



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

## Student Opinion of Teaching Survey

**Policy #: SP 13-11**

**Drafted By: Faculty Affairs Committee 2013-2014: David Claveau, Beatrice de Oca, Matt Furmanski, Jill Leafstedt, Nancy Mozingo (co-chair), Monica Pereira (co-chair) & Mona Thompson**

**Approval Date:**

**Effective Date: Fall, 2014**

**Applicability: CI Faculty**

**Purpose:** To replace the current Student Ratings of Teaching (SRT) instrument with the Student Opinion of Teaching Survey described in this policy. If approved, this policy would supersede SR 08-01 and SP 07-19. The Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) was tasked to work on this policy in response to questions/comments raised at senate and comments directed at members of FAC expressing dissatisfaction with the current instrument. We have revised the current Student Ratings of Teaching (SRT) survey in an effort to create a questionnaire that will provide useful information to faculty about teaching effectiveness. The new instrument is shorter - the current SRT has 20 rated questions plus 3 open-ended questions and the newly proposed instrument has 12 rated question plus 2 open-ended questions - and the questions are more succinct in comparison to the current SRT instrument. This policy includes an addendum with recommendations on using student surveys of teaching effectiveness in personnel decisions.

**Policy:**

### STUDENT OPINION OF TEACHING SURVEY

**Instructions:** There are 14 questions on this survey and each question is important to the process. Please answer each question thoughtfully.

#### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE COURSE

1. My expected grade is:  
A    B    C    D    F  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
2. On average, how many hours per week did you spend outside of class studying and preparing for this course?  
Less than 1 hour    between 1-3 hours    between 3-6 hours    between 6-9 hours  
more than 9 hours  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
3. How many class sessions did you attend?  
All    Almost all    About half    Almost none    There were no regularly scheduled class meetings  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe



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### COURSE/INSTRUCTOR QUESTIONS

4. The course was a valuable learning experience.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
5. The instructor presented course material in an organized way.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
6. The instructor provided examples and illustrations that helped me understand the course content.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
7. The instructor provided assignments that helped me understand the course content.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
8. The instructor returned graded work in a reasonable amount of time.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
9. The instructor encouraged and responded to questions in class.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
10. The instructor evaluated my work in a fair manner.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
11. The instructor helped to create an atmosphere of mutual respect.  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
12. The instructor responded to requests for help made outside of class (such as by phone, email or office visit).  
Very Strongly agree      Strongly agree      Agree      Disagree      Strongly disagree  
Not applicable/no opportunity to observe
13. What aspects of the course helped your learning the most?
14. What aspects of the course would you change and why?



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### **Addendum: Suggestions for the use of student surveys of teaching effectiveness in personnel decisions.**

Adapted from: <http://www.washington.edu/oea/resources/recommendations.html> (1-7) and the SJSU Interpretation guide for the Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness ([http://www.sjsu.edu/facultyaffairs/docs/2011\\_SOTE\\_Interpretation\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/facultyaffairs/docs/2011_SOTE_Interpretation_Guide.pdf)) (8-9)

1. Student ratings must be used in concert with other data that relate to the quality of a faculty members teaching, rather than as a sole indicator of teaching quality. Other sources such as peer reviews of classroom sessions, peer reviews of curricular materials, and faculty self-reflection should be assessed in addition to student evaluations to gain a true sense of the teaching skills and performance of a faculty member. Consideration of these other sources of evidence is especially important because student ratings alone do not provide sufficient evidence of the extent of student learning in a course.
2. Student opinion surveys from more than a single section should be used in making any decision about teaching quality. Research has shown that ratings from at least five courses are necessary to assure adequate reliability. The validity of the ratings for measuring teaching quality is increased as a greater variety of course formats is represented in the data upon which decisions are based.
3. Small differences in individual evaluations should not be used as a basis for differential decisions. There is a temptation to overestimate the precision of the averages that are presented. Small differences in ratings may not be meaningful. It is better to deal with much broader classifications, such as Very Strongly Agree vs. Strongly Agree.
4. Interpretations of student ratings averages should be guided by awareness that, in a university that uses teaching excellence as a hiring criterion, teaching is typically at a high level. Also, students tend to rate faculty at or near the high end of the scale. It is therefore not appropriate to use the median (or 50th percentile) as a presumed dividing line between strong and weak teachers. More appropriate would be to assume that the great majority of teachers are strong. It is also appropriate, when evaluating average ratings of individual instructors, to consider relevant comparisons and the specific characteristics of courses taught (see Recommendation 5).
5. Course characteristics should be considered when interpreting results. For example, large lecture courses typically receive lower ratings than smaller courses, new courses being taught for the first time receive lower ratings than well-established courses, introductory courses for non-majors receive lower ratings than higher division courses for majors, and courses in departments that have high student workloads typically receive lower ratings. Adjustments for course type should be made in order to have a fairer sense of the faculty member's teaching skills.
6. Faculty members should be given an opportunity to respond to evaluation results. Faculty should have an opportunity to discuss the objectives of the course, how the teaching methods were used to meet that objective, and how circumstances in the course might have affected evaluations.
7. Administration of course ratings should be scheduled to maximize the number of respondents. Generally, evaluations will have greater validity when higher proportions of the enrolled students complete evaluation forms. Ratings may not be an accurate reflection of the entire class when smaller proportions of students respond. This problem can be particularly acute in small classes. Generally, a minimum of a third of enrolled students must be included in the results to have any confidence in the results. As proportions decrease, particularly in small classes, there is greater opportunity for the rating of one or a few students to disproportionately affect the results.
8. Ratings are slightly but positively related to both expected and received grades.
9. Ratings given by students who are required to take a class are often lower than ratings by students for whom the class is an elective.