

## **Classroom Observation Policy (passed 3/6/14, adapted 2/26/15)**

The SUNYIT *Guidelines and Recommendations to Candidates for Preparing Portfolios* states the following information and supporting documents are to be included for SUNY Board of Trustees Criterion II. Effectiveness in Teaching:

- Teaching evaluations based upon observations of colleagues.
- Written observation reports should be included in the portfolio.

This policy sets forth guidelines to be followed in classroom observations for faculty **holding academic rank as defined by Art. II, 1.j. of the 2014 Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees:**

1. **Pool of Observers:** The Chair will work with the department faculty to identify a pool appropriate faculty members from the department who will conduct the observations. The pool should consist of at least four (4) experienced faculty members. Ideally, the pool should include only tenured faculty members. However, in some departments that may not be possible.
2. **Candidate Selection of Observers:** The candidate will choose two (2) of the members of the pool to serve as classroom observers.
3. **Scheduling the Visit:** The candidate and the observers will work together to identify an appropriate date and time for the observation. Observations are not to be made on days when the entire class period is devoted to the students taking an examination. Observers may not make unannounced visits to the class. Candidates are encouraged to notify their classes in advance of the planned observation visits so student anxiety will be reduced and the class routine will not be unduly interrupted.
4. **Preparing for the Visit:** The candidate will provide the observers with a copy of the course syllabus and will briefly discuss the instructional goal for the class session when the visit will occur. Observers should also be provided with copies of any handouts that will be given to the student during the class period.
5. **Visit:** Observers will arrive and be seated before the class begins. They will sit quietly in the back of the classroom and will not participate in class discussion. Observers will not have access to any grade information shared with students that. Except in the case of emergency, observers will not leave until a break or until the class ends.
6. **Written Reports:** Observers will prepare a written report to be shared with the candidate, the Chair, and other faculty members who are participating in the candidate review process.

Classroom observations should be done every semester for faculty members who are not yet tenured. The written observation reports included in the candidate's portfolio should demonstrate continued development of teaching effectiveness over time.

Departments should provide training for observers and should develop guidelines to ensure consistency in the way observation data is collected and used.

## **Online Course Observation Policy**

Faculty members who teach some or all of their loads online should also have their online courses observed. The same guidelines should be followed as above except for #5 Visit. In this case, the observers will need to have access to the online courses. The following guidelines will apply:

1. The candidate and the observers will determine the best time of the semester to observe the course. The candidate will request guest access for the observers. Guest access will only permit the observers to see posted material for the students and to read discussions that may be taking place. Guest access does not permit the observer to see the course grade book or any graded submissions from the students. Guests have no editor rights so they will not be able to add to, delete, or modify any of the course content. Guest access will only be granted for a short observation time (a few days).
2. The candidate will have the right to obtain logs or other records of any access activities. (UUP Technology Issues Committee, Best Practices for Online Learning, Updated 5/22/2013)