

Text of Interim President Edwards' August 15, 2012 Response to Senate reports and recommendations on Charge S-1104, on Online Teaching Evaluations and Best Practices in the Evaluation of Teaching Performance:

Dear Mr. Swalagin:

I am writing in response to the Reports and Recommendations on Charge S-1104 on Online Teaching Evaluations and Best Practices in the Evaluation of Teaching Performance as adopted by the University Senate in March 2012 upon the recommendations of the Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee and the Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee. These Committees have my thanks for their work in considering the important issues related to the evaluation of teaching at Rutgers.

I am pleased to support the Senate's reports and recommendations related to best practices in teaching evaluation and the administration of the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS), including maintaining the option for departments to request that some or all of their instructors use a paper survey in place of the online system in coordination with the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR). It is appropriate that the decision to use the paper SIRS or the online SIRS remain a departmental decision and not one decided by individual instructors. This recommendation is endorsed with the caveat that should departments begin exercising this option for large numbers of instructors, a funding source for the more costly paper system would need to be identified in order to accommodate all such requests. With respect to the recommendation to provide a mechanism for individual instructors to add questions to the survey to meet their specific needs, CTAAR staff members have indicated that while this option is not currently available, they are exploring how to accommodate instructor questions within the SIRS system.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Edwards, Ph.D.
Interim President

c: Gary Gigliotti, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Monica Devanas, Director, Faculty Development and Assessment Program