MEMO

From: Dr. Benjamin Lovett, Chair, Committee on Teaching Effectiveness
To: Dr. Lynn MacDonald, Chair, Faculty Senate
Re: Revising Course Teacher Evaluation forms
Date: April 30, 2019

The Committee on Teaching Effectiveness has spent the past year working on revisions to the course teacher evaluation content and process. We are now ready to propose revised content. During the 2017-2018 academic year, faculty were surveyed as to what aspects of instruction they felt were among the most important ones to be included on evaluation forms, and we found 10 aspects that a majority of faculty (responding to the survey) felt were among the 10 most important aspects. We composed items for each of those 10 aspects, and revised the items based on feedback from several sources. The table below shows the 10 aspects on the left, and an item for each aspect on the right. We propose that the items on the right be required for all evaluation forms across departments and instructors.

Foundational knowledge (presentation of core concepts in the discipline)	This course covered core content about the subject area.
Developing analytic skills (providing opportunities to stimulate thinking within the discipline)	This course required me to think carefully about concepts and ideas.
Professionalism (Fulfills professional responsibilities [e.g., showing up for class, arriving to class on time] and maintains academic integrity)	Class was conducted in a professional manner.
Clear communication (Clarity in verbal and written communication)	The course content was clearly presented.
Practical application (use of relevant and contemporary materials in the field)	The course included discussion on how the information and skills learned in the course can be applied or used in real world settings.
Organization (Preparation and planning; explains objectives, materials, assignments, etc. well)	Course materials (e.g., resources, exams, assignments) were organized and aligned with stated course goals.
Enthusiasm (holds student interest)	Course content was taught with enthusiasm.

Providing feedback (Provides valuable verbal or written feedback)	Regular, timely, and clear information about my performance or work in the class was provided.
Social awareness (Respectful and welcoming attitude toward students)	A respectful, fair, and inclusive attitude toward students was demonstrated.
Availability (accessible to students outside of the classroom)	The instructor was available for consultation.

For comparison, here are the current dimensions that must be assessed (on the left of the next table) and the items used for these dimensions (on the right):

Criterion in the CTE Manual	Matching Purdue Item
A. Definition of and adherence to the announced course requirements and coverage of content	**Purdue item 083** "The stated goals of this course are consistently pursued."
B. The teacher's effectiveness in presenting the course material (organization, structure, clarity, communication, teaching style, or lecturing ability)	**Purdue item 006** "My instructor has an effective style of presentation."
C. The teacher's availability to meet with students outside of class	**Purdue item 051** "My instructor is readily available for consultation."
D. Workload or course difficulty	**Purdue item 135** "Complexity and length of course assignments are reasonable."
E. Fairness in evaluating students	**Purdue item 125** "Grades are assigned fairly and impartially."
F. Teacher-student interaction or rapport	**Purdue item 078** "My instructor readily maintains rapport with this class."
G. Impact on students or students' sense of accomplishment	**Purdue item 191** "I am satisfied with my accomplishments in this course."
H. Global, overall rating of the course/teacher	**Purdue item 207** "Overall, this instructor has been effective."
(Additional item that had been added after the first 8 had been approved)	"This course has effectively challenged me to think."

Please also see attached our responses to feedback on an initial set of proposed items, which prompted many revisions.

Finally, there has been mention of student input as to the items on evaluation forms. Our committee did attempt to get student input, by contacting student government in the Fall of 2018, but we were never assigned a student representative to our committee. If the Faculty Senate feels that student input would be helpful, perhaps student comment might be sought before a final vote or decision is made on these items.

See 2 attachments on following pages – comments on initial proposed items along with our replies.

Notes from Open Faculty Senate Meeting
CTE Feedback

- Members emphasized the importance of the narrative responses
- When manual is revised, it should be made clear that grade incentives cannot be offered for CTE completion
- **Multiple votes for adding a distinct inclusion item (including BSU representation)
  - It should target the content being inclusive (not necessarily characteristics of instructor)
  - Recommendation to draw from "statements of inclusive commitment" that some colleges have new faculty write
  - **The committee is certainly aware of the desire, from many faculty members, to have a separate CTE item about diversity/inclusion, focusing specifically on the course content rather than fair and equitable treatment of students (a topic already addressed by one of our proposed items). The committee understands the advantages of such an item, but ultimately felt that such an item should be optional, not required, for several reasons. First, some courses and some disciplines do not lend themselves as readily to diverse perspectives, and "diversity" and "inclusion" could have very different meanings from one discipline to another. Second, students could understand such an item in very different ways, especially if they have not had coursework that has given them a clear meaning for terms such as diversity and inclusion. Finally, there was concern that all CTE items tend to be interpreted as being indicative of the quality of a course. If a math class does not integrate in diverse perspectives on calculus, is the class of poorer quality? We would not feel comfortable making that decision. There is no reason why departments and faculty members who want to use a separate diversity/inclusion item (with regard to content) cannot add it to their CTEs. What we feel should be required is that all faculty members demonstrate a fair, equitable, inclusive environment for students, and so we have proposed such an item here as being required.**
- Thoughts that #1 and #6 assessed same thing. Recommendation to combine
  - **We have instead revised #6, consistent with other suggestions.**
- Recommendation to send the items to department chairs for their feedback on whether items fit their dept objectives/ values
  - **We feel that discussion at Faculty Senate would be a way of reaching faculty from many different content areas.**
- Recommendation to split #5 (Practical application) into two items
  - **We feel that the current #5 is clear and specific enough.**
- *Thoughts on adding items for student writing and creativity since they were ranked, on average, 5th and 6th
  - **These items are unlikely to apply to all courses. Such items could (and perhaps should) be added where appropriate.**
- No vocalization of strong opinion regarding paper or electronic delivery

Foundational knowledge (presentation of core concepts in the discipline)
Developing analytic skills (providing opportunities to stimulate thinking within the discipline)

(1) This course covered core content about the subject area.
(2) This course gave students opportunities to improve the way that we think about the covered content.
This statement seems unclear. How do we know if we improved their thinking when we don't know what their starting point was? Suggested revisions:
"The course material stimulated my thinking about the subject." OR
"I learned how to think differently about the material in this course."
We have revised to "This course required me to think carefully about concepts and ideas."

Professionalism (Fulfills professional responsibilities [e.g., showing up for class, arriving to class on time] and maintains academic integrity)

(3) Class was conducted in a professional manner.
Suggest adding examples to end of statement:
(e.g., arriving to class on time, holding all scheduled course meetings).
Unfortunately, adding examples would likely keep the item from working for all classes.

Clear communication (Clarity in verbal and written communication)

(4) Course content was presented in a way that students could follow.
Suggested revision (for clarity):
"The course content was clearly presented."
We appreciate this revision and it has been made!

Practical application (use of relevant and contemporary materials in the field)

(5) The instructor discussed ways in which the information and skills learned in the course can be applied or used in real world settings.
Concern that students may not think it has real-world value, even though the instructor may have discussed how it did.
Indeed – the item is about only the latter. As for whether students' own perceptions of the practicality of content are accurate, this is a very general and important limitation of any CTE items – student perceptions are not valid measures of the quality of the content covered by the instructor.

Organization (Preparation and planning; explains objectives, materials, assignments, etc. well)

(6) The stated goals of this course were consistently pursued.
This statement isn't aligned well with the items on the left, which are about organization and preparation. Suggested revision:

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	"Course materials (e.g., resources, exams, assignments) were organized and aligned with stated course goals." **We appreciate this revision – it has been made!**
Enthusiasm (holds student interest)	(7)The instructor demonstrated enthusiasm for the content and for teaching it. *What if the instructor seems enthusiastic about one and not the other? Suggested revision:* **"The instructor demonstrated enthusiasm for teaching the course content."** **We appreciate this revision – it has been made!**
Providing feedback (Provides valuable verbal or written feedback)	(8)The instructor provided regular, timely, and clear information about my performance or work in the class.
Social awareness (Respectful and welcoming attitude toward students)	(9)The instructor demonstrated a respectful, fair, and inclusive attitude toward students.
Availability (accessible to students outside of the classroom)	(10)The instructor was available for consultation as needed. **This makes it sound like the instructor should be available on demand. Suggested revision:** **The instructor was accessible for consultation outside of class (office hours, email, etc.).** **We share the concern about possible misunderstanding, and so we have revised the item by deleting "as needed."**

General comments:

- **Support for the content in the left-hand column, but the items on the right do not always seem well-aligned. See comments above.**
- **Did the committee consider using a an already-validated set of items from another teacher evaluation system? Not sure why we need to create our own. The committee looked at items from several other evaluation systems.**
- **Could the items be re-worded to eliminate the word "instructor"? Some research indicates that removing "the instructor" or "my instructor" in individual items may diminish bias based on instructor characteristics, gender, race, etc.. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 already follow this format. The instructions to the CTE could still contain that language (assuming there's a common set of instructions). For example:**
  - **Social awareness item: "A respectful, fair, and inclusive attitude toward students was demonstrated." We have not reviewed this research, but the committee shared the concern, and we have revised the items accordingly, with the exception of the final item, which is purely about the instructor.**