

Faculty Perceptions of Teaching Evaluations

This ad hoc committee was charged, by Faculty Senate, to study faculty concerns about course evaluations and report on common concerns across the university.

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Faculty received e-mail invitations to access and respond to an online survey. There were 144 responses which represent 44% of 326 faculty.

27 departments and all colleges represented; 72% of respondents have tenure

Responses by College:

COE:	32	21.6%
L&S:	58	39.2%
CAC:	22	14.9%
CBE:	29	19.6%

1. How frequently is your teaching evaluated by students?

All courses, every semester	131	91%
All, some semesters	4	2.8%
Infrequently, at least once per year	3	2.1%
Some, every semester	4	2.8%
Some, some semesters	2	1.4%

2. How is the format of evaluations determined?

All by me	7	4.9%
By my college	14	9.7%
By my department	96	66.7%
Some by department, some by me	25	17.4%
Unknown	2	1.4%

3. What type of questions are used?

Combination of forced choice & Open ended	76	52.8%
Open-ended questions	1	.7%
Statements with Likert type Scales (forced choice)	67	46.5%

4. How is anonymity of student responses assured? (check all that apply)

No student names required	125	86.8%
Instructor leaves the room while the evaluations are filled out	135	93.8%
Responses to open ended items are typed out for the instructor	34	23.6%
A proctor gives and collects the evaluations	63	43.8%

Other: included students delivering

forms to department office (3)
and online eval. used (1)

5. Are student evaluations results adjusted for any of the following factors (check all that apply)

Type of class	9	6.3%
Class size	2	1.4%
Course required for major	5	3.5%
Course not required	6	4.2%
Graduate course	1	.7%
Undergraduate course	2	1.4%

Comments included 7 that said that these things may be considered unofficially within the department but the raw scores are reported as is And one respondent said that the form and questions are tailored to the course type.

6. Are results summarized into One score?
- | | | |
|-----|-----|-------|
| No | 37 | 25.7% |
| Yes | 106 | 73.6% |

7. How long does it take for you to get the results?

Less than one month	45	31.3%
2-3 months	79	54.9%
3-4 months	21	14.6%
More than 5 months	4	2.8%

8. Generally, do you get results before or after grades are given?
- | | | |
|-------|-----|-------|
| After | 141 | 97.9% |
|-------|-----|-------|

9. In what format do you get the results? (there were multiple replies to this open-ended question)

40	Raw data
57	mean of each item
32	mean for the course (all items averaged)
31	Grand mean for the semester (all course means averaged)
1	mean for just 5 questions
12	means compared to department means
17	Dispersion of scores – mean, SD, etc
8	medians
7	mean of medians
1	mode
1	Reported as Low/Mean/high/Your score (first 3 are department scores)
24	Actual responses to open ended items
4	Typed copies of open ended items
1	Copies of all responses

- 1 Single score on questions for 100-200 level course, another single score for 300-400 level courses)
- 1 Use a 5-point scale
- 1 Do averages ourselves

10. What, if any, other information is included in the overall evaluation of your teaching performance?

Number of preparations	51	35.4%
Number of courses taught	54	37.5%
New course	74	51.4%
Teaching improvement opportunities		
Taken	74	51.4%
Peer evaluations	104	72.2%
Other included: advising, self-eval., Portfolio and teacher's own course-specific evaluations	6	4%

11. What concerns do you have about the way student evaluation of teaching is handled?

Responses were coded into 10 categories

1. Student grades correspond to evaluation	1	.7%
2. Emphasis on quantitative data	6	5.1%
3. Lack of emphasis on qualitative data	4	2.8%
4. Relevance of the evaluation process	7	4.9%
5. Comparability: validity issue	33	22.9%
6. Differences in the process for tenure And probationary status	3	2.1%
7. Corruption of the process: student revenge, student fear of faculty revenge, pandering by faculty	22	15.3%
8. Reliability of scoring (student ability to judge)	19	13.2%
9. No problem	11	7.6%
10. Other	9	6.3%

(27 – no response)

These responses were crossed with College affiliation.

VAR00003 * VAR00001 Crosstabulation

Count	VAR00001					Total
	.00	COE	L&S	A&C	B&E	
VAR00003 .00	0	0	1	0	1	2
1.00	0	0	1	0	0	1
2.00	0	1	3	2	0	6
3.00	0	0	1	1	2	4
4.00	0	5	0	0	2	7
5.00	0	11	15	4	3	33
6.00	0	1	1	0	1	3
7.00	0	2	12	4	4	22
8.00	1	4	8	3	3	19
9.00	0	4	2	0	2	11
10.00	0	3	4	0	2	9
Total	1	31	48	17	20	117

Variables in left column correspond to numbered variables described above.

Conclusions:

1. Many respondents have one or more concerns – Question 11 –even though the concerns aren't evenly distributed among colleges. The 3 areas most often mentioned were the validity issues (comparability of scores), corruption of scores related to pandering or fear, reliability of scoring as questions about student ability to judge teaching – more than 50%.
2. Only 25 respondents reported that student evaluation numbers are adjusted for factors related to things like class size or level.
3. There is a variety of reporting methods (question 9) that call into question the comparability of the results and how the data impacts individuals in the reappointment, promotion and tenure process.
4. 67% report that the format is dictated by the department which call into question issues of comparability
5. Use of means and means of means over simplifies complex information into virtual uselessness.
6. There is widespread use of peer evaluations and teaching improvement opportunities which suggest that there is motivation to take advantage of other sources of information about teaching, despite the emphasis on students evaluation numerical data.

Suggested next steps:

1. Develop a comprehensive system for the evaluation of teaching of which course evaluation is a part. This system will ensure validity and reliability of the process.
2. The development of the system will reside in the LEARN Center. LEARN center personnel will aid departments with developing valid and reliable instruments as well as other processes that inform the improvement of teaching.
3. Request an explanation from University Administration regarding their view of the role of course evaluations in the promotion and tenure process to inform Colleges and Departments regarding the support of faculty.
4. Develop a consistent process by which new faculty are informed about the role of the evaluation of teaching in the promotion and tenure process.