

The Senate of Michigan Technological University

Superseded

PROPOSAL 2-87

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS POLICY

BACKGROUND:

The Senate Teaching Effectiveness Committee was charged with monitoring the trial year (academic year 1985-86) of Senate Proposal 10-85, Teaching Effectiveness, and offering recommendations for its modification and continuation or its elimination. Senate Proposal 7-86 extended the trial period through the fall term of the 1986-87 academic year.

The Teaching Effectiveness Committee visited departments during February and March, 1986 for the purpose of hearing faculty concerns about the Senate Teaching Effectiveness policy. The Committee also conducted a survey of all affected faculty and administrators in the Fall, 1986 to learn about their recommendations for modification of the policy and about their opinions as to the fairness and usefulness of Proposal 10-85.

Proposal 10-85 was judged to be "useful" by 50% of MTU faculty and 69% of MTU administrators and to be "fair" by 71% of faculty and 58% of administrators. Those who responded to the Committee's survey made specific criticisms and offered specific suggestions about how the policy can be modified to enhance its usefulness and fairness, but a clear majority (74% of faculty and 92% of administrators) feels that a teaching evaluation system should be continued. Complete results of the Teaching Effectiveness Committee's survey of faculty and administrators are appended (*Available by Request from the Senate Office*).

The Teaching Effectiveness Committee recommends that a Teaching Effectiveness Policy be retained by Michigan Tech and that the policy continue to address both the improvement and the evaluation of instruction. We also recommend that evaluation information continue to be collected from students (who are asked to evaluate instructional skills) and colleagues (who are asked to evaluate course content). We do, however, recommend several procedural changes in response to criticism and suggestions contained in survey data. These modifications are intended to make the process less cumbersome, more useful, and fairer. This proposal modifies and, if adopted, replaces Senate Proposal 10-85.

PROPOSAL:

The following definitions are used in this proposal:

Faculty Member refers to all persons responsible for teaching courses. This includes tenured and untenured faculty, nontenurable faculty, (adjunct, visiting, instructor, lecturer, faculty assistant, temporary, part-time, etc.) and graduate teaching assistants.

Academic Administrator refers to department head, department chair, dean or director of a college or school, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and others who supervise faculty members.

The Senate recommends that:

1. the University maintain a center for teaching excellence where faculty members can obtain help in developing skills and improving instruction and
2. the University maintain an equitable and standardized teaching evaluation system that will provide information for faculty members to use in improving teaching performance and for academic administrators to use in making personnel decisions.

I. CENTER FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE

The Center for Teaching Excellence is a professionally staffed facility which will sponsor and conduct workshops and training programs for faculty members, as well as provide private consultation for individual faculty members. The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence will be an active teacher who teaches an average of one course per term. The Center for Teaching Excellence materials on individual faculty shall be kept confidential and will not be made available to academic administrators.

II. TEACHING EVALUATION SYSTEM

The Teaching Evaluation System consists of two components: A) student evaluation and B) peer or colleague evaluation. The evaluation of teaching will provide information which individuals can use in improving skills and in course development. Some evaluation information will be used by academic administrators as partial support for and justification of personnel decisions (reappointment, promotion, tenure and salary adjustments) concerning the faculty member being evaluated. The evaluation of teaching will be weighted in a manner which is commensurate with the assigned teaching responsibilities of each faculty member.

A. Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness

1. Evaluation Instrument:

The instrument for student evaluation of teaching will be developed and processed at MTU. The instrument consists of a set of core questions common to all evaluations. It also allows written responses to questions designed by individual faculty members and permits the establishment of departmental cores.

2. Frequency of Required Student Evaluation:

Student evaluation will be done only in courses with an enrollment of four or more. Student evaluations of faculty will be done in one section of each different course preparation each term. Evaluations in additional sections with an enrollment of four or more may be requested by the faculty member or required by his/her academic administrator.

3. Procedures for Student Evaluations:

Evaluation instruments will be completed by students during a class meeting during the seventh through tenth week of the term. The faculty member will give the evaluation materials and instructions to a student in the class and leave the room. The student will distribute the forms and then collect and return completed forms in a

sealed envelope to the departmental office or another designated location.

The completed evaluations will be collected at the Center for Teaching Excellence. After scoring and analysis are complete, the Center for Teaching Excellence will return the entire student evaluation package to the faculty member and the tabulated summary of the university core items to the faculty member's immediate academic administrator. The Center for Teaching Excellence will not keep records of the results of individual evaluations unless requested by the individual faculty member.

4. Use of the Results of the Student Evaluation

The results from the common core questions on student evaluations will be used by academic administrators as partial support for and justification of personnel decisions (reappointment, promotion, tenure and salary adjustments) concerning the faculty member being evaluated. The evaluation of teaching will be weighted in a manner commensurate with the assigned teaching responsibilities of each faculty member.

Use of the results from optional departmental core questions is left to the discretion of the department faculty.

The evaluated faculty member will be able to use the information derived from student evaluations to identify strengths and weaknesses. The responsibility to act on evaluation information to improve instruction rests with the evaluated faculty member.

B. Peer or Colleague Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

1. Scope

Peer or colleague evaluation applies to all faculty except graduate teaching assistants.

2. Mechanism of Peer or Colleague Evaluation

Each department or school will establish an internal mechanism by which it evaluates the appropriateness of level, content, and currency of courses taught by individual faculty members and the quality of the faculty member's contributions to the teaching mission of the University.

3. Procedures for Peer or Colleague Evaluation

Peer or colleague evaluations will be conducted according to a departmentally established mechanism and reported initially to the evaluated faculty member. After he or she has had the opportunity to respond to the evaluation, the evaluators will report a final summary evaluation to the evaluated faculty member and to his/her immediate academic administrator. The evaluated faculty member may submit a written statement if he/she wishes to rebut or affirm the evaluation.

4. Uses of Peer or Colleague Evaluation

The evaluated faculty member will be able to use the evaluation as guidance in course development and teaching improvement. Peer or colleague evaluations

are intended to insure that faculty receive constructive advice concerning their professional development, but the responsibility for using that advice to improve instruction rests with the evaluated faculty member.

The information derived from peer or colleague evaluation will be used by academic administrators as partial support for and justification of personnel decisions (reappointment, promotion, tenure and salary adjustments). The evaluation of teaching will be weighted in a manner which is commensurate with the assigned teaching responsibilities of each faculty member.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

This proposal establishes policy which becomes effective at the beginning of the Winter Quarter, 1986-87, and which supersedes policy established by Senate Proposal 10-85.

The responsibility for monitoring and amending this policy will rest with the MTU Faculty Senate. The Senate Instructional Policy Committee will be responsible for recommending policy revisions to the Senate.

IV. DISSOLUTION OF THE SENATE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS COMMITTEE

The ad hoc MTU Senate Teaching Effectiveness Committee, having fulfilled its responsibilities, is hereby dissolved.

Approved by Senate: 5 November 1986
Approved by President: 7 November 1986
See Proposal 12-03