

Thursday, February 16, 1989

Teacher evaluation forms revised 'Cafeteria style' forms increase validity, usefulness of answers

By Melissa Naumann

REPORTER

Students may have noticed something different last semester when they filled out teacher evaluations — the forms only included questions that actually pertained to the class.

This is a result of a new evaluation form used last semester by the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Architecture and some individual departments within other colleges.

The form lets instructors choose different questions for different classes.

Because so many different parties have an interest in the teacher evaluations, Measurement and Research Services has developed an evaluation that is "cafeteria style," allowing deans, department heads and instructors to be involved in choosing questions.

Dr. Mark Troy, research psychologist and project coordinator, said the new evaluations focus on usefulness.

"We want to increase the validity of the ratings and increase the usefulness of the information for faculty and departments," he said. "By allowing different stakeholders to have input, information will be more useful."

The new evaluations consist of questions chosen from an item catalog. The dean of a college can select questions pertaining to that college, a department head can select ques-

tions important to his department and instructors can choose the remaining questions.

The evaluations include 15 questions chosen by the dean and department heads. The remaining five questions can be selected by instructors from an item bank with questions on everything from feedback to organization. The item bank also includes questions on laboratory assignments, reading assignments and writing assignments.

Dr. Tom Matthews, associate director of Measurement and Research Services, said faculty involvement in the choice of questions will improve the evaluation process.

"Faculty members are more likely to use information they have helped to develop," he said.

The new form will also eliminate irrelevant questions.

"Instruction is implemented in all kinds of settings and one evaluation form cannot do the job in all situations," Matthews said. "In some classes, some questions just don't apply."

Troy said teachers can ask ques-

tions on subjects other than teaching quality with the new evaluations.

"Some questions, like on the quality of textbooks, can help the faculty without hurting their tenure possibilities," he said.

Since an evaluation can include questions unique to a particular class, students are expected to answer the questions more carefully, Matthews said.

"Students hopefully will take them more seriously because the questions are tailored to their classes," he said.

The new evaluation form includes other unique features.

A space for general background information has been added as well as space for more specific information that an instructor might need to accurately assess his evaluations, Matthews said.

"This form, in addition to student judgments, provides information on who the students were," he said. "It's important for the faculty to know who the students are that rate them and take their courses."

Although the evaluation was first

used last semester, the Faculty Senate approved a recommendation on some new type of student-rating system two years ago.

The most recent committee, formed to work out details, was formed in Fall 1987.

The Student Senate also played a role in the development of the evaluation by submitting five questions for the item bank.

Since then, the evaluation has been used on a trial basis, Troy said.

"I'm glad the whole University hasn't been using it so far," he said. "We needed this pilot program to work out the bugs."

Dr. Chuck Stoup, senior academic business administrator in the College of Liberal Arts, said the college will continue to use the new forms.

"I think they were effective compared to forms we used in the past, which were more detailed and took longer to fill out," Stoup said. "We were pleased enough with the way they ran and the results we got with them to continue using them."

Victim advises students about rape protection

By Juliette Rizzo

STAFF WRITER

It happened to her, it can happen to you.

They were casually strolling around the University of Houston campus last spring, she and her "big guy friend" that is, when a man walked by with his hands tucked inconspicuously into his pockets.

"Hi, how are you doing?" were the last friendly words the man uttered. Their adrenalin levels rose significantly as he pulled out a gun and demanded their jewelry and money. But, he wanted more.

She was raped as her friend lay helpless after he was hit with the pistol and had his nose broken.

Afterward, the attacker told her friend to strip, too. He then left them lying naked with the threat that if they moved before the count of one hundred, he would be back for her friend.

They were the fifth couple in less than two hours to be robbed by this man. Melanie Strickland was the only one raped.

"It's a matter of circumstance," the Houston pharmacology major said. "We were in the wrong place at the wrong time."

In an informal, realistic presentation as part of Texas A&M's C.A.R.E. (Creating Attitudes for a Rape-free Environment) week, Strickland told about her personal experience with rape and gave tips on preventing such occurrences from happening to others on and off college campuses. She stressed campus safety and security for both males and females.

It seems surprising, she said, but rape happens to one in four women and one in seven men.

She said because A&M is such a large campus, all students need to be aware of their defenses in case of an attack. There is an equal danger for both sexes.

"Men need to be aware, too," she said. "If the attacker has a gun, it does not matter how big the victim is. The one with the gun is in control, or so he thinks."

She said all students should be reminded that there is strength in

numbers and to never walk alone unless they have to.

"Women should dress to run," Strickland said. "They should wear shoes and carry their heels."

"If attacked, passive resistance is an option," she said. "If you don't struggle, the attacker may not use his weapon, if he has one."

She said that if a person chooses not to resist, he should keep his eyes open wide to get an extremely detailed description of the attacker.

WTSU ponders possible merger with A&M or UT

CANYON (AP) — Regents at West Texas State University will present a report in May on the possibility of merging the school into the University of Texas or Texas A&M systems.

The board on Tuesday appointed a committee to study possible benefits of a merger to surrounding Panhandle communities.

Rep. John Smithee and State Sen. Teel Bivins have said they will file legislation proposing the merger depending on the outcome of the study.

Recent merger agreements have been reached at Pan American University in Edinburg, which will join the UT system, and Texas A&I University in Kingsville, which will become part of the A&M system.

Proponents of the move say a merger would enhance funding capabilities, broaden curriculum, expand facilities and increase prestige to attract faculty and students.

However, some local control over the school would be lost because the independent board of regents would be replaced.

Proposed exchange program may trade Aggies for Soviets

By Kelly S. Brown

STAFF WRITER

A proposal is being made by A&M officials to begin an exchange program with the Soviet Union in which students who are specializing in regional studies dealing with Soviet-East European affairs can travel to the Soviet Union to research.

Ron Hatchett, associate director of programs at Moshier Institute for Defense Studies, said the institute is studying the proposal with a favorable eye, but coordination with other University officials will be necessary before making any type of commitment.

The idea was presented to the Soviets earlier this month after Moshier held its first international conference on arms control in Houston. The conference drew top arms negotiators from the Soviet Union, the United States and most European countries.

During the conference, representatives from the In-

stitute for the Study of the United States and Canada invited Dr. Frank E. Vandiver and Hatchett to visit the Soviet Union in May to discuss possible forms of cooperation between their institute and the Moshier Institute.

"One thing mentioned is they would be interested in the possibility of sending two students from the Soviet Union on exchange programs to America," Hatchett said.

"This would be a chance for a student specializing in a subject like political science, history or geography who deals in Soviet-East European affairs, to go to the Soviet Union and do research," he said. "They would be sponsored by a Soviet institute and therefore have better access to their library and archives."

In turn, Soviet students who are working on U.S. topics would be sponsored by the Moshier Institute to come to A&M, Hatchett said. The exchange program would possibly last 60-90 days.

CORRECTION

A story in Wednesday's Battalion incorrectly reported the name of the person nominated to the University of Texas System Board of Regents by Gov. Bill Clements. The individual's name is Mario Ramirez.

Ramirez was named after Chester Upham Jr. withdrew himself for consideration when Clements was criticized for nominating three white males to the Board.

The Battalion regrets the error.

ARTFEST

March 6-March 31

Texas A&M Annual Juned Competition of Student Art

Sponsored by MSC VISUAL ARTS

Rules

- Open only to current TAMU students (must show student ID)
- Entries must be ready to show
- Entries must have been completed within the last year
- Winners will be exhibited in the MSC Gallery for the entire duration of Artfest
- Prize \$100 Best of Show

Categories

Drawing Painting Crafts Photography Sculpture Mixed Media

Accepting

Entries will be accepted March 1-3, 1989 11-3 p.m. MSC Gallery \$4/entry-limit 4

SUBMIT