

PEER TEACHING OBSERVATIONS MOODY COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

A regular peer teaching observation process is an integral part of faculty evaluation in the Moody College. The promotion and tenure guidelines from The University (included below) stipulate that these observations be carried out periodically and that they include certain key information.

Frequency:

- Assistant professors undergoing a Third-Year Review must have a minimum of two (2) peer observation reports; those being considered for promotion must have a minimum four (4) peer observation reports in their portfolios, and at least one (1) of which in the year preceding the promotion year;
- Associate professors, full-time NTT lecturers and clinical faculty should have peer observations conducted every three (3) years, or at least two (2) observations preceding the promotion year or the fall during the post-tenure review year;
- Full professors should have at least one (1) observation as a part of the Comprehensive Periodic Review (formerly called Post-Tenure Review) process.

Responsibility:

- These classroom visits are the responsibility of all tenured faculty members in the Moody College. The willingness of faculty to conduct these classroom visits will become part of their own annual merit evaluations; *no* tenured faculty member in the College is exempted from this responsibility.
- Assistant professors should be reviewed by those of higher rank. Associate/Full professors may be reviewed by faculty at the same or a higher rank.
- Full-time senior lecturers may be called upon to conduct reviews of full-time lecturers. Full-time of non-tenure track faculty is defined as an appointment at 66.67 percent time or more.
- On occasion, classroom visits can be conducted by tenured faculty from other departments on campus, although it is expected that the visits will be largely a departmental responsibility.

Process:

- Observation: Observations should be scheduled in advance through consultation between the faculty member being reviewed and the faculty designated to conduct the review.
- Report: The report should include attention to course organization; course content; methods of engaging students; constructive suggestions; any specific improvements from previous observations if relevant.
- Discussion: The visits should be followed by a thoughtful discussion between the evaluator and the individual instructor concerning course objectives, special challenges, teaching methods, and other issues pertinent to pedagogy.
- Report: Following this discussion, the faculty member conducting the review should file a written report, given guidelines, filed in the department office within a month of the date of observation.

University of Texas at Austin Policy from the 2017-18 Promotion and Tenure Guidelines (C.3.e) - Peer Classroom Observation Reports

e. Peer Classroom Observation Reports. These reports are broad observations of the candidate's effectiveness as a teacher at the graduate and/or undergraduate levels by those faculty members conducting the in-class observations. The reports should cover such elements as presentation, course content, organization, clarity of written materials, rigor and fairness of written examinations, appropriateness of methodology, and student outcomes.

Peer observations of classes should be carried out repeatedly in the evaluation period of the candidate, ideally in the same class over the course of multiple semesters. Particular attention should be paid to giving constructive advice during early observations, then following up with specific progress reports in subsequent semesters observing the same class. Include in the dossier all reports of in-class observations conducted while in rank. Observation reports for the fall semester during which the candidate for promotion is expected to be reviewed (i.e., Fall 2017) should not be used unless absolutely necessary (i.e., this is the only semester for which the observation is possible). The budget council/executive committee is to consider the peer observations in their assessment of the candidate's teaching service record. Each peer observation report is to include:

- number and title of course observed
- date of report
- date of classroom observation
- description of methods by which instructor engages students in learning
- date on which the observation was discussed with the candidate
- constructive advice
- any specific improvement from previous peer observation reports
- name and signature of observer(s)

UT Austin's Faculty Innovation Center has resources regarding Peer Review of Teaching:
<https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/opportunities/prof-dev/peer-observation>