



New Feedback Program Allows Students to Voice Complaints and Suggestions

By Julie Espinosa - 10 Jan 2006

Students can now voice their complaints and suggestions with a new feedback program put in place by BYU's Student Academic and Advisement Services.

"We want to make these services seamless to the students so what they remember will be activities, student life, their testimony growing and their experiences in classes," said Wayne Childs, director of Systems Assessment and Planning. "Our commitment to the students we serve has caused us to want to keep a listening ear."

SAAS includes peripheral services such as Admissions, Financial Aid, Records and Registration.

The online feedback program is available at feedback.byu.edu. It is provided by Allegiance, a South Jordan-based company founded by Marriott School professor Gary Rhoads, whose CEO, Adam Edmunds, was named BYU's Student Entrepreneur of the Year in 2004.

"It [the feedback system] will give students the opportunity to share their ideas," said Greg Heaps, vice president of sales and marketing at Allegiance. "It allows faculty and administration to maybe have a little closer ear to the feelings of students and then react and respond and make a difference."

SAAS has a one-year renewable contract with Allegiance. Childs said that while he could not disclose how much the contract costs, it is "incredibly economical" compared to other outside services and to what it would cost for BYU itself to create the infrastructure for such a system.

Furthermore, Childs said that students have a guarantee of anonymity and impartiality because their feedback is handled by a third party.

The feedback site is linked to SAAS Web pages with a top right-hand corner link, "Questions and Comments."

Childs said his office has conducted surveys and focus groups in the past, but that this is the first comprehensive means for students to voice their opinion without it being sought out. Financial Aid services has used Allegiance's feedback system for two years.

"Anyone can easily come in and offer feedback," Childs said. "It's a way to bore through the layers of bureaucracy at BYU."

Students who ask a question or who want a response can indicate that on the feedback form. Childs said his office will use the feedback to publish an annual report, which will be seen by the dean of SAAS and President Samuelson. He said Assessment and Planning will run both qualitative and quantitative queries on the feedback responses, and will forward their findings to individual services.

"We will use the feedback not just for assessment, but also for planning, which is important," Childs said. "We don't want these services to be obstacles to what they [students] came here for, an education."