Psychology Department Direct Observation Guidelines

*Accepted as Department Guidelines effective September 27, 2013*

Voted in attendance: Yes (16), No (1), Abstain (1)

With the goals of addressing the new Senate policy on direct observations (F12-6; Section C.1) regarding Evaluation in Effectiveness of Teaching for All Faculty, and addressing concerns about faculty obtaining all needed direct observations for review, the following establishes the Psychology department’s guidelines for conducting direct observations.

Assignment of Direct Observations: All direct observations will be assigned by the department chair. The observers must be currently employed as SJSU faculty members of at least equal academic rank as the faculty member being observed, and preferably of higher academic rank.

Timeline:

- **Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty** will receive one direct observation per year until 7 years after hire, across the full range of courses taught. Following the 7th year, direct observations will occur every 3 years for all faculty until full professorship is reached. Candidates for promotion to full professor must have at least two different courses observed. Upon promotion to full professor, direct observations will occur upon request for post-tenure review. The Chair, RTP committee, or a faculty member can request additional direct observations at any point.

- Temporary faculty will receive one direct observation per year until 7 years after hire, across the full range of courses taught. Following the 7th year, direct observations will occur at least once during each appointment (e.g., one-year or three-year appointments).

Direct observations will generally occur in the fall semester. Exceptions may include when a class is only offered in the spring, or in the case where a temporary faculty is hired to start in the spring semester (see Senate Policy F12-6, “Faculty in temporary positions shall receive a direct observation in at least one course during their first semester of appointment”). If the person assigned to do the direct observation does not complete his/her assigned observation in the fall, the direct observation will be re-assigned for the spring semester.

Scheduling of the Direct Observation: The individual assigned to do the observation is responsible for contacting the person who will be observed. If the observer does not contact the observee, the observee is responsible for notifying the Chair to ensure that he/she receives an adequate number of direct observations as required by the RTP and contract renewal process.

Observation Instrument: For all direct observations, faculty will use the template adopted by the Department. This template allows a space for observers to acknowledge any unfavorable conditions in the learning environment beyond the control of the observed faculty member.

Direct observation turn-around time: The faculty member being observed receives notice at least 5 working days prior to observation. The direct observation report is due to the observed faculty member and Chair within 15 working days after observation. The observed faculty member has the right to respond to or rebut in writing the report within five working days after receiving the report.
Training for Direct Observers: Although not required, the Center for Faculty Development shall make available training materials and will conduct group sessions, as needed, to instruct observers on best practices when conducting direct observations.

This policy was designed to ensure that faculty obtain the required number of direct observations prior to review. A faculty member who has not received the required number of direct observations will remind the department Chair of the need for additional observations at least one month prior to a periodic review.