Dear Members of the Online ESCI Task Force,

We are writing to update you on the current status of the project to move the course evaluation system to an online platform. As you know, the Senate response last spring called for a slower implementation of the project than we had initially planned, in order to allow for sufficient consultation with members of relevant Senate committees. As a result, our initial piloting this fall will be scaled back compared to our original conception. Plans are in place to pilot the system in two classes in Environmental Studies, ES 1 (436 enrolled) and ES 120 (48 enrolled). The system will be open for responses from midnight, November 21 through midnight, December 3. The results will be tabulated and a comparison with the last fall’s in-class evaluations will be made in the early winter.

In response to Senate calls for more active participation in this process, a new committee on this initiative has been formed. The members are Lisa Berry and Kim McShane from Instructional Development, Linda Adler Kassner from the Writing Program, Judith Green from GGSE, and members of Undergraduate Council (Harold Marcuse), Graduate Council (Karen Myers), CAP (Jeffrey Stopple), and CRIR (Libe Washburn). Prior to receiving Senate input, the primary task of the faculty committee was to hone and improve the item pool, so as to assist departments in developing new evaluation questions with a greater focus on student learning and outcomes, in conjunction with our upcoming WASC review. However, the Senate memos made it clear that there was still significant concern about the project on campus and that the Senate committees wanted a greater role in shaping it. As a result, the purview of the faculty committee has expanded, and now additionally includes participation in the evaluation of the pilot as the project is rolled out, discussions of how best to shape the project so as to ensure good participation rates, and discussions of academic personnel implications and measures we can take to mitigate any shifts in ESCI results following the move to online delivery.

Our current question is the role of the original task force, the set of campus administrators who were initially tapped to participate. Should this group be merged with the new faculty committee, remain as a distinct group, or disband? Another possibility would be for some members of the task force to join the new committee, but not necessarily all. We request your input on this question. What are your opinions and what advice do you have as we work with this new committee going forward?

Please reply by Tuesday November 29th. Once this issue is determined, we will be able to move forward to plan our first meeting with the new group.

Best,

George and Carol