# Course Evaluations Executive Summary – Spring 2024

Bowling Green State University (BGSU) undergraduate Student Learning Analysts (SLAs) from the Office of Academic Assessment conducted this assessment project. The SLAs designed a focus group protocol to gain knowledge about course evaluations at BGSU. The SLAs facilitated four focus groups with 21 participants from varying class standings and majors from four colleges. Out of the 21 participants, 76.19% identified as female (n=16), 19.05% identified as male (n=4), and 4.76% identified as nonbinary (n=1). From the race/ethnicity information participants provided, 85.71% self-reported their race/ethnicity as White (n=18), 4.76% as Biracial (n=1), 4.76% as White/Puerto Rican (n=1), and 4.76% as Not Provided (n=1). Zoom was used as the online meeting platform, and the focus groups were recorded. These recordings were then transcribed and analyzed. The SLAs used a three-step coding process, which involved open coding, focus coding, and theme identification. Three themes with their corresponding subthemes emerged throughout these discussions and are highlighted below.

## Motivation – Participants discussed factors that contribute or do not contribute to students completing course evaluations.

* 1. Requirements – Students talked about how course evaluations felt like mandatory assignments.
  2. Incentives – Students talked about what motivated them to complete course evaluations, such as extra credit.
  3. Class Experience – Students provided thoughts on how classes affected their effort to fill out course evaluations.
  4. Impact – Students talked about how professors’ use and class size can impact their motivation for completing course evaluations.

One student spoke about their appreciation of course evaluations in general:

*I actually like the concept of us having course evaluations. That way we can get our voice in, and we can give proper feedback from the student side of the education that we are receiving. Just the fact that the University is even giving them out, and, like, letting us have that choice to put our words in and speak for ourselves, I just think it’s just nice to have. (T4, L221-225)*

Another student talked about their motivation for completing course evaluations:

*I like to fill out all my course evaluations all the time both because I think that they're required, which I realize that they're not really. But also ‘cause I feel like it is helpful to… give back in that sense, like, to make sure that my voice is being heard about my experience in the course. (T1, L3-6)*

## Characteristics- Participants' expressed thoughts on how and when course evaluations are administered.

* 1. Format – Participants talked about how questions were asked in course evaluations.
  2. Content – Students discussed what questions were asked in course evaluations.
  3. Notifications – Students provided insight on how they were made aware of course evaluations.
  4. Timing – Students discussed the current timing of course evaluations and provided recommendations for changes to the timing.

A student talked about course evaluation characteristics as a whole:

*…I think they're fine now. If I was giving them… I'd probably make the deadline a little longer, and maybe more specific questions. I think that the open-ended questions are a little too open ended sometimes depending on the class… (T3, L306-310).*

## Feedback – Students shared their thoughts on the purpose and use of course evaluations and the potential use of mid–semester feedback.

* 1. Purpose – Students discussed what they believe course evaluations are being used for currently.
  2. Future Use – Students provided their thoughts on how they would like faculty and BGSU to use course evaluations in the future.
  3. Mid-semester – Students expressed their thoughts on providing course feedback mid-semester and its potential use.

One student commented on how course evaluations are used to provide feedback to make classrooms a more effective learning space with better resources:

*I feel like it's really just there to help professors know what they need to make the classroom a more effective learning space. I feel like it's just there to make it easier for in the future. If a student is struggling, they can adequately provide the resources that would help that student, and to make their environments more conducive to a positive learning environment. (T4, L19-23)*

Participants also provided a variety of suggestions throughout the focus groups about format, content, notifications, timing, future use, and potential mid-semester use of course evaluations.

For more information about this assessment project, please contact Dr. Jessica M. Turos, Associate Director of the BGSU Office of Academic Assessment, at jmturos@bgsu.edu.

# Infographic

