SUPPORTING ONLINE TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AT SCALE: ACHIEVING EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH PEER REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on one institution's efforts to integrate disparate evaluation procedures for face-to-face, hybrid, and online teaching. The resulting peer review of teaching program brings together all stakeholders involved in formative and summative faculty evaluation through an efficient, scalable model. This model utilizes cross-modal competencies; incorporates discipline-specific priorities; and generates actionable assessment data for the continuous improvement of individual faculty members, academic programs, and administrative units. The peer review program communicates the values and performance expectations held by the institution and provides opportunities for self-reflection, professional development, and community building with fellow peers.

Keywords: faculty development, peer review, adjunct faculty evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Growth in online courses and programs continues to outpace on-ground enrollments, with one in four higher education faculty members now teaching online (Magda, Poulin, & Clinefelter, 2015). While online learning has moved from the margins to the mainstream at many institutions, this is not always true in terms of organizational structure and culture. Many institutions have launched and managed the growth of online courses and programs outside of the flagship campus structure. These institutions maintain dedicated distance learning administrative units with their own leadership, faculty appointments (largely adjunct or otherwise contingent), and processes for curriculum development, assessment, and faculty evaluation. No doubt these parallel administrative structures have worked well for some institutions where a high degree of decentralization is normative, even sustaining, to the culture, and where the overall enrollment is sufficient to maintain distinct online and on-ground faculty appointments.

In contrast, the administration of distance learning at many private, nonprofit institutions—where the growth in online learning is particularly accentuated (11.3% from 2014 to 2015)—may be experiencing more challenging times (Allen, Seaman, Poulin, & Straut, 2016). Due to the size and often interdependent organizational structures in place at these institutions, it is arguably more difficult, and less desirable, to maintain separate administrative and faculty governance of online learning. As online enrollments grow, these institutions are well served to consider how to modify their approaches to create more inclusive and consistent experiences for students and faculty. Institutions that wish to integrate online learning into the broader culture must critically examine, recalibrate, and scale faculty-driven curriculum and oversight measures, including the assessment

of faculty teaching effectiveness.

In 2015, one private, nonprofit liberal arts university, Park University, began integrating once separate systems for the evaluation of face-to-face, hybrid, and online teaching. Influenced by the behavior of its students, who readily mix and match course modalities each term, the institution began to see less and less value in maintaining parallel structures and systems for core academic functions, such as teaching evaluations, across its on-ground and online programs. Likewise, student preference resulted in changes to the course assignments of most faculty, leading to increasingly mixed-modal teaching schedules. Finally, institutionalized requirements for faculty in all instructional modalities to use the University's Learning Management System (LMS) rapidly blurred the lines between online and face-to-face teaching, ushering in shared expectations (and vocabulary) around the use of the LMS tools.

As a result, academic leadership who once dealt exclusively with on-ground programs and instruction expanded their perspectives to encompass the development of online curriculum and the assessment of online teaching and learning. The relevance and utility of policies and instruments designed to evaluate teaching effectiveness in a single mode were called into question as more and more faculty navigated multimodal teaching assignments. Traditional means of assessing and supporting face-to-face teaching effectiveness were reimagined and integrated with systems designed to evaluate online and hybrid teaching. The University merged these systems in order to address the needs of faculty teaching in multiple modalities, and, in doing so, found more efficient means for providing academic leadership the data they need to assure the quality of all teaching in their programs, regardless of mode or location.

Although the peer review of teaching model presented here is incorporated across teaching modes, this article will focus on its use with adjunct faculty teaching fully online courses. As we know from the research literature (Magda et al., 2015), the majority of these faculty are contingent and may be simultaneously negotiating appointments at multiple institutions. As such, Park University's model attempts to clearly distinguish the values and performance expectations held by the University; provide opportunities for self-reflection and formative peer dialogue; and maximize the online faculty member's time and attention for creating engaging, personalized learning experiences for online students.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Established in 1875, Park University's commitment to providing broad access to underserved populations resulted in early adoption of distance education. In the mid-1970s, the University began establishing additional locations on military installations across the country to provide accelerated courses and degree-completion programs face-to-face. Several additional locations were added over time, including an online campus launched in the mid-1990s, resulting in the University's current operational scope: 42 locations in 21 states and online, serving approximately 18,000 students annually. The majority of the University's students take classes in multiple modalities, with 54% of the credit hours generated annually from online enrollments. The University maintains regional accreditation and program-specific accreditation in programs such as business, nursing, social work, and education.

The University's flagship campus is home to most of its full-time faculty and academic departments and is responsible for developing and assessing student learning outcomes against program competencies common across modes. Approximately 1,300 contingent (adjunct) faculty are employed by the institution and on an annual basis, approximately 85% of the courses across the University are taught by adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty teach as well, and the majority hold academic leadership positions such as Department Chair, undergraduate Program Coordinator, or graduate Program Director. These faculty leaders/ academic supervisors are responsible for approving adjunct faculty to teach, reviewing course syllabi, and evaluating the teaching of adjunct faculty in their programs, many of whom they will never meet in person.

Given the University's infrastructure, it is key to maintain a faculty evaluation system that engages these academic supervisors as fully, yet efficiently, as possible in oversight of the teaching within their programs—realizing that the constraints of time, scale, and geographic separation may make it impossible to observe and coach directly each

adjunct faculty member.

LEGACY ONLINE FACULTY EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Recognizing the limitations of instruments designed to evaluate face-to-face teaching, the University launched an Online Instructor Evaluation System (OIES) in 2004 (Mandernach, Donnelli, Dailey, & Schulte, 2005). The system incorporated competencies rooted in best practices for teaching online. With the preterm checkpoint included, the reviewer visited the online classroom five times. Through the review criteria, with an emphasis on observations and mentoring interactions across the entire term, the OIES sought to scaffold the summative evaluation of teaching with mentoring and professional development. This evaluation was then handed to the academic supervisor, who determined the faculty member's continued eligibility to teach online.

Although the outcomes of the OIES were largely positive in terms of feedback from instructors and academic leadership, the system was challenging to implement at scale. The University employed approximately five full-time reviewers to administer the OIES; on average, 100 out of 800 online faculty were observed each year. Additionally, the uptake of the observations by academic supervisors was uneven, with some reviewing all materials while others, especially from high-volume programs, were unable to process the lengthy reports and ancillary materials alongside separate reviews from face-to-face instructors utilizing a different form.

In 2009, the OIES was replaced with the Faculty Online Observation (FOO) program (Eskey & Roehrich, 2013). The FOO program was devised utilizing the same best practice competencies and administered within the same personnel model, but it utilized a streamlined form allowing each reviewer to observe a greater number of online faculty each term. Multiple visits were replaced by a specified two-week observation period and a single review rubric. This approach allowed for more attention to norming and inter-rater reliability. The mentoring aspects embedded in the OIES were unbundled and addressed by a new initiative. Under the FOO program, a greater number of online adjunct faculty were observed—approximately 375 each year.

The FOO allowed more efficient evaluation of online faculty; however, its staffing model posed challenges in terms of financial sustainability and the power differential existing between the full-time reviewers and adjunct instructor. Uptake of the FOO reviews continued to be uneven among academic programs for pragmatic and pedagogical reasons. Regarding the latter, some academic supervisors expressed skepticism about the ability of a cross-disciplinary, best-practices framework to yield insight into the quality of online teaching in their specific programs. To fully utilize the FOO report, many supervisors felt it necessary to complete their own parallel review. As a result, some programs began to devise their own observation forms and methods that quickly added to the workload of both the online adjunct faculty member and the supervisor.

From the online faculty member's perspective, the scope and influence of the centralized FOO program compared to that of academic departmental review initiatives was not always clear. While the FOO's outcomes were linked to high-stakes administrative processes for scheduling, the program-specific review performed by the supervisor determined ongoing eligibility to teach. Lack of clarity was also present in the disconnect among online, hybrid, and face-to-face evaluation methods. As with the OIES, the FOO dealt exclusively with the evaluation of teaching online. Face-to-face procedures remained unchanged and, in some ways, the discrepancies unintentionally communicated differing priorities. Additionally, both evaluation approaches, online and face-to-face, did not consistently yield assessment data outside of the individual instructor's performance. In addition to making it difficult to generate usable insights that could inform broader institutional change, this limitation created a need for yet additional evaluation systems to assess faculty training and professional development initiatives.

The FOO program was discontinued in 2014. While the University researched and piloted an alternative model that would address the challenges of efficiency and effectiveness that arose with previous approaches, the academic departments carried forward program-specific measures.

OVERVIEW: THE PEER REVIEW OF ONLINE TEACHING PROGRAM (PROT)

In 2016, based on data generated via adjunct and academic supervisor surveys and focus groups, and on the recommendations of a representative

Figure 1. Faculty Evaluation Stakeholders

working committee comprising all stakeholders involved in adjunct faculty performance review, the University launched an institution-wide peer review program for faculty evaluation. The program drew upon the strengths of earlier iterations while striving to create a more consistent, efficient, and scalable program.

The program was designed to serve as an effective and efficient means for adjunct faculty to engage in sustained reflection and dialogue with peers about teaching practices using the well-established strategy of peer review:

> *Formative evaluations aim to gain quick feedback about the effectiveness of current instructional strategies with the explicit goal of enhancing teaching during the target course. The focus of formative evaluation is on soliciting feedback that enables timely revisions to enhance the learning process (Tobin, Mandernach, & Taylor, 2015, p. 221).*

In the context of a peer relationship, both the faculty member being observed and the faculty member observing share pedagogical techniques of mutual benefit. Moreover, opportunities for continuous improvement on both the academic program and institution levels (e.g., instructional design, faculty development, online instructor training and mentoring) is possible through the data captured by the peer review instrument.

Although peer review serves as one input in a larger, ultimately summative, performance evaluation conducted by the academic supervisor, the objective of the peer review experience is not punitive (Bandy, 2018). Thus it is important to protect the focus of peer review on professional development and prepare faculty to participate in such an experience. Communicating the goals and values of the peer review program during the initial training and first-term mentoring of online adjunct faculty helps ready these faculty to participate in the process when they are selected for peer review.

With that said, the extent to which a faculty member engages in the peer review process can provide insight to the academic supervisor, whose knowledge of the adjunct online faculty member may not extend beyond the content of their transcript and curriculum vita. It becomes important, then, to devise an "off-ramp" for those faculty who are simply not viable candidates for the peer review process—for instance, those who do not respond to repeated phone or email messages from their peer reviewers and/or those who are simply not meeting minimum participation requirements held by the University. In these cases, although rare, the University has a procedure separate from the peer review program for immediately engaging program leadership to determine corrective measures, up to and including removal from the course. Also helpful to this process is the faculty participation learning analytics software the University has adopted for

its LMS, which allows for dynamic monitoring and intervention when instructors are not meeting the University's policies.

Park University's Peer Review of Online Teaching (PROT) program covers the entire eight-week online term, allowing the peer reviewer the opportunity to observe the course over several weeks and the instructor to incorporate, or at the least reflect upon, the reviewer's feedback. Dialogue between the peer reviewer and instructor begins on the first day of the term, sometimes even the week before. Indeed, the professional relationships that can form through the peer review of teaching can strengthen a sense of scholarly community (Bernstein, Jonson, & Smith, 2000), which is a significant value add for geographically dispersed and contingent online faculty.

Experienced online adjunct faculty from across the disciplines, called PROT Fellows, carry out the program, with training and support from the University's Director of Adjunct Faculty Engagement. The Director coordinates broadly across the University, including with faculty development, instructional design, and online operations personnel. The University supports 20 Fellows (each provided a stipend) who conduct approximately four observations in each of the five online terms the University offers each calendar year (totaling 400 instructors observed). Fellows are assigned to courses that align with their academic discipline or field. The University's goal is that all adjunct instructors are reviewed their first term and annually thereafter. Based on enrollment growth, the University has the flexibility to recruit the number of PROT Fellows needed each year, without the commitment of sustaining a set number of full-time positions.

In addition to serving as a more financially sustainable and scalable model, the appointment of online adjunct faculty members as PROT Fellows affords a number of benefits. Fellows are selected from a competitive application process that takes into account longevity, teaching performance, and the endorsement of the academic supervisor. Online instructors not only distinguish themselves from among their peers through this process, they also gain a professional growth opportunity that may contribute to their retention. As studies show, adjunct instructor dissatisfaction can arise from "inadequate frequency and depth of communication, lack of recognition of instructor's value to the institution, and lack of opportunities for skill development" (Dolan, 2011, p. 62) and from a lack of individualized training and professional development (Rhode, Richter, & Miller, 2017). The PROT offers recognition and the benefits of improving one's own practice through collaboration with colleagues. From the perspective of the online instructor participating in peer review, the most valuable feature of the program is receiving feedback from a reviewer with course- or field-specific knowledge (DeCosta, Bergquist, Holbeck, & Greenberger, 2016).

While both the formative and summative purposes of peer review are "important for helping to ensure quality teaching . . . , the reality of how this exercise is typically implemented [can diminish] the success of either goal" (Tobin et al., 2015, p. 222). Accordingly, the University's program sought to emphasize the formative role of peer review, both in how the workflow is staged (see Table 1) and by ensuring that a range of materials, not just the peer review, are considered as part of the summative performance evaluation by the academic supervisor.

PEER REVIEW OF ONLINE TEACHING (PROT) REVIE COMPONENTS

The peer review program spans the institution's teaching modes to provide a consistent experience to all faculty and to communicate a common message about the value and importance of teaching at the institution. As such, the program utilizes a common form (Appendix A) and a common set of cross-modal competencies, with the description of relevant instructor behaviors indicted, as needed, to reflect or clarify elements specific to a particular teaching mode. In addition to communicating shared values about teaching, the focus on cross-modal competencies reflects a belief that the

> [s]ame core attributes go into good online teaching as go into good teaching in other modalities. . . . Good teaching relies on a theoretical and logical framework. Best practices for teaching in any medium include the following:
>
> Making interactions challenging yet supportive for students
>
> Asking learners to be active participants in

Table 1. Peer Review of Online Teaching Workflow

	Week	Action
Formative	W1	The instructor is notified of his/her participation in the PROT program. The purpose, logistics, and individuals involved are outlined in the introductory letter and a link to the form is provided. The Peer Reviewer is enrolled in the online course as reviewer and begins to observe the class as it unfolds. The Reviewer begins to draft observation, which will develop over the first six weeks of the course.
	W1–W3	The Peer Reviewer engages in preobservation correspondence with the online instructor (via email and phone) to learn more about the class and the instructor's goals, and to build a rapport. In some cases, this connection leads to dialogue throughout the term (and after, as a professional relationship is built; other times, the instructor prefers to interact via the form itself). The Instructor works on Part I: Self-Reflection (due to the Peer Reviewer no later than Monday of W3).
	W3–W6	The Peer Reviewer completes Part Two: Classroom Observation (completed no later than Monday of W6), noting any new techniques or enhancements the instructor has made to his/her teaching based on the review process W1–W6.
	W6–W8	The Peer Reviewer engages in postobservation correspondence with the online Instructor (via email and phone).
	W8	Final week of the online term. The Instructor is responsible for completing Part III: Instructor Response. The Instructor reflects upon and responds to the feedback received during the review process, specifically identifying any feedback that was incorporated or he/she plans to incorporate in a future term.
Summative	W8	The Academic Supervisor is notified via email that the peer review is available for viewing.
	W8–W11 (W2 of the next, 8-week term)	The Academic Supervisor completes the performance review by considering the peer review alongside the student evaluations, the learning analytics dashboard (which contains key metrics related to activity in the LMS shell, gradebook feedback, discussion participation frequency, etc.), and his/her own examination of the LMS materials. The Academic Supervisor provides feedback to the instructor and may at this time confirm or withdraw the instructor's approval to teach.
Institutional	Quarterly	Reports for academic program leadership are created showing aggregate scores in order to trend instructor performance and needs over time; scores can be disaggregated by discipline. The Reports also reflect survey of instructors and Peer Review Fellows.
	Quarterly	Reports for the faculty development center and other personnel responsible for instructor support show in aggregate the qualitative data instructors provide in their self-assessment about faculty development needs. The feedback can be disaggregated by discipline to provide instructional design personnel data to inform enhancements to the design of online courses in the program.
	Quarterly	Example observations are pulled to use in quarterly inter-rater reliability trainings with the Peer Reviewers.
	Annually	Reports and example observations inform yearly updates to the Peer Review of Online Teaching program specifically and adjunct performance review processes in general.

the learning process

Acknowledging variety in the ways that students learn best

Providing timely and constructive feedback (Tobin et al., 2015, p. 5)

Part 1: Instructor Self-Reflection

Self-reflection represents an important part of the peer review of teaching (Baran & Correia, 2014). As Garcia, James, Bischof, and Baroffio (2017) note, reflection can

> *[raise] awareness of the effectiveness of the strategies [instructors] used to foster student learning. . . . and motivate the need to change their teaching practice. However, for the changes to become operative, peer feedback [is] required, providing the cues and strategies needed (p. 313).*

The PROT begins and ends with faculty self-reflection. The process starts with questions that solicit information about the instructor's goals for the class, his/her perceived strengths as an online instructor, and goals for professional development. These questions provide important cues to the PROT Fellow that influences where the reviewer invests the greatest effort in observation and coaching. The self-reflection can also help both the instructor and the Fellow identify techniques the former may want to experiment with implementing over the course of the review term.

Within the context of the University's large and geographically dispersed faculty, self-reflection also functions to gather data about online instructor's professional development needs. These needs include program-specific concerns (e.g., additional information about program curriculum or guidance to better understand the design of the online course) and the instructor's knowledge of University-wide faculty development resources. Despite a robust communication strategy about faculty development resources at the University, the majority of online instructors reviewed thus far expressed that they had limited, if any, knowledge of those resources prior to the peer review process. Results of the PROT program thus far have demonstrated that including information about faculty development on the peer review form

serves as a means of promoting awareness of the University resources to support teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Part II: Teaching Observation

While some peer review programs include open-ended or otherwise unstructured communication between the faculty member and the reviewer, other programs utilize a portfolio of materials or, like the PROT, a review form articulating a core set of predefined criteria, checklists, or templates to standardize written commentary. This can lead to greater scalability and efficiency within a process known for being highly individualized and time consuming (Bandy, 2018).

The cross-modal competencies and practice indicators refined for the form—course preparation, instructional strategies, learning climate and student engagement, and feedback and grading—have a strong basis in the literature on effective teaching (e.g., Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2011; Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Chickering & Gamson, 1987) and are utilized in models such as Penn State's (Taylor, 2010). However, the University's translation of the competencies reflects values specific to the institution, which include personalizing the online learning experience through the creation of resources to supplement the core, prescribed content; creating assessment commentary tailored to each student; and implementing other means to share their academic and industry expertise.

Finally, while it may be difficult at times to separate online course design from online instruction issues, it is important to identify competencies that are within the instructor's ability to demonstrate. This focus is important, as many measures for assessing online faculty intentionally or unintentionally evaluate course design rather than the actions of the instructor, who in many cases did not design the course. Rather, online instructor evaluation methods should involve a comprehensive examination of elements within the instructor's control, such as frequency of instructor engagement, response times, and assessment feedback (Piña & Bohn, 2014).

Also reflecting the institution's priorities, the PROT review form allows academic programs to incorporate course- and program-specific values and expectations. Providing academic programs a stake in the peer review instrument and process early on increases the relevance of the review for

the faculty member and the supervisor. It can also improve efficiency, as program-specific evaluation domains are incorporated into the peer review program rather than maintained through separate instruments. While program-specific teaching evaluations continue to be used by some programs, especially those with specialized accreditation, the University has seen increasing motivation to collapse once separate reviews into the PROT program, which has eliminated duplicative experiences for online instructors. The integration of review domains—best practices for online teaching and discipline- and program-specific priorities—yields a practical value of efficiency while collaboratively engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the program.

Throughout the period of the online observation, the PROT Fellow and the instructor are encouraged to interact. To emphasize the formative nature of the review, the Fellow is encouraged to draft and redraft his or her comments over the term in order to highlight changes observed in instructor teaching practices. When instructors identify areas of desired professional growth as part of the initial self-reflection process (Part I), the review form can represent a powerful narrative of pedagogical experimentation and refinement of new strategies to better engage students (Scott & Danley-Scott, 2015). In fact, after the initial pilot of the program, and based on PROT Fellow and participating instructor feedback, terms like "exceeds expectations" and "needs improvement" were replaced with the more flexible "strengths observed" and "improvements suggested," and Fellows were given the discretion to select multiple choices to reflect growth, such as when an instructor had improved upon a teaching strategy over several weeks.

Fellows report learning from and being motivated by the interactions with fellow online instructors. As is the reality with many online programs, while faculty may interact frequently with support personnel (e.g., instructional designers, program coordinators, and/or technology coordinators) and receive assistance with transforming their content and pedagogies for the online classroom, they may not find opportunities to interact with other online faculty in their disciplines to exchange ideas (Baran & Correia, 2014). Community building with peers becomes a product of the peer review process and does not have to be created through separate initiatives, thereby increasing the return on investment for all stakeholders.

Part III: Instructor Response

Self-reflection again enters the PROT process when, in the last week of the term, the online instructor responds to the Fellow's observation. The instructor discusses any actions taken during the run of the eight-week term and any techniques or take aways planned for implementation in future terms. While the instructor's rejoinder and signature do not necessarily signal agreement with the Fellow's observation, they do signal the conclusion of the formative review process, including the Fellow's formal interaction with the online instructor.

Summative Performance Evaluation by Academic Supervisor

Although affording far greater perspective than a one-way, one-time classroom observation, the PROT process, like any teaching review, is a necessarily incomplete portrait of instructor performance and "represent[s] merely a snapshot of teaching" (Bandy, 2018). Therefore, the summative review stage performed by the adjunct instructor's academic supervisor also takes into consideration other informants, including the supervisor's review of the LMS materials, student evaluations of teaching, and indicators of instructor participation as recorded by the LMS learning analytics software for instructor participation (Figure 2). These additional components can be accessed by the supervisor via software platforms at the University and do not have to be gathered by administrative support.

Baran and Correia (2014) assert that the success of online courses, and the satisfaction of faculty teaching in an online modality, comprise the interconnection between teaching, scholarly community, and the larger organization; these areas must be represented for core teaching responsibilities to thrive. Taken in full, the review process integrates the perspectives of the instructor, a peer colleague (PROT Fellow), students, distance learning administrators in Academic Affairs, and the academic supervisor. While involving multiple stakeholder perspectives, the PROT framework and the priority placed on transformative interactions between the online instructor and PROT Fellow means that instructors reap the maximum benefit of personalized professional development
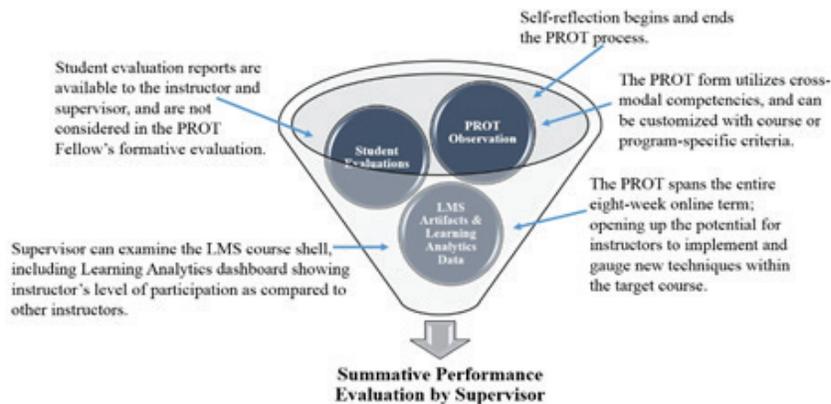
Self-reflection begins and ends the PROT process.

Student evaluation reports are available to the instructor and supervisor, and are not considered in the PROT Fellow's formative evaluation.

The PROT form utilizes cross-modal competencies, and can be customized with course or program-specific criteria.

Student Evaluations

PROT Observation

LMS Artifacts & Learning Analytics Data

The PROT spans the entire eight-week online term; opening up the potential for instructors to implement and gauge new techniques within the target course.

Supervisor can examine the LMS course shell, including Learning Analytics dashboard showing instructor's level of participation as compared to other instructors.

Summative Performance Evaluation by Supervisor

Figure 2. Inputs Considered by the Academic Supervisor in the Summative Performance Evaluation of Online Instructors

while the academic supervisor gains access to a rich collection of inputs to inform summative performance evaluation.

Institutional Learning

The University's peer review program was built with not only individual development in mind but also institutional improvement. Actionable insights suggested by individual reviews and emerging patterns in aggregate data are reported to stakeholders such as the College Deans, Instructional Designers who work with faculty to design the master LMS shell, personnel in distance learning, administrators responsible for training and first-term instructor mentoring, and leadership within the University's faculty development center.

Based on the four terms of the program and the approximately 320 reviews generated, the University has already realized learning benefits. First, the use of cross-modal competencies is advancing conversations at all levels about what the University values the most about teaching, what instructor behaviors we seek to motivate and reward, and how to best support the maximum engagement of online instructors and academic program leadership in the peer review program. Additionally, the University is exploring ways to further streamline and gain efficiencies in administering the program. Specifically, in Fall 2018 the University will launch a reporting software solution that will fully automate the workflow of the program and link the reviews to other pertinent inputs such as the instructor's curriculum vitae and historical record of teaching.

Results and Next Steps

The peer review program has begun to take root across the University, though it continues to be refined based on stakeholder input. Many instructors participating in the program have pointed to the value of feedback from peers, with such comments as:

> "I received positive and constructive feedback from my peer mentor. I feel validated and supported based on the feedback. This program makes me want to be better for my students and the institution."

> "I gained tips on engaging students through better use of questioning student responses [and] also better positioning my bio and access for student communication."

> "My peer reviewer had some great suggestions about linking videos to content and theory."

> "I gained positive and supportive encouragement from my peer review teaching fellow. Since I received high marks on all but one category, there was no need for any other substantive comments."

Notably, the last comment represents a primary

challenge of the young peer review program: divorcing it from earlier iterations that were more summative than formative. Although pleased with the outcomes, it is clear that this particular instructor perceived oversight and compliance as the spirit of the peer review process, rather than continuous learning and professional growth.

The Fellows' perspectives, which they share organically and formally through norming sessions conducted each term, have been invaluable to the successful launch of the program. In particular, the Fellows' helped refine the review criteria and the flow of the process overall in the first two pilot terms. In addition to refining the review criteria as described above (removing terminology like "exceeds expectations" typically found in summative reviews), the Fellows' feedback led to incorporating self-review at both the beginning and end of the process, rather than at the end only, as was originally conceived.

The Fellows who have also participated as instructors in the peer review process have provided important feedback about how it feels to be on the receiving end, namely which strategies work better than others for promoting full engagement of the instructor. The Fellows have also generated language templates and resources responding to common instructor needs as the foundation for a knowledge base and more formal training protocol to support the program.

Early efforts to aggregate and draw insights from the program have been augmented by a more informal perspective from academic supervisors and key staff in distance education and faculty development. Their input is shaping the format of the peer review and formalizing channels for the data generated to be used in the following ways:

- to improve the design of the online courses to maximize not only student, but instructor, engagement;
- to create more opportunities for online adjunct instructors to affiliate and interact with the academic departments and full-time faculty; and
- to build more intentional links among the initial training to teach online, first-term mentoring, and the annual peer review program.

In addition to refining the reporting, year two of the peer review program will also prioritize socialization of the program among academic supervisors to garner more input, solidify their understanding of the scope and purpose of the peer review, gain support for the recruitment of peer reviewers, and increase the amount of program- and course-specific competencies provided by the academic departments.

CONCLUSION

Institutions of all types can benefit from implementing peer review as a means of formative and/or summative evaluation. The University's experience as a private, nonprofit teaching-oriented institution affirms that peer review can be valuable as a guiding principle and framework for implementing an efficient and effective means of evaluation. Peer review is offering the institution's adjunct faculty personalized professional development at scale, and it is facilitating academic supervisors' summative evaluation of a large number of geographically dispersed adjunct instructors.

When undertaking a collaborative exploration of the possibilities of peer review, institutions may wish to consider questions like those offered below, many of which are adapted from Tobin et al., (2015).

Analyze Institutional Culture
- How does change occur at your institution? What institutional policies and expectations exist for the exploration and approval of new faculty evaluation programs?
- Are there academic governance bodies (i.e., Faculty Senate, Distance Learning Advisory Council, Faculty Development Advisory Council, etc.) whose objectives or initiatives could complement the development of a peer review of teaching program?
- What legacy systems or procedures are still fresh in the institution's memory? Are those legacy practices constraining or compelling?
- How could the institution's mission, vision, and strategic plan inform the development and adoption of a peer review of teaching program?

Consider Stakeholder Perspectives
- Who are the stakeholders to consider in the development of a peer review program? What professional development needs and

motivations are characteristic of each group?
- What are the characteristics of adjunct faculty teaching online at the institution? Do the majority of instructors teach in one mode or across instructional modalities? If most teach across modalities, what opportunities exist for implementing a common peer review program for evaluation?
- What role do academic leaders (i.e., Deans, Department Chairs, Program Coordinators, Graduate Directors) play in the oversight of online curriculum development and teaching? What artifacts or data do they need to understand the teaching that takes place in their programs?
- In addition to the individual faculty member and academic program, what institutional initiatives, such as instructional design, instructor training, mentoring, and faculty development, could be informed by the results of instructor evaluations?
- Which functions (formative, summative, or both) would be embraced by the stakeholders and in what balance?

Examine Extant Policies and Instruments
- What guidance regarding instructor evaluation can be found in policies such as those within a full-time or adjunct faculty manual?
- Are there collective bargaining agreements with full-time or adjunct faculty unions to consider?
- What guidance regarding adjunct instructor evaluation can be gleaned from regional or program-specific accreditation standards?
- Does the institution have, or need to develop, policy statements regarding minimum performance expectations for instructors?
- If such policies are mode specific, do any cross-modal, common competencies emerge?
- What program-specific approaches to instructor evaluation exist (any mode) and what competencies are relied upon?

Resource Success
- What is the available budget to support online adjunct instructor evaluation, including the development of training materials, recruitment of and remuneration for peer reviewers, and program evaluation?
- What complementary personnel or teams exist to support the implementation and ongoing administration of the program?
- What indicators will demonstrate success of the program?

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

APPENDIX A: PEER REVIEW OF ONLINE TEACHING FORM

PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING OBSERVATION FORM

Peer observations are opportunities for adjunct instructors to receive formative feedback about their teaching. Academic programs may customize this observation form to reflect specific priorities for courses or programs. The observation process should be constructive for the instructor and observer, providing both a chance to reflect on their own practices and the ways that Park University can support their continued professional growth.

Peer observations are reviewed by the academic department leadership, along with Student Opinion of Teaching Survey (SOTS) results, the Canvas LMS shell, and the instructors' adherence to the institution's policies for online instructor participation.

Instructor	Faculty ID	Term (e.g., F1 2017)
Enter name	Enter ID	Enter term
Observer Enter name		
Course/Title/Section Enter name		
Weeks Observed Enter weeks observed		
Areas of the Course Observed (i.e., discussion threads, Grade book, etc.) Enter text		

Part I: Instructor Self-Reflection (to be completed by the Instructor no later than Monday of Week 3 and sent to the Peer Review of Online Teaching Fellow)

1) What are your goals for this class? Click here to type your self-reflection.

2) What do you consider to be your primary strengths? Click here to type your self-reflection.

3) What areas would you like to further develop (e.g., as related to the content of the course or use of specific teaching strategies)? Click here to type your self-reflection.

4) How can your academic department, course developer, and/or the University as a whole improve your teaching experience? Click here to type your self-reflection.

5) What feedback do you have for your academic department and/or course developer that might improve this course for instructors and students? Click here to type your self-reflection.

6) Please select the resources you've utilized this year from Park's Faculty Center for Innovation:

☐ Two Minute Mentors	☐ FCI Website
☐ Innovation Exchanges	☐ FCI Intranet Resources
☐ Deep Dives	☐ Special Interest Groups
☐ FCI Faculty Newsletter	☐ Faculty Orientation Materials

7) What other resources or programs would you like to see developed by FCI to support your continuous learning and development? Click here to type your self-reflection.

Part II: Peer Review of Online Teaching Observation (to be completed by the Fellow and sent to the Instructor no later than Monday of Week 6; Instructors have the opportunity to apply the feedback if desired before the end of the term)

	Yes	No

COURSE PREPARATION

Approved syllabus is published on www.park.edu/course.		
Information about the instructor, including contact information and response/ grading time is posted in the course.		
Instructor participates in the Introductions discussion area.		

Observer Comments: Click here to enter text.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

	Strengths Observed	Improvements Suggested	Not Observed
Instructor encourages students to reflect upon, relate, synthesize or evaluate content, asking questions, providing feedback, and/or using other means to foster student engagement.	☐	☐	☐
Instructor reinforces the ways the content can be applied to students' academic, professional, and/or personal lives, *if applicable to the aims of the course*.	☐	☐	☐
Instructor reinforces the connection between the course activities and the course learning outcomes, identifying key ideas and takeaways for students.	☐	☐	☐
Instructor utilizes Announcement of discussion posts to provide resources to supplement student learning (i.e., timely videos, websites, articles, or other pertinent resources), *if applicable to the aims of the course*.	☐	☐	☐

Observer Comments: Click here to enter text.

LEARNING CLIMATE AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

	Strengths served	Improvements Suggested	Not Ob-Observed
Instructor communication demonstrates respect for students' diverse perspectives, experiences, and abilities.	☐	☐	☐
Instructor models clear, appropriate, and professional communication.	☐	☐	☐
Activity in the Announcements and Instructor Office areas clearly demonstrates instructor engagement in the course and responsiveness to student needs.	☐	☐	☐

	Strengths Observed	Improvements Suggested	Not Observed
Instructor encourages students to interact with one another and with the instructor.	☐	☐	☐

Observer Comments: Click here to enter text.

	Strengths Observed	Improvements Suggested	Not Observed

FEEDBACK AND GRADING

	Strengths Observed	Improvements Suggested	Not Observed
Instructor responds to all student questions in the Instructor Office and/or within Q&A discussion threads within 48 hours.	☐	☐	☐
Instructor regularly provides formative feedback to help advance student dialogue in the graded discussions (note: expectations of feedback and interaction can vary greatly depending on type of discussion).	☐	☐	☐
Instructor feedback demonstrates his/her knowledge of the course content and expertise in the field.	☐	☐	☐
Instructor provides individualized feedback on all graded as-signments, identifying how students can continue to improve (note: this review item does not apply to auto-graded quizzes or work graded in an exterior lab and then transferred into Canvas).	☐	☐	☐
Canvas grade book shows evidence of regular updates, in ac-cordance with the instructor participation policy, such that students can easily track their progress in the course.	☐	☐	☐

Observer Comments: Click here to enter text.

	Strengths Observed	Improvements Suggested	Not Observed

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS (OPTIONAL, SET BY THE PROGRAM)

	Strengths Observed	Improvements Suggested	Not Observed
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

Observer Comments: Click here to enter text.

Summary Comments (Optional): Click here to enter text.

Peer Reviewer Signature: Enter name of observer   Date: Click here to enter a date

Part III: Instructor Response, Required (to be completed by the Instructor no later than Monday of Week 8; sub-mit completed form; copy your Fellow if you wish for him/her to view your final comments).

Respond to the feedback provided in this Peer Review of Teaching form. Identify what feedback you incorporated in this class—or plan to incorporate in a future class—and feedback that you did not find as relevant to enhancing your online teaching.: Click here to enter text.

Instructor Signature: Enter name of instructor   Date: Click here to enter a date

Note: Signature by instructor acknowledges receipt of this observation form. It does not indicate agreement with comments made by the observer.