



TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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AGENDA ITEM: 5

**ITEM IDENTIFICATION:** *Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses (for approval) and Draft Provostial Guidelines on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses (for information and discussion)*

**JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:** The Committee on Academic Policy and Planning has general responsibility for consideration of University-wide policy in academic matters.

Guidelines are normally brought forward for information in conjunction with existing or new Policy.

**PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:** The University has previously adopted the Provostial Guidelines for Developing Written Assessments of Effectiveness of Teaching in Promotion and Tenure Decisions (May 14, 2003). This was brought forward in line with Section III: 15, iii) of the Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments which governs "Assessments of the Candidate's Teaching Ability." This states that:

"Written assessments of the candidate's teaching ability shall be prepared in accordance with guidelines approved for the relevant department or division. These guidelines specify the manner in which the division will provide the committee with evidence from the individual's peers and from students and will offer the candidate the opportunity to supplement his or her files. Changes to divisional guidelines must be approved by the Vice-President and Provost and reviewed by the Academic Board."

It is also in line with Item 12b from the Policy and Procedures Governing Promotions, "Assessment of Teaching" which states that:

"Written assessments of the candidate's teaching effectiveness will be prepared, in accordance with guidelines approved for the relevant department or division, and presented to the Promotions Committee. These guidelines specify the manner in which the division will provide the committee with evidence from the individual's peers and

from students, and will offer the candidate the opportunity to supplement his or her file. Changes to divisional guidelines must be approved by the Vice-President and Provost and reviewed by the Academic Affairs Board.”

**CONTEXT:** In September 2009 a Working Group was formed to review course evaluation practices across the University and relevant research in the area. The Working Group’s report was issued in March 2010 and included a series of recommendations.

(<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/essentialinformation/evaluation-framework.htm>)

Following the completion of the report, a Course Evaluation Framework Implementation Group was established by the Provost’s Office. Its first priority was to develop an institutional policy (and potential supporting guidelines). The *Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses* and the attached Guidelines represent the outcome of this process.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The *Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses* outlines the principles and parameters that should guide the evaluation of teaching in courses at the University of Toronto. The specifics of how the course evaluation process will be structured and administered in particular contexts will be outlined in the *Provostial Guidelines for the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses* which is currently in development and is being brought forward for reference. The Provostial Guidelines and this course evaluation policy, in addition to divisional guidelines on course evaluation, will form an institutional framework for the evaluation of courses.

The policy states that each undergraduate and graduate course will be evaluated each time it is offered. It provides that that Instructors will have full access to all quantitative and qualitative data from course evaluations conducted in each course they have taught; that Academic administrators will have access to data (except from instructor-selected questions unless this is released by the instructor); and that, as the norm, course evaluation data will be shared with students with the proviso that individual Instructors may opt not to release data for their course(s).

The policy emphasizes that all members of the University of Toronto community have an important responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that acknowledges the importance of course evaluations to the excellence of the University’s programs and that enhances the effective and full functioning of this critical process.

**FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:** None

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Committee on Academic Policy and Planning approve:

*The Policy on the Student Evaluation of Teaching in Courses.*