

Faculty Senate
Council on Academic Standards, Curricula and Student Life
March 5, 2002

The Following guidelines were approved for distribution by the Faculty Senate.

GUIDELINES for the Administration and Use of Student Input on Teaching

1. Each academic department normally will gather input from students in every course, every semester as part of the process of the annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the teaching by each member of the faculty.
2. A number alone is not sufficient basis for either evaluation or providing feedback to faculty on teaching effectiveness.

Therefore, no academic unit (department, school, college) will use the numbers from a computer-generated and/or administered form that gathers student opinion as the sole basis for judging the effectiveness of a faculty member's teaching. Any forms used by academic units will be presented to the students as attempting to gather student opinion about aspects of the course about which students are most capable of providing input, and not as an "evaluation of the faculty member per se.

3. Qualitative responses (i.e., written comments) from students should be included in the materials submitted by the faculty for annual review. If included, these materials should be carefully considered by the faculty peer committees in the evaluation of teaching excellence.

NOTE: If the University or a number of academic units decide to develop and/or adopt a common form for gathering student input and use an on-line format for the administration of the form, there are software programs now that permit "theme" analysis of open-ended feedback. Thus, additional paperwork would not be required of faculty or staff in order to summarize the student comments to open-ended questions.

4. To enhance the qualitative nature of the annual evaluation process, individual academic units are encouraged to implement a "Portfolio Process" that provides a broad context upon which to base an evaluation of teaching effectiveness. A SAMPLE PORTFOLIO might include the following:
 - a. Syllabi from courses taught, plus samples of exams, handouts, exercises, writing assignments, student work produced during the course, bibliographies, special assignments, etc.

- b. A statement of the faculty member's teaching philosophy and discussion of how courses taught are designed to apply the philosophy.
 - c. Report of other teaching (mentoring, independent study, etc.) undertaken during the year.
 - d. A statement from the faculty member providing her/his evaluation of the students in each class taught, and the conditions of the class setting (e.g., student readiness to learn, work ethic of students, background for the course, unusual disciplinary issues; gpa for the course; whether the course was required; large lecture; classroom space assigned adequate for type of instruction used (e.g., too small/large? Lack of visual aides, maps, overheads, computer support, etc?); other impediments to effective teaching according to the faculty member's perspective?
 - e. Peer input (whatever form deemed desirable, useful)
 - f. A faculty member's self-assessment of teaching during the year and how she/he judges effectiveness.
 - g. Other material, including student opinion, comments, etc.
5. Feedback to faculty should be provided in narrative form to as to indicate that all the information provided by the faculty member (not just the numbers from a form, if those are used at all by the department) was examined thoroughly by the peer committees at each stage in the process. In peer review at each stage, a majority of the members providing feedback (whenever possible) should be located at the site where the teaching is being performed, so that the peers are familiar with the conditions of teaching, the nuances of the teaching load, and the nature of normal student interactions with faculty at the site.

It is strongly suggested that reference to the numbers from any forms used be omitted in the narrative feedback provided to the faculty, and that the narrative be forwarded along with the portfolio and weighed carefully at all subsequent levels in the annual review and/or tenure and promotion process.

Each academic unit (department, school, college) is strongly urged to develop a process of evaluation of teaching effectiveness that is broadly inclusive of all materials in a "portfolio", and one that cannot at any level in the process simply use the numbers from a form as the sole basis for a judgment of teaching effectiveness.