A Guide to Providing Evidence of Excellence in Teaching

Consideration for ladder-rank advancement at UCSC requires evidence of excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service. As a means of determining excellence in *teaching*, Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) are normally included in review files. However, relying solely on SETs as a measure of teaching effectiveness is not ideal, and is not in accord with the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) policy that requires at least two measures of teaching effectiveness (see APM 210-1.d.1). Although SETs can be useful (Benton and Cashin, 2012), they are not infallible; research has detected bias in SETs along the lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, course difficulty, academic discipline, etc. (Basow and Martin, 2012). Over-dependence on SETs also places excessive emphasis on the perspective of students, who—though valued members of the community of teaching and learning—are neither disciplinary experts nor educated in pedagogical practices, and therefore should not be the primary authority in, nor bear the burden of, evaluating teaching.

By providing *additional evidence of teaching effectiveness*, faculty members can more fully represent their teaching practice. Moreover, assessments of teaching effectiveness, beyond SETs, may be better suited to providing faculty members with *formative data*, information that will help them improve their teaching practice. Formative assessments can play a crucial role in guiding teachers towards excellence and innovation in teaching and learning.

This brief guide suggests five different formative assessments, which faculty members may decide to submit as evidence of teaching effectiveness: 1) personal statement, and possible additional self-evaluation statement regarding one's own teaching; 2) evidence of contributions to graduate education; 3) peer evaluation; 4) syllabi; and 5) diversity statement. These documents should not be used to reiterate information that is already evident through a review of SETs; rather, they should refer to overall patterns in the SETs as necessary, but provide a more holistic and representative picture of the individual as a teacher and of their teaching practice. Please consider this list a helpful guide, not an exclusive catalogue of options.

The Evaluation of Teaching

"The Academic Personnel Manual (APM) requires more than one kind of evidence of teaching effectiveness (see APM 210-1.d.1– Criteria for Appointment, Promotion, and Appraisal: Teaching). Types of evidence of teaching effectiveness include: student evaluations; the assessments of faculty members based on class visitations or attendance at public lectures; departmental review of syllabi, exams, assignments, and other materials; the number and caliber of students mentored by the candidate; and the development of new and effective techniques of instruction, including techniques that meet the needs of students from groups that are underrepresented in the field of instruction. Numerical student evaluations alone ought never be the sole means of evaluating teaching. Because mentoring of students at all levels is a critical aspect of teaching, mentorship should be explicitly evaluated by the department as a form of teaching."

1. Personal Statement/Teaching Statement: Self-Evaluation of Teaching

What is a Self-Evaluation?

A self-evaluation allows faculty members to assess their current teaching practice, reflect on new courses taught or changes in teaching practice since the last review, and specify strategies for growth and improvement based on peer observation or Student Evaluations of Teaching.

Why Should I Conduct a Self-Evaluation?

As a professional in the craft of teaching, you bring your own motivations, choices, and beliefs to your teaching practice. Evaluation of your teaching by other members of the teaching and learning community—i.e., colleagues, mentors, experts, and students—is extremely helpful, but not sufficient to capture the totality of your teaching practice, especially changes you have made since the last review. The personal statement provides a space for contextualizing Student Evaluations of Teaching, specifying your contributions to the curriculum, and delineating your mentoring at both the graduate and undergraduate levels (see below for more on graduate student mentoring and teaching). You may also want to include in your file a Teaching Statement that reflects more extensively on your approaches to and development of your teaching during the review period.

What Should I Include in A Teaching Statement?

In this document, faculty members have an opportunity to describe their approach to designing and teaching courses, delineate any changes they have made in curricular

offerings or teaching practice since the last review (including redesigning existing courses or teaching new ones), address any areas in need of improvement, and list any professional development (including workshops, trainings, or participation in Faculty Learning Communities devoted to teaching and learning). The self-evaluation should also describe how previously planned changes in teaching practice (e.g. as indicated in earlier versions of the Personal Statement or Personnel Letter) were actually implemented, and reveal the extent to which those innovations were successful or are in need of further modification. Where success has been achieved, the evaluation may include strategies for maintaining and expanding upon those strengths.

In conducting a self-evaluation, you may want to reflect upon specific prompts, such as those found in : Sampson, J. P., Jr., Driscoll, M. P., Foulk, D. F., & Carroll, P. S. (2010). Successful faculty performance in teaching, research and original creative work, and service. Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, Office of the Dean of the Faculties.

2. Contributions to Graduate Education

What counts as evidence of contributions to graduate education?
Your dedication and effort in contributing toward graduate student success—success in research, scholarship, and pedagogical development—also count as evidence of your own pedagogical skill. To document your contributions, include activities such as advising, mentoring, leading seminars, developing programs, and conducting independent studies and directed readings, etc. For example, include the number of MA and PhD committees you have served on, the number of students under your supervision who have completed degrees, and the number and type of honors awarded to students you have advised. These honors can include fellowships, employment (both academic and non-academic), and publications.

3. Peer Observation

What is a Peer Observation?
Peer observations provide colleagues with an opportunity to learn from the teaching practices of others and gain a fresh perspective on their own teaching practices. In peer observations, colleagues visit one another's classes, and later meet to discuss the class observation. Faculty members participate in these activities on a *voluntary basis*.

How Should A Peer Observation Be Organized?
The Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research (CATLR) at Northeastern University proposes some guidelines for designing peer observations that are "formative, collegial dialogue[s], tailored to the contours of the discipline and the expressed desires of the teacher being observed."

Initial Conversation. Establish goals for the observation and provide useful background information for the observer. Questions to ask the observed: How can this process be most useful for you? Is there anything specific you would like to focus on? Are there

things you'll be trying for the first time in this class? How would you describe this group of students? Are there materials that I can look at ahead of the observation?

Observation. For the observer: arrive in class early and seat yourself somewhere unobtrusive. If applicable, use the rubric that is shared by all who participate in peer observation in your department. The CITL can help with the preparation of such a rubric. Take detailed notes about what the instructor is doing, how engaged students appear, how things seem to be "working, " questions or suggestions you have, and so on. In general try not to focus as much on the content as on the overall instructional experience. After the observation, it is helpful to review your notes and organize them into useful themes, highlighting both strengths and questions you may have.

Follow-Up Conversation. Questions to ask the observed: how do you think things went overall? Was there something you felt went especially well? Was there something that surprised you? What worked or didn't work, and why? I noticed ____ and wonder what your experience of that was.

Reflective Summary. To make the observation useful and put the results into practice, we suggest that the observed compose a written reflective summary of the experience, responding to questions such as: What was the most useful part of this experience for you? What specific things got reinforced as effective during this process? What specific changes do you envision as a result of this feedback? Did you learn anything new about your students or how they learn? This reflective summary, along with the rubric, can provide a basis for summarizing the peer observation as part of the evaluation of teaching in the personnel process.

Source: [Northeastern University, Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research – "Faculty Peer Observation and Feedback"](#)

4. Syllabi

How do I use syllabi to demonstrate effectiveness in teaching?

Syllabi can demonstrate a range of features concerning your pedagogical practice—e.g., what you value about the topic, what you intend for students to be able to do by the end of the course, the type of activities and environments students will engage in as members of the course, the pace of topics and readings, how students will be assessed, and how you value and promote inclusivity.

In preparing for your personnel review, you may decide to include existing syllabi; below, you will find links to helpful resources for syllabus design or redesign in the future:

[Cornell University, Center for Teaching Excellence – "Writing a Syllabus"](#)
[Stanford University, Teaching Commons – "Creating a Syllabus"](#)
[Yale University, Center for Teaching and Learning – "Syllabus Design"](#)

5. Diversity Statement

What is a Diversity Statement?

A Diversity Statement provides faculty members with a space to demonstrate their commitment to equity and diversity. It should be based in a strong understanding of the university as a diverse community, and include concrete illustrations of activities and contributions to diversity and inclusivity within the teaching and learning community. Please see [CAAD guidelines on Evaluating Contributions to Diversity for Appointment and Promotion (APM 210).](#)

Why Diversity?

"Diversity is a defining feature of the University of California and we embrace it as a source of strength. Our differences — of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, socioeconomic status, abilities, experience and more — enhance our ability to achieve the university's core missions of public service, teaching and research." (UCNet)

What Should I Include in a Diversity Statement Tailored to My Teaching?

How have you included diverse content, materials, and ideas in courses?
- When preparing course content, have you included materials that reflect diversity and reflect contributions and perspectives from historically underrepresented groups?
- How have you modeled openness to new ideas and students' questions?
- How have you encouraged students to think critically about how knowledge evolves over time?

How have you created an inclusive classroom environment?
- Have you clearly communicated ways you would like your students to interact, ask questions, and participate to achieve respectful interaction in the classroom?
- How have you encouraged participation from all of your students?
- How have you made reasonable accommodations to provide an equal opportunity to students with a disability to enjoy the benefits and privileges of your class?
- How have you included structured support in your courses to help all students achieve high standards?
- To the extent possible (depending on the size of your class), how have you come to know your students and the individual perspectives and skills they bring to your course?

How have you participated in mentorship activities?
- Have you mentored students, post-docs, staff or faculty from diverse and underrepresented groups? Provide information on the context and objectives of the mentoring, and any specific outcomes in terms of academic or career success for those you have mentored?

Sources: [UC Net – "Diversity"](#); [UC San Diego, Center for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion – "Contributions to Diversity"](#); [Washington University in St. Louis, The Teaching Center – "Strategies for Fostering Inclusion in the Classroom"](#); [UCSC, Disability Resource Center – "Service and Accommodations"](#)

Appendix

Links listed in order of appearance.

APM 210-1.d.1
http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-210.pdf

Sampson, J. P., Jr., Driscoll, M. P., Foulk, D. F., & Carroll, P. S. (2010). Successful faculty performance in teaching, research and original creative work, and service. Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, Office of the Dean of the Faculties.
https://education.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Self-Evaluation-of-Faculty-Performance.pdf

Northeastern University, Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research – "Faculty Peer Observation and Feedback"
https://www.northeastern.edu/learningresearch/teaching-support/improving-and-documenting-teaching-effectiveness/faculty-peer-observation-feedback/

Cornell University, Center for Teaching Excellence – "Writing a Syllabus"
https://www.cte.cornell.edu/teaching-ideas/designing-your-course/writing-a-syllabus.html

Stanford University, Teaching Commons – "Creating a Syllabus"
https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/resources/course-preparation-resources/creating-syllabus

Yale University, Center for Teaching and Learning – "Syllabus Design"
http://ctl.yale.edu/SyllabusDesign

CAAD guidelines on Evaluating Contributions to Diversity for Appointment and Promotion (APM 210)
https://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/caad-committee-on-affirmative-action-and-diversity/Evaluating%20Contributions%20to%20Diversity%20APM%20210.pdf

UC Net – "Diversity"
http://ucnet.universityofcalifornia.edu/working-at-uc/our-values/diversity.html

UC San Diego, Center for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion – "Contributions to Diversity"
http://facultydiversity.ucsd.edu/c2d/index.html#Are-there-any-guidelines-for-wr

Washington University in St. Louis, The Teaching Center – "Strategies for Fostering Inclusion in the Classroom"
https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/resources/inclusive-teaching-learning/fostering-inclusion-in-the-classroom/

UCSC, Disability Resource Center – "Service and Accommodations"
https://drc.ucsc.edu/services-and-accommodations/sa-overview/index.html