Senate Action 18-97/98 **Adopted by Senate February 12, 1998**

Right of Challenge Expires March 11, 1998

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS GUIDELINES

Report of the *ad hoc* Committee on Teaching Effectiveness
(as amended by the Faculty Senate)

Teaching is among the most important responsibilities of any institution of higher education. Evaluating and improving on this activity is an ongoing and critical function of faculty and administration. Teaching effectiveness must be taken seriously with review and evaluation occurring on many levels. The attributes considered to be indicative of effective teaching vary among individuals and across disciplines. Given this variability, the committee feels it is inappropriate to present one university-wide approach for assessing teaching effectiveness.

Approaches to Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness:

The committee recognizes that teaching effectiveness cannot be measured in isolation. It is related to the total workload of professors and must be looked at from the totality of what it means to be a member of the faculty.

It is the unanimous recommendation of the committee that a reasonable period of time be used in assessing a faculty member's teaching effectiveness. For the faculty member in her or his first year, assessment of only one semester may be all that is possible. As length of service increases, however, evaluating teaching effectiveness over multiple semesters becomes possible.

The committee also recognizes that there are measures of teaching effectiveness that may be valid at one level of analysis and invalid at another. For example, accreditation and professional certification may be valid in determining the effectiveness of a program or department but questionable in measuring effectiveness of an individual professor. Employer and alumni survey provide another example of program assessment that probably should be avoided as a measure of teaching effectiveness of individual professors.

The committee also believes that single methods of measuring teaching effectiveness of individual faculty members are to be avoided. The committee recognizes that different measures assess different aspects of teaching effectiveness and that each has advantages and disadvantages. Outlines of six possible approaches to evaluate teaching effectiveness, along with example measures, are provided below. The outline should not be viewed as some "minimum checklist." Instead, it is the committee's intent to provide departments examples of approaches that might be used, factors of teaching effectiveness that each approach might measure, and factors for which the approaches might be less appropriate than other approaches.

Approaches:

Self-Evaluation (May also be peer reviewed)

Examples:

Portfolios
Narratives about approaches, philosophy, innovations, etc.
Periodic (semester, annual, three-year, etc.) summary of teaching effectiveness
Periodic (semester, annual, three-year, etc.) plan for subsequent courses
Self-reflection questionnaire or paper
Course materials (syllabi, policy statements, samples of assigned work, projects, sample of exams)
Representative samples of work turned in by students
Evidence of significant course or curriculum development
Instructional methods (including instructional technology)
Summary of field-based learning experiences (practica, student teaching, internships, field work, service learning)
Computer based instruction
On-line course information
Laboratory materials
Summary of individual student projects supervised (special reading courses, honor components, etc.)
Summary of graduate student seminars and theses supervised

Possible Factors of Teaching Effectiveness to Evaluate:

Organization of courses
Clarity of goals, procedures, and expectations
Appropriateness of content to curricular objectives
Being prepared
Rigor of courses
Knowledge of discipline
Extent of student involvement
Fairness of policies
Number of preparations over period of time
Ability to express things clearly in writing
Respect for students
Interest and action toward improvement of teaching
Use of instructional technology
Course development activities

Should Not be Used to Evaluate:

Oral communication skills
Enthusiasm

Student Evaluation of Instruction:

Examples:

Ratings on various items/dimensions (standardized form or forms)
Written comments
Student interviews, individual or group (could be entire population or representative sample)
Student focus groups

Possible Factors of Teaching Effectiveness to Evaluate:

Clarity of learning objectives and expectations
Organization of course
Relationship between exams/assignments and course objectives and content
Presentation skills
Ability to present material clearly
Availability to assist students
Willingness to assist students
Fairness of applying policies
Respect for students
Faculty member's efforts to motivate and involve students
Encouragement of questions/comments from students
Willingness to provide adequate and timely feedback to students (including returning assignments and exams in a timely manner)

Should Not be Used to Evaluate:

Professor's knowledge of subject matter
Faculty member's competence
Appropriateness of instructional techniques
Appropriateness of content
Accuracy of content
Course rigor

Peer Evaluation:

Examples:

Classroom visits and observation
Review of portfolio (see self-evaluation)
Review of course materials
Review of video tapes of class presentations
Scholarship of teaching (publications and presentations)
Research in subject (as a measure of currency and knowledge)

Possible Factors of Teaching Effectiveness to Evaluate:

Knowledge of subject matter
Use of appropriate methods and instructional techniques
Rigor of course

Presentation skills (if observing)
Non-verbal communication skills
Organization of class materials
Appropriateness of content
Faculty member's responsiveness to student needs
Appropriateness of reading materials, text, and exams

Should Not be Used to Evaluate:

Being prepared
Availability and willingness to assist students
Clear expectations
Enthusiasm
Fairness

Learning Outcome Measures:

Examples:

Pretest-posttest, instructor-made testing
Standardized testing
MFAT or similar nationaly-normed exams (for program assessment only)
Pattern of final grade distribution (used in appropriate context)
Students' performance on group final
Students' performance on field-based instruction (for program assessment only)

Possible Factors of Teaching Effectiveness to Evaluate:

Factors of knowledge, information, and/or skills gained by the students

Should Not be Used to Evaluate:

Any factor other than factors of knowledge, information, and/or skills gained by the students

Alumni and/or Employer Feedback FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION ONLY:

Examples:

Surveys
Focus groups
Interviews

Possible Factors of Teaching Effectiveness to Evaluate:

Relevance of course/program content to later situations
Development of personal growth, values, etc.
Courses in program that benefited most
Suggested changes in program
Areas of deficit in courses, programs, or those graduating from program.

Should Not be Used to Evaluate:

Teaching effectiveness of individual faculty member

Administrator Evaluation: (Primarily Department Head)

Possible Factors of Teaching Effectiveness to Evaluate:

Availability to students
Participation in curricular development
Appropriate use of instructional technology

Recommended Procedures:

- Each department is responsible for preparing procedures for evaluating teaching effectiveness for teaching faculty in the department. The procedures are to be based on the Faculty Handbook and the "Roles and Rewards" document.

- Each department should be explicit about what factors of teaching effectiveness are to be measured and how these are to be assessed. This information shall be communicated to all faculty.

- Department should review procedures used to measure teaching effectiveness at least every three years.

- Departments should avoid using a single approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness. It is recommended that student evaluation of instruction be one of the approaches used. Student evaluation, however, should be used with other appropriate approaches. Six approaches of measuring teaching effectiveness, with examples, were described in an earlier section of this report.

- Department procedures should be flexible enough to allow as reasonable an amount of choice as possible by individual faculty members concerning appropriate multiple measures of teaching effectiveness.

- Department procedures are to be reviewed and approved by the college committee, college dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

- Direct comparisons or rankings of faculty between departments should be avoided.

- If statistical data are used in assessing teaching effectiveness, some understanding of statistical analysis is expected of those doing the assessment. If the necessary expertise is not available within the department, it should be provided to the department. The use of small differences in quantitative measures which are not statistically significant as a basis to differentiate teaching effectiveness should be avoided.

- Evaluation should be made within the context of general type and nature of course (graduate, general education, upper division, etc.)

- For tenure and promotion decisions, college committees, deans, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs should honor the recommendations of the department and department head in all but the most unusual circumstances.

Committee Membership:

The report was prepared as a result of a Faculty Senate charge to the 1997/98 *ad hoc* Committee on Teaching Effectiveness. Members included Drs. Alicia Mathis - Biology; Suzanne Bryde - Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle School; Peter Richardson - Management; Timothy Bender - Psychology; Martha Wilkerson - Sociology and Anthropology; and William Cheek, Natural and Applied Sciences, Chair.

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