

News

New course evaluation forms to debut next week

Mike Cole
STAFF WRITER

Get ready for less bubbling and more writing.

On the last day of class this semester, students will receive a longer and more detailed course evaluation form.

Mathematics professor Elwood Parker, who designed the new form, explained the reason for the change.

"With an entirely new curriculum in place here at Guilford, many of us faculty felt that we needed a better way for students to communicate with teachers about the courses," he said.

"Students will now have a chance to give much better feedback to professors about their classes."

He went on to explain how the new forms are different from the old forms.

"The new form asks much more specific questions about what a student gets out of the course," he said. "Some examples of questions [address] what skills he or she learned, such as reading and quantitative analysis, what the course encourages him or her to do, in respect to learning values and identifying career goals, and how available the professor makes

himself for students."

Yet according to Parker, the most useful aspect of the new forms is the open-ended questions.

"We have a lot more open-ended questions in the new form, asking questions such as, 'Explain how this course challenged you, or why didn't it' or 'Were you aware of using a particular type of thinking in the course, and if so, what type?'" Parker said.

Robert Williams, an economics professor, used the new form in a trial run in his class last semester. He strongly supported the new course form, especially the use of the open-ended questions.

"What I really like about the open-ended questions is how they ask the student, 'What did you get out of the course?' rather than 'What did you like about it?'" Williams said.

The old form asked broader questions about the course and solicited suggestions for improvements to the class.

"To be honest, I don't care if students think my course is too hard, or that the tests are too long," Williams said. "I want to know if my courses help my students figure out what they want to do with their lives, and these new forms help ask that question much more effectively."

Williams said using the evaluation affects his future classes.

"I've made actual changes in the way I teach my classes based on the feedback I receive," he said.

Parker also mentioned a section on the form where instructors now have the opportunity to ask questions more specific to their course.

"There are a bunch of blank question fields, where any teacher may ask up to six open-ended questions, relevant to his or her course," he said.

Parker acknowledged a concern he with the new form: its length.

He said, "Students may not feel like filling out a form which takes twice as long as the original."

But Sam Browning, a sophomore and former student in Robert Williams' economics class, in which the form was used, felt confident that length was not an issue.

"I'm not worried about the forms' being too long, because if a student has something he or she wants to say about the course, then that person will do it," Browning said.

Cesar Dones, a first-year student who was also in that class, agreed with Browning.

"It only took me about five minutes to fill out because I already knew what I wanted to say," Dones said. "The form was very detailed, and it asked all the right questions. I do not think it was too long."

Browning added, "If a person does not take the time to fill it out, then he or she probably did not have anything useful to say in the first place."

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Doss creates site for students

Erica Wiggins
STAFF WRITER

Randy Doss, vice president for enrollment and marketing, has created a page on the Guilford website with information about entertainment in Greensboro, and he wants feedback.

"This idea came from a Retention Committee meeting with students," Doss said. "It's our attempt to help students feel connected to the college and the city."

So far, he's created sections such as On Campus Events and Announcements, Guilford Sports News, 24-Hour Restaurants, Great Outdoor Places, Places to Party, Movies, Theatre, Music, and Where to Buy Things.

There are also links to Banner Web, Lotus Notes, The First Year Center, the Greensboro Public Library, and to the UNCG

website, which has a calendar of daily events on their campus. Doss also plans to have student-run message boards and a link to Community Senate's web page.

First-year student Ireys Baucum said, "I think it would be good, if students actually use it. But that still requires motivation from students."

Senior Bear Bell stated, "I think I would be at serious risk of harm if I was not given access to information about places to dine in the Guilford area. People feel like Greensboro's in the middle of nowhere, but in fact there's a lot going on."

The site will be complete by next fall, but Doss said, "The more input I get, the sooner it can be finalized."

Access the page at <http://www.guilford.edu/students/current.cfm?ID=8000210>.