

FACULTY ASSEMBLY TEACHING EVALUATION TASK FORCE

REPORT

(December 2018)

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PART I:

This is the charge for the Committee by FA President:

- 1) Identify how to use the new FCQs in merit and P&T review (e.g. which question or questions on the new FCQs should be used in these? Should we consider online vs. on campus courses? Class size? Undergraduate vs. graduate courses? New prep or major revision of courses in these numbers?)
- 2) Recommend two additional measures to use for teaching evaluations in merit and P&T review (e.g. peer review, student letters from former students, syllabus evaluations, student portfolio etc.?)
- 3) Propose best practices to the faculty assembly (by May) and then to the colleges
- 4) Consider how to make recommendations that all colleges and departments can effectively use.

Other topics to consider:

- Each unit/department [should] have a Teaching Mentor to help think through and revise unit policies about teaching evaluation (so it becomes an ongoing process rather than a one-time conversation)?
- What info[rmation] do faculty need to make a decision about what the FCQ values means? (e.g. comparison of our results with our department and college numbers, what percentage of student responses that are returned make it a meaningfully statistically value?)

When the Committee met, it was discussed that we should be aware that the Regents' policy requires that each unit use at least three measures for teaching evaluations for both annual merit evaluations and promotion and tenure decisions.

Likewise, we should be mindful that only Primary Units have the authority to decide what these measures are and what weight to give them in annual merit evaluations and P&T processes.

PART II:

Having met on Tuesday, December 4th, 2018, the Committee (all ten members were present) was aware of the following preliminaries:

- a. There is a question that Administrators should account for: Are the teaching evaluation measures used by P & T the same ones used for annual merit evaluations? This is of primary importance to all the full and part-time faculty who are not on tenure-tracks but are expected to be evaluated annually. [From what we understand, there must be three measures for both merit and P&T and one of those must include the FCQs, but the department/unit can have different measures and uses of those measures for each process. More clarity and consistency between the two are encouraged.]
- b. It was brought up that there are numerous problems with FCQs as such, so the reliance on them for teaching evaluation is problematic, including using them as the sole evaluation measure for reviewing year-to-year changes in one's teaching performance. Moreover, it has been documented that there is bias against women and minorities so that FCQs disproportionately affect protected classes and that all research suggests they are problematic in use for high stakes personnel decisions. Below is the link to the webpage FAWC is developing regarding use of Student Evaluations of Teaching (particularly, their propensity for bias). Though this is "work in progress" and is not public yet, it includes links to the arbitration decision in Toronto, the expert reports, and some of the primary sources. <https://www.uccs.edu/women/fcqs-bias-student-evaluation>.
- d. The Committee would also like to draw the attention to the Boulder Faculty Assembly's Diversity Committee Notice of Motion BEST PRACTICES—MOVING BEYOND THE FCQ BFA-R-2-102918 which was approved in the Fall of 2018. We quote here at length, because this document may serve as a model of what UCCS's FA may wish to do as well:

"Whereas: The BFA passed Resolution BFA-M-1-040518 in May 2018 to remove two omnibus questions from the FCQ due to the ways that they ask students to evaluate the instructor in a way that the instructor's personal identity characteristics are highly likely to be brought into question. The resolution also reinforces the University of Colorado policies that require units to use multiple measures in evaluations of teaching. Therefore, we, the Boulder Faculty Assembly recommends the following best practices to all units.

1. Invite discussions at your faculty meetings about implicit bias and equity. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement offers a number of workshops that can be set up at dates and times that are convenient for your department/unit. See: <https://www.colorado.edu/odece/> OR <https://www.colorado.edu/hr/diversity-inclusiveexcellence> Making discussion of bias and equity a regular part of your department's culture is a step toward changing culture. Work on inclusive excellence can't be the job of only one committee or individual; it must be taken up as work that is expected of everyone.

2. Give appropriate weight to the FCQ. Because we recognize that numerical scores on the FCQ may contain bias, give weight to measures that are likely to have the least bias. Such measures include peer observations by people who have been trained in avoiding implicit bias, teaching materials and syllabi, student interviews/focus groups conducted by trained facilitators, and faculty-produced narratives of teaching.

3. Privilege formative assessment. Given that it may be impossible to eliminate bias from survey data, it may be most appropriate to consider using surveys such as FCQs as formative assessments that help guide revision of teaching and curriculum, and not for summative personnel evaluations. Communicate these assessments clearly to faculty annually.

4. Employ multiple measures at every turn. Official Regent Policy, as outlined in APS 1009 "Multiple Means of Teaching Evaluation", calls for every unit to have and to employ at least three measures of teaching (one of which has to be the FCQ or something similar that captures student opinion), and that this has to be used, not just at promotion or contract review, but also at every salary consideration (that is, annual merit). The APS provides an extensive list of possible multiple measures: <https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/1009> Have regular discussions about multiple measures and effective teaching practices at faculty meetings.

5. Look for trends over time in teaching effectiveness, not just focusing on an individual course, semester or year in isolation. Note improvements or lack of improvement over the review period.

6. Look for corroborating evidence. Review all questions on the FCQ and note any outliers by comparing those high or low scores with other measures. Rather than privileging any one low data point in isolation, look for evidence elsewhere in the multiple measures of teaching. Conversely, a high FCQ score should not mask problematic evidence elsewhere in the file.

7. Resources: Teaching Quality Framework (draft rubric). The FTEP services for classroom observation, consultation, reflection. The ATDT services for portfolios or ASSETT (A&S) services, class observations and more. The Special Edition of Studies in Educational Evaluation titled "Evaluation of teaching: Challenges and promises".

Submitted by DIVERSITY COMMITTEE: October 24, 2018 Approved by the BFA Executive Committee: October 29, 2018 Submitted to the BFA General Assembly: November 1, 2018.”

- e. The Boulder document reinforces much of the discussion about using FCQs as one of three other measures (to be chosen by Primary Units), assigning to it a percentage (perhaps no more than 33%?) of the overall teaching evaluation, and using it primarily in conjunction with an overall performance report about one’s teaching (instead of comparing the numbers in the FCQ report to other faculty in the department or the college). It should also be noted here that departments/units should have the final say regarding the specific questions that should be part of their FCQs.
- f. The Committee is interested in other measures that could be used by departments, including but not limited to analyses of syllabi (in terms of difficulty and change from one semester to another), peer and subject matter expert reviews, and any and all reports about teaching engagement and development that include but are not limited to workshops, new course development, revision of course materials, conversion of courses to online format, and teaching portfolios (the format of which should be developed by each department/unit).
- g. Though the charge of the FA was directly concerned with and linked to FCQs and the questions that are being used for teaching evaluation, the Committee is most interested in minimizing the role of FCQs and working in the future with Primary Units, Chairs, and Deans on recognizing additional forms of self-evaluation of one’s teaching and how one could incorporate students’ feedback into an overall teaching evaluation. The danger, of course, is that students’ evaluations reflect their “satisfaction” with the course rather than an assessment about teaching effectiveness. It is unclear what is “statistically significant or meaningful” return rate, but anything less than 50% should not be used by administrators. Departments/units should decide what rate of return they find meaningful enough to include in their teaching evaluations.
- d. In using FCQs we recommend only looking at growth over time for individuals and not comparing instructors across platforms (in-class vs. on-line) or courses (intro level vs upper division), within departments/units or across colleges.
- e. It should be noted that if departments/units move to new or different teaching evaluation measurement criteria, this move should be gradual and allow for adjustment by faculty and that this move should be undertaken in consultation with them. This way, faculty would be informed ahead of time of any changes in their teaching evaluations and would be ready to present their cases with the support of their department/unit Chair.
- f. There should be an ongoing discussion and clear guidelines within departments/units about differentiated teaching evaluation between online and in-class courses (where it is common to have lower marks for online instruction),

between “service” courses and upper-division courses within the major, between undergraduate and graduate courses, and between small and large courses, if these distinctions are applicable in the department/unit. Obviously, such discussions should be at the department/unit level and not be superimposed by Deans and other administrators.

- g. It remains unclear what future action FA would like this Committee/Task Force to pursue. At a minimum, the Committee would like to encourage the President of FA to engage the Chancellor and Provost to direct Deans and Chairs to develop more robust means of teaching evaluation with input from faculty at all levels within their department/unit. Moreover, the Committee would like to encourage a teaching mentorship initiative (and perhaps a permanent program) for each department/unit supported by the administration, given the importance of the teaching mission of the campus.