

University Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

I. General Guidelines

The University is committed to the goal of excellence in teaching. It therefore provides encouragement and means for faculty development and establishes ways to recognize and reward effective teaching. Advisement of students as it relates to undergraduate research and theses, master's theses and doctoral dissertations is an important area of teaching. Each department should develop methods of evaluating, encouraging and rewarding excellence in student research advisement. Evaluation of teaching serves to provide information to the faculty member for self-improvement.

- A. Suitably devised evaluations of teaching (including research advisement) provide a means that is as fair, reliable, and valid as possible for the administrative evaluation of teaching performance for merit rewards. Evaluation for merit awards must follow certain guidelines to ensure maximum fairness, reliability, and validity.
- B. In the evaluation of the various aspects of teaching performance, an emphasis should be placed on skills and knowledge (including aesthetics and clarification of values where appropriate) acquired by students in each course. Attention should also be paid to the relationship of the skills and knowledge acquired to the overall objectives and the specific requirements of a given departmental program.
- C. A combination of methods must be used, so that each source of data will act as a check on the others and thereby contribute to a fairer evaluation. The interpretation of the data must be supplemented by cautious consideration of other factors germane to instruction, such as student ability and needs. Other factors that should be considered include grade distributions, class size, opinion survey response rates, and instructional format. Student learning is the result of the student's skills and efforts as well as those of the instructor.
- D. Great caution must be exercised to ensure that student opinion surveys are not used as a means to make fine distinctions among faculty members, although the overall pattern of student responses may be considered. Rank ordering of teachers or comparisons to departmental, college or university averages is not valid in the evaluation process. References to isolated student comments should be avoided unless an established trend can be demonstrated. When teaching is considered to need improvement, the evaluator(s) should make recommendations for improvement.
- E. Variables, such as course level, type of course, class size, whether the course is required vs. elective, teaching load, etc., must be constantly investigated and taken into consideration by those involved in the evaluation process. Class attrition is a questionable measure of teaching effectiveness, but if it is to be used, its relationship to various variables must be examined.
 1. In student opinion surveys (discussed below), survey response rate must be taken into consideration. Review letters should indicate response rates and number of responses in order to provide context for the

- review.2. Evaluators in all levels of the evaluation process must be attentive to allegations of bias and be particularly alert to patterns of possible discrimination.
 3. Department chairs, deans, and appropriate faculty committees should be knowledgeable concerning the evaluation, interpretation, and use of the data gathered from the various evaluation sources. The University, through the Office of Academic Affairs and other means, should make available opportunities for faculty members and responsible administrators to obtain appropriate knowledge.
 4. The data gathered in the evaluation process will not be made available to anyone beyond those officially part of the evaluation process without the written authorization of the faculty member. This restriction is not intended to apply to college-wide statistical studies that do not reveal the identity of individual faculty members.
- F. The several colleges are responsible for implementing the provisions of this policy. The colleges may delegate this responsibility to departments as appropriate. The development of college or departmental policy within the context of this policy is primarily a function of the faculty.
1. Appropriate departmental, college, and University individuals and committees should regularly review these policies on the evaluation of teaching (including research advisement) and how they are being implemented, both to ensure that they are not being violated to the possible detriment of the individuals being evaluated, and to initiate needed improvements.
- G. It is the ultimate responsibility of the provost and vice president for academic affairs to enforce the provisions of this policy.

II. Evaluation

The total evaluation of teaching must include evaluation by Peer Review of Portfolio and student opinion surveys unless an additional method of evaluation has been approved by the college/department faculty, the department chair, the dean, and the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

Colleges may choose to use additional methods especially in the case of untenured, tenure-track faculty.

A. Peer Review of Portfolio 1

The function of a portfolio is to present a case for effective teaching. These documents are to be assembled by each faculty member and presented to the department chair in accordance with the established University evaluation schedule. The chair will collect all portfolios and make them available to the designated evaluation committee.

1. Reviews of portfolios should be conducted every five years for tenured faculty, clinical professors, clinical associate professors, master lecturers, and senior lecturers and every year for nontenured faculty, clinical assistant professors, lecturers, instructors, and adjunct faculty. More frequent review may be requested by the faculty member. All courses taught during the review period should be included in the portfolio.
2. The full-time faculty of each department, through an election, are

responsible for establishing the procedure for the selection of evaluation committees as well as the process for evaluation. Each portfolio must be evaluated by at least three individuals. Portfolios of tenured and tenure-track faculty shall be evaluated only by tenured faculty. Portfolios of clinical faculty, master lecturers, senior lecturers, lecturers, and faculty adjuncts shall be evaluated by a committee of full-time faculty and should include non-tenured faculty at ranks higher than the faculty member being reviewed. Under this policy it is possible that a department might elect to have a separate committee for each faculty member, to assign the evaluation of all faculty to a standing committee, or to designate a specifically elected committee for the purpose of portfolio evaluation.

3. This content of the portfolio will vary across programs. These materials should consist of all instructor-provided materials used in each course (not section) during the period covered by the evaluation or other materials that evaluators can use to assess instruction. Materials from only the most recently taught section of each course and only from courses taught during the period covered by the evaluation should be included. If the faculty member chooses, summer session courses may be included. Individual faculty members may submit any additional materials or information they consider would make a case for effective teaching. These materials should be duly considered by the portfolio review committee. Where it is impractical to include items, such as films, a description of those materials should be included.
 - a. Examples of materials to be submitted are the course syllabus, assignment lists, research paper assignments, reading lists, study guides, handouts, problem sets, laboratory exercises, performance assignments, simulations, all testing materials including the final examination, efforts to improve teaching (including research advising), teaching development activities, grade distributions, and any other material or information that would assist the committee in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. Student opinion surveys are considered in the annual review and are not a part of the teaching portfolio review.
4. The issues that the evaluation committee will address in its review are as follows:
 - a. The overall nature of the faculty member's teaching tasks. Examples include number of courses taught, number of students in each course, whether the faculty member had graduate student assistance with large classes, presence of written work for large classes, number of research students advised, and participation in distance learning and other teaching venues requiring extra time and effort.
 - b. The overall quality of the materials selected for use by the faculty member in each course covered by the evaluation. Issues include whether the materials are current and represent the best

work in the field, whether the materials represent a superficial or a thorough coverage, how well the course has been developed, and whether the intellectual tasks set by the instructor are appropriate.

- c. The overall quality of feedback, evaluation and testing in each course covered by the evaluation. Issues include whether the testing and evaluation procedures are consistent with the intellectual tasks set by the instructor and whether adequate feedback is provided to students in order to develop the desired levels of intellectual performance. If appropriate, the reasonableness of grade distributions will be addressed.
 - d. Specific suggestions for improvement in any of the above areas.
5. In colleges or departments where faculty portfolios are developed and evaluated as part of the accreditation process, this effort can substitute for peer review of portfolio for the year of the accreditation review. The college or department should follow the process outlined above in other years.
 6. The peer review of portfolio process could result in faculty development proposals for those faculty whose instruction, course materials, or evaluation methods need improvement. Proposals for faculty development funds should be submitted by the faculty member, the chair or the dean and should include cost-sharing figures.

B. Student Opinion Surveys

1. The University/Information Technology Services (not the individual faculty members) is responsible for obtaining data to assist in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness within the college by means of a university-wide student opinion survey. Supplemental questions (or separate surveys) may be used by departments or individual faculty. In the case of courses taught by telecommunications, questions related to teaching in that environment should also be included. When courses are team-taught by more than one faculty member, students should be asked to complete separate surveys for each faculty member. Questions specific to team teaching should also be included where appropriate. Responses in the student's own words are to be solicited on surveys.
2. Students are to be made aware of the purposes and value of the survey.
3. The standardized student opinion surveys will be administered online by the University. Students will receive multiple notices from the University and should be encouraged by the course instructors to respond. However, faculty should not be blamed or penalized through comments on their annual reviews for low response rates to student opinion questionnaires in selected courses. Faculty may not offer incentives or extra credit to students to complete student opinion questionnaires.
 - a. The statistical results, produced so as to ensure student anonymity, are made available to the faculty, to the chair of the department, and to the dean as soon as the results are produced or

at the end of the normal grading period for the course, whichever comes later. Results for student opinion surveys where five or fewer students are enrolled in a class will be made available to faculty and administrators with the removal of demographic information.

- b. The student opinion survey results form one component of the overall evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Individuals who have a role in the process of evaluating teaching effectiveness will have access to the statistical results as contained in the individual faculty member's file. Survey results obtained by means other than these standardized procedures shall not be accepted as primary evidence of teaching ability.
- c. Student opinion surveys will be administered for all faculty members, including tenured, nontenured, instructors, lecturers, adjunct and graduate teaching assistants, according to the following schedule. Student opinion surveys will not be available to students after the last day of class.
 - Full-term classes (15 weeks or greater) for the fall and spring semesters – survey available during the last two weeks of classes
 - First part-of-term classes (7½ weeks) for the fall and spring semesters – survey available during the last two weeks of classes excluding the last three days of class
 - Second part-of-term classes (7½ weeks) for the fall and spring semester – survey available during the last two weeks of classes
 - Winter – survey available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the last week of classes
 - Maymester – survey available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the last week of classes, unless a faculty member requests that student opinion surveys not be administered for Maymester courses
 - Summer Sessions 1 and 2 (6-week sessions) – survey available during week five of classes, unless a faculty member requests that student opinion surveys not be administered for summer courses
 - Summer Session 3 (12-week session)—survey available during week 11 of classes, unless a faculty member requests that student opinion surveys not be administered for summer courses
 - Summer Session 4 (variable lengths, up to 14 weeks) – survey available during weeks 12 and 13, unless a faculty member requests that student opinion surveys not be administered for summer courses
 - Student opinion surveys will not be administered for

courses scheduled below three weeks in length.

4. At some point during the last two weeks of the semester, faculty must allocate fifteen minutes of class time (for lecture classes_ at the beginning of class and ask students to complete the student opinion survey. Faculty should leave the room while students complete the survey electronically. Graduate assistants or colleagues from the faculty members' department may be asked to be available in the classroom to answer questions and make sure that all students have the opportunity to complete the student opinion survey electronically.

C. Other Methods of Evaluation

As noted above, departments desiring an additional method of evaluation should submit a proposal, including documented departmental support, to the dean for review and possible approval. One example of this process is classroom visitation. A carefully designed and consistent program of peer observation of teaching may be established within a college or department. The design of the program of observation must provide for a consistent program, with sufficient controls to avoid prejudice or caprice, and must be approved by the college/department faculty, the department chair, the dean and the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

If a department chair becomes aware of concerns regarding an individual faculty member's teaching performance, the chair should consult with the dean and take steps to address the concerns.

- Recommended by the Faculty Senate

Approved by the president

June 1980

Revised August 10, 1992

Revised January 22, 1993

Revised May 3, 1993

Revised April, 2003

Revised May 17, 2004

Revised June 2, 2005

Revised January 23, 2006

Revised April 9, 2007

Revised June 24, 2010

Revised April 16, 2013

Revised December 16, 2014

Revised May 12, 2016 effective for July 1, 2016