To: The University Senate  
From: University Senate Faculty Affairs Committee  
Subject: Summative Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness at Purdue University, West Lafayette Campus  

Disposition: University Senate for Approval  

WHEREAS: University Senate Document 97-9 (Revised) indicates that “learning outcomes are important and should be evaluated;” and  

WHEREAS: student input on teaching is highly valued and helps ensure excellence; and  

WHEREAS: The use of the group medians of the students’ responses to the questions “overall, I would rate this instructor as” and “overall, I would rate this course as” are the current “common items” being used primarily, if not exclusively, for summative evaluations of faculty members, i.e., for promotion and tenure decisions; and  

WHEREAS: There is compelling evidence that student responses to this question are not accurate measures of student achievement of learning outcomes; and  

WHEREAS: Research on student evaluations of teaching is indicating that the requirements in the “common items” section of University Senate Document 97-9 (revised) result in summative evaluation systems that are biased, easily manipulated, and inaccurate.  

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:  
Starting with the fall, 2017 semester, the questions “overall, I would rate this instructor as” and “overall, I would rate this course as” will no longer be mandatory university questions. Moreover, academic units are strongly encouraged not to use student responses to these questions for summative evaluation purposes, i.e. for promotion and tenure decisions, beginning with fall 2018.  

For tenure-track faculty members that started at Purdue prior to fall, 2017, academic units should come to a mutual agreement on what will be used for their summative evaluations in support of the promotion and tenure process.  

We request that the Provost’s office meet with Deans, individual promotion committees, representatives of student government, and School/Department heads to describe the University’s expectations, identify proposed alternative assessment methods suggested by the academic units, as well as to gather feedback with respect to the use of summative course evaluation scores on the Promotion and Tenure Document and to ensure teaching excellence.  

The Provost’s office will present the results of their review of proposed alternative assessment methods and a summary of the feedback they received from academic units to the University Senate no later than January 2019. At that time, appropriate committees of the University Senate will consider whether additional review or action is warranted.  

Appropriate University groups should review all methods in use for summative evaluations as soon as possible initially, and then on a routine basis not to exceed an interval of 4 years. The review should include a
report on best practices across the University and a comparison to methods used or proposed elsewhere for summative evaluations. These reports should be submitted and reviewed by appropriate personnel with the Provost’s office and by appropriate University Senate committees, and disseminated to primary and area committees.

Respectfully submitted by

Levon T. Esters

Voted For:
Linda S. Prokopy
Steven Landry
Elizabeth A. Strickland
Evelyn Blackwood
Peter Dunn
Peter Hollenbeck
Ming-Ming Chiu
Bob Lucht
Vanessa Quinn
Paul Wenthold

Voted Against:

Did Not Vote/Abstained:

Absent:
Greg Blaisdell
Stuart Bolton
Sriramesh Krishnamurthy