

Adopted: May 26, 2020

**ACADEMIC SENATE
Of
CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY
San Luis Obispo, CA**

AS-898-20

**RESOLUTION ON UNIVERSITY FACULTY PERSONNEL POLICIES
SUBCHAPTER 8.4.5: STUDENT EVALUATION RESULTS**

Impact on Existing Policy: This resolution establishes new policy. Its impact on existing practice is described in the attached report.¹

- 1 WHEREAS, Student evaluation data are collected and used for the purpose of
2 providing student feedback as part of the evidence considered in the
3 evaluation of teaching in periodic and performance evaluations of
4 instructional faculty; and
5
- 6 WHEREAS, Cal Poly has no policies on the disposition of student evaluation data
7 beyond their practical use in the evaluation of teaching performance
8 as part of periodic and performance evaluations of instructional
9 faculty; and
10
- 11 WHEREAS, Colleges and departments have established their own varied practices
12 of removing out of date student evaluation data from faculty
13 Personnel Action Files (PAF); and
14
- 15 WHEREAS, University policy on document storage and disposition of student
16 evaluation results would eliminate variation across campus about
17 how student evaluation results are maintained in the PAF; and
18
- 19 WHEREAS, Electronic storage of student evaluation data has changed the
20 practices of document disposition without any consideration by the
21 Academic Senate about the value of standardizing longstanding
22 practice of disposition of student evaluation results from the PAF;
23 therefore be it
24
- 25 RESOLVED: The policy document contained at the end of the attached report
26 "Proposed University Faculty Personnel Policies Subchapter 8.4.5:
27 Student Evaluation Results" be established as university policy, and be
28 it further

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RESOLVED: Colleges and the Library revise their personnel policy documents prior to Fall 2020 to conform with subchapter 8.4.5 of UFPP.

Proposed by: Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee
Date: April 28, 2020

**¹ (1) Describe how this resolution impacts existing policy on educational matters that affect the faculty. Examples include curricula, academic personnel policies, and academic standards.
(2) Indicate if this resolution supersedes or rescinds current resolutions.
(3) If there is no impact on existing policy, please indicate NONE.**

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The Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) is a standing Senate committee with representation from each college, the library and professional consultative services, Academic Affairs, and a student representative. FAC employs a streamlined process for Academic Senate approval of personnel policies which specifies the nature of consultation with faculty affected by proposed changes and provides a clear accounting of which policy documents have been superseded by the proposed change. FAC has used this process to construct a new University Faculty Personnel Policies (UFPP) document and is now employing the same process to create and revise personnel policies to UFPP on an as-needed basis.

In creating UFPP FAC has adopted a guiding principle that, as far as possible, the migration of existing personnel policies from the former governing personnel policies document, University Faculty Personnel Actions (UFPA), into UFPP shall *not change* those policies as they are in UFPA, but instead *just reformulate them* into the new style and structure of UFPP. Once the policies previously in UFPA are in place in UFPP, FAC may then visit them for subsequent revision in the form of presenting to the Academic Senate revisions to chapters and sections of UFPP. FAC may also propose wholly new policies to be included in UFPP.

This report explains and justifies a proposed new personnel policy. The proposed new polices are addenda to the policies already in UFPP 8.4.5.

FAC engaged in consultation with the colleges about the proposed policy, presenting two options for the proposed policy. The policy presented here arose from the one option universally preferred by those who provided feedback.

Summary of Subchapter 8.4.5 Student Evaluation Results

Per article 15.15 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), results of student evaluations are stored as an electronic extension of a faculty member's Personnel Action File (PAF). Student evaluation reports comprise part of the body of evidence relevant to the evaluation teaching performance in faculty evaluation processes. Results of student evaluations contribute to the assessment of the faculty member's teaching performance as recorded in the AP109 form used by the Department Peer Review Committee and Department Chairs/Heads. These AP109 forms remain in the PAF forming a history of faculty evaluation, including the evaluation of teaching performance.

The proposed policy defines student evaluation results as the reports generated for each course evaluated, including a complete accounting of the quantitative responses and all the student comments from a given class section of a course. Filing and storage of student evaluation results amounts to filing and storage of these reports. The remaining policy text addresses the disposition of those reports beyond the period of their utility. Some background about the utility of these reports of student evaluation results is in order.

Given the validation of the quality of teaching inherent in the granting of tenure and post-tenure promotion, and in issuance and renewal of lecturer faculty contracts, the continued evaluation of

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teaching beyond these personnel actions is in reference to the summary assessment of teaching covered in the evaluation reports that recommended those personnel actions. The evidence of teaching under consideration in a subsequent post-tenure evaluation is assessed in reference to prior assessments of teaching performance in the reports issued from prior evaluations, but the evidence in support of those prior summary assessments is not something to revisit in subsequent evaluations.

When student evaluations were conducted with paper forms, student evaluation records consisted of summary reports of the quantitative results and the original paper forms containing each student's comments collected in the student evaluation process. Both those summary reports and the original paper forms with student comments were, by the CBA, considered to be part of the PAF. The summary reports were standardly filed in the PAF secured in the dean's office, while the original paper forms were typically stored in department offices, officially by the CBA as an extension of the PAF.

The storage of the original student evaluation forms provided practical limitations on how long those paper documents would remain available as an extension of a PAF. To make room for storage of recent student evaluation forms, ones no longer relevant to the active cycles of faculty evaluation would routinely be returned to the faculty member, and thus be purged from the PAF. In the absence of any policy on the disposition of student evaluation documents the purging of original student evaluation data including student comments varied across campus. Yet, the practice, in some form or other, of purging the data from the PAF was widespread.

The use of electronic storage of student evaluation data, and especially the electronic collection of such data across campus since Fall 2016, has allowed student evaluations to remain in an electronic extension of a faculty member's PAF virtually in perpetuity, and therefore beyond the period of their utility in evaluating faculty teaching quality. The absence of university policy governing the disposition of such data coupled with the elimination of any storage based need to purge outdated student evaluation data, in effect, creates a change away from accepted practice, and amounts to the construction of new policy by mere omission of prior policy, and without any action by the Academic Senate.

FAC therefore recommends that university policy establish that student evaluation reports be retained for the period of their utility in faculty evaluation, and then removed from the PAF as they lose that utility.

This recommendation is limited to the official reports of student evaluation results including the entire body of student evaluation data and the comments from students for a given class taught by that faculty member. Colleges and departments may summarize student evaluation results and record those summaries in other documents (e.g. comprehensive records of teaching assignments) that remain in the PAF independent of any provision of the proposed policy options under consideration.

This proposed policy requires a faculty member's PAF to be purged of student evaluation reports after six academic years. That period of time covers the normal probationary period for tenure-track faculty, overlaps with the standard period of post-tenure evaluation, covers the standard period of evaluation

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prior to the establishment of a three-year contract for lecturer faculty, and overlaps the period of two successive three-year contracts.

Impact on Existing Policy

The proposed policy governs how Deans serve as the custodians of a faculty member's PAF. The policy conforms with existing CSU policies about document retention and disposition. Student evaluation reports are documents with legal standing as elements of personnel files. CSU policies about document disposition of legal files as well as the secure deletion of data would prevail in the execution of the provisions of this policy.

The proposed policy conforms with the Collective Bargaining Agreement which specifies that results of student evaluations be placed in the PAF, and that this placement may be in the form of electronic storage. The CBA is silent about how long such results must remain in the PAF. The CBA allows for filing and removal of items from the PAF both from the faculty member and administrators.

In framing our ideas about how to draft the new policy, FAC considered similar policies that have been in place for a while at SDSU.

Implementation

This policy would go into effect the next academic year. Its implementation requires the purge of obsolete student evaluations from the PAFs of all those faculty who have met the conditions for the purge of those documents. The exact process and timing of document disposal amounts to an administrative task. It should happen in summer so the student evaluation data are fixed for the upcoming academic year. Further clarification of the administrative side of implementing this policy may warrant additions or revisions to this subchapter down the line.

What follows is the text of UFPP subchapter 8.4.5.1 and 8.4.5.2, which remain as they are, followed by new policy starting at 8.4.5.3. ...

8.4.5. Student Evaluation Results

- 8.4.5.1. Placement of student evaluation results in Personnel Action Files is governed by CBA 11.1, 15.15, 15.17.
- 8.4.5.2. Results of student evaluations shall be stored in electronic format and incorporated by extension into the Personnel Action File. The dean is the custodian of the PAF and will provide secure access to this information.
- 8.4.5.3. Results of student evaluations consist of reports generated for each course evaluated, including a complete accounting of the quantitative responses and all the student comments from a given class section of a course. Policies about filing, storage, and disposition of student evaluation results concern only these reports of student evaluation results.
- 8.4.5.4. Colleges and departments may summarize or extract selected quantitative student evaluation data into other reports about the teaching history of a faculty member that the college or department may require to be included in the PAF. Any extraction of student evaluation data into other reports for the PAF must be defined in the college or department personnel policies.
- 8.4.5.5. Results of student evaluations shall only be retained in the PAF for the prior six complete academic years.
- 8.4.5.6. Results of student evaluations from classes taught earlier than the prior six complete academic years shall be removed from the PAF, following standard CSU procedures for legal document disposition. The removal of results of student evaluations from the PAF shall normally occur in summer.



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Dustin Stegner

Date: June 29, 2020

From: Jeffery D. Armstrong

Copies: Mary Pedersen
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Subject: Response to AS-898-20 Resolution on University Faculty Personnel
Policies Subchapter 8.4.5: Student Evaluation Results

I am pleased to endorse the above-entitled Academic Senate resolution. Colleges as well as the library are encouraged to revise their personnel policy documents to align with Subchapter 8.4.5 of the University Faculty Personnel Policies (UFPP) as outlined in this resolution and supporting documentation with a minor caveat to the last resolved clause:

Although this university policy is effective fall 2020, and it governs college and department policies, the colleges and the library should be allowed additional time to comply as needed given the needs to prepare for a new fall calendar and virtual instruction.

Please express my appreciation to the Academic Senate members and the Academic Senate Faculty Affairs Committee for their attention to this important matter.