Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

I. **General Guidelines**
    The University is committed to excellence in teaching, including classroom, online, clinical instruction, field work supervision, directing undergraduate or graduate research or graduate-level theses, or mentoring students. It, therefore, provides support for faculty development, and establishes ways to recognize and reward effective teaching. Each department should develop methods of evaluating, encouraging, supporting, and rewarding excellence in all forms of instruction. Evaluation of teaching serves to provide information to the faculty member for self-improvement.

    A. Suitably devised evaluations of teaching and student mentoring provide a means that is as fair, reliable, and valid as possible for the administrative evaluation of teaching performance.

    In the evaluation of the various aspects of teaching performance, emphasis should be placed on students' acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values that align with the overall learning objectives and specific course requirements.

    B. 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.

    C. Student Opinion Surveys should be used only to provide formative feedback aimed at improving teaching effectiveness. 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 specific suggestions for improvement.

    D. Variables, such as course level, type of course, class size, whether the course is required vs. elective, teaching load, etc., must be taken into consideration by those involved in the teaching 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 at all levels of the evaluation process must be attentive to allegations of bias against the faculty member and be particularly alert to patterns of discrimination.

        2. Department chairs/directors, deans, and appropriate faculty committees should be knowledgeable concerning the evaluation, interpretation, and use of the data gathered

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from various evaluation sources. The University, through the Center for Faculty Development and other centers, should make available opportunities for faculty members and responsible faculty administrators to obtain appropriate knowledge and skills.

3. The data gathered in the evaluation process will not be made available to anyone beyond those officially involved in 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.

E. The development and implementation of the provisions of this policy are the responsibility of the faculty within that college/school/department.

   1. Appropriate departmental, college/school, administrators, and Faculty Senate committees should regularly review these policies on the evaluation of teaching (including mentorship of undergraduate and graduate researchers) 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.

F. It is ultimately the responsibility of the appropriate EVP to enforce the provisions of this policy.

II. Evaluation

The procedures for evaluation as outlined in this section shall not apply to the School of Medicine or School of Health Professions, which shall maintain a written process for evaluating teaching effectiveness as approved by the Executive Vice President for Health Sciences.

Comprehensive evaluation of teaching must include a Peer Teaching Portfolio Review and student opinion survey feedback. Colleges/Schools may choose to use additional methods, especially in the case of untenured, tenure-track faculty.

A. **Peer Teaching Portfolio Review** [1]
The function of the Peer Teaching Portfolio Review 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 career track faculty, and every year for other non-tenure eligible faculty with teaching duties (e.g., faculty of practice, and instructors). More frequent reviews 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. Adjunct faculty will be evaluated annually by the undergraduate or graduate program director or department chair.

   2. The full-time faculty of each department, through an election, are responsible for establishing the procedure for selecting evaluation committees as well as the process for evaluation. Each full-time faculty member's teaching portfolio must be evaluated by at least three individuals.

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[1] See the Schedules for Faculty Personnel Actions in the appendix for specific dates and actions.

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 to conduct teaching portfolio evaluations.

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, the faculty member should include a description of those materials.

   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 and research mentorship, 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 summary of teaching and research advising loads, grade distributions, the course objectives, and methods used to evaluate student performance.

4. The elements that the evaluation committee will address in its review are as follows:

   a. The number of courses taught, the number of students in each course, whether the faculty member had graduate student assistance with large classes, the presence of written work for large classes, the number of research students advised, and other activities requiring extra time and effort.

   b. The overall quality of the materials selected for use by the faculty member in each course is covered. 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 and evidence of continuous improvement. A review of whether the testing and evaluation procedures are consistent with the intellectual tasks set by the instructor and whether adequate feedback is provided to students to attain 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.

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5. In colleges/schools or departments where faculty portfolios are developed and evaluated as part of the accreditation process, this effort can substitute for Peer Teaching Portfolio Review for the year of the accreditation review. The college/school or department should follow the process outlined above in other years.

6. The Peer Teaching Portfolio Review 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 administers the student opinion surveys to assist in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness within the academic unit. Supplemental questions (or separate surveys) may be used by departments or individual faculty members. In the case of online distance learning courses, questions related to teaching in that modality should also be included. When courses are team-taught, students should be asked to complete separate surveys for each faculty member. Questions specific to team teaching should also be included where appropriate. Student Opinion Surveys should solicit open-ended responses.

2. Faculty should make students 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 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. Student opinion survey feedback for classes in which five or fewer students are enrolled will be made available only to the department chair, dean, and appropriate executive vice president.

   b. The student opinion survey feedback is 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 15-week (or longer) semesters and during the last few days of shorter terms for all faculty members, including tenured, untenured, adjunct and graduate teaching assistants.

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 approval. Methods of evaluation that

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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 achieved during the course. It should be developed and utilized regularly by the department or college/school level faculty.

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/school or department. A standard format should be used. A means should be devised to ensure accurate recording of the interview through a disinterested observer, through maintenance of a written account, recording, 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. Peer class observations - 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/school faculty, the department chair, the dean, and the appropriate executive vice president.

4. Evaluation of digital education - When teaching students at a distance, further evaluation may be based on: peer class observations, personal interviews of distant students (as defined above), and benchmarking against quality standards established by industry experts. If a course is part of a larger program for distance learners, the evaluation should also assess faculty contributions to the success of the overall program.

5. Certain other procedures are considered less reliable measures 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, the use of data based on these procedures should not constitute a primary means of evaluating teaching performance. Colleges/Schools 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

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6. It is the responsibility of colleges/schools 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;
  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);
  Revised May 1, 2020

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