

CSUN ePIF Survey Report

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Prepared by the ePIF Subcommittee of the Personnel Planning and Review Committee:

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Introduction

The ePIF Subcommittee of the Personnel Planning & Review Committee (PP&R) consisted of Kathy Dabbour, Subcommittee Chair; Sheila Grant, Chair of PP&R; Stephen Stepanek, Faculty President; Magnhild Lein, PP&R member, and William Whiting, Faculty Affairs. Based on discussions and actionable items from the previous year, in the fall of 2013, the subcommittee was tasked with exploring the implementation of optional electronic Professional Information Files (ePIFs) at CSUN. The subcommittee performed an informal scan of other CSUs and UCs and their experiences, and sought CSUN faculty and administrator input as a first step toward a more formal feasibility study, if the results indicated moving forward.

Environmental Scan

Prior to undertaking the ePIF survey, the subcommittee preliminarily explored what other CSUs and UCs have in place. Fourteen CSU campus' senate chairs replied to an informal email survey, out of which three have implemented or are in the process of implementing ePIFs; six are considering it and/or have formed committees to look into it, and three have had no formal discussions. Those who raised issues cited concerns over software costs, security, confidentiality, technical support, and potential pushback for less technologically inclined colleagues. Software platforms that are being used or considered for ePIF creation and access included Taskstream, an e-portfolio system, Microsoft SharePoint, and learning management systems Moodle and Blackboard. Universities outside of California were also mentioned as using ePIFs. At least four UC campuses are using electronic dossier systems, including Davis, Riverside, San Diego and San Francisco, and UCLA has formally studied and is developing its own system, scheduled to launch in 2014. Furthermore, an informal Google search of "faculty digital dossier" reveals that many other universities are considering or have launched an "ePIF".

CSUN ePIF Survey

Method

SurveyMonkey™ was used to create the survey, which consisted of 10 close-ended questions and provided opportunities for three open-ended responses. It was distributed via email on January 23, 2014 to all CSUN faculty and deans to seek input from probationary and tenured faculty, including faculty with peer reviewer experience. The deadline was February 17, 2014, a reminder email was sent on February 10, 2014, and announced at the Faculty Senate meeting, which was held on February 13, 2014.

Results

Three hundred and eighty four respondents answered all of the questions. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of respondents were full professors, followed by associate, and assistant professors or equivalents. Nine MPPs participated, and 14 indicated “other.”

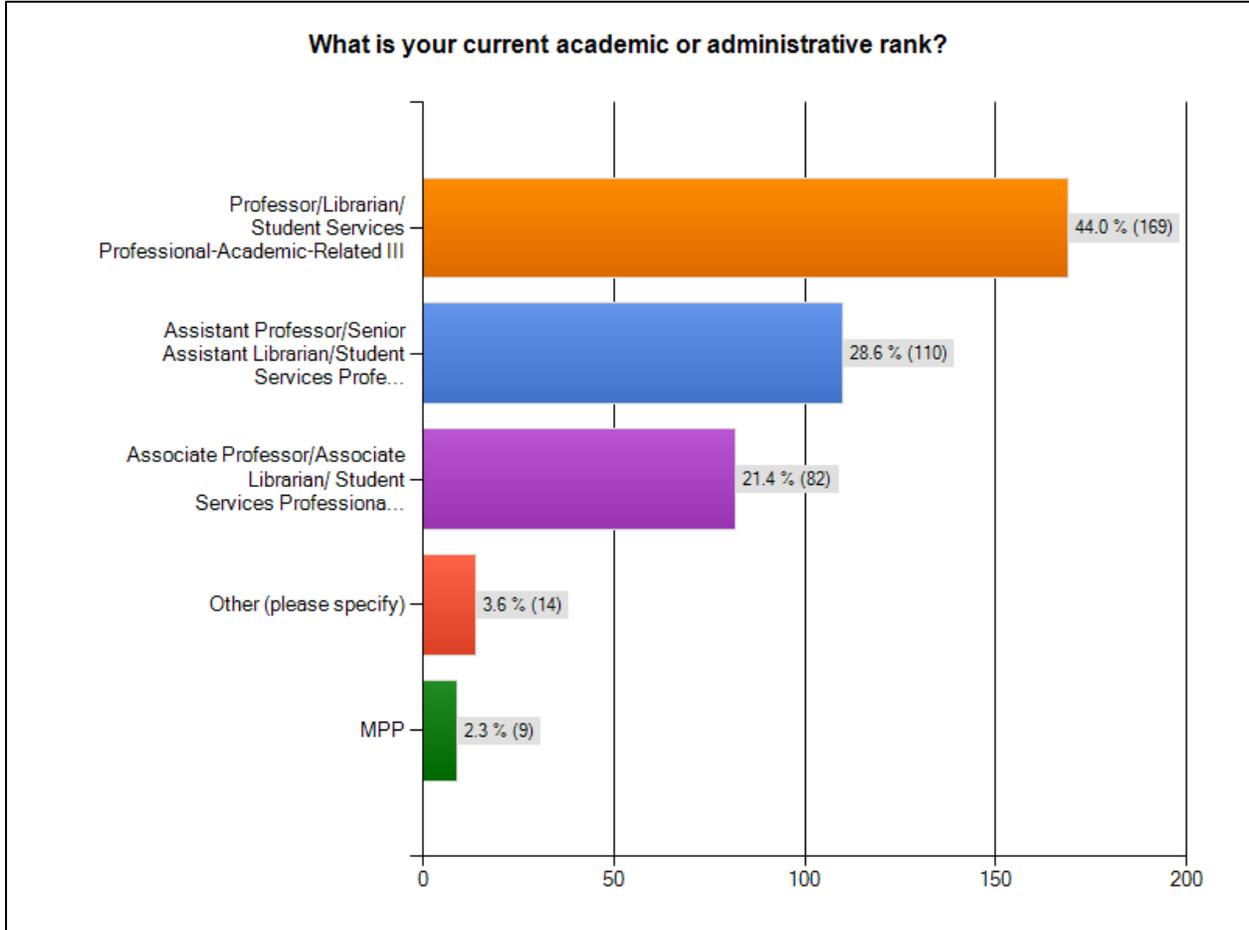


Figure 1

Respondents supplied their College or equivalent unit, as shown in Figure 2.

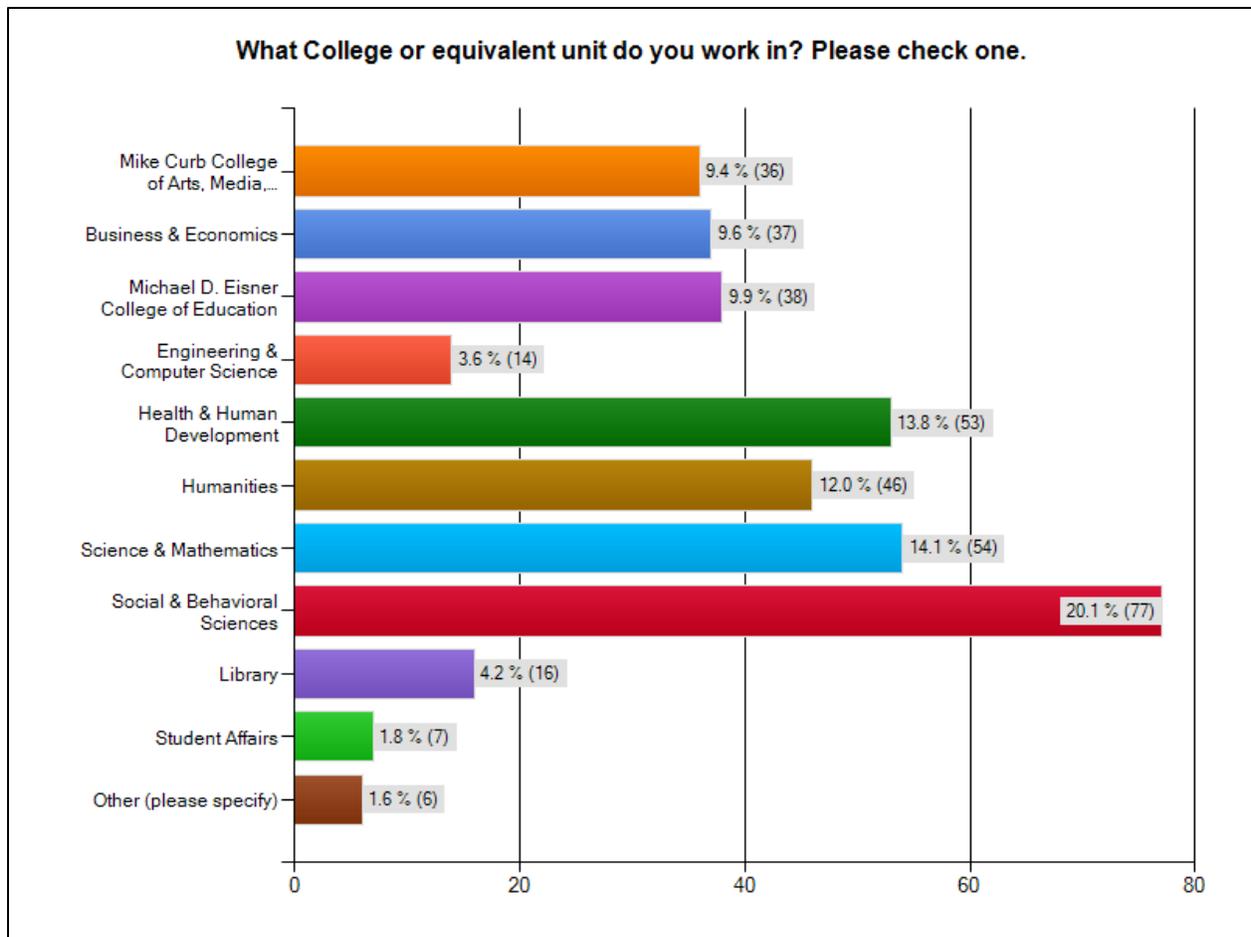


Figure 2

Question #2 asked if PP&R should “investigate the feasibility” of ePIFs as an option and 86.72% (333) answered yes, 5.21% (20) said no, and 8.07% (31) were unsure (See Figure 3). Of the 112 who provided comments to this question, most were positive, with the most enthusiasm expressed for the ePIF’s apparent contribution to campus sustainability efforts, ease of creation for the faculty member under review, and ease of access for the reviewer. Those citing ease of creation explained that most of their documentation was in an online format that one could easily convert to Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) and/or links to electronic resources. Some respondents cited the potential for creating more uniform PIF formats in an electronic environment. A few seemingly passionate respondents suggested it be made mandatory for all faculty and/or questioned why we haven’t done this sooner. The word “scrapbooking” came up more than once in describing the current hardcopy PIF assemblage procedure.

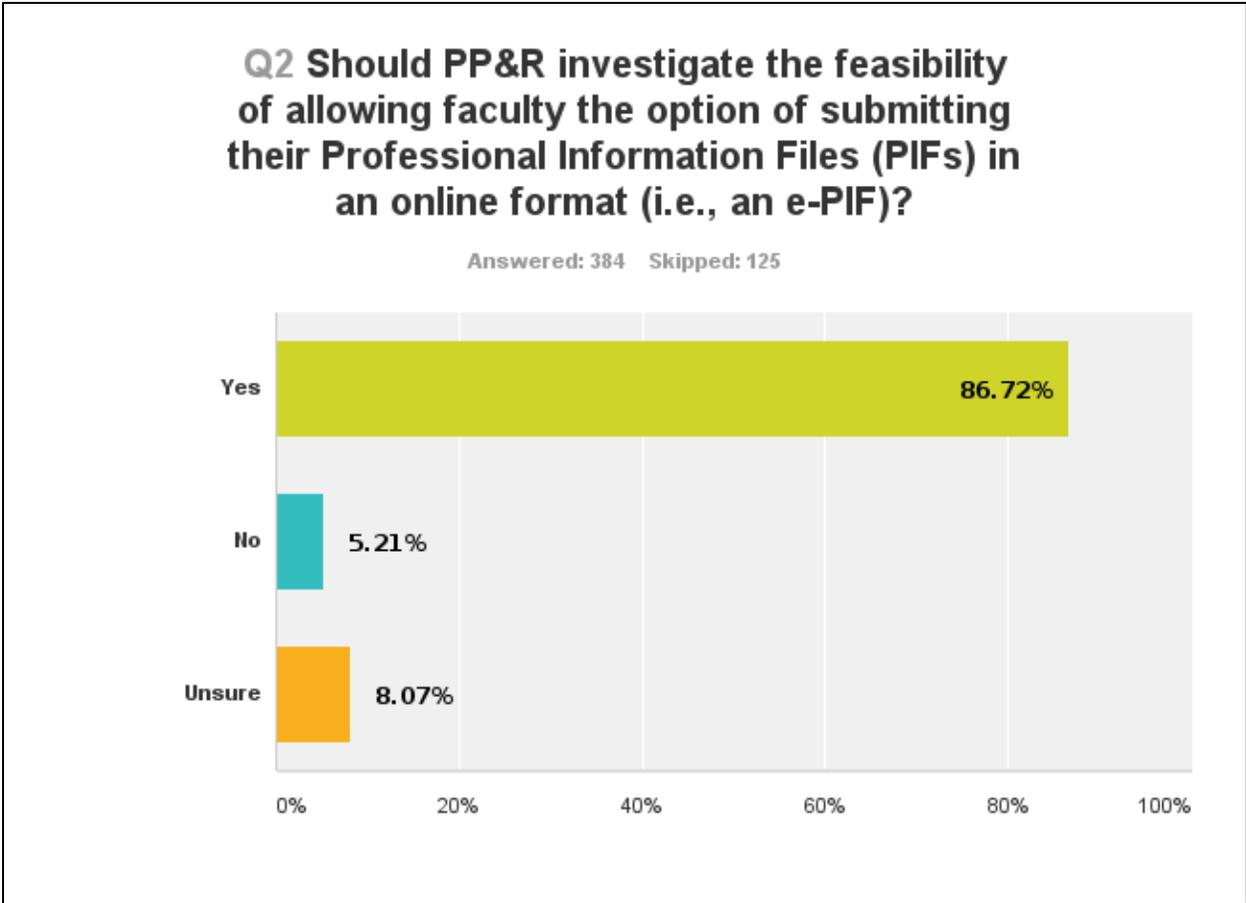


Figure 3

The negative comments focused on concerns about security, confidentiality, technical problems, and the learning curve required for creating and/or reviewing ePIFs versus traditional print PIFs. Some questioned how differing formats of exhibits could be presented in an ePIF, particularly those based in the creative arts, and/or not readily available online. The need for scanning hardcopy only documents, such as book chapters, was mentioned several times as an impediment to the expedient creation of an ePIF and a possible sustainability issue. A few commenters asked that CSUN not take the lead on this but wait for other campuses to demonstrate the feasibility of ePIFs.

Finally, the mixed or neutral comments to Question #2 focused on the need for a phased in, optional approach, caution exercised in who can access files and when, and keeping the hardcopy PIF as an option.

Question #3 asked if faculty were given the option of the ePIF, would they be willing to create or review one, and the majority answered “yes” (79.43%). (Figure 4) Of the 68 comments provided, approximately 59% were deemed negative for the same reasons listed for Question #2 above and 38% were classified as positive, again, for the same reasons cited in Question #2. Additional negative comments related to potential readability issues faced by reviewers having to access too many PIFs on a computer screen.

Furthermore, a couple of positive respondents offered to share their expertise in the creation of an ePIF system or share their experiences using ePIFs.

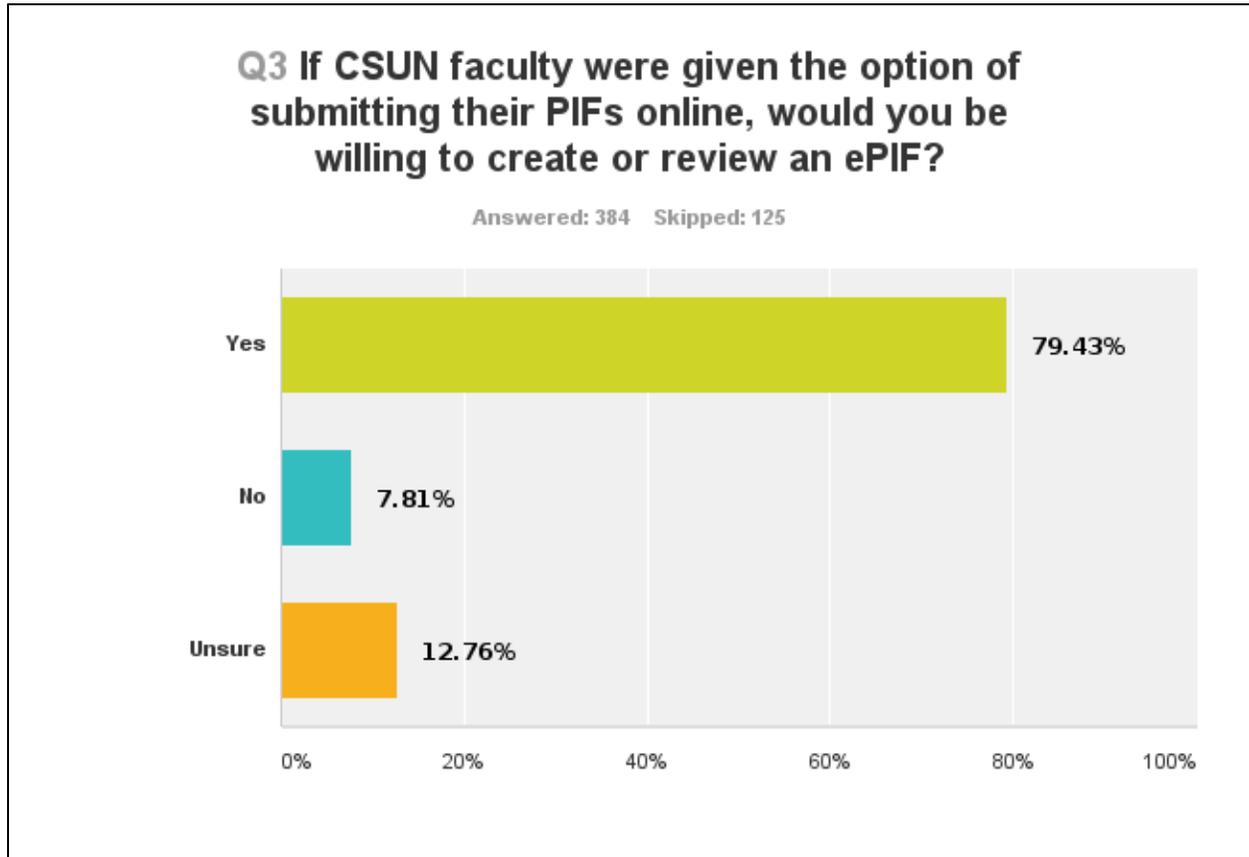


Figure 4

There were 71 additional comments that repeated respondents' previous comments, with more detail related to suggestions on how ePIFs should be implemented, if at all. Again, a cautious approach, replete with testing, was the main theme.

Conclusion

Based on the data gleaned from the survey and environmental scan, the Subcommittee recommends that there is sufficient interest among CSUN faculty as well as outside expertise to begin exploring the feasibility of an ePIF option at CSUN.

Next Steps

- Report on survey results.
- Investigate ePIFs in more depth.
- Present findings and recommendations.

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