

Phase out Current Student ‘Course Evaluations’ and Replace with Learning-Focused ‘Student Experience Surveys’

US18/19-14 – unanimously passed by UO Senate on April 10 2019

Section I

1.1 WHEREAS peer-reviewed research on the student evaluation of teaching has provided evidence that student course evaluations like those used at UO reflect bias with respect to gender and may reflect bias with respect to race, and that the numerical scores are statistically orthogonal to student learning; see for example the meta-analysis indicating student ratings are not related to student learning by Uttl, White and Wong Gonzalez (2017); the randomized, controlled, blind experiment related to gender bias by Boring, Ottoboni, and Stark (2016); and an online course experiment exposing gender bias by MacNell, Driscoll, and Hunt (2015);

1.2 WHEREAS in Spring 2017 the UO Senate initiated a multi-year effort “evaluating and improving course evaluations and peer reviews with respect to reducing biases and improving validity, with the goal of improving teaching, learning, and equity” – 2017 Motion to Create Teaching Evaluation Task Force;

1.3 WHEREAS guiding principles for this work have been to ensure teaching evaluation is fair and transparent; informed by data collected from peers, students, and instructors themselves; and based on clear definitions of teaching quality rooted in the university’s broad “inclusive, engaged, and research-led” pillars; and to ensure that instructors receive actionable feedback for their own purposes of continuous improvement;

1.4 WHEREAS in Spring 2018 the UO Senate adopted a Continuous Improvement and Evaluation of Teaching System, which approved centrally administered midterm student experience surveys (results only available to instructors) and course-level instructor reflection surveys (results included in instructors’ files), and forming and charging a standing committee with developing a new end-of-term student survey and addressing other issues related to the context, policy, and tools used in teaching evaluation;

1.5 WHEREAS in January 2019 the UO Senate voted unanimously to include in instructor files language that requires teaching be evaluated “primarily using peer reviews, instructor self-reflection, and substantive written comments,” and that “numerical student evaluations of teaching should not be used as a standalone measure of teaching quality for any university purpose” – 2019 Policy on Teaching Evaluation Disclaimer Language;

1.6 WHEREAS the evaluation of courses and instructors is the work of the faculty and unit leaders, and although student feedback about their learning experience may assist evaluators in that work, a Student Experience Survey is not a course evaluation in and of itself.

Section II

2.1 THEREFORE BE IT MOVED: beginning in Fall 2019, the University will **phase out its current student “Course Evaluations” and replace them with an end-of-term “Student Experience Survey”** and this process will be complete by Spring 2020.

2.2 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: the Student Experience Survey will offer specific prompts for written student feedback, asking students to report how specific elements of the course—for example, course materials, feedback, organization, interactions with peers, and their own investment of time and effort—affect their learning experience. The Senate CIET Committee will **develop procedures and guidelines regarding the addition of customized questions by units and/or instructors** to the Student Experience Survey. The surveys will not ask generic evaluative questions such as “What is the quality of this instructor’s teaching?”

2.3 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: the information provided by the Student Experience Survey **will not be used as a standalone tool to rate instructors** for the purposes of merit, promotion, tenure or renewal, but rather as one source of information to be included, along with peer reviews and instructor reflections, etc., in the **evaluation of instructors in light of their academic unit’s criteria for quality teaching.**

2.4 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: the Senate’s Continuous Improvement and Evaluation of Teaching (CIET) Committee will continue to refine the Student Experience Survey and reporting forms in cooperation with departments, schools, and colleges. The Committee will make annual reports to the Senate about this ongoing work.

2.5 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: the Senate CIET Committee will develop procedures for determining whether to **redact comments instructors have flagged as hateful or discriminatory.**

2.6 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: In collaboration with the Office of Student Conduct, the Senate CIET Committee will develop procedures to ensure that students who have been found responsible for academic misconduct will be not be able to complete the Student Experience Survey for that course.

2.7 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: the Senate CIET Committee will continue to refine a **protocol for instructors who wish to allow their students to complete the web-based Student Experience Survey in class.** The Senate CIET Committee will also develop and disseminate materials (videos, handouts) that will help students provide feedback in the Student Experience Survey that is actionable, concrete, and focused on their learning experience.

2.8 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: the Senate CIET Committee, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of the Registrar, will **phase out the current numerical “P&T report” generated by the Office of the Registrar and replace it with a new annual report that combines information from the Student Experience Survey and Instructor Reflection** in a format that, when combined with peer review of teaching reports, can be used by unit heads to evaluate instructors against the unit’s criteria for quality teaching. The committee will continue to study the issue of biases in student evaluations.

2.9 BE IT FURTHER MOVED: The Senate CIET Committee will produce recommendations for UO faculty search committees regarding materials they might request as evidence of teaching quality or promise above and beyond student ratings.