

**Faculty Standards Committee
To the University Senate
March 7, 2022**

Resolution in support of convening a University-wide task force to operationalize “evidence of teaching excellence beyond SET “(formerly known as SET+ or SET Plus)

Context

The Faculty Standards Committee (FSC) Working Group has identified problematic issues within the use of our current teaching evaluation process

- The current SETs are overemphasized as evidence of teaching effectiveness.
- Department heads, PTR committees, deans, directors, etc., employ the SET survey as a metric for several purposes, including evaluating instructor performance, eligibility for awards, etc. Not everyone using SETs for these evaluative purposes fully understands the limitations of the current SET, such as inherent bias, appropriate use of comments; and use of data (i.e., what is professional and ethical responsibility when using this data).

Holistic teaching evaluation efforts have been repeatedly discussed over a period of years, but actual implementation is scattered and varies in comprehensiveness and buy-in.

- Institution-level guidance has not been specific enough to enable (and motivate) departments to invest in tackling the challenge of developing a meaningful assessment of evidence-based teaching excellence beyond the SET.
- There continue to be limited consequences for departments and programs that do not produce and follow policies beyond SET.
- Individual committees at the department level or FSC level do not believe they possess the mandate or agency to move more progressive national examples of evaluation models forward to mitigate recognized problems.

Therefore, the FSC Working Group recommends that an institutional strategy is needed to address the shortcomings of the current evaluation system.

Motion to Recommend:

- Phase out the current SET+ nomenclature and policies – they have proven to be confusing and do not address the key issues identified with the current SET.
- Create a task force to be formed and charged by the Provost that includes all relevant stakeholders (Provost’s office/administration, senate, AAUP, ODI, OIRE, faculty, students), and clearly identify to whom the task force’s recommendations will go.
 - Considerations should be given to a manageable size of the task force (10-12 members)
 - Suggest task force be assembled spring 2022; major work next year, with a report of recommendations to the Provost and University Senate by end of 22/23.
- Create a standing committee distinct from the taskforce
 - charged with monitoring effectiveness, evaluating the impact, identifying potential concerns of the SET and teaching evaluation strategy beyond SET, and recommending regular revisions to the Provost’s Office going forward

- members serving for a set term (e.g., staggered 3year) and distributed representation of units over time.
- As an expression of shared governance and facilitation of buy-in and accountability, the communication strategy to the broader community of UConn instructors should be transparent, provide mechanisms for frequent input and recognize time spent on the thoughtful engagement of contributors.

Specific Charge and Scope of Work

The task force's main purpose should be to develop and recommend a supplement to the existing SET that narrowly addresses the key shortcomings identified by the FSC Working Group, as well as feedback from previous studies of this issue: Specifically, the task force should address:

- A name that better reflects the purpose of the supplement – SET+ misguidedly still positions the SET as the “primary” or most important element of evaluation of teaching
- An explicit framework and process for identifying what contextual factors may be at play for an individual faculty member related to their positionality, how identities or topics taught might bias evaluations, and how unintended, inequitable impact can be mitigated.
- A focus on both formative and summative feedback to the faculty member that provides explicit examples of their current positive teaching practices, as well as actionable feedback in areas of needed improvement.
- Outline a pathway with specific benchmarks to define, develop, evaluate, and reward teaching excellence beyond tweaking or replacing instruments. Recommendation may include minimum teaching criteria, what actions should be taken on department and/or institutions level (including identifying point person on meso and macrolevel)
- Option to conduct limited temporary feasibility experiments, e.g., with student course experience evidence and peer reviews.