

Teacher evaluation forms have an impact on careers

■ **REVIEW:** The papers do not reach professors and GTFs until all grading is completed

By Tamyra Howser
Higher Education Reporter

Ever wondered where instructor evaluation sheets wind up?

Now is the time to critically analyze the term experience with professors and graduate teaching fellows. And students may not realize how crucial their evaluation input is.

"Evaluation sheets are used from GTFs to full professors," said Marilyn Reed, administrative assistant of the English department. "During a review process, they are used for every step."

If a GTF is subject to a definite trend of criticism or similar complaints from students through a consecutive period of time, the GTF may not be appointed again, Reed said.

For faculty members who do not have tenure, student evaluations are weighed heavily into attaining tenure, Reed said.

"In the English department, there are almost 150 members here," Reed said. "[In this department], we look at the tabulated sheet — if it shows a problem, then we look at the written evaluation. Both sets of evaluations are important."

Tabulated sheets are stored in individual departments. Students may obtain results from a computer in the Knight Library reference section, which contains the tabulated evaluation results.

Written evaluation sheets, which are kept confidential from students, are given to the instructor, signed or not. Only signed

written evaluations are stored in the instructor's personnel file "for eternity," Reed said.

Instructors receive unsigned and signed written evaluations and tabulated evaluations after the term is over for personal review.

Students shouldn't worry about the professor or the GTF seeing the evaluation sheets before grades are turned in, Reed said.

"We guard them with our lives," she said.

Another type of evaluation is the midterm analysis from the teaching effectiveness program.

Nearly 60 to 70 different instructors use this optional evaluation form every term, said Georgeann Cooper, coordinator for the teaching effectiveness program.

"It opens up communication with students about how the course is going and show that they care a lot about teaching," she said. "For the students, it is an opportunity to offer constructive criticism [in the middle of the term]."

It shows responsibility on behalf of the instructor and shows that he or she cares a lot about teaching, Cooper said.

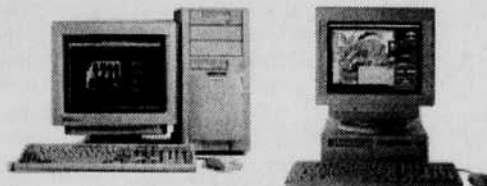
Ron Mitchell, an assistant professor of the political science department, uses midterm analysis as well as the University evaluation sheets.

"When students give feedback at the end of the term, they don't benefit," he said. "If evaluated during the middle of the term, [the students] will benefit during the second half [of the term]. Students can let me know in the middle of the term what I need to change [and improve]."

"I take student evaluations seriously, signed or not."



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