




Memorandum

To: Faculty Senate
Seton Hall University

From: Katia Passerini, Ph.D.

Provost and Executive Vice President

Re: *Student Evaluations Content and Administration*
2022-FS-43

Date: May 4, 2022

We have received *2022-FS-43, Student Evaluations Content and Administration*, which was approved unanimously by the Faculty Senate at its March 18 meeting.

This resolution approves three recommendations from the Academic Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate regarding the content and administration of course evaluations: (1) a draft of directions to students; (2) revised student evaluation of teaching questions; and (3) best practices for administrators in interpreting the results of student evaluations of teaching. We understand that the APC is working on a fourth recommendation regarding best practices for faculty in administering student evaluations of teaching, and we thank them in advance for that work.

As most know, the University has been using a standard set of 15 University-wide questions in course evaluations across most schools and colleges. In service of our commitment to quality instruction throughout the University, we are pleased to report that over the past few years we have expanded use of the standard University-wide set of questions to all schools and colleges and, this year, to Winter and Summer Session courses. In connection with this resolution by the Faculty Senate, we have asked all Deans to share all three recommendations with their faculty and administrative teams. These recommendations include two revisions to the course evaluation instrument (the revised directions and the questions) that we hope all colleges and schools will adopt expeditiously. We have asked the Deans to ensure that those few programs that have not begun using standard questions begin using them this Fall 2022. We appreciate that the APC approved the addition of two DEI-related items suggested by the Deans. Along with the additional changes to the traditional questions, the revised set is now comprised of 18 University-wide questions.

The Faculty Senate accepted the work of the APC, which we accept with the few changes noted below. We appreciate the APC and the Faculty Senate agreeing that this improved set of questions will help us carry out

Goal 4.1.3 of our Strategic Plan by establishing benchmarks for having met the DEI goals that we have set for ourselves. Our understanding is that all South Orange and Nutley programs will be using the new questions for all their programs, and the Faculty Senate is asking the schools and colleges to adopt these modest and timely revisions at their Spring 2022 meetings to allow use of the revised directions and questions to be incorporated by Institutional Research in time for their October deadline in order to use them for the coming Fall semester. As a reminder, the system is set up so that colleges, departments, and programs may, as always, decide to create additional questions for students on top of the newly-revised 18 standard University-wide questions.

Directions to students:

[We will retain the following bold-typeface language that is included in our current directions to students.]

Student feedback about a course is essential to faculty for their use in future teaching situations.

Your thoughts and experiences are important.

This on-line course evaluation is anonymous. Faculty receive responses without any identifiers.

Anonymous results are delivered to faculty after the course and semester have ended.

[We will add the following directions and questions from the Faculty Senate with small changes noted in bold, which is intended to be even more inclusive.]

Student evaluations of teaching play an important role in the review of faculty. Your opinions influence the review of instructors that takes place every year. Seton Hall University recognizes that student evaluations of teaching **here as elsewhere may be** influenced by ~~students'~~ unconscious and unintentional biases about the race and gender of the instructor. **Recent research indicates that women, instructors of color, and other minoritized groups** are systematically rated lower in their teaching evaluations ~~than white men~~, even when there are no actual differences in the instruction or in what students have learned.

As you fill out the course evaluation please keep this in mind and make an effort to resist stereotypes about professors. Focus your opinions about the content of the course (the assignments, the textbook, the in-class material) and not unrelated matters (the instructor's appearance).

SET items

Instructor showed good course organization

Instructor showed good time management (e.g., class pacing, organization of class period)

Instructor explained course material clearly

Instructor clearly explained how my semester grade will be computed

Instructor provided assistance in meeting the course objectives

Instructor designed assignments that facilitated my learning

Instructor made it clear how each topic fit into the course

Instructor provided meaningful feedback on my academic performance

Instructor created an environment in which the backgrounds and perspectives of all students in the class were respected, included, and valued

Where relevant, the course addressed issues of discrimination and/or structural bias inherent in the subject matter and/or the field

My participation was welcome in this class

Instructor was accessible outside of class

Instructor demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter

Instructor related course material to real life situations

Instructor introduced interesting ideas about the subject

Instructor encouraged and cared about student learning

This course increased my interest in the field

Overall the quality of teaching was excellent

All categories: 5 point scale; 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree, plus N/A option