

## TIME TO CHANGE THE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM FOR EVALUATION OF FACULTY PERFORMANCE

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### ABSTRACT

Under the new AACSB accreditation standards, business schools have to determine what kinds of knowledge and skills they want their students to learn, and then demonstrate that the students meet these specified learning goals. The new standard is called “Assurance of Learning.” Given the AACSB’s new standards with focus on actual learning outcomes, the traditional system for the evaluation of faculty which primarily focuses on the student evaluation of instructor scores (students satisfaction) may no longer be an effective means for motivating faculty to comply with the assurance of learning standard. The authors suggest the use of additional measures beside the student evaluation of the instructor scores for the evaluation and motivation of faculty. The proposed measures are based on the AACSB’s new standards

### INTRODUCTION

The AACSB standards for accreditation have evolved over the years. The focus of standards has shifted from examination of the quality and quantity of academic *inputs* to the examination of the quality of academic *outputs*. Initially the AACSB employed a resource evaluation approach to the accreditation of college programs under which the standards focused on measuring specific sets of *inputs* such as number of faculty with terminal degrees, student/faculty ratios, percentage of faculty with current research output, faculty load, proportion of faculty with professional certification, etc.

Later on, in 1991, the AACSB radically changed its standards for the accreditation. The new standards shifted the emphasis from the adequacy of *inputs* to the existence of adequate and effective *processes* for the accomplishment of the mission of the school and continuous improvement efforts. The main focus was on *processes* for curriculum planning, evaluation and revision, including an analysis of educational outcomes.

In 2003, once again the AACSB revised its standards for accreditation. This time the focus was shifted to *outputs*. The new AACSB accreditation standards require business schools to produce evidence of learning in their courses and programs [1]. Under the new AACSB accreditation standards, business schools have to determine what kinds of knowledge and skills they want their students to learn, and then demonstrate that the students meet these specified learning goals. The underlying rationale for the new standard is that when student *learning* is the focus of assessment, the institution can achieve academic excellence.

The new accreditation standards let each institution decide what those learning goals should be and how they should be measured. The new standard is called “Assurance of Learning.” The AACSB has suggested two measurement categories for the assessment and monitoring of students’ learning: **Direct Methods** (includes selection tests, course-embedded measurement, and stand-alone testing), and **Indirect Methods** (includes various surveys of alumni, employers, and

students). The AACSB has clearly stated that the indirect methods cannot replace the direct methods for assessment of student performance. By themselves, surveys produce weak evidence of learning.

## **OBJECTIVE OF PAPER**

It is generally understood that the faculty performance evaluation process should be designed in a manner that motivates the individual faculty members to undertake activities that help to accomplish the mission of the school and in particular maintain its AACSB accreditation. And student evaluation of the instructor scores has been a major component of the traditional methods for the evaluation of faculty performance.

Given the AACSB's new standards with focus on *actual learning outcomes*, the traditional system for the evaluation of faculty which primarily focuses on the student evaluation of instructor scores may no longer be an effective means for motivating faculty to accomplish and comply with the assurance of learning standard. Students' evaluation and satisfaction scores are not necessarily a measure of the actual amount of learning taken place in class.

Several studies provide evidence that students evaluation of the instructor is affected by many other factors such as grades granted in the course; vigorousness of the course; gender of the instructor; timing of the course; etc. For example Bharadwaj, Futrell and Kantak [3] utilized a longitudinal research design, and found that student evaluations change over time and that the final grade has an impact on attitudes toward the class. Paswan and Young [4] conducted a nomological investigation of student evaluation of instructors using structural equation modeling, and found that input factors of course organization and student-instructor interaction influence the endogenous factors of instructor involvement and student interest in a positive way, and also that factor-course demands affect these endogenous factors in a *negative* manner and are negatively associated with the other two input factors. Accordingly, the authors expressed concern that administrative users of student evaluations often ignore these relationships, and suggest that they should be considered when using student evaluation results. Boex L. F. J. [2] found that the student's self-reported expected course grade had a statistically significant impact on the instructor's effectiveness rating in all four study regressions. As expected a course grade below the student's GPA resulted in a reduced likelihood of receiving an excellent effectiveness instructor rating from all four groups of students in the empirical study; and an expected course grade above the GPA improved the ratings for undergraduate but not graduate instructors.

The objective of the current paper is to propose additional measures for the evaluation of the faculty performance that encourages the faculty to focus more on course learning outcomes and the enhancement of the learning outcomes and scholarship. The proposed measures encourage faculty to undertake activities that ultimately enhance course learning outcomes. Specifically, the suggestions proposed by the AACSB's new standards are incorporated in the evaluation process.

## **PROPOSED MEASURES**

### **Teaching Evaluation**

The measures that we propose to be adopted beside the student evaluation of the instructor scores for the annual evaluation of faculty performance in the area of teaching are as follows:

a. **Vigorousness of the Courses:** The AACSB's new standard promotes course expectations that result in investment of time by students and faculty in learning activities (Time-on-task concept). Accordingly, we believe that the extent of engagement of students in learning activities, in particular through graded activities, should be one of the adopted measures for the annual evaluation of faculty in teaching area.

b. **Course Currency and relevance:** As noted by the AACSB standards, currency is critical for a quality education. Utilization of current and relevant instructional materials should be encouraged. Enhanced learning environment through guest lectures, speakers, field trips should be encouraged. Accordingly, the extent of activities undertaken by faculty to maintain course currency and relevance should be one of the measures adopted for the annual evaluation of faculty teaching.

c. **Feedback to Students:** The new standard also emphasizes the importance of timely feedback on student performance, and the frequency of the feedback provided to the students. The new standard, understandably, considers performance feedback as an effective means for enhancement of the student learning. Accordingly, we believe that the frequency of the feedback provided to the students should be one of the adopted measures for the annual evaluation of faculty in teaching area.

d. **Active Learning Strategies:** As it is stated in the AACSB Standard, "passive learning is ineffective and of short of duration." Faculty members should develop techniques and styles that engage students and make students responsible for meeting learning goals such active learning techniques. Accordingly, we believe that the extent of application of active learning strategies in teaching should be one of the adopted measures for the annual evaluation of faculty in teaching area.

e. **Conducting Assessment:** Faculty should be encouraged to monitor learning outcomes in the course through assessment. Pre and Post assessments should be helpful. Accordingly, we believe that the extent of assessment and the extent of usage of the assessment results to improve course learning outcomes should be one of the adopted measures for the annual evaluation of faculty in teaching area.

f. **Incorporation of Skill Building and Interdisciplinary Subjects:** The AACSB standard has outlined certain critical skills and knowledge for the success of students in this ever changing business world. Faculty should be encouraged to take the opportunities for incorporation of some of those skills and knowledge in their courses to the extent possible. Accordingly, we believe that the extent of incorporation of skill building and interdisciplinary subjects in the course should be one of the adopted measures for the annual evaluation of faculty in teaching area.

### **Professional Development and Intellectual Contributions**

The AACSB's standard has also put high importance on the maintenance of disciplinary currency by faculty. Faculty members are expected to demonstrate activities that maintain currency and relevance of their instruction such as attendance in disciplinary workshops, professional development, professional experience, and collaboration with the business community. The standard promotes applied research studies. Faculty should make a conscious effort to include their students as beneficiaries in the involvement in these activities. It is believed that when faculty is current with the applicability and relevance of ideas and concepts in his or her field,

instruction, practice and inquiry benefit. Accordingly, we believe that a combination of the above activities should be used for the measurement of faculty's professional development and intellectual activities rather than just publications.

## **CONCLUSION**

The AACSB's new standards have created an environment that requires a shift from traditional methods for the evaluation of faculty. Now that the "student learning" as well as "quality education" is the focus of the standards, the traditional approaches utilized for annual faculty evaluations should change. Annual faculty evaluation is an effective mean to drive desirable behavior by faculty. Instead of evaluating primarily based on the student evaluations, schools should focus more on encouraging behaviors that enhance student learning, assessment of learning, learning enhancement activities, quality education which is critical to the school mission and student success and maintenance of the AACSB accreditation.

## **REFERENCES**

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