

Message from David Farrar, Provost and Vice President Academic:

In May 2007, a new policy on Student Evaluation of Teaching was approved by the UBC Vancouver Senate http://www.students.ubc.ca/senate/download/policy_on_student_evaluation_of_teaching.pdf. Please read on to find out how this policy will affect you as a Faculty member at UBC.

The Policy stipulates the following:

1) Student Evaluation of Teaching is to be used as part of a more comprehensive teaching evaluation strategy, including peer and self-evaluation, and not as the only source of data on faculty teaching effectiveness. It encourages faculty members to conduct confidential mid-term (concurrent) evaluations to obtain timely feedback from their students. For more information on concurrent evaluations please visit www.vpacademic.ubc.ca.

2) With some exceptions, Student Evaluations of Teaching should be administered in every course section at UBC each time it is offered. The exceptions refer to individual / independent study courses, classes with very small enrollments, as well as other specialized teaching contexts where alternative forms of obtaining student feedback are more appropriate and practical (e.g. courses taught by multiple instructors, clinical instruction, etc.), as determined by the Faculties.

3) A modular assessment instrument will be created which provides opportunities for individual faculty members, departments, Faculties, and the Provost's office to contribute evaluation questions. The questions contributed centrally constitute the University Module which is to be included in evaluations campus-wide.

The Policy allows Faculties to administer the assessment tool either electronically or in a paper-based format. It further requires the Provost to provide annual reports to the Senate on teaching quality, effectiveness and evaluation.

As we begin implementation of the Policy in the Fall 2007, you will see the inclusion of the University Module items on the evaluation forms. These items were recommended to the Provost by the joint Senate and university administration Student Evaluation of Teaching Committee, and further revised as a result of feedback received from the Faculties. You will find that these items correspond to some items that were, in most Faculties and departments, part of existing student evaluation forms, with the language now harmonized across the university. Some units have elected to include both wordings on the forms to be administered this term, which will allow us to study how they correlate with the University Module items. The University Module items approved for Fall 2007 implementation are as follows:

Based on a 5-point scale, where 1= very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = adequate, 4 = good and 5 = excellent, please rate your instructor on the following:

1. The clarity of the instructor's expectations of learning.

2. The instructor's ability to communicate the course content effectively.
3. The instructor's ability to inspire interest in the subject.
4. The fairness of the instructor's assessment of learning (exams, essays, tests, etc).
5. The instructor's concern for students' learning.
6. The overall quality of the instructor's teaching.

For more information on the University Module questions please visit www.vpacademic.ubc.ca.

The Senate policy mandates the University to establish a mechanism for sharing the University Module results within the university community. We plan to do so through a password-protected website -- but only with the consent of the individual faculty member for each course. Implementation of this requirement will not happen before Spring 2008. The University Module results from the Fall 2007 will not be published.

The Fall 2007 implementation will be carefully studied and results of the study will be made available to the university community on the website of the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (PAIR). Faculty input will be welcomed through a town hall meeting and through focus groups of faculty members. We will also seek students' input. This process will guide the review and revision, as needed, of the University Module.

For further information, please note the contact information below:

- Questions regarding the new Senate policy can be directed to the Office of Vice Provost and AVP Academic Affairs (604-822-5611).
- Inquiries about the on-line administration of the Student Evaluation of Teaching can be directed to the Office of Learning Technology (604-827-5159).
- Questions regarding the study of the initial implementation can be directed to PAIR (604-822-6517).