February 15, 2012

PAMELA PETERSON  
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Personnel

HERBERT LEE  
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

DANA TAKAGI  
Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel

Dear Colleagues:

RE: Use of Online Instructor Evaluations from ECommons for Academic Personnel Reviews

Thank you for your scanned memo dated 10 February 2012 detailing issues and concerns with respect to the use of online instructor evaluations for the review of academic personnel.

The memo makes a compelling case for the centralization of online course and instructor evaluation, and the integration of the evaluations with the BioBibnet system.

Campus practice has left the selection of evaluation method and process with the course sponsoring unit, as well as the responsibility for being the office of record. (The current process provides the program with an electronic spreadsheet format also.) The original charge to ITS was to duplicate, as closely as possible, the local control and processing of instructor and course evaluations to facilitate potential use of the system. This required significant modification to the evaluations package of eCommons, and ITS has done an exceptional job in carrying out this charge.

As your memo highlights, the online system of course evaluation leads to compelling possibilities with respect to centralized evaluation and archiving, uniform record retention and disposition policies, and electronic personnel file review, saving the campus countless hours of staff, faculty, and student time.

As you may know, our project oversight group, including ITS team members Jim Phillips, Robin Ove, Marion Bashista, and Rebecca Peet; APO team member Georgina Chang, and UE team members Daria Troxell and Richard Hughey, discussed many of these issues at its 2 February 2012 meeting. We would be happy to also work with, for example, a member of the Committee on Academic Personnel in future occurrences of these approximately monthly meetings.

In the February meeting, we discussed the different approaches and paths to continue to address identified issues. Our list of issues matches closely to those mentioned in your memo. We further refined the planned report style, and also strataged about the placement of evaluation data within the Data Warehouse and BioBibnet. We adopted an ordered strategy of focusing on the immediate archiving need, developing the new report format, refining the data pipeline architectures for seamless
integration with data repositories, and then implementing those pipelines. We also discussed the priorities of various other features such as the TA evaluations desired by many units.

Last week, ITS archived the Fall evaluation data. However, it is also appropriate, at this point in time, for departments to continue to maintain the function of office of record pending full archive automation.

Thank you for highlighting the concern regarding department manager workload related to instructor evaluation. I believe that this concern will be alleviated without needed action as the focus shifts from the time spent on steps that have been newly added to the process to the savings of a considerably higher number of hours that department managers and students will no longer need to spend with paper evaluations.

Thank you again for carefully analyzing these various issues, and I look forward to working closely with you as this project continues to move forward.

Sincerely,

Richard Hughey
Vice Provost and Dean of
Undergraduate Education

cc: Vice Chancellor Mary Doyle, ITS
Assistant Vice Provost Jessica Fiske-Bailey, Undergraduate Education
CP/EVC Alison Galloway
Academic Senate Chair Susan Gilman
Director Peter McMillan, ITS – CP/EC Liaison
Director Jim Philips, ITS – Learning Technologies