

# Improving Teaching Through Peer Review: INnovation of Process

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# Revising the Peer Review Process

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- Scoured literature for best peer review practices; Wendy surveyed other institutions
- Interviewed faculty and administration (Hort., CALS)
- Wendy and I revised the process used in Hort.
- Fine tuned process with a Hort. committee fall 2016
- Solicited feedback from faculty in other departments through the CALS Teaching & Advising Committee
- Developed and gave a “Hallmarks of Effective Teaching” seminar to Dept. to demonstrate to reviewers what to look for in their course observations
- Piloted the new process in spring and maymester 2017

# Peer Review Components

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- Review of course materials
- Pre-observation meeting
- Observation of at least 2 class sessions
- Post-observation meeting
- Written report that follows template provided

**Initially estimated that the process would take approximately 15 hours**

# Additional Assistance

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- For reviewers
  - Attend a Hallmarks of Effective Teaching seminar (by Wendy and Anne)
  - Attend a seminar/workshop on conducting a successful peer evaluation
- For instructors
  - Seek out assistance on how to assemble a teaching portfolio



# The Pilot Study

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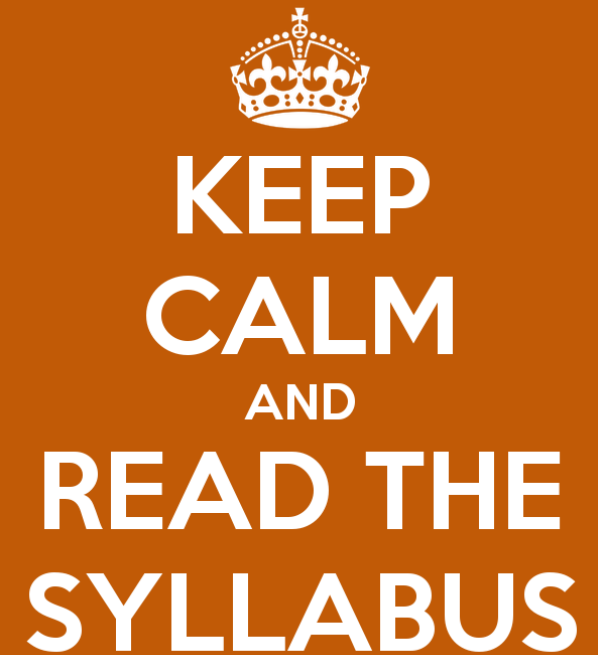
- 7 instructors reviewed
- Teams of 2 and 3 reviewers, across ranks, 11 faculty in total involved



# Successes of Peer Review Process: Benefits of Reviewing Course Materials

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- Benefits of reviewing course materials:
  - Excellent approaches to syllabus design
  - “Fresh eyes” on a syllabus helps catch errors
  - Informs faculty about course content and how it fits into curriculum
  - Faculty learned how courses could dovetail better together, strengthen student learning



# Successes of Peer Review Process: Pre- and Post- Observation Meetings

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- Pre- and post-observation meetings **most beneficial** for instructor and reviewers
  - Learned about University regulations
  - Teaching tips and strategies, and inspiration
  - Opportunity for open discussion about strengths and weaknesses of course
  - Learned more about others' subject area



# Successes of Peer Review Process: 2-3 Class Observations

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- Opportunity to see instructor/class interaction first hand
- Get ideas for your own class
- Learn new information





# Peer Review Process: The Final Report

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## Successes

- Template provided ensured final reports were consistent across reviewers
- Forced reviewers to note successes of course AND give constructive criticism
- Dept. head and upper admin. valued thoroughness
- Reviewer reflection on what they learned/how they could improve their own teaching

## Challenges

- Most time consumptive aspect of the process
- Some faculty felt some categories were redundant
- Realization that some of the categories were not reviewers' job

# Overall Reaction

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## Positives

- Dialogs about teaching
- Seen as valuable by faculty
- Actual process of peer review helps reviewers on their teaching
- Builds relationships between faculty
- Helps junior faculty with teaching early

## Negatives

- A lot of work for faculty member with small teaching load
- Difficult to get all data into report
- Entire process is a bit cumbersome—can we simplify it?
- A few faculty not willing to do all steps

# Best Practices

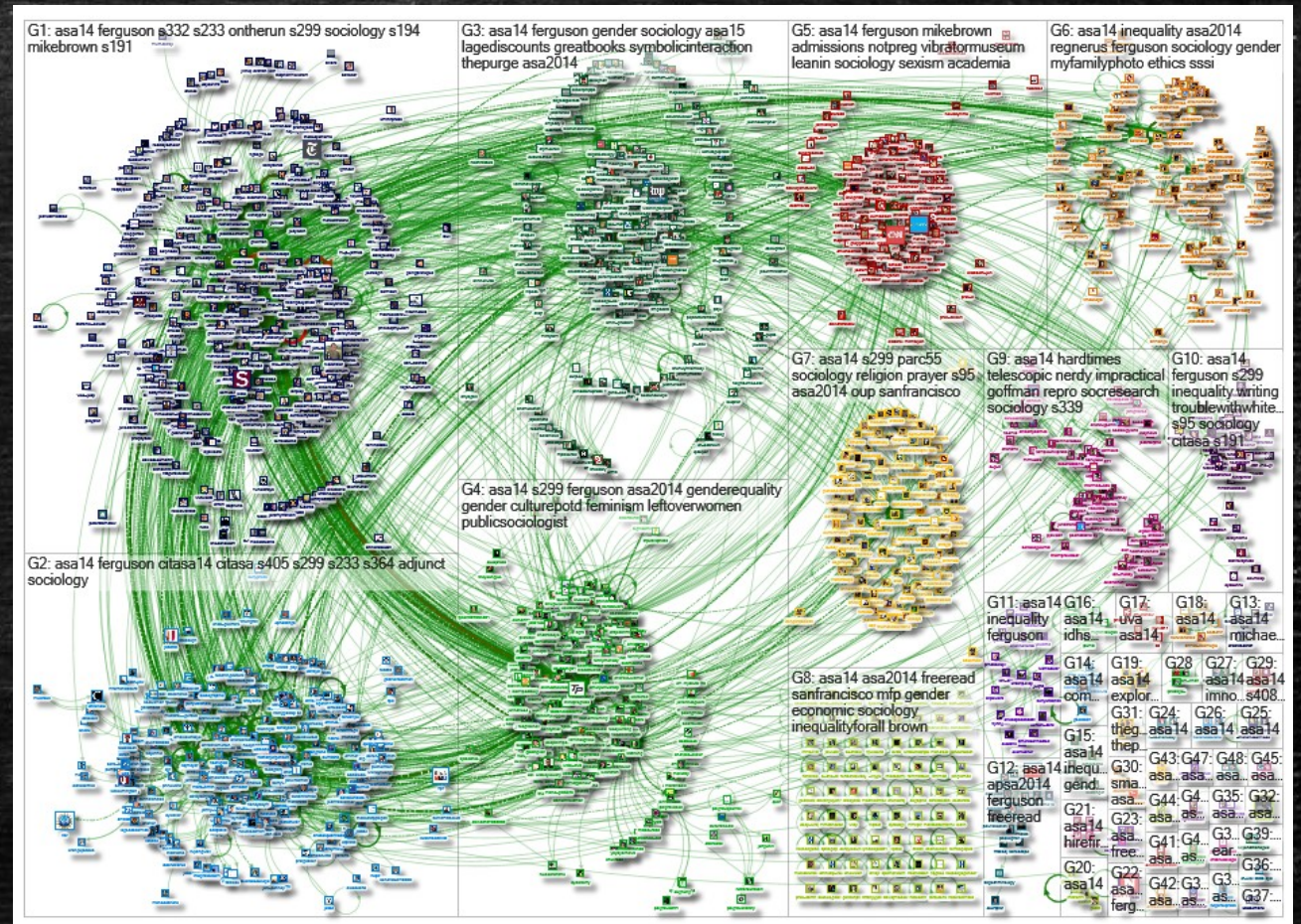
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- Point of Contact person to
  - Help organize overall effort
  - Send gentle/not so gentle reminders
  - Be available for assistance
- Lead reviewer assigned to help drive assigned review
- Rough draft of report completed and used to guide post-observation discussion
- *Include research and extension faculty as additional reviewers*



# Remaining Hurdles

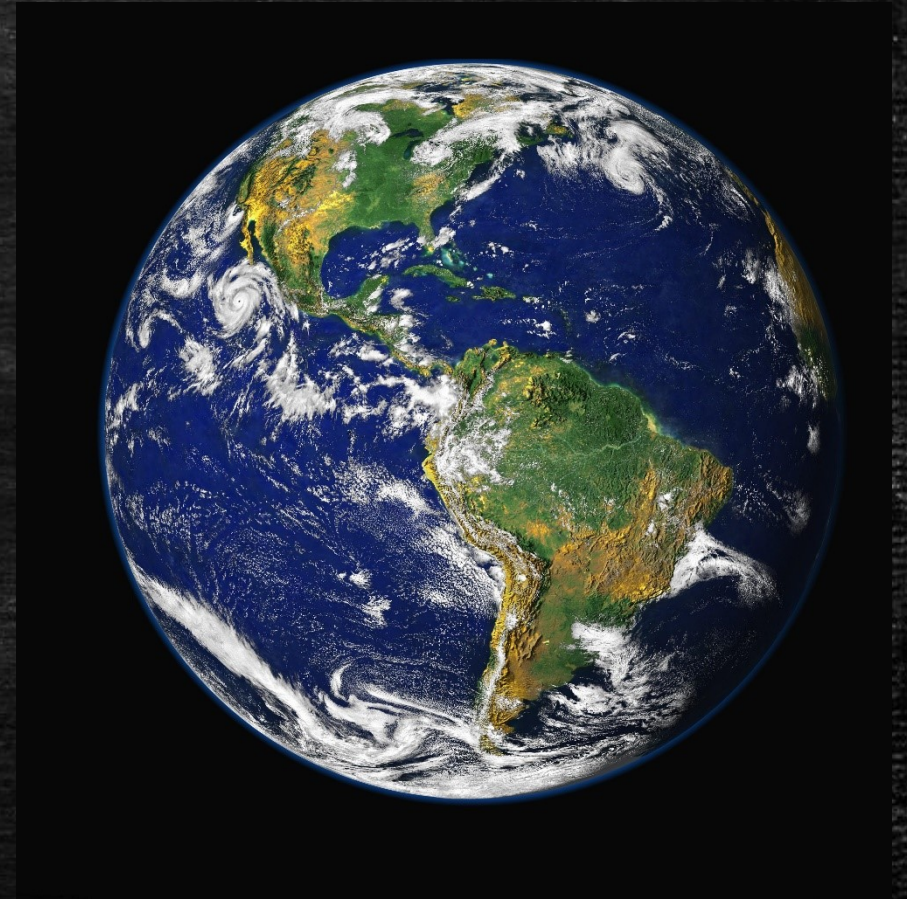
- Add a course materials assessment rubric to process
- Streamlining data into final report (most time consumptive part)
- Will successful completion of peer review process occur if not championed by one person? (and if not, can that be added to a faculty member's SME?)
- Metrics



# What's Next?

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- Fine tune the process one more time
- Encourage other departments in college to pilot
- Embed best teaching practices AND best peer review into Dept. and College kick-off events; seminar series, etc.
- Ensure faculty receive credit for participating in review process



# We need to hear from you!

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# Thank you!