

Longwood University Faculty Senate  
**PROPOSAL/POLICY COVER  
SHEET**

This cover sheet is intended to provide information to members of the Faculty Senate about a new proposal/policy or about revisions to an existing proposal/policy. **If you are proposing a new policy, then attach the text of the policy to this form. If you are proposing a change to an existing policy, then attach the text of the current policy with any deleted language marked by a strikethrough and with new language marked by an underline. If you are deleting a policy, then attach the text of the policy to be deleted.**

**COMMITTEE(S)** that authored or sponsored this proposal:

Student Assessment of Instruction Ad Hoc Advisory Committee

**TOPIC:** Replace Student Assessment of Instruction Tool

**BACKGROUND** (Provide a brief statement describing the origins of this proposal, the nature of the problem it addresses, and the work completed to devise the proposal):

The Student Assessment of Instruction Ad Hoc Committee was charged with reviewing Longwood's current student assessment of instruction and bringing it into alignment with best practices in higher education. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the committee executed an extensive review of the literature, which revealed overwhelming evidence that student evaluations are not valid measures of teaching effectiveness (Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2021; Uttl, 2017; Uttl, 2023). Student evaluation data are easily manipulated using incentives such as treats, extra credit, and lenient/inflated grades (Clayson et al., 2006; Lakeman et al., 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023; Uttl, 2023). Further, they tend to measure or reflect non-teaching related factors, like student ability and interest, the course subject, difficulty of the course, class size (Clayson et al., 2006; Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2021; Uttl, 2023). Student evaluation data are also biased against women, minorities, LGBTQIA+ faculty members (Boring et al., 2016; Chavez & Mitchell, 2020; Esarey & Valdes, 2020; Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2021; MacNell et al., 2015).

Based on these findings, the ad hoc committee recommended to Faculty Senate in Spring 2024 that Longwood a) stop using student evaluations for administrative purposes (like promotion and tenure, performance evaluations, and awards), b) rename the form to avoid implying it measures teaching effectiveness, and c) redesign the form and the process to develop a tool that faculty can use to improve their teaching. The committee was tasked with working on the latter two recommendations.

Since that time, the ad hoc committee has developed the *Student Experience and Learning Form (SELF)*. The process to develop the SELF was highly iterative and collaborative among various stakeholder groups across campus. The process included:

- A survey to faculty to gauge the elements that should be included in form to replace the current student assessment of instruction
- An initial draft of items, which were scrutinized by students in a survey design course
- A series of focus groups with different faculty groups on campus (e.g., tenured, untenured, graduate faculty, P&T committee members, department chairs) to gather feedback on the items; items were revised based on the feedback
- Solicitation of more feedback on the revised items through Faculty Senate while holding a series of focus groups with undergraduate and graduate students; items were revised again based on the feedback

Both the title and design of the new form reflect the true purpose of the form: to capture the student experience in a course, rather than assessing teaching effectiveness. The form provides faculty with feedback they may use to improve their teaching while simultaneously providing students with an outlet to share their voice, which stakeholder groups expressed in the development process was an important principle to retain.

#### *References:*

- Boring, A., & Ottoboni, K. (2016). Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness. *ScienceOpen research*.
- Chávez, K., & Mitchell, K. M. (2020). Exploring bias in student evaluations: Gender, race, and ethnicity. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(2), 270-274.
- Clayson, D. E., Frost, T. F., & Sheffet, M. J. (2006). Grades and the student evaluation of instruction: A test of the reciprocity effect. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 5(1), 52-65.
- Esarey, J., & Valdes, N. (2020). Unbiased, reliable, and valid student evaluations can still be unfair. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 45(8), 1106-1120.
- Kreitzer, R. J., & Sweet-Cushman, J. (2021). Evaluating student evaluations of teaching: A review of measurement and equity bias in SETs and recommendations for ethical reform. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 1-12.
- Lakeman, R., Coutts, R., Hutchinson, M., Massey, D., Nasrawi, D., Fielden, J., & Lee, M. (2023). Playing the SET game: How Teachers view the Impact of Student Evaluation on the Experience of Teaching and Learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 48(6), 749-759
- MacNell, L., Driscoll, A., & Hunt, A. N. (2015). What's in a name: Exposing gender bias in student ratings of teaching. *Innovative Higher Education*, 40, 291-303.
- Sullivan, D., Lakeman, R., Massey, D., Nasrawi, D., Tower, M., & Lee, M. (2023). Student motivations, perceptions and opinions of participating in student evaluation of teaching surveys: a scoping review. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-12.
- Uttl, B., White, C. A., & Gonzalez, D. W. (2017). Meta-analysis of faculty's teaching effectiveness: Student evaluation of teaching ratings and student learning are not related. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 54, 22-42.
- Uttl, B. (2023). Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET): Why the emperor has no clothes and what we should do about it. *Human Arenas*, 1-35.

**SUMMARY OF NEW POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES OR DELETIONS TO AN EXISTING POLICY** (Provide a brief list or statement describing the content of the policy or the proposed changes or deletions):

The current proposal offers the Student Experience & Learning Form (SELF) as a replacement for the current Student Evaluation of Instruction tool in *Section IV.R. Student Evaluation of Instruction*. The proposal also aligns the language in *Section IV.R.* of the FPPM with the new name and emphasis of the SELF, which is the student experience in the course rather than student evaluation of teaching.

The proposed questions and edited language to the FPPM are included in Appendix A. Appendix B includes a list of *recommended* procedures to administer the form. These procedures will be distributed with the SELF each semester.

**RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES** (Provide a brief statement as to why the new policy, the changes, or the deletion is needed):

The proposed SELF was intentionally designed to address the challenges of the current student evaluation system, like low response rates and bias, that often prevent it from serving as a tool for continuous improvement.

First, to maximize response rates, the SELF features a more concise design to reduce student fatigue. Compared to the current tool, it requires fewer total items and limits open-ended questions, which typically demand more time to complete. The committee also recommends administering the form during class (for in-person courses) while the instructor vacates the room. Students should be more likely to complete the instrument if it is brief and paired with dedicated, in-class time.

Second, to reduce bias, the SELF shifts the focus away from the individual instructor and toward course design and delivery. Questions targeting the instructor often invite implicit bias against certain demographic groups and measure factors that cannot easily be changed (such as personality traits). Questions in the SELF are more objective, prompting students to evaluate actionable course design elements that faculty can directly modify to enhance learning. Furthermore, the SELF's introductory statement and recommended administration script explicitly prompt students to think objectively about a course to help actively combat bias.

Together, these changes ensure that faculty receive feedback from a more representative sample of their students to support continuous course improvement.

**Routing information and signature lines:**

Date submitted to Senate Executive Committee for Consideration:

Action(s) Taken:

Date first read at Faculty Senate:

Action(s) Taken:

Date final action taken by Faculty Senate:

Action(s) Taken:

Senate Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to the PVPAA (within 5 working days of Senate approval):

Action(s) Taken:

PVPAA: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to other administration:

Action(s) Taken:

Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date (within 15 working days of PVPAA's signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to the Board of Visitors:

**APPENDIX A**  
**PROPOSED CHANGES TO SECTION IV.R. OF THE FPPM**

**R. STUDENT ~~EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION~~ FEEDBACK ON COURSE EXPERIENCES & LEARNING**

All faculty members who wish to be considered for performance salary increases are required to permit their students to anonymously complete the ~~instruction evaluation form~~ Student Experience & Learning Form (SELF) prior to the end of the semester. Specific instructions for the administration of the ~~evaluation activity~~ SELF will be provided ~~with the forms when the form opens~~. After processing, a report tabulating the results will be returned to the faculty member.

The administration and completion of ~~evaluations~~ the SELF are to take place during the two weeks prior to final examinations.

Classes with 5 or more students shall ~~be evaluated~~ receive the SELF. Department chairs, college deans and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (PVPAA) have access to the information in ~~student evaluations~~ the SELF.

~~A sample of the evaluation is reproduced on the next three pages.~~ The questions included the SELF are presented on the following pages.

## Student Experience and Learning Form (SELF)

The Student Course Experience Form (SELF) asks for your experience in your courses to help improve teaching and learning at Longwood University. Instructors will use your input to refine this course, and department chairs and committees review your feedback as one factor when evaluating faculty.

As you answer the questions, consider the following:

- **Be Specific:** Provide constructive feedback focused on your learning experience, not personal characteristics or personal preferences unrelated to learning.
- **Reflect Broadly:** Consider both your own engagement and the instructor's teaching.

**Q1.** On average, how many hours outside of class time did you spend preparing for this class (e.g., completing readings, assignments) each week?

None	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	6-9 hours	More than 9 hours
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**Q2.** Which of the following strategies outside of class did you find most helpful in learning the course material? Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Asking the instructor questions<br><input type="checkbox"/> Flashcards<br><input type="checkbox"/> Internet resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Lecture videos<br><input type="checkbox"/> Library resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Meeting with instructor during office hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Reasoning center<br><input type="checkbox"/> Reading assignments<br><input type="checkbox"/> Referencing faculty feedback<br><input type="checkbox"/> Rereading notes<br><input type="checkbox"/> Study groups with peers<br><input type="checkbox"/> Taking notes<br><input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring center<br><input type="checkbox"/> Writing center<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
|--|---|

**Q3.** Approximately what portion of class sessions did you miss in this course?

This class was asynchronous	None	Less than a week of classes	1-2 weeks of classes	More than 2 weeks of classes
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**Q4.** How frequently were you actively engaged in class (e.g., adding to conversations, asking relevant questions, taking notes, listening to lecture)?

This class was asynchronous	Never	Less than half the time	Half the time	Most times	All the time
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**Q5.** How frequently were you distracted by your technology and/or other's technology (e.g., phone, laptop, smartwatch, earbuds, tablet) during class time?

This class was asynchronous	Never	Less than half the time	Half the time	Most times	All the time
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**Q6.** How often did you read the assigned materials for each class period?

This class did not require preparation	Never	Less than half the time	Half the time	Most times	All the time
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**Q7.** Please provide any further comments regarding the factors that influenced the amount of effort you put into the course.  
[open ended]

**Q8.** The class content covered sufficiently prepared me for the assignments and assessments.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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**Q9.** The instructor provided clear guidance about what was expected on assignments.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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**Q10.** I received constructive feedback on my assignments that clearly indicated the ways in which I met or did not meet the expectations for the assignment.

I did not look at feedback	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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**Q11.** I received feedback on assignments in a helpful timeframe.

I did not look at feedback	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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**Q12.** The course challenged me to learn new knowledge and/or skills.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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**Q13.** Which of the following elements of the class did you find most helpful in learning the course topics and concepts? Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field trips               | <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-class assignments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group projects            | <input type="checkbox"/> Small group discussion   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guest speakers            | <input type="checkbox"/> Student presentations    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hands-on class activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Videos                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-class assignments      | <input type="checkbox"/> Whole class discussion   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lectures                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

**Q14.** Which specific assignments and/or class activities were the most and/or least beneficial to your learning?  
[open ended]

**Q15.** On average, when I communicated with the instructor outside of class, they responded to me...

I did not communicate with the instructor outside of class	Within 48 hours	Within 3-4 days	Within 7 days	In more than 7 days	Never
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**Q16.** The instructor communicated changes about the schedule, content, and assignments in a reasonable timeframe.

The instructor did not make changes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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**Q17.** Please provide any further comments regarding the design of the course (e.g., the structure, course materials, feedback, communication, or assessment methods).  
[open ended]

**APPENDIX B**  
**RECOMMENDED ADMINISTRATION OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE &  
LEARNING FORM (SELF)**

**RECOMMENDED PROCESS TO ADMINISTER THE SELF**

1. Publish dates the survey will be open before the semester starts
  - a. Put dates on the academic calendar
2. Add a statement to syllabi
  - a. *Students in this class will be asked to complete a Student Experience & Learning Form toward the end of the term. Your feedback is very important to help improve teaching, learning, and course design at Longwood University. Responses are anonymous, and I do not see the results until after final grades are posted.*
3. Announce dates the survey will be open in class
4. Provide class time for students to take the form during the last week of class,
  - a. Instructor reads script and leaves room
  - b. For online classes, post the announcement, add as an *ungraded* assignment

**RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT FOR IN PERSON OR SYNCHRONOUS CLASSES**

We are going to take time today to complete the Student Experience and Learning Form, which gathers your thoughts on your experience in this course. Your feedback is vital: First, it helps me personally refine this course for future students. For example, [insert a specific change you've made based on past feedback].

Second, the university uses your feedback for official purposes. Department chairs and review committees use your feedback as one of several tools to evaluate faculty performance and decide on promotions and tenure. While it's not the only factor they consider, your feedback serves as an important piece of evidence in their overall review.

As you reflect on our goal of [key skill/learning outcome], please focus your feedback on the learning experience itself—things like pacing, clarity, and assignments. Specific, constructive comments are the most helpful. Remember, learning is a partnership, so feel free to reflect on your own engagement as well. High response rates ensure we get an accurate picture of the class, so thank you for being thoughtful when completing the form.

**RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT FOR ASYNCHRONOUS CLASSES**

*Record as a video, send via an announcement or email*

I am requesting that you complete the Student Experience Learning Form for this course, which gathers your thoughts on your experience in this course. Your feedback is vital: First, it helps me personally refine this course for future students. For example, [insert a specific change you've made based on past feedback].

Second, the university uses your feedback for official purposes. Department chairs and review committees use your feedback as one of several tools to evaluate faculty performance and decide on promotions and tenure. While it's not the only factor they consider, your feedback serves as an important piece of evidence in their overall review.

As you reflect on our goal of [key skill/learning outcome], please focus your feedback on the learning experience itself—things like pacing, clarity, and assignments. Specific, constructive comments are the most helpful. Remember, learning is a partnership, so feel free to reflect on your own engagement as well. High response rates ensure we get an accurate picture of the class, so thank you for being thoughtful when completing the form.