

International Forum on Teaching Evaluation

Engaging the campus community in online teaching evaluation



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AGENDA



STRATEGIES	QUESTIONS/IDEAS	ACTIONS
#1: Multi-level Support for Development of Evidence-based Teaching & Learning Priorities		
#2: Establishment of Implementation Working Groups to Engage Range of Stakeholders (Administration, Faculty, Students)		
#3: Strategic Communications: Faculty/Staff, Students		
#4: Educational Resources		
#5: Modeling How to Use Data for Continual Improvement		



OUR GOALS

To provide a model for the development of an evidence based course evaluation framework

To reflect on 5 strategies and their impact – for consideration in your own context

To develop some key questions/ideas/actions to take back to your own institution

WHO'S IN THE ROOM?

- Faculty members?
- Students?
- Institutional staff – IT, policy, teaching support, administrative?
- Academic administrators/leaders?
- Other...?



PARTNER INTERVIEW: 6 minutes: 3 minutes each!

“Tell me about your context...”



1. Is your institution's approach to course evaluation centralized or decentralized?
2. Is your institution:
 - going online?
 - changing its instrument?
 - doing both?
3. How are course evaluations carried out?
4. How are course evaluation data used?
5. What is a priority for you? What's your most pressing question?

Your assessments function not only as data collection tools, but as messengers...



They tell a story about what you value with respect to teaching.



**ARE WE
ASKING THE
RIGHT
QUESTIONS?**

University of Toronto approach to this challenge...

Need to understand a bit about U of
T's *learning landscape*



COMPLEX &
decentralized
institutional
model

17
faculties/
divisions

87,000+
students



Canada's
LARGEST
university

3 city
campuses

14,000+
faculty

HISTORICALLY...

The University of Toronto's approach to the assessment of teaching prior to the new framework



- At least 33 different instruments across the institution
- Lack of consistency in overall priorities for student learning experiences at the University of Toronto
- Lack of attention to survey design best practices
- Lack of consistency in analysis and application of course evaluation data

TENSIONS RESULTING FROM THAT APPROACH

- Awareness of the *tension* between, as an institution, “**are we asking the right questions** in order to get the information we need?” *and...* “**are our questions reflecting the diversity** across our academic disciplines/programs with respect to pedagogy?”



FACULTY OF
ARTS & SCIENCE

OUR SOLUTION

We married these 2 priorities



1

Asking the right questions

2

Recognizing diversity across our academic disciplines & programs with respect to pedagogy

OUR SOLUTION

And addressed 2 sets of tensions



1

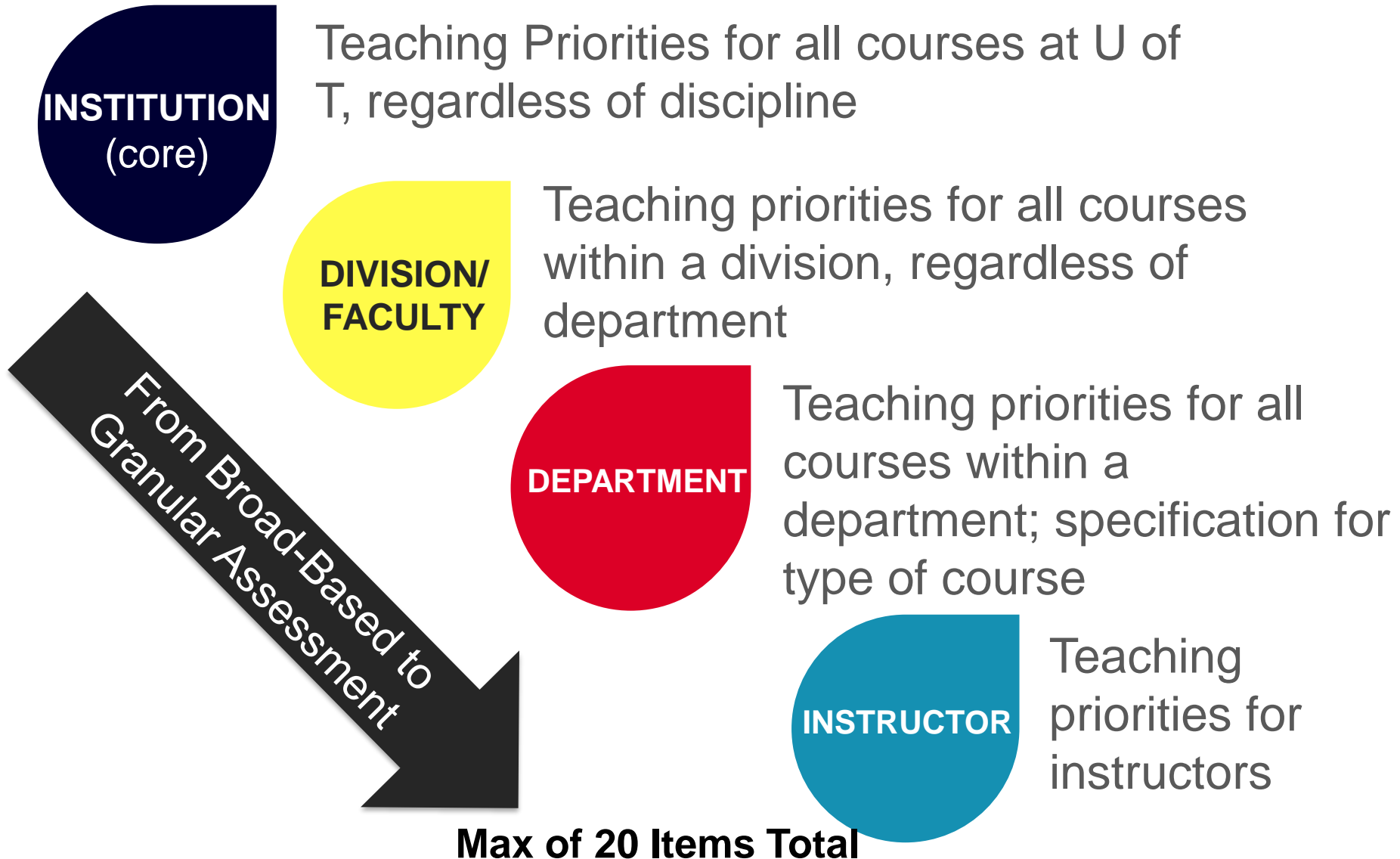
Centralized vs decentralized = **BOTH!**

2

Summative vs Formative = **BOTH!**

THE CASCADED ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Course Evaluation Framework at U of T



BLUE

- UNIQUE APPLICATION THAT:
 - designates core/fixed questions and incorporates **instructor-selected questions** from item bank





We needed strategies to bring this change to the community:

5 Key Elements

- 1. Teaching & learning priorities**
- 2. Working groups**
- 3. Strategic communications**
- 4. Educational resources**
- 5. Use of data for improvement**



**KEEP
CALM
AND
GET ON
BOARD**

STRATEGY #1:

Multi-level support for
development of evidence-based
teaching & learning priorities

PRIORITIES FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

(determined prior to implementation)

INSTITUTIONAL

PROVOSTIAL WORKING GROUP – 2009-2011

- Review of internal practices and instruments to identify common goals, characteristics
- Scan of peer institutions
- Review of literature (HEQCO report: Gravestock & Greenleaf, 2008)
- Broad consultation to prioritize key expectations for teaching & learning
- **Development of new course evaluation framework**

DIVISIONAL

DIVISIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES IN CONSULTATION WITH CTSI (starting with pilot in 2011)

- Review of internal practices and teaching contexts – tried to capture entire student learning experience
- Broad consultation with Divisional sub-committee to determine key expectations for teaching & learning
- Selection of priorities informed by literature, local context and institutional priorities

IMPACT of Strategy #1:

- Better assessment: information gathered reflects priorities and communicates teaching & learning values
- Shared understandings of teaching effectiveness





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STRATEGY #2:

Establishment of
Implementation Working Groups
to Engage Range of
Stakeholders (Administration,
Faculty, Students)

CENTRAL WORKING GROUPS



Provostial Course Evaluation Framework Working Group:

- led 1-year pilot in 4 Divisions

Once implementation was underway:

- **Course Evaluation Advisory Group**
- **Technical Advisory Group**



**Students engaged
at multiple points**

DIVISIONAL WORKING GROUPS



Phased implementation: division by division

- Led by Dean's Office
- Representation includes Registrars, students, administrative staff, faculty, senior leaders
- Setting divisional guidelines around CE data; local communications strategies; selecting/designing of Division-specific items (with assistance from CTSI)

IMPACT of Strategy #2:

- Engagement of stakeholders influences buy-in.
- Consultative approach paired with transparency of information is key.





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STRATEGY #3:

Strategic Communications:
Faculty/Staff, Students

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

For Faculty/Staff

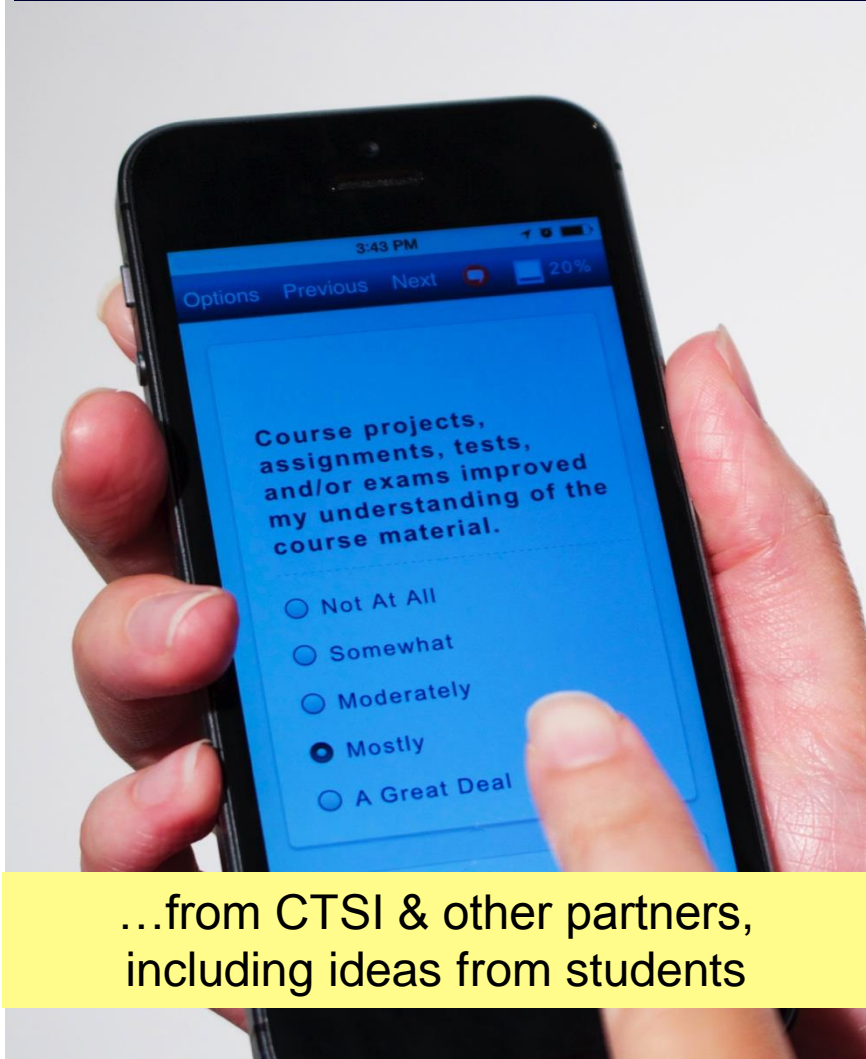


- Branded newsletter sent to all Divisional representatives at key points each term
- System emails sent to instructors at key points each term
- Regular webinars for administrative staff
- Blogs/presentations on issues related to course evaluations
- Just-in-time slides for lectures

...ALL FROM CTSI

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Getting Students Engaged



...from CTSI & other partners, including ideas from students

- Poster
- Social media & web presence
- Banners
- Articles/messaging (student blogs, newsletters, web sites, etc.)
- Videos
- System and Portal messages
- Messaging on publicly accessible computers (e.g. Library)
- Flyers
- Direct messaging from the Vice-Provost
- Videos with instructors highlighting how they use their CE data

IMPACT of Strategy #3:

- Improved accuracy and trustworthiness of data collected
- Strong instructor engagement
- Stable response rates





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STRATEGY #4:

Educational Resources

#1 Factor that Influences Student Engagement & Participation in Online Course Evaluations:

INSTRUCTOR ENGAGEMENT

- Importance of **endorsement, support, effort**; also, **encouragement** (e.g. posting their own reminders, sending their own email reminders)
- Importance of instructor-led **education** on uses of data – students understood role of course evals in decision-making; showing personal interest in data is key



Anderson, Cain & Bird (2005); Ballantyne (2003); Crews & Curtis (2011); Guder & Malliaris (2010); Murhy (2004); Perrett (2013); Robinson, White, & Denman (2004); Johnson (2002); Johnson (2003); Sorenson & Reiner (2003); Stowell et al. (2012)

EDUCATION RESOURCES

- FAQs for instructors, students and staff
- Presentations to relevant stakeholders on the new framework, timelines, process, etc.

Guides for Instructors

- how to add course evaluation items to forms
- how to interpret data
- how to improve courses using data

Guides for Administrators

- how to interpret data
- how to use data to mentor faculty

Guides for Students

- how to provide effective feedback
- how evaluation data are used



**IMPACT of Strategy
#4:**

**SUPPORTS INFORMED
USE OF THE DATA AND
GUIDES EFFECTIVE
DECISION-MAKING**



**KEEP
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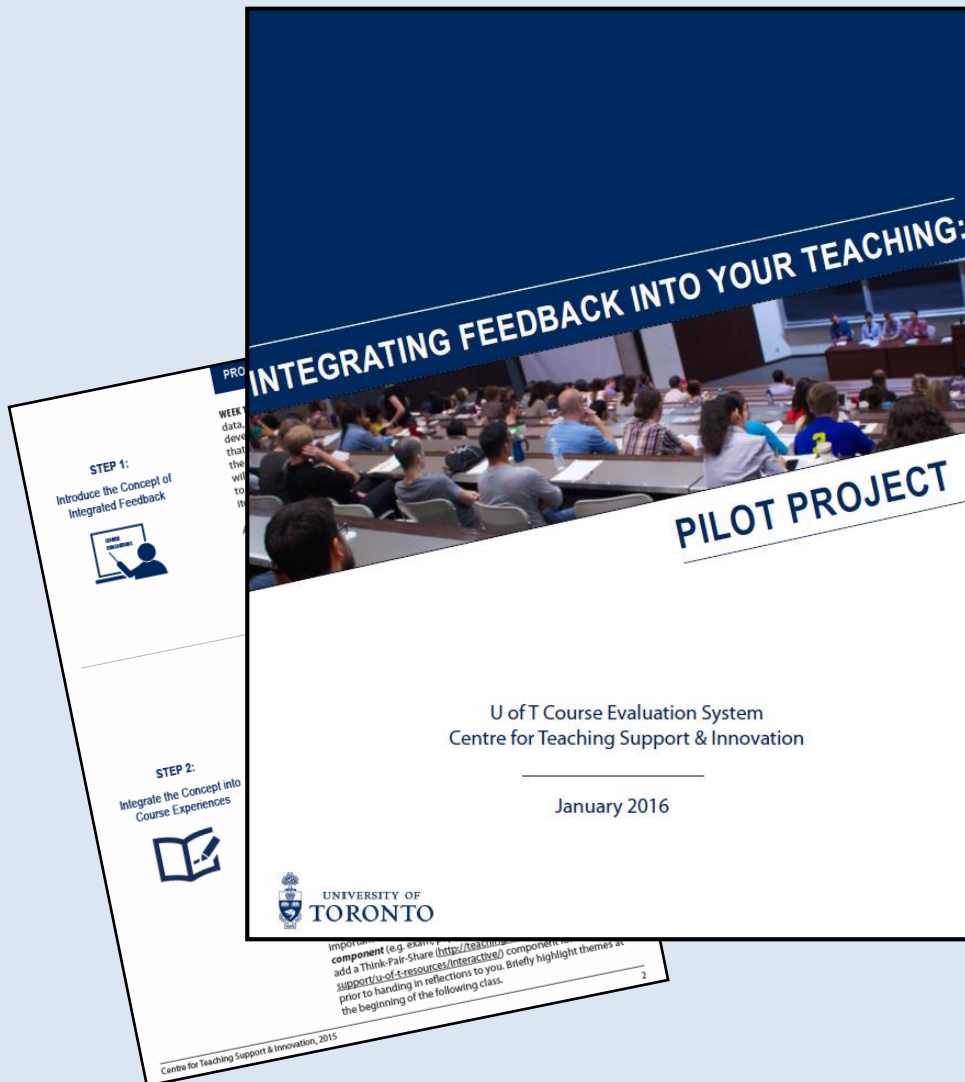
STRATEGY #5:

**Modeling How to Use
Data for Continual
Improvement**

SoTL Network
Use of course
evaluation data to
guide development of
inquiry questions for
Scholarship of Teaching
and Learning (SoTL)
projects



Integrating Feedback Into Your Teaching Pilot



Guided process for collecting and applying mid-course feedback that feeds into selection of instructor items at end of course

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Faculty Mentoring for Teaching Pilot



TEACHING ENHANCEMENT THROUGH P2P: Reviewing Course Evaluations to Inform the Mentoring Journey

This guide will help you identify areas of focus for the mentor-coaching process in the P2P Pilot (the desired change, learning, and growth for you), informed by your course evaluation data. As you use the steps below to review your course evaluation data, take notes and aim to identify approximately three possible areas of focus (see page 5 or 8).

STEP 1: Gather and organize your course evaluations for the course you want to focus on in P2P (January 2017 Term).

We recommend that you ideally select **ONE** course:

- that you are teaching this term
- that you have taught more than once
- for which you have identified a need and/or desire for improvement
- in which you tried something new or would like to try something new

IMPORTANT NOTE: NOT ALL P2P PARTICIPANTS ARE IN DIVISIONS USING THE NEW U of T COURSE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK/ONLINE SYSTEM.

- **SECTION A** = for instructors who are in divisions using the new U of T course evaluation framework/online system.
- **SECTION B** = for instructors who are not in divisions using the new U of T course evaluation framework/online system.

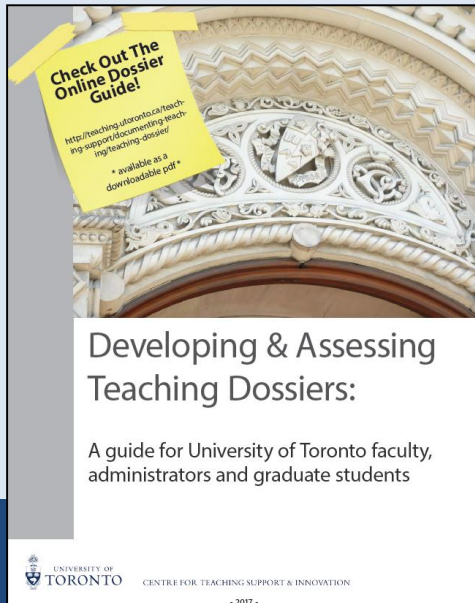
SECTION A

STEP 2 (A): Get to know your course evaluations

Broadly, your course evaluation reports contain three to four sets of items, each of which represent priorities at different levels of the institution. Except for institutional items, the precise number will vary.

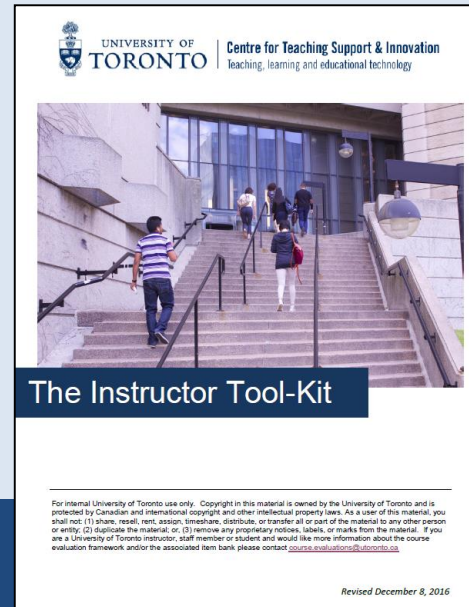
1. Institutional items (these eight are consistent across the entire university)
2. Divisional items (consistent across your division)
3. Departmental items (not present for all departments, but consistent if they are)
4. Instructor items (these items are only reported to you, the instructor, and are only present if you selected instructor items for your own formative purposes).

Intense and guided engagement with course evaluation data to set goals for course design and mentoring/coaching



Developing Your Teaching Dossier Guide

- Guidance for administrators on how to assess course evaluation data as part of review processes
- Guidance for instructors on how to frame course evaluation data in their dossier



Instructor Tool-Kit

Guidance for instructors on how to select questionnaire items that map onto course goals



IMPACT of Strategy #5:

- **Supports the use of these data to improve/inform practice in teaching & learning activities.**
- **Intentionally embeds these data in a range of initiatives.**
- **Expands purpose beyond use of data for personnel/accountability reasons.**

WHAT IS YOUR 1 KEY ACTION?

(see first page of your handout)

Providing **direction** and **support** in an institution-wide change management process
→ Changing assumptions, beliefs, perceptions

BENEFITS IN THE CHALLENGES

Pushing **teaching forward** with academic-driven **evidence & credibility** = some of the best discussions U of T has had about teaching

CLOSING

Alignment & Commitment



Aligning: University's commitment to excellence in teaching

University's commitment to academic and administrative ***rigor*** in the **assessment of teaching**





**BETTER INFORMATION & BETTER
APPLICATION OF INFORMATION
= better teaching & learning experiences for
our instructors & students**



A low-angle, blue-tinted photograph of a classical building facade. The image shows two prominent columns supporting a pediment. The text "Questions & Comments" is overlaid in white, centered horizontally across the middle of the image.

Questions & Comments

THANK YOU



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

www.teaching.utoronto.ca