SENATE SPECIAL JOINT TASK FORCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FACULTY TEACHING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Implementation of Student Feedback within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework
(Advisory/Consultative)

Implementation: Upon Approval by the President

Executive Summary

This is an advisory/consultative report from the Joint Implementation Taskforce (JIT) that was charged with implementing the "Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework" (FTAF), an advisory/consultative report passed by the Faculty Senate on September 14, 2021. The Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework proposed a "more developmental assessment of teaching effectiveness that reflects more than one data point (current SRTEs)" (para 1). In addition, the advisory report states that "any student feedback tool must acknowledge and attempt to decrease the potential for bias in its composition and interpretation of responses" (para 1). This report addresses the recommended changes to student feedback both regarding the survey instrument and the process of interpreting responses. Because the recommendations that are implementable do not sufficiently address the crucial aim of decreasing the potential for bias in the interpretation of student feedback, this report offers additional recommendations concerning how student feedback is integrated into annual, tenure, and promotion review processes.

Background

The Joint Implementation Taskforce (JIT) comprised three subcommittees, one of which focused on the assessment of teaching effectiveness by means of student feedback. The student feedback subcommittee was charged with making recommendations on the implementation of changes to the collection, analysis, and use of student feedback proposed in the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework (FTAF). The subcommittee's deliberation included consultation with several units that would be involved in implementing the FTAF recommendations, as well as learning from other institutions how they are addressing the challenges to implementation that the subcommittee encountered. In total, the subcommittee's research and benchmarking included (a) requests for information from Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) members about their current practices regarding student feedback; (b) meetings with experts in data analysis and machine learning to understand opportunities for summarizing and analyzing open-ended feedback; (c) a meeting with students to gather feedback about the proposed questions, and (d) receiving information from Angela Linse about the current process for collecting student feedback at Penn State. Regarding our recommendation to change the process of reviewing student feedback for tenure and promotion, the subcommittee sought feedback from colleagues in various leadership and faculty roles and presented an outline of the proposed change to the process of reviewing student feedback at a senate committee meeting in February.

The subcommittee's conclusion is that the FTAF recommendations cannot be fully implemented as outlined in that report; therefore, we are unable to submit an informational report to that end. Instead, we offer this advisory/consultative report to provide new recommendations for achieving the aims outlined in the FTAF. Of particular importance to the following

recommendations, we note that the 2021 FTAF report questioned whether student feedback should continue to be included in faculty evaluation at all due to potential bias, particularly regarding race, gender, abilities, age and more. We agree that the potential for bias exists both in students' feedback as well as in the interpretation of that feedback. We also think that the student voice remains a critical part of the assessment of teaching, with the understanding that feedback from students provides a unique perspective on their learning experience in a course (as outlined in a 2017 informational senate report on the Effective Use of SRTE Data by Angela Linse [Appendix R]), and we recommend that the institution continue to solicit student feedback. Thus, our objectives were to increase the fidelity of student feedback and promote authentic reception of the student perspective, while also bringing this point of view into balance with other sources of information about effective teaching. The recommendations outlined here (a) reflect responses to the directives in the 2021 FTAF report, and (b) describe processes for incorporating student feedback into annual, tenure, and promotion reviews.

A. **Responses to the recommendations from the 2021 advisory report on the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework (FTAF)**

FTAF Recommendation 1: Provide feedback from student surveys to faculty at the mid-semester (for 15-week courses).

This recommendation is implementable, pending new programming of the current SRTE system.

The current SRTE system can be used to collect mid-semester feedback for 15-week courses to provide instructors with information that might inform adjustments they choose to make. As articulated in the FTAF report, this feedback will be visible to the instructor only, and will not be shared with administrators.

We recommend that mid-semester feedback be collected during weeks 4−8 of the fall and spring semesters. Although the system will make the survey available to all students for this period, and notify all students and instructors accordingly, the 4-week window for feedback affords instructors the discretion to suggest that students complete the survey earlier or later, depending on the particular dynamics of assignments and learning experiences within courses. For example, an instructor might encourage students to respond early in the 4-week window, so that feedback can be incorporated as early as possible. Alternatively, an instructor might suggest students complete the survey after a key assignment because information on that learning experience would be especially pertinent.

We also recommend reminder emails to instructors that incorporate recommendations concerning how to talk with students about the opportunity to provide mid-semester feedback. This memo could include bulleted talking points to guide faculty as they describe how student feedback is used and the importance of these surveys in their course. We recommend that a resource be developed by the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence.

The 2021 FTAF report recommended six questions, five of which are open-ended (Table 1, left column). We recommend three items measured on a 5-point scale (i.e., closed-ended questions) and four open-ended questions (Table 1, right column). Our reasoning for reducing the number of open-ended questions is grounded in the fact that instructors may have constraints on the number and nature of adjustments they can implement mid-semester. We also observed that the

original report did not include questions on inclusive teaching or communication, and we recommend adding questions that address these areas (questions #3 and #4 in Table 1, right column).

Table 1

Comparison of Mid-Semester Feedback Questions from 2021 Report (FTAF) and Revised Questions from the Joint Implementation Taskforce (JIT)

FTAF Mid-Semester Feedback Questions	JIT Mid-Semester Feedback Questions

1. What has been the most helpful for your learning in this course so far? (OE)
2. You know what you are expected to learn by the end of the course.
  a. I know everything I am expected to learn
  b. I know most of what I am expected to learn
  c. I know only some of what I am expected to learn
  d. I know hardly anything of what I am expected to learn
3. Which course materials or resources are helpful? How are they useful? (OE)
4. What course activities/assignments helped you learn? How were they helpful? (OE)
5. What, if anything, has caused you difficulty in terms of learning in this class? (OE)
6. What practices have you personally adopted that have improved your learning? (OE)
	1. What has been the most helpful for your learning in this course so far? Please consider course materials/ resources, activities/assignments, interactions with peers and faculty, or any other aspects that have helped you learn. (OE)
	2. I am confident that I understand what I am expected to learn in this course. [Likert]
	3. (a) The instructor creates a welcoming and inclusive environment. [Likert]
	(b) In the space provided, please provide an explanation for your rating. (OE) **(NEW)**
	4. Do you know how to contact your instructor [yes/no] **(NEW)**
	5. What, if anything, has caused you difficulty in terms of learning in this class? (OE)
	6. What practices have you personally adopted that have improved your learning? (OE)

Note. OE = open ended; Likert = 5-point rating scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree.

An important principle guiding the work of the JIT was to bring the assessments of teaching effectiveness informed by self-reflection, peer review, and student feedback into alignment with each other. To this end, the JIT developed the Elements of Effective Teaching framework, presented as an Informational Report to the Senate at the March 28, 2023 meeting (Appendix N). Table 2 shows how the mid-semester questions recommended by the JIT's subcommittee on student feedback align with the Elements of Effective Teaching framework.

Table 2

Alignment of Joint Implementation Taskforce (JIT) Recommended Mid-Semester Questions with Elements of Effective Teaching Framework

Elements of Effective Teaching	JIT Mid-Semester Feedback Questions
Effective Design	Questions 1, 2, 5
Effective Instruction	Question 4, 5
Inclusive and Ethical Pedagogy	Questions 3, 5
Reflective and Evolving Practice	All

Expanded Rationale for Mid-Semester Feedback Questions Recommended by the Joint Implementation Taskforce

1. **What has been the most helpful for your learning in this course so far? Please consider course materials/resources, activities/assignments, interactions with peers and faculty, or any other aspects that have helped you learn. (OE)**
   Rationale: This question allows students to tell instructors what helps them understand the course content and what helps them learn in the course. This question subsumes questions #1, 3, and 4 in the FTAF report, and provides guidance to students about the topics they might address.

2. **I am confident that I understand what I am expected to learn in this course.** [Likert-scale]
   Rationale: We reframed this question (#2 in the FTAF report) to reflect a student's perspective on their own confidence that they have a good understanding of the aims of the course. We did not use words such as "objectives" or "goals" to limit confusion and misinterpretation; students might not focus on the learning objectives outlined on a syllabus.

3. **(a) The instructor creates a welcoming and inclusive environment.** [Likert-scale]
   (b) In the space provided, please write an explanation for your rating. (OE)
   Rationale: The questions recommended by the FTAF did not address inclusion. Feeling a sense of belonging contributes to student success/student engagement in courses. Student responses provide faculty with information about whether students perceive course materials, activities, and the overall course atmosphere to be welcoming and inclusive. Importantly, including a closed-ended question provides an opportunity for students to give their summary impression. The open-ended follow up question allows them to clarify the rationale for that rating. Recognizing that a low score can result when an instructor challenges previously uninterrogated views, as well as when an instructor perpetuates them, the open-ended follow-up question adds important value. At the same time, the closed-ended question gives a concrete reference point for an otherwise abstract open-ended question.

4. **Do you know how to contact your instructor** (yes/no)
   Rationale: Instead of asking students at the end of the semester if the instructor provided their contact information in the syllabus, as recommended in the FTAF report, we recommend adding this as a mid-semester question. Doing so allows instructors to make adjustments as needed to improve students' ability to contact them.

5. **What, if anything, has caused you difficulty in terms of learning in this course?**
   (OE)
   Rationale: This question is used to discern, mid-semester, what things could go better to help students be successful. We hope this information would provide the faculty member with opportunities to open a dialogue and/or adjust if necessary. Because this question goes only to faculty, any negative impact to the faculty member should be negligible. [Note: Because this item was not modified from the FTAF recommendation, this rationale is provided verbatim from the original report.]

6. **What practices have you personally adopted that have improved your learning?**
   (OE)
   Rationale: Student engagement in their courses and in active learning is critical for student success. This question is intended to identify what things work for the student. This information could be shared with the class, anonymously, or worked into future class activities or information. We also hope that this might prompt students to reflect on their own learning strategies and their investment in the course. [Note: Because this item was not modified from the FTAF recommendation, this rationale is provided verbatim from the original report.]

FTAF Recommendation 2: Provide indicated feedback from end-of-semester student survey to administrators and faculty at the end of the semester.

This recommendation is implementable, pending new programming of the current SRTE system.

The FTAF report recommended that student responses to questions #1−5 of the end-of-semester survey questions recommended in the FTAF report be shared with instructors and administrators, and that questions #6−8 of the end-of-semester questions recommended in the FTAF report only be shared with instructors as formative feedback (Table 3, left column). We recommend reducing the overall number of questions from eight to six, with student responses to questions #1−3 to be shared with instructors and administrators, and student responses to questions #4−6 to be shared with instructors only (Table 3, right column). We have no recommended changes to questions #4−6. We recommend changes to other questions from the original report to align them with the Elements of Effective Teaching, ensuring that all forms of teaching assessment, including peer review, self-reflection, and student feedback, aim to measure the same qualities of effective teaching. Specifically, the original report did not include a question on inclusive teaching, and the committee recommends adding question #3 (Table 3, right column). We recommend using one Likert scale question and one open-ended question to elicit student feedback on the learning experience related to course design and instruction.

Table 3

Comparison of Semester End Feedback Questions from 2021 Report (FTAF) and Revised Questions from the Joint Implementation Taskforce (JIT)

FTAF Semester End Feedback Questions	JIT Semester End Feedback Questions

1. What has been the most helpful for your learning in this course? (OE)
2. Describe the time(s) in this course when you were most engaged. (OE)
3. The course activities/assignments were
  a. Very helpful for my learning
  b. Helpful for my learning
  c. Somewhat helpful for my learning
  d. Not helpful at all
4. Which of the following best describes when assignments, exams, or other assessments were graded?
  a. All were graded in time to be useful for later assignments and exams.
  b. Some were graded in time to be useful for later assignments and exams, but some were returned too late to be helpful.
  c. Most were returned too late to be helpful.
5. Did the faculty provide contact information on the syllabus? (Yes/No)
6. If your course required materials, which materials or resources enhanced your learning? How? (OE)
7. What are the most important things you learned in this course? (OE)
8. Do you have any recommendations for the course? (OE)
	1. In a few sentences, please provide feedback on your learning experience in this course. Consider the assignments and feedback you received, materials, learning activities and interactions with peers, your interactions with the instructor and other aspects related to your learning experience that you want to mention. (OE) **(NEW)**
	2. The overall structure of the course (content and materials, assignments, activities) promoted a meaningful learning experience for me. [Likert] **(NEW)**
	3. (a) The instructor created a welcoming and inclusive environment. [Likert] (b) In the space provided, please provide an explanation for your rating. (OE) **(NEW)**
	4. If your course required materials, which materials or resources enhanced your learning? How? (OE, Instructor only)
	5. What are the most important things you learned in this course? (OE, Instructor only)
	6. Do you have any recommendations for this course? (OE, Instructor only)

Note. OE = open ended; Likert = 5-point rating scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree.

The original report also recommended making the student feedback survey available during week twelve to thirteen of the semester, and this recommendation is implementable.

We recommend opening the survey at the beginning of week twelve and leaving it open until the end of week fourteen. We further recommend that instructors take 10−15 minutes during one class period to allow students to complete the feedback survey (the instructor must leave the room) to increase student response rates. The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence interviewed instructors with high response rates and provided a report, Strategies for Increasing Response Rates, that instructors may consider using. The additional week we are recommending allows more flexibility for instructors who would like to integrate student feedback into class

time, and it allows students the option to complete more of the course before providing feedback. Following the FTAF, the recommended timeframe avoids the high-pressure demands on students and instructors in week 15. These recommendations will need to be adapted for shorter courses.

As with the mid-semester student feedback questions, we aimed to align the semester end feedback with the Elements of Effective Teaching framework. The correspondence between the questions recommended (Table 3, right column) and the Elements of Effective Teaching framework is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Alignment of Joint Implementation Taskforce (JIT) Recommended End Semester Questions with Elements of Effective Teaching Framework

Elements of Effective Teaching	JIT Semester End Feedback Questions
Effective Design	Questions 1, 2
Effective Instruction	Questions 1, 2
Inclusive and Ethical Pedagogy	Question 3
Reflective and Evolving Practice	All

Expanded Rationale for Semester End Feedback Questions Recommended by the Joint Implementation Taskforce

1. **In a few sentences, please provide feedback on your learning experience in this course. Consider the assignments and feedback you received, materials, learning activities and interactions with peers, your interactions with the instructor and other aspects related to your learning experience that you want to mention.** (OE) Rationale: This question is designed to prompt students to consider various elements of their learning experience within a single open-ended question that is both aligned with the ways students experience their classes and locates relevant feedback within a single question.

2. **Rate how well the overall structure of the course (content and materials, assignments, activities) promoted a meaningful learning experience for you.** [Likert] Rationale: This question addresses the overall learning experience in this course. Students can provide more detail about this in #1.

3. **(a) The instructor created a welcoming and inclusive environment.** [Likert]
   (b) In the space provided, please provide an explanation for your rating. (OE) Rationale: The FTAF report did not include questions that address inclusion. Feeling a sense of belonging contributes to student success/student engagement in courses. Student responses provide faculty with information about whether students perceive course materials, activities, and the overall course atmosphere to be welcoming and inclusive. Importantly, including a closed-ended question provides an opportunity for students to give their summary impression. The open-ended follow-up question allows them to clarify the rationale for that rating. Recognizing that a low score can result when an instructor challenges previously uninterrogated views, as well as if an instructor

perpetuates them, the open-ended follow-up adds important value. At the same time, the closed-ended question gives a concrete reference point for an otherwise abstract open-ended question.

4. **(Instructor Only) If your course required materials, which materials or resources enhanced your learning? How?** (OE)
   Rationale: This is a repeat question from midsemester because all material may not have been shared by the mid-semester feedback point. [Note: Because this item was not modified from the FTAF recommendation, this rationale is provided verbatim from the original report.]

5. **(Instructor Only) What are the most important things you learned in this course?** (OE)
   Rationale: This question allows the student to reflect on what they learned in the course and provides insight for faculty. [Note: Because this item was not modified from the FTAF recommendation, this rationale is provided verbatim from the original report.]

6. **(Instructor Only) Do you have any recommendations for the course?** (OE)
   Rationale: Faculty review and revise their courses all the time, do assessment on a continual basis, and often adjust throughout the semester. This question informs that process and with additional information or input regarding what might be changed. Providing this feedback only to faculty will allow faculty to use as appropriate while decreasing anxiety and potential weaponization of feedback that could otherwise impact promotion or salary. [Note: Because this item was not modified from the FTAF recommendation, this rationale is provided verbatim from the original report.]

As a result of revisions to SRTE questions in 2020 and the changes recommended in this report, faculty subject to review may have student feedback based on different student feedback surveys. Table 5 presents the five current sections of the SRTE form and clarifies the correspondence among these different versions of student feedback surveys. The student feedback questions recommended by the JIT (presented in the right-most column) will not contain options for sections B and C but retains an option for additional unit-authored questions. In addition, and following the FTAF report, the JIT recommendations include a section that is only viewable by instructors.

Table 5

Comparison of Summer 2020 and earlier SRTE Questions, Short Form SRTE Questions Implemented since 2020, and Questions Recommended by JIT

-	Summer 2020 and earlier SRTEs	Short Form SRTEs (2020-present)	JIT Recommended Student Feedback Questions
Section A, University Core	A1. Are you taking this course as an elective? (If uncertain, omit.) A2. What grade do you expect to earn in this course? A3. Rate the overall quality of this course. A4. Rate the overall quality of the faculty.	A1. Are you taking this course as an elective? (If uncertain, omit.) A2. What grade do you expect to earn in this course? A3. Rate how well this course increased your understanding of the course topics. A4. Rate how well the faculty provided a meaningful learning experience for you.	A1 & A2: Eliminated, per FTAF report JIT #2. The overall structure of the course (content and materials, assignments, activities) promoted a meaningful learning experience for me. [Likert] JIT #3. (a) The instructor created a welcoming and inclusive environment. [Likert] (b) In the space provided, please provide an explanation for your rating.
University Open-ended	1. What helped you learn in this course? 2. What changes would improve your learning?	1. What aspects of this course helped you learn? 2. What changes to this course could improve your learning?	JIT #1. In a few sentences, please provide your feedback on your learning experience in this course. Consider the assignments and feedback you received, materials, learning activities and interactions with peers, your interactions with the instructor and other aspects related to your learning experience that you want to mention.
Section B, Academic Unit	Select up to 15 items from a preset list of 177	None allowed, except with permission from VP Faculty Affairs.	Eliminated, per FTAF report

Section C, Faculty	Select up to 15 items from a preset list of 177	No Section C items allowed	Eliminated, per FTAF report
Additional Questions	Unit-authored items	None allowed	Unit-authored items (e.g., accreditation-related items)
NEW: Faculty-only (responses will only be shared with faculty)	N/a	N/a	4. If your course required materials, which materials or resources enhanced your learning? How? 5. What are the most important things you learned in this course? 6. Do you have any recommendations for this course?

Note. The numbering in the column for JIT recommended questions aligns with the numbers in Table 3.

FTAF Recommendation 3: Use software that can provide summary formats with thematic analysis for open-ended questions.

This recommendation is not implementable.

We consulted with Penn State data specialists and external experts and were not able to identify a tool that could provide a thematic analysis of open-ended questions. With rapid changes in artificial intelligence, we recommend that the standing review committee return to this recommendation at a later point to investigate new opportunities.

FTAF Recommendation 4: Mitigate bias by providing course development information rather than focusing on qualities of the faculty. Frame student survey to solicit information about student engagement, learning practices, support outside the classroom, learning materials, learning activities, student experience and course design and development.

This recommendation is implementable.

We recommend mitigating bias by soliciting information about the student learning experience, as reflected in the recommended questions for mid-semester and end-of-semester detailed previously. In addition, we took into consideration the Elements of Effective Teaching. We further recommend adding an anti-bias statement (see below) to the student survey instrument. Finally, as detailed subsequently, we recommend revising the process by which student feedback is reviewed for tenure and promotion.

FTAF Recommendation 5: Remove survey responses from students sanctioned for academic integrity.

This recommendation is not implementable.

Because Likert-scale questions are reported in the aggregate (i.e., individual student responses are not retained), survey responses from particular students cannot be identified and removed. As an alternative strategy to elaborate on student issues and other circumstances that might affect student survey responses, we encourage instructors to complete a brief (one page) [Student Course Feedback Annotation](). Information in the annotation documents can provide context to assist others when interpreting student feedback for an annual, tenure or promotion review.

FTAF Recommendation 6: A student review of the Student Course Feedback questions should be included in the teaching assessment review cycle.

This recommendation is implementable.

We recommend including a student review of the student feedback survey questions as part of the teaching assessment review cycle.

FTAF Additional Concerns
The FTAF report lists specific areas of concern regarding eth implementation of the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework. Our subcommittee has the following recommendations regarding student feedback.

1. ***FTAF Recommendation for courses for which faculty do not control design and/or content***
   - Student feedback should be collected but not be attributed to the faculty's evaluation.
   - The feedback should be directed to the unit groups that design or produce course content for process assessment and improvement.

JIT Recommendation
We recommend that feedback be collected and used for annual, tenure, and promotion reviews and encourage instructors to complete a brief [Student Course Feedback Annotation]() for each course to outline the extent of their control over course design and/or content. These documents can be shared for the annual review process and with the committee responsible for creating the report on student feedback for the faculty member's promotion and tenure review dossier (detailed subsequently). Instructors can use the document to clarify which aspects of student feedback they can address, and which aspects of the feedback need to be addressed by unit groups that control content and/or design.

2. ***FTAF Recommendation for administrator education and support***
   - Both administrators and faculty requested professional development to support administrators using this new model.

- The Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs should provide guidelines for best practices and facilitate developmental coaching and performance management for consistency in evaluative methods across units.

JIT Recommendation
The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence or equivalent local experts can provide education and support for administrators and members of review committees regarding the interpretation of student feedback.

3. FTAF Recommendation for on-going assessment of the tools and implementation
This recommendation was addressed in the March 2023 informational report Implication of Structural Elements within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework (Appendix N) "The Teaching Assessment Framework should be reviewed annually, not every five years, by a subcommittee consisting of members from the standing committees of Educational Equity and Campus Environment, Faculty Affairs, and Intra-University Relations. The review should assess consistent implementation, equitable practices, and anti-bias measures."

4. FTAF Recommendation for Student Education
- Students should receive education about how feedback is used and its importance.
- Consider a very brief anti-bias statement on the student survey.

JIT Recommendation
The current SRTE survey already contains a statement about the purpose of student feedback. We recommend adding an anti-bias statement to the mid-semester feedback survey and the end-of-semester survey, as well as language to encourage students to engage the feedback process thoughtfully. In addition, JIT recommends that a resource be developed by the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence to provide sample language for talking to students about how student feedback is used and its importance.

Mid-Semester Instructions to Students
Your instructor is committed to providing effective instruction, and your feedback is an important part of this process. Your time, effort, and care in providing feedback can improve the learning experience for you and your classmates this semester and shape the quality of instruction for future Penn State students. Your responses and written comments are reviewed by your instructor and used to inform adjustments to this course. As you fill out the feedback form, try to resist stereotypes about your instructor's identity. Instead, focus on your learning experiences in the course (e.g., assignments, activities) and your interactions with the instructor and not on unrelated matters (e.g., instructor's appearance).
Thank you for providing thoughtful and constructive feedback.

End-of-Semester Instructions to Students
Penn State is committed to providing effective instruction, and your feedback is an important part of this process. Your responses will be shared with the instructor after final grades are submitted and are used to make instructional improvements. Feedback you provide is also shared

with supervisors and others evaluating teaching for promotions and annual reviews. Thus, your time, effort, and care in providing feedback can contribute to high quality learning experiences for future Penn State students.

Unconscious and unintentional biases about an instructor's identity (e.g., race, gender, age) can influence responses to survey questions. As you fill out the feedback form, try to resist stereotypes about your instructor's identity. Instead, focus on your learning experiences in the course (e.g., assignments, activities) and your interactions with the instructor and not on unrelated matters (e.g., instructor's appearance).
Thank you for providing thoughtful and constructive feedback.

B. **Using student feedback for annual, tenure (including 2nd and 4th year), and promotion reviews**

Because the JIT could not implement all the recommendations in the FTAF report, we deemed that our recommendations for implementation fell short of its goal to mitigate the effects of bias in the interpretation of student feedback for the assessment of teaching effectiveness. In this section, we describe the use of student feedback in annual reviews, and we propose revision of the process through which student feedback is incorporated into tenure and promotion reviews.

Guiding Principles
Our recommendation is guided by the following principles, many of which align directly with the FTAF:
- Student feedback should be equal in weight and prominence to other perspectives on teaching effectiveness provided by faculty self-reflection and peer review.
- Implementation of a revised process should produce a comprehensive understanding of student feedback.
- The integration of student feedback into tenure and promotion dossiers should be achieved in a way that reflects informed consideration of that feedback and can identify teaching effectiveness that ranges from problematic to excellent.
- Providing student feedback in quantitative form for tenure and promotion dossiers can contribute to an over-reliance on numerical information that is decontextualized and subject to bias in its interpretation.
- Including unprocessed feedback encourages a narrow focus on rare or extreme comments and introduces more opportunities for biased interpretation.
- Summarizing or analyzing open-ended student comments for tenure and promotion dossiers cannot, at present, be achieved reliably or validly by existing software or artificial intelligence.

This recommendation aims to address the potential for bias in the interpretation of student feedback by including perspectives represented by the faculty, the administration, and a disciplinary peer.

Recommendations for Use of Semester End Student Feedback in Annual Reviews
1. The numerical and open-ended responses in the end-of-semester surveys, as detailed previously, are shared with individuals responsible for teaching assessment for consideration in annual reviews, as is current practice.
2. Faculty are encouraged to complete the brief Student Course Feedback Annotation for each course to provide relevant contextual information for individuals reviewing student feedback. The feedback annotations might mitigate the potential for implicit bias by providing the instructor's perspective.
3. Individuals responsible for teaching assessment are encouraged to participate in professional development on interpreting student feedback from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence or equivalent local opportunities.

Recommendations for Use of Semester End Student Feedback in Tenure and Promotion Reviews
1. The numerical and open-ended responses in the end-of-semester surveys will not be summarized or otherwise included in tenure and promotion dossiers. Instead, the dossier will include a report on student feedback, prepared by a Student Feedback Review Committee formed for each candidate being reviewed.
2. The Student Feedback Review Committee for each candidate will be convened by the academic unit head and will comprise three members of the faculty; the intention of the committee composition is to represent the voices of the faculty, the candidate, and the unit administrator. One of the above should represent the candidate's discipline. Individuals serving on this committee are strongly encouraged to participate in professional development on interpreting student feedback from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence or equivalent local opportunities for development. The Student Feedback Review Committee should include:
   a. One individual, serving as the chairperson of all review committees needed for the academic year, who is elected annually by the faculty in the unit (the "unit" may be defined as a department, school, division, or otherwise, as determined by university, campus, or college administrators). This election, following oversight processes developed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, should be held in the spring of each academic year to identify the committee chair for the forthcoming tenure and promotion cycle. The committee chair should hold rank equivalent to or higher than the rank for which all candidates in the unit who are being reviewed in the forthcoming year.
   b. One individual, selected by the chairperson of the committee from a list of one or more Penn State faculty nominated by the candidate. The candidate's nominee(s) should hold rank equivalent to or higher than the rank for which the candidate is being reviewed. The candidate's nominee(s) may be from any campus or college.
   c. One individual, selected by the chairperson of the committee from a list of one or more Penn State faculty nominated by the unit administrator. The administrator's

nominee(s) should hold rank equivalent to or higher than the rank for which the candidate is being reviewed and be faculty of Penn State. The administrator's nominee(s) may be from any campus or college. There is no restriction on the committee chair from selecting individuals who are nominated by both the candidate and unit administrator.

3. The Student Feedback Review Committee is charged with examining student feedback from all available courses for the period encompassed by the tenure or promotion review. The committee will have access to quantitative and open-ended responses shared with administrators, as detailed previously. The committee will also have access to the Student Course Feedback Annotations the candidate chose to submit.

4. The Student Feedback Review Committee will submit an evaluation, approximately 1200−1500 words long, of the candidate's teaching effectiveness based on student feedback. This report is not intended to be a direct summary of quantitative data or student comments; rather, it is a holistic report of insights about teaching effectiveness derived from students' feedback across the courses taught during the period under review. This report will be included in the dossier and subject to review by the candidate before signing. The report will attend to the Elements of Effective Teaching, and conform to the following outline:

    a. Overview (200−250 words) describing the committee's overall impression of the candidate's teaching effectiveness, as informed by student feedback.
    b. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness through course design, based on student feedback (200−250 words).
    c. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness through instruction, based on student feedback (200−250 words).
    d. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness through inclusive and ethical pedagogy, based on student feedback (200−250 words).
    e. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness though reflective and evolving practice, based on student feedback (200−250 words).
    f. Avenues or opportunities for improvement in the candidate's teaching effectiveness across the elements of effective teaching, as informed by student feedback (200−250 words).

    We recommend that the Senate, in coordination with the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, develop samples/rubrics to be shared with the elected committee chairs as part of their preparation for service as chairperson of the committee.

5. If the candidate perceives that the Student Feedback Review Committee report in the dossier inadequately represents the teaching effectiveness based on student feedback, they have the opportunity to revise their narrative statement to address that discrepancy. In addition, they have the option of including student feedback in supplemental materials in their dossier.

Comments on the Proposed Change to P&T documentation of Student Feedback
Feedback on this proposal to date has been largely positive, while also identifying concerns about implementation. These concerns generally emphasize two issues that merit discussion.

One concern is that the proposal does not fully mitigate the fact that student feedback and its interpretation might be biased with regard to race, gender, abilities, and age; therefore, it would be better to suspend collection of end-of-semester student feedback.

Future review of the implementation of assessment of teaching effectiveness may conclude that student surveys should be suspended. However, we think that the student perspective is important because students have firsthand experience in the course with the faculty member. Our proposal is intended to allow faculty and administrators to continue to listen to students, while eliminating the harm created when student feedback is included in tenure and promotion dossiers either based on one person's summation or as raw data or numerical summaries. Moreover, we locate responsibility for making sense of student feedback within a committee that has expertise with the curriculum, courses, and students. Because the potential for the misinterpretation of student feedback increases the further it is removed from the departmental or curricular context in which it was generated, relying on the Student Feedback Review Committee offers another means to mitigate bias. The proposed processes also ensure consistency across dossiers reviewed at the academic unit, college, and university committee levels.

A second concern is that the proposal increases the faculty service load.

We recognize the appearance of increased faculty labor in constituting a three-member Student Feedback Review Committee for each candidate being reviewed for tenure or promotion. Our concerns on this point are attenuated by several observations.

- The labor of summarizing open-ended student comments is already part of the process of preparing dossiers; however, who performs that labor and the process employed is neither consistent across units nor transparent.
- The work of tenure and promotion committees currently includes consideration of student feedback for all courses for all candidates, in addition to their review of other requirements for promotion or tenure. Shifting that labor to a committee dedicated to reviewing each candidate's student feedback reduces the load on tenure and promotion committees, while enabling more in-depth review of the student feedback than is reasonably expected of tenure and promotion committees responsible for reviewing multiple (and in some cases, many) candidates.
- Constituting the Student Feedback Review Committee as previously detailed ensures consistency within an academic unit, through the elected faculty member who chairs all committees in the unit, while distributing the labor to a larger number of faculty who populate a particular committee as the candidate's or administrator's nominee. The committee chairperson's role is easily recognized as substantial service, and the service load for the ad hoc members of the review committees constituted for each candidate is relatively light.
- We do not think this proposal creates new labor, but rather distributes current labor differently. Moreover, the committee submits that time and effort devoted to ensuring fair and consistent evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness is an important responsibility and integral to the mission of the university.

We conclude with additional benefits in the process we propose:

- The proposal creates a balance of power through the creation of a three-person committee representing the faculty in an academic unit, the candidate, and administration.
- The proposal grants agency to faculty candidates, who nominate a member to serve on the review committee, and who review the committee's report and may respond to it as needed.
- The proposal locates responsibility for making sense of student feedback with faculty who have relevant knowledge of the instructional context, which contributes to a more authentic and informed interpretation of student feedback than is possible for people with no familiarity with the context and unit curriculum.
- The proposal eliminates the current practice that, in some cases, gives the unit administrator responsibility for both summarizing open-ended student comments and for writing a letter of evaluation—which includes an evaluation of teaching based on that summary —for the dossier.

SPECIAL JOINT TASK FORCE ON THE IMPLIMENTATION OF THE FACULTY TEACHING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK – STUDENT FEEDBACK SUBCOMMITTEE

- Holly Angelique
- Melissa Bopp
- Beate Brunow, Co-Chair
- Gary Calore
- Gib Prettyman
- Pamela Silver
- Denise Solomon, Co-Chair
- Johnathan White

SPECIAL JOINT TASK FORCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FACULTY TEACHING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- Kim Blockett (March - July 2022)
- Beate Brunow
- Ann Clements, Co-Chair
- Felecia Davis (March – September 2022)
- Bill Goff
- Marinda Harrell –Levy
- Carey McDougall
- Denise Solomon
- Peggy Van Meter
- Josh Wede, Co-Chair

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Appendix A

Supporting Information and Sources

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