

To: Provost Martha Pollack

Re: Policies governing release of student evaluations of teaching

Dear Martha,

The committee on student evaluation release policies included two graduate students (Chukwuka Mbagwu, CoE; Chase Stone, SNRE), two undergraduate students (Anuskha Sarkar and Sean Pitt, both LSA), three tenure stream faculty (David Hess, Ross; Bill Schultz, CoE; Silke-Maria Weineck, LSA), and one lecturer (Anne Manuel, LSA). Its recommendations are as follows:

1. Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) will be released, using the new instrument currently developed by the committee convened by James Holloway, starting with courses taught in F16.
2. Since the release is a response to a request by students, SETs will be released to students only, not to the UM community at large or the general public. Students accessing the system will be asked to acknowledge that the data are for their consumption only.
3. To ensure that the data presented will be meaningful and in order to encourage participation, SETs will be released if one of two thresholds is met: a 50% participation rate or a minimum total of 30 evaluations per class
4. No SETs for classes taught by faculty or lecturers during their first three years at UM will be released
5. Under significant unforeseen circumstances affecting their teaching (such as illness, personal trauma, or other factors affecting teaching success), faculty can opt out of having SETs for a given class released. Such an opt-out will require permission from the department chair and has to be requested before the end of the term, with the understanding that it will be rare.
6. Courses for which SETs are not released shall be marked with a code explaining the reason (low participation, new faculty, faculty opt-out)
7. The SET portal will direct students to a brief framing statement containing caveats established by the relevant literature (such as the correlation between grading and evaluations; potential bias due to race, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, etc; lack of established correlation between SETs and learning outcomes)

For the committee,

Silke-Maria Weineck
Chair, SACUA
Professor, German and Comparative Literature
Chair, Comparative Literature