



WE WON BIG ON STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING. HERE ARE THE NEXT STEPS THAT UUP CHAPTERS SHOULD TAKE.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

Our new Agreement with New York State changes the criteria by which teaching can be evaluated to minimize the role of student evaluations teaching (SETs – sometimes also called student opinions of teaching). The language we have negotiated into SUNY Board of Trustees Policies is as follows:

Effectiveness in teaching — as demonstrated by such things as judgment of colleagues, development of teaching materials or new courses, the work of directing or advising students in independent projects, classroom observation, student academic growth, review of course materials by colleagues or administrators, and student reaction, as determined from interviews or surveys.

Student reaction as determined by surveys shall not be the sole or primary method of evaluation.

(Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, Article XII, title A 4(b) and Title B2(b))

WHAT IT MEANS

The new BOT language ensures that any evaluation of teaching must be holistic and include multiple indicators of teaching effectiveness. This is a huge win for our members who teach. For decades we have known that SETs are an unreliable, and often biased means of assessing teaching effectiveness. An overreliance on SETs can impact reappointment and renewal decisions and impair faculty career growth.

Departmental, school, campus, governance and other documents should be reviewed and possibly revised to ensure that the guidance for evaluation of teaching is compliant with our negotiated Agreement.

WHAT CHAPTERS SHOULD DO

UUP chapters must work with local management to ensure that all campus committees and entities that evaluate teaching – especially in the areas of tenure, promotion and reappointment – base

continued

NEXT STEPS FOR UUP CHAPTERS IN STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF TEACHING

their evaluation on a range of indicators and evidence. This must be reflected in the documents that address teaching evaluation procedures at each campus, including but not limited to department bylaws and policies, any campus-level tenure, promotion and reappointment criteria and procedures, and Senate or governance documents that address teaching effectiveness. This list is not exhaustive; all documents that address teaching effectiveness must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to comply with the new BOT policies. We suggest that chapters do the following:

- » **Make the revision of teaching effectiveness language a standing item for Labor-Management meetings.** Discuss with management how they will ensure that all relevant documents are pulled for review. UUP chapters should request permission from the UUP President's office to negotiate changes to all relevant policies and documents.
- » **As a starting point for such revisions and negotiations, we suggest that campus policies replicate the new BOT policy language above.**
- » **Chapters should also make clear to management** that all personnel cases that include reviews of teaching

effectiveness should involve a substantial engagement with a full record of teaching, rather than relying solely or primarily on numeric scores or student comments drawn from teaching surveys.

- » **Communicate with members** through executive boards, department rep structures and other structures that we should all review and revise our departmental documents.

- » **Work with campus governance bodies to spread awareness.** This change to the BOT policies provides an opportunity to shift the culture of how teaching is evaluated, so chapters should help drive a campus-wide conversation about the sorts of evaluation procedures that will be most beneficial.

WHAT ELSE?

When opening up evaluation procedure and bylaws, chapters may encourage departments to review and potentially update other key items such as the right of faculty to review a tenure/promotion dossier and comment after evaluation; rights of faculty to respond to evaluations; departmental voting rights; and departmental priorities in hiring, curriculum, or other key areas.

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