

## **Faculty Senate Resolution 2020-01**

### **Scholastic Policies Committee approval:**

**Topic:** Change of Clemson University Student Assessment of Instructors survey

**Whereas**, Clemson University uses a survey called the Student Assessment of Instructors to collect student feedback of their experience in academic courses. (See the attachment for the survey questions and [https://www.clemson.edu/institutional-effectiveness/oir/resources/student\\_assessment.html](https://www.clemson.edu/institutional-effectiveness/oir/resources/student_assessment.html) for further information);

**Whereas**, the use of student surveys to assess the effectiveness of instructors has been shown through research to be a vehicle for bias and discrimination against women and minority faculty, and this research has been published in academic journals and publicized in academic news sources;

**Whereas**, analysis and summaries of research by the Clemson TIGERS ADVANCE research group (see <https://www.clemson.edu/provost/tigers-advance/>) have shown that women faculty are subject to biased feedback in terms of statistical numbers (i.e., lower scores than men on the same questions on average) and in written comments (i.e., comments about their appearance, the way they dress, their sex appeal, etc.);

**Whereas**, Clemson faculty who are women report frequently finding inappropriate comments in student responses to student assessment surveys;

**Whereas**, studies of student feedback indicate that summative questions (such as “Is the instructor effective?”) concentrate bias, especially when administrators and others reviewing survey data and evaluating faculty use such summative metrics to judge teaching effectiveness;

**Whereas**, the TIGERS ADVANCE research group has requested the elimination of Question 10 of Clemson’s Student Assessment of Instructors survey for being problematic for these reasons indicated above, and the Scholastic Policy Committee agrees with the group’s recommendation to remove it;

**And whereas**, faculty of Clemson University have the authority to modify these student survey questions, and the Scholastic Policies Committee is charged in the Faculty Manual with approving these survey questions and will undertake a complete review of the current survey;

**Resolved**, while undertaking a complete review of the current survey, the Scholastic Policy Committee recommends the prompt removal of Question 10 (“Overall, the instructor is an effective teacher” — see attachment) from Clemson’s Student Assessment of Instructors survey, and that all parties evaluating faculty and reviewing the unamended surveys shall be provided with a copy of this resolution until it is removed.

**And resolved**, the University will take steps to educate administrators and others reviewing faculty through surveys about bias in student evaluations of teaching.

## Attachment: Existing questions:

You are being asked to evaluate your instructor and the course on a number of factors that relate to effective teaching. The information you give WILL be used by your instructor to improve his/her effectiveness as a teacher. Your responses WILL ALSO be used by administrators and colleagues to make decisions concerning your instructor's retention, promotions, tenure, and post tenure review, so please think carefully about each answer. Be as accurate and candid as you can. Your responses will remain anonymous.

**Type:** Subtitle

G1. The instructor clearly communicated what I was expected to learn.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G2. The instructor made the relevance of the course material clear.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G3. The course was well organized.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G4. There was a positive interaction between the class and the instructor.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G5. The instructor's teaching methods helped me understand the course material.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G6. The instructor's verbal communication skills helped me understand the course material.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G7. The instructor clearly explained what was expected on assignments and tests

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G8. The instructor kept me informed about my progress in the course.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G9. The feedback I received on assignments and tests gave me the opportunity to improve my performance.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G10. Overall, the instructor is an effective teacher.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G11. The instructor's grading procedures gave a fair evaluation of my understanding of the material.

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G12. How much work did you put into this course relative to your other courses?

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G13. How difficult was this course for you relative to your other courses?

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G14. To what extent was this course a requirement for you?

**Type:** How much; Scale: 1 (Not at all) - 5 (Very much)

G15. Was this course in your major?

**Type:** Yes - No; Choices: Yes, No

G16. Was this course team-taught?

**Type:** Yes - No; Choices: Yes, No

G17. Please indicate your satisfaction with the availability of the instructor outside the classroom by choosing one response from the scale. In selecting your rating, consider the instructor's availability via established office hours, appointments, and other opportunities for face-to-face interaction as well as via telephone, email, fax and other means.

**Type:** Satisfaction; Scale: 1 (Very Dissatisfied) - 4 (Very Satisfied)

Your instructor will receive your responses, including any comments you enter below, only after final grades have been assigned. Your responses will be anonymous, so please make your feedback as specific and constructive as possible.

**Type:** Subtitle

G18. Please comment on the strengths of the instructor and the course.

**Type:** Essay

G19. Please comment on the weaknesses of the instructor and the course.

**Type:** Essay

G20. Please comment on any teaching methods you found particularly helpful, and suggest alternative methods that you feel would improve the course.

**Type:** Essay

G21. I would recommend this instructor to a friend. Yes or no? Why?

**Type:** Essay