Faculty Senate Meeting

May 13, 2015, 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM

McDowell Formal Lounge

PLEASE NOTE START and END TIME CHANGE

1) Chair's Report – (2:00)
   a) Approve May 6, 2015 Minutes
   b) Personnel headcount information
   c) Faculty conduct-code committee

2) Provost's Report – Scott Bass (2:10)

3) Social Media Committee Report – Jenise Overmeier & Ayman Omar (2:25)

4) Ombudsperson Survey Results and Committee Report – Stacey Marien & Lauren Weis (2:40)

5) Graduate Regulations Section 2.3 & Exceptions Appendix – Michael Keynes (3:00)

6) SET Report – Tony Ahrens & Chris Tudge (3:20)

Minutes
Faculty Senate Meeting
May 6, 2015

****** The complete Recording for this meeting can be Found at http://www.american.edu./facultysenate/agendas-minutes.cfm***

Present: Professors: Lacey Wootton, Larry Engel, Candy Nelson, Tony Ahrens, John Douglass, Todd Eisenstadt, Maria Gomez, Alex Hodges, Billie Jo Kaufman, Despina Kakoudaki, Christine Lawrence, Jonathan Loesberg, Jun Lu, Glenn Moomau, Arturo Porzecanski, Andrea Pearson, Steve Silvia, Chris Simpson, Shalini Venturelli, Provost Scott Bass and DAA Mary L. Clark

Professor Wootton called the meeting to order at 2:34 PM

Chair's Report – Lacey Wootton

Professor Wootton stated that there have been some changes to the agenda in order to make sure that the review of the Graduate Regulations is completed. The Social Media Policy and Ombudsperson Survey and Report review will be done at the May 13, 2015, meeting.

Professor Wootton opened the meeting with the approval of the April 8, 2015, minutes. Professor Silvia requested a change in the CFA Instructions section and the Senate **VOTED** and the minutes were passed 18-0-1 in favor.

Professor Wootton introduced to the Senate the Executive Committee-nominated candidate for the Vice Chair seat in AY 2015-2016, Todd Eisenstadt. The Senate **VOTED** 19-0-0 in favor and welcomed Professor Eisenstadt to the Senate leadership.

Professor Wootton introduced to the Senate the new elected unit and at-large senators for AY's 2015-2017: Rachel Borchardt, University Library representative; Kelly Joyner from CAS, term faculty representative; Kate Wilson from CAS, at-large representative; Karen Baehler, SPA rep representative; and Chris Edelson from SPA, at-large representative. The changeover ceremony began with Professor Wootton thanking Candy Nelson for her three years of service in the Senate leadership positions and welcoming Larry Engel as Chair of the Senate starting June 15, 2015, and Professor Engel thanked Lacey Wootton for her service as chair in AY 2014-2015.

Professor Wootton thanked Lura Graham the Operations Coordinator of the Senate for her work and stated that she does many things that people do not know to make the Senate run.

Professor Glenn Moomau said that he wanted to recognize Professor Jonathan Loesberg, who will be retiring this year for all his contributions to the Senate and the university. Professor Loesberg has been on the Senate as chair and as a senator for many years; additionally, he was the chair of the Committee on Faculty Relations and the Senate representative on the Board of Trustees. Professor Moomau asked the Senate to take a vote by acclamation to thank Professor Loesberg for his many roles of service. The Senate **VOTED** and it was passed unanimously in favor.

Provost's Report on the Enrollment Status – Scott Bass

Provost Bass stated that the May 1st deadline has come and at this point the university is in a very different space than it has ever been in its history. Diversity is up, and more money has been moved to provide for students with financial need.

Graduate enrollments are ahead of the past pace. We won't know the actual outcome until late August. Summer face to face continues to decline, and online classes are remaining the same. Summer revenue numbers may be short. Undergraduate numbers are a huge success story.

Graduate Regulations – Michael Keynes

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Michael Keynes began the continued review of the Graduate Regulations.

- **2.3 Admission to a combined Bachelor's / Master's Program** – Suggested language was presented and after discussion it was sent back for further drafting and will return at the May 13 meeting
- **3.7 Incompletes -** new sentence has been added to address deadlines. The Senate **VOTED** on 3.7 and 18-0-0 in favor.
- **3.9 Internships**
- **3.10 Repetition of Courses**
- **3.13 Academic Warning, Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal**
- **3.13.1 Students Enrolled in a Graduate Program**
- **3.13.2 Students Enrolled in a Graduate Certificate Program**
- **3.13.3 Graduate Non-degree Students**
- **3.13.4 Incompletes and Academic Probation**
- **5.2 Course Levels –** Minor Clarification of this language was requested and it was agreed on by the Senators to vote on for approval with the changes.
- **5.3 Cross-listed Courses**
- **5.4 Designation of Full-Time and Part-Time Status**
- **5.5 Continuous Enrollment**
- **5.10 Time Limit on Courses**
- **5.11 Substituting Courses**
- **5.12 Waiving Requirements**
- **5.13 Graduation**

Professor Wootton asked the Senators to vote on the regulations in sections starting with sections 3.9 – 5.13. The Senate **VOTED** and these sections were passed 18-0-0 in favor.

6. Credit Requirements

- **6.1 Criteria for Courses to be Accepted for Graduate Academic Credit**
- **6.2 Transfer Credits**
- **6.3 Credits from Master's Degree Applied to PhD Programs**
- **6.4 Shared Credits**
- **6.4.1 Shared Credits for Concurrent Degrees**

- **6.4.2 Shared Credits for Non-Concurrent Degrees**
- **6.6 Permit to Study at Another U.S. Institution**
- **6.7 Permit to Study Abroad**

7. Requirements for a Graduate Certificate

- **7.1 Graduate Certificate Programs for Credit**
- **8.4 Thesis**
- **8.6 Dual Degree Programs**
- **8.6.1 Dual Degree Programs within American University**
- **8.6.2 Dual Degree Programs with Other Degree-Granting Instructions**
- **8.7 Combined Bachelors and Masters Degrees** – with minor word change.

Professor Wootton asked the Senators to vote on section 6, 6.1 – 8.7. The Senate **VOTED** and all sections were passed 18-0-0 in favor.

- **9.4 Ph.D. Dissertation Committee**
- **9.5 Advancement to Candidacy**
- **9.6 Examination of Dissertation**
- **10.4 Interruption of Studies**
- **10.4.1.1 General Conditions for All Temporary Leaves** – Friendly amendment of language addition, "in the course of a program."
- **10.4.1.3 Medical Temporary Leave and Reduction in Load**
- **10.4.2.1 Voluntary Separation from the University**

Professor Wootton asked the senators to vote on the remaining regulations. The Senate **VOTED** on sections 9.4 – 10.4.2.1 and the remaining sections were passed 18-0-0 in favor.

Associate Dean Keynes stated to the Senate that *Appendix 1 – Petition for Exception Decision Chart* has been added to the regulations for reference and transparency. The Senate had a discussion that the chart was confusing and needed revisions to make clear those regulations that had no exceptions and who was the decision maker. After a lengthy discussion it was decided to send the Appendix back for the discussed revisions and return it for review at the May 13 meeting.

Professor Wootton reminded the Senators that the final meeting on May 13, 2015, will review the remaining Graduate Regulations, Social Media Policy, the Ombudsperson Survey and Report and SET report.

Provost Bass thanked Professor Wootton for her superb job in moving a very intense review process with ease. He also asked if the SET committee could send out a notice of complex topics that might be in the SET report for review prior to the May 13 meeting.

Professor Wootton stated that after the report is sent out to the AU community she will work with the committee chairs to highlight contentious issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 PM

Faculty conduct-code committee membership

Unit reps:
CAS: Ralph Sonenshine, Lydia Fettig
KSB: Engin Cakici
WCL: Mark Niles
SPA: Tom Merrill
SIS: Tony Quainton
SOC: Pilar McKay
SPExS: Iris Krasnow
LIB:

HR: Beth Muha or Deadre Johnson

Mary Clark

Legal: Thi Nguyen-Southern (resource person)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the work to date of an *ad hoc* committee tasked by the University Senate to investigate whether an Ombuds position should be established at American University. The committee's first step was to design a short survey to poll AU Faculty about whether faculty supported establishing an Ombuds position. Overall, the results showed that 90% of the faculty who answered the survey were in favor of establishing the position, stating that to do so would increase communication, trust, advocacy, and employment satisfaction. This report organizes the survey's main findings according to both numerical results and relevant comments characterizing the results, both for and against the position. For the Senate's information, the report also goes on to explain the function of an Organizational Ombuds, where an Ombuds might be housed in the University, and how the Ombuds would benefit the university if established. We also include information, for comparison purposes, about peer and aspirational institutions' inclusion of an Ombuds in their organizational structures. This report does not recommend specifics of how an Ombuds position should be structured at American University. Should the Senate decide to move forward in establishing an Ombuds position; our *ad hoc* committee could investigate possible models and make a proposal for the Senate's consideration in September 2015.

The University Senate tasked an *ad hoc* committee, in October 2014, with investigating whether an Ombuds position should be established at American University. The members of this group are Stacey Marien, Lauren Weis, Caron Martinez, William Leap and John Willoughby.

History of the proposal: In 2006, an *ad hoc* committee was set up to propose changes to the Senate by-laws. One suggested change was to establish an Ombuds position as a faculty support and resource. After consulting an attorney specializing in institutional risk, the *ad hoc* committee did not recommend creating the position. In 2011, an *ad hoc* committee was formed to work on policies concerning term faculty. In their final report to the Senate, the committee suggested that the University establish an Ombuds position to facilitate term faculty concerns. The Senate never took up this suggestion for discussion.

In 2013, AU faculty responded to a Work/ Life Balance survey designed to assess the working environment at AU. One of the suggestions that came out of that survey was that AU establish an Ombuds position. In the summer of 2014, an adjunct professor at WCL, David Clark, submitted a proposal for the creation of an Ombuds position to the interim Dean of Academic Affairs, Mary Clark. This proposal was not acted on. In the fall of 2014, Stacey Marien and Lauren Weis submitted a proposal to the Senate to investigate establishing an Ombuds position. The Senate agreed to establish an *ad hoc* committee to survey AU faculty's interest in establishing the position. This report includes the results of that survey, and reports more fully on the tasks, benefits, drawbacks, and best practices of an Ombuds office or person so that the Senate has the additional information necessary to consider establishing this position.

The *ad hoc* committee designed a survey to be distributed to all AU faculty through the aufaculty email group. The survey consisted of five questions, with room for comments. The survey was sent out twice, once in December before the winter holiday break and once in January, just as the spring semester began. There are almost 1200 emails on the faculty listserv, and as of April 14, 2015, a total of 527 faculty had taken the survey.

Survey Design and Responses:

The survey invitation was prefaced with a message that stated:

"The AU Senate has approved an ad hoc committee to investigate whether to create an ombudsperson position for AU faculty. An Ombudsperson is an impartial, informal mediator who would support and advise faculty by listening and exploring solutions to workplace issues. By answering this short survey (only five questions), you will provide essential information to help the group develop a proposal for the Senate. We thank you for your time."

Question One: asked if the respondent had ever had an issue or concern that could have been brought to an Ombuds. 523 people answered this question. 45% said yes, 55 % said no.

Question Two: asked if the respondent could ever see using the resources of an Ombuds. 515 people answered this question. 66% said yes, 34 % said no. (One flaw in this question was there was not a "maybe" option.)

Question Three: asked if the respondent would support the creation of an Ombuds position. 515 people answered this question. 90% said yes and 10% said no.

Question Four: asked for the respondent's status as AU Faculty.

Tenured full - 100 (19.23 % of total respondents).
Tenured Associate - 90 (17.31%)
Tenure-line - 49 (9.42%)
Term - 86 (16.54%)
Multi-year - 63 - (12.12%)
Continuous Appointment - 11 (2.12%) (a new status in the library)
Adjunct - 121 (23.27%)

For comparison's sake, here are the total numbers of faculty, by status, on campus. These numbers were obtained from the DAA's office. The assumption is that Continuous, Multi-year and Term all fall under the Term Faculty category.

Tenured Faculty: 376
Tenure-Track Faculty: 115
Term Faculty: 379
Adjuncts: 629 (teaching in Spring 2015)

Question Five: was open-ended and asked participants to add their comments. We have summarized some of the examples that are most indicative of the major findings from the survey:

Those expressing a desire ***for*** AU to establish an Ombuds: (Again, 90% said yes; 10% said no)

1. Conveyed surprise that AU did not already have the position,
2. Considered such a position a "step in the right direction" to "solve the problems of unbalanced power" at AU,
3. Believed the Ombuds would help facilitate communication and advocacy between faculty and administration,
4. Trusted the Ombuds as a safe place to bring workplace issues

Those expressing a desire ***not*** to establish the position:

1. Conveyed irritation that it would be one more bureaucratic layer in an already bloated administrative structure,
2. Believed it would be an unnecessary cost, when money could be used elsewhere,
3. Questioned the power and independence in the position, with some people applauding that it would be a step forward towards listening and transparency, and others asking why we would have the position if the person couldn't make decisions or have real authority.
4. Believed that the position is redundant: that we already have people or functions that have the same charge as an Ombuds would.

As you consider this survey feedback, it is useful at this point to establish a working definition of what an Organizational Ombuds is, and what that person might do, or not do. *Note: full results of the faculty survey are included for your convenience, in the Appendix.*

What does an Ombuds do?
One essential task would be for AU to define the role and responsibilities of an Ombuds position that best meets the needs of faculty *here*. To define those parameters, it is useful to consider how peer institutions incorporate Ombuds' positions into their culture. In the paragraphs below we have compiled a snapshot of the variety of forms that an AU Ombuds could take by describing some of the Ombuds positions among AU's aspirational, "market basket," and D.C.-based peer institutions (see Appendix for full list), as well as other leading institutions in higher education.

For example, Stanford University defines the Ombuds' role by educating faculty on its website about why they would seek the services and counsel of an Ombuds:

When is it appropriate to contact the Ombuds Office? Why have an Ombuds?
Adapted from http://www.med.stanford.edu/Ombuds/whentouse.html
There are many situations in which you might want to make use of this confidential resource, such as:

- When you need someone to listen
- When an awkward situation or uncomfortable feelings are bothering you

- When you are unsure of Stanford policy or you believe a policy procedure or regulation has been applied unfairly
- When you wish to work through an intermediary
- When you are worried about favoritism or afraid of retaliation
- When you think you have been treated unfairly, harassed or discriminated against
- When you think someone has engaged in misconduct, or there has been an ethical violation
- All members of the university community (faculty, students, post-docs, and staff) have access to the Ombuds Office, and may not be retaliated against for contacting the Ombuds Office in a matter of concern. *[Note that the purpose of this report is to evaluate establishing an Ombuds for AU faculty, only.]*

As part of establishing the Ombuds' place in their institution, Columbia University's communicates the Ombuds' charge as centered on four principles: "Confidential, Impartial, Informal, Independent." These principles are clearly articulated through its dedicated website; below is an example. (http://ombuds.columbia.edu/node/22)

Confidential: The Ombuds Office holds the identity of our visitors and all communications in strict confidence and will not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so, except as required by law, or where, in the judgment of the Ombuds Officers, there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.
Impartial: The Ombuds Office is a neutral place. As designated neutrals, the Ombuds Officers remain unaligned and impartial. The Ombuds Office has no decision-making authority.
Informal: As an informal resource, the Ombuds Office does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedures. Any communication with the Ombuds Office is off the record and does not constitute notice to Columbia University.
Independent: The Ombuds Office is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within Columbia, with a reporting relationship directly to the President.

As part of educating both faculty and the wider community about the Ombuds position, Oregon State offers a clear chart showing both the differences and the slight overlap of an Ombuds and other University units, such as Grievance and Human Resources. As noted throughout this report, the Ombuds role can be clarified, defined and communicated in any way that AU decides is best for our purposes.

This chart shows how an Ombuds is similar and different from existing units and functions:
http://oregonstate.edu/ombuds/how-are-we-different

University Ombuds: Comparison of Services with Office of Equity and Inclusion & Office of Human Resources

	OEI	OHR	Ombuds
	Fosters an equitable and inclusive organization through strategic planning, policy and practice development, education and guidance, and by responding to discrimination and workplace bullying complaints through investigation and resolution. Promotes understanding and proactive practices related to affirmative action, equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. Coordinates access and accommodations for employees in accordance with the ADA. http://oregonstate.edu/oei/	Provides a comprehensive Human Resource management (HR) program (benefits, classification and compensation, recruiting, labor relations, training and development, HRIS) and leadership. Assists managers and employees in following and applying all HR-related policies and procedures. Conducts investigations as required for classified staff. Interprets and negotiates matters relative to the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Has responsibility for Professional Faculty only as directed by the Sr Vice Provost, Academic Affairs. http://oregonstate.edu/admin/hr/	Promotes a civil, inclusive, and healthy OSU campus climate for employees and students through 1) providing informal, impartial, independent, and confidential* conflict management services, 2) conflict management education and program outreach, and 3) identifying conflict trends and providing systemic feedback to administration. *http://oregonstate.edu/ombuds/
Serves in a compliance function	Yes	Yes	No
Provides employee relations training	Yes, primary focus is on a variety of topics related to equity, inclusion, and diversity.	Yes, primary focus is on all aspects of employee training and development with emphasis on leader development, organizational design and improvement, and conflict resolution.	Yes, primary focus is on interpersonal and organizational conflict management.
Designated neutral	No; compliance role	No; compliance role	Yes; designated neutral
Creates and enforces policies	Yes	Yes	No
Office of Notice	Yes	Yes	No
Conducts formal investigations	Yes	Yes; for classified staff, and when directed for professional faculty	No; informal fact gathering only
Participates in OSU formal procedures	Yes	Yes	No
Responsible for identifying systemic trends and/or patterns	Yes; employee and student related.	Yes; employee related (includes student employees).	Yes; employee and student related.

As an impartial party, an Ombuds' value is both symbolic and practical. The symbolic worth of a senior faculty member designated as a mediator, sounding board, mentor, and problem-solver cannot be overestimated as faculty at AU strive to be listened to, validated, and supported. For this reason, one quality of an Ombuds that is essential is "trustworthy." The person in the position must be seen as both impartial and open-minded, with a role to listen fairly and counsel without agenda, and with direct reporting authority to either the provost and/or the President. Practically speaking, an Ombuds position is an efficient, almost cost-neutral way (more "cost" information is included below) to engender faculty goodwill - the goodwill that comes from being heard.

Points to Consider

As the survey data of those objecting to the Ombuds' position suggest, a major argument against having an Ombuds is that faculty members already have the right to file a grievance against a decision that affects their standing in the university. Thus, some respondents questioned whether an Ombuds position would add an extra layer of costly bureaucracy to the university. Yet we believe that this concern is based on a misunderstanding of the role that an Ombuds can play. When an independent Ombuds serves as a confidential, impartial, informal resource for faculty, it should be possible to propose solutions to problems *before* they get to the grievance stage.

In addition, survey results demonstrate that a majority of faculty respondents believe that an Ombuds could identify problematic administrative practices that could be corrected. As a result, AU could move closer to the goal of creating an environment of fairness and equity for all faculty members, making the university a more efficient workplace that is truly focused on our educational mission. As one example, an Ombuds could be used for cases that grievance doesn't concern itself with, cases that affect perhaps *a group* of faculty rather than one individual. While the Ombuds would have no formal power to resolve disputes or create policy, his or her contribution could help American University design and implement improved personnel practices and academic policies that are possible because the Ombuds' voice would be respected by the university's leadership.

What would an Ombuds position look like at AU? What could faculty expect from such a person? What would be the limits and benefits of seeking advice or counsel from an Ombuds?

If we look to peer institutions, we see that there is truly no one pattern for an Ombuds position to follow, as these positions are tailored to suit each unique institution.
For example, at some schools (such as Stanford, Boston University, and Cornell), the Ombuds is not one position, but an entire office, and its charge is to serve the needs of the entire community, from staff to students to faculty. Syracuse students voted in November 2014 for an Ombuds office to serve students, growing out of campus concerns around Greek life and campus sexual violence. Syracuse does not have such a resource for faculty. We should note again that our proposal aims its focus squarely *on AU faculty only*. AU should feel free to create the position that best suits the needs of our faculty.

Notable universities and colleges with an Ombuds Position:
Boston University
Pomona College
Cornell University
Tufts University
Scranton University
Wellesley College
Washington University (St Louis) Medical School
Johns Hopkins Medical School
Georgetown University

Where does the Ombuds position "live" in the university?

Some schools have opted to define the Ombuds' natural home as part of its Wellness Outreach, including having a mental health and stress reduction focus. Others frame it as a skills-based endeavor (Princeton), conducting workshops and training for faculty to learn about and apply conflict resolution and negotiation to all areas of their lives. Still others house their Ombuds in the University Chaplain's office, or as part of spiritual life (Tufts), believing that "creating a positive ethical climate" and "mediating disputes" reflects Tufts' heritage as a place that "…honors a spirit… of inclusivity and social justice."

What would an Ombuds cost? How does an Ombuds increase efficiency?

The question of an Ombuds cost-effectiveness is complex. The idea of formal, "scientific" measurement of the cost-effectiveness of an Organizational Ombuds is controversial within the Ombuds profession. Mary Rowe argues that there is no singular "scientific" means to calculate the cost-effectiveness of an Ombuds to an organization, largely because his or her role can be so complex. In fact, Rowe argues that one part of the role of an Ombuds is to identify and communicate the benefits and usefulness of the role to an often diverse community.[1]

Evaluating the effectiveness of an Organizational Ombuds is a complex task for a number of reasons. These include:

- Multiple Stakeholders: Within an institution many points of view contribute in judging the effectiveness of an Ombuds, and the interests of numerous stakeholders may be in conflict. An Ombuds serves as a designated neutral, working outside of ordinary lines of reporting and structures, who must consider perspectives and interests that may differ considerably.[2] Whose point of view should determine effectiveness in the case of a university: administrators, staff, faculty, students, alumni, etc.? In the case of a university, individual stakeholders can change frequently (revolving committee chairs, student and staff turnover, as a few examples).
- Identification of Institutional Goals. An organization needs to come to some agreement about goals for an Organizational Ombuds position in order to determine how to evaluate effectiveness. Evaluation standards may include professional standards of practice, mission of the organization as a whole, values of the given Organizational Ombuds in relation to the values and practices of the institution, and more. It is also necessary to identify an appropriate time frame for evaluation, as some complex institutional challenges can take years to resolve.
- Context. An Organizational Ombuds can fulfill a multitude of functions, all of which may not be equally valuable within an institutional context. For example: Delivering Respect; Listening; Receiving and Giving Information on a one-to-one basis; Referral; Helping People to Help Themselves in a Direct Approach; Reframing Issues and Developing Options; Shuttle Diplomacy; Mediation; Facilitating a Generic Approach to Problems; Supporting Systems Change; Follow-up.
- Challenges of Assessment – who constitutes an effective and objective evaluator of the work of an Ombuds? Will the evaluator be internal or external? Will any evaluation span multiple stakeholders? Evaluation is difficult given the necessity of a "paucity of records, memories, organizational Ombuds footprints" of an Ombuds as well as the various goals and objectives of multiple stakeholders. [Note: the Committee believes assessment concerns could be addressed by creating some sort of anonymous evaluation measures]

Calculating the Benefits and Cost-Effectiveness of an Organizational Ombuds

The benefits of Organizational Ombuds to an institution are both tangible and intangible. "Many of the perceived intangible benefits of Organizational Ombuds are 'social benefits' or 'positive externalities',"[4] which are hard to measure in objective terms though they may be quite important. These might range from benefits to the family members of employees when those employees are happier at work, to the entire community being affected when the systems of an institution promote positive interactions or community well-being.[5]

Determining the cost-effectiveness of an Ombuds is not a straightforward task, for the value or "return" of a monetary investment depends on the values and goals, both short- and long-term, of the organization. For example, the work of the position could increase costs in the short term, particularly if the Ombuds develops a reputation for effectiveness and trustworthiness. More stakeholders may use their services, which could require additional resources. In the long run, the successful work of an Ombuds could increase productivity, increase faculty efficiency, and thus decrease costs. It can be very difficult to measure this effectiveness objectively because the success of an Organizational Ombuds frequently manifests through the actions of others motivated by confidential interactions with the Ombuds.[6]

Some practices that can help to demonstrate the effectiveness of an Organizational Ombuds include:

- Calculating the benefits and cost savings from specific initiatives
- Regularly identifying and communicating Ombuds effectiveness
- Internally assessing the caseload in relation to the mission of the position identified by the institution
- Collecting anonymous feedback from the community
- Identifying problems uncovered through the Ombuds process, which were previously unknown to the organization or unrecognized
- Constantly listening, and reporting back, to the community
- Including the Ombuds role in climate surveys
- Creating and disseminating annual reports, website materials, and training[7]

[1] Rowe, Mary. Identifying and Communicating the Usefulness of Organizational Ombuds With Ideas about organizational Ombuds Effectiveness and Cost-Effectiveness. Journal of the International Ombuds Association, vol 3, no 1, 2010.
[2] Ibid. 2.
[3] Ibid. 3-6.
[4] Ibid. 6.
[5] Ibid. 6-7.
[6] Ibid. 8-11.
[7] Ibid. 12-22.

Additional Points to Consider about Cost:

- An Ombuds position means a more efficient use of faculty time: faculty who are helped by an Ombuds will spend less time distracted by workplace concerns and have more time to dedicate to their core mission: educating AU students.

- An Ombuds chosen from among existing senior AU faculty would save time and resources in that it would not mean hiring a new position - just investing in training and accreditation through the International Ombuds Association. In terms of remuneration, we recommend that the University consider salary or stipend, together with course release(s) to facilitate the Ombuds' workload.

- An Ombuds acting as a conduit for faculty to find existing University resources provides a cost effective alternative to faculty having to spending time locating and accessing such information.

- An Ombuds is a smart, practical, and morale-building way to establish a "middle" person who can listen to faculty concerns that might currently go from complaint to grievance, by offering mediation and advocacy before such concerns reach the point of formal hearing or litigation. Though data, due to confidentiality concerns, are not available to support a clear correlation between an Ombuds and fewer legal cases, we can speculate with confidence that an effective Ombuds can diffuse concerns before they escalate.

- Finally, the support of an Ombuds position is a best practice among our peer institutions, and therefore a reasonable and customary part of the cost of doing business for an institution of the quality and stature of American University.

In August of 2014, an AU Adjunct Faculty Member from the Washington College Of Law, David Clark, wrote a proposal urging AU to create an Ombuds position for faculty. His definitions, framework, and suggestions for such a position are worth considering, and appear in the Appendix, below.

APPENDIX

The following five paragraphs are taken with the permission of an AU Adjunct Faculty Member, David Clark. In terms of clarifying an Ombuds position's responsibilities and advantages, Clark writes:

"A Faculty Ombuds has an open door for visitors from the ranks of tenure-line, term, and adjunct professors at the University... The Faculty Ombuds serves two purposes: (1) to listen to faculty members' concerns, complaints, and inquiries, and give advice or assistance to address those matters; and (2) to provide early warning of problems that could harm the University's reputation, finances, or people.

The Ombuds cannot accomplish these purposes without a key prerequisite: Trust. In order for faculty to feel comfortable communicating with the Ombuds, they must trust that their identity is confidential unless they give the Ombuds permission to act on their behalf. In this connection, the core standards of Ombuds practice are independence, impartiality, confidentiality, and informality.[7] The Ombuds will explain to faculty that there is a narrow exception to the rule of confidentiality: that when the Ombuds learns information that could put the University in imminent harm, the Ombuds must take steps to inform the University; and even in such situations, the Ombuds will not reveal the faculty member's identity unless permission is given to reveal his/her name.

In general, the duties of a Faculty Ombuds are described as "handl[ing] a range of complaints — from mundane disputes over office space to career-changing battles over termination. Sometimes they give advice, sometimes they clarify administrative policies, and in some cases they mediate." [8] That is, in many cases, the Ombuds may listen and provide feedback and information in order to help faculty to mentally process his or her concerns, without taking any further action outside of the Ombuds's office.

In other cases, the Ombuds may refer faculty to another appropriate office if giving notice to formal channels within the University might be necessary to effectively address the visitor's concern. In still other cases, faculty may request that the Ombuds use his/her diplomatic skill as a facilitator and mediator to reach out to third parties in an attempt to resolve the situation. In sum, establishing an Office of the Ombuds is popular "largely because it helps resolve conflicts while maintaining relationships that could be damaged in a more formal setting." [9] Also, "[u]ltimately, institutions hope that ombudsmen will decrease the number of formal grievances and lawsuits."[10]

Importance of a Faculty Ombuds
The Faculty Ombuds serves to promote collegiality and rapport among Faculty and Management. Issues of concern to Faculty, if not surfaced early in their existence, can fester over time and cause discontent among coworkers and work groups, which leads to inefficiency, discord and ultimately a product inferior to the output of a well-oiled organizational machine.

The Ombuds also acts an early warning system for matters that could result in great harm to the University organization and community. Those matters include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, physical violence, fraud, waste, and abuse of institutional resources. It is the duty of a University Ombuds to surface matters that could do lasting harm to the University as an institution, whether to its reputation, quality, or financial well-being."

[7] The core standards are discussed in depth in the American Bar Association's Standards for the Establishment and Operation of Ombuds Offices (revised Feb. 2004), available at http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/leadership/2004/dj/115.authcheckdam.pdf. As described there, "informality" means the Ombuds will not "voluntarily disclose to anyone outside the Ombuds office, including the entity in which the Ombuds operates, any information the person provides in confidence or the person's identity, unless necessary to address the imminent risk of serious harm or with the person's express consent."
[8] Eugene McCormack, Socratic Guidance for Faculty Grievances, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 3, 2006, at A10, available at http://chronicle.com/article/Socratic-Guidance-for-Faculty/20064/.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid. 4

Fulltime Faculty/Staff Headcount & Salary Budgets - FY2010-FY2014

		University Summary											
		FY2010		FY2011		FY2012		FY2013		FY2014		% Change FY10-FY14	
($000's)		Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget
Notes:	**Fulltime Faculty**												
1	Tenured & Tenure Track Faculty	452		468		482		491		494		9%	
	Term Faculty	243		265		297		314		328		35%	
	Total Fulltime Faculty	**695**	**$62,435**	**733**	**$65,530**	**779**	**$71,528**	**805**	**$74,607**	**822**	**$79,516**	**18%**	**27%**
2	Administrators	18		18		18		18		18		0%	
3	Professional Staff	783		807		854		878		915		17%	
4	Non-Exempt Staff	639		666		686		682		691		8%	
	Total Fulltime Staff	**1,440**	**$90,767**	**1,491**	**$98,593**	**1,558**	**$107,646**	**1,578**	**$113,229**	**1,624**	**$116,611**	**13%**	**28%**
	Total Fulltime Faculty, Staff & Administrators	**2,135**	**$153,202**	**2,224**	**$164,123**	**2,337**	**$179,174**	**2,383**	**$187,836**	**2,446**	**$196,127**	**15%**	**28%**
	Parttime Faculty												
5	Academic Year Adjunct	746		712		714		750		729		(2%)	
6	Summer Instruction	237		260		263		252		267		13%	
	Total Parttime Faculty	**983**	**$7,564**	**972**	**$7,672**	**977**	**$8,276**	**1,002**	**$9,305**	**996**	**$9,217**	**1%**	**22%**
University Total		**3,118**	**$160,766**	**3,196**	**$171,794**	**3,314**	**$187,450**	**3,385**	**$197,141**	**3,442**	**$205,344**	**10%**	**28%**

Sources: HR Source: headcount as of Census date of each fall semester.; Fiscal year-end salary budgets - Colleague Financial FY10-FY14.

Notes:

1 Tenured/tenure track faculty include librarians.

2 Administrators include the President's Cabinet, deans, and senior vice provosts/vice provosts with faculty ranks.

3 Monthly salaried staff

4 Staff who are eligible for overtime and paid biweekly based on hours worked.

5 Includes adjuncts teaching and being paid in the fall semester.

6 Summer instruction reflects adjunct instructors and fulltime faculty teaching in summer.

Fulltime Faculty/Staff Headcount & Salary Budgets - FY2011-FY2015

		University Summary											
		FY2011		FY2012		FY2013		FY2014		FY2015		% Change FY11-FY15	
($000's)		Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget	Count	Budget
Notes:	**Fulltime Faculty**												
1	Tenured & Tenure Track Faculty	468		482		491		494		480		3%	
	Term Faculty	265		297		314		328		343		29%	
	Total Fulltime Faculty	**733**	**$65,530**	**779**	**$71,528**	**805**	**$74,607**	**822**	**$79,516**	**823**	**$81,766**	**12%**	**25%**
2	Administrators	18		18		18		18		18		0%	
3	Professional Staff	807		854		878		915		907		12%	
4	Non-Exempt Staff	666		686		682		691		695		4%	
	Total Fulltime Staff	**1,491**	**$98,593**	**1,558**	**$107,646**	**1,578**	**$113,229**	**1,624**	**$116,611**	**1,620**	**$120,669**	**9%**	**22%**
	Total Fulltime Faculty, Staff & Administrators	**2,224**	**$164,123**	**2,337**	**$179,174**	**2,383**	**$187,836**	**2,446**	**$196,127**	**2,443**	**$202,435**	**10%**	**23%**
	Parttime Faculty												
5	Academic Year Adjunct	712		714		750		729		761		7%	
6	Summer Instruction	260		263		252		267		254		(2%)	
	Total Parttime Faculty	**972**	**$7,672**	**977**	**$8,276**	**1,002**	**$9,305**	**996**	**$9,217**	**1,015**	**$9,520**	**4%**	**24%**
University Total		**3,196**	**$171,794**	**3,314**	**$187,450**	**3,385**	**$197,141**	**3,442**	**$205,344**	**3,458**	**$211,955**	**8%**	**23%**

Sources: HR Source: headcount as of Census date of each fall semester.; Fiscal year-end salary budgets - Colleague Financial FY2011-FY2015.

Notes:

1 Tenured/tenure track faculty include librarians.

2 Administrators include the President's Cabinet, deans, and senior vice provosts/vice provosts with faculty ranks.

3 Monthly salaried staff

4 Staff who are eligible for overtime and paid biweekly based on hours worked.

5 Includes adjuncts teaching and being paid in the fall semester.

6 Summer instruction reflects adjunct instructors and fulltime faculty teaching in summer.

To: Lacey Wootton, Chair AU Faculty Senate

From: AU Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluation and SETs
Co-Chairs Tony Ahrens (CAS), Chris Tudge (CAS)

Date: May 6, 2015

Re: Draft Report

Our committee has reviewed extensive feedback received from the campus community concerning our most recent draft. In light of this we have edited our report, which is attached. We have done our best to listen, record, carefully consider, and incorporate the diverse community feedback. However, many of the issues in evaluation of teaching are not easily resolved. Not surprisingly, then, we have received feedback that was sometimes contrary to other feedback. We believe that the fact that there is such disagreement is one of the important results of this review. Teaching is individual, complex and multifaceted, and so evaluation of teaching must also be so.

The most substantive changes from the previous draft are:

1) A proposal to examine bias in SETs at American University.

2) Modification of the method of collecting SET information in light of concerns that smartphone usage will compromise the utility of the SETs, through limiting narrative comments and reducing appropriate levels of concentration.

3) Some slight modifications of the proposed SET instrument, along with a proposal that the new items be pilot tested before being adopted for general use.

4) Removing the proposal to automatically share narrative SET comments with those conducting faculty reviews. (Of course, the option to voluntarily share comments will remain as is.)

5) More developed recommendations for campus-wide education regarding the use of SET information, including how to develop comparison information for different types of courses.

Faculty Senate ad hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluation and SETs

Executive Summary

The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluation and SETs was charged with rethinking the current student evaluation of teaching process. The committee set this charge within the broader context of additional tools for mentoring and measuring teaching. Over the past year and a half, the committee has consulted with AU faculty, administrators, and students; reviewed the literature on evaluation of teaching; and circulated two draft reports.

While the present report reflects the rich community input, there were many points on which it was not possible to reach consensus, including among members of the committee. The present report notes the most critical of these points, though we acknowledge that members of the committee and of the university community at large may find that positions on which they were passionate are not represented in the current document. We are grateful for all of the suggestions and arguments, but it was not possible to include them all.

A central point upon which everyone agreed was that in evaluating teaching, it is critical to balance student input with other factors, as is stipulated in the Faculty Manual. Individual teaching units should continue to articulate for themselves how that balance is best achieved.

The major proposals resulting from the committee's work and from our deliberations are these:

- The student evaluation instrument should be renamed SILT (Student Input on Learning and Teaching), reflecting the role of students as contributors to the process of improving pedagogy at AU, rather than as evaluators.
- A new set of questions for the instrument is proposed, with final wording subject to pilot testing.
- The SILTs should be administered online, during class wherever feasible, following the model used in the Washington College of Law. We acknowledge the challenge of obtaining an adequate response rate from courses offered online.
- Usefulness of SILTs can be improved by
    - educating students as to the importance of providing thoughtful input on teaching and learning in the context of individual courses
    - educating faculty on ways of benefitting from student input
    - institutionally providing multiple analyses of data, including comparison with similar types of courses
    - de-emphasizing small and statistically non-significant variations in tabulated results

- In all evaluations of faculty teaching (adjunct, term, and tenure-line) for merit, reappointment, tenure, and promotion units should include measures that go beyond student input, where such measures are established by individual teaching units.
- Use AY 2015-2016 to pilot test both the new questions and the online platform, with full implementation in AY 2016-2017.

Committee Membership

The original committee served in Spring 2014, with some changeover in membership in AY 2014-2015. All members who served on the committee are listed here in alphabetical order.

Tony Ahrens (CAS), Naomi Baron (CTRL), Mark Clark (KSB), Borden Flanagan (SPA), Amanda Frost (WCL), David Kaib (OIR), Phyllis Peres (DAA), Tippi Polo (WCL), Rachel Robinson (SIS), Lenny Steinhorn (SOC), Chris Tudge (CAS), and Elizabeth Worden (CAS).

Draft Report

Evaluation of teaching is both necessary and necessarily imperfect. The task of the Faculty Senate ad hoc Committee on Teaching Evaluation and SETs has been to develop improved methods of evaluating teaching given both the necessity of evaluation and the imperfections in current forms of evaluation. We examined current scholarly research on evaluation of teaching. We solicited feedback from the broader AU community: sessions at the 2014 Faculty Retreat, an online forum for faculty, meetings with Deans and the Faculty Senate, a survey of undergraduate students, feedback from student focus groups, and face-to-face faculty open meetings.

This report, which presents the results of our work, is divided into the following parts:
1) Background on evaluation of teaching
2) Consideration of changing to electronic student evaluation of teaching
3) General SET considerations
4) Going beyond the SET in evaluation of teaching
5) Usage of various forms of evaluation
6) A summary of our recommendations
7) Pilot year and timetable for implementation
8) References cited
9) An appendix of proposed SET questions

Our recommendations are in bold text and collected in section 6.

1) BACKGROUND ON EVALUATION OF TEACHING
To evaluate the effectiveness of teaching one needs to understand its purpose. However, there is little formal agreement on the purpose of teaching, and purposes will likely vary from professor to professor, group to group (for instance, undergraduate vs. graduate students), culture to culture, and time period to time period. Indeed, many of the most interesting comments we received were, at least in part, about the possible mismatch of assessment tool with that which is being assessed. Moreover, our own reflections on what we value from our time as students also do not map easily onto a small set of readily definable goals.

Consider some definitions of the purpose of teaching. Judith Shapiro, former president of Barnard, presented this description of the purpose of higher education: “You want the inside of your head to be an interesting place to spend the rest of your life” (Delbanco, 2012). Heidegger writes:

> Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than — learning. His conduct, therefore, often produces the impression that we properly learn nothing from him, if by

> ‘learning’ we now suddenly understand merely the procurement of useful information. The teacher is far ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he still has far more to learn than they — he has to learn to let them learn (Heidegger, 1968).

Similarly, when a faculty colleague asked a former student why she/he should continue to be employed the former student declared that the faculty member should still be employed

> [b]ecause four years out from college I remember specific conversations and moments from the one class I took with you that helped shape my career and education choices, more than any other educational experience I had at [that professor’s school].

AU’s Middle States Self-Study included the following description of the goals of education, drawing from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U):

> By “liberal education,” AAC&U means, “an approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. This approach emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (for example, science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility; strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical, and problem-solving skills; and the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.”

Some of these goals, such as having the inside of one’s head be interesting, are more difficult to evaluate than others, such as demonstrating a particular practical skill. Assessment, however, is likely to focus on that which is most easily measured; some faculty may well then shape their behavior to that which is being assessed. Therefore, there is a danger that those goals that are more easily assessed will receive more attention at the expense of those goals that are more difficult to assess, crowding out efforts toward reaching potentially more important goals.

Despite these difficulties, teaching needs to be assessed, for two purposes.

First, assessment of teaching can help to improve teaching. Professors routinely engage in a variety of ways of seeking feedback so as to change how they teach, even in the middle of courses. Facilitating this sort of “formative” evaluation should improve teaching.

Second, assessment of teaching also needs to occur to evaluate the faculty engaged in teaching. In decisions ranging from merit pay review to reappointment to tenure, teaching *must* be considered, and that cannot happen without some form of “summative” assessment.

If assessment cannot be done perfectly, it can be done better and with a sense of the limitations of those methods used, as is true also in evaluation of scholarship and service – the other two legs of the three-legged stool of academic evaluation. Our committee has several recommendations for how to improve our methods of teaching evaluation, as we describe below.

2) CONSIDERATION OF CHANGING TO ELECTRONIC STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING

We recommend that SETs be done online. This shift should facilitate easy analysis of SET data and easier delivery. We will discuss some of the benefits of online evaluation in section 5, but we note here that the current paper-based system is near collapse, and so we must move to a new system in the very near future. This move affords an opportunity to switch to electronic SETs.

We will now discuss some of the considerations in changing to electronic SETs.

a) Not all forms of electronic evaluation are the same
Some universities that have switched to online SETs have experienced dramatic drops in student-response rates, with as few as 20% of students completing SET forms. Those who do complete the SET at these universities are likely to be atypical, as are those who often complete on-line reviews such as ratemyprofessor.com.

b) **We recommend that for ”traditional” face-to-face courses, SETs be completed in the classroom, as has been the case for paper reviews**. For fully online courses, evaluations are of necessity done online. For these courses, one possible recommendation would be that as an incentive, students who complete evaluations would receive earlier access to their course grades than students who do not (assuming such a system is feasible). Other means of boosting response rates should also be explored (see, for example, Berk, 2012 and Jacek, 2015). The committee was of mixed minds about how best to distribute SETs in hybrid courses, but we were united in seeking a process that ensures a robust response rate.

c) **We recommend that all SETs, regardless of whether done in class or, for online classes, outside of class, be done on laptops or desktops, not smaller devices. Paper will also be an option for in-class administration for students without access to laptops.**

i) Doing so will maximize participation. The overwhelming majority of AU students have (or have access to) a laptop.

ii) Paper back-up forms would be available to those who do not have laptops or do not bring laptops to the session when evaluations are done.

iii) Keeping the window open for 48 hours should facilitate participation by those who were not present in class when evaluations were done.

iv) We do not recommend use of tablets or mobile phones to complete the evaluations, since use of a larger screen and keyboard (on laptops) helps set a more reflective tone to the endeavor.

d) Some non-traditional courses (e.g., team-taught, laboratory) are not well-handled by the current system. We recommend that solutions to SET usage in such courses be examined during the pilot and implementation phases of the project. At a minimum the new SET system should be flexible enough to accommodate all types of courses taught at AU, allowing all faculty to be effectively evaluated.

e) **We recommend that a joint group of faculty, representatives from OIT and the Registrar's office manage the electronic system.** This should include development of specifications for the system in light of this report.

3) GENERAL SET CONSIDERATIONS

We propose new SET questions. These will be presented at the end of this report in an appendix. Before considering specific questions we will discuss SETs in general, so as to provide context.

a) Using SETs to evaluate teaching presents a variety of problems. We describe three of these problems here.

    Predictive Value for Subsequent Student Performance

    One recent study (Braga, Paccagnella, & Pelizzari, 2014) suggested that higher SETs were predictive of poorer performance in subsequent classes. Students were, to some degree, randomly assigned to different sections of the same course. Outcome measures were grades in subsequent (also somewhat randomly assigned) sections of linked courses. Students in sections that received better SETs did better in the initial class but less well in subsequent classes. This suggests that faculty who "teach to the test" might have students who value the course-specific progress they make and do better in the short run, but miss the deeper learning achieved by those in classes that are less favorably reviewed (for which the gains might be less immediately visible to students). However, this study examined courses in only three disciplines at one university in Italy, and there were difficulties in random assignment, rendering interpretation of the study difficult.

    Potential Sources of Bias

    Student evaluations of teaching are likely affected by a variety of factors that are unrelated to how much students learn. For instance, the largest correlate of student evaluations may be whether students have a prior interest in a course (Wright & Jenkins-Guarnieri, 2012). Thus, it is plausible that professors teaching lower-level required courses might receive lower ratings than those teaching higher-level optional courses even if there are no differences in objective learning. In addition, there may be biases in evaluations based on race, gender or other demographic variables. For instance, one review suggested that "gender appears to operate in interaction with other variables, such as the gender of the rater, the gender-typing of the field in which one teaches, one's gender-typed characteristics, and status cues" (Basow & Martin, 2012). There may also be biases based on actions faculty take that are unrelated to learning. Indeed, one article, drawing on correlational studies, suggested twenty methods faculty might use to raise SETs without increasing learning (Neath, 1996). **We recommend that there be an examination of potential biases arising from such factors as gender, race, country-of-origin, and age of the instructor.** This examination could take the form of an individual, or committee, periodically (perhaps annually?) and systematically evaluating the accumulating SET data at AU for various aspects of bias.

Student Estimates of Own Learning

It is difficult to assess what we do and do not know. For instance, sometimes the only way we can understand our own ignorance would require us to not be ignorant. Thus, the least competent are often the most likely to overestimate their performance (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Students who have learned little might judge themselves to have learned as much as those who have learned a great deal. If students rely on erroneous estimates of what they have learned to make their evaluations, those evaluations will be of dubious validity, as suggested by the Heidegger (1968) quote above.

These are all serious problems, and they do not exhaust the list of problems to be considered when using student evaluations. However, they do not doom student evaluations as a tool. That the evaluations are affected by some things other than learning does not mean that they are uninfluenced by learning. And the most recent review we could find of meta-analyses of the validity of SETs concluded, drawing upon 193 studies, that SETs were in fact valid (Wright & Jenkins-Guarnieri, 2012). Across a large number of studies, courses that were better rated also demonstrated more learning.

In addition SETs give students an opportunity to provide insights into a course. This is important not only because student input can improve teaching and help identify stronger and weaker teachers, but also because the role of a student calls for the reflection and voice present in the SET exercise. There can be an unfortunate tendency to reduce "students" to "customers." Having students supply input about their learning experience will, at its best, help students reflect on their activities and experience and by doing so enter more deeply into their roles. Having students voice their input serves as a reminder that their role in the scholarly community is not passive but, rather, active.

All these considerations, the drawbacks, validity, and usefulness of SETs, influenced our decisions regarding the SET. In the appendix, you will find those revised questions. We will discuss modified usage of SETs in section 5.

Different teaching units and individuals had different inclinations for which questions they would like to use. We propose that the new SET allow teaching units and individuals to add a small number of customized questions, as is the case with the current SETs.

Significant changes to both questions asked and delivery systems might well have unforeseen consequences. Therefore, **we recommend that the questions and delivery system be pilot tested in AY 2015-2016 in classes taught by a group of senior full professors**. Results of this pilot would be reviewed by the Senate before extending the new questions and delivery system to all of campus in AY 2016-2017.

4) GOING BEYOND THE SET IN EVALUATION OF TEACHING

Effective teaching has many dimensions, so our evaluation system must incorporate multiple means of capturing evidence of teaching effectiveness. In fact, our *Faculty Manual* mandates that we do so.

Presently, all academic units have narratives (listed on the DAA website[1]) identifying the variety of ways in which their own unit looks beyond SETs in evaluating (and hopefully mentoring) good teaching, primarily for promotion and tenure. However, in reviewing these criteria in their present form, as well as drawing upon CTRL's survey of academic unit practices, it was difficult to discern how such multiple criteria are actually applied. In addition, this is of particular concern for term and adjunct faculty, for whom there are few evaluation criteria for reappointment and merit.

While it is important to solicit and consider student feedback (e.g., as represented by SETs) as one set of stakeholders in the educational process, we believe that it is critical for teaching units to develop a more inclusive, transparent, multifaceted assessment of teaching effectiveness. The choice of measures and weight they are given may well vary with type of review (e.g., tenure-line versus term faculty, merit review versus promotion or tenure). All faculty (tenure-line, term, and adjunct) within each unit should be given the opportunity to participate in this development process, and the results of the process should be widely disseminated.

Examples of "beyond SET" criteria identified across units as well as proposed by our Committee include:

- Peer observation and mentoring of teaching

[1] http://www.american.edu/provost/academicaffairs/unit-guidelines.cfm#ten, accessed March 2014.

- Teaching portfolio
- Course syllabi
- Innovations in teaching, including teaching a new course
- Publications in/presentations at pedagogical journals/conferences
- Letters from former students and advisees
- Publications by students whose research faculty have supervised (faculty may or may not be co-authors)
- Self-description of course goals and self-evaluation of achievement of course learning objectives
- Examples of feedback provided on student work
- Fulfillment of course and program learning outcomes
- Preparation for advanced courses in the program

As with SETs, each of these has its limitations. For instance, peer observation of classes may capture only a small portion of a colleague's teaching and is likely to be affected by who is reviewing. Different peers might well give diverging feedback (a phenomenon familiar from peer review of scholarly manuscripts or grant applications). A given classroom visit will be difficult to contextualize absent knowledge of what has previously occurred in a course. And peer review on a large scale would be labor intensive. Letters from students will likely favor those with many students or those who encourage their students to write letters. Other items on the list also need to be critically evaluated for both strengths and weaknesses. But such alternatives must be considered to yield a richer, more holistic, evaluation than that provided by SETs alone.

The committee was of mixed minds regarding whether to have units set a cap on the amount of weight that SETs have in overall evaluation of faculty (adjunct, term, tenure-line) for merit, reappointment, promotion, and tenure. However, we all agreed on the importance of balancing SET information with the other factors (beyond SETs), as mandated in the Faculty Manual, and that each department, school, and college has already identified on the Dean of Academic Affairs website.

Teaching units should develop materials and training opportunities to support "beyond SETs" options, working with CTRL or other resources as appropriate. The primary function of this support should be to develop and mentor good teaching, rather than to serve as an evaluation metric. Current support systems include:

<u>CTRL and Unit Programs, Conferences, and Workshops</u>
Both CTRL and several of the academic units have events and personnel in place to help support good teaching. We strongly suggest that academic units work to shift their emphasis from asking

faculty up for reappointment to “raise their SET scores” and instead nurture an environment of helping them improve their teaching.

Peer Observation of Teaching

Individual units should continue to have the option of whether or not to conduct peer observations. Similarly, units should continue to decide for themselves whether feedback will be used strictly for mentoring purposes or for evaluation purposes as well. However, we urge that the emphasis be put on mentoring, not evaluation. CTRL has prepared a handbook on peer observation and will continue to assist departments and programs in developing peer observation of teaching methods tailored to their particular needs.

Explore Creation of University-Wide Teaching Mentoring Program

While some parts of the university have initiated programs to mentor faculty teaching (e.g. the pilot CTRL-CAS Partners in Teaching Program; programming in SIS), others have not. We propose that the university explore the usefulness and feasibility of establishing a university-wide cadre of faculty mentors available to faculty (and academic units) that choose to work with them.

5) USAGE OF VARIOUS FORMS OF EVALUATION

To some extent the difficulties with evaluation of teaching arise from the *usage* of particular methods of teaching evaluation rather than the methods themselves. Evaluation shapes behavior, and so, for instance, evaluating teaching by SETs likely changes behavior that will influence SETs. Faculty have been known to say that they have to raise SETs, and that they must go to CTRL to do so, rather than with the intent to do a better job of teaching. To the extent that faculty are trying to raise SETs, are they doing so with an opportunity cost of not doing better as teachers?

For all these reasons, evaluation of teaching must change to ensure that faculty do not do the equivalent of “teaching to the test.” Such a change may be more important than the specific questions used in any SET instrument.

But deans and others who evaluate teaching only have so much time to evaluate. All full-time faculty are evaluated on an annual basis for merit pay. To do deep analysis of every teacher on an annual basis would consume a huge amount of time. So for some purposes there is a need for relatively simple evaluation, but one that minimizes distortion arising from the form or schedule/frequency of evaluation.

These difficulties in interpretation of teaching-evaluation information also arise from the challenge of self-assessment. It is difficult for people in general to understand their shortcomings; if understood, they would be corrected (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). As a result, people generally believe that they are above average (Dunning, Heath, & Suls, 2004). For instance, in one study over 90% of faculty considered themselves to be above average compared to others at their institution (Cross, 1977). This makes conflict between self-evaluation of teaching and evaluation by outside observers both common and fraught. Having ways of dealing with at least some of these problems would be useful.

Here are some suggestions for how to improve the usage of SETs.

a) Develop better comparison groups
Right now courses are compared within units (e.g., department and college). They are also compared within broad categories of classes (e.g., 100-400 vs. 500- and above). But courses vary within these groupings. For instance, an introductory course with over 100 students is likely to draw a set of students with different commitments than a 400-level seminar with 15 students. Within a unit some courses generally get lower ratings. Chairs then have difficulty recruiting faculty for these courses as faculty do not want to risk receiving lower SETs.

We recommend the development of better, more fine-grained, comparison groups. For instance general education courses that many students take simply to fulfill a requirement might be separated out, as might small graduate seminars that draw students intensely interested in the topic. (Of course some students take General Education courses out of desire, and some students take courses that are not part of General Education for reasons other than desire. However, General Education courses are disproportionately likely to draw students who at least initially do not have that desire.) We suggest that general education courses for each of the five areas be grouped for purposes of comparison. We also recommend that other groupings be considered (e.g., courses taught by first year faculty, social science research methods courses, and required courses) and note that a move to electronic SETs should facilitate this process.

b) De-emphasize the importance of small differences in SETs.
There is faculty concern that small differences on SETs, though not meaningful, might be perceived as meaningful. For instance, some units review SETs for whether they are above or below the mean for the relevant department and college. But it is unclear that, for instance, being above and below a department's average is an important distinction. For example, we know of a case in which a faculty member received an average instructor rating of 6.07 for a large general education course section but was nonetheless below the department average for the instructor rating. As a result faculty, especially term and pre-tenured faculty, worry a great deal about receiving SETs that are even barely below comparison means. This problem also leads some faculty to try to avoid teaching courses that are particularly likely to draw low SETs. Our recommendation in section 5a partially addresses this problem. **We recommend that when comparing faculty SET numbers, evaluating bodies avoid a single-number "average" for a**

given question and instead determine an "average range" that would allow for small and insignificant variations around the average. (By analogy while the midpoint on intelligence tests is 100 "average" is considered a range from 90-109, rather than a single point.) There are multiple ways in which the average range might be determined. For instance, SETs within a standard deviation of the relevant teaching unit mean might be considered within the average range. Alternatively, the average range might be between the 25th and 75th percentiles.

c) Use better statistics (dealing with outliers, for instance)
Right now SET ratings are looked at in terms of averages, or as percentage of ratings in a particular range (e.g., 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). While use of averages has clear advantages it also has limits. For instance, in a small class one or two very low ratings might well pull down averages. **We recommend that the statistical output of SETS include information on medians and modes as well as means**. Discrepancies between these two might be examined for their meaning. Standard deviations may also be helpful. Two courses with similar means might differ with one having ratings clustered tightly about the mean and the other with ratings more widely distributed. Identifying extreme variations in distributions might provide a richer understanding of the evaluations. We also suggest that information about mean and median ratings for department/college/type of course be distributed to those involved in merit-pay review. This should help those who are assigned to courses that typically draw lower SETs, while still minimizing the reporting burden on faculty. Electronic SETs will likely facilitate the use of a more sophisticated statistical approach.

d) Conduct further study of the role of grades in evaluation of teaching.
Students in some courses rightly receive better grades than students in other courses. For instance, graduate students in very selective programs are likely to do particularly strong work and so receive particularly good grades. But faculty reports suggest that there is pressure to give relatively good grades, regardless of student performance, so as to bring about good SETs. At the same time, some evaluating bodies examine grade distributions as they conduct their own reviews of teaching performance, but these examinations are not done systematically or consistently across or even within units. We recommend further study of the role of grades in evaluation of teaching in order to produce recommendations for more consistent consideration of grades when evaluating teaching.

e) **Train faculty to make a case for themselves in files for action, merit files, etc.**
Because the SET instrument cannot capture all of the details of a course, faculty should fill in those gaps by describing innovations in their teaching, revisions to courses, "experiments" that did or did not succeed, problematic situations and their responses to them, and new pedagogical approaches. Units should create the opportunities for these descriptions by requesting them as part of files for action and merit files and as appendices to FARS reports. Units should also

provide guidance to faculty—particularly new term faculty and junior faculty—in effective methods of advocating for themselves as teachers.

f) Identify models of excellent evaluation of teaching

One of the reasons that SETs are so heavily used by administration is that units sometimes do not provide detailed information about faculty teaching to deans. There are many reasons for the failure to look beyond SETs in the evaluation of faculty teaching. As noted above, it takes time to evaluate and faculty time is often scarce. It can also be uncomfortable for faculty to give negative feedback to colleagues with whom they regularly interact and often, non-SET measures are insufficiently standardized or transparent enough to use in evaluations. It is understandable, then, that units sometimes engage in analyses lacking in detail and constructive negative feedback.

We recommend that deans work with divisions and departments in their units to develop meaningful ways of providing faculty evaluations that reflect the breadth of faculty teaching activity. Several programs on campus, such as the College Writing Program, offer models that can function as examples.

We recommend that processes be developed for educating faculty and administrators about more effective use of SETs. This would include, for instance, methods for comparison of SET results to other similar courses (for instance, particular General Education areas, or research methods classes across units, or classes of a certain size).

g) **We recommend creating a separate set of questions that faculty could use for formative purposes around mid-semester.**

Many faculty already engage in mid-semester exercises to obtain student feedback on their courses. It has been suggested that students take more seriously their end of semester evaluation role when they perceive faculty listening to, and acting on, a mid-semester evaluation (Jacek, 2015). We recommend developing a set of questions or templates that faculty could draw upon for use around mid-semester, though administration of mid-semester evaluations would remain the faculty member's option. The outcomes of these formative SETs would only be available to the faculty member. As appropriate, faculty members could seek mentoring advice from their colleagues or from CTRL.

h) **Modify FARS to better record and represent teaching effectiveness.**

FARS should be modified to include space at the <u>beginning</u> of the document where faculty members can summarize their most important accomplishments (in teaching, research, and service) for the year. Note that at present, the only open-ended space in FARS (found under

“Teaching”) limits faculty to talking about pedagogical innovations or student outreach activities “*that are not connected with a specific course.*”

i) Educate all members of the university about the functions of teaching evaluations

Information about the purpose, components, and uses of American University’s SET system of evaluating teaching effectiveness should be shared with students, faculty, and administrators in a systematic and repeated fashion. This process should ensure that:

- students understand the role SETs play in faculty evaluation, and therefore the importance of responding thoughtfully.
- faculty evaluation committees are aware of unit policies regarding the balance between SETs and other criteria in evaluating teaching, along with the vital role of mentoring.
- new faculty are introduced to the FARS system, including how it is used administratively.
- administrators and/or university-wide committees making final decisions on merit pay, promotion, and tenure remain cognizant of differential academic-unit policies.

j) Rename SETs

We recommend that the SET questions be renamed as “Student Input on Learning and Teaching (SILTs)”. We believe this change better reflects and frames what students are doing. (Note that we will continue to refer to them as SETs for the rest of this report, for ease of reading.)

High-quality teaching is critical to the mission of American University. Therefore, we offer these recommendations to include multiple aspects of teaching effectiveness in our evaluation and support systems for the continued development and practice of high-quality teaching.

6) A SUMMARY OF OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **We recommend that SETs be done online.**
2. **We recommend that for “traditional” face-to-face courses, SETs be completed in the classroom, as has been the case for paper reviews**. **We also recommend that the window in which students can complete responses be kept open if response rates are low.**
3. **We recommend that all SETs, regardless of whether done in class or, for online classes, outside of class, be done on laptops or desktops, not smaller devices. Paper will also be an option for in-class administration for students without access to laptops.**
4. **We recommend that a joint group of faculty, representatives from OIT, and the Registrar’s office manage the electronic system.**
5. **We recommend that there be an examination of potential biases arising from such factors as gender, race, country-of-origin, and age of the instructor.**

6. **We recommend that the questions and delivery system be pilot tested in AY 2015-2016 in classes taught by a group of senior full professors**
7. **We recommend that teaching units should develop materials and training opportunities to support "beyond SETs" options, working with CTRL or other resources as appropriate.**
8. **We recommend the development of better, more fine-grained, comparison groups.**
9. **We recommend that when comparing faculty SET numbers, evaluating bodies avoid a single-number "average" for a given question and instead determine an "average range" that would allow for small and insignificant variations around the average.**
10. **We recommend that the statistical output of SETS include information on medians and modes as well as means.**
11. **We recommend training faculty to make a case for themselves in files for action, merit files, etc.**
12. **We recommend that deans work with divisions and departments in their units to develop meaningful ways of providing faculty evaluations that reflect the breadth of faculty teaching activity.**
13. **We recommend that processes be developed for educating faculty and administrators about more effective use of SETs.**
14. **We recommend creating a separate set of questions that faculty could use for formative purposes around mid-semester.**
15. **We recommend that FARS be modified to better record and represent teaching effectiveness.**
16. **We recommend that information about the purpose, components, and uses of the SET system of evaluating teaching effectiveness be shared with students, faculty, and administrators.**
17. **We recommend that the SET questions be renamed as "Student Input on Learning and Teaching (SILTs)".**

7) IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

As noted above the proposals will need to be pilot tested before full implementation. We suggest the following as the timetable toward full implementation.

Summer 2015: Identify an online vendor that can also handle hybrid evaluations.

Fall 2015: Pilot the new questions in paper (or also online, if ready).

Spring 2016: Do focus groups with students in Fall 2015 pilot; pilot emended questions online.

Fall 2016: Do focus groups with students in Spring 2016 pilot; run full-scale emended questions online.

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9) AN APPENDIX OF PROPOSED SET QUESTIONS

Proposed Scale

Proposed on-line SILT (5 point scale) =
0 – Not applicable
1 – Definitely not
2 – No, mostly
3 – Somewhat
4 – Yes, mostly
5 – Yes, definitely

QUESTIONS:

I. The Course

1. I am now more knowledgeable about the subject matter of this course.

2. This was an academically challenging course.

3. The readings and other course materials enriched my learning.

4. The graded assignments (such as papers, projects or other required work) enriched my learning.

5. The overall course experience enriched my learning.

6. I worked hard in this course.

II. The Professor and the Learning Environment

7. The professor was well organized.

8. The professor presented and explained the material clearly.

9. The professor treated all students with respect.

10. The professor created a positive learning environment.

11. The professor provided me with the concepts, insights, and/or skills to engage successfully with difficult and complex ideas.

12. The professor was open to student questions and comments.

13. The professor was appropriately available for conversations or questions outside of the designated class time.

14. The professor provided constructive feedback on papers, tests, or other assignments.

Note: We present here two alternative options for piloting.
15a. Given the opportunity, I would take another course with this professor.
15b. I would recommend this professor to other students.

III. Your Engagement with the Course [Note use of different scales]

16. Excluding class time, the average amount of time I spent on the course per week was:
0-2 hours
3-5 hours
6-8 hours
9-11 hours
12 or more hours

17. In terms of my attendance in this class this semester:
I never missed a class session
I missed only one class session
I missed 2 or 3 class sessions
I missed more than 3 class sessions

18. The grades I received on the course assignments and/or exams fairly reflected the quality of my work.
Yes, my grades fairly reflected the quality of my work.
No, my grades were too high given the quality of my work.
No, my grades were too low given the quality of my work.
Not certain.

IV. Background and Reasons for Taking the Course

19. My class level is:

First year
Sophomore
Junior
Senior
Master’s
Ph.D.
Other (please specify)

20. The primary reason(s) I took this class was/were (choose all that apply):

I was interested in the subject matter
The course was required for my major or minor
The course satisfied a General Education requirement
The course satisfied a university requirement
The course satisfied a MA, PhD or certificate program requirement
I heard the professor was good
None of the above
Other (please specify)

Open-Ended Responses
(Only the professor will see these responses)

1 What was the best part of this class?

2. What changes to this course do you suggest?

3. What changes to the professor’s teaching style or methods do you suggest?

4. Additional comments

Friends and colleagues,

Social media are powerful, rapidly evolving tools for communication, information gathering, teaching, and learning. Like other media, robust use of social media has become integral to democratic processes in modern societies. Use of social media are generally protected from government interference by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

At the same time, use of these tools sometimes raises complex issues concerning ownership and fair use of intellectual property; personal privacy and legal protections for privacy in learning environments; and access to learning services. Social media may in some situations also pose significant challenges to academic integrity and social responsibility.

The guidelines offered below for social media use are intended for discussion throughout American University as practical measures for coping with the impact of these media on learning, teaching, and research. They are one part of the ongoing training, learning, and conversation needed across AU to keep pace with technological change and challenges.

Key concepts include:

- Separate your professional use of social media from your personal uses to the greatest extent possible, including by maintaining separate accounts.
- Establish clear policies for student use of social media in your courses that are consistent with the learning needs and opportunities of your subject, and ensure that students understand your policies.

· Avoid authorizing student social media use that disrupts classroom activities.

· Establish terms of permitted uses of intellectual property created by the professor or by other students, including uses via social media.

· Ensure fair access for all students to all learning tools available at American University, including social media.

· Strengthen respect for the personal privacy of students and compliance with relevant federal, state, and local laws such as FERPA.

Sincerely,

The Faculty Senate Ad-hoc Social Media Committee

Co-chairs: Ayman Omar & Jenise Overmier

Authors: Zoe Charlton, Barbara Emsmiller, Ayman Omar, Jenise Overmier, Jane Palmer, Chris Simpson, Brian Yates

Social Media Guidelines and Tips for Faculty, Staff and Students

For Faculty:

- Set clear boundaries with current students about what an acceptable social media relationship is between you (the faculty member) and them (the students). Respect student's boundaries as well.
- Be mindful of the fact that your activities on social media platforms, along with anything posted by you, do represent American University. On personal sites: Identify your views as your own.
- We suggest faculty respond to requests initiated by current students on personal social media accounts and do not initiate them, as this may create an uncomfortable situation. This includes Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and any other social media outlet.
- If you have concerns, consider creating separate social media accounts for personal use and school/class use.

For Staff:

- Be mindful of the fact that your activities on social media platforms, along with anything posted by you do represent American University. When you post on non-AU sites identify your views as your own.
- We suggest staff respond to requests initiated by current students on social media and do not initiate them as this may create an uncomfortable situation. This includes Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and any other social media outlet.
- Keep in mind that a student may view staff has being in a superior position in terms of the dynamics of the relationship. This is true also for staff members who are of the same generation as current students.

For Students:

- Please realize that while some faculty use social media in class and their lives, not all do. Be respectful of this when requesting or contacting a specific faculty or staff member on social media.
- Before initiating any contact on social media platforms, be sure to consider that the faculty/staff member may have work/personal life boundaries, and they may not consider social media relationships to be appropriate. Just ask them. (The reverse is true with any faculty who may reach out to you).
- When posting content on social media keep in mind that anyone (from fellow students, to professors to future employers) can see these materials now and after you graduate. Even the best privacy settings do not prevent someone from taking a screen shot of something you post.

For more information on American University's Social Media Policies and policies on Student/Staff/Faculty Interaction please refer to:

American University Faculty Manual

American University Student Conduct Code

American University Social Media Guidelines (new guidelines in development)

Syllabus language – as proposed by Social Media Policy Committee (April 2015)

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Sharing of Course Content

Students are not permitted to make recordings of classroom lectures using any type of recording devices (e.g., smart phone, computer, digital recorder) unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained, and there are no objections from any of the students in the class. If permission is granted, personal use and sharing of recordings and any electronic copies of course materials (e.g., PowerPoints, formulas, lecture notes and any classroom discussions online or otherwise) is limited to the personal use of students registered in the course and for educational purposes only, even after the end of the course.

Exceptions will be made for students who present a signed Letter of Accommodation from the Academic Support and Access Center. See: How Do I Request Accommodations? <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/Accommodations.cfm>

To supplement the classroom experience, lectures may be audio or video recorded by faculty and made available to students registered for this class. Faculty may record classroom lectures or discussions for pedagogical use, future student reference, or to meet the accommodation needs of students with a documented disability. These recordings are limited to personal use and may not be distributed (file-share), sold, or posted on social media outlets without the written permission of faculty.

Unauthorized downloading, file sharing, distribution of any part of a recorded lecture or course materials, or using information for purposes other than the student's own learning may be deemed a violation of ***American University's Student Conduct Code*** and subject to disciplinary action (see Student Conduct Code VI. Prohibited Conduct).