

# Understanding Your Faculty Evaluations

NSU began moving toward an online evaluation system for its faculty in the fall of 2003. The system works well, but some faculty members have been confused or frustrated with the process. Below are answers to the most frequent problems faculty encounter.

## *I can't access the evaluation site.*

1) The address must be typed correctly. It is: [www.nova.edu/online\\_evaluations/report](http://www.nova.edu/online_evaluations/report). Note that there is an underscore between the words online and evaluations. 2) The online evaluation system works best with more up-to-date computers. Check and make sure you have a current browser and operating system. 3) Try using Internet Explorer. The system doesn't do as well with NetScape Navigator.

If you are doing everything right and using the correct equipment and still having problems, please contact Kathleen Hagen ([khagen@nsu.nova.edu](mailto:khagen@nsu.nova.edu)).

## *I've been notified that I have evaluations ready to be viewed, but I can't access them.*

1) Make sure you use the correct user name and password. The user name is the same as your NSU e-mail account name. If you don't know your password, contact Karen Perez at [kperez@nsu.nova.edu](mailto:kperez@nsu.nova.edu). 2) Some faculty have had problems with being entered in Banner twice with slightly different user names and/or passwords. If you suspect that may be the problem, contact Kathleen Hagen ([khagen@nsu.nova.edu](mailto:khagen@nsu.nova.edu)). 3) When you see the list of evaluations just click on the course code (example ANA 5724) to access the report. 4) You may be attempting to access the evaluations too early. You'll know this if nothing happens when you click the course code. It may be that you were notified too early. In order to reinforce students' belief in the confidentiality of their evaluations, faculty are not able to access them until 16 days after the evaluation closed. When classes are chosen to be evaluated, it's easy for the data entry person to make a mistake and have the system notify faculty when the course ends rather than when they can access the evaluations. If you are notified soon after the course ends, that is possibly what happened. Another possibility is that the evaluation window was extended to allow students more time to complete their evaluation obligations. In that case, you would have to wait 16 days after the new close date of the evaluation. No evaluation can be opened longer than 30 days after the course is closed, so the maximum time you would have to wait to access your evaluations is 46 days.

## *I taught classes but I don't have access to my evaluations.*

1) The College of Optometry and College of Dental Medicine do not have separate faculty and course evaluations. In those colleges, students evaluate only the course and the name at the top of the evaluation is the name of the instructor of record. Except for the Dean of each college, only the instructor of record has access to the course evaluation. 2) If you are not part of the College of Optometry or College of Dental Medicine, but still don't have access to any evaluations, check with your departmental secretary (who is probably the person who entered the classes to be evaluated). In some colleges, not every class is evaluated. It's possible that the class(es) you taught were not chosen for evaluation. 3) If none of these scenarios seems correct, contact Kathleen Hagen ([khagen@nsu.nova.edu](mailto:khagen@nsu.nova.edu)).

### ***These evaluation reports don't make sense to me.***

Some colleges (College of Pharmacy and College of Allied Health) group questions with similar themes into sections. For those colleges, there is a section score obtained by averaging the scores for all the questions in the section. After all the sections, there is a breakdown of the scores for each question in each section. That is followed by a comments section.

For the other colleges, each question is listed with its scores, followed by a comments section.

### ***What do these statistics mean?***

1) **Mean and median.** The mean is the average of scores. The median is the point at which half the responses are larger, half are smaller. [For example, let's say your responses were 2, 3, 4, 5, 5. The mean is 3.8 ( $(2+3+4+5+5)/5$ ). The median is 4.]

2) **Standard deviation.** In this context, the standard deviation deals with the distribution of responses. If most of your students answered a certain way, your standard deviation would be small. If your students had a wide variety in their responses, your standard deviation would be larger. Even with a great variety in the responses, it will not be a large number because student responses are limited to at most 0-5. Whether it is better to have a big standard deviation or a small one depends on what your score is. If you received mostly favorable responses from your students (had a high mean), you would want to see a small standard deviation, meaning that most of your students thought well of you and your teaching. If you did not get many favorable responses from your students (had a low mean), you would want to see a larger standard deviation – meaning that some of your students thought well of you and some did not. You would also want to check the median, as the mean would have been dragged one direction or another by students who answered on the extremes of the responses. In that case, the median would give you a better idea of how the majority of your students felt.

3) **Reliability coefficient.** The reliability coefficient is a measure of the likelihood that you would receive similar scores if students were to do your evaluations again. It is better to have a higher number, but lower numbers do not mean that you are a bad teacher. They mean that the evaluation may not be a great measuring stick. One of the factors that would lead to a lower reliability coefficient is a small number of students responding to the evaluation. The highest possible number is one. A 0.70 or higher would indicate a high reliability coefficient. You probably shouldn't expect a number higher than 0.50.

4) **N.** N is the number of responses.