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# FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHING EVALUATIONS AS A FACTOR IN FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE FACULTY EVALUATIONS

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***FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHING EVALUATIONS AS A FACTOR IN  
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**Abstract**

Perhaps few topics in higher education elicit a broader range of responses than evaluations of teaching effectiveness, and particularly, student evaluations of faculty teaching when used as formative and summative assessments of faculty teaching. Protagonists have argued such evaluations are necessary for measuring the quality of education a student receives (Marsh & Roche, 1993), helping educators reflect upon their own practices (Centra, 1993), and assisting administrators in evaluation processes of faculty (Cashin, 1988). Antagonists would argue that such evaluations are both statistically invalid and unreliable, as well as highly correlated with a students' (perceived or otherwise) grade, and ultimately, perhaps nothing more than a "popularity contest" (Schmelkin, Spencer, & Gellman, 1997, p. 576). While institutions of higher learning often utilize other evaluations such as administrator evaluations, peer evaluations, and self-evaluations to measure teaching effectiveness (Smith, 2007), student evaluations have perhaps become the most commonly used (Richardson, 2005). At the crux of most debates concerning student evaluations of teaching effectiveness is the issue of whether they should be used for formative (employee review) or summative (learning process and outputs) evaluations (Rifkin, 1995), or both (Donahue, 2000). Common assumptions and conclusions related to faculty teaching evaluations among faculty tend to lean towards the suspicious and mistrustful; "one gets the impression from the anecdotal literature that there is widespread resistance on the part of faculty to student ratings" (Schmelkin, Spencer, & Gellman, 1997, p. 576).

Through preliminary findings in on-going research, and ideally with in-session participant discussions, this presentation will explore the following questions, ; *What are faculty perceptions of the efficacy of student evaluations of their teaching effectiveness in formative and summative evaluations? To what extent do faculty utilize student evaluations formatively in their teaching practices? To what extent do faculty believe these evaluations should be utilized by administrators for summative evaluations?* Such considerations are relevant far beyond one single institution of higher learning for several reasons. First, every institution is faced with the challenge of some level of accountability of student learning, from government agencies, accreditation bodies, market pressures, or comparisons with peer institutions. Secondly, every institution likely has or is grappling with its own (or its accrediting bodies') policies on including student-learning assessments in summative and formative evaluation of faculty. Third, to what extent faculty reflect upon student responses to teaching effectiveness, and to what extent they utilize this feedback, is a salient issue at any institution. Lastly, to what extent faculty and administrators do—and should—utilize student perceptions in measuring teaching effectiveness is a pertinent question for any institution of higher education.