

**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, 2012, the Academic Senate approved the following policy recommendation brought to the Senate by Senator Peter for the Professional Standards Committee.

**Action by University President: Approved by President
Mohammad Qayoumi on
January 7, 2013**

**Policy Recommendation
Evaluation in Effectiveness in Teaching
for all Faculty**

Resolved: The attached be accepted as University Policy.

Resolved: The policy will be effective beginning with the 2013-14 Academic Year, except for provisions concerning the administration of SOTES (sections E, F, G, and H) which shall be used to regulate the administration of SOTES beginning Spring 2013. Departments should prepare and seek approval of their guidelines for Direct Observations (section C.1) by the end of Spring semester, 2013.

Resolved: The President's assent to this policy constitutes approval of "a requirement to evaluate fewer classes after consideration of the

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

paper SOTES, including proctoring and signatures. Many elements of this policy will be discarded as irrelevant with the implementation of the electronic SOTES.

- S08-1 “Administration of Online Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness (SOTE) Evaluations for Online Courses.” This was an amendment to S06-6 concerning the evaluation of online courses and conflicts with the old contract. This should be rescinded since S06-6 is being replaced by this new policy.
- S08-6 “Developing Baseline Values (Norms) for the Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness (SOTE) Surveys for Use in Periodic and Performance Evaluations.” The norming of paper SOTES was difficult because it required all classes be evaluated—something that the old contract did not permit without special permission. The attached policy allows for continual re-norming, eliminating the need for S08-6.
- F12-1 “Administration of Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness Surveys (SOTES) Evaluations Online.” This recently passed policy set us on course to move to online SOTES. Its key provisions are absorbed here in order to unify our teaching evaluation policy.

Approved:

Vote:

Present:

Financial Impact:

Workload Impact:

- c. Enforcement of Guidelines: Department Chairs will be responsible for ensuring that all reports of direct observations follow the adopted guidelines. Any reports that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to the respective peer observer for revision, or else discarded and reassigned.
2. Assignment of Direct Observations.
 - a. All peer observers will be assigned by the department chair or the department personnel committee. The peer observers must be currently employed as SJSU faculty members of at least equal academic rank as the faculty member being observed, and preferably of higher academic rank.
 - b. A faculty member may request additional direct observations.
3. Training for Peer Observers. The Center for Faculty Development shall make available training materials and will conduct group sessions, as needed, to instruct peer observers on best practices when conducting direct observations.
4. Frequency of Direct Observations.
 - a. For probationary candidates seeking tenure, direct observations will be made for a minimum of one course per year. Over the entire probationary period, observations must be made to view the full range of courses taught.
 - b. For candidates seeking promotion to Professor, direct observations shall be made in at least two different courses during the period of review.
 - c. For tenured full professors, direct observations may be made upon request of a faculty member with the observations used for professional development.
 - d. An appropriate departmental committee of equal or higher rank, such as the personnel committee, may at its discretion require direct observations when problems of instruction come to its attention. The committee or its evaluators may make appropriate recommendations for the improvement of instruction (e.g. referral to appropriate faculty development resources).

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 atj iurse.a 27 T not be pher6 Tw 14.9eedback fo

determine the best method for distributing the information obtained from this question.

- e. There shall be a reasonable time period when faculty can examine the responses before the results are released; faculty will have the option to prevent release if, in their view, the comments would not be helpful to future students.
- f. If technically feasible, first-time students both transfer and freshmen, would be able to view these comments with the same status as responding students.

E. Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness Surveys (SOTES); both Qualitative and Quantitative

1. _____

of an occasional course from their periodic evaluations. Faculty may choose to exclude the survey results from one course per Academic Year from their periodic evaluation, provided that they teach at least fifteen units of courses during that Academic Year. Faculty who are credited with teaching double sized courses will be credited with teaching twice the normal number of units.

5. When SOTES are included in a periodic evaluation, both the quantitative scores and the associated qualitative comments will be included. When SOTES are excluded from a periodic evaluation, both the quantitative scores and the associated qualitative comments will be excluded.
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. If technically feasible, surveys from students earning the grade "WU" 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 software that “flags” and removes such remarks. To assist in evaluating possible bias in the SOTES, faculty will receive a full report that includes the text and frequency of all such remarks.

G. SOTES: Quantitative Surveys

1. The survey instrument shall include a quantitative component as per provision 15 in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.
2. Results shall be reported as the means, standard deviations, and medians for each item by class. The mean for each class will be compared against the mean and norms for the particular College and University, when

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 (e.g. no more than three weeks.)
 - b) The Registrar shall always have the option of releasing grades more promptly for serious academic purposes (e.g. to inform students of academic disqualification.)
 - c) Students shall have the option of accessing the SOTE survey and opting out; deliberately opting out shall count as completing a survey for the purpose of avoiding any penalties.
 - d) Students who complete their surveys will receive their grades at the normal time; students who do not will have their grades delayed for a period after the final faculty deadline for reporting grades.
3. Students shall be able to complete SOTES outside of class through secure electronic access.
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 (under "C") are collected, departments are encouraged to make use of additional observations for formative purposes. A formative observation is designed to assist a faculty member to improve his/her teaching but is completely confidential and the results are not to be used in any periodic review. For example, the very first direct observation of a faculty member might best be done according to formative guidelines. Faculty with serious teaching concerns will usually be helped first through the formative process. If departments wish to make use of formative observations, they can adopt the relevant procedures as part of their observation guidelines (described in C1.)
- a) Formative teaching reviews are frequently initiated by faculty request to the Center for Faculty Development; however, reviewing bodies for periodic or performance reviews (as specified in the CFA-CSU Agreement) may also request a formative review. In the 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:

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.