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**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** FACULTY SENATE  
**FROM:** APAFT CHARGE #6 – TASKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS  
**SUBJECT:** STUDENT EVALUATION OF FACULTY  
**DATE:** JANUARY 22, 2020

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**CHARGE 6**

Appoint a Faculty Senate task force representing each College to work in conjunction with the Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) and APAFT committees to make policy recommendations regarding standardization of a process for the construction and utilization of student evaluations across WSU. (task force)

Members:

Melissa NeVille-Norton (APAFT)  
R.C. Morris (TLA)  
Gail Niklason  
Diana Meiser (TLA)  
Jenny Kokai  
Andrea Easter-Pilcher  
Alex Lawrence (APAFT)  
Brenda Kowaleski  
Marjukka Ollilainen (APAFT)

**Background:**

This APAFT charge and Senate Appointed Taskforce was established in response to TLA's work in benchmarking good practice related to the timing, instrument, and purpose of student evaluations of faculty. 569 faculty were surveyed and 289 faculty responded (50.8% response rate). The breakdown from each of the Colleges was remarkably representative in terms of College representation.

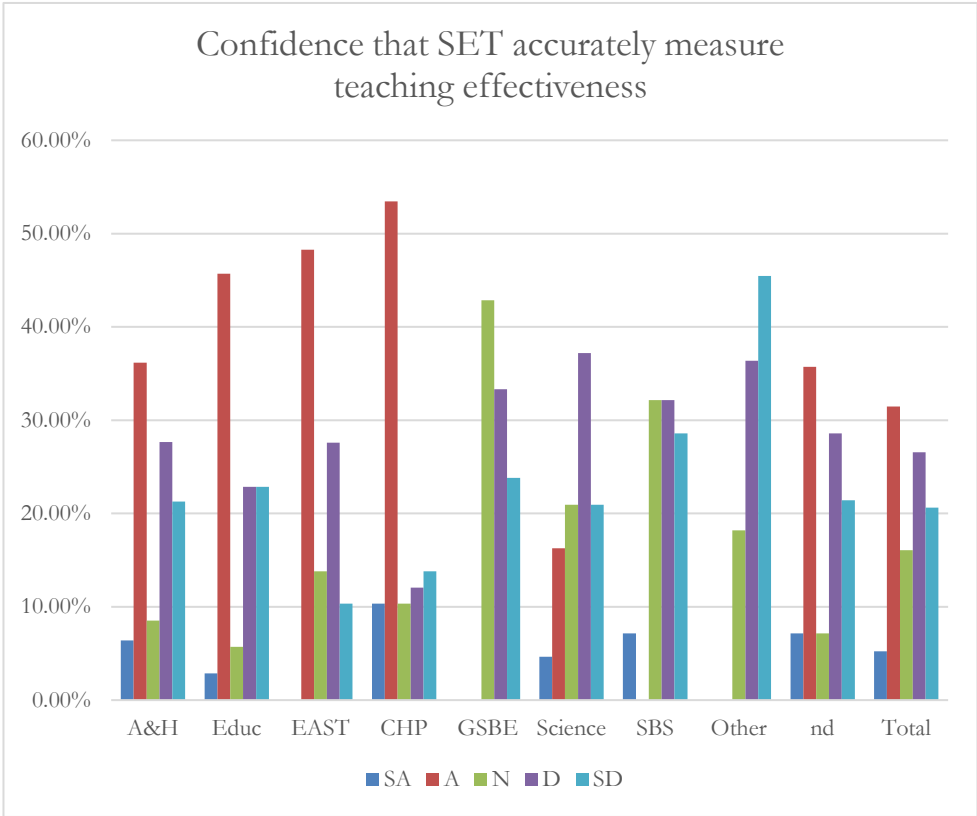
College/School	Percent of WSU Faculty	# Responses/rate by college	Percent of responses
Arts & Humanities	105/550 = 19.1%	48 of 105 = 45.7%	16.61%
Education	54/550 = 9.8%	35 of 54 = 64.8%	12.11%
EAST	77/550 = 14%	29 of 77 = 37.7%	10.03%
Health Professions	98/550 = 17.8%	58 of 98 = 59.2%	20.1%
GSBE	49/550 = 8.9%	21 of 49 = 42.9%	7.27%

Science	85/550 = 15.5%	43 of 85 = 50.6%	14.88%
Social Science	68/550 = 12.4%	28 of 68 = 41.2%	9.78%
Other/ND	14/550 =	26	9.0%

It was recommended that faculty have a voice (through APAFT and the Faculty Senate) to make recommendations.

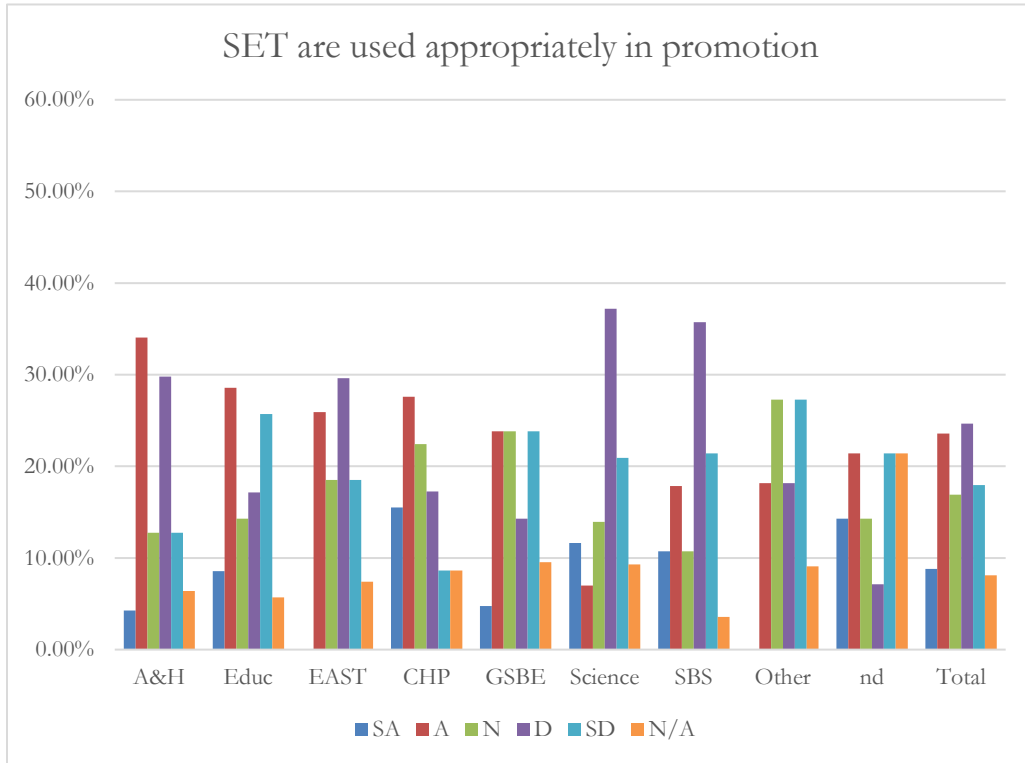
Last year (2019), a survey was sent to all faculty at WSU regarding their perceptions of student evaluations of faculty regarding:

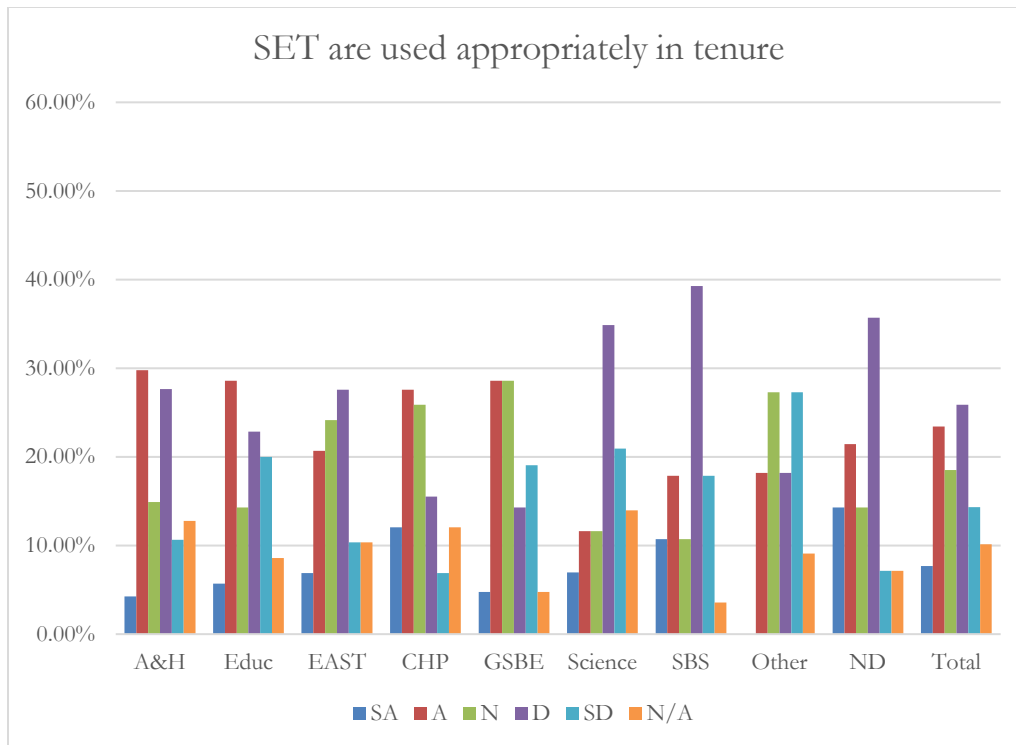
1. **Question 1.** *I am confident that current student evaluations of teaching accurately measure my teaching effectiveness.*



- Overall, 43.71% of respondents agree or strongly agree that SET is an accurate means of measuring teaching effectiveness. Those who disagree or strongly disagree with that statement represent 47.2% of respondents. The remainder – 9.1% - neither agree nor disagree.

- We see a marked difference between colleges on this question with Colleges who have external accreditation requirements, which require student evaluations being more positive in their responses.
2. **Question 2.** *Student evaluations of teaching are used appropriately in the promotion process.*
- Question 3.** *Student evaluations of teaching are used appropriately in the tenure process.*





- Overall, faculty in every College were less supportive with how student evaluations were currently being used to evaluating teaching for tenure and promotion
3. The survey included three open-ended questions about student evaluations of teaching:
    - *What are the strengths of the current student evaluation process?*
    - *What are the limitations of the current student evaluation process?*
    - *Please provide any additional feedback and comments about student evaluations of teaching.*
      - Responses were initially scanned, then reviewed more closely for tagging with categories – a disassembly process. Those categories of responses were then examined for significant themes – a reassembly process.
      - There were 177 total responses for this prompt. Strengths with the current process were articulated in 144 of those, and 29 participants received negative responses.
    - Findings
      - Providing students with a voice (n=38, 38/177 = 21.5%)
      - Value/role of Feedback (n=48, 48/177 = 27.1%); primarily focused on the qualitative feedback from students
      - 29 participants received negative responses; the majority of those indicating the respondent felt there was no value in the current process:

**Background Continued:**

The faculty appointed senate task force, which reports directly has met bi-monthly, has done extensive benchmarking regarding good practice related to (1) evaluation effectiveness; (2) the timing/process of student evaluations; and (survey instruments). Several research articles and survey instruments from peer institutions/national institutions were reviewed.

### **Proposals:**

1. APAFT will work this year to review and make recommendations regarding how student evaluation of faculty are used in the tenure and promotion process
2. Review and make recommendations regarding the timing of student evaluations at WSU:
  - **Surveys to be administered online**
  - **Traditional Semesters**
    - Survey will be administered just following the withdrawal period (approximately week 11 of the semester). This ensures that students who withdrew from a course cannot complete the evaluation. Evaluations will remain open for two weeks to capture online students and individuals coming to campus less often and to potentially improve response rates. Run the evaluations from 12:00am to 11:59pm
  - **Blocks/Exceptions**
    - Opens on week 6 for one week and closes on week 7 (after the withdrawal period). Run the evaluations from 12:00am to 11:59pm
  - Student Evaluation Marketing “Blitz” – Provost’s office will support a marketing blitz. **An evaluation week to remind student of the intent/purpose of students evaluations, increase awareness, meaning, and completion of evaluations.**
    - Signs, QR codes, emails, screens.
3. Develop an evidence-based (brief) evaluation survey instrument for use across Colleges, which Colleges and Departments may certainly add to for accreditation and faculty purposes.

### **Summary of Timing Student Evaluations (Estelami):**

" The results indicate that there are significant differences between those students who respond early to survey invitations and those who respond late. Early responders and late responders reflect different segments of the student body, have different course evaluation formation dynamics, and exhibit different grade expectations. The findings suggest the existence of systematic biases in SET scores related to response rate, requiring educators to closely examine policies related to the timing of SET survey administration." **Early responders provide feedback about the course experience, late responders reflect on their grade (anticipated or earned) other than the course itself.**

**Impact of a final exam on student responses (Arnold):**

"A special feature of the data is that students were able to complete on-line questionnaires during a time window ranging from one week before to one week after the final examination. This allows for the isolation of the effect of the examination on student evaluations. Among students who subsequently pass the exam, we **find little difference between pre-and post-exam ratings**. Among students who fail, evaluation scores are significantly lower after the exam on a number of items. Our evidence is compatible with a self-serving bias in student evaluations, *but does not indicate that students seek revenge on instructors through lower ratings*." My emphasis added.

**References (not an exclusive list)**

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- Arnold, I. J. M. (2009). Do examinations influence student evaluations? *International Journal of Educational Research*, 48(4), 215-224.  
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- Berrett, D. (2015). Can the student course evaluation be redeemed? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
- Dmitriy V. Chulkov Jason Van Alstine, (2012). Challenges in designing student teaching evaluations in a business program. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 26(2),162 – 174.
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- Hancock, G., D. Shannon, and L. Trentham. Student and Teacher Gender in Ratings of University Faculty: Results from Five Colleges of Study. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* 6:235-248, 1993. Wallisch, P., and J. Cachia. 2019. "Determinants of perceived teaching quality: The role of divergent interpretations of expectations." [10.31234/osf.io/dsvgg](https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/dsvgg)
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Wright, S. L. & M. A. Jenkins-Guarnieri, Student evaluations of teaching: Combining the meta-analyses and demonstrating further evidence for effective use, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(6) 683-699, (2012).

### **Survey Instruments Reviewed**

- Southern Utah University
- Utah Valley University
- Daytona
- Oregeon
- USC