



Office of the Chancellor

East Carolina University

105 Spilman Building • Greenville, NC 27858-4353

252-328-6212 office • 252-328-4155 fax

www.ecu.edu

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March 17, 2009

Professor Jan Tovey
Chair of the Faculty
Faculty Senate Office
Rawl Annex 140
Campus

Dear Jan:

At the February 24, 2009 Faculty Senate meeting, the Senate approved a revision to Appendix C related to the evaluation of teaching, Resolution 09-10. The revision effectively eliminates student input from the evaluation process. While I understand that the Student Opinion of Instruction Survey (SOIS) may be flawed, I cannot support the elimination of this instrument as a tool to assist in the evaluation of teaching.

I have been informed that there may be some methodological issues with the instrument and that there are also concerns with response rates to the survey. Nonetheless, I believe it is important that student opinion be used as an important, but not exclusive, data point in the evaluation of teaching.

Eliminating student input from the evaluation process is not a viable option. However, I am fully supportive of a comprehensive evaluation of national best practices in the collection and use of student opinion of instruction. While an alternative survey instrument may not be free, the proper use of student input is important to me, and I generally support the use of university funds to collect appropriate data.

Also, this resolution affects our students by eliminating their involvement in the teaching evaluation process and they should be provided with an opportunity to respond to any resolution which directly affects them.

I am happy to discuss this decision in more detail if you so desire. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Steve Ballard
Chancellor

pc: Provost Marilyn Sheerer
Interim Vice Chancellor Phyllis Horns
Vice Chancellor Deirdre Mageean
SGA President Andrew Griffin
BOT Chair Robert Greczyn