

GUIDELINES FOR PEER EVALUATION OF TEACHING AT LOYOLA COLLEGE

Prepared for the Academic Senate by the Faculty Evaluation Committee on
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I. Introduction to the Proposal

Peer evaluation has emerged as one of the methods used for the assessment of teaching at Loyola. To better understand the current practices of peer evaluation, the Faculty Evaluation Committee surveyed department chairs, asking them to describe how peer evaluation is conducted in their department, if at all. What emerged from the survey was that peer evaluation is widely practiced. However, there is considerable variation within departments on policies concerning peer evaluation of teaching. While some departments have well-developed systems for peer evaluation, others are less structured in their approach. In other departments, the peer evaluation process is *ad hoc*, designed to respond to the needs of tenure track faculty members. Finally, some departments have no process whatsoever.

Of course, each department at Loyola is unique, with its own culture and ethos. Consequently, a single methodology for peer review could not be appropriate for all departments. Moreover, peer review potentially can be a time-consuming process. If too burdensome, most departments may opt not to take advantage of this potentially useful tool. Even so, the Faculty Evaluation Committee strongly recommends that a peer evaluation of the teaching process be instituted throughout the College.

The Faculty Evaluation Committee believes that student course evaluations and letters from department chairs cannot provide a complete picture of a colleague's teaching abilities. An effective and appropriate system of peer evaluation can help build a broader, more reflective and more credible record for teaching performance and can benefit faculty in the tenure, promotion and annual review processes. In addition, peer review can be an important tool to improve the quality of teaching within the department, and also ensure that students are receiving the very best education possible.

This document lays out some foundational principles upon which peer review should rest. Departments can use the information presented here to initiate discussions about their own systems of peer observation during the next semester.

II. Guidelines for Peer Evaluation of Teaching --To be added to the faculty handbook

Peer evaluation has emerged as one of the methods used for the assessment of teaching at Loyola. Student course evaluations and letters from department chairs cannot provide a complete picture of teaching abilities. A system of peer evaluation can help build a broader, more reflective and more credible record of teaching performance and can benefit the faculty member in the tenure, promotion and annual review processes. In addition, peer review can be an important tool to improve the quality of teaching within the department, and also ensure that students are receiving the very best education possible.

It is recognized that each department at Loyola is unique, with its own culture and ethos. Consequently, a single methodology for peer review may not be appropriate for all departments. The following should be interpreted as general guidelines when engaging in a peer review

process. For more information on peer evaluation, including links to peer evaluation forms, templates and internet resources, see the **Loyola Peer Evaluation Web Page** at http://www.loyola.edu/academics/academicaffairs/Peer_Eval

Formative peer evaluation is designed primarily to aid faculty, particularly junior faculty, in their development as teachers. Summative peer evaluation involves the evaluation of teaching effectiveness to provide information for the annual review process, promotion, and/or tenure decisions. The process of formative peer evaluation and summative peer evaluation can be compatible and faculty members will benefit from involvement in both.

The following are guidelines for the faculty peer evaluation process.

1. Peer evaluation should encompass a combination of peer observation of classroom teaching, review of course materials (texts used in class, the syllabus, exams), and a review of actual student work (e.g., papers, projects, essays) as appropriate.
2. Departments must provide all faculty members with the opportunity to have a peer evaluation of their teaching either as a formative or summative exercise, or both, if the faculty member chooses.
3. Prior to the peer evaluation process, both the observer and the faculty member should be clear about the objective of the evaluation, and whether or not it is to be formative or summative.
4. Peer observation of classroom teaching should take place at a frequency adequate to achieve the objectives of the evaluation. In general, each evaluation should include more than one classroom visit, and provide opportunities for the faculty member to review and discuss his/her teaching objectives and approaches, course materials, and student work examples with their colleague both before and after classroom visitations.

The following are guidelines for departments to develop peer evaluation procedures:

1. Peer evaluation is a collaborative process in which both the faculty member and evaluator(s) exchange ideas and best practices about teaching and assessment of student progress.
2. Peer evaluation should be a process which is clearly described and easily understandable to all those who participate. Departments should have a well-defined protocol for conducting peer evaluation that includes a thoughtfully laid-out time table, and a methodology for selecting the peer evaluator(s).
3. The results of the peer evaluation should be clearly communicated to the appropriate parties (as determined by the faculty member in consultation with the department chair) and should be the result of an open exchange between the evaluator(s) and the faculty member.
4. For summative evaluations, the faculty member and department chair should maintain a record of the results.