

## UNCSA Course Evaluation Pilot Project: Spring and Fall 2021

### Why is this pilot happening? What's the background?:

Back in 2019, UNCSA Faculty Council (jointly with the Office of the Provost) created a Course Evaluation Task Force, charging it with taking a comprehensive look at UNCSA's end-of-course evaluation system and preparing recommendations for how to improve it. Co-chaired by Janna Levin (DLA) and Laura Martin (Dance), the task force completed its work in 2020 by submitting a series of recommendations, some of which have led to the creation of the CEIT and this proposed pilot. When the Course Evaluation Task Force visited your departments in the 2019-2020 academic year, many of you shared concerns about student response rates and the need for improved messaging to both students and faculty regarding the course evaluation process. Research indicates that three factors contribute to increased student response rates on end-of-course evaluations: 1) student understanding of how the instructor uses student feedback to make changes in the course; 2) completion of end-of-course evaluations during a class period; and 3) the use of mid-semester assessments that lead to adjustments during the semester.\* Accordingly, the pilot project will utilize several research-based strategies and assess their impact on end-of-course evaluations on our campus.

### If I volunteer, what will I have to do?:

We will select approximately 10 faculty volunteers, with the goal of having appropriate representation from multiple schools/divisions. If you are selected for the pilot, here's what to expect: The process involves collecting formative feedback from students at mid-semester, implementing that feedback during the semester, and closing the feedback loop at the end of the semester with the end-of-course evaluation administered during a class period. Faculty volunteers participating in the pilot will agree to:

- Take a quick pre- and post-survey about their perceptions of the pilot.
- Conduct mid-semester assessments in 1 course during both the Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 semesters, likely during Weeks 8 or 9.
- Implement at least 1 change to their course based on mid-semester feedback.
- Clearly communicate that change to students in the course.
- Administer end-of-course evaluations—using an online instrument—during a class session in the last week of the semester after reading a prepared explanatory script to students.
- Participate in a group discussion each semester of the pilot to provide feedback to the Implementation Team.

### Why volunteer to participate?

- If the research is any indication, it's likely that student response rates on your end-of-semester evaluations will increase and it's likely that scores on your end-of-semester evaluations will improve because students are more invested in the course.\*\*

- You might also use this as an opportunity to use a data-driven approach to build out your teaching portfolio for contract renewal and/or rank promotion.
- It's an opportunity to be a part of a positive culture change surrounding teaching and learning at UNCSA.
- Plus, you get \$50 on your One Card, redeemable wherever Pickle Dollars are accepted!

### *Research Citations*

\*Previous work in this area shows that there are three primary factors that increase response rates on end-of-course evaluations. First, students must understand how the instructor uses student feedback to make changes in the course (Chen & Hoshower, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Dommeyer et al, 2004; Laubsch 2006; Nulty, 2008; Tucker, Jones, & Staker, 2008; Goodman, Anson, & Belcheir, 2015 as cited by Young, 2018). Understanding use of course evaluations increases response rates because students perceive that their feedback is valued (Groves, 2009 as cited by Standish, 2018; Johnson, 2003, as cited by Ogden, 2018; Standish, 2018). Second, when end-of-course evaluations are completed during a class period, response rates increase. Synchronous completion during class removes the burden of students using personal time during the stress of end-of-semester activities and increases the likelihood of thoughtful responses (Faculty Strategies, 2012, as cited by Ogden 2018; Standish, 2018). Again, students perceive the use of class time for evaluations as an indication that faculty value student feedback. This strategy includes the added bonus of allowing the opportunity for clear and consistent communication with students about course evaluations (Young, 2018). Third, use of mid-semester assessments increases end-of-semester course evaluation response rates by 9-16% (Lewis, 2001; Tucker, Jones, and Straker, 2008; Crews and Curtis, 2011; McGowan and Osguthorpe, 2011 as cited by Young, 2018). Use of mid-semester feedback offers students the ability to benefit from their feedback, making them more likely to provide end-of-semester feedback that will benefit future students.

\*\*Research not only shows that student response rates on end-of-semester course evaluations increase when mid-semester feedback is collected but also that scores on end-of-semester course evaluations improve because students see the results of changes in the course and become more engaged in the course (Lewis, 2001, as cited by Young; Overall and Marsh, 1979 as cited by Young, 2018).