

# Departmentally Controlled Banner/myUVM Integrated Course Evaluation Platform Option

Educational Research & Technologies Committee and Student Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate Joint Proposal  
 University of Vermont  
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NOTE: This document is a revised notion incorporating feedback from many constituencies on campus regarding the departmentally controlled optional integration of course evaluations into the Banner/myUVM student portal.

**Issue:** At the University of Vermont, course evaluations are conducted during the semester before finals week with low participation rates (for units that conduct online course evaluations). Additionally, the data collected lacks depth in that it doesn't capture respondent demographics (class year, major, gender...) that could be used to better inform faculty on the student perspective in their courses.

## Proposal:

To address the issues above, the Educational Technology & Research Committee and the Student Affairs Committee proposes that the faculty senate pass a resolution supporting the implementation of an optional myUVM portal integrated course evaluation platform for UVM departments to consider using for their own purposes. The key features of this platform would be:

1. **Timing.** Students would be prompted to answer these departmentally designed questions BEFORE they see their final grade for the course. By integrating the course evaluation into the myUVM portal, it will have students offer feedback on the course at a time when they can reflect on the class in entirety (including end of semester help sessions, papers, or exams conducted during finals week) BUT still before they see the final grade in the class. Current campus evaluations are conducted during the week or two BEFORE final exams when students have NOT completed the course and are under a lot of pressure from their academic responsibilities. Integrating the evaluation into the myUVM portal will allow the evaluation to occur after the course is complete but still before they see their final recorded grade in the course.
2. **Opt-In.** Based on previous conversations on this topic, the integrated online course evaluation platform would ask the respondent (student) if they would like to complete a survey on their course. If they choose yes, they will be presented the departmentally selected questions. This Opt-In gateway will ensure only meaningful responses are harvested.
3. **Online.** There are some academic units at UVM using paper based surveys with scantrons and manual transcribing of open ended comments. This would be an optimized web-based course survey platform units could opt to consider migrating towards for operational efficiencies in collecting and aggregating the responses.
4. **Participation rate.** Academic units on campus using online course evaluations struggle with low participation rates (especially compared to paper based course evaluations). Presenting students with these Evaluations JUST before they are able to see their final grade will do two things:
  - a. Validate the authenticity of the survey for the potential respondent (while they are logged on to the trusted myUVM web portal).
  - b. Put the survey conveniently in front of them (circumventing issues with spam filters, authentication problems or browser problems).
5. **Richer Data.** Current course evaluations at UVM are not able to parse responses on important dimensions including Class Year, Ace score or Course Performance. Integrating a course survey mechanism into the myUVM/BANNER SIS portal will allow for seamless capture of respondent characteristics while still ensuring anonymity to the submitted response. This would allow for response parsing to identify differences in the student course experience among academic sub groups of our student population. Figure 1 is an example of how three questions could provide deeper perspective on the student experience among different student sub groups.

Figure 1

Course Survey Responses				
1: Strongly Disagree - 2: 2 - 3: 3 - 4: 4 - 5: Strongly Agree		Q1	Q2	Q3
All Responses	Mean	3.89	3.86	3.77
	Std. Dev.	1.01	1.06	1.08
	Min / Max	2.0 / 5.0	1.0 / 5.0	1.0 / 5.0
Class (Mean Scores)	First Year	-	-	-
	Sophomore	3.25	3.21	3.06
	Junior	3.89	3.87	3.80
	Senior	4.25	4.21	4.33
Performance (Mean Scores)	High (A+, A, A-, B+, B or B-)	4.12	4.30	3.87
	Low (C+ or lower)	3.66	3.78	3.75
Major (Mean Scores)	In Major (BSAD)	4.44	4.62	4.51
	Out of Major (Non BSAD)	3.20	3.10	2.40

6. **Departmental Autonomy.** The University of Vermont culture values departmental control over course evaluation questions and data. For the platform to be supported by the Faculty Senate, the implementation of this solution would need to ensure that:
  - a. Departments would be under NO obligation to use this platform – it would merely be an option for them to consider using if they so choose.
  - b. Each department that wants to use this platform would choose their own questions (meaning there would be no common questions).
  - c. ONLY the department (or departmentally designated individuals) may access the collected responses.
  - d. Data access auditing would be required of any considered solution (showing regular, verifiable access of records or access attempts to validate the integrity over the security & policy controls restricting access to evaluation data).
7. **Question Rating Scale Directional Consistency.** Current course evaluations conducted at UVM have different directional scales on their ratings based questions (e.g 1 is Strongly Disagree on some evaluations and 1 is Strongly Agree on other course evaluations). A centrally implemented campus platform would create an opportunity to unify the scale direction of all departmentally designed course evaluation questions.