UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY SENATE AD HOC TEACHING EVALUATION COMMITTEE

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Melissa Huffman-Beaven, Business Intelligence and Process Specialist

Molly T. Blasing, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Arts and Sciences

Kenneth L. Calvert, Ph.D., Professor, College of Engineering

Richard Charnigo, Ph.D., Professor, College of Public Health (Biostatistics)

Trey Conaster, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

Laneshia Conner, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, College of Social Work

Cindy Jong, Ph.D., Professor, College of Education

ToniMarie Marchioni, D.M.A., Associate Professor, College of Fine Arts

Sara B. Police, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacology and Nutritional Science

Elizabeth Salt, Ph.D., Associate Professor, College of Nursing (Chair)

Keiko Tanaka, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences

Lisa Tannock, M.D., Associate Provost of Faculty Advancement (served years 2023-2024; Sue Nokes, Ph.D. served years 2022-2023)

Committee convening bimonthly from January 2023-March 2024

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COMMITTEE CHARGE

The charge to the committee is as follows:

The Senate Council has appointed this subcommittee to undertake a two-part activity related to UK's teacher-course evaluations. First, the committee is charged with reviewing aspects such as (but not limited to) the following:

•past relevant faculty reports on teacher-course evaluations

•the current TCE survey instrument

•potential new software for TCE survey distribution

•appropriate uses of TCE results
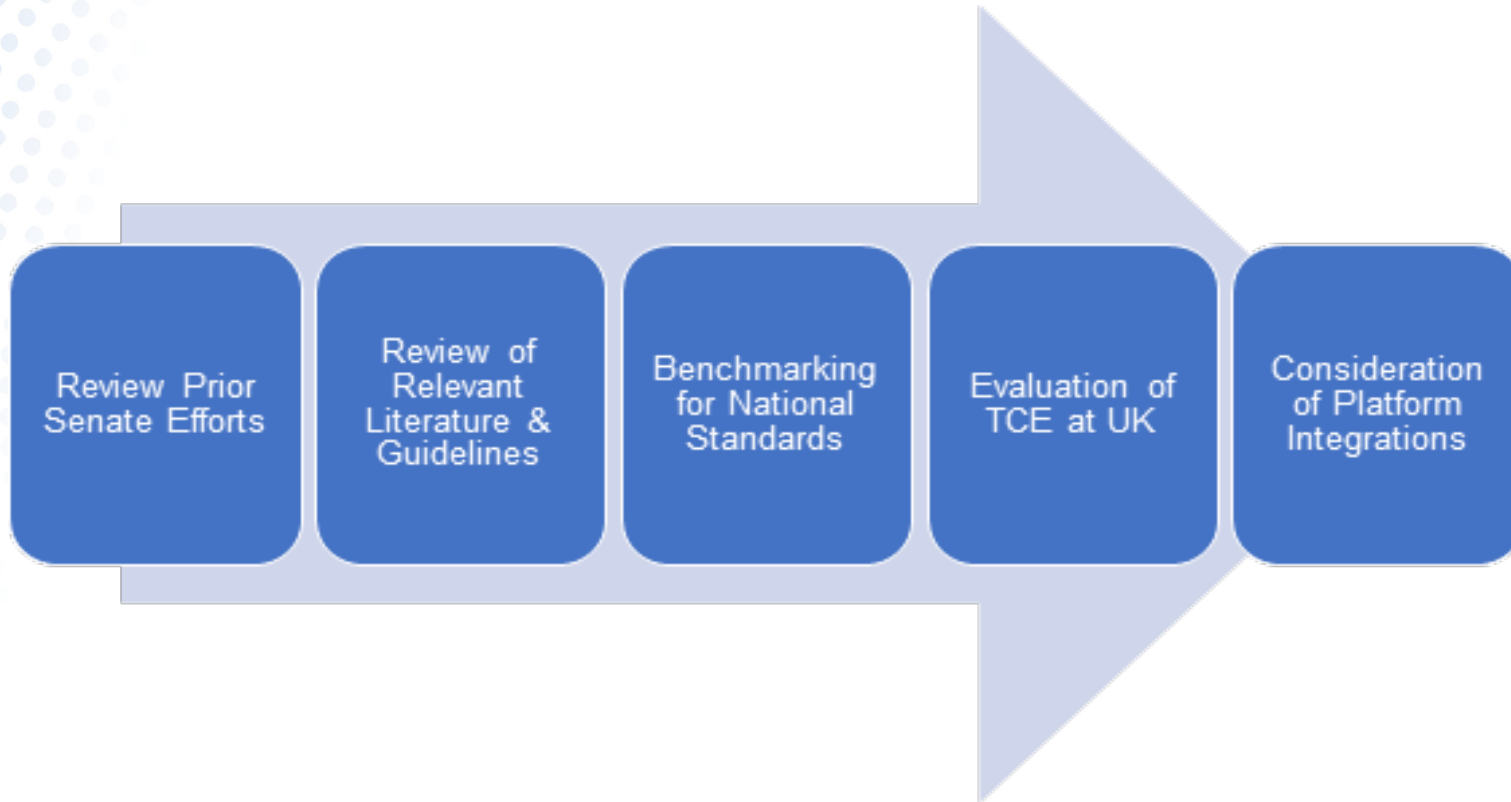
•national standards

The second part of the activity is for the committee to provide recommendations, based on national best practices, to improve UK's teacher-course evaluation process broadly, including suggestions to decrease bias.

OF NOTE: TCE refers to the currently used version of student survey of the instructor and course titled "Teacher Course Evaluations".

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RATIONALE FOR COMMITTEE CHARGE

- Recognition of recent efforts of 1) institutions of higher education and 2) organizations representing U.S. research institutions to improve the evaluation of teaching.[1 2]

- Recognized limitations of the historical use of metrics, most notably the student evaluation of teaching.[2]

- Recognition that the student evaluation of teaching has been widely recognized as a biased metric (i.e., racial, ethnic and gender bias, non-responses bias and measurement bias).[3-7]

- Teaching evaluation has not been systematically evaluated by a Senate committee since 2017.

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APPROACH TO CHARGE

Review Prior Senate Efforts → Review of Relevant Literature & Guidelines → Benchmarking for National Standards → Evaluation of TCE at UK → Consideration of Platform Integrations

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CURRENT TEACHER COURSE EVALUATION

In 2015 a standard set of TCE questions were approved by Faculty Senate.

UK TCE Response Rates

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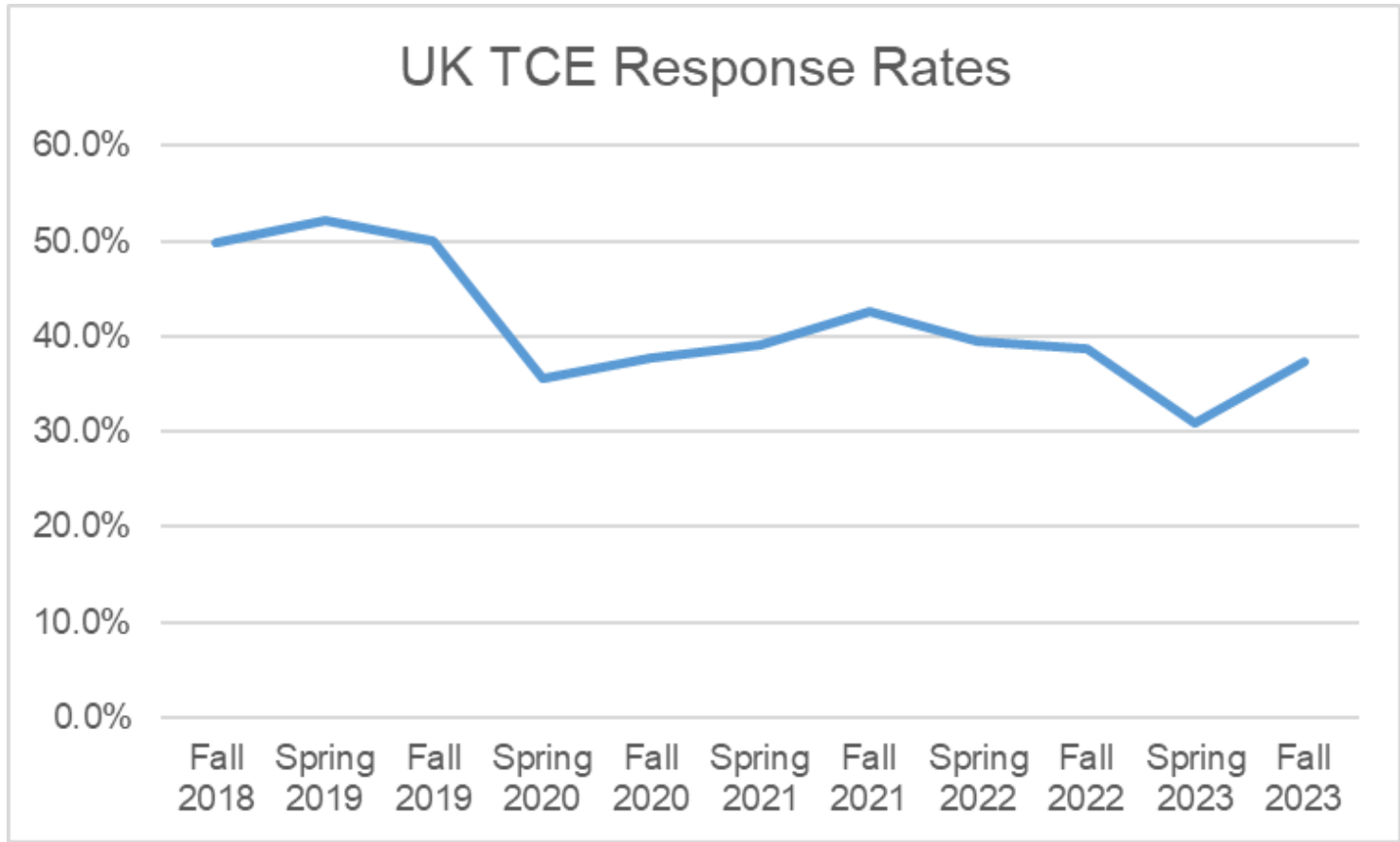
HISTORICAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS TEACHER COURSE EVALUATIONS

- In 2015, the Senate passed a motion (50 in favor, 9 opposed and 3 abstaining):
  - 1) accepted the report by the ad hoc Committee on Teacher-Course Evaluations;
  - 2) endorsed the mandate that these questions will be the **common questions** that all programs will use on their TCE with exceptions made for courses with certain characteristics; and
  - 3) requested that the implementation, which must be endorsed by the Senate, of the new questions be effective as soon as practically possible.

- In 2016, a motion was approved (67 in favor and 3 opposed) that made the **numerical scores from TCE available to students and faculty** (i.e., no written comments).

- Intramural access to TCE results concerning either **course academic content or instructor performance continued to be managed in accordance with existing academic policy of the University Senate and administrative faculty personnel policy (AR 2:1),** with the recommendation that course instructors with a supervisory role in a course (course directors, course coordinators) and the department chairs and the college deans of the unit housing the course had access to both numerical and written comments of instructor performance for all instructors in that course.

- To safeguard student **anonymity and comply with FERPA**, any results (numerical ratings and written comments) **for classes with < 5 TCE responses were not available to anyone**. However, results were included in the aggregated UK, College, and Departmental TCE means.

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POTENTIAL NEW SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION PLATFORMS

- In Spring 2023 the university pursued demonstrations of student evaluation software platforms.

- The chair of the Senate Ad Hoc Teaching Evaluation Committee and Senate Council attended those demonstrations and reported features to the committee.

- The features of these platforms were considered in the development of the committee's recommendations.

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BENCHMARKS EVALUATION

- The committee completed a thorough review of 40 benchmark universities (Appendix 2 in the Full Report).

- The committee used *University Benchmarks* list provided by the *Institutional, Research Analytics and Decision Support* (IRADS) office and the *Office of Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness*.[8 9]

- Personal communication with Claire Berg the Higher Education Project Assistant for the *Association of American Universities* assisted in the identification of other institutions who have completed significant work in the area.

Figure 1: The three "voices" in the framework.
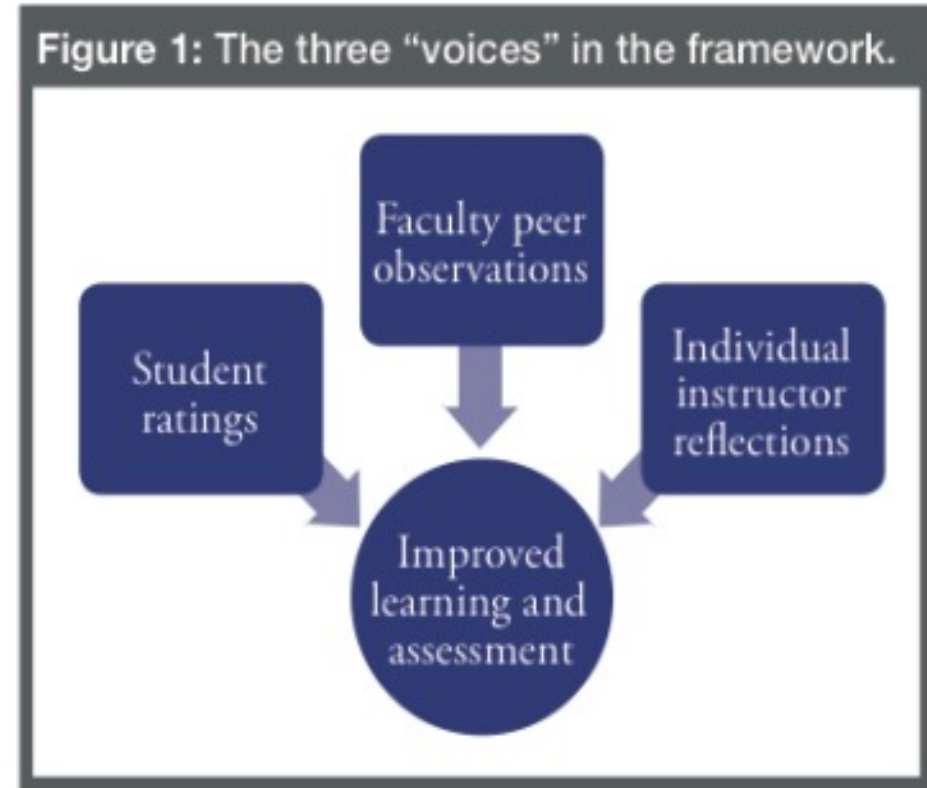
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BENCHMARKS

BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

IOWA ACE

ACE Task Force Summary

University of Oregon: Revising UO's Teaching Evaluations | Office of the Provost (uoregon.edu)

Penn State Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework

PennState SCHREYER INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

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ANALYSIS OF TCE USING MIXED METHODS APPROACH

SELF-REPORTED DATA COLLECTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND IRB APPROVED

Instructor Thoughts on TCE Qualitative Response Themes (N = 144)

- Comments are of use (seems to be a driver of the use scores)
- Faculty are soliciting feedback outside of the TCE
- Response rate is a concern/poor sampling
- Concerns about validity of the measure
- Not a measure of teaching quality or learning, impact or skills obtained
- In-person administration might improve response rates
- Self-reflection and peer observations equally important tools to improve teaching
- Course difficulty affects scores
- Bias (gender, race/ethnicity, sexual identity; response)
- Unit specific teaching evaluation development
- Standards-based approach
- TCE disincentivizes challenging assignments

- More effective tools to improve course (self-learning assessments)
- Should be allowed to complete after final grades
- Students are unable to assess "quality" for a course or instruction
- Highly impacted by the grade the student will receive in the course
- Triangulation (student surveys should not be the only metric)
- Exiting surveys are used
- Contradictory scores
- Numeric scores are of little value
- Some comments are personal and attacking
- Incentivized student completion
- Measure of customer satisfaction
- Small class sizes/no TCE results
- Should not be used for performance evaluation

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ANALYSIS OF TCE USING UNIVERSITY LEVEL DATA

- **Comparison Between Variable**

TCE Scores by Age	
TCE Scores by Age (Sample or Subsample N)	Mean ± Standard Deviation/p value
Overall (N = 153)*	
Course	4.33 ± .48/ p = 0.109)
Instructor	4.49 ± .48/ p = 0.017)
<35 years (n = 20)	
Course	4.48 ±.33
Instructor	4.70 ± .30
35-44 years (n = 43)	
Course	4.52 ± .34
Instructor	4.69 ± .26
45-54 years (n = 37)	
Course	4.23 ± .47
Instructor	4.29 ± .53
55-65 years (n = 41)	
Course	4.25 ± .57
Instructor	4.47 ± .50
>65 years (n = 6)	
Course	4.15 ± .33
Instructor	4.32 ± .31

- **Predictive Models.**
  - Course ratings could be predicted using models and the variables of faculty perception of speech, class size, student population and race.
  - Instructor score could be predicted by the variables of faculty perception of speech, class size, age, student population, teaching experience in higher education, and race.

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TCE ANALYSIS USING INSTITUTIONAL DATA

DATA AVAILABLE THROUGH UNIVERSITY DATASETS- COLLATED AND ANALYZED BY IRADS

Academic Term Id

Academic Year	Fall	Spring	Grand Total
2018-19	80,149	69,758	149,907
2019-20	81,374	52,586	133,960
2020-21	57,142	52,583	109,725
2021-22	62,963	55,271	118,234
2022-23	62,566	44,429	106,995
Grand Total	344,194	274,627	618,821

Instructor Title Series (Class Section Event Schedule Instructor1)	Count	Avg. Q10	Std. dev. of Q10	Avg. Q19	Std. dev. of Q19
Adjunct	7,089	4.10	1.05	4.30	0.99
Clinical	11,832	4.31	0.93	4.42	0.91
Extension	2,770	4.26	0.96	4.41	0.91
Lecturer	122,518	4.16	0.98	4.37	0.92
Library	77	4.13	1.08	4.35	0.96
Military	1,008	4.50	0.72	4.58	0.69
Part-Time	53,473	4.17	1.01	4.33	0.97
Post-Retirement	1,428	4.23	0.94	4.31	0.95
Regular	195,534	4.14	1.03	4.29	1.00
Research	1,104	3.93	1.16	4.18	1.08
Special	54,046	4.30	0.92	4.47	0.84
Temporary	7,775	3.97	1.11	4.14	1.07
Visiting	2,084	4.31	1.01	4.40	0.98
Voluntary	242	4.33	0.72	4.41	0.79
Grand Total	460,980	4.17	1.00	4.34	0.96

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TCE ANALYSIS USING INSTITUTIONAL DATA

Predictive Models:

- TCE item of "I consider this to be a quality course",
    - Developmental/remedial and program-required courses were evaluated less favorably
    - Professional and graduate courses (or mixed undergraduate and graduate courses) tended to be evaluated more favorably
    - Course level was the most useful variable for predicting course scores
    - Evaluations in academic years 2023 and 2020 tended to be very slightly more favorable than those in other recent academic years
    - Distance learning courses (except hybrid) tended to be evaluated less favorably than traditional or off-campus courses
    - Variation across colleges, both in terms of which colleges are hosting the courses and which colleges are employing the instructors
    - Less favorable for instructors who are not citizens.
    - Some instructors appear to obtain consistently higher course scores than others.

- TCE item of "the instructor provided quality teaching",
    - Instructors of developmental/remedial and program required courses tended to be evaluated less favorably,
    - Instructors of professional and graduate courses (or mixed undergraduate and graduate courses) tended to be evaluated more favorably.
    - Course level is perhaps the most useful variable for predicting instructor scores, among the variables considered.
    - Distance learning courses (except hybrid) tended to be evaluated slightly less favorably than traditional or off-campus courses.
    - Evaluations to be less favorable for instructors who are not citizens or who are racial/ethnic minorities.
    - There is some variation across colleges, in terms of which colleges are hosting the courses.
    - Evaluations from the most recent academic years tended to be very slightly more favorable than those from a few years back.
    - Older instructors tended to receive very slightly less favorable evaluations.
    - There is slight variation associated with instructor credentials (highest degree).
    - Some instructors appear to obtain consistently higher instructor scores than others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The current instrument, known as the Teacher-Course Evaluations (TCE), should be considered only a measurement of the student's perception of the learning experience and titled accordingly. Similarly, the TCE should include items that are able to produce a valid and reliable measure of the same.

2. The committee recommends that the survey of the student's evaluation of the learning experience be titled Survey of the Student's Learning Experience (SSLE).

3. Items of the SSLE should be applicable to all teaching modalities (i.e., in-person, online, hybrid, asynchronous, etc.) and phrased accordingly. Future efforts to address teaching evaluation should evaluate and adapt current items to accommodate this recommendation.

4. The measure of the student's perception of the learning experience should be one of multiple sources of the evaluation of teaching or course quality. The evaluation of teaching effectiveness and course quality should include two additional metrics, to represent the three relevant perspectives of teaching and learning- 1) peers or content expert, 2) student experience as a learner, and 3) self (instructor). Specifically, evaluation tools representing these broad categories could include peer evaluation/observation, alumni letters, exit exams or success on professional licensure exams, student exit interviews, and/or mid or periodic course reviews. All sources of evaluation should include a described process of self-reflection because substantive change is contingent on this iterative practice. Standardized rubrics or templates for self-reflection and peer observation should be adapted by a unit.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Students should be offered resources on providing constructive feedback.

6. Instructors should be provided with resources on interpreting students' evaluation of the learning experience and approaches to improve teaching.

7. To the greatest extent possible, the university unit should surveil and delete student feedback relaying inappropriate or abusive comments and personal attacks prior to providing the course evaluations to instructors.

8. In the case of response rates that do not meet the threshold for reporting survey results, aggregated data by instructor and course over time should be made available to faculty. These results are important for multiple reasons including but not limited to, the improvement of courses and teaching.

9. Mechanism to improve the response rates for the survey of the student's perception of the learning experience (proposed SSLE) should be integrated into courses. A not exhaustive list includes: 1) reinforcing the value of the survey by providing examples of positive course changes that resulted from student feedback, 2) reminder systems, 3) dedicated class time to complete surveys, and 4) a clear description of the purpose and directions for completion of the survey how the survey results are used at multiple time points in the semester. The consideration of survey distribution platforms that are easily accessible and user friendly should be used.
10. Work on improving the evaluation of the student learning experience should continue and should involve all stakeholders.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Perception: The TCE should be considered only a measurement of the student's perception of the learning experience and titled accordingly.

Title: Survey of the Student's Learning Experience (SSLE).

Modalities: SLE should be applicable to all teaching modalities (i.e., in-person, online, hybrid, asynchronous, etc.) and phrased accordingly.

Evaluating Teaching/Course Quality: Student Perception + Peer/Content Expert + Self (Instructor)

Student Resources: How to provide constructive feedback

Instructor Resources: Interpreting feedback to understand the perceptions and make informed decisions

Eliminate inappropriate/abusive comments

Provide aggregate data for response rates under the reporting threshold

Higher response rates lead to more reliable information.

Pursue the understanding and improve the evaluation of student learning experiences.

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10 RECOMMENDATIONS

01. Perception
The TCE should be considered only a measurement of the student's perception of the learning experience and titled accordingly.

02. Title
Survey of the Student's Learning Experience (SSLE).

03. Modalities
SSLE should apply to all teaching modalities (i.e., in-person, online, hybrid, asynchronous, etc.) and phrased accordingly.

04. Evaluating Teaching/Course Quality
Student Perception + Peer/Content Expert + Self (Instructor)

05. Student Resources
How to provide constructive feedback

06. Instructor Resources
Interpreting feedback to understand the perceptions and make informed decisions

07. Surveil
Eliminate inappropriate/abusive comments

08. For Low Response Rates
Provide aggregate data for response rates under the reporting threshold

09. Increase Response Rates
Higher response rates lead to more reliable information

10. Improve
Pursue the understanding and improve the evaluation of student learning experiences.

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SENATE RULES RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee crafted the above recommendations and then considered the appropriateness of codifying into Senate Rules. The committee felt that some of the recommendations are best practices for implementation of teaching evaluation and would not be appropriate as a Senate Rule. Yet, the committee did feel that a new section of Senate Rules to address teaching and course evaluation is necessary considering that is one of the three missions of the university and University Senate determines broad academic policy. The committee felt that teaching evaluation is a core academic function to improve teaching and learning and thus a policy should exist. As such, we have provided the two recommendations below to be considered for codification as Senate Rules.

We recommend the following text be included as part of a new proposed Senate rule:

SENATE RULE RECOMMENDATION 1.

The committee recommends that a new section of Senate Rules be developed and titled "Evaluation of Courses and Teaching".

SENATE RULE RECOMMENDATION 2.

The evaluation of teaching effectiveness and course quality should be comprised of three distinct perspectives of teaching and learning- 1) peers or content expert, 2) student experience as a learner, and 3) self (instructor).[4] Implementation should be tailored to meet the needs of colleges/unit.

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QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

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