

**Committee on Teaching and Academic Programs (CTAP) AY 16-17**  
**Promoting and Evaluating Teaching Excellence at USC**  
**Executive Summary**

Chair: Ruth Chung, Chair (Education)

Committee Members Contributing to This Report:

Robert Adler (Dramatic Arts), Jeb Barnes (Political Science), Devon Brooks (Social Work), Frank Corsetti (Earth Sciences), Kim Hirabayashi (Education), Marion Philadelphia (Business), Gale Sinatra (Education), Michaela Ullmann (Libraries), Ginger Clark (Ex officio).

Preamble

- Teaching and learning in higher education is increasingly complex and diverse in the range of students served, contexts and platforms of teaching, and range of tools utilized.
- The current system of course evaluation is primarily a measure of *student satisfaction* and is subject to a range of well-established biases. It is not a valid measure of instructor teaching effectiveness.
- The diversity of disciplines across USC necessitates diverse approaches to evaluating teaching quality. Each discipline should define what constitutes teaching excellence.

Guiding Principles

- Ensure educational value of a USC education by promoting excellence in teaching by ALL USC faculty.
- Provide a multidimensional system of evaluating teaching quality to be on par with the rigorous standards used to evaluate research at USC.
- Foster a culture of and commitment to excellence in teaching by defining what constitutes teaching excellence across the university.
- Provide recommendations for a common set of guiding principles and practices to be adapted and operationalized within each unit according to the particularities of each discipline.

Four Domains of Recommendations

- A. Promoting a culture of excellence in teaching.
- B. Revising the existing course evaluation system.
- C. Instituting a system of peer review of teaching practices.
- D. Developing a teaching portfolio.

DOMAIN A: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

We offer the following cadre of recommendations for promoting and reinforcing a culture of excellence in teaching as the primary desired goal of evaluating instructional practices.

**Recommendation 1: Articulate components and levels of what constitutes teaching quality**

Any revisions to the course evaluation system should be framed within a broader conceptualization and articulation of what constitutes teaching excellence as well as minimal standards of competency, both at the university and school levels. This, in turn, should be located within a strategic plan that articulates and implements USC's brand as an R-1 institution that values excellence in research *and* teaching. Each school should formulate the strategic plan in a similar manner as the diversity plan.

**Recommendation 2: Make connections to the diversity plan**

Each school should assess the degree to which faculty are aligning their instruction and course materials to the mission of the school, including its values around diversity and inclusion. The university should also provide methods for schools to assess whether faculty, particularly women or faculty of color, are being negatively impacted by bias in their course evaluations.

**Recommendation 3: Incentivize professional development to promote teaching excellence**

In order for faculty development to occur, time and resources must be provided that support it. A range of options and incentives should be provided to faculty to engage in professional development around improving their instructional practices and have it be recognized in the APR.

**Recommendation 4: Conduct systematic evaluation of the revised course evaluation**

The process for developing and implementing a new/revised course evaluation system should be purposeful and systematic, bringing together resident experts on the topic and building on the body of research and psychometric principles that are referenced in this report. A comprehensive system of evaluation of the new/revised course evaluation system should be articulated from the outset with the implementation plan.

**Recommendation 5: Use CET as the platform for implementing recommendations**

USC's Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) should be the driving force behind the pursuit of excellence in teaching by all schools, faculty, and future faculty at USC. It should fund and support innovative pedagogical initiatives that connect all of the varied resources USC has at its disposal. It should advise on teaching policy, including valid assessments of teaching practice that are both developmental and evaluative, and are embedded in the criteria used to determine merit, promotion, and tenure.

**DOMAIN B: REVISING THE EXISTING COURSE EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The current course evaluation instrument is flawed in its design, implementation, and use. We make the following recommendations for its improvement.

**Recommendation 6: Articulate specific domains in the quantitative survey portion of the course evaluation with multiple items with subscale scores**

The current course evaluation survey should be revised to include assessment on multiple dimensions related to instruction with subscale scores for each. Such dimensions should include: a) instructional design, b) instructor characteristics, c) learning experiences, d) assessments and feedback, e) diversity and inclusion practices. Additionally, a student self-assessment item should be added to ask students to reflect on their responsibility and contributions to their own learning experience. This will foster a mutually supportive learning community of faculty and students who are committed to excellence in teaching at USC.

**Recommendation 7: Utilize entire course evaluation and not just select items**

The limitation of the existing course evaluation system is exacerbated by incomplete use of available data. In many cases, schools are utilizing only items 11 and/or 12 of the quantitative survey as a single overall numeric indicator instructor's teaching effectiveness. In keeping with principles of psychometric theory, an overall scale score should be calculated and used that is a composite score of all the items with breakdown of subscale scores by different dimensions of the course evaluation for a better understanding of factors that comprise the overall course evaluation.

**Recommendation 8: Increase response rates**

The importance of increasing the response rate of course evaluations cannot be emphasized enough. Any improvements to the instrument used to evaluate courses and/or teaching is only as good as the extent to which it is utilized effectively. Strategies to increase response rates include: a) having students complete the course evaluation at the beginning of class, b) educate/remind students of the value and importance of course evaluations and their responsibility to contribute to the overall quality of USC as a learning community, c) have the release of course grades be contingent upon the completion of the course evaluation as is the case in many other institutions.

**Recommendation 9: Add student outcome data**

If we wish to improve upon and institute a multidimensional approach to evaluating our instructional practices, then an assessment of student learning in relation to the learning outcomes needs to be added. Range of possible indicators tied to desired student learning include: a) project samples as part of student portfolios and performance, b) pre/post learning outcomes (if applicable) that demonstrate student gains in learning in relation to baseline data.

**DOMAIN C: PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING PRACTICES**

Given that peer review is the primary mechanism of quality control within the academy, we suggest that a systematic peer review process be applied to evaluating excellence in teaching practices. A peer review system should be framed within a professional development and peer-mentoring model that emphasizes faculty members' ongoing commitment to their own learning. This will foster a mutually

supportive learning community of faculty and their commitment to excellence in teaching.

**Recommendation 10: Institute a system of peer *observation* of teaching system for the purpose of *formative evaluation* to improve quality of teaching**

Assuming that the primary goal of evaluating teaching practices is to improve the quality of teaching, we recommend a two-part staged system of using peer review. The first stage is to use peer observation of classroom instructional practices to provide *feedback* as part of a formative process of evaluation. Voluntary participation in peer observation could be used as evidence of investment in professional development in teaching in annual merit review. Sample guidelines and rubric are provided from existing practices within USC.

**Recommendation 11: Institute a system of peer *evaluation* of teaching for the purpose of *summative evaluation* at key points of faculty performance review (such as promotion)**

As part of a multifaceted evaluation of excellence in teaching, we recommend that a peer evaluation of classroom instructional practices be added as part of a summative evaluation to be used primarily at key points in faculty performance evaluation such as promotion points for both RTPC and tenure-line faculty. The possibility and feasibility of using peer evaluations as part of the annual performance evaluations on a biennial or triennial basis should also be explored within each unit.

**Recommendation 12: Incorporate peer review of instructional *design* as part of both the formative and summative evaluation identified above**

In addition to peer review of the performative aspects of instructional delivery in the classroom, we recommend a peer review of key aspects of instructional design such as syllabus, course assessments, sample student feedback, and possible instructional material for the flipped classroom, to name a few.

**DOMAIN D: DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

A sustained and systematic approach to improving the quality of teaching necessitates a portfolio system as part of a professional development plan for each USC faculty member.

**Recommendation 13: Develop a teaching portfolio system**

We recommend that each faculty create a teaching portfolio to complement student course evaluations as well as peer observation and evaluation of teaching. A menu of options for a teaching portfolio include: a) statement of teaching philosophy, b) sample syllabi of representative courses, c) representative instructional plans with supplemental materials, and d) representative assignment prompts with grading rubric, e) sample work by students to the above assignment prompt with feedback from the instructor, f) self-reflection of teaching practices over time with artifacts to show development of teaching practices, and g) additional options appropriate to each discipline and standards.

Committee on Teaching and Academic Programs (CTAP) AY 16-17  
**Promoting and Evaluating Teaching Excellence at USC**  
**FULL REPORT**

**CHAIR:** Ruth Chung (Education)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Robert Adler (Dramatic Arts), Jeb Barnes (Political Science), Devon Brooks (Social Work), Frank Corsetti (Geological Sciences), Kim Hirabayashi (Education), Marion Philadelphia (Business), Gale Sinatra (Education), Michaela Ullmann (Libraries), Ginger Clark (Ex officio).

**PREAMBLE**

USC must take seriously its role as an educator of generations of leaders, both as a fundamental principle of an institution of higher learning and as a financial necessity. As the Provost noted in his October 24, 2016 memo on excellence in teaching, "...our longest-lasting and most widespread impact as faculty will come through those we train for the future..." It is also true that USC is a tuition-driven institution. If we do not provide our students with an outstanding educational experience in every course they take, we have failed to uphold our promise to give them a USC-caliber education, and have failed to fulfill our financial obligation to them. In short, *we must ensure the educational value of a USC education by promoting excellence in teaching by ALL USC faculty.*

Excellence in teaching is rich and complex in its manifestation and thus cannot be conceptualized or assessed unidimensionally. Teaching and learning are occurring in an increasingly diverse student population as well as in varying contexts and platforms, adding to the existing complexity of the range of disciplines. To elevate the role of teaching at USC, in the same way high impact research and creative endeavors are valued and assessed, the university and schools must promote a culture and expectation of excellence in teaching. As an extension of this, a more systematic and multidimensional criteria for evaluating instructional practices need to be identified along with valid measures and tools for doing so. The current course evaluation instrument is primarily a measure of *student satisfaction* and does not capture the complexity or range of instructional practices or student learning.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In light of the above, the specific goal of this committee's report was to articulate a set of recommendations to serve as a common framework for evaluating teaching excellence at USC. In doing so, we frame our work within the broader goal of promoting a culture of and commitment to teaching excellence across the university. We begin by locating the current context of teaching and evaluation of instructional practices with a focus on trends and challenges in these areas. We then outline specific recommendations in four domains for a multidimensional approach to evaluating teaching excellence. These recommendations are intended to serve as a common set of guidelines and framework as a starting point for the university with the assumption that the work will continue within each school to operationalize these guidelines within its own discipline(s) and develop assessments that measure those dimensions in a context-specific way.

**The four domains of recommendations are:**

- A. Promoting a culture of excellence in teaching
- B. Revising the existing course evaluation system
- C. Instituting a system of peer review of teaching practices
- D. Developing a teaching portfolio

Throughout this report, the committee uses the term “instructional practices” or “teaching strategies” to encompass the wide range of components of teaching from the traditional performative aspects of the instructor’s behaviors within the classroom to less visible but no less important aspects of course design and curricular support. We also stipulate that the term “teaching effectiveness,” which is often conflated with course evaluations, *not* be used within this conversation because the term requires at minimum tightly controlled pre-post design elements to support a causal implication, which at this time, does not exist.

## CURRENT CONTEXT OF TEACHING AND COURSE EVALUATION AT USC

Our efforts to promote teaching excellence by articulating a multidimensional approach to evaluating teaching strategies were informed by the following internal and external factors, trends, and challenges:

- USC is a R1 university that emphasizes *excellence* in research *and* teaching, and value of education.
- There exists a strong research culture at USC, which extends to evaluation of teaching and teaching effectiveness.

- The cost of higher education is high and growing, there are many educational options available, and there is increased accountability for higher education institutions.
- Students and faculty are increasingly diverse in their cultural backgrounds and characteristics as well as in their educational experiences and learning/teaching styles.
- USC is strongly committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, and to enhancing a sense of community among students and faculty (and staff).
- There are varied pedagogical and disciplinary cultures and instructional practices across nineteen different units.
- Learning and teaching take place in a wide range of learning environments, from the “traditional classroom” to an increasing number of online or virtual environments.
- Proliferation of technology available to faculty and students, some of which has already profoundly impacted learning, teaching, communication and collaboration between and amongst faculty, students, educational programs, and supporting institutions.
- Shift towards reliance on RTPC faculty and part-time faculty and away from tenure track faculty to design and deliver the curriculum.
- Increasing numbers of faculty teach virtually and/or do not reside in the Los Angeles area, and therefore may not have strong connections with course content or identification with USC.

#### DOMAIN A: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Any revisions to the course evaluations and instructional practices should be framed within a broader conceptualization and framework of teaching excellence. This, in turn, should be located within a strategic plan that articulates and implements USC’s brand as an R-1 institution that values excellence in research *and* teaching. We recommend the formation of a committee to define what USC considers to be excellence in teaching to serve as a touchstone for how we as a learning organization engage in effective practices to promote teaching and learning. In addition, this committee should establish goals, policies, and incentives to promote excellence in teaching as part of a 5-year strategic plan of the University, and in turn, request one from each unit similar to that of the Diversity Plan. Perhaps the Provost’s Task Force on Excellence in Teaching is the logical body to engage in this work.

We offer the following cadre of recommendations for promoting and reinforcing a culture of excellence in teaching as the primary desired goal of evaluating instructional practices.

**Recommendation 1: Articulate components and levels of what constitutes teaching quality**

As a construct, teaching excellence can best be understood as optimal performance in different areas of teaching and curricular activity. A coherent conceptualization of teaching excellence is needed to inform conversations about expectations, performance and support of faculty, as well as efforts to evaluate instructional strategies. Attempts to conceptualize teaching excellence should respond to factors and trends presented in the previous section and be supported by theoretical and empirical knowledge on learning and teaching.

Due to limitations of time and our prioritizing of actionable recommendations related to improving evaluation of instructional practices, we did not attempt to articulate a comprehensive conceptualization of teaching excellence. However, we did delineate dimensions of teaching that are essential to a conceptualization of teaching excellence in Appendix A. These dimensions are by no means exhaustive and our discussion of them should be considered seminal rather than comprehensive. They represent somewhat distinct yet interrelated teaching activities that faculty at USC are expected to be engaged in, excel at (i.e., exceed expectations), and able to demonstrate both their engagement in the activity and how well they perform the activity.

**Recommendation 2: Make connections to the diversity plan**

Each school should assess the degree to which faculty are aligning their instruction and course materials to the mission of the school, including its values around diversity and inclusion. The university should also provide methods for schools to assess whether faculty, particularly women or faculty of color, are being negatively impacted by bias in their course evaluations.

Schools are expected to include curriculum review, faculty training, and addressing the impact of bias on faculty evaluation in their 5-year diversity plans. Schools should provide training for faculty on infusing diverse perspectives in the curriculum and in the classroom that is based in the content knowledge of their discipline. The university should provide methods to evaluate faculty efforts to be inclusive of diverse perspectives in the curriculum and in the classroom.

**Recommendation 3: Incentivize professional development to promote teaching excellence**

In order for faculty development to occur, time and resources must be provided that support it. A range of options and incentives should be provided to faculty to engage in professional development around improving their instructional practices and have it be recognized in the APR.

*Teaching development.* Similar to the function sabbaticals play in refreshing or advancing creative or scholarly pursuits by providing time away, time for reflection, and time for in-depth uninterrupted work, time and resources must be set aside for teaching development. The university must build incentives for pedagogical development into its structures, which could include, but not be limited to, covering time and expense for such development such as a course release.

*Peer observation/review.* Foster peer observation/review in order to promote a culture where peer observation of teaching is seen as a valuable tool for professional development, consider encouraging a “bottom up” developmental approach rather than a “top down” mandated evaluation approach, at least in the beginning until faculty get used to the process. Create positive peer pressure by demonstrating its effectiveness through enlisting influential senior faculty to participate, give testimony about how it changed their practice, and encourage their mentees to participate.

*Workload adjustment.* An explicit policy around workload adjustment should be made public to include Professional Development and peer observation mandates, so that faculty know that this will be part of their projected workload during the semester they participate in the process. Merit should be assigned to this activity so that participation is seen as a meritorious activity that deserves recognition. Negative impact from not participating should not be a part of the roll out of the program. Schools should develop a plan to address resistance to the process that is due to a new evaluation process.

See Appendix D for case study of Marshall School of Business and how they use a point system in the APR to incentivize professional development.

#### **Recommendation 4: Conduct systematic evaluation of the revised course evaluation**

The process for developing and implementing a new/revised course evaluation system should be purposeful and systematic, bringing together resident experts on the topic and building on the body of research and psychometric principles that are referenced in this report. A comprehensive system of evaluation of the new/revised course evaluation system should be articulated from the outset with the implementation plan with the following components:

- Formation of a committee or task force charged with revising the course evaluation system and evaluating its effectiveness
- Selection of items for a new or revised quantitative survey.
- Pilot testing of the new instrument with appropriate data analysis and revision.

- Detailed data analyses should look for any patterns of systematic bias such as:
  - Instructor and student demographic considerations (gender, race, etc.)
  - Course formats (e.g., online and on-campus courses; large lectures, seminars, or labs)
  - Content-based or performance-based courses that are not adequately captured using traditional approaches to course evaluations

This should be done on a pilot basis first, with a stratified sample of courses across disciplines, and then scaled up to a large-scale evaluation including determination of item reliability, validity using item response theory and methods.

#### **Recommendation 5: Use CET as a central platform**

USC's Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET) should be a mainspring of knowledge and best practices for teaching and learning at the university. It should fund and support innovative pedagogical initiatives that connect all of the varied resources USC has at its disposal. It should advise on teaching policy, including valid assessments of teaching practice that are both developmental and evaluative, and are embedded in the criteria used to determine merit, promotion, and tenure. CET should be the driving force behind the pursuit of excellence in teaching by all schools, faculty, and future faculty at USC.

To meet these goals CET should move to a federated model of services that mirror other offices housed centrally in the Provost's office and play a central role. CET should become the central office for advising the Provost and Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs on pedagogical policy and practice in the university, and support the schools in developing policy and practice that advance excellence in teaching at the school level. CET should support initiatives centrally that promote innovation and highly impactful approaches to teaching.

CET, informed by an advisory board of content experts, should become a central resource to support a culture shift at USC to promote teaching excellence:

- Serve as a resource for developing university-wide policies, processes, and best practices for a strong infrastructure for the advancement of teaching set forth by the Provost's Task Force on Excellence in Teaching.
- Promote and help establish school-based CETs (sbCETs) who will deliver CET's content to their school's faculty in a context-specific way. For example, CET would train faculty fellows to provide teaching programming in their schools and provide sbCETs information about the foundational principles of teaching and learning, and effective approaches to faculty development and mentoring.

- Coordinate university-wide events promoting advanced approaches to teaching and learning, such as infusing diverse perspectives into the curriculum, interdisciplinary curriculum, connecting undergraduate students to research, etc.
- Administer teaching recognition, support, and training, such as administering university-level teaching awards, administering teaching grants, developing faculty development content and TA training curriculum, and organizing a university-wide New Faculty Institute.

## DOMAIN B: REVISING THE EXISTING COURSE EVALUATION SYSTEM

### **Importance of role and function of teaching evaluations**

Teaching evaluations play a significant role in the life of a university on many levels. For students, it is the primary mechanism for providing feedback to instructors. For instructors, it is often the primary if not sole source of formative and summative feedback on their instructional practices. Additionally, depending on the track and rank of the faculty member, teaching evaluations have varying degrees of impact on annual performance evaluations, promotion, and tenure. From the perspective of the university, teaching evaluations are used to identify instructors who need improvement, with the intent to provide additional support. They also provide indicators of pervasive serious problems that need to be addressed through disciplinary action. This array of uses and the consequences of teaching evaluations begs the question whether the current system, or any such system, can live up to the burden of these expectations. This question is further pressed by the many limitations of the existing system as outlined below.

### **Limitations of the current approach to teaching evaluation**

USC's current teaching evaluation tool consists primarily of a quantitative 12-item Likert-type survey with two additional open-ended items (see Appendix B). A cursory review of teaching evaluations at other institutions (see Appendix C) revealed, as expected, similar practices to our own. Despite the wide-ranging and high stakes implications of teaching evaluations, the science of evaluation and assessment is largely ignored in development, administration, and scoring of teaching evaluations, contributing to their misuse in faculty development, merit, and promotion.

The assessment of teachers and student learning in K-12 is a billion dollar industry often outsourced to test development companies. In contrast, college course evaluations are rarely developed and validated through standard methods by trained

experts. Rather, they are likely to be created by a committee of faculty and staff who may or may not have expertise in measurement and evaluation. Often times, the most basic psychometric criteria of reliability and validity are not assessed nor used to revise or improve instruments. As in other leading institutions of higher learning, our current teaching evaluation system uses inadequate measures and methodology leading to flawed data that are misapplied to draw conclusions about *teacher effectiveness*. There is “strong evidence that student responses to questions of ‘effectiveness’ do not measure teaching effectiveness” (Stark & Freishtat, 2014). This discrepancy between what is purportedly versus actually measured led to our critique of the misuse of the term “teaching effectiveness” indicated at the beginning of this report.

Building on these concerns about *what* is being measured is the added concern about the *quality of the data* that is obtained. There is substantial evidence to indicate that the quantitative survey teaching evaluations used by most universities is essentially a self-report student satisfaction survey that is influenced more by how much students “like” the course rather than a reliable indicator of actual learning or a teacher’s effectiveness in promoting desired learning outcomes (Arreola, 2007; Utzl, White, & Wong Gonzalez, 2016). Furthermore, these self-report ratings of student satisfaction are subject to all sorts of biases, which include:

- Men tend to be rated higher on average than women
- Faculty of color are often rated lower than their white peers
- Senior professors tend to be rated higher than junior professors
- Electives are rated higher than required courses
- Courses presenting inherently challenging topics (statistics) or courses challenge students’ thinking (diversity) are rated lower on average
- Tougher grading, standards, workload often results in lower evaluations

Other concerns about the current teaching evaluation include:

- The utility of a uniform and simplistic tool that is not well suited to more “non-traditional” courses, particularly in studio and performance arts.
- Measures may not take into account instructor and student demographics or contextual factors (e.g., online courses; new courses; classroom is too small)
- Instructors being evaluated for implementing a common curriculum or other features of instructional design that the individual instructors have little or no control over, and in some cases, little to no training and support.

Within this context, many faculty, particularly RTPC and part-time faculty whose performance evaluations are determined largely by the course evaluations, cannot help but feel constrained to cater to students, grade inflation, and even lead to

pedagogical choices that may undermine actual learning for fear of lower ratings. Given the importance of course evaluations as a tool for improving the quality of teaching as well as implications for faculty members' evaluation and promotion, combined with established evidence of bias and psychometric limitations of the existing course evaluation system, we make the following recommendations for improvement.

**Recommendation 6: Articulate specific domains in the quantitative survey portion of the course evaluation with multiple items with subscale scores.**

In light of the above critique and concerns regarding instructional effectiveness, we recommend that the university revise the content of the current course evaluation to include assessment on multiple domains with subscores for each dimension related to instruction. Such dimensions should include:

- Instructional design (e.g., "The course objectives were clear.")
- Instructor characteristics (e.g., "The instructor was well prepared for class.")
- Learning experiences (e.g., "This course provided sufficient opportunity for me to learn.")
- Assessments and feedback (e.g., "The instructor's assessments reflected what was covered in the course.")
- Diversity and inclusion practices (e.g., I learned to value new viewpoints.)

We offer for consideration and adoption the additional items that flesh out the domains identified above that have been identified and are being pilot tested by the Rossier Faculty Evaluation Committee (as referenced in Appendix D).

**Recommendation 7: Utilize entire course evaluation and not just select items**

The limitations of the existing course evaluation system are exacerbated by incomplete use of available data. In many cases, schools are utilizing only items 11 and/or 12 of the quantitative survey as a single overall numeric indicator instructor's teaching effectiveness. From a psychometric perspective, use of any single indicator, especially given the high-stakes implications, is ill advised subject to all sorts of biases as described above. To increase the reliability and validity of a course evaluation, an overall scale score that is a composite score of all the items should be calculated and used. Alternatively, or in conjunction, subscale scores by different domains of the overall course evaluation should be used for a more nuanced understanding of factors that comprise the overall course evaluation.

**Recommendation 8: Increase response rates**

The importance of increasing the response rate of course evaluations cannot be emphasized enough. Any improvements to the instrument used to evaluate courses

and/or teaching is only as good as the extent to which it is utilized effectively. Low response rates undermine the validity of the evaluation and leave it vulnerable to those who use the process to air personal grievances. To counter low response rates of online surveys, we recommend the following options:

- Have students complete the course evaluation at the beginning of class rather than at the end or having them do it on their own time.
- Have faculty members explain and remind students of the importance and value of the course evaluations and their obligation as students to contribute to the overall learning community of the university.
- Have the release of course grades be contingent upon the completion of the course evaluation as is the case in many other institutions.
- Allow schools to have more control over when the window for completing the evaluations occur due to different term dates for online courses.

#### **Recommendation 9: Add student outcome data**

If we wish to improve upon and institute a systematic and multidimensional approach to evaluating teaching excellence, then a substantial component of student-related outcomes need to be added. In addition to the student self-assessment items to be added to the quantitative survey, indicators tied to desired learning outcomes (beyond course grades) also need to be added. They may include:

- Assessments or projects that demonstrate student competency and achievement.
- Student gains in learning, particularly with data from a baseline pre-assessment to end-of-course performance.
- Portfolios of student work.
- Student engagement, including student self-efficacy, value, and interest.
- Follow-up surveys of graduates at 1, 3, or 5 years asking them about their prior learning experiences or to identify the faculty members who have been most impactful on their subsequent learning or professional practice.

#### **DOMAIN C: PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING PRACTICES**

Given that peer review is the primary mechanism of quality control within the academy, we suggest that a systematic peer review process be applied to evaluating excellence in teaching practices. Though not an infallible system, peer review is a valuable tool of quality control that should be utilized to promote a culture of excellence in teaching and fostering a community of scholars who themselves continue to learn and grow by mutual support and reciprocal mentoring through the peer observation/review process. A peer review system should be framed within a

professional development and peer mentoring model that emphasizes faculty member's ongoing commitment to their own learning. This will foster a mutually supportive learning community of faculty and their commitment to excellence in teaching.

**Recommendation 10: Institute a system of peer *observation* of teaching system for the purpose of formative evaluation to improve quality of teaching**

Assuming that the primary goal of evaluating teaching practices is to improve the quality of teaching, we recommend a two-part staged system of using peer review. The first stage is to use peer observation of classroom instructional practices to provide *feedback* as part of a formative process of evaluation. Voluntary participation in peer observation could be used as evidence of investment in professional development in teaching in annual merit review.

Peer observation as a tool for professional development and mentoring has been promoted for the past several years through CET-sponsored workshops, building largely upon emerging efforts in Rossier, Marshall, and Viterbi. Existing practices around peer observation range from a deliberately informal and low-stakes approach utilized by Rossier and Viterbi, to a more structured approaches by Marshall where each new faculty is paired with a mentor from their department. This and other leading practices in promoting excellence in teaching are highlighted as case studies in Appendix D with sample peer observation protocols provided in Appendix E.

**Recommendation 11: Institute a system of peer *evaluation* of teaching for the purpose of *summative* evaluation at key points of faculty performance review**

As part of a multifaceted evaluation of excellence in teaching, we recommend that a peer evaluation of classroom instructional practices be added as part of a summative evaluation to be used primarily at key points in faculty performance evaluation such as promotion points for both RTPC and tenure-line faculty. The possibility and feasibility of using peer evaluations as part of the annual performance evaluations on a biennial or triennial basis should also be explored within each unit.

The shift from peer observation to peer evaluation will not be easy to institute. Given the long history of the isolated nature of teachers as sole proprietors in traditional classrooms, the reluctance on the part of many faculty to being evaluated by a peer is understandable. However, the time has come to institute peer review of teaching as part of a multidimensional approach to evaluating excellence in teaching. With this in mind, we feel it best to do so in a gradual manner that continues to promote through incentivization rather than a sudden mandate that is likely to engender resistance as well as pose substantial structural challenges in implementation. Any system of peer

evaluation to have credibility and buy-in would require a well-developed and thoroughly vetted set of procedures, rubrics, and implementation plan that would include training and calibration of peer evaluators as well as sampling methods designed to ensure that the classes being observed are reasonably representative of the instructor's pedagogy.

Again, we single out the work that is being done in Rossier as a case study and provide description of their pilot program (see Appendix D) and documentation of their rubric (see Appendix E). We also include other samples of peer observation and evaluation rubrics developed by Viterbi, Marshall, and CET. We recognize that peer observation is required of those who are going up for tenure or promotion but with varying degrees of compliance. Our recommendation to broaden these efforts to all faculty at key points in the review and promotion process should promote greater consistency and fairness in implementation of this requirement and send a clear message that teaching is taken seriously at all levels at USC.

**Recommendation 12: Incorporate peer review of instructional *design* as part of both the formative and summative evaluation identified above**

In addition to peer review of the performative aspects of instructional delivery in the classroom, we recommend a peer review of key aspects of instructional design such as syllabus, course assessments, sample student feedback, and possible instructional material for the flipped classroom, to name a few. These materials would be part of a teaching portfolio that is outlined below.

**DOMAIN D: DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO**

A sustained and systematic approach to improving the quality of teaching should include a portfolio system as part of a professional development plan for faculty.

**Recommendation 13: Develop a teaching portfolio system**

The following is a menu of options for a teaching portfolio:

- Statement of teaching philosophy
- Sample syllabi of representative courses
- Representative instructional plans with supplemental materials
- Representative assignment prompts with grading rubric
- Sample work by students to the above assignment prompt with feedback from the instructor
- Self-reflection of teaching practices over time with artifacts to show development of teaching practices
- Additional options appropriate to each discipline and standards

## CONCLUSION

USC must make its value of teaching explicit in its policies and practices to attract and retain faculty and students who care deeply about education and upholding research, scholarly, and artistic pursuits in the highest esteem. This will require a shift in the way the university expresses its values and evaluates its performance in enacting those values, particularly with regard to teaching.

Structural components that support effective teaching need to be embedded throughout the university. Meaningful incentives and remediation paths should be instituted that send a strong message that USC expects excellence in teaching from its entire faculty. Teaching development should be a required activity that is provided time in the faculty workload profile and financial support, and is included in merit and promotion criteria. Support and remediation paths should be developed for those who are not performing at an acceptable level of proficiency. Indicators of excellence should be clearly defined at both the university level as well as school level, to capture the more nuanced, discipline-specific indicators of effective teaching. These criteria should be regularly communicated to faculty, and support structures put in place, to help them augment their teaching practice to aspire to these goals, and the criteria should be embedded in merit, tenure, and promotion guidelines.

Valid forms of recognizing and rewarding teaching excellence is needed, such as funding initiatives for teaching development, top awards and honors for teaching, and leadership and mentoring in teaching. These require higher visibility and to be on par with the stature of awards for excellence and leadership in research and creative endeavors. Recognition of faculty who show excellence in teaching should lead to efforts to spotlight such faculty as leaders and connect them with who could benefit from their mentorship. Teaching excellence should be promulgated in every major aspirational communication by the university, especially its leaders. The change in culture must come from the bottom up and from the top down.

The high-stakes nature of most systems of evaluation makes any change to the current system likely to engender anxiety and resistance. Given the complexity and multifaceted nature of evaluating teaching and learning, it is unlikely that any system will be free of concerns about the reliability and validity of the data points selected for evaluation, as well as their appropriate uses. However, we assert that the changes recommended in this report represent a major step in the right direction for improving upon the current measures.

## APPENDIX A: DIMENSIONS OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE

This section contains an overview of the requisite (but not exhaustive) qualities and characteristics of what would constitute teaching excellence at USC.

### **A. Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion and Teaching Professionalism**

In order to promote excellence in teaching, a basic level of integrity and professionalism is required. Though seemingly self-evident, the following expectations for professionalism need to be articulated and clearly communicated to faculty.

- Valuing diversity and students from all backgrounds
- Ensuring that the educational experiences and learning environments are, and are perceived by all students as, inclusive
- Being responsive to student needs (understanding their responsibilities, but also their limits of engagement with students; knowing when to refer students to advisers, for example)
- Understanding that students from diverse backgrounds may be used to a different style/culture of instruction. Be cognizant of diverse backgrounds and help students to adopt a novel way of learning.
- Translate all content in a caring and engaging way to create a learning community in the classroom and beyond (e.g., service learning).
- Model professional conduct (professional appearance, use of appropriate inclusive language, etc.)
- Engage in professional development to stay current with the discipline, teaching practice, and teaching tools
- Managing and maintaining control in the classroom in a manner that provides an environment for students to feel safe to engage the instructor and each other (faculty needs to be informed where to get help if need be, or how to report students to SJACS, etc.)
- Teaching all scheduled classes, including during finals week; making compensatory arrangements when missing a class is unavoidable
- Starting and ending class on time
- Returning assignments with feedback in a timely manner

### **B. Promoting Student Engagement**

There are several dispositional features that are necessary for effectiveness in the classroom; among these is the faculty member's ability to convey a sense of enthusiasm that creates student interest in the subject matter. If the faculty member is not able to sustain a certain level of energy and passion for the subject matter, it will be difficult for the students to generate this on their own. This is not simply a matter of energy level or personality type but rather the leveraging of the teacher's expertise in articulating the value and relevance of the material.

Connected to this is embodying a culture of caring in which the instructor demonstrates a commitment *to student learning and growth* and not just to conveying

the content itself. It is this relational aspect that James Lange (2015) calls the “pedagogy of presence” in which our students are “waiting for us to notice them.” Although the size and medium of the class moderates the extent to which the personalized caring can be felt, still, a sense of caring that is reflected in the teacher’s commitment to their learning is key to student engagement.

### **C. Instructional and Course Quality and Improvement**

Instructional quality includes many aspects of the learning experience that a faculty member creates for students. Faculty not only needs subject matter expertise, but also instructional know-how to be able to communicate expertise into effective learning opportunities for students. Such expertise includes:

- Use of instructional approaches supported by empirical evidence (Faculty need support in selecting the best strategies for their learning materials/goals).
- Use of assessments (e.g. pre/post-tests) to improve course or instruction (Faculty need support in designing and administrating assignments, tests, and other forms of assessment).
- Expertise in course content (Faculty need the time and resources to stay current in their discipline on a continuous basis).
- Revision and innovation of course materials on a regular basis.
- Planning and organization of courses, units, workshops, master classes (Faculty should work with colleagues or instructional designers; peer interaction most valuable here).
- Effective instructional delivery (e.g. clarity, pacing, use of diverse learning strategies, etc. – supported by mentoring relationships/class observation).
- Integration of information literacy instruction, independent research skills and development of critical, creative, and ethical habits of mind (e.g. through collaborations with the libraries)
- Integrating understanding of diversity in teaching (Faculty to participate in training that helps them build on their current practices and fosters their understanding of inclusiveness and navigating diverse populations effectively).

### **D. Reflective Practice, Instructor Development, and Mentoring**

Ongoing efforts in self-improvement in teaching are highly valued and can take many forms. Without a doubt, reflection of practice on an ongoing basis is a foundational element of learning from experience and developing goals for improvement. This is where mentorship or peer discussion of reflection practices, goal setting, and implementation of change need to happen in order to make reflection meaningful. For example, faculty should discuss and realize what the differences may be between competency and excellence in their discipline and their instructional practices. This discussion could help units develop criteria for assessing varying levels of teaching performance. This discussion is essential and should contribute to the development of improvement goals.

Defining “mastery of teaching” is a moving target. Here, too, clear guidelines have to be developed that may differ by discipline and teaching assignment. Are faculty master teachers when they are able to teach multiple sections, managing a heavy workload, or does “mastery” mean each session of a course embodies best practices criteria, such as interactive, inclusive, and inspiring approaches to teaching. The definition of mastery also needs to include the ability to constantly adapt to new material, instructional methods, instructional technology, and trends in the discipline and in education.

Examples:

- Participation in professional development opportunities
- Documenting specific goals for personal development
- Seeking external consultation on teaching
- Continued assessment of teaching outcomes & effectiveness
- Attending seminars/workshops in teaching
- Leadership of improvement and innovation initiatives
- Using continued feedback from students and peers to enhance instructional and curricular performance
- Disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration with teaching practitioners and library faculty

#### **E. Building Bridges Between Courses and Connecting Curriculum Content**

Teaching and learning do not happen in isolation but in a partnership where the faculty’s role is to “educate” or “bring out” motivation and learning in the student, assuming the student’s attitude is “ready to learn.” Further, we might define learning as developing new knowledge and continuing to expand on existing knowledge.

Instructional practices are built on the foundation and assumption that the curriculum itself is well designed, meaning that courses build on each other, that the school, or program has learning goals, and courses have objectives that answer to those goals. Relatedly, the individual faculty should not be seen as the sole architect of a classroom but rather a co-constructor in building the curriculum and know their position in relation to the wider curriculum context. This understanding will translate into their teaching and foster student learning so that they also realize the connections between content of different courses and how their knowledge applies. Given the importance of these interconnections, schools and smaller units within them should provide spaces and support for a coordinated effort in curriculum development and improvement.

#### **F. Impactful Curricular Contributions**

Faculty members who are excellent teachers should contribute to the shaping of the curriculum as well as serve as a resource for fellow teachers. Faculty members may lead curricular change efforts, educate other faculty on topics of interest, or develop internship programs. Below are some examples.

- Review of current curriculum for cohesiveness and understanding positioning of course(s) taught

- Reviewing individual courses and their learning objectives (LO); ensuring LOs are contributing to program goals and are designed for the appropriate learning level
- Develop lesson plans and course materials appropriate to meet LOs
- Make suggestions for curricular innovation
- Take leadership of re-envisioning initiatives
- Development of online learning materials (with help of instructional designers and IT personnel)
- Create opportunities to educate other faculty on topics of interest
- Development of internship opportunities

In sum, teaching excellence is a synergy of many variables. Defining, communicating, and providing training and support around these foundational features is critical to promoting excellence in teaching.

## APPENDIX B: CURRENT TEACHING EVALUATION INSTRUMENT AT USC

### **USC**

[1-5 Likert type scale]

1. Clearly articulated course goals.
2. Organized course to achieve those goals.
3. Explained difficult concepts, methods, & subject matter.
4. Encouraged students to participate in their learning.
5. Was accessible to students.
6. Evaluated student work in fair & appropriate ways.
7. Was enthusiastic about communicating subject matter.
8. Stimulated student interest in subject matter.
9. Presented subject matter in ways that were academically challenging.
10. Provided students a valuable learning experience.

**11. Overall, how would you rate this instructor?**

**12. Overall, how would you rate this course?**

**USC - Marshall - Supplemental Question:**

How would you rate the course in terms of its ability to develop your critical thinking skills (i.e. the ability to identify key challenges and select effective solutions by skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and clearly communicating information and results)?

[Open Ended]

1. What were the instructor's main strengths?
2. How might the instructor improve their teaching effectiveness?
3. Any additional comments?

## APPENDIX C: COURSE EVALUATIONS AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The following institutions were compared to USC/Marshall's course evaluations:

- College of Business, Kennesaw State University (Georgia)
- University of Louisville (Kentucky)
- Purdue University (Indiana)
- California Institute of Technology (Caltech) (California)

The evaluations include both Likert type scale and open-ended questions. The quality of the questions compares closest to that of Purdue University. The use of end-of-semester evaluations remains debatable since in the merit review process only Q11 and Q12 (overall instructor and course rating) are considered.

### **College of Business, Kennesaw State University, GA**

[1-5 Likert]

1. The course plan outlined in the syllabus was followed.
2. The course materials added value beyond the text
3. Overall, this course was a very effective learning experience
4. The Instructor was timely in responding to my requests.
5. The level of interaction with the instructor was appropriate for this course.
6. The course grading criteria were clear.
7. Grades were returned according to expectations outlined in the syllabus.
8. Where appropriate, returned work contained constructive feedback.
9. Overall the Instructor was effective.

[Open Ended]

10. What aspects of the course provided the most positive (effective) learning experience?
11. What aspects of the course were not as effective for your learning experience?

### **University of Louisville, KY**

[1-5 Likert]

1. The instructor has been accessible to you outside of class. [Undergrad only; question for MBAs]
2. Considering both the limitations and possibilities of the subject matter and course, how would you rate the overall teaching effectiveness of the instructor?
3. Focusing now on the course content, how worthwhile was this course in comparison with others you have taken at U of L? [For MBAs it is reworded to "taken in the program"]

[Open Ended]

1. What aspects of this course were most worthwhile to your College of Business learning experience?
2. What elements of this course were not worthwhile to your College of Business learning experience?
3. Please give suggestions for improving the learning experience in this course.

### **Purdue University, IN**

[1-5 Likert]

1. Grading is clear and tied to key learning objectives.
2. The amount that I learned in this course is:
3. Course text, readings, and/or cases are helpful in learning course material.
4. Course assignments, exams, and/or projects are aimed at key learning objectives.
5. This instructor demonstrates good knowledge of the subject matter.
6. This instructor displays enthusiasm in teaching this course.
7. The instructor's in-class explanations help clarify course material.
8. This instructor is organized and well-prepared for class.
9. Overall, I would rate this course as:
10. Overall, I would rate this instructor as:

[Open-Ended]

1. What parts of the course did you like the best?
2. What parts of the course did you like the least?
3. What changes would you like to see made in the future sessions of this course?
4. We welcome your written comments below. What is something/are some things that the instructor does well, e.g., something you hope that the instructor will continue to do in the class in the future?
5. Make a suggestion(s) for improving the course (a criticism alone is not helpful; tell your instructor how you would fix any problem) in the course.

### **California Institute of Technology**

[modified scale, 1-7]

1. How challenging was this course?
2. Was the material interesting?
3. Were the texts or lab notes helpful?
4. Was the homework or lab work helpful?
5. How highly would you recommend this course?
6. Have you learned something valuable?
7. How enthusiastic was your TA?
8. How well informed was your TA?
9. Would you recommend this TA for the Division's Teaching Award?

For course with lectures:

1. Rate the lecturer's organization:
  - a. ability to convey concepts
  - b. rapport with the class
  - c. attitude toward questions in class
  - d. rapport with individual students
2. How enthusiastic was the lecturer?
3. How highly would you recommend the lecturer?

For seminar courses:

1. How appropriate were the guest speakers?
2. Please rate the continuity of the course

For lab courses:

1. How much constructive criticism of your work was provided?
2. Were the lab materials available?
3. Was lab equipment in good repair?

[Open Ended]

Write comments on the back of this form.

## APPENDIX D: CASE STUDIES OF BEST PRACTICES AT USC

In review of best practices within USC, current and developing practices at the following schools stood out as being notable.

### **Rossier School of Education**

The Rossier School of Education currently enrolls students in 6 different master's programs and 4 doctoral programs. Programs are offered in on campus, online, and hybrid formats.

In 2016, Rossier convened a faculty committee to address issues of instructional effectiveness within the school. The committee was convened at the request of the Rossier Faculty Council to address ongoing strategic planning efforts within the school related to the assessment and evaluation of teaching instruction. A particular concern of the Faculty Council was the very narrow focus on student evaluations as the measure of teaching effectiveness within the school, as well as the ways in which issues of diversity, equity, and access were being incorporated in instruction.

As part of Rossier ongoing strategic planning process, the subcommittee was tasked with recommending additional ways to assess and evaluate teaching and instructional effectiveness. This committee has become known as the Teaching Evaluation Committee and reports directly to the Faculty Council. The committee is co-chaired by Harry O'Neil and Sandra Kaplan and faculty members include Ruth Chung, Kimberly Hirabayashi, Larry Picus, Artineh Samkian, Gale Sinatra, Julie Slayton, and Ken Yates.

After much discussion and review of literature, the Teaching Evaluation committee chose to focus on three areas that they felt would more holistically assess and evaluate quality of teaching within the school:

1. Revision of final course evaluations
2. Development and implementation of instructional observation system
3. Revisions to the content of the Faculty Annual Performance Review submissions

The committee purposely chose to focus on issues of teaching assessment and evaluation, with the understanding that there would be ongoing collaboration and discussion with the school's mentoring committee. There was clear agreement in the Teaching Evaluation committee that training and mentorship are critical components in teaching instruction and that any focus on the assessment and evaluation of teaching needed to be implemented parallel to efforts for ongoing training and support to improve teaching within the school. Below is an overview of the ongoing efforts by the committee in each of the three areas of focus.

**A. Revision of Final Course Evaluations:**

The committee engaged in a systematic review of the standard University course evaluation questions and research on the effectiveness of course evaluations. The committee determined that the current questions were not sufficient to assessing student perceptions about their learning and determined that additional questions be identifying to supplement the University evaluations. The committee reviewed recommended student evaluation questions from the literature, as well as questions that were developed by the committee in alignment with learning theories. Lists of 15-20 questions were ultimately chosen for pilot testing with Rossier students. These questions will be given to students at the end of the spring semester in selected courses, along with the current University evaluation questions. Item analysis will assist the committee with the narrowing and identification of less than 10 supplemental questions that will be recommended for use beginning in fall 2017.

**B. Development and Implementation of Instructional Observation System**

The committee reviewed literature on classroom observations and examined several observation protocols that have been shown to be valid and reliable. Many of the protocols and rubrics were extensive and determined to be too time-consuming to implement on an ongoing basis. As a result, a rubric that was initially developed for implementation in a K-12 setting was modified by a Rossier faculty for use within the higher education context. The modifications were completed in fall 2016 and were piloted in spring 2017 in four different Rossier courses (on campus and online). The committee has also recommended that these observations be carried out for faculty on a specific timeline that would allow all faculty to be observed on an ongoing basis over a three- to four-year period. Sample rubric for peer observation/evaluation of teaching as well as description of the pilot study are provided in greater detail in Appendix F.

**C. Revisions to the Content of the Faculty Annual Performance Review (FAPR) Submissions**

Rossier annual performance evaluations (FAPR) have measured teaching effectiveness primary through the use of items 11 and 12 (particularly 11) of the USC course evaluation survey. Additional questions ask about the number of instruction-focused activities such as course development or revision, participation in dissertation committees, and teaching-related presentations or products. In order to expand how teaching is evaluated, the committee recommended that all questions (including any new supplemental questions to be implemented) in the course evaluations be included. In addition, the committee recommended that the short open-ended reflective questions within the FAPR be revised to allow faculty to more clearly discuss their instructional efforts within the school. The questions ask faculty to 1) reflect on their practices in supporting the school's efforts through teaching, research, or service to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and 2) describe and provide evidence as to how they have incorporated theoretical or research-based teaching and curricular practices that consistently facilitate effective teaching and learning into practice.

## Marshall School of Business

### **A. Traditional measures**

The MSoB uses the online end-of-semester USC standard evaluations to obtain quantitative and qualitative student feedback on all UG and G courses. Scores are adjusted for type of course/difficulty level of teaching to support fairness. In detail, data is collected over a period of two calendar years for Q11 and Q12 (overall instructor and course rating). The score adjusts for the difficulty of the teaching assignment (e.g., UG Required, UG Acct Required, UG Elective, UG Acct Elective, Grad Required, Grad Acct Required, Grad Elective, Grad Acct Elective, PhD, Non-Business/Non-Accounting). The score achieved here is labeled T1 and should not count for more than 50% in evaluating teaching.

The quantitative teaching score (T1) is complemented with additional qualitative materials that the instructor may submit with their annual performance review. These should reflect teaching innovation, currency of material, and rigor. Faculty also is encouraged to add comments to their class sections. The materials and comments are taken into account to assess an overall teaching score. The score achieved here is labeled T2. T1 and T2 combined result in the overall teaching score.

MSoB also uses Midterm evaluations (not mandatory). As of spring 2017, a template was sent to faculty that included reflective questions for students as to how they think they have been actively involved in their learning. Faculty can revise the questions as they see fit, and faculty are not mandated to solicit midterm feedback. It is up to the department chair to discuss student feedback with faculty, or up to the faculty to reach out to the chair, a peer, or their mentor. Since midterm evaluations are done at a busy time during the semester, by observation, any dialog at this time is the exception.

### **B. Faculty support and professional development**

#### Faculty support

Aside from these official measurements, MSoB, through their sbCET provide support and formative feedback for faculty - in particular, for new faculty, or faculty that may have experienced low teaching evaluations, or faculty that proactively seeks input from an instructional designer or coach. This formative process is not reported to a faculty supervisor, but may be initiated by them. The instructional designer/coach keeps in touch with the faculty to periodically check in as to how and to which degree improvement measures have been implemented, what may have worked and identify areas for which further coaching may be needed. - School-based workshops are periodically scheduled to give faculty a chance to exchange teaching practices and discuss challenges.

As mentioned below, Marshall's New Faculty Orientation among many purposes also serves to establish the relationship with the instructional designer and the faculty coach. Additionally, assigned mentors and other

faculty representatives are also invited to part of the orientation, providing networking opportunities. This relationship building is very important to support a culture of faculty *learning* and emphasizing that they are not alone in their efforts to seek teaching effectiveness but that support is readily available.

### Professional development

With its 2017 Marshall Faculty Manual

(<https://www.marshall.usc.edu/sites/default/files/PDF/USC-MSB-Faculty-Manual-2017.pdf>), Marshall formally introduced revised workload profiles for both the TT and RTPC faculty. The 100-point system, most notably for RTPC faculty, now includes points for “professional development” in addition to teaching and service. To quote from the manual,

*RTPC faculty also have eight points allocated for professional development activities, which might include attending conferences and workshops (either teaching or research related), case writing activities, publishing of practitioner related articles, serving on corporate boards etc. These activities are an important part of ensuring that our faculty both continue to excel in their teaching mission and retain their standing with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Marshall's tenure track and tenured faculty generally maintain their professional development through research activities such as attending professional conferences and completing scholarly publications. (MM, p. 29)*

Marshall’s Committee for Clinical Faculty has worked on drafting guidelines that indicate activities to fulfill the professional development requirement, categorizing activities as Highest (e.g., delivering a keynote at a professional or academic conference), Very Good (e.g., delivering a presentation at a conference), Good impact (e.g., attending a workshop). The guidelines and categories are still a work-in-progress and too extensive to be included here, but the point is that formalizing this mandate and including its assessment with the annual performance review should serve as an incentive for faculty to heighten their engagement in professional development building on the assumption that this engagement will inform their teaching, increase peer-to-peer exchange, and keep them current and/or creative in their discipline.

In order to provide opportunity for faculty to attend workshops, in addition to those offered by CET, Marshall has begun to offer a series of in-school workshops that offers opportunity for faculty to share their practices and experiences on different instructional topics, from classroom management to using cases effectively.

These workshops are targeted at all faculty, not only RTPC faculty. Marshall is still working on figuring out how to increase workshop attendance, and how

to further enhance building a culture of teaching excellence. For example, faculty can be asked to “report back” from conferences or other teaching related conferences they have attended.

### **C. Peer observation/mentoring practice in Marshall**

The mentors are either focusing their efforts on their mentee’s research or teaching effort, or sometimes both. All new faculty attend a new faculty orientation or NFO. This 2-3 day event includes workshops about teaching and opportunities for peer-to-peer networking; the NFO is primarily led by the faculty coach, and the educational program designer. The orientation sets the stage for ensuing class observations and meetings with the educational program designer and faculty coach. Either one (or sometimes jointly) will conduct a class observation, review syllabus, and teaching activities, and provide feedback. The joint observation is most effective as it provides more than one perspective and lets each observer focus on different aspects (e.g., one can focus on delivery and student/instructor interaction; the other can focus on content). It is considered to further aid this process by reviewing selected session recordings with the faculty (either with instructional designer, faculty coach, or mentor).

In addition, assigned peer mentors should also engage in similar observation and feed-forward activities with their mentees. This mentor/mentee relationship needs to be further guided and encouraged; for example, in faculty meetings where mentors and mentees can exchange their experiences.

In the promotion process, all members of the Promotion Evaluation Group (PEG) are required to conduct a teaching observation. This effort allows for a range of impressions and is therefore broader than a singular observation. At the point of promotion, the instructor, however, does not receive direct feedback of their effectiveness in the classroom. This, again, is why the PEG member observation should be one of an ongoing series of peer observations and exchanges.

## **APPENDIX E: ROSSIER PILOT STUDY OF PEER OBSERVATION RUBRIC**

### **Pilot of the Rossier Classroom Observation Rubric**

**Julie Slayton and Artineh Samkian**

**4/10/17**

In this report, we offer an overview of the process taken to pilot the Rossier Classroom Observation Rubric (RCOR). We also offer thoughts on next steps and scaling up. Overall, we believe this is a process that has the potential to supplement, in useful and important ways, other approaches currently underway to evaluating instruction in Rossier. We also recognize that this is a labor intensive and time consuming activity that will take time and dedication if it is to be undertaken by the school as a meaningful activity. Additionally, we believe it should be complimented by other forms of data and should not be used in isolation. We believe multiple forms of data should be used to create a picture of the quality of instruction provided by any and all members of the faculty. The report is laid out in response to a series of questions provided by Harry O’Neil. The questions focus on the approach used to identify faculty for observation, the approach taken to observing, the data collected, the approach underway to analyze the data, and next steps and scaling up.

### **1. How many faculty participated in the piloting of the observation protocol? What programs do/did they teach in? When and how were the observers trained? What did the data collection process look like?**

A request was sent out to faculty asking for faculty to volunteer to participate in our piloting of the protocol. Three faculty members volunteered to allow us to observe their classes. One instructor is a full-time tenure track professor. The second is a part-time faculty professor. In one case, the observation took place without any pre-conference or post-conference. In the other case, a pre-conference took place in which the professor was asked what, if anything, she would want to be thinking about in relation to her practice. This pre-conference took place at her request. In addition to the pre-conference, a post conference took place in which the observer and the professor debriefed the lesson and feedback was provided based on the observation data collected. A third member of the faculty volunteered, a full-time RTPC professor. It was not possible to observe this professor’s class before the end of the semester.

More specifically, we conducted two independent observations. One observation was conducted in a brick and mortar classroom on 10/5/16. The course that was observed was an EDL concentration course in the Ed Psych concentration. The other observation was conducted in an online classroom on 10/25/16. The course that was observed was an MAT Guided Practice section. Each observation lasted the duration of class time. Both of us took narrative notes. We documented the passage of time, the verbatim dialogue of the teacher, the students, and others who were in the classroom. We documented whole and breakout group activities. We also documented “observer comments” to indicate when we did not understand or hear something that was being discussed or taking place during the instructional interaction. We also noted thoughts that we were having in response to what we were observing. Both Artineh and I are trained qualitative researchers with years of experience engaging in and teaching qualitative data collection methods. We debriefed our approach to data collection after the fact and, in examining our notes, are able to confirm that our approaches were consistent with high quality qualitative data collection methods.

### **2. How was the data analyzed?**

Once the data were collected, we met to discuss our approach to analysis. We began by coding together, looking at one of the two observations and talking through what we thought we were seeing in the data. After spending more than an hour in this activity, we decided to change our approach. We moved from coding together to coding separately. We did this because it was not

feasible (for time purposes) to complete the process together. Having said that, as it turned out, it was probably better that we coded separately because it gave us different insight into the challenges associated with the coding/analysis process than we would have had if we had completed the coding together. We did not discuss in advance the approach each of us would take to the coding process. In debriefing the coding/analysis process, we discovered the following:

- a. One of us took a mostly deductive approach to the initial coding. She created an Atlas.ti database (see Attachment 1), using the observation rubric to create a priori codes. She coded the data using the a priori codes, labeling the data with the codes, not attempting to determine the quality of the activity being labeled. For example, She labeled data with the code “A.1.IC: Higher-order thinking.” In this first pass, she did not make an effort to determine the quality of the data coded by deciding that this was a 1, 2, 3, or 4 on the rubric, but just that what she was seeing in the data was related to the category in the rubric. There was a bit of emergent coding conducted as well, but the focus was on applying the rubric categories to the data.
- b. The other took an inductive approach to coding. She color-coded the data using both a priori codes (e.g., Assessment) as well as empirical codes (e.g., “Read the description of the assignment . . .”). She also wrote questions in relation to the data in relation to the rubric elements. In some instances, she began to assign initial numbers from the rubric to specific pieces of data (e.g., “1/2 quality of discourse). She also developed summary statements responsive to specific elements of the rubric (e.g., “Discourse: known right answer, no elaboration, no obvious need to know..”).
- c. Although our approaches are different (one mostly deductive, the other mostly inductive), upon meeting to discuss our initial thoughts on the analysis, we are seeing the “same things” in the data.
- d. We are not yet ready to render a judgment on the overall quality of instruction across the dimensions of the observation. We believe a second pass at the data would be necessary before making a judgment.

### **3. Next Steps and Scaling (including reliability and validity, recommendations for changes to the rubric and/or process, results/findings)**

We need to complete analysis and undertake calibration. We are confident that we will land on the same findings but are not confident that when we score we will assign the same numbers. We believe, with some conversation, we will reach agreement about the scores. In particular, we discussed the importance of focusing on the evidence we have to bring to bear on each of the categories in the rubric. In discussing this process, we identified the following additional considerations:

- a. If this is something that is important for the school to undertake, it will need to have resources dedicated to it. Both of us found it difficult to make time to analyze in addition to our regular workload.
  - i) We spent at least 2 hours each conducting the observations.
  - ii) We spent at least 2.5 hours each analyzing the evidence and we have not completed the process for 1 professor, much less the second.

- iii) Neither of us would be willing to do this activity as our only service to the school and this has implications for how this activity would be staffed.
- b. Given the n of the sample (2 observations, 2 data collectors/analysts), it is not feasible to offer reliability and validity for either the observation rubric<sup>1</sup> (measure) or our impending scores. Having said that, this process did give us insight into what would be necessary for us to obtain reliability and validity.
  - i) It is clear that it is possible to train people to collect data that allows for this process.
  - ii) It is clear that it is possible to collect high quality observation data that can be used for this purpose.
  - iii) It is clear that it is possible to approach analysis of the data using the rubric through either an inductive or deductive approach, and still “see the same things.”
- c. It is also clear that once we are done, there will be a need to revisit the rubric. For example, in our discussion of the analysis process we recognized that we have “appropriate content” under “Intellectual Challenge” and it is not clear that this is the right location for this element.
- d. We also believe that a guide would need to be developed that provided examples of the different rubric dimensions and scores in order to support our ability to establish inter-rater reliability. Such a manual does not currently exist, given the nascent stage of this effort.
- e. It will be possible to generate both qualitative and quantitative information from this process (as described above in relation to the analysis process).
- f. We discussed the fact that one of us worried about our “status” in this activity. What are the implications of evaluating someone of a higher “rank” or position than we have? How comfortable will faculty who are not full professors feel when asked to evaluate faculty who are of a higher “rank”?
- g. We also discussed the type of knowledge one has to have with respect to instruction to be well positioned to analyze the data in alignment with the rubric. If the analyst does not have sufficient knowledge, it will make calibration and accuracy much harder. On the other hand, engaging in this process could certainly contribute to the development of content expertise.

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<sup>1</sup> The RCOR is a modified version of a rubric designed by members of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Office of Research and Planning. We modified this rubric by considering the higher education context and literature on high quality instruction in higher education and K-12.

**APPENDIX F**  
**SAMPLE PEER OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION PROTOCOLS**

Sample peer observation and evaluation protocols from Marshall, Rossier, Viterbi, and CET are available as PDF files under the USC Academic Senate website for CTAP.