



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92521-0132

May 4, 2020

TO: Dylan Rodriguez, Chair
Academic Senate

FROM: Lucille Chia, Chair *Lucille Chia*
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Comments on Request Suspension of Course Evaluation (iEval) for Spring 2020

The CHASS Executive Committee engaged in a detailed discussion concerning the Request Suspension of Course Evaluation (iEval) for Spring 2020 and noted the following points. Although the Executive Committee acknowledges the strong arguments put forth by this memo, we also note that suspension of iEval may have a number of unintended consequences.

1. For many individuals engaged in teaching, including instructors of record and TAs, suspension of iEval may have both positive and negative consequences. These individuals may need evaluations of their teaching for personnel consideration, not only at UCR, but also for job applications outside the university. For these reasons, iEval is suspended, many instructors may benefit from an alternative way to receive feedback about their teaching.
2. The Executive Committee was divided in viewing these current circumstances as sufficiently exceptional to suspend iEval. For example, are the “unusual and difficult situation” resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic sufficiently different from other situations in which we *do* continue to employ iEval, such as when instructors offer new courses? Or is that not an adequate comparison? And if we do use iEval for a course taught under different circumstances (remote vs. in-person, well-planned online vs. in-person, a course being given for the first time in any condition, etc.), should the iEval results be weighed differently?
3. Since we are not suspending evaluation of the students, so we might view suspension of iEval for instructors as inequitable. Several members of the Executive Committee expressed concerns on how to evaluate the students in classes taught “remotely,” a new experience for both students and instructors. In many courses, for different reasons, we should not and cannot evaluate the students in the same ways as in in-person classes.
4. While we may consider suspending iEval for instructors, we must prioritize the careful and thoughtful design and deployment of other ways of evaluating teaching that focus on how we can

improve “remote teaching” for the near future (summer sessions and Fall Quarter of 2020) and further on, for the online teaching to which the university is devoting so much consideration? The university can greatly benefit these new methods of evaluating teaching methods, evaluation of instructors and students, necessary cybersecurity, etc.

5. What exactly does suspension of iEval involve? Is it as simple as toggling off the link in iLearn course website, or would it involve substantially more work for the administrative staff? Given the staff’s somewhat new and different responsibilities, would the suspension of iEval result in even more work for staff members?

One final note, that applies not just specifically to the question of suspending iEval. It is infeasible to try to plan for all unexpected circumstances, but the many contingent plans and “work-arounds” that all parts of the university had to design and deploy during the current Covid-19 pandemic suggest that we should consider how to institutionalize the university’s ways of responding to such circumstances. For example, we should adopt a general language style for writing about modifications in regulations and processes in the UCR Division’s Bylaws and Regulations, so that we do not reinvent ad hoc/impromptu ways of discussing issues—ways which may inadvertently be inconsistent, and which do not clearly express the temporary nature of how these issues are handled under unexpected circumstances.