

MEMORANDUM

To: RIT Faculty
From: Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Subject: Evaluating teaching effectiveness
Date: June 2012

Due to aging technology and inconsistent systems for gathering student input on teaching effectiveness, we will take our current mixture of student rating systems offline in August 2013 and fully implement a new on-line system beginning in the fall of 2013. To prepare for a new system, and at the recommendation of the academic affairs committee of the academic senate, during the 2012-2013 academic year, we will pilot two systems that can respond to our need for a consistent university-wide process for student input and which incorporates current higher education standards related to instrument design, administration, data collection, report format and use of results. An ad hoc committee, consisting of members from the academic affairs subcommittee, will oversee the pilot and will be soliciting faculty willing to participate in the pilot over the course of the summer. You can expect to receive more information about this pilot project early in the fall quarter of 2012.

More importantly, I want to express my clear position that the information from student ratings of teaching effectiveness is but one of several methods we use at RIT for evaluating overall teaching effectiveness. Other methods include, but are not limited to, peer evaluation of classroom teaching; teaching materials such as exams, assignments and syllabi; awards; and unsolicited letters from students and alumni. Ensuring that there are articulated processes that include a wide range of methodologies in all the colleges is an important priority that we need to address this next year. Over the summer, the deans and I will develop a working paper that will outline a robust system of teaching evaluation and I will ask each dean, as part of their expectations for 2012-2013, to work with the faculty in each college to develop college practices and procedures for implementing a wide range of methods in support of teaching evaluation.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the evaluation of teaching effectiveness is a critical component to the overall evaluation of faculty for annual merit adjustments, mid-tenure review, tenure review, and promotion review. It follows that all materials from the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, including (but not limited to) the input from student ratings, must and shall be available to the individuals and committees in the official review process. I ask for your support in making sure this information is available to these parties.

RIT has been, and always will be, known for its commitment to excellence in teaching effectiveness. A robust system of evaluating teaching effectiveness is critical to demonstrating this commitment and I look forward to codifying this commitment with a renewed approach to evaluation.

Jeremy Haefner
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs