ACADEMIC SENATE
CSU BAKERSFIELD

Accelerating the Transition to Fully Online SOCIs (Amendment to RES 252620)

RES 262702

FAC

RESOLVED: That Resolution 252620 be amended in response to Academic Senate feedback to establish a one-academic-year transition from paper-based SOCIs to fully online SOCIs, with fully online SOCIs beginning in the 2027–2028 academic year.

RATIONALE: This resolution is in response to Referral 2026-2027 02.

Resolution 252620 established a transition from paper-based to fully online SOCIs. In response to Academic Senate feedback, this resolution accelerates that transition so that SOCIs will be fully online beginning in the 2027–2028 academic year. Continuing paper administration for an additional year would create avoidable printing and administrative costs, while existing systems and institutional experience demonstrate that fully online administration is feasible.

The one-academic-year transition provides sufficient time for academic units to prepare and adopt practices that support student participation. Units prepared to implement fully online SOCIs sooner are encouraged to do so.

For face-to-face courses, instructors will continue to provide at least 15 minutes of scheduled class time during the designated SOCI completion period. Dedicated class time remains an important strategy for supporting participation and maintaining completion rates in the online format.

Attachment: RES 252620 Transitioning to Online SOCIs – Handbook Change

Distribution List:

President
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs
VP for Student Affairs and Strategic Enrollment Management
AVP for Faculty Affairs
AVP Academic Affairs and Dean of Academic Programs
AVP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
AVP for Information Technology Services and Chief Information Officer
Acting Executive Director of Antelope Valley

College Deans
Dean of Extended Education and Global Outreach
Dean of Libraries
Associate Deans
Department Chairs
General Faculty
Associated Students, Inc.

Approved by the Academic Senate: September 24, 2026
Sent to the President: October 5, 2026
President Approved: October 23, 2026

ACADEMIC SENATE
CSU BAKERSFIELD

Transitioning to Online SOCIs – Handbook Change

RES 252620

FAC

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate approves revisions to the University Handbook regarding the administration of student opinions of curriculum and instruction (SOCIs). Deletions are in ~~strikethrough~~, and additions are in **bold and underlined.**

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate recommends transitioning to online SOCIs.

RESOLVED: The transition from paper-based SOCIs to fully online SOCIs shall occur over a two-academic-year implementation period, with fully online SOCIs anticipated beginning in the 2029-2030 academic year.

RESOLVED: During the transition, the Academic Senate, in consultation with Academic Affairs, shall explore, implement, and assess strategies to increase response rates to online SOCIs.

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate shall consider convening an ad-hoc task force, with majority faculty representation, for the purposes of improving the quantity and quality of SOCI responses.

RESOLVED: The University, through the AVP for Faculty Affairs, shall provide faculty with clear guidance and sample language for promoting student participation in SOCIs, including recommended in-class statements, written announcements, and reminders aligned with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

RESOLVED: Students shall receive standardized instructions explaining the purpose of SOCIs, how responses are intended to be used in improving teaching and learning, how anonymity is protected, and why participation is important.

RESOLVED: The University shall develop and distribute consistent student-facing messaging to be used across courses to improve understanding of the value and impact of SOCI participation.

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate recommends that during the SOCI completion period, a standardized university-wide announcement shall be posted in the Learning Management System (Canvas) to encourage student participation.

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate recommends that this notification be displayed to students each time they log into Canvas during the SOCI completion period.

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate shall periodically review institutional practices for increasing SOCI response rates and may recommend adjustments to communication strategies, distribution methods, and instructional guidance as needed.

RESOLVED: Response rates for online SOCIs shall be monitored annually during the transition period, and findings shall be shared with the Academic Senate to inform future policy refinement.

RESOLVED: Faculty teaching face-to-face courses are required to provide structured in-class time for completion of online SOCIs during the designated period to support participation and continuity with prior paper-based practices.

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate recommends that Departments and Programs discuss, explore, and consider implementation of strategies to increase SOCI response rates among their students.

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate recommends that Associated Students, Inc. consider strategies for increasing SOCI response rates from their constituents.

305.4.4 Student Role in the Performance Review Process <u>for Instructional Faculty</u>

Student opinion of teaching by faculty is a required component of the performance review process. The Student Opinion on Curriculum and Instruction (SOCI) shall be the primary instrument used to collect student opinions of teaching.

Although this handbook currently identifies the Student Opinion on Curriculum and Instruction (SOCI) as the primary instrument used to collect student opinions of teaching, this tool is to be considered as only one of many measures used to evaluate teaching; SOCIs should not be given more consideration than the other measures of teaching performance outlined in section 305.4.2.6 (Evaluation of Teaching Performance). Further, the trends in student responses should be the focus of the evaluation of SOCIs as a

measure of teaching performance.

The quantitative and qualitative (i.e., open-ended) items included on the instruments to gather student opinions shall be reviewed and open for potential revision every 10 years, or more frequently. More frequent reviews and revisions are at the discretion of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. Any revision process shall include broad consultation from faculty.

~~Except as limited below, f~~ **F**aculty members will administer SOCIs in all sections and place the results of all SOCIs in the RTP (WPAF) File for use by all levels of review.

By default, course sections with fewer than six (6) students shall not administer SOCIs. However, SOCIs may be requested by the faculty member teaching the course. Requests must be submitted to the AVP for Faculty Affairs, who is ultimately responsible for determining whether SOCIs are administered. All courses with six (6) or more students shall have SOCIs administered, except in the following cases:

~~The requirement for collection of SOCIs may be waived in the following cases.~~

~~The requirement for collection of SOCIs may be waived for sections with enrollments of fewer than 6 students or similar situations in which the anonymity of respondents would be compromised and sections in which the primary mode of instruction or the SOCI would not reasonably correlate with instructional methods.~~

A. The requirement for collection of SOCIs may be waived for sections in which a faculty member went on leave and was replaced by another faculty member. This request shall be ~~honored at the discretion of the replacement faculty member.~~ **considered by the AVP for Faculty Affairs.**
    a. ~~The faculty member on leave shall not be subject to student opinions.~~

~~Within these guidelines, department chairs in consultation with their department shall determine which sections are eligible for waiver. Documentation of the department decision to grant a waiver shall be included in each section of the file for which SOCIs are waived.~~

The SOCI shall be anonymous and identified only by course and/or section. The format of the SOCI provides both quantitative information (ratings of course and instructor attributes) and qualitative information (comments about the course and instructor).

Faculty shall be provided course and/or section summaries of quantitative data. Means and standard deviations shall be provided for individual questions ~~as well as the overall SOCI~~.

Quantitative and qualitative data shall be linked in both online and physical SOCIs. SOCI reports shall be clear such that faculty can associate individual-student comments with individual-student quantitative responses. **Faculty shall also receive a SOCI report even when there are no completed student responses. SOCI reports shall be available to faculty teaching in all terms (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). SOCI reports shall be provided to the individual faculty instructors, department chairs, and college deans.**

Some bias in student opinions may be present. Since SOCIs are used in conjunction with other measures to evaluate teaching, the College Dean (or designee) should arrange for training for Unit RTP Committee members to be undertaken before the start of a faculty review. The training should include the following: (1) the purpose of the RTP review process and the responsibilities of Unit Committee members, (2) the identification of possible biases in student responses, and (3) the process to remove biased SOCIs from an evaluation of teaching.

Faculty under review may request that the AVP for Faculty Affairs (or their designee) reviews and removes the SOCI(s) with discriminatory comments and quantitative responses. SOCI(s) that are received within the prior academic calendar year are eligible for consideration for removal. Requests to remove SOCI(s) must be made 21 days prior to the deadline to submit the Working Personnel Action File (WPAF, commonly called the RTP File) for the next review cycle.

The AVP for Faculty Affairs (or their designee) shall consider the merit of such requests based on many factors, including (but not limited to) the human dignity of the faculty member, the student's role in the performance review process, and the added pedagogical value and relevance of the comments. Regardless of the decision of the AVP for Faculty Affairs (or their designee), the faculty member is encouraged to reflect upon feedback and may submit rebuttals to SOCI comments as part of the performance review process. In all cases, the Unit Review Committee, Department Chair (if applicable), College Dean, University Review Committee, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and President (or their designee) are expected to approach the evaluation of faculty and interpretation of SOCIs with care and professionalism. Ultimately, SOCIs are one component of a broad assessment of teaching performance.

305.4.5 SOCI ~~Distribution~~ Completion Period

The SOCI ~~Distribution~~ **Completion** Period shall be designated on the Academic Calendar, not to include the examination period. The timeframe for SOCI ~~distribution~~ **Completion** shall be the same regardless of course modality (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, online).

In the Fall and Spring semesters, SOCIs ~~distributed~~ **completed** online shall be available for 10 **class meeting days** ~~weekdays~~. ~~SOCIs distributed in person shall be distributed during one class meeting in the two-week SOCI Distribution Period; SOCIs shall be distributed between 14 and 21 days prior to the Last Day of Classes.~~ **The start of the SOCI completion period should be between 14 and 21 days prior to the Last Day of Classes.**

In the Summer and Winter sessions, SOCIs ~~distributed~~ **completed** online shall be available for 5 weekdays. ~~SOCIs distributed in person shall be distributed during one class meeting in the penultimate week of classes.~~ SOCIs ~~distributed~~ **completed** online shall be ~~distributed~~ **completed** during the penultimate week of classes.

For face-to-face courses, instructors shall provide a minimum of 15 minutes of scheduled class time for SOCI completion during the designated SOCI completion period. Instructors of face-to-face courses shall leave the classroom during this time in order to promote student privacy and reduce perceived pressure or response bias.

The University shall provide clear guidance and technical support to faculty and students to ensure consistent implementation and accessibility of online SOCIs. The AVP for Faculty Affairs shall ensure that faculty receive directions on how to access online SOCIs via the Learning Management System so that faculty can encourage student participation. Faculty may encourage their students to complete SOCIs. Faculty members shall administer SOCIs in Accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

RATIONALE: Referral 2025–2026 35 highlights the increasing and unsustainable financial and administrative costs associated with the continued use of paper-based Student Opinions of Curriculum and Instruction (SOCIs). Although paper-based SOCIs have served the institution well for many years, feasible alternatives are available in the modern era. Initial examination of other practices across the California State System suggests that several institutions already administer SOCIs exclusively online. Although the exact implementation strategies may vary depending on software used, there is a reasonable expectation of some Canvas integration and/or Canvas announcements for students.

Other CSU campuses, such as Cal Poly Pomona, include FAQ pages for Students, Staff, and Faculty. Some campuses, such as San Marcos, provide several faculty process guides

and student process guides. California State University Bakersfield can learn from other campuses and adopt useful strategies.

Transitioning to online SOCIs represents a fiscally responsible, environmentally sustainable, and operationally efficient alternative. Because online SOCIs are already used for fully online courses and are available as an option in face-to-face modalities, this resolution builds upon existing institutional practices rather than introducing a wholly new system.

At the same time, the Academic Senate recognizes that SOCIs play a meaningful role to allow students to participate in the performance review process, and they must be implemented in ways that preserve data quality, student participation, and faculty confidence in the process. A central concern associated with online SOCIs is the potential for reduced response rates when surveys are completed outside of class. This resolution addresses that concern through a structured, multi-year transition period and a coordinated institutional strategy focused on maintaining participation levels. The requirement that instructors of face-to-face courses provide dedicated in-class time for completion of online SOCIs preserves continuity with established paper-based practices and reinforces norms that support student anonymity, minimize perceived pressure, and encourage participation.

The two-year implementation period allows the University to evaluate and refine practices that support strong response rates before fully eliminating paper-based administration. During this period, the Academic Senate, Academic Affairs, faculty, and campus partners will explore evidence-informed approaches to increasing student engagement with SOCIs, including standardized communication, consistent student instructions, and institution-wide messaging. Annual monitoring of response rates will allow the Academic Senate to assess effectiveness, identify challenges, and recommend adjustments to institutional practices as needed.

This resolution also recognizes that improving student participation is a shared responsibility. Providing faculty with guidance and sample language for encouraging participation, offering students clear explanations of the purpose and impact of SOCIs, and implementing consistent campus-wide messaging are intended to strengthen student understanding of how their feedback contributes to teaching improvement and curriculum development. Encouraging departments, programs, and Associated Students, Inc. to

explore complementary engagement strategies further broadens institutional support for meaningful participation.

Additionally, this resolution formalizes expectations regarding the consistent generation and distribution of SOCI reports across all instructional terms, including cases in which no student responses are submitted. Providing reports in all circumstances ensures continuity in documentation for faculty, supports completion of Working Personnel Action Files (WPAFs) and periodic evaluations, and promotes transparency and consistency in personnel review processes.

The resolution maintains the position that SOCIs are one component of a comprehensive evaluation of teaching and should be interpreted alongside other measures. The emphasis on trends in student feedback, training for review committees, and mechanisms for addressing potential bias is preserved from existing (although recently implemented) policy and supports a balanced and responsible use of SOCI data.

By pairing fiscal responsibility with a phased implementation strategy and ongoing Senate oversight, this resolution seeks to preserve the integrity, usefulness, and fairness of SOCIs while modernizing their administration for the future.

Distribution List:

President
Provost and VP for Academic Affairs
AVP for Faculty Affairs
Academic Senate
College Deans
Dean of the Library
College Associate Deans
General Faculty
Associated Students, Inc.

Approved by the Academic Senate: February 26, 2026
Sent to the President: March 6, 2026
President Approved: March 12, 2026

Transitioning to Online SOCIs – Handbook Change

RES 252620

****CLEAN VERSION – Handbook Changes****

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The quantitative and qualitative (i.e., open-ended) items included on the instruments to gather student opinions shall be reviewed and open for potential revision every 10 years, or more frequently. More frequent reviews and revisions are at the discretion of the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate. Any revision process shall include broad consultation from faculty.

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Quantitative and qualitative data shall be linked in both online and physical SOCIs. SOCI reports shall be clear such that faculty can associate individual-student comments with individual-student quantitative responses. Faculty shall also receive a SOCI report even when there are no completed student responses. SOCI reports shall be available to faculty teaching in all terms (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). SOCI reports shall be provided to the individual faculty instructors, department chairs, and college deans.

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305.4.5 SOCI Completion Period

The SOCI Completion Period shall be designated on the Academic Calendar, not to include the examination period. The timeframe for SOCI Completion shall be the same regardless of course modality (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, online).

In the Fall and Spring semesters, SOCIs completed online shall be available for 10 class meeting days. The start of the SOCI completion period should be between 14 and 21 days prior to the Last Day of Classes.

In the Summer and Winter sessions, SOCIs completed online shall be available for 5 weekdays. SOCIs completed online shall be completed during the penultimate week of classes.

For face-to-face courses, instructors shall provide a minimum of 15 minutes of scheduled class time for SOCI completion during the designated SOCI completion period. Instructors of face-to-face courses shall leave the classroom during this time in order to promote student privacy and reduce perceived pressure or response bias.

The University shall provide clear guidance and technical support to faculty and students to ensure consistent implementation and accessibility of online SOCIs. The AVP for Faculty Affairs shall ensure that faculty receive directions on how to access online SOCIs via the Learning Management System so that faculty can encourage student participation. Faculty may encourage their students to complete SOCIs. Faculty members shall administer SOCIs in Accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.