

Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs
Daniel Kleinman, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs

DATE: May 4, 2017

SUBJECT: Announcement of the Task Force on Evaluating Teaching

Excellent teaching is at the heart of the educational experience we offer as a residential research institution. As peer institutions and professional organizations such as the Association of American Universities (AAU) advance a national dialogue about ways to evaluate teaching and ensure that excellent teaching is appropriately recognized and rewarded on university campuses, it is critically important for Boston University to examine its approach to student course evaluations and consider the place of student course evaluations in the overall evaluation of both undergraduate and graduate teaching.

It is for this reason that we write to announce the establishment of a University-Wide Task Force on Evaluating Teaching, which will gather information about current divergent approaches to student course evaluations at Boston University and recommend a set of research-based standard practices.

The charge to the Task Force on Evaluating Teaching includes the following:

1. Gather information about the language and content of current student course evaluations at BU and consider how this content aligns with current research and national conversations on how best to evaluate teaching;
2. Revise or re-draft a University-wide course evaluation form with both common content and questions and flexible options for schools, colleges, programs, and departments to tailor the evaluations to their specific needs;
3. Make recommendations about the possible participation of graduate programs in student course satisfaction surveys;
4. Consider the options for moving to online course evaluations and make recommendations about such a move;

5. Draft standard guidelines for administering electronic course evaluations to ensure maximum response rates;
6. Make recommendations for if, when, and how results of student course evaluations will be made available to students.

Gillian Pierce, Director of Learning Assessment, will serve as Chair of the Task Force. The group will consult as needed with the Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, Faculty Council, IS&T, and other stakeholders. We envision that the group's work will take approximately one year to address all aspects of its charge.

This is an important opportunity for us as an academic community to collaboratively assess and shape the way we evaluate good teaching at Boston University. Please join me in thanking our colleagues who have agreed to serve on this Task Force for their time and commitment to advancing excellence in teaching at BU.

2017-2018 Task Force on Evaluating Teaching

Chair:

Gillian Pierce, Director of Learning Assessment, Office of the Provost

Members:

Suzanne Chapin, Professor of Mathematics Education, School of Education

Terry Everson, Associate Professor of Music, College of Fine Arts

Ray Fisman, Slater Family Professor in Behavioral Economics, College of Arts & Sciences

Christopher Gill, Associate Professor of Global Health, School of Public Health

Daryl Healea, Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Enrollment Services, College of Arts & Sciences

Roland Jaeckel, Director, Educational Technology, Office of Digital Learning & Innovation

Deborah Jaramillo, Associate Professor of Film & Television Studies, College of Communication

Rebecca Kinrade, Senior Lecturer, Arts & Sciences Writing Program, College of Arts & Sciences

Chris Paal, Assistant Vice President and University Registrar

Michael Smith, Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, College of Engineering

Matthew Trevett-Smith, Director, Center for Teaching & Learning