



University Senate  
Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee (FPAC)

**Response to Charge S-1511: Personnel Consideration Related to Student Evaluations, and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching**

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**A. Charge**

<b>S-1511</b>	Provide input to the Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee (ICAC) regarding personnel considerations and ramifications related to their deliberations on Charge S-1510 on Student Teaching Evaluations, and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching 2015. Noting the ICAC's reporting deadline of <b>February 19, 2016</b> , coordinate directly with the ICAC chair regarding deadlines and issues. [Issued November 2015.]
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**B. Background**

In December 2015 the FPAC was charged as stated above with a due date of February 2016. By January 2016 it was obvious the charge would not be completed as originally scheduled and that the intent and scope of the charge had changed as the committee explored this topic. As a result, the Senate Executive Committee in April 2016 withdrew the original charge (S-1510) and issued charge S-1511. Within this time frame Senator Boikess forwarded to the committee a New Brunswick Faculty Council resolution on the same topic. Senator Boikess presented an article which shows no significant correlation between faculty ratings and student learning<sup>(1)</sup>; and asked that both the ICAC and FPAC committee “consider how the RU Senate could extend the planned actions (for revised evaluations) on the NB campus concerning evaluation of teaching to all RU campuses. “ In September 2016 the Instructional, Curricula & Advising Committee asked the Faculty and Personnel Affairs committee to consider “To what extent should the SIRS (Student Instructional Review Survey) results used in the evaluation of teaching and promotion/tenure process? Further “Are other Big 10 schools using such surveys and to what purpose?”

The Student Instructional Rating Survey has been used at Rutgers for the past 26 years. It was designed by the Rutgers Academic Forum and piloted in the 1992 fall semester as a scan-able ratings form. The questions were vetted in the summer of 1993 by faculty on all three campuses as well as faculty from the Graduate School of Education. In 1995 faculty on all campuses voted to report the results which were initially available in printed form only. In 2002 the survey and results were moved online. The approved SIRS consisted of ten standard questions with space for up to nine additional custom questions<sup>(2)</sup>. The first eight questions are formative in nature. Questions nine and ten (*I rate the teaching effectiveness of the instructor as ...* and *I rate the overall quality of the course as...*) are in summary form. It is questions nine and ten that are used for faculty review and promotion.



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Rutgers University selects two questions from the student evaluation and designates these questions on all forms used for personnel purposes including annual review, promotion, and tenure decisions as the first criteria in evaluating faculty members. In a comparison to other members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance these universities do use student course evaluations for personnel consideration but the decision on how to use the student evaluations are in many universities left to the department and the full data is reported and not only on two questions compared solely to the Department Mean score. At the University of Iowa peer evaluation is used solely and the use of peer evaluations are specified to be used in personnel decisions at the University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Ohio State University, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Maryland. Members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance delegate authority to the department or schools to determine teaching excellence.

Use of Student evaluations for promotion decisions in the Big Ten Academic Alliance

Big Ten Academic Alliance member	How teaching is evaluated for personnel reasons
Indiana University	Student Course Evaluations are used as one part of the criteria
Michigan State University	Student evaluations use is decided at the departmental and school level
Northwestern University	Student Course Evaluations are used as one part of the criteria. Faculty are able to add responses to the scores
Ohio State University	Student evaluations use is decided at the departmental and school level. Peer evaluation is used.
Pennsylvania State University	Student evaluations are used as one part of teaching evaluation and all questions are considered.
Purdue University	Student evaluations are used as one part of teaching evaluation and all questions are considered for a three year period.
Rutgers University	Question 9 and 10 from the Student Instructional Rating Survey are included in promotion and tenure applications and renewal applications.
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	All questions of the student evaluations. Peer observation a recommended method. Recommendation not to use comments on student evaluations
University of Iowa	Peer evaluation of the candidate's teaching
University of Maryland	Academic unit level must include opinions of students.
University of Michigan	Student Course Evaluations are used as one part of the criteria. No specific questions specified and only one part of the teaching evaluation. Teaching evaluations decided at the department level.

University of Minnesota	Teaching evaluation data/summary and peer reviews of teaching required.
University of Nebraska–Lincoln	Summary of quantitative data from student teaching evaluation
University of Wisconsin–Madison	Student evaluations and peer evaluations

The following are examples of teaching evaluation policies from members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance.

University of Iowa

The college’s written Procedures governing promotion decision making must specify a method of peer evaluation of teaching—which must include peer observation of teaching if practicable—and must identify those teaching activities and materials that will be evaluated by peers.

University of Maryland

The responsibility for the evaluation of teaching performance rests on the academic unit of the faculty member. Each academic unit shall develop and disseminate the criteria to be used in the evaluation of the teaching performance of its members. The evaluation must include opinions of students, colleagues, and the materials contained in the teaching portfolio.

University of Wisconsin–Madison

A meaningful evaluation of the candidate’s teaching requires the availability of credible evidence obtained by peer review and through student evaluations. In order to document significant accomplishment or excellence in teaching, the department is required to provide evaluation based on peer review of the candidate’s teaching activities covering the probationary period. The exact format of the peer-review process is at the discretion of the department. However some component of peer-review, such as classroom observation, is expected. The committee strongly encourages the department to consult the Teaching Academy Peer Feedback on Teaching pages for guidance in this matter. The peer review should begin in the first year and the assistant professor’s teaching should be reviewed at least annually during the probationary period. Judgments on questions of course content, level of presentation, and organization of material should be made by colleagues, and should be discussed in the dossier supporting the promotion or appointment.

A summary of student evaluations should be included for all courses taught, in all departments or programs in which the candidate teaches. The committee will be particularly interested in evidence of continuing development in the candidate’s teaching, and of systematic and significant improvement when the candidate’s performance has been weak.

Indiana University

Student Course Evaluations. Judgments about teaching effectiveness cannot be reduced to a single indicator or measure. Quantitative data from student course evaluations should be interpreted in the context of other materials assembled to document pedagogical achievements – and should not be given greater weight. Student course evaluations may be most useful for tracking improvements over time and especially for identifying teaching problems and measuring the impact of efforts to solve them. Statistical data must be presented in a summary spreadsheet or graph (showing course, semester/year, and results on campus-wide survey items), enabling trends and comparisons to reference groups to be easily discerned.

Northwestern University

The quality of a candidate's teaching and future potential as a teacher are also major factors affecting the decision to grant tenure to a faculty member. Information regarding a candidate's teaching must be included in any such recommendation. As with scholarly or creative work, the nature of the teaching enterprise may differ among the schools. Nonetheless, given the University's dual commitment to excellence in teaching as well as research, it is important that the quality of teaching be fully considered in these decisions.

#### Ohio State University

Indicate whether formal course evaluations were completed by students and/or faculty peers by placing a check mark in the appropriate column of the Teaching table. Evaluations delegated to department and school.

#### Purdue

[I]ndicators of excellence may constitute responses to questions from teaching evaluations, involvement in supervising student research, internships, study abroad or other experiential and service learning. Equally important is the evidence that students have learned under the candidate's instruction. Teaching awards and other formal recognitions (both internal and external to Purdue), pedagogical publications and presentations of research, diversity, range and number of classes or students taught, substantial curricular or pedagogical innovation, and efforts to improve the persistence and success of diverse populations of students are also important indicators of the candidate's accomplishments. Participation in teaching workshops or lectures, letters from those who have observed the candidate's teaching or evaluated his/her course in to (including teaching mentors and peers), as well as the accomplishments and success of undergraduate and graduate advisees are relevant for consideration in this category.

#### University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

##### Evaluation of Teaching

All promotion and tenure recommendations must include a thorough evaluation of the candidate's teaching. While departments may use different methods to evaluate teaching quality, strong performance in teaching cannot be simply presumed; it must be demonstrated as convincingly as measures allow. The specific evaluative practices recommended, and in some cases required, appear in the attached Instructions for Preparing Promotion Papers. Faculty members who teach credit-bearing continuing education courses or professional development courses should use these same evaluative practices.

Teaching evaluation must include a summary of ICES data (or, in the alternative, a summary developed through use of a departmental instrument), the candidate's self-review, and document evaluation. (Please note the requirements in the Instructions for Preparing Promotion Papers if the standard report form from the Center for Teaching Excellence is not used.) Units are encouraged to augment these required elements with results from additional methods of evaluation. Each unit shall have a clearly understood procedure for such additional evaluation.

The following have proven effective when developed with care:

Peer observation. Visits to the candidate's classroom can be valuable, but they should be made by at least two faculty observers for each of several courses. Visits should be made on more than one occasion in each course. This method is valuable for it entails considerable communication among faculty being evaluated and their colleagues involved in the evaluation. The campus is encouraging more extensive use of this approach, including the involvement of peers from other institutions, not only in the period when a promotion is being considered, but over the entire period of a faculty member's career at Illinois. When a candidate's teaching or curricular contributions

have achieved recognition by peers beyond the campus, the ability to comment on the instructional contributions as well as the candidate's other scholarship should be considered in the selection of external evaluators.

Information from students not currently enrolled, alumni, and others. Surveys or interviews with former students, alumni, and others can provide a different perspective from that of students currently enrolled, and this can be a valuable part of an evaluation. However, anecdotal comments from one or two people are generally not perceived as useful by review committees, because there is no basis for gauging the quality of the views. If information in this category is to be developed, it should be based on a method that can give a legitimate sample of views.

Evidence of student learning. Provision of measures of student learning is encouraged. They might include measures included in the unit's outcomes assessment program that can be linked clearly to the work of the candidate, exceptional awards or recognition earned by the candidate's students, evidence of student success in later coursework in a sequence, evaluation of student work products such as exams, papers, artwork, performances, and so on.

**Generally, it has not proven useful to provide selected students comments from ICES forms, for essentially the same reason that anecdotal comments from other quarters are of limited value. Review committees have no ability to judge either the relative frequency of favorable comments or the degree to which they might be offset by unfavorable commentary.**

The candidate must provide (in three pages or less) a personal statement of teaching philosophy, methods, strengths, problems, goals, and other material in a manner that will present colleagues with a context for interpreting other evaluative information. However, candidates may be poorly served by self-reviews drawing attention to their own weaknesses. It is not ethical to ask them to go so far in the statement. Units are encouraged to ask the candidate to prepare this statement early in the process of review, so that it can be made available to persons who are asked to take a particular role in the evaluation of the candidate's teaching, e.g. as peer observers.

### **C. FPAC results**

The FPAC found three key points for consideration regarding the SIRS:

1. The administration appears to use student responses to two questions on the SIRS for decisions related to promotions, tenure, merit raise and retention of TT, NTT and PTL faculty

Question 9 which reads: *I rate the teaching effectiveness of the instructor as:*  
*N/A Poor Excellent (on a 1 to 5 scale)*

Question 10 which reads: *I rate the overall quality of the course as:*  
*N/A Poor Excellent (on a 1 to 5 scale)*

2. The SIRS was designed and intended for student use and information; and for individual faculty and departments for the improvement of teaching; not for the formal evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness <sup>(3)</sup>.
3. A survey conducted by CTAAR of other Big Ten Academic Alliance member schools indicates similar surveys to the SIRS are in use<sup>(4)</sup>, but are not always used as the primary evaluation criteria of faculty teaching nor are the survey results shared with the

students.

4. The current SIRS is conducted as an on-line survey for the majority of classes at Rutgers University. The on-line surveys tend to have a lower participation rate and tend to attract students who truly enjoyed the instructor and the course and those who did not; leaving the “average” student view missing.
5. The ratings of instructors by students generally lack any clear measure of validity.
6. Student evaluations of faculty may subtly push faculty to decide that positive student evaluations can be attained if they do not push to maximize student learning; thus generating a higher probability of continued employment.
7. Evidence using meta-data analysis suggests that faculty who contribute most to learning receive lower ratings of instruction <sup>(5)</sup>.
8. This topic was explored earlier in Senate bills A-0812 (Best Practices in Assessment of Teaching: see attachment B) and S-1104 (Online Teaching Evaluations, and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching: see attachment C) where recommendations regarding the use of SIRS focused on the use of peer reviews and use of student comments to adjust course content.

FPAC discussions focused on several “revisions” to the current use of the SIRS by the Administration for promotions, tenure, merit raises and continued employment decisions for tenure-track, non-tenure track and part-time lecturer faculty. Committee recommendations are:

1. Teaching evaluations should be conducted by peers with content knowledge and who are familiar with the issues associated with teaching a particular course using a predefined format.
2. Peer evaluation should be used for evaluation of teaching for the promotion and tenure process and for renewals of all tenure-track, non-tenure track, contingent, and part-time lecturer faculty.
3. Teaching evaluations should be coupled with professional development.
4. The SIRS should be discontinued as the criteria to evaluate faculty teaching effectiveness. SIRS should be used as it was designed as student rating system for use by students and as source of feedback to the instructor.
5. The SIRS Question 9 and 10 table currently should be removed from the forms used by the university for reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions.

## **E. Resolution**

*Whereas*, the Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee (FPAC) has examined the FPAC report on Charge S-1511 endorsed by the Senate in April, 2016; and

*Whereas*, the FPAC recognizes that the proposed process for periodic evaluations of faculty is both desired and effective in building a viable faculty; and

*Whereas*, student feedback may be helpful to faculty and administrators and students in certain ways, results may not reflect a key mission of the University to promote student learning. It may, in fact, undermine that goal.

*Therefore, Be It Resolved*, that the University Senate urges the administration to study and implement a formal peer review process to evaluate the teaching effectiveness of all tenure-track, non-tenure track, contingent, and part-time lecturer faculty and that the administration discontinue the practice of using the SIRS as the sole criteria or form of measuring faculty teaching effectiveness or decisions related to continuation of employment.

*Be It Further Resolved* that the University Senate recommends that peer evaluation should be used for evaluation of teaching for the promotion and tenure process and for renewals of all tenure-track, non-tenure track, contingent, and part-time lecturer faculty and that teaching evaluations should be coupled with professional development.

*Be It Further Resolved* that the University Senate recommends that the following forms be revised to remove the use of SIRS survey questions 9 and 10.

Form 1-a for General Teaching/Research, Form 1-b for Faculty in the Creative or Performing Arts for tenure-track reappointments at the rank of Assistant Professor, and reappointment/promotion recommendations at the rank of Associate Professor and above

Form NTT 1-a for General Teaching/Researching Faculty

Form NTT 1-b for Faculty in the Creative or Performing Arts, Form NTT 1-c for Clinical Faculty. In RBHS for tenure-track reappointments at the rank of Assistant Professor, and reappointment/promotion recommendations at the rank of Associate Professor I or equivalent and for All Non-Tenure Track Candidates at or above the Associate Professor or equivalent

Form NTT 1-a for General Teaching/Researching Faculty, Form NTT 1-b for Faculty in the Creative or Performing Arts, and in Form NTT 1-c for Clinical Faculty. In RBHS for tenure-track reappointments at the rank of Assistant Professor, and reappointment/promotion recommendations at the rank of Associate Professor I or equivalent and for All Non-Tenure Track Candidates at or above the Associate Professor or equivalent

RBHS Form 1 Recommendation Information Form for RBHS and RBHS Form NTT 1 Recommendation Information Form for NTT RBHS.

*Be It Further Resolved* that the University Senate recommends to end the use of SIRS survey questions 9 and 10 for personnel decisions for part time lecturer and all other contingent faculty, lecturers, or instructors employed by Rutgers University.

## **Committee members**

### **Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee 2016-2017**

***Markert, Joseph, RBS:N/NB (F), Co-Chair***



**Settles, Alexander, RBS:N/NB (F), Co-Chair**

Alizadeh, Farid, RBS:N/NB (F)  
Ardeshna, Anil, RSDM (F)  
Boruchoff, Susan, RWJMS (F)  
Bugel, Mary Jo, RBHS At-Large (F)  
Craig, Vicki, RWJMS (F)  
Durham, Jacqueline, RBHS Staff  
Eastman, Wayne, RBS:UNB (F)  
Eisenstein, Robert, RWJMS (F)  
Fernandez, Vivian, VP Faculty/Staff Resources (non-Senator)  
Gould, Ann, SEBS (F) – EC Liaison  
Grave, Floyd, MGSA (F)  
Kalan, Marc, At Large-N (F)  
Kelshikar, Rachana, SAS-NB (S)  
Langer, Jerome, RWJMS (F)  
LaPointe, Eleanor, SAS-NB (F)  
Leibman, Raymond, PTL-N (F)  
Lewis, Jane, SPH (F)  
Linz, Sheila, At-Large Camden (F)  
Marchick, Natasha, SMLR (S)  
Nehring, Michael, RBS:UNB (S)  
Nissen, Alison, Law-C (F)  
Pagan, Kevin, Newark Staff  
Pandey, Virendra, NJMS (F)  
Ponzio, Nicholas, NJMS (F)  
Potter, Jonathan, SCI Dean (A)  
Robinson, Joanne, Nursing-C Dean (A)  
Saltzman, Cynthia, PTL-C (F)  
Schneider, Laura, SAS-NB (F)  
Shinn, Christopher, SB-C (S)  
Thompson, Karen, PTL-NB (F)  
Toney-Boss, Permelia, Newark Staff  
Wagner, Mary, Pharmacy (F)

**(1) Zero Correlation Between Evaluations and Learning; Colleen Flaherty, September 21, 2016; Teaching and Learning (News/Focus/Teaching and Learning) Innovations Conference March 12-15 2017 San Francisco**

**(2) See adding Additional Questions to SIRS at:**

<http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/sirs/addquestions.html>

**(3) See: <http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/sirs/>**

**(4) See CTAAR survey under “Attachment A”**

**(5) See - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4842911/>**

**Attachment A:**

**CTAAR Survey of Big Ten Institutions regarding Student Surveys (3/2016)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Name of Process</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>Instructor and Course Evaluation System (ICES)</b>	<b>Center for Innovation in Teaching &amp; Learning</b>
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>Online Course Questionnaire (OCQ)</b>	<b>IU Bloomington Evaluation Services &amp; Testing</b>
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>Assessing the Classroom Environment (ACE)</b>	<b>Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology</b>
<b>Maryland</b>	<b>Course Evaluations (Course Eval's)</b>	<b>Institutional Research, Planning &amp; Assessment</b>
<b>Michigan</b>	<b>Teaching evaluations</b>	<b>Office of the Registrar</b>
<b>Michigan State</b>	<b>Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS)</b>	<b>IT Services Teaching &amp; Learning</b>
	<b>Student Opinion of Courses (SOCT)</b>	<b>IT Services Teaching &amp; Learning</b>
<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>Student Rating of Teaching (SRT)</b>	<b>Office of Measurement Services</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>Course Evaluations</b>	<b>Office of Academic Technologies</b>
<b>Northwestern</b>	<b>Course and Teacher Evaluations (CTEC's)</b>	<b>Office of the Registrar</b>
<b>Ohio State</b>	<b>Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI)</b>	<b>University Registrar</b>
<b>Penn State</b>	<b>Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE)</b>	<b>Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence</b>
<b>Purdue</b>	<b>Course Evaluations (Course eval's)</b>	<b>Center for Instructional Excellence</b>
<b>Rutgers</b>	<b>Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS)</b>	<b>Center for teaching Advancement and Assessment Research</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>Course Evaluations</b>	<b>Testing &amp; Evaluation Services</b>

**Attachment B:**

**FPAC Report on A 0812 (February 2002)**

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**Best Practices and Recommendations**

The Committee makes the following recommendations, based on the practices discussed above:

1. The statement on the reverse side of the student course evaluation form that "This information is intended to be used by the instructor to modify or improve the course" should be deleted.
2. The Committee commends the process of mentoring, peer observation and peer evaluation used by the History Department-New Brunswick. We recommend that departments assign a teaching mentor to every first year untenured faculty member in consultation with that faculty member. Mentoring activities may include meeting periodically to discuss teaching, visiting each other's classes, co-teaching courses, reviewing instructional materials, and other aspects of teaching and student advising. We recommend that all departments conduct, taking steps to ensure that there are consistent guide lines and procedures for this process.
3. Departments should encourage faculty to develop a teaching portfolio for use in evaluations for reappointment, promotion and tenure.
  - a. Written comments from students can be included in the portfolio. All written student comments should be available, at least in the supplementary materials, to every level of the reappointment, promotion and tenure process.
  - b. A personal statement concerning teaching philosophy and accomplishments as well as scholarship and service should be included with the reappointment or promotion/tenure packet.

**Attachment C**

**S-1104 Online Teaching Evaluations, and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching (March 2012)**

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**Discussion and Recommendations:**

The reason that the FPAC is asked to comment on this charge is that, contrary to the originally stated purpose, these evaluations have been used increasingly in promotion decisions with tenured and tenure-track faculty and in reappointment decisions for part-time and other non-tenure-track faculty.

The FPAC endorses the report and recommendations of the ICAC report and notes that the recommendations of the report on Charge S-0109 Best Practices in Assessment of Teaching made by the FPAC (then FAPC) in 2002 and adopted as university policy by President McCormick are as relevant to the on-line version of the student instructional rating survey as they were to the paper version. The FPAC recommends to the administration to publicize them to the department chairs.