

## Resolution on Evidence-based Evaluation of Teaching, 5/5/22

*Whereas*, The University of Montana has placed a high priority on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)<sup>1</sup>, student success<sup>2</sup>, and improvement of student learning through evidence-based, student-centered, active learning strategies<sup>3</sup>; and

*Whereas*, institutional methods by which teaching is evaluated create either positive or negative incentives for faculty to work towards incorporating evidence-based, student-centered teaching practices<sup>4</sup>; and

*Whereas*, there is strong evidence that the practice of relying on averages of student teaching evaluation scores as the primary measure of teaching effectiveness for promotion and tenure decisions should be abandoned for substantive and statistical reasons<sup>5,6</sup>; and

*Whereas* student responses to questions of 'effectiveness' do not measure teaching effectiveness, rather student evaluations of teaching rate lenient teachers better than more effective teachers<sup>6</sup>, which causes grade inflation<sup>7</sup>, show demonstrable bias against women, bias against people of color, and bias against people with disabilities<sup>6,7,8</sup>; and

*Whereas*, the use of student evaluations of teaching are profoundly unfair even when adjustments are made to mitigate bias<sup>9,10</sup>; which creates legal liability when they are used for tenure and promotion decisions<sup>8,11</sup>; and

*Whereas*, UM can learn from many other institutions that employ evidence-based evaluation of teaching methods, which include mid-course student feedback, documented reflection, peer review, classroom observation, and measurement of learning gains<sup>8</sup>;

*Whereas*, UM students should have their voice heard in a meaningful way, and mid-course student feedback coupled with a faculty response has a better participation rate than end-of-term student evaluations, is more likely to be constructive, and provides timely, actionable information for teachers to respond to feedback<sup>8</sup>; and

*Whereas*, under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (10.120) the Faculty has the right, in accordance with Board of Regents policies, to review and recommend Unit Standards<sup>4</sup>;

*Therefore be it resolved* that the UM Faculty supports all efforts to advocate evidence-based methods for evaluation of teaching that are appropriate for respective academic disciplines and

consistent with goals for improving student success and DEI for faculty and students at the University of Montana.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.umt.edu/diversity/inclusive-excellence/default.php>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.umt.edu/oss/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.umt.edu/learning-development/teaching/teaching-excellence-initiative.php>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.umt.edu/provost/faculty/CBAs/ufa-2021-2025-cba-final--with-signatures.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.aaup.org/article/student-evaluations-teaching-are-not-valid#.Yl1-5C-B2X1>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/02/27/study-student-evaluations-teaching-are-deeply-flawed>

<sup>7</sup> <https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/04/student-evaluations-of-college-professors-are-biased-and-worthless.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.chronicle.com/article/colleges-are-getting-smarter-about-student-evaluations-heres-how/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/IMZDUUHTHCEDD4Q9VZYB/full?target=10.1080%2F02602938.2020.1724875&>

<sup>10</sup> <https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2013/10/21/what-exactly-do-student-evaluations-measure/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onla/doc/2018/2018canlii58446/2018canlii58446.html>