

Online Surveys Improve Data Analysis for University of Iowa

Graphical Reports Provide Results within Hours, Instead of Weeks



Inside

University of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa



Product:

What•Do•You•Think® Course Evaluation and Survey System

Why What•Do•You•Think?

“What•Do•You•Think? surveys and reporting features allow us to archive data and see trends over several years, so we can help faculty see where they’re doing well and where they need guidance. We couldn’t do this kind of analysis with our old system.” – Annette Beck, Director, Enterprise Instructional Technology and Evaluation & Exam Service, Office of Teaching, Learning & Technology

The Savings

Time, money and paper. Using What•Do•You•Think? customizable forms, the University of Iowa Athletics Department can easily change questions each time it issues a new survey. Surveys no longer have to be manually revised and printed, which saves hours of administrative time and thousands of sheets of paper every year. Electronic submission and automated data processing are also major time savers: What•Do•You•Think? provides data analysis within hours—a process that used to take UI several weeks.

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Business Profile

Founded in 1847, the University of Iowa was the first public university in Iowa and in 2015 was among U.S. News & World Report’s top 30 public institutions in the country. With just over 31,000 students, the University of Iowa is one of the nation’s top public research universities, a member of the Big Ten conference since 1899, and an Association of American Universities member since 1909.

The University of Iowa is world renowned for its balanced commitment to the arts, sciences,

and humanities. The campus is home to one of the nation’s largest academic medical centers, the pioneering Iowa Writers’ Workshop, and hundreds of options for affordable, accessible education.

Its long list of “firsts” includes being the first U.S. public university to admit women and men on an equal basis, the first U.S. university to offer writing programs in fiction and poetry (Iowa Writers’ Workshop) and nonfiction (Nonfiction Writing Program), the first public university in the country to grant a law degree to a woman (Mary B. Hickey Wilkinson, 1873) and to an African American (G. Alexander Clark, 1870), and the first state university to officially recognize a gay student organization (1970).

The Challenge

The University of Iowa Athletics Department wanted to update its old paper-based system for conducting semi-annual department-wide surveys. Under the old system, department administrators distributed a 150-question paper survey to approximately 1200 athletes across all athletic programs. Surveys were intended to evaluate student athletes’ overall experience in UI athletics programs and collect data to inform department policy, but hand-processing results was very time consuming and yielded limited data analysis.

The University had recently instituted the What•Do•You•Think? system for general course and instructor evaluations. What•Do•You•Think? replaced the DOS-based evaluation system the school had been using

for years. “There was no archiving or trending data available to us before,” Annette said. “We really wanted to modernize our reporting so we could see trending data and identify over the course of several years where our faculty were doing well and where they needed guidance.” In addition, before the University began using What•Do•You•Think?, their evaluation process was very decentralized. With several colleges implementing incompatible processes, cross-institutional comparisons were impossible. According to Annette, the University wanted “a reporting function that would bring the whole institution together.”

The Solution

Pleased with the data analysis and reporting functions of What•Do•You•Think? for campus-wide course evaluation, UI decided to use the system’s custom surveys tools for the Athletics Department’s semi-annual surveys. The department piloted the What•Do•You•Think? survey system with three programs; then increased the next survey sample to 10 programs and is planning to roll the survey out department-wide next term. Now, instead of distributing paper survey forms to 1200 students, the Athletics Department can have participants complete the survey on their smartphones and tablets. Responses are processed electronically and data reporting is available immediately.

According to UI Associate Athletics Director Fred Mims, “Using CollegeNET to offer an online version of our student-athlete year-end survey provided several benefits. Our student-athletes had the flexibility to access and complete the survey at a time convenient to them. Their anonymity was protected,

giving them the freedom to be as candid as possible. We were able to immediately compile and assess results for timely review.”

The Benefits

- Paperless system reduces waste and expense
- Customizable forms make changing questions easy
- Mobile compatibility adds convenience
- Digital data processing provides immediate results
- Reporting tools enable graphical data analysis
- Data analysis facilitates long-range strategic planning
- Separate survey and course evaluation data provides early, no-risk feedback to faculty

What's Next

Several deans and department heads are currently planning to use What•Do•You•Think? surveys to provide early feedback to new faculty. Using the Surveys feature allows Administration to collect early data and keep that data separate from trending data within the course evaluation portion of What•Do•You•Think?. New faculty thus have an opportunity to improve their teaching performance long before official course evaluation data is collected – and while students still have time to benefit from the improvements.

The University is also considering other areas on campus (such as Residence Life and Academic Advising), where What•Do•You•Think? surveys may ultimately replace paper-based systems.

What to Know More?

To discuss the many ways CollegeNET’s systems can save you time and money, and improve efficiency, contact sales@collegenet.com.

