

DRAFT snippet from February 23, 2015 SC Minutes:

6. Teacher-Course Evaluation Discussion

The Chair explained that SC members had before them a summary of senators' comments from the recent discussion on teacher-course evaluations (TCE) at the February Senate meeting. There was extensive discussion among SC members about the best path forward. Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Ben Withers attended as a guest; he offered background information from the Senate's last action on TCE (in 1990) and also participated in discussion.

SC members were still supportive of the proposed common set of TCE questions; those offering opinions believed that the proposed TCE was a huge improvement over the current TCE. The vast majority of comments dealt with three particular concerns.

1. There are still concerns that the new TCE, like the current TCE, will be inappropriately used as the sole instrument to evaluate teaching effectiveness.
2. There is a complete lack of information on how the new TCE will be implemented, including issues of who will review and approve additional questions and whether additional questions will have a cost associated with them.
3. There are many concerns about mandating that everyone use the new TCE, even those areas that opted out of the Senate-approved evaluation tool from the early 1990s almost immediately upon Senate approval.

There were additional comments about ensuring the TCE meets the needs of distance learning courses and determining if the new provost was as enamored with a common set TCE as the previous provost. As discussion continued, SC became more comfortable with the idea of first suggesting that the Senate approve the proposed new TCE as a baseline course evaluation form with the assumption that the questions will be mandatory with some exceptions. Second, exceptions and other implementation issues will be given to an implementation committee. There was continued discussion about whether these two issues should be decided in parallel, or one after the other.

SC members then discussed the idea of making the TCE mandatory only for those groups currently using the Senate-approved TCE. An implementation committee will be asked to determine the implementation-related questions and concerns. This idea gained traction and was the SC's final consensus.