

Motion

The Committee on Educational Policy and Planning (CEPP) proposes replacing the current “Dean’s Card” with a new form, to be implemented as soon as technological and logistical issues can be surmounted.

Rationale

For the last two decades the Skidmore faculty have used a three-question “Dean’s Card,” or student rating form, to evaluate the teaching and learning in our courses. In response to a 2010 *Report to CEPP on Quantitative Student Ratings of Faculty*, in 2011 CEPP and CAPT formed a joint subcommittee to evaluate and potentially revise the existing student rating instruments – both to assist the faculty in garnering more nuanced feedback on their courses, and to engender more accurate and less biased evaluations of faculty. For the last three semesters the subcommittee, and then CEPP, have developed a ratings instrument that could act as an alternative to the existing Dean’s Form. Faculty piloted the instrument in spring 2011 and some chose as well to utilize the revised form in the spring of 2012 to solicit student feedback; the subcommittee consulted with external (e.g., from the National Science Foundation) and internal experts on the development of the instrument and examined ratings instruments and questions used by faculty at other institutions; the Skidmore faculty applied statistical methods to demonstrate the validity and reliability of the pilot study questions; and the subcommittee and CEPP hosted multiple Faculty Interest Groups, open fora and a Committee of the Whole as recently as November 2012 to solicit the input of faculty regarding the usefulness of data generated by the pilot, and also twice sought feedback at Academic Staff meetings.

This fall of 2012, CEPP re-evaluated the student ratings instrument, consulted with former members of the subcommittee, and some faculty who have served on CAPT for (nearly) full terms over the last decade, as well as the DOF/VPAA. Discussions focused not only on an assessment of the ratings form but as well on which individuals on campus would have access to the results of the student ratings. The end result is the form which CEPP proposes that the faculty adopt as soon as the technological and logistical obstacles can be resolved. It is CEPP’s hope that the faculty will endorse this new ratings instrument, for the committee thinks that the new form provides more nuanced information about the effectiveness of the course and the instruction, and the students’ own role in their learning. CEPP also proposes that the instructor, his or her academic department, the academic administration and CAPT all will have access to the results of the instrument, as is the current practice. CEPP proposes as well that the results generated include sufficient data (e.g., course, instructor, department and college means, **and standard deviations if possible**) for all who have access to make informed assessments of the ratings. Finally, CEPP appreciates the challenge the faculty will face as we shift from one ratings instrument to another, and so has included in the instrument slightly modified versions of the current Dean’s Card’s three questions so that reasonable comparisons can be made during the transitional period between the current and new forms.