Colleagues:

You have no doubt found your course evaluations and summary data for this past semester. Susan Huey, a number of students, Allyson Hettrick, and Don Ray worked hard on the logistics to get these out to you, scanned, summarized, and back out to you. We recognize that there were some delays in this process and are working to improve it. As we continue to adopt this process, we welcome your feedback.

For now, I want to highlight a couple of factors about the information you should have received. You received copies of your narrative comments as well as a sheet with averages for all of the numeric questions. Of particular importance to me are the responses to questions 20, 21, and 22.

Question 20 asks students to give an overall rating of the course; the college-wide average for fall 2010 (CORRECTION: 2009) was 4.03. Question 21 asks students to give an overall rating of their own effort in the course; the college-wide average for fall 2010 (CORRECTION: 2009) was 3.81. Question 22 asks students to give an overall rating for the instructor in the course; the college-wide average for fall 2010 (CORRECTION: 2009) was 4.25. Our evaluation form has a 5 point scale.

These averages are of interest to me because they give me data points to watch for trends in our course offerings. For example, students' overall rating of their effort (3.81) is slightly higher than last spring but lower than I would like. This data will provide interest fodder for discussions about rigor, etc. Combined with data on grade distributions, we can likely have a good conversation about grade inflation, as well.

The overall ratings of courses (4.03) and of professors (4.25) are strong. Although they are slightly lower than the numbers from last spring, we should be proud of those assessments. When you consider student responses to your courses, you should consider how your courses compare to these campus-wide averages and how they compare to your own from past semesters.

I look forward to further conversation about course evaluations. You should expect further summary data about your individual courses, your courses in aggregate, and your courses relative to other courses. You will receive this information from Don Ray soon.

For now, thank you again for all that you do to make our academic program strong.

Paula