

A Resolution of the Bowling Green State University Faculty Senate

- WHEREAS Bowling Green State University is a premier, inclusive learning community, with core values that include both diversity and inclusion as well as excellence in all we do; (1)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU's first strategic objective is to provide undergraduate and graduate students (traditional and post-traditional) a demonstrably superior and innovative learning experience; (2)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU's third strategic objective is to support all individuals to build a quality learning community that fosters diversity and inclusion, collaboration, creativity, and excellence; (3)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU has adopted policies to provide both equal employment opportunity ([Policy 3341-5-35](#)), as well as equal education opportunity ([Policy 3341-5-34](#)), both of which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity, genetic information, gender expression, sexual orientation, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, or status as a Special Disabled or Vietnam-era veteran; (4)
- AND WHEREAS, like the overwhelming majority of institutions of higher education in the United States and around the world, BGSU regularly uses student evaluations of teaching (SETs; sometimes also called student evaluations of instruction; SEIs) to systematically collect students' feedback on their instructional experiences; (5)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU students have both a right and a responsibility to give meaningful, constructive feedback to instructors about their instructional experiences; (6)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU instructors have both a right and a responsibility to seek meaningful, constructive feedback from students about their instructional experiences to inform continuous improvement of instructional practices; (7)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU has recently instituted a university-wide set of common items to be included in SETs and required their administration in all courses; (8)
- AND WHEREAS BGSU has recently adopted Evaluation Kit as a common system for the administration of electronic SETs which is fully integrated with Canvas, BGSU's learning management system (LMS); (9)
- AND WHEREAS SETs are used by many of BGSU's instructional units and a criterion for evaluations of faculty teaching performance; (10)
- AND WHEREAS numerous empirical studies have investigated whether SET numeric scores are biased (i.e., systematically inflated or deflated in ways that can be attributed to non-instructional factors; see publications in [this OneDrive folder](#)); (11)
- AND WHEREAS several studies have found bias in numeric SET scores related to instructor's gender, attractiveness, race, national origin, age, sexual orientation, faculty rank, and related to the course's mode of instruction, and whether required or elective; (12)
- AND WHEREAS several other studies have found no evidence of bias or found evidence of negligible bias along these same factors; (13)
- AND WHEREAS the nature and degree of bias can reasonably be expected to vary from institution to institution due to the influence of contextual factors; (14)

AND WHEREAS some SET scholars have recommended that institutions investigate the degree to which bias is present in the scores derived from SETs at that institution, when those instruments have evidence to support their validity for proposed interpretations and uses, so that the influence of that bias can be mitigated or eliminated; (15)

AND WHEREAS the presence or absence of bias in numeric scores derived from SETs at BGSU is an empirical question that can be answered through systematic analyses of data from the new institution-wide SET items collected through Evaluation Kit; (16)

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that it is in the best interests of the students, faculty, and administrators of BGSU to ensure that the systems used to evaluate faculty teaching performance, to collect feedback from students about their instructional experiences, and to inform instructional improvement efforts, generate high-quality scores that are as accurate, precise, and free from bias as possible; (17)

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that BGSU commits to regularly examine SET data for evidence of bias and, when such bias is found, take reasonable steps to mitigate or eliminate the impact of bias on evaluations of teaching performance; (18)

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a working group on SETs at BGSU be formed to investigate numeric scores derived from SETs administered to students in BGSU classes during the 2018-2019 academic year to identify whether evidence of bias exists that is related to race, sex, gender identity, genetic information, gender expression, sexual orientation, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, disability, pregnancy, military status, or status as a Special Disabled or Vietnam-era veteran, and if such bias is found, determine its magnitude and direction so reasonable steps can be taken to mitigate or eliminate the impact of bias on evaluations of teaching performance; (19)

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group in question be constituted of seven members with appropriate expertise to conduct the investigation described; two members selected by the Senate Executive Committee, two members selected by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, one member selected by the BGSU Faculty Association, one member selected by the Graduate Student Senate, and one member selected by the Undergraduate Student Government; (20)

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group be provided a matched, de-identified data set of results from the SETs administered to students in BGSU classes during the 2018-2019 academic year to conduct the analyses described prior; (21)

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group provide a detailed report of its findings and implications for policy and practice prior to the final regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2019-2020 academic year. (22)