

UDLAP Raises Response Rates With Blue®

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Julia Edith Barrientos Ortiz, Manager of Planning and Evaluations at UDLAP.

CLIENT:

Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP)

NO. STUDENTS:

~7,000

SOLUTION:

Blue course evaluations

CHALLENGE:

UDLAP required campus-wide automation to increase response rates in addition to reducing the turnaround time for compiling and distributing reports.

BENEFITS

- Increased response rates by 20% over previous system
- Reduced report turnaround time by 80%
- Distributed personalized reports to instructors
- Launched multiple surveys on single system

The Department of Planning and Evaluations at UDLAP has figured out how they can do more in less time.

The University recently implemented Blue®, a course-instructor evaluation and survey solution that automates processes, eliminates the need for paper evaluation forms, and produces enhanced, detailed reports quickly.

With the new software, UDLAP has been able to increase response rates by 20% over their previous system and generate reports in 80% less time. They have also increased the number and level of sophistication of their reports to the University community.

TRACKING AND MEASURING FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

UDLAP runs several surveys throughout the year, including two course-instructor evaluations per semester, an annual student survey on University services, and an annual general survey of the President of the University.

“Five years ago, we implemented a new policy of continuous improvement at the University,” said Julia Edith Barrientos Ortiz, Manager of Planning and Evaluations at UDLAP. “We are constantly measuring ourselves to gauge our progress. The new policy also integrates results from instructor evaluations into the continuous improvement plan.”

To manage their mid-semester instructor evaluations, the Department of Planning used to rely on a native online system. While the University enjoyed the new paperless format, it took a great deal of time to generate reports, and they were limited in the type and number of reports they could produce.

“It used to take two to three weeks to produce reports for the midterm instructor evaluations,” said Barrientos. “We had to send everything to a third-party to obtain the integrated data to create the reports, and we could only get one type of report.”

"The result was a major increase in the operational workload, which prevented us to deliver results in a timely fashion. The amount of work was overwhelming for the staff working in this area."

UDLAP SELECTS BEST-IN-CLASS SOFTWARE FOR SURVEYS

UDLAP surveyed the market for a replacement system, and after a thorough evaluation, selected Blue® in April 2013. They received training on the system that June, and implemented in July. They ran their pilot project that same month.

"We ran a pilot project for the entire university during the summer semester, when we have fewer students," Barrientos said. "eXplorance was helpful in advising us on how to get data into Blue in a way that respected our complex internal policies on data sharing between systems."

INCREASED RESPONSE RATES WITH NEW SYSTEM

The new system helped increase response rates for the University. When they went live in summer 2013 with their pilot project, they saw a 20% increase in response rates over their previous system. For the larger course-instructor evaluation in the fall semester, which issued 30,000 surveys, they achieved an 18% increase in response rates.

"We have never had such a high response rate before," said Barrientos. "We are very pleased with this progress."

The Department of Planning made use of some of the effective tools within Blue to raise response rates.

"We think the reminder emails that are sent to students that haven't yet completed the evaluation forms make an impact," she said. "That students could access the forms from their mobile devices also made a difference."



In general, students gave positive feedback on the new instructor evaluation system.

"We received feedback from students saying that they liked being able to complete the evaluation anywhere, anytime. They don't feel as rushed," she said. "They also reported that they found the new system more user-friendly."

DETAILED REPORTS ASSIST WITH TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

At the end of every evaluation period, the Department of Planning generates a summary report for the academic heads of departments. These reports tabulate results by department and provide an overview of results.

"We are now generating the reports in half a week, instead of the two to three weeks it used to take," said Barrientos.

In addition to being able to generate reports in a fraction of the time, the Department of Planning is creating more of them: they now send a personalized report to every instructor who was evaluated.

"Before, we didn't have the time or resources to be able to create reports for professors," she said. "Now we're creating highly detailed reports that assist with teacher development."

The instructor report is quite visual, showing results with illustrative bar graphs and tables.



A summary at the top of the report shows totals for all questions on the questionnaire, including response rate, average rating for all questions, standard deviation, the lowest score and the highest score. The remainder of the report shows statistics for each question. These show number of responses, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and standard error.

"We have a program for professors' training and development at the university, which now uses these reports to identify areas of need and develop the necessary programs for them," she said. "Professors have congratulated us on the new reports, which are new for them."

SAVING COSTS WITH A SINGLE TOOL

To save costs and take advantage of Blue's powerful reporting capabilities, the Department of Planning is also using Blue® for the general annual survey of the President of the University.

"This is a very complex survey, with over 80 questions, that goes out to the entire university, including faculty, staff, and students," she said. "With Blue, we're now generating reports in one day for this survey, instead of a week and a half."

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SUPPORT

UDLAP is very pleased with the services they have received from eXplorance.

"We are very satisfied with the support from eXplorance," she said. "Everything became much simpler because all of the information is in Spanish, including the documentation, training, technical support and all of the labels on the software."

"Whenever we had an issue to resolve, we receive a response within one hour, maximum. Oftentimes, we get a response immediately after we call."

UDLAP is looking forward to improving their data collection and research capabilities further with the new software, which will provide the metrics integral to the continuous improvement of their environment.

"We are very happy with Blue — it has allowed us to make better use of our time," Barrientos concluded. "We can now focus on strategy, such as project development. We're looking forward to making full use of Blue's capabilities, so we can get the high quality data and research we need for the betterment of the university."

