**RATIONALE FOR PROPOSED STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM**

**TEACHING AND ADVISING COMMITTEE**

**Motivation:** The evaluation of instructors by students at the University of Idaho serves two synergistic purposes, to evaluate instructors (both annually and for tenure and promotion) and to inform instructors’ self-assessment. In this document we articulate how each of the questions in this new questionnaire contribute to one or both of these purposes. In our view, this revision of the feedback form significantly improves the second function while preserving the first.

Effective teaching is dynamic. The student population is changing nationally and more specifically at the UI. As a result, we need to evaluate our teaching because: (a) it’s the right thing to do for continuous improvement, (b) the UI is attracting more first generation students and more students from underrepresented populations. Consequently, it is necessary for us to reflect on our teaching to evaluate the extent to which it meets students’ needs and interests related to learning.

The data collected from such questionnaire is most trustworthy when the response rates are high. From our committee’s experiments with our own courses, we have seen that response rates rise dramatically when instructors actively encourage students to provide end-of-semester feedback. Unfortunately, for historical reasons, there is a low confidence within the faculty of the efficacy of the existing student evaluation system. In short, the well is poisoned. This new form represents an opportunity to reestablish trust between students, faculty, and administration.

**Questions 1, 2, and 3:** The first two questions on the form are intended to serve a dual purpose. First, they give context for the participation of the respondent in the course and prepare the student to consider their role in the educational process. Second, they give the instructor information about the student’s perception of the content and difficulty of the course.

**Questions 4 and 5.** These are the research validated questions that may be used for summative assessment of the instructional atmosphere of a course.

**Question 6.** This question probes the communications between instructor and student outside of the classroom.

**Questions 8 and 9.** The final questions greatly improve the formative function of this tool by asking students to reflect on positive and negative aspects of the course. Similar questions have been used by members of the committee to great effect in self-administered midterm evaluations.

**Reporting and Use of Data.** In order to inspire confidence in the summative results of student evaluations, it is of utmost importance that the summary data be reported with contextual information. This contextual information should include some normalizing of the results as well as a narrative which explains what conclusions can legitimately be drawn from the summative data. We also strongly recommend providing robust training to all administrators tasked with evaluating instructors so that they are able to combine the information gleaned from this instrument with other evidence (eg. peer observation, document analysis) in order to make a well-formed evaluation of instructor performance.

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