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*Georgia Southern University*

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# Revisions to Faculty Handbook language about Student Ratings of Instruction

Submitted by: Trent Maurer

2/17/2017

## **Motion:**

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The ad hoc Committee on Student Ratings of Instruction moves to amend the Faculty Handbook as follows:

1) Section 205.01 Criteria for All Types of Faculty Evaluation, second paragraph under Teaching, from: Student ratings of instruction shall not be the sole measure of teaching effectiveness for any review, nor shall instructors be ranked according to student ratings for evaluation; rather, a complete picture should be obtained through multiple sources. Documentation of teaching effectiveness is the responsibility of the faculty member.

To:

Student ratings of instruction shall not be the sole or primary measure of teaching effectiveness for any review at any level, nor shall instructors' ratings be compared to other instructors' (e.g., department means) or to specific "cut points" (e.g., 4.0 on a 5.0 scale) as part of their evaluation; rather, a complete picture should be obtained through multiple sources. The numerical data reported for each course shall consist of the frequency distribution of scores for each question, the number of responders, and the response rate for the course; measures of central tendency and variability (e.g., means and standard deviations) shall not be used to evaluate instructors at any level. Results should not be generalized beyond the students who responded, especially when the response rate is low. In evaluations, written comments from student ratings of instruction that are not about teaching effectiveness should be disregarded. Comments that are about teaching effectiveness should be evaluated cautiously in the context of the course. Research on student ratings of instruction and potentially biasing influences should also be taken into consideration in any use of student ratings of instruction data. Department chairs and other personnel who formally evaluate instructors' teaching effectiveness by means of student ratings of instruction data shall receive sound

methodological training and regular briefing on the major findings in the research literature on how to appropriately use such data. Documentation of teaching effectiveness is the responsibility of the faculty member.

2) Section 205.06 Procedures for Faculty Evaluations, Section E.3, from: Regents policy requires that a written system of student ratings of instruction be utilized in the annual evaluation of each faculty member (Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 8.3.5). Completed rating forms are kept on file in the department chair's office and are the property of the University.

To:

Regents policy requires that a written system of student ratings of instruction be utilized in the annual evaluation of each faculty member (Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 8.3.5). The use of student ratings of instruction data will be primarily formative, with the main goal of improving teaching effectiveness. Completed rating forms are kept on file in the department chair's office and are the property of the University.

3) Section 205.07 Student Ratings of Instruction, from: Georgia Southern requires and conducts written or online student ratings of instruction each academic term (excluding summer) to provide information to faculty for their use in the improvement of teaching. Results are also used in faculty evaluation as mandated by Regents policy as a portion of an evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Department chairs return a summary of numerical results and students' written comments to faculty each academic term; original responses are the property of the University. Courses shall be evaluated by students in the same manner as the course is conducted. Partially online courses whose content is offered 50% or more online are evaluated through CourseEval. As with any evaluation, faculty shall have the right to respond to student ratings regarding factors that might have influenced student ratings of instruction scores.

To:

Georgia Southern requires and conducts written or online student ratings of instruction each academic term (excluding summer) primarily to provide information to faculty for their use in the improvement of teaching. Results are also used in faculty evaluation as mandated by Regents policy as a portion of an evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Each academic term, department chairs return to faculty a numerical report on the frequency distribution of scores, the number of responders, and the response rate for each course, in addition to a typed copy of students' written comments for each course.

At each annual review, department chairs discuss the results with each faculty member with the main goal of improving teaching effectiveness. Original responses are the property of the University. Courses shall be evaluated by students in the same manner as the course is conducted. Partially online courses whose content is offered 50% or more online are evaluated through CoursEval. As with any evaluation, faculty shall have the right to respond in writing to student ratings regarding factors that might have influenced student ratings of instruction scores. These responses shall be permanently appended to any future reports of that student ratings of instruction data.

### **Rationale:**

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The ad hoc Committee on Student Ratings of Instruction was charged to propose methods to make the evaluation of teaching effectiveness more equitable and consistently defined, assessed, and used across the university including developing guidelines for how SRIs should be used and objectively valued in annual reviews and in promotion and tenure (and pre/post tenure) decisions for all faculty. These changes reflect best practices in the use of Student Ratings of Instruction from the published research literature on the topic. For a more detailed rationale in support of these changes, see Section II: Background in the Final Report of the ad hoc Committee. On behalf of the ad hoc Committee on Student Ratings of Instruction: Trent W. Maurer, Nan LoBue, Eudiah Ochieng, and Cordelia Zinskie

### **Response:**

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2/14/2017: The SEC voted not to approve this motion request because it is not within the charge of the committee, which was "to draft or recommend for purchase a new Student Rating of Instruction designed to measure teaching effectiveness, as approved by President Keel on September 16, 2014. The charge described in the rationale and in the committees' final report is not accurate.

## 205.01 Criteria for All Types of Faculty Evaluation

The criteria described below, along with the Desired Attributes in Section 204, apply to all types of faculty evaluation described in Section 205.04 of the Faculty Handbook. Evaluators of faculty at all levels shall seek evidence of sustained effort, involvement, and record of achievement. Accomplishments which have enriched the student learning experience are valued most. The entire body of work submitted by candidates shall be considered, though the most recent work shall be afforded greater consideration by the deliberating bodies at each level of evaluation. At Georgia Southern, the four Board of Regents' criteria of superior teaching, outstanding service to the institution, academic achievement, and professional growth and development are expressed as the three criteria of teaching, scholarship, and service, with professional growth and development considered among these three. The following standards, articulated by Charles E. Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene I. Maeroff in *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997, p. 36) shall be applied where appropriate to each area of evaluation: clarity of goals, adequacy of preparation, appropriateness of methods, significance of results, effectiveness of presentation, and evidence of reflective critique. While the manifestations of faculty achievement may vary across disciplines, the qualities represented in these criteria and in the Desired Attributes shall be the predominant basis for evaluation and shall be reflected in college and departmental governance documents.

### *Teaching*

A demonstrated record of superior, effective teaching is the first and most important area of evaluation. Superior teaching is reflective, student-centered, respectful of the diversity of students, multimodal, and focused on student learning outcomes. Teaching represents professional activity directed toward the dissemination of knowledge and the development of critical thinking skills. Such activity typically involves teaching in the classroom, laboratory, or studio, and direction of research, fulfillment of professional librarian responsibilities, mentoring, and the like. Teaching evaluation procedures should include both formative and summative elements. All teaching evaluation procedures should include a narrative or self-evaluation and student ratings of instruction. The narrative should include a description of teaching methods used to achieve or maintain excellence in teaching, description of new course development or course revisions, conferences attended on teaching and learning, college level teaching and learning projects, pedagogy scholarship, contributions toward special teaching initiatives, mentoring of student research and student writing, examples of course syllabi, and other class materials. Further evidence of excellence in teaching can be found in classroom evaluations by peers and/or the department chair, peer assessment, and examination of student work. A teaching evaluation might include any of these kinds of evaluations as well as other evaluation methods not listed here.

~~Student ratings of instruction shall not be the sole measure of teaching effectiveness for any review, nor shall instructors be ranked according to student ratings for evaluation; rather, a complete picture should be obtained through multiple sources. Documentation of teaching effectiveness is the responsibility of the faculty member.~~

Student ratings of instruction shall not be the sole or primary measure of teaching effectiveness for any review at any level, nor shall instructors' ratings be compared to other instructors' (e.g., department means) or to specific "cut points" (e.g., 4.0 on a 5.0 scale) as part of their evaluation; rather, a complete picture should be obtained through multiple sources. The numerical data reported for each course shall consist of the frequency distribution of scores for each question, the number of responders, and the response rate for the course; measures of central tendency and variability (e.g., means and standard deviations) shall not be used to evaluate instructors at any level. Results should not be generalized beyond the students who responded, especially when the response rate is low. In evaluations, written comments from student ratings of instruction that are not about teaching effectiveness should be disregarded. Comments that are about teaching effectiveness should be evaluated cautiously in the context of the course. Research on student ratings of instruction and potentially biasing influences should also be taken into consideration in any use of student ratings of instruction data. Department chairs and other personnel who formally evaluate instructors' teaching effectiveness by means of student ratings of instruction data shall receive sound methodological training and regular briefing on the major findings in the research literature on how to appropriately use such data. Documentation of teaching effectiveness is the responsibility of the faculty member.

#### *Scholarship*

The significance of scholarly accomplishments shall be judged rigorously within the context of the discipline. Candidates must provide evidence of work which has been selected for dissemination through normally accepted peer-reviewed venues such as publications, conference presentations, exhibitions, performances, or other professional accomplishments. Scholarship includes the discovery, integration, development, application, and extension of knowledge as well as aesthetic creation and is often demonstrated by publications and presentations designed for professional audiences. Scholarship is manifested in articles, scholarly books and texts, reports of research, creative works, textbooks, scholarly presentations, research grants, demonstration grants, papers read, panel participation, exhibits, performances, professional honors and awards, additional professional training or certification, degrees earned, postdoctoral work, and academic honors and awards.

#### *Service*

Faculty are expected to make service contributions to their professions and to the institution. Service at the department/school, college, and university levels is essential to the well-being of the University. Service includes the application of one's expertise in the discipline for the benefit of a professional organization, the community, or the institution. Service also includes the academic advisement of Georgia Southern University students. Additionally, service may include work in schools, businesses, museums, social agencies, government, or the like, as well as activities undertaken on behalf of the University that do not entail systematic instruction, such

as manuscript reviewing and the design and development of professional conferences. Consulting shall be designated as paid or unpaid.

*Approved as amended by Faculty Senate, April 21, 2015; approved by President, April 23, 2015.*

#### 205.06 Procedures for Faculty Evaluations

The following guidelines relate to different aspects of faculty evaluation.

##### A. Criteria in all evaluations

The major criteria to be considered in both qualitative and quantitative terms are those specified for promotion by the Regents: teaching, service to the institution, academic achievement, and professional growth and development (Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 8.3.6.1). At Georgia Southern, these four are combined as the three criteria of teaching, scholarship, and service (see § 205.01 of the Faculty Handbook). Regents' policy also states "effective advisement shall be credited toward retention, tenure, and promotion. It shall be a specific topic of faculty evaluation" (Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 3.9).

##### B. Faculty input and initiative

1. Each faculty member is encouraged to provide any information he or she wishes to facilitate the evaluation.
2. Either the faculty member or department chair may initiate an evaluation for promotion, but in either case, the faculty member provides the supporting material.
3. To facilitate the evaluation process, faculty whose scholarship is published in another language will provide English translations of articles, conference papers, and works of similar length. The department will seek third-party reviews in English of longer works such as books and monographs. This requirement may be waived in units where sufficient numbers of faculty who read the foreign language proficiently are eligible for service on evaluation committees. Such waivers require the appropriate dean's approval on an annual basis.
4. Each tenured or tenure-track faculty member undergoing either a promotion or tenure review shall submit to his/her chair or unit head the names and contact information of at least three qualified individuals not directly involved in the faculty member's work (i.e., have not been involved as a mentor or close collaborator) who can objectively review the faculty member's portfolio. The individuals should be experts in the faculty member's field and hold an academic appointment at an institution at least similar to Georgia Southern with rank at or above the rank to which the candidate is aspiring. The department chair or chair of the department's Tenure and Promotion Committee shall solicit letters from two of the individuals that address the quality of work performed and readiness of the candidate for promotion and/or tenure. In addition to submitting names for individuals who may be contacted for external review, the faculty member may submit up to three names (and contact information) of individuals who may NOT be contacted by anyone involved in the tenure and/or promotion review. The department chair in association with the Tenure and Promotion Committee chair may also solicit up to two additional letters from any individual not on the forbidden list that he or she may think has the background



commensurate with carefully evaluating the candidate's portfolio and contributions to the profession. (#4 approved by Faculty Senate, June 2, 2015.)

#### C. Feedback

The department/school chair will discuss the evaluations and the recommendations based upon them, except in cases of nonrenewal, with the faculty member involved. The discussion should be constructive, candid, and future-oriented. In the case of the annual evaluation, the primary purpose is to provide information for the faculty member's professional development, to advise the faculty member of any recommendations made and the basis for the recommendations, and to set professional goals for the faculty member for the coming year. A narrative summary of the evaluation, including recommendations, will be written by the department chair. The faculty member may append his or her written comments to this summary. A copy of the evaluation and comments will be given to the faculty member.

#### D. Locus and responsibility

The process of faculty evaluation is carried out primarily in the department. The chair directs the evaluation and provides summaries and recommendations to the dean.

#### E. Departmental determination of criteria and procedures

1. Members of each department shall approve all criteria for evaluation of instruction, scholarship and creativity, and service and all procedures for evaluation.
2. Each department shall describe in writing its criteria and procedures for evaluation. A copy shall be submitted to the dean for approval.
3. ~~Regents policy requires that a written system of student ratings of instruction be utilized in the annual evaluation of each faculty member (Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 8.3.5). Completed rating forms are kept on file in the department chair's office and are the property of the University.~~

**Regents policy requires that a written system of student ratings of instruction be utilized in the annual evaluation of each faculty member (Board of Regents Policy Manual, § 8.3.5). The use of student ratings of instruction data will be primarily formative, with the main goal of improving teaching effectiveness. Completed rating forms are kept on file in the department chair's office and are the property of the University.**

4. The special evaluations (for promotion, tenure, pre-tenure review, and post-tenure review) should also include some type of systematic evaluation by peers and others who have knowledge of the work of the faculty member.

#### F. College determination of procedures

Each college shall determine and describe in writing its procedures for evaluating the promotion recommendations submitted by the department chairs. A copy of the procedures shall be submitted to the Provost for approval.

#### 205.07 Student Ratings of Instruction

~~Georgia Southern requires and conducts written or online student ratings of instruction each~~

~~academic term (excluding summer) to provide information to faculty for their use in the improvement of teaching. Results are also used in faculty evaluation as mandated by Regents policy as a portion of an evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Department chairs return a summary of numerical results and students' written comments to faculty each academic term; original responses are the property of the University. Courses shall be evaluated by students in the same manner as the course is conducted. Partially online courses whose content is offered 50% or more online are evaluated through CoursEval. As with any evaluation, faculty shall have the right to respond to student ratings regarding factors that might have influenced student ratings of instruction scores.~~

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Approved as amended by Faculty Senate, March 12, 2015.

