

A Chronology and History of FDU Student Evaluations from 1970 to 1990

The first University-wide student evaluations of faculty administered at FDU were initiated pursuant to a clause in the *1977-79 Agreement* which called for a joint faculty-administration committee to select an instrument. Prior to that each college or department had been acting independently. Some used home-grown instruments, some used commercial products and some used nothing. New faculty should be aware that from 1972 until 1986 the AAUP was the bargaining agent for a unionized faculty at FDU. The *Agreements* were the union contracts.

The committee called for in the *1977-79 Agreement* was formed in the spring of 1978. It was jointly chaired by Fred Gaige, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Madison, and by David Flory, President of the AAUP. The committee reported August 9, 1979. Its report was referenced in the *1979-82 Agreement* which required student evaluations be conducted in conformity with the report. The instrument agreed upon by the MAD Committee from the options provided in the Report was *Endeavor*, a commercial product developed by Professor Peter Frey of the Psychology Department at Northwestern University.

Endeavor was first administered university-wide in the Spring 1980 semester. It was administered each semester thereafter through the spring of 1982. The agreements of 1982 and 1984 specified annual student evaluations and the frequency of *Endeavor* was reduced to once a year. The Fall 1982 semester was skipped and *Endeavor* was run in the Spring 1983 semester. It ought to have been run in each of Spring 1984 and Spring 1985 according to the *1984-85 Agreement* but it may not have been. My records show *Endeavor* was administered in Sp80, Fa80, Sp81, Fa81, Sp82, and Sp83. I cannot verify Sp84 or Sp85.

About 1985 the *Endeavor* company ceased operation and the University had to select another instrument. A second committee chaired by Professor Paul Strauss from our Madison Campus investigated the issue during the 1985/86 academic year. That committee designed its own evaluation instrument which was administered in the spring semesters of 1986 and 1987 and, slightly revised, in the fall of 1988. I believe no evaluation was done in the fall of 1986 or 1987 or in the spring of 1989. The form was also administered selectively to new and first year faculty in the fall of 1989.

In the spring of 1989 a third committee on student evaluations was appointed. It was an Ad-Hoc committee of the new Academic Senate that I chaired. We again reviewed the issues and redesigned the FDU Evaluation instrument. We used the original *Endeavor* questions for the first part of the form and added a few additional questions of local interest.

The Academic Senate approved the following **motion** at its October 25, 1989 meeting:

The University shall adopt the attached evaluation form, Ver. 2.0a, dated October 12, 1989, as its standard student evaluation instrument.

Student evaluations of faculty will be conducted once a year using the standard form. Normally, all class sections will be evaluated by the end of the twelfth week of the fall semester. Instructors should not evaluate their own classes; a student, a staff member, or a colleague should be designated. The designee will seal the evaluations to preserve their integrity and confidentiality. The instructor can submit three questions of his or her

own design to be answered by the class.

A report of the results of the evaluation will be returned to the faculty member, the department and the college. The report will contain the average response for each question, values for two factors, pedagogic skill and rapport, computed from the first seven questions, and a table of average scores on each question for similar sections. "Pedagogic skill" and "rapport" are defined and discussed in Frey, Research in Higher Education, 1978, 9, 69-91. Initially, similar sections shall be those in the same department. After the due date for final grades the written comments will also be returned to the instructor. The numerical results of the evaluation and its analysis will be placed in the instructor's personnel file and may be used for faculty status or merit evaluation.

During semesters when the University is not being evaluated, departments or individuals may evaluate selected classes or instructors using the standard form. They will be responsible for doing their own data analysis under the same guidelines as normally apply.

Departments or individuals seeking information not provided by the standard form may conduct supplementary evaluations using their own forms. Unless requested by the faculty member, the results of such local evaluations may not be used for faculty status or merit evaluation and shall not be placed in personnel files.

After passing the main motion the Senate approved a resolution that the written comments be returned to the instructor only. They are not to become part of the personnel files unless placed there by the instructor.

David Flory, Professor of Physics

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