ADVANCE BU is an NSF-funded program designed to increase intersectional equity among faculty, through evidence-based initiatives.

Cultural Change
Increase awareness of and appreciation for diversity and equity to create a culture of fairness, mutual respect, and inclusivity

Structural Change
Engage the campus in revising policies and processes for greater equity and transparency in annual review and tenure, promotion, and retention

A&A
(Advocates and Allies

ACT
(ADVANCE-informed Chair Training)

IDEAS
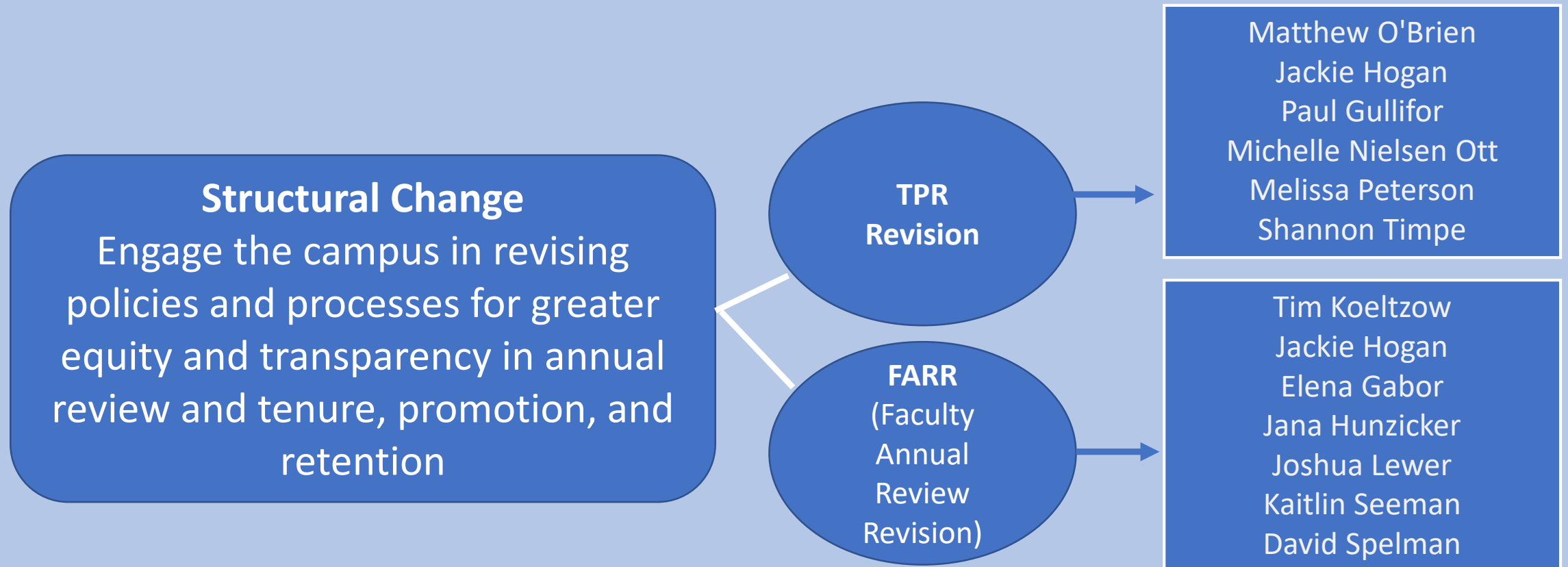(Increasing Diversity, Equity and Solidarity)

Equity Dashboard

FARR
(Faculty Annual Review Revision)

TPR Revision

The goals of the TPR Review and Revision Team and the Faculty Annual Review Revision (FARR) Team are:

1. To review current practices
2. To provide recommendations for revision

Structural Change
Engage the campus in revising policies and processes for greater equity and transparency in annual review and tenure, promotion, and retention

TPR Revision

FARR
(Faculty Annual Review Revision)

Matthew O'Brien
Jackie Hogan
Paul Gullifor
Michelle Nielsen Ott
Melissa Peterson
Shannon Timpe

Tim Koeltzow
Jackie Hogan
Elena Gabor
Jana Hunzicker
Joshua Lewer
Kaitlin Seeman
David Spelman

"Bradley University strives to maintain an academic environment that supports superior teaching, the primary mission of the University" (*Faculty Handbook* 2024: 44).

FARR: Key Questions about How Bradley Evaluates Teaching

1. What are our current practices at Bradley?

2. Do those practices need to change?

3. If so, how?

Methods: Step 1

In Spring 2024, ADVANCE BU surveyed Bradley chairs about how they evaluate teaching and their perceptions of the efficacy and equity of current evaluation methods.
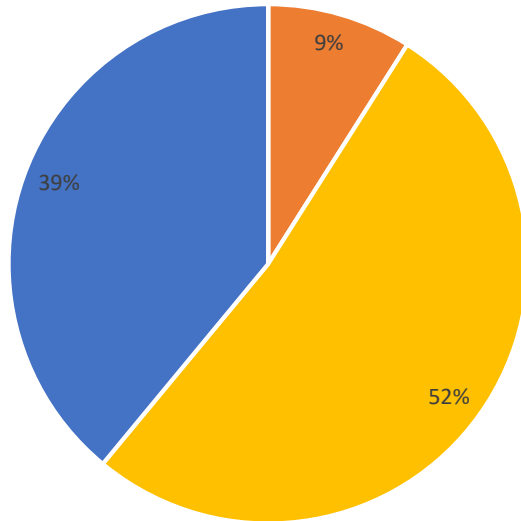
We had a response rate of 72%, with

chairs from all five colleges and

the library responding.

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Results

How effective do you think your department's current methods are at evaluating teaching performance?

- Not at all effective
- Slightly effective
- Moderately effective
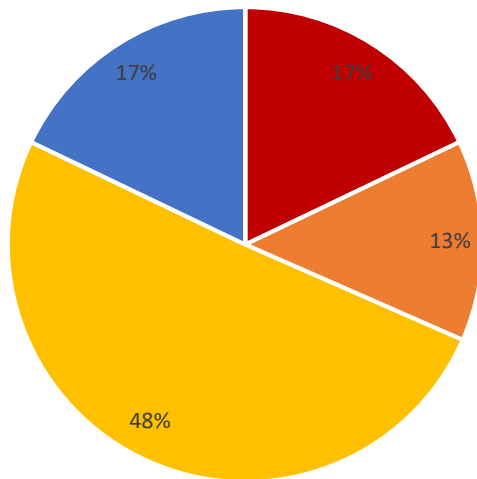- Very effective
- Extremely effective

9%
39%
52%

Only 39% of Chairs reported that their methods of evaluation were very effective.

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Results

How equitable do you think Bradley's current methods are at evaluating teaching performance regardless of faculty gender, race, nationality or other social status?

17%

13%

48%

17%

- ■ Not at all equitable
- ■ Slightly equitable
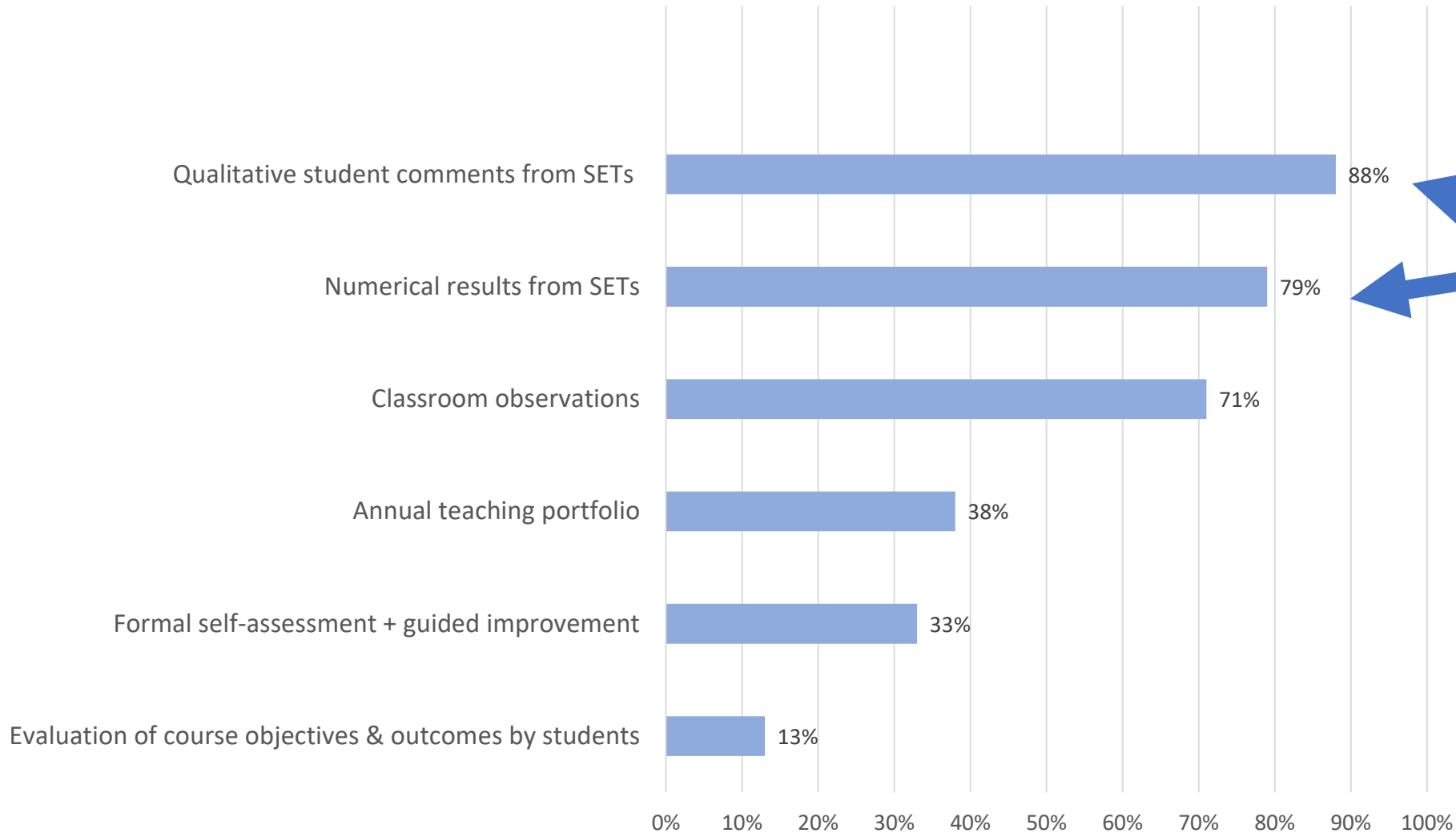- ■ Moderately equitable
- ■ Very equitable
- ■ Extremely equitable

Only 17% of Chairs reported that their methods of evaluation were very equitable.

Results

Which of the following do you use when evaluating teaching performance?

Problem: Limitations of SETs

Limits of student expertise	Student feedback is crucial. However, most students are not experts in pedagogy or the subject matter of the course.
Technical inadequacy	1. Poor (or inverse) correlation between SET scores and student learning, and home-grown instruments not tested for validity/reliability. 2. Not administered in standardized ways. Low response rates may capture only extreme views, and are not statistically valid. 3. Failure to use a common question set renders comparisons across departments problematic.
Biased results	Systemic bias against women, faculty of color, and other marginalized groups are well-documented. Marginalized groups more likely to receive abusive or discriminatory qualitative comments.
Misinterpretation and misuse of data	Although SET numbers provide a semblance of objectivity and comparability, variations between courses mean that comparing the SET numbers for different faculty or different courses is seldom comparing "apples with apples." While SETs can be a valuable source of formative feedback, they are only one piece of evidence of teaching efficacy, and should not be used as the sole evidence for summative evaluation (annual evaluation).

Methods: Step 2

The FARR Team reviewed every student course evaluation form on campus.

- 395 total questions; 45 unique questions

  - Significant variability in number and type of questions (ie., not "apples to apples")

- Questions were reviewed to find those most likely to yield reliable and equitable results.

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Based on this review and the SET research, we formulated 9 Recommendations:

1. That each unit formally articulate what it means by "effective teaching"

2. That we rename SETs to Student Experience Questionnaires (or similar terminology) to better reflect the nature of the data.

Full details of recommendations, rationale, and supporting literature will be posted at https://bradley.edu/sites/ADVANCEBU/reports/

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Recommendations:

3. That the surveys provide students with guidance on offering constructive feedback

For instance, "Your feedback will be used to improve this course. When providing written comments, please **be specific** (providing examples whenever possible). Focus on **observed course practices** (rather than general characteristics of the instructor or the course, e.g. "too strict" or "too hard.") **Be respectful** (abusive / derogatory comments based on race, gender, age, etc. are not appropriate or constructive).

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Recommendations:

4. That Bradley adopt a list of common questions to be included on every evaluation to allow for more valid comparisons across the institution.

5. That each unit choose two or more <u>CONTEXT</u> questions, two or more <u>COURSE</u> questions, and two or more <u>INSTRUCTOR</u> questions from the final menu of questions (from a drop-down menu in Canvas). Only COURSE and INSTRUCTOR questions will be used   to generate numerical averages.

6. That, if desired, units include customizable, discipline-specific questions for the purposes of formative evaluation (not factored into numerical averages).

<u>Draft Context Questions (Not included in instructor's numerical average)</u>

On average, how many hours per week did you spend outside of the class doing readings, reviewing notes, and any other related work for this course?

  0-2
  3-4
  5-6
  7-8
  9-10
  11+

How many absences have you had in this course?

  0
  1
  2
  3
  4+

What, if anything, might you have done differently to be more successful in this class? [Open response.]

<u>Draft Course Questions (Included in instructor's numerical average, except open response):</u>

The course syllabus or Canvas site provided clear and detailed information about course objectives, schedules, assignments, and policies (about grading, attendance, class participation, etc.).

The course enabled me to acquire new knowledge or skills and/or to reconsider my understanding of the subject.

The course structure, content, and presentations were clear and well organized.

Course activities, assignments, and assessed work corresponded closely to course materials and objectives.

What were the three (or more) most valuable concepts or skills that you gained from the course? [Open response.]

Draft Course Questions (Not included in instructor's numerical average)

What aspects of this course would you suggest changing in the future to improve student learning? Check all that apply. [Not included in instructor's numerical average.]

- The syllabus or Canvas site
- Course materials (textbook, readings, manuals, PowerPoints, etc.)
- In-class activities (lectures, discussions, group work, etc.)
- Tests and examinations
- Assignments
- Grading
- Instructor's preparation for each class period
- Instructor's knowledge of the subject
- Instructor's responsiveness to students
- Other, please specify [Open response]

Draft Instructor Questions (Included in numerical average)

Class sessions were engaging and contributed significantly to my learning.

The instructor treated students with respect and fostered an environment where I felt comfortable sharing my ideas.

The instructor provided timely and constructive feedback of my work.

Did you ever reach out to the instructor outside of class with a question or concern?

The instructor was available to meet with students or respond to student questions or concerns outside of class.

I would recommend this instructor to other students.

Draft Instructor Questions (Not included in numerical average)

Which of the following contributed positively to your learning in the class? Check all that apply.

- Lectures and presentations
- Discussions, group work, and other classroom activities
- Quality of texts and other instructional materials
- Assignments
- Instructor's enthusiasm
- Instructor's responsiveness to student questions, concerns, and needs

What suggestions do you have for changes that you think would improve student learning in the class? [Open-response.]

Recommendations:

7. That units adopt uniform, discipline-appropriate methods for administering the surveys to maximize response rates. (Continue give surveys only to courses with 5 or more students, due to limited statistical validity of small sample sizes.)

8. That Bradley consider adopting a review protocol for the removal of abusive or discriminatory evaluations from the instructor's record.

9. That survey data comprise only a portion of the overall annual summative score for teaching. Adopt additional complementary practices.

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Recommended Complementary Evaluation Practices:

- Classroom observations by Chairs or peers
- Review of syllabus/course materials
- Assessment of Student Learning
- Teaching-related activities in Watermark
- Annual Teaching Portfolio
- Formal Self-assessment/guided improvement

Full details of recommendations, rationale, and supporting literature will be posted at https://bradley.edu/sites/ADVANCEBU/reports/

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Discussion

Questions about our recommendations or rationale?

Initial thoughts or concerns?

Questions for Dr. Barta?

We have retained a numerical scale in places to allow for numerical averages, but due to problems with reliability and validity, some universities are adopting non-numerical scales. (eg. "Contributed to my learning; Neutral; Hindered my learning"). Should we consider this?

Other questions or comments?

Next steps

✓ Read our full recommendations at
https://bradley.edu/sites/ADVANCEBU/reports/

✓ Participate in campus forums this spring to discuss and refine recommendations

✓ Send additional feedback to ADVANCEBU@Bradley.edu

Thank you!