

University of San Francisco
Office of the Provost
Use of the Teaching Effectiveness Survey in
Tenure and Promotion Evaluations
November 9, 2015

Background:

In January 2015, USF switched from SUMMA to the new Teaching Effectiveness Survey, referred to as “Blue.” Some faculty had also used Blue in previous semesters as an evaluative tool. This document describes how the Provost and the Deans at the University of San Francisco plan to use Blue within the context of the CBA to evaluate faculty for promotion and tenure. We encourage the peer review committees to adopt a similar explicit policy and to engage in an open discussion with their deans about consistent evaluation of candidates.

USFFA Collective Bargaining Language:

The CBA says the following regarding evaluation of faculty for promotion and tenure in the category of teaching:

17.9.6 Teaching experience and ability relates to the effort associated with a faculty member’s specific course assignment as well as for courses the faculty member has taught or is projected to teach. The teaching standard includes performance in the classroom, course preparation, tutoring and assisting students in course or dissertation work, assessing student learning, advising, and other activity directly associated with course(s) assigned to a particular faculty member, including activities that are aimed at upgrading the faculty member’s knowledge and skills in his or her teaching area. The results of the questionnaire specified in Article 19.1.2 must be submitted with the application for promotion or tenure. Other evidence of teaching effectiveness includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- A. Course syllabi, course objectives, instructional materials, and tests.*
- B. Videotapes of the applicant’s teaching.*
- C. Invited presentations to others’ classes.*
- D. Records of supervision of independent study courses, honors theses, graduate theses and dissertations, field trips, internships, and practice.*
- E. Records of relative performances of the applicant’s sections of multisection courses.*
- F. Development of new courses and labs, or new approaches to teaching.*
- G. Publication of books or articles on teaching methods.*
- H. Enrollment in courses or programs designed to improve teaching.*
- I. Written evaluations by colleagues and/or students.*
- J. Assessment of students’ achievement of specific learning outcomes in courses taught by the faculty member.*

17.9.9 Criteria to Evaluate Teaching Experience and Ability; Service to the University and to the Profession or the Community; and Research or Creative Work

In order to be considered for promotion or tenure, a faculty member must be judged to be superior in two of the three categories listed in 17.9.1, and at least adequate in the third. The terms (“adequacy”) and (“superiority”) are defined below. The standards for promotion to Full Professor are more stringent than those for promotion of Associate Professor. Standards for promotion to Associate Professor are more stringent than those for appointment to Assistant Professor. While the standards for tenure are identical to those for promotion to Associate Professor, a faculty member must be considered and reviewed for promotion and tenure in all cases; e.g., criteria for tenure and promotion must be met, unless such are waived pursuant to 17.9.5.

These criteria, or the relative importance assigned to them, can be modified by the University, in order to meet the specific needs of the school or college, or to take into account the relative weights of teaching, research and service reflected in an individual faculty member’s workload. Modification of these criteria in the case of an individual will be by mutual, written agreement between the University and the faculty member only.

Teaching

Adequacy:

Teaching evaluations consistently at or above average for the school or college.

Course syllabi and/or accompanying instructional materials that show evidence of continuing scholarship, and periodic review of instructional materials and methods.

Substantive contribution to curriculum at the department, program, College or University level, supported by evidence, for example, letters from departmental or program colleagues, chairs or directors.

Superiority:

Teaching evaluations consistently significantly above the average for the school or college.

Course syllabi and/or accompanying instructional materials that show evidence of continuing scholarship, and periodic review of teaching materials and methods.

Quality of instruction is validated by evidence from varying sources such as, e.g., recognition of professional associations, colleagues, University or College adoption of original materials, etc.

Substantive contribution to curriculum development at the College or University level or especially distinctive contribution at the department or program level, supported by evidence, for example, letters from departmental or program colleagues, chairs or directors.

Context:

Committees and deans are asked to provide a holistic evaluation of a candidate's teaching ability based on the criteria described above. We recognize and stress that candidates may provide a variety of evidence of teaching performance, some qualitative and some quantitative. We also stress that deans and committees possess the expertise and background to evaluate this evidence as they see fit according to a candidate's particular case in order to determine superiority or adequacy. The dean will, within the context of the CBA, use all evidence presented by a candidate to make a determination regarding a candidate's evaluation.

This document focuses on the use of Blue as an instrument for teaching evaluations by the Provost and the Deans; that does not mean that Blue is the sole indicator of superiority or adequacy; all available evidence will be considered in evaluating candidates.

In addition, nothing in this document is meant to supersede the Collective Bargaining Agreement or restrict a dean's authority; he or she retains the full right to evaluate candidates according to his/her expertise, within the scope of the CBA.

Teaching Effectiveness Survey (Blue)

The Teaching Effectiveness Survey, or Blue is an instrument designed to assess student learning. For purposes of promotion and tenure it is also being used to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

Blue arranges questions into four categories: Instructional Design, Instructional Practices, Student Engagement, and Student Learning. Students are asked to answer 13 questions total in these four categories, with answers scored from 1-6. These scores are presented individually and aggregated at the category level, and presented along with averages for the department, college, and university.

The Deans intend to use the summary scores for these four categories as *leading indicators* of teaching performance. In other words, scores significantly above average are an indicator of strong performance, and scores below average are an indicator of concern, but neither should be considered in isolation.

The Deans also recognize that the relative importance given to these scores will vary depending on the candidate. For example, some candidates may teach classes in which a uniform syllabus is developed by the department, meaning instructional design is less under their control. We encourage candidates to provide interpretations of this data to help the dean and the committees understand its meaning.

In addition, there will be cases where evaluations were not given for a course (e.g., directed studies). In those cases, other information about the course will be used to determine teaching effectiveness.

We would argue that, in general, for a candidate to have superior teaching evaluations, he or she must show scores consistently significantly above average in multiple categories.

In determining what “significantly above average” means, we will compare the candidate’s scores to the college/school average scores. We will apply discretion and expert judgment in interpreting “significantly”; in particular, we do not know enough about the underlying distribution of data to use a statistical definition of this term.

Finally, we remind everyone of Provost Turpin's email on Sept 23, 2014 announcing the transition from SUMMA to Blue. She discussed the ad-hoc committee that would review and provide guidance in situations where a candidate for tenure and/or promotion has Blue scores that are lower than previous semester's SUMMAs: "Based on the pilot tests conducted by the Online Teaching Evaluation Task Force, we do not anticipate any major issues for faculty in adopting the new evaluation method. However, should any faculty member who is a candidate for tenure and/or promotion experience a marked change in the overall assessment of teaching after adoption of Blue, an ad hoc committee will meet to review and provide guidance to the College and University Peer Review Committees."

Summary

The Provost and the Deans will use the four overall scores for the four constructs as leading indicators of a candidate’s performance. Strong scores will be seen as a positive sign, and weak scores a reason for concern, but neither will be the totality of the evidence considered. The Provost and the Deans will use these scores, and the accompanying narrative and other evidence, to make a holistic determination, based on his or her expert opinion, of whether a candidate has met the criteria for superior or adequate as outlined in the CBA.