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**Date:** May 17, 2021

**To:** Talia Bettcher  
Chair, Academic Senate

**From:** Heidi Riggio  
Chair, Faculty Policy Committee

**Copies:** D. Fazzi, A. Avrumchuk, J. Lazo-Uy, R. Roquemore, V. Salcido

**Subject:** **Proposed Policy Modification for Chapter VI (Section B) of the *Faculty Handbook* FPC 20-1.6: Peer Observations of Instruction**

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, Faculty Policy Committee as a group agreed that there is a lack of clear University policy about how to conduct peer observations of fully online (asynchronous) and hybrid courses at Cal State LA. Considering the increase in these instructional modalities due to the COVID 19 campus closure, as well as the enormous increase in synchronous online (virtual) courses, FPC considered this lack of policy problematic. FPC considered a modification to the policy on Peer Observations of Instruction over several weeks, including consideration of policies and observation criteria from other CSU campuses, as well as the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Articles 15.3 and 15.14). FPC also reconsidered the current form offered by Academic Affairs for use in Peer Observations of Instruction, and revised it based on materials obtained from other CSU campuses and in an attempt to make the form useful for observation of any type of instructional modality. FPC is also seeking input from University Educational Policy Committee (EPC) on the form to be offered by Academic Affairs.

FPC voted unanimously to approve the policy modification, FPC 20-1.6: Peer Observations of Instruction, on May 10, 2021.

The following points summarize the proposed changes to the policy:

- Lines 15-18: We deleted and added language to make the policy consistent with the CBA, specifically Article 15.14, which indicates “There shall be consultation between the faculty member being evaluated and the individual who visits his/her class(es) regarding the classes to be visited and the scheduling of such visits.”
- Lines 20-22: We added new language about observation of synchronous online (virtual) class meetings.
- Lines 23-32: We added language about observation of asynchronous, fully online courses
  - 23-24: We added language that observation of asynchronous courses must be similar in scope and perspective to any other peer observation, as per Article 15.3.
  - 24-27: We added language that review of asynchronous courses involves review of online course materials available to students in the Learning Management System.

- 27-29: We added language that review of asynchronous course online materials must be limited to observation of the overview or welcome module, and one additional module chosen by the instructor. Peer observations of asynchronous courses are not evaluations of entire courses, but an “observation” of teaching.
- 29-31: We added language indicating that review of asynchronous courses must take a student-level perspective, similar to an observation of a face-to-face classroom meeting.
- 31-32: We added language emphasizing that observation of instructors’ synchronous meetings with students are not required in peer observations of an asynchronous course.
- Lines 33-40: We added about peer observations of hybrid courses.
- 35-36: We added language indicating that the instructor of the hybrid course to be observed has the right to decide whether a synchronous class meeting or online course materials will be reviewed.
- 36-39: We indicated the same limitations regarding review of online content (limited to the overview or welcome module and one additional module chosen by the instructor).
- 39-40: We added language encouraging instructors of hybrid courses to have various components of the course observed over time.
- Lines 46-49: We added language that clarifies College/Department/Division/School use of the form offered by Academic Affairs.
- Lines 47-49: We added language recommending adoption of consistent standards in conducting peer observations within a department/division/school.
- Line 63: We added language recommending that over time, a sampling of various instructional modes may be observed for each faculty person.

# 1 Peer Observations of Instruction

2 (Senate: 5/24/2011, 4/24/18, 10/27/20; President: 6/14/2011, 5/14/18, 11/16/20)

3 Governing documents: Articles 11 and 15 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the California  
4 State University and the California Faculty Association.

5 Instructional faculty members undergoing periodic evaluations for performance review must be evaluated in the  
6 area of educational performance which includes teaching performance and related educational activities.

7 The evaluation of teaching performance is an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the efforts that  
8 directly contribute to student learning. This evaluation must include multiple measures, one of which is a  
9 written report of a peer observation of instruction.

10 All peer observers will be assigned by the department/division chair or school director or the  
11 department/division/school personnel committee. The peer observers must currently be tenured or probationary  
12 faculty in an equal or higher academic rank as the faculty member being observed.

13 When classroom visits are utilized as part of the evaluation of a faculty member, the faculty member evaluated  
14 shall be provided notice at least five (5) days prior to the visit that a classroom or online observation, and/or  
15 review of online content is to take place. Notice shall include the date the observation will be made and indicate  
16 THE NAME OF THE PERSON who will conduct it THE OBSERVATION. In addition, there shall be  
17 consultation between the faculty member being observed and the individual who visits their class(es);  
18 REGARDING THE CLASSES TO BE VISITED AND THE SCHEDULING OF SUCH VISITS. †The faculty  
19 member conducting the peer observation may request copies of the syllabus and handouts prior to the  
20 observation. PEER OBSERVATIONS OF COURSES TAUGHT WITH SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE CLASS  
21 MEETINGS SHALL FOLLOW THE SAME GUIDELINES AS PEER OBSERVATIONS OF FACE-TO-  
22 FACE INSTRUCTION.

23 PEER OBSERVATIONS OF COMPLETELY ONLINE (ASYNCHRONOUS) COURSES MUST BE  
24 SIMILAR IN SCOPE AND PERSPECTIVE TO OTHER PEER OBSERVATIONS. THE OBSERVATION  
25 SHALL INCLUDE REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF COURSE MATERIALS (E.G., THE COURSE  
26 SYLLABUS) AND CONTENT AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS FOR THE COURSE IN THE LEARNING  
27 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. THE OBSERVATION MUST BE LIMITED TO THE COURSE OVERVIEW  
28 SECTION OR MODULE, AND ONE ADDITIONAL SECTION OR MODULE CHOSEN BY THE  
29 INSTRUCTOR. REVIEW OF ONLINE COURSE MATERIALS IN THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT  
30 SYSTEM MUST TAKE THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS IN THE COURSE (I.E., OBSERVERS WILL  
31 HAVE STUDENT-LEVEL ACCESS). OBSERVATION OF SYNCHRONOUS FACULTY-STUDENT  
32 INTERACTION IS NOT REQUIRED FOR OBSERVATIONS OF ASYNCHRONOUS COURSES.

33 FOR PEER OBSERVATIONS OF HYBRID COURSES (I.E., COURSES THAT INCLUDE SOME  
34 SYNCHRONOUS MEETINGS AND ONLINE COURSE MATERIALS AND ASYNCHRONOUS  
35 ACTIVITIES), THE FACULTY MEMBER TO BE OBSERVED SHALL CHOOSE WHETHER A  
36 SYNCHRONOUS CLASS MEETING IS OBSERVED OR IF ONLINE CONTENT IS REVIEWED. REVIEW  
37 OF ONLINE CONTENT IS LIMITED TO THE COURSE OVERVIEW SECTION OR MODULE, AND ONE  
38 ADDITIONAL SECTION OR MODULE CHOSEN BY THE INSTRUCTOR, WITH STUDENT-LEVEL  
39 ACCESS. FACULTY MAY CONSIDER HAVING VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF HYBRID  
40 INSTRUCTION OBSERVED OVER TIME.

41 Faculty members who conduct the peer observation of instruction are encouraged to discuss a draft of the  
42 observation report with the faculty member being observed. The faculty observer shall provide the final  
43 observation report to the department/division or school office and the faculty member within fourteen (14)

44 calendar days of the observation. Academic Affairs will provide a [peer observation of instruction form.](#), which  
45 may be adopted for college/department/division/school use.

46 COLLEGES/DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS/SCHOOLS MAY ADOPT OR ADAPT THE PROVIDED  
47 FORM, OR CREATE THEIR OWN FORM. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT  
48 DEPARTMENTS/DIVISIONS/SCHOOLS ADOPT CONSISTENT CRITERIA FOR PEER OBSERVATIONS  
49 THAT ARE USED IN PERIODIC EVALUATIONS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEWS.

50 When observations are assigned for evaluation purposes, reports must be included in the permanent Personnel  
51 Action File (PAF). The faculty member observed may submit a rebuttal statement in writing. A copy of the  
52 rebuttal statement shall be placed in the Personnel Action File. The faculty member observed may request a  
53 meeting with the department/school/division chair/director to discuss the observation report within five (5) days  
54 following receipt of the final observation report. Any requested meeting shall take place within ten (10) days of  
55 that request.

56 For probationary faculty members, at least one peer observation shall be conducted prior to each performance  
57 review file closure date. Normally, the peer observation shall take place in the first year of the performance  
58 review period. For tenured faculty members, at least one peer observation normally should be conducted no  
59 later than one semester before the file closure date. Lecturers shall receive a peer observation of instruction in at  
60 least one course during their first semester of appointment. Subsequently, lecturers with one-year or three-year  
61 appointments shall receive at least one peer observation of instruction during each appointment; lecturers with  
62 semester appointments shall be observed at the discretion of the department/division or school. Observations  
63 should be made for a representative sampling of courses AND INSTRUCTIONAL MODES over time.

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65 During performance reviews, reviewers at any level may recommend conducting additional peer observations  
66 for the next review period. The committee may also make appropriate recommendations for the improvement of  
67 instruction (e.g., referral to appropriate faculty development resources). A faculty member may request to have  
68 additional peer observations of their teaching at any time; this request will be made to the department/division  
69 chair or school director.