

Resolution in Support of the Guidelines for the Administration and Use of Student Evaluations of Teaching in Spring 2020 Recommended by the Co-Chairs of the Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness Working Group

WHEREAS, students “have a right to structured opportunities to provide feedback to their instructors regarding the quality of the course and performance of the instructor” [Faculty Handbook, p. 109],

WHEREAS, academic units have used the Course Comments Questionnaire (CCQ) in conjunction with other questions as a primary tool in providing students with the opportunity to provide feedback to their instructors,

WHEREAS, academic units have incorporated CCQ data, along with other evidence, to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of faculty and academic staff for purposes of annual reviews, merit reviews, and decisions regarding retention, tenure and promotion,

WHEREAS, standard evaluation tools such as the CCQ are best used when comparing an instructor’s performance over time when the instructor teaches the same course,

WHEREAS, the unprecedented shift to online delivery of classes during the COVID-19 emergency would make comparisons of instructors’ performance in courses during Spring 2020 to previous semesters difficult, if not render such comparisons invalid,

WHEREAS, it would likely be difficult for students not to weigh the second half of the Spring 2020 semester more heavily in their evaluation of their instructors’ performance, injecting another potential source of bias in a standard evaluation instrument like the CCQ,

WHEREAS, an alternate evaluation instrument for students to complete and an optional self-reflection by instructors regarding the experience of shifting courses to online delivery, rather than including CCQ results and similar data in their Professional Activity Reports (PARs), could provide insightful information to better support students and enhance teaching effectiveness in online instruction as well as affording the students the right to provide feedback on their instructors and courses;

BE IT RESOLVED that as a faculty, we support the recommendations of the Co-Chairs of the Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness Working Group including, but not limited to:

- 1) To administer a simplified, online Qualtrics survey similar to the one presented to the Faculty Senate on Wednesday, April 8, 2020 (see attached) for students to evaluate their instructors, their courses, and their experiences in Spring 2020,
- 2) That faculty exclude data from the student surveys for Spring 2020 in their PAR for the 2019-2020 Academic year, and
- 3) That, at their option, if faculty members would like to include information concerning their teaching in Spring 2020, they would provide a self-reflection indicating the teaching challenges they faced and the adaptations they made.

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DRAFT Guidelines for Faculty on Student Evaluations for Spring 2020

The purpose of this document is to offer guidance on the subject of course evaluation practices for the Spring 2020 semester. These practices were developed by the faculty co-chairs of the Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness Working Group, in consultation with CATL and the UC, and with administrative support.

What we're doing:

- For Spring 2020, we will be using a simplified, online Qualtrics survey to gather student feedback for this specific context of emergency remote teaching. This takes the place of the student evaluation tools typically used by your unit or program.
- We are advocating for the use of instructor self-reflection in lieu of Spring 2020 student evaluation data in the 2019-20 Professional Activities Report (PAR). Units may still include typically used student evaluation data from Fall 2019.
- Data collected from the student survey for Spring 2020 should not be used for the purposes of annual review or promotion and tenure decisions. Individual instructors may choose to include this feedback from students in the self-reflection. For Spring 2020, we are waiving the requirements of the “Policy on Student Feedback on Instruction” located on page 107 of the faculty handbook.

Why we're doing this:

- Our existing tools do not speak to the circumstances we're experiencing, and traditional student evaluations are most effective when they are context specific.
- We continue to value student feedback and student voices, and need to ensure that they have an opportunity to provide feedback on their learning during this time. This information will help us better understand strategies that are more successful.
- During this unprecedented time, we are unable to adapt the current tools to an online format for numerous reasons, including the increased workload at all stages of the process.

Key points to consider:

- Student evaluations of teaching are best used in the context of comparisons over time, for the same instructor teaching the same course. They capture the effect of changes to a course and for the instructor, on student perspectives and experience in the course. With the significant shift to remote instruction for the final third of the semester, it is difficult to interpret student evaluations of teaching in this compare-and-contrast manner. As a result, typical tools for student evaluation of teaching are not a particularly useful way to evaluate teaching effectiveness in present circumstances.
- We recommend a mindset shift from “evaluation of teaching” to “gathering feedback,” particularly for the Spring 2020 semester. Focus on finding out about student and

instructor experiences to inform future actions and decision-making (for both unit leadership and for individual instructors).

- One of the challenges faced by student evaluations of teaching is the simple fact that more recent events tend to play a more significant role in their ratings of instruction, and it is difficult to take a longer-term view of things. As a result, it is likely that students asked to evaluate their experience in a course this semester will almost surely provide feedback that is highly informed by their experience during this second half of the semester, even when prompted to focus on the first part of the semester. The questions on this survey will focus on the second half of the semester.
- Student bias on student evaluations of teaching is a well-studied phenomenon. During this time of heightened emotional and mental stress, we can expect this type of bias to increase. To help mitigate this, we are carefully framing the survey questions for students by acknowledging this potential bias. This is also why we are not using this data for annual review, promotion, and tenure decisions.

Alternative to Typical Student Evaluations Data for Annual Review, Promotion, and Tenure Decisions:

- **Instructor Self-Reflection & Reporting:** Instructor reflection on their teaching is a good practice to encourage every semester, and it can be particularly useful after significant changes have been made to a course. In addition to contributing to iterative course development, this reflection on teaching practices can inform an individual's narrative related to their development as an instructor. Given the larger scale disruption to instruction experienced this semester, this is a useful way for instructors to share and reflect on the adaptations they made and the challenges they faced.
 1. We strongly encourage faculty to use the following prompts in their PAR as a way of reflecting on teaching during Spring 2020. What did I do as an instructor to reduce student apprehension and anxiety during this time of disruption? What might I do more of should this happen again?
 2. Which course modifications were most/least successful in terms of my ability to:
 - maintain student engagement in their learning?
 - effectively identify student progress and barriers to learning along the way?
 - effectively assess student learning for their final grade? What (specifically) worked well?
 3. What unexpected student needs did I encounter? What did I learn from those experiences?
 4. What challenges did I face in moving to emergency remote instruction?

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DRAFT Student Feedback Form, Spring 2020

[Qualtrics Survey]

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Due to the unique nature of the Spring 2020 semester, we are adjusting our usual end-of-course evaluation procedures. Please use this form to share your insights into best practices used by your instructor during the remote instruction portion of the Spring 2020 semester. We will use this feedback to inform our future teaching, and to help us better serve students like you.

In addition, please consider sending a thank-you note to an instructor, TA, peer mentor, or staff member who has positively impacted you during this unusual semester. [[LINK HERE](#)].

1. Did you ever choose to take a course taught exclusively online or through remote delivery in the past? [Yes, No, I don't remember].
2. What positive strategies or approaches did this instructor use, during the remote instruction phase of the Spring 2020 semester (e.g. method/tone of communication, approaches to content delivery or engagement, redesigned/reformatted assignments, strategies for maintaining community, strategies to support students regardless of computer/internet access, etc.)? [OPEN ANSWER]
3. What positive strategies or approaches did you use to support yourself and your learning in this course, during the remote instruction phase of the Spring 2020 semester (e.g. strategies for time management, approaches to communication with instructor and student support staff, self-care strategies, etc.)? [OPEN ANSWER]
4. Additional Comments: Please use this space to share additional comments about your experiences during the remote instruction phase of the Spring 2020 semester. [OPEN ANSWER]

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