

SALISBURY UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE MOTION

Submit this form to the Faculty Senate President

SUBJECT: On the Use of Student Evaluations in Tenure and Promotion Decisions

SENATOR PROPOSING MOTION: David Keifer

SENATOR SECONDING MOTION: Mark De Socio

MOTION (this section alone will be recorded in the minutes):

The Faculty Senate recommends that the members of each department and/or school discuss the attached report from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Use of Student Evaluations of Teaching in Faculty Evaluations and make any desired revisions to the department and/or school's tenure and promotion guidelines. [If a department and/or school chooses not to require student evaluations in their tenure and promotion guidelines, then the department and/or school must replace those evaluations with another tool to evaluate teaching effectiveness by July 1, 2026. Suggestions are included on page 14 of the attached report.](#)

The Faculty Senate also recommends that item 7 in both Appendix C and Appendix D of the Faculty Handbook be changed to (new language in red), effective July 1, ~~2025~~2026:

Supporting Evidence of Effective Teaching: The evidence might come in many forms but must at least include ~~a) Some course materials developed by the applicant~~ **and any materials required by the relevant department and/or academic program/school.***; ~~b) Clear and understandable summaries and analyses of student evaluations for the last three years, and~~ **c) Actual student evaluations, in the students' own handwriting if available, for the previous teaching semester. (If original student evaluations are not available for open-ended evaluation questions, an explanation should be provided.) A brief description of the evaluation process when it occurred, under what circumstances, etc. would also be helpful.**

[*Faculty hired before July 1, 2026, may elect to provide "Supporting Evidence of Effective Teaching" in accordance with the language in the Faculty Handbook from the time they were hired, rather than needing to follow the current language of "Supporting Evidence of Effective Teaching," upon mutual agreement between the Faculty member and their department/school. In that case, the Faculty member must cite the language in the "Supporting Evidence of Effective Teaching" section of the Faculty Handbook in their tenure and/or promotion application.](#)

JUSTIFICATION:

The ad hoc committee's report makes a compelling case that student evaluations are biased and do not accurately reflect the teaching abilities of the faculty member. Thus, departments and/or schools should have the freedom to decide not to require student evaluations as a part of tenure or promotion

applications. The committee also made several other suggestions that department and/or schools may wish to incorporate.

By the way, Chapter 2 of the Faculty Handbook contains language on the “Procedures for Promotion of Faculty,” the “Evaluation of Performance of Faculty” (aka the annual review of faculty), and the “Comprehensive Review of Tenured Faculty” (aka the 5-year review of faculty). All those sections say that student evaluation may be used as evidence of effective teaching, but those sections do not require student evaluations. Thus, the current language in that part of the Handbook is consistent with the original version of this motion.

ANTICIPATED IMPACT:

Negative:

Departments and/or schools that choose not to require student evaluations as part of the T&P process might be seen as limiting student voices in the evaluation process (although faculty in those departments could, of course, still collect student evaluations for their own use).

Because all faculty going up for T&P currently are required to submit student evaluations, there is a level of uniformity in T&P applications, which makes it easier for groups such as the Promotions Committee to evaluate faculty from different areas by similar standards. Giving departments and/or schools more flexibility in how they evaluate teaching effectiveness for T&P could make that more difficult

Positive:

Departments and/or schools that see using student evaluations as a measure of teaching effectiveness to be problematic would no longer be required to use them. Other departments and/or schools could still decide to require them, if they decided that they had taken sufficient measures to mitigate or account for the bias.

The motion would also give departments and/or schools more flexibility in deciding on tools of evaluating teaching effectiveness that works for their discipline(s).

Is this a recommendation to the Provost? ☒ Yes _____ No _____

Is this a recommendation to someone else? No _____ Yes, to all academic departments and/or schools

VOTE: Number of Senators Present:

Motion Passes or Fails: