

Timing of Evaluations:

On average, do composite ratings for surveys submitted early in the last week of classes differ from composite ratings for surveys submitted later in the week?

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Background

Currently, all students in a given term are sent email messages near the end of the term inviting them to fill out a SET survey for each class section in which they are enrolled. These messages indicate that the surveys are open from the Friday evening preceding the last week of classes until midnight Sunday immediately preceding the first day of final exams.¹

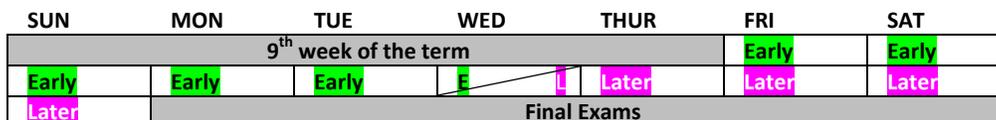
The Task Force on the Student Evaluation of Teaching proposed that the evaluation period be shortened so as to “... run from Wednesday of the last week of classes through the Sunday before exam week.” (See SET Final Report, p. 15)

In an email to the University community dated October 9, 2014, Frederick Parrella, in his role as chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee, communicated the following:

“The Faculty Affairs Committee also considered a recommendation to shorten the amount of time that the [SET] instrument would be available to students at the end of the term, but did not support the recommendation at this time. The Committee will continue to review the use of the new SET to determine if a shortened time may be used later this year or next.”

Analyses Based on Data for F2014

In an effort to provide information to the Faculty Affairs Committee for its continued review of the timing of evaluations, time-stamp data showing the date and time-of-day when a student submitted a survey were obtained at the conclusion of the fall 2014 survey period. These data were analyzed with the goal of determining whether the average composite rating for surveys submitted early in the last week of classes differed from the average composite rating for surveys submitted later.² A composite rating is the average rating given by a student based on SET Items 1.1 through 1.9. For this analysis, **early** was defined as the period from Friday evening preceding the last week of classes to 4:59 PM on Wednesday of the last week of classes; **later** was defined as the period from 5:00 PM on Wednesday of the last week of classes to midnight Sunday immediately preceding the first day of final exams. The schematic below illustrates this dichotomization.



Analyses showed no differences between the average composite rating for surveys submitted early and surveys submitted later. Summary statistics are shown below.

	Surveys Submitted Early	Surveys Submitted Later
Mean of Composite Ratings	4.2	4.2
St Dev of Composite Ratings	0.9	0.9
Number of surveys	17,738	6,212

¹ This description applies to students enrolled in class sections taught in all SCU schools/college except the Law School and JST. The Law School uses a different calendar, and JST has a different evaluation process.

² Excluded from this analysis were all Law School courses as well as independent study, peer educator, internships, and other such classes.