

# Best Practices in conducting student evaluation of teaching

Center for Professional Development  
Bemidji State University  
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# Contractual Obligation

- Article 22, section D. subd.1. IFO contract: ***For faculty with teaching assignments, the PDP shall include a process for student assessment***
- Article 22, section E. subd 1. ***If faculty members include student course assessments as part of their reports, such assessments shall be anonymous, identified only by course/section. Any other student communications or evaluations submitted with the PDR shall not be anonymous.***

We asked the Deans for informal feedback on the student assessments - **One of the biggest roadblocks to getting tenured at BSU is if you are failing at teaching**

The way to demonstrate you are doing well at teaching is by providing evidence via student evaluations of your teaching

# So what are you required to do?

- Plan some form of student evaluation of teaching (SET) - there are many ways in which this can be done
- Include this in your Professional Development Plan
- (You may discuss this with the relevant Dean during your PDP meeting)
- Conduct said SET in selected (or all) classes
- There are various ways which the SET can be analyzed
- Report the findings of your SET in your Professional Development Report
- Include the findings in your tenure and promotion packet

# What options are available to you?

As the contract does not specify what kind of evaluations you need to conduct, only that some form of assessment of your teaching should happen; here are a few options for conducting student evaluations of your teaching -

Quantitative: Scantron, Qualtrics or Likert scales

Qualitative: Descriptive, narrative comments from students

Mixed Methods: we suggest using a combination of methods for SETs

***What not to do:*** conduct no evaluations at all - because this may harm your case as you apply for tenure and promotions.

# Making sure student evaluations work for you

- Since there is no standard format for SET make them work for you!
- Are you looking for feedback on a particular pedagogical strategy you applied in class?
- Did you try an new experiential assignment?
- Did you create a new rubric for group discussion?
- Did you find your students not paying attention to something in particular?
- Do you want to find out why students are gone one particular weekend in fall

(Ok the answer to that is usually its hunting opener weekend!)

- ***Ask that question in your evaluation***

# Personalize your evaluation instruments

Some departments prefer that you use particular formats

Or you may have a particular format that works for you

You may not have known you can personalize your evaluation instruments

However, it's never too late!

Refer to the question bank available at the CPD website at

<https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/professional-development/teaching-support/course-evaluations/>

# Biases in SET

Students may be responding to your teaching based on some (implicit) biases

Gender

Physical appearance

Race

Sexuality (perceived)

Nationality

Religion

Accent

Political opinion

Ability/Disability

Perceived expertise

While this is not a comprehensive list of biases that may influence our students - note that personalizing the SET allows for control of these biases

# How to control for biases in SET

- Ask questions that ask about specific skill development in students. For example
  - ◆ The course increased my ability to interact with diverse groups of people
  - ◆ The course improved my ability to write a research paper
  - ◆ The course improved my ability to engage in critical thinking
  - ◆ The course improved my ability to create constructive criticism of my peers' work
  - ◆ The course helped me understand the ethical issues involved
- Do not ask questions about faculty likability, instead ask questions about faculty effectiveness
- Ask questions that make student reflect in their participation, preparedness and involvement in the class
- Make sure to tie in these questions with learning goals set out in your syllabus
- The CPD question bank discusses more of these issues.

# Best practices for in-class SET

- Students have reported high level of anxiety regarding anonymity of the SET and the potential for retaliation by faculty
- To avoid this, we suggest asking a student volunteer (or trusted colleague) to administer the evaluations on your behalf
- It might best to ***not be present in class***
- Student volunteer can collect the evaluations and hand the packet to department administrators
- We suggest collecting these packets from administrators ***only after*** you have posted final grades for that class

# Using ScanTron (bubble sheets)

- You can choose to conduct SET using Scantron (bubble sheet). There are extensive instructions available for that on the CPD website.
- Quantitative questions can be scored using the bubble sheet
- If you want students to provide a comment, provide a separate sheet
- Your department administrators can help you transcribe these comments
- IT Services can help scan these sheets and create reports based on data collected
- Information Technology Services at [scanresults@bemidjistate.edu](mailto:scanresults@bemidjistate.edu) at to obtain the Scantron sheets (pink bubble sheets). Please contact them a week ahead of time

# Qualtrics: easy SETs online

- Qualtrics is an online tool that you have access to through BSU
- How to access Qualtrics:
  - Sign in to you MyBSU webpage
  - Top left, under your name, click on the dropdown menu
  - The very last tab under there should be Qualtrics
- Qualtrics allows you to design your own SET
- You can distribute it to your students via a unique link that is provided
- Data gathered is anonymized and generating reports about this data is pretty intuitive.
- For more on Qualtrics visit IT Services <https://www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/its/knowledge-base/qualtrics-bsus-and-ntcs-survey-solution/>

# Getting students to participate in SETs

- Educate students on the purpose of evaluations
  - Do this often
  - Introduction/Syllabus, midterm and before end of semester evaluations
- Creating micro-incentives for filling out SETs
  - Some faculty report higher rate of response after micro-incentives like extra credit, increased participation points etc. were employed
  - While some faculty may find these incentives manipulative or unfair, faculty may find other ways to incentivize student participation such as offering a “certificate of completion” after SET
  - Please check out the peer-reviewed resource discussing this issue on our website
- Creating multiple processes of feedback
- Changing the nature of questions on SETs

# Available resources on CPD website

The CPD website has several sample end of semester evaluation instruments available for perusal

- A ***question bank*** that provides phrasing for questions to reduce implicit biases
- Suggestions on using Likert scales for simple and easy scoring
- Step by step guide to adding online evaluations to your D2L shell
- Innovative suggestions for group evaluations
- External resources
- And because we could not resist - a bibliography of articles on conducting student evaluations!