Loyola New Orleans maintains high response rates through transition to Course Evaluations & Surveys

The challenge

When Carol Ann MacGregor joined Loyola University New Orleans faculty in 2012, quality of teaching was a top concern. As a faculty member, MacGregor handed out instructor evaluations and was "hungry" for results, "but I didn't get my feedback back for months," MacGregor said.

Speeding up the evaluation process would be difficult. The process took the administrative assistants scanning the evaluations so much time that it cost the university thousands of dollars in labor annually.

The lack of standardization in evaluation questions also made it hard to identify trends across departments. "We have five colleges: College of Law, College of Business, College of Music and Media, College of Arts and Sciences, and the College of Nursing and Health," MacGregor said. "And they each have their own unique survey instrument."

The solution

The university administration took up the issue as part of a Student Success Summit. "They did their research and settled on Course Evaluations & Surveys (formerly EvaluationKIT). We've been using it now for six years, since before it became part of the Watermark family."

Loyola integrated the solution with both Blackboard and Canvas to drive response rates via pop-up reminders within the LMS.

"Like most schools, we're doubling down on our LMS right now," MacGregor said. "Because of turn-key integration between Course Evaluations & Surveys and our LMS, we're getting more than if we were surveying on our own. It is so much more streamlined to operate than using individual Google forms and merging them all."

The wins

Maintained high response rates: Loyola maintained high response rates throughout its transition from paper to digital and changeover from Blackboard to Canvas."We've had great success. Course Evaluations & Surveys has fantastic functionality: there're pop-ups to remind students to fill out the evaluation," MacGregor said. "What we hear from students is, 'I can do it in line at Starbucks. It's easy.'"

Evaluation reports automatically distributed to faculty within hours: When students have finished their course evaluations and grades have been posted, faculty can check the responses in real time. "For the individual faculty member, the feedback is as close to instant as possible," MacGregor said. With such quick access to results, faculty can make more timely adjustments.

Less time spent managing evaluations: One person is primarily responsible for Course Evaluations & Surveys on campus. "I would estimate it's about 5% of his work," said MacGregor. "It does not require a lot of staff time. There was, of course, some work at the beginning to get it set up, but now, it's just a wonderful system that doesn't take him very much time.'"

"One of the things I love most about Course Evaluations & Surveys is that there's really no labor. Once the courses are input, it's automated and you can check your response rate in real time. After the date closes, you get it right away. For the individual faculty member, the feedback is as close to instant as possible."

Dr. Carol Ann MacGregor
Vice Provost
Loyola University New Orleans

Institution snapshot

Loyola University New Orleans, LA

Institution Type: Private Doctoral University

Total full-time students: 4,400+

Total full-time faculty: 251

Number of campuses: One

watermark