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Article

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ACCOUNTING, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & BUSINESS ETHICS | REVIEW ARTICLE

Student evaluations of teaching in business and accounting courses: A perspective and a suggested improvement

Mitchell Franklin^{1*}

Abstract: Student evaluations of teaching can play a significant role on how one is perceived as a college instructor. In the case of many colleges and universities, the student evaluation is the primary measure used in decisions such as promotion and tenure, or contract renewal of the non-tenure track faculty. The accuracy of student evaluations of teaching is a very heavily researched area. Though many elements such as influence of grade and rigor on student perception have been highly mixed as to impact on student evaluation, there are many other variables that have been clearly shown to strongly influence student perceptions in the evaluation of a faculty member. This paper reviews several pieces of research to clearly show that evaluations can be biased, and suggests an alternate approach to the evaluation of teaching that contains a mixture of student evaluation in a less biased manner, blind peer review of instructional materials by a credentialed faculty member and in class observation by peers or administrators. This paper does not show that a peer-review method is indeed more effective, but suggests that programs consider whether or not a peer review of teaching, or similar method of evaluation can be more effective within their respective programs.

Subjects: Economics, Finance, Business & Industry; Education; Social Sciences

Keywords: teaching; students; performance appraisal; teaching evaluation; assessment

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

When one is being evaluated for promotion as an executive at a large company, does the evaluation of a summer intern play a significant role in the decision? Does a college student intern have the ability to determine if a senior executive at a company has the traits suitable to be promoted? Typically, this situation would not be normal, except for higher education. In many higher education institutions, instructor performance is assessed by the opinion of students, with little or no additional evaluation by individuals with the necessary skill to understand and assess teaching quality and pedagogy. This paper explores issues when faculty are evaluated by students, and presents suggested methodologies that universities should consider to assure that instructor teaching quality is properly measured and used in the determination of merit.

1. Introduction

Consider the following; a student is hired as an intern at a “Big 4” accounting firm. The firm leadership asks the intern to provide a detailed evaluation on a senior manager in the firm about to receive a promotion to join the partnership. The evaluation asks the perception of the intern on how well the manager does all aspects of the job, including managerial functions such as bringing in new business and interface with clients and other senior leadership within the firm. The firm partners rely heavily, near exclusively on intern evaluations with little to no independent evaluation of this manager before deciding on whether or not to make this manager a partner. Specifically, the intern is asked using a Likert scale to answer the question “Is this manager an effective leader within the firm?” Would this happen? Should this happen? Most in the corporate world would be outright disgusted if this approach was utilized to evaluate management and awarded significant weight in the final promotion decision. Despite the justified concerns, many managers would have with this approach, this sort of evaluation occurs on a daily basis. Visit many colleges or universities and look at how faculty members are evaluated as effective or ineffective teachers. In a majority of cases, a student evaluation of what is considered good teaching is the primary determinant of how administrators classify one as a good or poor teacher, and this impacts merit, tenure, promotion, and recognition among peers. In some cases, these student opinions are posted and shared with the public by the school, and could be considered career ending for faculty members. Is a student really qualified to define what is “good teaching” any more than an intern qualified to assess performance of a manager within a firm? Common sense says there is no difference in the two situations, yet a student is being asked to evaluate something beyond their abilities that has a significant impact on the life of the person being evaluated.

The issue of teaching evaluation effectiveness is a heavily researched area in higher education. There is research both for and against student evaluations of teaching. From review of the literature, despite the differences in opinion of some authors, it is clear that student evaluations have their use and are effective in many regards, but they need to be used properly in a way such that bias is controlled, and questions asked of the student are not beyond the ability of the student, and not as the primary measure of classroom performance. This paper looks at a sample of the literature on student teaching evaluations, specifically in business programs and accounting programs to illustrate the common themes of perceived weakness in student evaluations. Based on the facts presented in the literature, this paper provides a conclusion that student evaluations should be used as one small part of the evaluation process, but suggests increased significance on a “blind peer review” of faculty teaching quality by other faculty outside of the institution who have a greater understanding of what should be appropriate assessment, pedagogy, rigor, grading and expectations of a classroom compared to a student for a specific subject matter free of the demographic bias that often influences student evaluations of teaching. This paper suggests a process of review for teaching similar to how research is reviewed. Faculty in accounting departments especially need to consider the issues addressed in this paper, as data show that faculty who teach subject matter in areas that are considered “difficult” are often subject to greater bias in how they are perceived by students relative to teaching quality.

The purpose of this paper is not to present a research conclusion on the effectiveness of student evaluations, but to present an argument that there may be weakness as to how many programs utilize student evaluations based on prior research, and suggest a best practice that schools may select to consider and collect data on to determine if there are more effective methods to evaluate faculty performance such as the peer review presented within. The process proposed in this paper may also be of interest to accrediting bodies as a way to effectively measure an instructor’s ability to meet expected standards on a consistent basis.

2. Methodology

To support the premise that there has been evidence in support of weakness in the common methodology of student evaluations, this paper presents a sample of prior research that highlights many reported weaknesses in the student evaluations of teaching. Articles were selected from a review of

business education journals located on listings of “acceptable journals” at three AACSB accredited business schools, as well as applicable articles that were cited within the articles selected. The literature presented within does not constitute a comprehensive literature review, but instead provides evidence from multiple sources to support that there may be weakness within the evaluation process, to support the premise that there may be a need to refine the process and develop more effective methodologies to properly evaluate the effectiveness of teaching.

3. Sample of literature presenting weakness in student evaluation effectiveness

Ace-Morgan, Sneed, and Swinney (2003) compare the perceptions of administrators as well as faculty as to how valid student evaluations are and what factors may make the evaluations biased. The study shows that administration feels evaluations more effectively measure teaching than faculty members. Faculty members believe that evaluations bias on instructor personality, type of course and workload as determining factors that have the largest impact of ratings. Based on survey research, administrators believe evaluations are valid *usually*, while faculty believes that evaluations are valid *sometimes*. The perception of faculty did not differ by rank of assistant, associate or full professor/tenure status. Based on the analysis, faculty are inclined to manage ratings on evaluations by lowering standards and inflating grades. To administration, leaving the role of evaluation to the student is the easiest, quickest and most cost-effective manner of developing a baseline to make a determination of teaching quality. In the setting of many institutions, administrators are often removed from active teaching, especially large sections of undergraduate students and may tend to lose touch with reality in a classroom over time for a variety of reasons. This lack of contact makes understanding the evaluation bias difficult.

One article that begins to build support for faculty as stated in Ace-Morgan et al. (2003) that evaluations are *sometimes* effective was Barlow-Hills, Naegle, and Bartus (2009). The authors in this article do not just look at use of evaluation scores to measure teaching, but has a focus on the items that students are asked to rate on within the evaluation. Not all students view all evaluation questions equally and there are significant differences with how evaluation questions are emphasized based on gender, class year, and major of student conducting the evaluation. Underclass students were more focused on course structure, fairness of grading and workload, while upper class students were focused on discussion and ability to interact in class. GPA has an opposite impact on how an instructor is evaluated than what many would expect. Students with a high GPA are most concerned with clarity of expectations and availability of help to support study efforts to remain successful. Despite the differences found by Barlow-Hills et al. (2009), a majority of schools use a common evaluation form across all courses regardless of course level and typical student enrollment. Additionally, a majority of these evaluations ask questions that can be heavily influenced subjectively by opinion using a simple Likert scale in which all scores for a question are simply averaged not adjusting for the fact that student mixture can significantly impact how an instructor is rated from one course to the next, or one term to the next based solely on who is registered for the class, no matter how the instructor teaches. The study feels that specific and narrow questions can be answered, such as whether or not assignments align to learning objectives, or if grading is fair, but the open ended questions that are often used to make an overall teaching assessment such as “is this instructor effective” cannot appropriately be measured by students, yet it is used most heavily by administrators, and often posted within the school for other students and faculty to view and as a result form opinions on whether or not one is a “good teacher.”

Dorasamy and Balkaran (2013) further show support of Barlow-Hills et al. (2009) as they specifically looked to measure what competencies can most effectively be used to conduct a program evaluation. The paper shows that elements of student evaluations can provide useful feedback. How enthusiastic and prepared a faculty member is can easily be measured by a student population, students can also effectively evaluate closed end questions such as whether or not feedback and assignments were passed back within a fixed time period and whether a variety of teaching methods were used as well as visual aids. Specific targeted questions can be used that look at narrow elements of instruction, but that a uniform evaluation could skew the results in certain courses that

have harder workloads or faculty expectations. The evaluation does have use in the classroom, but they can be biased and the questions need to be carefully written to focus on specific behaviors, not an opinionated question that has significant room for bias. An evaluation can be effective as one source of information, but not the only source. As an addition, Dorsamy and Balkaran (2013) provide support for Ace-Morgan et al. (2003) that evaluations can sometimes be effective. The key to an effective evaluation is how it is written and what the student is specifically asked to evaluate. A student cannot effectively provide an opinion on teaching quality overall, but can provide a general opinion on certain personality traits of the instructor and whether or not the instructor engages in certain behaviors that would be expected of an effective teacher.

Barth (2008) examines the student evaluation instrument at the business school of one specific university to determine traits that have the greatest impact on student perceptions. At this one specific university, it was determined that the overall instructor rating was driven by quality of instruction, and that the model of evaluation at the one specific school in the study could serve as a basis for evaluation at other schools. At the same time, a regression analysis shows that a general question on the overall opinion of a professor does in fact assess instructor quality; there is also a relationship to show that instructors who utilize more rigorous standards do earn lower scores within this specific school. This raises significant questions that are addressed in other research studies. Firstly, can it be argued that faculty will lower standards to earn higher ratings? Despite specific debate as to whether or not grade earned influences evaluation, there is evidence to show that within the setting of accounting courses, faculty do have a propensity to reduce standards and inflate grades under the impression that it will increase evaluation score. A study by Crumbley and Reichelt (2009) shows that based on a survey of 1,000 faculty, in which 447 responded, 53% of faculty surveyed know of at least one instructor who has reduced standards and content to increase a student evaluation score. Does this lowering of standards cause a chain reaction that reduces the quality of education? Barth (2008) also shows that professors who use more rigor can overcome the negative evaluation impact by being more available for help and access outside of the classroom. Increasing availability to students to the level necessary to overcome the impact of negative rating in response to rigor is often not feasible in many schools, considering the increase in use of adjunct faculty with limited capacity as well as increased teaching loads and class sizes that restrict capacity to provide extensive outside assistance. One significant issue with this study as the data is based on one evaluation form at only one university, so the results are only valid within the exact setting of the school where the study was conducted with the exact evaluation form utilized.

Clayson and Sheffet (2006) look at how the specific personality of the instructor can influence evaluation of that instructor. Faculty with a good personality might be bad professors, and a faculty member with a terrible personality might be a very good professor. Regardless of this fact, this paper shows that there is a strong relation between personality of the instructor and overall rating of instruction quality, but not that personality actually dictates how good or poor an instructor is. Overall, the study showed that there is a consistent and positive relationship between overall course rating, instructor evaluation and personality traits of the instructor. This impact existed regardless of student GPA, student age, student expectations, expected grade, or course rigor. The paper also looks at the impact of when the perception of personality develops to the student. Overall, the research shows that within 5 min of the first day of class, students develop a perception on personality that lasts for the semester. If a professor has a significant personality shift during the year, that does change evaluation, even if no other variables in the actual course itself are changed. The implications of this study are that personality alone can significantly bias an evaluation of instruction when there is basis for opinion within the evaluation questions and personality would not be a legitimate factor to consider.

Davidovitch and Soen (2009) had an exclusive focus on whether or not there is bias as to how a student assesses the performance of a faculty member from external factors that do not include quality of teaching. Students and grade awarded by instructor based the specific emphasis on ranking. The study showed no relationship between grade awarded and instructor ranking, but did show

that there are other measures that do skew how a student will evaluate a faculty member based on interactions between the student and faculty member. It is also important to state that despite the fact there is no relationship between grade and instructor ranking, Crumbley and Richelt (2009) in a separate study show faculty will have a propensity to reduce rigor and inflate grades *under the impression* that there is a relationship. The personality of the instructor is a significant factor in how a student will evaluate teaching consistent with Crayson and Sheffet (2006). Students who can better interact with an instructor will regard that instructor as superior without regard to actual delivery of content. Sex and ethnic background of the instructor also influence the overall evaluation. Females and foreign faculty members will typically receive a lower evaluation score than a male faculty member of the same ethnic descent as a majority of students enrolled in the class.

Kozub (2010) specifically looks at the relationship between course, instructor, and student characteristics to student ratings of teaching effectiveness. This paper determined that several factors outside of overall teaching influenced the evaluations given by students. Based on the study, interest in the course, expected grades, time of day the class met, instructor appearance, instructor sex, instructor attractiveness, and student handicap all influenced quality of teaching performance. Many of the factors found in Kozub (2010) to show an influence on evaluation rating, but not a part of overall teaching quality are consistent with Davidovitch and Soen (2009) as well as Crayson and Sheffet (2006). Background characteristics were most strongly correlated to the open ended overall evaluation question asking a student to rate overall instructional quality often used by administration to assess performance.

Bardi, Abdulla, Kamali, and Dodeen (2006) profile evaluations in the first school to receive AACSB accreditation in the UAE. Based on a detailed study of evaluations, the results showed that a student evaluation of teaching is biased by self reported GPA, expected grade, course level, department within the program, class size, class time of day, and gender. Many of the variables within this paper that show to bias evaluation have also shown to be factors of bias in the other papers cited within this review.

It appears that colleges and universities who are more teaching oriented have developed an awareness to the issues with student evaluations and implemented other measures to evaluate faculty in conjunction with student evaluation. Read, Rama, and Raghunandan (2001) was focused on the overall reliance of teaching evaluations by administrators, as opposed to the quality of information provided by students specifically in accounting departments where bias can be more significant than other departments. The authors show that there is an inverse relationship between program emphasis on teaching over research and reliance on student evaluations. Schools that have the greatest reliance on teaching as a top priority place the least weight on student evaluations and focus on other measures, while schools that do not emphasize teaching as top priority will rely more heavily on student evaluations as the easiest measure to assess teaching. The conclusion is that administrators who focus on teaching are more aware of the bias and issues that student evaluations have, and as a result willing to look at other measures to assess whether or not one is an effective teacher.

When there is bias in an evaluation, one of the first efforts a program can take is to attempt to control for it within the evaluation based on demographic information collected. In many cases, schools do not even collect enough information on an evaluation form to attempt to control evaluation bias. Green, Calderon, and Powell-Reider (1998) focus strictly on evaluation within accounting departments. Consistent with other research, based on a survey of 70 accounting departments, many of these departments ask that students assess items that they cannot assess from a qualification standpoint. Additionally, over 30% of evaluations within the sample do not collect any demographic information of the student to control for any factors of bias. Furthermore, over 20% of the evaluations do not capture or collect any data on what would be considered effective teaching, yet many schools would still use composite evaluation scores to judge one as an effective teacher. The overall recommendation is that items be removed from evaluations that a student is not qualified to

assess, and that demographic information also is collected on students to control for any potential bias that may indeed exist and shown to exist in other research. Overall, based on what students have capability to evaluate, the authors suggest that a full portfolio approach be used to evaluate teaching, and using student evaluations as one small weight of assessment. Additionally, wording of questions, as well as open-ended questions can lead to subjectivity in all answers and opinions provided.

Bailey, Gupta, and Schrader (2000) examine perception differences between student evaluations across courses, level of study, other levels of judgment. The authors clearly recommend that reviewers of student evaluations of instruction be aware of factors that influence judgment and misjudge instructor effectiveness.

Dunegan and Hrivnak (2003), examine characteristics of student images of a teacher and a mindless evaluation. Mindless evaluation refers to a student completing an evaluation with little effort or thought when answering the questions provided. The data show that administrators need to use caution when placing a significant focus on student evaluations of teaching. Students, more often than not complete evaluations in a mindless manner and do not provide careful consideration to the questions, as well as how they rank on the standard Likert scale. Based on the fact that students rarely see any improvement from the evaluation and failure to understand the concepts asked to evaluate, effort in completion is minimal and often not accurate to reflect teaching quality.

Martin (1998) is a strong case against students evaluating faculty based on the theory of Deming's Management Perspective. The discussion and findings in Martin (1998) is in direct support of findings and statements in Dunegan and Hrivnak (2003), Bardi et al. (2006), Kozub (2010), Davidovitch and Soen (2009), and Clayson and Sheffet (2006). This paper shows there are numerous problems with the student evaluation practice based on many assumptions made by those in leadership, such as what was stated in Ace-Morgan et al. (2003) and suggest that the education system is flawed and evaluation of faculty should be conducted consistent with Deming's theory of management, which considers the practice of student evaluations a "deadly disease of western style management." Under the theory proposed by Deming, an evaluation practice would be used to motivate faculty to become an integrated group, as an alternative to models that currently place professors to behave as independent contractors and are punitive to faculty who are viewed negatively by students. Through the literature review, Martin (1998) shows that student evaluations are invalid and incomparable as faculty cannot be compared strictly by these evaluations due to many differences in teaching conditions that influence them, and that faculty will game the system to improve ratings despite research to show that not all gaming methods are successful.

Another concern of bias in the student evaluation of teaching is when a student has the same faculty members for multiple courses. In smaller departments where there may only be 2 or 3 full time faculty, this is a common occurrence. Koste (2014) specifically examines whether or not having a "dual encounter" or repeat instructor influences a student evaluation. Based on a survey instrument, the article finds that the majority of dual encounter situations occur in the areas of accounting and management. Within these departments, it was found that having an instructor over time does not increase evaluation scores. The overall impression from the first course will carry over to the second course. As such, a student will often evaluate a professor in the second course based on perceptions formed in the first course, not what has actually been done through instruction in the second course.

In no place in this paper is it implied that student evaluations of teaching should be eliminated, and that they should still be part of the faculty evaluation process. The concern is that student evaluations of teaching focus on measures that a student has the skill set to evaluate in a manner that addresses common student bias; and that the main measures of teaching quality be left to those who are qualified to evaluate, specifically other peer faculty members who through a blind review can assess teaching quality with a significantly reduced bias. Kiridaran, Mathieu, and Thevaranjan

(2003) examine and develop a model that should be used by programs to develop the correct mix of student evaluation and other measures of assessment. This model can be utilized by programs to set a faculty evaluation policy that is fair, and includes the proper mix of student evaluations and other means of evaluation. Based on the model, the authors show benefits to student evaluations, as well as consequences when student evaluations are over used to find balance when they can provide useful information and increase instructor effort and improvement. The article shows that evaluations used appropriately and not exclusively will improve teaching, professor effort and knowledge. Over reliance on student evaluations is when a decrease in rigor, reduced standards and grade inflation will result. The minimization of bias within a student evaluation can help to assure that evaluations are indeed used effectively within this model, or any other related model to mix a variety of measures of evaluation.

Based on the review of literature, there is evidence to show that the student evaluation of teaching may have significant flaws, mostly based on bias within the evaluation process and what qualities students are asked to evaluate. The review also shows that evaluations should not be discontinued, but used properly as one measure of evaluation within a formalized process of multiple assessment measures. The remaining sections of this paper present an evaluation process that significantly reduces bias in the process and can assure that there is a variety of stakeholders involved within the evaluation process that are qualified to measure the qualities required of one to be considered an effective teacher.

4. A suggested proper evaluation approach to consider

This paper shows clear relationship based on established research that students are not qualified to be a primary evaluator of teaching quality. When asked to provide an opinion as to whether or not an instructor is a “good teacher,” there are a variety of factors that really limit the ability of a student to make this assessment, including consideration of outside variables that should not influence an evaluation, the simple misconception of what is considered an effective teacher, and lack of knowledge to assess what an expectation should be for the specific course and coverage of material within the course. Though there is question as to whether grades or rigor do influence evaluations, many faculty members unaware of the research are prone to reduce rigor believing that it will make a difference regardless of the evidence. Consistently, factors such as sex, age, faculty attractiveness, personality of the instructor, course content/department and class time of day have a significant influence on how a student judges a teacher.

There are variables where student evaluation can be helpful, but these areas are much more limited than what a traditional teaching evaluation form attempts to measure. A student can assess through a basic “yes/no” question whether instructors meet certain specific criteria with little room for bias. A student evaluation needs to be closed ended on specific behaviors, and not a subjective measure such as a Likert scale. True evaluation of teaching quality needs to be left to other faculty and experienced educators who can measure appropriate rigor and assessment quality to determine how material was covered and retained by the students in the class to determine quality of teaching. As other academics are the primary determinant on quality of research through a peer-review process, the same process needs to be utilized to assess teaching; assuming teaching does have a priority within a specific program. Other faculty of the same subject matter, with knowledge of what a course is supposed to cover has the best background to truly measure if an instructor is performing. A detailed “blind” instructor course material evaluation by another instructor, in conjunction with a basic summary of student responses to general questions on certain instructor behaviors can provide a meaningful coaching tool to improve instructional quality. The most teaching oriented of schools may wish to add a third evaluation element of peer course reviews by other department members or administrators. A peer course review does not replace the blind peer review of course content, as the blind review will provide the most comprehensive feedback with limited bias, but will lack actual observation of material delivery in front of students. The below exhibits provide sample proposed evaluation forms to be completed by students, as well as a peer review form to be completed blindly by another faculty member in the same subject area. Also included is

a peer teaching observation template. Large departments could successfully conduct blind peer reviews in house, while smaller departments may be challenged due to the limited number of department members. It is the position of this paper that schools should partner up with the help of accreditors and review each other. This will be a logistical challenge for some programs, but in the best interest of improving teaching quality as accreditors deem as important. Accrediting bodies and professional organizations such as the American Accounting Association, ACBSP and AACSB can be integral in organizing a formalized peer review system.

Tenure track faculty should be evaluated through blind peer review at a minimum prior to the third year review, and prior to the tenure decision year. Non-tenure track faculty and adjunct faculty should be evaluated per a written policy at fixed intervals before contract renewals (e.g. annually for first three years of teaching, then every three years, unless there has been a significant change in assigned courses to justify a more frequent review). Tenured faculty should be required to have peer reviews before application for merit, promotion or any significant teaching assignment changes. This is not an intrusion of governance, but simply a part of the evaluation process in the same manner as research is evaluated in promotion decisions. Most all faculty manuals of all schools deem teaching quality as a measure of promotion. This paper is simply suggesting a more accurate method of measuring quality than a student evaluation.

5. Conclusion

There needs to be a significant shift as to how the student evaluation of teaching is administered and utilized. Despite the fact that the student evaluation of teaching is often a primary determinant of teaching quality and the main assessment used to determine teaching merit in decisions such as promotion, contract renewal and tenure, many evaluation questionnaires are filled with bias and assessment questions that a student is not qualified to evaluate. Based on the issues often associated with student evaluations of teaching, this paper proposes an alternative approach to evaluate teaching effectiveness and quality. The alternative approach includes a student evaluation that is significantly different from standard evaluations presently used in most schools, that focuses on closed end assessment of specific instructor behaviors, combined with a blind peer review of teaching materials that would be conducted by a faculty member of the comparable department at a different school of comparable quality. Many of the questions that are typically asked of students can be more effectively assessed through blind peer review, free of bias factors that typically exist in open evaluations of a specific faculty member due to the blindness of the review. Schools can also supplement the blind peer review with a peer teaching evaluation by a colleague within the college or university. The three evaluations together can be used to provide an overall assessment of teaching and coaching opportunity where areas of concern exist that is not punitive in nature. Future research opportunity is to utilize the suggested evaluation approach presented in this paper and determine if it does increase quality of teaching and instructor effectiveness in the classroom.

Exhibit A: Sample student evaluation of faculty form

ABC School of Business Student Review of Faculty

The purpose of this review is to collect a general evaluation of faculty to assure that minimum expectations are being satisfied within your class. Feedback from students is very important to assure that you are provided with the highest quality of instruction. Please note that these forms are not punitive to your instructor in any manner, but are one of many tools that are used as coaching tools to understand where your instructor can improve. Feedback on this form is completely anonymous. No feedback will be shared with your instructor until after grades have been submitted. In the event you cannot answer "yes" to a question, additional feedback is needed to assure efforts can be made to improve teaching quality. If you answer "no" to any question, please use the space provided to explain and provide details behind your reasons. This form should take no more than 10-15 min to complete. Thanks for your honest efforts to help continually teaching at your business school.

Course and instructor information

Course prefix (e.g. ACT):

Course number:

Section number:

Instructor:

Student demographic information

Class status (circle one)

Fr So Jr Sr Grad

Estimated grade in the course

A B C D F

Gender

M F wish not to say

Major _____

Overall GPA _____

1. The syllabus was passed out on the first day of class, and was easy to understand and clear compared to other syllabi you have received in other classes.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

2. For the office hours stated on the syllabus, the instructor was routinely at the office hours as stated.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

3. During the posted office hours, the professor was accessible, friendly, willing to address questions and not rushed to address a long line of students.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

4. Instructor was routinely in class and typically did not cancel class.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

5. The class typically started on time and ran for the scheduled class period.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

6. The instructor stayed on topic and utilized the class period to discuss matters related to the class and or related application of course materials (e.g. career opportunities in the profession).

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

7. The course syllabus clearly defined deliverables to be submitted during the course and how grades were to be calculated.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

8. During the course, grades were calculated consistent with grading criteria posted in the syllabus.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

9. When assignments and exams were submitted for grading, grades and feedback were provided within seven days of submission.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

10. If feedback on assignments was unclear, the instructor was willing to answer questions and clarify reasoning for the grade reduction.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

11. During classes and/or for assignments, the instructor utilized all of the instructional materials listed as “required” in the syllabus (e.g. textbooks, computer software or other readings).

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

12. All policies stated in the syllabus were enforced as stated, and enforced uniformly to the class. If you answer “no” to this question, consideration can only be made to answers where explanation was provided as to why there was a concern.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

13. When an E-mail question was sent to your instructor, or voicemail message left on phone number provided in syllabus, the instructor would typically respond to messages within 24 h on weekdays, or by the end of the next business day on weekends and holidays.

Y

N

NA

Explanation:

Please use the remaining space on this form to provide any other comments that should be considered to improve the quality of instruction in this course.

Exhibit B: Sample blind peer review of faculty form

Blind peer review of instructional faculty quality

You have been asked to provide a peer review of an instructor using materials from the past semester of instruction. The faculty member you have been asked to review is a member of the accounting faculty (can be full time, regular part time, tenured, tenure track or adjunct) at an AACSB accredited business school. Enclosed with this form find:

- Course Syllabus (all instructor identification information removed)
- Copies of course handouts and instructional materials (all instructor identification removed)
- Copies of all quizzes and exams. Just a copy of quizzes and exams administered, not copies of student-completed assignments.
- Printout of student grades on deliverables (all instructor and student identification information removed). Grades provided should be raw scores not including any curves, as well as any curved grades.
- Copy of textbook utilized if requested.

Please review all materials and address all questions within 30 days of receipt. Your purpose as a peer reviewer is not to be punitive in nature, but to provide feedback that can be used to continually improve teaching and coach the instructor under review. As you review and address the questions provided, please provide detailed feedback on how the instructor can improve. Be honest and professional in your evaluation. Feedback will be shared with the instructor, as well as other designees of the instructor's school as requested per school policy.

Part A: The syllabus

1. The syllabus follows a clear format and is presented in a professional manner, with no typographical errors:

Y

N

Explanation:

2. The syllabus states clear learning objectives that are written in a manner consistent with best teaching practice (e.g. using style such as Blooms Taxonomy) and are measurable and adequate for the specific course being reviewed.

Y

N

Explanation:

3. Required materials stated within the syllabus are reasonable and of appropriate standard for the specific course under review:

Y

N

Explanation:

4. The syllabus clearly states deliverables required for grade, and specific details and weights on how grades are calculated.

Y

N

Explanation:

5. The deliverables as stated in the syllabus are of adequate variety and typical for a course of this level and standard.

Y

N

Explanation:

6. The syllabus contains all course policies that should be included within the document such as attendance, late work, make up of exams, class participation and others one would expect to find.

Y

N

Explanation:

7. For the course policies stated within the syllabus, they are clear and reasonable for a course of the level and standard being reviewed.

Y

N

Explanation:

8. Review the course schedule within the syllabus. Is the coverage of content and pace of the course reasonable and expected for a course of this level and standard?

Y

N

Explanation:

Part B: Instructional materials

1. For the specific course, the instructor utilizes a variety of handouts and materials to supplement the reading and clarify topics that are sensitive to learning needs of a variety of student learning styles.

Y

N

Explanation:

2. The instructional materials provided by the instructor are consistent with material coverage style in textbook (e.g. does not use methodology that contradicts the textbook without explanation) and free of technical errors as well as grammar errors.

Y

N

Explanation:

3. Is coverage of topics within instructional materials consistent with the learning objectives of the course, and does it adequately support mastery of the learning objectives?

Y

N

Explanation:

Part C: Assessments and grades

1. Are questions on quizzes, exams and assignments clear and consistent with all of the learning objectives of the course?

Y

N

Explanation

2. Are questions on quizzes and exams of an appropriate level of difficulty as would be expected of a course at the level being evaluated?

Y

N

Explanation:

3. Based on the grades (before any curve) earned relative to the content and difficulty level of questions on the exams and other major course assessments provided, does performance on the deliverables demonstrate that the students have as a class adequately mastered all of the stated learning objectives of the course in a manner that would be expected in a course of this level?

Y

N

Explanation:

4. If curves were utilized on grades at any point in the course, are the curves reasonable and not inflationary of overall grade distributions for a course of this level based on the difficulty of the curved assignments?

Y

N

N/A (grades were not curved)

Explanation:

5. Do all grades appear to be calculated in accordance with stated grading practice in the course syllabus?

Y

N

Explanation:

Part D: Overall instructor evaluation

Based on your evaluation of the material provided to review, please rate the overall effectiveness of this instructor for the specific course under evaluation. 1 = Poor 5 = Exceptional

1 2 3 4 5

Would you recommend this instructor be considered to teach this course in your department at your institution based on the information provided for review?

Y

N

Please provide additional written comments and observations as they relate to the effectiveness of this instructor.

Exhibit C: Sample classroom observation of teaching by administrator form

Class observation form

Confidentiality considerations: The purpose of the Peer Mentoring Program is to continually improve teaching excellence within the school. For this objective to be effective, it is crucial that we establish and maintain an environment of mutual respect and trust. Therefore, all comments and discussion should be presented in a constructive manner, and maintained confidential. This observation will be used in conjunction with student reviews as well as the outside blind peer review to assess overall teaching effectiveness and make recommendations on continual improvement of teaching. The overall assessment of teaching quality based on all three evaluations can be utilized as a basis in determination of referral for merit recognition, as well as promotion and tenure. Specific details on how these documents are used together should be discussed with the Dean and Department Chair/Program Director.

Faculty Member Observed: _____ **Observer:** _____

Class Observed: _____ **Date and Time of Class:** _____

To be completed by the faculty member being observed:

- (1) The learning goal or outcome for today's class is:
- (2) During this class session, I would like the observer to provide specific feedback on:

To be completed by the observer:

- (1) Describe general observations from the class. Focus specifically on teaching methods, student and faculty behaviors and effectiveness of how observations achieved the learning outcome predicted by the instructor. Please explain in detail.
- (2) Where was the instructor most effective during this class session? Was the class a lecture or were there group activities and interactions?
- (3) Was there a point during this class session when the faculty member "lost" student attention? If so, what do you think caused it? How did the faculty member react, what did he/she do to regain student attention? Were the faculty member's efforts in this regard effective?

(4) Provide suggestions for improvement. Are there any other teaching methods that could be considered that were not used that could enhance learning and effectiveness in the classroom? Suggest resources within the school that may help improve in the areas discussed.

(5) Other comments or observations:

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