

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 Committee

TOPIC:

Use of student evaluation data in faculty evaluation

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 revisiting Longwood's current student assessment of instruction and, among other charges, bring it into alignment with current best practices surrounding student evaluations in higher education research. After an extensive literature review of the extant literature, the committee found 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 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). Using these data to make any administrative decisions (promotion and tenure reviews, annual merit evaluations, faculty teaching awards, etc.) may result in discriminatory decisions, which are unfair to faculty, and open the university up to the potential for litigation. As an example, a Canadian court ruled that evaluations cannot be used in promotion and tenure decisions because student evaluations are unfair and unreliable (Ryerson University v. Ryerson Faculty Association, 2018).

Based on the clear findings in the literature, the committee recommends that the current student evaluation form at Longwood University should not be used to evaluate faculty teaching effectiveness and/or make administrative decisions (promotion and tenure reviews, annual merit evaluations, faculty teaching awards, etc.). The reason for this recommendation is to ensure a fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory evaluation process for all faculty. The

recommendation also addresses a charge of the committee to align Longwood University with best practices in higher education. Specifically, there is a growing chorus of universities and professional organizations who are calling for the end of the use of student evaluations in evaluation decisions (e.g., American Sociological Association, 2019; TEval). The University of Southern California, the University of Kansas, the University of Colorado Boulder, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst are leaders in this initiative; they have all stopped using traditional student evaluation data and have developed new ways to evaluate teaching.

The current proposal suggests removing the use of student evaluation data from policies related to the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

References:

- American Sociological Association (2019). Statement on Student Evaluations.
- 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.
- Ryerson University v Ryerson Faculty Association, 2018 CanLII 58446 (ON LA), <<https://canlii.ca/t/hsqkz>>, retrieved on 2024-02-22.
- 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):

Section III.R.II. – Relationship Between General and Department Criteria (page 112)

We propose an addition to this section that disallows the use of student evaluation data as a measure of teaching effectiveness because other, valid measures of teaching effectiveness exist (i.e., faculty observations of teaching, course assignments, course materials).

Section III.S. – Professional Portfolio and Curriculum Vitae (page 117)

We propose editing the fifth point about including “computer summaries of data from student evaluation forms” in professional portfolios. Specifically, we propose that summaries of student evaluation data should not be included in the portfolio and, instead, other evidence of teaching effectiveness should be included (i.e., faculty observations of teaching, course assignments, course materials).

Section V.E. – Faculty Awards: Criteria and Selection Processes (page 272)

We propose edits to the nomination documents for faculty teaching awards including: 1) removing student evaluation data, 2) increasing the length of the nominator’s letter to allow for more descriptive information about the nominee’s teaching to be included, and 3) adding in observations of teaching from committee members. The relevant awards include Starke Faculty Excellence Award and Assistant Professor Award of Excellence, the Maude Glenn Raiford Teaching Awards, and the Innovation in Teaching Award.

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

Section III.R.II. – Relationship Between General and Department Criteria (page 112)

The criteria for faculty evaluation varies across departments, as different disciplines have “unique characteristics and demands.” Many departments include student evaluation data as a criterion to evaluate faculty. These data are then used to make decisions about promotion and tenure, performance ratings, and salary raises. The current peer-reviewed literature clearly indicates student evaluations do not measure teaching effectiveness and can result in discriminatory decision-making when used to evaluate faculty. As a result, Student Assessment of Instruction data should not be included in any department’s criteria for faculty evaluation. Instead, other valid indicators of teaching effectiveness should be used.

Section III.S. – Professional Portfolio and Curriculum Vitae (page 117)

Current evidence suggests that student evaluations do not measure teaching effectiveness and can result in discriminatory decision-making when used to evaluate faculty. They should not be included in a faculty member’s professional portfolio, which is used for promotion and tenure decisions. Instead, other, valid measures of teaching effectiveness (not to include student evaluations) should be included in a professional portfolio.

Section V.E. – Faculty Awards: Criteria and Selection Processes (page 272)

Current evidence suggests that student evaluations do not measure teaching effectiveness and can result in discriminatory decision-making when used to evaluate faculty, including to recognize

faculty achievements. Based on the information currently solicited in the nomination process, student evaluations are, in many instances, one third to one fourth of a nominee's packet, and therefore carry a lot of weight when evaluating a faculty member for an award. Also, additional documents (e.g., other measures of teaching effectiveness) are not allowed to be submitted with a nomination packet.

Our proposal to remove student evaluations from the nomination packet helps to reduce potential biases that may emerge when selecting award winners. In lieu of student evaluations, we propose that the length of the nominating letter be expanded to allow for the nominator to include information about the nominee's teaching. Further, we propose that members of the Faculty Awards Committee conduct observations of the nominees' teaching to provide a more valid measure of teaching effectiveness.

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:

**Section III. Academic Personnel Policies > R. Criteria for Faculty Evaluation > II.
Relationship Between General and Department Criteria (page 112)**

Recognizing that different academic disciplines have unique characteristics and demands, the following criteria for teaching, scholarship, and service are presented as guidelines from which individual departments will develop specific standards for annual performance evaluation, post-tenure review, probationary review, and reviews for tenure and promotion to any rank. (See Section IV Guidelines for Faculty Evaluation and Review). Student assessment of instruction (i.e., student evaluation) data should not be used as a measure of teaching effectiveness to evaluate faculty, as other, valid measures of effective instruction are available. The Dean of the college and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (PVPAA) must approve departmental standards for faculty evaluation and review before they are implemented. Copies of the approved standards must be distributed to all departmental faculty in writing.

III. Academic Personnel Policies > S. Professional Portfolio and Curriculum Vitae (page 117)

Professional Portfolio: Each faculty member shall establish in his or her first year of service, and shall update annually, a professional portfolio for the use of the committees and individuals involved in review. The portfolio shall contain evidence of the candidate's credentials, teaching proficiency, and professional growth, including (where applicable):

1. The candidate's curriculum vitae in a form consistent with department guidelines. These guidelines must include, at a minimum, education, academic employment, scholarship (e.g., research, publications, contributions to the arts, presentations), service (e.g., professional responsibilities to the department, college, university, and profession). A statement of current rank, date of appointment, rank at appointment, date(s) of part-time employment at Longwood (if any), and date(s) of leave of absence from Longwood (if any).
2. Up to five samples from the last five years of items listed under Scholarly Activities in the curriculum vitae.
3. The most recent syllabus for each course taught regularly.
4. All previously exchanged letters from both the Department Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Department Chair that have been forwarded to the appropriate Dean and the PVPAA (excluding those faculty applying only for promotion to Professor).
5. ~~The computer summaries of data from student evaluation forms for the entire probationary period. For faculty applying for promotion to Professor, only the previous two years of student evaluations are included.~~ Evidence of teaching effectiveness, which does not include student assessment of instruction data (i.e., data from student evaluation forms).
6. Such supplements and documentation as the written department procedures may specify.
7. No more than fifteen pages of additional material submitted by the candidate.
8. A self-evaluation of professional teaching development and a statement of teaching philosophy.

The portfolio may be in written or electronic format (see Section III. U Probationary Review of Tenure-Track Faculty).

Section V. Faculty Development and Awards > E. Faculty Awards: Criteria and Selection Processes (page 272-273)

Nominations

1. Nominations shall include: a.) a letter of nomination from a faculty member that showcases the nominee's achievements in relation to the specific award s/he is nominated for and does not exceed ~~two~~ **three** pages in length using 12-point font; and b.) documents provided by the nominee, as detailed below-. (see #3)
2. For the Starke Faculty Excellence Award and Assistant Professor Award of Excellence, documents provided by the nominee shall include a.) a copy of the nominee's current vita; ~~b.) student evaluations for the last two years from each class;~~ eb.) a personal 273 statement of teaching philosophy and practice not to exceed three pages; ~~ec.) one scholarship sample, if possible.~~

For the Maude Glenn Raiford Teaching Awards (Assistant Professor and Senior Faculty), documents provided by the nominee shall include: a.) a copy of the nominee's current vita; ~~b.) student evaluations for the last two years from each class;~~ eb.) a personal statement of teaching philosophy and practice not to exceed three pages.

For the Innovation in Teaching Award, documents provided by the nominee shall include: a.) a copy of the nominee's current vita; ~~b.) is available, student evaluations for the last two years from each class;~~ eb.) a personal statement of teaching philosophy and practice not to exceed three pages.

For the William David Stuart Leadership and Service Award, documents provided by the nominee shall include: a.) a copy of the nominee's current vita; b.) a personal statement that discusses leadership and service accomplishments, not to exceed three pages.

For the Provost's Scholarship Award, documents provided by the nominee shall include: a.) a copy of the nominee's current vita; b.) a personal statement that discusses scholarship accomplishments, not to exceed three pages; c.) one scholarship sample, if possible.

3. These documents should clearly provide evidence that the nominee's credentials meet the criteria of the award(s) for which s/he is nominated and state that s/he has not received the same award in the preceding 5 year.
4. No additional supporting evidence other than the nomination letter and required documentation as stated- above shall be solicited or considered.
5. Members of the Committee on Faculty Awards will conduct at least one observation of faculty nominated for teaching-related awards (Starke Faculty Excellence Award and Assistant Professor Award of Excellence, Maude Glenn Raiford Teaching Awards, and the Innovation in Teaching Award). Observations should be conducted by a committee member who is from a different discipline as the nominee.