



GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

University of Southern California

Resolution: Course Evaluations

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Date: Monday, April 20, 2015

This Resolution: Affirms that the USC GSG has reached a consensus on, and is dedicated to the idea that course evaluations are an important resource for students and they should be easily accessible online to all USC students and updated at least once a year.

In addition GSG also recommends a parallel process whereby USC's course evaluations system is improved by addressing systemic issues with course evaluations.

Proposition:

WHEREAS, some course evaluations from before 2011 are again available online, GSG recommends that the Office of the Provost continue to improve this system to ensure it is up-to-date and sustainable for years to come;

WHEREAS, there are many studies that have found that course evaluations suffer from systemic issues of gender, racial, and other biases, there are proven ways to minimize the impact of such biases;

WHEREAS, USC should strive for a course evaluations system that is a leader among academic institutions in terms of its fairness, usefulness, and impartiality;

WHEREAS, we recommend applying defined best practices at USC with the help of a formation of a small task force of graduate students who can advise the Provost's Office on improving USC's system of course evaluations;¹

¹ For example, see <http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/09/26/345515451/student-course-evaluations-get-an-f> and <http://benschmidt.org/profGender/#>

WHEREAS, the task force would include at least one graduate student with advanced research and computer programming skills who could advise and assist GSG in the technical implementation of an updated course evaluations database;

WHEREAS, we support that graduate student evaluations be private by default for teaching assistants and only be displayed if the graduate students and/or teaching assistants themselves opt-in to have their evaluations made public that semester;

WHEREAS, we support that graduate student evaluations always be made private by default for grading assistants and only be displayed if the graduate students and/or grading assistants themselves opt-in to have their evaluations made public;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the University of Southern California will reinstate course evaluations and utilize a task force of graduate students in order to ensure best practices for, and the betterment of, course evaluations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to President C.L. Max Nikias, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs Michael Quick, Vice Provost for Graduate Programs Sally Pratt, Associate Provost of Academic Affairs Mark Todd, Associate Director of Academic Affairs Donna Garcia and Assistant Director of Academic Affairs Alison Beck within 2 weeks of being passed by the Graduate Student Government Senate.

Signed by President, Yohey Tokumitsu on April 27, 2015

Signed by Incoming President, Nikita Hamilton on April 27, 2015