

Student Rating Review Team Meeting March 24, 2015 3:00pm Mellon Seminar Room

Minutes

Present: Elizabeth Yost Hammer (Convener)

Michael Homan (Faculty Association)

Steve Salm (Rank & Tenure)

James Bartkus (Business)

Renee Akbar (Education/Counseling)

Harris McFerrin (Bio/PH)

Jeremy Tuman (THE LAMP/VPAA Planning Council)

KiTani' Parker Lemieux (Pharmacy)

Karen Nichols (Online/Distance Ed)

Absent: Andrea Edwards (MAPS)

Suki Pramar (Pharmacy VPAA Planning Council)

The meeting was convened at 3:05pm and began with a welcome and going over the day's agenda:

Welcome

- Discuss our charge (Hammer)
- Brief summary the research on course evals (Hammer)
- Brief summary of what other schools are doing (Homan)
- Set our next meeting schedule and agenda

The committee members were then acknowledged:

- Elizabeth Yost Hammer (Convener)
- Michael Homan (Faculty Association)
- Steve Salm (Rank & Tenure)
- James Bartkus (Business)
- Renee Akbar (Education/Counseling)
- Andrea Edwards (MAPS)
- Harris McFerrin (Bio/PH)
- Jeremy Tuman (THE LAMP/VPAA Planning Council)
- Suki Pramar (Pharm, Basic Sci)/VPAA Planning Council)
- KiTani' Parker Lemieux (Pharm, Basic Sci)
- Karen Nichols (Online/Distance Ed)

Next we reviewed our Charge:

- Prepare a report for the VPAA Planning Council
- Reviewing the content/questions themselves
- Reviewing the way they are administered (e.g., paper versus online)
- Exploring evaluations for online/hybrid courses
- Other issues that emerge

In reviewing our Charge the following points were raised/commented on:

- Taking our time, prepare evidence-based recommendations
- Other issues that emerge—what about team-taught courses?
- **Let's add to this list: the historical context the current evals were prepared (1980's)**
- Clinical Pharmacy colleagues are assessed differently; Dr. Lemieux will put on their agenda what their concerns are; R&T cmte still uses evals for Pharmacy? Questions don't work and given evals at the end of the course for 5-6 faculty; lots of bias
- **What about ability of people to request that certain courses be evaluated. First 2 yrs every course, etc., let's look at how this works (formative assessments, every course every time)**
- We are looking at student reviews: **Call this student ratings** (imply that they need to be interpreted) vs. student evaluations (imply summative already)
- Don't get the whole picture (quality of course and instructor) based solely on student ratings.
- For team-taught, can still be individual. Use one form to rate the course, then rate each teacher
- Question raised: Why we are looking at this now? (Current system no longer has tech support, parts needed for the machine, good time to review what we're doing since we must move to a different system)

Next, Dr. Hammer presented:

Preliminary Summary of Research

- Misconceptions (with no data to support them)
 - Students cannot make consistent judgments.
 - Student ratings (SRs) are just popularity contests.
 - SRs are unreliable and invalid
 - Time of day affects ratings.
 - Students will not appreciate good teaching until they are out of college.
 - Students just want an easy course.
 - SRs cannot be used to help improve instruction.
 - Emphasis on SRs has led to grade inflation.
- From Benton & Cashin. Idea Paper #50 Student Ratings of Teaching: A Summary of Research and Literature

She explained that this is broad research, no specifics about individual questions. She went over how research was conducted. We are going to be the ones to develop expertise and needs to be evidence-based. There is an option if we don't want to make any changes to existing evaluations.

Dr. Hammer then presented variables that do not affect Student Ratings

Instructor variables NOT related to SR

- Age and teaching experience
- Gender
- Race
- Personality
 - Caveat: how manifested in classroom can make difference (e.g., what they do v. who they are)
- Research productivity

Student variables NOT related to SR

- Age
- Gender
- Level of student
- GPA
- Student personality

Course variables NOT related to SR

- Time of day of course
- When SRs given (as long as second half of course)

Dr. Hammer next presented variables that were related to Student Ratings:

Instructor variables related to SR

- Faculty status (regular v. grad students)
- Expressiveness (Dr. Fox Effect)

It was mentioned that gender disparity might be a consideration as well.

Student variables related to SR

- Student motivation
 - Prior interest in subject
 - Taking as elective
- Expected grade
 - Low but positive correlations

Expected grade is a question often added and we may wish to consider that one too.

Course variables related to SR

- Level of course
- Class size
 - Weak negative correlation
- Academic discipline
 - Humanities > Social Science > STEM
- Workload/Difficulty
 - Contrary to conventional wisdom, small POSITIVE correlation

Administrative variables related to SR

- Non-anonymous ratings
- Instructor present

Online versus Paper Administration

- Responses rates to open-ended questions higher
- Written comments lengthier
- Lower response rate
- No evidence for negative bias in those who do respond

- Dr. Homan talked about how 15 other schools are doing their evals—all online. Howard offers a certificate at the end of the rating that students can print out and give to instructors for extra credit. Evals have 2 categories: instructor + course; some have space where instructors can add their own questions (textbook, etc). Likert scale usually used; if you're trying to improve teaching, have other teachers evaluate your teaching, don't rely on students.
- Is part of our recommendation going to be HOW the evaluations are going to be used? Important for us to take into account HOW they're going to be used. Most important—how can teachers improve? R&T uses evals and looks for patterns; student COMMENTS are really most important.
- Looking at Xavier's current evaluation form:
 - Re: research; not real meaningful for students to rate/instructors' knowledge of the course (#5 on Xavier's eval)
 - Didn't find #10 question anywhere else in other schools' ratings.
 - #9 is problematic as well; in pharmacy #9 is not an option. Students don't have a choice of instructor or course.
 - Can add to rating info like class size, etc., in order to interpret the responses to the questions.
 - Dr. Salm explained more about the report R&T receives on evals.
 - Can we include a range of GPA question? Is your GPA 3.5-4.0? What would we get from overall GPA? Expected grade in the course is a good question though, as is are you taking this as an elective or requirement? In Pharmacy, knowing the overall and expected course GPAs might be useful.
 - Dr. McFerrin: Insight surveys are confidential but not really anonymous so if we have online evals, they may not be anonymous either. Can R&T look up who did the eval?
 - Back to research slide: GPA does not affect;
 - Good idea for instructors to add questions.
 - We would like a good response rate. Dr. Hammer mentioned using an app or Bb and have the students complete the ratings in class.
- How do we want to post our minutes? On CAT's website where we can receive anonymous feedback. Dr. Hammer will send the link for the committee members to share with their divisions.
- **Let's talk to students during this process too!**
- Homework: Let's all go back to the colleges we went to and check out their eval process, look for questions they ask and then we can have a pool of questions to look at. Send questions to Dr. Homan by April 10 and he will compile them.
- Dr. Hammer will check SoTL research on question types—most useful and effective.
- Next meeting: Tuesday, April 14 at 3pm (Update: This meeting was cancelled and homework was given for the summer.)

- Let this be called the Student Rating Review Team.
- The meeting adjourned at 4:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen N. Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'K'.

Karen N. Nichols, Ph.D
Distance Education Coordinator