



The University of Vermont

Date: January 5, 2015

Re: Charge from Provost to develop a college model for evaluating teaching performance

Provost Rosowsky requested that each college develop “a model for assessing teaching performance in their college/school that includes, but is not limited to, the results of student evaluation of courses.” The request emphasized that the assessment model “*cannot rely solely on student input*” and must be developed in consultation with faculty and students.

This effort is driven by the desire to have more robust ways to evaluate teaching and as a result provide a more comprehensive assessment of the teaching.

The following is the proposed timeline and a consultation process to develop a CEMS college-wide teaching performance evaluation model.

Timeline

January 20 th	Present model to faculty during CEMS college meeting and seeks feedback.
January 30 th	Feedback is provide to college leadership team and model is revised to incorporate comments/suggestions.
February 9 th -20 th	Revised model is presented to students.
March 2 nd	The Dean shares with the faculty, and students a draft that incorporates and/or responds to the recommendations offered by faculty and students.
March 10 th	The Dean presents final model to faculty at CEMS college meeting. Models is shared with students.
Fall 2015	Model is implemented by each unit starting fall 2015.

Governing Principles of Good Metrics to Assess Teaching

- The evaluation system should reflect the complexity of teaching and should include the assessment of relevant domains, such as:
 - The course design element (e.g., course objectives align with program learning outcomes; effective activities and assignments),
 - The instructional delivery of the course (e.g., engages student participation and facilitates discussion effectively),

- Grading and assessment of learning outcomes (e.g., appropriate rigor and expectations, monitors progress effectively),
- Classroom management (e.g., creates learning environments that welcome, challenge, and support all students),
- Mentoring and advising (e.g., keeps office hours; where appropriate, directs honors theses and individually designed projects; properly organizes co-curricular activities),
- Professional development and the scholarship of teaching (e.g., incorporates new pedagogical advances and instructional methods)
- Multiple sources should be used in the evaluation of teaching. These sources must include:
 - Assessments by self, students, peers/external evaluators, and chair.
- An evaluation of teaching should include both formative feedback and summative evaluation. Formative feedback fosters individual improvement. The formative feedback should include a discussion of future performance goals and strategies for meeting these goals. Summative evaluations measure whether and the degree to which institutional standards are met and/or surpassed.

Proposed CEMS Model of Teaching Performance Evaluation

Departments and programs will use a common template to organize and systematically evaluate teaching performance in their particular units. However, the evaluation is flexible enough to allow the disciplines in the college to their particular needs, goals, teaching methodologies, and desired learning outcomes. The proposed evaluation template is explained below.

Domain indicators: For each teaching domain, the evaluation system must name and describe the “indicators” that assess the domain, as well as the source and method of assessment. In addition, the model should describe the criteria used to determine whether the faculty member “*consistently exceeds expectations*”, “*meets and in some cases exceeds expectations*”, “*satisfactorily meets all expectations*”, “*meets most expectations, but some improvements needed*”, “*needs improvement*”. Below is the draft of the evaluation performance for each of these categories.

1. To achieve the rating “*consistently exceeds expectations*” in teaching--denoted henceforth as “Excellent” – there should be substantial evidence of quality based on the following indicators. These are not listed in order of importance. Also, this is not an exhaustive list; *additional* indicators of excellence can be considered if appropriated. As much as possible, any one of the criteria below (including student evaluations) should be used to help assess the overall quality and educational effectiveness of the instructor's courses, keeping in mind that each of these criteria comprises just one component of the overall assessment. In evaluating teaching the chair will also consider mitigating factors beyond the control of the faculty member, such as the times and the physical support for lectures (e.g., location of a class, class size, performance of hardware, whether the course is a required service course for another major, teaching assistant support, etc.).

The faculty member who consistently exceeds expectations will exhibit many of the following

indicators:

- Is a well-prepared, engaging and stimulating teacher.
- Effectively encourages independent and creative student thinking, discovery and learning.
- Works to improve courses (constructs course web pages, incorporates new technologies, incorporates current examples and applications in class, updates topical coverage in courses, etc).
- Keeps current with teaching resources (such as textbooks and websites) and with scholarly literature on teaching.
- Attends seminars, workshops, sessions at professional meetings meant to improve teaching.
- Maintains high standards for amount, level and quality of work expected from students.
- Receives student evaluations that, in light of both the quantitative "Overall Instructor" and "Course Difficulty" ratings as well as written student comments, indicate that students perceive the course(s) given by the instructor as being excellent.
- Receives excellent peer/external evaluations (based on class visitations or other forms of assessment).
- Generates feedback from students and other faculty members that is generally highly positive, with significant outstanding comments.
- Is successful in teaching a range of courses---by level or topic---as needed in the Department.
- Is accessible to students outside of class, including during posted office hours.
- Designs and effectively teaches new courses (if allowed the opportunity), or creates significant changes or innovations to existing courses.
- Designs and effectively implements new or innovative methods for course delivery (e.g., web-based courses or materials, hybrid or online courses, etc.).
- Takes on additional teaching responsibilities when the need or opportunity arises (e.g., supervises independent study, practica, or service learning courses, student research projects, honors theses, etc), if allowed to.
- Supervises masters projects, masters theses, or doctoral dissertations (if a graduate faculty member)
- Communicates to students an interest in them as persons and in their intellectual development.

2. To achieve the rating “*meets and in some cases exceeds expectations*” in teaching—denoted henceforth as “Highly Satisfactory” - there should be substantial evidence of quality based on the following indicators:

- Shows marked evidence of success in many of the above mentioned categories, but generally the quantity and/or quality is less than that of an "excellent" teacher.
- Receives student evaluations that are still very positive but not at same level as an "excellent" teacher.
- Generates feedback that is highly positive but to a lesser degree than for an "excellent" teacher.

3. To achieve the rating “*satisfactorily meets all expectations*” in teaching—denoted henceforth as “Satisfactory” - there should be substantial evidence of quality based on the following indicators:

- Shows some evidence of success in some of the above-mentioned categories, but generally the quantity and/or quality is less than that of a "highly satisfactory or excellent" teacher.
- Receives positive as well as primarily satisfactory student evaluations.
- Generates feedback that is generally positive but to a lesser degree than for a "highly satisfactory" teacher.
- Makes themselves available to students on a basis commensurate with the faculty member's teaching and advising assignments, and maintains office hours reasonably convenient to students.
- Makes substantive and sincere adjustments to teaching in response to deficiencies identified by student and/or peer/external evaluations.

4. To achieve the rating “*meets most expectations, but some improvements needed*” in teaching, there should be substantial evidence of quality based on the following indicators:

- Shows only marginal evidence of success in the above-mentioned categories, and generally the quality is less than that of a "satisfactory" teacher.
- Receives mostly satisfactory, but a significant number of poor, student evaluations.
- Generates feedback that is generally satisfactory but with some student dissatisfaction or complaints.
- Is minimally available to students on a basis commensurate with the faculty member's teaching and advising assignments, and office hours are sometimes insufficient or inconvenient for a significant number of students.
- Makes substantive and sincere adjustments to teaching in response to deficiencies identified by student and/or peer evaluations.

5. To achieve the rating “*needs improvement*” in teaching, there should be substantial evidence of deficiencies in quality based on the following indicators:

- Consistently receives mediocre or poor student teaching evaluations.
- Generates feedback from peers and students about teaching performance that is often negative.
- Either does not have appropriate office hours or does not reliably attend scheduled office hours
- Does little to seek to maintain or improve present courses.
- Does little to keep abreast of important general studies, textbooks and pedagogical materials germane to the courses he/she teaches.
- Exhibits inconsistent attendance or frequent tardiness at classes (has substitutes more than a few times).
- Is unresponsive to students' needs.
- Does not respond to normal student questions or requests in a timely and appropriate fashion.
- Does not adhere to deadlines related to courses and students.
- Is avoided by students as a teacher, advisor, or supervisor (e.g., for required research projects or theses).
- Does not cover required course material.

Sources of assessment and evaluation: At a minimum, the evaluation of teaching performance must include input and feedback from students, assessments and evaluations from peers/external evaluators, a comprehensive self-assessment and teaching analysis by the instructor, and the overall evaluation by the chair.

- Students
 - At a minimum, students will be given the opportunity to provide quantitative and qualitative feedback, using, whenever possible, standardized forms and methods, including the scoring, analysis, and interpretation of the feedback.
 - Each unit must develop, describe, and make public its systematic system for scoring, analyzing, and interpreting both the quantitative and qualitative feedback.
 - The instrument and method to seek student feedback should be homogeneous across the college, but flexible enough to assess relevant disciplinary and course-specific feedback, as well as to assess and interpret the input within the appropriate disciplinary context and relevant course characteristics.
- **Peers/External Evaluators**
 - At a minimum, peers/external evaluators will contribute to the assessment of the appropriateness of the course design and the instructional delivery, including the grading and assessment of learning outcomes.
 - Departmental models of teaching evaluations must specify the process and methods of the various types of peer/external evaluator evaluation.
 - To increase inter-rater reliability and validity, peer/external evaluator evaluations should follow specific protocols and rubrics.
 - Departments will develop evaluation protocols that are not overly cumbersome, and to design the schedule of peer/external evaluation strategically and selectively, according to the following guiding principles.
 - New faculty members will receive some form of role-modeling and/or mentoring by faculty known to be excellent teachers (e.g., through attending and observing their mentors classes and course materials, seeking their mentors advice on course development or pedagogy, co-teaching where appropriate, etc.) and will be required to participate in short courses related to teaching offered by CTL or other external sources (E.g., ExCEED), as available.
 - Peer/external evaluator observations will be driven by need. These will normally be more frequent and comprehensive for junior faculty (e.g. at least once each year prior to the first review and at least once every other year until tenure) than for experienced, tenured faculty (who would only receive peer/external review prior to seeking promotion, in the case that deficiencies were identified by student evaluations or complaints, for courses that consistently fail to attract the expected number of students, or upon request by the faculty member).
 - Online student evaluations will be redesigned to be more concise and easier to

complete, in order to improve response rate.

- Mid-semester student evaluations will be performed to provide real-time feedback to instructors so that instructors may make mid-semester corrections to address concerns. Mid-semester evaluations that indicate that teaching is less than satisfactory or insufficiently rigorous will trigger an immediate peer/external review. The faculty and the chair may use the difference between the mid-semester and final course student evaluations as one piece of evidence of the degree to which mid-semester corrections were effective.

○ **Self**

- At a minimum, the faculty member is responsible for providing, in a timely manner, the information required by the departmental teaching evaluation model.
- In addition, as part of their annual report faculty must provide a self-reflective statement that addresses which of the departmental quality teaching indicators have been met or surpassed; e.g., new course development, updates to existing courses to keep them current, modifications to teaching in response to deficiencies indicated by peer/external or student evaluations, new pedagogical approaches they have incorporated, what resources they have sought out to improve their teaching effectiveness (e.g., attending relevant conferences or short courses, utilizing web repositories, books, consultations with CTL), etc.
- Based on the above, the self-assessment must include a justifiable self-evaluation as to which of the 5 assessment categories the faculty member believes their teaching warrants.

○ **Chair**

- The chair is responsible for organizing peer/external evaluations as necessary, per the departmental protocol. The chair must consider all of the sources and types of assessed evidence, and provide a written summative evaluation of whether and the degree to which institutional standards have been met and/or surpassed. The summative evaluation should be provided in writing as part of the faculty annual evaluation.
- The department must design a process to provide formative feedback in the case of junior faculty and/or in cases where evidence of deficiencies have been identified. This should include a face-to-face discussion with either their mentor(s) and/or the chair (at the chair's discretion) about future performance goals and strategies for meeting these goals. The substance and the outcomes of this discussion should be recorded in writing, provided to the faculty and their chair, and kept in the faculty member's departmental file.