To Faculty Council and EPUS:

Preface:

The BFA Executive Committee would like to express its appreciation for the work being done on the Faculty Evaluation process. We admire your objectives as we understand them, to make the process

- More valuable to faculty
- Simpler and less time-consuming
- To be taken more seriously by students and seen as more constructive by faculty

We approve the idea of encouraging administrative support for faculty who would like to do a mid-term formative evaluation and think that is a good step in the right direction.

Boulder faculty also feel strongly, however, that the positive effects of such a proposal depend on its being the choice of each faculty member rather than a mandate. A midterm diagnostic assessment could be very valuable to some faculty and yet counter-productive to others. The pedagogical concerns behind this unanimous opinion of the Boulder Faculty Executive Committee, as reflected in the motion below, include the following:

- Such an assessment will be an interruption which takes yet more valuable time from the educational process and comes in addition to the time spent on FCQs.

- Such a feedback process can actually work *against* the quality of teaching in the case of some classes. When one is taking students through a challenging educational experience with higher standards of critical analysis and assimilation of knowledge than students expect, it may be crucial to allow them the full arc of the pedagogical approach throughout the semester before asking their opinion of it. Some of the most sensitive teachers will resist a "diagnosis" that comes too early because negative remarks can be traumatizing and tempt them to teach to those who least understand or appreciate the most important aims of a class.

At the same time, as the motion also reflects, there is a great deal of interest in discussing the evaluation of faculty teaching on the Boulder campus. We have just learned that, in addition to the BFA, Fred Anderson, Chair of the Arts and Sciences Faculty Governance Council has planned to make the subject a priority for discussion in the coming academic year. He, as many of us, was unaware of the valuable work being done by EPUS. The Boulder campus would therefore appreciate the chance to take part in a widely inclusive discussion of the subject.
In summary, we think the objectives and efforts in regard to the FCQs on the part of Faculty Council and its EPUS committee are a highly commendable step forward in addressing one of the issues of most concern to faculty. Because it is such a highly-charged issue, we also think that choice of a mid-term diagnostic evaluation is critical, and that the opportunity for widespread discussion on the Boulder campus would be a boon to all concerned.

The Boulder Faculty Executive Committee motion in this regard, which was approved without dissent (14 for, 0 against, 5 not responding), follows:

**Be It Moved That:**

1) The diagnostic mid-semester assessment proposed in The "Draft Revision to the Faculty Handbook, Part 3, Page III-21" be included in the Faculty-Course Evaluation process *only* as a recommendation to faculty, not a requirement;

2) Thorough feedback and majority approval from the Boulder Faculty Assembly be given before any required changes to the Faculty-Course Evaluation process are made a part of the Faculty Handbook.

Notice of Motion to the Executive Committee:  June 2, 2000
From:  Cathy Comstock
Approved by BFA Executive Committee:  June 6, 2000