

How to convince colleagues that teaching evaluation reform is worthwhile

Faculty working to advance teaching evaluation practices in their departments may face some initial resistance. Colleagues will raise legitimate concerns about **feasibility** and **benefits**. We asked faculty who have led teaching evaluation reform in their departments for advice. This page shares their testimonials about effective arguments and the back provides more explanation.

Emphasize that reformed teaching evaluation can:

Address Bias

Better evaluation is more fair

"Faculty recognize the bias behind the student evaluations and how inaccurately that can reflect the actual teaching that goes on."

– Faculty member

Foster Growth

Better evaluation provides better feedback

"I talked about how important it was to my own development as an instructor. That it wasn't antagonistic... just two colleagues watching each other then having a conversation about what worked well and what could be improved."

– Faculty member

Clarify Expectations

Better evaluation creates clear standards

"If you're gonna get [evaluated], you should know how you're [evaluated]; so that you understand why you got the [evaluation] that you did."

– Faculty member

Discuss how teaching evaluation does NOT have to be:

Too Time-consuming

Faculty find the time commitment feasible

"I think a lot of people had the wrong impression of what was involved. But as soon as they realized what was involved and what peer evaluation took, and that it didn't take somebody a week to do it, it could be done in a matter of a few hours [or] spread out over a period of time, people were much more accepting of it."

– Faculty member

Restrictive

Faculty retain autonomy over their teaching

"And I talked to some people beforehand and the arguments were: 'I don't want somebody coming in to tell me how to teach.' [So we did] the legwork of identifying those people who are gonna resist it...talking to 'em over a coffee, having a chat with 'em... allaying any of their fears."

– Faculty member

TESTIMONIALS

Learn more about teaching evaluation reform:



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Emphasize that reformed teaching evaluation can:

Address Bias

Student evaluations are biased based on instructor identity, vary by course type, and are unrelated to student learning.

Reformed evaluations draw on multiple sources of evidence and take steps to mitigate biases, creating systems that are more fair for faculty.

Foster Growth

Student evaluations alone typically provide little actionable feedback. Reformed evaluation practices can better support faculty in improving their teaching, documenting growth over time, and strengthening dossier materials.

Clarify Expectations

Most departments lack clear expectations about what constitutes effective teaching and what evidence demonstrates effectiveness. Reformed evaluation practices make expectations more transparent, reducing uncertainty about evaluation.

Discuss how teaching evaluation does NOT have to be:

Too Time-Consuming

The number one concern raised by faculty is that new evaluation practices will be too time-consuming. Discussing the details of how new practices will work can quickly convey their feasibility and demonstrate how the benefits outweigh the modest time investment.

Restrictive

One common concern is that new teaching evaluation practices will limit faculty autonomy in the classroom. Yet most departments design reformed practices that allow for a wide range of teaching practices, aiming to identify strengths and areas for improvement for every faculty member.

EXPLANATIONS

Learn more about teaching evaluation reform:

