Draft Report on Open Course Evaluations

Promoting a Culture of Openness

Report and Recommendations
of the Student Affairs Committee
of the University Senate

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Executive Summary

The Open Course Evaluations Subcommittee (OCES) of the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate unequivocally endorses open course evaluations of the Columbia University faculty, defined here as the release of selected results of course evaluations to the Columbia community. Open course evaluations promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and self-examination consistent with the highest ideals of scholarship; provide valuable information for students as they plan their academic careers; and signal to students that their opinions are taken seriously, leading to more thoughtful and higher-quality feedback for instructors. This initiative enjoys the support of a wide cross-section of the University community, including undergraduate and graduate students, professors, and University leaders such as President Lee Bollinger, Provost John Coatsworth, and Interim Dean James Valentini.

The subcommittee has examined the potential impacts of an open course evaluation policy through extensive discussions with University stakeholders, a review of academic literature, and benchmarking of schools at Columbia and peer institutions. Many peer schools, as well as several of Columbia's professional schools, currently employ successful open evaluation systems that benefit students and faculty alike. Among many other merits, such systems eliminate student reliance on unofficial third-party sites like CULPA.info. Columbia itself enjoys a rich history of releasing course evaluations to students, having published a robust, student-edited, officially-franchised compendium of evaluations from 1962 to 1990 (the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide*).

The updated evaluation system should be easy to use and integrated with the online Directory of Classes. It should include, at a minimum, selected quantitative indicators and at least one qualitative question, to the effect of 'Would you recommend this course to your peers, and why?' Graduate student instructors should be included in the open evaluation system only if they explicitly opt-in. The evaluation period should be extended to include time after finals are complete, but terminated before students view final grades. All incoming faculty should be granted a grace period for their first two semesters of teaching at Columbia.

Respecting the challenges of both technical and cultural change, initial implementation of open evaluations should be a two-semester rollout process, during which only reviews of tenured professors should be published. As a simple first step, the existing CUIT capability to publish quantitative course evaluation results through CourseWorks should be turned on. This should be followed by integration with the Directory of Classes and swift development of a more robust system with the features recommended in this report.

Introduction

Considering the widespread demand among students for open course evaluations and the trend of Columbia's peer universities to implement open evaluations, the Open Course Evaluations Subcommittee (OCES) of the Student Affairs Committee was formed in the fall of 2011 to develop a recommendation for a coordinated policy regarding open course evaluations across Columbia's schools.

Specifically, the subcommittee sought to understand what the experience of other universities with open course evaluations has been; whether there are salient differences between Columbia and other universities which have successfully implemented open course evaluations; what best practices or innovations might increase the utility of such a system; what would be the possible impacts on all stakeholders at Columbia of transitioning to an open course evaluation system; and what reasonable measures might be taken to mitigate any adverse consequences of publishing evaluations to the community.

The subcommittee has approached open course evaluations at Columbia on three fronts: 1) benchmarking of the current policies and best practices of Columbia's schools, peer schools, and third-party websites with regard to the publication of course evaluations; 2) a survey of the academic literature on the subject; and 3) informal and formal conversations with stakeholders across the University, including students, faculty, and administration.

As a result of this research, the subcommittee unequivocally recommends open course evaluations for Columbia. An open system provides better feedback to instructors, empowers students to select classes that best meet their needs and expectations, fosters a healthy climate of openness and accountability in keeping with the mission of the University, and signals to all parties that Columbia is committed to outstanding teaching alongside outstanding research. Several legitimate concerns about an open system exist, and will be addressed in this report; but we believe that a properly designed system is mutually beneficial for Columbia's students and faculty.

This paper presents our findings, accompanied by some discussion, and then proposes a 'best practices' open course evaluation system that attempts to incorporate all of this information.

Background

Academic literature on the role of course evaluations in higher education dates back several decades. The role of evaluations is a well-researched topic; we present here a summary of only a small sample of the available literature.

Conclusions about the correlation between grades and evaluations are mixed. A 1973 article written by Granzin and Painter examines students' course evaluation tendencies.[1] Granzin and Painter found that 'those doing well in the course, as measured by the final grade, gave significantly higher ratings only in the overall course rating category,' but also that 'more difficult courses fared better than easier ones… instructors teaching difficult courses or who assign heavy work loads can expect no penalty in the form of low course ratings.' On the other hand, a study by Powell, which compared two versions of the same course with varying difficulty, concluded 'evaluations of both the instructor's performance and the course decreased as the stringency of the grading criteria increased.'[2] An article by Centra supports Granzin and Painter's conclusions. Notably, Centra found that 'after controlling for learning outcomes, expected grades generally did not affect student evaluations. In fact, contrary to what some faculty think, courses in natural sciences with expected grades of A were rated lower, not higher. Courses were rated lower when they were rated as either difficult or too elementary. Courses rated at the 'just right' level received the highest evaluations.'[3]

There is validity to the claim that the results of student evaluations are not entirely reflective of the ability of the professor, but partially dependent on other factors as well. Granzin and Painter found no correlation between the favorability of course evaluations and the age/advancement of students, but Kovacs and Kapel concluded, 'high-need-to-achieve students rated the content and structure higher than did the low-need-to-achieve students.'[4] Romney concluded that there is a considerable 'course effect' on student evaluations based on the type of course that is being taught.[5] He argues that

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[1] Granzin, Kent L., and John J. Painter. 'A New Explanation for Students' Course Evaluation Tendencies.' *American Educational Research Journal* 10.2 (1973): 115-24. *JSTOR*. Web.

[2] Powell, Robert W. 'Grades, Learning, and Student Evaluation of Instruction.' *Research in Higher Education* 7.3 (1977): 193-205. *JSTOR*. Web.

[3] Centra, John A. 'Will Teachers Receive Higher Student Evaluations by Giving Higher Grades and Less Course Work?' *Research in Higher Education* 44.5 (2003): 495-518. *JSTOR*. Web.

[4] Kovacs, Robert, and David E. Kapel. 'Correlates of Faculty and Course Evaluations.' *Research in Higher Education* 5.4 (1976): 335-44. *JSTOR*. Web.

[5] Romney, David. 'Course Effect vs. Teacher Effect on Students' Ratings of Teaching Competence.' *Research in Higher Education* 5.4 (1976): 345-50. *JSTOR*. Web.

interpretation of course evaluations must take place within the context of the course. Similarly, Trent and Johnson find that student's 'values and educational attitudes' influence the 'worth' assigned to a particular course.[6] Feldman finds that instructors 'teaching humanities, fine arts, and languages tend to receive somewhat higher ratings' compared to instructors of other subjects. Similarly, 'teacher and course ratings tend to be somewhat higher for upper division and elective courses.'[7] Howard and Schmeck argue that the most important extraneous factor is 'the student's motivation to take the course.'[8] According to the UCLA Office of Instructional Development, factors that may bias a student rating include class size, grade leniency, instructor personality, gender, course workload, time that class meets, and type of class.[9]

Some researchers make recommendations about the content and use of evaluations. Kovacs and Kapel argue that in order for evaluation data to be useful, it is important to obtain information 'on what constitutes ideal teaching for the individual student.'[10] Jauch suggests that 'significant rewards for teaching must be offered' in order to emphasize the importance of teaching as opposed to research.[11] Smith echoes other researches by arguing that 'student course/instructor ratings should be recognized as only one facet of instructor performance.'[12] The University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching points out that 'the use of optional items chosen by the instructor customizes and makes the forms more useful for teaching improvement purposes.' Michigan also recommends that forms 'should include open-ended questions so that students can write their own comments. Written comments are particularly helpful in improving classroom

[6] Trent, Curtis, and James F. Johnson. 'The Influence of Students' Values and Educational Attitudes on Their Evaluation of Faculty.' *Research in Higher Education* 7.2 (1977): 117-25. *JSTOR*. Web.
[7] Feldman, Kenneth A. 'Course Characteristics and College Students' Ratings of Their Teachers: What We Know and What We Don't.' *Research in Higher Education* 9.3 (1978): 199-242. *JSTOR*. Web.
[8] Howard, George S., and Ronald R. Schmeck. 'Relationship of Changes in Student Motivation to Student Evaluations of Instruction.' *Research in Higher Education* 10.4 (1979): 305-15. *JSTOR*. Web.
[9] 'Guide to Evaluation of Instruction: Literature Review.' *UCLA Office of Instructional Development*. University of California, 2011. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <http://www.oid.ucla.edu/publications/evalofinstruction/eval6>.
[10] Kovacs, Robert, and David E. Kapel. 'Correlates of Faculty and Course Evaluations.' *Research in Higher Education* 5.4 (1976): 335-44. *JSTOR*. Web.
[11] Jauch, Lawrence R. 'Relationships of Research and Teaching: Implications for Faculty Evaluation.' *Research in Higher Education* 5.1 (1976): 1-13. *JSTOR*. Web.
[12] Smith, Philip L. 'The Stability of Teacher Performance in the Same Course over Time.' *Research in Higher Education* 11.2 (1979): 153-65. *JSTOR*. Web.

performance.' Finally, Michigan suggests that a 'teaching improvement consultant should be available to discuss evaluation results' with professors.[13]

Several sources combat common arguments against course evaluations. Smith shows that 'teacher performance in a particular course is very stable from occasion to occasion.'[14] Berk deems course evaluations to be 'a necessary source of evidence of teaching effectiveness for both formative and summative decisions, but not a sufficient source for the later.' Berk's review of faculty complaints about student ratings 'found barely a smidgen of research to substantiate any of the common allegations by faculty.'[15] A literature review conducted by the UCLA Office of Instructional Development draws conclusions on many facets of course evaluation. Analysis of research 'shows that students tend to take teaching evaluations more seriously than faculty and institutional members commonly believe. Students are more willing to… offer meaningful feedback when they believe and can see that their input is being considered.' UCLA's summary supports Smith's research by concluding that 'students who show an acceptable level of consistency… given a class size of at least 15' and 'consistency among raters increases as class size increases.' A common argument is that the use of course evaluations may promote grade inflation. UCLA points out another possible explanation for this: 'effective teachers promote student learning... which results in higher grades.'[16]

More recent literature analyzes the effect of online data collection for course evaluations. UCLA's literature review finds that online evaluations have lower levels of participation but allow for more useful written comments. Leung and Kember observe that collection of evaluation data on the internet 'can result in a cheaper and more efficient process.' Their research supports the use of internet collection, suggesting that 'changing to internet

[13] 'Guidelines for Evaluating Teaching.' *University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching*. University of Michigan, 2011. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/guidelines.php>.

[14] Smith, Philip L. 'The Stability of Teacher Performance in the Same Course over Time.' *Research in Higher Education* 11.2 (1979): 153-65. *JSTOR*. Web.

[15] Berk, Ronald A. 'Survey of 12 Strategies to Measure Teaching Effectiveness.' *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 17.1 (2005): 48-62. Web.

[16] 'Guide to Evaluation of Instruction: Literature Review.' *UCLA Office of Instructional Development*. University of California, 2011. Web. 12 Feb. 2012. <http://www.oid.ucla.edu/publications/evalofinstruction/eval6>.

collection for course and program evaluations will not affect the comparability of ratings.'[17]

History of Course Evaluations at Columbia

Beginning in 1962, course evaluations of instructors at Columbia were conducted, compiled and distributed to all students through the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide*. A dedicated *Course Guide* staff of fifteen students worked out of 311 Ferris Booth Hall and was responsible for the distribution of questionnaires to the student body, as well as for the printing and publishing of the physical booklet. The goal of the guide was, according to its Statement of Purpose,

> *From time immemorial, student word-of-mouth has been important in discovering which courses are good and which are bad.* Course Guide *is more effective than word of mouth, however, because it collects, assesses, and publishes a wider range of opinions than any student can obtain alone … By assessing the university's academic strengths and weaknesses, this book serves not only the students, but the faculty and Columbia University as a whole.* Course Guide *provides faculty with student feedback and serves the entire academic community by promoting better student-faculty communication and better academic offerings …* Course Guide's *ultimate ambition [is] to serve as an academic record of the university.*[18]

The guide was in many ways a university-wide collaborative effort. The 'Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York' are listed as the official owners of the copyright, and the current president typically set the tenor for the guide through a letter, directed towards students reading the guide, that opened the work.[19] Although these letters were typically concise and lauded the immense amount of work and collaboration that went into that year's guide, the 1976 letter of President William McGill was particularly memorable for its candor and profound insight into the ultimate goal of the guides: 'Do not be put off by style or mannerisms or acting ability [of your professors].

[17] Leung, Doris Y.P., and David Kember. 'Comparability of Data Gathered from Evaluation Questionnaires on Paper and through the Internet.' *Research in Higher Education* 46.5 (2005): 571-91. *JSTOR*. Web.

[18] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1973. Volume 11, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1987-1988.

[19] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1973. Volume 11, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1973.

Ask yourselves whether you will remember thirty years from now what the instructor had to say.'[20]

Subsequently came acknowledgements; the 1973 guide cited thirty-four names of administrators across the university as contributing editors, and the preface in this guide specifically mentions that each semester, the guide requires 'the cooperation of thousands, the assistance of scores, and inevitably the sacrifice of a few,' proceeding to acknowledge a distinct combination of thirty administrators and staff members by name for their contributions, including the president of the university, multiple deans and a large number of employees of the student activities office.[21]

The information and data provided in these guides was extremely robust and detailed in nature. Each department had an introductory section which preceded any professor reviews; these varied in length and focus depending on the department, but included everything from lengthy descriptions of an individual department's academic health, outlook and general approach to undergraduate instruction within Columbia to its reputation in the greater academic world. A simple 26-question questionnaire (Appendix A) asked both qualitative and quantitative questions about courses and professors, and these results were then tabulated and averaged for each professor, with the qualitative assessments included as anecdotes in the descriptions of the courses and the professors. Quantitative assessments applied a 1-5 Likert scale to ratings of workload, content, clarity of lectures, readings, and overall course and instructor (see Appendix A). In many ways, the course guide served as a more comprehensive Columbia Bulletin, providing both students' perceptions in conjunction with the professors' or departments' descriptions of the courses that one now sees in the Bulletin.

To wit, Professor Kenneth Jackson's review in the 1973 guide opens with a very standard description of the course, 'American Urban History: An Introduction To The Conceptual And Methodological Problems Associated With The Study Of The City In American History,' and then proceeds to describe the classroom setting from the student perspective:

> *'He's not spectacular, not the type to attract a fanatic following, but seems to be just about what a teacher should.' Professor Kenneth Jackson makes this course on American Urban History one of the most popular of the History Department offerings[…] Though the class suffers drawbacks which plague any popular lecture*

[20] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1976. Volume 14, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1976.
[21] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1973. Volume 11, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1973.

> *course—too large a class, insufficient classroom discussion and incessant note-taking—Professor Jackson makes a gallant attempt to destroy the lecture stigma.*[22]

Consonant with the uniqueness of departments, courses and professors, reviews varied greatly between different subjects and professors. The guides achieved an impressive balance between qualitative feedback and quantitative metrics, which becomes apparent when contrasting the review of Professor Deborah Mowshowitz's biology class with the above review of Professor Jackson. Her review begins with a general introduction similar to that provided for Professor Jackson's course: 'Introduction to Modern Biology: Molecular Biology Of Prokaryotes (Bacteria), Eukaryotic Cells, Multicellularity And Development, Evolution, Neurobiology. Texts: Keeton, Biological Science; Watson, Molecular Biology of the Gene. Four hour exams (lowest dropped) including one during final exam week.' However, the subsequent content in the review is much more focused on her lecturing style and the nature of her tests:

> *Biology C1401, under the aegis of Ms. Deborah Mowshowitz, is generally considered a good course. Most students appreciate Ms. Mowshowitz's "good command of the material", "fluent speaking style", and "genuine concern for students" in this 9:00 a.m. offering. Ms. Mowshowtiz is an extremely rapid lecturer, making it "easy to get lost if one is not 100 percent attentive to lectures", but serious students tend to appreciate the "overwhelming amount of stuff" that makes each lecture both "challenging and interesting." Ms. Mowshowitz's high-pitched, "squeaky" voice can be irritating, but "there is steel in that warbling larynx." […] Reaction to Ms. Mowshowitz's exams is another matter entirely. Tests are "the closest thing I have seen to science aptitude tests" with questions that are "not extraordinarily relevant to lecture material." Test questions are multiple choice with an explanation required; the right answer with the wrong explanation will cost some points while some credit is give for a reasonable explanation of a wrong answer. […] Success apparently requires "being on the same wavelength as Mowshowitz" or "just plain luck."*[23]

To ensure sufficient student response to the evaluations, which in the pre-Internet era were necessarily distributed in print, the *Course Guide* staff initially reached out to the professors around midterm season about whether they would prefer distributing the evaluations on their own or having the *Course Guide* staff pass out the evaluation. In this initial contact, the professor was also provided with a separate evaluation form for he or she to fill out about his or her course, detailing the general framework of the course and

[22] ibid. pg. 292-293.

[23] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1973. Volume 11, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1973.

any highlights they felt might be pertinent to students reading the guide. If the professor neglected to respond, a secondary contact was initiated; if the professor still did not make contact respond, the *Course Guide* staff would physically attend as many of the non-responder classes as possible and ask the professors for permission to distribute the evaluations. If at any time a professor indicated that he or she did not want evaluations distributed, this wish was respected; the *Guide* staff notes in their preface that this was a rare occurrence because all of the professors were aware that the majority of their peers were electing to be evaluated.

Grade distributions for individual courses, for entire departments and for majors began appearing in the guide in 1972, and were published both in one large spreadsheet that included all professors and courses as well as alongside the other numerical values from the evaluations that appeared next to each individual professor's course description (see Appendix A).

During its existence, the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* was funded through the Student Affairs Office of Columbia College. According to Professor Michael Rosenthal, who taught during and after the *Course Guide*'s existence, its disappearance in the 1980s was a result of funding shortfalls. The *Course Guide* was a rather large volume because of how many courses and how much information was included, and the printing costs required to meet the demands of the student body simply became too great for the Student Affairs office to justify economically.[24]

The writers of the *Guide* were cognizant of potential criticisms about the subjective nature of their work, and set forth an eloquent defense thereof in the introduction to 1976's *Guide*: [25]

> *We want to remind you that the articles in this edition are not written in stone. Each evaluation is a selection of opinions made by a writer who, however independent, is still human. It seems to us that fallibility is not a bad price to pay for sensitivity, and that a humane, subjective book is preferable to a compendium of statistics and percentages. Once more, we extend an invitation to all interested students to join us in our attempts to provide Columbia with an academic forum, a University record.*

[24] Conversation with Professor Michael Rosenthal, Special Research Scholar in the Department of English and Comparative Literature-Columbia University, March 21, 2012.

[25] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1976. Volume 14, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1976. Pg. 22.

The success and profundity of the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* was largely due to the collaborative nature of its production; the guide was the result of an extensive amount of effort invested over the course of an entire semester by a diverse array of university members united through a common goal of providing a meaningful, genuine and aggregate perspective of academic life at Columbia. The result was both an invaluable practical resource for students and faculty and impressive evidence of a University-wide commitment to evaluating and improving the quality of pedagogy at Columbia. For bother of these reasons, the subcommittee believes that the disappearance of this institution was an unfortunate step backwards for Columbia. Finally, we cannot resist lamenting, in passing, the loss of a public forum that inspired students to such literary afflatus as 'steel in that warbling larynx' and 'all hail Pope Pious.'

Student Opinion

Anecdotally, nearly all students strongly support open course evaluations. The enduring popularity among students of third-party websites like CULPA attests to the widespread desire for readily accessible course reviews.

Even at an institution with Columbia's rarefied reputation, teaching quality is not uniformly excellent; clearly, some instructors are better teachers than others. As long as this remains true, students assert that course evaluation results are necessary to make the most of their limited time at Columbia:

> *As a pre-med student with a Neuroscience and Behavior major my courses for the most part have been laid out for me. General chemistry, Biology, Physics and so on. When it came time to choose a class for the global core, I relied on CULPA. I was looking for a class that was interesting, light on reading, thought provoking, and not too challenging (as I had to take this class in conjunction with biology and physics). The reviews on CULPA led me to choose a class which unfortunately was not adequately described on the website. CULPA is written by the extremists; students who fall in love with their class/professor cannot wait to write raving reviews, and students who had horrible experiences cannot wait to write that their professor does not belong at this university. What about all of the students in between? For this class, students who worshipped the professor wrote the reviews. Why they did so is still a mystery to me; his lectures were disorganized and completely unrelated to the reading material. Although the subject matter was interesting, the professor did not capture the attention of the class. If I had been able to read reviews about the mediocrity of the class I would have been more cautious in my choosing, but instead I wasted one of my few 'electives' on a class that was hardly stimulating and unmemorable.*

-- NP, CC BA 2013

However, demand for open course evaluations is by no means contingent on subpar instructors. Even faced with a selection of only outstanding classes, students believe that course evaluations are an invaluable tool for avoiding misalignments of prerequisites, workload, and teaching format:

> *The most influential professor that I have had at Columbia was my microeconomics professor. I found the course on CULPA, where reviews described his class as 'challenging,' 'hard,' and not 'a grade inflator.' Further exposition led me to choose his section over others, and while not the easiest class, I finished knowing exactly where I wanted to focus my future studies. Without the reviews I would not have taken his class and might not have found my current direction. I have never been more enthusiastic about my studies and I firmly attribute this to one ideal professor. Unfortunately, CULPA's scope is limited and I believe opening course evaluations would serve to enable the best and most informed decisions in shaping a student's academic career.*
>
> *– NM, GS BA 2013*
>
> *When I first arrived at Columbia to do my master's in computer science, I enrolled in a physics-based computer animation course that I expected to be informative, fun, and easily manageable based on my previous studies in physics. The course was excellent, but also much harder than anticipated. I eventually found myself over my head and had to drop it (something I never had to resort to as a Harvard undergrad) – I'm a master's student and pay by credit, so this cost me personally around $5000 on top of my frustration. Since I was new to Columbia and didn't know anyone at SEAS to ask for advice when I signed up for the class (and didn't know about CULPA), I had no way of gauging how difficult it would be and how much familiarity with C++ would be required; I think this could have been easily avoided if I had had access to an online evaluation system. It was a very expensive lesson learned.*
>
> *-- RT, SEAS MS 2012 [report author]*

Finally, students believe that published evaluations promotes a standard of openness and accountability conducive to a healthier and more inclusive academic community:

> *As a doctoral student at Teachers College (TC), I've gone through the arduous but valuable foundations courses that we're expected to take in our department. These courses have focused on, among other topics, what comprises of quality education, ways to evaluate effective teaching, and the development of our own pedagogical skills. As a college consistently ranked in the top 5 of graduate schools of education, TC*

attempts to instill in its students the value of humanizing education, of honoring and hearing out all student voices, and of establishing a democratic dialogue aligned with the values of our beloved John Dewey, among others. When it comes to TC's practices, though, there seems to be a great misalignment. Not all instructors and professors have the pedagogical skills or even the content knowledge sometimes to teach the high level courses that they do. Yet, we as students pay for this. Although we take the time to complete course evaluations at the end of each semester, there is little to no evidence that these evaluations are used for any public good - not in terms of training for instructors/professors nor for helping students make the right decisions as to which classes to take. Keep in mind that TC's graduate students are not aspiring entrepreneurs, doctors, or lawyers. Most work part- or full-time jobs while taking classes in the evening, many work in public schools during the day, and many intend to stay in their roles as teachers and public servants. We genuinely believe in the work that we do, no matter the cost. Every class is a significant investment of our time, finances, and emotional well-being. By keeping course evaluations under wraps, the college is essentially contradicting its purported philosophies, perpetuating systems of power and privilege, and silencing the voices of over 2000 graduate students. -- IA, TC 2016

Faculty Opinion

Faculty opinion is notably more varied than student opinion. Several faculty members have raised a number of legitimate concerns about negative impacts of open system; detailed discussion of these concerns and proposed mitigations can be found in the 'Issues and Concerns' section.

Many faculty concur that an official Columbia open evaluations system 1) incentivizes students to provide higher-quality feedback, 2) prizes self-examination of pedagogical strengths and weaknesses; and 3) potentially encourages faculty to engage with new teaching techniques and ideas. For instance, Professor Sam Silverstein writes:

Everyone needs feedback, and does better for having it. By and large, feedback for faculty comes from grants, promotions, lectures etc. That's one of the many reasons many research universities pay so little attention to teaching in promotions, etc. But that attitude is a serious misconception of the reasons society invests in higher education. A few of this nation's most outstanding research universities, such as MIT, hold teaching in very high regard. That's one of the reasons they feel comfortable putting faculty lectures up on the web. Take a look at the MIT site. The lectures are excellent … Accordingly, I view the present initiative to make course evaluation data

> *available as a first step in elevating the culture of teaching and education at [Columbia] University.*[26]

Several key administrators have expressed their support for open course evaluations at Columbia, including President Bollinger, Dean James Valentini, Dean Peter Awn, and Registrar Barry Kane. Provost John Coatsworth has also publicly stated his approval:

> *I support online publication of course evaluations. Open course evaluations can provide a valuable service to the academic community by raising the quality and quantity of course reviews from students, providing better feedback to faculty and empowering students to make more informed decisions on the courses and instructors that best meet their academic needs and interests. I have no doubt that all of Columbia's faculty and students would benefit if we were to follow the example of many of our peer institutions by adopting such a policy.*[27]

Benchmarks

Columbia Schools

All Columbia schools conduct evaluations online. Of those schools with data provided, nine out of fifteen (Barnard, Business, Law, Dental, Journalism, Mailman, P&S, SEAS, SIPA, and Social Work) already have public evaluation systems in some form. Six out of fifteen (Columbia College, General Studies, GSAPP, GSAS, Nursing, and School of the Arts) thus keep evaluations entirely private. However, even at those schools that do offer some measure of open course evaluations, the system is not always robust:

- At Barnard, a handful of departments give professors the option to release evaluation results on the departmental website, but few professors have opted in.
- At SEAS, quantitative results are published in the SEAS oracle http://oracle.seas.columbia.edu/). Perhaps because it does not include any qualitative results, and because nearly all courses fall into a similar range of quantitative results, the SEAS oracle has only mediocre popularity with students. For example, in January and February 2011, 466 visitors made 688 visits to the site, out of a total 3,700 enrolled at SEAS. Anecdotally, few students find the SEAS Oracle useful.[28]
- The Dental school releases only quantitative data.

[26] Email from Professor Sam Silverstein, March 24, 2012.

[27] Email from Provost John Coatsworth, March 27, 2012.

[28] Straw poll taken at Engineering Graduate Student Council meeting, November 4, 2011.

- At the Mailman School of Public Health, Physicians and Surgeons, and Social Work, students may see evaluation results only if they inquire in person at a central office.
- The Business School releases quantitative and qualitative data for most classes. Evaluations for core classes are not posted.
- Law, Journalism, and SIPA provide full evaluation results.
- In February 2012, the Economics department announced that quantitative results for all economics courses will soon be available online.[29]

Peer Schools

Peer schools were chosen for their membership in the Ivy League or for their proximity to Columbia, among other reasons. All peer universities, like Columbia, are made up of a large number of individual schools that often maintain independent course evaluation policies, which makes it difficult to draw definitive comparisons to Columbia's (also varied) course evaluation systems. Collection of full data on each school for each University was not feasible with the resources we had available; we therefore attempted to obtain the information for the major undergraduate school at each university, along with whichever other schools were easily obtainable.

We collected data on nine universities with eighteen total schools in the Northeast, including:

- Brown (1: undergraduate college)
- Cornell (4: Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering, Human Ecology)
- Dartmouth (2: Engineering, Medical School)
- Harvard (2: Harvard College and GSAS)
- MIT (2: graduate and undergraduate)
- NYU (4: Gallatin, Law, Wagner School of Public Service, Tisch)
- Princeton (1: Princeton College)
- University of Pennsylvania (1: College of Arts and Sciences)
- Yale (1: Yale College)

[29] Chen, Lilian. 'Econ Department Makes Course Evaluations Public.' *Columbia Spectator*, February 21, 2012.

Of these peer universities, eight out of nine have at least one college within the university that allows for public course evaluations in some form. Brown University was the only institution with no form of public course evaluations.

Five (Cornell Arts and Sciences, Cornell Engineering, NYU Gallatin, NYU Tisch, Brown College) out of eighteen schools keep course evaluations private. Eight (Cornell Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dartmouth Engineering, Dartmouth Medical School, Harvard College, Harvard GSAS, NYU Law, NYU Wagner, Yale College) out of the eighteen total schools allow students to view course evaluations. Four (Cornell Human Ecology, MIT undergraduate, MIT graduate, Princeton College) out of eighteen schools permit public course evaluations, but leave this decision up to the discretion of the departments. Two of the five schools that keep evaluations private (NYU Gallatin, NYU Law) collect evaluation data in print form.

Brown: Brown's undergraduate student body 'operate[s] a parallel review process (The Critical Review) and compile Zagat-guide like summaries of student responses, which are made available online,' but the administrators in charge of the official evaluations 'have not raised the question of making the information public to anyone outside the department.'[30]

Cornell: Cornell's various schools have vastly different policies, a fact that has caused some consternation amongst both administrators and IT staff: 'Course evaluations [at Cornell are] a messy thing since every college has latitude to do what they want,' said Mike Hammer, director of data management for the College of Engineering (Willner 2010).[31] The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, in a vote undertaken by a completely faculty senate, chose to make course evaluations public in.[32]

Dartmouth: Dartmouth's Engineering and Medical Schools make evaluation results publicly available, but they are only accessible via request at the respective school libraries. Evaluations for the semester are conducted online, compiled into evaluation binders and then stored in the Dartmouth libraries and available by the start of the next semester.

Harvard: Harvard has a long-standing tradition of publishing robust course reviews to students. The CUE (Committee on Undergraduate Instruction) Guide dates back to 1975,

[30] Email from Dean Catherine Yatrakis relaying opinions of Dean Katryn Bergeron, Brown, December 8, 2011

[31] Willner, Samantha. 'Students Reject Web Evaluations.' *The Cornell Daily Sun*, February 18, 2010.

[32] Duch, Kate. 'All Eyes on Course Evaluations'. The Cornell Daily Sun, February 13, 2008.

and was integrated into the current online evaluation system in 2005-2006.[33,34] Harvard currently publishes quantitative data for all courses along with the results of a single qualitative question, 'Would you recommend this class to your peers?' Notably, Harvard allows the instructor to post a public comment in response to the reviews, which has helped somewhat to mitigate faculty anxiety about unfair reviews.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Like its next-door neighbor, MIT discontinued an older Zagat-style student-published course guide during its transition to online evaluations, in the mid-2000s. MIT leaves decisions about course evaluations up to the discretion of individual departments, and the majority appear to opt-in. Quantitative results are searchable and available on an online portal; reviews are not published.[35]

New York University: NYU is a large university with individual schools taking autonomy over the decision to make course evaluations public or not, with drastically disparate results. The Wagner School of Public Service and Law School permit full access to both quantitative and qualitative results of evaluations to their student bodies. NYU's Tisch and Gallatin schools still perform evaluations in print exclusively, and both schools maintain staunchly that these evaluations be shared only between departments and professors. NYU has a robust Center for Teaching Excellence, which focuses on improving the teaching performance of all teachers in NYU-affiliated institutions. NYU's Center for Teaching Excellence has a much larger full-time staff than the corresponding Columbia centers (the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Teaching Center and the Business School's Arthur J. Samberg Institute for Teaching Excellence).

Princeton: Princeton allows students to view qualitative assessments made by their peers and a generic Likert-scale rating of the overall class quality. Ultimately, the availability of these ratings is at the discretion of departments, but the majority of departments appear to opt-in to have evaluation results made available to students.

University of Pennsylvania: Similar to Harvard's or Columbia's defunct course guides, the University of Pennsylvania publishes a Zagat-style course evaluations guide. 'At the end of each semester, the Provost's office, in conjunction with ISC [Information Systems and Computing], administers Penn's course evaluation form, which consists of eleven

[33] http://q.fas.harvard.edu/harvardQ/qguide.jsp. 'CUE' was renamed to 'Q' in 2007.

[34] Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences registrar Barry Kane, who now serves as Columbia's registrar, oversaw the transition to online evaluations.

[35] Conversation with Rosanne Santucci, Office of Faculty Support, MIT, January 23, 2012.

questions aimed at assessing the quality of the course and instructor.'[36] A student-run publication, the Penn School Review,[37] is permitted access to the evaluations and compiles a summary set of data to which all students have login access.

Yale: In the Fall 2002 semester, the faculty of Yale College voted to implement a web-based application that permits students to evaluate their courses online. Students are prompted to complete evaluations in all courses with more than five enrolled; students who complete or opt out of the evaluation will be able to see their final grade for the course before the end of the evaluation period. The evaluation period lasts for approximately one month and extends beyond the end of final examinations.

The evaluation form has six standard questions; four questions are open-ended and two questions are rated on a Likert scale. The answers to three of these questions are made available to students, including:

- How would you summarize [course name] for a fellow student? Would you recommend [course name] to another student? Why or why not?
- Overall, how would you rate the workload of this course in comparison to other Yale courses you have taken? [1-5 scale]
- What is your overall assessment of this course? [1-5 scale]

In addition, some types of courses (language, quantitative, science, and others) have additional questions that are not made available to the student body. Professors have the option to submit custom questions. Evaluations are only available to be viewed by students during the designated shopping period.

Third Party Sites

In the absence of a robust open course evaluation system at Columbia, students rely on third party websites to access course evaluation information. It is generally understood that the majority of students who post (unsolicited) reviews on third-party sites are motivated by either a very positive or a very negative experience in a class; reviews on third-party sites thus tend to be more polarized, and perhaps biased, than University-based systems.

[36] https://beta.penncoursereview.com/faq

[37] https://beta.penncoursereview.com/

CULPA.info

Anecdotally, CULPA.info (www.CULPA.info) is by far the most popular among Columbia students. Student demand for the information on CULPA is high; the site boasts more than 21,000 reviews on more than 3800 courses. CULPA does not require any sort of authentication in order to post a review, nor can it prevent a single student from posting multiple reviews. The lack of authentication puts CULPA at an obvious disadvantage vis-à-vis an official Columbia-sponsored system; however, some students see this independence from Columbia as an asset, since they can be confident that unfavorable reviews have not been withheld at the behest of faculty or administrators. CULPA administrators do monitor the site and respond to requests to remove abusive or grossly inaccurate posts.

Because there is much smaller response rate through CULPA than through CourseWorks, initially harsh reviews in CULPA may have lasting effects. Susan Elmes, Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Economics Department, describes such a situation:

> *Over the years, the Department of Economics has hired a number of faculty members who have taught in foreign universities, where the culture of the classroom and the expectations of both students and faculty are often quite different than at Columbia. Both faculty and students experience a culture shock in that first semester. Since most of our classes are very large, there will usually be a few students in the class sufficiently motivated to write a 'not very kind' CULPA review. After that first semester, the faculty have made an effort to improve their classes by adjusting the material covered, the expectations they have for students, and their own teaching methods, and all of them have improved significantly as evidenced by their improved teaching evaluations. Most of them now receive average reviews for the department. However, because of the old CULPA reviews, their class sizes remain depressed (significantly so in some cases). Many of them teach core economics courses which are taught by other faculty, so students are choosing to avoid their sections not because of the material but because of the instructor. The combination of small classes and 'average' teaching makes it unlikely that current students will be motivated to write a new CULPA review reflecting the current state of the instructors teaching, so the bad reviews remain and continue to discourage students from taking courses with these instructors. This is bad for students who often re-arrange their schedules to avoid some sections and then crowd into other already large sections and it is bad for faculty who have to deal with extra large classes. By putting the course evaluations online, each semester, students will have access to current information about a class and an instructor.*

Despite its flaws, CULPA.info employs a number of features worthy of consideration. The system requires a minimum word count of 150 words for all reviews, which encourages students to flesh out and substantiate their claims; in contrast, RateMyProfessors.com has a maximum word count of 350, requiring reviews to be terse. Additionally, CULPA.info's lack of authentication makes it possible (in theory) for students to leave a review many months or years after completing a course. Because the true value of a course may become clear only in time—after the student has drawn on the knowledge in higher-level courses or applied it on the job or in an interview—we believe this inadvertent feature is actually a highly useful one, possibly worth emulating in Columbia's system.

RateMyProfessors and MyEdu

RateMyProfessors.com and MyEdu.com are two popular third-party alternatives offering online course evaluations.

RateMyProfessors has a basic structure that combines a rough quantitative element with a qualitative/comment element. Readers may 'flag' a problematic review, which directs administrators to consider removal. The tone of the website is extremely casual—for instance, one of the categories up for review is professor attractiveness, or 'hotness.'[38] Another quantitative element measured is 'easiness.'

A 2011 article published in the Chronicle of Higher Education discusses the legitimacy of RateMyProfessors. The website was launched in 1999, and currently contains over 10-million ratings and reviews. The site calculates the quality of a professor by averaging scores from two categories: helpfulness and clarity. The article cites evidence that a small sample size of students can give relatively reliable reviews. Notably, a 2011 study conducted by Bleske-Rechek and Fritsch found that professors with 10 evaluations displayed 'the same degree of consensus in their quality ratings' as those with 50. Bleske-Rechek also noted that she was surprised to find evidence that well-respected students contributed their opinions on RateMyProfessors, and that posters were not limited to spiteful students or those only looking for an easy A. The article also cites a 2009 study by Davidson and Price that took a different position. Davidson and Price were unimpressed with the casual tone of the website, lack of academically driven comments, and simplicity of the system used to calculate a professor's score.[39]

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[38] http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/topLists11/topLists.jsp

[39] Parry, Marc. 'Researchers Rate RateMyProfessors and Find It Useful, If Not Chili-Pepper Hot.' *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 18 Nov. 2011. Web. 1 Mar. 2012. <http://chronicle.com/article/Researchers-Rate/129820/>.

MyEdu is attractive because of its clean interface and social media integration. MyEdu uses a voting system that allows readers to vote a review up or down after it has been posted. However, the information captured by course evaluations and professor reviews is minimal; the quantitative questions including only two simple 1-5 Likert scales, and the qualitative element is two very open-ended categories, 'pros' and 'cons.' MyEdu also works directly with some universities, including UC Berkeley and UCLA, to publish detailed grade distributions for popular classes.[40]

Considerations

Various stakeholders across the University have expressed concerns about possible negative ramifications of publishing course evaluations. Concerns range from the general and abstract, such as the possibility that course reviews tend to promote the 'commodification' of education and negatively affect academic freedom, to specific objections about the appropriateness of publishing the teaching records of student instructors. All of these concerns should be considered in light of the genie that is already out of the bottle: CULPA.info. The pertinent question is not whether public evaluations are problematic; it is whether a Columbia-sponsored open course evaluation system is better or worse equipped than existing third-party websites like CULPA to address the problems.

Polarized and/or Inaccurate Reviews

Many instructors worry that reviews do not accurately reflect their abilities, and/or that students with unjustified grudges might perform 'hatchet jobs.' These concerns are amplified by the status quo, where students get their information from more-biased third-party websites. As Prof. Susan Elmes points out, above, a class-wide evaluation solicited by the University can provide a much more balanced picture.

Several other specific implementation features may serve to alleviate this concern:

1) Instructors should be able to petition their department or dean to remove individual reviews they find inappropriate.
2) Instructors may, as at Harvard, have the ability to attach public comments to reviews in order to explain inappropriate or inaccurate remarks.
3) Online viewers of the course evaluation results may be able to vote individual reviews up or down (i.e. 'useful' or 'not useful'). If reviews are displayed in order of

[40] http://community.myedu.com/myedu/topics/how_does_myedu_get_grade_information

usefulness, grossly unfair reviews will drop to the bottom of the results page and exert less influence. Students are capable of recognizing unfair reviews.

Academic Freedom

A number of professors, at Columbia and elsewhere, have expressed concerns that online publication of results will tend to result in reviews that reflect a student's enjoyment of a class, rather than the quality of the education. Columbia Professors Robert Pollack and Carol Lin, for instance, express concern that reviews will capture student's enjoyment of a class rather than its value; Harvard Physics professor Eric Mazur, an advocate of technology-enhanced active learning, calls evaluations mere 'popularity contests' and claims 'zero correlation between course evaluations and the amount learned.'[41] Accordingly, instructors may feel compelled to court students' favor at the expense of their education, reducing the instructors' freedom to pursue less popular but more effective (or experimental) pedagogical techniques; as such, evaluations are a threat to academic freedom.

This concern is not a new one; it is probably as old as course evaluations themselves. Columbia President William J. McGill (1970-1980) offers advice to students along these lines in the 1976 *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide*:

> *Twenty-eight years ago I enrolled in a first-year graduate course offered by B.F. Skinner.*
>
> *The course really annoyed me. Skinner's teaching was obviously dull and unappealing. Nearly everything he said about human behavior seemed wrong or even ridiculous. The whole experience proved to be a bitter disappointment. And yet now Skinner is seen as one of the landmarks of my education. Eventually nearly every major part of my own work was provoked by the principles developed in that single concentrated experience. I have succeeded in convincing myself over and over again that Skinner was wrong, but in a real sense I have been working for him all of my productive life.*
>
> *This is the standard by which students at Barnard and Columbia should judge their coursework. Do not be put off by style or mannerisms or acting ability. Ask yourselves whether you will remember thirty years from now what the instructor had to say.*

We agree that questions about the impact of course evaluations on academic freedom are serious; however, we believe that publishing the results of Columbia evaluations will

[41] Lambert, Craig. 'Twilight of the Lecture.' *Harvard Magazine*, March-April 2012.

reduce concerns about academic freedom, not intensify them. Since students commonly make course decisions based on the information they find at CULPA.info, academic freedom is already curtailed, and nothing can be done about it; by bringing evaluations in-house, evaluation designers can carefully script the questions so as to minimize the problem as much as possible. It is beyond the scope of this report to make detailed recommendations about particular evaluation questions, but we will note here that, with respect to academic freedom, the question 'Would your recommend this class to your peers?' is superior to a question like 'Did you enjoy this class?' (although the second question may be additional information worth soliciting). We urge evaluation designers to be extremely sensitive to the impacts of evaluation design on issues of academic freedom as they pertain to each discipline.

A number of specific add-on features of the evaluation system may also serve to mitigate concerns about academic freedom, including professor responses to comments and *ex post facto* reviews. These will be discussed below.

Easy Classes

Some instructors worry that increased visibility of evaluation information will encourage students to search for, and ultimately enroll in, the easiest classes. Given the many avenues already available for finding easy classes, including word of mouth and CULPA.info, we believe that most students who want to create a less challenging schedule already have little trouble doing this. Moreover, looking for an easy class should not carry the stigma that it does; simple academic planning requires that some highly motivated, hard-working students seek just such a class to round out an otherwise heavy schedule. We believe that, in light of the superior quality of Columbia's student body and advising system, such paternalism is misguided; so long as Columbia's faculty deem a course appropriate for the curriculum, students should be able to choose for themselves whether to take it. The easiest course at Columbia is only as easy as the faculty permits.

These concerns are exacerbated if published evaluations include details about grade distributions, as they were in the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* starting in 1972.[42] The editors of the 1973 *Course Guide* note that

> *Obviously, the [grade distribution] chart, like Course Guide as a whole, can be used to find the easiest or most generously graded courses, and there is some evidence that this did occur with the most glaringly generous graders … However, our prime*

[42] *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* 1973. Volume 11, Number 1. New York: O.B. Johnson Press, Inc., 1973, page 20.

motivation in publishing this grading chart was not to facilitate gut hunting. We expected students to take the more leniently graded of two courses when all other factors were equal, but we also thought, correctly as it turned out, that "all other factors" would rarely be equal. It seems certain that the vast majority of students continue to base their choice of courses primarily on their own needs and interests and on the quality of courses and instruction; this grading chart is used, quite properly, only as an adjunct, insuring that the curve in a given course is not unusually out-of-line.

Grade Inflation

This argument maintains that because students might use open course evaluations to look for easy classes, faculty may feel pressure to hand out easier grades and/or reduce the rigor of courses in order to earn better reviews and higher enrollment. As with other objections, this concern already exists with CULPA.info as well, and was addressed in some detail in *Columbia-Barnard Course Guides*. Additionally, since the results of evaluations are already used by the departments, faculty may already feel this pressure; it is uncertain whether open course evaluations will have a meaningful effect on this dynamic. We believe that Columbia should trust in the integrity of its faculty to award appropriate grades without undue influence from student opinion.

Boggs et al claim that 'research does show that there is a positive correlation between grades and student ratings.' However, it is certainly possible that 'this positive correlation is simply evidence of student learning: students rate faculty more positively when they have had a positive classroom experience.'[43]

Non-Tenured and Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

By definition, non-tenured faculty members enjoy much less job security than tenured faculty. In particular, it is understood that supervisors generally scrutinize the evaluations of non-tenured faculty more closely, and at more frequent intervals, than those of tenured faculty. As such, non-tenured faculty are peculiarly susceptible to the effects of bad reviews, and may take extraordinary measures to avoid them; thus some of the other concerns noted in this report (like academic freedom and grade inflation) may apply more strongly to this group.[44] We urge evaluation designers to carefully consider the needs of this large and disproportionately affected population in implementing an open evaluation system.

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[43] Boggs, Andrew, Pamela Gravestock, and Emily Greenleaf. 'The Validity of Student Course Evaluations: An Eternal Debate.' *Journal of the Center For Excellence in Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 2, 2009.

[44] Conversation with Prof. Carol Lin, February 28, 2012.

We do not believe that non-tenured faculty should be exempt from public evaluations; however, a closed-evaluation grace period of two semesters for new non-tenured hires is reasonable, and in some cases schools may wish to consider a further, ongoing grace period corresponding to the first instance of a faculty member's teaching any particular class. Grace periods allow new faculty members to adjust to the culture of Columbia and update their courses based on initial feedback before evaluations are subject to public scrutiny. The results of the evaluations conducted for these first two semesters should not be released retroactively; these results are purely for the benefit of the faculty member and his or her department.

Promotions and Tenure

Several faculty have commented that, should professors be privy to reviews of their colleagues, they may object to being passed over for promotion in favor of a candidate with lower average ratings, thereby curtailing flexibility of administrators. We believe this concern is addressed by consideration that course evaluation results are useful, but in no way definitive, measures of value; decisions about promotion and tenure necessarily incorporate a broad range of factors. Furthermore, the published results are only a subset of total evaluations.

Racial and Gender Biases

Though we are not aware of definitive research on the subject, a number of studies have examined the effects of race and gender on course evaluations. These studies are either inconsistent on the impact of gender or tend to find little or no statistically significant effect;[45,46] however, findings about racial bias seem to be more robust.[47,48,49] We believe that these concerns require further study, but should not prevent or delay implementation of open course evaluations. At a minimum, designers of the evaluation system should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the existing literature on the subject.

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[45] Centra, J. A., & Gaubatz, N. B. 'Is There Gender Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching?' *Journal of Higher Education*, 71, p. 17, 2000.

[46] Feldman, K. A. College Students' Views Of Male And Female Faculty College Teachers: Part II – Evidence From Students' Evaluations Of Their Classroom Teachers.' *Research in Higher Education*, 34, 151-211, 1993.

[47] Hamermesh, D. S. & Parker, A. M. (Forthcoming, 2005). 'Beauty In The Classroom: Instructors' Pulchritude And Putative Pedagogical Productivity.' *Economics of Education Review*.

[48] DiPietro, M. & Faye, A. 'Online Student-Ratings-Of-Instruction (SRI) Mechanisms For Maximal Feedback To Instructors.' Paper presented at the 30th Annual Meeting of the Professional and Organizational Development Network; Milwaukee, WI, 2005.

[49] A useful review of this literature can be found at http://sun.skidmore.union.edu/sunNET/ResourceFiles/Huston_Race_Gender_TeachingEvals.pdf

Student Instructors

A number of parties, most notably the Graduate Student Advisory Council, have expressed concerns about public evaluations of student instructors. At the December 2011 Senate plenary meeting, Senator Cristina Perez Jimenez read a statement into the record expressing this concern. The statement reads, in part:

> *Graduate student TAs and instructors fill an interstitial space in the university, simultaneously being students and teachers. Graduate students are not employees, a fact that the University Senate endorses in its 2001 discussion of student employment ... Teaching assistantships, preceptorships and teaching fellowships are given to students as an opportunity for students to train and learn skills in teaching and assisting classes at the university level. Graduate student TAs and Instructors are under the guidance and supervision of their department and faculty, and undergo regular meetings, observations, reviews, and evaluations of their teaching and instruction. Since TAs and Instructors are under the purview of the relevant department faculty members, who are those most-qualified to judge their performance, making this information available to others could provide fodder for antagonistic developments between undergraduates and TAs, and create an unhealthy environment for both learning and training of future faculty. Furthermore, mentorship support for TAs vary greatly, as does the extent to which TAs have input in the course syllabus and outline.*

In addition to the concerns cited in this statement, the potential exists for legal ramifications of publishing evaluations of currently enrolled students under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The educational mission of Columbia University includes the training of graduate students as the next generation of distinguished faculty at Columbia and elsewhere. Student teachers play a number of roles in the university community, serving as instructors (lecturers), with proximate responsibility for the academic experience of the students; as compensated recitation or laboratory leaders, who often serve alongside several partners and interact with students on a limited basis; and as compensated TAs with purely grading responsibilities. Because TAs, recitation and laboratory leaders, etc., have relatively little influence on the class experience, and rarely serve the same class for multiple semesters, we do not believe publishing evaluations of these students is useful or practical. Unless otherwise noted, the subsequent discussion pertains only to lecturers with direct teaching responsibility ('student instructors').

Student instructors are learning as they teach, and the quality of their learning is no less important than the experience of those being taught. Unlike TAs, most graduate student

instructors cannot chose whether or not to teach classes and are not (directly) compensated; instruction is a compulsory part of their curricula. Furthermore, graduate student instructors always serve under the tutelage of some faculty supervisor, who enjoys the ultimate responsibility for the course; this faculty supervisor should share the accountability for the on-the-job performance of his or her student instructors, by having his or her name published on any reports made public. Affirming this responsibility will further incentivize the supervisor to mentor and support the trainee.

Because of the above considerations, we believe that the most appropriate evaluation policy for student instructors is an opt-in system, in which student instructors choose to make their evaluations public only if they wish to do so. Because most student instructors are highly motivated to become excellent teachers, and opting in to a public evaluation may be appealing to such instructors, we do not believe this represents a de facto no-evaluation system.

A number of complicating factors in the student instructor issue may occasionally arise; for instance, the case of a fully voluntary, compensated instructor, or of a compensated TA with both (extraordinary) lecturing responsibilities and long tenure. In these situations, some policy other than opt-in may make sense--for example, an opt-out system combined with a suitable grace period in which a new teacher can practice without fear of public censure.

Course Evaluation Format

Information collected from course evaluations may be delivered to at least three distinct audiences:

- Instructors, in order to improve the quality of the course offering in future semesters;
- Potential students, in order to provide actionable information about what can be expected from a particular course; and
- Administrators, in order to evaluate an instructor's performance for tenure, promotion, or other decisions.

The types of information required by these audiences are not necessarily the same; the questions that solicit each type of information may also be distinct. A well-designed course evaluation system should clearly separate questions designed for the instructor from questions that are designed for students, excepting some degree of overlap (in particular, the professor will probably also be interested in the results of any question that

also interests students, but the reverse is not usually the case). Questions of interest purely to faculty should not be made public; doing so only overwhelms the student with useless data and makes it hard to distinguish signal from noise. Excessive questions will tend to fatigue the respondent and result in less useful data; likewise, excessive display of results fatigues the reader. The current CourseWorks implementation, which sometimes displays up to 19 histograms on a single page, suffers from this problem.

Professor Steven Mintz, director of the GSAS Teaching Center, observes that the mere inclusion of a particular question in an evaluation may influence the teaching style of an instructor. For instance, the question 'Did the instructor use technology appropriately and to good effect?' may pressure those who would otherwise be hesitant to incorporate new technology to do so more rapidly. Evaluation designers should, at minimum, be aware of this effect, and they may choose to wield it more proactively to 'nudge' instructors towards outcomes the University has deemed to be in its interest.

Quantitative Questions

Quantitative questions offer the advantage of allowing easily sortable and comparable data between classes. Classes are generally posed on a 5-point Likert scale; anecdotally, this may not provide enough granularity to usefully distinguish between the majority of classes, which tend to cluster in the 3-4 range. We urge evaluation designers to consider 7- or 9- point scales instead.

Workload. Questions about workload are critical for student's academic planning. The evaluation should devote considerable energy to capturing the true expected workload of the class, which is often different from that advertised on the syllabus. In some cases, it may make sense to distinguish between different aspects of the courses' time commitment, by asking respondents for the proportion of time spent on each type of coursework (e.g. problem sets, laboratory, reading, discussion posts, essays, etc.).

Qualitative Questions

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to qualitative questions. The system should support the generation of several (3-5) department-specific and course-specific questions. However, at a minimum, the system should include one required general, open-ended qualitative question that solicits student's general impressions of the course. Our recommendation for this minimum required question borrows Harvard's elegantly simple question: 'Would you recommend this course to your peers?'

Presentation of Results

Many of the open course evaluation systems we have studied have clearly relegated the presentation of results to an afterthought – a serious mistake, since there is plenty of

evidence to suggest that students will not use a system that does not present results in a useful, meaningful way. Wherever possible, the viewer should be able to grasp the gist of a result at a glance, and drill down to further details as needed. For most question types, we believe that a standard horizontal histogram representing results of the Likert scale is the most intuitive representation of the results data (and certainly superior to a tabular display). Most viewers will expect the negative or 'disagree' side to appear on the left, and the most positive responses on the right.

Recommendations

Reviews of peer institutions and conversations with stakeholders across the University have resulted in the following set of recommendations, separated here into minimum, recommended, and superlative implementations.

Quantitative Data. Quantitative data on various aspects of class quality should be published in a user-friendly format.

Qualitative data. Qualitative data (reviews) should be published on at least one open-ended question, such as 'Would you recommend this class to your peers?'

Workload. The system should solicit real, usable quantitative information about course expectations and workload.

Graduate Student Instructors. Graduate student instructors, or a student who is the primary instructor for a course, should have the option to opt-in to the open course evaluations system if they so chose. These evaluations should remain private by default.

Syllabus. The syllabus for classes should be available all members of the community (for at least a period of two weeks at the beginning of the semester), not only to enrolled students.[50]

Inappropriate Comments. Instructors should be able to initiate a process for removing inappropriate comments from public display. An administrator should approve such requests.

Professors vs. Curriculum. Results should clearly distinguish between the same course taught by different professors in different years. Results should be searchable by both professor and by course.

[50] New CourseWorks makes this the default setting.

Integration with Course Catalog. The results should be fully integrated with the course catalog, providing one-click access from a course's current listing to its past reviews. Current results available through CourseWorks are very difficult to find and to use,[51] severely hampering their effectiveness. Since most students use the Course Catalog rather than Courseworks to search for classes, many are totally unaware of the existing evaluations.

Extended evaluation period. The review period should be extended to include at least one week after exams. Currently, all of Columbia's course evaluations are due before the student takes the final exam in that class. Overloaded students often do not have time to fill out reviews thoughtfully in the week or two before final exams; moreover, the content of the final exam is an important facet of the course that can never be reviewed under the current system. Several universities, including Harvard, have extended the review period to include the post-exam period due to these concerns.[52]

> *Course evaluations for Barnard College classes, which are filled out on CourseWorks, must be completed by the student otherwise the final grade in the course is withheld until the second week of January. One year, I had an enormous amount of work during reading week, and unintentionally missed the deadline to fill out these evaluations. When my final grades were withheld over winter break, I was very frustrated because I had all the time in the world after finals were over to fill out more thorough evaluations than I would have been able to during reading week. I wished that I had the option to fill out the evaluation to see my withheld grades. Reading week is often the most stressful time of the semester, and I would spend much more time on course evaluations after the semester was over. SS, BC'12 [report author]*

Minimum Thresholds. To preserve anonymity, results should be kept private unless the smaller of two thresholds is met: a minimum absolute number of respondents, and a minimum response rate. The subcommittee proposes a nine student minimum and 50% response rate.

Grace Periods. The system should incorporate grace periods for both tenured and non-tenured faculty, as outlined below ('Rollout').

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[51] The current (old) Courseworks requires at least three steps to see an evaluation: 1) searching for a course in the upper-right corner of the screen; 2) expanding the Quick Search or Advanced Search section; and 3) checking a 'with evaluations' box. Courses with evaluations are not visually differentiated from those without when browsing classes (as opposed to searching for them).

[52] Child, Maxwell L. and Christian B. Flow. 'Faculty Passes Q Reforms.' The Harvard Crimson, February 13, 2008.

Rollout

CourseWorks already includes a mechanism for displaying the quantitative results of course evaluations to Columbia students; however, the mechanism requires both a department administrator and the individual professor to opt in to the system. Currently, only the Journalism school publishes results using this system, but it is available to any Columbia school that uses CourseWorks. Simply checking this box, therefore, is a great first step towards a robust open course evaluation system. The mechanism for publicizing quantitative data to the Columbia community already exists within CourseWorks, and every effort should be made to release this quantitative data as soon as possible. A more robust system that also allows for the publication of targeted quantitative and qualitative questions should be developed for the future.[53]

For the initial rollout period, we believe that publishing evaluations only of tenured faculty is a sensible interim step. Among all instructors, tenured faculty have the least to lose from an open system; a partial system will allow time to correct mistakes and experiment with new ideas. After the first two semesters, non-tenured faculty and student instructors should also be integrated into the system on the terms specified in this report.

All new faculty members should receive a grace period of two semesters of teaching at Columbia before their reviews are made public. Every new professor should be given the opportunity to adjust to Columbia University and incorporate feedback from initial reviews before his or her evaluation results are included in the open course evaluation system. When this system is first implemented, existing professors whose reviews are included should benefit from this same grace period. Reviews of existing tenured and non-tenured faculty should be published beginning with the evaluation period when the data was first collected online. These published evaluations should not include any evaluations from the first two semesters of teaching at Columbia.

A grace period for any faculty member teaching a course for the first time should also be considered. Even experienced professors can benefit from one semester of feedback in order to improve the course before it is subject to public review.

This rollout system has the support of Political Science Professor Richard Pious:

[53] The current CourseWorks implementation falls short of the ideal. It allows for viewing of only quantitative data, not qualitative reviews. Additionally, the published results are difficult to find and are not integrated with the course catalog.

> *I am certainly in favor of opening course evaluations to the CU community, preferably as part of Courseworks. I think students are entitled to full information as they make decisions about classes to take, and I don't see why evaluations of classroom performance should be exempt, when just about every other facet of modern life involves quantitative evaluation. I would suggest that faculty in their first year of teaching in the university, and those offering courses for the first-time (even if senior members) need not have these first evaluations made public. Often there is significant improvement after a 'tryout' period. As with live theater, one ought to be allowed one semester of tryouts and dress rehearsals before the critics get a shot at the show on its official opening date.*

For the reasons outlined in the earlier section, graduate student instructors should only be integrated into the system should they explicitly chose to make their evaluation results public.

Features for Further Discussion

A number of interesting additional features have been proposed beyond the standard implementation above. While many of these features may introduce additional costs and complications, the subcommittee believes that these ideas have significant merits and should be investigated. Many of these features are rare or non-existent in course evaluation systems at our peer schools, representing an outstanding opportunity for Columbia to innovate.

Review Voting. It is now standard for any website offering reviews or a Q&A format — including ecommerce sites like Amazon.com, third-party evaluation sites such as myEdu.com, and forums like Quora.com and StackOverflow.com — to offer viewers the chance to approve or disapprove (vote up or down) a review's 'usefulness.' Reviews are displayed in descending order of usefulness as voted on by readers. This practice enjoys the obvious advantage that information widely regarded as helpful is at the top of the page, and that, conversely, unhelpful reviews are rarely seen. We believe that Columbia should adopt this industry-standard for its course reviews; in particular, we recommend a format similar to Amazon.com's, which places the 'most useful positive review' and 'most useful negative review' at the top of the page, and the rest of the reviews in descending

order of usefulness.[54] Highly-acclaimed StackOverflow.com, which has pioneered the next generation of Q&A content management based on 'reputation,' is also a useful guide.

In addition to making the information more useful to students, this system also partly mitigates concerns about unfair or biased reviews. Students are in general critical readers and will tend to vote down (i.e., 'not useful') a review that betrays an obvious vendetta or bias (or, at least, they will tend not to vote it up). Unhelpful reviews, over time, should sink to the bottom of the list.

***Ex post facto* reviews.** The true value of an educational experience is often not clear until months or even years after the fact, when the former student finds inspiration or an application for the knowledge in the classroom, in an interview, or on the job. Designers of course evaluations have recognized this from the beginning; as Columbia President William McGill (1970-1980) points out in the introduction to the 1973 *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide*, 'it is very difficult to judge the ultimate value of any course from an immediate and superficial judgment of the course content or the instructor's manner. What counts is the distillation of knowledge ten years or more from now.' Obviously, it is be difficult to predict what experiences will stay with us years later – so why not simply ask which ones actually did? Students should be able to post reviews about a class months or years after graduating; in fact, they should be solicited for them at some intervals after leaving Columbia.[55] (To avoid confusion, these reviews should be visually differentiated from reviews left by currently enrolled students.) There are technical hurdles with authenticating former students; however, since Columbia students retain their unique UNIs and email addresses after graduating, reasonably simple email-based authentication should be feasible.

We know of no University-based system that uses this feature; ironically, third-party sites that do not authenticate users already permit it by default (though they do not solicit reviews after the fact).

Dropped-Class reviews. Failing to ask students who drop classes for a review introduces a significant selection bias into the results. Columbia's system should capture this information by immediately prompting students who withdraw for a class for an evaluation (possibly one as short as the single question 'Why did you drop the class?').

[54] We do not believe that the superficial resemblance between such a Columbia course evaluation system and a commercial website like Amazon.com should be taken as evidence for 'commoditization' of the reviewed classes. The usefulness-voting idiom pertains to the reviews per se, not to the entities reviewed.
[55] Perhaps at intervals of 1, 5, and 10 years.

These results should be published alongside normal reviews, but visually differentiated from them. Hearing from other students who already dropped a particular class is almost certainly the best possible way for the next potential dropper to avoid the problem.

Dropped-class reviews evaluations will tend to be more negative than end-of-semester evaluations. Of course, they should be subject to the same monitoring conditions as normal reviews, with any unfairly critical, abusive, or inappropriate reviews removed; nevertheless, faculty may reasonably have some reservations about releasing these data. The subcommittee proposes therefore that dropped-class reviews be solicited but kept private (that is, for the instructor's and supervisor's use only) during an trial period of three to five years, after which the question of publication be revisited.

Grade Distributions. Advocates for publishing the full distribution of grades in a class (in histogram format, presumably) believe that it can help combat grade inflation and more fairly standardize grades across the university. Additionally, it may mitigate concerns about discrepancies between the average GPA of students at different Columbia schools (e.g., the College vs. SEAS). Opponents note that it will make shopping for an 'easy A' dangerously simple. In fact, Columbia has a long history of making grade distributions public; full distributions on every class, accompanied by analyses of grade inflation, were routinely published in the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide* starting in 1972 (see Appendix A).

Tighter Integration with Teaching Center. The Columbia University Teaching Center[56] offers a robust portfolio of assessment, workshops, training, and other resources to graduate student instructors who wish to improve their teaching skills.[57] The same resources are made available to all faculty members; however, very few faculty members make use of them.[58] We believe that the relatively small allocation of resources to the Teaching Center (reflected in the fact that many students and instructors are not aware of its existence) is regrettable. High quality teaching and familiarity with state-of-the-art pedagogical techniques like active learning benefit faculty as much as students; as Prof. Sam Silverstein notes, "Good teaching motivates students and stimulates their thinking. Faculty investments in creative teaching pay dividends in increasing the depth of faculty and student thinking about a subject, and the quality of student feedback."[59]

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[56] http://www.columbia.edu/cu/tat

[57] The Arthur J. Samberg Institute for Teaching Excellence provides similar services exclusively to Business School students.

[58] Conversation with Professor Steven Mintz, February 7, 2012.

[59] Email from Professor Sam Silverstein, March 24, 2012.

We believe that Columbia should invest more funds in the Teaching Center, seek to raise its profile, and fully integrate the Center into the evaluation process. Emphasizing continuing education of faculty via the Teaching Center fosters a culture that more highly prizes pedagogical excellence and improvement, consistent with Columbia's mission to be a world leader in higher education.

Incentives. Many institutions offer either positive or negative incentives to encourage students to fill out the evaluation form, such as the early release of grades; these incentives have been shown to significantly increase the response rate of the surveys.[60] However, some universities, including MIT, have elected not to provide such incentives, citing various cultural/historical reasons as well as the 'overjustification effect' – the tendency of extrinsic incentives, even positive ones, to reduce a student's intrinsic motivation to perform a task, which might in turn reduce the quality of reviews and other collected information.[61] We believe this problem deserves further study (and note that it would make an excellent fodder for the Psychology department.) In the meantime, Columbia should consider such incentives if evaluation response rates are unacceptably low.

Mid-semester Evaluations. Provide instructors with the option to conduct (and possibly publish) a mid-semester evaluation. A student who makes a useful suggestion in a mid-semester evaluation might still be enrolled in time to see it implemented. (CourseWorks already provides this capability.)

Zagat-style Reviews. Like many other universities, Columbia has a history of publishing course reviews in a (physical) handbook compiled from University-solicited information by an official student-run agency (the *Columbia-Barnard Course Guide*). At nearly all schools we surveyed, these committees were largely supplanted during the transition to online reviews in the last decade; however, there is no inherent conflict between the online collection of data and its summarization by a student committee. Indeed, such summaries may still be useful alongside, or instead of, exhaustive publication of all reviews. The salient objection to Zagat-style edited reviews is the prohibitive cost of paying humans to sort reviews and aggregate comments; however, within a few years, natural language processing software will reach a level of sophistication at which automation of much of the process may be feasible, perhaps making Zagat-style reviews more financially viable.

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[60] Conversation with Registrar Barry Kane, February 13, 2012.

[61] Conversation with Rosanne Santucci, Office of Faculty Support, MIT, January 23, 2012.

Informational Videos. The SEAS Engineering Graduate Student Council is currently pursuing a proposal to publish short video interviews with all SEAS instructors regarding course content and expectations prior to the enrollment period, possibly also including short excerpts from previous lectures.[62] This would allow potential students to familiarize themselves with instructor personalities and teaching styles without an unmanageably large courseload the first two weeks of the semester. While such videos would not replace course evaluations, we believe they are an intriguing idea and that the SEAS experiment should be closely watched.

Wiki-reviews. The success of Wikipedia and other open source collaborative knowledge ventures have amply demonstrated the potential of 'crowdsourcing' enabled by information technology. They suggest an intriguing possibility: could students in a course collaborate in such a way as to reach consensus on a single, comprehensive, definitive review? To our knowledge, this type of collaboration has not been attempted for course evaluations, and we believe this is an exciting idea that should be followed up.

Conclusion

The Open Course Evaluations Subcommittee believes that open course evaluations are a force for positive change and an important piece of the culture of higher education. Mechanisms exist to mitigate or entirely overcome the drawbacks of publishing course evaluation data, and on balance the benefits to both faculty and students significantly outweigh the costs. Columbia should work with appropriate parties from CUIT and each school to implement an official campus-wide open course evaluations policy as soon as possible.

[62] Conversation with EGSC President Andrew Kang and Vice President Cathy Chen, February 24, 2012.

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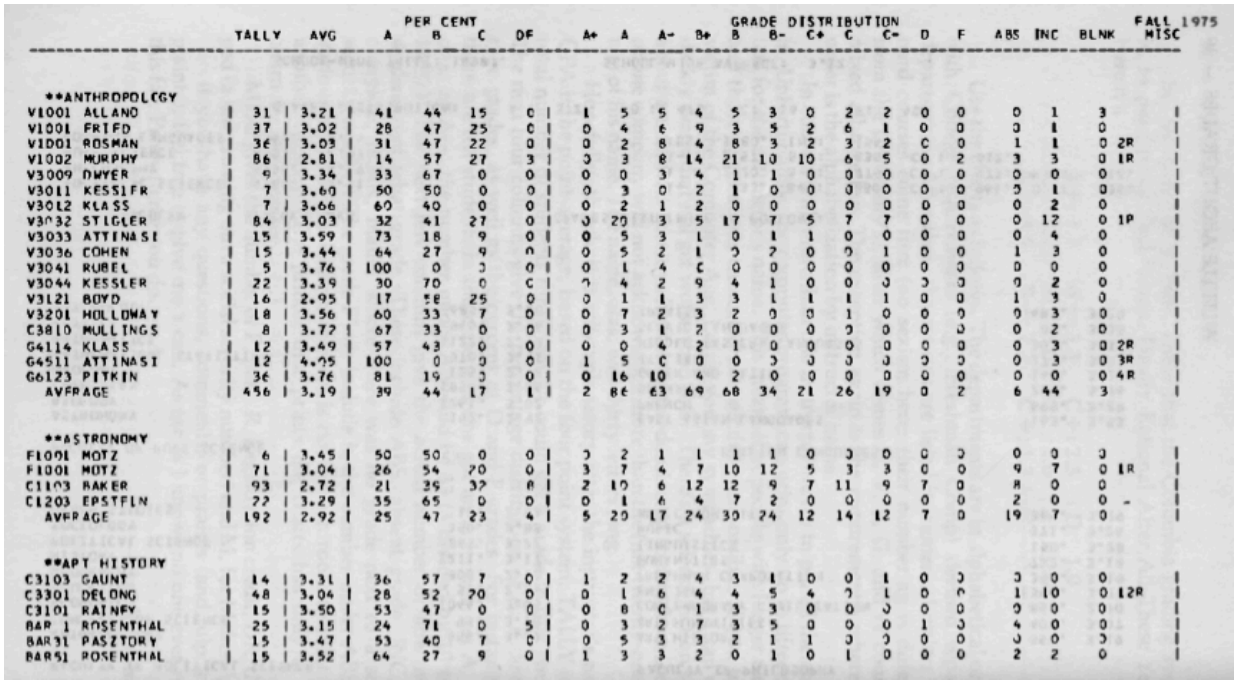
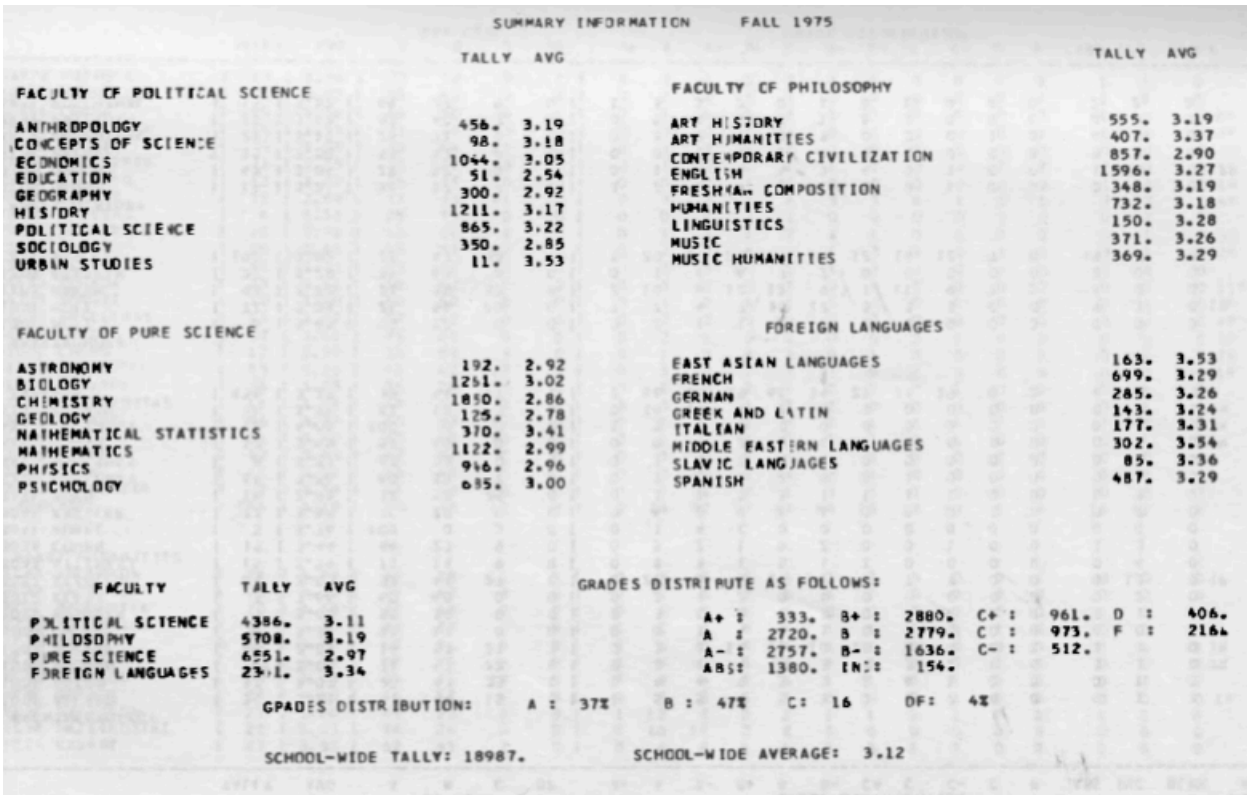
Appendix A – Excerpts from the Columbia-Barnard Course Guides



PER CENT GRADE DISTRIBUTION — FALL 1975

	TALLY	AVG	A	B	C	DF	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F	ABS	INC	BLNK	MISC
**ANTHROPOLOGY																					
V1001 ALLANO	31	3.21	41	44	15	0	1	5	5	4	5	3	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	3	
V1001 FRIED	37	3.02	28	47	25	0	0	4	6	9	3	5	2	6	1	0	0	0	1	0	
V1001 ROSMAN	36	3.03	31	47	22	0	0	2	8	4	8	3	2	3	2	0	0	1	1	0	2R
V1002 MURPHY	86	2.81	14	57	27	3	0	3	8	14	21	10	10	6	5	0	2	3	3	0	1R
V3009 DWYER	9	3.34	33	67	0	0	0	0	3	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
V3011 KESSLER	7	3.60	50	50	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
V3012 KLASS	7	3.66	60	40	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
V3032 STIGLER	84	3.03	32	41	27	0	0	20	3	5	17	7	5	7	7	0	0	0	12	0	1P
V3033 ATTINASI	15	3.59	73	18	9	0	0	5	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	
V3036 COHEN	15	3.44	64	27	9	0	0	5	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	
V3041 RUBEL	5	3.76	100	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
V3044 KESSLER	22	3.39	30	70	0	0	0	4	2	9	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
V3121 BOYD	16	2.95	17	58	25	0	0	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	
V3201 HOLLOWAY	18	3.56	60	33	7	0	0	7	2	3	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	
C3810 MULLINGS	8	3.72	67	33	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	
G4114 KLASS	12	3.49	57	43	0	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2R
G4511 ATTINASI	12	4.00	100	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3R
G6123 PITKIN	36	3.76	81	19	0	0	0	16	10	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4R
AVERAGE	456	3.19	39	44	17	1	2	86	63	69	68	34	21	26	19	0	2	6	44	3	
**ASTRONOMY																					
F1001 MOTZ	6	3.45	50	50	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
F1001 MOTZ	71	3.04	26	54	20	0	3	7	4	7	10	12	5	3	3	0	0	9	7	0	1R
C1103 BAKER	93	2.72	21	39	32	8	2	10	6	12	12	9	7	11	9	7	0	8	0	0	
C1203 EPSTEIN	22	3.29	35	65	0	0	0	1	6	4	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	-
AVERAGE	192	2.92	25	47	23	4	5	20	17	24	30	24	12	14	12	7	0	19	7	0	
**APT HISTORY																					
C3103 GAUNT	14	3.31	36	57	7	0	1	2	2	4	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
C3301 DELONG	48	3.04	28	52	20	0	0	1	6	4	4	5	4	0	1	0	0	1	10	0	12R
C3101 RAINEY	15	3.50	53	47	0	0	0	8	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
BAR 1 ROSENTHAL	25	3.15	24	71	0	5	0	3	2	7	3	5	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	
BAR31 PASZTORY	15	3.47	53	40	7	0	0	5	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
BAR51 ROSENTHAL	15	3.52	64	27	9	0	1	3	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	

Figure A-1. Grade Distributions by Course



SUMMARY INFORMATION FALL 1975

	TALLY	AVG
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE		
ANTHROPOLOGY	456.	3.19
CONCEPTS OF SCIENCE	98.	3.18
ECONOMICS	1044.	3.05
EDUCATION	51.	2.54
GEOGRAPHY	300.	2.92
HISTORY	1211.	3.17
POLITICAL SCIENCE	865.	3.22
SOCIOLOGY	350.	2.85
URBAN STUDIES	11.	3.53
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY		
ART HISTORY	555.	3.19
ART HUMANITIES	407.	3.37
CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION	857.	2.90
ENGLISH	1596.	3.27
FRESHMAN COMPOSITION	348.	3.19
HUMANITIES	732.	3.18
LINGUISTICS	150.	3.28
MUSIC	371.	3.26
MUSIC HUMANITIES	369.	3.29
FACULTY OF PURE SCIENCE		
ASTRONOMY	192.	2.92
BIOLOGY	1251.	3.02
CHEMISTRY	1850.	2.86
GEOLOGY	125.	2.78
MATHEMATICAL STATISTICS	310.	3.41
MATHEMATICS	1122.	2.99
PHYSICS	946.	2.96
PSYCHOLOGY	685.	3.00
FOREIGN LANGUAGES		
EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES	163.	3.53
FRENCH	699.	3.29
GERMAN	285.	3.26
GREEK AND LATIN	143.	3.24
ITALIAN	177.	3.31
MIDDLE EASTERN LANGUAGES	302.	3.54
SLAVIC LANGUAGES	85.	3.36
SPANISH	487.	3.29

FACULTY	TALLY	AVG
POLITICAL SCIENCE	4386.	3.11
PHILOSOPHY	5708.	3.19
PURE SCIENCE	6551.	2.97
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	2341.	3.34

GRADES DISTRIBUTE AS FOLLOWS:

A+ :	333.	B+ :	2880.	C+ :	961.	D :	406.
A :	2720.	B :	2779.	C :	973.	F :	2164
A- :	2757.	B- :	1636.	C- :	512.		
ABS:	1380.	INC:	154.				

GRADES DISTRIBUTION: A : 37% B : 47% C: 16 DF: 4%

SCHOOL-WIDE TALLY: 18987. SCHOOL-WIDE AVERAGE: 3.12

Figure A-2. Grade Distributions by Department