

Four Purposes of Student Opinion Surveys (SOS)

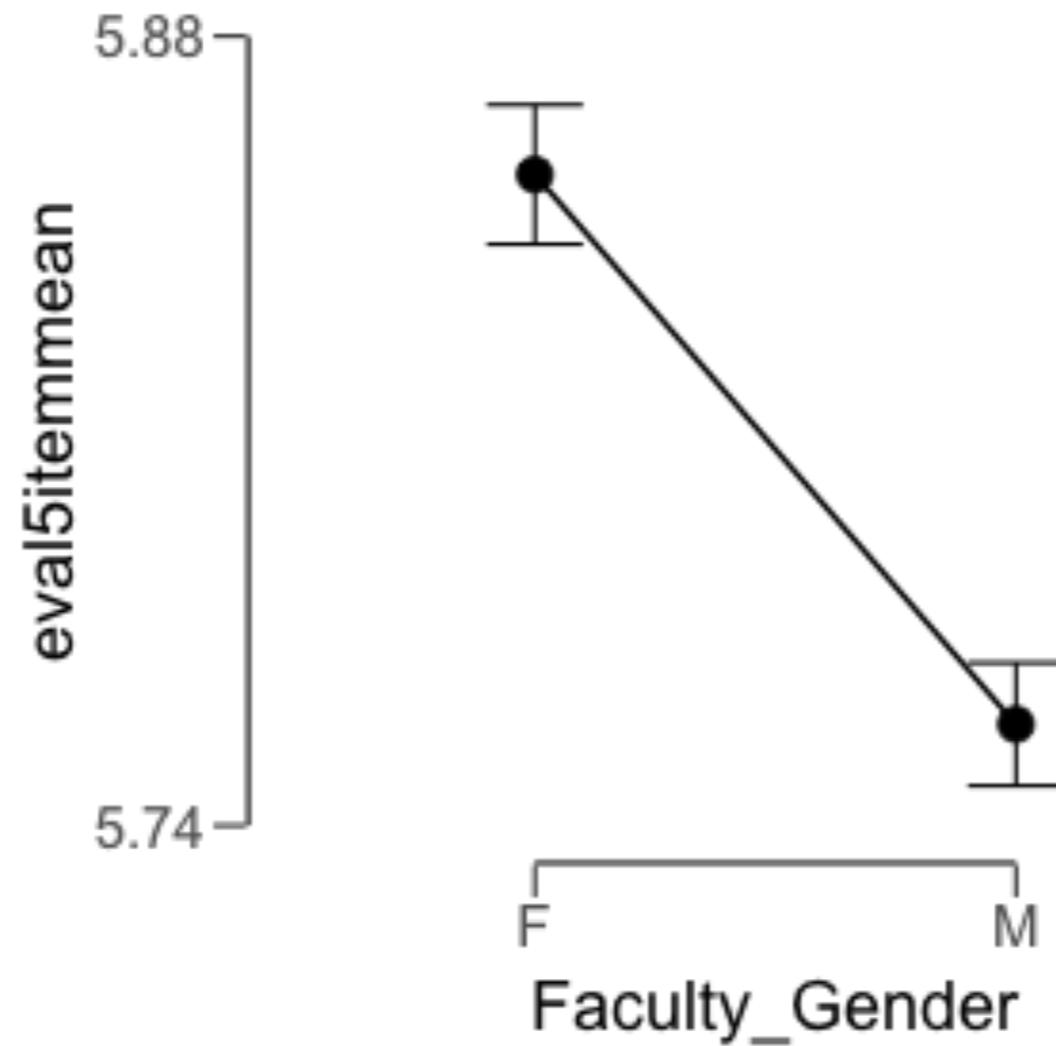
- Provide a direct, anonymous way for students to communicate to faculty members their opinion of how the course was taught – preferably to assist the faculty member in improving the course and its instruction.
- To provide personnel committees and the Review committee with information directly from students about what actually went on in class and alert those reviewing the candidate to problems that might otherwise remain hidden.
- To provide students a voice in their education.
- To assist department chairs in mentoring junior faculty.

Issues with SOS

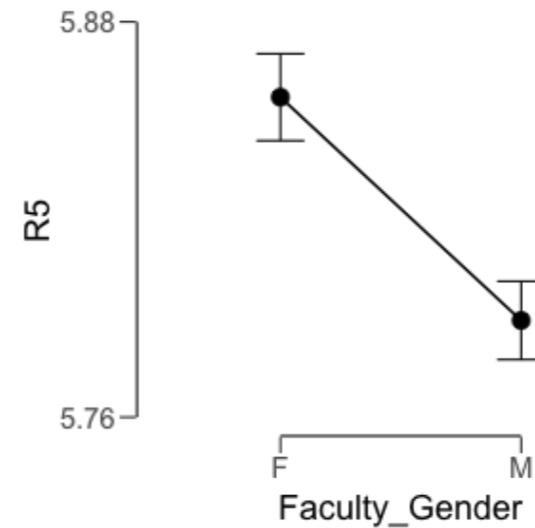
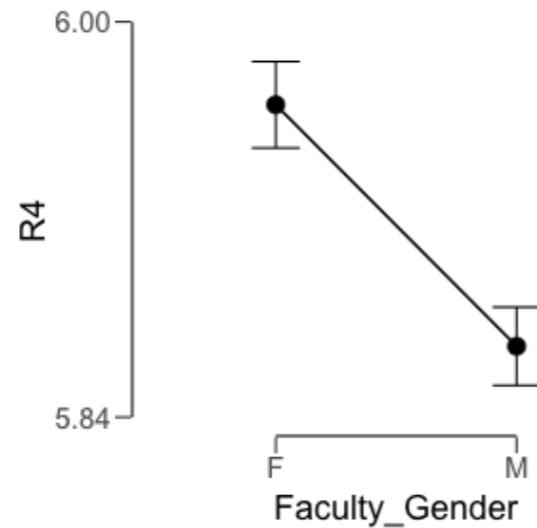
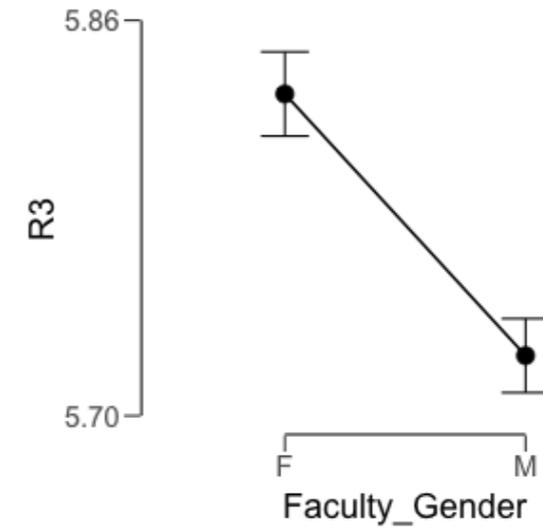
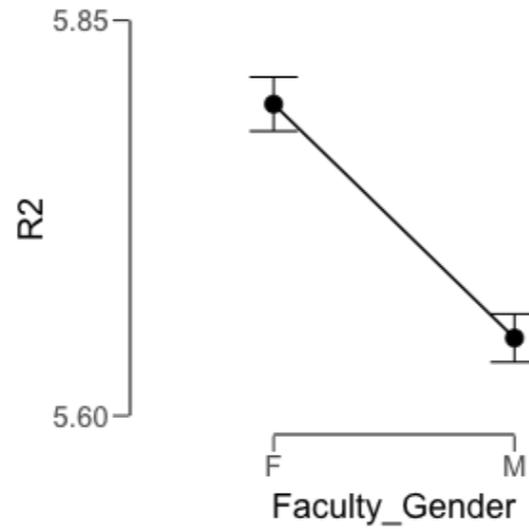
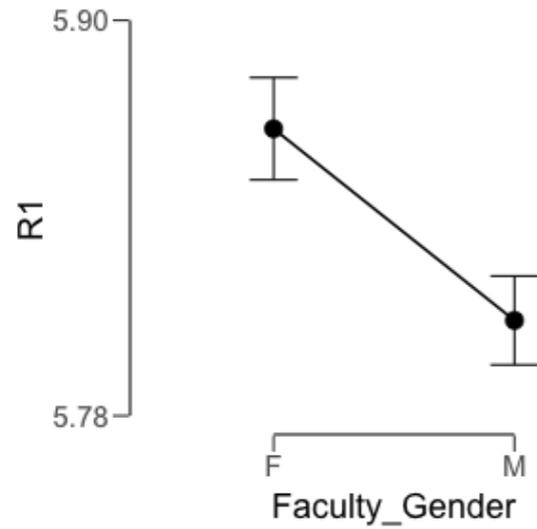
- Potential for Bias, particularly in written comments.
- Discouraging unfamiliar or unusual pedagogies.
- Discouraging risk taking in how we teach especially for junior faculty members.
- Design of our current form.
- Demoralizing effect of negative evaluations especially among women and people of color (see Bias).

Analysis of SOS Data

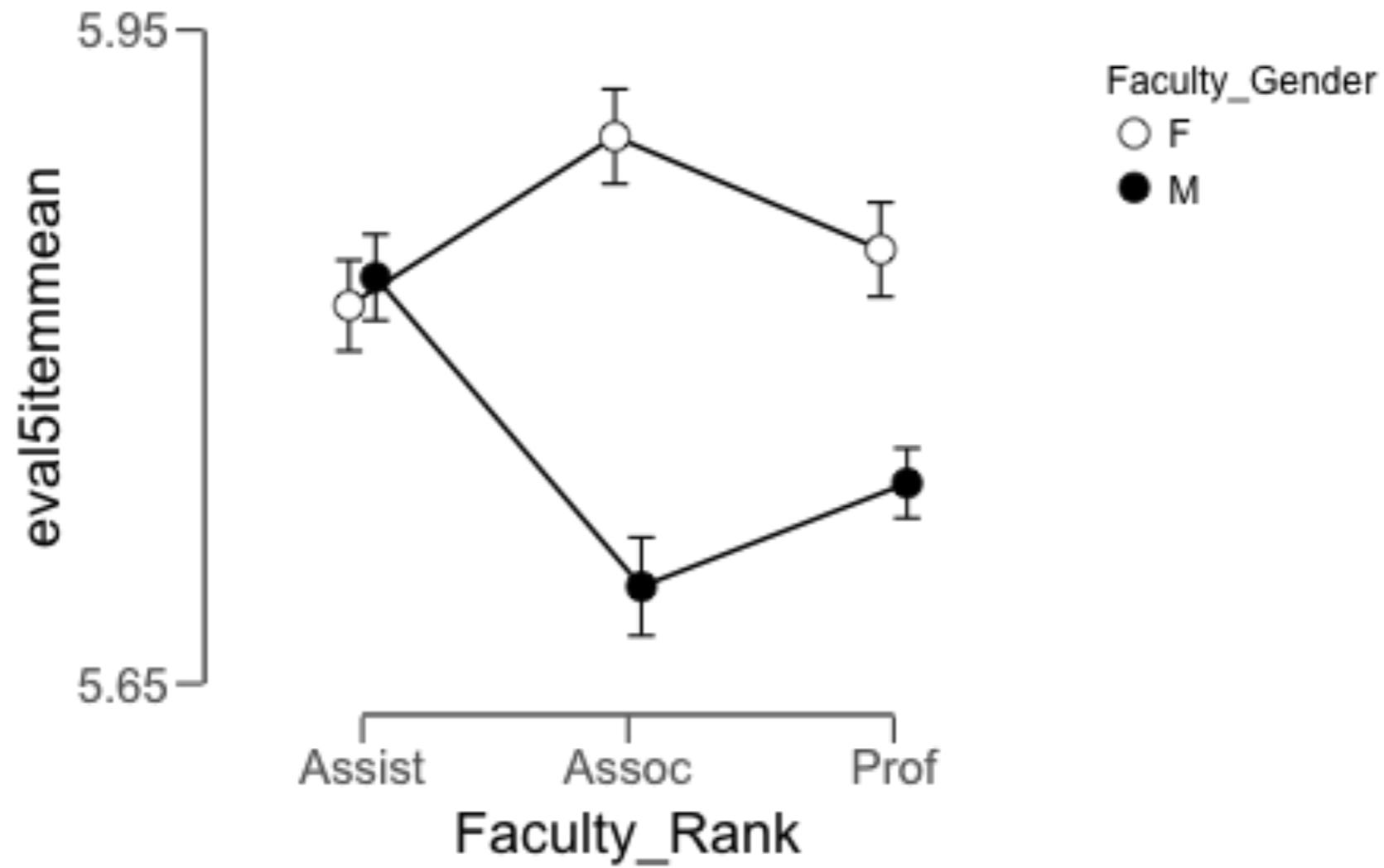
- No evidence in numerical data for gender bias.
- Have not yet included data on faculty race and ethnicity.
- Most prominent predictor for variance in SOS scores is expected grade (4% of variance explained).
- SOS scores increase with course level.
- Course Average Grade (1% of variance explained) is a weak predictor of overall SOS scores.
- Further research is needed to investigate the influence of race and ethnicity as well as to analyze the textual data on each survey item.

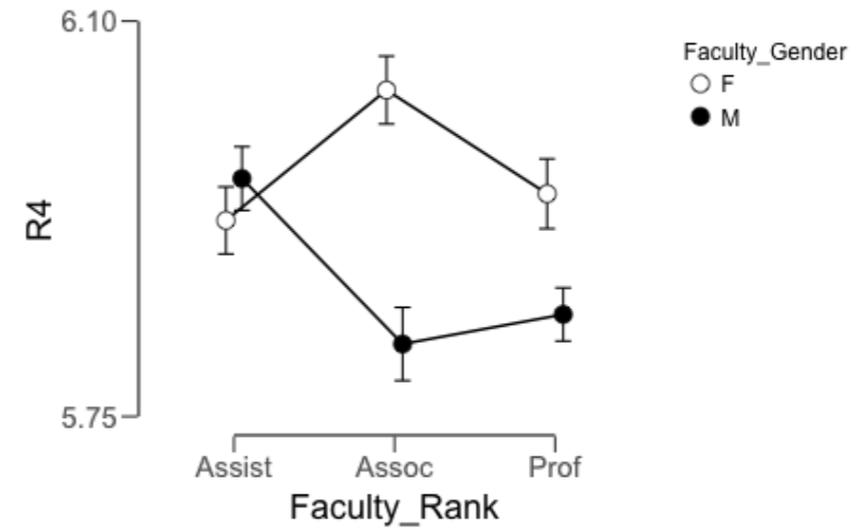
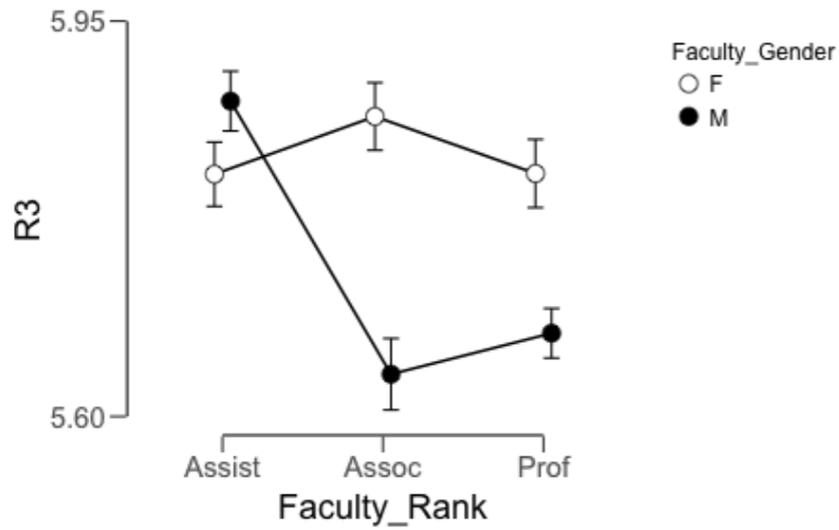
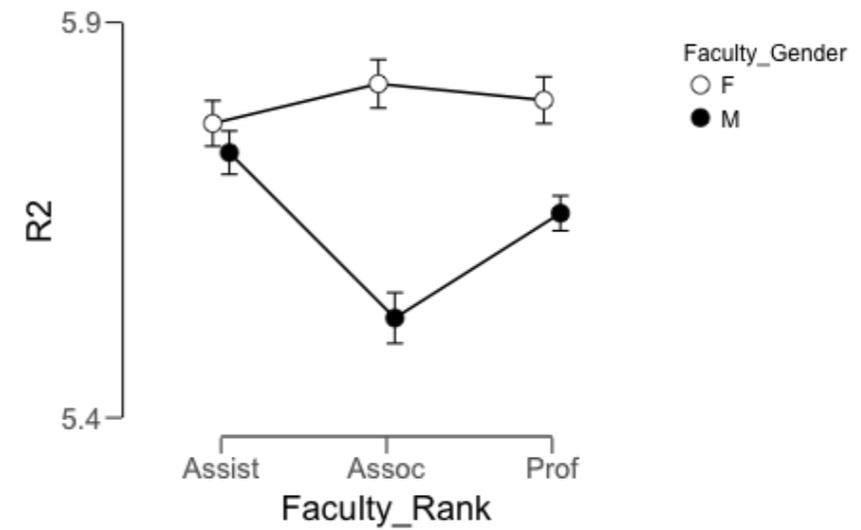
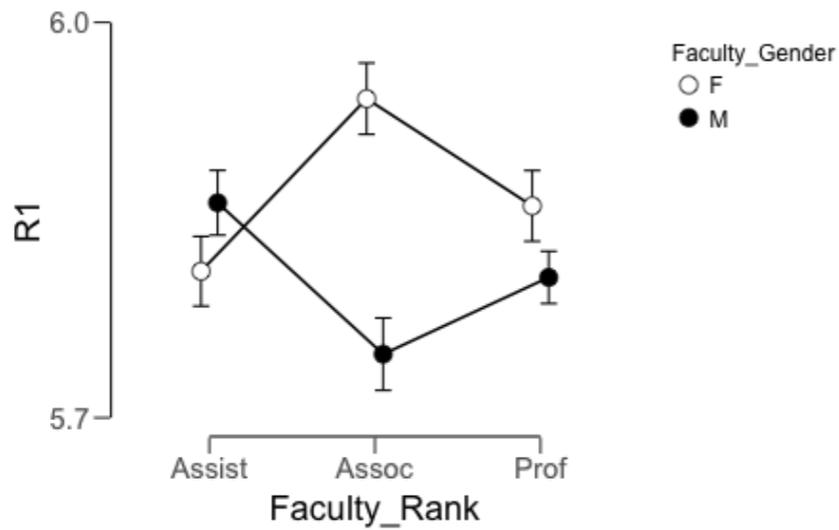


Note: All error bars are 95% confidence interval around mean

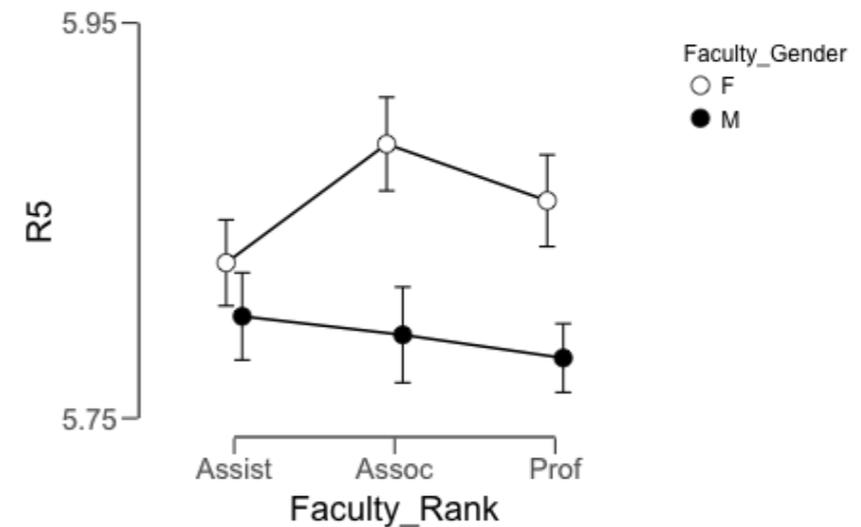


- R1 – Contribution to education
- R2 – Effectively conduct class
- R3 – Responses to work
- R4 – Helpful to learning outside of class
- R5 – Level of effort





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Questions

- Does our current form accomplish the four purposes of the SOS?
- Does our form provide accurate/useful “objective” information? Can any form do this?
- Is it possible for a single form used once at the end of each semester to accomplish all of the four purposes effectively?
- Do we want to accomplish the four purposes using the SOS or are there other ways to accomplish them?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of anonymity?
- How do we help students develop the ability to critique effectively?

Options

- Find ways to accomplish the purposes of the SOS other than the SOS - maybe multiple things.
- Revise our SOS.
- Find a SOS that addresses the possibility of bias or allows us to better manage the bias.