

## Overview of SAIS

Teaching evaluation at the University of Tennessee began in 1987 with an ad hoc committee of the University of Tennessee's Faculty Senate calling for the implementation of a process of reviewing teaching performance. The assessment would consist of two parts. The first would be a survey of students in courses taught by the instructor under review and the second part would consist of a peer component. By February of 1989 a second Faculty Senate committee introduced the original CTEP (Chancellor's Teaching Evaluation Project) form to address the first part of the review of teaching performance. This form had six common "CTEP" questions rating an instructor's effectiveness on a three point Likert scale. While department heads and faculty grudgingly accepted the concept of student evaluation of teaching, the execution of the first few semesters was a disaster due to results being delayed by months. In addition, departments and instructors had the opportunity to conduct similar evaluations using their own questions as well as instruments from the Student Government Association and the Learning Resource Center. The Teaching Council revised the form for Fall of 1991 to include a section that could be used by departments for questions or surveys in addition to the six CTEP questions. The Student Government Association, working with the Faculty Senate, incorporated new questions in 1993, resulting in another revision of the form.

During this time there was much discussion about how the results of this growing evaluative tool would be used. The Faculty Senate stood by the initial goal of assisting instructors in improving their teaching. Since the program was developed as part of a review of an instructor's teaching which was subsequently used for tenure and promotion decisions, administrators saw the value of CTEP results. And when the Student Government Association successfully incorporated their questions into the instrument, their objective of providing students with information about instructors for the purpose of course selection added another duty to the CTEP mission. By 1994 a diverse group at the university began the search for an instrument that would best address the multiple goals of the teaching evaluation process. The decision was made to adopt the University of Washington's Instructional Evaluation System, which consisted of eight forms designed for a variety of courses. At that time the CTEP task force said of the program: "we have located an assessment system that has been expertly designed and validated and has been in use for twenty years at a university comparable in size and type to UTK." While the acronym remained the same, the name was changed to the Campus Teaching Evaluation Program.

When the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees approved a post-tenure review of faculty in June 1998, another examination of the CTEP process was set in motion. This time the task force did a comprehensive review; talking to peer institutions, conducting a survey of faculty and instructors at UTK, meeting with student leaders, completing a literature review of student ratings of instruction and revisiting the University of Washington's Instructional Assessment System (which had made significant changes to their evaluation system). The decision was made in March of 2000 to implement major changes to the program. The name was changed from the Campus Teaching Evaluation Program to the Student Assessment of Instruction System (SAIS) and replaced the old eight forms from UW with the current set of eleven forms. In addition, the practice of including percentile rankings and comparisons with department, college, and university means on the evaluation reports was abandoned and replaced with an on-line database that allows comparison of individual course means with college and university means according to the form used (the form type reflected the basic characteristics of the course and would be a useful comparative tool). (See <http://oira.tennessee.edu/sais/> and click on Comparative Means Archive on the left side of the screen.) The mandate for the online system came from this task force as well. Finally, there were several items relating to educating faculty, department heads and other administrators on the use of SAIS results that have not been successfully addressed years later.