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Senate Task Force on IDEA (5 year review)

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#	Response
1	I find the data results virtually impossible to decifer.
2	I can only assume how administrators and students interpret, utilize, and/or understand the IDEA. I think it has very little practical significance and inundates the faculty with a lot of nuisance data. With so much data available, it is easy to see how an administrator could pick and choose specific numbers to support his/her evaluation of the faculty. I think we need a more streamline, userfriendly process
3	I like the IDEAmuch more informative than the old SET. And I feel it's important to give students a measured voice. I would do away with tenured faculty being allowed to opt out from a course. What message are we sending other than we have a privileged class of classroom instructors for whom the students' opinions do not matter? My two cents.
4	Unless a better tool is found, these sure beat the SETS
5	Program specific evaluations would be much more helpful to faculty, to programs, etc., etc.
6	I am new to the college and am not completely familiar with the IDEA system.
7	Two of my courses are clinical courses where I am the students' supervisor. I find that the IDEA is not useful for this purpose and that the scores are lower than I think they should be because the questions are not applicable. Also, because of the length of the IDEA I find that students' seem to have survey fatigue or disinterest for those IDEAS that are administered at the end of the week long IDEA administration period.
8	I feel that since Heather McGovern became director of the faculty institute there has been better understanding of how to interpret and use the IDEA results, but she is only able to educate faculty and administrators, not students.
9	IDEA is the best student evaluation system and a tremendously useful tool. Faculty are evaluated by how well students believe they met course objectives, and while still subjective allows one to see how students perceive teaching methods based on outcomes, not pure personal like or dislike of the instructor. I would prefer all online evaluations - data returned faster, and can be done outside class time.
10	People will tend to complain about ANY evaluation tool. Please be wary about complaints about evaluations in general vs. complaints about IDE/ in particular. IDEA is a vast improvement over the previous teaching evaluation form. I suspect that many faculty simply do not understand how to use it effectively, especially those intimidated by quantitative data.
11	The former system we used was straightforward and easy for everyone across the board. Idea takes far too much time and effort without yielding anything appreciably better than we had before. When it becomes necessary to have lengthy instructions and meetings for understanding the evaluations - especially with college professors - there is something obviously wrong. Please don't allow any more time to go by before you fix something that wasn't broken to begin with!
12	I mean, need I say more?
13	It's a horrid system. It costs the college a huge amount of money and is a total scam for the people here who get paid to administer it. I have asked many times exactly how much we pay for this and have never been given the information. Their literature says specifically that it's not designed to be used totally and always as the evaluating system. It has horrid flaws, like lowering the number score if students say that the course is harder than their usual courses. What sense does that make???? We have no information on what courses in their system that our courses are compared to.
14	Quite truthfullyI knew where I stood much better with the previous "primitive" forms. This system is convoluted. It does not answer any of the questions I have about how I have reached the students. I usually have to create my own survey for that.
15	Administrators and PRC members "USE" the IDEA in a reductionistic and punitive manner when evaluating faculty members for tenure and promotion. IDEA is an invalid indicator and poor substitute for REAL COMMUNICATION about teaching growth and student outcomes and the tool should be abolished. Faculty who have produced multiple graphs on IDEA scores in teaching portfolios should pause for thought. BEWARE when a checklist becomes more important than the evaluation of true creativity and leadership!
16	Any evaluation that is used must not have more than 20 questions. The questions should be posed using simple words and phrases most students can understand very quickly.
17	I am a 13D Professor, and this will be the first time I use the IDEA system.
18	I had a mix of the old SET and the new IDEA when I came up for tenure. The old SET provided no information that was directly useful for improving ones teaching; while the IDEA provides a ton of useful feedback if one is willing to take the time to consider it. The IDEA reports wer more useful to me in improving my teaching during my pre-tenure years. They were also far easier to use within my self-eval, not due to the

numbers being any better, but more due to better defined meaning. On survey question 3, some of the learning objectives are not immediately understood by all students. They are written with language for educators. I've found it useful to provide students with an explanation for how the 12 IDEA objectives apply within the context of the course (e.g., paraphrased versions of them on my syllabi). This helps most students get a better grasp of the IDEA objectives. On question 8, I think most administrators understand how to interpret the IDEA stats. I've seen at least one example, however, where this is not the case. I've been at the level of faculty evaluation where I'd be able to see Dean's evaluations of candidates. In one such letter, a Dean pointed to an instance where an adjusted score of a candidate was below the "similar" category. In this instance, the raw score was within the "similar" category. According to the IDEA documentation, reports, etc on their website, it is considered best practice to use the HIGHER of the raw or adjusted scores. In this one example, a Dean was misusing a data point from the IDEA against a candidate

- A lot of these questions are asking us to get in the heads of others--students, administrators, colleagues. I suppose it's useful for the Senate and your committee to know what we BELIEVE others understand, but the actual correlation between what we think they understand and what they actually understand may be low. One might raise an additional question: What's the relationship between what students, colleagues and administrators THINK they understand about the IDEA, and what do they actually understand? Best of luck tackling that question. Finally, Russ's mustache rocks.
- 20 previous SET system was way better, simpler, shorter, easier to interpret, and way more helpful for improving my teaching
- 21 IDEA is an OK evaluation system that could be better with a few modifications to the questions. There are better evaluation systems out there, but IDEA is better than none or what was previously used. Keep it and tweek it!

In any student-to-teacher feedback, I find that the most important information comes from the free-form comments, such as those at the end of the IDEA survey. I have always gleaned the most meaningful insights into my own teaching and the experience of my students throughout the semester by reading them. I encourage my students to write comments at the end when I give them the IDEA forms. However, some people don't even know they exist, administrators do not look at them, and one has to go out of their way to get access to the individual surveys so that one may peruse them. When I have made significant changes and improvements to my teaching style as a result of student-teacher evaluations, it has always been in response to to some specific comments my students have left me. I cannot ever recall looking at a number on the IDEA results form and improving my teaching in response to it, and with a strong background in statistical analysis, I know exactly what those numbers mean -- as it reflects on my teaching, almost nothing. They just seem like a way to quantify our performance as faculty. As convenient as it would be, the quality of a teacher cannot be quantified. It would be nice to be able to compare one faculty member's IDEA scores to another and say, "look, this person has higher numbers and is therefore a better teacher," but few of us would believe that to be true. No matter how many questions long the survey may be, teaching ability cannot and should not be projected onto a Likert scale and left at that. Convenient? Sure. Accurate? Certainly not.

I have found that by evaluating the statistical outcomes for each objective, I was able to improve my overall score by changing the importance for the objectives I had chosen based on the outcome. Now, does that mean I am a better teacher? To me, it indicates that the instrument is not a very good measure of teaching ability. Incidentally, I always have very high scores, so my comments are "sour grapes" as they say. Also, I did not complete the questions about what others do and do not understand because I feel unable to judge other people's perceptions about this issue. As you can see, I am not particularly impressed with this instrument.

This is better than the old system. From speaking with the folks complaining after the Fall Faculty Conference, it was clear that some of them didn't understand how to interpret the results and/or how to maximize the use of the form. From my Dean's comments about what junior faculty should improve, it is clear that he understands some parts, but not all of the results. I am a senior faculty member. All systems have problems. This is the best one that I have experienced at the various institutions I have taught at. It just takes awhile, but that's to be expected in a more comprehensive form. I have tried the online form and disliked that- fewer students completed it and they seemed to have been less connected to the course, as if they were hurrying through it. I value the additional comments I get and will not use the online form again as it seems to discourage that.

- 25 Simplify! Everyday language for students. Qualitative data more valuable--perhaps fewer evaluations, or rotate them, so we can read student statements.
- 26 I believe that the IDEA instrument will be very useful in assessing my own teaching, but I have not used it as fully as I should (and hope to in future).
- 27 Students often don't take time to make comments. That limits usefulness of this instrument.
- I believe there should be a place where faculty could give an overview of the class setting: students' aptitude, attitudes, allowing the faculty member to provide information about some students who may be non-compliant and whose input may damage the teacher's ratings. We may have one or two students in a class that can "trash" the teacher and bring the entire IDEA scores down. Is this taken into consideration when admin. looks at the IDEA results?
- 29 I don't think that IDEA is so much more helpful than a simpler form that it merits its high cost.
- lt's a great system, somewhat hampered by people (administrators, but also many faculty members) failing to LEARN to interpret it, beyond looking at numbers.
- 31 I liked the original one better

Many students do not take the time to properly fill out the form. Very few give comments which I feel are most helpful. More than half will either fill in all the answers with 1's or 5's, which adds a lot of noise to the data. There is no real control variables, I can't tell if the issue are coming from the students who didn't purchase the text and came to few classes or the ones who were involved and diligent. I especially don't like the fact that the students are asked these questions when they are approaching finals, stressed out, and some have already gotten themselves in a hole so deep that failing the course is a real option. That halo effect contorts their perceptions. Therefore, if the College continue the IDEAs (which I think you should not), it should be given earlier in the semester, when most of the course and teacher characteristics can be judged and the stress and or anger for paper, tests, grades, and sleep, are not contributing to perceptions. I have a colleague at another school who makes sure that everyone in his class has close to an A average when they do the evaluations and then give a difficult final to effect the grades appropriately. I feel that is a mistake as the early assignments where they make the most mistakes. These are the best teaching opportunities. Henceforth, they can grow and when the final exams and papers arrives they are now best prepared to do well. By the way, Colleges and Universities are concerned about grade inflation. IDEAs are giving students the tools to encourage that trend. Non-tenured Faculty and adjuncts are the most vulnerable to wanting to please student for good evaluations. I think more emphasis should be put on peer and department evaluations for direction on tenure and conformance with school and academic objectives.

33	Distinction needs to be made between undergraduate and gradaute students
34	IDEA system is very good.
35	I can't say anything about other faculty or the administration, however, I feel that it is too lengthy and statistically dubious. I don't find the evaluations using this instrument very helpful in improving my teaching.
36	I was surprised and a bit appalled when my dean created an Excel file summarizing my scores to discuss my teaching with me. She used the adjusted scores and focused only on the negatives, ignoring the positives until I pointed out that there were more positives than negatives and that I can't control how students view their own efforts, which often lower my raw scores in the adjusted scores.
37	The essential goals from which to choose favor the arts, preparation for the professions, and important general skills such as teamwork. They are incomplete and disadvantageous to the social sciences. In addition, the CIP codes are horrible and uselessnothing is an acceptable match for Stockton's FYE courses, HIVA attributes, G categories, transfer student seminars. There are dozens and dozens of choices for particular areas within the professions (minutia), but other subjects are lumped with just one. The comparisons with other schools are not at all useful and we should not even show that data.
38	hard to answer about other people's understanding!!
39	The students fill the IDEa out in 3 minutes. Don't write anything. I find them useless. My IDEA reports are in the high 4's always, but so what. They are useless.
40	I believe the IDEA approach is far superior to the former SET evaluation instrument, however I question the usefulness/validity of ANY evaluation instrument. This information should be collected/collated/distributed by the students. The purpose should be to inform students which instructors might best serve their needs/expectations during the pre-registration period.
41	I do not like the IDEA System and would prefer the old SET system. The IDEA Form is too long most students fill it in a minute without thought and careful reading. The way the adjusted scores are obtained in a mystery. Picking a few objectives and weighing them is like playing a game.
42	This IDEA system is WAY too long for the students to answer meaningfully. Further, while there is some use value to statistics in this capacity, the sheer length of the form precludes any chance that students might take the time to write more substantive qualitative comments the kind that actually help me think through specific things to "retain" or "improve." I'm not sure I could hate a teaching evaluation system more than this one. AND this is NOT because I misunderstand the data NOR because I do not score well In fact I score well above average in every class's IDEA evals. I just think that they are overly long and while they may provide some useful info for administrators, they do not really have much to offer in terms of actually becoming a better teacher.
43	The reduced emphasis on written comments on the IDEA is regretful. In the area of written feedback the old SETs were superior.
44	Evaluation should be made on how well the professor meets the course syllabus, not on a separate syllabus called the IDEA system. The IDEA system will eventually undermine the quality of education since it will force instructors to teach to those factors in the IDEA questionnaire, not course content. Results will be to dumb-down the contents of courses.
45	(1) I worry that the quantitative results of IDEA are privileged over the possibly more valuable qualitative info learned from other documents (peer observations, teaching philosophy, syllabi, etc.) despite warning by IDEA that it should not be overvalued. (2) concern that if you administer online the "window" is longer than if you do it in person; that means that if you give back exams or papersevents that we know can provoke emotional responses from studentsclass may do IDEA that same day and results may be skewed; (3) while IDEA seems to provide a wealth of info, it seems I don't have time (or incentive) to actually dig into it; might be different if I were not tenured; (4) Bias against any quantitative method as problematic in evaluating something like teaching
46	The IDEA evaluations have encouraged me to lower my standards of teaching in an effort to please the students. My teaching has become worse, my teaching methods are less based on contemporary knowledge about student learning and more a result of students' preferences and laziness. I am being forced to teach less and with lower quality. The only consolation is that when I have tenure, I will be able to finally teach the way I should without having to worry about IDEAs.
47	The form inhibits student comments which could be the most useful aid to changing a course. It would be better to get answers to three questions: What about the course should be retained? What about the course might be changes: Would you recommend this course to a friend? Why or why not?
48	I think this should not be used as an assessment for what makes a good teacher. It should only be used as supplementary material to the faculty portfolio. Some students can be unfair or cruel to teachers particularly when they get low marks because they are female, minority and with an accent in speaking. In addition, when some teachers promote independent, rigorous thinking, some students resist this paradigm shift in thinking about their human reality.
49	Unnecessarily complicated. The summary scores are all that is looked at in personnel decisions. There are too many questions on the survey since it covers all areas.
50	Students, for the most part, just breeze through it. I am not sure, therefore, of its value as an evaluative tool.
51	We waste money paying for it that could be put to better use. The old SET was free!
52	If students are not up to college level learning and do not receive Asyou get a a poor grade from them.
53	Students who answer too many IDEA evalutions in one day/week often do not give the evaluation tool appropriate considerationthe students want to "be done with completing the form"; the method of collection for online teaching has the form open for two weeks while students in the face to face classroom have one class period to complete the IDEAyet, proponents of online state the experiences should be similar between face to face and online education; during the two week period in which IDEA evaluations are open for students, often students are contributing work and having graded work returned in that timeframe. Sometimes, after receiving a lower grade in online assignments during a two week periodstudents have the opportunity to submit a negative IDEA based on their reaction to the lower score on the exam.
54	Drop the IDEA and get a better, and more affordable, tool of evaluation.
55	It doesn't really work with the discipline that I teach.
56	it's too confusing and vague

57	I really don't follow the system too well. Generally I think if the results are good, I am doing well, however, when I go to my faculty superior to interpret, I see some areas where questions are interpreted differently by students. Also, often, the better students do not respond or do so haphazardly, whereas the lower end or problem students use it to vent. In mid semester feedback I learn that most students would like the class better if they didn't have to read or write so much, they would rather just talk, so I don't know how valuable any of their input is!
58	The objectives are limiting and some too broad causing student and teacher confusion as to exact meaning. There appears to be a trick to getting higher scores, i.e. only selecting two essential objectives, etcwhy? Objectives need to be clearer, non overlapping and you should select as many as apply to your course!
59	An improvement over the previous SET. As the most uniform assessment in the teaching portfolio, I think it is often given too much weight. Developing some common practices around peer evaluations, portfoilio presentation would strenghten other mechanisms for evaluating teaching.
60	Junk and waste of taxpayer dollars. I'm constantly being adjusted downward while the poor teachers are adjusted upwards. Is this socialism for teachcing evaluations? Give me a break.
61	need more text comments and a shorter quantitative instrument so that more students will fill out the text comments for it to be useful to my teaching.
62	Limitations experienced would be common to any evaluation form but there should be a way to ensure that different sections of the same course are always evaluated using the same form, even if one section happens to have enrollments under 15 and the other more than 15.
63	Somewhat useful. Better than the SETs. But, the larger issue concerns what this "Black Box" really is, what is represents, and how to best interpret the results. I suspect that most (including admins) glance at the basic stats and draw inferences. Probably a decent tool for identifying truly horrible teachers but not hugely useful in sorting out the rest. If IDEAs are used as ONE input into a larger evaluation process, I think they are probably OK. To the extent they become the principle means by which faculty teaching performance is evaluated they have huge shortcomings.
64	It's not perfect, but IDEA is better than the SETs!
65	better than the old instrument, but could (should) be improved
66	IDEA is more useful than the SET instrument. I administer IDEA at the beginning of class and students seem not to rush and do take time to think about the questions. I imagine that how well they understand them depends on the question. I also encourage them to write comments. My essential and important goals are posted right away on Blackboard (with specific explanations of what I am trying to accomplish). I mention these goals in class at the beginning of the semester (without mentioning IDEA) and that is it. I do not mention these goals again. I do find the IDEA feedback useful in ways that SET feedback was not. Specific actions are more obvious and strengths/weaknesses are spelled out. Generally, IDEA measures appear to be on target (at least for me), but I fare better on advanced courses than introductory courses. IDEA is clearly telling me that there is a difference in the way freshmen perceive my teaching compared to seniors (for example). I have been trying to figure out what this difference is for some time now. Is it amount of work? Teaching approaches? Expectations? It could be that seniors have come to expect challenging work, while freshmen are surprised (and annoyed?) by it, but IDEA has not helped me in teasing out an explanation for this difference. Like any evaluation instrument it has limitations, but again, it is much better than what we had.
67	Some of the questions on the IDEA form are difficult for the student to really understand what they are evaluating. There are also many questions on the form that are not relevant to all of the courses For example: If the course is a seminar type format, then questions pertaining to small discussion groups etc would be more relevant. Otherwise, a student may give a poor rating when that type of format is irrelevant to the course. I also believe that there is too much weight placed on these evaluations in relation to tenure and promotion. The student feedback should be helpful to the faculty member for the purpose of improving teaching, not held against the faculty member especially if the subject matter that they are teaching is not within their control. Also, if students do not like the faculty member, they will base the evaluation on personality vs teaching skills, techniques etc. Also, they may base their opionion on the amount of work within the course. Hope these comments are helpful
68	The IDEA system requires a level of analytical game theory choices that are inconsistent with a serious approach to teaching.
69	Far too complicated.
70	who knows if administrators and FRC understand how to interpret IDEA stats!
71	Having the national norms is extremely helpful. I wish it had fewer questions, however.
72	I like it, it has helped me improve techniques and it's good feedback.
73	Adjustment of ratings is inappropriate based on a subjective student appraisal of "work difficulty," etc. Ratings should be based only on student responses without adjustment.
74	too long for students. I think they get tired of doing them and just rush through it.
75	Teaching in "team taught" courses, the students are frequently asked to use IDEA for multiple faculty members in a discrete time frame. This facilitates a lack of reflection and increased frustration on the students' part.
76	The system allows all the power to held by the students, who are not experts in their fields and not experts in teaching. Although I enjoy "good scores", I think that it is too long and the information obtained is taken out of context.
77	It would be wonderful if each discipline determined the values that were going to be assessed for each class (rather than having those values determined by each instructor individually). This would eliminate apples to oranges-style comparisons between profs. And I would trust the data was collecting if I knew we were all be measured by the same criteria.
78	I believe that faculty and administrators sometimes forget that IDEAS provide information about students' PERCEPTIONS about a teacher and a course, rather than factual information about the faculty member and the course. Sometimes these perceptions relate clearly to the facts of the course, but sometimes they don't. Faculty can use student perceptions to better understand how students are responding to their course and teaching style, but the notion that the IDEA actually measures teaching effectiveness is problematic.
79	My only criticism of the current use of IDEA at Stockton is that for online courses, not many students complete the online version and therefore the results are not very accurate. I wish there was a way that we could increase the online students' participation in this important evaluation process.

80	Q3 is for students to answer
81	I have no data upon which to base answers to 7 and 8.
82	Any survey instrument which has more than 10 questions is fundamentally flawed. There are too many questions and many of the questions suggest aspects of teaching excellence which are questionable. The IDEA system is garbage!Our old 7 question SET were much more valid and useful!
83	I don't like it. The old in house SET form was better.
84	As explained at a meeting: the scores are adjusted based on the mean??? Why adjust scores? Either students understand and respond because they care, or the result of the survey is moot. I think the student portfolio evaluations conducted by the writing department each year are much more telling and effective.
85	IDEA is annoying and can be manipulated for results. The fprmer teacher rating system was better.
86	Categories for major are antiquated. For example: no Environmental Science.
87	The IDEA summary evaluation relies on 10 objectives and student ratings of two questions 1. I would rate this teacher as excellent 2. I would rate this course as excellent It might as well be whittled down to those 12 questions and about 7 subjective questions about the students perceptions about the amount of reading, whether they wanted to take the course etc to allow for the adjusted ratings. Since the styles and methods questions only count for use by the faculty member for their own use in changing their teaching style they really do not count as part of the evaluation used by the administration. I think the questions that are most easy for the students to understand and evaluate are the teaching styles and methods questions and feedback on theses questions I felt was most important yet the score did not influence the overall idea score. The IDEA objectives are more geared towards humanities and social sciences courses. I tink an instrument that adapted questions from the styles and methods sections would be more helpful than having faculty trying to second guess what objectives students think are important nd what is meant by an excellent teacher or excellent course.
88	Most programs that use contrived acronyms for titles are ineffectual and often stupid. This one qualifies on both counts.
89	The IDEA system takes a very simple objective like evaluating a teacher, and turns it into a mathematical calculation worthy of Advanced Calculus. Any simple questionnaire can fulfill the objectives of the IDEA system with greater accuracy and simplicity. This process does not need to be so esoteric, and frankly the numbers I received back on my forms were completely unintelligible and useless to me.
90	For a retiree adjuncting one course per semester, not having to be concerned with numerical scores, I think I would learn more about my teaching, and the students would learn more about evaluation, if there were a only a single question such as: Please comment constructively on the instructor's teaching.
91	My PRC and dean both understand how to use the IDEAs. The FRC last year and this year does not. I am not certain about the Provost. The FRC needs to complete mandatory training on the IDEAs given by the Institute for Faculty Development before serving on the FRC. There needs to be better adherence or definition of how the IDEAs will be used in tenure and promotion.
92	As compared to what?
93	The Dean does not even understand how to interpret the IDEA! Students don't understand the objectives/goals. Students complain that it is too long.
94	The students that I catch cheating on their papers and exams give be very poor grades on IDEA. Are you surprised?
95	The survey would be helpful to have "not sure". I have no way of knowing if the students and administrators understand the usefulness of IDEA or how to interpret. I would like a return to the SETS which were to the point and clear. The IDEA system is confusing, unclear, and not valuable in my opinion.
96	My students hate doing the teaching evaluations and were holding a meeting when I stepped into the hallway to give them some privacy while doing the IDEAs. The FRC does not used the IDEAs the way they were designed. According to the company they should be a small subset not 100%.
97	The survey is so long that students do not take the time to carefully consider their answers.
98	The most important feedback to me is the written responses. The length of IDEA makes written responses rare. I also find that students don't read the statements carefully and often answer strongly to statements that are irrelevant to the course.
99	Some of the questions are too much for some of our students (for example, 1st semeter- or year- students), and the time of day of the class, type of course (required, part of major, smaller or larger) and room may not be adequately weighted in the final "assessment" of the IDEA survey. What, exactly, are the POSITIVES of this? Do faculty and discuss this together, do administrators sensitively deal with the data? In the prsent educational climate f NJ, do we really want to devote the good timeto grappling with what our students/ faculty/administrators/parents /advocates really expect from the (once highly-vaunted, but now sadly "factory-ized") educationalexperience, escepcially a liberal-arts one? Do we communicate with our community college colleagues to figure out a just way of assessing higher education in NJ (or anywhere)?
100	The evidence and guidelines published by IDEA should be utilized in evaluating teaching. for example, IDEA scores should comprise only 30-50% weight of teaching portfolio to evaluate teaching effectiveness as noted by IDEA; however many faculty and administrators use select IDEA scores as the sole measure of teaching effectiveness. The college needs to establish institution wide rubrics for use of IDEA scores based on the published evidence rather than individual bias and interpretation.

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