

Adjunct Faculty Observation and Evaluation

Philosophy and Procedures

Santa Fe College is committed to the professional development of all of its instructors, both full and part-time. All faculty have been vetted through the hiring process, and each faculty member is entrusted with meeting the course objectives. A teaching observation is one way the instructor can receive feedback about his or her teaching style. The purpose of holding such observations is to encourage faculty to discuss and share ideas for effective practices for Santa Fe students and to find ways to continuously improve instruction at Santa Fe. Classroom observations are intended to be non-intrusive and helpful to the instructor.

The observer

- will be a chair or (more commonly) faculty designee of the chair.
- will contact the instructor in advance to set up a time that is convenient to both parties.
- will offer the instructor the opportunity to visit his or her own class, and/or another experienced member of the faculty in the department, as well as offer to be available throughout the semester should any questions or concerns arise.
- will respect different teaching styles and have a primary concern for what works for the students involved.

The checklist

- is a mentoring tool, a means to help all faculty improve their teaching methods by sparking discussion and should be shared with the faculty member to be evaluated well in advance of the observation.
- summarizes items that the college believes to be essential to good instruction, though not every item is appropriate to every lesson or applicable to every instructor and teaching format.
- should be seen as a planning tool for the entire semester and a guide to help develop a good class; while use of different delivery methods is strongly encouraged, every method does not need to be used every class.
- should not be considered a measurement of perfection. No one is expected to get checked “excellent” in every category, nor should an excellent evaluation be seen as an indication that no further improvement is possible or desired. “Good” is an indication of quality instruction, and “needs improvement” is a call for additional mentoring.

After the observation:

- Within a week, the observer will meet with the instructor to go through the checklist and discuss what was observed, and to share insights about teaching that particular course.
- If there were any “needs improvement” items, the two faculty members will brainstorm ways to address that particular item for that class, and a second classroom observation will be scheduled for later in the semester to determine what improvements were made. After the second observation, the two faculty will meet again to discuss how the adjustments worked.

- The classroom observation checklist will be made available to the department chair but only after the observed instructor has had the opportunity to review and make his or her own comments. If two observations were made, both checklists should be presented to the department chair, with special attention noted for how the instructor attempted to make adjustments between visits. Keeping the checklist on file will also provide helpful information for developing letters of recommendation.
- Observed faculty may ask for additional opportunities to visit faculty classrooms and to have additional visits to his or her own classroom for more informal feedback.

Observation schedule:

- New faculty will be visited each of the first two semesters in which they teach at Santa Fe.
- They will be evaluated at least annually for their first three years at SF.
- After three years of teaching the same courses, adjunct faculty may be observed as infrequently as every third year thereafter. In non-observation years, they should simply schedule an informal meeting with another faculty member to talk about teaching.