Feb. 25, 1994

To: Faculty Senate  
From: Ad Hoc Committee on Course-Teacher Evaluations  
Subject: Student Evaluation of Faculty

In light of recent resolutions and recommendations from the English Department and faculty confusion about student evaluations, the committee feels that it is necessary to clarify the process that was followed in the development of the new course-teacher evaluation forms.

There is no such thing as a perfect evaluation form, but the committee strongly believes that the new form and procedures are a significant improvement over the old form. The form provides a valid means of obtaining student evaluation of faculty teaching, and such information is an important part of any system of faculty evaluation. Over the last two years the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Evaluations, the Administration, and Administrative Computing have put in many hours to devise and implement the system of course-teacher evaluation approved resoundingly by the faculty in November 1992. It is time to put that system into full implementation. Only then can we know what modifications really need to be undertaken.

We address in detail the concerns that have been raised in the following pages, but let us briefly answer some of those concerns:

1. The questionnaire is substantially the same one approved by the faculty in November 1992. Some questions have been slightly reworded, but that is all.

2. In making these slight modifications, the committee has followed the charge by the faculty to "work with Administrative Computing to fine tune the instrument and its administration."

3. The question as to whether or not the form was administered correctly was in the questionnaire approved by the faculty. Neither that question nor having a student read the instructions is intended to insult the faculty but to provide for greater uniformity in the administration of the forms.

4. While there may be some extra work every third semester for a department's administrative assistants under the new system, there will be much less during the other two semesters. The Provost is aware that the new system may put some strain on some of the largest departments and is willing to work with those departments to provide some assistance.

5. The problem of security is actually much less with the new system where there are triplicate copies of the forms.

6. There were some problems with reading the triplicate copies in the trial runs, but that has been corrected.

Attached you will find a more detailed response to concerns that have been raised, a copy of the proposal and questionnaire approved by the Faculty in November 1992, and a copy of the new form.
To:  Faculty Senate  
From:  Ad Hoc Committee on Course-Teacher Evaluations  
Subject:  Detailed response to concerns about student evaluation of faculty  

The Ad Hoc Committee on Course-Teacher Evaluations was formed Spring semester 1992 and charged with three main tasks, all of which were basically completed by November 1992. The first charge was "to study the value of student evaluations," and "collect significant research on this matter and provide each member of the faculty with a bibliography of this research." That study was conducted over the course of the summer with the committee meeting for eleven times between May and September. Outside of those meetings, the committee members read articles on faculty evaluations and the use of student ratings, gathered materials on faculty evaluation from other institutions, and talked with colleagues at the College of Charleston and at other institutions about the evaluation of teaching. At the October faculty meeting, we provided all faculty with a select bibliography on faculty evaluation with particular emphasis on the use of student ratings. All of the books and articles listed on this bibliography were made available in the reserve section at the College library.

Our second charge was to "make a decision whether current research supports the use of student evaluations as a tool to promote and/or measure good teaching" and report that decision to the faculty by its October meeting. That was done in the course of those numerous meetings of the committee, during which we held frank and in-depth discussions about our own views on the evaluation of teaching and about what we had learned from other sources. From those readings and discussions we reached a consensus and reported the unanimous view of the committee that student ratings are one aspect of the evaluation of effective teaching and should continue to be used at the College of Charleston. At that October meeting we also provided all faculty members with a detailed explanation of the committee's position and a draft proposal with a number of specific proposals for consideration, including a new form for course-teacher evaluations and a new procedure to be followed in conducting them. The committee strongly encouraged faculty members to contact members of the committee if they had any questions or concerns. The committee also held two open forums for discussing these ideas prior to the committee's making its specific proposal to the faculty for recommendation to the President.

Finally, we were charged to make our "recommendation no later than the December 1992 meeting of the faculty." Following the committee's further discussion of the proposals and the two faculty forums, the committee made its final and official recommendation at the November faculty meeting. The proposal was overwhelmingly approved by a vote of the faculty at this meeting and sent on to the President.
The procedures described in the ad hoc committee's proposal dated Oct 28 and passed by the faculty at its November faculty meeting have been scrupulously followed. One factor that was emphasized in the committee's report and on which the literature is unanimous is the need for uniformity in how the evaluations are administered. To that end, the faculty voted that "the evaluation forms need to be made available to faculty only shortly before they are ready to administer the evaluations" and that "the administration should designate one week toward the end of the semester when all student evaluations are to be administered." The faculty also voted that the students should be given standardized instructions and that the "evaluations should be administered during the first 20 minutes of the period." All of this is aimed at making the administration of the evaluations as uniform as possible. Having a student read the instructions rather than having a faculty member read those instructions similarly aims at uniformity.

In proposing such a major change in the course-teacher evaluation form and process, the committee realized that problems would arise in the changeover which no one could imagine at that point. For this reason, the proposal passed by the faculty stated that "the Ad hoc Committee on Evaluation will work with Administrative Computing to fine tune the instrument and its administration." I discussed this with the Speaker of the Faculty prior to the November 1992 meeting of the faculty and at his suggestion pointed this out to the faculty prior to the vote on the proposal. The slight modifications in the form and process that have been undertaken since the passage of the proposal by the faculty were taken by the committee in light of this charge from the faculty.

The new forms are substantially the same as those seen and approved by the faculty in the fall of 1992. The layout of the forms is somewhat different, but the general structure and format are the same. The changes in layout were worked out with the committee and Administrative Computing to get the form on one sheet of paper that could be machine read. Of the 15 questions on the questionnaire, 9 are exactly the same as those on the original version of the form. The six questions that were changed involved relatively minor modifications. One change was to replace "and" with "and/or."

Four questions were modified because of a concern raised by some faculty after the November meeting that there was a possibility that questions with compound predicates could be confusing to interpret. In response to that the committee changed four questions to eliminate the compound predicate. In making the changes, the committee chose to keep the term that was felt to be more important and/or more generally useful. So, for example, "the instructor is accessible and helpful" became "the instructor is helpful," because it seemed to us that being accessible is included in being helpful. The committee decided to leave a couple of questions with compound predicates despite the concerns that had been raised because we felt that both parts of the compound predicate were needed and we felt the chance of
confusion or misinterpretation of the data was very slight. So, for example, we kept "this course stimulates creative and/or critical thinking," because we believed that every course at the college should stimulate one or the other of these but that not all would stimulate both.

Finally, we changed one question, not because we didn't like the question, but because the answers we had proposed really did not fit the question and we could not come up with good answers for the question as it was worded. Consequently, "to what extent are you a better learner than you were before taking this course?" became "to what extent have your learning skills improved as a result of taking this course? All of these are really minor stylistic changes which do not change the general nature and intent of the questionnaire proposed and approved in November of 1992.

The new questionnaire was given trial runs both Spring semester and Fall semester 1993. As a consequence, some glitches were caught and corrected. For example, there was a problem in reading the triplicate copies, but this has been corrected. Students taking the new forms have responded favorably, no serious difficulties have arisen in the students' understanding the questions or the instructor's interpreting the answer, and faculty who have given the trial runs have felt that the evaluation results were more enlightening and useful than the old forms.

There is no such thing as a perfect evaluation form, but the committee strongly believes that the new form and procedures are a significant improvement over the old form. The committee strongly recommends that the Senate reject any moves to delay implementation of the forms and procedures approved by the faculty and developed since then under that faculty mandate.
To: Faculty  
From: Ad Hoc Committee on Use of Student Evaluations of Teaching  
Jane Clary, George Dickinson, Stephanie Ellis, Sam Hines, Bill Olejniczak, Chris Starr, and John Newell  
Subject: Proposal on Student Evaluations

Following further discussion within the committee, discussion with other faculty members, and two faculty forums, the committee unanimously recommends the following:

1. We recommend that student ratings continue to be used as a part of the College's system of faculty evaluation. We urge all departments, however, to supplement the data from student evaluations with such material as:
   a. Teacher's statement of teaching methodology  
   b. Teacher's self evaluation of teaching effectiveness  
   c. Portfolio of instructional materials  
   d. Peer observation  
   e. Colleague evaluations based on examination of the above  
   f. Chair observation and evaluation.

2. We recommend that a number of substantive changes be enacted in the administration of student evaluations.
   a. Some reforms need to be enacted in order to assure the uniformity of how the evaluations are administered. The evaluation forms need to be made available to faculty only shortly before they are ready to administer the evaluation. To help ensure this, the administration should designate one week toward the end of the semester when all student evaluations are to be administered. The faculty should give standardized instructions on how to fill out the evaluations, and faculty must stay out of the room while students are completing the evaluations. The evaluations should be administered during the first 20 minutes of the period; and a student should be designated to collect the forms, notify the instructor when the class is ready to resume, and turn in the envelope of student evaluations to a designated location at the end of class.
   b. For the first six years a faculty member is at the College, the forms should be administered in every section of every course every semester.
   c. After the first six years, faculty should be required to administer the evaluations in every section of every class only every third semester. This will provide adequate information for evaluation purposes and will continue to assure that all classes taught by a faculty member are evaluated periodically. In order to obtain a sufficient pool of data with the new form, however, all faculty should be evaluated in every section of every class for the first three semesters (Fall 1993, and Spring and Fall 1994) and then begin the every third semester rotation.
   d. A faculty member who is not required to administer student evaluations in a given semester may choose to have the forms administered in any or all of his/her classes by notifying the Dean of his/her School at the beginning of the semester. If
there are concerns about the teaching effectiveness of a specific faculty member, the chair may require that faculty member to be evaluated in some or all of his/her courses in a semester when that faculty member would not normally be evaluated by notifying the faculty member and the Dean of the School at the beginning of the semester.

3. We recommend that the current Student Evaluation Form be replaced with the attached form. This revised form offers a number of advantages over the current form.
   a. It has fewer questions, and all of the questions on the revised form ask questions that can legitimately be asked of students. The questions also provide a basis for assessing the student's efforts in the class.
   b. The revised questionnaire includes a place for written comments elicited by standardized questions. Written comments need to be used consistently across the College, and this revised form will encourage that. The written comments should go to both the chair of the department and the faculty member being evaluated, and they should be used in the evaluation process.
   c. The research indicates that student ratings need to be norm-based to improve their usefulness to the faculty member. With the revised questionnaire, questions 1-8 can be norm-based to question 9, which addresses prior interest in taking the course. The literature indicates that student motivation for taking a course shows a higher correlation with student evaluations of the teacher than any other variable.
   d. The report on the questionnaire from administrative computing should give for each question both the proportion of students who answered within each category and the mean reported to the nearest tenth. While we recognize that there are theoretical problems with giving a mean for nonparametric items, statisticians recognize the practical value of obtaining such means, and we believe that the advantages of reporting the mean outweighs the disadvantages.
   e. If possible, a limited trial run of the new questionnaire will be conducted in Spring 1993, with full implementation in Fall 1993. The Ad hoc Committee on Evaluation will work with Administrative Computing to fine tune the instrument and its administration.

4. For evaluation purposes, administrators and faculty (especially those serving on the Tenure and Promotion Committee) should receive training in how to interpret student ratings properly. This training would aim at calibrating their responses to the student ratings and would focus on identifying valid and invalid interpretations of student ratings.

5. For improvement of teaching, the faculty should receive feedback about the student ratings, and the College must provide the material support needed to help improve faculty teaching.

6. In addition to the regular student evaluation form, a faculty member concerned with improving his/her teaching in a particular course should be able to obtain student comments and ratings based on a longer diagnostic form, which could be created from a cafeteria style menu. We recommend investigating the feasibility of creating a data bank of questions that could be drawn on in such a cafeteria style in the future.
DIRECTIONS:
The purpose of this form is to collect your opinions about the quality of the instruction you have received this semester. The answers you provide have two primary uses:
   a. as information to your instructor for improving the quality and effectiveness of his or her teaching
   b. as information for personnel decisions (promotion, tenure, and annual evaluation).
Please answer thoughtfully the questions below. This form will not be returned to the instructor until after grades have been turned in.

YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE WRITTEN COMMENTS.
Select the phrase which best describes your response to each statement.

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<th>Highly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Highly Disagree</th>
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<td>HA</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>D</td>
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1. The instructor is well prepared and organized.

2. The instructor presents material clearly and understandably.

3. The instructor encourages students to express themselves and to ask questions.

4. The instructor is accessible and helpful.
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<th>5. The instructor provides constructive evaluation of my work.</th>
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<td>6. The instructor is an effective teacher.</td>
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<td>7. This course stimulates creative and/or critical thinking.</td>
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<td>8. I would give this course a positive rating.</td>
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Mark the answer that best completes each of the following questions:

9. Before enrolling in this course, how much interest did you have in taking it?
   - very interested
   - somewhat interested
   - indifferent
   - not interested
   - hostile

10. How many classes (excused and non-excused) have you missed in this course?
    - 0-3
    - 4-6
    - 7-9
    - 10 or more

11. How many classes has the professor missed in this course?
    - 0-3
    - 4-6
    - 7-9
    - 10 or more

12. How difficult did you find this course?
    - very difficult
    - fairly difficult
    - about average
    - fairly easy
    - very easy

13. What is the average number of hours per week that you spent on this course outside of class?
    - less than 4
    - 4-6
    - 7-9
    - 10 or more

14. To what extent are you a better learner than you were before taking this course?
    - great improvement
    - moderate improvement
    - slight improvement
    - no change

15. Was this form administered fairly and correctly?
    - Yes
    - No
1. The instructor is well prepared. Comments:

2. The instructor presents material in an understandable way. Comments:

3. The instructor encourages students to express themselves and/or to ask questions. Comments:

4. The instructor is helpful. Comments:

5. The instructor provides constructive evaluation of my work. Comments:

6. The instructor is an effective teacher. Comments:

7. This course stimulates creative and/or critical thinking. Comments:

8. I would give this course a positive rating. Comments:

9. Before enrolling in this course, how much interest did you have in taking it?
   - Hostile
   - Somewhat interested
   - Not interested
   - Very interested
   - Indifferent

10. How many classes (excused and non-excused) have you missed in this course?
    - 0-3
    - 4-6
    - 10 or more

11. How many classes has the professor missed in this course?
    - 0-3
    - 4-6
    - 10 or more

12. How difficult did you find this course?
    - Very easy
    - About average
    - Very difficult
    - Fairly easy
    - Fairly difficult

13. What is the average number of hours per week that you spent on this course outside of class?
    - Less than 4
    - 7-9
    - 4-6
    - 10 or more

14. To what extent have your learning skills improved as a result of taking this course?
    - No change
    - Moderate improvement
    - Slight improvement
    - Great improvement

15. Was this form administered correctly?
    - Yes
    - No
### DIRECTIONS:

The purpose of this form is to collect your opinions about the quality of the instruction you have received this semester. The answers you provide have two primary uses:

- a. as information to your instructor for improving the quality and effectiveness of his or her teaching,
- b. as information for personnel decisions (promotion, tenure, and annual evaluation).

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONS 1-8:

Select the phrase which best describes your response to each statement.

- **Highly Agree**
- **Agree**
- **Slightly Agree**
- **Slightly Disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Highly Disagree**

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONS 9-15:

Mark the answer that best completes each of the questions.