

MRFA Recommendations Regarding SEI Processes and Forms

Core Principles

- ⤴ evaluation of faculty be based on faculty's performance only
 - ⤴ evaluation of teaching performance be comprehensive
 - ⤴ assessment of teaching performance be reliable and valid
 - ⤴ processes, criteria, and standards be transparent and efficient
 - ⤴ processes, criteria, and standards be in writing
 - ⤴ evaluators be trained on processes, criteria, and standards
 - ⤴ evaluation be against written processes, criteria, and standards
 - ⤴ processes, criteria, and standards be equitable and uniformly applied across departments
 - ⤴ processes, criteria, and standards be periodically reviewed
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Review of the SEI Processes and Form

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the UTPC create a joint committee to review the SEI processes and form to ensure that the teaching performance of full-time members for tenure and promotion and of part-time members for reappointment is evaluated appropriately and to make recommendations for change to the UTPC. In determining the composition of the committee, the MRFA recommends that the UTPC include:

- ⤴ one member of the MRFA Faculty Evaluation Committee appointed by the Faculty Evaluation Committee
- ⤴ two members elected by the MRFA
- ⤴ a member of the Chairs' Assembly appointed by the Chairs' Assembly
- ⤴ the Chair of APTC; and
- ⤴ three representatives of the administration (e.g., an associate dean, someone from Institutional Analysis and Planning)

In Favour	250 (93.6%)
Not in Favour	17 (6.4%)
⤴	

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	267 (95.0%)
Abstain	14 (5.0%)
Total	281

Recommendations

The MRFA makes the following recommendations to the joint committee for its consideration in reviewing the SEI processes and form.

Administration: Online SEI Administration

Motion THAT the MRFA Recommend the joint committee consider investigating online administration of SEIs.

Features

- ^ Many institutions are moving SEIs online due to substantial reduction in costs
- ^ Online SEIs allow greater standardization (e.g., all classes can be evaluated within relatively short period of time towards the end of classes rather than over a long period of time with some courses evaluated early and other courses evaluated late)
- ^ Online SEI administration would allow evaluation of all courses (MRU does not evaluate all courses primarily due to very high cost of in-class evaluations).
- ^ Research review comparing online vs. in-class SEI shows the following:
 - ^ Response rates may drop by as much as 20% in online vs. in-class SEIs
 - ^ Central tendency measures (means, medians) are comparable between online vs. in-class SEIs
 - ^ Reliability of individual course ratings would drop due to drop in response rates (however, this would be mitigated by having all courses evaluated)
 - ^ Students tend to write more comments in online vs. in-class SEIs (faculty find these useful for formative purposes)

In Favour	167 (62.8%)
Not in Favour	99 (37.2%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	266 (94.7%)
Abstain	15 (5.3%)
Total	281

Administration: Evaluation of All Courses

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend, if MRU moves SEI administration online, the joint committee considers having all courses evaluated.

Features

- ^ MRU does not evaluate all courses primarily because of high cost of in-class evaluations
- ^ Moving SEI administration online would allow evaluation of all courses

In Favour	163 (64.7%)
Not in Favour	89 (35.3%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	252 (89.7%)
Abstain	29 (10.3%)
Total	281

Confidential and Signed

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider making SEIs confidential and signed.

Features

- ^ Students should be accountable for their evaluations
- ^ MRFA FEC Survey showed that 68% of responding faculty believe SEIs should be confidential and signed
- ^ Easy to implement if SEIs are administered online
- ^ See MRFA FEC Survey (p. 7) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Survey3.pdf

In Favour

214 (80.8%)

Not In Favour

51 (19.2%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	265 (94.3%)
Abstain	16 (5.7%)
Total	281

Processes, Criteria, Standards: Availability to Instructors

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having instructors be provided with the processes, criteria, standards, and interpretive guide for SEI system at least two weeks in advance of teaching courses.

Features

- ^ Evaluated faculty should know processes, criteria, and standards
- ^ They should know how SEIs will be interpreted and used
- ^ They should know this before the start of the evaluated period
- ^ see MRFA FEC Review (p. 68) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour

258 (96.6%)

Not in Favour

9 (3.4%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	267 (95.0%)
Abstain	14 (5.0%)
Total	281

Processes, Criteria, Standards: Availability to Students

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having Students fully informed about use of SEI in evaluation of faculty for summative and formative purposes, including processes, criteria, and standards used for summative decisions.

Features

- ^ Students provide more constructive, accurate, and positive evaluations when informed about their purpose and uses
- ^ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 71) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	242 (90.6%)
Not in Favour	25 (9.4%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	267 (95.0%)
Abstain	14 (5.0%)
Total	281

Processes, Criteria, Standards: Training of Evaluators

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having evaluators trained in interpreting SEIs. They should be provided with written procedures, criteria, standards, and interpretive guides.

Features

- ^ A major problem with SEIs is that they are improperly interpreted by evaluators
- ^ In one research study, more than half of the evaluating faculty were unable to answer basic questions about common statistics printed on SEI reports
- ^ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 69) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	237 (90.1%)
Not in Favour	26 (9.9%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	263 (93.6%)
Abstain	18 (6.4%)
Total	281

SEI Form: Mandatory and Optional Questions

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having SEIs consist of two parts: 1) mandatory set of questions to be used for summative purposes, and 2) optional set of questions to be used solely for formative purposes and selected by individual faculty from a wide pool of available questions.

Features

- ^ Mandatory questions are common across all courses
- ^ See University of Alberta example
<http://www.aict.ualberta.ca/images/stories/aict/tsqs/usri2000.pdf>
- ^ Optional questions allow instructors to obtain specific feedback for the specific course; they support formative function of SEIs
- ^ Optional questions summaries are provided only to the course instructor
- ^ Optional questions can be selected from a large database of questions
- ^ See University of Alberta example
<https://karl.srv.ualberta.ca/pls/webuser/catalog.idq>

In Favour	227 (85.0%)
Not in Favour	40 (15.0%)

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SUMMARY

Answered Questions	267 (95.0%)
Abstain	14 (5.0%)
Total	281

SEI Form: Anchored Response Scale

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having SEIs ask students to provide their opinions using immediately transparent, meaningful labels such as: Not Applicable, No experience/No opinion, 1=Very Poor, 2=Poor, 3=Fair, 4=Good, 5=Very Good, 6=Excellent, 7=Outstanding

Features

- ^ Student ratings are immediately interpretable; they describe what students thought about various aspects of instruction/courses
- ^ Reader knows what students meant when they chose particular ratings
- ^ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 8-10) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	245 (91.4%)
Not in Favour	23 (8.6%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	268 (95.4%)
Abstain	13 (4.6%)
Total	281

Standards: Three Year Aggregate SEIs

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having any summative evaluations of faculty be based solely on data aggregated over the past three years or over as many SEIs as are available up to the past three years. Summative evaluations should not be based on SEIs obtained in any single course.

Features

- ⤴ Single course SEI reliabilities are generally insufficient
- ⤴ Single course SEI reliabilities are very low for small classes (such as MRU's)
- ⤴ CAUT recommends using minimum of three years, unless the evaluation is for renewal of a contract with shorter duration
<http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=385&lang=1>
- ⤴ See University of Alberta url <https://www.aict.ualberta.ca/units/client-services/tsqs/idq/idq-reports>
- ⤴ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 62) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	221 (87.0%)
Not in Favour	33 (13.0%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	254 (90.4%)
Abstain	27 (9.6%)
Total	281

Standards: First Time Taught Courses/Changed Courses

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider enabling Faculty to be free to experiment with new modes of instruction to enhance teaching and learning: they should not be penalized if SEIs temporarily drop.

Features

- ⤴ Faculty are likely to avoid teaching new courses, teaching courses after major changes, and experimenting with new modes of instruction if temporarily lowered SEIs may have negative effects on their tenure and promotion
- ⤴ See American Psychological Association Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology (p. 17)
<http://www.apa.org/education/undergrad/principles-undergrad.pdf>
- ⤴ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 64) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	261 (95.3%)
Not in Favour	13 (4.7%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	274 (97.5%)
Abstain	7 (2.5%)
Total	281

Summarizing SEIs: Interpolated Medians

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider using interpolated medians, rather than means or medians, to describe central tendency of the SEI ratings.

Features

- ^ SEI distributions are highly skewed
- ^ Means are inappropriate measures of central tendency for skewed data
- ^ Medians are very crude measures of central tendency when used with 5-7 point SEI discrete scales
- ^ Interpolated medians are the most appropriate measures of central tendency for skewed and discrete SEI ratings scales (see MRFA FEC Review p. 11)
http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf
- ^ see University of Alberta discussion and examples
<https://www.aict.ualberta.ca/units/client-services/tsqs/idq/median>

In Favour	209 (91.3%)
Not in Favour	20 (8.7%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	229 (81.5%)
Abstain	52 (18.5%)
Total	281

Summarizing SEIs: Outliers

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider Outliers-ratings different from the ratings given by other students-being removed from SEIs prior to summarizing the SEI ratings for summative or formative purposes.

Features

- ^ Outliers are opinions that differ substantially from the mass of students in any given class
- ^ Outliers are scores dissimilar from the rest of the distribution; they are identified by Tukey's analysis (see MRFA FEC Review p. 12-13)
http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf
- ^ Outliers can substantially influence summary SEI scores (see MRFA FEC Review p. 14-15) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	195 (77.4%)
Not in Favour	57 (22.6%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	252 (89.7%)
Abstain	29 (10.3%)
Total	281

Standard: Satisfactory SEIs Fall Within SEI Distribution

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider: if a specific SEI course rating falls within the distribution of ratings obtained by others in comparable (reference) courses, it should be considered satisfactory. If the specific course rating falls outside of the distribution at its low end (e.g., is identified as an outlier by Tukey's analysis), the rating may be considered unsatisfactory.

Features

- ^ Following University of Alberta model, the standard for satisfactory SEI performance should be the lower cut-off for outlier scores (low fence) as determined by the Tukey's box-and-whisker plot analysis of appropriate comparison group of courses (accumulated across the years).
- ^ Instructors whose SEI interpolated median scores are equal or greater than the low fence of the comparison group should be deemed to have attained satisfactory SEIs
- ^ Instructors whose SEI interpolated median scores fall below the low fence may be considered unsatisfactory in terms of SEIs
- ^ see University of Alberta Example of Instructor Report <https://www.aict.ualberta.ca/units/client-services/tsqs/idq/idq-req/539-instructor-report>
- ^ see MRFA FEC Review (p. 50) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	183 (82.1%)
Not in Favour	40 (17.9%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	223 (79.4%)
Abstain	58 (20.6%)
Total	281

Standards: Comparison Group

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having the comparison (reference) group of courses be courses with at least similar student interest/motivation ratings for taking the courses, similar class size (1-15,16-30,31+), and the same course level (i.e., 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000).

Features

- ^ SEIs are influenced by a variety of factors unrelated to instructor
- ^ The influential factors include student motivation, class size, and class level.
- ^ Student motivation and class size alone may have as large as 1.0 effect on a 5-point SEI scale
- ^ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 24-26) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	204 (83.3%)
Not in Favour	41 (16.7%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	245 (87.2%)
Abstain	36 (12.8%)
Total	281

Standards: Aggregate Score Across Items

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having any summative evaluations of faculty be based only on aggregate scores across all mandatory SEI items. Individual item SEI ratings should not be used in any summative evaluation of faculty but only for formative purposes.

Features

- ^ Individual SEI scores are much less reliable than aggregate scores across mandatory SEI items
- ^ Individual SEI items are suitable for formative purposes but not unidimensional (e.g., satisfactory/unsatisfactory) summative purposes (e.g., Abrami, 2001; Cashin & Downey, 1992)
- ^ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 65) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour **214 (83.9%)**

Not in Favour 41 (16.1%)

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SUMMARY

Answered Questions 255 (90.7%)

Abstain 26 (9.3%)

Total 281

Standards: Written Comments

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having anonymous written comments not be seen nor used by anyone else but the instructor.

Features

- ^ Written comments are idiosyncratic, potentially biasing
- ^ Evaluators may focus on a few negative comments and ignore many more positive comments
- ^ No reasonable, reliable, and valid mechanism for summarizing written comments exists
- ^ Should be used only for formative purposes and only by instructors themselves
- ^ see CAUT Model Clause [url{http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=385&lang=1}](http://www.caut.ca/pages.asp?page=385&lang=1)
- ^ see University of Alberta model [url{http://www.aict.ualberta.ca/units/client-services/tsqs/idq/idq-reports}](http://www.aict.ualberta.ca/units/client-services/tsqs/idq/idq-reports)
- ^ see MRFA FEC Review (p. 66) http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour **158 (60.3%)**

Not in Favour 104 (39.7%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions 262 (93.2%)

Abstain 19 (6.8%)

Total 281

Evaluation of Teaching: Teaching Portfolios

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider having seventy or more percent of overall teaching evaluation should be based on evidence presented in teaching portfolios, excluding SEIs. SEIs should contribute at most 30% to the overall teaching evaluation.

Features

- ^ Teaching includes a wide range of activities (see MRFA Collective Agreement)
- ^ Teaching portfolios/dossiers summarize teaching accomplishments
- ^ Teaching portfolios are gaining wide spread acceptance
- ^ e.g., University of Guelph www.tss.uoguelph.ca/resources/idres/package.td.html
- ^ e.g., University of Victoria <http://lrc.uvic.ca/servicesprograms/teachingdossiers.php>
- ^ The most recent evidence indicates SEIs are not related to learning, and dependent on a wide variety of factors unrelated to instructor including student motivation/interest, class size, course level, discipline, etc.
- ^ See MRFA FEC Review (p. 16-17, 18-21, and 22-44)
http://mrfa.net/files/MRFA_SEI_Review_v6.pdf

In Favour	186 (74.7%)
Not in Favour	63 (25.3%)

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SUMMARY

Answered Questions	249 (88.6%)
Abstain	32 (11.4%)
Total	281

Diversity Considerations

Motion THAT the MRFA recommend the joint committee consider the impact of the diversity of the instructors when interpreting SEI data.

References:

- It has been shown that gender and ethnicity and other forms of diversity have an impact on SEIs.
- Gender and Student Evaluations: An Annotated Bibliography Developed at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan.
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/multiteaching/gsebibliography.pdf>
- Bibliography on Diversity of Instructors includes section on Student Evaluations.
<http://www.denison.edu/offices/provost/feb2012bib.pdf>

In Favour	179 (70.8%)
Not in Favour	74 (29.2%)

SUMMARY

Answered Questions	253 (90.0%)
Abstain	28 (10.0%)
Total	281