Teaching effectiveness has been considered a major criterion for tenure and promotion at Penn State for very many years. PS-23 made teaching effectiveness a specific criterion (along with research, scholarly growth as displayed in mastery of one's field, and service to the community) in obtaining both tenure and promotion in academic rank.

Recently the Senate heard from the Committee to Review Procedures of Academic Units for Student Evaluation of Courses. The Committee concluded that Penn State has no system-wide set of objectives or policy with respect to the student evaluation of courses, and that course evaluation is rarely distinguished from teacher evaluation. Moreover, a survey conducted by the Committee suggested that in most units of the University, student survey instruments are the primary, and often the only means by which teaching effectiveness is judged for purposes of personnel decisions. This is clearly NOT what the Senate ever intended—indeed a careful reading of the several discussions in the Senate in the years since 1970 will show clearly that judging has several times been explicitly disapproved of by the Senate. Most recently, the Senate adopted, in April 1975, the following recommendation:

Administrators and faculty members involved in personnel decisions relating to tenure, promotions and merit increases must exercise extreme caution in judging teaching effectiveness solely by the results of survey instruments. Surveys of student responses, however, while important to take into account for general institutional purposes, must not by themselves be regarded as official judgments of faculty competence, nor as an adequate assessment for the purpose of improving instruction. Recommendations regarding personnel actions must incorporate various kinds of information on teaching effectiveness, which may include critical observation of instructor performances, self-appraisal, and other data concerning course materials, student opinion, faculty opinion, procedures, conditions, etc.

While student evaluation by means of questionnaires may have a place, provided such surveys are appropriately formulated and administered, they cannot possibly serve adequately as the sole means of judging teaching effectiveness. All too often evaluation instruments are designed for the student's short run perspective rather than the more appropriate long run perspective of the educator. The student is inevitably concerned with course requirements, the amount of work involved, the kind of examination given, how course grades are determined, term projects required, etc. Teaching effectiveness evaluated from the long run point of view (a point of view too long to expect the student to take while enrolled in a course) more properly concentrates on the instructor's command of subject matter, employment of effective pedagogical devices, ability to generate enthusiasm for his material in others, and the overall ability to make lasting, life-long and significant contribution to the student's education. Because of this crucial difference, it is clear that many efforts toward obtaining student evaluations are of extremely limited use in providing a means of academic judgment of teaching effectiveness for the purposes of tenure and promotion decisions.
Our major conclusion, therefore, is that the Senate must reaffirm this statement and recommend that such policy become part of the official guidelines for the implementation of PS-23. There must be no room for doubt concerning the Senate's position.

An important question, therefore, is what other potential techniques there are for judging teaching effectiveness which could be employed? The Committee is of the opinion that the teaching mission of the faculty varies so widely from one discipline to another that probably no single evaluation technique exists which is ideal for all cases. In some areas expository skill is of primary importance; in others, the ability to lead discussions, effective use of field trips, organized laboratory demonstrations, workshops, supervision of student projects in or out of the classroom, or supervised student research papers, may be more appropriate. Thus, judging teaching effectiveness must always be developed in a manner consistent with the objective and procedures appropriate to each discipline. That a wide variety of means to judge teaching effectiveness exists in addition to the use of student questionnaires can be shown easily.

Listed here, in no particular order and without suggesting that they are all necessarily good, or that any one would be appropriate for all teaching areas, are the following possibilities, many of which are already being used somewhere in the University:

1. Follow-up of student performance in more advanced work can be used as one way of evaluating teaching effectiveness in lower division or introductory courses.

2. Ex post survey of graduates of Penn State could be undertaken to determine ex-students' views on the contributions of professional efforts in enhancing their knowledge and insight. This kind of perspective by students two or more years after leaving Penn State could be helpful.

3. Classroom visits can be arranged for members of Departmental Personnel Committees, preferably by one member at a time and at various points in given courses.

4. Oral interviews of students can be arranged for, perhaps grouped by student ability, designed explicitly to assess student evaluation of the instructor's long run teaching contribution as well as the short run perspective not irrelevant described above.

5. Departmental and/or faculty seminars, in which research in progress is reported on, can be used in a systematic way by those involved in personnel decisions to get first hand knowledge of the instructor's effectiveness in communicating with others in his chosen field.

6. Performance by students on standardized tests, particularly in introductory courses, can where appropriate be used as a technique for judging effectiveness in the classroom.

7. At the graduate level, subsequent admission to graduate schools, successful completion of degree programs, career performance by ex-students, subsequent review by ex-students of the value of work done with a given instructor all suggest themselves as possibilities which might prove helpful in some circumstances.

8. In some cases obtaining the instructor's permission to tape typical classroom hours may prove of help in judging teaching effectiveness.
9. Use of written statements from instructors in which they evaluate themselves might be of peripheral use in getting a line on what the instructor himself regards as his chief strengths and weaknesses, his approach to his field. Obviously, this kind of information would have to be carefully elicited in an appropriate instrument and sensitively evaluated making due allowance for the personality of the instructor as well as the nature of his field and his classroom objectives.

10. In many cases it is highly likely that faculty members can obtain insight into the probable teaching effectiveness of instructors from conversation, reading the instructor's course materials, etc. This may be of particular advantage when built up over several years of close association. So developed, such subjective information can be of value.

This list is by no means exhaustive nor do we suggest that any method mentioned above is ever singularly appropriate in a particular situation. But that there are numerous ways of judging teaching effectiveness, other than examination of results of surveys of student reaction as reported in written reports is clearly shown.

The Senate should underscore and reiterate previous positions on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Moreover, it appears essential that the Senate move to establish more explicit guidance to the various Penn State academic units for evaluating teaching effectiveness. At this time, other than assuring itself that such evaluations are NOT based solely on student questionnaires, the Senate should encourage maximal experimentation so as to develop better and more complete alternative techniques. Such experimentation can not only improve the evaluation of teaching effectiveness in one unit, but can enrich the potential possibilities for other units as well.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: The Faculty Affairs Committee recommends adoption of the following:

1. The Senate reaffirms its statement of April 1975, cited earlier within this report, that "Recommendations regarding personnel actions must incorporate various kinds of information on teaching effectiveness." Specifically, the evaluation of teaching effectiveness should in all cases be based on more than student evaluation of classroom performance.

2. The Senate reaffirms its statement in PS-23 that all evaluations of teaching effectiveness should include student input. It should, however, additionally make explicit that evidence culled from student evaluation surveys will in no case be adequate by itself to fulfill the student input requirement of PS-23.

3. The Senate requests the Provost to incorporate the substance of the above two policy statements explicitly in the "Administrative Guidelines for the Conduct of the University Promotion and Tenure Review Process."

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS
James Bartoo    Marjorie Knoll
John Brighton   Robert Malcolm
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Jeanne Chenualt Cara-Lynne Schengrund
Carolyn Dexter Ronald Smith
Ronald Dietz    Howard Theoele
L. Peter Gold   Minot Tillson
Charles Gunderman James Wambold
Philip Klein    Paul Weener