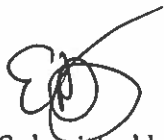**Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to the Faculty Senate –
September 7, 2016**

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee met on August 17, 2016.

At this meeting, the following items were presented/discussed, and/or approved:

- Calendar for XC and full FS meetings to be presented to the Senate at the September meeting
- Current Governance Situation – UL, BOT & Faculty Welfare Implications
- Dependent Verification Audit – numerous concerns were raised by faculty about the cost-benefit of conducting an audit, the timing of the announcement, and the impact on faculty generally and on those with ten-month contracts. The Chair and Vice Chair immediately scheduled a meeting with Jeanell Hughes, Asst VP Admin & Operations in Sr. VP for F&A Office, to make her aware of these issues and to request an extension of the due date to submit the verification documents.
- University Faculty Grievance Committee (UFGC)
  - Redbook requires a review of the chairs of the UFGC every three years by a Committee of the FS Chair, and a representative of the Provost's Office (Chap. 4, Appendix A).
  - The FS also agreed to solicit names for appointment as UFGC Chair, a position currently held jointly by Melissa Laning, Assoc Dean in LIB – Admin and former FS Chair and Neal Nixon, Professor in LIB - Kornhauser Library
- New priority grading & course evaluation procedure to faculty – We were asked to communicate this new approach to course evaluations. A new priority grade access program will begin in Fall 2016 in order to increase UofL's overall response rate (which is the national average - 53% - 55%). A pilot project was conducted in Fall 2015 in 65 courses and it yielded an increase in response rates from 25-35%. See attached recommendation for implementation.
- Parking Changes – we discussed the need for faculty consultation *before* decisions are made to help avoid unanticipated consequences, provide feedback about particular faculty welfare implications and to ensure transparency in decision making about matters that have a university-wide impact.
- Reports of the Faculty Senate Chair, Staff Senate, Student Government Association, Standing Committees and other university-wide committees (STEC, ATC, HRAC)

Submitted by Enid Trucios-Haynes,
Professor of Law, Vice Chair of Faculty Senate and
Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee
September 7, 2016

Priority Grade Access – Pilot Project Results and Recommendation for Implementation

UofL has used many techniques to increase and sustain the response rates to course evaluations. Some of the known "best practices" that UofL has employed include:
· make students aware of course evaluation availability
· inform students about the specifics of the evaluation process
· engage faculty in the evaluation process
· make the evaluations easy to access
· provide incentives
· advertise the evaluation process

UofL's overall response rate remains at the national average (approximately 53% to 55%) despite using the combination of the practices listed above. In order to increase this rate, UofL's Office of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP) did extensive research on the current practices at other institutions. The one emerging practice that UofL has not yet operationalized is providing students, who complete all of their evaluations, priority access to view their grades. IRP worked with UofL's IT department and the vendor of the course evaluation software to develop this functionality within PeopleSoft. The functionality was tested in production using five courses in fall 2015. It is worked as expected. The pilot project for spring 2016 was to gauge changes in student behavior.

Pilot project conducted in fall 2015:
The pilot project conducted in fall 2015 used five courses (one MBA course and four graduate nursing courses) to determine if the priority grade access functionality worked as expected in UofL's PeopleSoft environment. Students were given the chance to "opt-out" of completing the evaluation. Students who proactively "opted out" were allowed priority access to their grades.

Average historical response rates for the courses participating in the fall 2015 pilot project varied from 42% to 57%. The final fall 2015 response rates for these courses (excluding the students who opted out) varied from 71% to 79%, yielding a **net increase in response rates from 20% to 35%** when compared to the average historical response rates.

An additional analysis comparing the mean overall course score from fall 2015 to the average historical mean overall course score for each of these courses **confirmed that there was not a significant difference (either increase or decrease)** in the score as a result of granting students priority access to their grades.

Pilot project conducted in spring 2016:
Sixty-five courses from four academic units (i.e., College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education and Human Development, the School of Music, and the School of Social Work) participated in the expanded pilot project conducted in spring 2016. Associate deans asked for faculty to voluntarily participate in the pilot project. "Talking points" were distributed to the associate dean, instructor of record, and to the students enrolled in the identified courses that provided details of the process. No technical issues were experienced during the spring 2016 pilot project.

Below is a summary table of response rates for these academic units.

Academic unit	Overall response rate – priority grade access pilot project	Net overall response rate – priority grade access minus "opt-out"	Overall response rate – non-priority grade access	Net increase in response rates (priority grade versus non-priority grade access)
College of Arts and Sciences	80%	67%*	41%	26%
College of Education and Human Development	88%	70%	53%	17%
School of Music	85%	74%	32%	42%
School of Social Work	92%	75%	60%	15%

*It is important to note that the College of Arts and Sciences realized a large percentage of students "opting out" of the evaluation. Upon further review, those opting out were primarily enrolled in courses with the same instructor. The Vice Provost for Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Analytics will review these results with the department chair of this particular instructor. **If the students opting out from this one instructor's courses are included in the calculation, the net overall response rate was 46%.**

Recommendation:
Increasing the number of students participating in the course evaluation process improves the culture of assessment for the university. Therefore, it is recommended that UofL implement the priority grade access functionality university-wide during the fall 2016 semester.

Please note the following:

"level of delay – course" indicates that the institution blocks access to grades only for the courses that have outstanding evaluations
"level of delay – global" indicates that the institution blocks access to all course grades if one evaluation is outstanding. This is UofL's proposed practice.

1. **Brown University** (level of delay – course): "A grade block feature prevents students from viewing their final grade in a given course until they either complete a form or indicate that they prefer not to." (source: http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/support/faculty/course-evaluations)

2. **San Francisco State University** (level of delay – global): "If you complete all your teaching evaluations before they close, you'll be able to view your final grades on MySFSU as soon as they are posted by your instructors. Note that instructors have until a set time to post grades, but many post them much sooner. _If you do not complete all assigned evaluations_, you won't be able to view your final grades until the official grade release date." (source: http://at.sfsu.edu/sete/faq/students)

3. **Yale** (level of delay – global): "Will I be able to view my grades on line if I fail to evaluate a course? Yes. However, the online grade will not be viewable until the end of the course evaluation period." (source: http://www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar/oce_faqs_student.html#18s)

4. **Harvard University** (level of delay – global): "Beginning May 18, if you have _completed all_ of your evaluations, your grades will be released to you (as they are submitted by the faculty member)." (source: http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~evals/evaluate.htm)

5. **Boston College** (level of delay – global): "As an added incentive, those _who complete all of their online course evaluations_ will also have access to their posted grades on the first day of final exams." (source: http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/students/courseeval.html)

6. **Stanford University** (level of delay – global): "The grade release program is used as an incentive for students who complete all their evaluations to see an early view of their grades. All students are able to see their grades two days after the evaluation is closed." (source: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/course-evals-faq)

7. **University of Pennsylvania** (level of delay – global): "Students may still access grades without completing an evaluation. When students who have not completed all their course evaluations go online to check their grades through Penn In Touch, they will be prompted to complete their evaluations. However, the evaluation system will have an "opt out" option for each evaluation. Before viewing grades during the evaluation period, students must either complete their evaluations or opt out of their evaluations. _All open evaluations must be completed before display of any grades_." (source: https://evaluation.isc-seo.upenn.edu/blue/files/OnlineCourseEvaluation-faq.htm#StudentResponse4)

8. **University of Texas at Tyler** (level of delay – global): "In appreciation for completing evaluations before Dec. 10, the university will grant respondents "priority access" to view their semester grades one week earlier than non-respondents. Students who complete course evaluations will have access to grades on *my*UTTyler on Dec. 20. Students who do not complete course evaluations will have to wait until Dec. 26 to have access to grades through either *my*UTTyler or Blackboard." (source: http://www.uttyler.edu/news/announcements/2012/11192012.php)

9. **Western Kentucky University** (level of delay – global): "Only students *who have completed all of their course evaluations for the semester* will receive early access to their grades that faculty have posted via TOPNET prior to the date when all grades are due." (source: http://www.wku.edu/instres/documents/faqs_student.pdf)

10. **Northern Kentucky University** (level of delay – course): "Undergraduate and non-law graduate students who complete an evaluation for a particular course (or opt out of doing so within the evaluation instrument) will be rewarded for their participation by having access to their course grade as soon as that grade is submitted by the instructor." (source: http://eval.nku.edu/)

11. **University of Oregon** (level of delay – global): "Students who complete (or decline) each of their evaluations by 7:00am Monday morning before Finals Week, will be able to begin viewing their grades Monday evening of Finals Week. Students who do not complete (or or decline) each of their evaluations by the deadline will have a "grade hold" placed on their record. *This means that all grades from all terms, including official and unofficial transcripts, will be unavailable to the student until the Friday after the grading deadline* (the week following Finals week). Grade holds are automatically released for all students on that Friday." (source: https://registrar.uoregon.edu/course-evaluations)

12. **Brandeis University** (level of delay – global): "Even if a professor posts your grades early, you will be *unable to access them until you complete all of your Instructor Course Evaluations*." (source: http://www.brandeis.edu/provost/faculty-info/courseevaluations/FAQ.html)

13. **Ball State University** (level of delay – global): "No, students are not required to submit an evaluation. However, in fall 2012, students who do not complete evaluations will have access to their final grades delayed by several days. This change is meant to encourage complete participation in the course evaluation process, which provides feedback critical to improving the learning experiences of future students. We know that this feedback is important to the faculty, and we want to be sure that you have what you need." (source: http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/provost/facresources/crseresponsefaqs#21)