

ATRAP's Recommendations for Performance Review of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty February 2019

ATRAP, a group representing the interests of the non-tenure-track faculty on the Danforth campus, makes the following recommendations for reviewing the performance of its members.

1. Performance should be reviewed annually. The aim should be to establish a personnel file to which testimony about a faculty member's contributions to the university, school, and department is added over time.
2. We recommend that each year the faculty member submit a self-appraisal. See below for one suggested template; another is attached. The faculty member may supply supporting documents if warranted.
3. Department chairs should respond in written form to each faculty member's self-appraisal. A copy of this written response should be added to the faculty member's personnel file.

The chair's evaluation should be based primarily on the self-appraisal. The chair might also take into account letters from people who have observed the faculty member's performance in class; however, we recommend that any such observers have evidence-based training in assessing classroom performance.

Although the chair may look at student evaluations, it has been shown that these evaluations are inherently sexist¹, racist², and ageist³; they promote pandering, grade inflation⁴, and unhealthy competition among colleagues; they are unreliable indicators of what students have really learned⁵⁻⁹; they do not differentiate between different kinds of classes; and they contain questions students do not seem to understand. Student evaluations should form only a place from which to start a conversation about the quality of a faculty member's teaching. Consistent student comments on course evaluations can provide valuable feedback, but numerical responses should be given little credence unless they are abysmally low.

4. Each department [chair] [Dean] [Provost] should establish clear written guidelines for how a chair might express concern about, and make suggestions for improving, a faculty member's performance. For example, a chair might have a conversation with the faculty member in which she offers evidence-based training in teaching that also brings in at least one third party; this might be achieved through classroom observation, discussion with colleagues, or some other way. The Teaching Center can be consulted when problems arise. After a trial period, if the chair still has concerns, a department [school] [university] [non-tenure track faculty] personnel committee established for this purpose should review the information and make a recommendation to [Chair][Dean] [Provost] [Chancellor]. Steps should be taken to ensure that personal grievances do not play a role in any decision not to renew a contract; chairs should recognize the vulnerability inherent in the current system of "appointment letters." For the reasons given in item 3, above, student evaluations should never be the sole basis for such a decision.

5. Contracts should be renewed unless (a) there is a demonstrated problem with a faculty member's performance--see item 4, above--or (b) the position is being eliminated.
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Example Self-Appraisal Template

To be completed once each year.

1. What were your job responsibilities in the year being evaluated? If you did any activities beyond these, what were they?
 2. What were your goals for the past academic year?
 3. Discuss your successes and challenges in meeting those goals.
 4. What are your goals for the current year?
 5. What can the department do to support you and your professional development?
 6. What additional comments do you have, if any?
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References

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2. Aruguete, M., Slater, J., & Mwaikinda, S. (2017). The effects of professors' race and clothing style on student evaluations. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 86(4), 494-502.
3. Wagner, N., Rieger, M., & Voorvelt, K. (2016). Gender, ethnicity and teaching evaluations: Evidence from mixed teaching teams. *Economics of Education Review*, 54, 79-94.
4. Eiszler, C. (2002). College students' evaluations of teaching and grade inflation. *Research in Higher Education* 43(4), 483-501.
5. Boring, A., Ottoboni, K., & Stark, P. (2016). Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness. *Science Open Research*.
6. Cornell, N., & Hausman, H. (2016). Do the best teachers get the best ratings? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 1-8.
7. Hornstein H. (2017). Student evaluations of teaching are an inadequate assessment tool for evaluating faculty performance. *Cogent Education*, 4(1).
8. Spooren, P., Brockx, B., & Mortelmans, D. (2013). On the validity of student evaluation of teaching: the state of the art. *Review of Educational Research*, 83(4), 598-642.
9. Zabaleta, F. (2007). The use and misuse of student evaluations of teaching. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(1), 55-76.