



University Council

February 14, 2020

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2019-2020

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal for a new Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 23, Measurement of Teaching Effectiveness, will be an agenda item for the February 21, 2020, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting. This agenda item was tabled at the January 24, 2020, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting for further revisions.

Sincerely,

John Maerz, Chair

University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu
Dr. Rahul Shrivastav

Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 23, Measurement of Teaching Effectiveness

1. References

- a. Board of Regents Policy Manual, Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, Policy 8.3.5.1, Faculty
- b. University of Georgia Academic Affairs Policy 4.07-16, End-of-Term Course Evaluations, adopted by the University Council Curriculum Committee, February 10, 2010
- c. University of Georgia Academic Affairs Policy 1.06, Evaluation
- d. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Principles of Accreditation 2018 Edition, Principle 6.3, Faculty Evaluation
- e. Adopted by the University Council [date].

2. Objectives

Evaluation of teaching in higher education emphasizes the use of three sources of evidence: students, trained peers, and self. Focusing on three sources of evidence for measuring teaching effectiveness avoids prescribing a single, perfect, or model program and provides a method by which departments will develop their own approach for evaluation following good principles and best practices.

3. Policy

The three sources of evidence for measuring teaching effectiveness will consist of: a) student voice or student end-of-course evaluation, b) trained peer voice, and c) instructor voice or self-evaluation.

a. Student Voice/Student End-of-Course Evaluation

Students must be given the opportunity to complete a common, campus-wide, end-of-course evaluation, which is centralized, standardized, automated, and recorded, for all courses taught by a faculty member, including those taught by adjuncts and graduate assistants.

- The end-of-course evaluation survey must include the eleven common course questions listed in section 4a.
- The end-of-course evaluation survey may include optional unit-specific questions.
- The end-of-course evaluation survey may include additional questions that specifically relate to the format of the course, such as online, Service Learning, Experiential Learning, Study Abroad/Field Study, Honors, or Research.

The following courses are excluded from this requirement:

- Courses involving individual instruction, such as independent study, internships, practicums, and thesis and dissertation supervision.

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- Class sections for which the number of possible respondents to the instrument is so small as to make it possible to identify individual students, thus compromising their confidentiality and possibly biasing their responses, or render results of limited statistical usefulness, such as any course where the number enrolled is less than or equal to five.

For multiple instructor courses, a separate survey will be provided for each instructor who is instructor of record for more than 10% of the course. The instructor(s) should not be present while the survey is being completed.

Faculty, including graduate teaching assistants, will have access to student comments associated with their course after grades have been submitted and may download them for personal use. Access beyond the faculty member or instructor teaching the course will be determined by the College and where granted, will be granted only to those having a supervisory relationship to the faculty member and their designees (e.g., deans, department chairs, college and department evaluation administrators). Colleges wishing to grant access must make a request to the Office of Instruction.

Student Midterm Course Evaluations

Midterm course evaluations are optional. Midterm course evaluations such as surveys or moderated discussions can be used to support instructors in making improvement during the semester, but should not be kept as a record and should not be used to evaluate the instructor during the promotion and tenure process or annual evaluations.

b. Trained Peer Voice

All units must develop a trained peer evaluation process that follows the principles of effective peer evaluation for both formative and summative purposes while keeping workload reasonable. Whenever possible, individuals should be selected from within the unit to serve as peer evaluators; however, they can be drawn from other units if needed. These individuals should not only be charged with evaluating the teaching of their colleagues, but also with serving as learners who will assist the unit in understanding the connections, opportunities, and challenges, such as how courses relate to each other across the curriculum.

c. Instructor Voice/Self-Evaluation

All faculty members are expected to reflect annually on their teaching efforts, with the goal of improving effectiveness.

4. Guidelines

a. Student Voice/Student End-of-Course Evaluations

It is recommended that instructors provide time in class for students to complete the online survey, ensuring a better response rate and more consistent responses. Students should be given at least 15 minutes to complete the survey.

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i. Required Questions

The following eleven common course evaluation questions must be included on all end-of-course evaluation surveys. Units may also add additional questions.

1. The instructor clearly defined and explained the course objectives and expectations.
Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
2. The instructor effectively engaged students in class.
Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
3. I have a deeper understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.
Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
4. The instructor was responsive to student inquiries in a timely manner.
Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
5. I would take another course with this instructor.
Choose one: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
6. Overall, the instructor was:
Choose one: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor
7. Overall, the course was:
Choose one: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor
8. What grade do you expect that you will earn in this course?
Choose one: A, B, C, D, F
9. What were the main strengths of the course?
10. What suggestions do you have for improving the course?
11. Do you have any additional comments?

ii. Required Statement

To make students aware of implicit biases in student evaluations, the following statement will be included on all end-of-term course evaluations:

*“Student evaluations of teaching play an important role in the review of faculty. Your opinions influence the review of instructors that takes place every year. The University of Georgia recognizes that student evaluations of teaching are often influenced by students’ **unconscious and unintentional** biases about the personal characteristics of the instructor.*

As you fill out the course evaluation, please focus on the quality of the instruction and the content of the course (e.g., assignments, textbook, in-class material) and not unrelated matters (e.g., instructor’s appearance).”

iii. Course Evaluation Responses

End-of-course survey summary scores are statistical data that are difficult to compare among different courses and instructors. Thus, guidelines for interpreting course survey data that will be used as part of the evaluation process should be developed by the departmental voting faculty a minimum of one year in advance of the faculty evaluation process for which they will be used. This will help to ensure (a) that the individual being evaluated and those conducting the evaluation have a mutual understanding regarding procedures, standards, and expectations, and (b) that the criteria for evaluation are consistently applied to all individuals being evaluated by a unit.

Several factors should be taken into account when developing guidelines for the interpretation of end-of-course surveys. Course level, requirements, content and difficulty, class size and composition, teaching style, and response rate can all influence end-of-course survey responses and thus limit the usefulness and meaning of summary statistical data. Therefore, departmental voting faculty should evaluate a given instructor/course based on scores provided for that instructor/course combination from year to year to assess consistency and improvements made to ensure quality teaching. Furthermore, end-of-course surveys provide ordinal data that should be evaluated using distributions rather than averages. Results of the entire evaluation with a distribution of responses, number of students, course GPA (if possible), and response rate should be reported to the dean, the department chair, and the faculty member. Units will have discretion regarding further distribution and comparison within departments.

Midterm Course Evaluations

Midterm course evaluations are optional, but can provide instructors with feedback on how to improve their courses and allow students an opportunity to provide input before the academic period is complete. The Center for Teaching and Learning holds workshops on effective use of midterm course evaluations and maintains information on its website regarding how to develop, implement, and make use of midterm course evaluations.

Questions for a midterm course evaluation may include open-ended items such as:

- What is the instructor doing well that they should keep doing?
- What elements of the course are helping you learn?
- What specific things should the instructor do differently to help you learn?
- What specific suggestions do you have for improving the course so you are better able to learn?

b. Trained Peer Voice

To develop a peer evaluation process, units should use a collaborative process to develop criteria and instruments to assess teaching using peer evaluation. Units are encouraged to develop clear, well-articulated expectations for teaching effectiveness, and sponsor a process to support teaching skill development. Any pilot evaluation programs should evaluate teaching in relatively low-stakes contexts, such as annual evaluations, and be focused on professional development and growth of the instructor.

The Center for Teaching and Learning will play an important role in helping units design and implement their processes, including providing training, resources, and examples for the following:

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- How to conduct effective peer evaluations, including selecting appropriate evaluators and evaluation tools, establishing common guidelines, and conducting course observations;
- How to provide formative feedback on teaching in writing and in person; and
- How to write summative evaluations of teaching effectiveness that accurately reflect the trajectory of an individual's teaching over time.

Departments should also consider including individuals from other departments who will bring an outside perspective to the unit in peer evaluations. Selected individuals should complete training offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning on how to prepare for, conduct, and debrief a peer evaluation. Peer evaluators should make use of multiple sources of evidence, including review of syllabi, instructional and assessment materials, and observations of instruction to maximize the trustworthiness of the evaluation and reduce potential for bias. At the completion of each peer evaluation, the evaluators should meet briefly with the faculty member to discuss findings, answer questions, and discuss possible approaches for teaching development. A brief summary of the findings and the discussion should be written by the peer evaluators and shared confidentially with the faculty member and the department head. This summary should focus on describing and evaluating the trajectory of the candidate's teaching effectiveness and teaching improvement over time rather than teaching effectiveness at any single point in time. Peer evaluators should work together at key evaluation timepoints, such as for third-year reviews and promotions, to synthesize data from the peer evaluations. Departments that have been using peer evaluation that meet these guidelines can continue with their existing process.

Priority should be placed on completing peer evaluations of tenure-track faculty during the probationary period and lecturers annually/biennially, but should continue throughout a faculty member's teaching career. Peer evaluations should be conducted in a way that promotes continuous improvement. For example, peer evaluations could be conducted twice for the same course for a given faculty member, or twice for different types of courses. The aim is to allow the faculty member to take action on feedback between the two sets of evaluations.

c. Instructor Voice/Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluations frequently take the form of statements included in annual progress reports or documentation of teaching accomplishments over the evaluation period. Instruments for self-evaluation may include structured forms that document the type of course taught, number of students taught, teaching objectives, activities, accomplishments, shortcomings, and plans for improvement. Checklists and writing prompts for reflection may also be used as a part of the process. Self-evaluations should be utilized with other measures of teaching effectiveness, such as peer evaluations, to illustrate how the instructor is thinking about their teaching and taking steps to improve over time based on evidence gathered from student end-of-course evaluations and peer evaluations. The Center for Teaching and Learning will support faculty in learning how to reflect on their teaching and write self-reflections by offering professional development and providing advice and exemplars on its website.