

Evaluation of Instruction in the KU Libraries

Implementation Plan

January 31, 2006

Background

Over the past 18 months, faculty and staff in the KU Libraries have engaged in a variety of activities aimed at integrating formative and summative assessment of instruction into relevant personnel review activities, including the annual review process completed by all employees, and the appointment, promotion, and tenure process completed by members of the library faculty.

Among these activities were:

1. inclusion of language related to teaching experience in relevant position descriptions for new hires, and demonstration of instructional skills as part of the appointment process (as appropriate);
2. design of a student evaluation form meant for use at the conclusion of an instruction session (Fall 2004), and inclusion on a voluntary basis of information drawn from sample student evaluations as part of the annual review process completed by library faculty in Spring 2005 (review year 2004) and Spring 2006 (review year 2005);
3. articulation of a multi-faceted approach to the evaluation of instructional performance disseminated and discussed among library staff during the 2004-2005 academic year <<http://www.lib.ku.edu/instruction/lib/peerreview/assessment.pdf>>
4. exploration of a peer-based approach to the assessment of instructional performance through the creation of a Peer Review of Teaching Task Force (Spring 2005), and through a pilot program of peer review of teaching (Fall 2005)

Student Evaluation of Instruction

Since Fall 2004, library faculty and staff have had the option of conducting classroom assessment of their instructional performance through the use of a student evaluation form.

This approach to the evaluation of instruction built on the local experience of IT trainers and librarians who had participated in the IT Workshop Series. Instructors in the workshop series have long been able to collect feedback from participants through the locally-designed Learning Management System (LMS). IT trainers included summary information from student evaluations collected through the LMS as part of the review process for 2004.

After discussion among members of the Library Faculty Assembly (LFA) and the library administration during the 2004-2005 academic year, it was decided that LFA members with a significant responsibility for instruction as part of their primary professional responsibilities would be asked to include information drawn from sample student evaluations on a voluntary basis as part of their annual review materials for review years 2004 and 2005. Inclusion of summary information collected from student evaluation forms given to at least 3 classes was to become mandatory as part of the review process beginning in January 2006 (i.e., for use in the Spring 2007 review process).

Peer Evaluation of Instruction

During Spring 2005, a Peer Review Task Force (Burich, Currie, Graves, Krentz, Neeley) conducted a review of existing peer review of teaching programs in academic libraries and provided a final report <<http://www.lib.ku.edu/instruction/lib/peerreview/report.pdf>> to the library administration that included a recommendation that a pilot program be conducted during 2005 in order to identify issues needing to be addressed prior to including peer evaluation of instruction as a formal component of the annual review or the promotion and tenure process.

During Fall 2005, a pilot program was conducted by a group of volunteer faculty and staff (Bullington, Currie, Ellis, Emde, Ghouse, Graves, Koenig, Krentz, McEathron, Waters, Williams) led by Tami Albin. Documentation related to this pilot program is available at <<http://www.lib.ku.edu/instruction/lib/peerreview/>>.

While we have discussed inclusion of a mandatory peer evaluation of instruction component in the annual review process and as a component required at key points in the promotion and tenure process, there are a number of questions identified in the report of the pilot program group that should be engaged by LFA leadership, including the question of which members of the faculty would be required to participate in such a program and at what intervals.

Proposal for Implementation

After two annual review cycles during which the collection and report of student evaluation of instruction was voluntary, we recommend that all library faculty and staff with a significant responsibility for instruction be required to include evidence of student evaluation of instruction as part of the annual review process beginning with the review year 2006. Among the library faculty and staff who would automatically be expected to provide evidence of student evaluation of instruction are:

1. all members of Subject Councils;
2. all liaisons to non-academic programs or to academic programs not designated as part of the Subject Council structure (where such programs include an instructional services component);
3. all members of the Instructional Services unit.

In addition, individual supervisors may ask library faculty and staff who do not serve in one of the roles noted above to include evidence of student evaluation of instruction as part of the annual review process if they are determined to have a significant professional responsibility for instruction. Supervisors should make this expectation clear at the beginning of each year in which it will be required as part of the annual review process.

After 12 months of discussion and review of a peer evaluation of instruction process, we recommend that all members of the library faculty who serve in one of the roles noted above and have not achieved tenure be required to participate in the peer review of instruction program every year during the pre-tenure period beginning with the 2006-2007 academic year (i.e., as part of 3rd year review dossiers prepared for consideration in Spring 2007, and as part of tenure and promotion dossiers prepared for consideration in Fall 2007).

We recommend further that any members of the library faculty planning to submit an application for promotion to LIII and who serve in one of the roles noted above be required to participate in the peer review of instruction program at least once during the 3 years prior to making the application.

In both cases, the goal of including peer review of instruction materials as part of the promotion dossier is to address the requirements outlined in the Provost's Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Recommendations as regards the inclusion of multiple forms of assessment of instructional performance.

Again, we recommend that individual supervisors discuss with members of the library faculty who do not serve in one of the roles noted above the possible benefit of participating in the peer review of instruction program, especially during the pre-tenure years.

Finally, we recommend that all members of the library faculty and staff who serve in one of the roles noted above be strongly encouraged to participate in the peer review of instruction program at least once every three years in order to promote critical reflection on an important professional responsibility and to build a community of practice around the culture of teaching in the KU Libraries.

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