

**THE MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION, STATISTICS, AND ASSESSMENT
DEPARTMENT**

Invite you to Attend the Final, Public Dissertation Defense for:

Katherine Reynolds

Titled:

**MEASURING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACULTY AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE
OF CLASS USING RASCH/GUTTMAN SCENARIO SCALES**

The defense will be held on

Wednesday, March 11th at 2 PM

in

Campion 208

Dissertation Committee:

**Dr. Larry Ludlow (Chair), Dr. Jessica Greene (reader), Dr. Ana Martínez
Alemán (reader)**

Abstract:

Interaction with faculty is one of the most important aspects of completing an undergraduate degree (Chambliss & Takacs, 2014). At traditional college and universities, much of this interaction takes place within the classroom. However, out-of-class communication (OCC) is also an important part of the college-going experience. Participation in OCC has been associated with many positive undergraduate outcomes, such as motivation (Komarraju et al., 2010) and course grades (Micari & Pazos, 2012).

Prior measurement instruments related to OCC suffered from limitations with respect to construct definition and methodological procedures that limit the interpretability and utility of the scores they yield. My dissertation ameliorates these issues in constructing a new instrument that measures students' perceptions of faculty availability outside of class. This instrument is built using Rasch/Guttman Scenario (RGS) scale methodology, which brings together the

frameworks of Rasch measurement (Rasch, 1960/80) and Guttman facet theory design (Guttman, 1954; Guttman 1959). Two scales, each containing seven short scenarios that function as items, were constructed: the Physical Accessibility Scale (PAS) and the Social Engagement Scale (SES). Together, these two scales comprise the Out-of-Class Availability Scales (OCAS). Three facets of physical accessibility and social engagement are identified and represented within the items: arranged meetings, chance encounters, and email.

The OCAS development process and analysis results presented within my dissertation suggest that the RGS methodology is useful for capturing students' perceptions of faculty availability outside of class. The OCAS can also be used by others to conduct future research on the topic of OCC. Because they measure students' perceptions of availability and not frequency of OCC, the OCAS have value as a potential faculty evaluation tool. Even if students choose not to interact with a particular faculty member outside of class, they would still ideally find that faculty member available for such interaction should the need arise. Finally, the RGS scale development process ensures that OCAS scores are accompanied by qualitative descriptions, which enhances their utility and measurement value.