

Kutztown University IDEA Task Force Final Report

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Respectfully submitted to APSCUF-KU, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Student Government Board,
and the University Senate

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Abbreviations

APSCUF-KU	Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties at Kutztown University
CET	Center for the Enhancement of Teaching
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement Between APSCUF and PASSHE
FIF	Faculty Information Form (Part of the IDEA Instrument)
IDEA	Individual Development and Educational Assessment
IFF	Information Form for Faculty (Currently in Use)
PASSHE	The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
PET	Peer Evaluation for Tenure and Promotion Committee
SRI	Student Ratings of Instruction

Principal Recommendation

Since 1980, Kutztown University has considered replacing or amending its instrument for measuring student ratings of instruction of faculty (SRI). In 1992 and again in 1999, APSCUF-KU Representative Council passed motions approving the use of the IDEA Instrument. More recently, an ad hoc SRI Task Force Committee chaired by Dr. Thomas Stewart from 2007-2008 concluded unanimously that KU's current instrument was a poor tool for evaluating teaching performance and recommended that Kutztown University consider adopting the IDEA Instrument.¹

The KU Faculty IDEA Task Force, the committee who authored this report, has met regularly since the start of the 2008 Fall Semester to consider whether the IDEA Instrument was a good fit for Kutztown University. To support this effort, APSCUF-KU, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Student Government Board, and the University Senate authorized the committee to conduct a pilot program to gauge faculty and student support for the current SRI and the IDEA Instrument, and to identify possible administrative and contractual issues that a switch to the IDEA Instrument would raise.

After completing the pilot program in the 2009 Spring Semester and reviewing its findings, the committee is well positioned to offer its recommendation.

The Kutztown University IDEA Task Force unanimously recommends that Kutztown University use the IDEA Diagnostic Instrument for its student ratings of instruction.

The committee makes this recommendation because each of its members believes that the IDEA Instrument would improve the quality of instruction at Kutztown University. More specifically:

The IDEA Instrument will provide faculty with the tools to become better instructors. The IDEA Instrument asks a series of diagnostic questions that are designed to help faculty become more effective instructors. The results from these diagnostic questions can be matched against the course's learning objectives and/or a host of other variables (such as the size of the class section) to generate recommendations to improve student learning.

The IDEA Instrument places a focus on learning. The IDEA Instrument measures students' perceptions of how much they have learned. Students are not qualified to evaluate a host of variables associated with an instructor's performance. For example, assessing whether the instructor has kept abreast with his or her discipline or is assigning the proper texts is best handled by peer evaluation committees or department chairs. However, the literature on student evaluation does indicate that students are well positioned to evaluate how well they learned. That is, students can identify how well they achieved a course objective, such as learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).

The IDEA Instrument is flexible. Up to twenty additional questions can be asked of an individual course section. Therefore, if the university wants to add common questions to be asked of every class, or if an

¹ Key documents from Meet and Discuss and APSCUF-KU Representative Council are available at http://www.apscuf.com/kutztown/documents/sri_docs/SRI_Background_Docs.pdf.

individual instructor desires to ask unique additional questions about their classes it can be done via the IDEA Instrument.

The IDEA Instrument helps correct for factors beyond the instructor's control: The IDEA Instrument is "based on the idea that specific teaching methods influence certain types of student learning under certain circumstances." Therefore, an instructor's scores can be adjusted and/or converted so that factors beyond the instructor's control (e.g. the size of a class, students' desire to take the class, or work habits) do not adversely affect an instructor's evaluation scores.

The IDEA Instrument allows for internal and external comparisons. The IDEA Instrument has been publicly available since 1975, and during the 2008-2009 academic year 259 universities and colleges used the instrument. Consequently, the IDEA Center has compiled a large database of over three million evaluations that will allow instructors to compare results from their evaluations to either national or discipline specific results. Once KU has used the instrument for 400 courses it will be able to make intra-university comparisons.

Confidentiality will be maintained. The IDEA Center will send only the processed student evaluations to the designated university recipient (i.e. an SRI Coordinator). Additionally, all student evaluation results at the IDEA Center are stored on computers with no Internet access. Equally importantly, the recommendations detailed in the Administrative Procedures section below would insure that the course evaluation data will be given only to the evaluated instructor and his or her peer evaluation and department chairs. Keeping with KU's current practice, no records will be maintained by any member of the administration.

The value of the current KU SRI is questionable. We do not know if the instrument currently being used at KU is either reliable or valid, and both contractual and administrative issues make testing for either all but impossible. Moreover, as discussed in the Pilot Program section below, there appears to be little faculty support for the current KU SRI. Perhaps most troubling is that students indicated that they see the current KU SRI as a sign that the university does not take the students' evaluation of teaching seriously.

Calendar for Implementation

Switching to the IDEA Instrument will require the university to make some fundamental changes in the way it administers its SRI. Additionally, the IDEA Instrument's use of learning objectives as the key component of measuring students' evaluation of instruction will require academic departments to match their course objectives with the IDEA learning objectives. Finally, faculty and key members of the administration will have to be trained on how to use the IDEA Instrument and interpret the results.

A transition to the IDEA Instrument will be successful only if it is done thoughtfully and deliberately. Moreover, these changes must be made in a way that meets both the letter and spirit of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between APSCUF and PASSHE. Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

Kutztown University begin using the IDEA Diagnostic Instrument for its student ratings instrument of instruction at the start of the 2011 Spring Semester.

Three reasons led the committee to recommend waiting to use the IDEA Instrument until the 2011 Spring Semester. First, the administration will need time to implement a new routing system so that completed student evaluations can be shipped to the IDEA Center and returned in a timely manner to the evaluated faculty. As discussed in the Administrative Procedures section of this report, the committee recommends that the administration appoint an SRI Coordinator to manage the process. The coordinator ought to be appointed by the end of the 2009 Fall Semester and would have roughly a year then to bring the administrative process into alignment. Most importantly, the SRI Coordinator would work with the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching to train the faculty and key administration officials.

Second, by delaying implementation until the 2011 Spring Semester academic departments would have almost a year to match their courses with the requisite IDEA discipline code and match the IDEA learning objectives with their key course objectives. This process is detailed in the Course Syllabus Proposal section of this report, and the committee anticipates that for most departments this will be a relatively quick and easy process. However, some departments may need time to discuss which objectives they see as essential. It is the committee's belief that departments could complete these tasks by week seven of the 2010 Fall Semester.

Third, the committee recommended making the switch in the spring semester to avoid contractually-mandated deadlines governing the promotion process during the first semester KU uses the IDEA Instrument. The CBA requires that the department evaluation committee and chair submit a list of promotion applicants and a detailed recommendations by February 1 to the University Promotion Committee.² To make these recommendations the committee and department chair need to have time

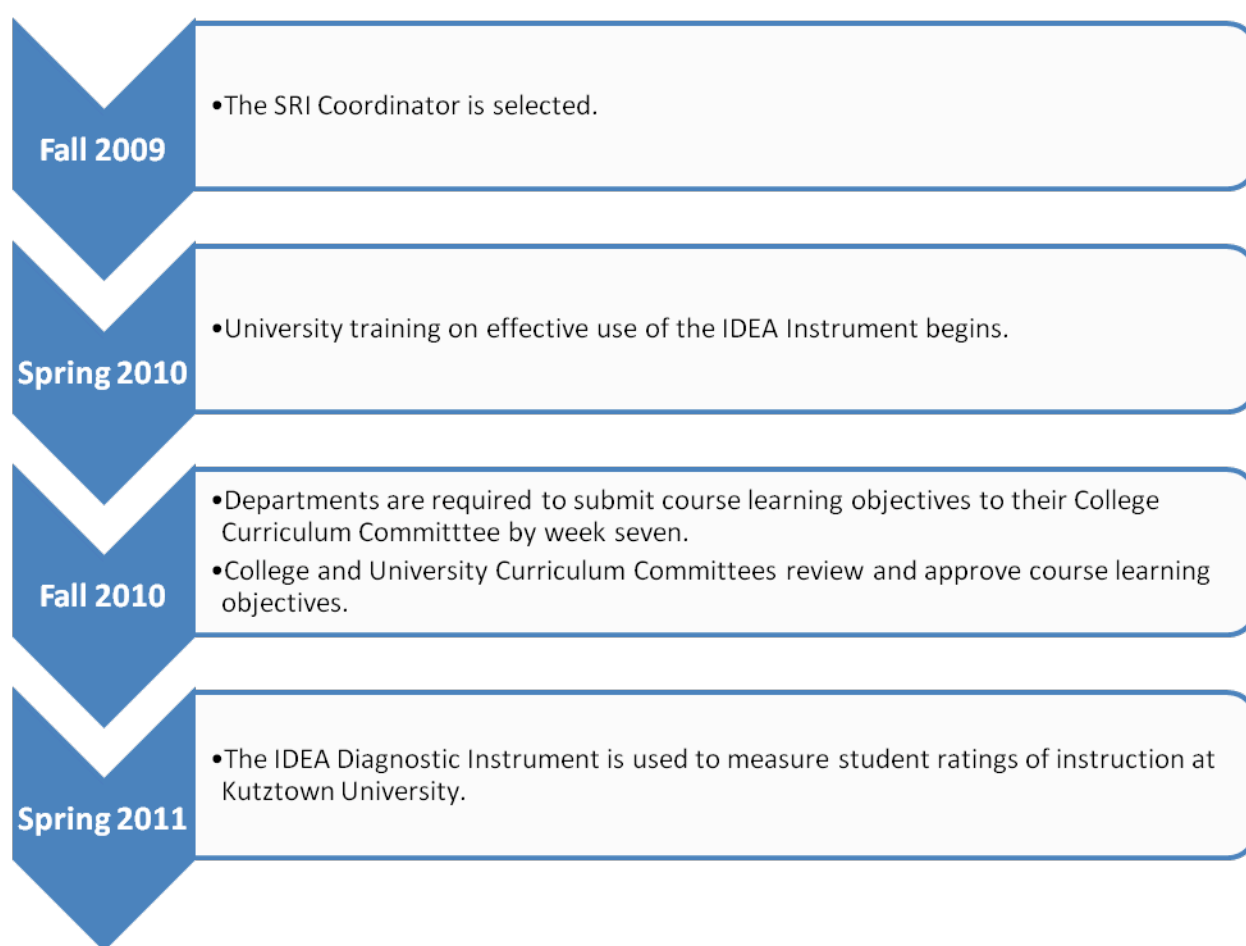
² *Collective Bargaining Agreement Between APSCUF and PASSHE, June 1, 2007 to June 30, 2011, Article 16, B. 6.*

to review the candidates' SRI reports from the fall semester as early as possible. For many departments this is done in late December or early January.

The committee has done its best to identify potential problems that will arise if the university switches to the IDEA Instrument. However, unexpected issues will inevitably occur during the university's first run-through and it is the committee's belief that the university will be best equipped to manage these issues during the spring semester when the SRI data are not immediately needed for promotion or tenure.

In summary, a timeline for implementing these recommendations is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Calendar for Implementation of IDEA at KU



IDEA Pilot Investigative Study Summary

The main goals of this Pilot Investigation centered on (1) identifying administrative concerns associated with adopting IDEA (e.g., amount of time required to administer IDEA Instruments and how to handle selecting course learning objectives) and considering how we might handle these concerns; (2) obtaining student opinions, including preferences, of the KU SRI and IDEA Instruments; and (3) obtaining faculty opinions, including preferences, of the KU SRI and IDEA Instruments.

As summarized in the following sections, an analysis of the data generated by the Pilot Investigation reveals that the IDEA Diagnostic Form, more than the IDEA Short Form, would indeed be a “good fit” for Kutztown University. In brief, the Pilot Investigation revealed that:

- The IDEA Diagnostic Form will not take that much more class time than our current instrument, and it will provide information that will assist in improving teaching and learning practices.
- IDEA instruments offer a question comparable to our current question #20.
- The IDEA Diagnostic Form was clearly preferred more than the IDEA Short Form or the current KU SRI, especially by students. Indeed, students indicated that they view our current instrument as woefully inadequate in capturing their opinions regarding teacher evaluations.
- There are several administrative concerns that must be addressed if Kutztown University moves forward with one of the IDEA instruments.

Key data and observations used to support this conclusion are summarized below.

Summary of Participant Information

In total, 702 students and 68 faculty members participated in some aspect of the Pilot Investigation.

FOCUS GROUPS: There were 8 student focus groups, consisting of 57 students, and 5 faculty focus groups, consisting of 31 faculty. All four colleges, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), College of Business (COB), College of Education (COE), and the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), as well as undergraduate and graduate students, were represented in the focus groups.

ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEYS: A total of 37 course sections, involving 645 students, participated in administering both the KU SRI and the IDEA survey instruments to students. 20 of those sections administered the IDEA Short Form; 17 administered the IDEA Diagnostic Form. Faculty from the CLAS, COE, and CVPA participated in this phase of the Pilot Investigation. Unfortunately, despite extensive efforts to involve faculty from the COB, the Implementation Committee was unsuccessful in this effort.

Key Data: Administration Time

One issue that has consistently been raised regarding the IDEA Instruments, particularly the Diagnostic Form, centers on the amount of class time that would be required if Kutztown University were to change student evaluation instruments. It has been a common assumption that the move to the IDEA Diagnostic Form would involve so much extra class time as to be impractical.

To systematically explore this issue, volunteer faculty involved with the Pilot Investigation were asked to record the amount of time students required to complete the instruments, KU and IDEA, when evaluating courses. The time to administer data is listed below:

1. KU SRI – Mean administration time: 11.7 minutes (range: 7 – 19 minutes)
2. IDEA Short Form – Mean administration time: 9.5 minutes (range: 6 – 15 minutes)
3. IDEA Diagnostic Form – Mean administration time: 14.5 minutes (range: 9 – 20 minutes)

If Kutztown University were to adopt the IDEA Diagnostic Form, the longer of the two instruments, it would involve, on average, only 2.8 additional minutes of class time compared to administering the KU SRI. It should be noted, however, that these calculations do not take into account the time that may be added if the additional questions (up to 20 are possible) are utilized. If extra questions were included we estimate that each additional multiple-choice question would add 18.5 seconds to the administration time.

Key Data: Comparison of Question #20 to comparable IDEA Questions (#17 and #41)

There has been, in the opinion of the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force, an unfortunate reliance on Question #20 from the KU SRI in evaluating faculty since the adoption of this instrument in 1980. As outlined in the Teaching Standards with IDEA section of this document, the CBA clearly calls for the consideration of multiple factors when evaluating the effectiveness of instructors. Nevertheless, the fact remains that for faculty, departments, and administration alike, question #20 can be a useful tool for evaluating instructors.

Both of the IDEA instruments possess a question that is similar to the current #20 (see below), and the Pilot Investigation examined whether responses to these questions would be comparable.

Question #20 – KU SRI

All things considered, how do you rate the instructor's performance?

- (a) Excellent (b) Very Good (c) Good (d) Poor (e) Very Poor

IDEA Question (Diagnostic Form #41 and Short Form #17)

Overall, I rate this instructor an excellent teacher

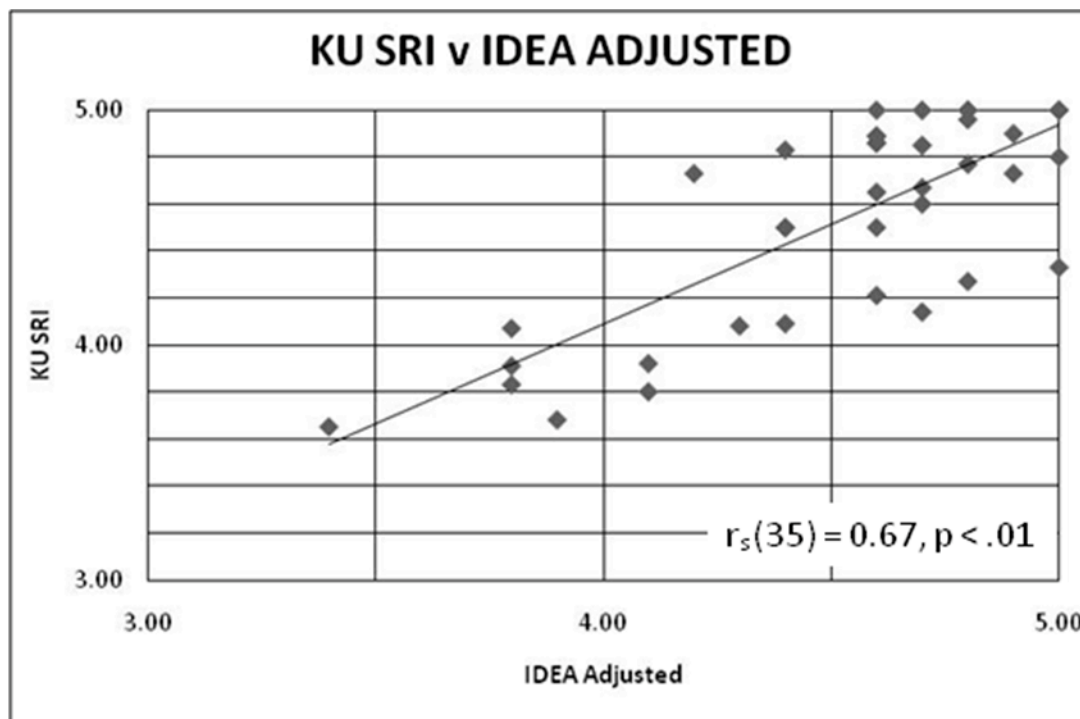
- (1) Definitely False (2) More False Than True (3) In Between (4) More True Than False (5) Definitely True

Recall, that each section of a course rated the instructor twice, once with the KU SRI and once with an IDEA Instrument. Furthermore, the order in which courses received the instruments, administered on different days, was counterbalanced.

In sections that received the IDEA Forms (N=37), the mean rating of KU SRI Question #20 was 4.53 (SD = 0.44) and the mean rating of IDEA Question was 4.52 (SD = 0.39) revealing no statistically significant difference in ratings.

The data points in the figure below indicate the overall correspondence of the data for these KU SRI and IDEA instrument questions. Specifically, the mean ratings obtained for the KU SRI instrument and the IDEA instrument in each participating course section are plotted thereby revealing their statistically significant correlation. The trendline indicates the degree of linear relationship between the data points. *(Please note: Only 32 data points, rather than all 37, are evident in the figure below because there were*

5 instances where more than one course received identical scores on the two instruments, thereby resulting in overlapping points.)



These data reveal that the questions (KU SRI #20 and the IDEA question) possess similar mean values, are significantly correlated, and possess a strong linear relationship. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the questions are not identical. If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA instrument, it will be important to have training sessions available that can inform the entire Kutztown University community regarding the proper interpretation of these data.

Key Data: Student and Faculty Preferences for Evaluation Instruments

Prior to meeting in their respective focus groups, students and faculty, were asked to review both the KU SRI and IDEA instruments. Once in the focus groups, participants were asked, along with other questions, to indicate which instrument they would prefer that Kutztown University used for teacher evaluations.

STUDENT PREFERENCES: Students overwhelmingly indicated that they preferred the IDEA Diagnostic Form. Across the seven student focus groups for which these data were recorded, 42 of the 45 students (93.3%) indicated that they preferred the IDEA instruments. Furthermore, an analysis of the comments indicated that the majority of these students preferred the IDEA Diagnostic Form. Representative comments indicating these preference patterns are highlighted below:

- “It (IDEA-Diagnostic) has a more holistic approach, this covers more of what we want to be evaluating about a professor.”

- “The old one (KU SRI) gives you blunt statistics and the new one (IDEA-Diagnostic) actually allows you to see the player for who they are, what they do, when they are on the field...it allows me to fully explain how I feel about this course and the professor and how they relate to one another.”
- “Not to sound negative, but I remember filling out the SRI for this same professor last semester and I remember looking at the numbers and he seemed so strong on paper, but that’s not my belief on how the course went. Looking at this (IDEA-Diagnostic), the numbers are lower, they are not as positive and I feel like it’s a more accurate description versus the SRI I filled out last semester.”
- “I like how the IDEA has more information about the student...because this also gives you a better idea of how dedicated they are to the course and about how the course influenced the student.”
- “It seems to me; especially in comparison...the questions in the traditional or current evaluation form (SRI) tend to be focused on administration level concepts. They’re not things that seem to be relevant to me as a learner. I don’t know that they are necessarily even relevant to an instructor as far as feedback. They seem to be very organizational and administrative focused...I felt much more connected to give pertinent responses to these questions (IDEA-Diagnostic) because not only did they reflect my personal opinions, they reflected the impact that the course had on me.”
- “I prefer the long form over the short form of the IDEA and I prefer both of the IDEAs over the current SRI...I could very easily see myself tuning out the impact of this short form and just running down this quick list of 18 questions...which is why I do like the thoroughness of the long form...as it gives you a chance to evaluate a number of areas that are important.”
- “The length (IDEA-Diagnostic) actually adds to the evaluation...it identifies the student and why they took the course...it is worth the length and the fact that it is broken into sections.”

FACULTY PREFERENCES: Unfortunately, preference data were not consistently recorded from all of the faculty focus groups. Three of the five focus groups clearly recorded preferences for the IDEA Diagnostic Form with only two of the three recording specific vote totals (six votes for IDEA – zero votes for KU SRI). Of the two focus groups that did not record preferences, one did not record any specific preference information as the focus group discussion wandered to address other issues. The preference data for the remaining focus group were ambiguous with a unanimous preference for the IDEA instrument recorded at one point, whereas at another point the vote was recorded as split between the IDEA instrument and the KU SRI. Nevertheless, collapsing across all focus groups, a general preference for the IDEA Diagnostic Form emerged. This preference, however, was not as overwhelming as that observed with the student focus groups. Representative comments indicating preferences for the KU SRI and indicating preferences for the IDEA instruments are highlighted below.

Preference for KU SRI

- “Well since we just used question 20 on the one (SRI), we would have to use everything on the other (IDEA), the old one (SRI) is much easier”

- “I think definitely this long form, this IDEA form is just not feasible...it’s just too much information that I don’t think we can really use. There’s too much subjectivity here, just a long instrument.”
- “There’s a lot of extra here (IDEA)... they’ll get frustrated, by the time you get to 20 these kids won’t care what they’re writing, just to get it over with...”
- “I get what I need from this (SRI) in most cases especially with the questions at the end and the ones my committee decided to focus on...”

Preference for IDEA instrument

- “I like the fact that you can compare with another institution, with other faculty, I think that is very helpful. I think the greatest challenge is in making sure that everyone understands how important the twelve objectives are to the level of importance for the courses...”
- “I do see...a foundation here for looking at this and being able to build a better university...being able to build a program of looking at a bunch of these and saying where’s our program going...I see this as a broad assessment tool...I see enormous potential here.”
- “IDEA is productive if it is for faculty development...”
- “We’re trying to get students to engage seriously with what we mean by education, with what we want them to get out of the experience. So the more that we can give them guidance as to what they should be looking for in a class for themselves and for the professor, the more this SRI (IDEA) will do really work for us...”

Additional thoughts/concerns/issues that were repeatedly highlighted in focus group discussions

- Faculty were concerned about the amount of class time that would be required and would like us to explore the online option for administration of the IDEA instrument.
- Faculty would like to see a question that addressed the grade expectations of students.
- Faculty were concerned that the IDEA instrument would not be helpful if we do not develop a system that helps train individuals, departments, and committees in how to use the instrument.
 - “My fear is that it’s (IDEA) going to be used selectively and not uniformly and it has that potential and it takes us back to where we are with this instrument that we’re using (SRI). So, for the individual professional development of a faculty, I think it is a superb instrument, there’s no two ways about it. For evaluation purposes, I mean it could be, we could develop a system...that respects the instrument for what it is and the elements of the instrument...but if we leave it up to individual PET committees and then bring it up to the University Promotion Committee level, they’re not going to be able to make heads or tails out of that (without training).”
- Students would like to see some of the questions from the KU SRI incorporated into the IDEA instrument. The items most often mentioned addressed (a) faculty availability during office hours, (b) clarity of faculty presentations, (c) degree to which faculty display respect for and maintain proper relationships with students, (d) degree to which faculty were on time, and (e) the reasons students took the course.

- Students also offered other suggestions for any revised or new evaluation instrument. They would like to have questions determine the degree to which (a) the syllabus was followed, (b) the course matched the course catalog description, (c) required materials were actually utilized, and (d) the willingness of faculty to make appropriate accommodations for disabilities.

Administrative Procedures

I. Establishment of a SRI Coordinator: Currently, a small team in the Office of Institutional Research processes the university's SRI. This is possible in no small part because of the dedication of that office, but also because any mistakes in processing can be handled internally. That is, if an instructor's student evaluations were not labeled correctly or completely, the Office of Institutional Research can contact the originating department and either ask for clarification or return the forms to be recompiled.

This process has afforded the university a certain degree of flexibility. Not only can some minor errors be addressed on a rolling basis, but more serious issues, such as student evaluations being delivered well past the normal processing period, can be handled.

If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA Instrument, it will have to develop a set of procedures to insure that both the Faculty Information Forms and the completed evaluations are completed and organized properly prior to being shipped to the IDEA Center. Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. The university name a fulltime SRI Coordinator whose duties would include:
 - a. serving as the primary point of contact between the university and the IDEA Center;
 - b. ordering the evaluation materials;
 - c. developing and implementing a process to produce and distribute the Faculty Information Forms and Student Forms with preprinted approved course learning objectives, enrollment numbers, and institution, course, and instructor information.³ These forms should be provided to the department peer evaluation committee chair(s) no later than two weeks prior to the evaluation periods;
 - d. working with the Office of Institutional Research to determine the enrollment size of course sections;
 - e. acting as the principal university-level agent collecting the completed evaluation forms, sending them to the IDEA Center, and returning them to the departments (see Section IV);
 - f. providing oversight and quality control to ensure that evaluations are properly processed;⁴

³ The IDEA Center provides free PreMark software that can assist with this process. Selection of course objectives is reviewed in the IDEA and Course Syllabi Proposal section of this document.

⁴ By oversight we mean that the forms have been filled out and assembled correctly. At no point should the SRI Coordinator, or anyone involved in the process alter a students' response.

2. If a department fails to meet the required due date, the SRI Coordinator will contact the department peer evaluation review chair(s) and attempt to resolve the situation. If necessary, the SRI Coordinator will also contact the corresponding Dean's office who can help address any outstanding issues.

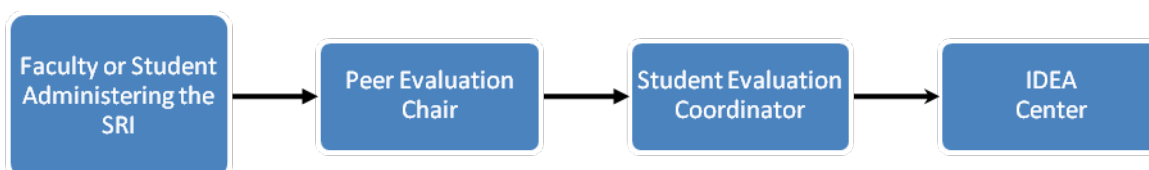
II. Routing: Currently, department peer evaluation committee chairs coordinate the process of administering the SRI in eligible faculty members' classes during the prescribed period. Most departments rely upon the peer evaluation committee chair(s) to gather all their faculty materials and hand deliver them to their Dean's office. The various Deans' offices then move their entire college materials to the Office of Institutional Research, and the evaluations are processed in approximately one week. Upon completion a member of the Dean's office will pick up their college's materials and then contact each of their departments who in return will send a representative to bring their evaluated faculty members' materials back to the department. Some departments keep copies of the records, while others ask the peer evaluation committee chair(s) to maintain copies of the materials, and others simply distribute the materials back to the faculty member without making any copies. Ultimately, the completed student evaluations (both the optical scan forms and qualitative responses) and tabulated scores are returned to the evaluated faculty members.

Other than simply moving the materials to the appropriate office, the peer evaluation committee chairs, Deans' offices, and the Office of Institutional Research also provide the vital role of quality control. It is common for either the completed student evaluations or the Course Header Page to either be filled out incorrectly or compiled imperfectly so that the forms cannot be accurately read.⁵ Routinely, the Office of Institutional Research has to ask departments to address errors so that the forms can be processed.

If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA Instrument the SRI routing process will have to be revised. Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Kutztown University adopt the routing process outlined in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2 Gathering and Processing the SRI

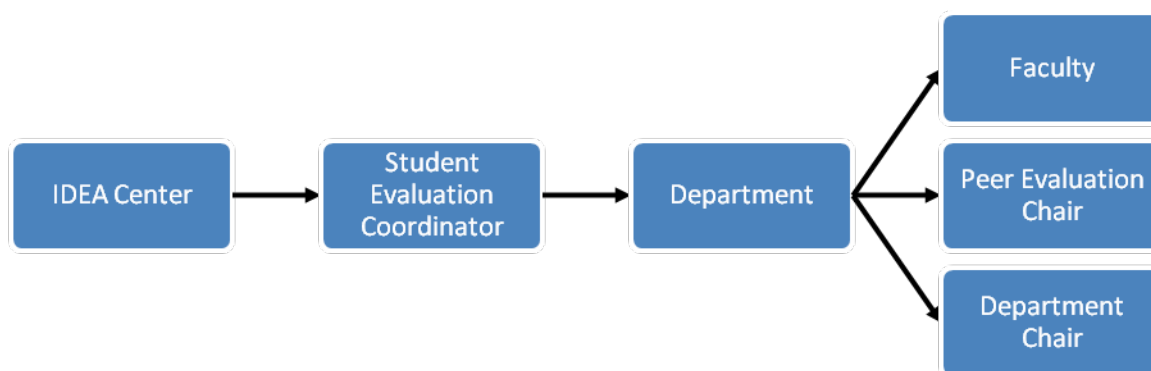


⁵ One estimate is that the one in five course sections contain errors that prevent accurate processing.

Administering the SRI to the students would continue to be managed at the departmental level. Following each department's procedures, the peer evaluation committee chair(s) would oversee the administration of the SRI, and the peer evaluation committee chair(s) would be responsible for ensuring that requirements detailed in the CBA and local agreements were met. Once, the evaluations were completed, the peer evaluation committee chair(s) would deliver (in person) the completed evaluations to the SRI Coordinator who would acknowledge receipt of the materials and send the entire university's materials to the IDEA Center on an agreed upon date.

The IDEA Center would return the materials to the SRI Coordinator whose office would then deliver (in person) the materials to the departments. Departments would then return the tabulated results to the evaluated faculty members and in accordance with their departmental procedures distribute them to the peer evaluation committee and department chairs.

Figure 3 Returning the Processed Student Evaluations to Departments and Faculty Members



As compared to the current routing procedures, the proposed model offers two potential advantages. First, it simplifies the process as the Deans' offices would no longer handle the materials. Additionally, the proposed process institutionalizes the routing procedures across the campus. As it stands, departments and colleges manage the administration of the SRI differently and at times this has caused confusion, errors, and avoidable delays.

III. Completion of the Faculty Information Form and Department Responsibilities: Currently, departments differ on how they complete the Course Header Page. In some cases, departments ask that the person who administers the SRI complete the form, while other departments rely upon the peer evaluation chair(s) or the department secretary.

Additionally, some departments still use the Information Form for Faculty (IFF) that was adopted by the university in 1980. The purpose of the IFF is "to specify the parameters of his/her teaching assignment

for each course taught,” and by doing so it allows a faculty member to document a circumstance or event that might have influenced how their course was evaluated. For example, if technology supporting a smart classroom constantly failed, a faculty member could document that he or she believed it adversely affected his or her ability to lecture effectively.

Finally, departments have developed their own practices on evaluating laboratory course sections. That is, some departments require that both the laboratory and lecture be evaluated separately, while other departments will administer the student evaluation only in the lecture if the professor is both the course and laboratory instructor.

The IDEA Instrument requires that student evaluations for each course section be accompanied by an IDEA Faculty Information Form that contains demographic data, course objectives, and contextual questions.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Evaluated instructors complete the course objectives for each course section in a manner that is consistent with the standards detailed in the IDEA and Course Syllabi Proposal section of this document.
2. Departments identify the Discipline Code for each of their courses. In most cases, this is a quick and easy process (e.g. Chemistry is 4005). However, in some instances a course may not have an obvious discipline code (e.g. Public Administration, 4400 vs. Political Science, 4510).
3. Evaluated instructors are strongly urged to complete the contextual questions of the Faculty Information Form.
4. The university continue to use the Information Form for Faculty (IFF) with the IDEA Instrument.
5. All laboratory course sections taught by faculty members eligible for evaluation are to be evaluated and the instructor teaching the laboratory course complete a Faculty Information Form.
6. If a department fails to deliver their faculty members' completed student evaluations on-time (see Section IV), the department work with the SRI Coordinator to arrange for late delivery of the material and pay the additional costs from their department budgets.

IV. Timeline for Administering and Processing the SRI: As governed by the *Procedures for Administration of Student Evaluations in a Classroom Environment*, a local agreement approved on 10 April 2008, the student evaluations are administered during the final four weeks of a course. The evaluations must then be submitted to the administration for computer scanning no later than the last class day of the semester.

As discussed in Section II, If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA Instrument, new routing procedures for handling student evaluations will have to be adopted. To ensure that the student evaluations are processed and returned to faculty members in time to meet contractually-mandated deadlines for

promotion and tenure, the university will in turn have to develop a new timeline for administering and processing the evaluations.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. The university adopt the following administrative timeline:
 - a. Departments provide the name of the department peer evaluation chair(s) by the second week of the fall and spring semester to the SRI Coordinator.
 - b. The SRI Coordinator provides the evaluation materials to the departments by the fifth week of the semester.
 - c. Evaluated instructors return their completed course section IDEA Faculty Information Form to their peer evaluation chair(s) before the start of classes of week eight of the semester.
 - d. The student evaluations are administered between weeks ten and twelve of a course.
 - e. Peer evaluation chairs submit the completed student evaluations for processing to the SRI Coordinator by the first day of classes following the eleventh week of a course.

V. Additional Questions: Although the KU SRI does not contain an additional questions section, some instructors have asked their classes unique questions, or, in some cases, they have asked their students to complete an additional survey.⁶ For example, the College of Education developed a student evaluation instrument to be used for student teachers.⁷

The IDEA Instrument contains a provision for additional multiple-choice questions to be included in each surveyed course section. These questions could be constructed at the university, college, department, or individual instructor level.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Any additional questions added at the university level (i.e. questions to be asked of every course section) be introduced and approved at a college curriculum committee, approved by the University Curriculum Committee, and approved by a local meet and discuss agreement. The SRI Coordinator would be responsible for including the additional question(s) with the evaluation materials distributed to peer evaluation committee chairs. These “additional questions” would be considered part of the official KU SRI.
2. Any additional questions added at an individual level (i.e. questions asked of one or more of an instructor’s course sections) be included at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor will

⁶ The procedure for adding up to fifteen additional questions is detailed in a memo to the KU community from the Committee to Develop a New Form for Student Evaluation of Faculty, “New Forms and Procedures for Administering Faculty Evaluations Beginning in the Fall 1980 available at http://www.apscuf.com/kutztown/documents/sri_docs/SRI_Background_Docs.pdf.

⁷ A local meet and discuss agreement approved the use of the additional survey in 1998 and it is to be administered in addition to KU’s standard SRI.

be responsible for including the additional question(s) with the evaluation materials distributed to peer evaluation committee chairs.

3. Questions added at the individual level are not considered part of the official KU SRI, and it is up to the instructor under review to include these additional questions in his or her materials.
4. Upon passage of the IDEA Instrument of Instruction, the KU IDEA Task Force be given the charge to recommend additional questions to be added to the IDEA Instrument for use at the university level. Any additional questions would have to be approved via the governance structure detailed in Administrative Procedures section V 1. The committee would expire at the end of the Fall 2010 Semester.

VI. Confidentiality: Currently, the Office of Institutional Research does not keep any copies of the completed student evaluations or the course section reports. Once the student evaluations and the course section reports are returned to the departments, the departments turn them over to the evaluated faculty members according to their established procedures.

If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA Instrument, care will have to be taken to continue to protect both the privacy of the evaluated faculty member and the accuracy of the tabulated results.

Once the student evaluations are processed, the IDEA Center will provide the university with: two printed copies of each course section's report; a digital report of each course section's report; and a printed and digital copy of any group summary reports that were ordered.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Academic departments review their procedures for distributing the tabulated SRI to department and peer evaluation committee chairs and evaluated faculty so that the requirement to evaluate faculty is balanced against the need to protect the faculty members' privacy.
2. The SRI Coordinator deliver all printed copies of the evaluated course section reports, the digital course section report, and the completed student evaluations to each department peer evaluation committee chair(s). The SRI Coordinator shall **not** retain any copies (printed or digital) of these materials.
3. The department peer evaluation committee chair(s) provide the evaluated faculty member two printed copies of their course section report, a digital copy of his or her course section reports, and the completed student evaluation forms. The peer evaluation chair(s) will retain copies of the reports and provide copies to the department chair in accordance with their department procedures.
4. Any data generated by the SRI shall be used only to meet the contractually-mandated evaluation process.
5. APSCUF-KU enter into negotiations with the Kutztown University administration regarding a local agreement governing assessment.

VII. Training and Course Improvement: For almost thirty years, Kutztown University has used the same SRI. Over that time, the students, faculty, and administration have become very accustomed with the mechanics of administrating the SRI and interpreting the results.

If the IDEA Instrument is adopted, not only will the KU community have to become familiar with a new set of administrative procedures, but everyone will have to be oriented to the IDEA Instrument's approach to evaluating student learning. For example, faculty will need to participate in training sessions on how to select the proper objectives for their courses and interpret the reports of their classes. Additionally, students will need a better understanding of how faculty members are evaluated and what element the student evaluations play in that process.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. The Center for the Enhancement of Teaching (CET) be given the charge, authority, and resources to offer ongoing training sessions for faculty and administrators on the IDEA Instrument.
2. A webpage be developed that would support CET's efforts to train the KU community.
3. A brief handbook on the IDEA Instrument and student evaluation of instructors be constructed and distributed to all faculty members, and salient sections be included in the *Key Student Handbook*.
 - a. APSCUF-KU initiate the formation of a committee to evaluate the use of the IDEA Instrument at Kutztown University. The charge of this committee would be to conduct an ongoing review of the administrative procedures governing the use of the IDEA Instrument at KU and review the use of the IDEA Instrument for evaluating teaching effectiveness.

VIII. Team Taught Classes: Currently, some courses are taught by teams of two or more instructors. The KU SRI is administered in these courses, like any other KU course, if either of the instructors is eligible for evaluation.

The IDEA Instrument can be used to evaluate student learning in team taught classes with minor adjustments to the administrative procedures.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. If two or more of the professors are eligible for evaluation, students complete one evaluation for each eligible instructor.
2. Instructors identify the course objectives in a manner that is consistent with the IDEA and Course Syllabi Proposal section of this document.

IX. Extra-Contractual Evaluations: Some tenured faculty members have requested to have their classes reviewed outside of the contractually-mandated periods (i.e. they are not eligible for five-year review and not standing for promotion). These requests are currently handled at the department level, and typically the peer evaluation chair assigns a faculty member or student to administer the SRI.

If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA instrument, the SRI Coordinator will have to be notified of the request for the extra-contractual evaluation, and the university will be charged an additional cost.⁸

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. The practice of allowing faculty members to evaluate their classes outside the contractually-mandated periods be continued.
2. A tenured faculty member who wishes to have a course section(s) evaluated extra-contractually must notify his or her department peer evaluation chair no later than the last day of classes of the previous semester.
3. Fees associated for the extra-contractual evaluations be provided for at the university level.

X. Qualitative Responses: The current KU SRI asks two open-ended questions. Students write their responses to these questions on paper that is provided by the person administering the evaluation. Over time, departments have developed their own unique rules governing how the answers to these open-ended questions, or qualitative responses, are handled. For instance, in some departments the qualitative responses are considered the property of the professor being evaluated and are never shared with either the department chair or peer evaluation committee. Conversely, other departments keep copies of the qualitative comments and formally incorporate them into their evaluation of faculty.

The CBA does not distinguish between quantitative and qualitative questions. Rather, Article 12 states that the evaluation committees must use the approved SRI as part of the data to inform its evaluation of faculty teaching. More to the point, the May 1992 and April 2008 local agreements on administration of the SRI both state that, "Copies of the computer analysis of optical scan forms and student comments will be provided to the PET committee and department chair."

If Kutztown University adopts the IDEA Diagnostic Instrument, the university may opt to add open-ended questions. Although there is space on the Diagnostic Form for comments or answers to open-ended questions, procedures must be developed that ensure that the peer evaluation and department chairs receive the results to all the required SRI questions and that simultaneously responses to the diagnostic questions are not used for evaluative purposes. The Teaching Standards with IDEA section of this report details some of these procedures.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Answers to any open-ended questions be written on a separate sheet of paper.
2. Answers to any open-ended questions, which are part of the official KU SRI, be used in the evaluation of faculty teaching.
3. Any writing in the "Comments Section" not be considered part of the official evaluation.⁹

⁸ Depending on how many Diagnostic Forms Kutztown University orders at a time, the cost would range from \$.25 to \$.14 per student in the course with a course processing fee of likely \$4.50.
<http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/SRFeeSchedule.pdf>.

⁹ The committee recommends that students be instructed not to write in the Comments Section. See the Statement to be Read to the Students section of this report.

IDEA and Course Syllabi Proposal

The IDEA Instrument (both the “short” and longer “diagnostic” forms) lists twelve “possible learning objectives.” Students are asked to “describe the amount of progress you [the student] made on each (even those not pursued in this class)” on a scale of 1 (“no apparent progress”) to 5 (“exceptional progress”). In order to be applicable to any of course, these course objectives are by necessity generic in nature.

If the results of the IDEA process are to be valid and useful, it therefore seems reasonable that an instructor should have delineated the desired learning objectives *before* the class begins. Fortunately, at Kutztown University, we already have a well-established process for communicating course objectives to students, namely the course syllabus. In many cases our syllabi have language similar to that in the IDEA Instrument; in other cases, that is not so.

An examination of IDEA’s twelve learning objectives reveals that some are content oriented, while others are process oriented. For example, one learning objective is, “Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.” Another is, “Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team.” The IDEA Center has prepared an excellent document (“Some Thoughts on Selecting IDEA Objectives”) that more fully describes each of the twelve learning objectives in order to help faculty better determine how the objectives relate to a particular course.

While we may like to think that every one of our courses addresses all twelve objectives, the IDEA “Faculty Information Form” asks the instructor to rate each of the twelve objectives as either “minor or no importance,” “important,” or “essential.” Furthermore, The IDEA Center states that “most instructors will be unable to address seriously more than three to five objectives.” In order to decide which objectives are the most important and/or essential, it is suggested that instructors ask three questions:

1. Is this a significant part of the course?
2. Do I do something specific to help the students accomplish this objective?
3. Does the student’s progress on this objective affect his or her grade?

Since different instructors teach the same course, both within one semester and from one semester to the next, it is possible that the same course may have different important or essential learning objectives in each instantiation. However, if we want to collect meaningful and useful longitudinal data on a specific course (especially if the diagnostic form is used), it seems reasonable that there should be some commonality every time the course is taught, regardless of the instructor.

Accordingly, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force proposes that each department¹ identify at least one IDEA learning objective as being “essential” and up to an additional three objectives that are or “essential” or “important.” When an instructor² teaches the course, he/she will be required to fill out the Faculty Information Form accordingly. However, he/she will have the option of identifying additional objectives as being essential or important, but the number of both department-identified and instructor-identified essential or important objectives should not exceed a total of five. The remainder of the twelve objectives on the Faculty Information Form are then to be marked as “minor or no

importance.” Furthermore, the Task Force recommends that all the learning objectives (both those from the department¹ and those from the instructor²) be included on the so-called first-day handout or course guide.

Since objectives are currently part of each official course syllabus at Kutztown University, it will be necessary to examine our current syllabi to determine how well they align with IDEA’s twelve objectives. IDEA’s objectives are generic in nature (example: “Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)”), while ours are specific to the actual course and content. Accordingly, The Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends the following process/procedure:

1. The department¹ goes through each course objective, identifying which *one* of the twelve IDEA objectives that course objective aligns with most closely. Note that several course objectives may align with the same IDEA objective.
2. Having completed the alignment described in (1) above, the department¹ then selects at least one IDEA objective that is essential and up to an additional three objectives that are either essential or important. The remaining objectives, if any, are then assumed to be minor.

Figure 4 presents an “Objectives Alignment Grid” that may be used to expedite this process.

3. The department¹⁰ will then revise the course syllabus to indicate which course objectives align with which IDEA objectives and which ones are essential, important, or minor.
4. When an instructor¹¹ teaches the course, he/she is required to mark the department-identified essential and/or important objectives on the Faculty Information Form. Since the department has identified a maximum of four IDEA objectives as being essential or important, the instructor may mark at least one (or more) additional IDEA objectives as being essential or important, but the total number of essential and important IDEA objectives should not exceed five

The IDEA Task Force will ask the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) to develop a process to expedite the approval of revised course objectives. It is hoped that such a process will be similar to the relatively painless one we recently followed to add the so-called assessment piece to each syllabus.

¹⁰ In accordance with the *UCC Bylaws*, if a course has multiple prefixes (indicating that more than one department has “ownership” of the course), any changes to the course syllabus must be approved by all such departments before going forward in the curriculum approval process. The implication for IDEA is that the alignment process described above must be carried out jointly, thereby resulting in only one set of newly-aligned objectives.

¹¹ Because of contractual implications, if a course is team taught and one or more of the instructors is to be evaluated during semester in question, the KU IDEA Task Force recommends that each such instructor be rated separately and on different days. Further, each such instructor will be responsible for determining any additional essential or important objectives to be added to the form used when he/she is evaluated.

Figure 4: Objectives Alignment Grid

		IDEA Objectives											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Course Objectives	a												
	b												
	c												
	d												
	e												
	f												
	g												
	h												
	i												
	j												

Essential (E) Important (I) Minor (M)

IDEA Objectives:

1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
6. Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)
8. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
9. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems
10. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
12. Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers

Directions:

1. For each course objective, place an **X** in the appropriate column to indicate with which *one* IDEA objective that course objective most closely aligns. Note that when the grid is completed, there may be more than one **X** in a single column and that some columns may be entirely blank, but that each row should have *one and only one X*. If a course objective does not align with any of the IDEA objectives, then a thirteenth column "(Other)" may be added, with the understanding that any such "other" objectives will not be rated by the IDEA Instrument.
2. For each cell in the last row, place an **E** if the course objective(s) in the column above are essential, an **I** if they are important, or an **M** if they are minor. Note that if the column above is blank for a particular cell in the last row, then that particular cell is also left blank.

Teaching Standards with IDEA

I. Reporting: As is discussed in the Administrative Procedures section above, departments have developed different procedures for administering the current SRI and returning the completed evaluations to the evaluated faculty members.

If Kutztown University adopts the Diagnostic IDEA Instrument, a Course Summary Report of each course section will be generated. The first page of the report contains a Summary Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness, and the remainder contains data collected from the diagnostic questions. The IDEA Center recommends that the diagnostic data not be used for administrative decisions.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. For official purposes of faculty evaluation (i.e. yearly and five-year review, tenure, and promotion) all that is required to be submitted from the IDEA Report is the Summary Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (the first page) and qualitative responses to any open-ended questions.
 - a. A faculty member may include in his or her evaluation material any additional information from the report that her or she sees fit.
2. The faculty member being evaluated, his or her chair, and his or her peer evaluation committee will receive the full IDEA report in a manner that is consistent with Section VI of the Administrative Procedures section of this document.

II. Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness: The CBA lists the following materials as examples of data upon which judgments can be made of a faculty member's performance relative to effective teaching and fulfillment of professional responsibilities:

Student evaluations, peer evaluations, classroom visitations, quality of syllabi, quality of student advisement, willingness to accept departmental work assignments, timely execution of work assignments.¹²

In addition the CBA states that "Evaluation of teaching effectiveness and fulfillment of professional responsibilities will not be based on a single datum. A combination of all appropriate data will be used to give sufficient evidence for an overall judgment of teaching effectiveness and fulfillment of professional responsibilities."¹³

In concert with these items is the strong recommendation from the IDEA Center that "additional sources

¹² *Collective Bargaining Agreement Between APSCUF and PASSHE, June 1, 2007 to June 30, 2011*, Article 12, B. 1. a.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Article 12, B. 1. b.

of evidence be used when teaching is evaluated and that student ratings constitute only 30% to 50% of the overall evaluation of teaching.”¹⁴

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. The results from the student ratings should constitute only 30 to 50 percent of the overall evaluation of teaching, with a percentage closer to 30 percent being preferred.

III. Interpreting IDEA Scores: There is considerable variance across the university on how to interpret the data generated from the current KU SRI. Interviews with the 2007-08 tenure and promotion committees as well as surveys of the department chairs indicate that Question Twenty is central to most faculty members' evaluation. For those departments that have formally articulated acceptable standards for Question Twenty, most require a high percentage (e.g. 80 percent) of students to evaluate the instructor's performance either as excellent or very good. The third category "good" is generally considered a poor score.

The IDEA Center describes the scores that they report as follows:

Raw averages: are the average of student responses for that question. In the case of Progress on Relevant Objectives the raw average is a weighted average of learning objectives identified on the Faculty Information Form as important or essential. The objectives identified as essential are double weighted, and those that are identified as important are singly weighted.

These raw averages are modified in two ways:

Adjusted averages: are corrected for factors which affect student ratings yet are beyond the instructor's control (such as student motivation, student work habits, class size, and course difficulty).

Converted averages: take into account the fact that the average ratings for items on the IDEA form are not equal as students report more progress on some objectives than on others. Converted averages are reported as weighted T-scores which compare student ratings for a course with those in the entire IDEA database, the IDEA discipline, or the institution (KU) as a whole (after 400 courses have been evaluated).

Summary evaluation: are converted averages that are calculated from both raw and adjusted averages.

¹⁴ IDEA Center, *Using IDEA Results for Administrative Decision-making*, Revised February 2005. Available at <http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/Administrative%20DecisionMaking.pdf>.

The IDEA Center states that “it is best to regard the ‘true score’ for a converted average as lying within + or – 3 of the reported score.” In other words, converted averages differing quantitatively by less than six are not significantly different.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Adjusted converted averages compared to the entire IDEA database be used in evaluating faculty teaching in most circumstances.
2. Raw converted averages be used (instead of adjusted converted averages) in cases where the raw average score is high.¹⁵

III. Number of Respondents and Response Rate: Currently, the KU SRI is administered in all eligible faculty course sections regardless of the course size. Thus far, Kutztown University has not conducted any studies to measure the reliability or validity of the instrument. Moreover, we do not know the degree to which the reliability of the data generated by the instrument varies by course size or participation rate.

Several studies testing the reliability and validity of the IDEA Instrument have been conducted, and they indicate that the instrument is both valid and reliable.¹⁶ The IDEA Center provides guidelines on the minimum number of student responses and the percentage of the number of student respondents for the data generated by the IDEA Instrument to be considered reliable and representative.

Consequently, the Kutztown University IDEA Task Force recommends that:

1. Data generated from classes with ten or fewer respondents is to be considered unreliable because the number of students responding is so small.
2. Data generated from classes with fourteen or fewer respondents is to be considered only marginally reliable because the number of students responding is so small.
3. Data generated from classes where the percentage of the students responding is less than fifty percent is to be considered inadequate to assure representativeness.
4. Class survey results that are considered unreliable, marginally reliable, or inadequate to assure representativeness are still to be included in an instructor’s materials (i.e. a candidate standing for tenure would still submit all his or her SRI reports). However, the individual or committee conducting the performance review shall be instructed to be very cautious in using the data in the evaluation.

¹⁵ “In these instances, a downward adjustment occurs not because the instructor was less effective than suggested by unadjusted ratings but because extraneous factors (high motivation, good work habits) played such a large role in fostering student achievement that the teacher’s opportunity to influence progress was reduced. In these cases, instructors should not be penalized for having success with a class of highly motivated students with good work habits.” Ibid.

¹⁶ For example, see Donald P. Hoyt and Eun-Joo Lee, “Technical Report 12: Basic Data for the Revised IDEA System,” August 2002 available at <http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/techreport-12.pdf>.

Statement to be Read to the Students

At KU we are committed to the quality of education. To that end we periodically ask our students to evaluate the quality of our instructors and their courses. Your thoughtful, sincere, and honest answers to the questionnaire will serve two purposes: (1) helping your instructor improve his or her teaching, and (2) helping those who will make decisions about promotion and tenure for your instructor.

A word of caution about the survey questions on the twelve course objectives. No one instructor or class can cover all of them, so your instructor and his or her department have identified those that are most important for this class. Therefore, you will likely find that you won't evaluate your instructor highly on all twelve; this is to be expected, and the less important objectives will not factor into the final evaluation.

Your responses will not be seen by your instructor until after final grades for the course have been submitted to the Registrar. Your responses and comments are to be anonymous, so please do not sign your name anywhere. Please do not write in the "Comments Section" on the reverse side of the form; instead, use the extra sheet of paper you were provided for any comments you may have.

Appendix

KU's Current SRI Instrument

<http://www.kutztown.edu/idea/pdfs/KU-SRI.pdf>

IDEA Diagnostic Instrument

http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/Student_Ratings_Diagnostic_Form.pdf

IDEA Faculty Information Form

http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/Student-Ratings_Faculty_Information_Form.pdf

Sample IDEA Report

<http://www.theideacenter.org/sites/default/files/AXReport.pdf>