

Stetson University Faculty Policy Document – Student Evaluations of Teaching

Policy regarding z-scores calculated from student evaluation of teaching

Presented to Faculty Senate on 8-26-19; passed on to full Faculty.

1. Quantitative reports of student evaluations at Stetson currently included z-scores as a comparative metric. These scores are calculated by averaging the means of the 15 questions into 5 categories and then comparing those averages to the average and standard deviation by course level and college. Z-scores that are one half of a standard deviation above or below the comparison mean are flagged as possibly exemplary or possibly needing improvement.
2. As discussed in the SET task force report, these z-scores are calculated from statistically inappropriate means derived from biased underlying data. They are highly subject to influence from outliers and are often compared in categories that are not actually similar.
3. As an institution of higher learning that uses quantitative reports for evaluations, it is incumbent upon us, the faculty, to avoid simplistic and statistically inappropriate measures that are highly prone to multiple forms of bias in our faculty evaluation.
4. Beginning in spring 2020, quantitative reports of student evaluations will no longer include z-scores.
5. Candidates submitting portfolios for pre-tenure reviews, tenure or promotion may include past z-scores as evidence if desired by the candidate. No candidate is required to submit z-scores as part of a portfolio beginning in spring 2020.