

Documenting Teaching Effectiveness for Annual Review: Making Our Teaching Visible

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Objectives

1. **Identify** characteristics of effective narratives on teaching.
2. **Reflect** on your personal teaching narrative
3. **Develop** a plan to write and/or revise your narrative

University Expectations

“UTRGV is committed to retaining and promoting those faculty whose work achieves a high standard of excellence and who demonstrate, through the performance of their duties, a commitment to professionalism and to UTRGV’s mission. To this end, full-time faculty members and continuing part-time faculty members at UTRGV will be evaluated annually. In evaluating a faculty member’s performance in teaching, research, service, patient care, or administration (as applicable), reviewers are expected to provide faculty with an appraisal of their job performance compared to the standards/criteria set forth in or adopted under this policy. The objectives of this annual evaluation process include providing faculty with a more concrete understanding of ways to achieve professional growth, and providing a job performance basis for possible merit salary increases.” [ANNUAL FACULTY EVALUATION](#)

Departmental Expectations

“For lecturers, tenure-track faculty, and tenured faculty, teaching will be evaluated on the basis of official course evaluations administered by the university, peer evaluations of teaching, and quality and impact of teaching enrichment activities reported by each faculty member.”

“The Faculty Review Committee will assess the quality and impact of each faculty member’s teaching by reviewing the teaching enrichment activities reported for the period under review. Appendix 1: Teaching Enrichment Activities provides a list of possible activities that faculty members should report on and describe in their dossiers. The impact of a faculty member’s teaching performance is greater when it includes diversified teaching enrichment and pedagogical activities that are designed to increase student success. Incorporating experiential learning and community engagement and adapting courses for different student populations are highly encouraged [...] **Faculty members should report all of their activities and highlight the impact and significance of these activities in their review narratives.**”

College of Liberal Arts | [Department of Writing and Language Studies Policies.](#)

Who has influenced my thoughts about writing my teaching narrative this year?

1. [Students' experiences with remote/online learning](#)
2. [E-mail communications from department chair and college dean](#)
3. [COVID-19 Message from the EVPs for Faculty Affairs and Health Affairs.](#)
4. [How \(Not\) to Evaluate Teaching During a Pandemic by Jody Greene](#)

From: Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 10:32 AM
To: offaculty@utrgv.edu
Subject: COVID message



April 7, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to thank all our faculty for pulling together your talent and resources in these trying times. Because of our faculty's devotion to teaching and ethic of care, your response to this event has been nothing short of extraordinary. We understand these circumstances have led to further questions as we navigate through these unprecedented times. To help you stay informed of the latest developments, below are some important updates:

Peer Observation of Teaching in Remote and Online Courses

Peer observations for the 2019-2020 academic year will be optional.

As we support each other personally and professionally during these unprecedented circumstances, we can reflect on our teaching with a renewed perspective. This may be an opportune moment to embrace **peer observation of teaching** as a reciprocal and reflective endeavor centered on collectively improving our teaching and student learning. The Office of Faculty Success & Diversity and the Center for Teaching Excellence are preparing to host a session on best practices and recommendations for conducting peer observation of teaching in an online and/or remote environment **should you desire to do so**, which takes into consideration the overall challenges we face as a community during this health crisis.

Promotion and Tenure Clock

The rapid transition to remote and online teaching has put an unexpected strain on many faculty members. Although UTRGV will continue to follow the Tenure and Promotion timelines, if needed tenure track faculty members are encouraged to request an extension of their tenure clock. Please refer to the Pathways for Review Deadlines published on the Academic Affairs Website:

https://www.utrgv.edu/academicaffairs/_files/documents/faculty_resources/pathways_deadlines_2019_2020.pdf and UTRGV HOP Policy Number: ADM 06-505

<https://www.utrgv.edu/facultyresources/ten-06-505.pdf> for tenure clock extension.

We will keep you informed of any UT System policies that may be developed to streamline a system-wide tenure-clock extension specifically in response to current events.

Faculty-Student Engagement in a New Learning Environment

The shift from face-to-face to remote teaching in response to the pandemic has forced faculty and students to engage by sometimes radically different means. As we adapt to the circumstances brought to us by this health crisis, it is imperative that learning environments be inclusive. This is the reason why faculty should avoid requiring synchronous meetings and truly accommodate for students' life changes as well as unequal access to technology and connectivity. Our students might be working a changed schedule or more hours, taking care of children and/or elders, or only have access to technology and internet at delimited times. If synchronous meetings are preferred for pedagogical reasons, faculty should nonetheless create faculty-student engagement opportunities that provide all students access to an environment conducive to learning.

If faculty need assistance with developing these alternative forms of engagement for learning, please reach out to fellow colleagues, the Center for Teaching Excellence, or CQTT for ideas or reminders of older and often overlooked technologies that may be more easily accessible to all involved.

Listening to Student Feedback

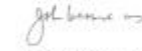
We believe that student feedback is critical to understanding the outcomes of the different strategies and methods put in place to meet this semester's unique demands. Because of this, we decided that student evaluations of teaching for the Spring 2020 semester will continue. However, please know that we will work closely with faculty to ensure the disruptive circumstances created by the COVID-19 crisis are considered when considering potentially negative teaching evaluations in any annual review or tenure/promotion decisions. We also ask that faculty reflect constructively on feedback received regarding course conversions to online format, instructional responsibilities, and student experiences. Finally, we are currently looking into the possibility of modifying aspects of the student evaluation template to gain more insightful information directly tied to the choices and assumptions made to transition to remote delivery. We will be in communication with faculty once the feasibility of these changes is confirmed.

We are confident that, collectively, we can create new spaces for teaching and learning by maintaining high expectations for all of our students through a flexible and compassionate mindset and designing new teaching and learning opportunities that empower our students as learners and future professionals.

In closing, we know there may be bumps in the road, but know you have support and resources through your deans and divisional EVPs. Please feel free to reach out to them as needed. We admire your commitment to continuing to provide your students with the best educational experience possible under these most trying of circumstances.

Thank you again for all you do for UTRGV!

Sincerely,



John H. Knouse, MD, PhD, MBA
Executive Vice President, Health
Affairs Dean, School of Medicine



Patricia Alvarez Morfitt, PhD Executive
Vice President, Academic Affairs Student
Success, and P-3B Integration

Teaching Narrative Mindset:

- * *Shape your teaching narrative through a responsive teaching lens, always, but especially after COVID-19.*
 - * *Constructively reflect on the context of your teaching, pedagogical shifts, innovations, growth.*
 - * *Write your teaching narrative for you and your students first and then for others (e.g., committees, chair, dean, upper admin.)*
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What are characteristics of effective teaching narratives for annual review?

1. **Highlight** values and beliefs about teaching and learning
2. **Focus** on self-growth and improvement through examples
3. **Identify** student engagement and learning
4. **Showcase** innovation and redesign as linked to [Strategic Plan](#) and impact on student learning outcomes
5. **Contextualize** students' evaluations and peer observation of teaching
6. **Illustrate** intersections among teaching, research, and service (as appropriate)
7. **Broaden** definition of teaching to other areas, such as directing a thesis, guest speaker, or serving as a mentor

1. **Highlight** values and beliefs about teaching and learning

- **Share** values and beliefs about teaching
- **Identify** shifts in our teaching values after COVID-19 to reflect flexibility, empathy, compassion

- **Align** values/beliefs about teaching to
 - student learning outcomes
 - course content
 - assessments
 - pedagogies

2. **Focus** on self-growth and improvement through examples

- **Reflect** on self-initiatives to improve our teaching
- **Identify** areas of growth informed by peer and student feedback, student performance, student experience with remote/online learning
- **Commit** to future action steps to further develop in these area

3. **Identify** student engagement and learning

- **Articulate** how students demonstrate engagement and learning in your courses
- **Provide** specific examples of engagement/learning moments
 - What do assessments reflect about student learning outcomes?
 - How did you collect feedback from students on their learning experiences after COVID-19?
 - How did this inform your pedagogical choices in the moment?
- **Reflect** on your pedagogical practice (innovation #4) that impact learning

4. **Showcase** innovation and redesign as linked to [Strategic Plan](#) and impact on student learning outcomes

- What **specific pedagogical practices** impacted student learning (in remote/online learning)?
 - Community engagement
 - Undergraduate research projects
 - Problem-based learning
 - Collaborative assignments
 - A new technology
 - Culturally responsive practices

- Active learning strategies
- Flexible teaching and learning plan
- Shift to learning as opposed to "grades"
- and many more...
- **Link** your pedagogical practices to specific student learning outcomes as represented in assessments/projects
- What **new pedagogical approaches** will you implement?

5. **Contextualize** students' evaluations and peer observation of teaching

- **Reflect** on impact feedback from peers and students (e.g. course evaluations, reflections) has on your teaching
 - What kind of feedback do you seek from peers and students?
 - What is the context for the feedback (e.g., course, learning objectives, assignment, goals, lesson, etc.)?
 - What meaning are you making about the feedback provided?
 - How have you used the feedback to improve your teaching that semester and/or subsequent semesters?

6. **Illustrate** intersections with research and service and teaching and learning.

- Explore how your teaching practices/pedagogical interests intersect with your research and service interest, if applicable.
- Potential reflection questions:
 - How might a pedagogical approach lead toward a research study or project?
 - How does your research inform your teaching practices?
 - How might a course design lead to new assessment approaches to consider in an assessment committee?
 - How might conversations with students on their needs/questions inform informational sessions?

7. Broaden definition of teaching to other areas, such as directing a thesis, guest speaker, or serving as a mentor

- **Reflect** on teaching and mentoring students beyond the classroom:
 - Directing or serving on thesis or graduate portfolio committees
 - Serving as guest class speakers
 - Mentoring students (e.g., academic, undergraduate research, community engagement, etc.)
- What impact do these teaching moments beyond the classroom have on your teaching?

Reflection Questions

- *How can you draw on these or other suggestions/experiences to make your teaching visible?*
 - *What questions do you have about your teaching narratives?*
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