteered to have the survey administered to multiple sections of their course and seven instructors volunteered to pilot the survey in two different courses that they were delivering during the fall term. An online data capture tool using web-based programming was created to enable direct data entry from the course evaluation survey. Two graduate students were employed to enter the data from each of the completed surveys. The online data capture forms organized the data into a data set, which maintained a complete response for each individual within a coded group (class). Once all data were entered and checked for errors/missing values, a Statistical Analysis Software (SAS[®]) program was written to read the data set and provide the following statistical analyses.

Frequency Analysis

Frequency distributions for each question were generated using the *proc freq* procedure of the Statistical Analysis Software (SAS[®]). This output highlighted the patterns, frequencies and percentage of responses to each categorical option (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable) within a question. The frequency analyses were run first for the entire group and then on a class-by-class basis to determine the frequency response pattern within each of the classes surveyed.

The results indicated that the responses by all students were negatively skewed (i.e. most respondents indicated strongly agree/agree) for each of the questions. There was only one question (Question 10 [57%]) where the responses “strongly agree” and “agree” accounted for less than 60% of the total frequency. The frequency of responses by question for the entire group (N=670) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency of Response by Question for the Entire Group

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable	# of Responses	Missing
1. A comprehensive course outline was provided (for example, the outline included: office hours, course topics evaluation methods, etc.)	430	214	12	11	0	1	668	2
2. Learning objectives were clearly presented.	261	295	77	32	3	0	668	2
3. The course content matched what was presented on the course outline.	335	263	53	10	2	2	665	5
4. The course materials were useful in promoting learning of the course concepts.	223	283	98	50	10	1	665	5
5. The instructor encouraged student participation.	305	224	91	37	9	0	666	4
6. The instructor responded to all questions in a respectful manner.	344	206	71	34	12	0	667	3
7. The instructor respected diversity among the students (for example, differences in: age, gender, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc.)	398	179	50	22	3	13	665	5
8. The instructor clearly explained the course concepts.	249	263	99	45	7	0	663	7
9. The instructional method(s) enhanced student learning.	165	279	135	62	21	0	662	8
10. The instructor monitored student learning in order to make any necessary adjustments to the pace of delivery.	139	235	166	92	26	3	661	9
11. The instructor appeared enthusiastic about teaching the course.	364	207	58	18	10	1	658	12
12. The instructor was accessible to students outside of the class.	274	233	116	22	5	15	665	5
13. The instructor appeared well prepared for class.	364	243	35	17	6	0	665	5
14. I found the course appropriately challenging.	206	318	93	35	10	0	662	8
15. I found the course stimulating.	159	261	133	77	32	0	662	8
16. I have acquired new knowledge as a result of taking this course.	259	309	63	28	6	0	665	5
17. The knowledge from this class can be applied to a variety of	241	278	99	36	8	0	662	8

situations.								
18. The instructor provided opportunities to further develop my analytical skills.	161	271	166	57	5	1	661	9
19. Graded materials were aligned with the learning objectives for the course.	208	309	97	35	10	6	665	5
20. Feedback on graded materials was timely	195	265	109	57	24	8	658	12
21. Feedback on graded materials was valuable.	173	240	152	49	23	20	657	13

Question	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	# of Responses	Missing
22. Overall, I would rate this instructor as:	292	219	96	36	16	659	11
23. Overall, I would rate this course as:	182	254	168	41	12	657	13

The “Not Applicable” response was selected a total of 71 times out of the total of possible 14070 responses (0.5%). Five questions were associated with 62 of the “Not Applicable” responses. Missing data ranged from .003 (.3%) to .02 (2%) depending on the particular question.

The frequency distributions for each of the classes involved in the pilot study were analyzed in order to assess any differences that existed across the classes surveyed. The results again highlighted the negatively skewed data indicating that most responses were either strongly agree or agree responses. Almost 40% (28/71) of the “Not Applicable” responses for all participants was associated with two specific classes. Class # 5 had 15 “Not Applicable” responses associated with five questions (Q7, 19, 21, 12, and 20). Class #17 had 13 “Not Applicable” responses associated with question 7. It is not possible to explain this result from the data collected. No other patterns were highlighted in the frequency distribution data organized by class.

Cronbach’s Alpha: The data were analyzed using the *Cronbach’s Alpha Procedure* to establish an estimate of internal consistency for the test. Cronbach’s alpha measures how well a set of items measures a single, unidimensional latent construct. Cronbach’s alpha will generally increase when the correlations between the items increase. Some professionals, as a rule of thumb, require a reliability of 0.70 or higher (obtained on a substantial sample) before they will use an instrument. The Cronbach’s alpha for the revised survey was 0.91. This indicates strong internal consistency between the items. The contribution of each item to Cronbach’s alpha was calculated by systematically deleting each question from the survey and recalculating the Cronbach’s alpha. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient For The Total Group with Deleted Questions

Deleted question	Raw Variables	
	Correlation with Total	Alpha
1	0.400074	0.907943
2	0.513084	0.905469
3	0.522706	0.905571
4	0.601591	0.903297
5	0.588905	0.903631
6	0.617934	0.903009
7	0.221955	0.916224
8	0.670462	0.901766
9	0.723087	0.900076
10	0.603492	0.903316
11	0.555888	0.904559
12	0.370969	0.910871
13	0.563884	0.904650
14	0.558822	0.904371
15	0.666958	0.901433
16	0.643868	0.902898
17	0.612039	0.903145
18	0.602882	0.903228
19	0.571775	0.904234
20	0.506364	0.905645

Deleted question	Raw Variables	
	Correlation with Total	Alpha
21	0.572825	0.904104

The item analysis demonstrates the strong internal consistency of the survey instrument. In addition, the high alpha value (above .90) also indicated that there was only one main factor being measured. The results indicated that systematically reducing specific items did not substantially increase the alpha value.

Based on the high alpha value, the possibility of reducing the total number of items on the instrument while maintaining an alpha over 0.80 was also explored. An alpha of 0.89 was found for the set of items that included the 10 questions with the highest correlations. A shorter instrument may be better in that it provides almost the same level of internal consistency around one main factor as the longer one, but can be delivered in less class time. However, this benefit was considered to be offset by the importance attributed to providing students with the opportunity to provide feedback on specific facets of their instructor's teaching (i.e. course organization, classroom climate, instructor's performance, student learning, assessment and evaluation). In addition, the sub-committee were committed to developing a survey that provided instructors with detailed formative feedback from students on specific aspects of their teaching performance. Feedback gathered from the students during the focus groups conducted in Phase 1 of the pilot supported the inclusion of all items.

Following the item analysis, the data were finally processed using a *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Procedure* to produce correlation coefficients that could be used in a subsequent exploratory factor analysis. Factor Analysis using *varimax* as the *Orthogonal Rotation* was run to determine if distinct factors (constructs) were identified within the questionnaire, based on the response patterns of the student sample. The subsequent factor analysis confirmed the Cronbach's Alpha finding that there is only one strong factor (teaching performance) that has been identified for the instrument.²

Following the final review of the items included in the survey, question 22 and 23 were re-worded to fit the scale being used throughout the survey.

² Kaiser's Measure of Sampling Adequacy was also calculated (MSA = 0.9) to examine the appropriateness of conducting the factor analysis. The overall measure of sampling adequacy and the individual KMO estimates for each item in the survey were above 0.8. As characterized by Kaiser, Meyer & Olkin (1974) the data confirmed the use of the exploratory factor analysis.

6. DISCUSSION: EVIDENCE OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Evidence of Validity: One of the main objectives of the pilot assessment was to determine if the interpretations that were based on results collected with the survey instrument were valid given the intended use of the survey. While the collection of evidence for validity requires ongoing study, some preliminary evidence that the revised instrument results in valid interpretations given the intended use of the survey was collected.

Evidence of validity based on test content. A review of the item generating procedure was performed by reviewing the content of the revised instrument in relation to instruments at other universities in North America, research literature on teaching performance, and consultation with twelve experts on teaching performance. This review provided evidence that the content of the revised survey represented a unidimensional construct, which we refer to as teaching performance.

Evidence of validity based on internal structure. Items were not related to each other in accordance to the original subdomains that were used for the first draft of the instrument. Results of the Cronbach's alpha (.91) suggest that there is a strong internal consistency, evidence that, in fact, we are measuring one domain. Therefore, interpretations about teaching performance that are based on the results of the survey should focus on teaching performance as the singular domain.

Evidence based on response processes. Evidence based on response processes was collected via the student focus groups and the "think aloud" technique employed in one graduate class that reviewed the instrument. Survey respondents were interviewed regarding their interpretation of the meaning of items, their scoring strategies and the "think aloud" technique allowed the monitoring of the development of responses as students completed the survey.

Evidence based on consequences of testing. What are the intended and unintended consequences of using the test? There were two opportunities to meet with groups of students following their completion of the draft survey. The sub-committee engaged the students in a discussion of the questions and their interpretation of specific items. In the few cases where the interpretation was different from the intent, the wording was carefully analysed and changed where it was felt necessary. Further study could provide additional evidence of validity based on consequences of testing.

Evidence of validity based on relations to other variables, like an external criterion variable, was not collected. While this type of assessment could be considered in the future, it would be very difficult as no single criterion of effective teaching is sufficient (Marsh & Roche, 1997).

Evidence of bias. The sample of instructors whose courses were part of this pilot was based on a call for volunteers delivering on-campus courses at the Lakehead University campus and was not randomly identified. Instructors were told that the survey would be administered one week after the Senate approved survey and that they would not receive any course evaluation results from their participation. All of the volunteers were instructors who had been teaching for a minimum of five years and expressed a genuine interest in how students evaluate courses at Lakehead. The instructors may also have been those feeling confident in the quality of their teaching. There is a possibility that the group of volunteers was not a representative sample of the population of instructors at Lakehead University. Bias in this study may have resulted in homogeneity of variance and the skewed responses.

Evidence of Reliability: Most researchers agree that student evaluations of teaching surveys serve as reliable tools (Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008). They provide consistent and stable measures for specific items such as an instructor's organization of the course or the classroom climate.

“This is particularly true when the instrument has been carefully constructed and psychometrically tested before use.” (Gravestock & Gregor-Greenleaf, 2008, p.28).

The Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each class and provided information around the variation between items. With the exception of one class, the Cronbach's alpha, for all classes greater than 10 students, was greater than 0.8. Visual inspection of the frequency data for the responses to each of the items revealed highly skewed response distributions; that is, the majority of students used only the positive end of the scale (i.e., “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”) to rate their instructors. These results may suggest that the students' responses were consistent throughout the series of items, providing evidence to support the reliability of the ratings. We cannot however ignore other potential sources of error that may have influenced the individual student respondent such as motivation, health, and student anxiety levels. Potential sources of error external to the individual student respondent include the possibility of students scoring higher than others, and possible distractions during the completion of the survey.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the intent of the subcommittee to provide insights in this report solely related to the items included on the instrument. Overall, the results from this pilot suggest student responses are quite consistent across the items. The questions seem to be highly related, targeting a single construct of “overall” teaching performance. The primary objective for conducting student evaluation of courses

at Lakehead was to allow students a meaningful opportunity to provide feedback on their learning experience. The qualitative data collected during the pilot work supports the fulfillment of this objective.

Based on the work completed over the past two years, the Subcommittee on Course Evaluation at Lakehead University is recommending the adoption of the new survey instrument entitled Student Evaluation of Teaching at Lakehead University. This recommendation is based on professional judgement constructed from evidence provided by extensive preliminary and pilot work. The subcommittee is also recommending that an option for providing instructors or units with the opportunity to pose additional questions be explored pending acceptance of the new survey instrument.

The Subcommittee is moving the acceptance of the revisions to the Senate Policy on Course Evaluations (Student Satisfaction Survey). The revisions replace the old survey title with the proposed new title.

Finally, the Subcommittee is recommending that, pending acceptance of the new survey instrument, the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee seek input on the new instrument throughout the first full year of implementation and conduct additional analyses to verify validity and reliability measures.

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Thank-you,

Subcommittee on Course Evaluation at Lakehead University

Don Kerr

Moira McPherson

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10. APPENDICES

- APPENDIX 1 Proposed New Instrument: “Student Evaluation of Teaching at Lakehead University”
- APPENDIX 2 Questions to elicit feedback from students on draft instrument, Pilot phase 1, 28th September 2008
- APPENDIX 3 Questions to elicit feedback from instructors on draft instrument, Pilot phase 1, 24th October 2008
- APPENDIX 4 Consent cover letter and form for Phase 2 of pilot

APPENDIX 1

Proposed New Instrument: "Student Evaluation of Teaching at Lakehead University"

This space will be used by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Government Relations to collect specific information related to the identification of the course, section, instructor, date survey completed, etc.

Please consider each of the statements below and evaluate your instructor's teaching performance based on your course experiences. For each statement place a mark in the box that best reflects your judgment.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. A comprehensive course outline was provided (for example, the outline included: office hours, course topics, evaluation methods, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Learning objectives were clearly presented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The course content matched what was presented on the course outline.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The course materials were useful in promoting learning of the course concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The instructor encouraged student participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The instructor responded to all questions in a respectful manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The instructor respected diversity among the students (for example, differences in: age, gender, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The instructor clearly explained the course concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The instructional method(s) enhanced student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The instructor monitored student learning in order to make any necessary adjustments to the pace of delivery.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The instructor appeared enthusiastic about teaching the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The instructor was accessible to students outside of the class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The instructor appeared well prepared for class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I found the course appropriately challenging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I found the course stimulating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I have acquired new knowledge as a result of taking this course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. The knowledge from this class can be applied to a variety of situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. The instructor provided opportunities to further develop my analytical skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Graded materials were aligned with the learning objectives for the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Feedback on graded materials was timely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Feedback on graded materials was valuable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Overall, I would recommend this instructor.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Overall, I would recommend this course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX 4

Consent cover letter and form for students, Phase 2 of pilot. (A similar cover letter and form was given to instructors.)

Pilot Study Examining A Revised Survey Instrument For Student Evaluation Of Courses At Lakehead University November 18, 2008

About the Pilot:

A sub-committee of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee has been engaged in a process to develop, test, analyze and refine a new and improved course evaluation instrument for Lakehead University. The development of a revised course evaluation instrument is a complex, multi-step process. An evidence-based approach has been used during each stage of the process. We are currently conducting a pilot study in order to assess the validity and reliability of the items included in the revised survey instrument.

The responses provided on the revised survey instrument will be unattributed and will be handled in a way to ensure anonymity and confidentiality for both student and instructor. The results of the pilot will not be used to assess, or to provide evidence of, instructional performance at Lakehead University, but solely to provide information on the measurement construct, domains and proposed questions of the instrument.

Your participation in the pilot will involve approximately 15 minutes of your class time. Students will be asked to evaluate their instructor based on their course experiences. Students will not be required to supply the instructor's name, course/section name, program name, or any other information which will reveal the student or instructor identity. Following the completion of the survey an invigilator will collect the consent forms and seal them in an unmarked envelope. All of the survey instruments will be collected and placed in a different unmarked envelope. The data from the analysis of the pilot study will be used to make a final set of revisions to the items included on the survey instrument.

Your participation is voluntary; you may refuse to participate in any part of the pilot study, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Further, you may decline to answer any questions during the study. There are no foreseeable risks, harms or inconveniences. There are no direct benefits. A summary of the pilot study results may be obtained through contacting Dr. Don Kerr. Contact information is provided below. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Kerr at 807.343.8695 or dkerr1@lakeheadu.ca

Consent Form for Pilot Study Participants

My signature on this sheet indicates that I agree to participate in a study conducted by the Senate Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee on course evaluation at Lakehead University, and it also indicates that I understand the following:

- I have read and understood the information provided on the pilot study.
- I agree to participate.
- I understand the potential risks and/or benefits of the study, and what those are.
- I understand that I am a volunteer and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- The data I provide will be securely stored at Lakehead University for five years.
- I understand I can request a copy of the pilot study from Dr. Kerr at 807-343-8695 or dkerr1@lakeheadu.ca
- My data will remain anonymous in any presentation of the data.

Participant _____

Program enrolled in at Lakehead University _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Thank you for participating in this study.

Donald Kerr, PhD
Faculty of Education, Lakehead University
955 Oliver Road
Thunder Bay, ON, P7B 5E1
Tel: 807-343-8695