

Complete Policy Title:
**Policy on the Encouragement of
Teaching Excellence**

Policy Number (if applicable):
SPS 10

Approved by:
**Senate
Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval:
**April 8, 2009
May 7, 2009**

Date of Original Approval(s):
November 10, 1993

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:
February 9, 1994

Responsible Executive:
Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

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I Rewards and Recognition for Good Teaching

The University provides a number of incentives for good teaching, including promotion through the professorial ranks, the granting of tenure, salary increments based on merit, and University teaching awards (the President's Awards). In addition to providing incentives, these processes allow opportunities for the improvement of teaching through formal and informal feedback. Such feedback is particularly important for new faculty, at the beginning of their teaching careers, where it can and should provide a useful contribution to the development of teaching skills.

Assessment of teaching for salary review occurs throughout the career of all faculty, and assessment for promotion and tenure touches all faculty at the appropriate stages of their careers. The general expectations regarding teaching effectiveness and illustrations of how this can be evaluated are contained in Section III, clauses 4 to 8 of the "*Policy and Regulations with Respect to Academic Appointment, Tenure and Promotion*". Procedures for such assessments are described below. In general, they involve two components, assessment by students and assessment by peers. The process of peer assessment is a cooperative one, involving the faculty member and the department chair and possibly other departmental colleagues and/or external assessors. In the following two sections, guidelines are presented for each of these two kinds of assessment.

II Guidelines for Student Evaluations

Over the past decade, every department in the University has developed considerable experience in the formulation, administration and interpretation of student evaluation questionnaires. In recent years, some consensus has developed, at least within Faculties, regarding the form that such questionnaires should take. The following guidelines are intended to consolidate this consensus and to prescribe uniform procedures for the administration of student questionnaires. It is the responsibility of the Dean of each Faculty to ensure that these guidelines are followed.

1. Each Faculty shall develop and maintain a standard, Faculty-wide student evaluation questionnaire. If necessary, this questionnaire may be customized for individual departments, maintaining a common format.
2. All courses should be evaluated. Student evaluation by questionnaire shall be performed for every undergraduate course (including summer courses), toward the end of the course, every time the course is offered. Students should be informed at the beginning of each course that they will be expected to participate in these evaluations. The same evaluation procedure may be used for graduate courses if 10 or more scores are available or have been accumulated over a number of offerings of the same course.
3. It should be made clear to the students that the instructor is not involved in the administration or the analysis of student questionnaires. Questionnaires should be distributed and collected during class time by someone other than the instructor. The instructor shall not be present during this procedure. Completed questionnaires should be returned by someone other than the instructor to the departmental office.
4. Information from the questionnaires will be consolidated by the department into a report, consisting of a tabulation of numerical data on the form containing the questions. Departments will provide all instructors with contextual data (averages and medians, ideally a histogram) for all the courses given in each term. This report will be used by the department as input for promotion, tenure, permanence, and/or salary reviews, and a copy will be given to the instructor after the final grades have been submitted.

III The Structure of Teaching Dossiers

Every faculty member should have a teaching dossier, which he/she updates regularly. In the case of a teaching dossier that forms part of a tenure and promotion or permanence dossier, the candidate will provide the teaching dossier to the relevant committee(s) in advance of consideration of their candidacy, for reasons set out below (section IV). This teaching dossier should consist of six sections (the appropriate length of each section is indicated in parentheses):

- (i) description of responsibilities and mechanism of evaluation drawn from the appointment letter, or updates thereto;
- (ii) description of teaching approach/philosophy (about one page);
- (iii) description of teaching practice, including examples of how the approach/philosophy has been implemented, or how teaching has been adapted to unusual conditions (one to two pages);
- (iv) evidence of effectiveness of teaching practice, which could include, though it need not consist entirely of, references to students' ratings of courses taught (about one page);
- (v) description of contributions to teaching, for example, course design, publications and research on teaching and learning, presentations on teaching and learning, professional development, educational leadership, reports on issues pertaining to teaching and learning (about one page);
- (vi) complete details of responses to the summative question(s) in the students' ratings of all courses taught over the past several years (as an appendix to the dossier). Departments will provide all instructors with contextual data (averages and medians, ideally a histogram) for all the courses given in each term.

This structure of the teaching dossier accords with best practice and will ensure that peer evaluation of a candidate's teaching can be conducted most effectively. The above elements constitute, in effect, an "executive" summary of a potentially much larger portfolio. The intent of this summary is to provide a means to manage the larger portfolio rather than to require that all such portfolios have a distinct length and uniformity. For example, the larger compilation could record the changes and evolution in the items (i) through (v) and collect relevant items such as course outlines, exams and assignments.

It is necessary to state explicitly that students' comments are *not* to be included in teaching dossiers. Indeed, anonymous statements from students are unreliable and typically unverifiable, and a summative evaluation (such as is conducted when candidates are considered for tenure and promotion or permanence) should not be based, in whole or in part, on such comments.

For faculty in the teaching stream this dossier should be the primary evidence in the context of the annual review conducted by the department Chair.

IV Peer Evaluation of Teaching

A teaching dossier structured in accordance with the description in Section III would allow peers to evaluate the appropriateness of the individual's teaching approach, effectiveness of his or her teaching practice, the robustness of the evidence adduced in support of the instructor's effectiveness, and the importance of the individual's teaching contributions. It should also facilitate yearly annual review and discussion of teaching between the Department Chair and each faculty member, as well as the peer evaluation that is part of tenure and promotion and permanence processes.

Sound evaluation of teaching mandates evaluation by multiple people, on multiple occasions and in multiple contexts. The product of the evaluation process will not be a uniform document, rather teaching is messy and the product of evaluation of teaching may also be messy. Faculty members use a variety of pedagogies and work with students in multiple settings with multiple aids. For this reason, peer evaluation cannot take the form of a single classroom visit, or an opinion expressed by a single individual after review of a single component of teaching, for research has shown that this method of evaluating teaching is unreliable. Instead, peer evaluation must adhere to the principles of involving more than one evaluator and more than one site or occasion of evaluation. A second example of sound practice would be the review of the teaching dossier by several colleagues. A teaching dossier structured in accordance with the description in Section III would allow peers to evaluate the appropriateness of the individual's teaching approach, effectiveness of his or her teaching practice, the robustness of the evidence adduced in support of the instructor's effectiveness, and the importance of the individual's teaching contributions. It should also facilitate yearly annual review and discussion of teaching between the department chair and each faculty member, as well as the peer evaluation that is part of tenure and promotion and permanence processes. Those colleagues may be members of the Department's Tenure and Promotion Committee or other senior, experienced teachers.

Numerical ratings of teaching effectiveness supplied by formal teaching evaluations need not be included in the materials to be assessed by peer evaluators. Conversational interviews about the contents of the dossier between the instructor and the peer evaluators offer a good practice for evaluation, since they prepare the ground for informed and nuanced assessments of the instructor's teaching.

To the extent that the students' ratings feature in the consideration by peers, or in the dossiers prepared for tenure and promotion or permanence, it is critical that these numerical ratings be set in the context of all the teaching done by the department. At a minimum this context should include the averages and medians (better, a histogram) of the scores for the summative question(s) for all courses, with distinction by level or service vs. program teaching. It may be appropriate to weight the results for different courses by the number of responses.

For the purpose of clarity, the department's submission on the peer evaluation of teaching should minimally contain commentary with respect to all of the following elements that are relevant:

- review of, and results of discussing with the candidate, the teaching dossier. Best practice would suggest that there is a record of annual discussion.
- observations from peers' visits to lectures or other teaching situations and evidence that the observations have been discussed with the colleague.
- significant contributions to the curriculum. For example, this may take the form of well considered, evidence-based development in one's own course or across the curriculum or evidence of innovative teaching practice.
- significant contributions to the development of course materials.
- significant participation in pedagogical discussions with students, peers, TAs, in the department or elsewhere.
- evidence of incorporation of some form of formative evaluation in courses and evidence of response to the concerns of students.

Reference: John A. Centra, "Colleagues as Raters of Classroom Instruction." *Journal of Higher Education* 46:1 (1975)327-37. Results were upheld in later studies, see, for example, Ch. 11 in Arreola, Raoul A. (2007) *Developing a comprehensive faculty evaluation system*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

V Curriculum Development, Professional Development and Educational Research

Curriculum development, enhancement of teaching and supervisory skills, and educational research are all important components of a faculty member's job. Each of these activities requires time and resources which should be recognized and budgeted for by departments. In general, time and effort spent on the development of new teaching methods, courses and/or programs should be consistent with a departmental strategy for the evolution of its educational offerings. In this context, assignments to develop new courses, labs etc. should be viewed in the same light as other educational activities, such as lecturing. Ultimately, of course, it is the responsibility of the department chair to assign teaching duties to faculty. Depending on its resources and priorities, a department may or may not wish to invest in new initiatives at any given time.

However, the operative principle is that, when such initiatives are undertaken, the time spent on them should be recognized as part of the teaching contribution of the faculty members involved.

In some cases, a faculty member may wish to undertake educational research or professional educational development of potential value to the University as part or all of the project for a research leave. Such a proposal is eligible for consideration under the Research Leave Policy, provided that the faculty member meets all other criteria.

VI Assurance of Educational Quality

The responsibility for ensuring and continually improving the quality of educational programs is shared by departments, Faculty Deans and by the governing bodies of the University, the Senate and the Board of Governors. The following two paragraphs address methods for program evaluation, (A) by departments and (B) by the Deans and governing bodies.

- A. In addition to monitoring the teaching performance of individual faculty members by the means described in Sections II and III above, each department or Faculty should have in place procedures for program evaluation whereby graduating students, both undergraduate and graduate, are surveyed or interviewed regarding their overall experience with and impressions of the effectiveness of the teaching program. A record should be kept of these students' plans and career aspirations and of how they can be contacted in the future. These surveys or interviews should be followed up by a second survey, 3 to 5 years after graduation, of at least a sample of each graduating class. The results of these surveys and interviews should be used by the department or Faculty for program evaluation and improvement, and they should be made available, in summary form, for use by internal university reviewers.
- B. The primary mechanism by which the quality of the educational programs of departments is monitored is through periodic internal reviews conducted under the auspices of the University Planning Committee. The following policies are intended to supplement the procedures which are currently in place for such reviews.
 1. The review process should be open and transparent. All participants should be asked to provide comments during the review and on the draft report before final recommendations are made. All those affected by the outcome of the review should participate, including faculty, staff,

and undergraduate and graduate students.

2. The review panel should study the reports on teaching by individual faculty members which are the subject of Sections II and III above. They should also refer to the results of interviews of graduating students and alumni, described above, and they should themselves interview some current students and alumni regarding the effectiveness of the overall teaching program of the department.
3. Based on the final report, the reviewing body and the Dean should agree on a set of recommendations to be implemented, and the agreed-upon set of recommendations should be made public. The Dean is responsible for the implementation of these recommendations and will report periodically on the progress of this implementation until it is agreed that the implementation is complete.