

**Rutgers University Senate**  
**Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee**  
**Response to Charge S-1510 on Student Teaching Evaluations**  
April 2017

S-1510: **Student Teaching Evaluations, and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching 2015:** Revisit the [March 2012 Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee report on Charge S-1104, on Online Teaching Evaluations, and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching](#). Consider questions such as: Have there been changes in the completion rates and use of the Student Instructional Rating Surveys (SIRS)? How can we make students more aware that the results of the SIRS are available to them? Are the questions on the SIRS still valid, or do they need to be modified in light of changes in educational technologies? To what extent should the SIRS results be used in the evaluation of teaching and the promotion/tenure process? Are other Big-10 schools using such surveys, and to what purpose? Solicit input on personnel ramifications from the Senate's Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee.

For over twenty years, students throughout Rutgers University have been asked to complete the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS) at the end of the semester for each of their courses. While the SIRS is commonly referred to as a “teaching evaluation,” that is not what it was designed to be. Evaluation is something done within departments by peers with content knowledge, who are also familiar with the ramifications of teaching particular courses. The Student Instructional Rating Survey is meant to be a “University-wide survey of students for their comments about their experiences in the classroom. The results are used by the individual instructors, departments, schools and the University for the assessment and improvement of teaching.”<sup>1</sup> However, the inclusion of expanded questions, and questions developed by specific individuals or groups such as RUSA, are moving SIRS away from its original intent. In addition, the use of the two summative questions in personnel actions contributes to the perception that this is indeed a “teaching evaluation.” Many students are not aware that they have access to SIRS results, are reluctant to complete the surveys, and rely instead on websites such as “Rate my Professor” when making course selections.

The perception and, to some extent, use of SIRS as a teaching evaluation has long been a matter of concern. Certainly there are other, much more valid, ways to both access teaching and improve a course environment. There has also been concern about the existing SIRS data in cases where the survey completion rates are low. The Senate has produced a number of reports relating to this topic.<sup>2</sup> This report builds on those earlier reports, as well as a very extensive presentation to ICA at our February 19, 2016 meeting by Monica Devanas, the Director of Faculty Development and Assessment Programs at the Rutgers Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR), and Joseph Delaney, CTAAR’s Director of Instructional Technologies, on the history, usage, and issues pertaining to the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS). In addition, the Senate Faculty and Personnel Affairs

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://ctaar.rutgers.edu/sirs/>

<sup>2</sup> The most recent being *Online Teaching Evaluations and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching Performance* (March 2012) <http://senate.rutgers.edu/ICAConS1104OnlineTeachingEvaluationsAsAdoptedMarch2012.pdf> and *Online Teaching Evaluation* (March 2012) <http://senate.rutgers.edu/FPACResponseToICACReportOnS1104BestPracticesInTeachingEvaluationMarch2012.pdf>

Committee (FPAC) was charged with providing input to ICA regarding the personnel considerations and ramifications related to this charge.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS)**

Designed by the Rutgers Academic Forum, SIRS was piloted in the Fall of 1992 as a scanable ratings form. In the Summer of 1993 faculty bodies on each campus, as well as faculty at the Graduate School of Education, vetted the standard questions to be used on the form. In 1995, faculty on all three campuses voted to report the results. Initially the results were available in printed format. Later they became available on CD-ROM; in 2002 they moved online. RBHS units began using SIRS in their courses as well in Fall of 2014.

SIRS, as approved by the various faculty bodies, consisted of ten standard questions, with space available for nine extra questions.

The first eight SIRS questions are formative in nature:

1. The instructor was prepared for class and presented the material in an organized manner.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
2. The instructor responded effectively to student comments and questions.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
3. The instructor generated interest in the course material.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
4. The instructor had a positive attitude toward assisting all students in understanding course material.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
5. The instructor assigned grades fairly.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
6. The instructional methods encouraged student learning.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
7. I learned a great deal in this course.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A
8. I had a strong prior interest in the subject matter and wanted to take this course.  
Strongly disagree      Strongly agree  N/A

---

<sup>3</sup> Charge S-1511: "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 of Teaching 2015." ICA and FPAC met to discuss their recommendations; these have been incorporated into this report.

Questions 9 (“I rate the teaching effectiveness of the instructor as”) and 10 (“I rate the overall quality of the course as”) are summary in nature. It is the results of these latter questions that are reported for review and promotion processes.

In addition to the ten standard questions, originally there was an option for the department or the instructor to add up to nine extra questions. The results of those questions were reported only to the department/instructor. With the move to the online format, departments could still add questions to the survey, but there was no longer an option for individual instructors to request additional questions.

However since 2015, instructors have the capability to add up to ten extra questions to the Survey for their own course sections. They can either choose from a pool of existing questions, or can use their own questions. Instructors may add different types of questions, i.e., ratings scale, open ended, etc.<sup>4</sup> To allow access to this option, departments have to submit information on who is teaching what course, as well as instructor NetIDs.

In addition, COHLIT, the Center for Online and Hybrid Learning and Instructional Technologies, an academic unit of the Division of Continuing Studies, adds questions for fully online courses. At one point students were barred from their course site until they had completed a survey; that practice has been eliminated. Results from these surveys go directly to COHLIT and are not shared with CTAAR until several months later.

## **The Questions**

While the formative questions on the survey are meant to assess students’ “experience in the classroom,” most relate directly to the instructor. This adds to the perception that what is being assessed is not the course, but the instructor. The first question, for example, asks the student to assess if “The instructor was prepared for class and presented the material in an organized manner.” Certainly it would seem more logical given the stated purpose, if instead they were asked to assess if “The class was well-organized and well-prepared.”

While most would agree that having some sort of course evaluations can provide valuable information to course instructors, the department, and to future students in that course, it is debatable if the ten questions currently being asked are the best for those purposes. The SIRS questions were developed almost twenty-five years ago, were designed exclusively for face-to-face courses, and in no way reflect today’s technologically-enhanced instruction. At the very least they need to be revamped to reflect the current classroom environment.

The reason behind some questions is also not readily apparent. For example, most students see no purpose to question 8 “I had a strong prior interest in the subject matter and wanted to take this course.” The question is, however, included as a counter against possible low scores received in large introductory, required courses for example, where students are predisposed to not be interested in the subject matter.

---

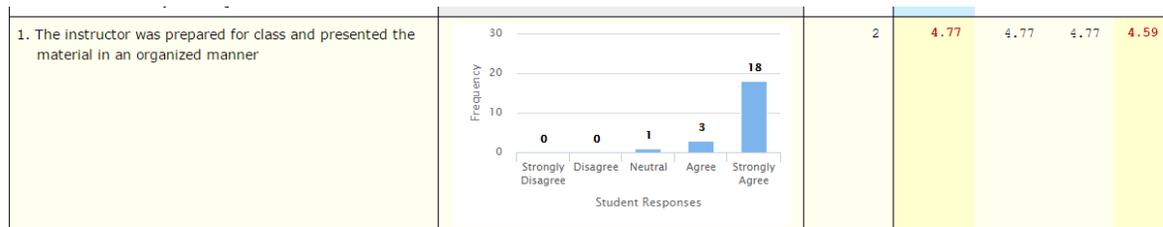
<sup>4</sup> See Adding Additional Questions to SIRS at: <https://ctaar.rutgers.edu/sirs/addQuestions.html>

The ability to add questions is certainly critical and welcome; however most faculty—and departments--do not seem to be aware that they have this option. Certainly it would be useful for departments to develop questions that would be most relevant for courses in their particular disciplines, especially if these are going to be used for personnel actions. There may be interest in developing questions relating to the class physical environment; or questions tied to the course learning goals.

Some faculty have also identified the fact that currently for multiple-section courses any additional questions have to be added separately for each section is problematic. It would be very useful if there could be a way that common questions could be added to multiple sections globally.

The current survey allows for comments; these comments are shared with the instructor and department, but are not included in the online survey results. While students have expressed an interest in seeing these comments, there are practical issues with trying to add them to the results. In addition, as probably only the most motivated (happy/unhappy) students are inclined to add comments, those comments could not be seen as necessarily reflective of the class as a whole.

On the other hand, compressing student feedback into a fairly incomprehensible number has limited utility as well. On the SIRS website data now displays as a bar graph.



However, what is sent to the department and the instructor is a pdf which includes only the numerical scores. It certainly would be much more useful for the graphs to be included in those reports as well.

### An “Instructional Rating Survey”

While SIRS was not conceived, or designed, as a teaching evaluation, calling it an “Instructional Rating Survey” no doubt contributes to the perception that it is indeed a teaching evaluation.

CTAAR surveyed the Big 10 institutions about what they call their surveys:

Institution	Name of Process
Illinois	Instructor and Course Evaluation System
Indiana	Online Course Questionnaire
Iowa	Assessing the Classroom Environment
Maryland	Course Evaluations

Michigan	Teaching Evaluations
Michigan State	Student Instructional Rating System
	Student Opinion of Courses and Teaching
Minnesota	Student Rating of Teaching
Nebraska	Course Evaluations
Northwestern	Course and Teacher Evaluations
Ohio State	Student Evaluation of Instruction
Penn State	Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness
Purdue	Course Evaluations
Rutgers	Student Instructional Rating Survey
Wisconsin	Course Evaluations

If SIRS is retained in its current, or a similar form, it would make sense to rename it to reflect what it was intended to be. Calling it the Student Course Assessment (SCA) or the Student Course Assessment Tool (SCAT) would seem to be appropriate.

### **Student Awareness of SIRS Data**

Most students are at the University for a finite length of time. It is very easy to forget that the students who were very cognizant of a particular service five years ago are for the most part no longer at the University. Therefore it is critical to regularly reintroduce students to services that are available to them. In our initial discussion of SIRS, the students serving on the Committee knew they were regularly asked to fill out the survey form in courses but did not realize that they had access to the results. While SIRS is listed as a “Related Link” on the Web Registration Login page (<https://sims.rutgers.edu/webreg/>) it would probably be more useful to have a link to the SIRS from the listings in the Schedule of Classes itself.

If the results of this, or a similar survey, are to be taken seriously, it is important that the majority of students in a course actually complete the survey. CTAAR does send students reminders about filling out the forms every two or three days after the survey starts. It may be a good idea to review the language in that reminder—students should be aware of why it is important **to students** that all course participants fill out the survey.

### **Usage**

Despite concerns about survey completion rates, the number of visits and returning visits to SIRS remained fairly constant between 2013 and 2015, while the number of page views has increased substantially with some 205872 views in 2013 and 416950 in 2015. These are impressive numbers, especially in light of the fact that many students seem unaware of their access to SIRS.

Not all departments have chosen to use the online SIRS form. The New Brunswick Writing Program, for example, did a study of the completion rate of paper versus online forms, and found fewer of their students filled out the form online than in paper. Consequently they have chosen to continue to use paper forms. At SMLR, as a result of the reduced completion rate online at least

one department has voted to only use the paper forms. The Bloustein School did some tests and they believe that they could emulate the paper response rate if the survey could be done in class.

Completion rates for course evaluations continue to be an area of concern, not just at Rutgers, but throughout higher education. As noted in our 2012 report<sup>5</sup>, while individual instructors have had some success with offering incentives to students to complete the survey,<sup>6</sup> a 55-60 percent completion rate seems to be the norm at most large universities.<sup>7</sup> The University of Maryland, which has an extra credit incentive, still cannot get its completion rate above 60 percent for example.

In an age when almost all students have mobile devices, having students complete the online surveys in class would seem to be a reasonable option. Students without mobile devices would still be able to complete the survey outside of class; even if not all of them chose to do so the completion rate would still probably be significantly higher.

### **Use in Faculty Review**

The University requires that the results of Questions 9 (“I rate the teaching effectiveness of the instructor as”) and 10 (“I rate the overall quality of the course as”) of the core survey be reported for use in review and promotion processes. CTAAR, which is responsible for the survey, receives the names of official candidates for review from the Department of Academic Affairs, and generates a teaching grid for those candidates, which now include clinical faculty. In the review process these results are included in Form 1-a and related forms (Form 1-b; Form NTT 1-a; RBHS Form 1, etc.) as part of the departmental review.

The use of SIRS data in personnel actions is perhaps the most controversial aspect of the SIRS. The survey was not designed as a teaching evaluation tool; using it to assess the quality of instruction in a course is problematic at best. While the summary SIRS ratings offer a quick and convenient quantitative measure of classroom performance for personnel review purposes, they are certainly not the only—or the best—tools that could or should be used. While the issue exists for all faculty, PTLs, and to some extent NTTs, whose contracts are short-term, are especially vulnerable to even a single set of negative results.

The problem is perhaps less the use of the SIRS summative question results, which can, in at least a limited way, be informative; but rather the use of those results as the sole measure of teaching. There are many other academically recognized ways to assess faculty. Some of these were noted in an earlier report from the Senate Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee;<sup>8</sup> the

---

<sup>5</sup> *Online Teaching Evaluations and Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching Performance* (March 2012) <http://senate.rutgers.edu/ICAConS1104OnlineTeachingEvaluationsAsAdoptedMarch2012.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> A faculty member in the New Brunswick Economics Department, for example, offers his students ½ percent extra credit for completing the SIRS as well as a survey in Sakai and a post-course test.

<sup>7</sup> Based on a CTAAR survey of AAU colleagues. The exception are those institutions that have included an “I do not choose to participate” option that then counts towards the completion rate.

<sup>8</sup> *Charge S-0109, Best Practices in Assessment of Teaching*. <<http://senate.rutgers.edu/bestprac.html>> “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

current report from FAPC (Appendix) includes examples of teaching evaluation policies, many of which list some of these measures, from members of the Big Ten Academic Alliance.<sup>9</sup> The just released discussion draft from a joint New Brunswick Faculty Council/New Brunswick Chancellor's task force charged with looking at the evaluation of teaching<sup>10</sup> includes a table showing the extent use of a variety of assessment measures by the Big Ten.<sup>11</sup>

Mentoring, peer observation, peer review of instructional materials, and teaching portfolios are not only likely to result in better teachers, they are also going to provide much more valid qualitative measures of teaching performance. They are of course also much more labor intensive for both the candidate and the department. It should be noted, however, that there are many ways to do peer review of teaching performance—it does not have to be limited to, or even necessarily include, class observation.<sup>12</sup>

### Mid-Semester Course Assessment

The Mid-Semester Course Assessment is another tool available to instructors. As noted in the *ICA Report on the Mid-Semester Course Assessment*<sup>13</sup> “Research shows that the most useful course assessment is often a mid-semester instructor-generated assessment which allows for adjustments prior to the completion of the course. Unlike the required end-of-semester course evaluations, a mid-semester course assessment is a formative assessment designed solely to provide information and feedback to an instructor and to allow for development and improvement of a course in progress.” The Mid-Semester Course Assessment can actually be done at multiple points in a semester. CTAAR has developed a simple Midcourse Survey<sup>14</sup> in which students can comment on a course in which they are currently participating. The results of the Midcourse Survey go directly to the instructor; CTAAR does not keep or analyze the results. There are also instructions for creating individual midcourse surveys in ScarletApps.<sup>15</sup>

---

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 guidelines 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.”

<sup>9</sup> pp.4-6.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the Joint Faculty Council-Chancellor Task Force on the Evaluation of Teaching at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. Discussion Draft. March 29, 2017. This report was released too late to be discussed in committee in conjunction with this report.

<sup>11</sup> Table 1: Evaluation of Teaching Practices

<sup>12</sup> In the New Brunswick English Department, for example, instructors meet twice a semester with another instructor to go over the syllabus, assignments, and student results, and to discuss issues relating to the course.

<sup>13</sup> <http://senate.rutgers.edu/icacmidsemestercourseassessment.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://ctaar.rutgers.edu/surveys/midcourse/index.php>

<sup>15</sup> <https://ctaar.rutgers.edu/technology/googleForms.html>

Midcourse surveys can be invaluable for making course adjustments as the course progresses, and may well result in higher SIRS scores at the end of the semester. Many faculty do not seem to know about the availability of the Midcourse Survey. It would be useful if CTAAR emailed all faculty at mid-semester to remind of this option. A link to the survey from course management sites might also encourage the use of the survey by students.

## **Resolution**

*Whereas*, the Senate Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee has examined the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS), its intent, composition and use

*And Whereas*, it is clear that the SIRS was never formulated or intended to be used as a teaching evaluation

*And Whereas*, the Committee has discussed and received input from the Senate Faculty Affairs and Personnel Committee regarding the use of the SIRS in personnel actions

Be it resolved that the Rutgers University Senate adopts the following:

1. To better reflect the intent of the survey, the Student Instructional Rating Survey (SIRS) should be renamed the Student Course Assessment (SCA).
2. The standard questions should be reformulated to focus on course assessment and be appropriate for face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses.
3. Instructors and departments should be regularly reminded that they have the option to add questions that might be particularly relevant for that course or that department to the survey.
4. To increase completion rates and make the results more meaningful, schools and units should have instructors give students time in class to complete the online surveys on their own mobile devices.
5. The survey reports that go to individual faculty and their department should include the results in the same graphical format that is available on the web site.
6. The listings in the Schedule of Classes should link out to the assessment survey.
7. CTAAR should email all faculty at mid-semester to remind them about the availability of the Midcourse Survey.
8. CTAAR should investigate the possibility of developing a program that could add common questions to multiple course sections globally.
9. Peer review—in the form most appropriate to specific schools or departments—should be the primary tool 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; teaching evaluations should be coupled with professional development.
10. The requirement that the results of SIRS questions 9 and 10 be reported should be removed from form 1-a and related forms (1-b; NTT 1-a; NTT 1-b; NTT 1-c; RBHS Form 1).
11. In order to allow for student input, departments should include relevant student comments from the SIRS, or other sources as appropriate, in the teaching section of Form 1-a and related forms.

**Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee Members:**

Natalie Borisovets, Chair, Libraries, Faculty

Wanda Blanchett, GSE Dean, Administration

Molly Bradshaw, Nursing, Faculty

Mary Bridgeman, Pharmacy, Faculty

Daniel Bubb, CCAS, Faculty

Sherri-Ann Butterfield, FAS-N Faculty Dean, Administration

Nancy Cantor , Newark Chancellor, Administration

Joseph Clark, SAS-NB, Student

Ann Coiro, SAS-NB, Faculty

Theresa Collins, SAS-NB, Faculty

Barbara Cooper, SAS-NB, Faculty

Samuel Cutler, SAS-NB, Student

Diane Davis, SEBS, Faculty

William Field, SAS-NB, Faculty

Juliane Gross, SAS-NB, Faculty

James Hayton, SMLR Dean, Administration

Robert Johnson, NJMS Dean, Administration

Senem Kaptan, GS-NB, Student

Natalia Kouraeva, PTL-NB, Faculty

Peter March, SAS-NB Dean, Administration

Jorge Marcone, SAS-NB, Faculty

Daijiro Okada, SAS-NB, Faculty

Helen Pirrello, Alumni Association

Jonathan Rozenburg, CCAS, Student

Cecilia Salazar, SAS-NB, Student

Joseph Schiavo, Assoc. Dean, CCAS, Administration

Robert Scoloveno, Nursing-C, Faculty

Julie Serrano, SAS-NB, Student

Michael Shapiro, NJMS, Faculty

Neil Sheflin, SAS-NB, Faculty

George Stauffer, Dean, MGSA, Administration

Barbara Thomson, NB Staff

4/24/17



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**

**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.]
---------------	---

**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.

The SIRS results are to be reported on Form 1-a for General Teaching/Research and 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. Question 9 and 10 are collected for applications the for non-tenure track candidates for promotion to rank of Associate Professor and above in 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 also include questions 9 and 10 on RBHS Form 1 Recommendation Information Form for RBHS and RBHS Form NTT 1 Recommendation Information Form for NTT RBHS

The universities Short Forms for Appointments, Reappointments, and/or Promotions of Non-Tenure Track Faculty for Rutgers and RBHS positions do not specify the use of Questions 9 and 10.

The SIRS question 9 and 10 are not collected on Form 1-c for County Agents or on Form 1-d for Extension Specialists. County Agents and Extension Specialists are peer evaluated for their teaching activities.

The requirement include in these forms is the following:

1. Using the format in the example below, list in reverse chronological order, the teaching assignments of the candidate for every semester since the last successful evaluation, including the assignment for fall 2016. In the case of candidates for tenure, list the teaching assignments for the entire probationary period. If there is no formal teaching assignment for a semester, then indicate "none" and give the reason (sabbatical leave, chairperson of major committee, leave without pay, etc.). The teaching chart is to be used only for typical classroom teaching (including lecture courses, seminars, colloquia, etc.) in credit-bearing courses that involve formal and consistent evaluative processes, typically the Student Instructional Rating Form. Independent studies and other forms of student mentorship or advising, including dissertation supervision, are to be listed under items 3 to 6; do not list these on the teaching chart.

**Course Information:**

For each course, include year, semester, course title and number, number of credits, mode of instruction, main audience, responsibilities and enrollment.<sup>2</sup>

**Course Evaluation:**

For each course for which summary student evaluation data are available, include the number of student evaluation responses received, and the instructor and departmental mean values for questions 9 and 10 on the University's Student Instructional Rating Form. If units use a different rating form, please indicate maximum rating value. If evaluations are not included for a specific course, please account for missing evaluations.

**Example:**

- COURSE INFORMATION -								- COURSE EVALUATION -				
S/ Yr	Course Title	Number	Cr	MOI	Aud	Resp	Enrl	Evaluation Responses	Teaching Effectiveness (Max = 5)		Course Quality (Max = 5)	
									Instructor	Dept Mean	Instructor	Dept Mean
i.e.: F13	Women's Studies	161:111:11	3	Lec	unm	Total	55	50	4.44	4.10	4.19	4.20

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.

FAPC 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)*

*Ardehna, 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)**  
**Page 2 of 4**

**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)**

**Page 1 of 4**

**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.