New USC Model of Teaching Excellence
Why the change?

- Recommendations from 3 faculty committees in 4 years
- Provost’s initiatives to elevate the status of teaching
- In response to research findings about student evaluations
University Investment in Teaching

• During the past 22 months:
  • **Plan** for elevating teaching at USC
  • **Definition** of Excellence
  • **Reorganization of CET** to teaching development center
  • **Hiring** of additional instructional designer
  • **Evidence-based resources, customizable plug & play**
  • **Consultation and development** for schools and faculty
  • **Continuing Appointment** for Teaching-Track faculty
USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching

Respectful and Professional
Conveys commitment to learning through demonstrated effort in, and enthusiasm for, the teaching process
Models and expects respectful and appropriate behavior in all professional interactions
Develops professionalism in students through high expectations for mindful, ethical, and responsible behavior
Recognizes the power differential between professor and student, and acts with integrity toward students
Fosters professional identity development through student use of discipline-specific customs and language

Challenging and Supportive
Creates learning objectives and experiences that are challenging but attainable
Models and fosters critical, analytical, and creative thinking
Encourages student curiosity, exploration, and self-directed learning
Cultivates a belief that mistakes and failed experiments further knowledge and understanding
Fosters a mindset where growth is always possible, and ability is not fixed
Provides encouragement, positive reinforcement, and support
Guides students to university support services according to university policy

Inclusive and Diverse
Creates an open environment conducive to intellectual risk-taking
Includes students’ strengths, experiences, and identities in the learning process
Provides materials, cases, or applications that examine diverse experiences, perspectives, or populations
Applies multiple techniques and strategies to reach all students in a culturally-responsive way
Follows guidelines of Universal Design for Learning and accessibility best practices
Pursues continuous improvement of teaching and course design by applying research-based best practices
USC Definition (cont.)

**Relevant and Engaging**
- Uses content that is current, rigorous, and informed by theory, research, evidence, and context
- Uses active learning strategies to promote development of mastery
- Fosters transfer of learning and problem-solving skills to address real-world challenges
- Models and requires use of multiple media and technologies aligned with learning objectives and experiences
- Fosters student participation in academic discussions and peer-to-peer collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and feedback
- Facilitates student engagement in inquiry and research

**Prepared and Purposeful**
- Uses an instructional plan aligned with learning objectives that includes assessment of student prior knowledge, instruction followed by application, and shared reflection of what was learned
- Fosters self-regulation to help students assess their own learning and adjust their strategies
- Manages learning effectively: plans activities, uses routines, and manages time, behavior, and participation
- Utilizes educational technologies (e.g., LMS) to provide students access to course materials, grades, and other feedback

**Fair and Equitable**
- Establishes clear expectations and learning objectives
- Uses formative assessments to evaluate student progress, and summative assessments to evaluate mastery
- Uses transparent assessment processes with clear criteria tied to learning objectives
- Provides specific, regular, and timely feedback tied to performance criteria
- Maintains reasonable course policies that are applied uniformly and fairly

**Evidence-Based**
- Uses results from formative and summative peer and student teaching evaluations to inform teaching practice
- Demonstrates effectiveness of instruction through measures of student mastery of learning objectives
- Pursues continuous improvement of teaching and course design by applying research-based best practices
Teaching Evaluation
What we used to do

• Student evaluations
  • Item 11: Overall, how would you rate this course
  • Item 12: Overall, how would you rate this instructor

• .....
USC Student Evaluations are no longer a Primary Measure of Teaching Effectiveness

• Not correlated with student learning or other measures of teaching effectiveness (Braga, Paccagnella, & Pellizzari, 2014; Hornstein & Law, 2017; Uttl, White, & Gonzales, 2016)

• Women are rated lower than men (Basow & Silberg, 1987; Fandt & Stevens, 1991; Martin, 2016; Mengel, Sauermann & Zölitz, 2018; Mitchell & Martin, 2018; Rosen 2017, Sidanius & Crane, 1989, Wagner, Rieger, & Voorvelt, 2016)

• Courses taught online by male & female instructors who each taught a course under a male & female identity (MacNell, Driscoll & Hunt, 2015), and when students were randomly assigned to a male or female instructor (Boring, 2017)

• Some evidence for the same effect for faculty of color (Reid, 2010), but studies are few and results inconsistent.
Student Evaluations: Acknowledging what we are measuring

- Student evaluations are not valid measures of teaching effectiveness.
- Student evaluations are experience satisfaction surveys.
- Students are not pedagogical experts, we shouldn’t use them as such.
- Students are qualified to evaluate their learning experience.
- Student perceptions of learning experiences should inform our teaching, but should not determine our effectiveness.
- New Learning Experience Evaluation measures student perceptions of their learning experience in five targeted areas.
Learning Experience Evaluation

**Five Subscales**
- Course Design
- Instructional Practices
- Inclusive Practices
- Assessment Practices
- Course Impact

**Student Engagement Items**
- Hours Per Week Doing Coursework
- Number of Times Contacted Instructor Outside of Class
- Type of Study Strategies Used

**Qualitative Feedback:**
- Most and Least Valuable Aspects and How to Improve Course

*Guidance to Students on Appropriate Types of Feedback*
Student Feedback is crucial

Learning Experience Evaluations:

Give students a voice about their learning experiences

Should be used by faculty as formative feedback to inform their approach to reaching students

May be used by schools as one of many measures of student engagement
Student Feedback is crucial

Schools may use Learning Experience Evaluations to:

- Gather school-wide data about student perceptions to inform curriculum or diversity and inclusion efforts
- Gather school-wide data about student engagement
- Identify faculty who are exceptional at engaging students
- Identify faculty who need support in engaging students
- Identify problematic classroom behavior for further inquiry or evaluation
What is recommended for evaluating teaching?

University of Michigan
Center for Research on Learning and Teaching

A comprehensive, systematic approach to evaluating multiple components of the teaching process, including but not limited to:

- Instructional Observation
- Course materials review
- Assessment review
Categories for Evaluating Teaching

- Teaching Effectiveness
- Teaching Development
- Inclusive Practices
- Reviewing Peers
- Student Engagement
- Other possible categories
# Teaching Evaluation
Multiple Categories, Multiple Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Possible Methods</th>
<th>Possible Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Effectiveness</strong>&lt;br&gt;(50+% of teaching evaluation)</td>
<td>Peer Review: (Majority of category review)&lt;br&gt;Other methods:</td>
<td>Classroom Observation, Syllabus Review, Assessment Review, Teaching Reflection Statement, etc.&lt;br&gt;Outcome measures, awards, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other categories might include….</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Development</strong></td>
<td>Evidence of Investment</td>
<td>Teaching workshops, training programs, conferences, leadership in teaching development, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review of Peers’ Teaching</strong></td>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>Quality of review reports, number of peers reviewed, leadership in peer review, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusive Teaching Practices</strong></td>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>Inclusive Syllabus Review, Inclusive Practices Observation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>Classroom Observation, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Student Feedback</td>
<td>Learning Experience Evaluation, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schools

USC

Formative Evaluation

Training

Mentoring

Peer Review
- Reflection
- Observation
- Syllabus
- Assessment

School-Based Definition of Excellence in Teaching

USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching

Syllabus

Assessment
Acclimate to the Instrument

**Introduce** objective peer review measures

**Examine** through critical self reflection

**Train** faculty on classroom observation and syllabus review tools

**Expose** faculty to peer review process for teaching development only

**Share** experiences of participants to decrease anxiety about the process
Steps needed for Fair and Effective Peer Review

1. Independent critical self-reflection

2. Formative peer review

3. Summative peer review
Merit flows into promotion

Criteria are aligned for merit, promotion, tenure, & continuing appointment. Evidence for APR can be used as evidence in PTCA.
Schools

Mentoring

Formative Evaluation

Training

Merit

Tenure, Promotion, Continuing Appt

Awards

Leaves & Grants

Peer Review

Reflection, Observation, Syllabus, Assessment

Syllabus

Assessment

Merit, Tenure, Promotion, Continuing Appt

School-Based Definition of Excellence in Teaching

USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching
CET

Supporting the USC Model of Teaching Excellence
Lessons Learned

• Beware of the virus that makes all memos unreadable
• Don’t rely solely on Governance Structures for dialogue and feedback
• Use an incremental approach (Start with having schools define excellence in teaching, use pilots with feedback)
• Launch resources just in time
• Cite everything you can, though the higher ed literature on teaching is mushy
Development

University Investment (aligned with USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching)
- CET Institutes
  - Future Faculty (graduate students) (Fall 2017)
  - New Faculty (Fall 2017)
  - Faculty Fellows (Teacher Leaders--Senior Faculty) (Fall 2018)
  - School-Based Institutes (Fall 2019)
- CET Online resources (videos, guidance documents, templates)
- TA Training Curriculum
- CET Consults

School Investment (aligned with school’s Definition of Excellence in Teaching)
- Discipline-based best practices
- Teaching conferences
- Mentoring Programs
- Formative Assessment Process
Evaluation

University Investment (aligned with USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching)

- CET Peer review evaluation tools
  - Classroom observation
  - Syllabus (course design) review
  - Teaching statement (including use of student evaluations as formative assessment tool)
  - Assessment review
- CET Peer review evaluation tool training for schools

School Investment (aligned with school’s Definition of Excellence in Teaching)

- Discipline-endorsed forms of evaluation (peer review and other types)
- Peer review system of evaluation for merit, tenure, promotion, and continuing appointment
Reward

**University Investment** (aligned with USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching)
- Associates Award for Excellence in Teaching
- Continuing Appointment
- Other awards, grants, and titles in development

**School Investment** (aligned with school’s Definition of Excellence in Teaching)
- Teaching Awards
- Paid leave or sabbaticals for teaching development
- Grants and seed money for teaching proposals
Assistance from CET

In addition to resources already developed for teaching development and peer review, CET will make available guidance documents on:

- Developing a comprehensive school teaching plan, including a definition of teaching excellence
- Implementing peer review evaluation
- Enhancing incentive structures
Communication Timeline

Oct 19, 2017: A memo was sent to USC faculty announcing that the student course evaluation would be changing, with a rationale, process, and timeline.

Mar 27, 2018: A memo was sent to USC faculty announcing new teaching initiatives, including a new teaching model, and peer review system of evaluating of teaching.

Apr 2, 2018: A memo was sent to USC faculty explaining the new definition and model of teaching excellence, including USC’s investment in teaching development, peer review evaluation, and reward structures. It announced the discontinuation of the use of student evaluations as a primary measure of teaching performance, and described their new purpose.

Apr 10, 2018: A memo was sent to USC faculty announcing the new Learning Experience Evaluation, including an explanation of the new purpose, items, protocol, and report.

Apr 16, 2018: A memo was sent to USC faculty announcing new peer review resources to assist schools as they develop a peer review teaching evaluation system.
Lee Revision Timeline & Process

Aug 10, 2017: Meeting with Rossier School evaluation experts on student evaluations

Oct 18: Academic Senate reviewed the evaluation revision process and new pool of items, and was asked to provide feedback from faculty councils by November 1st

Oct 18 - Nov 1: Feedback collected from faculty councils

Oct 18 - Nov 1: Feedback collected from students

Nov 1 - Nov 12: Revisions from feedback from feedback made

Nov 13 - 17: First pilot run on a cross-section of courses

Dec 5 - Feb 26, 2018: Confirmatory factor analysis and cross referencing with criteria in new USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching used for selection and modification of items for 2nd pilot

Mar 5 - 9: Second pilot run on a cross-section of courses

Mar 12 - 23: Confirmatory factor analysis used for elimination and modification of items for final evaluation

Mar 5 - Apr 9: Development of protocol, communication plan, and report structure

April 10: Learning Experience Evaluation Memo Released

Apr 23 - May 1: Learning Experience Evaluation Launched

Apr – Dec 2018: Data from full implementation in Spring 2018 and Fall 2018 evaluations will be used to make slight modifications to items as appropriate

Apr 2019: Final version of the evaluation will be implemented, with periodic analysis to ensure it continues to assess desired components of student learning experience
References


Martin, L.L. (2016). Gender, teaching evaluations, and professional success in political science. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 49*, 313. DOI: 10.1017/S1049096516000275
References (continued)


