



# 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  
**BFA-M-1-040518**

**Whereas** experimental studies,<sup>1</sup> observational data from within CU,<sup>2</sup> and studies by CU-Boulder faculty,<sup>3</sup> 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;<sup>4</sup> 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,"<sup>5</sup>

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 Regents of the University of Colorado,<sup>6</sup> the CU-Boulder Campus works to replace FCQs with an alternative "Faculty-Course Evaluation" method that is evidence-based and eliminates or mitigates the effects of 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.<sup>7</sup> In this process, the campus should conduct appropriate evidence-based studies at CU to ensure non-biased questions.

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<sup>1</sup> <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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cu.edu/regents/policy-4b-faculty-course-evaluation>, accessed 12/04/07; see also <https://www.colorado.edu/fcq/>

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



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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,<sup>8</sup> 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. This should include student feedback gathered in ways that mitigate biases.

*Approved by the Executive Committee: March 19, 2018*

*Approved by the General Assembly: May 5, 2018*

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<sup>8</sup> <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 Gleeson: <https://artsandsciences.colorado.edu/facstaff-old/docs/MultipleMeasures.pdf>, accessed 3/7/18