

Subject: Effective Teaching Evaluation
Date: Monday, February 7, 2022 at 1:08:09 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: FACSEN-STAFF-L on behalf of Faculty Senate
To: FACSEN-STAFF-L@LISTSERV.GMU.EDU
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Dear colleagues,

As many of you know, the Faculty Senate approved changes to the question set used in the student evaluation of teaching process (SET) process that will be implemented this Spring 2022.

As part of a national movement among universities to improve the evaluation of teaching, the Faculty Senate and the Effective Teaching Committee (ETC) have worked to respond to evidence that existing SET processes are problematic. There is no evidence that our current SET process has improved teaching and learning, and equally important, the existing form reinforces biases, especially against women and people of color. In response, the ETC formulated a series of modifications to the instrument following a comprehensive review with input from scholars, administrators, faculty, and students. [The new instrument](#) reflects institutional goals of supporting faculty teaching development, promoting equity, and ultimately improving student learning outcomes. It is one tool among many that can help us support faculty, evaluate teaching, and improve our courses.

This refreshing of the SET process prompts the need to re-assess faculty review processes that emphasize SET questions previously used but no longer included in the instrument. For example, in some units, reliance on the “overall” SET scores (e.g., items 15 and 16) in annual reviews and RPT processes will need to change, as these questions have been removed from the instrument.

The [Stearns Center](#), the Office of Institutional Assessment and Planning (OIEP), [Faculty Affairs](#), and the ETC are prepared to help academic units implement changes to the overall teaching evaluation process in order to provide constructive support for faculty and improve equity. In addition to the new SET, some combination of formative faculty assessment, faculty peer-review of course documents and activities, student self-assessment, and summative faculty reflection can provide evidence for improved evaluation of teaching. In addition to changes in the SET instrument questions, the move to online implementation of the instrument with BLUE and the corresponding disruption of the Covid pandemic necessitates each of us to make adjustments and employ flexibility as the University community adapts to a more equitable and valuable teaching evaluation process.

We are committed to helping each unit, and individual faculty, improve their approach to the evaluation of teaching starting this semester. Mason values quality teaching and is investing in the future of faculty development by providing resources; watch for upcoming announcements about guides, workshops, and consultation options that can help Mason faculty adapt productively to these changes. We look forward to supporting the efforts of all units and faculty and invite you to engage with us as we move to improve the evaluation of teaching across campus.

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