AY21-29-A

University Policy on the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

I. **General Guidelines**

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, optional opinion survey, 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 distinctions among faculty members. 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.

II. **Evaluation**

The total evaluation of teaching must include evaluation by Peer Review of Portfolio. Colleges may choose to use additional methods especially in the case of untenured, tenure-track faculty.

A. **Peer Review of Portfolio**

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

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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 may be considered in the annual review and are not a part of the teaching portfolio review.

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B. **Student Opinion Surveys**

1. The colleges are responsible for obtaining data to assist in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness within the college. **Student opinion surveys may be developed at the College, Department, or Program level, but they are to be used exclusively for formative evaluation. The instructors could use the survey results to determine the effectiveness of their teaching practices and identify future course improvements. If used systematically across a College, Department, or Program, then the instrument must be demonstrated to have construct validity and reliability. In no case are student opinion surveys to be used for summative evaluation of individual faculty members, such as for purposes of reappointment, promotion, or intra-mural awards, e.g., University Teacher, University Professor, etc.**

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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 may be included in the overall evaluation of teaching effectiveness at the discretion of the instructor. Individuals who have a role in the process of evaluating teaching effectiveness will have access to the 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.

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University Professors

II. Procedure

B. Criteria

1. Each nominee shall ordinarily teach a minimum of three undergraduate courses per year for at least the past three years.
2. Faculty nominated for consideration as University Professors shall have a record of superior accomplishment in teaching. The nominee shall document this record with evidence such as results of peer evaluation, statements from former students, and other relevant information.

   a. The nomination packet shall include:

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Student Course Feedback Opinion Survey

Historically the response rates of Student Opinion Surveys have been **low** and **non-statistically significant** (range 11-40% per semester per college) and varied greatly by **course level and enrolment**. Data comparison on course level reports across campus indicates that **100 level courses have the lowest mean values** for each question, followed by next lowest mean of 200 level courses. This variance in response rates and course level biases make it difficult to gather statistically significant and useful information for course improvement. Therefore, it was determined by the Faculty Senate that the Student Opinion Survey content and structure should be reviewed.

In fall 2019, an ad-hoc committee of faculty was formed. The purpose of the committee was to:

- review the student opinion survey
- propose new survey questions
- determine how to collect actionable information for course instructors
- provide recommendations for improving the administration of the survey

The committee consisted of representatives from four colleges and included a variety of faculty and staff ranks and experiences.

- Tatyana Lobova (chair) - Biological Sciences, Master Lecturer
- Orlando Ayala - Engineering Technology, Associate Professor
- Remica Bingham-Risher - Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, Director of Quality Enhancement Plan Initiatives
- Suzanne Morrow - Psychology, Master Lecturer
- Tisha Paredes - Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, Assistant Vice President

The committee reviewed various national and internal surveys and considered how the data would be used. The survey questions were designed with the only **goal to produce information that faculty could use to determine the effectiveness of their teaching practices and identify future course improvements**. Important consideration was to keep the **questionnaire short and questions concise** because long surveys are less likely to be used by students.

Numerous research studies in the past decade have determined that student responses can be biased depending on the instructor's gender, race, appearance, accent, incentive, and other factors not related to teaching practices (e.g., *1, 2, 3, 4*). Therefore, after several discussions and reviews of surveys, the committee determined that the **Student Opinion Survey should provide qualitative data for pedagogical use only and it should not be used for evaluation and promotion of faculty**. The committee recommends that other methods be determined to evaluate faculty.

New Student Opinion Survey

For the construction of the new survey the committee reviewed questionnaires and practices used by the **National Survey of Student Engagement** (NSSE), UC Merced, UW-Madison, UC Berkeley and Missouri State.

The survey has three sections that cover instructor practices, course experiences, and general student opinions. The committee's goal was to make all questions actionable.

Students will see this short guiding statement before starting the survey:

Meaningful input from students is essential for providing necessary feedback for course improvement. Answer the questions with your PRIMARY COURSE INSTRUCTOR in mind. Please be specific and give examples when possible.

Part 1. Instructor-specific

- During this semester to what extent has your instructor done the following?

Very often/Often/Sometimes/Never/Unable to Rate

1. Clearly explained course goals, requirements, and expectations
2. Taught course sessions in an organized way
3. Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points
4. Provided prompt and meaningful feedback on assignments
5. Used a variety of techniques to accommodate different approaches to learning
6. Provided standards for satisfactory completion of assignments (rubrics, assignment instructions and/or examples, outlines, etc.)
7. Was available to address difficulties or questions

Part 2. Course-specific

- In this course, how much did the coursework emphasize the following?

Very often/Often/Sometimes/Never/Unable to Rate

8. Memorizing course material
9. Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations

10. Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts

11. Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source

12. Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

- To what extent did this course help you learn and develop in the following areas?

Very often/Often/Sometimes/Never/Unable to Rate

13. Writing clearly and effectively

14. Speaking clearly and effectively

15. Thinking critically and analytically

16. Analyzing numerical and statistical information

17. Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills

18. Working effectively with others

Part 3. Open-ended

1. To what extent has this course challenged you to do your best work? If so, how? If not, why not?

2. What one change would you most like to see implemented that would improve your learning in this course?

3. What contributed the most to your learning in this course?

4. Based on your experiences with the instructor, to what extent were students treated with respect?

Addendum: Teaching Assistant Survey Questions

1. The TA was adequately prepared and clear in presenting subject matter
2. Assignments handled by the TA were returned in a timely manner and with useful feedback.
3. The TA was able to answer questions clearly and completely.
4. The TA was available during office hours or by appointment.

Open ended:

5. What are one to three specific things that your TA does particularly well to support student learning?

6. What might your TA do to improve his/her teaching?

New Course Evaluation Survey Field Testing

In February 2020, the newly designed survey was disseminated to 384 students across six courses from four departments. After completing the survey, students were asked to respond to a follow-up feedback about its effectiveness to determine: if the survey was easy to take; applicable to the course experience; any areas for improvements; specific suggestions for improvements.

Course Evaluation Survey Feedback:

Purpose: The goal of this survey was to solicit feedback from students who had taken the test course evaluation survey in the effort to improve the survey.

Population: 384 students from BIOL 291, PSYC 203S, PSYC 306, MET 330, MET 350, WMST/ENGL 495/595

Responses: **111** anonymous responses – **28.9%** response rate

Question 1(Likert Scale):

	Extremely Easy		Slightly Easy		Slightly Difficult		Extremely Difficult		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How easy was the survey to take?	93	84%	16	14%	2	2%	-	-	111	100%

Question 2 (Likert Scale):

	Extremely		Very		Moderately		Slightly		Not at all		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How applicable were the questions to your experiences this semester?	40	36%	48	43%	21	19%	1	1%	1	1%	111	100%

Question 3 (Free Text Response):

What do you think could be improved about the survey?

- Nothing / n/a / I don't know – 41
- Positive – 20
    - These range from "Survey overall seemed good and effective" to "I think the survey was very adequate"
    - One comment mentioned preferring this survey: "I like it better than the old style"

Future Considerations:

- Add college-specific and department-specific questions in addendums as needed
- Have separate surveys for other types of faculty (e.g., clinical faculty, etc.)
- Develop alternative methods for evaluating faculty (e.g., peer review evaluation across departments using a standard rubric, portfolio review to include survey results and actions, etc.)
- Work with ITS to determine how the survey is administered and reported
- Explore University-wide mandates or incentives to increase response rates
- Determine who has access to the survey data and how the results are disseminated to faculty
- Present results in the aggregate to the University community and report how the results were used (e.g., video, website, etc.)
- Review UC Merced/ODU Engineering model for actionable rubric for open-ended questions (see "Helping Students to Provide Valuable Feedback on Course Evaluations" below)

References

1. Boring, A., K. Ottoboni, and P B. Stark. 2016. Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness. ScienceOpen Research DOI: 10.14293/S2199-1006.1.SOR-EDU.AETBZC.v1

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3. Hornstein, H. A. 2017. Student evaluations of teaching are an inadequate assessment tool for evaluating faculty performance. *Cogent Education* 4: 1304016

4. Wagner, N., M. Rieger, K. Voorvelt. 2016. Gender, ethnicity and teaching evaluations: Evidence from mixed teaching teams. *Economics of Education Review*. 54: 79–94.

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Evaluation of Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, and Master Lecturers and Promotion of Lecturers and Senior Lecturers

A. Lecturer - This is a full-time rank that requires an appropriate master's degree and evidence of teaching ability. Demonstrated expertise in a specific field may also be required. Persons appointed to this rank are expected to assume a predominantly instructional role, at undergraduate or graduate levels, and participate in other professional service activities normally assigned to or expected of full-time faculty.

2. Promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer

a. The candidate prepares and submits to the department chair his/her professional accomplishments to include at a minimum a curriculum vitae prepared in accordance with the Guidelines from the Provost's Office, a list of teaching assignments with teaching portfolio evaluations, all annual evaluations by the department chair and dean, and other relevant materials. The chair forwards the credentials to the department promotion and tenure committee.

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B. Senior Lecturer - This is a full-time rank that requires an appropriate master's degree, demonstrated expertise in the field, a sustained record of effective performance in teaching and professional service, evidence of continued development and study in the field, and a minimum of five years' experience at the rank of lecturer or equivalent. Persons appointed to this rank are expected to assume a predominantly instructional role, at undergraduate or graduate levels, and participate in other professional service activities normally assigned to or expected of full-time faculty.

2. Promotion from Senior Lecturer to Master Lecturer

a. The candidate prepares and submits to the department chair his/her professional accomplishments to include at a minimum a curriculum vitae prepared in accordance with the Guidelines from the Provost's Office, a list of teaching assignments with teaching portfolio evaluations, all annual evaluations by the department chair and dean, and other relevant materials. The chair forwards the credentials to the department promotion and tenure committee.

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Helping Students to Provide Valuable Feedback on Course Evaluations

	Criteria	Highly Useful Feedback	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
1.	Offer commentary on attributes of the learning environment.	"I find the instructor very challenging and that motivates me to try harder in this class"	"The instructor cares about my learning."	"My instructor's hair is cool."
2.	Answer all parts of the question focusing on description rather than judgment.	"My writing ability now is better than at the beginning because now I am more confident in my writing based on the feedback I received from instructor and peers."	"It improved a lot. I noticed that my critical thinking ability has improved a lot."	"Hard class."
3.	Attribute positive or constructive feedback to specific aspects of the course. Use examples that support your answer to the question.	"Before this class I was every unsure on how to do a research paper, now that I have taken the class I am more confident in my research and writing skills. I understand how to format a paper correctly and how to follow MLA."	"Instructor sometimes describes things unclearly, but I always ask questions if I am confused about anything."	"Research projects are stressful"
4.	Focus on the course and the quality of instruction given regarding the course learning outcomes.	"I loved the projects, in particular group discussions were very important to understand the readings."	"Peer review, presenting, and office hours helped me with learning."	"I wish I knew when assignments are due"
5.	Offer suggestions that are relevant and plausible to the course or instruction and why you think they would help your learning.	"If I had the opportunity, I would include more quizzes or other assignments so students could practice more before the exam."	"I wouldn't change anything."	"This class is too early."

Highly Useful Feedback – instructor can clearly understand the experience the student is having, what they are doing well, or what they could do better. Instructor can conclude what exactly needs to be done to improve the course and/or instruction. Any improvements that need to be made are plausible and are within the instructor's control.

Somewhat Useful Feedback – instructor have a general or vague idea of what is going well or what should be changed to improve the course, but it is not completely clear. Instructor may not have the ability to completely make this change.

Not Useful Feedback – instructor cannot understand what to do to improve the course at all based on this answer. It tells nothing about the class or pedagogy, if the student is having a positive learning experience, or why they feel they seem to be having a negative learning experience. Instructor has no control over making this change.

1. Personal statement by the person nominated describing general teaching philosophy [maximum two pages double spaced].
2. Documentation of teaching innovations.
3. Additional documentation such as a current Portfolio Review is required.
4. Curriculum vitae with priority given to activities and awards that focus on teaching [maximum two pages].
5. Professor's teaching log listing courses taught in the last five years with number of students and grade distributions from the last three years.

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University Distinguished Teachers

II. Procedure

A. Criteria

1. Each nominee shall ordinarily teach a minimum of three undergraduate courses per year for at least the past three years.

2. Faculty nominated for consideration as University Distinguished Teachers shall have a record of superior accomplishment in teaching. The nominee shall document this record with evidence such as peer evaluation, statements from former students, and other relevant information.

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a. The nomination packet shall include:

1.Personal statement by the person nominated describing general teaching philosophy [maximum two pages double spaced].

2. Documentation of teaching innovations and of a scholarly approach to teaching and learning.

3. Portfolio reviews for the last three years are required.

4. Curriculum vitae with priority given to activities and awards that focus on teaching [maximum two pages].

5. Faculty member's teaching log listing courses taught in the last three years with number of students and grade distributions from the last three years.

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