FEEDBACK FROM THE FACULTY ON TEACHING EVALUATION

The FPPC received feedback and suggestions from 25 faculty members plus the FTLCAC, Christine Renner, and CLAS Faculty Council. That feedback and our response to each is reproduced in the following pages. There were four concerns that were mentioned by at least a handful of faculty members:

General Comments

1. The workload would burden senior faculty members:
Concerns about the amount of service work peer assessment would add to a faculty member's workload was the most consistent piece of feedback we received. The concerns are valid, and we made several changes to address them (see #3).

The primary mission of Grand Valley is to be an excellent teaching institution. Performing peer evaluation of course materials and observation of classroom teaching has two purposes. First, we want to provide our non-tenured faculty with collegial feedback so that they can improve their teaching prior to personnel decisions and be successful during the contract renewal, tenure, and promotion procedures.

Second, we want multiple measures of teaching performance so that candidates are not forced to rely primarily on student impressions, which evidence has increasingly indicated are not an optimal method of measure of teaching skills. (In fact, there are currently several court cases examining the validity of using student impressions to assess teaching).   If we do not do peer evaluation, then by default, we rely on student impressions to determine people's careers.

A review of 27 studies of peer review found that, in addition to other benefits, the practice is "able to overcome limitations of student evaluation as a form of pedagogical measurement in teaching performance (Thomas, Chie, Abraham, Raj, & Beh, 2015).

The FPPC therefore believes that there is no service we perform for our colleagues or this institution that is more important than this. The charge to develop peer review of both course materials and in-class observation originated with the UPRC, which is chaired by the Provost. The Provost has steadfastly expressed support for both methods of peer review.

If a faculty member was on a peer review team, that translates into looking at materials for one class, observing one class, meeting once with other peer reviewers, and meeting with the candidate. It is certainly our expectation that these activities will be credited under service, and we encourage each unit to discuss that.

2. The workload would burden untenured faculty:
The workload for untenured faculty members will consist of electronically assembling a syllabus, assignments, tests, and an example of graded work for one class. The untenured faculty member will be observed (which does not add work) and meet once with the peer review team.

There seems to be an overestimation of what is required here and how much time it would take to assemble the course dossier. This is not a teaching portfolio; it is a collection of teaching materials for one course. There is no narrative, and the materials requested are fairly minimal. Digital Measures is programmed so that course materials (e.g., syllabus, exams, assignments) can be uploaded in approximately 20 minutes.

In return for this, untenured colleagues will receive feedback about what is being done well and where improvement or modifications could be made.

3. This will be more difficult for smaller units.
There is no question that it will. We looked at the composition of all units, and we agree that a minority of units have an untenured/tenured faculty ratio that would be difficult to navigate.

After listening to feedback from UAS, we have agreed on the following:
1. The first-year formative review will be done by the mentor(s).
2. The fourth and fifth optional formative reviews have been eliminated. If a faculty member is still having notable problems with teaching after contract renewal, that person should be referred to the FTLC.
3. There will be a pilot test year.

4. Can we use fewer peer reviewers and fewer classroom visits. A multiple observer, multiple visits model is what is recommended. It is accepted that a single instance of peer observation is not sufficient for a report to be valid (Seldin 1984; Paulsen, 2002). Experts in the area of peer review make different recommendations about the number of reviewers and visits that should be used in a summative peer review.   "Atwood, Taylor and Hutchings (2000) propose a system of frequent visits, each lasting an hour or less. Kahn (1993) advocates 'regular' observations, though without giving a specific number, and Cosser (1998) 'as many as possible'—meaning (ideally) all teaching sessions for a given course, but otherwise 40% of teaching sessions, with an absolute minimum of three. Rowley (1978) recommends 'the maximum possible number of visits' but prefers observation sessions less than an hour in length" (in Austrian Learning Teaching Council, 2009).

"The internal validity question – Are we measuring what we intend to measure – does rely on consensus about what good teaching looks like in a situation at hand. In addition, however, the internal validity question engages the question of inquiry method. Since recommendations on the implementation of peer review embed the approach with a design that not only involves consensus on standard, but advocates multiple reviewers, multiple methods, and sustained engagement, it can readily be seen that such a system has distinct validity advantages to the single source approach (student ratings)..." (Chism, 2007, 23).

Specific Comments

Feedback from FTLCAC:

1. What parts of this will go into the faculty handbook? Will the instruments be included in the faculty handbook?

   > **Response***: 3.01 C-F will go. in the Faculty Handbook. The sample instruments will be linked.*

2. How will the peer reviews/observations be evaluated in the contract renewal/tenure and promotion portfolios?
   > **Response:** *The peer review team report (s) will be put in the personnel action portfolios. The unit's recommendation must address all pieces of evidence with the peer reviews being the most important.*

3. Will there be a trial/pilot phase?
   > **Response:** *Yes, Academic Year 2020-21. (See Recommendations, pg. 9)*

4. Definitions: We appreciated the emphasis on critical thinking and social justice in this section.

   The examples of excellent teaching included are very helpful. This is long overdue and helps clarify criteria for full professor review and also for faculty who want to know how to exceed "effective" teaching.
   Response: *Thank you.*

5. This peer review section is described well. Is there any flexibility on what materials could be submitted and when? New professors may be using materials created by others in their first year or two.
   Response: *Professors should submit what they use. If they are using other's materials, they should simply note that.*

6. The FTLC will have the role of "training" peer teams and, perhaps too, review committee members on the new peer review process and how to use the instruments. In consideration of the time it takes for a faculty member's participation in the peer review process, we suggest that the FTLC offer a range of training options, such as on-line modules, podcasts, etc. to go along with face-to-face workshops. Christine Renner said recently that they already have in place peer review training and that they will provide alternatives formats. Please follow through on this, we request.
   Response: *Christine has indicated that the FTLC will be developing an online version of the currently existing training.*

7. Make more distinction between formative and summative evaluations:
   Response: *This was done; see page 7.*

8. Will the same "peer team" be responsible for both formative and summative evaluations? This could be problematic.
   Response: *There is no requirement that the team stay the same from year to year.*

9. Some departments have mentors, which are part of a formative evaluation process. Indeed, the university mentoring policy requires a "peer advisor"; wouldn't it make sense for this adviser to be involved in the formative teaching feedback process?
   Response: *One of the changes we made was to give the first-year review to the mentor(s). Yes, the mentor should certainly participate in the second-year formative review.*

10. Personnel actions and voting: Can peer reviewers from Years 3 and 6 vote in personnel actions?
    Response: *Yes.*

11. Additional workload: There are some concerns about workload and managing schedules, particularly in light of timing on FAPS, FARs, and portfolios. It may be difficult for smaller departments to conduct regular peer reviews as a "team" (too few faculty to go around).
    Response: *We have made some changes; please see pages 1-2*

12. "Formative evaluation will take place in years 1 and 2." If this is included in the faculty handbook, can "will" be changed to "should"?
    Response: *We don't want people to begin to see the formative reviews as optional.*

13. It would be helpful to see more detail on the timeline—what's due, when, how it fits in with the contract renewal/tenure and promotion dates, what are the responsibilities of the faculty member, what are the responsibilities of the peer reviewers? Perhaps add a flow chart.

Response: *People on FPPC liked the idea of a flow chart. However, we have eliminated reviews, and the process seems fairly simple to us now. We will offer one and see whether ECS/UAS thinks it should be included.*

14. Would the course portfolio be reviewed as summative by the unit peer review team before it is added to the portfolio for contract renewal/tenure, so the candidate could apply feedback before the portfolio becomes final, submitted for faculty review and voting?

    Response: *The faculty member will meet with the peer review team to go over their report. Hopefully, differences can be resolved. If not, the faculty member has a right to insert a rebuttal.*

    If a unit wants to review all the course materials the peer review team looked at, that can be done. Frankly, that seems inefficient because the review team has already done a more thorough evaluation. The unit should, of course, look at materials from other courses that were not peer reviewed.

15. We appreciate that the sample instruments are pretty straight-forward. How much can the sample instrument be revised before it must be reviewed by the UPRC?

    Response: *The most important thing is the identified teaching dimensions are reflected on the instruments (see page 8), The format of the instrument is up to the unit (e.g., narrative, checklist, rating scale, etc.)*

16. Can units continue to use their own existing instrument if they reflect the guidelines on peer review? We are worried about a double standard being applied by review committees if candidates use the "standard" new form versus other modified forms. Whether intentional or not, will the use of the new form add "weight" or at least help make a stronger case for the candidate's performance. In other words, would be a disadvantage using anything other than the standardized form. Ideally, there should not be any dis/advantage, but in practice? Perhaps this should be a part of the training that review committees will get to prepare them for this new personnel review process.

    Response: *Yes, a unit can continue to use its own instrument or modify it as long as the identified teaching dimensions are there. It should make no difference in use. We can ask Christine to address that any different teaching instrument in place has been approved by the UPRC and is completely acceptable.*

17. Some of the dimensions seem to be "Yes/No", not able to rate on a scale. For example, "Content is organized so that course has meaningful structure." A professor would either be organized or not. What would examples be for advanced ratings?

    Response*: We do not see this as a yes/no response. There are degrees of organization – it is not "dismal" or "perfect". Please remember that as long as the performance dimension of organization is on the form, a unit can change the wording on the subdimensions.*

18. For each of the competencies, add a N/O (not observed) (or N/A) to the three assessment ratings (needs improvement, effective, every effective); not every item may apply to the context of the course or the observed classroom.

    Response: *Fair point; will do.*

19. To clarify, the "effective" is a level that meets the bar for effective teaching, while the "very effective" rating is just that, better than meeting the bar - but is NOT to be assumed to be "excellent" as defined in the new policy document; the latter is related to 'full-professor' criteria. Is this a correct interpretation, then, about the distinction between effective and very effective ratings?

Response: *It is. When applying for promotion to full professor, a candidate must have demonstrated at least effective teaching. But even if the faculty member does that, there are additional requirements to be promoted to full. A rating of "Highly Effective" is not enough.*

Feedback 1: I reviewed the FPPC's Teaching Evaluation Methods and as you had asked for feedback, I have the following comments. I think it is important if we say that teaching is our primary responsibility that our evaluation processes align with this and agree that having a more detailed process for the evaluation of teaching is important in creating more consistency across the University. However, I have the following concerns with the proposed process.

In a climate where we seem to be asking more and more of faculty, particularly as we increase the requirements for scholarship and service and are simultaneously looking to reduce reassigned time or requiring reassigned time to be used as significant focus as opposed to reducing teaching load, this seems to place even more work on certain faculty. Namely the untenured faculty member and the committee of reviewers. My reading of this is that untenured faculty would have to prepare and have reviewed teaching portfolio's a minimum of 4 times before tenure, including each year for the first three years. This seems like a lot of additional burden to place on a new faculty member. Additionally, this places an additional service load on faculty assigned to the review committee, not just in the time that it takes for the review, but apparently, they also have to be trained by the Pew FTLC. Though in larger departments this could be spread around, I fear that certain people could get tagged to do this more frequently because (1) they are trained (like inclusion advocates) or (2) because they have more expertise/are better or more thorough at doing this.

Something that I don't see in this, but that I think is important are some clearer guidelines for the writing of personal statements. It would make sense to me that faculty be encouraged to frame their statement regarding teaching around the criteria of effective teaching that have been established. Explicitly indicating how the materials they have included in their portfolio demonstrate their meeting of these criteria. It would also be a good idea for the FAR, if we really want faculty to demonstrate these criteria, to explicitly ask them to reflect on their teaching in light of one or more of the criteria.

Response: *The training will be done in the second semester of the pilot year. Although it is up to the unit we recommend that all tenured faculty be trained. We are not sure what is meant by "personal statement". If you are referring to Self-Reflection, we are recommending modification of the question in the FAR to reflect your suggestion.*

Feedback 2: Another issue I thought about in regard to teaching has to do with the question of materials. In the sciences, many times the syllabi are decided by committee, as are quizzes, lab manuals and other assignments. How does that really reflect on the individual faculty members? Additionally, the course that I have taught most frequently is a team-taught class where I am not the primary instructor; how would people in this kind of situation be evaluated?

Response: *If material is common and was not developed by the faculty member, that would be noted. It should still be included, so peer reviewers can look the context of the class. We believe peer review is best done on a class or section of a class where there is one instructor.*

Feedback 3:
- The number of observations/reviews scheduled for pre-tenured faculty, the number of and rank/status of reviewers/observers required per action (3, tenured), and efforts to have folks within disciplines and departments engage in these actions make these protocols quite restrictive—while this may work in

very large departments, it is our sense that this will be very difficult/impossible to achieve in many departments and perhaps entire colleges across campus.

- For example, departments with graduate teaching loads may disproportionately offer courses M-Th, 6-9pm; given that several faculty in a department may teach 3 of the 4 nights a week in a given semester, it would likely be very difficult to find 3, tenured faculty to observe another class during these time blocks.
- Can we have more information about why 3 tenured faculty members are required for review/observation? It seems that if there is proper training, 2 should be enough differences between two reviews/observations should not be *so* different to require a third tiebreaker.

Response: *Please see pages 1-2.*

Feedback 4: I agree with the Provost's sentiments about teaching being the most important work we do, and therefore we should welcome opportunities for review/observations and formative and summative feedback. I understand the need to align feedback with the personnel processes in place for TT faculty. Given the importance and value we place on teaching effectiveness at this institution, what are the opportunities/requirements for formative and summative peer feedback for faculty that are not up for personnel action? In order to ensure that high quality teaching is available to all students in all classes, should we not have some sort of schedule for ALL tenured/tenure track faculty? What mechanism exists for peer review of teaching that ensures teaching effectiveness is maintained post-tenure?

Response: *The FPPC agrees with you. We do believe that all faculty should be peer reviewed (perhaps every three to five years) and that annual reviews rely way too much on student impressions in some departments. If ECS wishes to send us a separate charge to look at that, we would welcome it. However, faculty are saying that just reviewing non-tenured people is too big a workload, so I am not sure how they would feel about incorporating all faculty.*

I would exercise caution with having the very *first* statement of definition relate to organization. The statement: *Teach content in a coherent, organized manner to aid student learning* by itself supports a simplified view of teaching that my experience has been used a proxy by both students and faculty for other issues. I am not suggesting that organization isn't important, but the frequency with which I have seen "organization" invoked signals that it is an easy term to fall back and that, relative to the other dimensions, can be a broad catch-all for dissatisfaction with teaching. I am also concerned about discouraging teaching that may not at face value appear organized but that is very much intentional in the design of the learning experiences. For example, constructive approaches, immersing students in desirable difficulties, or active learning pedagogies such as Reacting to the Past, may not at first blush appear organized but are in fact quite well planned. Will a peer observing one (chaotic and messy) class session rate that instructor's class as organized? Are all students in an introductory course at the metacognitive level to differentiate organization and deep learning experiences (see this study as an example)? All that is to say that I would advocate moving this item to appear as a later dimension of the definition and possibly to provide additional verbiage to define/explain what is meant.

Response: *We moved the organization dimension from the first position and changed the explanation.*

I raised this issue early on in the drafting of the language about the use of "*and*" in each statement. If we take a look at Dimension 5: *Establish and communicate challenging learning goals and high expectations*, there are from a literal and possibly legalistic viewpoint four different items therein that must be evaluated:

1. Establish challenging learning goals
2. Establish high expectations
3. Communicate challenging learning goals

4. Communicate high expectations

I would urge the committee to review each of the eight statements with an eye towards the compound statements and how evaluation will be operationalized.

Response*: We understand the issues involved with compound sentences. Rather than having many dimensions to effective teaching, we think this is best handled on the evaluation instrument for units that are concerned about this. For instance:*

Establishes Challenging Goals and Expectations
1. The degree to which challenging learning goals are established is.....
2. The degree to which high expectations are established is..................
3. Challenging learning goals are communicated to students................
4. High expectations are communicated to students.............................

I wonder about the extent to which the Course Portfolio/Dossier is tied to the class observation. My initial sense was that the review of course materials was very much tied to the observation and that these materials were to be considered as context for the observation itself. That said, the document reads as though these two things are separated. I wonder whether or not the entire review procedure would be simpler if the peer observation/material review were more intentionally linked and thus considered One Thing. If the intent is for them truly to be separate events, then I do see this entire procedure as being a great deal of work. Once upon a time, we chatted about providing units with a menu of peer review options. Might it be appropriate for units to choose between the two – peer observation OR review of course materials? I ask only because I know other institutions undertake a combined review or choose one or the other.

Response: *The charge we received asked that both be developed, and we agree that doing both is optimal. We believe that certain performance dimensions are better assessed by one form of peer review than the other. We do not see it as two separate processes; one of the purposes is for the course materials to set the context for the observation. We specify that the course materials will be looked at shortly before the peer observation, and they are both discussed in the peer review meeting. When setting up the observation, the reviewer should ask about what will occur in that class and if there are any course materials that would be particularly pertinent. If some units would like to combine the two instruments, we think that is acceptable. In the proposal, we did combine the two types of peer review into one procedure to better communicate their interconnectedness.*

Lastly, I want to come back to the issue of a "yes, we did it" approach versus a "we rated the quality" process. With respect to both the reflective self-evaluation and also the class observation, how important is it that a rubric/form be completed that evaluates the quality of these items or is the important thing to note that an instructor undertook the process of reflection (with sufficient guidance/prompts/models) and engaged with peers around a classroom observation? I raise the issue because of the challenges associated with "grading" these two aspects of the evaluative process. One might imagine that it is simpler to provide a checklist or rubric with which peers can provide evaluative remarks on course materials – syllabi, assignments, graded work, etc. Which then brings me back to the role of the personnel portfolio in this evaluative process. Might a checklist/rubric be developed to help colleagues better evaluate the portfolio materials?

Response*: For the summative reviews, there does need to be an outcome specified; it would not be enough to simply say, "we did this". For the second-year formative review, we do ask that the instruments should be used because it is a low-stakes way for faculty to experience what will happen*

during summative review. Perhaps it was not forwarded to you, but four sample rubrics were developed and will be linked in the Handbook. Units are also free to develop their own instruments.

Feedback 5: I'm writing with feedback to the FPPC proposed policy for standardizing teaching evaluation.

I recognize the immense work that this committee has put into preparing this proposal, but feel that this added burden doesn't align with the Provost's commitment to evaluating workload and ensuring that service is meaningful. Additionally, as a newer faculty member, one who is undergoing tenure review currently, I can't agree that this amount of teaching evaluation would have relieved or help me. I think it would be intensely anxiety inducing and stressful, and although the policy says the reviews at years 1, 2, 4, and 5 are formative only and only to be seen by the individual faculty member being evaluated, the impressions left for the evaluators who are in your department would still exist when it came time for personnel decisions. These impressions wouldn't just go away because the policy says it's a formative evaluation.

I think we need careful consideration of what the "problem" is that we are trying to solve through this standardization in the policy. If the lack of standardization is the problem, that can also be solved by a single required evaluation each year prior to personnel decisions.

If the problem is that we want to help new teachers grow and thrive to become excellent teachers, I don't think constant evaluation by your departmental colleagues is the proper course of action. I think we could better utilize the Pew FTLC by having them visit your classroom while your teaching (these could be "required"), with private feedback given to the faculty member (the mid-semester reviews are nice, but only gather student impressions, not professional impressions of your teaching). We could have Pew FTLC have a process by which they give feedback on specific coursework, like a student might visit the writing center. We could have workshops where the FTLC helps you interpret, reflect on, and act on your student teaching evaluations, and we could require junior faculty visit classes being taught by recognized, senior faculty - maybe award-winning teachers – to better develop their teaching skills. I feel I would have jumped at the opportunity to have any of these options available to me as not-yet tenured faculty member looking to improve my teaching, and the university investing in resourcing these kinds of opportunities would be helpful if the problem we are solving with this policy is to help improve teaching.

If the problem is that we currently have bad teachers, then those cases should be handled individually through another mechanism.

I hope that you forward my thoughts to FPPC.

Response: *This charge originated with the UPRC, which is chaired by the Provost. I did check with her, and she remains in favor of both kinds of peer review. One of the problems we are trying to solve is that there needs to be multiple methods of assessing teaching, not just student impressions. In order to be fair, those processes should not differ tremendously from unit to unit.*

I did talk to the FTLC about your suggestions, and it already does everything you mentioned when someone is referred or asks for help, but the center does not have anywhere near enough staff to do those things for all untenured faculty members. The FTLC can certainly be a resource, but it cannot take the place of the unit.

Feedback 6: I am happy that we're making the effort to meaningfully evaluate teaching. Teaching is the most important activity we do, and I welcome efforts to improve that.

The materials that I see are quite ambitious. I see a lot of attention to rubrics and forms and submitting portfolios over a number of years (perhaps every year until tenure/promotion!). To me, that largely sounds like what we do in a personnel review. Is this to be a formative process, or a review? Even though the current proposal attempts to distinguish those two activities, the line does not seem to be clearly drawn.

I also worry that formulating an instrument by which we report the results of the review of teaching will inevitably result in "teaching to the instrument." It's been my experience that the most meaningful moments of teaching development have involved experimentation, inquiry, discussion with students and colleagues, visiting colleagues' classes and observing teachers with all different sorts of pedagogies. This free exchange of ideas and engagement with teaching is what I value most, and I fear that the measures proposed will encumber those or, worse, supplant them entirely.

Thanks for all your work on this. I'll be following this issue closely, and I'd be happy to provide more feedback.

Response: Please note that this is not done every year until tenure. We have changed the first year to formative review done with the mentor (unless a unit wishes otherwise); then there is a formative in Year 2, contract renewal review in Year 3, nothing in Years 4 and 5, and a pre-tenure review in Year 6.

We agree that teaching development involves experiment, inquiry, discussion, etc. Nothing in this proposal prohibits any of that. In Years 1 and 2, that is the goal. But, for better or worse, there has to be a summative review when a person is up for a personnel decision. And, there has to be some way of reviewing/summarizing teaching performance to inform that decision.

The proposal stipulates that a unit does not have to use the instruments attached; they are samples only. A unit can use different instruments for formative and summative review. A unit is free to develop its own instruments as long as it includes the relevant teaching dimensions and it is submitted to the University Personnel Review Committee. If a unit wants to develop a narrative form for maximum freedom of expression, it may do so.

Feedback 7: Flexibility: I think that the policy would be better with a bit more flexibility built in, as several people noted in the meeting. That flexibility should be tied to the people involved as reviewers of the portfolio and doing class visits, as well as the course being reviewed. For instance, it seemed like there could be some issues with expecting that a single course would be taught in both semesters. There's huge variety in teaching loads on campus.

Response: We are not sure exactly what is being asked for here. The course being reviewed is up to the faculty member. We do believe that tenured faculty members should be the reviewers. The summative review of a course will occur in one semester, so teaching it in both semesters is not necessary.

Timing for Rollout: This is not something we discussed, but it's an issue I think about every time we have a personnel policy change. It seems like the pattern is, once UAS approves and the provost signs off, the change in the faculty handbook is immediate. When this has happened with personnel standards, it has always made me uncomfortable; in recent decisions, I didn't realize this until after UAS had voted, so I neglected to raise it.

For this proposed change, there will be lots of departments and colleges for which this is a BIG change and a lot of new work. I think it would be highly unwise to instantiate this next fall. Folks should have a year to figure out a plan, and maybe the opportunity to pilot it with new faculty. I also think that there has to be some process that allows faculty in the tenure pipeline to not experience a wildly different second review.

I compare this to the catalog: when a major changes and there are new requirements, they aren't retroactive, but rather apply only to the incoming class of students (while older students can opt in). When we make big changes in personnel policy, I think they should apply to the new cohort of faculty, but we should have some means to make the change more gradually for people who've already been here several years.

Response: This is a good point. The FPPC recommends that next fall be a pilot semester, which will involve a limited number of units. The winter will be dedicated to reviewing results, making any necessary changes, and training. Although university-wide implementation is up to the Provost's Office, our recommendation is that it begin in Fall 2021.

Feedback 8: We feel that departments with strong mentoring documents that have been approved at every level should be exempt from the new peer-review process due to the strength and efficiency of the processes already in place. We are essentially being asked to fix something that's not broken because of issues other departments and colleges are having. Colleges and departments that are faltering in meeting mentoring standards should be required to use the new process, but those with strong mentoring processes already in place should not.

Some specific issues:

Small departments like ours are unduly burdened by the requirement of having three-person mentoring teams. If the faculty mentor cannot be on the team and untenured faculty cannot be on the team, that leaves us with just four individuals who could serve as team members. Next year we will likely have three untenured tenure track faculty members, which means team members would each have to cover three classes per semester, often classes that meet on opposite schedules. This requirement is imposing a lot of extra work on faculty who already are stretched trying to complete teaching, scholarship and service requirements.

Having an outside committee member makes little sense when concepts specific to our discipline are what is being taught. How well someone teaches anthropological theories or methods would be very difficult for a non-anthropologist to evaluate. Imagine someone like me evaluating how well a Chem professor is teaching temperature conversions or how to balance redox reactions. I might be able to evaluate my own understanding or guess at how well the students are taking in the information, but I wouldn't truly be able to evaluate the pedagogy the way a chemist would.

If a team is required, we think two people makes a lot more sense and that a team of two is more practical than a team of three.

We also believe that the first year of a new faculty member's time at GVSU should be something of a "safe space" where they can get used to their classes and settle in without immediately being evaluated. Russ said there was some talk at UAS about moving this evaluation to start in the 2nd year and we think that's more reasonable.

We'd like clarification on how much we'd be able to change the final form to make it more compatible with our already successful system. That said, we do not think it's logical to replace something that works well just to improve the appearance of consistency across departments.

Response*: Department mentoring certainly has a role in formative review, but not summative. We changed the first year to review to one that is done by the mentor to reflect that. Mentors should not do summative reviews; faculty members must to be able to trust a mentor, not have to be watchful of what is said or done because the mentor will eventually formally evaluate the mentee.*

The literature indicates that people not familiar with the discipline can be effective peer reviewers; they demonstrated equal reliability and validity as non-experts in the subject matter (Hanson, 1993; Morgan, 2013). If a reviewer knows nothing about the content of the discipline, that dimension can be skipped. Per instruments, the important thing is that the forms reflect the dimensions of teaching that the type of peer review is meant to assess. The format is flexible.

Feedback 9: I believe this process creates an incredible and unnecessary addition to the workload for pre-tenured faculty: although preparing the course portfolios is in some ways a draft for the personnel file, I would have been overwhelmed by this in my first year and probably even my second. It seems to ratchet up the pressure just when new faculty are getting their footing, and I don't know that the value outweighs the cost.

Response: *Please see pages 1-2.*

Feedback 10: If we were to require the course portfolio, I would have difficulty evaluating it because there is no narrative to accompany it. There's certainly value in reviewing course materials with a colleague early in a faculty member's tenure – I got a lot out of my conversations with my mentor when we looked at my course materials – but those were conversations, not a formal, written review. To me, the conversation element seems really important; I would be uncomfortable making a judgement about a colleague's pedagogy without having some explanation from the faculty member about his/her/their intentions and goals. That doesn't mean I think we should add a reflective piece to the course portfolio – that would be even more work. I just don't see the value in such a rigorous review before year three.

Response: *We have changed the first-year review to occur with the mentor. The value of the second-year <u>formative</u> review is to look at progress through more than one pair of eyes, note anything that needs improvement, and be a low-stakes acclimation of the faculty member to the review process that will count towards contract renewal in Year 3. We expect that conversations with the faculty member will occur anytime a formative or summative review is done.*

Feedback 11: The proposed process seems to mirror a lot of the mentoring work, and perhaps in so doing dilute the quality of both. Also, I wonder if this workload might not place a higher burden on smaller departments and/or departments that have less tenured faculty. (e.g., the peer review team is supposed to be three tenured faculty). And, as we know, the winter semester is already one that seems to have an increased workload (e.g., affiliate reviews, searches/campus visits, tenure binders, registration/student advising, a very short turn-around from fall).

Response: *Please see pages 1-2.*

Feedback 12: It wasn't clear to me -- is the course portfolio to be for the class to be observed? If so, that means we're expected to have everything planned out, built, written, etc. before the semester starts. Before we even meet our students. That does not seem like it encourages responsive teaching. Also, as a new faculty member, I am likely to have new preps, which increases my workload. And if it were not a new prep, the required submission deadline for the portfolio (and the lack of time between semesters) means that we would likely be preparing this portfolio (and hence our course) without the benefit of things like summative student feedback, seeing how final projects pan out, etc. Again, this does not seem to encourage responsive, reflective teaching.

Response: *Yes, the course materials are for the course that will be observed. During the first two years, this will be formative feedback only. Formative feedback certainly does not preclude changing materials*

in subsequent semesters, and we expect the peer reviewers might be able to contribute helpful suggestions. By the third year, materials will need to be complete because the contract renewal is imminent.

Feedback 13: The requirement to build a course dossier (in addition to knowing how much work you would be foisting onto your colleagues) prior to observations seems like it would discourage faculty from requesting formative evaluations.

Response: *Please see pages 1-2.*

Feedback 14: This new process would have all tenure-track faculty in essence create a Course Portfolio every year (maybe several depending on how many different courses they teach - it is not specified in the guidelines whether they would need to create one for every course they teach or just a selected course). Then the Portfolio needs to be shared with three tenured faculty and evaluated in detail. The same three faculty would also complete observations every year (some formative, some summative).

Response*: They assemble course materials only for the course that is being observed. It does not have to be the same three faculty members each year.*

Feedback 15: Given the ratio of tenured v. tenure-track faculty in our department, tenured faculty would constantly be reading and evaluating portfolios. Tenure-track faculty would constantly be creating portfolios where the documenting of work would take away time from the actual work. The process would leave little time for both tenured and tenure-track faculty to actually engage with students and do service or work on scholarship. Also, would this work be standard expectation from tenured faculty or is this something they can claim as service? Based on my reading it appears to be standard expectation, which again in a small department like ours would requires a huge time commitment from everyone. While I am all for giving feedback early, I believe our new mentoring guidelines will ensure that formative observations take place before summative observation.

Response: *This would count as service. Please also see pages 1-2.*

Feedback 16: I don't disagree with the definition of effective teaching per say. The emphasis on peer review and self-evaluation (reflective & dialogical approach) is welcome and helps to, if not decrease the weight of the LIFT evaluations, at least to emphasize their function as ONE measure only. In this regard, I agree with the overall philosophy.

What I have issue with though is the process, both in terms of its complexity and cost (labor). The faculty involvement it requires at the unit level and the burden it puts on new faculty members is quite frankly concerning. While there are explicit "formative reviews" built into it, the scope and complexity of the process may suggest that there is no room or time to develop and get acquainted with the culture of the institution. The biggest concern then is that the formalized steps and product (portfolio) end up becoming the driving force and not the development of effective teaching through personalized and customizable peer-to-peer support.

Response*: Please see pages 1-2. The first two years are peer-to-peer support; no one is involved or sees any results other than the mentor, peer reviewers, and the faculty member.*

Feedback 17: While I believe the process is moving in the right direction, I have some reservations about the one-size fits all approach FPPC are suggesting. What may work for large units will not necessarily work for smaller units, especially trying to (easily) find three (3!) tenured faculty for classroom observations. I'm

also concerned about faculty workload of both new faculty and tenured faculty that this process entails. Isn't one of the reasons we moved away from 2, 4, and 6-year reviews was to decrease faculty workload? This new process actually has us doing more reviews that when we changed the system eight years ago. I'm also worried about the inherent redundancy with the mentoring plans all units were tasked with creating this past fall. Those mentoring plans already have formative review/feedback built in, so this new proposed process in the first year seems like overkill. Finally, I'm also concerned that if the LIFT evals are only to be one measure of effective teaching, they seem to show up as possible sources of evidence for too many categories.

Response: *Please see pages 1-2. The FPPC shares your concern about the overuse of LIFT. We have been given a charge to propose policy about how LIFT can and cannot be used.*

<u>Feedback from the CLAS Faculty Council.</u>

1. CFC requests that Formative and Summative should be defined in the document.
    Response: *Definitions have been added; see page 7.*

2. Is it Observation? Review? Evaluation?
    Response:
    1. *Evaluation - determination of the value , nature, character, or quality of something or someone; assessment.*
    2. *Observation - notice or perceive (something) and register it as being significant.*
    3. *Review - careful examination of something, formulation of a judgment, and statement of the judgment*
    4. *Assessment - the evaluation or estimation of the nature, quality, or ability of someone or something; the action or an instance of making a judgment about something*

        Synonyms: Assessment = evaluation; review =reassessment; observation= review

        Note: This was the most fun we had writing this plan/proposal/proposition/recommendation.

3. Should not evaluations always be formative?
    Response: *They must be summative if we want to use them in personnel decisions to supplement student impressions of teaching.*

4. CFC is concerned about managing workload.
    Response: *Please see pages 1-2.*

5. CFC is hesitant about three reviewers meeting to discuss their peer observations. Would this not be a "micro" personnel committee? If so, is it redundant for Units with Personnel Committees? Is not there the strong likelihood of consensus building among the reviewers? Which in turn may defeat the point of three reviewers?
    Response: *Consensus building is the goal. We do not believe that two forms of actual peer review is the same as what a Unit Personnel Committee does. The documents produced by the peer review team would be used by the Unit Personnel Committee.*

6. Are we in danger of imposing pedagogical straight jacket?
    Response*: We are not sure what is meant here. We believe the identified dimensions of effective teaching should occur in all classes. We do not believe that asking all instructors to*

have disciplinary knowledge, teach skills, assess students, set challenging goals, etc. constitutes a straitjacket.

7. How are reviewers determined? Besides tenure? Are the reviewers expert/excellent teachers? By what standard?
   Response*: That is up to the unit.*

8. Does the specific FTLC training referenced already exist?
   Response: *It does. The FTLC also plans to develop an online version.*

9. There was concern that rubrics included do not offer flexibility.
   Response: *The proposal stipulates that a unit does not have to use the instruments attached; they are samples only. A unit can use different instruments for formative and summative review. A unit is free to develop its own instrument as long as it incorporates feedback on the relevant teaching dimensions, and it is submitted to the University Personnel Review Committee. If a unit wants to develop a narrative form for maximum freedom of expression, it may do so.*

10. There was hesitancy regarding the number/frequency of reviews.
    Response*: Please see pages 1-2.*

11. There was concern about the use of the language " We… feel… and failure"
    Response: Where is this language, and what is the concern?

12. The was a concern that assessment methods are divergent by nature.
    Response: *They are. That is why we want to see a mix of them used to assess a faculty member's teaching.*

Feedback from Brooks (Brooks faculty were asked to respond via the request in QI, and the feedback from the eight who did appears below)

Q1 - UAS has been asked to provide comments and feedback on the new peer review of teaching policy being developed by FPPAC. This proposed policy would require all departments comply with nearly annual peer review of both teaching materials and in- class teaching by 3 different faculty in 3 different days of class until tenure, and then again 1 year prior to promotion to full professor. Years 1, 2, 4, and 5 would be formative feedback and years 3 and 6 would be summative (years 4 and 5 are at the request of the faculty member). There are strong concerns about work load requirements for both large and small departments, and the impact of these reviews on new faculty. This feedback has to be submitted to the Chair of UAS by Thursday, so please respond to this survey by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, February 4. This is a very important matter that could impact everyone in the college, so please take a few minutes to read the proposal and respond in the text box below if you have any comments or concerns.

I am concerned about increased workload for faculty (with those being reviewed and those who need to do the reviewing) particularly at a time when the Provost is trying to reduce service commitments for faculty. This also seems like overreach - so many reviews that, in small;; departments, will need to be undertaken by too few senior faculty. Rather than reviewing junior faculty so often, I would rather make it possible (required) for junior faculty to regularly attend classes conducted by senior faculty, to observe skilled and experienced teachers at work. Thanks.

Response: *The Provost is supportive of the peer review process, and the charge came from the University Personnel Review Committee, which the Provost chairs. Please see pages 1-2 for changes we made that will affect workload.*

The first bullet concerning effective teaching contains bias with the subjective nature of the term "meaningful structure" and emphasis on organization. Studies continue to demonstrate that faculty of color, women, and other marginalized faculty are routinely seen as disorganized by students in comparison to their white and/or male peers. This includes when faculty teach the same content in the same manner. UAS and the FPPC should reconsider the use of the term organization in its definition of effective teaching. To this end, I am wary of the use of civility in #4 as the term civility has been used to police the affective behaviors of people of color, specifically African Americans throughout US history. It's disconcerting to see it invoked within these guidelines. It's unclear how the course portfolio referenced in "Documentation of Effective Teaching" fits within the broader section of teaching in the personnel dossier. Given the transition to the tenure track for faculty, formative evaluation should only occur in the second semester of the first year or the first semester of the second year, as some units may conduct summative evaluations in the winter semester of the second year in addition to the fall semester of year three. Depending on the unit and the number of faculty undergoing formative and summative assessments, this could place a heavy workload on those in the unit. For instance if here are two personnel actions in addition to a unit who has hired new faculty annually, there could be 4 or more formative assessments in addition to the summative peer reviews. I suggest that formative assessments be conducted by the untenured faculty member's mentor and either the unit head or person appointed by the unit head. That person should be tenured. Nonetheless, the proposed procedure places undue labor on untenured faculty, especially those who are also preparing dossiers in years 3 and 6. It's unclear how this process will benefit faculty or not be duplicative to some of the work in preparing the teaching section of the personnel dossier. To this end, I suggest that the FPPC review existing materials and practices of various units on campus to see if there are examples of how the peer review process can be supportive during years of personnel actions without creating extra labor that may also be duplicative. Moreover, the document is not clear as to whether the formative assessments will be included in unit materials during the personnel process. And if they are included, it's concerning since these are supposed to be formative.

Response: *The term "civility" was eliminated to reflect that the dimension was really talking about the effective management of classroom discussion. We rewrote the "organization" dimension. The reports from the peer review teams will go into the Personnel Portfolio. The proposal is very clear; formative assessments are shared with the faculty member only. Also, please see pages 1-2 about workload concerns.*

I have a number of concerns: 1. This creates increased workload for faculty--how will Units address this in terms of Service allocations? 2. I would like there to be a critical discussion around the word "civility" and how that can be used against marginalized faculty--especially those who teach Issues and Diversity courses and in related fields of social justice, critical race theory, religion, and LGBTQ+ issues 3. I would like there to be a discussion on how faculty reviewers will be mentored to account for working with marginalized faculty (especially if they are not marginalized) and how to use feedback as supportive and not punitive. 4. I really like the idea of teams of reviewers, but again, this relates to work load and concern for small units. How can there be additional support provided?

Response: *The word "civility" was eliminated because what we were really concerned about was management of class room discussion. Your point about marginalized faculty is important; "A special caution concerning bias applies to the cased of underrepresented faculty in the peer review process...the prevailing cultural bias of our society infuses the work of the academy in the same way that it influences other societal institutions" (Chism, 2007, 24). We will ask the Faculty Teaching and Learning Center to incorporate coverage about assessing marginalized faculty in the training.*

This work counts as service; the particulars are up to the unit.

I completely understand and support all efforts to ensure that teaching excellence is centered in our jobs at grand Valley. However, different departments and different colleges do this in different ways. I am concerned greatly at what is proposed amendment would do to faculty workload, especially in smaller departments or colleges. Additionally, for departments like mine that have a large number of pretend your faculty, this would add incredible administrative and service work for senior faculty as well as additional stress for junior faculty. In my department currently, we work with senior faculty mentors who observe and give developmental feedback on our teaching every year. The system allows for faculty mentors to change, junior faculty to seek out a range of viewpoints, and avoid putting too much time pressure on all faculty. As a junior faculty, this proposal seems not only not supportive but potentially abusive. I would strongly encourage reconsidering this proposal and it's impacts.

Response: *We are not sure what is meant by "pretend faculty". Your comment is addressing developmental feedback,, and we have moved more of that to the mentor and the FTLC. We were given a charge to also develop a summative method of peer review so that faculty careers would not be so dependent on student impressions of teaching. Please see pages 1-2.*

I appreciate the FPPAC's efforts to standardize definitions and practices associated with teaching evaluation, and their attention to the numerous factors that go into teaching well. Nonetheless, the proposed review process raises a number of red flags. Small units already have to rely on outside members to serve on personnel review committees at the third year, t&p and Full professor levels and this creates workload issues for those who are asked to serve outside their own unit, while requiring core faculty to serve on every personnel action. Putting together teams to review individual faculty on a yearly basis will increase this workload considerably. Additionally, this puts additional stress on junior faculty for whom reviews are always fraught, and compiling the portfolios would require considerable time away from either research or working with students directly. While these recommendations may represent best practices, I wonder what the cost of these practices might ultimately be, and I am unclear about what the problem is -- other than a lack of standardization which is not necessarily a bad thing -- that we are trying to solve here. In fact, in an effort to standardize the definitions of teaching effectiveness and excellence, I think we may be simultaneously stifling some creativity in the classroom and devaluing important traditional pedagogical practices. That is, by defining effective teaching as "reflecting current practices and information" do we stifle, perhaps even penalize, those who are at the cutting edge, trying to push their disciplines and disciplinary practices in new directions, or those who are doing interdisciplinary work that doesn't always fit with the traditional definition of a discipline? And at the same time, does the expectation for what seems to be near constant innovation in the classroom devalue the importance of careful textual analysis and the development of strong writing skills, both of which rely on some pretty traditional pedagogical practices that, in the age of information overload, may benefit our students greatly. I would also argue that there is something quite valuable about lectures -- good lectures -- for

teaching students to listen carefully and to be patient and mindful. Again, I want to recognize the work that the FFPAC put into these guidelines. They reflect best practices to a great degree and remind us that good teaching is complicated and requires resources, including mentoring and time for reflection. I am just not sure that we have the systems and personnel in place to advance the best teaching while still requiring that we meet our responsibilities for service and research. We've been encouraged by the Provost to streamline meetings and set clear priorities for how we spent time. Upping the expectations for the review and mentoring of our faculty may be at odds with that message.

Response: *One of the problems is that a valid evaluation of teaching depends on multiple measures, and that is not happening across campus. We want to be sure that no one's career depends on the use of only one evaluation method. In the interests of procedural justice, un-tenured faculty should be evaluated using the same processes. For instance, we currently have units that use nothing but teaching impressions, and we have units that don't use them at all. So, a faculty member's experience with tenure will be quite variable depending on the home unit.*

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of your concerns; however, we think you may be misinterpreting what is called for here. The "reflect current practices and information in the discipline" phrase you cite is a part of the "Content" teaching dimension; it has nothing to do with pedagogy. We do believe that all instructors should possess current information about their disciplines.

You express a concern that we are favoring a certain kind of pedagogy. We are not, and if you think there is something in the definition of teaching that does, please alert us. We don't believe the proposal reflects any concerns about interdisciplinary or cutting-edge methods. We do not see that the definition of teaching requires near constant innovation in the classroom. We do not believe there is anything wrong with lectures or traditional pedagogy; a good lecture can be both informative and engaging.

I have reviewed the proposal and believe it produces too much additional workload for all parties involved. Faculty are already being constantly evaluated by students and other faculty, and this adds additional work for the entire faculty as well as added scrutiny to the tenure process. While I believe a standard and clear instrument is necessary, this proposal basically returns us to the yearly review process that we had at GVSU before we limited ourselves to ONE pre-tenure review. My understanding is that this decision was made because yearly reviews were simply too punitive and generated too much labor. This would be especially true now that we also have to file FAP/FARs and track all of our yearly activities in digital measures. I would propose something at the scale of perhaps half as many teaching observations as are proposed here. Introducing a standard of observation that is this constant and intense does not seem to be equitable when it comes to the power dynamics between junior and senior faculty. If the university would like to introduce even more neoliberal tracking "efficiency" measures like these and force faculty to even further police each other across dynamics of unequal power and security, than perhaps some amount of faculty labor should be removed. As it stands, I believe that a set of policies requiring this much observation will make the GVSU climate far worse than it already is for junior faculty, especially marginalized junior faculty who face issues in the classroom that many senior faculty do not experience and have no training to handle. I would only support a model such as this if we got rid of student evaluations (which have been widely documented to be ineffective and discriminatory) and only AFTER senior observers had been sufficiently trained and could demonstrate the cultural competence to observe marginalized junior faculty in a fair and productive manner.

Response: *Please see pages 1-2. We have cut the number of reviews. We have also received a charge to recommend how student impressions should/should not be used to evaluate faculty teaching. We think it*

is crucial to develop measures of teaching performance beyond student impressions. We plan to ask the FTLC to add cultural competence to the peer review training.

The workload suggested here is enormous - even in our large department, as we have many new faculty this suggests an enormous investment of time and effort, when we are already facing a huge teaching review burden. Further, the entire process seems to introduce a highly structured approach and new variables to the process of teaching evaluation and review - this requires careful thought by all of us. Please allow us the time to meet and talk through these ideas together as faculty, I believe that there are significant implications of this new process beyond workload, and that we need time to review and consider. I'm not confident that the context of my unit and college are well reflected here.

Response: *This has been under discussion for two years. Faculty had a chance to respond to a university-wide survey. There have been a total of eight visits to ECS and UAS. There will be a pilot year study. As evidence mounts that student impressions of faculty teaching are a poor way to assess teaching performance, we want to make sure that all faculty in all units are evaluated using multiple measures. For the workload question, please see pages 1-2.*

Requiring all departments to comply with these excessive peer reviews will damage this institution. The faculty in our department are already overworked and have no time to add these classroom visits and additional layers of paperwork to their workload. I have no idea how this governing body could reasonably expect smaller departments like ours to compete this work.

Response: *Please see pages 1-2.*

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