

## **Is there gender bias in veterinary student evaluations of teaching?**

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One of several significant concerns regarding the use of student evaluations (SET) as a measure of teaching effectiveness is the potential for bias. Bias, implicit or otherwise, is inherent to the human condition. Virtually all human based systems are subject to bias, manipulation, and misinterpretation. As a result, some educators have argued that bias invalidates SET data and that SET should, therefore, not be part of faculty assessment. In this study, we asked if faculty who are identified as female are put at a significant professional disadvantage when SET are used as a component of evaluating teaching. Gender bias has been well documented in higher education, but those studies have primarily involved undergraduates and/or male dominated fields. Veterinary medicine is unique in that >75% of students and 50% or more of faculty identify as female. Further, students are post-baccalaureates enrolled in a professional program. Our hypothesis was that this context matters. We analyzed 5 years (10 semesters) of SET data from the WSU College of Veterinary Medicine's DVM program. This robust dataset constituted nearly 12,500 student data points from 453 SETs (211 female prof., 242 male prof.). Each SET contained 7 Likert-rated queries and an instructor composite score. Student response rates were high, with a 5-year average of 67%. The data was examined using Welch's T test; unpaired, two-tailed, unequal variance. In this presentation, we will discuss the results of our analysis and a holistic model for addressing bias in evaluating teaching. We will note again that all human based systems are subject to bias, including peer observation.