

# Teaching Committee Advisory Report (revised)

In Fall 2019, Interim Dean of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, Rex Welshon, charged the LAS Teaching Committee with providing recommendations for two timely and important issues related to teaching. The first issue was how to implement evaluations of impactful teaching beyond the classroom for purposes of retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) criteria. The second issue focused on the use of peer observations in teaching and their use in teaching evaluations. The Teaching Committee met on November 13, 2019, and the recommendations (below) were developed.

## Charge to the Committee: Evaluation of Teaching Impact for Retention, Promotion, and Tenure

Historical [CU policies related to measuring teaching effectiveness](#) are made available on the [Teaching Quality Framework Initiative](#) website. This policy document explores guidance on the following: 1) development and use of multiple measures of teaching; 2) defining teaching quality; and 3) use of Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs) for CU Boulder and other system campuses. New CU Regent rules focus on the evaluation of [teaching impact beyond the classroom](#). We must first recognize the tools available to evaluate quality teaching before determining how to measure teaching impact.

*Recommendation 1:* We urge Departments to use this aforementioned CU policy document and the [Tools for Teaching Evaluation](#) made possible through the Teaching Quality Framework Initiative when re-writing or editing RPT criteria.

*Recommendation 2:* In Spring 2019, the [Faculty Assembly Teaching Evaluation Task Force](#) provided recommendations for annual merit ratings and RPT criteria. We urge Departments to review this document, especially the bulleted items included in the **Teaching Portfolio** (item 10, starting on pg 2).

*Recommendation 3:* We urge Departments to develop mentoring plans, which may be formal or informal. To provide two examples, a [formal mentoring plan](#) was established in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry for faculty on the tenure-track. In this Department, there is also an informal [Enhancing Teaching Effectiveness](#) tool for all faculty members, regardless of rank.

*Recommendation 4:* We urge Departments to think broadly about how to connect teaching effectiveness with student learning across their majors and programs. This could include the following: 1) utilizing formative and summative assessments within a course or across several courses; 2) developing tools to adequately capture student learning as a student moves from lower-division to upper-division courses; and 3) linking course learning objectives across several courses as appropriate.

*Recommendation 5:* We urge Departments to develop a guide for the [RPT Teaching Statement](#). This guide could include components such as: 1) goals for student learning; 2) preparation for teaching; 3) methods and teaching practice; 4) creating an inclusive learning environment; 5) assessment of goals; 6) mentorship and advising; 7) evaluating teaching impact; and 8) teaching service and scholarship.

*(3/3/2020) Recommendation 6:* We urge evaluators (chairs and evaluation committees) to consider the existence of bias in FCQs. The [UCCS Faculty Assembly Committee for Women has consolidated evidence](#) for reference. The [Teaching Quality Framework initiative at CU Boulder has described similar concerns](#)

and suggests that student evaluation of teaching be used primarily as formative feedback rather than summative assessment.

*(3/3/2020) Recommendation 7:* We urge departments to identify the immediate instructional setting as the place where regular assigned teaching occurs. Any teaching impact at the departmental, campus, or community level (and beyond) demonstrates impacts of teaching and learning beyond the candidate's immediate instructional setting.

### Charge to the Committee: Peer Evaluation of Teaching

The second charge to the committee was to provide recommendation concerning peer observation or peer evaluation of teaching. Many LAS departments are encouraging or requiring the use of peer observation in the RPT process.

*Recommendation 1:* We urge Departments to visit the [Resources page](#) of the Teaching Quality Framework Initiative and examine the *Peer Observation* menu. These resources include peer observation protocols, peer evaluation plans (for setting up a Departmental procedure), and letter writing guides for peer observation to provide feedback to the teacher from the observer.

*Recommendation 2:* We urge Departments to utilize the [master list of peer observation themes](#) that best suit their teaching needs. This master list can be used when developing peer observation forms (templates are available by clicking the link included in this recommendation above).

*Recommendation 3:* We urge Departments to include peer observation as part of a developed mentoring plan with the realization that [peer observation includes several steps](#): 1) pre-observation, 2) observation of the teacher, 3) post-observation debriefing, and 4) reflective summary by the teacher and/or formal letter by the observer.