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University Council

April 16, 2021

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2020-2021

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Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal for a new Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 23, Improvement and Documentation of Teaching Effectiveness, will be an agenda item for the April 23, 2021, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting. This agenda item was tabled at the January 24, 2020, and February 21, 2020, Full University Curriculum Committee meetings for further revisions.

Sincerely,

John Maerz, Chair

University Curriculum Committee

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu
Dr. Rahul Shrivastav



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Office of
Instruction

April 2, 2021

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To: University Curriculum and Faculty Affairs Committee
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Subject: Proposal to Improve Measurement of Teaching Effectiveness

The 2017 President's Task Force on Student Learning and Success contained twelve recommendations to improve student learning and success at the University of Georgia. Recommendation #7 was a proposal to strengthen systems to document and promote effective teaching at the University of Georgia. Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro and I co-chaired a committee (Dr. Peggy Brickman, Dr. Gary Greene, Dr. Andrew Owsiak) that met several times to examine approaches to improve the measurement and documentation of teaching effectiveness on campus. This past summer, two faculty members, Dr. Erin Dolan and Paula Lemons, with expertise and interest in this topic offered their input on the report the committee had prepared.

Essentially, this proposal outlines an approach where an instructor's teaching effectiveness should be measured by more than end-of-course evaluations alone. The proposal states that teaching effectiveness should include a student voice (end-of-course evaluations), peer voice (a system of peer evaluation), and a self-reflective piece from the instructor. The committee examined end-of-course evaluations from our peer and aspirational institutions and the questions listed in the proposal are in alignment with our peer and aspirants. Units can add to this list of ten questions as they see fit. The peer evaluation section contain broad guidelines on how units should proceed to develop a peer evaluation system. There is no one size fits all for this type of procedure given the diversity of units across campus.

**Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 23,
Improvement and Documentation 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 voices that provide distinct types of evidence: students, trained peers, and self. The systematic collection of evidence from these three voices helps improve teaching over time and ensures that teaching evaluation is systematic and equitable. This policy provides guidance for departments to establish their own approaches for teaching evaluation to improve teaching over time and ensure fair and equitable evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

3. Policy

In order to support teaching improvement over time and ensure fair and equitable evaluation of teaching effectiveness, three sources of evidence will be used: a) student voice in the form of student end-of-course evaluations, b) peer voice in the form of trained peer observations and feedback, and c) instructor voice in the form of self-evaluations.

- A. Student Voice: Student end-of-course evaluation.** Students will complete a common, campus-wide, end-of-course evaluation, which is centralized, standardized, automated, and recorded, for all courses, including those taught by adjunct faculty and graduate assistants. 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. Instructors 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 instructor teaching the course will be determined by the College and will be granted only to those having a supervisory relationship to the instructor and their designees (e.g., deans, department chairs, college and department evaluation administrators).
 - i. **Required end-of-course evaluation questions:** The end-of-course evaluation survey will include the following 11 common course questions with a response scale of *Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*, unless otherwise indicated. Units may add additional questions. Units can add their own questions to the survey if desired.

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1. The instructor clearly defined and explained the course objectives and expectations.
2. The instructor effectively engaged students in class.
3. I have a deeper understanding of the subject matter as a result of this course.
4. The instructor was responsive to student inquiries in a timely manner.
5. I would take another course with this instructor.
6. Overall, the instructor was: *Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor*
7. Overall, the course was: *Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor*
8. What grade do you expect that you will earn in this course? *A, B, C, D, F*
9. What were the main strengths of the course? (*open ended and optional*)
10. What suggestions do you have for improving the course? (*open ended and optional*)
11. Do you have any additional comments? (*open ended and optional*)

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

“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 characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, or gender).”

iii. Exceptions. The following courses are excluded from this requirement in order to protect student confidentiality and ensure fair and equitable evaluation of teaching:

- Courses involving individual instruction, such as independent study, internships, practicums, and thesis and dissertation supervision.
- 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.
- Professional degree programs (J.D., Pharm.D., D.V.M.) are excluded from this policy if they have student end-of-course evaluation questions and processes in place that are consistent with their accreditation procedures.

B. Peer Voice: Trained peer observations and feedback. Units will establish a peer evaluation process for full-time faculty in order to support teaching improvement over time and document teaching effectiveness fairly and equitably. Peer evaluators can be selected from within or outside the unit and are expected to complete training on how to conduct and give feedback on peer evaluations of instruction fairly and equitably. Peer evaluation processes should include:

- Multiple sources of evidence, including syllabi, instructional and assessment materials, and observations of instruction to maximize the trustworthiness of the evaluation and reduce potential for bias;
- When observations of instruction are used, they should include a brief pre-observation meeting with the instructor to discuss goals for the observation and a brief post-observation

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meeting with the instructor to discuss findings, answer questions, and discuss possible approaches for teaching development.

- A brief written summary of the findings to be shared confidentially with the faculty member.
- A method, to be determined by the Unit, for using formative feedback from peers in summative teaching evaluations, such as promotion dossiers.

Units may establish their own timelines for peer evaluation, while ensuring that peer evaluations are conducted at least twice prior to promotion (e.g., Assistant to Associate, Associate to Full, Lecturer to Senior Lecturer) and during continuing review periods in order to allow for teaching improvement over time and enable identification and documentation of changes in teaching effectiveness.

- C. Instructor Voice: Self-evaluations.** All faculty members are strongly encouraged to reflect in writing annually on their teaching efforts, with the goal of improving teaching effectiveness over time. Self-evaluations provide a venue for the instructor to explain their thinking about their teaching as well as how they are making teaching decisions over time based on evidence gathered from student end-of-course evaluations, peer evaluations, and other sources of knowledge about teaching effectiveness such as those described in the University Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Guidelines on Contributions to Teaching. Self-evaluations can be included in annual progress reports and in summative teaching evaluations, such as promotion dossiers, as a complement to and context for student and peer evaluations. Units may establish their own format. Guidelines for formats are provided in the attached Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Academic Rank Faculty.

GUIDELINES FOR APPOINTMENT, PROMOTION AND TENURE

for items that provide summary evaluations of the course and instructor, if collected by the department or unit.

- b. Representative student comments that attest to a teacher's abilities to arouse student interest and to stimulate their work should be reported for the previous three years. Candidates seeking early promotion may provide this information for the previous two years.
 - c. Evaluation by students being trained in clinical, laboratory, field or teaching-hospital activities.
 - d. Letters of evaluation from former students attesting to the candidate's instructional performance both within the traditional classroom setting and beyond it.
 - e. Performance of students on uniform examinations or in standardized courses.
 - f. Accomplishments of the teacher's present and former students, including information to show the students' success both in learning the subject matter of the discipline and in pursuing it to a point of intellectual significance.
 - g. Effective direction of graduate study including theses and dissertations.
 - h. Evidence of students coming from other institutions especially to study with the teacher.
 - i. Successful direction of individual student work such as independent studies, special student projects and student seminars.
 - j. Evidence of effective advisement of students.
4. Effectiveness shown by peer evaluation of expertise in instruction.
- a. Peer evaluations by colleagues/supervisors who are familiar with the candidate's teaching, have team-taught with the candidate, used instructional materials designed by the candidate, or have taught the candidate's students in subsequent courses.
 - b. Selection for teaching special courses and programs.
 - c. Participation in special teaching activities outside the University, including international assignments, special lectureships, panel presentations, seminar participation and international study and development projects.
 - d. Membership on special bodies concerned with teaching, such as accreditation teams and special commissions.
 - e. Invitations to testify before academic or governmental groups concerned with educational programs.