



Boulder Faculty Assembly

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

BFA Diversity Committee Draft Resolution on
BFA Support for Removing Biased FCQ Measures for Evaluation of Teaching in Promotion, Tenure,
Reappointment, and Merit Evaluation - Amended
BFA-M-1-040518

*Moved forward by the BFA Diversity Committee to the BFA Executive Committee on 2018 March 19
Moved forward by the BFA Executive Committee to the full Assembly on 2018 April 5
Amended and emailed to BFA Representatives on 2018 April 25 for consideration prior to May Assembly
With 23 votes in favor; 10 opposed; and 2 abstentions the Resolution carried on 2018 May 5*

Whereas experimental studies,¹ observational data from within CU,² and studies by CU-Boulder faculty,³ suggest that student evaluations of Professors and Instructors using tools such as Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs) may be biased against members of several protected classes, including race, ethnicity, and/or gender; and

Whereas non-discrimination laws and the University of Colorado's own policies prohibit discrimination against members of protected classes in employment matters;⁴ and

Whereas using a biased instrument to evaluate employee performance is a form of discrimination; and

Whereas CU-Boulder's official policy is that "The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to providing an inclusive environment where all individuals can achieve their academic and professional aspirations free from discrimination, harassment, and /or related retaliation based upon protected classes,"⁵

Therefore, now be it

Resolved that the Boulder Faculty Assembly recommends that:

1. FCQ questions should not ask students to evaluate the instructor in a way that the instructor's personal identity characteristics are highly likely to be brought into question. Specifically, the current questions that ask students to "Rate the instructor overall" and "Rate the course overall" should be immediately removed; and
2. Consistent with the policies of the University of Colorado,⁶ the CU-Boulder Campus works to replace current FCQs with a student evaluation that is evidence-based and uses questions designed to

¹ <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/170984>, accessed 12/04/17;

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1615/JWomenMinorScienEng.2017013584>, accessed 12/04/17;

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/14/study-says-students-rate-men-more-highly-women-even-when-theyre-teaching-identical>; accessed 3/14/18

² <https://www.colorado.edu/fcq/sites/default/files/attached-files/ethgendeffects.pdf>, accessed 12/04/17

³ <http://amj.aom.org/content/53/2/238.abstract>, accessed 12/04/17

⁴ A list of relevant Federal laws and CU policies are available at <https://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination-and-harassment-policy-and-procedures> , accessed 12/04/17

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ <https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/1009>, accessed 4/10/18; see also <https://www.colorado.edu/fcq/>



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limit bias against protected classes. Potential frameworks for doing so are currently in development at many universities, including federally funded efforts on the CU-Boulder campus.⁷ In this process,

the campus should conduct appropriate evidence-based studies at CU to understand and limit bias as much as possible.

3. Whether or not FCQs are revised or replaced, awareness of biases in evaluation must be increased campus-wide.
4. Consistent with University and Campus policies around reappointment, promotion, and tenure,⁸ multiple measures must be used in evaluations of teaching. Evaluation committees at all levels of the University should give weight to measures that are likely to have the least bias.
5. Given that it may be impossible to eliminate bias from survey data, it may be most appropriate to consider using surveys such as FCQs as formative assessments that help guide revision of teaching and curriculum, and not for summative personnel evaluations.

Approved by the BFA Executive Committee: March 19, 2018

Approved by the BFA General Assembly: May 5, 2018

⁷ <https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/>, accessed 12/04/17

⁸ <https://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/1009>, and <https://www.colorado.edu/facultyaffairs/career-milestones/reappointment-promotion-and-tenure/relevant-policies-and-procedures-0>, accessed 3/7/18. See also report by then AVC Todd Gleason: <https://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/facstaff-old/docs/MultipleMeasures.pdf>, accessed 3/7/18