



Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada

86th Session, 2018-2019

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AMENDING STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Resolution Number: 144

Authored By: Senator Hughes

Sponsored By: 2018-2019 Student Government Assembly

Whereas, at the end of every semester, students are asked to complete a survey unique to each course they were enrolled in;

Whereas, these surveys allow students to evaluate the course that they were enrolled in as well as provide feedback to the department and professor regarding the course and teaching methods;

Whereas, professors use various incentivization techniques to encourage students to take these surveys;

Whereas, there is also a University wide initiative that incentivizes students to take the survey;

Whereas, these evaluations are incredibly beneficial as they supply professors, department heads, deans, and upper administration course feedback from students' perspectives;

Whereas, these evaluations are currently not made available for students to view;

Whereas, the lack of institutionalized public evaluations gives nontraditional students without a campus network a disproportionate disadvantage to information on potential courses;

Whereas, often times when students do not have a formal way to gather information when enrolling in courses, they turn to external sources such as Rate My Professor;

Whereas, Rate My Professor is an online platform where students can give feedback on professors;

Whereas, the professors on this cite are given three different categories of evaluation: "Would take again?", "level of difficulty", and "overall quality";

Whereas, these ratings can be determined from as few as one reviewer and do not provide students with holistic feedback on the professor or the specific course that they are taking;

Whereas, Rate My Professor has over four million users per month across the UK, U.S., and Canada¹;

Whereas, 2,649 professors are listed on Rate My Professor under the University of Nevada, Reno²;

Whereas, this shows that students are not only utilizing this resource, but they are also utilizing it at the University of Nevada, Reno;

Whereas, some schools already make these course evaluations available to students. W. Lee Hansen, a professor at the University of Wisconsin stated in an article by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “[University entities] regularly publish evaluation results obtained from departments for the purpose of helping students identify the most popular courses and instructors.”³;

Whereas, public evaluations would not only allow students with a more holistic view of faculty and courses, but studies show that when people feel as though there is efficacy in their actions, they are more likely to complete duties that are beneficial, such as voting⁴;

Whereas, administration at the University of Nevada, Reno have been trying to increase the number of students who complete these evaluations;

Whereas, if students know that their evaluations will be made public, they will, in theory, be more likely to complete them as well as do so thoroughly;

Whereas, in addition to making these statistics available to students, it would also be beneficial to add a question regarding course materials;

¹ 1 “RateMyProfessors.com – Find and Rate Your Professor or Campus.” Vance Wolverton at California State University Fullerton - RateMyProfessors.com, www.ratemyprofessors.com/About.jsp.

² 2 “RateMyProfessors.com – Find and Rate Your Professor or Campus.” Vance Wolverton at California State University Fullerton - RateMyProfessors.com, www.ratemyprofessors.com/search.jsp?queryoption=TEACHER&queryBy=schoolDetails&schoolID=4288&schoolName=University%20of%20Nevada-%20Reno&dept=select

³ 3 Education, Liberal. “Rethinking the Student Course Evaluation.” Association of American Colleges & Universities, 31 Oct. 2014, www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/rethinking-student-course-evaluation.

⁴ 4 “Home - PMC - NCBI.” Current Neurology and Neuroscience Reports., U.S. National Library of Medicine, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4894288/>

Whereas, the University, Board of Regents, and ASUN have been extremely concerned with the affordability of course materials;

Whereas, among various other efforts, adding a question that references the course materials will allow professors to receive feedback on how effective their course materials were as well as allow future students' knowledge on whether or not they are essential to purchase;

Whereas, the statistics from this question can give students insight regarding whether they must purchase a new edition, can rent the book, can borrow the book, or totally opt out of the course materials;

Whereas, a proposed option for this question is:

“Please rate the following on a 1-5 scale, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree:

The required course materials are essential to achieving the learning outcomes of the course

How much money did you spend on all course materials for this class? (Select one)

<\$20, \$20-50, \$50-100, \$100-200, >\$200”

Be it resolved, that the Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno support the publication of aggregate data from course evaluation statistics and the ability for students to easily access these evaluation results;

Be it further resolved, that ASUN supports that addition of a question being added to the current course evaluations that will allow for feedback regarding the effectiveness and cost of required and/or recommended course materials;

Be it further resolved, that this resolution be sent to Provost Kevin Carman, President Johnson, and the Office of the General Counsel.

Adopted in Senate on March 27th, 2019

Attest:

Andrea Godoy, Secretary of the Senate

Anthony Martinez, Speaker of the Senate



From: Savannah Hughes, Senator for the College of Engineering
TO: Speaker Anthony Martinez
Date: March 21, 2019
RE: S.R. 86- A Resolution in Support of Amending Student Course Evaluations

As the 86th Session of Senate comes to a close, I wanted to allow as much time as possible for all of the legislation that will be coming through Senate. In order to utilize the remaining meetings as effectively as possible I would like to fast track this legislation. It has been thoroughly reviewed as well as discussed with Provost Carman.

Respectfully,

Savannah Hughes

Speaker Pro Tempore, Senator for the College of Engineering

Associated Students of the University of Nevada