Guidelines for Teaching Evaluations in 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has created considerable disruption to our methods of teaching. FSU faculty did remarkable work in switching to remote teaching this year. Given that most of our faculty had no experience teaching online, this change required a lot of effort. Faculty redesigned their courses, learned new tools and techniques, and adopted new methods for evaluating their students’ performance to teach online. When we evaluate their 2020 teaching performance, it is important to duly consider all that our faculty did to transition to remote teaching. We affirmed our commitment to duly consider the impact of the pandemic on all aspects of faculty work in a UFF-BOT MOU. Another commitment we made in this MOU was to exclude student perceptions of teaching (SPCI ratings) from 2020 faculty evaluations (annual, progress toward promotion/tenure, P&T reviews; Performance Improvement Plans) unless the faculty member requests their inclusion. This will require changes to how we evaluate faculty performance in teaching in 2020. Here are some suggestions for 2020 faculty teaching evaluations:

1. Evaluate faculty effort in preparing for remote teaching and/or support offered to others in their teaching and learning.

“How actions did you take to acquire skills for remote teaching? List all workshops, training session, or other activities you engaged in during 2020 to better prepare yourself for teaching.”

“Describe any service you did to sustain the campus teaching mission during the pandemic, such as helping other faculty with remote teaching, helping students navigate remote learning, pitching in to support coworkers in their teaching, participating in faculty work groups.”

2. Ask faculty to reflect on their 2020 teaching with an emphasis on recognizing efforts to continuously improve teaching.

“How satisfied are you with the work and the learning your students did in your courses?”

“What might be improved to elicit better learning and/or student work?”

“How did you facilitate student interactions with you, the course materials, and fellow students?”

“How did you monitor the “climate” in your classroom? How did you help students feel supported and engaged?”

“What technology tools did you use in your courses and why?”

“What aspects of your courses were most successful? What makes you most proud?”

3. Review syllabi and course materials to evaluate three important aspects of course design and delivery: alignment, classroom climate, and strategic use of technology (see “Guidelines for Teaching Remotely” for a framework for evaluating teaching). A sample rating form is attached along with examples of best practices for each evaluation category. Modify the rating form to fit with teaching criteria most relevant to your academic discipline.
### Evaluations of Remote Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Practice</th>
<th>Substantially exceeds</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Official Concern</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1. Creates a welcoming classroom environment that fosters student engagement</td>
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<td>2. Is responsive to students and gives timely feedback</td>
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<td>3. Shows how course aligns with the curriculum</td>
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<td>4. Learning objectives are clearly written and appropriate for the course</td>
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<td>5. Evaluations align with learning objectives</td>
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<td>6. Learning process is aligned with objectives and evaluations</td>
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<td>7. Makes effective use of technology for student-instructor interactions</td>
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<td>8. Makes effective use of technology for student-student interactions</td>
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<td>9. Makes effective use of technology for student-material interactions</td>
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<td>10. Overall Assessment of the Instructor</td>
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Examples of recommended practices:

1. Creates a welcoming classroom environment that fosters student engagement

   Acknowledges the difficulties of current circumstances and encourages students to share ideas and provide feedback on creating a safe and effective learning environment.

   Respect students’ privacy: Encourage them to show themselves “live,” but respect their decision if they choose not to.

   Provides opportunities for students to practice with technological tools that will be used in the course, including remote proctoring, before assignments are given.

   NOTE: For synchronous/hybrid classes, the above may be done via zoom sessions. For asynchronous classes, instructors are encouraged to create a “welcome video” for their students to give a face to their instructor and for the instructor to verbally provide the above information to their students. Videos at the start of each learning module are also recommended.

   Encourages students to drop in during “office hours”; creates zoom meetings for students to ask questions and participate in discussions.

   Invites continuous student feedback about the class.

   Provides opportunities for students to ask questions and participate in discussions.

2. Is responsive to students and gives timely feedback on assignments and evaluations.

   Provides students with contact information (ideally in the syllabus).

   Establishes remote office hours that allow for individual appointments.

   Informs students about best ways and times to contact the instructor, when to expect responses to their communications, and timelines for providing feedback on assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.

   Provides written information on what students should do if they are unable to attend a session, meet a deadline, etc.

   Provides written information about the make-up policy for tests, quizzes, assignments, etc.

   Provides timely feedback to students on their performance evaluations.
3. Shows how course is aligned with the curriculum and well-defined learning objectives.

Informs students how this course fits into the curriculum and, where appropriate, the importance of this course for students’ career goals.

4. Learning objectives are clearly written and appropriate for the course.

Poorly defined learning objective: Understand the thermodynamics of chemical reactions

   Improved learning objective: Define enthalpy and entropy and explain how these thermodynamic quantities are combined into the concept of free energy.
   Calculate the standard free energy change for a chemical reaction. Explain how the free energy of a reaction can be used to determine the direction a reaction will take to spontaneously reach equilibrium.

Poorly defined learning objective: Ideal gas law

   Improved learning objective: Use the ideal gas law to calculate the volume of gas given pressure, temperature, and composition of a gas.

Poorly defined learning objective: Learn how social forces affect health.

   Improved learning objective: Use data to draw conclusions about the relationship between inequality and health.

5. Evaluations are aligned with learning objectives.

Uses well-defined grading rubrics that align with learning objectives

Administers frequent assessments of student learning

Uses multiple types of evaluations to assess student learning

Assesses baseline performance, where feasible, to assess progress

6. Learning process is aligned with objectives and evaluations

Makes explicit to students how course content (readings, activities, lectures) is linked to the learning objectives of the course.

Synchronous and asynchronous class activities are selected to align with the learning objectives.

Criteria used to evaluate student performance are clearly stated at the time the assignments are made.

Includes assignments that ask students to express what they have learned and what they still need to learn.

Tools should be selected to meet the purpose they are asked to serve and should also be as simple to use as possible, to assuage student and faculty anxiety. It is not recommended to employ multiple new tools beyond Canvas and Zoom at the same time. This document identifies the types of interactions we might wish to use for learning and suggests the appropriate tools to accomplish them.

Questions for the supervisor to consider:
- Did instructors make good selections of technology tools to facilitate student interactions with the instructor? With course materials? With classmates?
- Did instructors post syllabi on Canvas and use Gradebook for posting grades on tests and assignments?