

August 17, 2020

TO: Members of the Faculty Senate

FROM: Carol A. Fierke, Provost and Executive Vice President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Carol A. Fierke'.

RE: FS Resolution 37.355 – Affirming Faculty Senate support of the Student Course Evaluation Task Force Recommendation Report

Per Faculty Senate Resolution 37.355 affirming its support of the recommendations submitted to me by the Student Course Evaluation Task Force, and following my review of the recommendations included therein, the ten proposed items (attached) will be included on all student course evaluations administered across the university (including all levels, campuses, locations, and mode of delivery) as of the fall semester, 2020 (with a few notable exceptions as outlined in the recommendations). As of this date, all student course evaluations will be administered online and managed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Evaluation.

In addition, in an effort to standardize practices across the university, and based on recommendations forwarded to me from the Student Course Evaluation Task Force and affirmed by the Faculty Senate, the attached procedures will be enacted as of the fall semester, 2020.

Let me assure you that colleges, departments, programs, and individual instructors will have the ability to include additional items to their respective student course evaluations and to use the information gathered through the student course evaluations as they see fit.

I want to thank the members of the Student Course Evaluation Task Force along with the members of the Faculty Senate for their efforts to review existing practices and to develop standardized items to be implemented across the university. My hope is that by including common items across courses, as well as standardizing practices as well as practices, the information gathered from students will guide efforts to continually review and strengthen the educational experience we provide for our students. I also encourage the Faculty Senate to consider reviewing the usefulness of the standardized items every 2-3 years to ensure we are eliciting valuable feedback from our students.

Practices and Procedures for University-wide Student Course Evaluations (SCE)¹

SCE PERIOD - Student course evaluations (SCE) shall open at 8am the day after the Q-drop date and close at 11:59:59pm the night before final exams begin.

- For programs that do not have a Q-drop date (e.g., professional programs where there are unique college-specific calendars), course evaluations will open approximately 10 days prior to the start of the final exam period and will close at 11:59:59pm the night before finals begin.
- For courses that are offered during partial terms, department or college leadership are responsible for identifying the specific start date for the SCEs, so long as they close prior to final exams (in instances where final exams are given).

COURSES TO BE INCLUDED - In accordance with Texas Administrative Code (§4.228(e) Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter N) and relevant TAMU and TAMUS policies, the following standards are in place:

- Student course evaluations will be administered to any undergraduate, graduate, or professional level courses offered at Texas A&M with five or more students enrolled. This includes on-campus, off-campus, distance education, and dual- credit courses (including those taught on high school campuses or other approved locations).
- Courses with highly variable subject content that are tailored specifically to individual students, such as Independent Study, Directed Reading courses, and/or Thesis/Dissertation research hours, will automatically be waived from inclusion in student course evaluation administration.
- Additional requests from department heads or instructors for student course evaluations to be administered in specific courses will be honored, regardless of course enrollment. If the enrollment in the course is less than 5, students will be notified that their confidentiality could be compromised.

AVAILABILITY OF RESULTS - Online student course evaluation results shall be made available within 24 hours after the official deadline for grade submission to the Office of the Registrar.

ACCESS TO RESULTS - Results of student course evaluations shall be made available online to instructors, department heads (for the department where the instructor has their primary appointment), and any additional designees requested and so authorized by the department heads and/or deans from the department/college where the instructor has their primary appointment.

In the event an instructor is teaching a course offered by another department/college, the department head of the instructor as well as the head of the department offering the course shall have access to the student course evaluation results.

¹ *Developed by the University Student Course Evaluation Task Force; Affirmed by the Faculty Senate (Resolution # 37.355, May 5, 2020); implemented as of Fall, 2020.*

STUDENT IDENTITY - Student identities shall not be revealed to instructors for any reason (including, requests for a list of students who completed the evaluations for purposes of providing extra credit, etc.).

- In the event a student includes comments indicating intent to cause harm to either themselves or others, the instructor is to notify the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Evaluation (evaluations@tam.u.edu). Once notified, there is a procedure in place that allows for the student to be identified per authorization of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Strategic Initiatives and the Dean of Students. In this unlikely event, the instructor is informed that appropriate action has been taken but is not told of the specific student's identity nor the nature of any subsequent actions.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO RESULTS

A. Results for the following items shall be publicly accessible for the courses required to per statute (i.e., undergraduate courses other than those waived; see above) or current TAMU practice (i.e., graduate courses other than those waived and noted above):

1. Based on what the instructor(s) communicated, and the information provided in the course syllabus, I understood what was expected of me.
2. This course helped me to learn concepts or skills as stated in the course objectives/outcomes.
3. In this course, I engaged in critical thinking and/or problem solving.
4. Please rate the organization of this course.
5. In this course, I learned to critically evaluate diverse ideas and perspectives.
6. Feedback in this course helped me learn.

B. Results for the following items shall not be publicly accessible²:

1. Begin this course evaluation by reflecting on your own level of engagement and participation in the course. What portion of the class preparation activities (e.g., readings, online modules, videos) and assignments did you complete?
2. The instructor fostered an effective learning environment.
3. This instructor's teaching methods contributed to my learning.
4. The instructor encouraged students to take responsibility for their own learning.

C. Results from student course evaluations shall not be mandated for professional programs³ (unless mandated by statute); decisions regarding public accessibility of results from student course evaluations for courses within professional programs shall be decided by the college within which the program resides and submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Evaluation.

² In addition to the four items listed below, college, department, program, or instructor-specific items also will not be included on the publicly accessible SCE reports.

³ Pre-licensure programs or advanced license/certification programs

REQUESTS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDENT RESPONSES TO BE REMOVED - Individual students' responses student course evaluations shall not be removed from the overall results.

INCENTIVES - With regards to the use of incentives (or negative consequences) to motivate students to complete student course evaluations, the Faculty Senate Resolution provided below remains in place until which time the Faculty Senate so choses to revisit the existing resolution:

Faculty Senate Resolution FS.27.122: RESOLVED, that the Faculty Senate opposes granting academic credit of any kind to students for completing course evaluations of any kind or instructor evaluations of any kind.

University-wide Standardized Items for Student Course Evaluations (SCE)

Begin this course evaluation by reflecting on your own level of engagement and participation in the course. What portion of the class preparation activities (e.g., readings, online modules, videos) and assignments did you complete?

- <50%
- 50-70%
- 71-90%
- >90%

*Based on what the instructor(s) communicated, and the information provided in the course syllabus, I understood what was expected of me.

- No, I did not understand what was expected of me
- I partially understood what was expected of me
- Yes, I understood what was expected of me

*This course helped me learn concepts or skills as stated in course objectives/outcomes.

- This course did not help me learn the concepts or skills
- This course only slightly helped me learn the concepts or skills
- This course moderately helped me learn the concepts or skills
- This course definitely helped me learn the concepts or skills

*In this course, I engaged in critical thinking and/or problem solving.

- Never
- Seldom
- Often
- Frequently

*Please rate the organization of this course.

- Not at all organized
- Slightly organized
- Moderately organized
- Very well organized

*In this course, I learned to critically evaluate diverse ideas and perspectives.

- *Not Applicable*
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

*Feedback in this course helped me learn. *Please note, feedback can be either informal (e.g., in class discussion, chat boards, think-pair-share, office hour discussions, help sessions) or formal (e.g., written or clinical assessments, review of exams, peer reviews, clicker questions).*

- No feedback was provided
- Feedback provided was not at all helpful
- Feedback provided was only slightly helpful
- Feedback provided was moderately helpful
- Feedback provided was very helpful
- Feedback provided was extremely helpful

The instructor fostered an effective learning environment.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The instructor's teaching methods contributed to my learning.

- Did not contribute
- Contributed a little
- Contributed a lot

The instructor encouraged students to take responsibility for their own learning.

- Did not encourage
- Sometimes encouraged
- Frequently encouraged

NOTES:

- Each item will be followed by a text box giving students an opportunity to provide additional written comments.
- Questions marked with * will be used for the publicly accessible student course evaluation reports. No written comments will be included on the publicly available reports, nor will the results from any additional college, department, program, or instructor-specific items.
- Students will be asked to respond to two additional (optional) items following the items listed above:
 1. Was course required?
 2. What grade do you anticipate receiving?

TEXAS A&M FACULTY SENATE

Resolution affirming Faculty Senate support of the Student Course Evaluation Task Force Recommendation Report

May 11, 2020

Whereas, in Fall 2018 Provost Fierke assembled a Faculty Task Force to identify a set of questions to be standardized across all student course evaluations, and

Whereas, the Task force was comprised of Texas A&M University Faculty from all Colleges (except Geosciences), and included Faculty with backgrounds in evaluation and assessment, and

Whereas, the Task Force developed a list of ten suggested standardized questions and recommendations for the use of these questions in the teaching evaluation of the Faculty of Texas A&M University, and

Whereas, the Task Force based these questions on peer-reviewed literature and diligently sought input from stakeholder groups across campus, holding multiple meetings and presenting numerous reports, and

Whereas, in October 2019 the Task Force solicited feedback on the initial set of developed questions from all faculty and received responses from 931 respondents, and

Whereas, the Task Force revised the questions based on this feedback, and

Whereas, the Fall 2020 semester will provide a unique opportunity to pilot these questions,

Now therefore be it resolved that the Texas A&M Faculty Senate accepts the recommendations of the Student Course Evaluation Task Force and recommends developed questions be used by Texas A&M students in evaluation of teaching beginning in the Fall 2020 Semester.