

# Bias Disclaimer in Course Evaluations

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*A Few Titles of Research Articles and Studies:*

**Students Praise Male Professors**

**What's in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching**

**Gender and cultural bias in student evaluations: Why representation matters**

**Mitigating gender bias in student evaluations of teaching**

## Issue at stake:

- Female faculty at universities often receive unconstructive feedback based on their appearances and dress style rather than based on their academic expertise and knowledge of the topic.
- Research also shows that students tend to give perceived female faculty lower overall scores on faculty evaluations than they do perceived male faculty, regardless of actual gender or performance.
  - This suggests gender bias exists in how students rate their professors

# Proposal

Add a disclaimer page at the beginning of course evaluations which includes:

- An explanation of how student evaluations often include gender bias
- Students should be aware of their own biases when completing the evaluation
- Refrain from describing personal attributes, focus constructive criticism or compliments on the technical aspects on the instructors ability to teach.

Students would be asked to read and agree to the goal of an unbiased evaluation of the course

## Example Disclaimer:

Prior to starting this course evaluation please take a moment to consider the intent of this activity and refrain from basing answers on personal attributes or other factors that would result in biased scores. Gender bias is a serious issue and one that is often evident on course evaluations. Your scores and suggestions should be on the technical aspects of the course and the instructors ability to convey information. For more information on gender bias please feel free to contact your academic advisor.

# Expected Results

1. Immediately prior to proceeding with the evaluation, the student has a mental self check for their own biases. This helps to dispel said biases.
2. Brings the idea of bias in evaluation, a very real diversity issue, into the students mind as a method to get them thinking about more diversity issues.
3. Course evaluations will be more fairly graded on quality of teaching.
  - a. Benefits all professors and graduate students equally, as of now female teachers are receiving less benefits from evaluations.
  - b. Improves the quality of female faculty because they will receive more constructive criticism
  - c. Greater likelihood of promotion, tenure, hiring
  - d. Develops role models for young women pursuing STEM, thus increasing diversity in STEM

# References

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