



GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE Student Ratings of Instruction Survey Report AY 2009-2010

Executive Summary

In November 2008, Guam Community College (GCC) administered the *Fall 2008*Student Questionnaire designed to assess the delivery of instruction of each course offered at the College, to provide formative feedback to faculty, and to provide information about student concerns regarding the classroom learning environment and the time and day classes are offered.

Although the questionnaire provided useful information, the process of compiling the raw data was time-consuming. Consequently, a recommendation was made to use an already established student survey that fits the College's needs and whose results can be processed by the vendor. Additionally, with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges' (ACCJC) requirements that the College assess Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for courses, it was recommended that the focus of the student survey be on learning rather than the delivery of instruction.

After reviewing available surveys, the College decided to pilot the IDEA¹
Center's *Student Ratings of Instruction Survey* which focuses on student learning and is tailored to fit the faculty's teaching objectives. The results of the *IDEA Student Ratings* of *Instruction Survey* are processed by the vendor and a copy of the survey results is sent to the College for distribution to faculty to help guide improvement efforts. Another reason for selecting the IDEA Center is that the College has utilized their services in the

¹ The IDEA Center is a non-profit organization based at Kansas State University. See http://www.idea.ksu.edu for a preview of the instruments utilized in this study.

past to administer the *Administrator Assessment Survey* and has been pleased with their services.

The *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Survey* was administered in Fall 2009, Spring 2010, and Summer 2010; however, the results for each semester are considered invalid because of low response rates and issues with the Faculty Information Forms² (FIF). The discussion that follows includes background information on the *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction System*, administration of the survey at GCC and recommendations for future surveys.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE IDEA STUDENT RATINGS OF INSTRUCTION SYSTEM:

The *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction System* includes Faculty Information Forms (FIF) (Appendix A) and Student Reactions to Instruction and Course forms. For this particular study, the Student Reaction Form that was used is the Diagnostic Form (Appendix B) because it contains information that can be utilized for instructional development. The FIF includes 12 learning objectives which are organized into the following six groups based on statistical and conceptual similarities: basic cognitive background, application of learning, expressiveness, intellectual development, lifelong learning, and team skills.

Faculty must indicate which of these objectives they consider to be relevant (*important* or *essential*) to their class. IDEA recommends that faculty select 3-5 objectives as *important* or *essential* for each class. When more than 5 objectives are

² The FIF describes each course and provides critical information needed to generate class summary reports and group summary reports.

selected, effectiveness ratings are thought to be adversely affected because faculty may be trying to accomplish too much. The *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction* uses self-report of student learning on these objectives as the primary means of measuring teaching effectiveness. Progress ratings for relevant objectives are based on a 5-point scale where 1=no apparent progress, 2=slight progress, 3=moderate progress, 4=substantial progress, and 5=exceptional progress.

Since effective teaching is defined in terms of progress on the objectives selected, it is important that faculty members are thoughtful in their selection. Objectives considered *important* or *essential* by faculty are those requiring substantial and explicit effort towards their achievement. Attainment of these objectives is meaningfully reflected in the appraisal of student progress.

The overall measure of progress on relevant objectives is determined at by combining progress ratings on all *important* and *essential* objectives. Double weight is given to objectives considered *essential*. Thus, objectives identified as *essential* count twice as much as those considered *important* in the calculation of progress on relevant objectives. In addition to progress on relevant objectives, teaching effectiveness is assessed by the average student agreement with statements that the faculty and the course were excellent. The summary evaluation is the average of these two measures.

B. ADMINISTRATION OF THE IDEA STUDENT RATINGS OF INSTRUCTION SURVEY AT GCC:

In Fall 2009, the College piloted the *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction*. On August 25, 2009 and October 1, 2009, the Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness (AIE) Office posted a memo to faculty via MyGCC³ Campus Announcements informing the College community about the survey. The survey was administered to randomly⁴ selected postsecondary and adult high school students for a period of three weeks, from October 17, 2009 to November 6, 2009. Faculty were provided with packets containing a copy of the *Directions to Faculty IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction* (Appendix C) prepared by the IDEA Center and a copy of the FIF and Student Reactions to Instruction and Courses (Diagnostic Form), one week prior to the administration of the survey. The Directions to Faculty included information on how to complete the FIF and instructions on classroom administration. Faculty were informed that completed surveys may be placed in drop boxes located in the Faculty Lounge, Student Support Services Office, or the Student Services and Administration Building (Rotunda). Faculty were also informed that they may return completed surveys to the AIE Office. Survey packets were collected, packaged and shipped to the IDEA Center for processing on December 7, 2009. The results were received in January 2010.

One hundred and fourteen classes participated in the Fall survey; however, four classes were excluded from the evaluation because *important* and *essential* objectives were not identified in the FIF. The response rate was 68% which is lower than the desirable response rate of 75% but higher than the minimum response rate of 65% for

³ *MyGCC* is the College's integrated database system with web accessible information that combines student, financial aid, finance, and human resources into one system.

⁴The Microsoft Excel RAND Worksheet function was used to randomly select courses from the Fall 2009 Master Schedule of Classes provided by the Registrar.

dependable results. Response rates for 42 classes were below 65%. The average class size of participating classes was 20. The average number of objectives selected by faculty as *important* or *essential* was 8.4. This is more than the 3-5 objectives recommended by the IDEA Center. The concern with this, as previously mentioned, is that effectiveness ratings are adversely affected because faculty may be trying to accomplish too much. Consequently, results were deemed unusable.

On February 9-10, 2010, Dr. Michelle Santos (Dean, School of Technology and Student Services) and Ms. Sarah Leon Guerrero (Professor, Education Department) attended the *IDEA Train the Trainer Workshop* in Orlando, Florida. The workshop was designed to train end-users on the appropriate use of the *IDEA Student Ratings System*. Upon Dr. Santos' and Ms. Leon Guerrero's return, they met with department chairpersons and department faculty to discuss what they learned from the workshop. In particular, they discussed how faculty should complete the FIF and how to interpret results.

In April 2010, the College administered the Spring 2010 IDEA Survey to all postsecondary faculty⁵. The survey was administered from April 12, 2010 to April 24, 2010. The average response rate of 63%, however, fell below IDEA's minimum of 65% for dependable results. Of the 109 classes that participated in the survey, the response rate for more than half of the classes (64) was below 65%. Five classes were excluded from the report because they did not identify *important* and *essential* objectives. The average class size of participating classes is 20. The average number of objectives selected as *important* or *essential* is 6.9, still above IDEA's recommendation of 3-5

⁵ A Spring 2010 Master Schedule was obtained from the Admissions and Registration Office and the highest enrolled class for each faculty member was selected to participate in the survey.

objectives. The results for this period are considered unusable because of the low response rate.

Surveys were also administered in Summer 2010. Two faculty members who did not participate in the survey in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010 were asked to complete a FIF and to administer the survey to their class. The return rate for these two classes was considered too low by the IDEA Center to process⁶.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SURVEYS:

Although the College experienced many challenges with its pilot administration of the *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Survey* in AY2009-2010, many lessons were learned along the way. GCC intends to administer the survey instrument again in AY 2010-2011. Based on the College's experience with the survey last academic year, the following recommendations are made for future surveys:

• When the survey was first piloted in Fall 2009 and administered again in Spring 2010, there was no campus-wide campaign to inform faculty and students about the intent of the survey and the survey process. For the next implementation, AIE should conduct an awareness campaign (i.e., posters, *MyGCC* announcements, flyers, email messages) so that faculty and students understand the purpose of the survey and what is expected of them.

It is recommended that faculty discuss the course objectives with students early in the semester. Students must be informed that they are going to be asked to rate their own progress on the objectives, and that these ratings are taken seriously. Faculty communication to students will help to facilitate good response

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⁶ One class had a return rate of 23% and the other class had a return rate of 61%.

- rates. If faculty encourage student feedback, students may be more likely to participate.
- The process of selecting course objectives should be collaborative, with faculty as
 a group taking ownership of curricular goals by reviewing each course's purposes
 as they contribute to a coherent curriculum.
- In the next survey administration, AIE should provide faculty with an abbreviated list of discipline codes for GCC programs to assist them in completing the FIF.
 The list should be developed with input from the Deans.
- Someone other than the instructor should administer the survey (i.e., COPSA student volunteers, Committee on College Assessment members). If this is not possible, the INSTRUCTOR MUST LEAVE THE ROOM while students are completing the forms. Additionally, standardized instructions to students should be read aloud. For example:
 - "Your ratings will be most helpful to faculty and to the institution if you answer thoughtfully and honestly. Students sometimes wonder if the course was well taught and if they learned a lot, should they rate every item high? The answer is-No. IDEA focuses on what the instructor was trying to teach and on what you learned. Therefore, an instructor is not expected to do well on every item. Thus, items not related to this course are not counted in the final evaluation."
- The survey should be administered in the middle of the course (Fall: mid-October, Spring: mid-March) so that the students' ratings of their progress accurately reflect their learning for the entire course. The survey should not be

administered on either the last day of class, before the final exam or on the day of the exam.

• AIE should ensure that reminders of the survey and end dates are communicated frequently. If surveys are available for a two-week period, reminders should be sent every 3 days (i.e., email reminders). If the response rates are not adequate as the end date approaches, reminders should be sent on a daily basis. Extending the end date can also help encourage additional responses.

The *IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Survey* is a valuable tool because of the self-report of student learning on course objectives identified as *important* and *essential*. The College is committed to ensuring academic excellence through improvement. The assessment of learning in the classroom is an essential part of ensuring that improvement. AIE will be administering the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction Survey in AY 2010-2011.



This report was written by Dr. Virginia C. Tudela, Assistant Director, Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness (AIE) and Co-Chair of the Committee on College Assessment (CCA). Administrative assistance was provided by Vangie Aguon, AIE staff. AIE would also like to recognize Dr. Michelle M. Santos and Ms. Sarah Leon Guerrero for providing valuable feedback and faculty training on how to complete the Faculty Information Form (FIF) and how to interpret the results. Acknowledgment is also given to GCC students for their participation in this assessment study. Cover provided by the Office of Communications & Promotions. Cover photo by R.D. Golding.