

## **FAQs on the New Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) Tool**

Fall 2014

### **1. Why did we develop a new tool for the Student Evaluation of Teaching?**

Over the years faculty have raised concerns about the evaluation of teaching, especially the role of student input and how the evaluation process might be improved. These issues became the focus of campus discussion in 2011. Two task forces were formed in response: the [Task Force on the Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness](#) (2011-12), and the [Task Force on the Student Evaluation of Teaching](#) (2012-13).

[The Charge for the Task Force on the Student Evaluation of Teaching](#) provides further detail.

### **2. What process led to the implementation of the new Student Evaluation of Teaching tool?**

The [new SET tool](#) emerged from the Task Force's research and consultation with the faculty, including a Campus Survey, discussions with the Faculty Senate Council and the Faculty Affairs Committee, and a campus pilot study.

The Task Force [Final Report](#) and the [Executive Summary of the Pilot Study](#) provide further detail.

### **3. What's new about the new tool?**

- The actual items to which students respond are new.
- The survey is shorter (fewer items).
- It includes an open-ended response question.
- The new SET tool focuses on the elements of an instructor's teaching that students are most able to judge.

### **4. What will the evaluative report resulting from the new SET look like?**

The format of the report (the Basic SET Report summarizing students' responses for one course) is nearly identical to the format of the report that has been in use since spring 2009.

The report includes the distribution of student responses, means, medians and standard deviations for each individual item on the survey. In addition, the overall average of items 1.1-1.9 is provided.

The SET survey concludes with an open-ended item that asks, “Is there anything else you would like to add about this instructor or course?” The SET report sent to instructors will include student responses to this item.

See this [example of a Basic SET Report](#) for a fictitious class. (Thank you to Leo Terrazas in Information Technology for creating this sample.)

**5. What’s the difference between items 1.1 - 1.9 and items 2.1 and 2.2, and how will the information generated from these different categories of questions be reflected in the course report?**

Items 1.1-1.9 ask students about the instructor’s organization and management of the course. The distribution of student responses is reported for each individual item.

Items 2.1 and 2.2 ask students about their level of engagement in the course, first, as they consider the amount of time they spent on the course, and, second, as they consider how challenging this course was compared to other courses. These are stand-alone items, as confirmed by a statistical analysis of the pilot study. Subsequent discussions with faculty groups led to the items’ inclusion in the final SET tool.

For more on the pilot study analysis of the statistical results, see the [Executive Summary of the Pilot Study](#).

**6. I can see my SET results. Who else can? What do they see?**

Consistent with current practice, faculty members will receive a report for each class they teach, and a copy will be sent to the dean’s office.

Consistent with current practice in the College of Arts and Sciences, Leavey School of Business, School of Engineering, and the School of Education and Counseling Psychology, Basic SET Reports will be available to the university community at <http://evaluations.scu.edu/>. The SET report posted online will *not* include responses to the open-ended item.

Consistent with current practice, Law School SET results will not be posted online.

**7. How do I access student responses to the open-ended question?**

Student comments in response to the open-ended item (“Is there anything else you would like to add about this instructor or course?”) will appear at the end of the report PDF sent to the instructor.

**8. Is the process for administering the new SETs different from the old process?**

The process of sending the survey to students has not changed. Students will receive an email link to the SET survey at the end of the term.

**9. My department/program uses its own paper forms. How do the two evaluations work together?**

Some departments have used and will continue to use narrative or other supplemental forms for student evaluation of teaching. Often these are completed in class. Consistent with current practice, those departments will determine how to integrate multiple forms of student feedback.

**10. I'd like to change the open-ended question and add questions. How do I do that?**

At this time we are not able to make changes to the open-ended question or to add items. As has been the case in the past, instructors or departments wanting feedback on additional items may choose to administer an additional survey or narrative evaluation.

**11. How and by whom are SET results used?**

Faculty can use SET results for self-reflection on their teaching, course planning and redesign, assignment and learning activity design, and overall professional development.

Faculty include SET results in their Activities Reports and other documents related to regular performance evaluation, reappointment, mid-probationary review, tenure and promotion.

Chairs and committees use SET results along with other sources of evidence (for example, syllabi, course materials, sample assignments, activities and exams, statements of teaching philosophy, student work, peer reports on classroom visits, and the like) in evaluating faculty teaching performance.

SET results, in the context of other indicators of teaching effectiveness, support the evaluation process by helping faculty, chairs, and committees identify teaching strengths and areas needing attention.