

# UNC Charlotte Academic Policy and Procedure: Student Evaluations

## I. Introduction

After researching the methods by which student evaluation forms are distributed by each college, after concluding that significant differences exist among several colleges, and in order to maintain a consistent process that support academic integrity, the FAPSC recommends that all colleges follow this procedure for distributing teaching evaluations:

## II. Policy and Procedure Statement

1. Teaching evaluations are to be distributed via an email invitation within two weeks prior to the end of the semester.
2. Each College or Department will a) write a set of instructions for filling out the electronic evaluation forms that is communicated read to the students prior to their completing the forms, and b) write a brief statement to be communicated read to the students explaining the importance of the evaluations.
3. ~~The packet of evaluation materials will be given to faculty members by the College or Department. Included in that packet is the set of instructions to be read to the students (see #2).~~
4. Students may complete the electronic evaluation forms outside of class or during class. The faculty member will select someone to be present (the "proctor") while the students fill out the evaluation forms. Under no circumstances, however, will the faculty member him or herself be present while students are filling out the forms.
5. ~~The proctor will read the College of Department's statement and the set of instructions (see #2) to the students.~~
6. ~~The proctor will collect the completed forms, seal them in an envelope, and return them to the College of Department's secretary.~~
5. A faculty member may not have access to the results of their course evaluations until after final grades have been submitted.

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We recommend that the following two items be used as the standard questions in student evaluations of faculty across colleges.

Overall, this instructor was effective

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Overall, I learned a lot in this course

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Student evaluations are important because they provide a way of collecting student perceptions about courses and successful teaching practices. The recommended items draw the students' attention to how much they are learning in a course and to whether or not the instructor was effective. This is the kind of information that only the student can provide and that is useful feedback for the instructor.

### III. Definitions

- **College** – An academic unit of the University. Each of the seven discipline-based colleges at UNC Charlotte represents an organization of related departments.
- **Department** – A unit within a college representing a discipline. For example, the Department of English is in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.
- **Faculty** – The members of the teaching and research body staff of UNC Charlotte. Faculty may hold the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer, research associate, research assistant, or the equivalent of any of these academic ranks.
- **Semester or Term** – A period of study of approximately 16 weeks, usually half of the academic year (i.e., fall and spring semesters). The fall semester begins in August and the spring semester begins in January at UNC Charlotte. There are summer terms as well: one ten-week and two five-week terms.

### IV. Policy and Procedure Contact(s)

- **Authority:** Faculty Council [Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee]
- **Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- **Additional Contact(s):** n/a

### V. History

- Revised: April 19, 2001
- Approved: April 27, 2000

## **VI. Related Policies, Procedures and Resources**

There are no Related Policies, Procedures, and Resources for this policy and procedure.

## **VII. Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Which students are covered under this policy?** This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate students at UNC Charlotte.

**Memorandum**

November 3, 2011

TO: Faculty Executive Committee

FR: Heather McCullough, FITSAC chair

RE: Motion to implement web-based student course evaluations

**Motion**

FITSAC has initiated the following multi-step motion:

1. Convert the current paper course evaluation system to electronic course evaluations commencing with the end of Spring 2012 semester;
2. Implement the conversion over the course of two years, beginning with volunteer colleges first;
3. FITSAC will serve as an advisory committee for assessing and improving the conversion in all its aspects; it will report to Faculty Council annually on the conversion, including its successes, problems, solutions, and the committee's recommendations going forward.

**Faculty Council Minutes**  
**November 17, 2011**

**Present:** *FEC* - Michael Green (Faculty President), Ed Jernigan (President Elect), Judy Walker (Secretary), Charles Bodkin (Past President), Randy Haldeman (Arts & Architecture), Alice Tseng (Business), Mirsad Hadzihadic (Computing & Informatics, Alternate), Tracy Rock (Education, Alternate), Meg Morgan (Liberal Arts & Sciences), Susan Peters (Liberal Arts & Sciences), Robert Tyson (Liberal Arts & Sciences, Alternate), Barbara Tierney (Library),

*Unit Representatives* – Casper Wiggins (ACCT), Dennis Ogburn (ANTH), Jeff Balmer (ARCH), Janet Williams (ART), Dennis Livesay (BIOINF), Jian Zhang (BIO), Tom Schmedake (CHEM), Johnny Graham (CENG), Richard Leeman (COMM), James Frazier (CS), Donna Dragon (DANC, Alternate), Ellen Sewell (ECON), Rebecca Shore (EDLD, Alternate), Bharat Joshi (ECE), Tony Jackson (ENGL), Keener Hughen (FINN), John Diemer (GEO/ES), Harry Chernotsky (GIAS, Alternate), Gregory Mixon (HIST), Roy Fielding (KNES), Betty Ladner (LIB), Kent Curran (MGMT), Linda Swayne (MKTG), Alan Dow (MATH), John Allemeier (MUSC), Eddy Souffrant (PHIL), Vasily Astratov (PHYS), John Szmer (POLs), Jane Gaultney (PSYC), Beth Racine (PHS), Amy Good (REEL), Julia Robinson-Harmon (RELS), Lucille Travis (NURS), Susan McCarter (SOC), Murray Webster (SOWK), Kelly Anderson (SPED), Lon Bumgarner (THTR)

*Ex officio* - Joan Lorden (Provost), Susan Sell (Associate Dean, Graduate School), Christie Amato (Associate, Dean, College of Business), Robert Johnson (Dean, College of Engineering), Nancy Fey-Yensan (Deant, College of Health & Human Services), Nancy Gutierrez (Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences), John Smail (Dean, University College)

*Also Attending* - Leslie Zenk (Academic Affairs), Clarence Greene (Academic Affairs), Jay Raja (Academic Affairs), Mary Pat Young (Academic Affairs), Cindy Wolfe Johnson (Academic Services), Valorie McAlpin (Center for Teaching & Learning), Susan Sell (Graduate School), Jay Dominick (ITS), Tony Carter (Office of Student Financial Aid), Christopher Knauer (Registrar), Denise Dwight Smith (University Career Center)

*Guests* - Heather McCullough (Chair, Faculty Information and Technology Services Advisory Committee), Betty Doster (Office of Constituent Relations), Claire Kirby (Undergraduate Admissions)

**Absent:** *FEC* – Terry Xu (Engineering), Mary Nies (Health & Human Services), Tanure Ojaide (Liberal Arts & Sciences)

*Ex Officio* – Ken Lambla (Dean, College of Arts & Architecture), Yi Deng (Dean, College of Computing & Informatics), Mary Lynn Calhoun (Dean, College of Education), Stanley Wilder (University Librarian)

*Unit Representatives* – Veronica Hilliard (AFRS), Xiuli He (BISOM), Pam Lassiter (COUN), Joe Kuhns (CJUS), Mike Doyal (LCS), Ed Morse (MENG), Spencer Salas (MDSK), Xintao Wu (SIS),

Meeting was called to order by President Green at 12:31 PM.

**Announcements:**

- We lost the attendance sheets from the October 27, 2011 meeting. A second green attendance sheet is being circulated. Please indicate if you were here for the October meeting on that sheet. Today's meeting will be the last opportunity to capture the correct attendance for October.
- Green took a few minutes to extol the many virtues of Mary Pat Young, who will be retiring at the end of the year, and thanked her for all of her hard work on behalf of the university and faculty. The faculty acknowledged their appreciation with a rousing round of applause.

**1. Approval of the Minutes of the October 27, 2011 meeting of the Faculty Council**

Fielding moved and Peters seconded the motion to approve the minutes of October 27, 2011. It was again noted that attendance will be added after the December meeting as noted above. The motion passed

unanimously.

## 2. **Motion from Faculty Information and Technology Services Advisory Committee**

FITSAC has initiated the following multi-step motion:

1. Convert the current paper course evaluation system to electronic course evaluations commencing with the end of Spring 2012 semester;
2. Implement the conversion over the course of two years, beginning with volunteer colleges first;
3. FITSAC will serve as an advisory committee for assessing and improving the conversion in all its aspects; it will report to Faculty Council annually on the conversion, including its successes, problems, solutions, and the committee's recommendations going forward.

Green gave brief background on the history of the motion. He also noted at the last Faculty Executive Committee meeting the FEC voted 12-0 to put the motion on the Faculty Council agenda. A second vote was taken in regard to whether the members of the FEC recommended the motion. That vote was six in favor of the motion, five not in favor of the motion, and there was one abstention. There is one motion with three parts.

Souffrant moved to second the motion.

*Discussion:*

Morgan basically feels the motion is okay because we are living in a much more technological environment. The English department's concerns revolve around the lower response rate and the environment in which the students respond to the evaluation (i.e., Friday night after a party). Other possibilities with an electronic evaluation include friends filling out the evaluation, students opting out more frequently, those who drop the class still receive the evaluation email, student's feelings toward the professor, etc. Many of these can be controlled better with written evaluations. If we are to go to the electronic format, we have to understand there will be a 'new normal' and the data may be less reliable.

We need some nontechnical policies that would counter the affects of change, such as not using these evaluations for reappointment, promotion and tenure for tenure track faculty. They could be looked at and considered but not be the primary data for the decision. Also we shouldn't use the evaluations as the major method for evaluating the teaching effectiveness of non-tenure track faculty or part-time faculty. They should also not be the only factor in determining merit raises.

What we need is to create a new environment for using the data at all levels (department, college, & university) especially during the transition from paper to digital evaluations. Time is needed to establish the new norm before this data can be used effectively in the RPT process.

Green indicated that Morgan presented these concerns at the last FEC meeting. After much discussion the FEC sent the concerns and issues to FITSAC as the first set of policy questions for its review. The FEC also asked the Provost for leadership in this area through the drafting of a "white paper" that describes important values and considerations in making faculty decisions during the time of transition from paper to electronic course evaluations.

Provost's comments (at this faculty council meeting): At her level they receive a lot of material, and the teaching evaluations data is only one small part of it. They do not see decisions concerning the non-tenure track and part-time faculty in her office, so Morgan's concerns really need to be addressed at the departmental and college levels. She suggested that there be discussion at the department and college levels, keeping in mind that the primary reason we do evaluations is provide useful feedback about improving teaching. When it comes to RPT and merit raises, this should just be a small piece of it. We need to better describe the broad range of data needed to make those significant decisions. We need to reaffirm that the primary reason to do the evaluations is to provide feedback to the individual.

The Provost also agreed we definitely need to monitor the transition closely. Yes, at first there may be a drop in the response rate, but other institutions have managed to increase the response rate over time. We

can develop a marketing campaign so that students understand the importance of the evaluations and increase the response rate. It should also be noted that the project conducted last spring indicated there was a very small difference in ratings between the paper based and electronic evaluations. One of the pluses of the electronic system is that we can track more variables and see if there are anomalies. She promises that if the council approves the move, they will closely monitor the response rate; we will try to promote the response rate and monitor systematic differences in the ratings themselves.

Morgan would still like some type of official written statement about the issues from the Provost. The Provost will put her responses in writing and share them with the community (the "white paper").

Balmer from Architecture also had concerns about the Internet culture and how much control faculty would have in the implementation. That would be up to the unit.

Gaultney voiced the psychology department's concern about the dissemination of the data. It would be a good time to restate general principles. They suggest that except as being required by tenure document or institutional reporting requirements, the general principle would be that information is aggregated and available one level up. For example, individual faculty data is available to the department chair. They are concerned an individual's data would wind up where it doesn't belong. Green suggested this could be one of the first issues that FITSAC and CTL address. Security of the data is very important. McAlpin indicated the system is very customizable, and units can assign levels of access. The system can also accommodate the necessary freedom of information act requirements.

Leeman indicated that his department (COMM) is concerned that the proposal is being based on flawed data. They have concerns about the control group and the lack of open-ended questions. The open-ended questions are often the most useful. We will end up with open ended data that is different from what we have now. Only those at the extremes will respond. He doesn't think there will be much of a cost savings since most of the savings are based on labor. Unless those people will be fired, there really isn't any cost savings. He also doesn't agree that technology has to be the new norm. The faculty council has it within its power to say whether it's the new norm or not.

Bumgardner's department (THTR) is concerned about problems with the technology working correctly. The IT folks are already strapped. Will they be able to respond quickly if there is a problem? He thinks this would be a more interesting project five years down the road after there has been more study.

McCarter from the Department of Social Work echoed some of the concerns mentioned earlier, especially around the methodical flaws in the study upon which we are basing the policy. In addition, they would like to spend time evaluating the instrument itself as Dr. Lambert suggested at the end of his presentation in September.

McCullough (FITSAC) gave a little more history of the initiative. The original request to FAPSC to investigate the issue of electronic evaluations came from the College of Arts & Sciences in 2009, and they in turn asked FITSAC to do a pilot study. The departments will have control over the questions that appear on the instrument. Each department can continue to develop it's own instrument. As for the open-ended questions, it appears from a review of studies done at peer institutions that, in some studies, the students actually wrote more in the electronic versions than the paper version.

Fielding (KNES) still want us to look at the use of clickers in the classroom setting, which gives the faculty more control. His department is concerned about the online environment with little control.

Green believes that the proposal doesn't have overwhelming support although it may have popular support. He suggested that the council could amend the motion to implement for those colleges who voluntary want to go to electronic evaluations. Then use the information gather from those units to inform other colleges about the process. McAlpin asked if what he meant was that it would not be mandatory for the entire university only for those units that volunteer. Yes, the volunteers would implement in 2012 and the remaining units consider the shift in 2013. That would give us some time to work out the issues. There are

some colleges that want to implement electronic evaluations now, and others do not, and they shouldn't hold them back. McCullough indicated that FITSAC would not object to doing a phased rollout. It was the original charge from FAPSC that wanted to develop a framework that the entire university could use.

Bodkin asked what is the definition of volunteer college? Green indicated that would be determined at the college level. It may be an administrative decision or it may include all of the faculty.

The Provost indicated there are some issues with supporting two systems. She was not sure how long they would be able to do that. We are essentially running two systems now because the online courses are all using electronic evaluations. This is particularly important now because of budget issues, and we don't have a lot of cash to spare.

Haldeman (FEC, CAA) asked since most of the concerns voiced are about the quality of data and how they are used, is there a possibility to roll it out at the department level? There is some disagreement at the departmental level within the colleges that have volunteered. The Provost's white paper would be very helpful to the units/departments as they plan for the implementation. McAlpin indicated that it would be difficult to manage a rollout at the department level.

Morgan likes the idea of a phased rollout, and that would give FITSAC a chance to develop policies that deal with the non-technical issues. McCullough indicated FAPSC would be better equipped to handle the policy aspect of the project. It is obvious from other institutional reports that there needs to be heavy faculty oversight of the process. McAlpin indicated that CTL knows there is a need to make policy, which really resides at the unit/department level. This is only a motion to change the mechanism used to collect the data; as we go through the process, there will be a need for more conversations about policies, support and implementation. There are a number of different venues where those conversations and decisions can be made, and the faculty will have a voice in everything that is done.

Green asked McAlpin when is the point of no return for implementing the system, in the spring and/or fall? She responded that there are several facts at play. One is funding and economies of scale. We need to continue OPSCAN since it is heavily used for final exams. So it will not completely go away. Therefore, we need to run two systems, and funding for that will depend on Academic Affairs and ITS. When the program is implemented is up to the council; spring is feasible, but if the council wants to wait until fall, that is also possible. But CTL needs a vote today to implement it in the spring 2012 or a spring vote to implement in the fall of 2012. We need at least 2-3 months preparation time.

Astratov (PHYS) asked if it was possible to know which system is the most used by our sister/peer institutions? **Student Voice** is most widely used system, which is also currently being used by our distance education unit. According to McAlpin, half of the UNC institutions, as well as half of our peers, use an electronic system for student evaluation.

The council voted on the proposal as written. A hand count was necessary. Motion passed with the following vote: 26 in favor; 25 opposed; 4 abstentions.

Wiggins asked if the council could consider Green's earlier suggestion about a volunteer rollout. Green indicated that could be discussed at the January meeting.

### 3. Motion from Faculty Council for University College

A motion from Faculty Council for University College: Amend the Standing Rules of the Faculty Council to rename the Faculty Council for University College as University College Faculty Council, for immediate implementation upon approval by the Faculty Council.

Seconded by Morgan, the motion passed unanimously.

### 4. 49er Democracy Experience (<http://democracyexperience.uncc.edu/>) presentation by Betty Doster.

Betty Doster spoke to the council about the university's involvement in the 2012 Democratic Convention in



September. She and Dr. Eric Heberlig from the political science department have been working with local educational institutions and political organizations to take advantage of this learning experience for UNC Charlotte students, faculty and staff. Dr. Heberlig is responsible for the curriculum related activities, while Doster's primary responsibility is working with external entities. Although a major focus is on the Democratic convention being held in Charlotte, she indicated it also involved the Republican Convention in Tampa. Their mission is to leverage the opportunities available because of these events. It will provide education opportunities such as forums, speakers, internships, seminars, curriculum tie-ins for classes, etc. to engage UNC Charlotte students, faculty, staff and the community at large in the democratic process. In conjunction with the convention, the Washington Center, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization, will be offering a two-week course for students from around the country, which will be held at the center city campus. UNC Charlotte will serve as the official academic partner to the Washington Center and as such will receive ten scholarships for our students to attend the course (five will go to Tampa, five will attend the one here in Charlotte). The Washington Center will also be hosting a number of forums, speakers, etc. for the general public at the center city campus. The opportunities will not just focus on the political aspects of the event but address a wide variety of topics such as sustainability, health and human services issues, etc. There will be a good number of internship opportunities which will be run through the university's regular internship process.

There is a catalog of 106 spring classes that are connected to the convention. They are working with regional schools and community partners to coordinate the forums, speakers, etc. that the different institutions will be hosting. The Urban Institute will be involved in evaluating the impact of the convention on the Charlotte region. The website will also include information about faculty expertise, which will be promoted by the Public Relations office.

They are working with host committee to offer forums/speakers on policy that will include both national and local experts. The host committee wants these forums to be a legacy experience in which action plans are developed.

For more details and for up-to-date information on opportunities visit the website - <http://democracyexperience.uncc.edu/>

##### **5. Report of the Chancellor (Dr. Philip Dubois) – None**

##### **6. Report of the Provost (Dr. Joan Lorden)**

Our Master of Science in Real Estate degree was approved by the Board of Governors.

Academic Affairs is working on setting tuition and fees. At the moment it looks like they will be asking for a 6.5% across the board increase. They still need to have a little more discussion about this and the fees, and then it has to go to the Board of Governors. There is a lot of debate around the state and some divided opinions on the BOG about this issue. It will be February before there is a final decision.

They are also working on enrollment numbers. Enrollment growth has slowed from our 4-6% per year down to around 1.4% over the last three years. This year's growth was only .84%. We are proposing to grow about 1% next year. We lost ground in graduate enrollment coming up short of our projections by about 300 students. A lot of this was due to students in education programs that were being paid for by the school systems, which are not doing that any more. She doesn't expect that those numbers will be coming back very soon. We had been around 21% graduate enrollment. We are now around 19%, which is where we were about eight years ago. But about 25% of the degrees we confer are graduate degrees. She wants to keep the balance, so is looking for opportunities to maintain and/or grow graduate enrollment.

A number of programs that we had hoped to have online by now are not yet ready, which has also hurt our online enrollment. The Board of Governors believes we should be doing more online courses. They are very enthusiastic about providing more online access, but that also means more students and need for more money.

Nominations for the Bank of America teaching awards are now open.

As part of the web migration project, and with the help of Leslie Zenk and Eric Clay, the policy page of the website has been updated. We also now have our catalogs available in HTML format, which makes it much easier to use.

**7. Report of the President Elect (Dr. Ed Jernigan) – None**

**8. Report of the President (Dr. Michael Green)**

The student council is sponsoring a blood drive on January 12, 2012.

**9. New Business – None**

Meeting was adjourned at 1:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Walker".

Judy Walker, Faculty Secretary