

**Faculty Senate Executive Committee  
Summary of Faculty Feedback on Proposed Changes to Student Evaluation Form  
February 2025**

**Summary of Feedback Themes and Common Statements**

- **Too Many Questions:** A primary concern across multiple faculty members is that the proposed evaluation form has too many questions, which could lead to survey fatigue, rushed responses, and negatively skewed results.
- **Question Clarity and Wording:** Several faculty members point out issues with the clarity and wording of specific questions, noting that some questions are vague, repetitive, or inconsistent.
- **Relevance and Validity of Questions:** There is concern that some questions do not accurately assess the instructor's teaching effectiveness. Some questions are seen as subjective, focusing on student effort or opinions rather than instructor performance. There is also debate about whether students are qualified to assess certain aspects of teaching, such as course organization or teaching methods.
- **Potential for Bias and Misuse:** Some feedback suggests that certain questions could be misinterpreted or used to provide biased feedback. Concerns were raised that students might use the evaluation to express irrelevant complaints or discriminatory views.
- **Time Commitment:** GTAs expressed worry about the amount of class time that would be lost to having students complete the lengthy evaluation form.
- **Instructor Workload:** Some instructors suggest adding questions that recognize the constraints placed on them such as workload, class size, and new course preparation.
- **Positive Feedback:** One faculty member suggests adding an item that asks students what worked well in the course, recognizing that instructors also benefit from positive feedback.

**Specific Statements and Requests**

- Reduce the number of questions, especially Likert scale questions and open-ended questions
- Use more specific and clear language
- Remove or revise subjective or irrelevant questions
- Define terms like "inclusive environment" if used
- Separate questions that assess multiple constructs
- Reorder certain questions to improve flow
- Include an "N/A" option for questions that may not be applicable
- Remove questions that are not relevant to online or hybrid classes
- Protect faculty from negative effects of poor evaluations•
- Ensure a balanced perspective in measuring the quality of an instructor
- Provide a supportive response to instructors who seek to improve their skills
- Consider the workload of faculty when evaluating them
- Add questions related to student responsibility and engagement

## Concerns

- **Concerns about Student Qualifications and Bias:** Several faculty express concerns about the ability of students to accurately evaluate teaching effectiveness. Some faculty members suggest that students lack the training or knowledge to assess course organization, teaching methods, or the relevance of course content. There is a concern that students may evaluate instructors based on their personal biases, such as the difficulty of the content, their own level of success in the course, or even instructor characteristics. One faculty member suggests that students may be more critical of quantitative courses, regardless of the instructor's effectiveness.
- **Potential for Weaponization of Feedback:** Some faculty members worry that certain questions, particularly those about expressing opinions or creating an "inclusive environment", could be "weaponized" by students to express harmful or irrelevant complaints or personal attacks. It is suggested that such questions could be easily misinterpreted and used to penalize instructors unfairly.
- **Impact of Workload on Instructor Performance:** Several faculty members express concern about how workload and class size impact teaching effectiveness and evaluations. One faculty member notes that increased class sizes and new course preps can hinder their ability to provide high-quality instruction and detailed feedback. They suggest including questions that acknowledge these constraints. The concern is that evaluations may not accurately reflect the instructor's abilities when the instructor is working under difficult conditions that are not within their control.
- **The Timing of Evaluations:** One faculty member mentions that students will be completing evaluations before they receive their final grade, potentially impacting how they assess the "effectiveness" of instruction.
- **Faculty Skepticism about Administration's Commitment to Feedback:** There is a sense of skepticism among some faculty regarding the administration's willingness to seriously consider and implement their feedback on the evaluation form. Some faculty members believe that their feedback will likely be ignored, based on previous experiences.
- **The Disconnect Between Contractual Obligations and Student Needs:** One faculty member suggests that even if an instructor meets contractual obligations (e.g., providing office hours), students may still rate them poorly if those times do not meet their specific needs. This highlights a potential disconnect between what is required and what students expect.
- **Specific Question Issues:**
  - Several faculty members object to questions about student effort and participation, arguing that these are not indicators of instructor performance.
  - There are concerns that questions about course organization or teaching methods are too subjective or beyond the ability of students to judge.
  - Some questions are considered repetitive, vague, or redundant.
  - There are also specific suggestions for rephrasing questions to be clearer and more accurate. For instance, one faculty member suggests that rather than asking about "expectations for performance" it would be clearer to ask if "expectations

for performance were clearly communicated on the syllabus and throughout the semester".

- Some faculty suggest that questions about student opinions may be more relevant in certain disciplines than others (e.g., philosophy vs. mathematics).
- For Question 9, there is a proposal to rephrase it as "I felt like I could actively participate in the course" to better capture student engagement.