

Preliminary Report of the  
**Task Force on Teaching Evaluation**

**March 11, 2013**

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**Background of the Task Force on Teaching Evaluation**

In the fall of 2012, Provost Susan Martin appointed a Task Force on Teaching Evaluation to examine the methods used to evaluate teaching at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. That Task Force was given the following charge:

The charge will be to review practices on teaching evaluation at peer/aspirational peer institutions and develop new guidelines for evaluation including peer evaluation of teaching as well as standardized information and data to be presented for annual evaluation, retention, and tenure and promotion.

The rationale for this Task Force was partially in response to the student evaluation of teaching (SAIS) migrating to an online system. Results at The University of Tennessee were similar to other universities with the greatest outcome being a drop in the student response rate to approximately 50%. Many faculty questioned the reliance placed on this system (SAIS) and multiple measures were undertaken to improve the response rate, but little improvement was seen. In an email communication from the Provost, she stated, "In the last year, I have received feedback from many individuals and groups expressing concern that our current processes for the evaluation of instruction need improvement. Many have observed that we rely too heavily on the SAIS scores and do not gather or analyze other kinds of data, both quantitative and qualitative, to assist in evaluation or improvement of teaching" (email communication, 09/25/12).

The Task Force on Teaching Evaluation was comprised of Toby Boulet, Thomas Burman, Jenny Fowler, Carol Parker, Elizabeth Pemberton, Annette Ranft, Lloyd Rinehart, David Schumann, and chair, Vincent Anfara.

A significant amount of literature was reviewed by the Task Force along with what Top 25, peer/inspirational peer institutions, and others are doing in this regard. Appendix A contains the information from the Top 25 (and additional institutions of higher education) regarding methods of teaching evaluation. As will be realized from a reading of this preliminary report, many questions are raised as we attempt to provide advice on the evaluation of teaching.

**Introduction**

From the available literature, most institutions of higher education have wrestled with teaching evaluation. Evaluation has a major role in promoting accountability and in improving the quality of instruction. There are a number of concerns:

- (1) Learner outcomes are cumulative; it is difficult to isolate the effect of any one teacher on a student's performance.
- (2) Teacher behaviors and activities interact with numerous factors to shape student performance. Student socioeconomic status, school climate, pupil abilities, previous instructional treatment, family life and home conditions are but a few of the many factors that influence a student's performance. Teacher effectiveness, however defined, is highly contextual and conditional.
- (3) Teachers vary in the practices that work for them.

Therefore, there can be "no single, simple method of evaluating teacher effectiveness because there is no single concept of what the teacher should be undertaking in the classroom" (Travers, 1981, p. 22).

### **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles reflected in the literature on teaching and learning informed our work and form the basis for the recommendations we offer in this preliminary report:

- A culture of good/effective/quality teaching needs to be established on this campus, much like the culture surrounding research and creative achievement. That culture must be characterized by trust, communication, a commitment to strong evaluation, and a significant reward system.
- Faculty assumes multiple roles which need to be evaluated: classroom teacher, mentor/advisor, thesis/dissertation chair.
- Teaching evaluations should be utilized to improve teaching and learning as well as for accountability purposes.
- For the evaluation process to be effective, instructors must value and embrace it.

### **Process Elements**

The following process elements were also deemed important for consideration:

- We recognize that there are multiple aspects of good/effective teaching. While recognizing that fact, we acknowledge that good teaching and learning involve similar characteristics. (e.g., course organization, characteristics that reinforce strong rapport with students, strong motivational presence, appropriate challenge and rigor, focusing on relevance, viable assessment techniques, active engaged learning methods). (see Appendix B for various lists of characteristics).
- It is necessary to use multiple data points over time from a variety of constituents to effectively evaluate teaching.
- Teaching improvement may start with data but may also include a variety of other opportunities including coaching, workshops, observation, and the like.

### **Data We Currently (Potentially) Collect**

In the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* (2012), we currently collect the following data in the process of the evaluation of teaching:

- (1) Statement of teaching philosophy and its implementation.
- (2) A list of courses taught in resident instruction, continuing education, and international programs.
- (3) A concise compilation of student evaluations (SAIS).
- (4) A peer evaluation of teaching/internal letters about teaching effectiveness.
- (5) Summary of student comments—the best liked and least liked qualities of teaching (compiled by department head).
- (6) Statements from administrators.
- (7) Evidence of teaching and advising effectiveness (performance in subsequent courses, tangible results).
- (8) Any teaching honors and rewards.
- (9) A list of graduate dissertations (or equivalent).
- (10) A list of undergraduate honor theses supervised.
- (11) Membership on graduate committees.
- (12) Any evidence of expertise in international or intercultural activities.

### **Adopted Conceptual Framework**

The following framework is borrowed from the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center. It provides a foundation for categorizing a subset of the recommendations in this preliminary report. It considers two elements of assessment. The *type of feedback* (represented by rows) can be either formative or summative in nature. Formative feedback is typically non-graded (in the case of student feedback in response to some aspect of learning) and it reflects a response at that moment in time. Summative feedback provides an evaluation of summary knowledge (in the case of student learning) or a summary reaction (in the case of instructor evaluation). The *target of the feedback* (represented by columns) can either be student learning or instructor effectiveness. Each quadrant contains different methods of assessment, yet the information provided with quadrants can potentially inform assessment in other quadrants.

<p><b><u>I. Formative evaluation of learning</u></b></p> <p>Methods: Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATS) – e.g., clearest point/muddiest point, minute reflection papers, list of questions to clear up confusion. Non-graded and often anonymous.</p>	<p><b><u>III. Formative evaluation of instruction</u></b></p> <p>Methods: e.g., surveys, open-ended questions on course structure, instructor’s reflection, or instructor’s style (students answer “what is helpful to, or could improve the learning process”).</p>
<p><b><u>II. Summative evaluation of learning</u></b></p> <p>Methods: e.g., tests, quizzes, projects, homework, assignments. Aligned with student learning objectives. Graded..</p>	<p><b><u>IV. Summative evaluation of instruction</u></b></p> <p>Methods: e.g., SAIS, Peer Evaluation of Teaching, Teaching Portfolio.</p>

## **Recommendations**

The initial recommendations of this Task Force are divided into three categories. They include: Multiple Indicators, Improvement and Rewards, and Administrative Policy/Practices Implementation. The first category contains items that can be placed into formative and summative subcategories, which allows for the conceptual framework (discussed above) to be utilized. Taken together, we recommend a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy that is reflected in the recommendations to follow.

### **Recommendations Regarding Multiple Indicators:**

**We recommend some set of the following multiple indicators be considered in the evaluation process (Roman numerals reflect the quadrant in the framework above that uses direct feedback):**

- (1) Employ three relevant and recent samples of student work—papers, projects and the like, include one excellent, one average, and one poor (II)
- (2) Provide a pared down student assessment system to include good teaching indicators (IV)
  - Identify indicators of good teaching from the literature and avoid repetition
  - Revise SAIS (or develop a new system of student evaluations) to shorten number of questions and define terms being measured
- (3) Provide evidence of effort to improve teaching: attending discipline based workshops and conferences, trying new teaching technologies, workshops on teaching
- (4) Provide evidence of teaching leadership, including head teacher for a course, developing new courses, revising a course
- (5) Establish a consistent process of peer evaluation to retain quality, developmental nature of process, but create efficiencies regarding time and effort (IV)
- (6) Self-assessment (III, IV)
- (7) Provide samples of course syllabi and other course materials that are teacher developed
- (8) Provide evaluations from students who we provide mentoring for dissertations/theses, honors projects, undergraduate projects (III, IV)
- (9) Include input from alumni (IV)
- (10) Include periodic self-assessment during semester, for example, a question that focuses on teaching that serves as an exit ticket for students from class (III)
- (11) Provide evidence of implementation of research in teaching (speak more directly to influence of one of the other)
- (12) Provide clear evidence of the relationship between course difficulty (course rigor; required course or not; amount of time invested by student) and student evaluations
- (13) Provide evidence of student perceptions regarding the value of the course (IV)
- (14) Provide statement of mentoring philosophy (for dissertations/thesis/honors projects/undergraduate projects)
- (15) Detail advising responsibilities—not just the number of students advised
- (16) Provide feedback from advisees (III)

### **Administrative Policy/Practices Implementation:**

- (1) Put SAIS into a “app” format (or completely revise SAIS to a UT version with a limited number [approximately 10]) of questions—see section of SAIS recommendations.
- (2) Identify who does the evaluations and professionally develop them in good evaluation techniques.

### **Improvement and Rewards:**

- (1) Design a system for clear and meaningful rewards for good teaching at both the college and campus levels.
- (2) Reinforce a culture of teaching and learning on the campus similar to the culture of getting a research grant (e.g., similar to the support for the Creative Teaching Grant Program).
- (3) Design a system for the informal faculty review of teaching that is required by each department. There are no rewards as well as no punishment attached to this process, except for Department Head if no report is submitted on a yearly basis.
- (4) Conduct peer evaluation of teaching needs periodically (every 3-5 years), not just at promotion.
- (5) Develop a calendar of assessment for department heads.

### **Specific Areas for Recommendations:**

#### **SAIS**

The Task Force recognizes the “broken” nature of the SAIS system. Multiple forms, the inaccuracies of what is being measured (i.e., terms are not clear or defined, behaviors are not always observable and measurable, and the low responses rates are just a few problem with the SAIS system.) There are multiple issues that call into question the system’s reliability and validity.

With this as background, we recommend:

1. That The University of Tennessee investigates other commercial companies in the development of a new student evaluation system.
2. That the comments sheet be administered separately through Blackboard and that this methods of acquiring formative feedback be done at points throughout the semester.
3. We suggest getting a group of experts in the areas of evaluation and teaching/learning to look at the forms and to arrive at a small number of items (potentially around the following characteristics of effective teaching) which are defined, observable, and measurable. It is our recommendation that the development of the “new” instrument, the administration of the new system of student evaluation, and the using of the data in appropriate ways be considered when comprising in this committee. The characteristics to be observed, define, and measured include, but are not limited to course organization, strong rapport with students, strong motivational presence of the instructor, appropriate challenge and rigor, a

focus on relevant topics, viable assessment techniques, and active learning techniques. A more complete listing of the categories of “strong” teaching is found in Appendix B.

4. UT should develop a new system of student evaluation, which has a limited number of items, each being defined, observable, and measurable.
5. The faculty needs to be more pro-active in getting students to complete the online evaluation (whatever format that takes). It is too easy to simply ignore student evaluations knowing what the current issues are.
6. The student evaluation of teaching should be a secondary source of evaluation until the response rate for the student evaluation system is significantly increased.

We see much value in student evaluations and would like this done well. It should be used as a tool on improve teaching and learning as well as an evaluation of teaching.

### **Dossier Inclusion**

The Task Force on Teaching Evaluation examined the report from the Tennessee TLC and saw the vast diversity found in the portfolios. We reviewed the categories inclusive of the teaching philosophy statements, the syllabi, statements from administrators, a listing of honors and awards, student support letters, and the like.

We recommend:

1. That there be consistency in the portfolios according to the information contained in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.
2. We recognize that a certain amount of variance cannot be avoided due to the multiple disciplines considered at The University of Tennessee.
3. We recognize that there is no set of standards for Promotion and Tenure Committees to follow, beyond what is found in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*. A standard set of regulations should be developed.
4. That the dossier should be used for the evaluation and improvement of teaching.

### **Peer Review of Teaching**

Please see Appendix C, “Revision of the Peer Teaching Evaluation Guide” for the complete document for which the recommendations and justification below are made. (Please see Appendix C for the list of nine concerns.) Also see Appendix D, “Peer Evaluation Teaching Guide.”

1. It is recommended that the University employ a subset of outstanding teaching faculty (both tenured and non-tenure track faculty) to serve as the UT Peer Teaching Review Council (UT PTRC). This group would have a rotation of 18 individuals every two years so that at any one time, 36 individuals would comprise the UT PTRC. These individual would comprise two of the three individuals necessary to conduct a peer evaluation. The third person would be assigned as a content expert from the discipline of the individual to be reviewed. (This addresses concerns #5 and #6 in Appendix C).

Hopefully, being a member of the UT PTRC would be viewed as an honor. These members would be selected from a combination of university and college teaching award winners, dean and department head recommendations, and recommendations from the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center. This group would be coordinated by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Each individual would be responsible for participating in ten reviews per year (five per semester). These reviews would average 5-6 hours/review, a total of 50-60 hours/year. This service commitment would be compensated by a one course release across 2 years. This commitment would be spread across all campus departments over time.

Justification: There are significant advantages to this strategy. First, from a faculty development perspective, sharing perspectives about teaching methods across disciplines provides diversity of thought and moves the process away from functional silo thinking. Second, this strategy significantly reduces the workload within any one department. Third, it provides potential opportunity for interdisciplinary creativity in teaching. Fourth, it evenly spreads the cost across departments (likely one course release every 4-5 years). This recommendation will require a change in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

2. A Peer Teaching Review Manual, approved by the faculty senate, will be made available online for use by the departments and the UT PTRC. The Manual will build upon the original guide and provide a more straightforward process for conducting these reviews. Web links with supporting materials will be provided.

Justification: A Peer Teaching Review Manual will provide consistency across the peer teaching review process. In addition, it will provide a straightforward process easier for everyone to follow. (This addresses concern #4 with consistency across the peer review of teaching process, see Appendix C).

3. The process should equate full time tenured and full time non-tenure track instructors since both have equal responsibility for delivering courses for their respective department. Thus a mix of tenured and non-tenure track faculty can comprise the UT PTRC. Tenure track faculty should not be included in the UT PTRC.

Justification: Regardless of faculty status (tenured or non-tenure track appointments), UT full time instructors are invested in their teaching and in the University community. As such, instructors can learn from each other's experience and the peer evaluation of teaching process should be consistent across all three types of faculty. There are now career tracks for both tenure and non-tenure full time faculty, both requiring peer evaluation for promotion.

4. The Tennessee TLC will serve in a consulting role with the UT PTRC. An observation rubric will be developed by the Tennessee TLC for faculty reviewing guidance.

Justification: The Tennessee TLC has significant knowledge regarding teaching competence and can provide its expertise to UT PTRC in a consulting role. The Tennessee TLC can also provide an



observation rubric to be used as a guide. This rubric will increase consistency across the peer evaluation.

### **References**

Travers, R. M. W. (1981). Criteria of good teaching. In J. Millman (Ed.), *Handbook of teacher evaluation* (pp. 14-22). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

**Appendix A**

**Top 25 Evaluation of Teaching**

University	End of semester student evaluations, numerical and uniform across campus	Peer evaluation of teaching	Recommended faculty initiated mid-term evaluation	Self statement or Dept chair statement for merit and promotion	Midterm Student Evaluations	Midterm department evaluation	End of Semester Department Evaluation	Course Director Report to be submitted to Dean for review	Statement of Teaching Philosophy	Evaluation of Student Learning or Portfolio (Successes or Recognitions of students)	Information from not currently enrolled students (Survey of Alumni, clients, etc.)	Advising, Mentoring, or Research supervision documentation	Recognitions in academic field (publications, etc.)
UC Berkeley	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
UCLA	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
Virginia	X	X	X							X	X	X	
Michigan	X				X	X	X						
UNC Chapel Hill	X	X			X			X					
Illinois	X	X					X		X	X	X		
Wisconsin	X	X							X		X	X	X
Washington	X	X		X					X	X			
Penn State	X	X		X			X			X			
UT Austin	X	X		X					X	X		X	X
Ohio State	X	X		X						X			
UMD	X	X			X							X	
Texas A&M (has a task force)	X	X		X					X	X		X	X
Florida	X	X		X				X		X	X		X
Pittsburgh	X	X					X	X		X	X	X	X
Purdue				X		X							

Georgia	X	X		X				X		X	X	X	X
Clemson	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
Rutgers	X			X			X	X		X		X	X
Minnesota	X	X					X	X	X		X	X	X
Michigan State	X	X		X			X	X		X	X	X	X
Indiana	X	X								X			X
Auburn	X	X		X					X	X		X	X
Iowa State	X	X							X	X		X	X
NC State	X	X	X	X			X			X	X		
Portland State	X	X		X						X		X	X

## Appendix B

### Literature Review of the Categories of Strong Teaching

Hattie (2009)

- Teacher subject matter knowledge
- Quality of teaching
  - Challenging students
  - Setting high expectations
  - Monitoring and evaluation of student work
  - Helping students develop ways of thinking about the subject matter
  - Provide strong course organization
  - Expressed a high level of passion for their subject matter
  - Reinforced a positive classroom climate that fostered learning
  - Demonstrated respect for their students
  - Had a problem solving disposition to teaching
- Teacher – student relationships
  - Demonstrate a caring that each student learn
- Teacher clarity
  - Providing clear definitions, explanations and examples

Marzano (2007)

- Establish and communicate learning goals and track student progress
- Helping students effectively interact with new knowledge?
- Help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge
- Help student generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge
- Engage students
- Establish or maintain classroom rules, procedure, and organization
- Recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules, procedures and organization
- Establish and maintain effective relationships with students
- Communicate high expectations for all students
- Develop effective lessons organized into a cohesive unit

Bain (2004)

- What do the best teachers know and understand? (content knowledge)
  - What big questions will my course help students answer, or what skills, abilities, or qualities will it help them develop, and how will I encourage my students' interest in these questions and abilities?
  - What reasoning abilities must students have or develop to answer the questions that the course raises?
  - What mental models are students likely to bring with them that I will want them to challenge? How can I help them construct that intellectual challenge?

- What information will my students need to understand in order to answer the important questions of the course and challenge their assumptions? How will they best obtain that information?
- How will I help students who have difficulty understanding the questions and using evidence and reason to answer them?
- How will I confront my students with conflicting problems (maybe even conflicting claims about the truth) and encourage them to grapple (perhaps collaboratively) with the issues?
- How will I find what they know already and what they expect from the course, and how will I reconcile any differences between my expectations and theirs?
- How will I help students learn to learn, to examine and assess their own learning and thinking, and to read more effectively, analytically, and actively?
- How will I find out how students are learning before assessing them, and how will I provide feedback before – and separate from – any assessment of them?
- How will I communicate with students in a way that will keep them thinking?
- How will I spell out the intellectual and professional standards I will be using in assessing students' work, and why do I use these standards? How will I help students learn to assess their own work using those standards?
- How do they prepare to teach (preparation to provide an intellectually demanding class)
- What do they do when they teach (natural critical learning environment)
- How do they treat students (openness, reflective, sharing, respectful)
- How do they check their progress and evaluate their efforts (formative and summative feedback)

Davis (1993) as reported in Berk (2006)

1. Organizing and explaining material in ways appropriate to students' abilities:
  - Knows the subject matter
  - Can explain difficult concepts in plain, comprehensible terms
  - Gages students' background knowledge and experiences
  - Identifies reasonable expectations for students' progress
  - Selects appropriate teaching methods and materials
  - Devises examples and analogies that clarify key points
  - Relates one topic to another
  - Assesses whether students are learning what is being taught
2. Creating an environment for learning:
  - Establishes and maintains rapport with students
  - Responds to students' needs
  - Communicates high expectations
  - Gives appropriate feedback
  - Respects diverse talents and learning styles
  - Emphasizes cooperation and collaboration
  - Uses strategies that actively engage learners
3. Helping students become autonomous, self-regulated learners:
  - Communicates goals and expectations to students
  - Directs students in making their own connections to course content
  - Views the learning process as a joint venture

- Stimulates students' intellectual interests
- 4. Reflecting on and evaluating one's own teaching:
  - Critically examines why one is doing what one does
  - Identifies the effects of what one does on one's students
  - Imagines ways to improve one's teaching
  - Finds strategy to help students resolve problems they encounter

## Appendix C

### Revision of the Peer Teaching Evaluation Guide

Subcommittee of the Taskforce on Faculty Evaluation of Teaching: Jenny Fowler, Lloyd Rinehart, David Schumann

The charge to the subcommittee was to revise the Peer Evaluation of Teaching Guide to address key concerns and be inclusive of both tenure and non-tenure track faculty members.

A review by the Teaching and Learning Council and the Faculty Affairs Committee revealed several concerns regarding campus adoption of the Peer Teaching Evaluation Guide. These concerns are listed below.

1. Lack of consistency in implementation across the campus
2. Process is clearly stated in writing and included in faculty and department policy documents
3. Process of interaction between the review team and instructor should be clarified as well as progression beyond the process following the time of the review
4. The complexity of the process
5. The amount of time and effort required by the review team
6. The make-up of the review committee
7. Accounting for differences in teaching philosophies
8. Fairness of implementation across different types of courses and department expectations
9. Excessively complicated

The weighting of the concerns listed above reflect the most concern over #4, #5 and #6. The subcommittee believes that if these concerns can be resolved, it will minimize or erase the other concerns. To better understand the University commitment to the peer review process, the subcommittee undertook a data collection to ascertain the average annual total of tenured, tenure track, and non-tenure track full time instructional faculty. Averaging across multiple data sources resulted in the following approximated numbers:

Annual average number of tenured faculty: **700** (this number has ranged from 711 to 745 over the past decade but includes non-instructor tenured faculty)

Annual average number of tenure track faculty: **270** (this number has ranged from 257 to 316 over the past decade but the number has decreased over the past decade)

Annual average number of full time non-tenure track faculty: **320** is an approximation of full-time non-tenure track faculty (the total number, full and part-time, has ranged from 579 to 676 over the past decade but the number has steadily increased)

Three assumptions need to be considered.

- The tenured faculty and the non-tenured track faculty need to be reviewed once every 5 years



- The tenure track faculty need to be reviewed twice within the first five years
- There is an attrition rate at all of the above levels. We assume an attrition rate of 5%/year. This would suggest that 3% who were scheduled to be reviewed are no longer at UT at the scheduled time.

The sum reflects the following approximate number of peer evaluations per year by type:

- Tenured faculty: 140/year (assumes once every 5 years)
- Tenure track faculty: 108/year (assumes twice within the first five years)
- Non-tenure track faculty: 64/year (assumes once every 5 years)
- Department head or faculty requested (assumes 5% of the faculty with a “needs improvement on annual evaluation): 65 (based on 5% of total faculty)
- Subtract 5% attrition from total of 377.

**Approximate total number/year: 358 peer reviews**

This number is considered on the high side and the likely number is less than this amount.

With this in mind, the subcommittee offers the following recommendations:

1. To address concerns #5 and #6 (see list of nine concerns above), it is recommended that the University employ a subset of outstanding teaching faculty (both tenured and non-tenure track faculty) to serve as the UT Peer Teaching Review Council (UT PTRC). This group would have a rotation of 18 individuals every two years so that at any one time, 36 individuals would comprise the UT PTRC. These individual would comprise two of the three individuals necessary to conduct a peer evaluation. The third person would be assigned as a content expert from the discipline of the individual to be reviewed.

Being a member of the UT PTRC would be viewed as an honor. These members would be selected from a combination of university and college teaching award winners, dean and department head recommendations, and recommendations from the Tennessee Teaching and Learning Center. This group would be coordinated by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Each individual would be responsible for participating in ten reviews per year (five per semester). These reviews would average 5-6 hours/review, a total of 50-60 hours/year. This service commitment would be compensated by a one course release across 2 years. This commitment would be spread across all campus departments over time.

Justification: There are significant advantages to this strategy. First, from a faculty development perspective, sharing perspectives about teaching methods across disciplines provides diversity of thought and moves the process away from functional silo thinking. Second, this strategy significantly reduces the workload within any one department. Third, it provides potential opportunity for interdisciplinary creativity in teaching. Fourth, it evenly spreads the cost across departments (likely one course release every 4-5 years).

2. To address #4 with consistency across the peer review of teaching process, a Peer Teaching Review Manual, approved by the faculty senate, will be made available online for use by the

departments and the UT PTRC. The Manual will build upon the original guide and provide a more straightforward process for conducting these reviews. Web links with supporting materials will be provided.

Justification: A Peer Teaching Review Manual will provide consistency across the peer teaching review process. In addition, it will provide a straightforward process easier for everyone to follow.

3. The process should equate full time tenured and full time non-tenure track instructors since both have equal responsibility for delivering courses for their respective department. Thus a mix of tenured and non-tenure track faculty can comprise the UT PTRC. Tenure track faculty should not be included in the UT PTRC.

Justification: Regardless of faculty status (tenured or non-tenure track appointments), UT full time instructors are invested in their teaching and in the University community. As such, instructors can learn from each other's experience and the peer evaluation of teaching process should be consistent across all three types of faculty. There are now career tracks for both tenure and non-tenure full time faculty, both requiring peer evaluation for promotion.

4. The Tennessee TLC will serve in a consulting role with the UT PTRC. An observation rubric will be developed by the Tennessee TLC for faculty reviewing guidance.

Justification: The Tennessee TLC has significant knowledge regarding teaching competence and can provide its expertise to UT PTRC in a consulting role. The Tennessee TLC can also provide an observation rubric to be used as a guide. This rubric will increase consistency across the peer evaluation process.

## Appendix D

### Peer Evaluation of Teaching Guide

Revision Draft – February 14, 2013

#### Table of Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Process Steps
3. Content Appendices

### Introduction

**Benefits:** Peer evaluation of teaching is a critical component of a quality program of education. Faculty members benefit from the feedback and recognition. Students benefit from the ongoing improvement in faculty instruction. Department heads benefit from the information about their faculty members and gain material from which to write annual evaluations and teaching award nominations.

This guide provides the information necessary for department heads, the review committee, and the faculty to schedule and implement the faculty peer review process. Numerous factors were considered in developing this guide to include appropriate timing by faculty rank, content and process of the evaluation, and faculty evaluators' time commitment so as to not make this an overly arduous process, yet adhere to the spirit and letter of the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

**Purpose:** Peer evaluation of teaching is discussed formally in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* (<http://provost.utk.edu/docs/evaluation/faculty-evaluation-manual-2009.pdf>). As stated in this *Manual*, the underlying reason for conducting peer teaching reviews is:

“Peer assessment provides faculty members with feedback from their peers that will assist them in identifying strengths and areas for improvement in their teaching. Peer assessment of teaching can foster constructive dialogue about teaching that can benefit not only the faculty member under review, but the members of the peer assessment team.”

**Department bylaws:** The *Manual* proscribes that the process for peer evaluation of teaching should be addressed in the department bylaws (see Appendix 1 for an example).

## **The Peer Review Process Steps**

### Step 1. Developing a schedule of peer reviews (Department Head)

The department head develops a schedule of reviews for a multi-year period to include the review team composition (see next step) and a selection of the team leader. The following required review periods need to be considered in developing this schedule:

Required review periods:

Tenure Track Assistant Professors (twice before T&P – second or third year; fifth year)

Tenure Track Associate Professors (once before Promotion, no later than five years after T&P)

Tenure Track Professors (once before further promotion, no later than five year after promotion to full.

Non-tenure track lecturers (once before promotion to Senior Lecturer)

Non-tenure track senior lecturers (once before the second year and every five years subsequently)

The *Manual* states when the peer evaluation

“A peer teaching review should be conducted for a tenure-track faculty member typically twice during their probationary period, and for a tenured faculty member at least once prior to consideration for promotion. For non-tenure track faculty, the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* states that a lecturer must be reviewed in the second and every five years subsequently. Department bylaws may specify more specific intervals for peer assessment, as well as whether or if full professors are reviewed. Where special circumstances arise, a faculty member has the right to request reconvening of a peer assessment team or formation of a new peer assessment team in the interval between scheduled peer reviews. Peer assessment of teaching should also be conducted as part of a ‘triggered’ cumulative review of tenured faculty as described in the Faculty Handbook (3.8).”

Other considerations: A faculty member should be able to request an informal review at any time. Likewise, a department head should be able to request a review for a faculty member one semester in advance should the circumstances recommend it.

### Step 2. Form the review committee (Department Head)

Composition: As stated in the *Manual*, the peer review team should consist of three tenured faculty members. During the summer, the department head will contact the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs with a list of who is scheduled for review in the forthcoming academic year. The department head in consultation with the faculty member will select a content expert from the discipline to serve as the chair of the review team. This person should be either a tenured faculty member or a member of the non-tenured faculty (tenure track Assistant professors are prohibited from serving on the review committees). The Vice Provost’s Office will select two members from the UT Peer Teaching Review Council as well as relate this information to the department head.

### Step 3: Review team initial meeting with person to be reviewed (Review Team)

It is recommended that the review team have an initial meeting with the person to be reviewed to 1) request information needed (e.g., syllabus, exams, assignments) and 2) ask the person to be reviewed if there are key issues or concerns about her/his teaching that the person would like the team to observe and provide feedback, and 3) schedule observations across multiple sections/courses.

Timing of feedback: As noted in the *Manual*, “feedback is facilitated by meetings with the faculty member to discuss teaching before, after, and otherwise as needed or requested during the assessment process.”

### Step 4: Review of materials, observation, and interviews with students

Understand the learning objectives for the course and for the classes to be observed, the pedagogy used, and the assessment of learning methods. Ascertain the faculty member’s needs regarding the peer evaluation.

The review team reviews selected materials provided by the instructor to be reviewed. A list of such materials and rubric for evaluation is provided in Appendix 2.

The review team observes and interviews students. A rubric is provided in Appendix 3 as guidance for the observation. A process to interview students is provided in Appendix 4. It is appropriate to observe at least 3-4 class settings or combination of other outreach/teaching situations (e.g., Clinical Teaching, Service Learning), conduct in-class student evaluation, and meet with faculty member afterward, as appropriate.

### Step 5: Review team drafts a report and meets with the instructor

The review team leader drafts a report that is shared with the UT PTRC members and edited as necessary. An example is provided in Appendix 5. A meeting is convened between the review team and instructor to review the report and have a conversation about the findings.

Nature of feedback: The *Manual* recommends the peer evaluation team offer the following points of feedback:

- Consider whether the courses of the faculty member have appropriate content and offer students sufficient opportunity to acquire appropriate skills;
- Consider whether the grading system and review/assessment tools are consistent with course content and student skill development;
- Examine the teaching methods of the faculty member for effectiveness; and
- Recognize the potential risks and benefits inherent in innovative teaching methods.

Teaching Methods: While pedagogy may be discipline specific, the review should assess the degree to which faculty actively engage students in their learning process. Active engagement is reflected in learning activities that create meaningful learning moments

through application, analysis, evaluation, discovery, and critical thinking. These active learning moments may take place through engaged interaction in-class or through out-of-class activities and assignments.

Step 6: Final report and submission to Department Head

The leader of the review team drafts the final report and submits it to the Department Head with a copy to the instructor and members of the review team.

Step 7: Instructor response

Faculty member under review has the right/opportunity to respond to the report.

### Appendix 1: Sample Departmental Bylaws

“Evaluation of faculty for promotion, tenure, retention, and merit will be based on teaching, service, scholarship/creative activity, research accomplishments and outreach, weighted according to effort allocation. Faculty should consult the Faculty Handbook (Chapter 3, Items 3.8- 3.11), the Manual on Faculty Evaluation, the UTCVM Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion , UTCVM Guidelines on Effective Peer Review of Teaching (Appendix 10.3) and departmental bylaws for specific information on evaluation of teaching, scholarship/creative activities, research, service, and outreach.”

### Appendix 2: Checklist of Materials Needed and Rubric for Evaluation

- Teaching philosophy
- Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives
- Course descriptions
- Syllabi
- Online sites (e.g., Blackboard)
- Teaching materials
- Assessment examples
- Formative feedback, if collected

Evaluation of Materials Rubric:

Course Syllabus (if applicable):

- Does the syllabus include goals and objectives of the course? Does it include course policies, descriptions of assignments and exams?
- Does the syllabus further support rapport with students and reflect a positive, motivating approach?
- Does the syllabus communicate challenge and high expectations?
- Does the syllabus reinforce the importance of student responsibility for learning?
- Does the syllabus include a statement regarding the importance of active, engaged learning in class?

Course Materials: (objectives, recommended text(s) or readings, notes or handouts, presentations, videos or other teaching aids)

- Are the materials organized clearly? Is the format appropriate (acceptable, readable, attractive)?
- Does the material match the goals of the instructor, course, and program?
- Are the learning objectives clear, specific and measurable?
- Is the content accurate, current? At an appropriate level for students?
- Does the content engage student interest?
- Do the active learning exercises engage student interest?
- Does the material reflect creativity in teaching?

### Assignments and Examinations:

- Are the directions in exams clear? Is the exam format and length appropriate for time available?
- Does the exam material match the course goals and content? Are the grading methods appropriate?
- Does the examination include assessment of higher order thinking skills (application, assessment, analysis, synthesis)? Reflect an appropriate level of challenge?
- Are homework/class assignments clear, challenging, and reflective of the course content?
- Does the instructor employ grading rubrics to aid the students in understanding expectations for performance?

### Appendix 3: Class Observation Rubric (to be developed)

#### Classroom Observation Rubric:

Session	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the session reflect some aspect of the course objectives</li> <li>2. Was the material clearly organized for the students?</li> <li>3. Does the instructor clarify relation of class to previous and future classes, provide class goals or purpose, outline?</li> <li>4. Does the instructor have well-organized learning activities that reinforce active engaged learning?</li> <li>5. Does the instructor explain transitions between class or lecture segments?</li> <li>6. What instructional activities are employed to engage students in their learning process?</li> </ol>
Instructor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the instructor well-prepared for this session?</li> <li>2. Does the instructor vary the pace of activities?</li> <li>3. Does the instructor encourage and respond to questions from students?</li> <li>4. Does the instructor appropriately facilitate class discussion?</li> <li>5. Does the instructor provide directions to the instructional strategies and/or assignments (if applicable)?</li> <li>6. Does the instructor reinforce the use of active engaged learning techniques in class?</li> <li>7. How effective is the instructor's voice clarity, pace, volume, tone and pitch</li> <li>8. Does the instructor employ good eye contact with all students?</li> <li>9. Does the instructor have any distracting mannerisms</li> <li>10. Does the instructor show respect for students?</li> </ol>



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Does the instructor address students directly and in a constructive manner?</li> <li>12. Does the instructor recognize student confusion?</li> <li>13. Does the instructor provide appropriate guidance, feedback and positive reinforcement (including student assignments or presentations)?</li> <li>14. Does the instructor encourage creative thought for active learning?</li> </ol>
Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what degree do the students appear to be actively engaged in class?</li> <li>2. Do students frequently ask questions in class to clarify learning?</li> <li>3. To what degree do students stay on task?</li> </ol>
Integration of session, instructor, and students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the content appropriate, accurate and current?</li> <li>2. Does the instructor define new terms or concepts?</li> <li>3. Does the instructor effectively communicate reasoning processes for difficult concepts? Does the instructor elaborate or repeat complex concepts?</li> <li>4. Does the instructor use examples effectively?</li> <li>5. Does the instructor employ active engagement learning activities that directly reflect the course content?</li> </ol>

#### Appendix 4: Student Feedback Session

Each team should conduct in-class student feedback sessions (without faculty member present).

One method of getting formative feedback from students in these sessions is to ask students to get into groups of 4-5 and develop answers for the questions below. Ask one student in each group to record the responses and hand in anonymously at the end of the session.

1a. What do you like about the class regarding its different structural components (e.g., organization, presentation of content, methods of learning, assignments, evaluation process)

1b. What structural components of the class would you like to see improved?

2a. What do you like about the way the instructor teaches the class?

2b. What would you like to see the instructor improve upon?

2c. If you had to describe this instructor to a friend, what words would you use?

After providing 15 minutes to work in teams, it is suggested that the students have time to voice some of the major things they like or would like to see improved.

Appendix 5: Sample Final Review Document

**EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE**

**PROFESSOR JANE DOE**

**2005-2006**

Evaluation Team: Professors John Smith and Carol Jones

This evaluation took place in the Fall Semester of 2010. The following activities were conducted in the course of this evaluation:

- Discussion of Professor Doe's perspectives on teaching with her
- Review of Professor Doe's course syllabi
- Review of Professor Doe's philosophy of teaching document
- Review of the description of the course project
- Review of Professor Doe's teaching evaluations over the past two years
- Interviews with eight former and current students of Prof. Doe.
- Interviews with three peer teachers of Prof. Doe
- Interview with a Ph.D. student whom Prof. Doe mentored
- Two classroom visits to observe Prof. Doe's teaching

**Evaluation of Prof. Doe's Teaching Quality:** Exceeds expectations.

**Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement:**

***Strengths:***

Throughout the evaluation process, it was evident that Prof. Doe's course planning and design, course content, delivery methods, and demeanor toward her students were excellent. Consistently high student evaluations and interviews with students indicate that Prof. Doe connects well with students and is considered tough but fair in her grading policies. Her material and delivery are very applications oriented. This is a hallmark of her work, particularly in the program's \_\_\_ course. She uses many examples from her own experiences, an approach which is much appreciated by her students both for their applications orientation as well as their ability to hold student interest and

to be considered relevant to their future careers. She insists on professionalism in class, penalizing lack of attendance, insisting on class participation as a key element in grading, and being very firm about considering her class as a professional “work” environment, which requires being in class every day, arriving on time and not exhibiting unprofessional behavior (e.g., cell phone on, instant messaging, napping in class, etc.).

Simultaneously, Prof. Doe’s delivery in the classroom is highly energetic, stimulating, and enthusiastic. She also creates a dynamic class atmosphere, in that she continuously walks around the classroom instilling attention and participation by all students. This leads to a significant amount of student interaction within all of her classes. She seems to be in constant benevolent control of her classes.

The content of Prof. Doe’s courses is very comprehensive, an important aspect of these types of offerings. There appears to be no omission of important or difficult issues (as is sometimes seen in other courses and colleges) due to a faculty preference or bias. Given the coverage demanded by the courses in Prof. Doe’s teaching assignments, this is a significant accomplishment.

Outside of class, Prof. Doe is considered to be friendly and accessible. No student to whom we talked indicated that they had any problem in having discussions with her after class or in her office. They said that she was very responsive to e-mail and, overall, was highly accessible and helpful to them, both as a teacher and as a mentor.

Illustrative positive comments about the quality of Prof. Doe’s teaching from her students and peer teachers include the following:

“I want to get into large animal practice and this class was probably one of the most beneficial classes I have taken while at school...”

“Dr. Doe gave it to us straight and with honesty about the real world and how we needed to be prepared...Her class discussion was very interactive and effective – she wanted students to speak up – she wanted to hear what our thoughts, opinions and worries were about...Your grade was based on what you earned – your participation in class, attendance, along with how you expressed your reasoning on written exams.”

“I thought that Dr. Doe was a wonderful teacher in \_\_\_\_\_. I really felt like I learned a lot about \_\_\_\_\_ and I think that her examples were even more helpful.”

“I had Dr. Doe in \_\_\_\_\_ and another class also, I think it was \_\_\_\_\_. In both, she was very clear on what she was teaching and was always good at getting the class involved and relating the subject matter to real life situations. Her tests were fair and discussions were never boring.”

“Dr. Doe follows a very creative way to teach her class. She brings out examples of her personal life as a \_\_\_\_\_ and tailors it so as to address similar issues that students will face in their future jobs...She asks students to express their thoughts and encourages discussion that stimulates students’ attention in class. This way, the class becomes a friendly environment where students are encouraged and feel free to ask questions and share ideas with both classmates and the teacher.”

***Suggested Areas for Improvement:***

In attending the \_\_\_ class, it was clear that student attention was difficult to maintain for the allotted time. This is a general problem that has been discussed by the college and one that generally demands either (1) a significant amount of that course being dedicated to group work or simulations, or (2) more frequent but shorter breaks.

It may be advisable to modify the course to include more interactive assignments or exercises for significant portions of each meeting time, or to at least include a five minute “stretch” break about halfway through each portion of each day.

The only complaint students had about Prof. Doe was that she did not return course projects on time, or not at all. (This was from students who had Prof. Doe in class last term.) Students found the project to be very relevant to the content, but would have liked to have had feedback on it. A significant proportion of the students interviewed from course \_\_\_ made comments like, “I never saw feedback on my final project” and, “I never got to see my final exam feedback or my individual feedback. I wasn’t too concerned regarding my grade; however, I do like to have feedback in a timely fashion.” Those who did receive exam feedback indicated that it was highly relevant; however, every effort should be made to get feedback to students on their course projects prior to the end of the course.

Finally, in the interviews, students were significantly more enthusiastic about Prof. Doe’s teaching than were peer teachers, though it should be emphasized that peer teachers definitely considered Prof. Doe to be a very competent mentor and teacher. However, peer teachers felt that her teachings, while stimulating and involving, were not of significantly higher caliber than many other faculty, in contrast to the uniformly high praise of the students that Prof. Doe was one of the very best they had experienced. Peer teachers also commented that her examples, though relevant, were too oriented toward her personal career and did not include a sufficient breadth of situations for those interested in other facets of veterinary medicine. Finally, those who were evaluated by her on their final oral presentations found her comments excessively pointed, particularly as the comments were delivered in front of the class. (Perhaps the same feedback content could have been provided in a less negative manner, thus providing the critique needed without the students feeling that they had been embarrassed in a peer setting.)

Even given these few needs for improvement, however, the evaluation team strongly feels that Prof. Doe is an exceptional teacher and deserves an, “Exceeds Expectations” evaluation due to her conscientiousness, professionalism, involvement of students in the classroom, stimulation of students’ interest in her material, providing material to students that they can apply to important areas in their professional lives, and bringing applications oriented material to them in her subject matter in a way that makes them highly receptive to learning.