Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

Structuring the Departmental Teaching Evaluation Process

Report from Matt Kretchmar and Matthew Neal

1. We discuss the intra-department evaluation process on a per-review time frame. Junior faculty are reviewed approximately every five to six semesters. Thus, we consider what type of information and and how much would be useful and appropriate per every three-year review period.

2. *How frequently should evaluation occur?*
   It seems that twelve in-class evaluation sessions should be a minimum for each five-semester review period.

3. *Who should do the evaluating?*
   We identified four categories of people:

   (a) The faculty mentor: 6 evaluations

   (b) Tenured department member from the same half (math/cs): 3 evaluations done by the same person (optional additional evaluations by other tenured faculty within the same half – see below).

   (c) Tenured department member from other half (cs/math): 3 evaluations done by the same person.

   (d) Other: evaluations from tenured faculty within the department, non-tenured faculty within the department, and faculty from outside the department: evaluations as available.

4. *What is most important about the process?*
   The most important objective (from the perspective of the junior faculty), is to have a coherent and consistent record of departmental evaluations. To achieve this, the following are most critical:

   - To have periodic evaluations spread out over the five-semester reviewed period. (Not lumped together all at once).
   - To have the same people do the evaluation to provide a common thread of review.
   - To have a standardized process for the review so that the same information is being collected and recorded in the same framework.

5. *What do we need to do to achieve this objective?*
   There are two important changes we can make to the process.

   (a) Formalize the scheduling of in-class evaluations.

   (b) Have a standard form for recording in-class evaluations.

6. *How should we formalize the scheduling?*
   Solution: during the first department meeting of each semester, it is the responsibility of the junior faculty and the tenured department members to agree upon certain dates, specific classes, and the number of visits to occur during that semester. Certain flexibility should be granted on moving the date to accomodate a test or some other non-evaluating situation once that date actually arises.

7. *What should go on the evaluation form?*
   There are perhaps two parts to the form:

   (a) Part I to be filled out by the junior faculty member includes data such as: class name, date, class composition and such. But it should also include the pedogagical goals of that lecture period and some discussion of the methodology for achieving those goals. This part of the form should be completed before the lecture begins and perhaps even briefly discussed with the reviewer before lecture.

   (b) Part II to be filled out by the evaluator includes strengths, areas for improvement, and possible directions for trying something new in the future. The evaluator and evaluatee should meet soon after the class session for discussion.

   A sample form is attached.

8. *How will this information be used?*
   Both the evaluator and the evaluatee will retain a record of the form. The junior faculty member may choose (or not choose) to include the actual form as part of the review folder, though we anticipate that it usually will be included. The evaluator may use the form as a written record of in-class evaluations and may refer to the forms when writing letters of recommendation to be included in the review folder.

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Departmental Teaching Evaluation Form

This page to be completed by the teaching faculty prior to teaching the class. Ideally this information should be shared with the observer at least a day before the class.

Instructor:
Date:
Course Name:
Course Type: GE Begining Major Advanced Major
Course Enrollment:
Lecture Topic:
Pedagogical Goals:

1. What concept(s) do you intend your students learn?
2. How does this concept(s) fit into the overall course?
3. How should students be able to apply or utilize this concept(s)?

Methods:

1. What techniques will you use to achieve your goals?
2. What activities will you employ to achieve your goals?
3. How will you assess your success at achieving your goals?

Observer:
To be completed by the faculty/person observing the class.
What are areas of strength?

What are the points for development and improvement?

What are some new strategies or techniques that might be tried in the future?