

**Perceptions of Administrators, Associate Instructors, Faculty, and Students about
the Evaluation of Teaching in the School of Education: A Report for the
Committee on Teaching**

Executive Summary

The Committee to Review the Evaluation of Teaching, a sub-committee of the Committee on Teaching, was composed of a group of faculty and associate instructors who came together with common interests and questions about the way teaching is evaluated in the School of Education. Clearly, the promotion of strong teaching practices that foster student learning aligns with the mission of the School of Education. Teaching evaluations are conducted for multiple purposes and the results may be employed in different ways. We viewed a review of practices for the evaluation of teaching in the School of Education as timely.

Several questions guided our inquiry. These questions related to the ways that various stakeholders with an interest in the evaluation of teaching perceived current practices. To address these questions, we generated a set of survey instruments to elicit data from administrators (i.e., departmental chairpersons), associate instructors, faculty, and students (i.e., members of the Dean's Advisory Council). The body of this report presents our analysis of the findings.

Based on these findings, we propose the following recommendations for consideration by the Committee on Teaching. Subsequent to their approval of the report, we request that our recommendations be forwarded to Policy Council for its consideration and action.

Recommendations

- Articulate the distinction between evaluating teaching for promotion and tenure and for annual merit review, with respect to the purpose of evaluation as well as the criteria by which an evaluative judgment will be made. The two processes should be made more transparent. Our data also raises the question whether multiple forms of evidence (a more time-intensive evaluative process) should be required for annual merit review as they are now for promotion and tenure.
- Establish common criteria across departments within the School of Education regarding materials required for submission as evidence of quality teaching *and* their weighting.

- Group courses in categories when using student ratings as evaluative data: for example, compare introductory courses with other introductory courses, graduate seminars with other graduate seminars, online courses with online courses, and so forth.
- Delineate the weight given to various forms of documentation.
- Assign less weight to 1st year evaluations.
- Design and implement a coherent and consistent program of guidance and mentoring for associate instructors that is ongoing throughout the academic year. Given the amount of concern about this issue voiced in our data, it seems that the current beginning- of- the- year orientation provided by the Office of Teacher Education is not sufficient. Clearly, associate instructors are requesting support and opportunities to improve their teaching skills.
- Inform associate instructors as to the purpose of evaluating their teaching, the method of doing so, and how these data will be utilized for the purpose of an evaluative decision.
- Clarify to all course instructors the role they can play in constructing the course evaluation instrument (i.e., that they have a choice in selecting which items appear on the BEST evaluation form).
- Advise new instructors to more carefully match BEST items with specific course content and instruction.
- If course evaluations are administered in class, allow adequate time for students to provide thoughtful responses to BEST questions, pending school-wide adoption of online administration of BEST.