

FACULTY SENATE ISSUE FORM
Date Submitted: October 12, 2017
Title of Issue (a short descriptive title by which the issue may be referenced)
Proposed changes to the policy on Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness
Description of Issue: The Provost’s Council recommends changes to the policy on Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness related to the administration of the student opinion surveys. The intent of the changes is to ensure courses offered outside the 15-week fall and spring semesters have guidelines and appropriate timelines for student input. There would be no change in the timeline for administration of the surveys for full-term fall and spring semester classes.
Rational for Submission: The current policy states that the student opinion surveys will be administered within the last nine days of classes when a term is scheduled for fewer than 15 weeks. However, several terms do not have a defined last day of class followed by an exam period, such as winter term, Maymester, summer sessions and other periods when the exam may fall on the last day of class. Thus, timelines have been added to the policy for the administration of the surveys for courses scheduled for fewer than 15 weeks.
In addition, the Provost’s Council recommends that the administration of surveys in the summer be changed so that faculty are able to opt out of the survey process for summer courses rather than the current requirement that they must request that student opinion surveys be administered for summer courses. There have been requests from faculty to change to an opt-out practice for summer courses. The surveys are especially useful for faculty seeking tenure, promotion, or designations such as University Professor and University Distinguished Teacher; an opt-out practice would help ensure student input is obtained.
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Department: Academic Affairs
Date: October 12, 2017
Signature:

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Assigned to Committee:
Date Assigned:

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. The rating of an instructor in the majority category should be considered as evidence of teaching competence. 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 deficient or needs improvement, the evaluator(s) should make suggestions 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. Evaluators in all levels of the evaluation process must be attentive to allegations of bias and be particularly alert to patterns of possible discrimination.
 2. 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.
 3. 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. 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 Peer Review of Portfolio is to evaluate teaching effectiveness by an examination of the documents used in instruction. 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, every three years for master lecturers and senior lecturers, and every year for nontenured faculty, lecturers, instructors, and adjunct faculty. More frequent review may be requested by the faculty member, the chair or the dean. 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. 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 portfolio will consist of all instructor-provided materials used in each course (not section) during the period covered by the evaluation. 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. 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, 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.
 - b. In addition to the course materials, the faculty member should also provide a brief summary of teaching and research advising loads, grade distributions, the course objectives and methods used to evaluate student performance.
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 colleges are 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.
 - 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 within the last two weeks of classes for full-term classes (15 weeks or greater) and during the last nine days of classes for courses less than 15 weeks for the fall and spring semesters for all faculty members, including tenured, nontenured, adjunct and graduate teaching assistants, and during the last two weeks of classes of the summer semesters (for faculty who request that student opinion surveys be administered in the summer courses and for faculty on alternate contracts).~~

Student opinion surveys will be administered for all faculty members, including tenured, nontenured, adjunct and graduate teaching assistants, according to the following schedule.

- 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 weeks six and seven
- Second part-of-term classes (7½ weeks) for the fall and spring semesters – survey available during the last two weeks of classes

- Winter and Maymester – survey available at 75% of course completion through 90% of course completion
- Summer Sessions 1 and 2 (6-week sessions) – survey available weeks four and five, unless a faculty member requests that student opinion surveys not be administered for summer courses
- Summer Session 3 (12-week session)—survey available weeks 10 and 11, except courses that run fewer than 12 weeks, 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 21 days prior to the last day through 7 days prior to the end of the session, 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.

C. **Other Methods of Evaluation**

As noted above, colleges and/or departments desiring an additional method of evaluation should submit a proposal to the dean for review and possible approval. Methods of evaluation that might be used are as follows:

1. Student achievement tests - Student achievement tests should be used for evaluation of teaching if standardized and uniform questions and scoring are feasible, and there exists a wide testing sample of students with different instructors in different semesters or in different sections of the course. Testing shall be performed both early and late in the course to ensure a valid measure of learning actually achieved during the course. It should be developed and utilized, where possible, on a regular basis by the faculty on the department or college level.
2. Student interviews - Systematic exit interviews or surveys, or interviews at predetermined stages of a student's major program, may be conducted within each college or department. A standard format should be used. A means should be devised to ensure accurate recording of the interview, through the presence of a disinterested observer, through maintenance of a written account, tape, or transcription of the interview, or through other appropriate means. Comments about individual faculty members should be transcribed and made available to them, although the identity of the students will remain confidential.
3. 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.
4. Evaluation of distance education - When teaching students at a distance using technology, such as instructional television, or the internet, further evaluation may be based on: class visitation at a distant site (as defined above), personal interviews of distant students (as defined above), benchmarking against quality standards established by industry experts, e.g., the Sloan Consortium, or a review of evaluations prepared by regional or national consortia such as National Technological University. If a course is part of a larger program for distance learners, the evaluation should also assess faculty contribution to the success of the overall program.
5. Certain other procedures are generally considered to provide a less reliable contribution to a fair and systematic evaluation of teaching performance and therefore should be employed only with due caution. They include (1) evaluation by organized student groups; (2) alumni surveys; and (3) self-evaluations. Normally, use of data based on these procedures should be limited to a supplemental role and not constitute a primary means of evaluating teaching performance. Colleges or departments that wish to use these or other techniques not noted above as a primary data source for the evaluation of teaching must develop clear standards

- of application for their use. These procedures and standards of application must be approved by the faculty, the dean and the provost and vice president for academic affairs.
6. It is the responsibility of colleges or departments to establish formal procedures for the evaluation of faculty, supervision of student research projects, internships, tutorials, honors programs, and the like. The results of such evaluations may be included in the evaluation process but must be used with extreme caution, particularly when such activities constitute a major portion of an instructor's teaching load.

- Recommended by the Faculty Senate
Approved by the president
June 1980
Revised August 10, 1992
Revised January 22, 1993
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¹See the Schedules for Faculty Personnel Actions in the appendix for specific dates and actions.