

(Original motion by James McDonald as revised by the Ways and Means Committee)

**Proposed revision in the Faculty Handbook, I, Section V. Faculty Personnel Policies, Performance Evaluation and Merit Pay**

**Insert the following at the end of paragraph 2:**

It is important that the evaluation instrument and procedures, including college and/or department rubrics, reflect best practices and research on faculty assessment, especially the assessment of teaching. Teaching is a complex activity and research shows that student evaluations of instruction should not largely determine the evaluation of teaching performance. Furthermore, when student evaluations of instruction are used, multiple measurements from the surveys should be used in the evaluation. For these reasons, two constraints are imposed on the use of student evaluations of instruction for teaching evaluation.

1. Rubrics for the teaching evaluation portion of faculty assessment shall not give student evaluations of instruction more than a weight of 35%.
  2. Rubrics for teaching evaluation which make use of student evaluations of instruction shall incorporate the responses to at least three questions from the student evaluation of instruction.
- A few additional sources of input useful for evaluation of teaching include peer review based on observation, student comments solicited separately from the formal student evaluation of instruction, faculty self-evaluation, and teaching portfolios.
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**Rationale for the motion.**

The sense of the Senate is that the rubrics and processes for performance reviews of teaching in use by some units at UL Lafayette place too much weight on the results of the Student Evaluation of Instruction. This motion encourages a more holistic approach to teaching evaluation and imposes two constraints on the use of results of the Student Evaluation of Instruction.

The current version of the relevant section from the Faculty Handbook and two supporting documents are attached.

1. A brief note by Beckie Supiano from [The Chronicle of Higher Education \(9 September 2019\)](#) which briefly summarizes the current state of the argument against over-reliance on student evaluations of instruction with reference to the statement on student evaluation of teaching by the American Sociological Association.
  2. The [Statement on Student Evaluation of Teaching by the American Sociological Association](#) (September 2019 ). Note that this statement was endorsed by 17 other scholarly associations.
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## **Current I. SECTION V FACULTY PERSONNEL POLICIES**

### **Performance Evaluation and Merit Pay**

The University conducts an annual performance evaluation which rates a faculty member's performance. A faculty member's department head or immediate supervisor, sometimes with the assistance of a departmental personnel committee, evaluates that person's performance in the areas of teaching, research and professional activities, and university and community service. The department head's evaluation is ultimately reviewed by the dean of the college and by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, both of whom may adjust the faculty member's overall evaluation relative to other members of the college or the University.

The evaluation instrument used in each college may vary slightly, but the general procedure and aims of the process are similar. The evaluation instrument, which a faculty member completes in January each year, summarizes the person's activities for the preceding calendar year. Faculty members are judged on the basis of their overall merit in all activity areas.

**Rating Scale** (to be used in conjunction with college and/or departmental rubrics)

- **5** = Exceptional—distinction, extraordinary productivity/performance beyond annual expectations
- **4** = Exceeds expectations—high quality, performance/productivity that can be sustained annually
- **3** = Meets expectations—quality, performance/productivity can be strengthened and sustained annually
- **2** = Needs Improvement—requires improvement in one or more areas
- **1** = Unsatisfactory performance—requires significant improvement in one or more areas

# Sociologists Caution Colleges Not to Over-Rely on Student Evaluations of Teaching <https://www.chronicle.com/article/Sociologists-Caution-Colleges/247101>

By Beckie Supiano September 09, 2019 Premium (2019 The Chronicle of Higher Education)

The American Sociological Association released on Monday a [statement](#) laying out the problems with student evaluations of teaching and urging colleges not to over-rely on them.

“Student feedback,” says the statement, which was endorsed by 17 other scholarly associations, “should not be used alone as a measure of teaching quality. If it is used in faculty evaluation processes, it should be considered as part of a holistic assessment of teaching effectiveness.”

An extensive research literature has identified problems with student evaluations of teaching. In its statement, the association cites two key issues. For one, course evaluations don’t measure the quality of teaching particularly well. They are “weakly related to other measures,” like students’ performance on exams, the statement says, and are often used in “statistically problematic ways,” for instance assigning too much importance to small differences.

This is not the first time a major scholarly association has weighed in on the question of how teaching should be evaluated. In 2013 the American Educational Research Association [released](#) a [report](#), “Rethinking Faculty Evaluation,” that said teaching assessment should be based on what students learn. That, it said, cannot be derived from student ratings. Instead, the report said, colleges should draw on evidence from teaching portfolios, classroom observations, and surveys and interviews of both students and professors.

## Further Reading From *The Chronicle*

### The problems with course evaluations:

Research has found that students [judge professors who are women](#) more harshly than those who are men.

If course evaluations are steeped in bias, and they’re [used in personnel decisions](#), then colleges could face litigation.

**The value of student feedback** Students can be [trained to give better feedback](#), as in this effort at the University of California at Merced.

Kevin Gannon offers some advice for [interpreting course evaluations](#).

### Models for evaluating teaching:

Adopt a [better student evaluation](#), says the IDEA Center.

Use [an inventory of teaching practices](#), argues Carl Wieman, an advocate for science teaching.

Incorporate [peer evaluations](#), suggests Philip B. Stark. That’s the direction in which [the University of Southern California](#) has recently moved.