Syllabus Survey: Spring 2016

Alicia LeValley, Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D., and Barry C. Gribbons, Ph.D.

At the request of the Academic Senate Standards and Practices Committee, the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted a survey to gather data from full-time and part-time faculty members. The purpose of this survey was to assess faculty opinions of the most essential elements of an effective syllabus. The survey also addresses the Actionable Improvement Plan in the 2014 Accreditation Self-Study. This plan seeks to ensure that every student receives clear and accurate information with specific learning outcomes by implementing a system for reviewing and storing accurate syllabi for every class.

Surveys were distributed to faculty emails through Survey Monkey the week of April 25, 2016. One reminder email was sent on May 4, 2016. Of the 884 faculty members who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 151 faculty members, resulting in a response rate of **17 percent**. <u>**Introduction**</u>

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of respondents indicated that the following should be "required" in the introduction of the syllabus: official course title, course prefix and number, term, schedule and location, college name, section number and course description.

Table 1. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Introduction

	Required	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Unnecessary
Official course title (n=152)	92%	5%	3%	0%	0%
Course prefix and number (n=152)	84%	10%	3%	3%	1%
Term (n=152)	80%	11%	4%	4%	1%
Schedule and location (n=151)	74%	11%	7%	7%	1%
College name (n=152)	70%	14%	10%	5%	1%
Section number(s) (n=152)	69%	13%	9%	7%	3%
Course description (n=152)	69%	13%	9%	6%	3%
Units for course (n=151)	47%	16%	13%	16%	9%
Prerequisites (n=152)	38%	26%	11%	15%	10%
Add/Drop deadlines (n=149)	29%	30%	18%	20%	3%

Figure 1. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Introduction
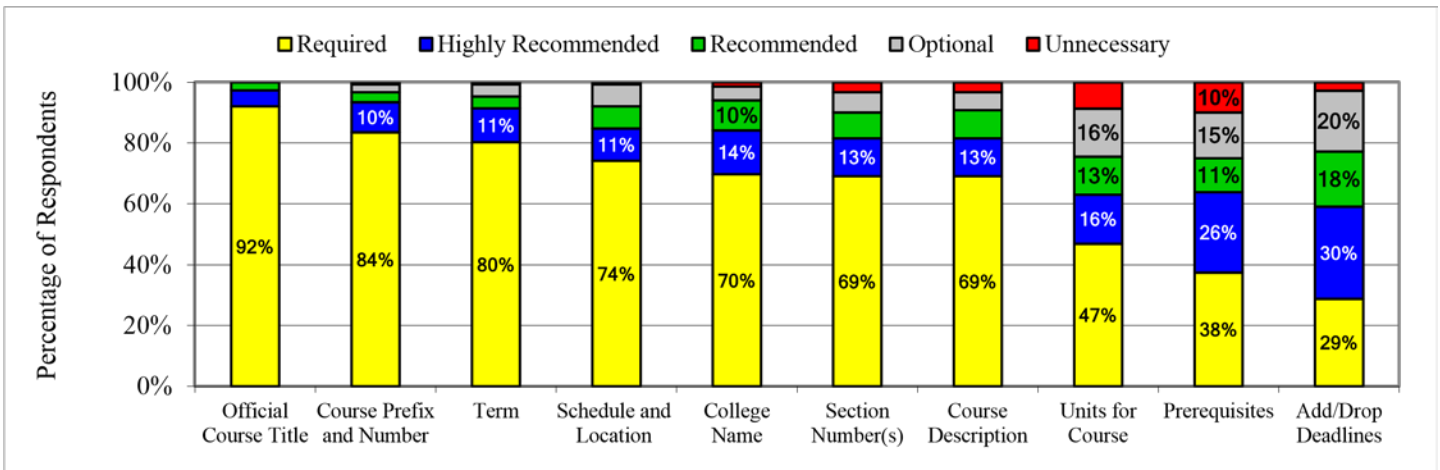
Instructor Information

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of respondents indicated that the following should be "required" in the Instructor Information section of the syllabus: instructor name, office hours and location, and contact information. **Table 2. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Instructor Information**

|					
Instructor name (n=152)	90%	7%	1%	1%	1%
Office hours and location (n=152)	89%	7%	3%	1%	0%
Contact information (n=152)	79%	13%	5%	3%	0%
Teaching philosophy (n=151)	3%	10%	16%	49%	22%
Biography (n=152)	1%	9%	13%	47%	31%

Figure 2. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Instructor Information
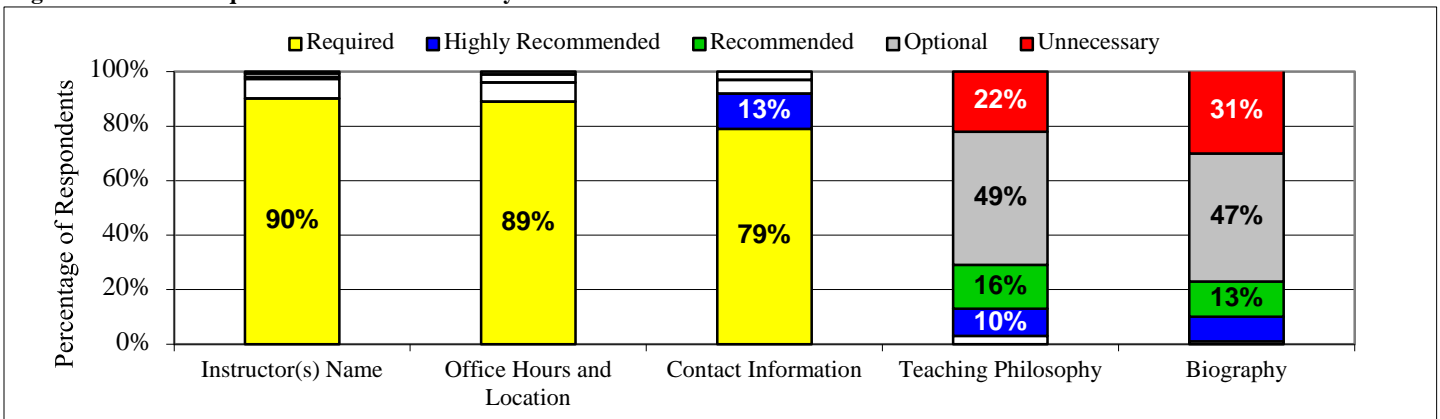
Student Learning Information

As indicated in Table 3, the majority of respondents indicated that the required materials and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) should be "required" in the Student Learning Information section of the syllabus.

Table 3. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Student Learning Information

Required materials (n=151)	83%	7%	7%	3%	0%
Student Learning Outcomes (n=150)	72%	15%	5%	5%	3%
Course objectives (n=150)	54%	19%	14%	11%	1%
Course calendar (n=151)	53%	24%	11%	9%	3%
Content (n=150)	44%	25%	16%	13%	2%
Methods of instruction (n=151)	23%	23%	21%	26%	7%

Figure 3. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Student Learning Information
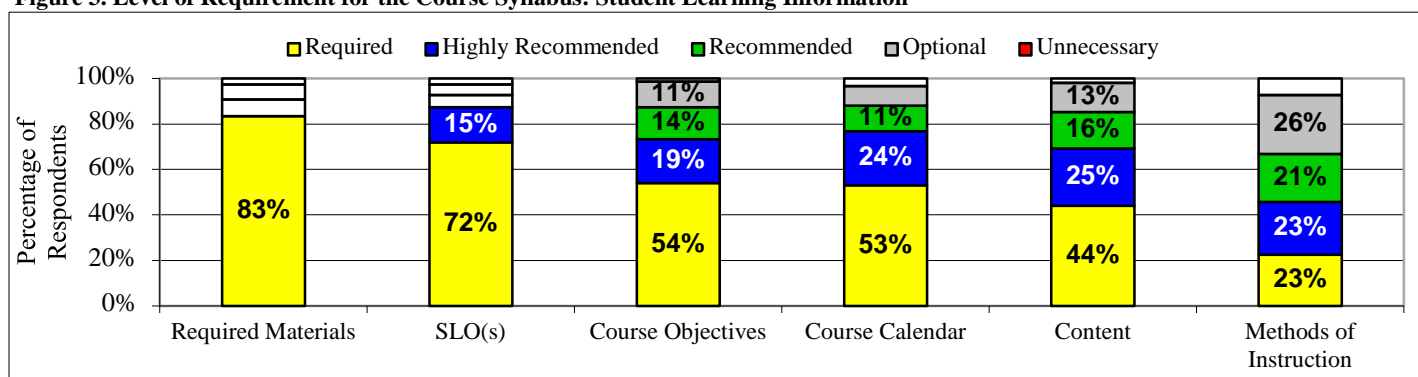

Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations

As indicated in Table 4, the majority of respondents indicated that the grade scale used to determine the student's final grade should be "required" in the Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations section of the syllabus. **Table 4. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Assignments, Assessments and Evaluations**

	Required	Highly Recommended	Recommended	Optional	Unnecessary
Grade scale to determine final grade (n=149)	70%	22%	3%	4%	0%
Exams (n=149)	64%	21%	9%	5%	1%
Key graded assignments, projects, and exams with weighted total toward final grade (n=149)	58%	29%	8%	4%	1%
Late policy (n=148)	57%	28%	9%	5%	1%
Departmental grading policy (n=150)	49%	19%	13%	12%	6%
Submission information (n=148)	37%	33%	11%	14%	4%
Revision policy (n=149)	36%	28%	17%	15%	4%

Figure 4. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations
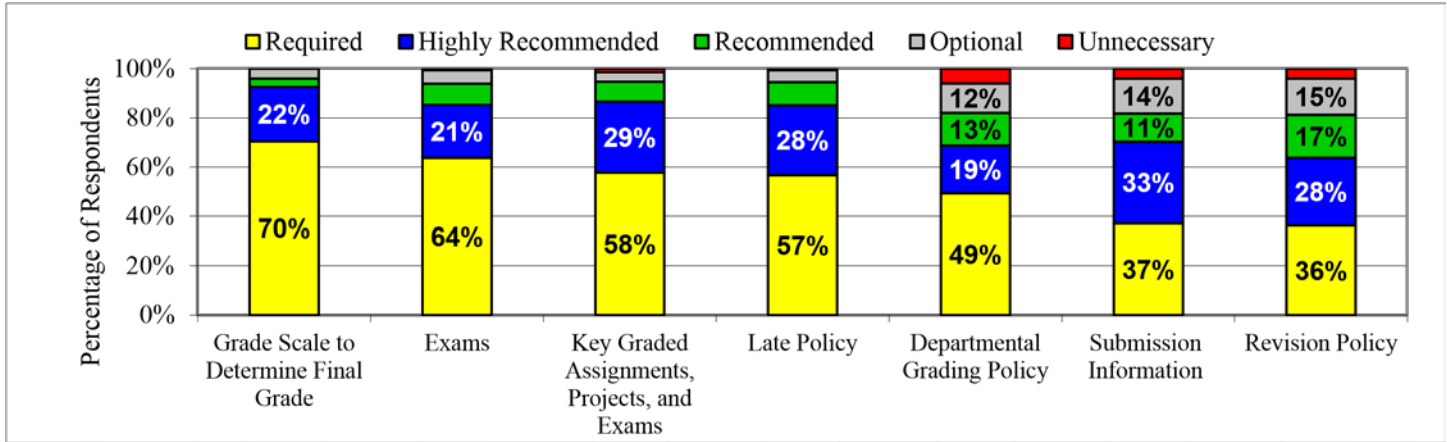
Course Policies

As indicated in Table 5, about half of the respondents indicated that academic integrity and the absence/tardy policy should be "required" in the Course Policies section of the syllabus.

Table 5. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Course Policies

Academic integrity (n=149)	56%	29%	9%	5%	1%
Absence/tardy policy (n=149)	56%	30%	9%	4%	1%
Notice that the course schedule and/or assignments may be changed at the instructor's discretion (n=149)	54%	34%	7%	3%	1%
Classroom courtesy, cell phones (n=149)	36%	43%	15%	6%	0%
Emergency procedures (n=149)	17%	28%	26%	22%	7%
Management of stress and mental health (n=149)	13%	31%	23%	26%	7%

Figure 5. Level of Requirement for the Course Syllabus: Course Policies
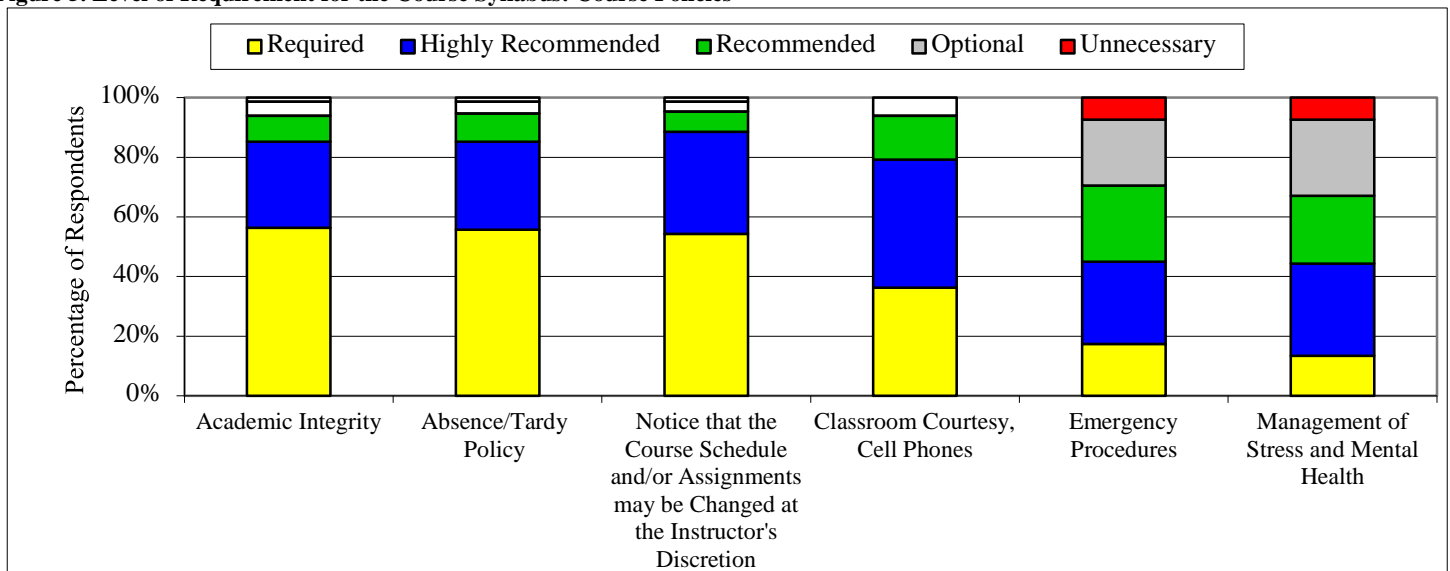
Addendum of Services

Respondents were asked to indicate what they think the level of requirement should be for the Addendum of Services section of the syllabus, which includes a list of student services such as The Learning Center, Library, Student Health Center, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSP&S), and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). Eight percent indicated that the Addendum of Services should be "required", while 33 percent indicated it should be "highly recommended", 24 percent indicated it should be "recommended", 24 indicated it should be "optional", and 9 percent indicated the Addendum of Services is "unnecessary".

Summary

In summary, 70% or more of the respondents indicated that the following should be "required" in the course syllabus:

- Introduction o Official course title
  - o Course prefix and number o Term
  - o Schedule and location o College name
- Instructor Information o Instructor name o Office hours and location o Contact information
- Student Learning Information o Required materials
  - o Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)
- Assignments, Assessments, and Evaluations o Grade scale to determine the final grade

Recommendations

Upon review of the results, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Consider respondents' assessments of the level of requirement for the content in each of the areas of the syllabi.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office located in BONH-221, or call Daylene Meuschke, Dean of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.