



Sources of Information for Evaluation of Teaching

Fall 2020

Students in all classes are surveyed towards the end of the semester using a survey tool for the evaluation of teaching. This survey is administered through the Center for Teaching and Learning. Scores from these evaluations are shared with faculty instructors as well as with College administration. In addition, comments made by students are shared with faculty. It is up to faculty whether the comments are shared with the administration. This is governed by Senate policy. Senate policy also indicates that in evaluating teaching effectiveness, no more than 50% weight can be placed on the student evaluation of teaching results.

Results from student evaluations of teaching are known to exhibit bias, especially against female faculty and faculty from underrepresented groups. This has to be taken into consideration when evaluating teaching effectiveness. It may be particularly significant in classes for majors in disciplines that are historically dominated by white men. It is therefore critical that evaluation of teaching use additional tools to ensure that they are equitable, and drawing on more than the student evaluation of teaching survey tool.

The College of Forest Resources and Environmental Science has multiple additional tools that are used to evaluate teaching. These are outlined below and all that are applicable are used in evaluating teaching during annual performance evaluations.

1. **Self-reflection.** Prior to the annual performance evaluation, faculty are asked to provide a short reflection on their performance in the evaluation year. This includes performance in teaching, research and service. This provides faculty the opportunity to reflect on successes and challenges in their teaching.
2. **Annual performance evaluation meeting.** During annual performance evaluations, faculty have the opportunity to discuss their teaching in light of the various tools that are available for evaluation. This discussion can lead to opportunities to share successes, and identify ways to address challenges.
3. **Exit interviews.** All graduating students are invited to participate in an exit interview that includes a standard set of questions about their experiences at Michigan Tech. This provides feedback about classes that were well received, and those that were less well received. It also provides opportunities to hear from our graduates about how we might improve our curricula and our teaching.
4. **Student feedback during online surveys.** Each semester the College surveys students on one or more occasions in order to ask for anonymous feedback about how the semester is going. This provides feedback on which classes are going well, and which the students are finding challenging and why. This enables feedback to specific faculty and to faculty in general as these comments are summarized and shared.



5. **Faculty awards and recognition.** Faculty awards and nominations that may be taken into consideration as reflective of excellence in teaching include the University Teaching Award, Deans Teaching Showcase, and the College Faculty Member of the Year Award.
6. **Digital Measures.** Faculty have the opportunity to develop statements about their teaching philosophy and other aspects of their teaching in Digital Measures. Where available, this is reviewed as part of the annual performance evaluations.
7. **Professional Development.** There are a wide range of professional development opportunities that faculty have available to learn about new pedagogies and to develop new skills in teaching. These include participation in Lunch and Learn programs put on by the Center for Teaching and Learning, participating and contributing to conferences about education (such as the Biennial Conference on Undergraduate Education in Natural Resources and the UP-Teaching and Learning Conference) as well as in sessions at conferences that have a broader focus.
8. **Curriculum and course development.** The College Curriculum Committee provides opportunities for faculty to participate in curriculum development which assists in placing their classes in the broader context of degree programs.
9. **Optional colleague review.** Faculty have the option to request a review of a class or of their canvas page and to share this review in their Digital Measures or as part of their annual performance evaluation packet of documents.

In addition to these different sources of information about teaching, faculty frequently participate in small, informal discussion groups about classes and teaching techniques. Participation in these can be used in the self-reflection document listed above.