

Concordia University Course Evaluation Survey: Summary Report

Introduction

In fall 2010, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning engaged the Institutional Planning Office to conduct a survey of student practices and preferences in course evaluation. Soliciting student input made sense as a way to inform the discussion and decision-making process around online vs. paper evaluations, in-class vs. out of class administration, and student participation rates. Three main questions framed the creation of the survey:

1. Do possible means to boost participation rates address the reasons students give for not completing course evaluations?
2. Do students report responding differently when doing course evaluations in class versus outside of class?
3. Do students report treating online evaluations differently than paper?

In the spring of 2011 an email invitation was sent to all current Concordia students inviting them to complete the survey. 6,374 students responded, resulting in a margin of error for the survey of +/- 1.1%, 19 times out of 20.

A visual summary of the results follows. Each question is followed by a table and chart indicating the response frequencies for each question in the survey as well as the question mean where appropriate. When reading the results, note that before calculating the question means and frequencies, each response was weighted—i.e., multiplied by a factor that would allow the responses to represent more accurately the overall university distribution of graduate/undergraduate students, full-time/part-time students, and male/female students. The frequency counts themselves remain un-weighted, but the percentages and means are. The latter cannot be calculated from the frequencies for this reason. Multiple response questions, i.e., those where a student could give several answers, have percentage totals that exceed 100%.

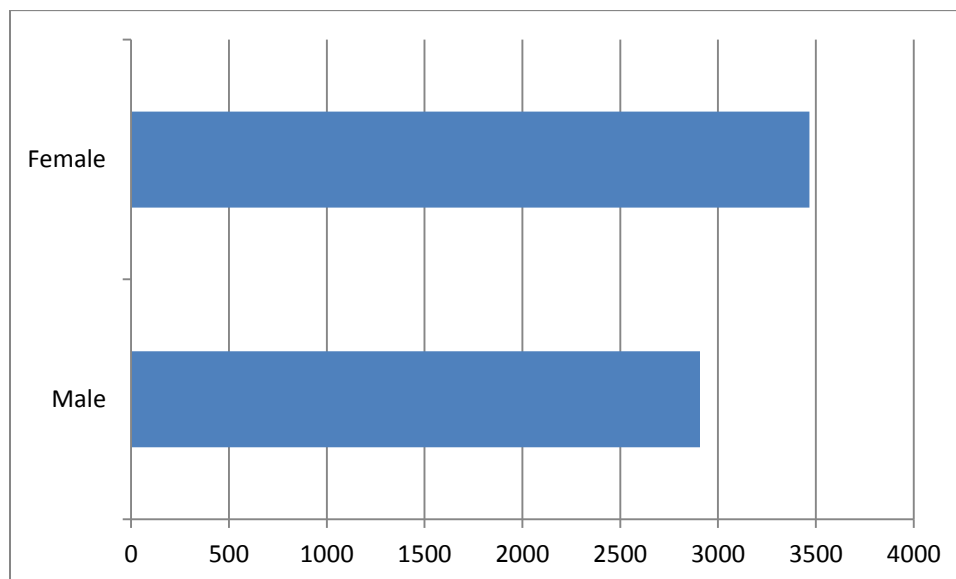
In addition to this summary report, the Institutional Planning Office will release a technical report in the near future, which will include complete descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing, as well as a description of the weighting technique.¹ Please direct questions about the survey to Bradley Tucker, Director, Institutional Planning Office.

¹ The technique is used by the analysts at the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, the home of the

Frequencies and Means

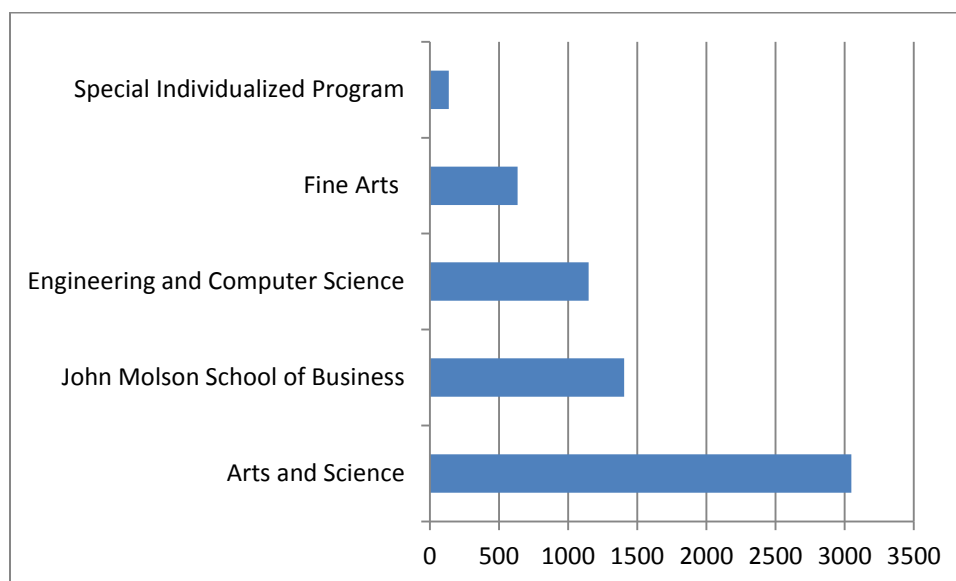
PLEASE TELL US YOUR GENDER.

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
Female	49.4%	3467
Male	50.6%	2907
Total	100%	6374



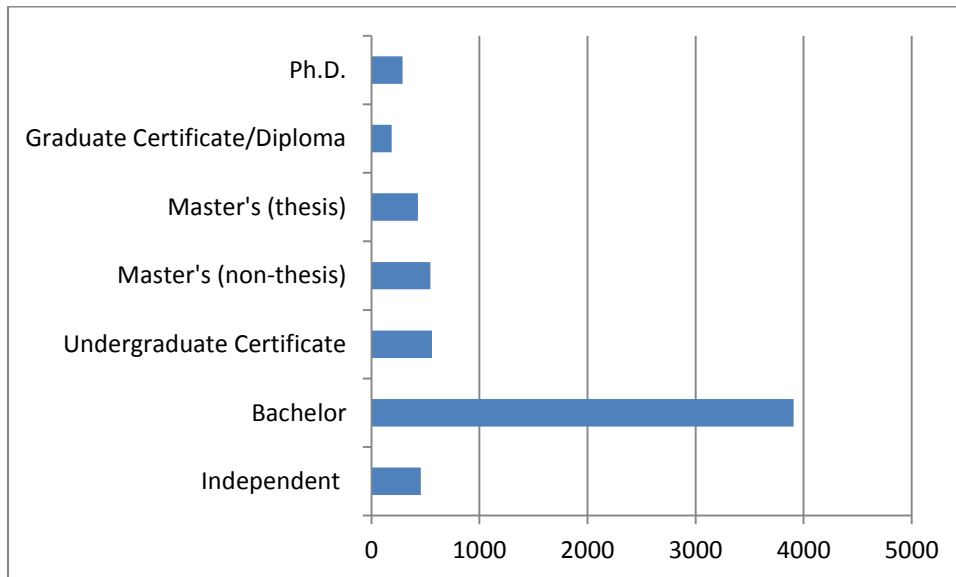
IN WHICH FACULTY ARE YOU STUDYING?

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count	Number of Students
Special Individualized Program	0.4%	137	N/A
Fine Arts	10.2%	635	2710
Engineering and Computer Science	17.5%	1149	5006
John Molson School of Business	23.2%	1405	6802
Arts and Science	47.7%	1149	14152
Total	100%	6374	28670



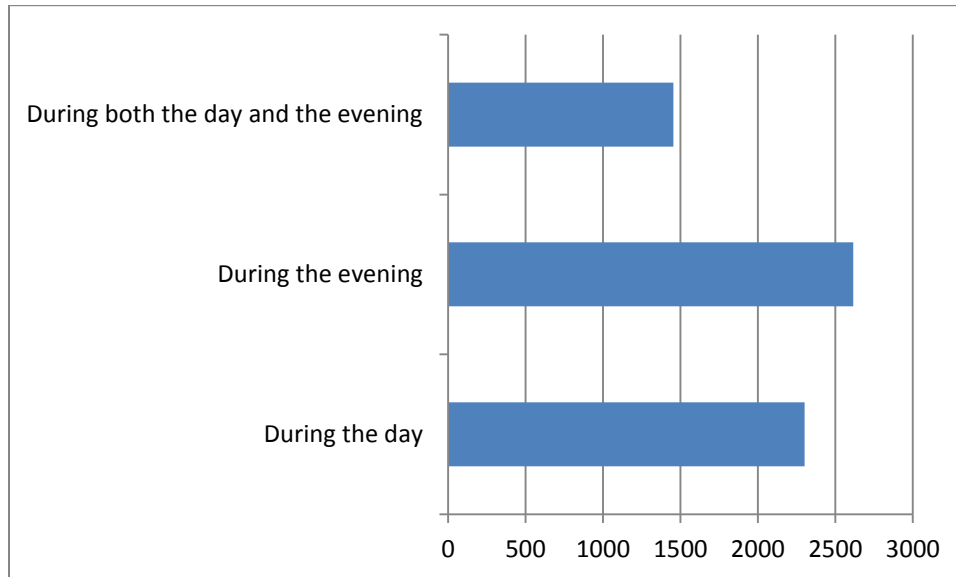
WHAT TYPE OF DEGREE OR OTHER STUDIES ARE YOU PURSUING?

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count	Number of Students
Ph.D.	4.5%	288	1489
Graduate Certificate/Diploma	2.9%	187	822
Master's (thesis)	6.7%	429	1203
Master's (non-thesis)	8.6%	545	2493
Undergraduate Certificate	8.8%	560	593
Bachelor	61.3%	3909	27113
Independent	7.2%	456	3338
Total	100%	6374	37051



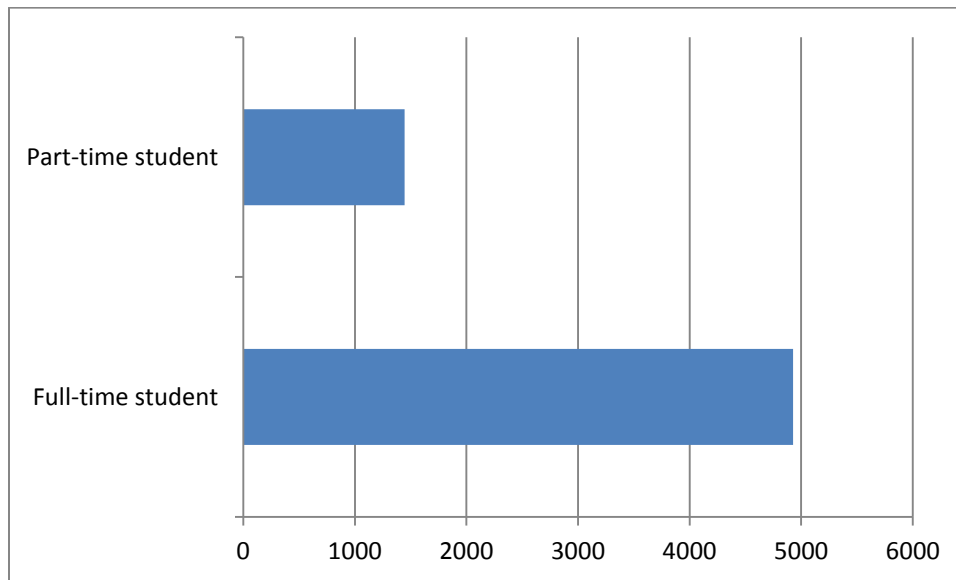
DO YOU ATTEND CLASSES PRIMARILY...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
During both the day and the evening?	23.8%	1455
During the evening?	40.1%	2616
During the day?	36.1%	2303
Total	100%	6374



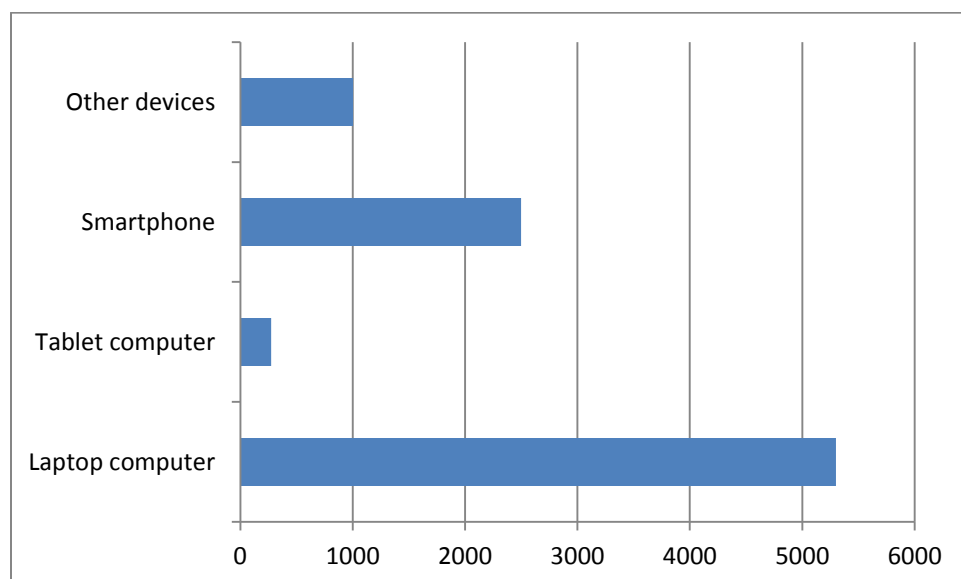
HAVE YOU BEEN PRIMARILY...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count	Number of Students
A part-time student?	29.4%	1445	10162
A full-time student?	70.6%	4929	19711
Total	100%	6374	29873



I HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING INTERNET-CAPABLE DEVICES THAT I COULD BRING WITH ME TO CLASS TO COMPLETE A COURSE EVALUATION:

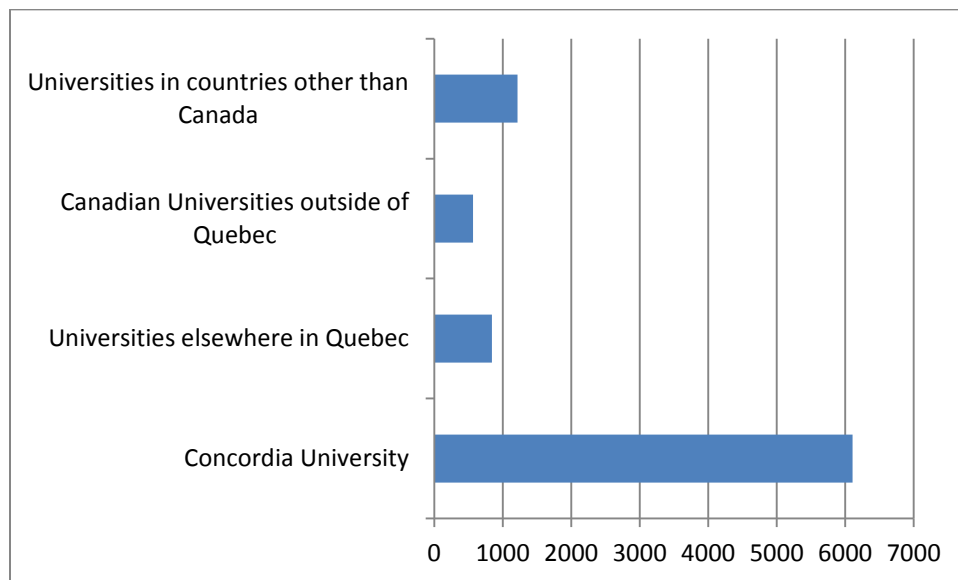
Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
Other internet capable devices	17.4%	1004
Smartphone	45.0%	2497
Tablet computer	5.2%	274
Laptop computer	91.0%	5300
Total	158.6% ²	9075



² Please note that the percentages do not sum to 100% because this is a multiple response question.

MY UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE INCLUDES STUDY AT:

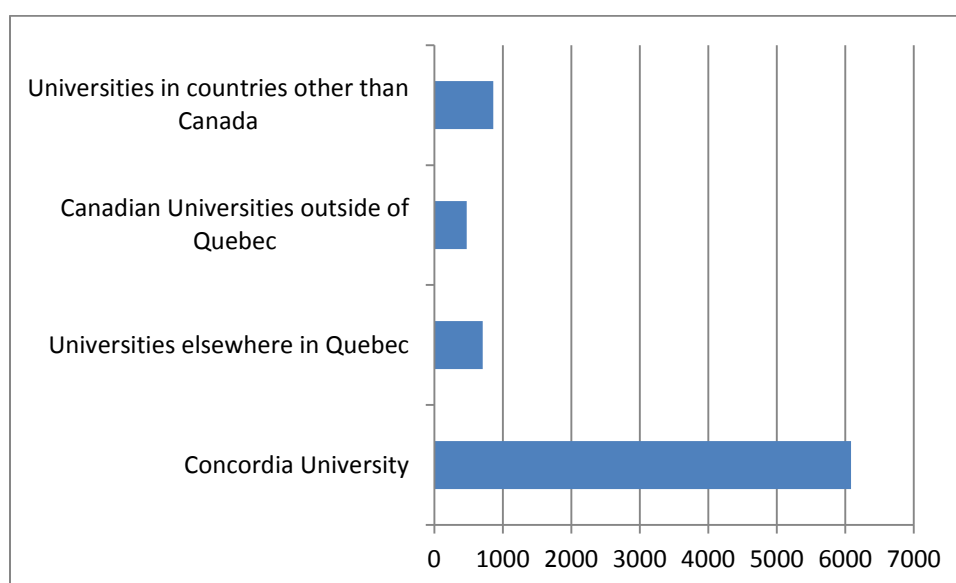
Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
Universities in countries other than Canada	16.9%	1215
Canadian Universities outside of Quebec	8.4%	568
Universities elsewhere in Quebec	12.5%	842
Concordia University	96.4%	6109
Total	134.2% ³	8734



³ Please note that the percentages do not sum to 100% because this is a multiple response question.

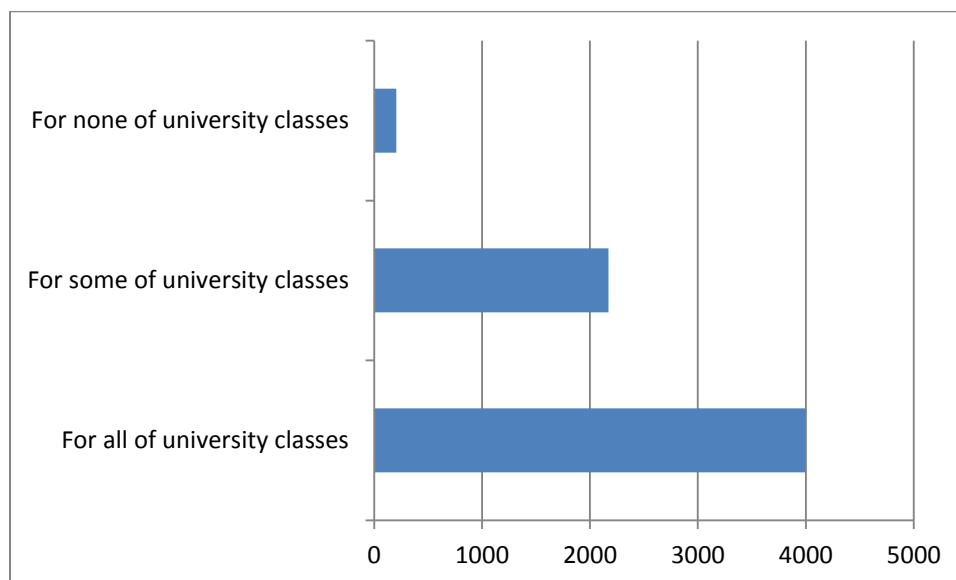
DURING MY UNIVERSITY-LEVEL EXPERIENCE, I HAVE COMPLETED ACADEMIC COURSE EVALUATIONS AT:

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
Universities in countries other than Canada	11.8%	861
Canadian Universities outside of Quebec	7.0%	473
Universities elsewhere in Quebec	10.5%	710
Concordia University	96.3%	6083
Total	125.6%	8127



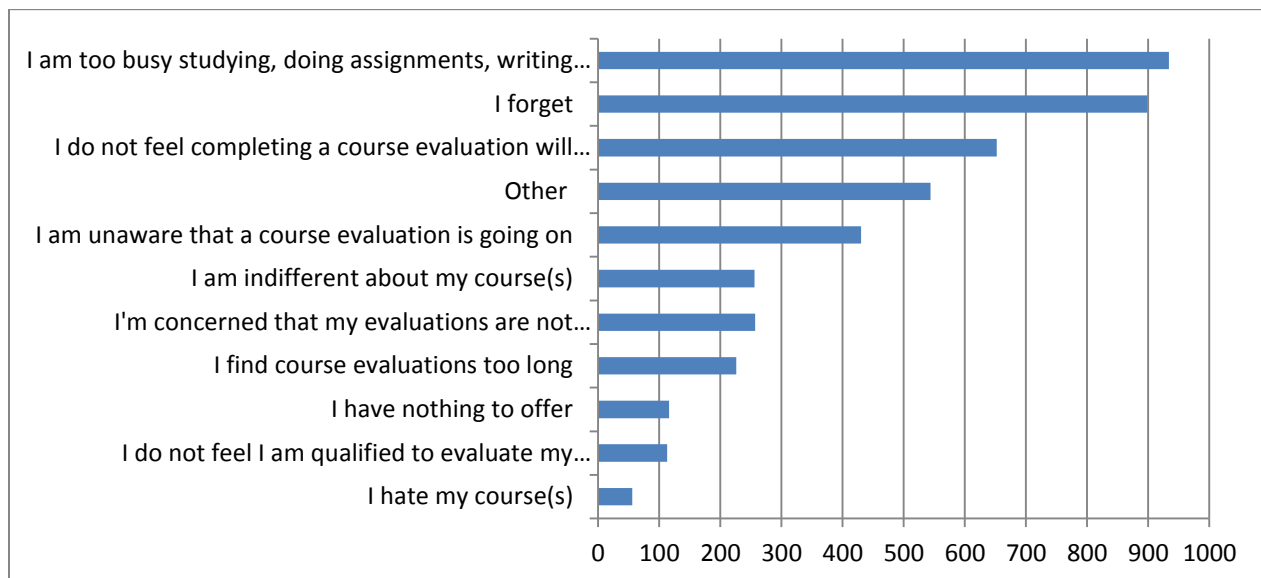
AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, I HAVE COMPLETED COURSE EVALUATIONS...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
For none of my university classes	2.8%	204
For some of my university classes	34.7%	2172
For all of my university classes	62.5%	3998
Total	100%	6374



PLEASE INDICATE WHY YOU DO NOT COMPLETE COURSE EVALUATIONS FOR ALL OF YOUR COURSES.

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
I do not feel I am qualified to evaluate my instructor	4.5%	113
I do not feel completing a course evaluation will make any difference	28.5%	652
I am too busy studying, doing assignments, writing exams, etc...	40.1%	934
I have nothing to offer	4.9%	116
I am indifferent about my course(s)	11.9%	256
I hate my course(s)	2.2%	56
I am unaware that a course evaluation is going on	18.1%	430
I forget	38.6%	899
I find course evaluations too long	10.2%	226
I'm concerned that my evaluations are not anonymous	11.0%	257
Other	22.1%	544
Total	192.2% ⁴	4483



⁴ Please note that the percentages do not sum to 100% because this is a multiple response question.

In this question, 22.1% of the respondents had “other” reasons for not completing course evaluations for all of their courses. In the open-ended response section following this question, most of these students indicate that they were not provided with a course evaluation in the first place. A second recurring theme is missing class on the day the evaluation was distributed and the evaluation not being offered subsequently. Third, many of the respondents indicate that they feel their evaluations will make no difference because “bad” professors never change, especially if they are tenured, and that they do not believe that the university does anything in response to negative feedback. Finally, many respondents reiterate that being “busy” prevents them from completing their course evaluations.

HOW LIKELY WOULD EACH OF THE FOLLOWING INCENTIVES BE TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO COMPLETE A COURSE EVALUATION?

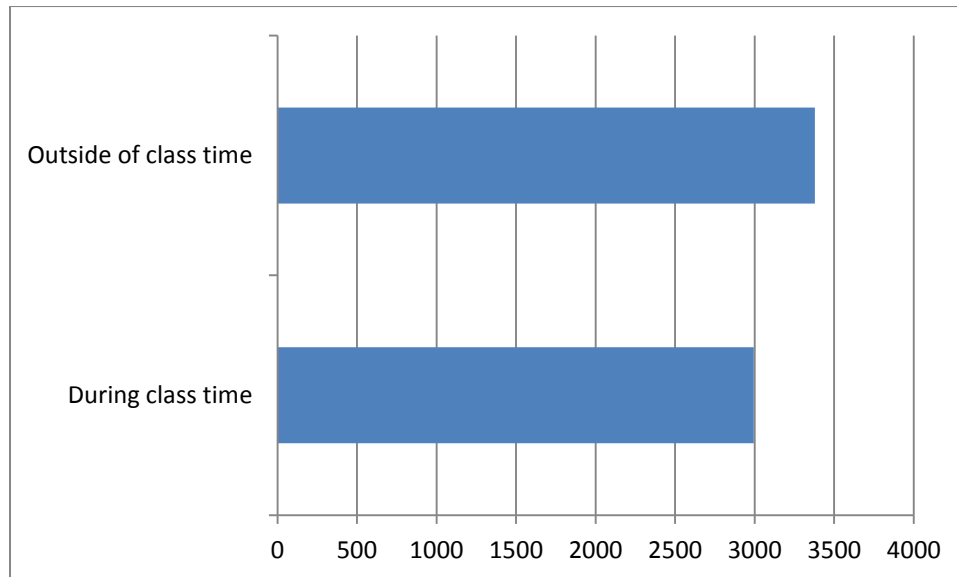
(Please note that some students did not have access to this question based on their answers to a previous question on whether or not they completed course evaluations. For this reason, the total number of responses does not sum to 6,374.)
(For the mean calculation, please note the following calibration: Very likely=4, Somewhat Likely=3, Somewhat Unlikely=2, Very Unlikely=1)

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Mean
I could see evaluation results from my courses.	1069 (45.8%)	833 (35.7%)	241 (10.3%)	190 (8.2%)	3.19
I could have a chance to win a bookstore or computer store gift card.	1134 (49.1%)	686 (29.7%)	259 (11.2%)	232 (10.0%)	3.18
I could see evaluation results for courses I am considering taking.	1531 (65.4%)	566 (24.2%)	138 (5.9%)	106 (4.5%)	3.5
I could receive a small amount of course credit for doing so.	1274 (55.5%)	400 (17.5%)	212 (9.2%)	409 (17.8%)	3.14

This question was followed by an open-ended section asking the respondents about what else might encourage them to complete course evaluations. The majority of the answers mention a desire to see evaluations have an impact on the teaching and the course, that is, changes in response to the feedback from students. These comments indicate that students do not believe that their evaluations are taken into account: “my evaluation actually does not have any effect,” “our evaluations don’t change a thing,” and “poorly evaluated professors and classes remain exactly the same in future years.” Many students also want to see that the “good” professors, i.e., those with positive evaluations, rewarded in return.

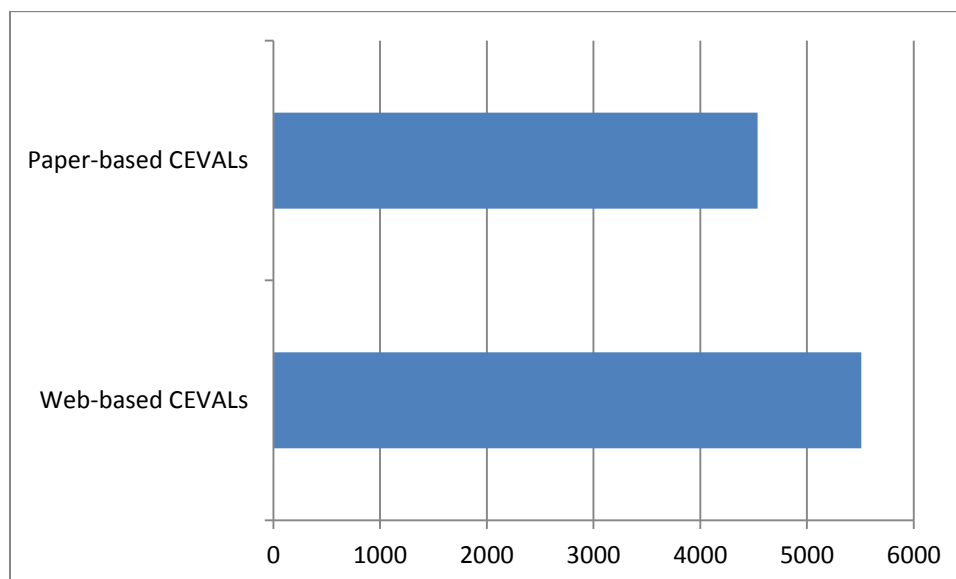
AT CONCORDIA, I PREFER TO COMPLETE COURSE EVALUATIONS...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
During class time	52.9%	3379
Outside of class time	47.1%	2995
Total	100%	6374



AT CONCORDIA, I COMPLETE...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
Paper-based course evaluations	71.2%	4536
Web-based course evaluations	86.4%	5509
Total	157.6% ⁵	10045



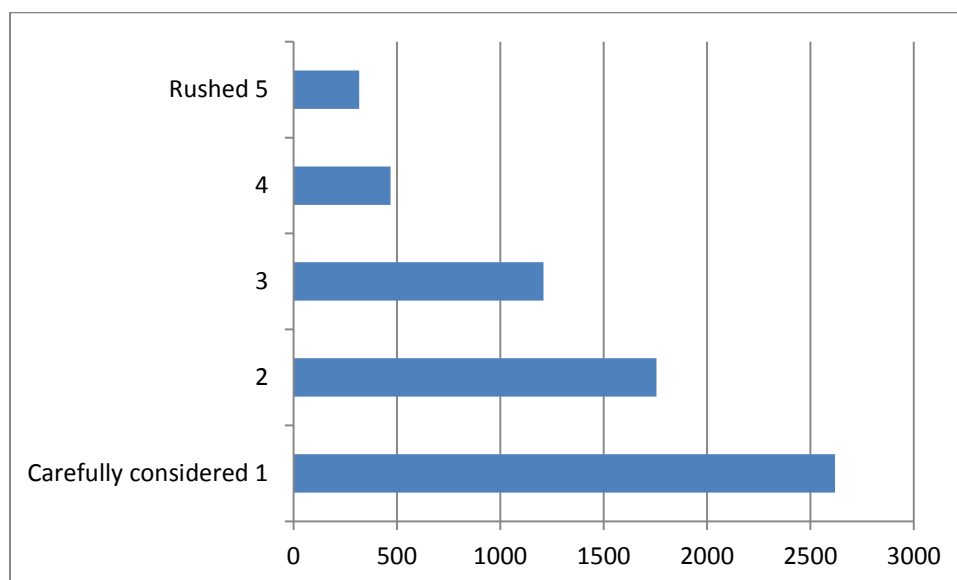
⁵ Please note that the percentages do not sum to 100% because this is a multiple response question.

COMPARING ONLINE TO PAPER FORMATS, WHICH IS BETTER AT...

	(Web) 1	2	3	(No Difference) 4	5	6	(Paper) 7	No answer	Mean
Being easy to complete.	2545 (39.6%)	474 (7.5%)	269 (4.1%)	2294 (36.6%)	144 (2.3%)	159 (2.4%)	486 (7.4%)	3 (0.0%)	2.91
Helping me focus on what I have learned in class.	1334 (20.9%)	370 (5.6%)	263 (4.1%)	3270 (52.0%)	255 (4.0%)	296 (4.6%)	571 (8.5%)	15 (0.3%)	3.61
Allowing me to reflect on the quality of teaching.	1603 (24.9%)	475 (7.3%)	328 (5.3%)	2842 (45.2%)	248 (3.9%)	284 (4.4%)	582 (9.0%)	12 (0.2%)	3.45

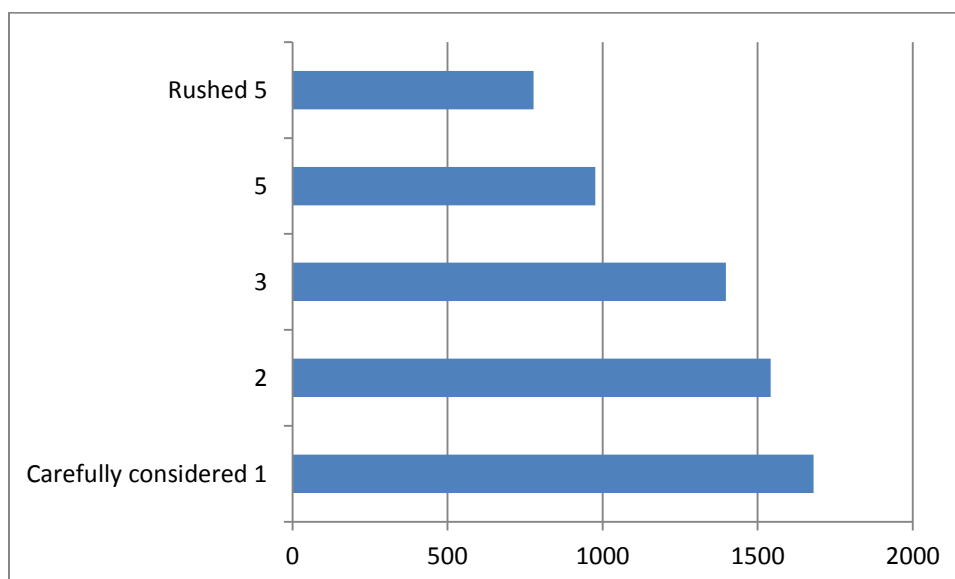
WHEN I AM COMPLETING WEB-BASED COURSE EVALUATIONS, MY COMMENTS ARE...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count	Mean
5 (Rushed)	4.8%	318	
4	7.3%	470	
3	19.3%	1210	
2	27.5%	1756	
1 (Carefully Considered)	41.0%	2620	
Total	100%	6374	2.07



WHEN I AM COMPLETING PAPER-BASED COURSE EVALUATIONS, MY COMMENTS ARE...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count	Mean
5 (Rushed)	12.6%	777	
4	15.4%	977	
3	22.3%	1398	
2	23.8%	1542	
1 (Carefully considered)	25.9%	1680	
Total	100%	6374	2.65



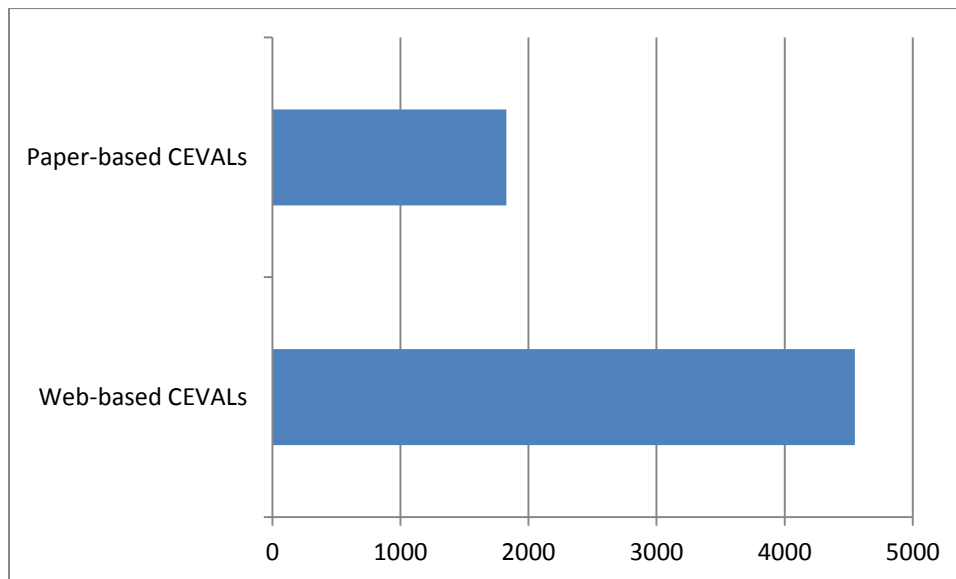
MY COURSE EVALUATION RATINGS ARE INFLUENCED BY...

	(Strongly Agree) 1	2	(Neither Agree Nor Disagree) 3	4	(Strongly Disagree) 5	No Answer	Mean
How much I learned in the course.	3555 (55.0%)	2098 (33.5%)	500 (8.1%)	154 (2.3%)	63 (1.0%)	4 (0.1%)	1.61
How well the professor managed the course.	4626 (72.1%)	1367 (21.8%)	184 (2.9%)	87 (1.4%)	98 (1.5%)	12 (0.2%)	1.38
How well I thought the professor taught.	4478 (70.2%)	1347 (21.4%)	316 (4.8%)	87 (1.2%)	101 (1.6%)	45 (0.7%)	1.41
How well the course met my expectations.	2354 (36.5%)	2193 (34.5%)	1352 (21.5%)	302 (4.7%)	127 (2.1%)	46 (0.8%)	2.01
How well I did in the course.	1075 (16.6%)	1679 (26.2%)	2099 (33.4%)	911 (14.2%)	562 (8.9%)	48 (0.8%)	2.72
The quality of the classroom in which the course was taught.	1367 (21.2%)	1789 (28.8%)	1732 (26.9%)	886 (13.7%)	578 (9.1%)	22 (0.3%)	2.61

This question was followed by an open-ended section asking the respondents if there were any other factors influencing their course evaluation ratings. The majority of the responses mentioned that the attitude and character of the professor influence their ratings most. For example, answers like the professor being “nice,” “caring about the subject,” and “patient,” were frequent. Many answers also focus on the course itself, whether it was “well organized and structured,” considered “relevant” to the academic program, and “interesting.”

GIVEN THE CHOICE BETWEEN PAPER-BASED AND WEB-BASED COURSE EVALUATIONS, I PREFER TO COMPLETE...

Response	Weighted Percentage	Raw Count
Paper-based course evaluations	28.7%	1827
Web-based course evaluations	71.3%	4547
Total	100%	6374



Respondents preferring to complete web-based course evaluations identify their main reason as the “time” they have to complete the evaluation: they think web-based evaluations give them “more time” and are “more convenient.” Another main reason that the respondents prefer web-based evaluation is the “waste of paper” that occurs when the evaluations are paper-based.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT...

	(Strongly Agree) 1	2	(Neither Agree Nor Disagree) 3	4	(Strongly Disagree) 5	No answer	Mean
Professors act to improve their courses based on student feedback.	1170 (17.5%)	2086 (33.0%)	1691 (26.6%)	892 (14.3%)	523 (8.4%)	12 (0.2%)	2.63
The university makes use of student feedback from course evaluations in evaluating professor performance.	1187 (18.0%)	1984 (31.1%)	1748 (27.1%)	839 (13.8%)	603 (9.8%)	13 (0.2%)	2.66

I WOULD FIND IT USEFUL TO...

	(Strongly Agree) 1	2	(Neither Agree Nor Disagree) 3	4	(Strongly Disagree) 5	No answer	Mean
View the class results from the course evaluations I complete.	2969 (46.5%)	1752 (28.0%)	1105 (17.1%)	288 (4.4%)	244 (3.7%)	16 (0.2%)	1.91
Have course evaluation results available when I am planning which courses to take in the future.	4158 (65.3%)	1325 (20.7%)	580 (9.2%)	143 (2.2%)	152 (2.3%)	16 (0.2%)	1.55

I USE ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION WEB SITES LIKE “RATE MY PROFESSOR” TO ...

	(Never) 1	2	(From time to time) 3	4	(All the time) 5	N/A	No answer	Mean
Evaluate my professor(s).	2121 (33.0%)	600 (9.5%)	1283 (20.3%)	619 (9.6%)	1066 (17.3%)	591 (8.8%)	94 (1.5%)	2.65
Choose classed taught by particular professors.	1346 (20.8%)	590 (9.2%)	1387 (21.8%)	1042 (16.6%)	1447 (23.5%)	542 (7.9%)	20 (0.3%)	3.14

PRIVACY AND ANONYMITY

	(Strongly Agree) 1	2	(Neither Agree Nor Disagree) 3	4	(Strongly Disagree) 5	No answer	Mean
I am confident that my course evaluation responses are kept anonymous.	2870 (44.8%)	1705 (26.7%)	1194 (18.7%)	423 (6.9%)	172 (2.7%)	10 (0.2%)	1.91
I would be comfortable with my professor knowing that I complete course evaluations as long as my responses are anonymous.	3125 (49.1%)	1437 (22.9%)	971 (15.0%)	343 (5.3%)	481 (7.5%)	17 (0.2%)	1.55

FINAL COMMENTS

The most often recurring final comment is that the students want responses to the feedback they provide through their course evaluations; they want to know that their evaluations are actually being taken into consideration. Many comments express positive thoughts on the course evaluation questionnaires themselves, but the major concern that the respondents have is what happens, or does not happen, after the university receives their feedback.