

## Report of the FSU Teaching Evaluation Committee for the 2020–2021 School Year

**Members for 2020–2021, as posted at**

<http://facsenate.fsu.edu/standing-faculty-senate-committees/teaching-evaluation-committee>

### **2018-2021**

Christine Mokher, Education  
Rhea Lathan, Arts and Sciences  
Shenifa Taite, Medicine

### **2019-2022**

*Jon Ahlquist, Arts and Sciences, Chair*  
Lynne Hinnant, Communication and Information  
Jack Fiorito, Business

### **2020-2023**

Sarah Eyerly, Music  
Radha Modi, Social Sciences and Public Policy  
Qiong Wu, Human Sciences

### **Ex officio:**

Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement  
Coordinator of Instructional Development  
Coordinator of Assessment Services

Faculty Senate President Eric Chicken asked us to consider two issues, both written in bold.

### **Should all future teaching evaluations be performed online only?**

Committee chair Jon Ahlquist compiled the following reasons for and against “online only” teaching evaluations.

Reasons for: It saves class time, allows smaller classes to have course evaluations because student handwriting cannot be recognized, and saves the testing center a major headache of processing thousands of paper forms at a time when they have to handle thousands of final exam forms. The last point is apparently a big issue for the testing center.

Reasons against: Online evaluations may lower the class response rate, potentially leading to biased reviews, under the assumption that people are more likely to complain than praise.

Robby Fuselier is an "ex officio" member of the teaching evaluation committee in his role as coordinator of Instructional Development, director of the Office of Distance Learning and director of the testing center. He provided the committee with the following information:

[Begin quote]

I agree with the point that was made regarding the difficulty managing course evaluations during finals week. Even with extensive overtime hours, it is difficult for our staff to process the evaluations, complete scanning jobs for final exams, and proctor tests in the Testing Center. Our funding has been dramatically reduced and I only see this becoming a greater challenge as we move forward.

All the data I have seen regarding response rates has shown that online evaluations typically have a higher return than paper, and there are fewer integrity issues. We ran a pilot with the College of Law and College of Communication & Information a few years ago and saw an overall response rate increase from 51.1% to 87.2%.  
[End quote]

The committee then voted on the proposal to switch to "online only" course evaluations. The vote was eight (8) votes for "online only" and one (1) vote for "online or paper, at the instructor's choice."

**Question 10 on FSU's teaching evaluations is "Instructor demonstrated respect for students." This has been identified as a potential invitation for implicit bias in evaluating female faculty and faculty of color. Can you and the committee come up with a better phrasing for this question? Should the question be retained? It's possible this question is a state-mandated one. However, that doesn't mean we should not try to fix it. We can elevate the concern through all the SUS institutions and get it to the Board of Governors who would be able to get it modified.**

Jon Ahlquist emailed the following to the committee: [Begin quote]

After checking, this appears to be a state mandated question.

Details: I have not found anything at FSU that identifies which of our questions

( [https://odl.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2391/files/media/PDFs/ESPCI\\_Revision.pdf](https://odl.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2391/files/media/PDFs/ESPCI_Revision.pdf) )

are state mandated and which are FSU creations, but I did such a statement for FIU. At <https://opir.fiu.edu/spotspolicy.htm> it says: [Begin quote]

The Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey (SPOTs) is composed of nineteen questions. Eight original questions (Q1, Q2, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q12, Q13, & Q15) were established by Chancellor's Memorandum, CM-95-06. The remaining eleven questions were designed by FIU. [End quote]

Looking at page 7 in:

<https://academic.fiu.edu/docs/Student%20Perceptions%20of%20Teaching%20Survey%20Guide.pdf>

"Respect and concern for students" is FIU's 13th question. That means that it is one of the questions from the SUS Chancellor's Memorandum, CM-95-06, which I interpret to mean it is a required question.

[End quote]

After discussion of the issue among the committee members through email, committee chair Ahlquist sent the following statement to Senate President Eric Chiken: [Begin quote]

Question 10 appears to be one of the questions mandated at the state level. Further, committee members commented on the complexity of the issue of bias. Next school year, we will examine bias as part of a broader study of how teaching is evaluated, including the teaching evaluation work of Carl Wieman and others. I have established a Canvas website for the teaching evaluation committee where we can assemble readings on these issues and post discussions.