

## **Use of and Research Related to Electronic Course-Instructor Surveys (eCIS) at The University of Texas at Austin**

### **Use of eCIS System at UT Austin**

Fall 2006 – 62 departments, 1,318 instructors, and 2,515 unique sections  
Spring 2007 – 45 departments, 530 instructors, and 874 unique sections  
Fall 2007 – 56 departments, 722 instructors, and 1,375 unique sections  
Spring 2008 – 55 departments, 705 instructors, and 1,227 unique sections  
Fall 2008 – 59 departments, 695 instructors, and 1,253 unique sections

### **UT Austin eCIS Policy**

- Starting in the spring 2008 semester preliminary eCIS results were released early to those faculty using the eCIS system
  - About 2 weeks prior to preliminary paper results in the fall
  - About 1 week prior to preliminary paper results in the spring
  - At the same time as preliminary paper results in the summer
- DIIA is working with Faculty Council, UT legal office, and UT governmental relations office to address issues related to type written comments

### **UT Austin eCIS and Paper CIS Comparison Study**

Purpose:

- To determine whether an eCIS system provides information and security comparable to that provided by the paper-based CIS system.

Goals:

- (1) to review policies and reports on electronic student evaluations from UT Austin's 11 peer institutions
- (2) to review response rates and overall ratings from paper and electronic evaluations at five other institutions with published findings
- (3) to investigate response rates and overall ratings from paper and electronic Course-Instructor Surveys at the University of Texas at Austin.

Results:

- Overall eCIS results for Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 were compared to paper CIS results for the same courses taught by the same instructor in Fall 2005 and Spring 2006, respectively (total matched course sections = 780).
  - Overall response rates for the eCIS were lower (between 6 – 10% less) than those for the matched paper CIS course sections from previous semesters.
  - Overall instructor and course ratings for the eCIS were equal or nearly equal (within 0.1) to those for the paper CIS.

- Comparing UT Austin with other U.S. institutions
  - Most UT Austin peer institutions have replaced or are beginning to replace their paper system with electronic systems.
  - Similar to UT Austin, overall course and instructor ratings do not significantly differ between paper and electronic forms at other institutions.
  - Similar to UT Austin, response rates are somewhat lower for electronic than paper systems at other institutions. Rates tend to increase over time as an institution continues to use electronic student evaluations.
  - Email reminders and informing students about the importance of student evaluations are the two most used strategies to improve electronic response rates.
  - Online evaluations may be less susceptible to non-response bias than paper evaluations.

Conclusions:

- Most UT Austin peer institutions have replaced or are beginning to replace their paper systems.
- Initially, response rates are somewhat lower for electronic than for paper systems at both UT Austin and at other institutions, but rates tend to increase over time as institutions continue to use electronic student evaluations.
- The two most common strategies for improving electronic response rates are sending e-mail reminders and informing students about the importance of their evaluations.
- Online evaluations may be less susceptible to non-response bias than are paper evaluations.
- Overall course and instructor ratings do not differ significantly between paper and electronic forms, either at UT Austin or at other institutions.

Report location:

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/mec/publication/pdf/fulltext/eCIS.pdf>

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