

**The University of Washington  
Faculty Council on Instructional Quality**

The Faculty Council on Instructional Quality met Tuesday, April 2, 2002, at 12:30 p.m. in 36 Gerberding Hall. In the absence of Chair Jan Carline, Randy Kyes presided.

**PRESENT:**     *Professors* Coutu, Kyes, Devasia, McGovern, Simpson, Wells  
                  *Ex officio* Bridges, Conquest, Jacobson, Lowell, McCracken

**ABSENT:**     *Professors* Bierne, Hoffer, Mulligan, Reinhall,  
                  *Ex officio* Evans, Lewis, Pitre, Stromberg, Graff

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Kyes called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Agenda**

The agenda was approved.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the March meeting were approved.

**Synopsis**

- 1) Approval of agenda
- 2) Approval of minutes
- 3) Possible Class C legislation on Use of Student Evaluations of teaching
- 4) Discussion of additional evaluation items
- 5) Discussion of Office of Educational Assessment Evaluation Web pages
- 6) Academic Challenge discussion

**Possible Class C legislation on Use of Student Evaluations of Teaching**

Council members reviewed and commented on the eight-item draft of recommendations for Class C legislation governing the use of student evaluations of teaching.

- 1.** Student ratings must not be used alone in making decisions about merit of a faculty member's teaching. Other sources such as peer review of classroom sessions, peer review of curricular materials, and faculty self reflection must be reviewed in addition to student evaluations in order to gain a true sense of the teaching skills of a faculty member. (Accepted without comment)
  
- 2.** More than one set of evaluations should be used in making any decision about merit. Ratings from at least five classes over several quarters should be included for analysis. If possible, courses should include a variety of formats, from lecture based to seminar format.

Council comments:

- Concern about number of ratings required - research faculty often don't have more than one rating. Perhaps this should say "it is recommended" rather than "required" to have five ratings. (Randy Kyes)
- Junior faculty teach only one course per quarter - it's hard to accumulate five classes over several quarters. In addition, Dance does NOT repeatedly evaluate a course in which the instructor is "doing fine." (Maria Simpson)
- What is the intent of Item 2? (Wayne Jacobson)

- Looking for change, improvement. As College Council considers merit and promotion, they keep their eyes on changes in scores. (George Bridges, answering Jacobson)

3. Only global ratings of teaching effectiveness, such “Overall teaching effectiveness,” should be used in personnel decisions. Other, more specific items should be used by the faculty member for review of specific skills and areas for improvement. (Accepted without comment)

4. Do not overestimate small differences. There is a tendency to overestimate the precision of student ratings because they are quantified. A faculty member at the sixtieth percentile on an item does not differ in any practical way from another at the fiftieth percentile. It is better to deal with much broader classifications, such as Excellent or Very Good. Differences of .01 are not meaningful.

Council comments:

- Is the change to one decimal place effective yet? If so, we don't need the sentence "differences of .01 are not meaningful." (Santosh Devasia)
- Change can be made effective in Spring Quarter (Nana Lowell, response to Devasia)

5. Use comparative data, but with caution. Colleges and departments should compile information about evaluations for faculty in their courses over time. Without comparative norms, faculty members can easily overestimate or underestimate this effectiveness. Comparative data should be calculated from more than a narrow population of instructors. Departments with fewer than thirty faculty members should not rely on departmental norms, but use norms calculated for a number of similar departments or for the school as a whole. (Accepted without comment)

6. Consider course characteristics when interpreting results. For example, large lecture courses typically receive lower ratings than smaller courses, and introductory courses for non-majors receive lower ratings than higher division courses for majors. Adjustments for course type should be made in order to have a fairer sense of the faculty member’s teaching skills.

Council comments:

- Should also cite new courses in course characteristics - low scores for new courses should be taken into account, since new courses are usually rated very harshly. (Wayne Jacobson)

7. Give faculty members an opportunity to respond to evaluation results. Faculty should have an opportunity to discuss the objectives of the course and how the teaching methods were used to meet that objective, and how circumstances in the course might have affected evaluations. For example, students tend to rate less traditional teaching methods lower than more traditional ones, even though they might be most appropriate for the objectives. (Accepted without comment)

8: In order for evaluations to be valid, a minimum of a third of enrolled students must be included in the results. Results may not be representative of the full class if less than a third respond. Alternatively, if the class is randomly sampled, all students included in the sample must respond.

Council comments:

- In re the statement: "if class is randomly sampled, all students included in the sample must respond" - doesn't this interfere with the student's right NOT to respond? (Lisa Coutu)
- Be aware that the percent response rate is based on the number of forms you request unless you advise OEA differently. If you request extra forms (e.g., 30 forms vs. the 28 actually enrolled in your class), your response rate is calculated on 30, not on 28. (Devasia and Lowell)

These comments will be collated and forwarded to Carline for incorporation into the next draft of the proposed Class C legislation.

### **Discussion of additional evaluation items (peer institutions)**

Wayne Jacobsen introduced a document that showed samples of Teaching Evaluation Websites and evaluation items from University of Iowa, University of Michigan, University of Illinois, and University of Texas Austin (see addendum).

In Iowa's system, Jacobsen pointed out, items on which teaching is evaluated are fully self-selected by the department or individual, with the exception of Student Core items. Other schools use a standard form with some options available. The bottom line is that all of these schools evaluate teaching; the variables seem to be what is evaluated and how the evaluations are structured. University of Michigan, for example, evaluates diversity issues and instructional climate in addition to course content and instructor effectiveness.

Typically, these institutions allow the instructor or department to build and generate evaluation forms on the Website, Jacobsen said. This seems to be more convenient and flexible than the UW system. Nana Lowell commented that the OEA uses forms that can be scanned - depending on the quality of the printer used to produce them, forms printed from a Website might not scan.

Council members were generally in favor of the flexibility the cafeteria-style choices afford the instructor or department in building evaluations that are custom-designed to the class being evaluated. Lowell advised discretion in embracing this, however, since it would involve a complete remake of the UW system and year-to-year continuity in the evaluations would definitely be affected. .

Maria Simpson said she feels the current UW evaluations never quite speak to performing arts classes, even when the class being evaluated is a theory class. She added that cafeteria-style choices would give more control to faculty.

Lisa Coutu advised in-depth study - she would hate to go to all the time and expense of changing the present system unless the change would be a clear improvement. Do the evaluation items used by other institutions reveal the desired information any better than the UW system does?

Lowell reiterated that big changes should be done carefully, especially in light of the fact that the present system is not always used to its full capabilities. The back of the current form can be used for more evaluation questions with a different focus.

Loveday Conquest related that her ideas about the UW's student evaluations changed after she discussed them with Jerry Gillmore - the conversation allowed her to appreciate the checks and balances built into the system and to understand the consistency of the results.

The possibility of doing online evaluations was discussed, but this is problematic because of the low response rate. Lowell said OEA has the means to do online evaluations, but needs a solution to the low response rate. She would welcome any ideas.

### **Discussion of Office of Educational Assessment Evaluation Web pages**

Lowell advised that OEA is due to redesign its Website - she would like input from the Council on what kind of look, feel, and functionality would be more helpful than what they have now, and what should be included. Lowell assessed the present site as information-heavy with pages of dense text. The top three levels, she said, are least dense but the fourth level is extremely dense. George Bridges suggested that the site be reorganized more around what faculty need to do, and less around explaining what OEA does.

Lowell invited Council members to look at the OEA site and pass on any suggestions for revised functionality, focus, and links. She will collect all suggestions and use them as the site revamp progresses.

### **Academic Challenge**

George Bridges advised that he has worked with the Teaching Academy to complete a draft of Academic Standards based on the ongoing Academic Challenge discussions with the Councils and with Regent William H. Gates, Sr. Bridges said that the University has to make a declaration about what students should expect from an education at the UW and what is expected of them.

Bridges believed Council members had seen this draft, but that is not the case. He will contact Jan Carline and Brad Holt about this document and will provide it to the Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m. *Minutes by Linda Fullerton, Recorder.*

(also see addendum, attached)

## **Addendum**

**University of Iowa** – <http://www.uiowa.edu/~examserv/acepool.html>

### **Categories of Items**

- 101... Global Items
- 201... Course Content, Objectives, and Structure
- 301... Instructor's Behavior
- 401... Communication Skills
- 501... Instructional Methods and Materials
- 601... Outcomes of Instruction
- 701... Diversity Issues
- 801... Laboratory Courses and Sections
- 815... Clinical Courses
- 832... Production Courses

### **Sample Items:**

#### *201... Course Content, Objectives, and Structure*

- 201. Class time is used efficiently.
- 202. There is continuity from one class to the next.
- 203. Course requirements are clear.
- 204. Course objectives are helpful in organizing my studying.
- 234. Classes are worth attending.

#### *301... Instructor's Behavior*

- 317. Student questions are encouraged.
- 318. Questions are answered clearly and concisely.
- 319. Material is summarized in a manner that helps me learn.
- 320. Sufficient detail is given to make generalizations meaningful.
- 322. This instructor communicates at a level appropriate to my understanding.

#### *701.. Diversity Issues*

- 701. This course has broadened my understanding of people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- 702. This instructor takes into consideration ethnic and cultural differences in teaching this course.
- 703. This instructor encourages mutual respect among students of diverse backgrounds.
- 707. This instructor is fair and unbiased in the treatment of all students in this course.
- 709. This instructor treats students fairly regardless of their ethnic or cultural views.

#### *832.. Production Courses*

- 832. The demands made upon my talents are exciting and challenging.
- 833. My individual artistic gifts have developed because of this course.
- 834. Time spent in rehearsal is well used.
- 836. Performance requirements represent outcomes which I can achieve in the time allotted.
- 837. Performances provide me an opportunity to demonstrate my learning.

### **Student Core Items:**

The student core is automatically printed on the back of ACE answer sheets (for instructors selecting this option) as a block of six items. Results from the student core are given to the University of Iowa Student Government to distribute on campus.

- 210. This course requires an appropriate amount of work for the credit earned.
- 901. This instructor increased my interest in the course material.
- 902. This instructor clearly communicated class material.

- 903. Exams in this course were fair.
- 904. The syllabus was an accurate guide to course requirements.
- 104. Overall, this is an excellent course.

**University of Michigan** – <http://www.umich.edu/~eande/tq/design tq.htm>

### **University-Wide Questions**

These questions ask for an overall evaluation of a course and instructor. Unless special arrangements are made, these four questions will appear automatically on your questionnaire.

- Overall, this was an excellent course.
- Overall, the instructor was an excellent teacher.
- I learned a great deal in this course.
- I had a strong desire to take this course.

### **Sample Instructor-Selected Items**

#### *Interests and Values*

- 140. I deepened my interest in the subject matter of this course.
- 141. I developed enthusiasm about the course material.
- 142. I was stimulated to do outside reading about the course material.

#### *Instructional Climate*

- 183. The instructor used examples that had relevance for me.
- 185. The instructor was sensitive to multicultural issues in the classroom.
- 243. The instructor treated all students fairly.
- 244. The instructor encouraged student participation in an equitable way.
- 245. The instructor valued the diversity of life experiences among students.
- 246. The instructor tried to learn the names of all students.

#### *Interaction*

- 222. One real strength of this course was the classroom discussion.
- 223. Students in this course were free to disagree and ask questions.
- 252. The instructor made me feel valued in this class.

#### *Assignments*

- 260. Group assignments helped me to learn the material.
- 261. The term project was very useful in learning the material.

#### *Instructional Computing*

- 351. Electronic presentations were a valuable part of this course.
- 352. E-mail discussions were a valuable part of this course.
- 353. Use of the World Wide Web was a valuable part of this course.

#### *Student Responsibility*

- 368. I actively participated in class discussions.
- 369. I tried to relate what I learned in this course to my own experience.
- 370. I attended class regularly.
- 371. I utilized all the learning opportunities provided in this course.
- 372. I created my own learning experiences in connection with the course.
- 373. I helped classmates learn.

University of Illinois – [http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/dme/ices\\_cat/NewICESfaq.html](http://www.oir.uiuc.edu/dme/ices_cat/NewICESfaq.html)

### Evaluation form options

#### Option 1: Departmental Core plus optional Instructor-Selected Items

Each department can designate a set of items called a department core. These items will be automatically printed on each student questionnaire, so you don't have to choose the items yourself. If your department has a core, you may select up to 23 items *minus* the number of items in the core. To find out if your department has a core and the number of items on it, click [here](#).

You may want to look at the actual core items before making other questionnaire choices to avoid duplication of questions. Your department office has a list of its core items or call for one at M & E, 333-3490.

#### Option 2: Instructor-selected Items (no department core)

You may select up to 23 items from the ICES catalog. You may choose a different set of items for each section since you fill out one [request form](#) for each section of students who provide feedback.

Selecting the [university student publication option](#) adds another 6 items to your ICES. You also need to know that *if* you select too many items, some will necessarily be omitted. Questions are printed in this order: departmental core items first (if there is a department core), then the student core items (if selected), and finally the instructor selected items.

#### Option 3: Complete forms

You can select one of 4 [complete forms](#), ready-made questionnaires if your department doesn't have a core, *and* you don't want to choose items from the catalog. Note: The system doesn't allow for using both a form and instructor-selected items on the same questionnaire.

University of Texas Austin – <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/mec/cis/cissampleq.html>

The following is a list of questionnaires that the Course-Instructor Survey Office provides. Only certain questionnaires are approved for use within any department.

Basic form (B)  
Expanded form (E)  
Basic form + Architecture Supplement (41B)  
Expanded form + Architecture Supplement (41E)  
Discussion (42)  
Basic form + Discussion Supplement (42B)  
Expanded form + Discussion Supplement (42E)  
Foreign Language (43)  
Basic form + Foreign Language Supplement (43B)  
Expanded form + Foreign Language Supplement (43E)  
Laboratory (44)  
Basic form + Laboratory Supplement (44B)  
Expanded form + Laboratory Supplement (44E)  
Applied Music/Ensemble (45)  
Basic form + Applied Music/Ensemble Supplement (45B)  
Expanded form + Applied Music/Ensemble Supplement (45E)  
Basic form + Practicum Supplement (47B)  
Expanded form + Practicum Supplement (47E)  
Basic form + Student Teaching Supplement (48B)  
Expanded form + Student Teaching Supplement (48E)  
Studio Art and Design (49)  
Basic form + Studio Art and Design Supplement (49B)  
Expanded form + Studio Art and Design Supplement (49E)  
Teaching Assistant Questionnaire (50)  
Law School Questionnaire (51)  
Expanded form + Nursing Clinical Rotation Supplement (54E)

**UT Austin - Selected Supplemental Course-Instructor Survey Items**

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/mec/cis/cisownquests.html>

*Clarity of presentation*

The instructor's classroom presentations were easy to follow.  
The instructor stated objectives for each class session.  
The instructor got right to the point when answering a question.

*Helps students distinguish what is important from what is not*

The instructor emphasized what is important in the field.  
The instructor kept the students focused on relevant material.

*Interest in students*

The instructor was fair in his/her dealings with students.  
The instructor was considerate in his/her dealings with students.

*Tolerance of other viewpoints*

The instructor was open to other viewpoints.  
The instructor invited students to share their knowledge and experience.

*Responsiveness to students in instruction*

The instructor presented the material on an understandable level.  
At the beginning of the course, the instructor determined what skills and abilities students brought to the course.  
The instructor used questions, problems, or other methods to check student understanding during lectures.  
After checking to see if the material was being understood, the instructor adjusted the presentation accordingly.  
I felt I could ask a question during the lecture if there was something I didn't understand.

*Skill in directing discussion*

The instructor encouraged students to speak during discussions.  
The instructor gave useful feedback on student contributions in discussion.  
The instructor related ideas discussed to their class activities and materials.  
The instructor tried to make it possible for anyone who wanted to participate to have a chance to talk during discussions.  
I felt comfortable in participating in the class discussions.

*Fairness in examinations and grading*

The test questions corresponded to what had been taught.  
The examinations accurately measured my achievement in this course.  
I am satisfied with the way the performance of students was evaluated in this course.

*Provision of helpful feedback*

The instructor used test results to see where students needed extra help.  
The instructor commented informatively on my written work, either orally or in writing.  
The instructor provided criticism in a constructive manner.

*Impact on students*

The instructor encouraged students to think for themselves.  
I was stimulated to work beyond the requirements of the course.

As a result of this course, I feel more confident in working independently.