

## *Final Recommendation*

*February 6, 2023*

### **Revisions to the Student Feedback Form and the Inclusion of DE&I Modifications**

#### **Background to the Charge**

In November 2010, the Steering Committee issued a charge for CAP to modify the Student Feedback Form to meet current practices and recommend a new procedure for administering the Student Feedback Form. The matter came up again in fall 2017, when Alex Molder, on behalf of the Student Government, requested that Steering review the latest literature on student feedback forms. Steering formed a Taskforce on May 16, 2018 to examine the best practices for: using student feedback in teaching; establishing a sound student feedback policy; creating effective questions for the instrument; and determining the goal of assessing teaching in an instrument. Steering required the Taskforce to gather input from TCNJ stakeholders on the function and effectiveness of teaching questions in its current instrument.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Taskforce met with representatives from the IT department to explore how TCNJ might administer student feedback electronically via a new delivery system. In Spring 2019, the Taskforce recommended the following modifications to the existing Student Feedback Instrument and how it should be administered to the campus: the addition of a preamble for the Student Feedback Instrument that would help students understand the purpose and use of the Feedback Form, the inclusion of a statement that emphasized its protection of student anonymity, and a review of third-party vendors for alternate ways to deliver the Instrument to the campus electronically. The Taskforce also held three campus demonstrations of possible alternatives for administering the Student Feedback Form.

On April 3, 2019, Steering accepted the Taskforce's recommendation to purchase EvaluationKit (now called, Watermark Course Evaluations and Surveys), a third-party product, to administer the Instrument electronically to the campus via Canvas. Steering then formed a new Student Feedback Taskforce to further revise the items included in the Feedback Instrument, including modifications to its preamble and an exploration of adding a campus-wide mid-semester course assessment. The new Student Feedback Taskforce drafted and piloted a prospective mid-semester course assessment instrument in fall 2019 and spring 2020 using full professors who volunteered for the trial. On December, 19, 2019, the new Taskforce made five [recommendations](#) to Steering that reflected feedback it received from Academic Leaders, the Dean's Council, and the Faculty Senate Executive Board. Of the five recommendations, TCNJ had already started delivering the student feedback instrument through an electronic platform (now called, Watermark Course Evaluations and Surveys), but CFA tabled the other four recommendations until fall 2020 because of unexpected events.

Between winter 2019 and fall 2020 the nation experienced back to back crises: the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests that followed the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. In response to the protests, the Campus Diversity Council issued [Black Lives Matter Call to Action](#) (see item under "Curricular Changes"), which questioned inclusivity in the classroom. That concern

compelled Steering to revise and reissue the Student Feedback charge to CFA, this time with a requirement that the Instrument include questions that concerned diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I).

On April 6, 2022, CFA presented a preliminary recommendation to the Faculty Senate and CFA held a public forum with the SGA on April 13, 2022. CFA also disseminated a campuswide Qualtrics survey on the preliminary recommendation between April 3 and April 22, 2022. In the fora, Faculty Senators and SGA representatives questioned the applicability of DEI questions to the Sciences and Engineering; they also inquired about plans to reduce the length of the overall feedback form. Despite receiving meaningful input, the outcome of the open fora and the Qualtrics survey, CFA determined the testimony produced inadequate results. For example, the Qualtrics survey yielded only seventeen responses. CFA felt strongly that it should reissue the Qualtrics survey and seek additional public testimony in fall 2022.

On November 16, 2022, CFA held another round of public testimony in the Faculty Senate, with 51 attendees. The faculty questioned redundancies in the Feedback Form questions, whether CFA included modifications to increase student participation, if a reduction in the number of questions on the Instrument might increase student participation (an issue associated with item 1 of the 2019 Taskforce recommendation), if there was lack of clarity in the instructor and course sections of the Instrument, if the Instrument used of vague or loaded terminology, how departments and the administration might construe unanswered questions, the decision to place the DE&I section in the middle of the Instrument, and whether the DE&I section represented the full complement of inclusive identities. CFA met for a second time with SGA on November 30, 2022 (75 attendees). Students questioned whether the Feedback Form should address ARC accommodations, if the DE&I section should include a longer list of identities and circumstances, if it was possible to shorten the Instrument, and what constituted bias on the instructor's part in the DE&I section. CFA also relaunched the Qualtrics campus-wide survey and received forty-eight responses, twenty-nine that supported the revisions, twelve that were neutral, and seven that rejected the changes. The qualitative responses in the Qualtrics repeated some of the concerns voiced at the campus fora. Just before CFA's last meeting of fall 2022, it spoke with Christopher "Kit" Murphy, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Liberal Learning, who shared his thoughts on the revisions and suggested that TCNJ should review the Student Feedback Form on a five-year cycle.

### **Charge to CFA from Steering**

In keeping with the timeline below, Steering requests that CFA review the Student Feedback Taskforce's [recommendations](#) 1, 3, 4, and 5 (including appendices). In addition, Steering requests that CFA include questions (or statements) on the Student Feedback Form to assess inclusivity and racial climate in the classroom. CFA should consult with the Campus Diversity Council and other campus experts on inclusivity, anti-racist praxis, and survey methodology.

Once CFA has completed this work, CFA should prepare a preliminary recommendation on student feedback and seek broad testimony from across the campus community, including, but not limited to: Student Government, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate; Academic Leaders; the Council of Deans; the Campus Diversity Council; campus groups that represent BIPOC (Black

Indigenous People of Color) students and faculty or that deal with issues of power and oppression (e.g., Departments of African Americans Studies and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; recognized [“Culture and Community” student organizations](#)); Accessibility Resource Center; and the Office of Assessment.

### **Background to the Recommendation**

CFA created a working group that consulted the 2019 Student Feedback Form Taskforce, surveyed the best practices at leading institutions (University of Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University, Howard University, and Boston University), considered newest relevant literature on the value of inclusive teaching and testing, reviewed the feedback from the HSS Anti-Black Racism Taskforce’s survey of the campus racial climate, and consulted with the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Office of Curriculum and Liberal Learning. From those sources the working group revised the Student Feedback Instrument and redrafted the 2019 Student Feedback Form Taskforce’s draft for a mid-semester course assessment form. While the working group investigated guidelines for a mid-semester course assessment instrument and drafted a model instrument for campus wide consideration, the Office of Curriculum and Liberal Learning launched its own, voluntary mid-semester assessment instrument through Watermark, which changed the urgency for CFA to include a mid-semester evaluation in its recommendation. The working group used the following considerations to guide its choices when drafting CFA’s recommendations for the prevailing Student Feedback Form charge:

1. That *item 1 of the 2019 Taskforce on the Student Feedback Form recommendation*, which sought modifications to, and a reduction of, the questions in the Instructor and Course sections of the Instrument, presented a way to address the issue of low student participation.
  - a. Rationale: In each public fora, participants mentioned that a reduction in the number of questions on the Instrument might encourage better student participation in course assessments.
2. That *item 3 of the 2019 Taskforce on the Student Feedback Form recommendation*, which called for a requirement to administer the Feedback Instrument during the first half class time, is an effective way to increase student participation.
  - a. Rationale: Compared to the paper forms TCNJ used in the past, student participation has declined with the electronic feedback system that relies on student initiative. Reserving time in class to administer the Feedback Form might recapture some of the effective elements from the previous Student Feedback Form practice.
3. That the revised Student Feedback Instrument should *provide consistent informational content to the sections* that remind students of the significance of the assessment and a statement on the protection of student anonymity and privacy.
  - a. Rationale: This change makes the informational portions of each section of the Student Feedback Form consistent throughout the instrument. Currently, the informational sections, which include the rationale for participating in the assessment, the directions for completing the Feedback Form, and a statement

regarding the assessment's use and commitment to anonymity, appear inconsistently in the Student Feedback Form. This change would remedy that and provide a place to explain the purpose for each section.

4. That the revised Student Feedback Instruments should *have a separate section dedicated to DE&I* distinct from demographic, instructor, course, and comments sections.
  - a. Rationale: CFA believes that DE&I questions in the Student Feedback Form address topics that demand consideration in a stand-alone section, rather than being embedded in the three sections (Demographic, Course, and Instructor) that comprise the current Feedback Form. While DE&I items relate to topics in the current sections, the Instruments should not give the impression that DE&I items are less important than other items that might be in the section. In addition, placing DE&I items in sections of the current Feedback Form would create repetition that might undermine student participation.
  
5. That the revised Student Feedback Instrument's DE&I section should *recognize that DE&I questions might not apply to every course*.
  - a. Rationale: CFA believes the Feedback Form should recognize that DE&I questions might not apply to every course and/or discipline and that the Instruments should give students the opportunity to state as much when appropriate. However, if a course that does not typically address DE&I topics raises a DE&I concern, students will be able to note that in the open-ended questions section of the Instrument.
  
6. That the revised Student Feedback Instrument should *place the new DE&I section in the middle of the instrument*, between the current Course and Instructor sections.
  - a. Rationale: CFA believes placing the DE&I section in the center of the revised Student Feedback Form will signify the importance of DE&I as an issue in the assessment process and its relationship to both the course and teaching.
  
7. That the revised Student Feedback Instrument should *provide a variety of survey items* that include open-ended, multiple choice, and Likert scale options to capture the feedback.
  - a. Rationale: Best practices for assessing course structure and teaching recommend using multiple types of questions to get a broad picture of the student's experience. They also recommend using a mixture of feedback that can be quantified and assessed on qualitative content.
  
8. That a *mid-semester course assessment should be voluntary and only used for teaching enrichment and development* and not reappointment, tenure, promotion, and/or five-year review.
  - a. Rationale: The 2021 RPD and TCNJ/AFT MOA #98 stipulate that end of semester Feedback Form is the Instrument that will be used for reappointment, tenure, promotions, and five-year review. A mid-semester course assessment instrument can only serve for teaching edification and developmental purposes. Best practices, however, acknowledge the value of a sustained dialogue on

teaching effectiveness throughout the semester, and as such a mid-semester assessment should be encouraged among the faculty.

9. That a mid-semester course assessment, which comprises item 4 and 5 of *the 2019 Taskforce on the Student Feedback Form recommendation*, was already in use at TCNJ through the Office of Curriculum and Liberal Learning. And that the current mid-semester assessment process was *voluntary* and used *solely for teaching enrichment* with no connection to reappointment, tenure, promotion, and/or five-year review.

### Final Recommendation

Following the limited feedback CFA received from the campus survey in the spring 2022, and better responses to the campus survey during the second round of testimony in fall 2022, CFA revised the Preliminary Recommendation and Student Feedback Instrument. The following reflects the original recommendations and CFA's final recommendation.

CFA recommends the following changes to the student feedback process and *Course Feedback Form* (Appendix A):

1. TCNJ implement a five-year review of the Student Feedback Form to ensure that it is consistent with its values and aims and it reflects current best practices.
2. As recommended in the 2019 Taskforce report (item 3), instructors should reserve ten (10) minutes in the first half of the class during the two-week window that the Student Feedback Form is open for completion. Additionally, instructors should exit the room during the ten minutes the Feedback Form is being administered to ensure students can answer freely and comfortably.
3. In the *current Student Feedback Form*, **remove the following four (4) questions** from the *Course section*:
  - a. #3, "Where relevant, collaborative work with classmates added to my understanding of the course."
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is too specific and cannot be measured consistently across the campus or even within programs. Additionally, it can be captured in the qualitative questions in the Comments section.
  - b. #4, "Required readings were valuable and enriched my learning experience."
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in items #1, 5, and 6 of the Course section in the current Form, and those items are carried over in the new Form.
  - c. #7, "I acquired valuable skills and knowledge in this course."
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item #9 of the Course section in the current Form, and that item is carried over, and clarified, in the new Form.
  - d. #8, "I found the course intellectually challenging."
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item #9 of the Course section in the current Form, and that item is carried over, and clarified, in the new Form.

4. In the *current Student Feedback Form*, **remove the following ten (10) questions** from the *Instructor section*:
- a. #1, “The instructor encouraged and motivated me to do my best in this course.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item #5 of the Course section in the new Form.
  - b. #2, “The instructor’s teaching style contributed to learning materials covered in the course.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item #1 of the Comments section.
  - c. #4, “The instructor presented background for concepts or skills developed in class.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is implicit in item #3 of the Instructor section in the current Form.
  - d. #5, “Where relevant, the instructor presented contrasting points of view on topics.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in items # 2 and #3 of the DE&I section in the new Form.
  - e. #8, “The instructor was accessible to students outside of class time.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item # 14 of the Instructor section in the current Form, and it is unclear about what constitutes “outside of class time.”
  - f. #9, “The instructor promoted an atmosphere that was conducive to students sharing ideas and knowledge.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item # 14 of the Instructor section in the current Form and items #1 of the DE&I section in the new Form.
  - g. #12, “The instructor communicated enthusiasm for the subject matter.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is subjective and might assess the instructor’s personality rather than their teaching. Additionally, students have the opportunity to address course atmosphere in the Comments section of the new Form.
  - h. #13, “The instructor was respectful of differing viewpoints expressed by students.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item #1 of the DE&I section in the new Form.
  - i. #15, “The instructor treated students with respect.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item #1 of the DE&I section in the new Form.
  - j. #16, “The instructor challenged me to think.”
    - i. *Rationale*: This point is captured in item # 8 of the Course section in the current Form, and it is carried over to item #5 of the Course section in the new Form.

It is important to note that **the Student Feedback software allows instructors to add their own questions** at the end of the survey. If an instructor feels strongly that responses to one of the questions listed above is important to their course, they can customize their feedback and include that question.

5. In the *new Student Feedback Form*, revise the Instrument to include clearly defined Demographic, Instructor, DE&I, Course, and Comments sections that contain questions within them.
6. In the *new Student Feedback Form*, add an informational preamble to each of the five sections (Demographic, Course, Instructor, DE&I, and Comments) that offers instruction, and in the case of DE&I, explains its significance.
7. In the *new Student Feedback Form*, situate the inclusion of a DE&I section between the Course and Instructor sections. The DE&I section will contain the following information and items:
  - a. An explanation of DE&I and instructions in the preamble that reads:
    - i. “TCNJ’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion seeks to foster a community where we “treat each other with civility and respect” and work “together in a spirit of fairness and cooperation.” Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about DE&I and the course. If an item does not apply to your particular course, or if you have no personal knowledge of a particular item, please respond 'Not applicable' rather than assigning an arbitrary number.”
  - b. The **addition of the following five items** (four on a Likert scale and one open-ended) for the DE&I content:
    - 1) “The instructor treated all students with respect.” (Likert scale)
    - 2) “The instructor acknowledged biases in the course topic that may be implicit in how it is taught.” (Likert scale)
    - 3) “The instructor modeled civil discourse (open and professional sharing of ideas).” (Likert scale)
    - 4) “The instructor respected people from different groups (i.e., People with disabilities; Blacks/African Americans; or LGBTQ, racial, ethnic, religious, and gender groups). (Likert scale)
    - 5) “Please elaborate on any of the information you provided in the DE&I section.” (Open-ended)
8. In the *new Student Feedback Form*, make the following **changes to the open-ended questions** in the Comments section:
  - a. Replace question #1, “Please indicate aspects of the instructor's teaching or of the course that have been most valuable to you?” with “What aspects of your instructor’s teaching have been most helpful to your learning in this course?”
  - b. Replace question #2, “Please indicate aspects of the instructor's teaching or of the course that you feel most need improvement?” with “What aspects of the instructor’s teaching did you find the least helpful in this course?”

9. For a **mid-semester course assessment** CFA recommends formalizing the Office of Curriculum and Liberal Learning's Mid-semester Course Check-In instrument and administration process as it satisfies the aims listed in this Preliminary Recommendation: it is voluntary; it is not connected to promotion, reappointment, five-year review, reappointment, or tenure decisions; it is used for strictly instructor development; it is capable of modification to fit individual program and faculty needs; it is already in circulation through Watermark Evaluation software; and it does not conflict with TCNJ/AFT MOA #98.

**Appendix A**  
**2023 Revisions to Student Feedback Form**

[See Attached PDF]

## Section 1

### Introduction and Demographics Questions

Your thoughtful and independent responses to this Feedback Form are essential to your instructor and the College's assessment of the quality of the teaching and learning process. Your feedback is collected anonymously, and your responses will be recorded and kept securely until after course grades have been submitted.

You do not have to answer questions in the order they are presented, but you cannot leave any of the multiple-choice answers blank (required questions are indicated with a red asterisk). If there is a question for which you do not have an answer or that does not appear to apply to the course or instructor, please select **“Not applicable,”** rather than assigning an arbitrary answer.

You do not have to answer all of the questions in one session. You can answer some of the questions and return later to complete the survey before the end of open period by clicking on the box at the bottom of the survey labeled “Save and Finish Later.”

\* A.) Please indicate your reason for taking this course.

- Liberal Learning Requirement
- Major/Minor Requirement
- Major/Minor Option
- General Interest
- Graduate Course
- Other

\* B.) Please note the average number of hours per week doing work for this course outside of class: (e.g., reading, group work, studying, research, assignment, etc.)

- Less than 1
- 1-4
- 5-8
- 9-12
- More than 12

\* C.) What do you think your grade for this course will be?

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A                     | A-                    | B+                    | B                     | B-                    | C+                    | C                     | C-                    | D+                    | D                     | F                     |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

\* D.) Level of interest in the subject matter prior to the course:

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Very Low

\* E.) Level of interest in the subject matter after taking the course:

- Very High
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Very Low

## Section 2

### Course Questions

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about the course. If an item does not apply to your particular course, or if you have no personal knowledge of a particular item, please respond 'Not applicable' rather than assigning an arbitrary number.

\* Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not applicable
1.) The course materials were well prepared and carefully explained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.) The course assignments added to my understanding of the course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.) The course examinations or written work reflected the content and emphasis of the course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.) The course methods for evaluating student work were fair and appropriate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.) The course increased my ability to critically analyze various ideas, arguments, and points of view.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Section 3

#### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Questions

TCNJ's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion seeks to foster a community where we "treat each other with civility and respect" and work "together in a spirit of fairness and cooperation." Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about DE&I and the course. If an item does not apply to your particular course, or if you have no personal knowledge of a particular item, please respond '**Not applicable**' rather than assigning an arbitrary number.

**The College of New Jersey**  
**Second Draft Survey of Revised Student Feedback Form Feb 2023**

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\* Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not applicable
1.)The instructor treated all students with respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.)The instructor acknowledged biases in the course topic that may be implicit in how it is taught.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.)The instructor modeled civil discourse (open and professional sharing of ideas).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.)The instructor respected people from different groups (i.e. People with disabilities; Blacks/African Americans; or LGBTQ, racial, ethnic, religious, and gender groups).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 3.) Please elaborate on any of the information you provided in the DE&I section.

**Section 4**

**\* Instructor Questions**

Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about the instructor. If an item does not apply to your particular instructor, or if you have no personal knowledge of a particular item, please respond 'Not applicable' rather than assigning an arbitrary number.

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Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

	(5) Strongly Agree	(4) Agree	(3) Neither Agree nor Disagree	(2) Disagree	(1) Strongly Disagree	Not applicable
1.) The instructor clearly explained the goals and requirements of this course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.) The instructor provided valuable feedback on assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.) The instructor returned assignments in a timely manner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.) The instructor used student questions and comments to help students understand course material.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.) The instructor was well organized and prepared for class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.) The instructor was responsive to student needs and concerns.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Section 5**

**Comments**

Your written comments below will be shared with your instructor. To protect your anonymity, avoid using any personal identifiers in your comments. Please answer the numbered questions in the corresponding numbered boxes below.

\* 1.) What aspects of your instructor's teaching have been most helpful to your learning in this course?

\* 2.) What aspects of the instructor's teaching did you find least helpful in this course?

\* 4.) Please use the additional space below to clarify any of your responses on your overall impressions of the course.