

Making Difference

The University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services (CESS)

College of Education and Social Services Evaluation of Teaching Performance April 10, 2015

In the College of Education and Social Services we have always utilized multiple sources of data to evaluate teaching effectiveness. This holistic approach to teaching effectiveness is a central part of each faculty member's personal professional development plan related to teaching. Our Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure (RPT) Guidelines (http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/resources/CESSRPT16Sep2014_Final.pdf) highlight how teaching performance is assessed across the College. These RPT guidelines resulted from over a year of dialogue across the College on how faculty should be evaluated. The CESS approach requires that several sources of information serve as evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of faculty teaching. Examples of these sources of teaching effectiveness include but are not limited to:

- faculty peer observations of teaching (required each year for probationary faculty and those seeking reappointment and promotion)
- evaluations of teaching by students
- department chair evaluations
- creative collaborations with professional colleagues (in academia or in the field)
- professional awards
- creativity and innovation in syllabi, readings, materials, and teaching methods
- university, state, regional, and/or national recognition
- development of new courses, teaching materials, and other activities related to instruction

These documents, and others that faculty identify, have always been part of the RPT process and are welcomed as teaching effectiveness evidence during the annual review process. During annual review, departments have tended to rely on teaching evaluations for evidence of effective teaching due to the efficiency of the documentation as a form of evidence. Nothing precludes individual faculty members from providing additional evidence during the annual review process.

In the College, we have preferred to take a more collaborative approach to improving teaching effectiveness, which allows for faculty (with input from the chair) to work with their colleagues on addressing teaching issues on an as-needed basis. Additionally, faculty collaborate on redesigns of course and program curricula as necessary due to an array of shifting contextual issues such as evolving accreditation requirements, emerging research in their fields, changes in available technology for integration, and the evolving needs of students. Evaluating teaching effectiveness is a constantly evolving process based on critical reflection and continuous improvement.