

Class Visits to Non-Tenured, Tenure-Track Faculty Courses

The Jepson School is committed to teaching effectiveness, appreciation of the divergent methods of teaching adopted within the school, collegiality among faculty, an “academic commons” approach to educating our students, and the idea that teaching is a profession or “practice” that can be effectively shaped through mentoring. The following guidelines are proposed very much in the spirit of these commitments. In order to provide *formative* input on teaching to junior faculty and to supplement the current data for periodic *summative* evaluations of teaching effectiveness of non-tenured faculty members, the Jepson School will adhere to the following:

Guidelines for class visitations:

1. Ordinarily, with the exception of the non-tenured faculty member’s first semester, one course taught by that faculty member should be visited in every semester prior to the submission of the tenure portfolio. Alternatively, the non-tenured faculty member may choose to have a class session videotaped. Upon the request of the instructor, a second class session in the same course may be observed by the same tenured faculty member in the same semester.
2. The associate dean for academic affairs will designate a tenured faculty member to observe the non-tenured member’s class after consulting with the non-tenured member as to which course should be visited or videotaped, as well as to which portion of the course is most appropriate for observation. Tenured faculty members will have prepared for the role of classroom observer by regular participation in discussions of teaching. These discussions will focus on teaching expectations, visitation processes, and effective feedback.
3. To the extent possible, different tenured members should observe each non-tenured member’s classes in different semesters. That is, over time, as many tenured faculty as possible should be familiar with the teaching of each non-tenured member. Over time, tenured faculty should also see a variety of courses—for example, required courses and elective courses, lower-level and upper-level courses, and so on.
4. Before the class, the instructor and the visitor should meet to discuss the teaching objectives for the designated class period and the session’s relation to the aims and structure of the course. The specific class period to be observed will be mutually agreed upon by the non-tenured faculty member and the tenured faculty member. Students should be informed that such sessions are a routine vehicle for constructive and evaluative feedback.

5. The tenured faculty member should discuss his or her observations with the non-tenured faculty member after the class. A written statement of the observations and suggestions for improvement should be given to the non-tenured faculty member and to the dean. The tenured faculty member should not attempt to provide an overall or comparative evaluation of the non-tenured faculty member's session. The non-tenured faculty member may also respond in writing to the observations.
6. The statements will become a portion of the teaching portfolio of the tenure-track faculty member for the purposes of annual evaluations (only after the first year), mid-tenure review, and review for tenure and promotion to associate professor.

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