SENATE FORUM

Student Ratings of Instruction at CSUF— Perspectives and Recommendations

I n the 2004-05 cycle of University Planning Initiatives, the University funded a project entitled "Improving the Student Evaluation of Teaching Program: A Planning Grant." The purpose of the project was "to review student evaluation forms and processes in order to modernize the process." Noting that some campuses currently collect student evaluation data electronically, the proposal called for sending two or three members of a planning committee to visit such campuses. Additionally, funds were provided to engage a consultant specializing in effective student evaluation. Finally, the proposal called for consultation between the committee, IT staff, and a technology consultant on issues of (a) compatibility with CMS and (b) security of electronic collection systems. The planning committee currently comprises Vipin Agrawal, Rhonda Allen, Jo-Anne Andre, Margaret Atwell, Paul Deland, Al Flores, Phil Gianos, Ellen Junn, Susan Kachner, Mike McGee, G. Nanjundappa, Roberta Rikli, Patricia Szeszulski, Kristen Stang, and Fred Zandpour.

Current Procedures
Procedures guiding the evaluation of faculty at Cal State Fullerton are detailed in UPS 210.000 (Faculty Personnel and Procedures), UPS 210.050 (Personnel Policy for Full-Time Temporary Faculty, and

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UPS 210.060 (Personnel Policy for Part-Time Lecturers). These documents may not conflict with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the California Faculty Association and the Board of Trustees of the CSU (see Article 15 Evaluation), with policies of the Board of Trustees, with the California Administrative Code, Title 5, or with other applicable state and federal laws.

Number of Classes Surveyed

The CBA and these campus policies vary regarding the number of classes in which SRI forms must be administered. The lower limit is set in the CBA, which requires that written student questionnaire evaluations be conducted in a minimum of two classes annually for all faculty employees who teach. Conversely, campus policies guiding the evaluation of full-time faculty employees (UPS 210.000, 210.050) specifically require the collection of student opinion data for *all* courses taught. Interestingly, UPS 210.060 notes that "Departments shall develop guidelines for evaluation of part-time faculty," but a requirement that student opinion data be collected for each class is not directly stated; indeed, there is no direct reference to student opinion data in UPS 210.060.

Questionnaire Items and Format

The questionnaire forms are designed and adopted at the department level according to UPS 210.000. The same form must be used in all "courses of the same kind." The CBA requires a "quantitative (e.g., 'Scantron' form, etc.)" format, but allows for qualitative student comments; UPS 210.000 (p. 23) requires all forms to include "adequate space for written student comments" and stipulates that students be informed of their right to include written comments. Presumably, then, the questionnaire could comprise as few as one quantitative item with space provided for student comments (at least one department on campus uses a form with a single quantitative item).

According to UPS 210.000, student opinion forms must be attached to the Department Personnel Standards. The standards are reviewed by deans and the appropriate vice president (academic or student affairs). Also, the Faculty Personnel Committee is empowered to approve department student opinion forms and shall approve any changes to the forms (p. 24).

Interpretation of Student Opinion Forms

Although the CBA is silent on how student evaluations should be interpreted, UPS 210.000 requires departments to develop guidelines to facilitate interpretation of student opinion forms "(or summaries)" and the Faculty Personnel Committee approves the methods of data presentation (p. 24). Departments are expected to develop guidelines to evaluate faculty performance using procedures that are "clear, objective, and reasonable" in Department Personnel Standards, states UPS 210.000 (p. 22, C. 1).

Process of Administering Forms

Both the CBA and UPS 210.000 require student anonymity. Aside from this, the procedure for administering student opinion forms is guided by UPS 210.000, which states that the opinions shall be "collected toward the end of the semester" in the instructor's absence, by someone other than the faculty member. Final grades must be submitted before instructors can view the student opinion forms or summaries. Neither the CBA nor UPS 210.000 addresses the collection of student opinion data electronically or the control of forms once they are administered. ☙

SRI Forms in the RTP Process: A View from the Faculty Personnel Committee

James L. Dietz

I have served on my department's personnel committee for more years than I like to remember, often as chair. Currently, I am in the second year of my second tour of duty on the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC). For many faculty members, the retention, tenure and promotion (RTP) process seems fraught with obstacles, not the least being meeting the standard for teaching, which UPS 210.000 establishes as the crucial indicator in the evaluation process.

Currently the FPC reviews portfolios of faculty whose departments either do not have approved RTP standards (Attention all departments without such standards! DO THEM!) and all portfolios with a negative decision at prior levels. During this academic year, such cases amounted to approximately 70 personnel files. Given that all portfolios must include all the statistical summaries of student evaluation (SRI) forms and that the Appendix must contain all the original SRI forms as filled out by students for each class each term, we read a lot of student evaluations during the course of a year! Front and back!

Although it is true that SRIs are not, and cannot be, the only instrument for evaluating teaching effectiveness, they are undoubtedly one of the most important yardsticks. Years of experience tell me (with no R^2) that they are pretty accurate predictors of who is doing a good job in the classroom and who isn't.

> *"It's time to think about standardization of SRI forms, at least for some key questions."*

Students are tough critics. It is true they don't particularly adore demanding teachers, but they do evaluate objectively those who are fair and who teach well, even if they ask a lot. It's the demanding professors who *don't* teach well *yet still* expect their students to learn on their own that often get lower evaluations. I don't know, but that seems reasonable to me.

Students also evaluate disapprovingly faculty who pander to them or are too easy or who don't give them sufficient material to learn what they need to know. Students expect to have high-quality teachers who provide them with the skills and tools they will require when they go out into the other real world. And, in general, I think they do a rather respectable job in distinguishing between the worthy and not so admirable among us, especially when a typical faculty member coming up for tenure has, say, five years of evidence from, on average, 30-40 classes from which evaluators may draw conclusions.

Are the current SRI forms perfect? Unfortunately, the answer is no. There is more variation among departments in the questions asked than might be optimal. At least one department (and, no, I will not name names) has a form with only one question. One! The rest of the form is left for open-ended responses. The reliability of the responses to just one question must be suspected. It is time to think about standardization of SRI forms, at least for some key questions.

Some departments report median values on their SRI summary statistical forms. The FPC has tried, really tried, to figure out what those median values tell us. We have had no luck. Medians obfuscate. Mean values do provide some indication of where any individual faculty member performs relative to his or her peers. Hopefully, all departments will report means in the future… and on more than one question!

Departments should also try to compare similar data. Faculty SRI forms in lower division classes would ideally be compared with the department's average performance by all faculty members in

lower division classes. Graduate courses would be compared with the department mean of all graduate courses. Maybe GE courses taught by faculty should be compared with the department averages on GE courses. Core courses with core courses. The point is, departments should be thinking of ways to compare like courses if the teaching evaluation process is to more closely reflect "the truth." This would be good for faculty, for the process, and for departments.

Some departments need more than one SRI form. For example, faculty members are teaching in non-traditional ways, particularly online learning, for which the current SRI forms are less than adequate. It is time that departments offering such courses design an appropriate SRI form. Perhaps another committee is needed?

Departments administer existing SRI forms each semester with little thought about what story the SRI forms are telling, yet probationary faculty and those seeking promotion must live or die with the results. If departments are truly interested in creating a process that helps to identify excellent teaching and then reward it, it is time for them to devote some effort to re-considering their current SRI forms and look to the future.

At a minimum, we could do worse than have separate SRI forms for lecture courses and another for online courses. Maybe there are other variations that the present and future demand. And it might be wise to consider to what extent greater uniformity can be achieved among departments in what is asked on the SRI forms. ❧

James Dietz is Professor of Economics and Latin American Studies and is the 2004-05 chair of the Faculty Personnel Committee. He has taught at CSUF since 1973.

SRI Forms and the DPC

Joanne Gass

Stanley Fish, in a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article ("Who's in Charge Here?" February 4, 2005), says of student evaluations:

> They are randomly collected. They are invitations to grind axes without any fear of challenge or discovery. They are based on assumptions that have more to do with pop psychology or self-help or customer satisfaction than with the soundness of one's pedagogy. A whole lot of machinery with a very small and dubious yield.

Fish's sarcasm aside, he nevertheless focuses on some crucial issues which confront personnel committees when they engage in the RTP process. SRI forms place a heavy burden of responsibility on the Department Personnel Committee for the very reasons Fish delineates: the Committee must take them very seriously at the same time as the Committee must also be aware of the pitfalls inherent in taking them too seriously.

My concerns are the product of my experiences evaluating the work of my colleagues as they go through the RTP process. I am currently completing my second year as chair of my Department Personnel Committee, an experience which has increased my ambivalence toward SRI forms. I have presided over several periodic reviews and passed judgment with my colleagues on a number of tenure and promotion files. During my term as chair we have revised our student opinion surveys (they are currently awaiting approval) and our Department personnel document, in which we attempted to recognize the importance of SRI forms without giving them too much importance—a delicate balancing act. In addition, we have evaluated and will evaluate again all of our part-time faculty members, whose re-hiring depends greatly on their student evaluations.

Let me begin by saying that SRI forms do provide some valuable information. They can expose a professor who regularly fails to meet his or her classes or to keep office hours. They reveal problems of civility in the classroom—professors who belittle or are rude to students, who make inappropriate comments about race, gender, or politics, or who in other ways conduct themselves in an unprofessional manner. Problems such as these might otherwise go unnoticed and are usually brought to light in the written comments students append to the evaluation forms—the importance of *reading* those comments cannot be minimized.
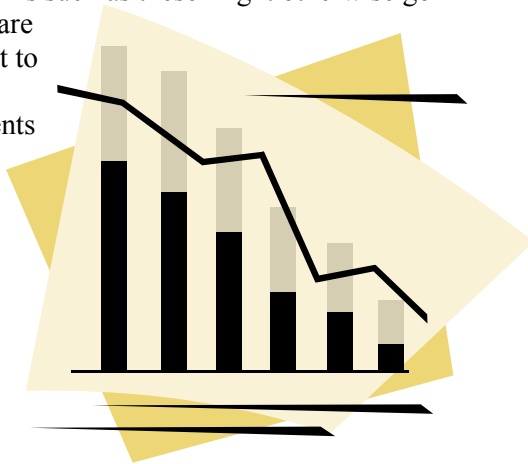
Pedagogically, however, SRI forms provide very little useful information as to the competence, teaching techniques, or effectiveness of the professor being evaluated. Students' expectations are not necessarily based upon good pedagogical concepts, and whether they "like" a professor's methods or not really should not form the basis for evaluation of good teaching by the Department Personnel Committee. Frequently, in the same class, about the same number of students will "like" group discussion as those who dislike it and complain that the professor should lecture more. But "therein lies the rub"—upon what other evidence of teaching excellence can the committee make its judgments?

Peer reviews after classroom visitations are helpful, but not necessarily unbiased (when was the last time you actually saw a negative peer evaluation?), and evidence of participation in teaching seminars provided by the Faculty Development Center indicates an interest in improving one's classroom performance but does not necessarily provide evidence of the application of new pedagogical practices in the classroom. However, whereas the only witnesses on a day-to-day basis to the efficacy of teacher training seminars and commitment to teaching excellence are the students themselves, we find ourselves back to examining the numbers and reading through the comments, like soothsayers

reading the entrails of the sacrificial victim, trying to tease out the evidence upon which to make our judgments. Because SRI forms require students to rate their professors on a numeric scale, more often than not, the numbers carry the most weight. Our forms ask students to write comments in support of their numerical choices, but when it gets right down to it, the numbers and the averages of those numbers in comparison to department averages can weigh heavily in the personnel process.

And what of the probationary faculty member who gets low evaluations in his or her first year? She or he is admonished by reviewers at all levels to bring those numbers up. When the numbers go up, however, so, too, do the average grades. This is particularly problematic since the mere fact does not necessarily preclude excellent teaching, high standards, or hard work on the part of the students and their professor, but the committee, confronted with the numbers, sometimes finds itself in the very uncomfortable position of fearing that the professor might be teaching to the evaluations. How can the professor demonstrate in his or her file that the correlation between the two sets of numbers results from improved teaching methods, better performance by the students, and the growth of warm, mutual respect in the classroom? Such things can and do happen, and, again, we pore over the written comments in search of the positive evidence which supports and validates the numbers.
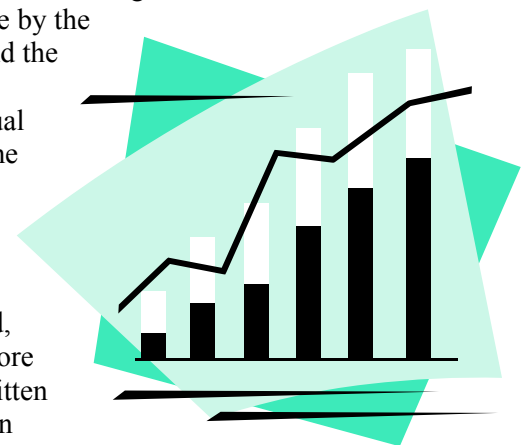
So, then, what *is* the value of SRI forms? What are we hoping to find out, and are we, in fact, finding it out? Or, is it, as Stanley Fish asserts, "A whole lot of machinery with a very small and dubious yield"? What do we want to achieve by reforming our SRI forms and processes? Do we want easier to read charts filled with numbers? Will reforming the forms and online evaluations achieve the desired results? I don't think so. Our good intentions might very well further

eclipse the very objects of our deliberations. The more machinery we create in the RTP process, I fear, the further away real assessment of quality teaching will recede. ✎

Joanne Gass is professor of English and Comparative Literature and vice-chair of the Department of English, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics. She is currently chair of the Department Personnel Committee and serves on the Academic Senate and the Senate Executive Committee.

Student Ratings of Instruction Have Value

*Mona Mohammadi and Drew Wiley*

Through our experience at Cal State Fullerton, we have noticed that newer students do not take the ratings as seriously as students who are further along in their tenure. It seems that most faculty members do not stress the importance of the ratings to students. Many students are surprised on the day of the evaluations because they have never experienced a system like this before. Students are sometimes not told about the ratings ahead of time, leaving them no time to think about their
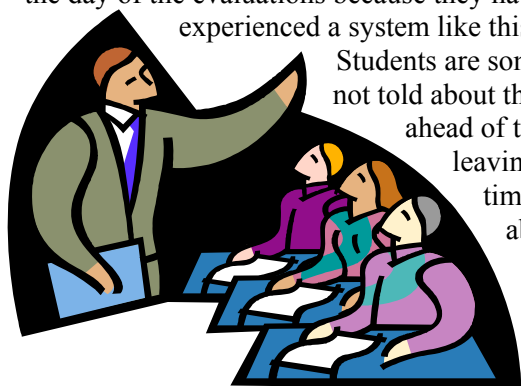
instructor's performance critically. As students move further along in their studies, they are able to experience a wider variety of teaching styles and are better able to evaluate faculty. More senior students also learn either through faculty members or fellow classmates that the ratings actually give professors critical commentary and feedback on their teaching style and class structure. We believe that faculty members need to make sure to stress the importance of these evaluations to their students, especially in lower division courses where students are more likely to be new to the campus. Once students learn the seriousness of the ratings, they will be more inclined to critique their instructors carefully.

We think that it is important to survey every course every semester. When different students enroll in classes each semester, the students' learning styles vary and students may respond differently to the instructor's teaching style than in previous semesters. In the end, each semester's students may give a different critique of the same instructor's teaching style. This can give the instructor a more holistic understanding of what works best to convey concepts and materials to students.
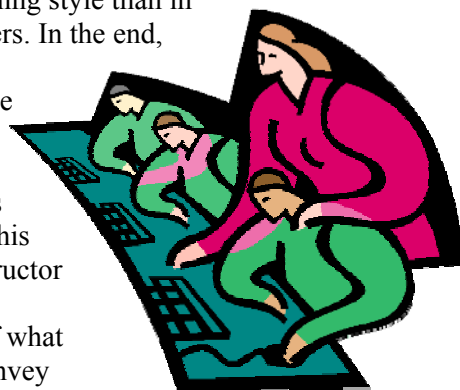
As students, we would hope that the evaluations do improve instruction. We think that the ratings are a good way for faculty to understand their students and the learning tendencies they have. The degree to which faculty members consider their students' responses determines the degree to which the ratings can improve instruction. We believe that the majority of students do take the ratings seriously and are therefore offering true and relevant critiques of their instructors. It is our understanding that the rating process is in place to better the quality of education at Cal State Fullerton where, after all, "*learning is preeminent.*" As students, we want faculty to know that we don't perceive the rating system as a chance for students to point out every difficulty they faced in a course. Rather, we view it as a chance to inform instructors about what we

struggled with and also what we thought was effective so that future students can avoid those same struggles and benefit from effective teaching styles.

The questions asked on the rating form target all the areas that we think are necessary for a holistic evaluation. We think the most useful section is the space for "additional comments" that allows students to give extra critique or praise on a specific area of the course.

In conclusion, we think that the rating system is valuable and can be highly effective if used properly. The only area we see as not up to par is the exposure of students ahead of time to the rating system. Allowing students, especially ones newer to the campus, to begin thinking about their professors would yield only more valuable responses. ✎

Mona Mohammadi is a junior majoring in Political Science with a minor in International Politics. She is a President's Scholar and hopes one day to attend Columbia University to obtain her Law Degree and Ph.D. in International Politics.
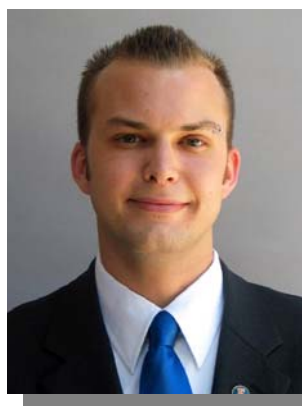
Drew Wiley began attending CSUF in the fall of 2001 as a Music Education major. Drew has found interest in many different academic areas and is currently pursuing a degree in Political Science as well as minors in both Music and Speech Communications.

One Dean's Perspective on Improving SRI Forms and the RTP Process

Roberta E. Rikli

I have been asked to give a "dean's perspective" on the Student Rating of Instruction (SRI) process at Fullerton. As I understand it, the motivation for addressing (or re-addressing) this topic has to do with two different (but related) sets of discussions that are occurring on campus, each of which I will comment on below. One discussion centers around the merits of the SRI process itself and the opportunity for making changes and improvements in it as the campus moves from its old "main frame" computer system for processing SRI forms to a new system that will be more compatible with the Common Management System (CMS) currently being implemented.

The other discussion about SRIs has to do with a possible streamlining of the process and is part of a broader concern over finding ways to reduce the increasing amount of paperwork, binders, boxes, and overall "bulk" that is being submitted as part of faculty portfolios in the evaluation process. This especially has been an issue in evaluating portfolios of tenure track faculty involved in the retention, tenure, and promotion (RTP) process, where the size of some portfolios has become so large that as many as 4, 5, 6, and even 10 boxes (in one case) have been needed to house the materials. Clearly, in almost everyone's judgment, such bulk is excessive and provides more than is necessary to evaluate a faculty member's effectiveness—and it surely is more than can be justified in terms of time spent in preparing these massive portfolios and in reading and reviewing them at each of the multiple levels of review.
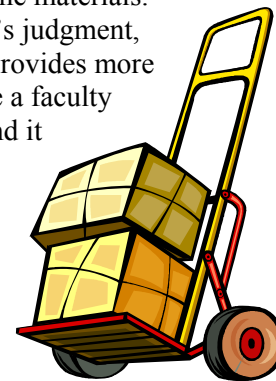
Suggestions for Improving the SRI Process

First, as one who reads nearly every word of the student comments made on hundreds of SRI forms each semester, it is my opinion that student evaluations (especially the hand-written comments) are informative and helpful, both to the evaluator and to the faculty member under review. Most faculty members, in my experience, echo the same message. By and large, they tend to consider the main points made by the students to be relevant and they see how this feedback can be useful in improving the effectiveness of their instruction. In fact, I could cite a number of examples where young instructors in their first semester or so of teaching received a clear theme of constructive feedback from students and, based on this feedback, were then able to make adjustments that quickly improved their success in the classroom.

"One of the more serious limitations in our current procedures ... is the lack of a policy or standardized method of ensuring that faculty members receive, in a timely manner, copies of the hand-written comments made by students on the individual SRI forms."

Relationship between SRIs and Grading Distributions

Out of curiosity about the SRI and grading distribution (course GPA) relationships in the College of Health and Human Development, my staff and I ran a quick analysis of the fall 2004 data on these variables. We compared the grading distributions of those faculty who fell within the top quartile of the SRI statistics college-wide with those in the bottom 25% and found only a .10 difference in the average grades given between the two groups (average GPA of high SRI group = 3.18 vs. 3.08 for low SRI group, with undergraduate and graduate courses combined in the analysis).

In looking more specifically, at only the top 10 faculty in the college with respect to SRI statistics (where the average rating was an impressive 3.83 on a 4.0 scale), it was interesting to note that in every case each faculty member's average course GPA was *below* that of the mean for his/her department for the same level of courses taught (lower division, upper division, etc.). Further, the combined course GPA of all 10 faculty members was only 2.97, which is lower than the college average, suggesting that our best instructors (in terms of SRI statistics) were certainly *not* earning their high ratings through easy grading.

However, being reasonably familiar with the literature on this topic, I also am well aware of the various complaints, concerns, and limitations of student evaluations, the most prominent concern being that faculty ratings are significantly influenced by the grading standards of the instructor. Although earlier research on the validity of student evaluations did show a strong effect of grading, with easy graders receiving higher evaluations than tough graders, much of this research has since been criticized as involving "flawed" contrived designs that did not reflect realistic classroom situations. More recent literature suggests that the relationship between student evaluations and expected grades is quite low (Greenwald, 1997, *American Psychologist, 52*, 1182-1186).

At this point, even though we know that the SRI process is a less than perfect way of measuring teaching effectiveness and sometimes has been shown, at least to a small degree, to reflect extraneous factors such as grading leniency,

instructor gender, ethnicity, course type, course difficulty level, and class size, there appears to be no other method that is known to be a *better way* of evaluating teaching performance. Most portfolio reviewers on our campus, I believe, are quite aware of the potential extraneous influences on SRI ratings and do consider them when judging a faculty member's teaching ability. Reviewers also are aware of the importance of using SRI data as only *one* indication of teaching effectiveness, not as the sole indicator. On the positive side, one of the strongest indicators of the reliability and validity of student evaluations comes from research that has shown rather impressive correlations (in the .70s - .80s range) between student ratings of instructors at the end of a course and subsequent evaluations by alumni years later relative to these instructors' influence on their learning and their professional development (Hobson & Talbot, 1998, *College Teaching, 49*, 26-31).

Although I highly support the SRI process on our campus, both as a way of providing a summative evaluation of teaching effectiveness and as a method of providing useful formative feedback to faculty, I have some specific suggestions for improving the process. One of the more serious limitations in our current procedures is the lack of a policy or standardized method of ensuring that faculty members receive, in a timely manner, copies of the hand-written comments made by students on the individual SRI forms. Although all faculty members are provided with a computer-generated copy of the statistical summaries of their evaluations shortly after the end of each semester (after grades are recorded), there is no standard procedure for providing them with copies of the students' written comments, which no doubt are the most valuable to improving instruction. As is, because of the campus requirement that SRI raw data forms be secured under lock and key and that faculty can see them only in the presence of a supervisor, many faculty (I've learned) are not making the extra effort it takes to arrange to see the comments by students until the time they put their portfolios together (and, in some cases, not even then). Most departments have a process whereby the raw data forms (with the student comments) are stored in department offices and are inserted into each faculty member's portfolio just prior to it being submitted for review.

At the very least, regardless of any other changes made in the way SRI forms are processed, it should be a campus priority to develop some type of a standardized system (such as scanning or photocopying students' comments, typing the comments, or possibly moving to an online evaluation system) that would provide all faculty with a copy of the written comments made by the students in their classes. Any such system that would help consolidate all students' word-for-word comments into one or two pages for each course (with the raw data forms then discarded) would not only allow faculty easier access to student feedback,

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Additional Suggestions to Improve the SRI Process

● *The number of SRI evaluation items should be small.* Students are more apt to read and given serious thought to a list of 7 or 8 questions than they are to a list of 20 or more items, as seen on some forms. (For more personalized feedback from students, faculty members should be encouraged to administer mid-course evaluations, not to be included in their portfolio.)

● *Space should be provided on the front page of SRI forms, specifically inviting student comments.*

● S*tudent evaluations should be administered at the beginning of the class period* (not at the end), thus giving students time to write comments.

● *The policy of administering student evaluations in every class every semester, regardless of faculty tenure status or rank, should be continued.* Evaluations of tenured faculty can vary considerably over different semesters and different courses, especially as they take on new roles and responsibilities (research, grants, added committee assignments, etc.). Students should have the opportunity to provide feedback concerning their experiences in every class they take. I also believe that faculty, regardless of rank, can continue to benefit from students' perceptions of their learning experiences in each class taught.

but it also would eliminate a huge amount of the "bulk" in faculty portfolios and the amount of file space needed for storing SRI forms (which can number well over a thousand forms per faculty member by the time he/she is up for tenure, promotion, or post-tenure review).

Suggestions for Reducing Bulk in Portfolios
In addition to the above suggestion for eliminating the need to include all SRI raw data forms in portfolios, other more substantive changes ought to be made in the RTP process that also would cut back on the size of faculty portfolios and, even more importantly, would improve the focus and objective of the faculty evaluation process.

One such change that I would suggest is that of limiting the information that can be included in the appendix to only a few pieces of each faculty member's *most important* work. I especially like the system used at San Diego State where faculty are limited to only five pieces of supporting documentation in each of the three evaluation categories. In the area of teaching, for example, faculty would continue to include the usual required items such as SRI and GPA statistics and copies of course syllabi, but then would be limited to only five additional documents to support the quality of their teaching. These might include items such as a new course proposal, lab manual, study guide, an innovative lesson plan, description of a special teaching award, or a joint faculty-student project, as examples.

Similarly, following the San Diego State model in the area of scholarship, faculty would submit documentation for what they consider to be their five most noteworthy accomplishments during their period of review (e.g., peer-reviewed papers, books, grant proposals, special presentations, or works in progress). Also, in the area of service, documentation would be provided for only five selected contributions (chairing a major committee, serving as an officer in a professional organization, writing an accreditation self-study, etc.). Again, although *all* accomplishments during the review period are listed in the faculty member's curriculum vitae, a maximum of five items in each category

would be discussed in the narrative and documented in the appendix.

Clearly, such a system that focuses on selected samples of faculty work (as opposed to our current policy which requires documentation of every accomplishment) would contribute to our long-term, but so far unsuccessful goal of controlling the size of faculty portfolios. But even more importantly, it would encourage faculty members to think more in terms of the "quality" and "importance" of their work, rather than on seeing "how much" they can fit into their portfolios each year. I do not, by the way, blame our probationary faculty for most of the "excess bulk" found in portfolios, but rather I blame those of us who continue to give mixed messages to our probationary faculty. For years, in various RTP workshops, seminars, and mentoring activities, we have extolled the importance of quality over quantity, yet, at the same time we insist that faculty members document every accomplishment and every contribution listed in their file, regardless of degree of significance or level of importance. And if they dare miss a piece of documentation, it is sure to be pointed out by some reviewer in the written evaluation. Having observed for many years the huge amount of time spent on both preparing and evaluating portfolios that are filled with excessive, often repetitive, and sometimes "low information" types of materials, I'm convinced that it is time to adopt a strict policy similar to the one at San Diego State (and other institutions), which places clear guidelines and absolute restrictions on the amount of information to be included in both the portfolio *and* the appendix.

Finally, if we do find a way to eliminate the necessity for including all SRI raw data forms in portfolios and decide to place limits on the appendix documentation, we also might want to consider adopting another of San Diego's policies – that of limiting the size of all binders to no more than 1 inch in width. Having experienced the difficulty of maneuvering through huge, overstuffed binders (where pages are difficult to turn and often pop out in the process), this would certainly be a welcome change. ❧
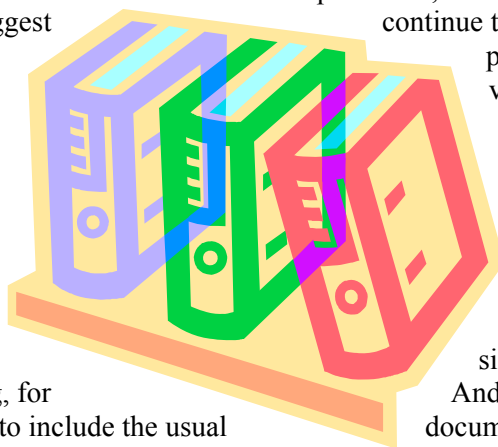
Roberta Rikli, Dean of the College of Health and Human Development, has held a number of leadership positions during her 32 years at Cal State Fullerton. Her scholarship in the area of older adult health and mobility has brought her a number of awards and recognitions.

Should Student Opinions Control Faculty Careers?

Charles H. Schroeder

O ur University faces complicated issues in evaluating faculty of whatever ilk. Perhaps one of the more troublesome areas relates to the appraisal of lecturers, particularly part-time faculty. Because these instructors rarely publish in journals, by default an inordinate reliance may be placed on student evaluations in rehiring and other personnel decisions.

Much has been written about student evaluations and how they could encourage relaxation of academic standards. A particularly relevant article is Dr. Michael Birnbaum's 1998 survey of CSUF faculty to obtain opinions on student evaluations. In part, he expressed concern that student evaluations may be causing more harm than good. "Most faculty [members] believe that ratings will be lowered by changes that would improve learning and that the effect of student evaluation of teaching is to decrease the quality of education" he noted. Anecdotally, students also report they give higher ratings to courses with less content and lower standards.

The question then becomes how student evaluations are used. Student evaluation forms differ by department. Furthermore, there is no common lecturer evaluation form used by the deans and personnel committees and there is very limited information on practices used in the colleges. University policy requires that most faculty members be reviewed annually. Evaluation criteria for tenured and full-time faculty require consideration of student evaluations among many other factors including scholarly/creative activities and community service, but often no weights are assigned. In the case of part-time faculty members, no factors are listed and, in their absence, student evaluations become dominant—perhaps leading to unintended consequences. On some department faculty evaluation forms, the first factors (and usually a large part of the comment section) are on student evaluations, reinforcing the perception that they are of utmost importance in performance reviews. On one form the next to last factor is coverage of topics and the last is relevancy of assignments, presumably based on syllabi and exam copies.

On the other hand, we must ask if student evaluation forms can be helpful in improving teaching. Certainly, they can. I believe that most often student observations are fair, reasonable, and insightful, although there can be vindictive and baseless comments that might find their way into a personnel file. Yes, the students are our customers, but the weakness of our approach is that there may be no firsthand observations of instructors' classroom performance or relationships with students. Many universities do require such visits in the evaluation process. In some cases, even tenured faculty members are observed by two other faculty members, one appointed by the department and the other by the faculty member being reviewed. The weakness of this approach is that it only provides a snapshot view and takes a lot of faculty time.

F or those departments that place heavy emphasis on student evaluations and do not include classroom visits, additional measures should be developed. CSUF has spent much to develop faculty websites and the Blackboard system. A possible proxy for visits might be a review of web pages covering class notes, slides, other assignments and readings. A review of these materials could provide more insight than does a mere reading of syllabi. At a very minimum, student evaluations should be used to identify faculty who may need collaborative or professional

coaching. Until we change our "absent evaluator" procedure, new ways need to be developed to assess performance and commitment to excellence in teaching. ✎

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SRIs Fail to Perform

Susan Shipstead and Sharon Willmer

Previous issues of *The Senate Forum* (Fall/Winter 1992, Summer 1993, Fall 1999) have devoted space to faculty discussion of SRI forms, but as an academic community, we have not yet been swayed by, for example, Gayle Vogt's legal cautions or the results of Michael Birnbaum's faculty survey. Our campus policy to require anonymous student evaluations of every class has remained the same regardless of faculty members' thoughtful and consistent criticism of it. Grateful that the window of discussion (as noted on page 1) has been opened, we present our criticisms and suggestions in support of the educational process at CSUF, student maturation, and faculty integrity. Please know that we write as recipients of high student ratings that meet our college's criteria for an excellent rating of teaching and have no sour grapes agenda.

Criticisms of the Use of Anonymous SRI Forms to Evaluate Teaching Performance
Reliance on anonymous SRI forms undermines the educational process by interfering with faculty's teaching mission, hindering student maturation and accountability, and demoralizing faculty.

Faculty members have been hired to teach students and evaluate their learning; our teaching mission is mandated and supported by the State of California and serves the wider needs of the community for an educated populace. Faculty members are prepared and supported for teaching and evaluating by our advanced degrees, experience, professional and ethical guidelines, mentors, university workshops and programs, and the trust and respect of our society. Asking students to evaluate faculty redistributes power from faculty members to students, communicates a lack of confidence in faculty's abilities, and promotes unwarranted confidence in students' knowledge of what constitutes quality teaching.

> *"Reliance on anonymous SRI forms undermines the educational process by interfering with faculty's teaching mission, hindering student maturation and accountability, and demoralizing faculty."*

The SRI process also impedes our teaching mission by putting faculty and students in dual roles; that is, although we are the students' instructors and evaluators, they become our evaluators. Thus, we have a conflict of interest from the moment we walk into class and meet our students. Readers of SRI forms know exactly how to improve ratings: lower the work load, ease the rigor of grading systems, ignore the quality of students' writing and focus only on content, and refuse to teach tired students in night classes. Birnbaum's 1999 faculty survey detailed areas of potential conflict between quality of teaching and student ratings and concluded "It seems sad that so many faculty concede having made changes that they believe reduced the quality of education."

Anonymous SRI forms discourage mature, respectful, accountable dialogues between faculty and students. The SRI process suggests to students that they need to hide behind anonymity in order to be protected from faculty. The process obstructs guidance in how to approach superiors with maturity, respect, diplomacy, and constructive criticism; further, it models a template of immature communication and evaluation that students carry forward from the university into the community. In her 1992 Senate Forum article on "The Mask of Anonymity," Vogt concluded that "student evaluations should be subject to the same grievance procedures that faculty must abide." Faculty should not be in the business of teaching students that non-responsible evaluations are acceptable.

Anonymous SRIs contribute to faculty demoralization and impact the educational process. Surely all faculty have been stung by critical, mean-spirited, distorted, or entitled comments on SRI forms even if they have been in the minority; we are, after all, human beings. Students should not be expected to have a clear vision of what is in their best interests educationally, and when they make negative comments and there are no means to discuss, challenge, or defend, faculty often feel like victims of their students. As a result of such experiences, they may become wary of their students and give them what they like in order to improve ratings and avoid negative comments. Another demoralizing aspect of anonymous SRIs is that some faculty feel forced to participate in a procedure that is in opposition to the moral values, ethical codes, or teaching standards to which they are devoted.

By using anonymous SRI forms, we rely on a poor instrument and untrained raters to evaluate instruction. As an assessment product, the SRI forms are not reliable; most faculty who teach multiple sections of a course over a year have received inconsistent feedback in spite of presenting the same syllabus, content, assignments, and assessment tools. Variables such as class size, time and frequency of instruction, and class composition affect students' evaluations. The point is that SRI forms, as an

"…SRI results provide limited opinions about instructors, but do not reflect the students' contributions to the instructional process."

assessment tool, do not produce consistent results for consistent teaching.

The content validity of SRI forms is suspect at best; we are not confident that the items add up to a justified measure of quality teaching. On some forms, for example, students rate the clarity of instruction, but are not asked if they completed the required reading that would support this clarity. Students rate how interesting the instructor was, but not how much they learned. Students rate the punctuality of the instructor, but not their own attendance, and the instructor's concern with students' needs and interests, but not their own civility. In short, the SRI results provide limited opinions about instructors and do not reflect the students' contributions to the instructional process.

Furthermore, quality assessment is a challenge even for trained evaluators. Students have no training in how to evaluate instructors. The strongest message they receive before filling out their SRI forms is that the instructors will not see the results before grades are posted. Students, in general, lack the experience, wisdom, developmental maturity, personal insight, responsibility, and skills to rate faculty's instruction. To consider student culture and accepted views on teaching, we point to a popular web site (ratemyprofessors.com) that invites students to rate their professors on a 1-5 scale in three categories: easiness, helpfulness, and clarity. Note that any "measure" of learning is absent and that easy professors are better. We argue that the University's implicit trust in the quality of students' evaluation of faculty teaching is unfounded.

Suggestions for Change
Our understanding of the current CFA contract is that SRI forms must be anonymous and that a minimum of two classes must be evaluated annually through the SRI process. We suggest that future discussions of faculty evaluation consider the following:
- Eliminate anonymous student ratings of instruction; anonymity has no place in the

evaluative process. A university full of academics surely can create ethical and appropriate assessment procedures.

- If a standardized student feedback is deemed necessary, one option is to change the terminology of the forms from *ratings of instruction* to *descriptors of educational experiences*. The items would then be accurately labeled as perceptions of students' experiences, but not passed off as valid assessments of teaching performance. There's a palpable difference between saying "an instructor is interesting" and "I found the instructor interesting." Let's not rely on invalid assessments. Let's label the forms for what they are.

- In a survey of *descriptors of educational experiences*, let's ask about students' input to the instructional process (e.g., their attendance, commitment to completing assignments, attentiveness, civility, interest in the subject matter, success in the course) to communicate that both faculty and students contribute to the educational process. Finally, let's offer opportunities to students to speak with faculty about their experiences and recommendations within a constructive forum.

- In our University discussions of civility in the classroom, let's explore the impact of anonymous SRI forms on student attitudes and behavior.

Experienced and dedicated faculty members value and elicit student feedback, and they do so in formats that elevate faculty-student dialogue to a mature and respectful model of professional behavior. Periodic feedback mechanisms, open discussions, and reflective activities help students examine their learning and help faculty evaluate their teaching strategies, assignments, expectations, clarity, class activities, lectures, and grading practices. Students' opinions and feedback can be helpful when delivered appropriately, but let's not delude ourselves that students are qualified to be evaluators of faculty, instruction, and the learning process. We advocate that the University return the responsibility to teach and evaluate to its faculty and remove the

encumbrance of anonymous student ratings of instruction. ❧

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Sharon Willmer, lecturer in the Department of Child and Adolescent Studies, teaches a range of upper division courses, including the professional development internship course and a senior seminar on developmental psychopathology. She is in private practice as a clinical therapist and has extensive cross-cultural experience.

A Department Chair's View on the Use of Student Ratings of Instruction

Patricia A. Szeszulski

The student learning subgroup of the most recent WASC self study spent a considerable amount of time discussing the concept of *learning* without reaching a consensus regarding its meaning. I suspect the same outcome would result if the topic under discussion were *effective teaching*. Support for this supposition can be found in the diverse array of approved SRI forms that

have been adopted by programs to collect student opinion data in each course taught at Cal State Fullerton. Although university policy prohibits these data from being used as the sole criterion for judging teaching effectiveness, they nonetheless do contribute significantly to the evaluation of teaching and subsequent personnel decisions for instructional faculty, particularly probationary and temporary faculty members. My views on the efficacy of student opinion data in the teaching-learning enterprise have been shaped and informed through periodic perusal of the literature on the subject, engaging in conversations on the topic with colleagues and students, and reviewing scores of summaries and original student opinion forms as a member of numerous personnel committees and in fulfilling my obligation as department chair. In this article, I provide a brief commentary and review of three issues that I, as an end user of SRI data, recommend be carefully considered in discussions of the SRI process: students' responsibilities, the quality of SRI survey instruments, and the interpretation of student opinion data.

The university document on *Student Rights and Responsibilities (UPS 300.000),* states "students have the right to a just measurement of their performance by the professor" and in turn "students are expected to evaluate faculty fairly and responsibly. Anonymous evaluations must solely focus on academic criteria and not on the basis of opinions and conduct in matters unrelated to academic performance." A common theme in presentations given by the late Don Farmer, a nationally recognized expert on faculty development, was that one can't expect instructors to do what they don't know how to do. Accordingly, we have a highly successful Faculty Development Center designed to support all facets of classroom instruction, including authentic and just measurement of student learning. Yet we expect students to assume a consequential responsibility quite probably without an awareness of the scope of the charge specified in UPS 300.000 – and most certainly without any training in fair evaluation of instruction. The quality of data collected from students could be improved through the inclusion of student development activities in venues such as

orientations or group advisement sessions where students are explicitly tutored in their responsibility to engage in fair and responsible evaluation of faculty performance.

One potential obstacle to students' fair evaluation of faculty is the content of SRI surveys themselves. Students most certainly lack adequate experience to address questions commonly asked about faculty qualifications, such as knowledge of the subject. On the other hand, the literature on the topic generally concludes that students are uniquely qualified to respond to questions about observable pedagogical practices and faculty behaviors and to rate their perceptions of increased knowledge of the subject that ensued from their learning experiences. Clearly students' ability to provide valuable feedback depends upon the suitability of the questions that are asked. Although a cursory review of SRI forms currently used at CSUF revealed a number of surveys that were consistent with the dictums presented in the literature, too many others–including the one used in my own department–call into question the existence of a defensible rationale for the particular set of questions selected to elicit student views of faculty performance. Farmer's advice to not ask faculty members to do what they don't know how to do again comes to mind. Thus, I encourage the Faculty Development Center to provide the necessary leadership to facilitate informed discussions on the construction of SRI surveys.

Department personnel guidelines provide very specific criteria for rating SRI statistical summaries and the trends reported in the SRI literature are based almost exclusively on statistical data; however, both are virtually silent on the role of student comments in explaining statistical ratings. Although evaluators generally assume a positive relationship between student evaluation and the actual quality of instruction, a number of factors have been shown to bias student evaluations. The relationship between grading practices and student rating of instruction remains a contentious issue both on campus and in the literature. Adding fuel to this situation are the findings from two recent studies that reported that students did tend to rate

lenient graders higher than faculty that engaged in harsher grading practices. Contrary to conventional wisdom, easy professors do not necessarily receive higher ratings, particularly if students perceive that a faculty member relaxes his or her standards to compensate for poor quality instruction. Indeed, a relatively robust relationship has been found between student rating of instruction and actual performance on common final exams employed in multi-section courses; student ratings were the highest for instructors whose students performed best on the standard exams. In most cases, direct evidence of student learning is not readily available, so evaluators must resort to other means such as trends in student comments to interpret statistical data and test subjective hypotheses. Although it must be acknowledged that all student comments are not of equal value, they frequently do provide additional insights into justifications and motivations that drive student ratings.

Although student ratings of instruction are an important source of data for the evaluation of teaching performance, they must be considered carefully and interpreted within the context that they are given. ✍

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Student Ratings of Instruction

Gayle H. Vogt

Administration

The administration of the Student Rating of Instruction walks a path of danger: Proctoring faculty may neglect to explain how to fill out the forms, which may be turned upside down or backward. Even when asked for comments, students either don't care or are fearful. The forms, on an expensive, special computer-compatible paper, are jammed into the envelopes, causing them to be unreadable. Forms are processed electronically.

It's at this point that additional issues surface: Because numerical values can be easily measured, SRI results are treated by personnel committees as evidence of learning. However, especially in small classes, as suggested by a department chair to me, if students are absent or late, rating values are skewed. The questions are not uniform throughout the university; higher grades can influence evaluations; a proctor's comments may affect the outcome. All of these factors raise questions about the validity and reliability of SRI forms. Probationary and temporary faculty members are particularly vulnerable because SRI forms are given such prominence in the evaluation of their work.

Legality and Constitutionality
SRI forms don't really rate instruction, do they? The few comments I receive say things like, "A really great teacher," or conversely, "Grades too hard," neither of which say much about instruction and are mostly benign. Research shows that story telling most closely correlates with high student evaluations. Increased classroom expectations, though, can result in false and libelous comments about the professor. And that's where my beef is.

Anonymous student comments are used as an expedient means to measure faculty competence. These comments are seen not only by administrators, but also by personnel committees and staff members, thus broadcasting any libel— defined as written defamation—to a large number of people, some of whom have the power to damage a faculty member's career. Faculty members, however, are denied the precious constitutional liberty of facing an anonymous accuser.

Recommendations
Instructors should, and often do, use assessment throughout the semester to determine how students are learning. The opinion surveys departments employ are by their nature thinly veiled personality ratings. The university would benefit from a new system, one that is legal, constitutional, and without opportunity for anonymous revenge messages. ✍

Gayle Vogt studied education law at Claremont Graduate University where she received her Ph.D. in 1985. A member of the Academic Senate, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, and CSUF Lecturer Representative to CFA, she has been a full-time lecturer in Business Communication since 1987. Research and publications concern second language speakers and assessment.

Finally, research demonstrates that SRI results are affected by instructors' demographics, including gender and race/ethnicity, as well as other irrelevant factors beyond the instructor's control and unrelated to instructional effectiveness. It is common on this campus to interpret teaching effectiveness primarily based on anonymous student evaluations. This, and the use of department means as a standard of comparison for all faculty members, raises serious concerns. ❧

G. Nanjundappa is professor of Sociology and president of the Fullerton Chapter of the California Faculty Association.

Concerns about the SRI Process: A Brief Comment

G. Nanjundappa

As president of CFA Fullerton Chapter, I hear directly from faculty members who have encountered problems with the use of SRI forms on our campus. Based on my experience in dealing with faculty over several years, I offer these recommendations.

First, SRI forms must be under direct control by authorized personnel (other than students) at all times. The forms should not be administered by students, taken to the office by students, or handled by students during processing. Cases in which students completed multiple SRI forms for the same course, took the completed forms elsewhere before turning them in to the department office, and lapses in confidentiality have been related to me.

Second, the multiplicity of forms used on campus raises serious concerns about their reliability and validity. Items and forms with known psychometric properties should be investigated and considered. Related to this, the use of means as opposed to medians when distributions are not normally distributed is significantly problematic.

Teaching Evaluations: Relevant Considerations

Ran Chermesh

A serious discussion of teaching evaluation should take into consideration a set of principal issues, some of which are listed below:

- What are the objectives of the evaluation?
- What is role of the instructor in academic learning?
- What are the most relevant contextual dimensions of academic teaching?

Objectives of the Evaluation
Academic teaching takes place in an academic setting, and therefore in and by an organization. Not all organizations are alike; some are economic corporations, others are closed correctional institutions, some are social clubs, and others schools. Evaluation of a salesperson's effectiveness should take into consideration the customers' satisfaction; evaluation of a prison guard's behavior should assign higher scores to a staff member who blocks escapes than to a friendly, prisoner-oriented, guard. Teachers' impact on their pupils' future success should carry more weight than their PR abilities. Clients must always be counted but in different ways.

The raison d'etre of universities is mostly cognitive, producing informed, well-trained graduates. Therefore, academic teaching evaluation should primarily be concerned with the degree to which such a transformation has been achieved. The impact of students' likes or dislikes is relevant to teaching evaluations only in so far as these feelings shape learning behavior—their likes and dislikes are not the objective of instruction.

The Role of the Instructor in Academic Learning

Instructors should not be considered in vacuum. There's no way of understanding teaching without dealing with learning: both are intertwined. Academic learning evaluations must include data about four elements: the instructor, the student, the interaction between the instructor and students, and the environment. Even though we can single out a given element and statistically control the impact of other elements, the final results must be interpreted with caution. Thus, for example, instructors of required courses are usually underrated in student evaluations compared to instructors of elective courses, first-year students are more critical of their instructors than sophomores or seniors, and students in large courses are less enthusiastic about their professors than those enrolled in small classes. If an institution of higher learning disregards these trends, then it may face reluctance of its staff to take responsibility for teaching its most strategic courses, the first year introductory courses. Instructors aren't omnipotent; their teaching involves students. The most important determinant of instructors' scores is not their method of teaching; it's their students' prior motivation and interest. An instructor who plans to teach two identical sections of a course, one as a required course for non-majors and the other, an elective for majors, will end up, if he/she acts correctly, with two altogether different courses. Even if the two sections are the best of their kind, students will provide lower scores to the first than to the second.
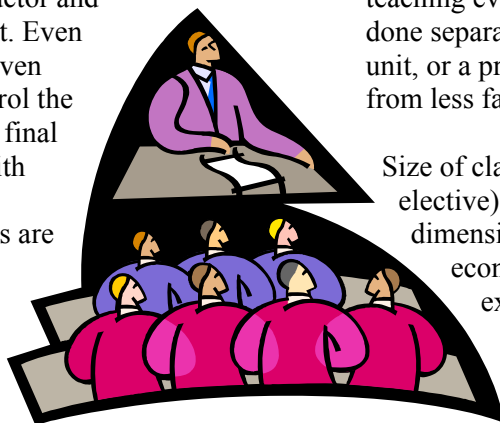
Contextual Dimensions of Academic Teaching

My university (Ben-Gurion University; BGU) has five major divisions: Engineering, Life Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Management, and Health Sciences. Of these, a standardized teaching evaluation poll has been implemented in the first three. Consistently, the ranking of average instructors' ratings follows the same order: Humanities (first), Social Sciences, Engineering, and Life Sciences (fourth). Does this ranking reflect the instructors' skills? The instructors' investment and motivation? No! This ranking reflects some unexplained structural differences between these four fields, differences not accounted for by individual professor's characteristics. These structural differences must be considered if and when teaching evaluations serve as input for promotions. Therefore, when a best instructor prize plan is implemented, candidates should never be chosen on an institution-wide level based on teaching evaluations. A valid selection can either be done separately for each relatively homogenous unit, or a premium should be added to instructors from less favored units.

Size of class and status of class (required vs. elective) are other important contextual dimensions of academic teaching. Primarily for economic reasons, university administrators expect their staff to attract as many students as possible to their classes. Cooperative instructors should not be penalized twice, once for teaching crowded classes, and second for earning less favorable evaluations. If a standardized university-wide poll is circulated, evaluation scores must be adjusted. The size of the prizes or bonuses should be determined by statistical means.

### The Ben-Gurion University Models of Teaching Evaluations

Model A: The Path-Analytic Model. BGU has implemented a path analytic model for more than 10 years. The details of this model are introduced in more detail in the following source: Chermesh, R. (1978). Instructional evaluation by students: Its use for teaching diagnosis and improvement. *Educational Technology, 28*, 9-13.

This model includes the following main features:

1. Teaching indicators were divided into three classes: inputs, throughputs, and outputs. Input items included concrete behavioral items like the use of examples, of teaching aids, etc.

Throughput items were level of interest and level of clarity. Output items included level of learning (information, synthesis, application, etc.), general evaluation of instructor, and general evaluation of the course.

2. Teachers were instructed to start from the bottom up. That is, to check their output scores first, then throughput, and finally their input. If an instructor found his/her final score in the level of learning, for example, unsatisfactory, then he/she was led to check the cause of this frustrating outcome. Was it caused by poor clarity or by boring presentation, for example? A low score on an intermediate variable was, in many cases, related to a low score on specific inputs (teaching techniques). Narrowing the span of potential deficiencies is very helpful when assistance is being sought.
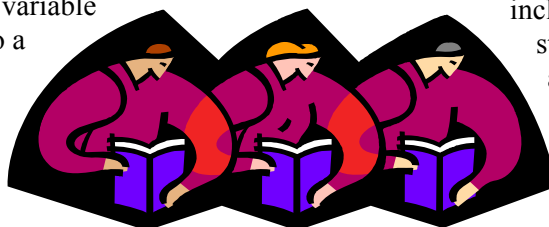
3. Instructors who had low output scores got a detailed computerized report, which provided them with names of colleagues in their department who gained the highest scores for each of their problematic items. It was up to the individual instructor to decide if she/he was interested in being assisted by a given reported qualified colleague, by another, or not to seek help. A statistical analysis of the data showed that the majority of the faculty had at least one item to offer as a model and at least one item for which they needed help. Such a situation allows genuine exchange and doesn't incur heavy costs for consultation.

Model B: The Comprehensive Instructor-Student-Situation Model. Recently, a new model has been tested. This model targets almost exclusively the improvement of learning, and is not restricted to the evaluation of teaching. The learning situation is treated as an academic setting in which instructors interact with students. Students are asked to provide their scoring of items tapping three domains:

- **Instructor's inputs**: clarity of explanations, defined expectations, fairness, raising interest, encouraging questions, independent ideas and thinking, etc.

- **Student's inputs**: effort invested in class, level of interest in class subject matter, class attendance, etc.

- **Class situation:** type of course (lecture, seminar, etc.), is the course offered by the student's major department, or a service course by another unit, is the course required or elective, etc.

The comprehensive form allows production of altogether new reports. Thus, for example, instructors don't receive merely a global summary of their students' views; instead, the results will include the level of interest of their students in class subject matter and students' level of investment in class. The final stage of this project envisions an optional offer to the teaching staff to run independent analyses, breaking their data along their lines of interest.

Conclusion
Teaching effectiveness surveys can be a very useful tool for improving academic teaching. Their design, however, must fit the teaching situation.

- Instructors should be held accountable exclusively for their part in the teaching situation. Any overlooking of this requirement will create distrust and frustration.
- Students should be held accountable for their part in the learning situation. Students should be made aware of the fact that academic learning requires their time, effort and interest.
- All partners—instructors, students, and administrators—must be made aware of the organizational constraints of teaching, meaning class size, program requirements, etc.

An evaluation system should incorporate comprehensive data, enabling control for external factors while focusing on relevant selected aspects. ❧

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Eliminate Unnecessary Periodic Reviews

Lynda Randall

Eliminating periodic reviews in years three and five for those tenure-track faculty members who have demonstrated the standard would be an excellent policy change. The annual review of retention and tenure portfolios is superfluous for candidates who have established a pattern of success and developed an ongoing portfolio framework that can be easily maintained. By the third year of the RTP process, candidates should have a sufficient understanding of what is expected to earn tenure. In fact, a break from focusing on the RTP process could allow them an opportunity to focus more on professional growth than on simply surviving in the university setting.

In terms of the review process in general, it seems that *more is not necessarily better*. This principle applies to both the number of reviews provided during the RTP process and the quantity of materials to be submitted. Review committees at this university have historically been inundated with the annual review process and with support materials that often consist of several boxes for a single candidate. A detailed curriculum vitae or tabled entries can provide ample information for annual review by departmental committees or mentors. In addition, artifacts that have been carefully selected and refined over time can provide a clear and focused view of a candidate's success in teaching, scholarship, and service.

Throughout my fifteen years at CSU Fullerton I have thought that the RTP process is an all too present and ominous force that seems to take on a life of its own. Candidates spend inordinate amounts of time compiling materials, attending preparation workshops, and generally ruminating about the possibility of failure in the process. Those who advise candidates on how to compile their portfolios often suggest that they simply "put everything in there." Such was not my experience in earning tenure at Florida State University, where a departmental committee assessed my detailed curricula vitae annually and provided feedback and direction. My portfolio contents at the time of tenure and promotion consisted of two slim binders.

> *"The current annual focus on portfolio development and review is time-consuming, anxiety-provoking, and unproductive."*

For the reasons outlined here I support changes to the UPS 210.000 that would eliminate the periodic review for those who have met the standard in all three areas in years two and four. The current annual focus on portfolio development and review is time-consuming, anxiety-provoking, and unproductive. It often results in new faculty members becoming exhausted and embittered, perhaps well on their way to burnout by the time they earn tenure.

The valuable time of both reviewers and those undergoing review could be better spent on enhancing teaching, advancing research, and extending service. This change is long overdue. I would go further to suggest that we explore ways to streamline the portfolio process and find ways to support candidates in separating essential indicators and nonessential artifacts. ✍

Dr. Lynda Randall, Professor of Secondary Education, came to CSUF in 1990. She has published two textbooks and numerous articles, as well as received funding for grants for beginning teacher support and assistance. Dr. Randall received the Jewell Plummer Cobb Diversity in Education Award and was an inaugural member of the Teacher/Scholar in Residence program.