

Policy for the Evaluation of Teaching

- Directive (9/87) from Provost King
 - Policy for the Evaluation of Teaching (for Advancement and Promotion)
 - Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations
-

Berkeley: OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

September 18, 1987

DEANS, PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES:

Re: Policy for Evaluation of Teaching (for Advancement and Promotion)

Last year the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations asked the Senate Committee on Teaching to formulate a comprehensive policy with guidelines for how the assessment of teaching should be presented in recommendations for faculty promotion or advancement. The Committee on Teaching conducted a review, which included among other things invoking the aid of faculty who have received the Distinguished Teaching Awards.

Their statement, "Policy for the Evaluation of Teaching (for Advancement and Promotion)" and its attachment, "Recommendations for Administering and Analyzing Student Course Evaluations," are enclosed. Please distribute these documents to your respective teaching units. The Policy has the full endorsement of the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations and unit heads are urged to follow it as closely as possible.

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Provost, Professional Schools and Colleges

Attachment

POLICY FOR THE EVALUATION OF TEACHING (FOR ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION)

Committee on Teaching
April, 1987

I. Criteria for Advancement Promotion

The University community believes that excellence in teaching and excellence in research go hand in hand, and as a matter of policy teaching and research are both essential duties of every faculty member. Promotion depends upon the demonstration of excellence in both areas.

The essential question in the evaluation of teaching is whether the candidate contributes in an effective, creative, and appropriate way to the teaching mission of the department. Attention should be paid to the varieties of demands placed on instructors and the range of teaching activities called for in various disciplines and at various levels. It is imperative that clear documentation of ability in teaching be included in all advancement and promotion cases. Incomplete advancement or promotion cases will be returned to the originating department. While no two cases will be alike, there are several recurring themes which may be addressed in the preparation of the teaching component and several useful techniques for verifying performance in these areas.

II. Aspects of Teaching to be Evaluated

Teaching plays a major role in decisions regarding advancement and promotion. Therefore, an explicit discussion of the teaching performance of a faculty member is essential. The following components of teaching may be evaluated in a personnel review decision.

Design and redesign of courses. Does the course "work"? Are the course objectives reasonable? Are course requirements clearly stated and communicated to students? Is the course continuously updated to reflect recent developments in the field?

Presentation of material. Does the teacher convey enthusiasm for the subject matter? Does the teacher present material with logic and force, arousing curiosity in beginning students and stimulating advanced students to creative work?

Command of the subject. Is the instructor knowledgeable in the subject matter of the courses he or she teaches? Does the instructor engage in reading or research in the subject matter of the course in order to keep up to date with current research developments?

Contributions to curriculum and instruction. Has the teacher developed instructional materials, such as textbooks, videotapes, computer courseware, slides, publications related to

teaching, or the like? In what ways has the teacher participated in departmental or campus curriculum design or development efforts?

Directing student research. How active is the teacher in guiding the research projects of graduate and undergraduate students?

Advising. What formal advising duties or informal advising has the teacher undertaken? How much time does the teacher spend consulting with students?

Guiding and supervising Graduate Student Instructors. To what extent has the teacher prepared, trained, and supervised graduate student instructors?

III. Sources and Methods for Evaluating Teaching

Each department or teaching unit can be expected to have a unique culture which supports and encourages teaching excellence and which will have its own traditions of teaching evaluation that serve to define and reinforce that culture. Departments should work to improve their evaluation methods and seek to make them supportive and encouraging rather than investigative or punitive. The following is a list of sources of information for evaluating teaching; departments will choose those most appropriate for the particular case.

The candidate's **faculty colleagues** who have appropriate expertise in the discipline are best able to evaluate the scholarship that informs the design and organization of courses and curriculum, the choice or development of texts and other instructional materials (syllabus, handouts, etc.), the nature of examinations and assignments, and so on.

Current students can comment on an instructor's ability to communicate clearly, the extent and level of the instructor's course preparation, whether the instructor makes effective use of class time, how sensitive and responsive the instructor is to difficulties students may be having in the course, the workload, and so on. Students should not be used to judge the adequacy, relevance, and timeliness of the course content nor the breadth of the instructor's knowledge and scholarship.

Former students can comment on the long-term effectiveness of the candidate's teaching: for example, the role of the instructor's courses in preparing the student for advanced study or work in the discipline.

If the candidate teaches with **Graduate Student Instructors**, these students can often comment on the teachers role and effectiveness in the classroom and in preparing, training, supervising and evaluating GSIs.

Self-evaluations can be both descriptive and evaluative and may address such issues as teaching goals and philosophy, involvement in curriculum projects, efforts to improve teaching, and so on.

Various methods can be used to gather data from these sources: rating forms or detailed questionnaires, written appraisals (letters or responses to open-ended questions on rating forms), interviews, observations, and so on. Combining sources and methods, it is possible to collect a variety of information about a faculty member's teaching. For example, colleagues can evaluate instructional materials or observe an instructor's classroom teaching. Students can complete evaluation forms at the end of a course, participate in individual or group interviews, or fill out surveys when they graduate.

IV. The Teaching Dossier

A teaching dossier should include the following items:

Departmental letter summarizing the candidate's teaching. A carefully prepared Chair's letter is an essential part of a dossier. An effective letter from the chair will describe departmental teaching evaluation procedures, the nature and quality of a candidate's teaching, and the evidence upon which this evaluation is based.

Departmental ad hoc committee report for mid-career review, promotion to tenure, and promotion to professor. For these types of reviews, departments are encouraged to convene an ad hoc committee (two or more faculty members) to examine evaluation data and assess a candidate's teaching performance. The ad hoc committee's report should be included in the dossier.

Candidate's statement. It is helpful if candidates provide a written statement of their teaching approach, including the goals of specific courses and choices of teaching strategies. They may also comment about their efforts to improve instruction and respond to criticisms of their teaching performance made by the department chair and by students on end-of-course evaluations.

Description of courses taught. A list of courses by course number and enrollment should be included. The candidate may wish to comment on the courses indicating which are new, team taught, and so on.

Description of student research directed. Candidates may want to describe their role in directing senior theses, masters and doctoral studies, and postdoctoral scholars. The number of graduate students successfully completing degree work could also be included (indicate the date each student began graduate school).

Peer evaluation. Reports or letters about the candidate's teaching performance from faculty colleagues familiar with the content could be included in the dossier. The letters should cite the basis and evidence for judgments made (observation, review of instructional materials, and so on).

Student evaluation. Some form of student evaluation data (e.g., end-of-semester student ratings) for each different course taught in the period under review should be presented. The data should

include both summaries of student evaluations of teaching and sufficient "raw" data (i.e., representative student comments) to allow the reviewers to see the candidate's teaching from the students' point of view. In addition, the dossier can include letters from current students or summaries of interviews.

Alumni evaluation. Former students, as well as Graduate Student Instructors (if the candidate teaches with GSIs), can provide information about the candidate's teaching performance. Dossiers may include letters, results of group interviews, or summaries of surveys of alumni that specifically address the candidate's teaching.

V. Resources for Evaluating Teaching

The Office of Educational Development, under the auspices of the Committee on Teaching, has prepared a handbook that suggests a range of useful methods and procedures for evaluating teaching.

April, 1987

COMMITTEE ON TEACHING
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AND ANALYZING STUDENT
COURSE EVALUATIONS

(adopted from **Evaluating Teaching: Handbook of Ideas** by the Office of Educational Development)

Student course evaluations (or students ratings) are one source of data about teaching. Although departments may use any type of evaluation form to obtain student opinion, since 1975 it has been required that students numerically rate each instructor on the following question:

"Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor?"

Scale of 1-7, 1 indicating not at all effective, 4 indicating moderately effective and 7 indicating extremely effective.

It is recommended that departmental evaluation forms give students the opportunity both to numerically rate instructors and to comment narratively on instructors' performance.

Frequency of administration. Every course should be evaluated by students each time it is offered. Evaluation data from each course should be included in the dossier for personnel review, with the following exceptions: New assistant professors may choose not to have data from their first year of teaching reported, and experienced faculty members teaching new or experimental course for the first time may decide to omit evaluation data from their review.

Procedures for administering student evaluation forms. Departments have the prerogative to determine the nature of their questionnaire, but procedures for administering forms should be fair and standardized across campus, and systematic efforts should be made to obtain student evaluations of courses. A recommended procedure is described below:

A set number of blank evaluation forms are distributed to each faculty member for each class.

Sufficient class time is designated for students to fill out questionnaires (evaluations are best not distributed at the final exam, when students have other things on their minds, but rather during the last two weeks of the term).

Students are informed about the purpose of the evaluation.

The instructor designates a student from the class (or a staff person) to supervise the evaluation.

Students complete the questionnaires while the faculty member is absent from the room.

The designated student (or departmental staff person) collects the evaluation forms and places them in an envelope, noting on the outside the instructor's name, the course number, the total number of students present, the total number of forms collected and the date. The student then signs the envelope and files it with the department.

The responses are summarized (using a computer, if possible, for quantitative questions) by the staff or designated group and made available to the instructor only after final grades have been submitted.

Summaries of the numerical ratings and qualitative comments are maintained in secure departmental files.

Procedures for analyzing student evaluation forms. Whether the data are summarized by hand or by computer, it is recommended that:

The summary include the number of completed questionnaires upon which the summary data are based and the percentage of class enrollment represented by the data. If summaries indicate less than two-thirds return of student evaluations, an explanation for the missing data must be included.

Data be summarized separately for each offering of each course. (Aggregating data for several different courses may obscure differences in teaching effectiveness for various kinds of instruction and may raise questions of proper weighting of the responses in each course. Aggregating data for several offerings of the same course may obscure long-term trends toward increased or decreased student satisfaction.)

If there are fewer than 10 student questionnaires for a course, they should not be summarized but simply included in the dossier. Student questionnaires from independent reading courses or seminars with small enrollments may be accumulated over several terms and summarized when their numbers are sufficiently large.

If there are more than 10 student questionnaires, for questions that are quantifiable, the summary should include:

- a. frequency distribution of student ratings for each item;
- b. average response, specified as either the mean, mode, or median;

c. departmental norms (averages) or comparison norms on key items for courses of a similar size, level, and kind of instruction (e.g., laboratory seminar, lecture, studio).

If there are more than 10 student questionnaires, for questions that are qualitative, the responses (or a representative sample in large classes) should be summarized by the departmental staff or designated group in such a way that the full range of comments as well as their preponderance is accurately represented.

Departments should retain raw student evaluation data for three years for all faculty; summary information (including statistical data and syntheses of open ended responses) should become a permanent part of the teacher's file.

Department chairs should meet with faculty members whose ratings are significantly below departmental norms to advise them of ways they might improve their teaching and to inform them of the campus resource for instructional improvement, the Office of Educational Development.