



To: President Mark Kennedy, Vice President Michael Lightner, Professor Sheana Bull
From: Faculty Council Executive Committee
Re: Faculty Evaluations Conducted by the Office of Digital Education at the system level
Date: December 18th, 2020

It has come to the attention of Faculty Council that the Office of Digital Education is administering their own course and faculty evaluations. Some of the questions being asked include: “The instructor helped to keep course participants engaged and participating in productive dialogue,” “The instructor provided feedback in a timely manner,” and “I can apply the knowledge created in this course to my work or other non-class related activities” as well as questions rooted in subject matter expertise. Any questions that evaluate the effectiveness of a course or instructor regardless of modality are governed by Regent Policy 5:

Policy 5.A: Faculty Governance

5.A.1 Principle of Shared Governance

(B) Tenured and tenure-track faculty with appropriate participation by instructional, research, and clinical faculty, have the principal responsibility for decisions concerning pedagogy, curriculum, research, scholarly or creative work, academic ethics, and recommendations on the selection and evaluation of faculty. The development of general academic policies shall be a collaborative effort between the faculty and administration.¹

To our knowledge, the evaluations currently being used by ODE have not been developed with or approved by any official shared governance body. As made clear in Policy 5, faculty evaluation is a principal responsibility of the faculty within their academic unit based on procedures developed in collaboration with the administration. Indeed, our most recent FCQ redesign (2016) involved extensive participation from our shared governance leaders as well as comprehensive campus-wide involvement.² Every faculty member at CU already uses a Faculty Course Questionnaire that has been approved in accordance with Regent Policy 5 by their campus and the appropriate use of the FCQ is articulated by individual primary units.

Given this we insist:

- 1. That all course and faculty evaluations by ODE be halted and that those evaluations that have been completed not be released in any form, individually or in aggregate, to anyone other than the faculty member who taught the course;*
- 2. That a process be developed in consultation with the Faculty Council Executive Committee, which includes the chairs of all campus Faculty Assemblies, to bring ODE into compliance with Regent Law and Policy as well as to honor shared governance;*

¹ These are the very principles the Boulder Faculty Assembly called upon Faculty Council to protect in BFA-R-1-10149.

² The exception was Anschutz as they use a platform other than the one shared by our undergraduate campuses.

3. *That any summative assessment such as course evaluations currently being used by ODE are offered as an “opt-in” option for faculty, not an “op-out” option; and*
4. *Any and all formative or summative course evaluation, individually or in aggregate, not be released to anyone other than the faculty member, especially given that faculty supervisors already have access to a campus-level approved FCQ for these same courses and because ODE lacks the authority and expertise to evaluate faculty for merit, tenure, and promotion per Regent Law and Policy.*

In addition, Faculty Council has received reports of ODE issuing memos directly or indirectly to faculty supervisors (unit leaders and/or Deans) that may have negatively impacted faculty in terms of merit review and potentially tenure and promotion. This is an egregious action on the part of ODE. While ODE certainly has a responsibility to assist faculty in creating quality courses and should certainly work directly with faculty in this regard, it does not have the authority to communicate directly or indirectly with faculty supervisors regarding faculty or to influence faculty evaluations per Regent Law and Policy.

Finally, given the bias against women and BIPOC faculty that research has repeatedly shown to exist in course and faculty evaluations as well as the fact that those conducting these reviews at ODE are not subject matter experts, we are especially concerned about the ways the duplicative evaluation process of academic units and ODE may be putting certain classes of faculty in a double jeopardy situation.

To ensure a continued productive relationship between faculty and ODE and a successful accomplishment of the university educational mission regarding online teaching, we request that the system administration gives full attention to these alarming concerns and responds quickly.