

Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL)

MEMO

ATTENTION Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules
FROM Stephen Spector, Chair, Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning
RE Students and Instructor Course Evaluations:
Resubmission of SCUTL report and request for action
DATE November 17, 2010

Dear Members of the Senate Community on Agenda and Rules:

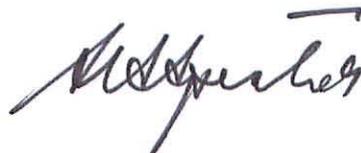
The issue of course and instructor [C&I] evaluations at SFU has been longstanding. In early 2009, SCUTL completed a report, "Evaluating How We Evaluate" and submitted this to SCAR in March 2009 with a request for advice on how to proceed. SCAR's response was that sending the report to Senate would be premature. Given the timing of the request, it was suggested that the recommendations in the report could be incorporated in the Task Force on Teaching and Learning which had yet to report to Senate.

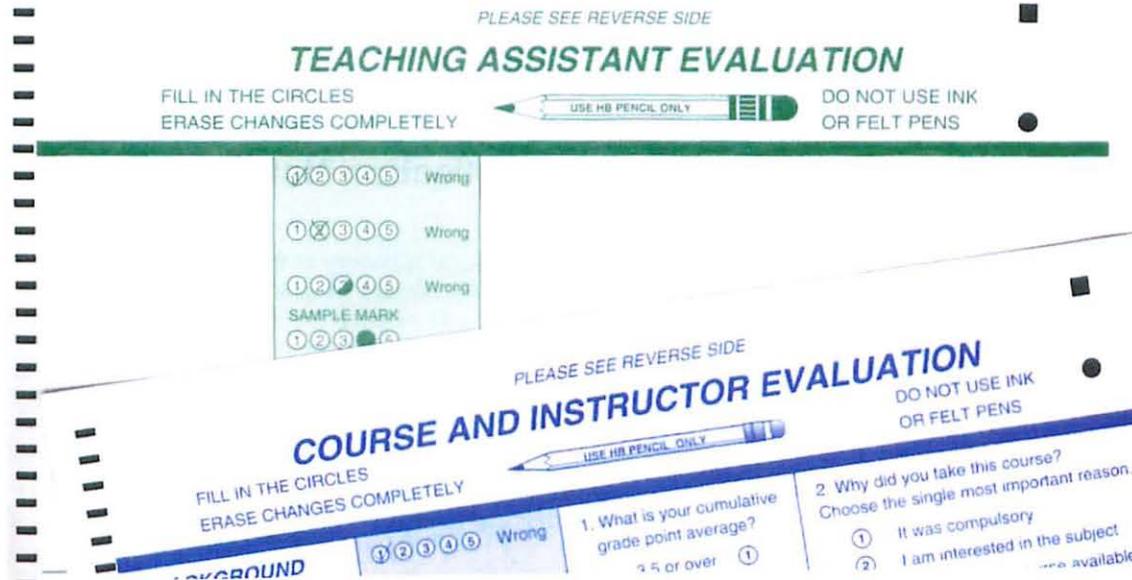
The Task Force on Teaching and Learning (TFTL) incorporated our recommendations at a conceptual level in its final recommendations. These were accepted by Dr. Jon Driver, VPA, earlier this year. However, activity on the issue of C&I evaluations has yet to commence. In the September 2010 SCUTL meeting, Dr. Driver attended and discussed this issue and advised us to forward the issue of C&I evaluations to Senate for review and approval. Dr. Driver expressed a willingness to support action to improve the process and the instruments used for C&I evaluations at SFU pending Senate approval and direction.

As noted in the TFTL's information gathering in 2008/9, the C&I evaluation was an important issue to many respondents. Departments have also been requesting changes to the generic form with the addition of specific questions, different options depending on the type of course, and options in its administration (e.g. online). Lacking institutional directions or alternatives, some departments have created their own evaluations. Furthermore, at the institutional level, both the 2010-13 academic plan and the TFTL recommendations emphasize diversifying students' learning experiences. This however, would require a range of options in C&I evaluations which do not presently exist.

Therefore, we respectfully request that Senate review our attached report and approve action on the development of new course and instructor evaluations at SFU. Senate approval would then allow the VPA, in conjunction with SCUTL, to establish a course evaluation project which would include input by a broad range of stakeholders at SFU.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.





EVALUATING HOW WE EVALUATE

Examining SFU's course and instructor evaluation system

prepared by members of the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning

Summer 2008

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE CAN DO IT BETTER	2
I — Practice	3
STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSE AND INSTRUCTORS AT SFU	3
A MIX OF FORMS	3
DISTRIBUTION METHODS	4
USES OF DATA COLLECTED	4
IS THIS WORKING?	5
II — Perspectives	7
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	7
History of evaluations at Simon Fraser University	7
Timeline of activities at SCUTL	9
STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES	10
Students	10
Instructors	11
LITERATURE FROM THE FIELD	12
III — Recommendations	16
A VARIETY OF OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	16
Summary of recommendations	16
DESIGNING A SOLUTION THAT WORKS FOR SFU	16
Recommendations	16
CREATING BEST-PRACTICES GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS	18
INFORMING OUR UTILIZATION OF EVALUATIONS	19
SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING	20
IV — Sources	22
REFERENCES AND WORKS CITED	22
V — Appendices	24
Appendix A SFSS Course Evaluation - c. 1974 (SFSS Archives)	25
Appendix B Sample Anti-Calendar (unknown source, SFSS Archives)	27
Appendix C SFU Course and Instructor Evaluation - Current	28
Appendix D SFU Teaching Assistant Evaluation - Current	29
Appendix E SFU Forms – Statements of Use	30

Executive Summary

The Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning (SCUTL) has been engaged in a process of reviewing the university's current practices and tools related to student evaluations of courses and instructors. This process has been wide-ranging and pursued at great length through a variety of avenues.

SCUTL has reviewed the history of evaluations at SFU and the various incarnations that the instruments and methods take across the university. The committee has engaged in wide-ranging consultation with experts in the field of evaluation and higher education, and has engaged students, faculty, staff, and administrators in their discussions. Overall, the committee recognizes the potential for valuable information, critiques, and suggestions to be collected through student evaluations of courses and instructors at SFU, but feels that the current instruments and methods of conducting evaluations do not encourage a full utilization of this potential.

As such, SCUTL has prepared and presents this report on student evaluations of courses and instructors at SFU. The committee recommends that evaluation methods and implements should be renewed, allowing the university community to make the best use of the information that can potentially be collected. While the committee recognizes the constraints that current fiscal realities place on the operations of the university, it also feels that reviewing and renewing evaluation practices and procedures could be a strategic investment in assuring the quality of education at SFU, by engaging students, staff, and faculty in assessing our educational endeavours and thereby identifying points of strength and areas of potential improvement.

Broadly, the Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning recommends the following, which are discussed in-depth later in the report, along with subsidiary recommendations:

- SFU should develop or obtain new course and instructor evaluation forms that can be offered to the university community.
- SFU should develop a best-practices guide for conducting student evaluations of courses and teaching.
- SFU should develop a best-practices guide for using the information collected through student evaluations for administrative and operational purposes.
- SFU should develop and ensure support for responding to student evaluations of courses and instructors.

Introduction

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE CAN DO IT BETTER

As part of its terms of reference, the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCUTL) is charged with “...provid[ing] advice and guidance on the development and upgrading of teaching evaluation instruments in use in the University” (SFU 2007).

SCUTL has been engaged in reviewing the evaluation instruments in use at SFU for some time. A history of activities at SCUTL is presented in the second part of this report, but it is important to note the significant amount of effort that has been placed into reviewing current evaluation instruments and practices. The committee feels strongly that there is a potential for valuable and useful information to be collected through student evaluations of courses and instructors at SFU but that current forms and practices are hindering these well-intentioned efforts. SCUTL feels that evaluations can be useful and that ours can be done better.

This self-examination is particularly pertinent in light of changing delivery systems/course methodology at SFU. For example, we need to be able measure the impacts of current changes to class sizes, removal of tutorials from certain courses, etc. in order reliably to assess the consequences of these changes.

This report will discuss the current practices of student evaluation of courses and instructors at SFU (Part I), will discuss a variety of perspectives, the history of evaluations at the university, and a brief review of leading academic literature on the subject (Part II), and will present a number of recommendations with detailed suggestions on how current practices can be improved, for the benefit of the entire university community (Part III).

The committee realizes that this subject can potentially be a contentious matter, but stresses that with proper consultation and engagement of all university stakeholder groups, the value in student evaluation of courses and instructors can be recognized and utilized to ensure that the university is achieving its goals of engaging all of its communities in providing the best education that it can possibly provide. The committee will remain seized of this matter and is willing to provide resource and assistance in any actions that arise out of this report.

The committee wishes to acknowledge the efforts of a number of people who have provided invaluable assistance. Acknowledgements are given to Chris Groeneboer, Amrit Mundy, Maria Davis, Gary Poole, Ted Kirkpatrick, and others who have provided advice or assistance during this process. A special thanks goes to the 2007-2008 members of SCUTL: Paul Neufeld (Faculty of Education and Chair), Janet McCracken (Faculty of Applied Sciences), Nicky Didicher (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), Stephen Spector (Faculty of Business Administration), Timothy Beischlag (Faculty of Health Sciences), Chris Kennedy (Faculty of Science), Kevin Harding (undergraduate student), Joe Qranful (graduate student), David Kaufman (Director, Learning and Instructional Development), Elaine Fairey (Director, Student Learning Commons), and Nancy Johnston (Senior Director, Student Learning and Retention).

I — Practice

STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSE AND INSTRUCTORS AT SFU

At the end of each semester, most SFU students are asked to fill in one or two bubble sheets evaluating the instructors who have taught or interacted with them. The forms are relatively simple; they collect simple demographic information with regard to the students, ask the students why they took the course, and then they delve into a complex matrix of evaluative criteria on the instructor and the course.

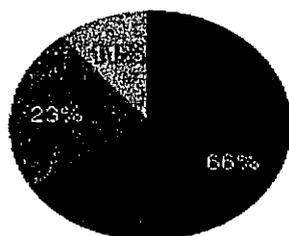
In order to understand better how departments and academic units across the university are using evaluations, a survey was developed and administered to academic units who have a staff person on the SFU Departmental Assistant contact list. Of the fifty-nine units on this list, seven were eliminated because they are units or sub-units that do not directly conduct evaluations, such as a Special Arrangements office or a Surrey campus office, leaving a sample size of fifty-two units to which the survey was administered. All units but one responded, providing a very high (98.1%) response rate (Groeneboer 2008, 4).

Of the fifty-one responses, four units did not have undergraduate sections, and graduate programs do not appear to conduct evaluations as often as undergraduate programs. Removing these four units from the sample, all of the remaining forty-seven units reported that they evaluated “all courses each term” (Groeneboer 2008, 8). Drawing from this, it is reasonable to assume that student evaluations of courses and instructors are a nearly universal practice at SFU.

A MIX OF FORMS

However, it is not safe to assume the same level of universality for the forms and instruments used across the university. As Figure 1 below indicates, while most (66%) units use the standard blue and green evaluation bubble forms so familiar to most of the SFU community, some (23% and 11%) use either a combination of the standard forms and departmental forms or

FIGURE 1 - TYPES OF FORMS (n=47)



departmental forms only, respectively (Groeneboer 2008).

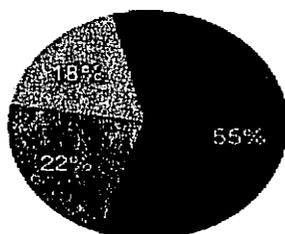
The varied use of forms is a preliminary indicator of some of the concerns that have arisen with regard to the current SFU evaluation forms. While two-thirds of departments do use the standard green and blue forms, others have supplemented these forms with their own, or entirely replaced them, in order to capture more useful data. According to the canvassing report

prepared by Chris Groeneboer, some departments use their own forms “because they wanted more space for comments[,]” or because “a couple of extra questions are added.” This raises some questions as to the efficacy of current instruments.

DISTRIBUTION METHODS

The ways in which the evaluations themselves are conducted are also not universal across the university. As illustrated below in Figure 2, while a majority of units (55%) use the

FIGURE 2 - METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION (n=47)



“standard procedure” for conducting evaluations, the rest use a variety of methods.

The “standard procedure” is one that most members of the community are familiar with. Evaluation forms are handed out, a brief explanation is given, and the instructor leaves the room. A student volunteer is asked to collect the forms and return them to the department at the end of class.

Some departments use a slight variation on this standard procedure as departmental staff or teaching assistants conduct the evaluations instead of student volunteers. A significant proportion of departments said that they had set procedures for conducting evaluations but did not specify the exact methodology. One department reported using email surveys and one department reported using online surveys. In addition to this is the course evaluation employed by the Centre for Online and Distance Education (CODE). CODE administratively supervises distance education courses and uses an online form for evaluations primarily, while giving students the option to request a paper form for evaluations if they so desire (Groeneboer 2008).

Again, this variety of distribution methods foreshadows concerns with current evaluation implementation—there does not appear to be a “best practices” model employed or communicated, raising a number of additional concerns with current practices.

USES OF DATA COLLECTED

How units actually use the data collected through evaluations is likely to be just as varied as how the evaluations are conducted. While the survey administered did not directly ask units how they used the data, comments and open-ended responses received can be used to gauge this to a certain degree.

It is generally understood that units use instructor, course, and TA evaluations to some degree with regard to human resources requirements. Generally, instructor evaluations are used

by departmental tenure and promotion committees (TPCs), teaching appointment review committees (TARCs), and appointment committees. To what extent different departments use the data collected is largely unknown; however, it is generally understood that evaluations are “only a part” of the human resources processes, which may also include discussion of teaching portfolios and other materials. Teaching assistants also have the results used during HR procedures such as hiring, with such use governed by the collective agreement between the TSSU and SFU.

Open-ended responses from the various departments also highlighted other specific usage-related information that is valuable. A number of units reported that the open-ended comments on evaluation forms represent the most valuable data collected. Some departments place a summary of course evaluation data into personnel files. Some departments asserted that they “really follow up” if there are negative comments for instructor or TA (Groeneboer 2008). This seems to imply a systemic assumption that no actions are taken to improve teaching or course quality in response to negative student evaluations.

Again, the varied usage of the data collected, at least as far as can be inferred from comments, shows the beginnings of a number of concerns that were further discussed during SCUTL’s review of evaluations. There is no best-practices guide for usage of data, nor does there appear to be an overarching university policy that directly governs the usage. TPCs and other such bodies do not currently have guidance in interpreting or following up on the information they receive via student evaluations.

IS THIS WORKING?

This brings us to the central question that SCUTL has been pondering for some time: are current methods of student evaluations of courses and instructors working?

As hinted at above, there are a number of concerns with the current practices around student evaluation of courses and instructors. While there does seem to be a widespread agreement on the value of undergraduate evaluation of courses and instructors, given that 100% of respondents indicated that undergraduate programs were being evaluated, the same cannot be said of graduate programs. Due to small class sizes and concerns over confidentiality, not all graduate sections are evaluated. This raises questions as to whether or not graduate courses should be evaluated, and if so, how.

Additionally, concerns emerge over the current evaluation practices. While two-thirds of units use the standard green and blue SFU evaluation forms, a large number either supplement these with their own, additional forms or use other instruments entirely. This would seem to indicate a disconnect between what information departments are looking for in evaluations and what they are currently receiving. Similarly, a majority of units reported following what has become standard procedure in conducting evaluations, but just less than half report following a variation of this. There is no best-practices guide on conducting evaluations aside from requiring that the person being evaluated leaves the room. This opens the current practice up to questions of efficacy and fairness as different units use different methods, all of which can potentially have an impact on the results.

The forms themselves are areas of significant concern. The questions asked are often irrelevant to actual teaching and learning in the courses evaluated. Some courses use teaching methods (such as team teaching) different from that which is assumed in the instruments, creating problems for evaluation. Additionally, faculty have serious (and well grounded) concerns over the amount of additional data that can be collected during evaluations, with concerns raised over additional sheets of complaints or concerns being attached to evaluation forms instead of being pursued through formal avenues in departments and units. Many departments have expressed an opinion that the comments section of the form is the most valuable, and have expressed a desire to see that portion preserved. Many of the individuals involved in discussions at SCUTL expressed concerns over the questions asked other than the open-ended portions, with regard both to their design and their wording. No information is available as to the author(s) of the questions on these forms or the validity of the questions, and the forms have not been updated in at least twenty-nine years.

One of the largest areas of concern that emerges is in regard to how the data are used. Both of the major constituencies involved in evaluations (students and instructors) seem to have the most concerns here. While the perspectives of students and faculty will be explored later in this report, the concerns over utilization can be explored here. Given that there do not appear to be university-wide best practices for using the data, or even common ways of using the data collected through evaluations, there is a good deal of confusion as to how the data are actually used. Faculty are generally aware as to the fact that the data actually are used, but they are not in agreement as to what extent data are used. Students are generally surprised to learn that any weight is ever applied to the consideration of the data collected, with many assuming that the evaluations are simply exercises in futility. Departments, faculty, and students all expressed a desire for useful data from evaluations that could be used towards improving teaching and learning at SFU.

Overall, the members of SCUTL believe that evaluations can indeed be valuable. However, members also agree that improvements must be made.

II — Perspectives

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to understand the rationale, recommendations, and substance of this report better, a variety of perspectives must be considered, including an historical perspective on evaluations at the university and the activities at SCUTL that give rise to this report.

History of evaluations at Simon Fraser University

Formal and official evaluations did not exist in any recognizable form when SFU opened its doors to its charter students in 1965. Indeed, university-sponsored evaluations did not start until the 1970s, and it was not until much later that university policies were established that required nearly-universal student evaluation of instructors and courses and universal survey forms (Johnston 2005, 143).

Prior to this policy change, students organized unofficial “anti-calendars,” which were published through the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS). Anti-calendars were published compilations of results of surveys and included statistical summaries of student responses to a variety of questions—with some questions very similar to those on the current course evaluation forms. Anti-calendars also included biographies of instructors, various information about the instructor’s teaching history at the institution, and recommendations from sample students in regard to the course in question.

An SFSS student course questionnaire from 1974 (a reproduction of which is included as Appendix A) asked students these questions, in addition to others:

- “What would you tell another student if he asked whether or not he should take this course?”
- “How well was the instructor prepared for his lectures?”
- “How much freedom of choice in written assignments?”
- “Was the lecturer successful in stimulating your interest in course material?”
- “What was the tutor’s attitude towards the subject of the course?”
- “Any suggestions for the improvement of this course?”

A sampling of other SFU and SFSS course evaluation questionnaires, including those administered by departmental student unions, indicates a wide variety of questions asked of students when evaluating, including whether or not the course as taught met the student’s expectations after reading the course outline (Simon Fraser Student Society 1974).

When published, anti-calendars included statistical breakdowns of the responses to the questions posed in the questionnaires and open-ended commentaries from students. An example of an anti-calendar, from an unknown source, is reproduced in Appendix B. It should be noted that at SFU such questionnaires appear to have been solely conducted by the SFSS or its various departmental student unions. Other universities (such as the University of Ottawa) conducted joint course and instructor evaluations, with the student society and the university sharing efforts and resources.

However, solely student-led evaluations do not appear to have lasted much more than fifteen years at Simon Fraser University. As Hugh Johnston notes in his SFU history book, *Radical Campus*, “SFU faculty began conducting student evaluations themselves, partly in self-defence and partly because they were, sometimes reluctantly, persuaded that they had a value” (143).

Indeed, in about 1979, the university began to change its policies and procedures around evaluations. In one report to the VP Academic, authors M. Gates and P.E. Kennedy made a number of recommendations with regard to the “principles which should govern the evaluation of teaching and the procedures which could be used” (1979, 1).

The Gates and Kennedy report made a number of suggestions, specifically that course evaluations should be tools for career progress advancement. Notable were the suggestions to limit severely the amount of input that students had in the evaluation processes, establishing university-wide “general and flexible guidelines” for departments and units to follow in evaluation, eliminating numerical ratings, and changing the names/titles of course evaluations implements from “course evaluations” to “students’ opinions.” (Gates and Kennedy 1979). Particularly memorable is the recommendation that student input on course and instructor evaluations be limited to four questions:

- i) What do you consider to be the weakest features of this course?
- ii) What do you consider to be the strongest features of this course?
- iii) What do you consider to be the weakest features of this instructor as a teacher?
- iv) What do you consider to be the strongest features of this instructor as a teacher?

(Gates and Kennedy 1979, 4)

Interestingly, these proposed questions appear nearly verbatim (the four questions have simply been condensed into two) on the current form of SFU course and teaching evaluations (See Appendix C). This would suggest that while the mechanical form of course evaluations may have changed between 1979 and now (the Gates and Kennedy report makes reference to carbon copies of comments) the questions posed and the kinds of data collected may not have been reviewed or updated for as many as twenty-nine years.

In the meantime, the student-led evaluations at SFU seem to have disappeared. Many reasons are cited, notable amongst them the costs of legal review of draft anti-calendars to avoid charges of slander and libel. Very few, if any, departmental student unions still produce anti-calendars. The only DSU in recent memory to have contemplated publishing one was the Biology Student Union. The Sociology/Anthropology Student Union was puzzled as to what an anti-calendar was, upon discovering that their constitution mandated an anti-calendar standing committee. Alternatives to anti-calendars have appeared to fill this void, notably the introduction of ratemyprofessors.com.

SFU departments and units still overwhelmingly conduct student evaluations of courses and instructors. Students do not display a large amount of confidence in the procedures, and do not always complete them or give them a large amount of attention. A considerable amount of discussion at SCUTL has centred around perceived deficiencies in current course evaluations, and proposed alternatives.

Timeline of activities at SCUTL

In 2005, SCUTL decided to act on a request from the Simon Fraser University Faculty Association to examine the issue of student evaluations, including perceived deficiencies in the current system(s) and possibilities for updating them. Over a period of two years, a sub-committee with help from an LIDC Research Assistant (Amrit Mundy) devoted time and energy to investigating many issues connected to student evaluations. Their activities included

- a literature review to determine current thinking as to validity and efficacy of student evaluations, and best practices in the field,
- a number of limited, informal surveys of students, faculty, and dept. chairs to determine their concerns with and hopes for student evaluation forms,
- interviews with administrators at Canadian academic institutions which had recently been through the process of updating their student evaluation forms, and
- examination of a number of different forms commercially available but designed at reputable academic institutions.

In the summer of 2007, the SCUTL sub-committee prepared to pilot one of the two commercially-available form sets which we felt best matched both the criteria which our faculty and students had identified as important and pedagogical concerns which our literature review had indicated to be important. However, both of our preferred form sets were American, and one of the criteria SFU faculty had indicated was important to them was that forms be processed locally, so we began negotiations to see if we could pilot one of them and process the results in Canada.

SCUTL also determined, both from the literature review and from the interviews with administrators at other institutions, that in order to make a major change in student evaluations it was important that all three of the major stakeholders (faculty, administrators, students) have significant input into the decision-making processes.

In early 2008, AVP Academic Bill Krane announced a new task force to review a number of issues related to teaching and learning at SFU. Members of SCUTL feel that examining student evaluation of courses and instructors should be included in the work undertaken by the new task force. This report is intended to be a textual statement of our beliefs in regard to course evaluations.

STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

Across the university, student evaluations are received with varying degrees of warmth, interest, or tolerance. Each constituent group of the university community acknowledges the value of student course evaluations—to a degree—and each wants course evaluations to be as useful as possible. What differs between each group is how the group views course evaluations and how each group feels that they should be used.

Students

In the heady times of SFU's birth, students conducted their own course evaluations and published them. They considered this to be a democratic form of participation in the university's governance. Over time, the university itself began conducting course evaluations, and student-led evaluations have gradually disappeared.

On the whole, students informally surveyed indicated a great deal of support for an ideal type of course evaluation in which their input was genuinely considered in times of course revision or review or when faculty and instructors were undergoing performance evaluations. However, students expressed a great deal of doubt with regard to current course evaluation practices. Common responses were

- a feeling that course evaluations do not seem to go anywhere: students fill them out and then never seem them or results again, so it seems to them pointless to offer comments, and
- a desire to see some form of publicly accessible results of scores from evaluations.

Further consultations with student leaders such as student senators and members of the Board of Directors of the SFSS resulted in a few additional comments:

- course evaluation results should be available to Senate decision-making committees such as SCUS and SCUP when reviewing course proposals, program restructuring, or program proposals, and
- course and instructor evaluations should be available to external reviewers.

In 2007, the Student Forum of the SFSS voted unanimously to express support for revising current evaluation forms to make them more useful and suggested the publication of some form of the results.

Graduate students have a considerably different experience with evaluations than do undergraduate students. First, they are often evaluated as teaching assistants in addition to offering evaluations of their instructors. Second, with the small class sizes of graduate classes, the principle of anonymity is not as guaranteed as it is with large undergraduate lectures. Third, the relationships between graduate students and their instructors who may also be supervisors can be difficult to negotiate. Some graduate students expressed concerns with current practices in regard to the use of teaching assistant evaluations. According to one student, some departments offer large lecture courses with TA support that do not have tutorials, yet they still

/

use TA evaluation forms geared toward leadership in tutorials (see Appendix D). Concern was expressed as to the value of the evaluations received from students who were evaluating a TA with whom they may have had no contact, and concern was additionally expressed about the weight of these evaluations in employee files.

Overall, students expressed support in principle for evaluations, but expressed a desire to ensure that they were meaningful and conducted in valuable ways.

Instructors

Given that a request from the Simon Fraser University Faculty Association was one impetus to SCUTL to be evaluating how we evaluate, it would appear that faculty have a desire to revise the current system. They also have a distinct perspective on student evaluations. It should be noted, however, that an in-depth survey of faculty was not conducted, and as such, no claims of representativeness are made with regard to the concerns discussed herein.

Many concerns raised by instructors have to do with the usage of the data collected and with the construction of the green and blue SFU forms that are predominantly used for course and instructor evaluation. Some concerns are as follows:

- questions asked on the green and blue forms seemed to be poorly constructed, with good and bad poles of scales being inconsistent—for example, questions 5 and 6 are centre-weighted while the rest are left-weighted (see appendix C)
- the various bodies and persons that receive the results do not necessarily have a best-practices guide on how to use the data collected
- any public disclosure of data collected (as has been suggested by students) may be a violation of privacy
- academic freedom and innovative teaching methods may be compromised if results are overly weighted in TPC and other assessments
- there is a possibility of grade inflation if instructors desire high student evaluations.

Faculty also have a considerable number of constructive criticisms:

- evaluations should be processed locally to provide for quick turn-around times (note: the current forms are processed at UBC)
- evaluations should not be conducted by a private or commercial enterprise as this raises questions of privacy
- evaluations must be conducted, processed, and stored in Canada due to concerns around privacy engendered by the Patriot Act
- evaluation questions should be validated by experts in the field in the field of psycho-educational measurement.

Additionally, faculty expressed concerns over the impacts of teaching evaluations on the practice of teaching. Concerns were expressed over the interplay between popularity and

effective teaching, and the effects that this has on teaching and learning in classes. Concerns were expressed that popularity may have a higher influence on outcomes of evaluations than would effective teaching. During discussions, SCUTL acknowledged the tensions experienced by faculty through course evaluations.

LITERATURE FROM THE FIELD

The following text is taken from a brief report prepared by former SCUTL chair Ted Kirkpatrick. The committee appreciates his work on the report.

The literature on student evaluations of teaching is vast. The IDEA Center (at Kansas State University, see <http://www.theideacenter.org/category/idea-center/about-us>) claims over 2000 articles have been published on the topic. To provide good entry points into this literature, this report highlights several articles and special issues. Most of these articles are reviews or even formal meta-analyses of prior work. In addition to these review articles, I list several other articles that make specific points of particular note.

Overviews

IDEA (n.d.) summarizes the literature in a single page. No citations are provided, but the conclusion summarizes the consensus of most experts:

Student ratings can be valuable indicators of teaching effectiveness, and they can help guide improvement efforts. But they are most useful when they are a part of a more comprehensive program which includes additional evaluation tools and a systematic program for faculty development.

Two more IDEA reports provide excellent summaries. Cashin (1989) developed a framework for evaluating college teaching. He expanded the definition of teaching to include seven areas:

- Subject matter mastery
- Curriculum development
- Course design
- Delivery of instruction
- Assessment of instruction
- Availability to students
- Administrative requirements (book orders, grades, etc. completed and on time)

Then he listed eight sources of data for evaluating these areas:

- Self
- Files
- Peers—faculty members knowledgeable about the subject matter
- Colleagues—faculty members not knowledgeable about the subject matter
- Chair/dean—the faculty member's immediate academic supervisor
- Administrators—who do not have direct supervisory relationship
- Instructional consultants

- Others

He developed a table (Table 1, p. 3) with the seven areas as rows and the eight sources as columns, suggesting which sources of data might be useful in evaluating which areas. He concluded that student evaluations are of most utility in evaluating the latter four areas (delivery, assessment, availability, and administrative requirements) and of little to no use in evaluating the first three areas (subject matter, curriculum development, and course design). Specific examples are given by IDEA (n.d.), that students cannot judge “the appropriateness of the instructor's objectives, the relevance of assignments or readings, the degree to which subject matter content was balanced and up-to-date, or the degree to which grading standards were unduly lax or severe.”

In a later report, Cashin (1996) provided 20 guidelines for successful evaluation of the complete faculty contribution, including teaching, research, and service components, as applicable. He argued,

As one reads the different authors, one is struck by the high degree of agreement among them. I would suggest that among those knowledgeable of the literature and experienced in the field, there is 80 to 90 percent agreement about the general principles that should guide effective faculty evaluation. The answers to the important questions are known, although not necessarily on every campus.

These three articles are short and reflect the contemporary consensus, despite their age.

Validity concerns

A large literature exists on the validity of student evaluations, under what circumstances they are valid, and what constructs they measure. A Current Issues section of *American Psychologist* (Greenwald, 1997) presented competing viewpoints (d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; Greenwald & Gillmore, 1997; Marsh & Roche, 1997; McKeachie, 1997).

Each of the four articles provided different answers to four validity questions:

1. Conceptual structure: Are ratings conceptually unidimensional or multidimensional?
2. Convergent validity: How well are ratings measures correlated with other indicators of effective teaching?
3. Discriminant validity: Are ratings influenced by variables unrelated to effective teaching?
4. Consequential validity: Are ratings results used in a fashion that is beneficial to the educational system?

The key point, from my perspective, is in Greenwald's (1997) originating question:

My interest in student ratings had a sudden onset. In 1989, I received the highest student rating evaluations I had ever received for teaching an undergraduate honors seminar. The sudden interest came, not then, but a year later, when I received my lowest ever evaluations. The two ratings were separated by eight deciles according to the university's norms—about 2.5 standard deviations apart. But these two ratings were for the same

course, taught in the same fashion, with a syllabus that was only slightly changed. (p. 1182)

McKeachie (1997) replied,

Had I been consulting with him about the ratings, I would have said something like this:

“Tony, classes differ. Effective teaching is not just a matter of finding a method that works well and using it consistently. Rather, teaching is an interactive process between the students and the teacher. Good teaching involves building bridges between what is in your head and what is in the students' heads. What works for one student or for one class may not work for others. Next time, get some ratings early in the term, and if things are not going well, let's talk about varying your strategies.”

I think this puts the validity debate in perspective.

Olivares (2003) offered another widely-cited critique of the validity of student ratings. His arguments strike me as attacks on a straw figure. He lists four requirements for student ratings to be valid objective measures (p. 236). Not surprisingly, he can assemble counter-examples to every one of these requirements, and therefore student ratings lack psychometric validity. However, his conclusion acknowledges that student ratings may still have use:

Considering the foregoing analysis what can be concluded regarding the utility of numerical student ratings of teachers? It depends on the purpose of SRTs. Armstrong (1998) suggested, “there is no evidence that the use of teacher ratings improves learning in the long run” (p. 1223). Nor is there evidence to show that SRTs improves teacher quality (Feldman, 1983; Ryan et al., 1980). If, however, SRTs are intended to serve as a convenient method to evaluate teachers using students' opinions of their satisfaction with the course or teacher, then SRTs can be considered to have practical utility.

Thus, a lack of validity does not mean that SRTs are not useful; rather, it just suggests that SRTs are not measuring what they intended to measure and therefore inferences regarding teacher effectiveness or student learning should be constrained.

Much of the debate concerning validity of student ratings centers around differing definitions of “what they are intended to measure.” I would argue for McKeachie's (1997) more pragmatic emphasis, that student ratings are best viewed as subjective responses and can provide useful information when viewed in that light. As Mike Theall (2006) wrote in an online discussion forum

Ratings are intended to present students' opinions and they are doing just that.... Pseudo-psychometric issues ... are far less important than emphasis on appropriate interpretation and use of those data....

Appropriate use of students' opinions requires that they are embedded in a comprehensive process for evaluating faculty performance; that they are considered in light of other evidence; that context and other factors are considered in interpreting the data; and that evaluation is accompanied by administrative support in as many forms as are necessary to insure effective teaching and learning.

I consider that the best conclusion to the debate over validity of student evaluations.

Course evaluations as predictors of learning

A recent study by Weinberg, Fleisher, and Hashimoto (2007) took a new approach to assessing the value of course evaluations. As economists, Weinberg et al. took an economic value viewpoint. Their paper argues that course evaluations are ultimately intended to help the university fulfil its role of increasing the nation's human capital. After several pages of dense economic theory (which I am unqualified to evaluate), they present a model relating student evaluations of teaching in a first course in economics to expected performance in a second course building on the first. Co-varying for many other factors (including grades received, ethnicity, and others), they assess how well students' assessment of the first course's effectiveness predicts their grade in the second course. They conclude,

When both current and future course grades are included in the same regression (column 3), the effect of current grade clearly dominates, and the coefficient [for teaching effectiveness as a predictor of] future grade is small and insignificant. (p. 15)

This study is the first one of any size that considers teaching evaluations in terms of grades in later courses. It appears well-designed, and its message that teaching evaluations do not measure learning of knowledge that will be useful in future courses should be taken into consideration.

[end of embedded report by Ted Kirkpatrick]

III — Recommendations

A VARIETY OF OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senate Committee on University Teaching and Learning spent a considerable amount of time assessing the various forms of evaluation implements used at institutions across the province, the country, and in other locations. Careful examination of the variety of options available across the spectrum has led the members of SCUTL to develop a number of recommendations for proceeding.

Summary of recommendations

The recommendations that SCUTL makes can be summarized into changing current implements, updating current practices, and ensuring that support exists to work with the information collected through evaluations. Below is a four-point summation of the recommendations that SCUTL makes; each point will be expanded on below. There are sub-recommendations and detailed suggestions that accompany each wider recommendation. In broad terms, SCUTL recommends the following:

1. SFU should develop or obtain new course and instructor evaluation forms that can be offered to the university community.
2. SFU should develop a best-practices guide for conducting student evaluations of courses and teaching.
3. SFU should develop a best-practices guide for using the information collected through student evaluations for administrative and operational purposes.
4. SFU should develop and ensure support for responding to student evaluations of courses and instructors.

DESIGNING A SOLUTION THAT WORKS FOR SFU

Much discussion at SCUTL centred on perceived deficiencies of the current course and instructor evaluation forms that SFU uses (see Appendix C, but recall that different departments and units supplement these or use other forms) and discussion around how the various forms could be improved to ensure that adequate information was being collected and that the questions asked are as fair and as useful as possible. This gives rise to the first set of recommendations, all of which deal with improving the implements that we use for student evaluations of courses and instructors.

Recommendations

1. Develop or obtain new course and instructor evaluation forms that can be offered to the university community.

The committee felt strongly that a revision or replacement of the current evaluation forms must be conducted. This opinion was arrived at through a considerable amount of discussion of current implements, usages, and methods of evaluation. SCUTL felt that new forms could either be 1/ developed locally, 2/ modified from currently existing forms, or 3/ obtained from

commercial suppliers. However, members also felt that the forms should be processed locally, due both to time constraints and privacy concerns.

- 1.1. Options similar to those used at UBC (a common core module plus unit-specific questions) or the University of Washington (different forms for various units/kinds of courses) should be considered, balancing the need for university-wide assessment and unit-specific information.

The committee felt that a “one-size-fits-all” solution would not work at SFU, given both the recommendations in the literature (which recommends different methods of evaluation for different disciplines or methods of teaching) and the desires of various units to use solutions that fit their needs best. Current practice supports this, with a third of units that conduct evaluations either supplementing SFU forms with their own or using their own exclusively. However, the committee balanced this with university-wide operational needs. The University of British Columbia uses a specific method that approaches a best-case median of this dilemma, with a common core set of questions that are asked of students across the university and a number of questions that can be specified by the various units. This sort of evaluation instrument would allow not only for discipline-specific questions, but also allow units to tailor evaluations for different methods of delivery such as field schools, wet labs, practicum courses, seminars, etc. This would likely satisfy the majority of units at SFU, allowing them to continue asking the questions that they currently are (and continuing to use any amassed data) while providing an institution-wide refresh of evaluation implements.

- 1.2. Distinction in the form should be made between evaluation of the course as a course and the instructor as a teacher.

The committee felt that one of the problems that currently exists with the SFU evaluation procedures is a fuzzy boundary between evaluating the instructor as an instructor and the course as a course: the section called “general” seems to be where the course evaluation happens, but it could have a clearer title. The section called “course grading” may apply either to the course or the instructor, depending on the circumstances of delivery. Other instruments make a very clear distinction between course and instructor evaluation, with some going so far as to have separate forms for these purposes. While the committee recognized that courses are often developed by individual instructors, it also recognized the value in evaluating courses against student expectations and desires. SCUTL also discussed the utility of evaluating programs or streams, and opportunities for this. Some members believed that a clearer division between evaluation of the instructor and evaluation of the course could provide an ability for institutional use of the comments or data collected.

- 1.3. Consideration should be given to the unique environment of graduate courses and instruction when developing new forms and practices.

Given that graduate courses often have small enrolments, graduate students reported a concern over the anonymity when responding to course evaluations. The unique supervisor/student relationship also factored heavily into this discussion. Some departments are conducting graduate evaluations in unique ways, such as having the graduate chair of the program interview classes. Whatever course of action with regard to student evaluations SFU

settles on, consideration should be given to the unique nature of graduate instruction and courses when developing new implements.

- 1.4. Create an electronic repository to allow for university-wide access to forms and related resources.

Whichever way new implements are developed, the committee felt that sharing information with regard to the instruments and practices was vital to ensure that the maximum use of evaluations was being realized. Specifically, an online repository of information relating to evaluations was suggested, to allow all members of the university community access to combined and collected knowledge. Note: this would not be a repository of student ratings and comments, but one which details the forms SFU supports and the best-practices guidelines for conducting evaluations.

CREATING BEST-PRACTICES GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING EVALUATIONS

One of the most pervasive issues that continuously appeared in discussions at SCUTL was the many methods by which various units conduct evaluations. Some members were concerned about the variety of methods, and in discussions, other methods of conducting evaluations were considered.

2. Develop a best-practices guide for conducting student evaluations of courses and teaching.

SCUTL members strongly agreed that a best-practices guide should be developed and made available to the university community. Such a best-practices guide should not be mandatory policy, but set out ideal conditions and procedures through which evaluations should be conducted. This guide should also outline acceptable levels and means of public dissemination of results. A number of additional recommendations accompany the recommendation for a best-practices guide.

- 2.1. Students should be informed of the uses of the information collected in a clear and coherent manner.

Currently, students are informed as to the uses of evaluations through a legalistic-sounding disclaimer on the back of the current forms. While the student members of SCUTL have become somewhat intimately familiar with practices around the use of data, the same cannot be said of the student population. While most faculty and TAs know how data are used during reviews or tenure and promotion committee meetings, most students feel that the evaluations are simply exercises in futility. It is likely that a clear and coherent explanation of the uses of the data collected would go a long way in assuaging the concerns of students.

- 2.2. Explain and make students aware of the opportunities that exist for students to provide feedback outside of course evaluations.

A large amount of concern currently exists over the perception that student evaluations are an opportunity for disgruntled undergraduates to exact revenge on their instructors. However, this may very well be because students are not necessarily aware of the alternative ways that they can voice complaints about courses and instructors. SCUTL feels that the student evaluations are not an appropriate venue for initiating grievances/actions versus the instructor, and, as part of the best-practices guide, the committee feels that students should be informed as to the various opportunities that exist for them to pursue these outside of evaluations (such as

/

bringing concerns to the department/unit Chair or to a departmental student union), in an attempt to ensure that constructive responses are collected on evaluations.

2.3. Timing issues should be explored.

Currently, there is no university-wide recommendation on when to conduct evaluations, aside from the fact that they should be conducted before final examinations. SCUTL does not necessarily endorse this stipulation: one advantage of offering electronic evaluations after the final examination would be that students could offer comments on the fairness of the exam and of the grading of materials which they do not receive back until after the end of classes. In general, the committee felt that timing issues should be considered when developing a best-practices guide.

2.4. Explore moving to on-line evaluation implements or processing evaluations locally.

While reviewing options for evaluation implements, the committee felt that consideration should be given to moving to online surveys. Online surveys have a number of advantages over paper surveys, given that they can be processed almost instantly, are secure, can guarantee confidentiality, and are highly customizable. However, drawbacks were also identified, especially in lower response rates (online evaluations through CODE receive a response rate of approximately 20%). To improve these, completion of evaluations could be tied to grade release (in a manner similar to library fines) or SFU could offer incentives, for example a lottery for prizes such as ipods/laptops drawn from all completed evaluations.

2.5. Encourage instructors to engage in informal formative evaluations throughout the semester.

During SCUTL discussions, innovative practices already in place at SFU were also identified. Some faculty currently conduct informal evaluations at mid-term, which allows students to provide immediate feedback and see results during the course. Consideration should be given to encourage instructors who are willing to do this to continue to do so and share their experiences with others. We also note that mid-term evaluations accompanied by a narrative account of changes in methodology/content which the instructor institutes to respond to those evaluations can be useful as part of a teaching dossier in faculty applications for promotion and tenure.

Additionally, the committee discussed the possibility of creating an anonymous, consistent, and university-wide communication mechanism for students to provide feedback outside of course evaluations, with such feedback going to the instructor of the course.

INFORMING OUR UTILIZATION OF EVALUATIONS

Along with developing a best-practices guide on how to conduct evaluations, the committee also recommends developing a best-practices guide on how to use the information collected.

3. Develop a best-practices guide for using the information collected through student evaluations for administrative and operational purposes.

3.1. TPCs and TARC's should be informed about best practices for interpreting data collected from evaluations.

The committee felt that the committees that deal with instructor evaluations should be informed about the best practices for interpreting data collected. Some specific suggestions included suggesting criteria-based assessment when reviewing evaluations, along with looking at the data collected in light of the full teaching portfolio. Other suggestions included a formalized process for allowing faculty to enter responses to course evaluations to review committees, and ensuring that evaluations are only a part of the overall assessment.

- 3.2. The persons and bodies responsible for hiring sessional instructors and teaching assistants should be informed about best practices for interpreting data from evaluations.

This suggestion follows from the suggestions for faculty and instructors, as the committee felt that any HR related use of the information collected through evaluations should be accompanied by an understanding of the best practices for interpreting the data.

- 3.3. Issues around tutorials, labs, and TAs must be considered when considering evaluation results.

Some graduate students have reported that they have been evaluated as TAs even when they have no direct contact hours with students. These students are performing marking and related duties and attending office hours and lectures, but have no tutorials—and yet students are asked to evaluate them. There are undoubtedly other considerations with more complicated vectors, and these should be kept in mind when considering evaluation results.

- 3.4. Information from course evaluations should be shared with decision-making bodies where appropriate and possible.

Various decision-making bodies approve course changes or program changes without having access to even the meagre data currently collected that could be very useful. One example is the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies (SCUS), which must approve course edits or prerequisite deletions, amongst other changes. While current forms ask students if prerequisites are necessary, such data are not presented to SCUS for consideration. The committee felt that such data, where possible to be shared, should be shared in the interests of informed decision making. This will be of particular significance in assessment of current changes to formats for course delivery (changes to class sizes, removal of tutorials, etc.).

SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING

SCUTL felt that course evaluations have the potential ability to identify cases where good teaching could be recognized or where opportunities for improvement could be identified. As such, the committee felt strongly that all opportunities to support teaching and learning should be clarified and promoted to all instructors at SFU. Additionally, the committee felt that proactive engagement with all those engaged in teaching at SFU should be considered.

4. Develop and ensure support for instructors in responding to student evaluation.

The committee felt that current programs that are intended to support teaching and learning need to be continued and that new programs and initiatives should be explored, wherever possible.

- 4.1 Opportunities for supporting teaching and learning need to be clarified and promoted as an opportunity for instructors.

The committee recognized that a number of opportunities for instructional development currently exist, but it felt that the opportunities are often not promoted to the fullest extent or are not clarified as opportunities for instructors to participate in.

- 4.2 Support should be available for all instructors, irrespective of the evaluation results and without consideration of rank.

The committee felt that all instructors should have the opportunity to participate in instructional development opportunities, irrespective of evaluation results, and without consideration of their academic rank or status. The committee felt that this would provide all individuals engaged in teaching at SFU with the opportunity to engage in informed self-assessment, share their skills and abilities, and learn varied approaches to teaching across the many disciplines and units at the university.

- 4.3 Opportunities and support should be provided for one-on-one consultation with peers, peer mentors, peer networks, or available specialists at SFU.

The committee recognized the potential value of peer networks and peer mentoring programs in which faculty work together on sharing skills and suggestions. Additional value was recognised in working with teaching specialists in support departments, faculty in other departments, and a potential institutionalization of the peer mentorship program found in some units.

CONCLUSION

SCUTL respectfully submits this report to the Senate of Simon Fraser University, asking Senate to read it and to consider our recommendations. We feel that re-examining current instruments and practices with regard to student evaluations is of particular significance to SFU in light of ongoing changes in course delivery methods and formats and in light of SFU's current Task Force on Teaching and Learning.

IV — Sources

REFERENCES AND WORKS CITED

- Cashin, W. E. (1989). *Defining and evaluating college teaching* (Paper No. 21): IDEA Center, Kansas State University.
- Cashin, W. E. (1996). *Developing an effective faculty evaluation system* (IDEA Paper No. 33): IDEA Centre, Kansas State University.
- d'Apollonia, S., & Abrami, P. C. (1997). Navigating student ratings of instruction. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1198-1208.
- Gates, M. and P. E. Kennedy. 1979. "Evaluation of Teaching at S.F.U." Unpublished. Accessed from SFSS Archives, folder #703.15 (Course Evaluation Miscellaneous)
- Greenwald, A. G. (1997). Validity concerns and usefulness of student ratings of instruction. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1182-1186.
- Greenwald, A. G., & Gillmore, G. M. (1997). Grading leniency is a removable contaminant of student ratings. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1209-1217.
- Groeneboer, Chris. 2008. "SCUTL Course Evaluation Canvass Final Report." Unpublished. Available from Learning and Instructional Development Centre, Simon Fraser University.
- IDEA. (n.d.). *Overview of student ratings: Value and limitations*: IDEA Center, Kansas State University.
- Johnston, Hugh. 2005. *radical campus: Making Simon Fraser University*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, Ltd.
- Marsh, H. W., & Roche, L. A. (1997). Making students' ratings of teacher effectiveness effective. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1187-1197.
- McKeachie, W. J. (1997). Student ratings: The validity of use. *American Psychologist*, 52(11), 1218-1225.
- Olivares, O. J. (2003). A conceptual and analytic critique of student ratings of teaching in the USA with implications for teacher effectiveness and student learning. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 8(2), 233-245.
- Simon Fraser Student Society. 1974. "Student Course Questionnaire." Accessed from SFSS Archives, folder #703.15 (Course Evaluation SFSS Anti-Calendars)
- Simon Fraser University. 2007. "SCUTL - Senate - Simon Fraser University." <http://www.SFU.ca/senate/SenateComms/SCUTL/> Accessed 28 May 2008.

Theall, M. (2006, Electronic discussion entry, Sep. 7). Re: Effect of research on SETs. Retrieved May 16, 2008, from <http://listserv.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0609&L=pod&F=&S=&P=3766>

Weinberg, B. A., Fleisher, B. M., & Hashimoto, M. (2007). Evaluating methods for evaluating instruction: The case of higher education (Working paper No. 12844). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

V — Appendices

1

evaluating how we evaluate — senate committee on university teaching and learning

The lecturer's choice and effective use of audio-visual aids, etc. was:

- 20. Very good
- 21. Good
- 22. Adequate
- 23. Poor
- 24. Very poor
- 25. The lecturer is:
 - a) Generally available
 - b) Generally available but unhelpful
 - c) Generally unavailable but helpful
 - d) Neither available nor helpful
 - e) Don't know—never met the lecturer.
- 26. The lecturer:
 - a) Encourages and elicits thoughtful disagreement.
 - b) Accepts disagreement very well.
 - c) Tends to discourage disagreement.
 - d) Is intolerant of disagreement.
 - e) Was never tested.
- 27. What percentage of the lectures did you attend?
 - a) 0 to 20.
 - b) 20 to 40.
 - c) 40 to 60.
 - d) 60 to 80.
 - e) 80 to 100.

SECTION E: TUTORIALS AND LABS

- 28. How well was the tutor prepared for class meetings?
 - a) Always well prepared.
 - b) Usually well prepared.
 - c) Inadequately prepared at times.
 - d) Frequently inadequately prepared.
 - e) Never adequately prepared.
- 29. What was the tutor's attitude towards the subject of the course?
 - a) Enthusiastic.
 - b) Secured interest.
 - c) Secured somewhat bored at times.
 - d) Uninterested.
- 30. The tutor's ability to explain is:
 - a) Very good.
 - b) Good.
 - c) Adequate.
 - d) Poor.
 - e) Very poor.
- 31. Was the tutor successful in stimulating your interest in the course material?
 - a) Very successful.
 - b) Quite successful.
 - c) Not very successful.
 - d) Totally unsuccessful.

The tutor's choice and effective use of audio-visual aids, etc. was:

- 32. The tutor:
 - a) Encourages and elicits thoughtful disagreement.
 - b) Accepts disagreement very well.
 - c) Tends to discourage disagreement.
 - d) Is intolerant of disagreement.
 - e) Don't know—was never tested.
- 33. For what purposes were the tutorials primarily used?
 - a) To discuss lecture material.
 - b) To discuss material not covered in the lectures but related to the course.
 - c) To discuss required readings.
 - d) To present another lecture.
- 34. The tutor is:
 - a) Generally available and helpful.
 - b) Generally available but unhelpful.
 - c) Generally unavailable but helpful.
 - d) Neither available nor helpful.
 - e) Don't know—never met the tutor.
- 35. What percentage of the tutorials did you attend?
 - a) 0 to 20.
 - b) 20 to 40.
 - c) 40 to 60.
 - d) 60 to 80.
 - e) 80 to 100.
- 36. With respect to overall comprehension of the course, time spent on labs was:
 - a) Of no use.
 - b) Of little use.
 - c) Useful.
 - d) Very useful.
 - e) No lab.

What aspects of this course have you liked most?
 What aspects of this course have you liked least?
 Any suggestions for the improvement of this course?
 What other questions do you think should be included?

STUDENT COURSE QUESTIONNAIRE Nov. 1974
 Simon Fraser Student Society

Dept:
 Course No:
 Prof:
 TA:

You are being asked to complete this questionnaire as part of a project by S.F.S.S. to establish an anti-calendar at Simon Fraser. Your attitudes honestly and thoughtfully expressed are welcomed so that future courses may be planned and conducted with the benefit of constructive student opinions.

You are not asked to sign this questionnaire so that your opinions will not be connected with you personally. Certain classifying data is needed so that it can be determined whether opinions concerning this course are related to area of concentration, age, grade point average, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Use an HB pencil or heavier when filling out the answer sheet.
2. For each question choose only one alternative. The computer can cope with only one answer.
3. It is essential that the classification section be filled out correctly in the box provided at the top right hand corner of the answer sheet.
4. Please note that a separate sheet is provided for additional written comments. Do not write on the answer sheet.
5. If you feel questions are irrelevant please omit them.

THANK YOU

Miss. Chandra Sigo

CLASSIFICATION DATA

PLACE THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN THIS SECTION ONLY IN THE BOX PROVIDED AT THE TOP RIGHT HAND PORTION OF THE PAGE.

- 1. Place the tutorial code number provided you on line I.
- 2. Line II is this course within your major or intended major discipline?
 - 1. Yes.
 - 2. No.
- 3. Line III Age.
 - 1. 19 or below.
 - 2. 20 or 21.
 - 3. 22 to 25.
 - 4. 26 to 30.
 - 5. 31 or over.
- 4. Line IV Indicate accumulated credit hours to date.
 - 1. 0 to 29.
 - 2. 30 to 44.
 - 3. 45 to 59.
 - 4. 60 to 74.
 - 5. 75 or more.
- 5. Line V Indicate grade point average last semester.
 - 1. A. 3.50 to 4.00
 - 2. B. 2.75 to 3.49
 - 3. C. 2.00 to 2.74
 - 4. D. or below, 0. to 1.99
 - 5. Fast semester.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

SECTION A: THE COURSE AS A WHOLE

- 1. What is your principal reason for taking this course?
 - a) Required.
 - b) One of a group which must be chosen.
 - c) Purely optional.
 - d) Heavy credit.
 - e) Fitted my schedule.
- 2. The most enjoyable part of the course was:
 - a) Lectures.
 - b) Tutorials.
 - c) Assignments.
 - d) Labs and field work.
 - e) Personal consultation with instructor.
- 3. The overall organization of the course was:
 - a) Very well planned.
 - b) Well planned.
 - c) About right.
 - d) Somewhat disorganized.
 - e) Far too disorganized.
- 4. What would you tell another student if he asked whether or not he should take this course?
 - a) Don't miss it.
 - b) It's a good course.
 - c) It's adequate.
 - d) Take it only if you have to.
 - e) Avoid it.
- 5. Criteria for grading in this course were:
 - a) Fair and clearly stated.
 - b) Unfair and clearly stated.
 - c) Not stated.
- 6. The standards used in grading this course were:
 - a) Very lenient.
 - b) Somewhat lenient.
 - c) About right.
 - d) Somewhat strict.
 - e) Very strict.

SECTION B: READINGS AND WRITTEN WORK

- 7. The reading assignments were:
 - a) Relevant and stimulating.
 - b) Relevant.
 - c) Adequate.
 - d) Irrelevant.
 - e) Irrelevant and dull.
- 8. The library resources relevant to the course are:
 - a) Totally insufficient.
 - b) Somewhat insufficient.
 - c) Adequate.
 - d) Totally sufficient.
 - e) Excellent.
- 9. How much time spent each week reading for the course?
 - a) 0 to 1 hour.
 - b) 2 or 3 hours.
 - c) 4 or 5 hours.
 - d) 6 or 7 hours.
 - e) More than 7 hours.

- 10. The amount of time spent on written work was:
 - a) Far too little.
 - b) Somewhat too little.
 - c) About right.
 - d) Somewhat too much.
 - e) Far too much.
- 11. How much freedom of choice in written assignments?
 - a) Far too little.
 - b) Somewhat too little.
 - c) About right.
 - d) Somewhat too much.
 - e) Far too much.
- 12. Comments on your written work were:
 - a) Very constructive.
 - b) Somewhat constructive.
 - c) Never constructive.
 - d) Destructive.
 - e) No comments at all.

SECTION C: EXAMINATIONS

- 13. The exams were oriented toward:
 - a) Lecture material.
 - b) Lectures and reading.
 - c) Reading.
- 14. How about the clearness of exam questions?
 - a) Vague and ambiguous.
 - b) Moderately clear.
 - c) Usually quite clear.
 - d) Very clear.
- 15. How adequately did exams test your overall comprehension of the course?
 - a) Not at all.
 - b) Very inadequately.
 - c) Somewhat inadequately.
 - d) Adequately.

SECTION D: LECTURES

- 16. How well was the instructor prepared for his lectures?
 - a) Always well prepared.
 - b) Usually well prepared.
 - c) Inadequately prepared at times.
 - d) Frequently inadequately prepared.
 - e) Never prepared.
- 17. The lecturer's speaking ability is:
 - a) Very good.
 - b) Good.
 - c) Adequate.
 - d) Poor.
 - e) Very poor.
- 18. The lecturer's ability to explain is:
 - a) Very good.
 - b) Good.
 - c) Adequate.
 - d) Poor.
 - e) Very poor.
- 19. Was the lecturer successful in stimulating your interest in the course material?
 - a) Very successful.
 - b) Quite successful.
 - c) Not very successful.
 - d) Totally unsuccessful.

Sample Anti-Calendar (unknown source, SFSS Archives)

biology³⁴

BIOL 106: BIOLOGY

Ted Robinson

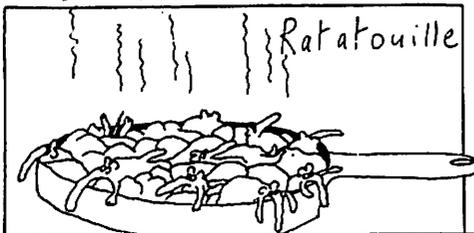
Course: BIOL 106	Staff Member: Assoc. Prof. Robinson, Prof. Moore	Star Rating: ***
ASSESSMENT		Response Guide
C Test	SA - strongly agree	
D Essay	A - agree	
F Tests	U - undecided	
E Exam 50	D - disagree	
J Prac 30	SD - strongly disagree	
F Final		
O Other 15		
Fairly assessed		SA A U D SD
Clearly explained		15 47 2 0 0
Informed of progress		3 23 43 19 0
LECTURES & LECTURERS		
Lecturer's claimed availability..... hrs		SA A U D SD
Interesting		30 80 0 0 0
Well organized/presented		47 57 10 0 0
Attended most		45 39 2 0 0
Available for consultation		37 40 19 3 0
Would like to have this lecturer again		31 40 7 2 0
TUTORS & TUTORIALS		
Relevant & interesting		SA A U D SD
Well organized/presented		19 20 0 0 0
Attended most		11 17 0 0 0
Available for consultation		20 17 0 0 0
Did not monopolize class time		3 30 0 0 0
Helpful & sympathetic		19 20 0 0 0
Complemented lectures		18 19 3 0 0
Would like to have this tutor again		7 15 0 0 0
PRACTICALS & DEMONSTRATORS		
Interesting		SA A U D SD
Well organized/presented		17 63 1 0 0
Attended most		23 50 3 0 0
Complemented lectures		46 27 0 0 0
Helpful/sympathetic		37 41 7 0 0
WORKLOAD		
Relatively light		SA A U D SD
GENERAL		27 63 7 0 0
Glad having done course		7 37 17 10 0
Pre-reqs, co-reqs, helpful		1 20 27 12 7
Encouraged independent, critical thought		30 41 0 0 0
References/Text available		32 40 3 0 0
References/Text useful		40 29 7 7 0
Course relevant to my degree		37 50 3 3 0
Recommend course		43 40 0 0 0
Adequate use made of teaching aids (e.g. A.V.)		

Opinion 1

BIOL 105 is a prerequisite. Arms & Camp - great textbook (the best I've seen). The lecturer (Ted Robinson) was excellent. If I were giving him a grade I'd give him an "A". Maybe there should be one lecture and one tutorial instead of two lectures/week. This course is the best one I have done all year. The subject was very interesting as well.

Opinion 2

Read widely, it's not strictly necessary, but it's interesting to do so. Keep up with the work and get help with problems as they arise. I enjoyed the casual atmosphere of the practs. and the helpfulness of the staff. In some of the mini courses there was a discrepancy between the demonstrations mentioned on the tape and what was available in the lab; Lab sessions need more tutors.



BIOL 205: INTRODUCTORY BIOCHEMISTRY

Dr Hiller

Course: BIOL 205	Staff Member: Dr Hiller	Star Rating: **
ASSESSMENT		Response Guide
C Test	SA - strongly agree	
D Essay	A - agree	
F Tests	U - undecided	
E Exam	D - disagree	
S	SD - strongly disagree	
F Final		
O Other		
Fairly assessed		SA A U D SD
Clearly explained		26 82 0 0 0
Informed of progress		1 30 40 10 0
LECTURES & LECTURERS		
Lecturer's claimed availability..... hrs		SA A U D SD
Interesting		15 24 16 5 0
Well organized/presented		10 30 8 10 0
Attended most		15 36 25 5 0
Available for consultation		5 30 40 10 0
Would like to have this lecturer again		
TUTORS & TUTORIALS		
Relevant & interesting		SA A U D SD
Well organized/presented		10 24 16 5 0
Attended most		20 48 0 0 0
Available for consultation		15 40 0 0 0
Did not monopolize class time		11 40 8 0 0
Helpful & sympathetic		15 40 10 0 0
Complemented lectures		10 36 0 0 0
Would like to have this tutor again		10 40 10 0 0
PRACTICALS & DEMONSTRATORS		
Interesting		SA A U D SD
Well organized/presented		10 24 16 5 0
Attended most		30 40 0 0 0
Complemented lectures		25 40 0 0 0
Helpful/sympathetic		25 40 10 0 0
WORKLOAD		
Relatively light		SA A U D SD
GENERAL		15 40 20 5 0
Glad having done course		10 30 20 5 0
Pre-reqs, co-reqs, helpful		10 30 20 5 0
Encouraged independent, critical thought		10 30 20 5 0
References/Text available		10 30 20 5 0
References/Text useful		10 30 20 5 0
Course relevant to my degree		10 30 20 5 0
Recommend course		10 30 20 5 0
Adequate use made of teaching aids (e.g. A.V.)		



Opinion

Read from the text book frequently. Don't fall far behind in Prac. write ups. BIOL 210 or HSC Biology would be handy in covering respiration and photosynthesis. Lecture notes were good, lectures were O.K., but certainly required clarification from textbook. Rosemary Davy was an excellent tutor and went to lengths to make sure everyone understood the theory behind the experiments. Hiller's summary of lectures at the end was good. Maybe he could give them a bit slower so that notes could be taken, and avoid standing in front of overhead projector and casting shadow on screen. Another point in favour of the course was that the experiments covered work from the lectures well.

BIOL 206: GENETICS

Peter Johnston

Assessment

- Examination - 60%
- 2 assignments & seminar - 20%
- 2 problem tests 20%



SEX

Putty delish us! Look! Don't miss the new issue! Putty delish us! Look! Don't miss the new issue! Putty delish us! Look! Don't miss the new issue!

Appendix C
SFU Course and Instructor Evaluation - Current

PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE

COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

FILL IN THE CIRCLES
ERASE CHANGES COMPLETELY

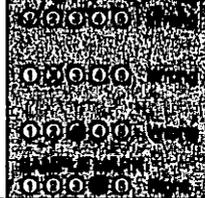


DO NOT USE INK
OR FELT PENS

BACKGROUND

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

The results are carefully considered in decisions regarding course revisions, and promotion and tenure of faculty members.



1. What is your cumulative grade point average?

- 3.5 or over ①
- 3.0 to 3.49 ②
- 2.5 to 2.99 ③
- 2.0 to 2.49 ④
- below 2.0 ⑤

2. Why did you take this course?

Choose the single most important reason.

- ① It was compulsory
- ② I am interested in the subject
- ③ No alternative course available
- ④ It looked like an easy credit
- ⑤ Other reasons

GENERAL

- 3. How often did you attend the lectures/seminars?
- 4. The course prerequisites were
- 5. The overall level of difficulty for the course was
- 6. The amount of work required for the course was
- 7. How valuable was the course content?
- 8. The course text or supplementary material was
- 9. I would rate this course as

- always ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- essential ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- too easy ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- too little ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- vary ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- relevant ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

- hardly over
- not essential
- too difficult
- too much
- not very
- irrelevant

COURSE GRADING

- 10. The assignments and lecture/seminar material were
- 11. The exams and assignments were on the whole
- 12. The marking scheme was on the whole

- well related ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- fair ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- fair ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

- unrelated
- unfair
- unfair

INSTRUCTOR AND LECTURES / SEMINARS

- 13. How informative were the lectures/seminars?
- 14. The instructor's organization and preparation were
- 15. The instructor's ability to communicate material was
- 16. The instructor's interest in the course content appeared to be
- 17. The instructor's feedback on my work was
- 18. Questions during class were
- 19. Was the instructor reasonably accessible for extra help?
- 20. Was the instructor responsive to suggestions or complaints?
- 21. Overall, the instructor's attitude towards students was
- 22. I would rate the instructor's teaching ability as

- informative ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- excellent ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- excellent ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- high ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- adequate ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- encouraged ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- available ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- very ① ② ③ ④ ⑤
- excellent ① ② ③ ④ ⑤

- uninformative
- poor
- poor
- low
- inadequate
- discouraged
- never available
- not at all
- poor

Course:	Semester:	Instructor's Name:
<p>GENERAL COMMENTS</p> <p>1. What do you consider to be the strongest and weakest features of the instructor, as a teacher?</p> <p>2. What do you consider to be the strongest and weakest features of the course?</p> <p>3. Any other comments or suggestions?</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Please do not write outside the enclosed area. Use a regular sheet of paper for additional comments.</p>	

SCANTRON CANADA FORM NO. O-102913-SFU

PC3 3099 - 996 - 12

Appendix D
SFU Teaching Assistant Evaluation - Current

PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE

TEACHING ASSISTANT EVALUATION

FILL IN THE CIRCLES
ERASE CHANGES COMPLETELY



DO NOT USE INK
OR FELT PENS

<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	Wrong
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	Wrong
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	Wrong
SAMPLE MARK					
<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	Right

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Your assessment of the T.A.'s teaching abilities will become part of his/her employment record. This information will also provide feedback to help your T.A. refine and improve his/her teaching methods.

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. How often did you attend your tutorial (or lab)? | always | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | hardly ever |
| 2. Tutorials (or labs) and lectures were | coordinated | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | not coordinated |
| 3. Was the T.A. reasonably accessible for extra help? | available | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | never available |
| 4. Did the T.A. keep to his/her scheduled office hours? | always | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | hardly ever |
| 5. Questions during tutorial (or lab) were | encouraged | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | discouraged |
| 6. The T.A.'s marking was | fair | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | unfair |
| 7. The T.A.'s interest in the course content appeared to be | high | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | low |
| 8. Was the T.A. punctual in starting tutorials (or labs)? | always | <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | hardly ever |
| 9. I would rate the tutorial (or lab) as | | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E | |
| 10. I would rate the T.A.'s teaching ability as | | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C | <input type="radio"/> D | <input type="radio"/> E | |



IMPORTANT:
Don't forget to specify your T.A.'s name.

Course:	Semester:	T.A.'s Name:
<p>GENERAL COMMENTS</p> <p>1. What do you consider to be the strongest and weakest features of the T.A.?</p> <p>2. Can you offer any suggestions for improving the T.A.'s style of presentation, individual consultation, marking, etc.?</p>		
Please do not write outside the enclosed area. Use a regular sheet of paper for additional comments.		

SCANTRON CANADA FORM NO 0-1C3087-SFU FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION ON THE ALBERTA RECEIPT PC 3 3299 10/88-6

Appendix E SFU Forms – Statements of Use

Course and Instructor Evaluation form

Protection of Privacy Collection Notice

The information on this form is collected under general authority of the University Act (R.S.B.C. 1979, c.419) and SFU Academic Policies A11.02, A12.01, A12.02 or A12.05. It is related directly to and needed by the University to operate its personnel management and academic programs. The information will be used to evaluate the qualifications and performance of faculty according to their assigned duties and responsibilities; to decide on salary increases, promotion, contract renewal or tenure; and to evaluate an academic program. This evaluation form is completed anonymously, however, please be advised that any handwritten comments you provide on this form will be available to the person being evaluated and university administrators. If you have any questions about the collection and use of this information please contact the administrative staff in the academic department responsible for the course.

Teaching Assistant Evaluation form

Protection of Privacy Collection Notice

The information on this form is collected under general authority of the University Act (R.S.B.C. 1979, c.419), the SFU/TSSU Collective Agreement (Article 17) and/or SFU Academic Policy A12.09. It is related directly to and needed by the University to operate its personnel management and academic programs. The information will be used to evaluate the qualifications and performance of non-faculty teaching support staff according to their assigned duties and responsibilities; to decide on reappointment and to evaluate an academic program. This evaluation form is completed anonymously, however, please be advised that any handwritten comments you provide on this form will be available to the person being evaluated and university administrators. If you have any questions about the collection and use of this information please contact the administrative staff in the academic department responsible for the course.