

Collaborating with Faculty on an Evaluation Process

“There are few tasks at a university more important than the evaluation of teaching. Without it, professors themselves are unable to determine the direction of needed improvement and thereby become vulnerable to the process of stagnation. Without it, academic units are unable to identify and encourage professors who truly are effective in the in the classroom with their students.”

D.L. Fink, University of Michigan Journal of Educational Development
quod.lib.umich.edu/t/tia; The Evaluation of College Teaching

KCC's Formative Evaluation Program— aka "The FEP"

- Institutional Goal—improve student success and increase retention
- Obstacle—the FEP was a relic of bygone times; all but one of the creators had left the institution



History of the FEP

Last updated in 2003:



- MySpace had just launched. (Facebook and Twitter would not show up for another three years.)
- Netflix was still *mailing DVDs* to subscriber's homes.
- KCC still had chalkboards and chalk in our classrooms; most classrooms had no Internet service.



The Four Components of the FEP

- I. Student Evaluations
- II. Observation and Evaluation
- III. Professional Effectiveness Plan (PEP)
- IV. Annual Review Meeting-(ARM)

Student Evaluations--Challenges

- Process did not reside in Instruction; no authority to make changes
- Access to data was limited – Supervisor access & VP access
- Faculty could select two sections per year for evaluation
- Response rates declined significantly when evals went online
- Inconsistent deployment
 - Some classes were not evaluated
 - Some were evaluated too late or too early – missing critical information
 - Instruction was often not notified when evaluations were going to occur

Observation and Evaluation--Challenges

- FEP applies to tenured faculty only
 - Observations occurred every three years; the form used to document the observation uses outdated terms and metrics
 - The observation form was for face-to-face modality only
- Outdated forms led to inconsistent tracking, documenting, and adding information to the faculty file

Note: Pre-tenured faculty are subject to a different system (still rely on student evaluations)

Observation and Evaluation--Challenges

Observation components included seven elements:*

- Physical
- Climate
- Instruction
- Classroom Interaction
- Learning Styles
- Classroom Management Behavior
- Syllabus Review

***Faculty were able to choose four elements upon which to be evaluated – plus the syllabus review. Faculty could request an additional observation if they chose to do so.**





Observation and Evaluation--Challenges

And...

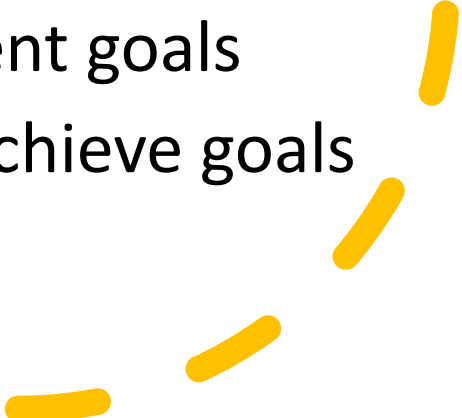
The system stated that 'A LIST OF TRAINED' observers would be maintained by the VP for Instruction's office. Observers had a right to refuse any observation and were not to act in a supervisory manner – the list was to be updated each year, and the trained observers were to be rotated.

But...

NO ONE KNEW WHO THESE PEOPLE WERE – EVEN FOLKS WHO HAD BEEN AT THE COLLEGE FOR MANY YEARS HAD NO IDEA WHERE THE LIST WAS AND WHO THESE FOLKS WERE.

Professional Effectiveness Plan (PEP)-- Challenges

PEP discussed with supervisor at the ARM

- Significant professional activities and roles
 - Summary of the student evaluations
 - Summary of the observation with a reflection on the results
 - Self-assessment that includes a discussion of the four FEP criteria – problems needing to be solved and celebrations
 - Personal professional development goals
 - Estimates of resources need to achieve goals
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Trust and Timing

Faculty and Administrators agreed the FEP was outdated.

But, faculty had concerns:

--Why does Administration need evaluation from every student and every class?

--Will the results be used eliminate faculty?

--Will raises be tied to evaluation results? (If yes, guess what--faculty want to see administrators be evaluated by a 360 evaluation tool.)

--No agreement on what elements should be observed and how to evaluate faculty in non-instructional positions such as librarians and counselors.

--Faculty wanted to maintain the current system which primarily focused on self-reflection.

Trust and Timing

In 2022, Department Chairs and Directors participated in a workshop titled,

“Communication and Collaboration—Tools for Department Chairs”

To practice the skills presented in the workshop, they were assigned the task of working together to edit the FEP.





Trust and Timing

During contract negotiations in 2022, the faculty union agreed to form a committee to revise the FEP, using the edited version created by the Chairs and Directors as a draft.

“Maybe you should reconsider those place cards.”

The Committee—Getting Started

The faculty bargaining unit agreed to a six member committee:

- Three faculty to be selected by the bargaining unit
- Three administrators to be selected by administrator

The bargaining unit chose faculty with specific interests and characteristics – not necessarily the easiest folks when it comes to negotiating.



The Committee--Faculty

Each faculty member brought their own personality – one was very philosophical and had to be brought back to the topic; others wanted to discuss their specific agenda interests, etc.

All are well-respected, don't shy away from difficult decisions, and have a lot of experience at the College

- Faculty 1 has been with the College for 40+ years and is dedicated to the College being successful. She is practical and can share history of what has or has not been successful.
- Faculty 2 is a Librarian who could represent faculty who are not instructional. She is very pragmatic
- Faculty 3 English so he was good at articulating the message.

The Committee--Administration

Administration felt strongly that we had to play to the strength of the faculty members selected.

- Admin #1 was from HR and could represent the legal aspects
- Admin #2 was a director of a workforce health program. He led the C/Ds and came to the table with a strong knowledge of what C/Ds needed in the process
- Admin #3 was a Dean (me!) - what did I bring? I have been both a Director and a Chair - I have worked on both sides of the house

Make up of committee was intentional – building upon the common ground of:

***the importance of problem solving the student evaluation system,**

***the importance of creating a meaningful and relevant system,**

The Committee—Logistics



Early Obstacles:

Trust issues—Faculty--refused to use the draft version created by the C/Ds. They insisted on going back to the original document.

Trust issues—Administrators—one administrator insisted that the entire process had to be reformed. It is a self-evaluation, and they wanted a complete overhaul to a supervisory evaluation

How the barrier to progress were eliminated:

Agreed to a meeting timeline and format – this was very tricky – we had summer session, and faculty teaching during times and a new HR person coming on board.

Agreed to take minutes and to be sure to complete any homework assignments given to members. We agreed to house conversations on a common TEAMs site and that a faculty member, and an admin representative would provide updates to their respective groups.

Agreed to use the C/D's recommendations to initially establish basic goals.

The Committee--Goals



Prioritize this work; Set and adhere to a timeline.

Find common ground, keep it at the forefront.

Make the process less complex and more meaningful – Don't worry about a complete overall – the trust is somewhat fragile at this point.

Amend the main parts of the FEP but leave the basic structure intact - needed to have a good foundation to build upon for more potential difficult decision in future – consider and encourage changes based on the four main parts of the current FEP.

Observation of Faculty and Student Evaluations – come to a common understanding about the importance of moving student evaluations to the instructional side of the house and update the observation elements to make them more relevant.

The Committee—Ability to Compromise

What we could agree on:

- Student Evaluations- every class, every student, every semester and move process to Instruction.
- A schedule to review and update the process needs to be put in place – 1 year prior to negotiations.
- Observation and Evaluation- Needs to continue every 3 years
- Professional Effectiveness Plan (PEP)- happens too frequently. Change to every two years
- Update language to represent today's technology and methodologies
- Acknowledge that non-teaching faculty need a different process than the instructional faculty

The Committee—And then there are more Obstacles along the way...

- **Time & meeting modality** – specific folks only wanted to meet in person but then some components had to be virtual due to teaching schedules. Faculty sometimes cancelled in the summer.
- **Staying on task** – showing respect and listening to ideas when they went down the rabbit hole. Faculty tended to focus on their specific classroom methods when discussing observations – needed to consider all types of instruction and content areas.
- **Going through each word and each form** was monotonous. The form was not always able to be edited – keeping track of changes became very difficult.



The Committee—Recommendations

- All students should have the opportunity to evaluate each course they are taking. Student evaluations are to occur each semester, for each course, each section.
- The student evaluation process needs to be included in the Academic Calendar.
- The student evaluation dates and a statement about the process needs to be included in the master syllabi components in WIDs.
- A consistent window for the completion of student evaluations should be about 3 to 4 weeks before the end of the semester. If a course is of a different length than what is typical or has a late start date, the window will open at approximately 2/3 of the length of the course.
- “POP-UPS” and other messaging will be used to notify students and staff. Email may be used but not as the sole method of communicating.

The Committee—Recommendations, cont.

An evaluation form to be used as a **discussion tool** was created to be consistent across the following groups: faculty, librarians, and counselors. The forms outline unique expectations for each group and consistency in departmental and institutional expectations for all.

- Recommend **Instruction Division** ownership of student evaluation process.
- Recommend faculty members *and their direct supervisors will receive complete results* of the student evaluations.
- Explore ways to increase student participation.



Obstacles— What prevented us from doing this sooner?

- Trust—by far the biggest barrier to success
- Timing—aligning the project with contract negotiations helped. In addition, changes in leadership over the last several years made a difference. This could not have been accomplished five years ago.
- Inability to compromise—in the past, when faculty and administration have been at odds, everything would just stall. The ability of the committee to find common ground and work toward compromise on other areas made an enormous difference.

Questions and Reflection

What obstacles are preventing you from moving forward with a project or a needed change?

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE?



ASK THEM YOU MUST