CSUDH

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DATE: January 15, 2019 (reformatted on letterhead February 11, 2019)

TO: All teaching faculty

CC: Michael Spagna, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs
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          College ARMs
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          Bill Chang, Khiem Ha, Ed Liao, Yuki DeSoto, & Alana Olschwang, IT division
          PAF of all teaching faculty

FROM: James Hill, Interim Associate Vice President, Faculty Affairs and Development

RE: PTE administration in the 2018/2019 Academic Year

Faculty,

   As you are aware (and as referenced in previous communication from this office), the administration of Perceived Teaching Effectiveness (PTE) forms in the Fall, 2018 semester had multiple problems and there have been data concerns. This memo is to address two issues around that: current understanding and measures taken to assure this is not repeated; and review for RTP or periodic evaluation in light of data concerns.

> **Due to the IT issues, some courses may appear to have low response rates to PTEs for the Fall 2018 semester. This should not negatively impact any RTP review or periodic evaluation that includes this time period.**

Background of the problems:

1. When PTEs for regular semester courses were opened approximately four weeks before the end of the F18 semester, the standard process called for FAD staff to enable the survey release for courses using software developed at DH. This program would open the survey, send email to each student in the class announcing its availability, and send email to the instructor with a similar announcement. Each week thereafter, notices would go out to the students and the instructors (generated by a single action for each course under review). In the first week, FAD began to get some calls by students who did not receive the email. It took some time to verify the problem, isolate it, and find a fix for it, but near the end of the semester IT had fully understood the specific problem and it is solved. Basically, a BCC for each student email was

generated for verification purposes, and when Gmail (which is the underlying home for student emails) detected fast multiple sends between the same "From" and "To" address, it temporarily blacklisted the sender and subsequent emails from that program would not actually reach student emails for 48 hours. By removing the BCC to a gmail address, this was solved. Near the end of the semester students did get proper notification from the system, but this was rather late and many students may not have responded who otherwise would. This problem affected most courses, and is the biggest source of missing information. Note that when instructors sent reminders through BlackBoard or other ways, these would reach students successfully. Note also that this has nothing to do with the availability of the surveys through the MyCSUDH portal.

2. In the middle of the PTE administration period, FAD also began to get calls from students saying that the link in a notification or direct access through the portal took them to a "blank page" where the list of courses to be evaluated should be. This problem was much smaller in scope than the previous problem, appearing to affect a small minority of students who attempted to access surveys. Screenshots from some students experiencing this have been forwarded to the IT division and they are still investigating. While this problem is still not solved, it has been isolated and understood to be regarding the interface between the PTE specific software and the MyCSUDH software which constructs the PTE menu for each student.

3. In the last week of classes, when FAD staff tried to check PTE data (mainly to assist debugging of the previously noted issues), there appeared to be some courses with "empty" data; that is, a record of student response, but no actual responses. There also appeared to be mis-assigned data. The first of these turned out to be a false problem. The "data cleaning" steps within the software would sometimes not "flush" responses until the close of the survey. Those data were intact by the time the instructors saw results. The latter issue was found to be related to only a handful of courses where the instructor changed after census. This was fixed "by hand" and may need a better protocol to address going forward, but it is not a technical issue.

Impact and resolution:

The PTE administration for most course sections in the F18 semester had fewer reminders to students than it should have, and for many students the first reminder was very late in the semester. A few courses may have had students who were never able to respond to PTEs. **Note that any data that were collected should be as reliable as in any other semester.**

The Faculty Affairs and Development office will insert this memorandum into the PAF of all active Full-time Faculty. College ARMs (with staff) should insert a copy into the PAF of all lecturer faculty.

This serves to note that if courses appear to have low response rates to PTEs in the Fall 2018 semester, it is not to be taken as the fault of faculty, and should not negatively impact any RTP review or periodic evaluation.

For course sections with low response rates that do have data, standard care should be taken for assessment of small data sets.