

Effective Teaching Committee 2020-21 report

The Effective Teaching Committee's work was profoundly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic during the 2020-21 academic year. Through consultation with many faculty on campus, we determined this was an unprecedented year of triage, where faculty and students struggled to modify courses with pedagogies and approaches to learning hastily assembled and implemented. The prepared pilot testing of the modified Student Evaluation of Teaching could not be conducted. New online software (BLUE) produced low response rates for the traditional SET instrument. The committee is in agreement that results of these SET instruments from Covid-19 impacted semesters should not be used for quantitative comparisons or promotion and tenure decisions. We have argued they should only be released to individual faculty teaching the courses.

In light of the growing evidence of the discriminatory nature of SET instruments nationally and evidence of continued use at Mason, the committee sees an opportunity to promote change in evaluation of teaching throughout the University. Through consultation with the Provost, this committee recommends the creation of a task force, represented by members of all colleges and schools, to offer new tools and review and revise evaluation of teaching to provide support of faculty, reward of collegial collaboration and methods emphasizing student learning outcomes. The implementation of online, hybrid and in person teaching provides an additional need for the work of this task force. The committee recommends selection of task force representatives over the summer of 2021 with work of the task force to be conducted in the fall. Committee members will be responsible for facilitating the meetings through collaboration with the Provost.