Student evaluations of faculty are universally hated and distrusted by faculty. Student evaluations are highly regarded by students and administrators. Each of the preceding statements is true because of the other statement. I view student evaluations to be like any survey. In general, the information is valid and can be helpful; however, it is easy to distort the results, so you need to be careful.

The first semester results from IDEA for Physical and Earth Sciences are actually very positive. The departmental average is just under 4.0 (scores run from 1.0 to 5.0 with 5.0 being most positive). Nearly all the faculty have an average score that is above 3.0. I do not think such scores are something to hate and distrust.

Still, in the spirit of fairness, I am willing to compile a list of comments from this Department about IDEA and send them to the Dean. You can email me your thoughts. I will send them on to the Dean without your name being attached. Seriously, the Dean is willing to listen to comments about IDEA and to consider changes. JSU spends about the same total dollars on the student surveys as they spend to support research (with grants). Some information that you might want to consider (from a study conducted at Georgia State University):

- Paper surveys are much more expensive than online surveys,
- Instructor ratings are the same with paper as on-line surveys,
- Better students are equally likely to complete a paper as an online survey,
- Poor students are more likely to fill out a paper survey.

A question that I have, is should a student be required to fill out a survey (i.e., grades are withheld until a survey is completed)? What are your comments and questions?

Lou
Save the Date
College of Arts and Science Reception is scheduled for Thursday, 14 May. You will be receiving more details shortly.

Required Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention Training
http://www.jsu.edu/hr/sexualharassment.html
This annual training must be completed by April 30, 2009.

Department News

ACS Sponsored Speaker
Autumn Cole, Forensic Scientist for the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, will give a talk on Chemistry Applications in Forensic Sciences on Thursday, May 16th at 6:15 pm in room 234. Refreshments will be served. All faculty and staff are invited.

IDEA (Individual Development and Educational Assessment)
Encourage your students to evaluate their courses and instructors by going to evaluation system—please share the URL for your course evaluation. Beginning April 8, students will receive e-mails from IDEA for each of their courses. Each student is asked to take a few minutes to click on each link, enter the first part of his or her JSU e-mail address (the part before the @) and complete each evaluation form. To encourage participation, all respondents will be entered in a drawing to receive one of these great incentives: a JSU jump drive, a $100 gift card to the JSU Bookstore, or an iPod Shuffle.

Valene Singleton, Instructional Media Specialist
As most of you know, Valene takes care of the computers (hardware and software) for the College of Arts and Sciences. She will assume the responsibility of the PES computer lab. If you need to use the computers for your class and you need them configured in a special way, please let Valene know. I want to also thank Miriam Hill for her efforts in maintaining the lab, including the recent computer upgrade.

Faculty Annual Reports (FAR) due on Friday, 8 May
The report forms can be downloaded from the College of Arts and Sciences web page: http://www.jsu.edu/depart/cas/collegepolicy.html
These should be completed and turned in to the Head of Department by 8 May. Meetings with the Head will be scheduled for 18 - 29 May.
Over 100 lbs. of Glass
Over 100 lbs. of broken glassware from the chemistry laboratories was collected and disposed of (the photo shows the broken glassware safely packaged for disposal). This is only one year's accumulation of broken glass. Of course, all these beakers, flasks, pipettes, graduated cylinders and other expensive glassware will need to be replaced. It is amazing that the library is allowed to charge you for returning a book a day late, and will charge you to replace a book that you destroyed, but we are not allowed to charge a fee for the breakage of glassware. I am still waiting to have this explained to me.

Environmental, Geology and Geography Unit Meeting
On Friday 10 April at 3:00. Mark your calendars.

Publications and Presentations

Allison Newton is a participant in the Geography workshop: Teaching with the Stars at the 2009 GeoSummit on 27-30 May at Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas.

Al Nichols and David Steffy are co-authors on a paper "The effects of chronic mercuric chloride ingestion in female Sprague Dawley rats on fertility and reproduction" that has been accepted for publication in Food and Chemical Toxicology.

Alabama Academy of Science Annual Meeting
5 of our chemistry majors attended the Alabama Academy of Science at the University of West Alabama.

Livia Cara, Chris Hornbuckle and Al Nichols presented Poster "Calorimeter investigation on various food restaurants".
Kristen Shirey and Nagarajan Vasumathi presented "The effects of temperature on the specific rotation of Isoborneol and (S)-(−)-endo borneol at a specific concentration – Part II"

David Steffy and Al Nichols presented Poster "Uptake of Mercury by the Earthworms with a Subacute Exposure"

Degenerate States

**Speeding Norman**
A traffic cop stops Norman for speeding and asks for his license. Norman rolls his eyes and replies impatiently, "I wish you guys would get your act together. You take my license one day and then expect me to show it to you the next!"

**Norman Needs Repairs**
Norman pushes his BMW into a service station, saying to the mechanic "It died." After a few minutes the mechanic has it idling smoothly. Norman asks "So what's the story?" The mechanic replies, "Just crap in the fuel injectors." To which Norman enquires, "How often should I do that?"

**Norma’s Knitting**
A traffic officer pulls alongside a speeding car on the highway. Glancing across, he is astounded to see Norma behind the wheel knitting! Realizing that she is oblivious to his flashing lights and siren, the office turns on his bullhorn and orders, "PULL OVER!"
"NO!" yells back Norma, "IT’S A SCARF!"

Contact Details
If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursday at; tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.