

# EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

## 1. Methods Used to Evaluate

### 1.1 IDEA Student Evaluation <http://iweb.tntech.edu/ideaevaluations/>

1.1.1 Every instructional unit within the University will use the IDEA student evaluation form to evaluate teaching except the Honors Program, which may use a self-designed form. All faculty will be provided with the results of their evaluation.

1.1.2 Tenure-track, full-time temporary, and part-time faculty, as well as teaching assistants with grading responsibility for courses, will have all their courses evaluated every semester (summer courses excluded). The results of these evaluations will be reviewed at least once per year in connection with personnel actions by the chairperson and, in the case of tenure-track faculty, by the dean or director. This review will be based on the available results of IDEA surveys and other evaluation tools appropriate to the discipline. The results of course evaluation and of their review by administrators will be made available to the instructor and placed in his or her file, and may be used to inform decisions about professional development, improvement of instruction, and future teaching assignments. (Revision approved by the Academic Council January 25, 2006, to be effective Fall 2006.)

1.1.3 All tenured faculty must submit at least two IDEA evaluations, per year, (one from an introductory course, and one from an upper-division course, when possible) to their department chair or director. Faculty who teach fewer than four courses per year need only submit one evaluation. Faculty may choose which one(s) to submit, and may submit more than the minimum requirement.

1.1.4 Tenured faculty seeking promotion must evaluate all classes for at least one semester each year for each of the previous four years or from initial appointment, whichever is the shorter period.

1.2 Individual colleges and departments may require faculty to submit evaluations beyond the minimum requirement noted above (as is currently the case with the College of Business).

1.3 All departments must regularly (as they define that term) discuss evaluation options. Thereafter, the dean or director and the departments will reach consensus on ways to judge teaching for administrative purposes, in addition to the IDEA form. Other options include those noted below.

#### 1.3.1 Supplemental evaluation forms

1.3.1.1 Departments may supplement the IDEA with other evaluation tools (including self-designed and/or narrative based forms) specifically catered to their discipline.

1.3.1.2 Individual faculty members may utilize personal evaluation forms in addition to the IDEA instrument. They may (or may not) share the results with their chair or director.

1.3.1.3 Departments or individual faculty members may add their own questions to the IDEA form. Responses to these questions will be tabulated and summarized together with other IDEA evaluation questions.

#### 1.3.2 Peer Review (including in-class observation)

1.3.2.1 Some form of peer review must be used by all departments to evaluate instruction for tenure-track faculty and those seeking promotion.

1.3.2.2 The extent of peer review may vary among departments. In some cases tenured department members will review the candidate's IDEA evaluations. Other departments may allow for the

examination of a more comprehensive "teaching portfolio." The tenured faculty or in some cases a tenure-review committee comprised of tenured faculty, will review the information provided and make recommendations to the chair and the dean or director. This information will be provided to the individual faculty as part of the evaluation process.

1.3.2.3 Department chairs may choose to personally observe all faculty in the classroom, or may provide their faculty the option of a classroom visit. Other faculty may be invited to observe a class upon the instructor's request.

1.3.2.4 Individual departments determine how often classes are observed, and whether the visits are prearranged or at random.

### 1.3.3 Student interviews and Alumni surveys

1.3.3.1 Departments may supplement evaluation through student surveys and interviews.

1.3.3.2 Departments may also gain information on instruction via alumni surveys.

1.4 The University reserves the right to employ a student evaluation tool different from the IDEA on an experimental basis.

1.5 In utilizing student evaluations, chairs, deans, directors and other administrators must be aware of the variety of factors which can influence the evaluation process.

1.6 IDEA may serve as one component of an administrative appraisal of classroom performance, but NEVER are student evaluations of teaching to be used as the sole basis for pay raises or tenure decisions. Student evaluations must be used in combination with other measures.

## 2. **Suggestions for Individual Faculty**

2.1 All faculty should involve themselves with their department's discussion of evaluation procedures. However, they should also note that they can supplement the evaluation process if they so desire. Ultimately, the burden of demonstrating effective teaching lies with the individual faculty member.

2.2 All faculty should be aware of their ability to supplement the IDEA form with their own evaluation instrument. It is recommended that non-tenured faculty have this form approved by the chair/director, and share the results with him/her. All faculty should also note their ability to add questions to the IDEA form, including one that solicits narrative replies.

2.3 Faculty should also be reminded that they have the right of reply in the event of poor teaching evaluations. Mitigating circumstances which may have affected teaching performance can and should be noted by the individual faculty member on his or her yearly evaluation form.