

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
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F12-6, Policy Recommendation, Evaluation in Effectiveness
in Teaching for all Faculty

Legislative History: Replaces S91-9, S06-6, F83-2, S08-1,
S83-12, S08-6, S89-6, S73-8, F12-1

At its meeting of December 10

University Policy

A third major issue addressed by this policy is the timing of classroom visits for temporary faculty. S91-9 mandates visits every third semester, but temporary faculty contracts are renewed annually and then sometimes extended into three year contracts after they earn six years of seniority. The three-semester interval is too infrequent to correspond to the review period early in a temporary faculty's SJSU career and too frequent to correspond to the three year contracts that often characterize a temporary faculty's later career.

Numerous other changes are also contained in this policy, and language has been updated to reflect new teaching methods that were not customarily practiced in 1991 when the last major revision of this policy occurred.

To aid in understanding the scope of this policy, the following is a list of policies being replaced and short descriptions of what they contained.

- S73-8 "Tower List--Not to be used in evaluation of faculty members' performance." This policy prevented an independent student-run faculty evaluation system from being used in the official faculty rating process. Therefore, the attached policy updates this restriction to cover more modern equivalents, such as Rate My Professor.com.

- S83-12 "Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness: prohibition on reporting with percentiles." We are not entirely sure what this one was about, but it seems to have been intended to

educate people about appropriate and inappropriate ways to interpret the results. The attached policy preserves this requirement.

Vote: (10-0-0)

Present: (Green, Reade, Maldonado-Colon, Gleixner, Winnard, Brown, Peter, Condon, Semerjian, Hsu)

Financial Impact: (Savings for electronic SOTES that were already considered in F12-1.)

Workload Impact: (Generally fewer peer reviews, but some will be more thorough, depending on department culture. Department Chairs are assigned

of peer observers experiencing the course content from the vantage-point of the students. Each faculty evaluation should include at least one direct observation, which may be made in either regular or special session classes.

1. Guidelines for Direct Observations

a. Creation of Guidelines: Each department shall adopt guidelines for the conduct of direct observations of teaching faculty by peers. Departments may adopt their own unique guidelines, or they may opt to adopt guidelines that are widely shared throughout the college or across the university. In all cases, guidelines will be approved by a majority vote of the department faculty, following standard department voting rights. The Center for Faculty Development shall provide model guidelines, and instruments, and suggestions which a department may use to develop and implement its own guidelines. The adopted guidelines must then be approved by the appropriate college Dean.

b. Content of Guidelines: Observation guidelines will:

1) Provide details on the frequency of direct observations (if greater than the minimum established by this policy) and on the frequency of any required formative observations (reference section "I" of this policy).

2) Provide either a specific observation instrument (form) or a list of the content to be included in a direct observation report. Through either a form or content list, guidelines will be constructed to reflect what the department deems relevant to teaching within its discipline, so that direct observation reports will comment on all relevant factors listed above in sections "A" and "B" of this policy.

3) Require reports to acknowledge any unfavorable condros(epor)1.7 (tf)5 (l)

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recommendations for the improvement of instruction (e.g. referral to appropriate faculty development resources).

- e. Faculty in temporary positions shall receive a direct observation in at least one course during their first semester of appointment. Subsequently, they shall receive at least one direct observation during each appointment (e.g., one-year or three-year appointments). Observations will be made for a representative sampling of courses over time.
- f. Departments who have too few qualified peer observers to complete the required number of observations may request assistance from another department. If a sufficient number of peer observers is still not identified, a temporary reduction in the number of required direct observations may be authorized by the appropriate college Dean. Under these circumstances, departments will give priority to faculty who need direct observation reports for impending reviews. Any faculty denied their request for a required observation will instead receive an explanatory letter from the Department Chair that will take the place of the missing observation report in any periodic review.
- g. A faculty member who has not received the required number of direct observations will remind the department Chair of the need for additional observations at least one month prior to a periodic review.
- h. When departments create their guidelines for direct observations, they may choose to encourage or require a higher number of direct observations than the minimum set by this policy (see C.1.b earlier in this policy). Departments may also specify whether the additional observations shall be used for periodic evaluations or whether they will be formative evaluations (see I.3 later in this policy).

5. Procedures for Direct Observations.

- a. Faculty shall be notified a minimum of five working days in advance of his/her direct observation. Advanced consultation is required so that the peer observer can understand how to put the observation into the context of the overall course and curriculum.
- b. Direct Observation Report: A written report must be provided by the peer observer to the faculty member and the Department Chair

within fifteen working days. The faculty member has the right to respond to or rebut in writing the report within five working days after receiving the report.

D. Student Testimonials, Complaints and Unofficial Surveys

1. Any student communications or opinions provided outside of the regular evaluation process must be identified by name to be included in a Personnel Action File.
2. Student opinions published separately (e.g., “Rate My Professor,” “The Tower List,” etc.) are specifically excluded from consideration in any periodic review.
3. Individual faculty, departments and other academic units may choose to administer unofficial student surveys designed to provide various forms of feedback for faculty. These surveys are unofficial and the results may not be placed in the faculty member’s personnel file.
4. SERB (Student Evaluation Review Board) may elect to administer one qualitative question at the same time as the SOTES (Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness Surveys), for the purpose of collecting student advice to share with other students. This is subject to the following provisions:
 - a. While administered at the same time as the SOTES, the results of this question will not be part of the SOTES, will not be entered into the faculty personnel file, and will be limited as per D.2. above (i.e., excluded from consideration in faculty periodic reviews.) The question will be clearly demarcated as separate from the SOTE so that students will be aware that their answers to this question will be made available to other students, while their answers to the SOTES will be confidential.
 - b. Only the faculty member, and current San José State University students who completed SOTES during the previous semester, will have access to the results of this survey question.
 - c. The specific question will allow for students to offer advice to other students who are considering taking the course.

4. Other than those classes excluded in E3 (above), SOTES shall be administered in all classes with enrollments of 5 or more students. In courses with enrollments of 5-9 students, faculty may choose that SOTES not be administered in the course. Results of SOTE evaluations will be placed in the faculty personnel file. Faculty may submit a written rebuttal to be included in the faculty personnel file with a class's SOTES when they believe that additional information is needed or that there are student biases (as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 15). Rebuttals shall be sent to the Faculty Services office within 10 academic year duty days following the release of official SOTES. Faculty may choose to exclude the survey results from one course per year from their periodic evaluations, provided that they teach at least fifteen WTUs (equivalent of five typical three unit courses in either regular and/or special sessions) evaluated via the SOTE instrument during that year. (Issues in interpreting the 15 WTU requirement shall be resolved by the Provost or designee.) For this purpose, the "year" shall correspond to the review cycle of the faculty member; i.e., for tenured/tenure-track faculty beginning in Fall; for lecturer faculty beginning in Spring. When the periodic review covers multiple years, only one course in any year may be excluded, and the remaining SOTES shall be representative of the teaching assignment. In consultation with the Professional Standards Committee, Faculty Services will develop a process for exclusion and rebuttal of SOTEs and issue guidelines and a calendar describing that process.
5. When SOTES are included in a periodic evaluation, both the quantitative scores and the associated qualitative comments will be included (as will any rebuttal). When SOTES are excluded from a periodic evaluation, both the quantitative scores and the associated qualitative comments will be excluded (as will any rebuttal).
6. SERB shall prepare the specific questions and survey instrument to be used to measure student opinions of teaching effectiveness. It shall decide the scale, format, and layout of the instrument, and determine the information that is provided in the reports generated by the surveys. The instrument shall be approved by the Senate upon recommendation of SERB and the Professional Standards Committee, and may only be amended by SERB.
7. SERB shall prepare a suitable interpretation guide which explains how the quantitative results of the SOTEs will be interpreted, complete with analysis of factors expected to influence ratings and an explanation of statistical norms, etc. It is the responsibility of the Provost to see that the interpretation guide is provided to all personnel committees and administrators responsible for evaluating the teaching of faculty.

8. Any SOTE with a response rate of less than fifty (50)% or with fewer than 10 responses will be flagged as potentially unreliable and interpreted with caution.
9. Surveys from students earning the grades “W, WU, and AU” are to be excluded from results.
10. The SOTE instrument must be compliant with all pertinent accessibility regulations.

F. SOTES: Qualitative Surveys

1. All SOTES shall provide opportunity for unsigned, open-ended (qualitative) student comment. When a SOTE is included in a periodic evaluation, all qualitative comments associated with that SOTE must be included (with the exception only of F.3 below). However, comments may be reported in ways that minimize the use of space, provided that the comments from each student are grouped together.
2. Summaries of qualitative remarks for use in performance reviews or periodic evaluations of a faculty member are to follow the guidelines below:
 - a) Departments may, at their option, devise methods to provide unbiased summaries of qualitative remarks.
 - b) The AVP for IEA, after consultation with SERB, may implement a system to provide faculty with unbiased summaries of qualitative remarks.
 - c) When summaries of qualitative remarks are provided, they may supplement but may not replace a copy of all student qualitative remarks.
 - d) Only summaries approved by the Department Chair or the AVP for IEA may be used in a performance review or periodic evaluation. Use of any summaries will be at the discretion of the faculty member under review.
3. Faculty may request the removal of remarks in the qualitative surveys that are completely unrelated to teaching, such as comments that are bigoted, hateful, comment on personal appearance, or otherwise violate campus policies.

- a) Such remarks will be removed after verification of their content by the Department Chair.
- b) The AVP for IEA, upon consultation with SERB, may implement

1. SOTES shall be collected by electronic means.
 - a) The AVP for IEA shall arrange for all students to receive regular electronic reminders to complete their SOTES, and these reminders will inform students how to connect to and complete the survey instrument. The reminders will also inform them of on-campus locations where they can obtain connectivity if they do not have independent access.
 - b) SERB shall prepare statements that clearly explain to students the seriousness with which SJSU takes the results of the survey; students should know its importance for the performance evaluation of faculty as well as its benefits for course design and the improvement of instruction. These statements should be provided both in the electronic reminders and at the beginning of the survey instrument.
2. SERB will be responsible for researching "best practices" and for determining collection and incentive methods that work for SJSU to achieve response rates comparable to paper-and-pencil evaluation response rates—an absolute minimum of 60%. A variety of incentives may be used, provided they are approved by SERB and the AVP for IEA. Incentives may include the avoidance of a temporary delay in the ability for students to access their official grades until after submitting their SOTES. However, this incentive is subject to the following limitations:
 - a) The delay must be temporary and reasonable

4. Faculty may provide time so that students may complete the SOTES in class, subject to the following provisions:
 - a) Students must be informed that they may complete the SOTE outside of class if they prefer, or if they do not have an appropriate electronic instrument with them in class.
 - b) If faculty provide class time, it must be at least a 15 minute block.
 - c) The faculty member must not be present while the survey is being completed.
5. The period of time in which the SOTES will be administered shall be set by SERB in consultation with the AVP for IEA, but shall not be earlier than the final ten days of class nor later than the normal time when the student's final grade is released. The specific "window" for administration of the survey will be established so as to best enhance the integrity and quality of the survey results. A minimum of ten calendar days will be provided to respond.
6. All SOTES must be administered in such a way as to maintain absolute confidentiality for the student respondents. Official SOTE reports shall include responses to a question that asks respondents about any undue influence from others while completing the SOTE.
7. No SOTE results—either quantitative or qualitative-- may be released to faculty until after grades for the class are officially submitted.
8. No students will be allowed to submit SOTES after they have seen their official semester grade for a course.
9. Results for SOTES will be stored on a secure server and the server shall be considered an extension of the personnel file. The AVP for Faculty Affairs shall determine procedures for secure access to this extension of the faculty personnel file. The AVP for Faculty Affairs, in consultation with the AVP for IEA and SERB, shall determine the most appropriate method for providing faculty and appropriate evaluators with access to the results of SOTES.
10. Additional technical and implementation details not covered in this policy will be decided by the AVP for IEA in consultation with SERB and the Professional Standards Committee. Changes in implementation procedures will be reported to SERB and the Professional Standards Committee.

I. Use of SOTES and Observations for Formative Purposes

1. All evaluations of teaching are ultimately intended for the improvement of instruction, and will be implemented and interpreted in that spirit.
2. Formative use of SOTEs. SERB, the Center for Faculty Development (CFD), and the AVP for IEA will collaborate on ways to use the SOTE design and SOTE feedback for the improvement of instruction. This collaboration may use SOTE results to alert faculty to resources that are available to help improve instruction, such as links to help sites, interpretive reports, and invitations to work on particular issues with faculty development personnel. Any contact with faculty on the basis of SOTE results must be subject to the following provisions:
 - a) Department Chairs may initiate contact with faculty to suggest development opportunities that address possible concerns identified by their SOTES. As technology permits, the AVP for IEA, in consultation with SERB and CFD, may develop automated ways of confidentially screening SOTES to help Department Chairs to identify faculty who could benefit from available resources for teaching development.
 - b) Faculty development activities resulting from this contact will be kept strictly separate from faculty evaluation.
 - c) Participation in faculty development programs resulting from this contact are voluntary.
3. Formative Use of Direct Observations. So long as the minimum number of formal direct observations for evaluative purposes is 66.95 -1.1eorm6t4 (ct)3(f)5 ill

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latter situation, the reviewing bodies may not obtain the results of that review.

- b) Individuals must have received training from the Center for Faculty Development (CFD) in relation to conducting a review in order to perform formative teaching evaluations. Reviewers who have received training will receive a document indicating that they have completed the training. Reviewers will, in most cases, be members of the same department or college as the faculty member being reviewed.
- c) The review process shall consist of three components:
 - 1) A pre-instruction conference between the faculty member and the reviewer to determine areas for which the faculty member would like to be reviewed.
 - 2) As determined in the pre-conference, the reviewer will follow established guidelines and determine observation tools needed to perform the review. The reviewer will spend a minimum of one hour observing.
 - 3) The reviewer will use strategies presented to coach the faculty member to indicate where the faculty member might try to improve and to suggest workshops, seminars, or other resources that would be beneficial.
- d) The results of the formative review shall be disclosed only to the reviewer and to the faculty member being reviewed, though appropriate procedures will be adopted to track that reviews have taken place and to acknowledge the participation of the observer and the faculty member. Faculty members may request certificates of completion for any workshops or seminars attended but records of attendance at those functions shall not be public.
- e) Faculty members are encouraged to consider the recommendations of the reviewer but are not required to follow them.

ⁱ For just a few of the thousands of articles available in the literature on the effective use of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness, the AVP for IEA and SERB recommend the following:

Abrami, P.C., d'Apollonia, S. and Cohen, P.A. (1990), Validity of student ratings of instruction: what we know and what we do not, *Journal of Education Psychology*, 82(2), 219-31.

Carrell, S.E. and West, J.E. (2010), Does professor quality matter? Evidence from random assignment of students to professors, *Journal of Political Economy*, 118(3), 409-432.

Cashin, William E. (1995), Student Ratings of Teaching: The Research Revisited. Idea Paper #32. Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, Kansas State University.

Clayson, D.E. (2009), Student evaluations of teaching: Are they related to what students learn? A meta-analysis and review of the literature. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 31(1), 16-30.

Dowell, D.A. and Neal, J.A. (1983), A selective review of the validity of student ratings of teachings, *Journal of Higher Education*, 53(1), 459-63.

Feldman, Kenneth A. (1996), Identifying Exemplary Teaching: Using Data from Course and Teacher Evaluations, *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 65 (Spring 1996), 41-50.

Nuhfer, E.B. (2010), A fractal thinker looks at student ratings. Retrieved from <http://sites.bio.indiana.edu/~bender/resources/Assessment/fractalevals10.pdf>

Theall, M. (2002) Student ratings: Myths vs. research evidence: Focus on Faculty, Faculty Center newsletter article, BYU. Retrieved from <http://studentratings.byu.edu/info/faculty/myths.asp> See especially the bibliography.