College of Liberal and Fine Arts
Guidelines for Mandatory Peer Observation of Teaching
December 1, 2013

The following guidelines are supplemental to UT System “Guidelines for Faculty Peer Review of Teaching” and the UTSA Provost’s “Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching.” COLFA guidelines are intended to promote consistency of evaluation across the college. They reflect the collective opinion of COLFA department chairs regarding best practices. Alternative procedures at the deparmental level are permissible provided they meet System and Provost’s requirements and do not introduce substantial variation.

These guidelines pertain to System-mandated peer observations required for inclusion in all tenure and promotion reports. Departments may elect to conduct other peer observations for purposes of annual merit evaluation and the improvement of teaching that are not subject to these guidelines.

- Time and effort devoted to peer observation should be commensurate with the actual utility of the observation results.
- As an extension of System policy, all third year review reports in COLFA will also include peer observations of teaching.
- Peer observers should be tenure-track and/or tenured faculty from the same department as the instructor.
- The Department Chair, in consultation with the DFRAC, may determine if circumstances warrant the addition of one or more observers from another department.
- The course to be observed will be selected by the Department Chair in consultation with the instructor.
- Departments should develop short observation forms to guide the process and responses.
- The selected course should be observed a minimum of two times by a minimum of two observers.
- Departments shall develop timelines which accommodate established UTSA Third-Year Review and Promotion and Tenure DFRAC reporting deadlines.