



# Center for Teaching Excellence Hampton University Teaching Matters

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## The Course/Instructor Evaluation Process

by **Spencer Baker**

As the semester rapidly progresses, soon you will be engaged in the university's course/instructor evaluation process. These evaluations provide important information about your course activities and teaching effectiveness as perceived by your students. I know that you have a strong interest in the appropriate administration of the evaluations and in the procedures for the evaluation process. As you will remember, distribution of the evaluation forms is controlled by your department. Your responsibility is to ensure that a student proctor picks up the evaluation forms from the departmental office at the appropriate time and brings them to the classroom. You have an additional responsibility for ensuring that critical information about the course is prominently posted in the classroom prior to completion of the evaluations. Before the students begin the evaluation process, you must leave the classroom. Upon their completion, the student proctor will collect the evaluation forms and return them to your department.

These initial steps in the course/instructor evaluation process are pretty easy. However, understanding the results of the evaluation is often more challenging. The instructor will receive a separate report sheet for each course and section. At the top of the sheet will be identifying information, but even more important is the aggregated data included below. For brevity, the questions have been abbreviated on the left side of the report and are separated into two areas, one for course evaluation and the other for professor evaluation. The first columns of data under the title "Course Statistics" provide information about the number of students responding, the mean rating with its standard deviation, and the minimum and maximum ratings for the specific course and section. The second set of columns under the title "All Sect" provides information about all sections of the course for comparison. The final columns under the title "Dept Statistics" provide information about the overall department or course identifier (e.g., ENG, HEA, etc.). You may use this information to compare yourself with other instructors in your department.

The bottom row for both the course and instructor portions of the report are overall averages of the questions so you can again compare yourself to others. I recommend that you pay particular attention to the minimum and maximum scores and the standard deviation columns. These measures of variability provide you with the "spread" of how students rated the item. A small variability measure means everyone was close to consensus, while a large variability means that there may not have been a consensus.

Although the Course/Instructor Evaluation report may seem formidable, it provides a wealth of information in a very concise format. As a member of the faculty, you should always look for opportunities to improve and the course/instruction evaluation process is one means for helping you to do just that. So get ready - the course/instruction evaluation period will be here before you know it! However, you are now armed with the information you need for achieving a successful outcome.

## Announcements

The Hampton University Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) is presenting its first Brown Bag Lunchtime Seminar entitled “Expanding Your Research Through Collaboration” as part of a series on Wednesday, October 15, 2008 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Student Center Cyber Lounge. This short one-hour interactive session will include presentations by CTE staff and behavioral science researchers to increase the capacity of faculty to obtain and conduct research grants, and to foster collaboration with researchers whose projects are conceptually related to increase funding opportunities across disciplines. Upon completion of the session, participants will be able to create a research strategy and identify potential collaborators for their proposed projects. Seating is limited to the first 20 participants.

Another Center for Teaching Excellence initiative this academic year is to assist in the development of a Mentorship Program for faculty designed to (1) increase the overall quality of teaching, scholarship, and service among faculty; (2) increase collaboration between senior and junior faculty; and (3) lay the groundwork for long range productivity through training and nurture. The overall aim of the program is to provide junior faculty with opportunities to engage in scholarly research in order to increase participation in conferences/presentations, enhance professional writing for publications, and improve teaching strategies. Emphasis will be placed on interdisciplinary research and collaborations with faculty and students. The effectiveness of research and teaching strategies will be addressed through a series of workshops/seminars offered through the Center for Teaching Excellence to enhance faculty participation in the research and teaching process. We are interested in surveying your views and beliefs about the mentoring process, and would also like to learn of any established procedures for mentoring faculty in your academic units. This information will be used in our efforts to institute a university-wide mentorship program.

The AAC&U’s fall Network for Academic Renewal Meeting (Diversity, Learning, and Inclusive Excellence: Accelerating and Assessing Progress), is scheduled for October 16-18, 2008, in Long Beach, California, and Engaging Science, Advancing Learning: General Education, Majors, and the New Global Century, will be held November 6-8, 2008, in Providence, Rhode Island. Join the AAC&U contact list to be notified when early registration opens. AAC&U is also announcing that its 2009 Annual Meeting will be held January 21-24, 2009, at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel in Seattle, Washington. A preconference symposium will focus on issues of sustainability. More details about the meeting will be available in June on the website. **For more information, visit the AAC&U at [www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org).**