Interim Report of the Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce
April 23, 2021

Respectfully Submitted by
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2020-2021 Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce
Interim Report to Senate Academic Advisory Committee

Overview

In response to a request from the UMSL Senate Academic Advisory Committee and of UMSL Provost Marie Mora, the UMSL Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce was formed and has been working to review, develop, and recommend a research-informed, balanced, and multi-measure approach to evaluate and promote teaching effectiveness. Beginning first with careful and deliberate work on establishing a new definition and context for teaching effectiveness, the Taskforce is committed to developing a common set of standards to be used across all academic units within the university that values peer feedback, student feedback, and self-reflection to provide an important contextualization of data that is often missing when reviewing student feedback alone.

There may have never been a time more relevant for conversation and documentation of faculty teaching effectiveness. In recent years across the country, faculty have been asked to teach more and the documentation of performance in this area of one's job responsibility has often been reduced to student evaluations that are uneven, potentially biased, and inconsistent across the campus. Indeed, student feedback is a limited and narrow snapshot of faculty teaching effectiveness; we will ultimately propose multiple measures that allow faculty members to document a panoramic portrait of effective teaching.

In his book *Understanding Teaching Excellence in Higher Education* (2005), Alan Skelton argues that teaching effectiveness is a contested, value-laden concept, acknowledging that faculty, students, administrators, and employers may each have different understandings of teaching effectiveness. It is our intention that this work be seen as *collaborative* and that it promotes ongoing continuous improvement benefiting from the triangulation of multiple sources of evidence from students, peers, and self-reflection.

Summary of 2020-2021 Recommendations

This interim report describes the history and context of what led to the formation and charge of the Taskforce and shares the progress the Taskforce has made during the 2020-2021 academic year. The report concludes with an outline of the direction the Taskforce intends to take in its work for the 2021-2022 academic year. For purposes of an executive summary, we briefly present the recommendations here and invite the

Senate Academic Advisory (AA) Committee to read more about each recommendation in-depth later in the report:

- Recommendation #1: The Taskforce has drafted, sought campus input, and revised a new definition and context related to teaching effectiveness. We seek approval of the Senate AA Committee of this definition to be used as foundational for the Taskforce work moving forward.

   Effective teaching at the University of Missouri-St. Louis creates a student-focused learning environment valuing a diverse community that is inclusive and equitable. Effective teaching relies on relevant, organized, inspired, and engaged instruction and promotes critical and creative thinking.

   Effective educators use disciplinary, interdisciplinary or professional experience to design research-informed, carefully-constructed courses. Effective educators tailor teaching strategies and assessments, use appropriate technology, and ensure timely, constructive feedback to support student learning and achievement. Their high educational standards foster lifelong, self-directed learning.

   Sustained teaching effectiveness requires refinement through analysis, constructive and continuous feedback, reflection, and professional development. Effective teaching is strengthened by institutional resources, programs, and collegial support and is documented and assessed by outcomes as established by departments and instructors incorporating feedback from students, peers, and self-reflection.

- Recommendation #2: Building on the endorsement by the Provost and the Senate AA committee to implement a common student course evaluation instrument at UMSL, the Taskforce recommends piloting a standard student course evaluation instrument across end-of-term course evaluations. The committee subgroup on student feedback drafted the questions to be closely connected to the definition and context of teaching effectiveness shared above using a standard scale. The instrument is currently being evaluated for validity through a collection of student feedback on the questions via a survey and through student focus group interviews. The Taskforce requests permission to ask departments to pilot the new survey instrument as early as Summer 2021 to contribute to ongoing analysis of the instrument's reliability and validity. In

addition, the Taskforce seeks support to centralize the administration of the course evaluation surveys following the guidelines set by the UMSL Senate.

● Recommendation #3. The Taskforce seeks approval to continue its work in the 2021-2022 academic year related to developing and recommending a multi-measure approach that incorporates peer feedback and self-reflection into a holistic system of teaching evaluation. The Taskforce is committed to developing a system that is user-friendly, optimized for efficiency, and rolled out incrementally to reduce the stress and workload concerns that UMSL faculty may be experiencing.

The Taskforce Charge

In Spring 2020, the UMSL faculty Senate Academic Advisory (AA) Committee recommended the formation of a Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce. After reviewing the Senate's call for a taskforce, the Provost provided this charge to form a taskforce on teaching effectiveness in August 2020:

We are proud of the strong tradition of teaching excellence at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. However, teaching assessment at UMSL and across the University of Missouri System ranges in clarity and specificity within and across the academic units. Teaching that excels in achieving effective student learning must be assessed and rewarded in ways reflecting its high priority to the university, our faculty, and most importantly, our students. Moreover, resources and mechanisms for rewarding the excellent teaching on our campus are limited and inconsistent. UMSL faculty and other instructional staff deserve a comprehensive, clear, and meaningful process for evaluating their teaching as it pertains to their own professional development goals and opportunities for continuous improvement, tenure, promotion, merit, recognition, and other outcomes.

To align with more meaningful recognition and reward structure for distinction in teaching, together with the other institutions in the UM System, we are excited to announce that UMSL is advancing on a path to create a comprehensive method for measuring teaching effectiveness. In consultation with the Center for Teaching & Learning, the Faculty Senate Advisory Committee, the Faculty Senate Educational Outcomes Committee, and other stakeholders, the Office of the Provost has convened the Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce to leverage the foundational work previously started by the then-Intercampus Faculty Council (IFC), and where appropriate, adapt successful implementation models from peer institutions.

The Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce has four main goals:
1. *To craft a comprehensive definition of teaching effectiveness*
2. *To propose a campus-wide, multi-measure approach for the evaluation of teaching*
3. *To propose a system of support, recognize and incentivize teaching excellence*
4. *To establish a plan to measure the long-term impacts of these changes on student learning and success.*

To accomplish these goals, the Taskforce will ground its approach in research literature on the best practices and examples from peer and aspirational institutions, relying on the expertise and ingenuity of our own excellent instructors. A campus-wide dialogue is necessary to solicit input from faculty and instructional staff at all levels who will be affected by any policy changes.

The Taskforce Committee

Twelve faculty members from across the UMSL campus took up the taskforce charge for the 2020-2021 academic year. They represent a diversity of rank, academic discipline, gender, ethnicity, and years of experience at UMSL. The faculty were supported by four members of the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL).

For maximum productivity, the committee members organized themselves into three subcommittees:
- Student Feedback
- Peer Feedback
- Self-Reflection

Name	College/School/Department	Title	Subcommittee
Nancy Singer, Taskforce Chair	College of Education	Associate Professor	All subcommittees
Kim Baldus	Pierre Laclede Honors College	Teaching Professor	Peer Feedback
Sanjiv Bhatia	College of Arts & Sciences, Computer Science	Professor	Self-Reflection
Baorong Guo	School of Social Work	Associate Professor	Peer Feedback

Keeta Holmes	Center for Teaching & Learning	Director, CTL & Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Innovation	All subcommittees
Shea Kerkhoff	College of Education, Educator Preparation & Leadership	Assistant Professor	Peer Feedback
Vanessa Loyd	College of Nursing	Associate Teaching Professor	Student Feedback
Jennifer McKanry	Center for Teaching & Learning	Assistant Director, CTL	Self-Reflection
Jennifer Reynolds Moehrle	College of Business Administration, Accounting	Professor	Student Feedback
Tareq Nabhan	College of Optometry	Assistant Clinical Professor	Self-Reflection
Mary Painter	Center for Teaching & Learning	Learning Analytics Coordinator	Student Feedback
Kurt Schreyer	College of Arts & Sciences, English	Associate Professor	Student Feedback
Jeffrey Sippel	College of Arts & Sciences, Art & Design	Professor	Peer Feedback
Ann Steffen	College of Arts & Sciences, Psychological Sciences	Professor	Self-Reflection
Erin Whitteck	Center for Teaching & Learning	Assistant Director, CTL and Assistant Teaching Professor of Chemistry & Biochemistry	Peer Feedback
Hiroko Yoshii	College of Arts & Sciences, Language and Cultural Studies	Assistant Teaching Professor	Student Feedback

Between September 17, 2020 and March 19, 2021, the Taskforce met as a whole group monthly and met in three taskforce subcommittees (student feedback, peer feedback and self-reflection) six times each for a total of 24 meetings across the six-month timeframe. A [Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce website](#) was launched in September

2020 to provide an open and transparent sharing of the goals, process, and meeting agenda topics for all meetings. This website provides a centralized location to store meeting notes and campus-wide messaging including the solicitation for input on the definition and context for teaching effectiveness.

During this time these accomplishments are noted:

- Wrote a definition of teaching effectiveness. The definition was sent out campus-wide for faculty feedback two times (November 2020 and January 2021). The taskforce made changes each time based on this feedback. 75.6% responding faculty (n=42) agreed or strongly agreed with the November 2020 draft; 85.2% of the responding faculty (n=29) agreed or strongly agreed with the January 2021 version of the definition.
- Reviewed research-informed practices, peer institutional approaches for multi-measure teaching evaluation and designed prototypes for self-reflection, peer feedback, and student feedback.This important work is ongoing and will serve as the primary goal for the 2021-2022 work of the Taskforce.
- Drafted possible procedures for implementation of each of the three measures. This important work is not yet complete; it remains ongoing and will serve as the primary goal for the 2021-2022 work of the Taskforce.

Recommendation 1: Definition of Teaching Effectiveness

There is no definitive checklist or one-size-fits all approach to effective teaching; good teaching is highly individualized and often discipline-specific, though there are common elements that cross disciplines and course types. The Taskforce recommends a common definition to explicitly identify the values and assumptions about teaching at UMSL that reflect UMSL's core mission related to student success and inclusive excellence while also acknowledging the variety of teaching approaches and strategies faculty might employ. This understanding was pivotal as the subcommittees worked to ensure that the values were reflected in the student feedback, peer observation, and self-reflection instruments to be grounded in this new definition and context for teaching effectiveness.

The Taskforce leveraged the University of Missouri's (MU) [Taskforce to Enhance Learning and Teaching (TFELT) definition](#) as a starting point and reference for how UMSL as a campus might adopt or adapt the definition. The following values shared in MU's definition were kept in the UMSL definition: student-focused learning through relevant, organized and engaging instruction, inclusive and equitable learning environments, and the importance of continual refinement through reflection and professional development. The definition/context drafts for teaching effectiveness were sent out campus-wide for faculty feedback two times (November 2020 and January

2021). The taskforce made changes each time based on this feedback. 75.6% of (n=42) responding faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the November 2020 draft; 85.2% (n=29) of the responding faculty agreed or strongly agreed with the January 2021 version of the definition. After lengthy discussions and careful consideration from two campus opportunities to collect faculty input and feedback, the faculty authors on the taskforce expanded the definition to acknowledge the value of academic training and expertise; additionally, the new definition addressed the intentionality with which effective educators operate through constructive feedback, tailored strategies, and promotion of self-directed, lifelong learning.

To that end, the faculty authors from the UMSL Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce offer this definition of teaching effectiveness:

> *Effective teaching at the University of Missouri-St. Louis creates a student-focused learning environment valuing a diverse community that is inclusive and equitable. Effective teaching relies on relevant, organized, inspired, and engaged instruction and promotes critical and creative thinking.*

> *Effective educators use disciplinary, interdisciplinary or professional experience to design research-informed, carefully-constructed courses. Effective educators tailor teaching strategies and assessments, use appropriate technology, and ensure timely, constructive feedback to support student learning and achievement. Their high educational standards foster lifelong, self-directed learning.*

> *Sustained teaching effectiveness requires refinement through analysis, constructive and continuous feedback, reflection and professional development. Effective teaching is strengthened by institutional resources, programs, and collegial support and is documented and assessed by outcomes as established by departments and instructors incorporating feedback from students, peers, and self-reflection.*

Initial Work Toward a Comprehensive Multi-Measure System to Evaluate Teaching

At UMSL, we believe that effective teaching is best documented using multiple measures. To provide support and feedback on multiple dimensions of teaching, we share the context within which the evaluation of teaching effectiveness is considered and the rationale why the Taskforce would like to continue its work related to three

approaches for gathering evidence of teaching effectiveness: student feedback, peer observation and self-reflection.

To date, the collection of student evaluations is the primary—and often the only—source for feedback on effective teaching. The state of Missouri and the University of Missouri System (UM-System) require the collection of student feedback for purposes of course improvement, annual evaluation and promotion and tenure.

Missouri Senate Bill 389 (2007)

Missouri Senate Bill 389 (2007) created new obligations for Missouri public universities relating to student evaluations of teaching. The bill created Section 173.1004(1), which reads:

> "The coordinating board shall promulgate rules and regulations to ensure that each approved public higher education institution shall post on its website the names of all faculty, including adjunct, part-time, and full-time faculty, who are given full or partial teaching assignments along with web links or other means of providing information about their academic credentials and, where feasible, instructor ratings by students."

Missouri Department of Higher Education (2008)

The passage of SB 389 led to the creation of a new section in the Department of Higher Education's Code of Regulations (CSR), 6 CSR 10-9.010 *Consumer Information*, which became effective on May 30, 2008 and guided institutions to develop a set of administrative rules. The CSR specifies that:

> "(3) Where feasible, each institution shall post on its web site instructor ratings by students, except that no institution shall be required to post any item the publication of which would constitute a violation of state or federal law.
>
> (A) The ratings must include:
> 1. The most recent ratings available; or
> 2. A faculty member's ratings for multiple academic terms, whether data for each term are presented separately or in aggregate form, so long as the ratings posted include the most recent ratings available."
>
> (B) Each institution may determine whether to post each faculty member's ratings:
> 1. As an aggregate representing ratings received for all courses taught by that faculty member; or

2.   For each individual course taught by the faculty member.

(C) Institutions need not post ratings of faculty members who are teaching for the first time at the institution if no such ratings exist.

(D) If an institution decides to post ratings for each individual course taught by the faculty member and a faculty member is teaching a course for the first time, the institution need not post ratings for that course if no such ratings exists.

(E) This information must be posted at least ten (1) calendar days before the first day that any student may enroll for the next academic term, starting with the first academic term starting on or after August 1, 2009, and every academic term thereafter.

(F)   If the Missouri Department of Higher Education (department) determines that the ratings posted by an institution do not provide sufficient information, that institution shall work cooperatively with the department to develop ratings that do provide information the department deems sufficient.

(G) Ratings must be posted on a portion of the institution's web site that may be viewed by currently enrolled students and by all new students participating in the enrollment process at the institution."

UM-System Collected Rules and Regulations

The UM-System Collected Rules and Regulations also refer to the importance of student assessments of teaching with respect to decisions about Promotion and Tenure. CR&R 320.035, Policy and Procedures for Promotion and Tenure, Section B.2.c., states that,

"Teaching of all faculty members shall be evaluated annually. … A significant element in the evaluation of teaching is the overall judgment of students, and each unit, department, school, and college is responsible for obtaining such information on all faculty members, particularly those recommended for promotion. Questionnaires developed at the college or school level in cooperation with the faculty committees on promotion and tenure may be used for this purpose, or a similar procedure can be followed which is designed to reflect comprehensive student judgment concerning teaching qualifications. Data from questionnaires should be buttressed by interpretation and comparative data. Simple numerical summaries of evaluations are not sufficient to judge teaching ability. Faculty members whose records consistently reflect poor teaching will normally not be recommended for promotion."

UM-System Intercampus Faculty Council Taskforce (2017)

In response to SB 389, the resultant DHEWD Administrative Rule and the CR&R 320.035, each university has attempted to capture a comprehensive view of an instructor's effectiveness in part through questions asked on student evaluations of teaching. The UM-System Intercampus Faculty Council (IFC) convened a task force in 2017-2018 to examine strategies to evaluate teaching effectiveness with the primary goal of improving teaching effectiveness and student learning. The IFC reviewed more than 50 studies identifying the critical issues in evaluating teaching and authored a policy paper recommending that each campus develop a multiple-measures approach to evaluating teaching effectiveness. The IFC further recommended that the approach be composed of three sources of data: student feedback, peer observation, and self-reflection. The IFC white paper identifies the following emerging issues as central to its recommendation of a multi-measure approach to teaching evaluation:

- With the rising cost of college, growing student debt, and a heightened focus on preparing students for employment, there is an increased focus on "student success" in college. Effective teaching is an important component of student success.
- With the use of online student ratings, the response rates have been dropping to the point that neither the faculty nor the students have confidence in the results.
- Despite the issues with student ratings of teaching, they are often used for promotion and tenure decisions – sometimes as the primary source of teaching evaluation.
- At research-focused universities, department chairs and faculty feel they have limited time to launch extensive teaching evaluation efforts.
- Only a few academic units use a comprehensive multiple-measures system to evaluate teaching effectiveness.
- National standards recommend using data from multiple sources.
- Student ratings of teaching are a necessary, but not sufficient, strategy in assessing teaching effectiveness.

At the September 26, 2019 Board of Curators meeting, UM-System President Choi invited the Chancellors to provide an update on each campus's efforts on improving teaching effectiveness. The recorded "Teaching Matters" session provided a snapshot of campus efforts as of 2019 toward a multi-measure approach as an opportunity to place student feedback on teaching within a larger context about teaching. At the end of this meeting, President Choi asked each campus to continue these efforts and stand ready to present again. As a result of this call from President Choi, the University of

Missouri launched the TFELT (Task Force to Enhance Learning and Teaching) who provided a valuable model to follow.

The Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce at UMSL builds on the work of the IFC taskforce recommendations, the foundational work of the TFELT group at MU, and those practices implemented in some colleges within UMSL to initiate the collection of data through peer observation or self-reflection to balance feedback collected by students. In addition, the UMSL Teaching Effectiveness Taskforce remains informed by best practices at peer and aspirational institutions (Appendix I) regarding the implementation of a multiple-measure approach to teaching evaluation. The UMSL Taskforce is proud now to serve as a model, in addition to MU's TFELT group, for the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the Missouri University of Science & Technology who are soon to launch their own teaching effectiveness taskforces.

Recommendation 2: Student Feedback Improvements

Value Statement

We take seriously the educational experience that students have in our classrooms. Students are provided with an opportunity to rate their experience in each class every semester in accordance with CRR 320.035 and in compliance with requirements by the state of Missouri and the Missouri Department of Higher Education. The Taskforce researched best practices related to student evaluation of teaching, including an internal analysis of UMSL's approach to collecting student feedback at mid-semester and end of the semester. As a result, the Taskforce sought and received approval from the Office of Academic Affairs and the combined Faculty Senate Academic Advisory (AA) and Assessment of Educational Outcomes committees for a green light to implement a common student survey for end of course evaluations tied to the definition of teaching effectiveness. This report now seeks the approval of the committee to run a test pilot of the survey as we continually refine the instrument.

Purpose of Student Feedback

Student feedback not only provides an opportunity for students to record their experiences in a classroom, but it also affords instructors a way to reflect on their performance and efficacy in the classroom. Student evaluation of teaching is important for a number of reasons. These evaluations add the student perspective on quality in university teaching, provide an independent method of gauging a teacher's effectiveness, guide in making decisions for major curriculum changes and professional development for faculty, and help in establishing a framework to better quantify and

reward good teaching outcomes. The Taskforce acknowledges the extensive literature describing the flawed nature of relying solely on end of semester student feedback, including concerns of bias (e.g., gender, ethnicity, academic discipline, size of course, experience of instructor among others) (Basow, 1994; Koblitz, 1990; MacNeil, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2014; Mitchell & Martin, 2018; Morgan et al., 2016; Hamermesh & Parker, 2005; Smith & Johnson-Bailey, 2012; Centra, 1978; Kember & Leung, 2011; Boring, Ottoboni, & Stark, 2016; Davies, Hirschberg, Lye & Johnston, 2007; Flaherty, 2016; Linse, 2017; York University, 2002; Feldman, 1978; Franklin et al., 1991; Miles & House, 2015). The formative power of student feedback at mid-semester and end of semester can provide, however, a valuable lens for both instructor and administrators. These data need to be placed within a broader context through the lens of the instructor's goals via self-reflection and peer observation.

Related to student feedback, there are multiple opportunities provided at UMSL through the UMSL Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) for students to provide feedback, including the following programs:

- Mid-Semester Feedback System: Centrally managed by the CTL, this is a confidential online questionnaire administered to students to obtain early feedback on the course that can be considered while the course is still in progress. Only the instructor has access to the feedback.
- Mid-Semester Online Design Survey: Centrally managed by the CTL, this is a confidential online questionnaire administered to students to obtain early feedback on the design, navigation, and online learning community experiences within the online course. Only the CTL Learning Analytics Coordinator and the instructor have access to the feedback.
- GIFTs: Group Instructional Feedback Technique: This service is offered to blended and in-person courses at mid-semester where a CTL professional staff member (without the faculty member present) guides students to reach consensus around what is fostering their learning, what barriers to learning may exist, and which potential solutions may be possible to overcome those barriers. The CTL facilitator summarizes the responses and within 1-2 days meets with the instructor to discuss the feedback and potential changes to teaching and feedback strategies. This feedback is only provided to the instructor.
- Course Evaluations: In August 2020, the online course evaluation survey system CoursEval was added to the CTL portfolio of services; deployment of surveys remains decentralized, relying on college administrative and business support personnel to set dates and ensure surveys are active. All course evaluations have been administered fully online since 2014; since 2019, those course evaluations are collected

following a set of opening and closing survey dates as specified by the UMSL Senate.

Guided by the literature on the evaluation of teaching listed in the references section, we recommend using multiple measures to evaluate teaching through student feedback, peer observation and self-reflection. The Taskforce has and will continue to focus on improving the quality and quantity of student feedback in two ways: 1) deploying strategies to increase response rates by using one or more of the tactics provided in the literature, and 2) utilizing a core set of questions for comparisons across disciplines and courses where additional questions could be customized to best fit the campus, department and/or course.

Recommendations to Improve the Collection of Student Feedback

Because UMSL already offers a variety of mechanisms for collecting student feedback at mid-semester, the Taskforce subcommittee on student feedback focused their 2020-2021 work on improvements to the end of course evaluation instrument and process by which summative student feedback data is collected. Currently UMSL administers surveys in a decentralized approach with over 1500 variations in questions and over 100 different scales used; UMSL is the only UM-System campus without a common instrument. The time it takes for students to carefully consider such a variety of questions as they move across departments and colleges increases the time for students to complete the survey. In addition, scales vary within a particular survey such that a "1" for one question indicates the lowest option on a question and a "1" for another question represents the highest option. This variation in questions and scales likely results in conflicting results, unreliable data, and reduced response rate.

The Taskforce has identified two ways to improve the quality and quantity of student feedback on teaching: 1) development of a new, common student feedback survey instrument that aligns with the new definition of teaching effectiveness, and 2) identification and deployment of strategies to increase response rates. To address the first, we propose a set of standard questions to be used across all UMSL colleges and departments; the current draft includes 10 Likert questions with a common scale and one (1) open-ended question. Departments will be able to customize the surveys by adding up to four (4) questions (Likert-scale or open-ended) specific to their discipline if they wish. A common set of questions will enable departments within and across colleges to examine instructor ratings. Moreover, data from student evaluations may then be consistently communicated to the UM-System when it is called for. To address the second issue, the Taskforce will continue to review and recommend a set of strategies to increase response rates.

Development of a Common Student Feedback Survey Instrument

The Taskforce recommends a common instrument to include a standard set of roughly 10 Likert-type scale questions and one common open-ended survey with the option for departments to include up to four additional questions they would like to add to their surveys. These additional departmental questions can be either Likert-type scale or open-ended questions.

The taskforce proposes the following common instrument questions:
  10 Likert-Scale Questions

1. The syllabus clearly expressed the goals, expectations, and the nature of the course. (SB 389 required question)
2. The required course materials contributed to my learning.
3. The course required me to be prepared for the learning activities. (SB 389 required question)
4. The instructor was responsive when I had questions or challenges. (SB 389 required question)
5. This course expanded my analytical thinking, my technical skills, my creativity, my knowledge, and/or my competence. (SB 389 required question)
6. The instructor encouraged me to expand my learning beyond this course.
7. The instructor showed a genuine concern for my learning.
8. The instructor encouraged the inclusion of diverse groups/perspectives and treated students equitably.
9. The assessments reflected the learning objectives for this course.
10. Information was available so I could track my academic performance during the semester. (SB 389 required question)

And one Open-Ended Question: What about this course and its instruction impacted your learning? (Please share both positive feedback and recommendations for improvement.)

The question drafts were analyzed in connection to the definition of teaching effectiveness to ensure the instrument would collect feedback about aspects of course design and delivery about which students can offer an informed opinion. The matrix below indicates how the Taskforce worked to ensure coverage of the following aspects of the definition/context of teaching effectiveness.

	creates a student-focused learning environment	values a diverse community that is inclusive and equitable	relies on relevant, organized, inspired, and engaged instruction and promotes critical and creative thinking	tailors teaching strategies and assessments, uses appropriate technology	ensure timely, constructive feedback to support student learning and achievement	fosters lifelong, self-directed learning
Q1	X		X	X		
Q2			X			
Q3	X		X		X	
Q4	X	X			X	
Q5			X	X		X
Q6						X
Q7	X	X		X	X	
Q8	X	X				
Q9			X	X	X	
Q10					X	
Open-ended question	X		X			

Between March – April 2021, the taskforce administered a survey to 60 undergraduate students asking them to read each question, explain what they think each question is asking and to identify any terms they do not understand. In addition, they were asked if any questions were missing or if questions were redundant and should be added. Lastly, they were asked for general feedback on the survey or if they had any questions. In April, a Taskforce member will lead three focus groups with these students to better understand their feedback and determine what changes, if any, are needed. Once that

feedback is compiled and themes identified, the committee will again review the questions for any changes and will seek another group of students identified by Student Affairs for a second collection of feedback to ensure the validity of the questions and reliability of the instrument. The taskforce will further test validity by piloting the survey with departments interested in using the survey for end of the semester course evaluations. Additionally, testing across departments in a variety of classes over a semester will also test the reliability of the survey questions as it pertains to the teaching effectiveness definition.

The committee considered how to determine the appropriate scale for the questions and has decided to recommend a 6-point scale with a choice to not respond as the seventh choice. In current practice, most rating scales, including Likert-type scales and other attitude and opinion measures, contain either five or seven response categories (Bearden, Netmeyer, & Mobley, 1993; Peter, 1979; Shaw & Wright, 1967). Miller (1956) argued that the human mind has a span of absolute judgment that can distinguish about seven distinct categories, a span of immediate memory for about seven items, and a span of attention that can encompass about six objects at a time, which suggested that any increase in number of response categories beyond six or seven might be futile (Preston & Colman, 2000; Colman, A. M., Norris, C. E., & Preston, C. C., 1997). Lewis (1993) found that 7-point scales resulted in stronger correlations with t-test results . In addition, 7-point Likert scales appear to be more suited to electronic distribution of usability inventories (Finstad, K., 2010). The committee discussed the concern of an "easy out" where a student might choose a neutral option in the middle rather than share feedback, an outcome that may negatively impact the overall score of a faculty member. Therefore, the committee recommends a forced-choice, even-numbered Likert-type scale of 6-1 with a seventh choice for the student to select "no opinion" to not impact the overall average of the course evaluation. Additionally, an even number of items in the response scale can yield groupings that are easier to understand and discuss such as unfavorable, uncertain, and favorable.

Recommended scale for each Likert-scale question:

- Strongly agree (6 points)
- Agree (5 points)
- Somewhat agree (4 points)
- Somewhat disagree (3 points)
- Disagree (2 points)
- Strongly disagree (1 point)
- No opinion (score not calculated)

Once this feedback is considered and the survey revised accordingly, the Taskforce requests permission to ask departments to pilot the new survey instrument as early as Summer 2021 to contribute to ongoing analysis of the instrument's reliability and validity. These analyses may lead to further revision of the questions. Any revisions will be shared with the Senate AA Committee.

Discussion on Procedure for Implementing Student Course Evaluation Surveys

Currently, mid-semester feedback is collected from students during the fall and spring semesters only. End of course student evaluations of every section of every credit bearing course are conducted each semester, including all summer sessions. The collection of student feedback, whether at mid-semester or end-of-term, currently follows a rhythmic, predictable approach to follow the recent Senate recommendation to structure the collection of course evaluation surveys according to these windows:

- 16-week courses: Surveys open Monday of week 14 and close Sunday of week 15
- 8 week 1 courses: Surveys open Monday of week 7 and close Sunday of week 7
- 8 week 2 courses: Surveys open weeks 14 and 15
- 4-week courses: Surveys open last 5 days of classes
- Winter intersession: Surveys open last 5 days of classes
- All summer sessions: Surveys open last 5 days of classes

These dates reflect a balance of collecting student feedback before students know final grades and gives students ample time to complete surveys. Student survey results and reports are available to faculty and administrators three days after grades are due. This specification structures when reports are shared with faculty to eliminate any potential influence on final grades. This 2019 Senate recommendation intends to reduce student confusion caused when surveys across the university have unexpected start and closing dates. The UMSL Taskforce on Teaching Effectiveness recommends continuing this practice and evaluating the effect this approach has had on response rates.

The UMSL Taskforce also recommends that the campus should centralize the administration of the course evaluations. In his article enumerating the top five flashpoints, Berk (2013) identifies this recommendation as a critical step in any system evaluating teaching effectiveness. He further emphasizes the importance of standardization not only of the instrument, but also of the administration procedures. According to the Educational Advisory Board (EAB) (2011) analysis of higher educational institutional approaches to defining and measuring course quality through student course evaluations, a centralized approach ensures the instrument is valid and reliable, measures what the faculty and administrators hope to learn, and more successfully implements the surveys. Although the online CoursEval system is now part of the CTL portfolio of services, the current role of the CTL is to provide training and send out reminders to all departments including chairs, associate deans, and

administrative and business support personnel responsible for setting up and activating the surveys. When staff change or when the responsible person is away on vacation or forgets to activate the surveys, the effect is devastating and can result in skipping entire colleges or departments from collecting surveys. This has happened numerous times in recent years. Given how infrequent the task is for staff personnel and the frequency of turnover of positions, the Taskforce recommends that the CTL administer all student surveys by activating and deploying all surveys according to the dates specified by the UMSL Senate. Encouraged by the literature and fueled by a challenging environment where resources are limited, this recommendation will ultimately save a great deal of time for staff who routinely have to be trained on the CoursEval system, manage nuances of cross-listed courses and ensure they do not fail to activate the surveys.

Further, the Taskforce recommends that each department can submit up to four additional questions to be added to their survey by July 1 of each year. These additional questions allow departments the flexibility to ask tailored open-ended or Likert-type scale questions. These questions can be updated each year following the July 1 deadline. Departments would not be required to add additional questions to the survey if they so choose.

The Student Feedback subcommittee of the Taskforce has not finalized all of its recommendations related to the procedure and strategies for increasing student response rates, though these conversations will continue in the 2021-2022 academic year. The literature provides reasons for the differences in response rates range from gender and age factors (Hatfield and Coyle, 2013); privacy and anonymity (Khorsandi *et al.*, 2012; Nevo *et al.*, 2010); social pressure; distraction and location issues (Mau and Opengart, 2012); lack of engagement; incentives; communication; perceived inaction with feedback or general "survey fatigue" (Bennett and Nair, 2010); and demographic and economic variables peculiar to the institution or country (Morrison, 2011). The most comprehensive work done by Berk (2012) outlines a review of the problems and articulates an in-depth set of techniques and best practices which can be applied to increase online response rates. It should be noted, however, that he does not advocate a "one size fit all" solution, but rather emphasizes that success in raising response rates will most likely be met by a combination of strategies and incentives over the long term. These strategies include, but are not limited to, increasing student awareness of the value of their feedback, creating targeted messaging about how their identities are kept confidential, providing guidance about how to provide constructive feedback, and offering incentives to complete the evaluations. Response rates will also increase by other actions we have already taken to streamline the course evaluation process, such as mitigating survey fatigue by using one standardized instrument. Though there are multiple strategies currently in practice at UMSL, the Student Feedback subcommittee

will continue to review best practices and make a consolidated report of recommendations in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Recommendation 3: Request to Continue Working Toward Multi-Measure Approach

In addition to the improvements to student feedback processes, the Taskforce requests permission to continue its work toward making recommendations incorporating peer observation and self-reflection components within a multiple-measures approach to the evaluation of teaching. The Taskforce has devoted considerable work toward possible approaches for collecting and administering possible peer evaluation and self-reflection components within a more comprehensive set of recommendations. However, the Taskforce needs more time to knit these ideas together into a manageable, streamlined, efficient process that can be accomplished at UMSL in a productive way. To illustrate this point, the subcommittees individually reviewed and developed a series of thoughtful instruments and supportive processes related to peer feedback and self-reflection that, when considered by the entire Taskforce examining all recommendations, resulted in the realization that the combination of efforts from these three focal areas would result in too arduous a process to logistically implement. The Taskforce has begun finding areas of synergy to find efficiencies and are exploring models that have a more simplified approach as to not overburden faculty, department chairs, deans, and staff. To that end, the Taskforce remains committed to a process that includes peers and self-reflection, is grounded in goal setting and tied to UMSL's strategic goals and commitment to student success, fosters inclusive and effective teaching, and can be implemented with relative ease.

The Taskforce needs more time to edit the early drafts of instruments and processes to find efficiencies in the overlap of how peer observation contributes to self-reflection on classroom practice. We also need time to discuss and solicit campus feedback, much like the process of teaching effectiveness definition feedback, on how potential recommendations might best be integrated with existing faculty annual review processes. In addition, the Taskforce recognizes the value and importance of developing a synergistic professional development and training initiative to support faculty and administrators to find value and meaning in these processes. Most importantly, the Taskforce would like to avail itself of Provost Mora's suggestion and offer to use NSF Advance grant funds to hire an external review of the overall approach and comprehensive set of recommendations. This external review would include an analysis of the process and instruments for student feedback, peer feedback, and self-reflection to reduce the chance of bias, thereby providing a significant contribution to UMSL's commitment to improving campus processes toward diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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Appendix I

List of Peer and Aspirational Institutions
Models for Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness

Colorado State University Teaching Effectiveness Framework
https://tilt.colostate.edu/wp/TEF/

Penn State University Peer Review
https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/ol2000/lesson4p7

Texas A&M Framework of Faculty Teaching Performance Evaluation
https://cte.tamu.edu/getattachment/Faculty-Teaching-Resource/Teaching/Peer-Review/Framework-for-Faculty-Teaching-Performance-Evaluation-pdf.pdf.aspx

Thompson Rivers University Peer Review of Teaching and Instructional Support
https://www.tru.ca/celt/Faculty_Development_and_Feedback/peer-review-teaching-instructional-support.html

University of British Columbia Formative Peer Review of Teaching
https://ctlt.ubc.ca/programs/all-our-programs/peer-review-of-teaching-2/

University of Calgary Teaching Squares
https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/teaching-squares-observe-and-reflect-teaching-and-learning

University of Colorado Boulder Teaching Quality Framework Initiative
https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/resources

The University of Kansas Evaluating Teaching
https://cte.ku.edu/evaluating-teaching-ku

University of Missouri TFELT (Task Force to Enhance Learning and Teaching)
https://committees.missouri.edu/tfelt/