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PowerPoint Handouts

Talking about Student Evaluation Results: What to Say and How to Say It

Presented by:

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A distinguished scholar and author, Dr. Maryellen Weimer has consulted with more than 600 colleges and universities on instructional issues and regularly keynotes national meetings and regional conferences. She has won Penn State's Milton S. Eisenhower award for distinguished teaching. Her book, *Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice*, 2nd ed. remains one of the most influential books for educators.

Presented by:

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In his current role, Jon Hess works on UD initiatives and programs to mentor new faculty and department chairs. He is a regular facilitator at a national teaching conference and currently is also an editor of the discipline's leading journal for research on communication and learning.

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The Presenters

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Program goal:

**Explore ways we can talk about
rating results that make those
exchanges constructive
conversations about teaching
and learning.**



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Scenario 1: *When the ratings have declined*

Ratings in the courses you've taught the last couple of semesters have either stayed the same or they've gone down—not a lot, but they clearly didn't improve. Your department chair points this out and asks you to talk about what you think is going on.



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Questions:

What are the faculty responses the administrator doesn't want to hear?

What are some constructive responses?

What if the decline isn't statistically significant?



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Relevant Research

Boysen, G. A., Kelly, T. J., Paesly, H. N., and Casner, R. W. (2014). The (mis)interpretation of teaching evaluations by college faculty and administrators. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(6), 641-656.

—three studies looked at how faculty and administrators negatively interpreted small differences in means (differences small enough to be within the margin of error).



Scenario 2 *When there are some negative student comments*

In your introductory survey course with 45 students, there's four or five negative comments. One accuses you of making "offensive, liberal remarks." A couple complain about how you formed groups, saying "all the slackers" ended up in "my" group. And one says you were "rude" to students but provides no examples.



Questions:

What are the faculty responses a division head doesn't want to hear when there are some negative comments?

What should a faculty member say about negative student comments?

What if the administrator over-reacts, only wants to talk about the negative comments?



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Scenario 3: When the ratings are high and the program coordinator thinks he knows why

Your ratings are good, excellent in fact, among the best in the program. They have been so for a number of years now. Rather than complimenting you for a job well done, the program coordinator carries on about grade inflation and starts asking how much work it takes to get an “A” in your course. You figure it out: he thinks you’re getting high ratings because you’re teaching an easy course.



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The Questions:

Should a faculty member confront these misconceptions about ratings?

If so, how?

What should/could a faculty member say about the belief that high ratings are the result of teaching easy courses?



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Relevant Research

Centra, J. (2003). Will teachers receive higher evaluation by giving higher grades and less course work? *Research in Higher Education*, 44(5), 495-514.

–An analysis involving 50,000 individual courses did not find correlations between high ratings and higher grades and less course work.

Marsh, H. W. and Roche, L. A. (2000). Effects of grading lenience and low workload on students' evaluations of teaching: Popular myth, bias, validity or innocent bystander. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(1), 202-228.

–This large study found it was a myth. Easy graders and easy courses don't result in high course evaluations.



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Scenario 4: Leaving a good impression

You work hard on your teaching and you're getting better. You're finding your way to a style that works. You've started actually designing your courses. You've still got some issues with classroom management; students don't always pay attention or take many notes, and they text. But you see ways you can work on these issues. As the conversation is concluding, your department chair asks if there's anything else you'd like to say about your teaching.



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The Question:

What advice would you give a faculty member who wants to be honest about his/her teaching but still leave a favorable impression?



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Tell us what you think

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/evaluation091318>

Thank you!

