To: Dr. Erika Paterson

From: Catherine Yu

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Subject: Proposal for Introducing Mid-term Student Evaluations of Teaching to Increase Opportunities for Student Feedback at UBC

**Introduction**

Student evaluations of teaching provide university students with a confidential, student-centred way of providing feedback on their learning experience and assisting professors with further development of their teaching. They are offered at the end of the semester and apply to all undergraduate, graduate and continuing studies courses at UBC. Term-end student evaluations are one of the most important tools for professors and teaching assistants (TAs) to receive feedback on their quality of teaching and determine if particular teaching strategies are effective or not. Students are able to provide their honest feedback on the course and are left with a feeling of satisfaction about their contributions to improving the learning experience. However, when teaching evaluations occur so late in the term, students are unable to benefit from any feedback or changes that could improve their learning experience. The final report will be addressed towards the members of the UBC Vancouver Senate, specifically Jessica Iverson, Academic Governance Officer on the Vancouver Senate Committee.

**Statement of Problem**

Even though student evaluations are incredibly valuable for faculty and students alike, they are only available at the end of the term and serve no use for students who would like to provide feedback during the course. Currently, students have no avenue of expressing concerns until after they complete the course. This may discourage students from actually completing evaluations as their feedback no longer applies to their personal learning experience. In large university classroom settings, students may find it difficult to reach out to their instructors outside of structured evaluations.

**Proposed Solution**

One potential solution to improve student learning experiences is to implement mid-term evaluations in addition to term-end evaluations. Mid-term evaluations encourage continual improvement on behalf of faculty members and allow students to benefit directly from changes implemented from their feedback. The process of mid-term evaluations can employ the existing student evaluation system, with the exception that the portal is open in the middle of the term.

**Scope**

To assess the feasibility of conducting mid-term student evaluations of teaching in addition to term-end student evaluations, I plan to pursue the following areas of inquiry:

1. What are the benefits and drawbacks of the current student evaluation schedule?
2. What proportion of students at UBC actually participate in term-end evaluations?
3. How important are the student evaluations to students at UBC?
4. How do students provide teaching feedback outside of term-end evaluations?

**Methods**

An examination of student perspectives on teaching evaluations are important to foster a quality learning environment at UBC and inform teachers on how they can continuously improve their practice to support student learning. I will survey UBC students using interviews and written surveys. Surveys will be conducted with current university students in different departments. Those willing to participate in my survey will be my primary data source in determining the need for mid-term evaluations of teaching.

**My Qualifications**

As a 4th year Microbiology & Immunology student at UBC, I am aware of current student perceptions of the teaching evaluation process and the limitations of term-end surveys. Based on student complaints, I have consistently heard from peers that it is difficult to communicate constructive feedback to professors outside of evaluation periods, and have witnessed a decline in interest in participating in term-end evaluations. I believe my recent personal experiences and familiarity with the current system give me the qualifications to research and propose a solution to this topic.

**Conclusion**

Fostering quality learning and teaching in a student-focused manner is an important pillar of the UBC policy on student evaluation of teaching. Clearly, the current schedule for student evaluations has several limitations that need to be addressed in order to improve the student learning experience. By addressing the areas of inquiry listed above, I hope to determine the feasibility of introducing mid-term student evaluations to the university population. With your approval, I will begin my research and collect data on the problem at hand.