



CSUN Teaching Effectiveness

Task Force

Progress Report

Fall 2022 - Fall 2023

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1. Background

For well over a decade, faculty at CSUN have expressed concerns about student evaluations of faculty (SEF) and their central role in teaching evaluation and the Retention, Tenure and Promotion process. SEFs used at CSUN have unknown validity and reliability, yet student ratings are used to judge teaching effectiveness and, ultimately, determine faculty retention and promotion. In addition to concerns related to questionnaire quality, there is substantial research documenting a variety of biases inherent to SEF, resulting in lower ratings for women and faculty of color (see California State University San Marcos Senate Task Force, 2023 and California State University Fullerton Student Opinion Questionnaire Committee, 2019 for reviews).

Teaching effectiveness is “an essential criterion for retention, for tenure, and for promotion to any rank” at CSUN (CSUN Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures, “Section 600”, 2023, p.59). The only definition for teaching effectiveness at CSUN is one found in Section 600 (2023), which reads: “Teaching effectiveness refers to the instructor’s success in providing learning experiences well designed to achieve the educational objectives of classroom instruction, student laboratories, and individual student projects, research, and field work” (p.59). Implicit in the definition of teaching effectiveness in Section 600 are the actions taken by faculty to design and implement courses that provide meaningful learning experiences for students, as well as assess student progress in meeting course objectives.

With regard to how CSUN evaluates teaching effectiveness, Section 600 requires SEFs as a major source of evidence. How SEFs measure teaching effectiveness, as a culmination of actions and outcomes as defined in Section 600, is unclear. There appears to be no other requirements for judging teaching performance in Section 600 beyond SEF; however, Section 600 mentions that class visits may be included as part of a faculty’s personnel file and that faculty may use “other additional methods of gathering data relevant to teaching effectiveness and placing them in the Professional Information File” (p.31). Section 600 highlights possible evidence for teaching contributions other than SEF such as development of instructional materials and teaching strategies, leading service-learning courses, and conducting teacher training workshops. Despite attention to other sources of evidence for teaching effectiveness in Section 600, there are no campus-wide standards for evaluating teaching effectiveness and each department at CSUN creates its own procedures for evaluation.

As explained in Section 600, SEFs are designed to evaluate teaching effectiveness for performance review and to inform employment decisions. However, the original purpose of student experience surveys when they first came into vogue in the United States in the 1970s was to improve teaching (Hornstein, 2017). Over time, student course evaluations took on less of a formative nature and became used primarily for employment decisions. The literature on teaching effectiveness recommends the use of student experience surveys not just to document teaching competencies (summative), but to improve teaching based on student

feedback (formative) (Artze-Vega et al., 2023; Erickson & Dariotis, 2022; Benton & Young, 2018). The use of student experience surveys for both summative and formative evaluation is recommended by scholars in the field of faculty development (Barbeau & Happel, 2023; Benton & Young, 2018). Several CSU campuses, including San Francisco State University (SFSU) and CSU Fullerton, have redefined the purpose of SEF from a purely summative evaluation of teaching performance to a more formative evaluation of student experience. Some campuses have mandated the use of student surveys mid-semester and at the end of the semester (University of Oregon Office of the Provost, n.d.) to both improve student learning during the semester and provide data for summative evaluation.

Student experience surveys are inherently subjective; they elicit student opinions and feelings about a course and a professor. CSU Fullerton changed the name of their student survey to “student opinion surveys” to more accurately reflect the nature of the data (CSU Fullerton Division of Academic Affairs, 2023). San Jose State and CSU Fullerton have initiated reforms on their campuses to improve the quality of student rating questionnaires and avoid misuse of student ratings data by creating an interpretation guide for people charged with reviewing student ratings data for faculty under review (San Jose State University Student Evaluation Review Board, 2019; California State University Fullerton Student Opinion Questionnaire Committee, 2019). There are many initiatives within the CSU and across the country reform systems of teaching evaluation by using student course evaluations to improve teaching, improving the quality of evaluation methods and instruments, reducing bias in student surveys, and establishing a holistic framework for teaching evaluation that includes student ratings, peer observations, and teacher portfolios.

To the end of making student course evaluations a meaningful learning activity for all, the Educational Equity Committee (EEC) within the Faculty Senate created the CSUN Teaching Effectiveness Task Force in Fall 2022 (“task force” hereafter). The task force was chaired by Suzanne Spear (Health Sciences) and co-chaired by Nellie Duran (Family and Consumer Sciences). The Provost’s Office funded the task force initiative. This report summarizes the achievements in the 2022-2023 academic year and makes recommendations to improve the system of teaching evaluation at CSUN.

A subcommittee of faculty serving on EEC created a proposal for a task force in 2021-2022. The subcommittee conducted a great deal of information gathering work and awareness raising on campus. The subcommittee met with leaders from San Francisco State University (SFSU) and CSU Fullerton (CSUF) involved with reforming teaching evaluation systems. The subcommittee organized a virtual Town Hall on April 8, 2022 (see Figure 1) to raise awareness of the problem with teaching evaluation at CSUN and invited the SFSU and CSUF representatives to share their work. Twenty people attended the town hall.

Figure 1. Flyer for the 2022 Town Hall at CSUN

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COMMITTEE
PRESENTS

TRANSFORMING TEACHING EVALUATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE GROWTH

Wei Ming Dariotis, Ph.D.
Faculty Director, Center for Equity and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CEETL)
Professor, Asian American Studies, College of Ethnic Studies
Co-Chair Academic Senate Teaching Effectiveness Assessment (TEA) Task Force
San Francisco State University

Brad Erickson, Ph.D.
Lecturer, College of Liberal and Creative Arts
Co-Chair Academic Senate Teaching Effectiveness Assessment (TEA) Task Force
San Francisco State University

Benikia Kressler, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Special Education
Co-President, Researchers and Critical Educators (RACE) Board
California State University Fullerton

FRIDAY | APRIL 8TH, 2022
2PM-3PM | ROOM 12
ZOOM LINK:
[HTTPS://CSUN.ZOOM.US/J/89344308555](https://csun.zoom.us/j/89344308555)

If you have questions or to request ASL accommodations, contact
martha.d.escobaresun.edu

2. Limitations of Student Evaluations of Faculty Surveys: A Brief Overview

Research has shown that women, people of color, particularly women of color, and non-Native English speakers receive lower SEF scores than men and white men. In one experimental study by researchers at North Carolina State and the University of Wisconsin (MacNell et al. 2015), undergraduate students were randomly assigned to one of four discussion sections of a fully online introductory anthropology course. In two of the sections, the two teaching assistants (one woman and one man) operated under different gender identities, that of the other teaching assistant. Both teaching assistants had the same credentials, covered the same material, conducted their online activities similarly and returned assignments at the same time. Results of teaching evaluations showed that in the sections where students perceived the instructor to be a woman, students gave her significantly lower ratings than the male teacher on 6 of 12 items, including being prompt and fair (MacNell et al., 2015). Second, a large study of existing SEF data of over 500,000 student surveys from five universities in Australia found significantly lower scores for female faculty and faculty from non-English backgrounds, which suggests a possible cultural bias in addition to a gender bias (Fan et al., 2019).

Research has found evidence of racial bias in SEFs. A study conducted at the University of Georgia analyzed over 13,000 evaluation forms collected in the College of Education representing 190 tenure track faculty. The authors found significantly lower mean scores on SEF for Black faculty compared with White and “Other,” which combined small numbers of Asian, Latino and American Indian faculty (Smith and Hawkins, 2011). The ratings for Black faculty were lowest for global questions such as the “overall value of the course” and the “overall teaching ability”: however, when surveys asked students to report on specific observable behaviors of their teachers, the scores of Black faculty were higher than their global scores. The authors explain that faculty regardless of race had above average ratings on the specific behavioral questions on the survey, which suggests that the global questions were more likely to elicit racial bias. For an in-depth literature review on racial bias in SEFs, see the white paper written by the Researchers and Critical Educators Board at California State University Fullerton (2019).

At least one study has documented a negative bias towards faculty from Latinx backgrounds (Smith & Anderson, 2005). Researchers at the University of Chicago and University of Houston had 404 students review multiple versions of a course syllabus that varied by instructor gender (male & female), ethnicity (Latinx & White), and teaching style (lenient or strict). Students read each version and provided ratings on multiple items including instructor knowledge, competence, warmth and availability (Smith & Anderson, 2005). Results from this study showed that Latinx professors received higher marks overall, but only when the Latinx professors used the lenient teaching style. The authors concluded that Latinx faculty face a teaching style contingency that White faculty, particularly male faculty, do not face.

In addition to faculty demographics and teaching styles, research has shown that SEF are highly sensitive to contextual factors such as time of day, class size, difficulty of course material, perceived grade, workload, and whether courses are required or electives (CSU Academic Senate Report, 2008). For example, studies suggest that students commonly rate quantitative courses and online classes lower than other classes (CSU Academic Senate Report, 2008).

Finally, SEFs are not associated with teaching effectiveness, as defined by student learning. At least two studies found that the least effective instructors based on student final grades and grades in subsequent coursework had the highest SEF scores (Basow et al., 2013; Boring et al., 2016). In a study testing students' actual learning with their feelings of learning, Deslauriers et al., (2019) randomized students in several introductory physics courses at Harvard University to one of two conditions: active learning or passive learning (lecture) approach. The experiment took place during one week during the semester and students in both classes received the same content and handouts. At the end of the week, students rated their experience with the instruction and took a multiple-choice knowledge test based on the topic of instruction. The results showed that students were more satisfied and had higher feelings of learning in the passive lecture condition, but had higher scores on the knowledge test in the active learning condition. In sum, student evaluation ratings may favor classes in which actual learning is limited.

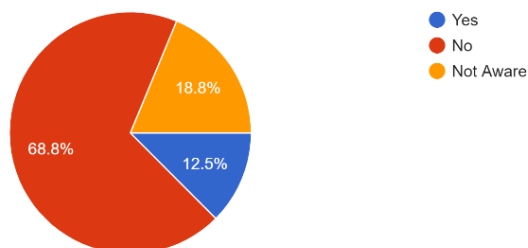
For many years, faculty at CSUN have expressed concern about how departments evaluate teaching effectiveness and the weight given student evaluations of faculty (SEF) in the RTP process. To assess whether departments at CSUN have made adjustments to their SEF surveys and procedures to address common concerns mentioned above, members of the EEC subcommittee on teaching evaluations sent a short online survey to all departmental chairs on campus in fall 2021.

The EEC survey resulted in 16 responses from diverse departments across campus. Of the 16, 5 or 31% of respondents reported that their departments had made some changes to their SEF in the past 5 years. The changes made involved aligning the surveys with a department's anti-racist mission, simplification of the questions, adding online teaching categories, and improving response categories for some questions. One change a department chair reported had to do with their peer evaluation form; the department dropped the use of quantitative 5-point scales and added categorical responses such as "meets/exceeds expectations", "needs minor improvement", and "needs major improvement."

In response to a question that asked if one's department had attempted to make changes to the departmental SEF survey to address bias, only two respondents (12.5%) reported making any changes (see Figure 2). One suggested change by a chair was to avoid any questions on SEF that ask about the teacher as an individual and only include questions that address the course, curriculum, and teacher's engagement.

Figure 2. CSUN Departments Addresses Bias in Teaching Evaluations Based, 2021 Survey of CSUN Department Chairs (N=16)

Has your department attempted to address bias within your teaching evaluations?
16 responses



Among those respondents who reported no prior attempts at addressing bias, two people explained that their departments plan to address this in the future. One respondent shared that because of known biases in student surveys, their department evaluates faculty based on many methods, with SEF being only a small part. Finally, one respondent shared that their department has a diverse faculty and has not had the need to address bias in SEFs because minority faculty in this department are doing very well on their evaluations.

3. Task Force Membership 2022-2023

The subcommittee members from the EEC modeled the CSUN Teaching Effectiveness Task Force off a similar task force at San Francisco State University (SFSU). Following the guide of SFSU, Spear, a member of Faculty Senate and EEC identified a list of stakeholder groups that would represent faculty, both full-time and lecturers; Faculty Affairs; Faculty Senate's Personnel Planning and Review Committee; Faculty Development; students; chairs and deans; California Faculty Association; and advocacy groups such as the Black Student Success Council. Members of the Faculty Senate and, in particular, EEC, helped to nominate individuals for the task force who had leadership qualities and who had an interest in fostering diversity, equity and inclusion on campus. The task force included the President of Associated Students (AS) on campus and another member of the AS board. See Table 1 for a list of task force membership from fall 2022 to fall 2023.

Table 1. task force Members Academic Year 2022-2023, by Stakeholder Type

Name	Department/Office	Stakeholder group
Maria Elena De Bellard	Biology, College of Math and Science	Full-time faculty; Faculty Senate
Michael Bennett	Educational Leadership & Policy Studies Department, College of Education	Lecturer; Faculty Senate
Briana Brazil	Educational Psychology & Counseling (Fall '23 only)	Student
Marcella De Veaux	Faculty Development, Associate Director; Journalism, Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication	Faculty Development; Full-time faculty
Nathan Dunne	College of Business; Associated Students (Spr. '23 only)	Student
Elizabeth Duran	Psychology (Fall '23 only)	Student
Nelida Duran	Family and Consumer Sciences, College of Health and Human Development	Full-time faculty; CFA
Aimee Glocke	Africana Studies, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Full-time faculty; Faculty Senate
Diane Guido	Faculty Affairs, Director	Faculty Affairs
Kandace Harris	VP Undergraduate Studies	Administration
Helen Heinrich	Associate Vice President for Academic Technology	Administration
Candice Liu	Institutional Research, Administrative Analyst	Administration
Sylvia V. Macauley	History, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Full-time faculty; Personnel Planning & Review Committee; Faculty Senate
Shyrea Minton	Educational Psychology & Counseling, College of Education	Full-time faculty; Black Faculty Assn.
Theresa Montano	Chicana/o Studies, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Full-time faculty; Black Student Success Council; CFA; Faculty Senate
Shayan Moshtael	Associated Students, President (Spr. '23 only)	Student
John Pan	Manufacturing Systems Engineering and Management (Fall '23)	Chairs
Whitney Scott	Faculty Development, Director	Faculty Development
Suzi Spear	Health Sciences, College of Health and Human Development	Full-time faculty; Educational Equity Committee; Faculty Senate
John Valdovinos	Electrical and Computer Engineering; College of Engineering & Computer Science (Fall '22 only)	Full-time faculty; Educational Equity Committee
Bohsui Wu	College of Social and Behavioral Sciences	Deans

4. Task Force Vision, Goal and Objectives

The EEC subcommittee set the stage for the task force and drafted language for the task force's vision, goal and objectives. The task force adopted the vision and goal statements and set of objectives at the initial meeting in December 2022.

The vision for the CSUN Teaching Effectiveness Task Force is to transform teaching evaluation for collective growth of both faculty and students.

In the EEC subcommittee and the initial task force meeting in December 2022, the shared desire to make teaching evaluation a meaningful activity for faculty and students and one that supports faculty in their professional development was palpable. Faculty on the EEC task force learned in the course of speaking with colleagues at SFSU that student evaluations can and should serve a formative purpose to help improve teaching and student experience. If campuses design student evaluations to inform and improve teaching practice, students benefit through enhanced learning. Hence, teaching evaluation can and should support the collective growth of faculty and students at CSUN.

The goal of the CSUN Teaching Effectiveness Task Force is to reform teaching evaluation practice and policy to support faculty and promote student learning.

To effect change in the system of teaching evaluation at CSUN, the task force needs to not only recommend good practices, but also create an equity-minded system of teaching evaluation that includes clear guidelines for implementation and the creation of new policy language in Section 600. CSUN does not have standards for what constitutes teaching effectiveness or guidelines for how to evaluate it beyond skeletal language in Section 600 requiring student evaluations. CSUN's own Office of Faculty Development urges the campus community to grapple with what teaching effectiveness means: "At CSUN we are teaching courses using different modalities while trying to improve graduation rates and eliminate racial equity gaps. We are better equipped to measure successful and productive teaching when we know what we mean by teaching effectiveness" (CSUN Faculty Development, n.d.).

The task force approved six objectives to guide its work. Starting with defining teaching effectiveness was a logical first task, but one often unaddressed by other CSU efforts to improve teaching evaluation.

One priority that emerged in the task force discussion was to adopt a strengths-based approach to our work. The task force acknowledged the importance of investigating approaches for teaching evaluation on campus and building upon models that are working well. To that end, one objective focused on gathering information from campus leaders about teaching evaluation practices and understanding faculty perspectives.

Ultimately, the work of the task force will result in a protocol for teaching evaluation that can serve as a standard practice for the campus. The vast majority of CSU campuses have campus-wide student course evaluation surveys that all departments use (Dyer, 2024). The approach adopted by CSUN to allow departments to create their own surveys has resulted in separate surveys for every department and over 400 questions in current use (Candice Lui, 2023). If CSUN can articulate a shared understanding of key dimensions of teaching effectiveness, student evaluations and peer evaluations should logically align with those dimensions.

According to guidelines for Equity-Minded Faculty Evaluation published by the American Council on Education (O'Meara and Templeton, 2022), systems for faculty evaluation, which includes evaluation of teaching, should be clear and transparent. There should be a mechanism for ensuring accountability so that people involved with evaluation of faculty follow procedures set in place at the university. Additionally, good faculty evaluation allows for appreciation of the contexts in which faculty work, such as the types of classes they teach, their student population, and factors that impact student experience outside faculty control such as class scheduling, class size, class format (e.g., lecture, lab or discussion section), and difficulty of the subject matter. Most importantly, teaching evaluation should help link faculty to resources for training and support to improve their teaching.

TASK FORCE OBJECTIVES

1. Define teaching effectiveness for CSUN.
2. Collect data on current practices and perspectives at CSUN.
3. Develop a teaching evaluation protocol that aligns with CSUN values of diversity, equity, and anti-racism.
4. Pilot test the teaching evaluation protocol to determine feasibility and acceptability.
5. Assist faculty affairs with creating a plan for how to implement a new teaching evaluation protocol that includes a method for ensuring accountability.
6. Propose new policy language on teaching evaluation to faculty senate.

5. Key Accomplishments

Convening the Task Force

The task force had its first meeting in December 2022. In spring 2023, the task force met four times (February through May 2023). All meetings were two hours in length. The task force met in person for all but one meeting. At all meetings, attendance was very high. At least one student representative was present at each meeting. The task force has continued meeting monthly in fall 2023.

Progress on Task Force Objectives

1. Define teaching effectiveness for CSUN.

Beginning February 2023, members of the task force reviewed multiple teaching effectiveness frameworks from universities across the country. Table 2 organizes the main topics within each framework according to broad categories related to teaching excellence, including course design, instructional strategies, assessment and teacher feedback, student motivation, and creating a welcoming environment. We included the CSU Quality Teaching and Learning framework, a familiar and valued framework for many CSUN faculty. In reviewing existing frameworks—note: this list is not exhaustive—we can observe a great deal of overlap across the frameworks, particularly in the areas of course design, assessment of student learning, instructional strategies, and climate. All frameworks take a learner-centered approach to teaching. Learner-centered teaching shifts the role of instructors from givers of information to facilitators of student learning or creators of an environment for learning. In learning-centered teaching, the instructor focuses on what students are learning, how they are learning, and how they can use the learning (Blumberg, 2009). Active learning, a student-friendly syllabus, and transparent assignments are three examples of learner-centered teaching.

The categories we outline in Table 2 are not mutually exclusive. For example, student motivation and instructional activities are two categories that are interrelated. Activities that involve active learning or interactive activities that engage students in learning such as small group discussions or hands-on projects, one of the dimensions, may build student motivation, the focus of another dimension. Teaching effectiveness frameworks may not highlight motivation as a domain of teaching effectiveness, but consider motivation to be an important consideration in the design of a course and learning activities.

Many frameworks emphasize the importance for instructors to incorporate efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in their teaching and actively create an environment where diverse students feel welcome and valued. The task force agreed that incorporating principles of equity, diversity and inclusion into one's teaching practice is critical to teaching effectiveness

at CSUN. Attention to gaps in educational outcomes among students of color is a priority at CSUN and principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice are highly valued.

There are several conclusions one can draw from a review of frameworks on teaching effectiveness. First, effective teaching is multi-dimensional. There are the technical skills associated with designing courses with clear objectives and creating learning activities and assessments that align with the course objectives. The course design provides structure and organization to the class. There is also an environmental or relational dimension to teaching. Instructors create an environment through their relationships with students and the relationships instructors foster among students. While teaching is mainly observed in classrooms by administrators, teaching extends to activities with students outside the classroom in office hours, advising, and mentorship on instructor-led projects.

Another dimension to effective teaching is ongoing learning. Effective teaching is not so much a state to be achieved, but a process of striving for continuous improvement and connection with students and other instructors. Evidence-based teaching practices evolve over time, necessitating ongoing learning about pedagogy. Student populations are highly diverse and the needs and circumstances of students change over time. There is formal teacher training that happens in faculty development workshops or at teaching conferences. There is also the informal education faculty gain by getting to know their students and their lived experiences. The taskforce acknowledges the dynamic nature of effective teaching and the importance of context.

With significant assistance from Faculty Development staff, the task force agreed upon a set of key dimensions of teaching effectiveness based on existing frameworks. Table 3 lists the key dimensions, in no particular order, explicates each dimension using examples, provides a few references for each dimension, and cites sources of evidence that may be used in evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Central to the work of the task force is designing a system for teaching evaluation that is based on a shared definition of teaching effectiveness that is responsive to the CSUN community and context.

Table 2. Matrix Showing Teaching Effectiveness Frameworks by Major Categories Related to Effective Teaching

Framework	Course Design	Assessment & Feedback	Instructional Strategies	Classroom Climate	Student Motivation	Pedagogical Knowledge & Preparation	Reflection & Professional Development in Teaching	Accessibility & Universal Design	Other
<u>California State University Quality Learning & Teaching</u>	Specific and measurable objectives; Technology for Teaching and Learning	Student Learning & Assessment	Instructional Materials and Resources Utilized; Facilitation and Instruction	Student Interaction and Community	Technology for Teaching and Learning			Accessibility and Universal Design	Learner Support and Resources
<u>University of Colorado Boulder's Teaching Quality Framework</u>	Goals, Content, and Alignment		Methods and Teaching Practices	Presentation and Student Interaction		Preparation for Teaching	Reflection, Development, & Teaching Service/Scholarship		Student (and Other) Outcomes; Mentorship and Advising
<u>Colorado State University Teaching Effectiveness Framework</u>	Curriculum/ Curricular Alignment	Feedback and Assessment	Instructional Strategies	Classroom Climate; Inclusive Pedagogy	Student Motivation	Pedagogical Content Knowledge	Pedagogical Content Knowledge		
<u>University of Oregon Teaching Excellence</u>	Professional Teaching; Inclusive Teaching; Engaged Teaching	Professional Teaching; Research-Informed Teaching	Engaged Teaching; Research-Informed	Inclusive Teaching			Engaged Teaching	Professional Teaching	
<u>Association of College & University</u>	Designing an Effective Course	Assessing to Inform Instruction &	Using Active Learning Strategies	Establishing a Productive					

Framework	Course Design	Assessment & Feedback	Instructional Strategies	Classroom Climate	Student Motivation	Pedagogical Knowledge & Preparation	Reflection & Professional Development in Teaching	Accessibility & Universal Design	Other
<u>Educators Effective Teaching Practice Framework</u>		Promote Learning		Learning Environment					
<u>Equity Praxis Group ("4 R's")</u>	Rigor		Rigor	Relationships; Racial Justice	Relevance; Racial Justice				
<u>Boise State Framework for Assessing Teaching Effectiveness</u>	Course Design	Scholarly Teaching	Learner Centered	Learner Centered		Practices Reflective Teaching for Continuous Improvement of Teaching	Practices Reflective Teaching for Continuous Improvement of Teaching		

Table 3. Draft Dimensions of Effective Teaching and Questions for Student Learning Experience Survey

Dimensions of Effective Teaching	General Description of Dimensions	Evidence-Base (note: selected references, not exhaustive)	Sources of Evidence for Teaching Evaluation
Designs learner-centered courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs courses with specific objectives and organizes activities and assignments that clearly align with the objectives. • Designs courses that use innovative methods to engage students and help them gain new knowledge and skills. • Clearly communicates course information to students and ensures that course materials are easily accessible to all students. 	<p>O'Sullivan, E., Morrell, A., & O'Connor, M. (Eds.). (2016). <i>Expanding the boundaries of transformative learning: Essays on theory and praxis</i>. Springer.</p> <p>Fink, L. D. (2013). <i>Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses</i>. John Wiley & Sons.</p>	<p>Student survey (each semester)</p> <p>Peer review (review of syllabus and canvas site, as scheduled for personnel reviews)</p> <p>Teacher narrative (included as part of personnel review)</p>
Builds a climate conscious of students' multiple identities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a welcoming environment for all students. • Engages with students to learn about their cultural backgrounds, identities, and abilities. • Shows support for diversity in class materials and in-class discussions. • Builds relationships with students and encourages students to interact and learn from each other. 	<p>Walton, G. M., & Brady, S. T. (2017). The many questions of belonging. <i>Handbook of competence and motivation: Theory and application</i>, 2, 272-293.</p> <p>MacDonald, S. (2023). Inclusive Pedagogy. Emory University.</p>	<p>Student survey (each semester)</p> <p>Peer review (as scheduled for personnel reviews)</p> <p>Teacher narrative (included as part of personnel review)</p>

Dimensions of Effective Teaching	General Description of Dimensions	Evidence-Base (note: selected references, not exhaustive)	Sources of Evidence for Teaching Evaluation
Creates transparent, rigorous & formative assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provides feedback to students within the timeframe outlined in the assignment. ● Creates multiple “low stakes” assignments to help students practice what they are learning and meet high standards of education. ● Provides additional resources to help students gain deeper knowledge and resources for various abilities and mastery levels. ● Uses assessment and student feedback to improve instruction. 	<p>Winkelmes, M. (2016). A teaching intervention that increases underserved college students’ success. Successful Transitions to College through the First-Year Programs, 18(1-2).</p> <p>Winkelmes, M. (2013). Transparency in Teaching: Faculty Share Data and Improve Students’ Learning. Liberal Education, 99(2).</p> <p>Transparency in Teaching and Learning: Higher Education website with resources and examples</p>	<p>Student survey (each semester)</p> <p>Peer review (review of syllabus and canvas site, as scheduled for personnel reviews)</p> <p>Teacher narrative (included as part of personnel review)</p>
Promotes engaged learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses a variety of teaching methods, media and technology. ● Organizes opportunities to learn, practice and receive feedback through individual and partner work. ● Organizes activities that promote reflection, higher order thinking and self-directed learning. 	<p>Bonwell, C.C. and Sutherland, T.E. (1996). The active learning continuum: Choosing activities to engage students in the classroom. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 1996: 3-16.</p> <p>Braxton, J.M., Jones, W.A., Hirschy, A.S. and Hartley III, H.V. (2008). The role of active learning in college student persistence. New</p>	<p>Student survey (each semester)</p> <p>Peer review (as scheduled for personnel reviews)</p> <p>Teacher narrative (included as part of personnel review)</p>

Dimensions of Effective Teaching	General Description of Dimensions	Evidence-Base (note: selected references, not exhaustive)	Sources of Evidence for Teaching Evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides resources such as tech help, tutoring or other assistance to support learning. 	Directions for Teaching and Learning, 2008: 71-83.	
Motivates learning through relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When possible: Make course work relevant to student's lives and/or learning. Ensures course materials reflect cultural diversity to engage students and provide live models Organizes opportunities to make connections with community members and experts in the field. 	<p>Linnenbrink-Garcia, L., Patall, E. A., & Pekrun, R. (2016). Adaptive motivation and emotion in education: Research and principles for instructional design. Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 3(2), 228-236.</p> <p>Dweck, C. S. (2006). Mindset: The new psychology of success. Random house.</p> <p>Yeager, D. S., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. Educational Psychologist, 47(4), 302-314.</p>	<p>Student survey (each semester)</p> <p>Peer review (information sharing with peer reviewer, review of canvas site, as scheduled for personnel reviews)</p> <p>Teacher narrative (included as part of personnel review)</p>
Reflects on teaching practices and seeks opportunities to grow as teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages in an iterative process of improving the course based on multiple sources of feedback. 		Teacher narrative

Dimensions of Effective Teaching	General Description of Dimensions	Evidence-Base (note: selected references, not exhaustive)	Sources of Evidence for Teaching Evaluation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in professional development activities related to effective teaching. 		

Embedded within the dimensions of teaching effectiveness is a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ). For example, under the dimension “Build a climate inclusive of students’ multiple identities,” our framework emphasizes that instructors should incorporate the work of diverse scholars in course materials, in examples used in lectures, and highlight diverse perspectives in class discussions. Equity-minded teaching emphasizes learning about our students’ diverse backgrounds and circumstances. The more instructors seek to understand their students’ needs and aspirations for life after school, the more successful instructors can be in making learning and instructional activities relevant to their students’ lives. Motivating through relevance is not only an important pedagogical strategy for engaging students in learning, but represents a commitment among instructors to equity and racial justice (Armistead & Schwartz, 2023). Integrating DEIJ into the dimensions of teaching effectiveness is important because of the need for CSUN faculty to serve a diverse student population and reduce our equity gaps in student outcomes.

2. Collect data on current practices and perspectives at CSUN.

In spring 2023, Spear and Duran conducted key informant interviews with seven faculty who are leaders in their departments and colleges (five chairs, one dean, and one assistant professor). Spear and Duran identified all but two faculty based on recommendations from EEC and task force members. In one case, a chair approached Spear to discuss teaching evaluation and, in another case, Duran knew of a chair who piloted a new approach to gathering formative data on teaching in his department.

Spear and Duran designed the interviews to be 30 minutes to reduce the burden on faculty. Interview questions included: 1) What does effective teaching mean to you?, 2) Does your department/college define teaching effectiveness for the purposes of RTP?, 3) How does your department/college evaluate teaching?, and 4) If we could do anything we wanted to evaluate teaching at CSUN, what would you like to see us do?

We heard different perspectives on what teaching effectiveness means to faculty. Common themes included course design (“Here are the outcomes. How do we get there?”); giving students multiple ways to engage with the material, including the use of active learning; creating a welcoming environment for students so students are comfortable asking questions and feel their opinions are valued; making the class and the content relevant to students (“Making content relevant to students’ lives and careers”); and valuing diversity. Based on the feedback, it is clear that effective teaching is multi-dimensional. One faculty member explained that there are multiple facets to effective teaching: structural components (i.e., punctuality, clear presentation, instructional activities such as active learning, and assessments), instructor attributes (i.e., competency, approachability, caring personality, and trustworthiness), relevance of content as perceived by students, pedagogical approach (i.e., how one helps

students understand, scaffolding of assignments, timeliness of feedback), and the environment or feel of the classroom (i.e., tone of the class, “strengths-based classroom,” students feel comfortable asking questions and that their opinions are valued).

On the topic of diversity and environment, one faculty stressed the need to include diverse voices and perspectives in the classroom and to encourage students to share, particularly those from oppressed communities. One faculty shared that an effective teacher includes diverse voices and perspectives, where possible, in the course material and in class discussion. For example, teachers can highlight scholars from diverse backgrounds in course readings and examples shared during class lectures. The same faculty member further related the importance of the teacher to talk about race and privilege with students and to “be vulnerable in front of students” to show that we as teachers are open to learning about the experiences of our students and show humility in teaching racially/ethnically-diverse students, many of whom come from disadvantaged communities.

Based on the key informant interviews, we learned there is no shared definition of teaching effectiveness for CSUN as a campus. Overall, there is low support for student evaluations of faculty. Some departments emphasize student ratings more than others. Response rates among students are low, suggesting weak enthusiasm for the surveys among students. The key informants expressed a desire to see the “culture of evaluation” improved.

One key informant attempted to initiate a change in culture by administering an anonymous mid-semester learning experience survey to students and sharing the findings with the corresponding faculty. Although faculty were receptive to receiving results from the formative evaluation, the next step of initiating change in pedagogy before the semester ended did not occur. Thus changing the culture of evaluation is also about emphasizing a growth-mindset with accompanying training opportunities.

We were unable to obtain much feedback on how to reform teaching evaluation due to time constraints in the interviews. One suggestion for improving student surveys was to focus the questions on what a teacher does (behaviors) versus their personality or other attributes outside a teacher’s control (e.g., does the teacher use examples to help clarity, provide opportunities to apply knowledge, encourage students to share ideas, provide feedback, creates supportive classroom climate, teaching techniques). One informant shared that her department recently created a new “classroom observation” form for their graduate courses. The classroom observation form includes questions about many of the behaviors mentioned above related to course design and active learning, as well as other topics such as identification of the instructor’s strengths, to what degree instructors presented material “from an intersectional & anti-oppressive lens,” promoted critical thinking, and created an environment in which “students and instructor appear to be interconnected and engaged with each other in a collaborative, student-centered learning environment.” Other key informants were less

enthusiastic about the utility of peer observations to evaluate teaching. Overall, feedback from the key informants suggests the need to improve the teaching evaluation system at CSUN so that the process is meaningful for faculty, students, and administrators.

3. Develop a teaching effectiveness protocol that aligns with CSUN values of diversity, equity, and anti-racism.

There are three main elements to an equitable and thorough teaching evaluation protocol: student experience surveys, peer reviews, and instructor narratives of their teaching progress along with sample syllabi, assignments, and other instructional materials that showcase the instructor's work. To date, the task force has created a student learning experience survey based on the dimensions of teaching effectiveness. Spear and Duran reviewed numerous student questionnaires, including surveys used by Communication Studies at CSUN, CSUN's Quality Learning and Teaching team, Fresno State, the University of Oregon, and Berkeley. Spear and Duran led the task force in a process of mapping questions to the dimensions of teaching effectiveness.

The student learning experience survey will have several unique features that improve upon current surveys at CSUN. First, the survey contains questions that are specific and tied to teaching effectiveness. Students are only asked to report on aspects of teaching that they can observe. Vague statements such as "My overall assessment of the instructor is" are not included because vague questions may invite biased responses and tend to be less useful than questions about specific teaching behaviors (California State University Fullerton Student Opinion Questionnaire Committee, 2019). Second, the survey includes an introduction that explains to students the purpose of the survey (i.e., to improve teaching and student experience) and mentions that student survey data are used for making employment decisions about instructors. Third, the survey includes an anti-bias statement. Communicating the purpose of the survey to students and including an anti-bias statement are common recommendations for improving student ratings of teaching (Artze-Vega et al., 2023; California State University San Marcos Senate Task Force, 2023). See student experience survey in Appendix A.

4. Pilot test the teaching evaluation protocol to determine feasibility and acceptability.

The pilot study will involve faculty from every college on campus volunteering to administer the student learning experience survey in their classes in fall 2023. The student learning experience survey will function as a supplemental survey in addition to the regular SEF survey. Students will access the student learning experience survey on their course Canvas site. Only the faculty will see their results from the survey.

Spear and Duran submitted an IRB application in October 2023 to conduct focus group interviews with faculty and students who participated in the pilot study. In fall 2023, the task force co-chairs, with assistance from the EEC and the task force, will recruit departments to pilot test the student learning experience survey. In spring 2024, Spear and Duran will invite faculty and students to participate in focus groups to determine acceptability and utility of the student learning experience survey and recommendations for improvement.

5. Assist faculty affairs with creating a plan for how to implement a new teaching effectiveness protocol that includes a method for ensuring accountability.

Work on this objective will take place in spring 2024 after completion of the pilot test and feedback from faculty and students is summarized. The task force will also make recommendations for peer review and teacher narratives for departments to consider. Evidence collected for teaching evaluation should align with the key dimensions of teaching effectiveness developed by the task force.

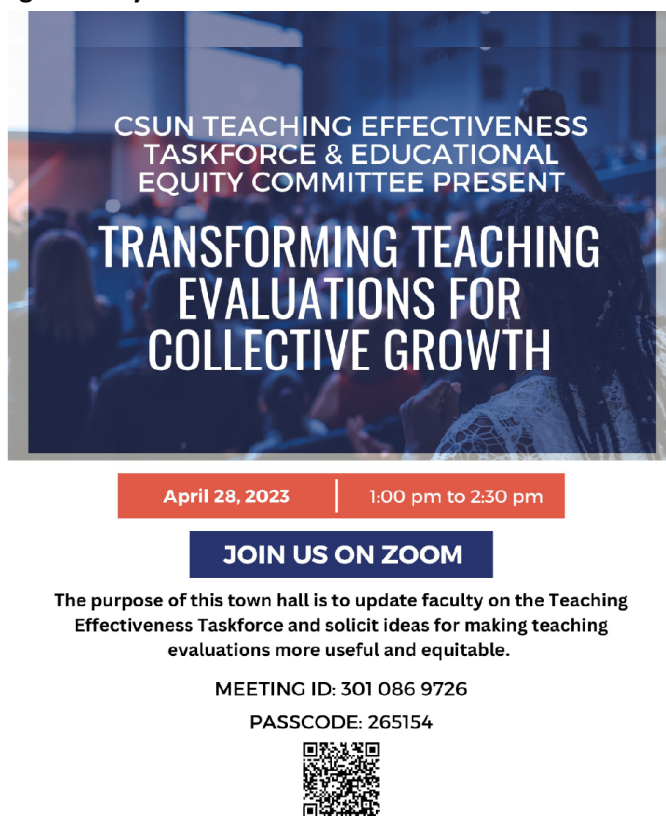
6. Propose new policy language on teaching evaluation to faculty senate.

Work on this objective will take place in spring 2024 in collaboration with Faculty Senate's Personnel Planning & Review Committee.

Other Accomplishments

On behalf of the task force and EEC, Spear and Duran organized a second town hall on April 28, 2023 for CSUN faculty and administrative staff, reprising the same theme from the first town hall, which was "Transforming Teaching Evaluations for Collective Growth" (see Figure 2). During the town hall, Spear presented the goals and objectives of the task force and elicited feedback from participants. A total of 38 people attended, including the hosts Spear and Duran. The audience was a mix of faculty, chairs, and administrators.

Figure 2. Flyer for the 2023 Town Hall at CSUN



Task Force Recommendations

The task force recommends establishing a campus-wide system for teaching evaluation that all departments follow. Currently, there are no common standards or tools for teaching evaluation at CSUN. While the decentralized approach to teaching evaluation—one in which very department designs their own process—is well established and valued by many at CSUN, it is difficult to ensure a fair and meaningful approach to teaching evaluation without standardization and central oversight. A new system should adhere to core principles of equity-minded faculty evaluation: clarity, transparency, consistency, context, and flexibility (O’Meara & Templeton, 2022). Given the importance of reducing equity gaps experienced by students from underserved communities, the campus needs to promote high standards of teaching effectiveness and teaching evaluation to hold faculty accountable and identify areas for faculty development in the area of teaching. In what follows is a list of recommendations that the campus can adopt to create a system for teaching evaluation that is meaningful, equitable, and growth-oriented.

1. Adopt a shared definition of teaching effectiveness.

An evaluation of teaching effectiveness should include a definition of teaching effectiveness and a clear description of how the university evaluates teaching. Moreover, a definition of teaching effectiveness would direct faculty to teacher training programs at the university to help faculty build their skills in effective teaching practices. The task force developed

a framework for teaching effectiveness by identifying key dimensions of effective teaching from research. This framework can provide guidance for teaching evaluation practices such as the collection of evidence of teaching work in and outside the classroom. The key dimensions are a starting point and should be understood as a general structure to guide teacher training and teaching evaluation policy and practice. Faculty should reevaluate the dimensions over time along with experts in teaching scholarship and make adjustments as needed.

2. Adopt policy language that calls for a holistic evaluation of teaching that includes three sources of data: data from student learning experience surveys, data from peer observations of teaching, and teacher narratives, accompanied by sample syllabi, assignments, and other instructional products.

Teaching evaluation should include the voices of students, peers, and teachers themselves. No one source of data is sufficient on its own to determine teaching effectiveness. Much of what goes into designing learner-centered courses, planning activities, and mentoring students happens outside the classroom. Student ratings of teachings only assess student experience in a course. Peer review of teaching can identify the use of effective practices and better assess the efforts of teachers to design learner-centered courses through a review of syllabi, course websites, sample assignments, and other instructional materials. Finally, teacher narratives can provide important contextual information about teaching strategies faculty implement, connection of the strategies to the key dimensions of teaching effectiveness, challenges with implementation, classroom dynamics, and other information that personnel committees and administrators should consider when interpreting student ratings data and peer observation reports.

3. Develop a campus-wide “student learning experience” survey that allows for supplemental questions by departments.

CSUN is currently one of five CSU campuses that does not have a campus-wide survey (Dyer, 2024). Each department creates their own survey at CSUN. Most universities across the country have a campus-wide survey for student ratings of teaching.

There are several advantages to a campus-wide survey. First, a campus-wide survey, if designed to measure key aspects of effective teaching, would provide aggregate level data on teaching effectiveness and student experience at CSUN as a whole. Second, normative data could be calculated and analysis of trends over time could be examined, including bias in student

ratings based on gender and race/ethnicity of faculty members. Third, a campus-wide survey can identify needs for teacher training, as well as other resources to support student learning.

The Task Force recommends changing the name of the survey from “Student Evaluation of Faculty” to “Student Learning Experience” survey. No other CSU uses the language “student evaluation of faculty” to describe their student ratings surveys. To be clear, students are not evaluating faculty or evaluating teaching effectiveness—naturally, such an endeavor goes beyond the students’ capacity and requires holistic assessment from multiple sources of data—but providing their feedback on teaching and sharing their experience in a course. More common names for student surveys in the CSU are “student opinion surveys,” “student perceptions of teaching,” or simply “course evaluations.” Calling our campus-wide survey “Student Learning Experience survey” aligns with the purpose of the survey, which is to elicit student experience with learning and teaching.

4. Develop criteria for student learning experience questions to assist departments with evaluating the quality of their questions.

Departments may elect to supplement the Student Learning Experience survey with questions that address teaching practices specific to their disciplines. It is important that all questions administered to students be tested for validity and reliability. In the absence of such testing for quality control, departments need guidance to develop questions that are good quality and questions that avoid potential biases. For example, we know that global questions that are broad and do not reference a specific teaching behavior may invite bias. Open-ended questions, if poorly designed, may also lead to unfair biases against faculty (Dyer, 2023).

CSUN can make available to departments validated surveys of student ratings of teaching. A task force to address student ratings of teaching at CSU San Marcos includes many recommendations for avoiding bias in questions (California State University San Marcos Senate Task Force, 2023). CSUN criteria for student learning experience questions can reference recommendations from the CSU San Marcos report along with published work on best practices for collecting student ratings of instruction. CSUN should develop a guide for departments on best practices for student learning experience surveys.

5. Develop an interpretation guide to help faculty and administrators use student ratings data appropriately and avoid unnecessary harm to faculty.

Faculty and administrators need guidance to use student ratings data appropriately and to avoid harm to faculty. For example, personnel review committee members and administrators should not compare faculty on their student ratings, nor should faculty ratings be compared to departmental averages. As highlighted in this report, there are many factors that impact student ratings of teaching.

The Task Force recommends a growth-oriented approach to teaching evaluation, which discourages the comparison of faculty to one another based on their student ratings or departmental averages, but, rather, encourages the use of data to help faculty reflect on their teaching and set goals for improvement. San Jose State University created an interpretation guide for student ratings of teaching *San Jose State University Student Evaluation Review Board, 2019). The Task Force recommends that CSUN adapt this guide for use at CSUN and broadly disseminate the guide across campus.

6. Create an ad-hoc committee as part of Faculty Senate

Several CSUs have a committee dedicated to teaching evaluation or student ratings of instruction within the faculty senate. CSU Fresno is one example. CSU Fresno has a faculty senate committee on student ratings of instruction. The committee at Fresno oversaw a validation study of a new “student ratings of instruction” questionnaire and led the effort to seek approval from the faculty senate to adopt the newly tested questionnaire.

Having an ad-hoc committee on teaching evaluation within the CSUN Faculty Senate would sustain the work started by the task force. An ad-hoc committee would allow for more faculty to get involved in this work as membership could change every two to three years in the same way that other committee membership changes. The ad-hoc committee would oversee a study testing validity and reliability of the Student Learning Experience survey once acceptability and feasibility has been established. The ad-hoc committee would partner with the Provost’s Office and Faculty Development to develop disseminate information on 1) the dimensions of teaching effectiveness, 2) the student learning experience survey, 3) an interpretation guide for faculty involved with collecting, reporting, and reviewing student learning experience data, and 4) models for conducting peer-evaluation using the dimensions of teaching effectiveness. The ad-hoc committee will work with the Provost’s Office and Faculty Affairs to design an implementation plan that will involve developing training programs and a system for documenting adherence to the protocol for teaching evaluation. Finally, the ad-hoc committee would work with PP&R to revise the section on teaching effectiveness and teaching evaluation in Section 600. The committee would review all materials and procedures for teaching evaluation every five years and identify necessary adaptations to surveys and other materials used for teaching evaluation, as well as necessary updates to policy.

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Appendix A: Draft Student Learning Experience Survey (SLE)

MESSAGE TO STUDENTS INTRODUCING THE SLE

Dear students,

This is an ungraded, anonymous survey where you can provide feedback on your course experience. **Your honest and constructive feedback is valuable** to make improvements to the course. I am interested in learning what aspects of the course and/or instruction helped you learn and what aspects can be changed to help future students learn more effectively. **Your feedback is completely anonymous.**

Student ratings of instruction play an important role in the performance reviews of faculty. California State University Northridge recognizes that student evaluations of teaching may be influenced by students' unconscious and unintentional biases about the race, gender, and other identities of the instructor. Women, instructors of color, and members of other minority identity groups are systematically rated lower in their teaching evaluations, even when there are no actual differences in the instruction or in what students have learned. As you fill out the student learning experience survey [replaced course evaluation], please keep this in mind and make an effort to resist stereotypes about professors. Focus on your opinions about the content of the course (for example, lectures, assignments, textbook, etc) and not unrelated matters (the instructor's appearance).

Please answer the following questions and elaborate on your answers in the space provided.

1. The purpose of this course was clear to me.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]
2. The assignments were pertinent to the course content.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]
3. The course content was presented in an organized manner.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]

4. I felt welcomed in this course.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]

5. I felt accepted in this course.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]

6. Students were encouraged to ask questions in class.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]

7. I understood what was expected of me in this course.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]

8. The instructor returned graded assignments in time to benefit my future performance.
 - a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]

9. The instructor used various activities that involved me in learning.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]
10. This course provided opportunities for me to learn by engaging with other students.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]
11. The instructor made the course content relevant to me.
- a. Strongly disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree or disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly agree
 - f. Please elaborate. [text box]
12. List one or two specific aspects of this course that were particularly effective in fostering your learning. [text box]
13. What suggestions, if any, do you have to improve the fostering of your learning? [text box]