How to Increase Course Evaluation Response Rates

- Discuss course evaluations during class
- Take class time to complete course evaluations
- Set a response rate goal
- Treat course evaluations as an assignment

A few days before the evaluation period begins, have students think about the course evaluations. Encourage them to look at the syllabus, specifically the course objectives, to see what the syllabus stated the course will be about and what actually happened in the class.

Reframe the students' role as more than learning the course content. Reinforce the idea that it is students' responsibility to offer feedback for improving teaching, learning, and course design. Help them understand that course evaluations are important because they allow faculty to serve students' needs better.

Explain how the evaluations would be used to improve the course design and instruction. If possible, share examples of how you acted upon student feedback from previous course evaluations to make your current course(s) better. Students want to believe that their opinions matter.

Encourage all students to participate. Students who like the course or have no issues with the course may not think it is necessary to complete the evaluations.

Stress the anonymity of responses. Some students may be reluctant to give their true opinions if they don't know that their responses are anonymous.

Use verbal reminders to encourage participation. Once the evaluations are set up, students get frequent reminders from the survey software via their Citadel email account, but those reminders will carry more weight if they come from the faculty.

Take class time to complete the evaluation. Walk the students through the procedure of completing the evaluation in class. If they cannot complete the evaluation in class (perhaps there is not enough time or the Wi-Fi is too slow), they can always go back to it and finish it at their convenience.

Build some excitement about the evaluations. Set a high threshold response rate for each one of your classes to meet and facilitate a friendly competition among your courses about the response rates. (e.g., tell your Tuesday class that your Thursday class is leading in the competition).

Give students periodic updates about the response rate. During the evaluation period, let students know what percentage of the class has responded and that your goal is to receive feedback from everyone.

Treat course evaluations as one of the course requirements in the syllabus. Include the dates the evaluation is available and explain its importance. Including the evaluation in the syllabus as a course requirement conveys the message that it is an important part of the course - similar to a homework assignment.