

**Faculty Assembly Women's Committee Agenda  
February 1, 2019; 9-10:30am; UC 126**

- I. Old business
  - a. Update on Fall mini-grant program JENNIFER

*Four grants were issued in the Fall cycle.*

- II. New business
  - a. Mini-grant – revise guidelines to ask for travel justification BETH

*Some faculty have access to travel funds through their college and others don't. Accordingly, we will revise our announcement call to ask for justification for travel fund requests going forward.*

- b. Spring Mini-grant cycle – timeline

*We will move the spring mini-grant cycle earlier in the semester to alleviate time pressure for reviewers at the end of the semester. The Spring call will go out in March.*

- c. Update on Spring workshops TISHA; EMILY/CATHY; KARIN

**February 22 from 12-1:30 in UC122:** "Career and Leadership Opportunities for Instructional Faculty at UCCS"

**March 15 (12-1:30 in UC309):** "Institutional Protections for Instructional Faculty at UCCS"

**March 21 from 12-1:30 in UC124:** "From Teaching Philosophy to Teaching Portfolio: Building a Comprehensive Measure of Teaching Effectiveness"

**April 12 from 2:30-4 in UC309:** "Post-tenure Career Development for Tenure-track Faculty"

- d. Post-tenure workshop w/external speaker for Fall 2019 CERIAN

*Pushed to Fall 2019; might also address leadership development*

- e. Update on our FCQ committee BETH

*Our website now has a page with links to research on student evaluations including problems of bias. <https://www.uccs.edu/women/fcqs-bias-student-evaluation>. Tom Christensen will distribute a summary of the research (**see below**) to dean and request that they distribute to chairs, directors, etc.*

- f. Update on FA FCQ committee KARIN

*Committee has met and is considering recommendation options.*

- g. Looking ahead: We need an incoming chair for 2019-2020

*Please contact Beth if you are interested.*

- III. Guest: Andrea Herrera, AVC for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

**Next meeting: April 26, 2019 from 9:30-11am in CENT 106**

**Context and Summary:** Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs) are used across the UCCS campus as a measure of teaching effectiveness (both in annual merit reviews and in promotion and tenure decisions). However, the literature on student evaluations of teaching (SETs) demonstrates they are flawed instruments for evaluating teaching effectiveness for a variety of reason AND are subject to biases that disenfranchise certain protected classes, particularly women, raising concerns about equity. Furthermore, the literature indicates SETs should not be the primary deciding factor in making high-stakes personnel decisions. A recent arbitration decision between the Ryerson Faculty Association and Ryerson University provides an excellent synthesis and outline of the problems with SETs and how they are generally used by university administrators. Below is a summary of the limitations of SETs based on the expert report prepared by Richard L. Freishtat, Ph.D., for this arbitration hearing that was recently decided in favor of the Ryerson Faculty Association. In addition, the Faculty Assembly Women's Committee at UCCS has reviewed the research literature on student evaluations of teaching. On our website, we have links to reports from the Ryerson case and published journal articles on student evaluations <https://www.uccs.edu/women/fcqs-bias-student-evaluation>. We encourage administrators, dean, and chairs to consult this body of evidence and consider it for faculty review purposes.

Biases based on characteristics of the faculty member (Freishtat p. 5-7):

- SETs are influenced by gender, such that women tend to receive lower ratings than men
  - This bias is evident even on seemingly "objective" measures, such as grading timeliness
- SETs are influenced by ethnicity and race, such that faculty of color tend to receive lower ratings
  - Additionally, SETs reflect a bias against non-native English speakers
- SETs are influenced by attractiveness, such that more attractive faculty receive higher ratings
- SETs are influenced by other traits of the instructor, such as: attitude, perceived fairness, stereotypical fit (i.e., how well the faculty member matches the subjective image of an ideal teacher for that field), and likeability

Biases based on characteristics of the student (Freishtat p. 2, 5-8):

- SETs are influenced by traits of the student, such as: motivation, attendance, prior ability and education, and fit with the course (i.e., whether the course is in their major)
- SETs are biased by grade expectations and actual final course grades (i.e., expectations of higher grades translate into higher SETs) even when administered prior to final grade assignment
- SETs are negatively biased by feedback from other students (i.e., SETs are not independent assessments by each student)

Biases based on characteristics of the course (Freishtat p. 7-8):

- SETs are lower for required courses, compared to electives and courses within a student's major
- SETs are lower for more quantitative courses (physical science < social science < humanities)
- SETs are higher for faculty who teach smaller classes (< 40 students)
- Despite greater learning, students rate active and innovative courses lower than lecture courses (disincentivizing course changes that benefit students)
- SETs are often negatively biased in courses that cover controversial or sensitive topics

SET validity (Freishtat p. 2-4, 10-14):

- SETs do not correlate with student learning or teaching effectiveness/quality
- SETs are primarily a measure of student satisfaction and liking
- Students lack the expertise to evaluate teachers (e.g., their methods, helpfulness, assessment/assignments) or courses (e.g., content, relevance, importance)
- Response rates are often lower than necessary to assume a representative sample of the class
- Factors unrelated to teaching, such as administration method (e.g., paper vs. online) and timing, impact SETs
- Numerical SETs are ordinal, not continuous – therefore averages should *not* be used (rather, look at distributions of scores)
- SETs should not be used to compare faculty or courses, due to confounding variables
- Recommended to use SETs as a formative, rather than summative, piece of faculty evaluation, relying on more comprehensive teaching dossiers in merit and P&T decisions