

**DATE: 11/19/02**

**TO: DEANS AND DIRECTORS**

**FROM: Jan de Vries  
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Faculty Welfare**

**SUBJECT: Policy on Teaching Evaluations**

Over the past year, committees of the Academic Senate have urged that a uniform question, with a uniform scale of quantitative evaluation, be included in all departmental forms used for the evaluation of teaching on the Berkeley campus. In March of this year I solicited opinions from all deans and department chairs on this question. The responses were made available to the Academic Senate and its committees, and they have recently confirmed their support for the campus-wide administration of a uniform question, and the uniform reporting of the quantitative responses to this question.

Consequently, upon the recommendation of the Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations, with the support of the Committee on Teaching and the endorsement of the Divisional Council of the Academic Senate, all departments are to include in their teaching evaluation forms the following question:

Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all			moderately effective			extremely effective

This question, scored using a seven-point scale, should be included in all teaching evaluation forms as soon as practically possible, but no later than the fall semester of 2003.

In conformity with the desires of the Academic Senate and its committees, departments should also calculate and report the mean and the median score for the question for each course taught by an individual faculty member in all merit and promotion cases. Finally, the department is to supply departmental averages for all courses taught in the same category in the same semester. For example, if Professor X receives a mean score of 4.5 and a median of 4.6 in an

upper division lecture course, the department should also supply the mean and median scores for all upper division lecture courses offered by the department in the same semester.

In implementing this policy, please bear in mind the following:

1. If you do not currently use this question, its introduction does not require that you in any way change the existing questions or scoring conventions used by your department. You may wish to make additional changes, but this question is envisioned as in addition to rather than in the place of the rest of your evaluation form.

2. The measurement of teaching performance provided by this question is intended to supplement other information on teaching performance. It is not intended to replace other types of information, let alone become the sole indicator used in merit and promotion evaluations. Consequently, it is important that your evaluation forms ask additional questions to the uniform question cited above and/or solicit narrative responses from students. Chairs' letters and other departmental documents should summarize these other sources of information, and not dwell exclusively on the descriptive statistics of the uniform question in their characterizations of a faculty member's teaching.

3. Student evaluations of teaching are a necessary source of information on teaching performance, but they should not be regarded as a sufficient source. Departments are encouraged to solicit other types of information, including class observation, comments by GSIs and co-instructors, course materials, and self-evaluations supplied by the faculty member. The obligation to make use of the uniform question does not negate the importance of drawing on a variety of sources in evaluating teaching effectiveness.

4. Finally, several technical matters: For courses with fewer than ten students, the original evaluation forms should be submitted for merit/promotion review; there is no need to calculate summary statistics. For all courses, the number of evaluation forms submitted should be reported alongside the course enrollment. Large discrepancies between the two numbers should be explained. In many cases, the median and mean scores provide an adequate description of the underlying raw data, but when the scores do not approximate a normal distribution, a frequency distribution should be provided to assist in the interpretation of the data. Departments are free to define the categories of their courses (upper division, lower division, lectures, seminars, requirements, electives, etc.), but should be consistent in the categorization they select. Departments that currently score this question using a 5 point scale should put the new scores and averages in perspective or develop a methodology to

translate the old averages to the new scale. Whichever approach is chosen should be fully described in the review file.

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