



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

UNIVERSITY SENATE

1100 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, Maryland 20742-7541
301.405.5805 TEL 301.405.5749 FAX
<http://www.inform.umd.edu/CampusInfo/Senate>

DATE: 22 April 2004

TO: Joel Cohen, Senate Chair

FROM: Dennis M. Kivlighan, Chair, Joint Senate/Office of Academic Affairs
Task Force on Course and Teaching Evaluation

SUBJECT OF REPORT: Proposal to Implement a University-wide Course Evaluation Requirement

A. Statement of Issue:

The Task Force was charged with addressing a major question, among others, of whether there should be a university-wide requirement for student evaluations. The Task Force members unanimously agree that a university-wide course evaluation requirement and system be adopted. This document addresses that question and others with relevant recommendations and rationale for how this can be achieved.

B. Resolution:

For the purposes of improving the quality of teaching and to assure consistency and comparability of information obtained through student evaluations of teaching, we recommend that there be a university-wide requirement for student evaluations in all undergraduate and graduate courses.

C. Rationale:

The Senate Executive Committee and the Provost jointly charged this Task Force, (a) with determining whether the campus should adopt a University-wide requirement for student evaluations of teaching, (b) what the criteria and process for implementation should be if the Task Force were to recommend a standard evaluation instrument, and (c) how the campus might use both a standard instrument and other forms of teaching evaluation to meet multiple needs. After extensive study, both of processes and instruments in use at peer institutions and of the literature, the Task Force does recommend that the campus adopt a University-wide student evaluation instrument for undergraduate and graduate courses. Research completed over the past two decades suggests that student evaluations are psychometrically sound and positively related to a number of indicators of teaching effectiveness. The Task Force further recommends that the instrument contain a set of standard questions, as well as optional ones added by colleges, departments or programs, or instructors. Third, the Task Force recommends that the Internet be used, both to administer the instrument and to make some of the information available to students. Finally, the Task Force suggests additional modes of teaching evaluation and the ways in which the campus might use these multiple indicators of teaching effectiveness.