PEER ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING

QUESTION #1: WHY SHOULD WE DO IT?

Self-assessment, student assessment, and peer assessment are the three components of thoughtful instruction and growth as a teacher. We often feel that there is not time for self-assessment or peer assessment and so rely on student assessment as the sole quantitative and qualitative evaluations of our teaching. Students have a unique insight that cannot completely evaluate all aspects of instruction and poor response rate on student evaluations decreases the value of those data.

Complete peer review of teaching is “a systematic process of examining and evaluating colleagues’ teaching for purposes including professional development, performance appraisal, and/or promotion and tenure.” A complete review of peer assessment and tools are available from the Provost (http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/peer_review). Peer evaluation of instruction includes the following:

- Review of statement of teaching philosophy
- Review of educational materials, e.g. syllabi and other materials in various media (including course web sites) prepared for instructional use.
- Review of class websites
- Review of student work
- Review of instructional delivery. This review should be conducted by more than one colleague and should involve more than one observation of classes in a course.

We are required to participate in peer review of teaching according to the University policy entitled “Evaluation of Teaching” (http://policy.umn.edu/education/teachingevaluation).

“C. Peer Evaluation of Teaching

Peer review should include assessment of the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter, general contributions to departmental teaching efforts, and any other teaching contributions. (see Appendix for best practice guidelines.)

1. **Peer review process.**
   a. Every academic unit should have a documented process for peer review of every instructor’s teaching efforts and contributions to teaching, both for purposes of promotion decisions and for teaching-based salary increases. The academic unit should evaluate instructors in ways appropriate to the discipline, and include consideration of activities outside the classroom such as facilitating student research, advising students, and other activities related to students' educational programs.
   b. The peer-review process must include consideration of any additional materials identified by the instructor as relevant to the evaluation. Instructors are encouraged to prepare and regularly update a teaching portfolio that contains materials that will be considered during his/her evaluation.

2. **Faculty peer review.**
a. Faculty peers are responsible for evaluating teaching conducted by tenured and tenure-track faculty as outlined in Board of Regents Policy: *Faculty Tenure*, Administrative Policy: *Faculty Compensation*, and Administrative Procedure: *Reviewing Candidates for Tenure and/or Promotion: Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty*.

b. Both faculty and instructional staff may participate in the evaluation of instructors who are not tenure-track or tenured faculty.”

**QUESTION #2: WHO SHOULD DO IT?**

All faculty members who provide 3 or more lectures over the academic year, including senior faculty members, should consider being evaluated at least once every 2 years. Faculty with the rank of assistant should be evaluated at least once yearly. All individuals going up for promotion in a given calendar year should undergo evaluation early in that year.

Peer review is best done by someone who is a peer as an instructor, not necessarily a peer in one’s discipline. We can bring in trained evaluators but we can be trained to do this work as well and it is of great benefit both to the person being reviewed and to the reviewer. The reviewer and reviewee need not be from the same department.

Mechanisms that have been tried include:
- Departments making a list of people to be evaluated annually and those individuals pairing up
- Central resources making themselves available to facilitate pairings or doing the review for given faculty members
- Other ideas?

**QUESTIONS #3: HOW DO WE DO IT?**

**WHAT WILL BE EVALUATED?**

The person being evaluated chooses the teaching offering to be evaluated. This may consist of observation of teaching performance in lecture or laboratory, review of course notes or other handouts, evaluation of the text or other required readings, review of examinations or other assessment methods, or any other aspect of teaching.

**HOW WILL THE EVALUATION BE USED?**

Evaluations are intended to be formative but may be included in merit review packets or promotion dossiers at the discretion of the person being reviewed.

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS?**

The person to be reviewed self-identifies a reviewer or asks for assistance in finding a reviewer. The reviewer and person being reviewed meet prior to the evaluation for
completion of the Pre-Observation Form (see below). After the observation, the reviewer logs on to the website (https://moodle.umn.edu/course/view.php?id=2278 ) and logs in the date of the observation for verification purposes, and fills out the Post-Observation Form (see below). Finally, the two parties meet in person, for face-to-face feedback and clarification. The Post-Observation Form is held by the person who was reviewed. Those individuals going up for promotion are required to provide evidence of peer assessment of teaching and should use this evaluation.

Timeline:

Person being reviewed:
- Identify reviewer
- Identify date of observation
- Fill out Pre-Observation form and meet with reviewer
- Undergo review
- Meet with reviewer for feedback

Reviewer:
- Agree to review and date of observation
- Meet with person being reviewed
- Observe class and/or review course materials
- Log onto website and log in date of observation
- Fill out Post-Observation form and meet with person being reviewed

Other forms are available on the CVM Faculty Quick Links website (http://www.cvm.umn.edu/faculty-and-staff/cvm-educational-support/FacultyStaffQuickLinks/index.htm). Some of those forms may be more suitable for review of course materials or evaluation of teaching in laboratory sessions or on clinics. Faculty being reviewed and their reviewers are encouraged to visit the website if attached paperwork does not meet their needs.

QUESTION #4: WHAT ARE BARRIERS TO PEER REVIEW? HOW DO WE OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS?
Person being reviewed: __________________________________________
Reviewer: ____________________________________________
Observation date: ____________________ Observation time: ____________
Location: ____________________________ Class: ______________________
Notes for Pre-Observation Meeting:
Year of students: Class of ____________
Required [ ] Elective [ ]
Class session topic: _____________________________________________
Instructor’s personal teaching goal(s) for the session?
1. _____________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________
Learning objective(s) for the session? (What will the students be able to do/know by the end of the session?)
1. _____________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________
Instructor Concerns / Focus (What would you like the observer to pay special attention to?)
Post-OBSERVATION FORM
(To be completed by the reviewer after the observation and shared with the peer during post-observation conference)

Person being reviewed: __________________________________________
Reviewer: __________________________________________
Observation date: ____________________ Observation time: ____________
Location: ____________________________ Class: ______________________

Notes for Post-Observation Meeting:

Instructor’s personal teaching goal(s) for the session? – Were these goals met? / observations –

1. ___________________________________________________________________

2. ___________________________________________________________________

Learning objective(s) for the session? (What will the students be able to do/know by the end of the session?) – Did the students achieve these objectives? How do you know? / observations –

1. ___________________________________________________________________

2. ___________________________________________________________________

Instructor Concerns / Focus (What would you like the observer to pay special attention to?) – Response to specific concerns / General observations

Comments: