



# Annual Presidential Assessment: Policy and Procedures

**Category:** Governance and Legal;

**Jurisdiction:** General Counsel and University Secretary; Board Executive Committee;

**Approval Authority:** Board of Governors;

**Established on:** January 2014;

**Amendments:** March 28, 2014.

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## I – Purposes and Principles

1. The purposes of an annual assessment of presidential performance are:
  - to review recent performance in a manner which provides guidance and enhances the ability of the president to discharge his/her leadership responsibilities;
  - to evaluate progress towards established goals;
  - to ensure, as needed, the recalibration of goals and measures to be given priority by the university's executive leaders; and
  - to serve as a basis for decisions about presidential compensation.
2. An annual assessment should be conducted in accord with performance management principles. As such, it should have the following characteristics:
  - a) The assessment should relate primarily to executive performance with respect to goals established in advance and related to approved institutional priorities or to other matters requiring attention of the president personally;
  - b) Goals should be accompanied by realistic measures of achievement, including progress to long-term objectives;

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- c) The assessment process should be as focused and streamlined as possible. It should provide useful feedback to the president and the opportunity to modify or adjust the focus of future executive activity.
- d) Assessment considers both what has been achieved and how it has been achieved. Achievement of, or progress to, goals should include consideration of the overall executive leadership capacities shown in the pursuit of these goals, for example in dimensions such as;
- strategic thinking,
  - executive team leadership,
  - stakeholder communications, and
  - dealing with difficult decisions and major unforeseen developments.
- e) Assessment should take place in the context of a 'no surprises' relationship between the president and the board's leadership. In the year prior to the assessment, there should have been regular interchanges between them and feedback about the successes of, and the challenges facing, the university's executive leadership;
- f) The committee undertaking the assessment should be composed of senior external governors. It should be large enough to include a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives among its members. It should be small enough to operate as informally as possible and in an atmosphere in which discussions focus on the opportunities and challenges of executive leadership and on how the executive team and the board can best support each other.
- g) Annual assessment discussions should take place in the context of complete confidentiality between the president and those undertaking the assessment.
- h) The leader of the assessment process shall seek input on a confidential basis from board members and, as necessary, from others. The president shall be informed of, and may comment on, any plans for consultations beyond the board membership.
- i) The process should conclude with: (a) feedback discussions with the president and formal confidential documentation of the process and outcomes and (b) a summary oral report from the board chair in camera to the board.

## II – Detailed Process

### Accountability

3. Assessment of the President is the responsibility of the Board of Governors. An annual presidential assessment is hereby delegated to the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors, to which the Board has assigned responsibility for matters involving employment conditions and compensation and for serving as an advisory body to the Chair of the Board and the President with respect to governance and administrative issues.

On recommendation of the Chair, the Executive Committee may assign the conduct of the assessment review to a subgroup of its members. If so assigned, the subgroup will report its assessment conclusions to the Committee. The Executive Committee will retain its authority over proposed changes in compensation or other contractual terms for the President.

4. Members of the Executive Committee, including the President, should undertake to discuss the work of the Committee only among themselves, except as authorized by this Policy. The Secretary of the University should provide support to the Executive Committee, but should not attend any portion of a meeting in which members or members and the President are discussing the assessment.

### Leadership of the Process

5. The Board Chair is responsible for the overall management of the annual assessment process and for acting to ensure its focus and its timely completion. The Chair has the authority to supplement or modify the provisions of this Policy in ways consistent with the principles in Section I.

### Process

6. For each year of the President's term, the President should prepare by the end of April a statement of his/her goals and objectives for the year starting July 1. The items in the list should relate to the University's long-range strategic priorities and to shorter-range

matters that will require presidential leadership or personal oversight. The statement should include measures of achievement, which the Executive Committee can use to assess progress during year-end discussions with the President.

7. For the first year of a new President's term, Board Chair should request that the President, in selecting his/her goals and objectives, give particular weight to the statements about areas for special presidential attention contained in any official position specification issued during the presidential search.
8. The President's goals and objectives statement should be discussed with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair following which it should be presented in draft form at an Executive Committee meeting, for discussion and recommendation for Board approval.
9. After the above Executive Committee meeting, the President will present his proposed goals and objectives statement for approval at the next Board meeting. The Board's approval of the statement signals the appropriateness of the President's action plan in terms of institutional priorities and the statement's use as the primary reference point in the annual assessment process. The President, the Board Chair and Vice-Chair should consult informally several times during the academic year about on-going work with respect to these priorities.
10. By late April of each year of the President's term, the President should prepare a report on his/her administration's progress with respect to his/her current goals and objectives. The report should be presented to the Executive Committee at a meeting in early May.
11. During April of each year, the Chair will circulate to all Board members another copy of the President's previously approved goals and objectives statement and invite members to provide in confidence to him/her any comments they have with respect to the President's progress with respect to them.

12. In addition, on an annual basis, the Chair may decide, after consultation with the President, to request comments from individuals beyond the Board membership on particular areas of assessment related to the President's goals for that year. The Chair should use his/her discretion about whether to make such requests, taking into account such matters as: whether the annual assessment is proximate in time to an end-of-term presidential review and whether the individuals outside of the Board are likely to have information which may be helpful in the assessment process.
13. The annual assessment provisions and related meetings required by sections 10-12 above and of the first two sentences of section 14 below shall be suspended in a year when the Executive is involved in a comprehensive, multi-year review leading to a decision about the extension or renewal of a presidential term.
14. During May, the Executive Committee should meet with the President to discuss his report on his/her goals and objectives for the year coming to an end. Following discussion, the Committee will meet in camera to review and discuss all input. Subsequently, the Chair and Vice-Chair will meet with the President to review the Committee's conclusions about presidential performance, to convey compensation adjustments, and also to discuss any recommendations bearing on the coming year. The gist of communications considered by the committee in the assessment process should be given (without attribution) to the President as part of the committee's feedback. The Chair and Vice-Chair should convey on behalf of the Executive Committee the bases of its observations and conclusions, both with respect to positive outcomes with respect to goals and areas where goals may not have been sufficiently achieved. The President should have the opportunity to state the basis of any disagreement with the observations and conclusions of the Executive Committee.
15. At the end of the process the Chair will: (i) brief the Board at an in camera session on the highlights and outcome of the process and (ii) summarize the process, the Committee's conclusions and relevant follow up conversations in a confidential letter to the President

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## **Appendix: Summary of Annual Assessment Timeframe for a July 1 – June 30 Year**

April/May: President prepares goals and objectives statement for the July 1-June 30 year; reviews draft with Chair and Vice-Chair; presents draft to Executive Committee for its review and recommendation to the Board.

June Board meeting: President presents the final form of the goals and objectives statement to the Board for approval.

The following April: Board Chair recirculates goals and objectives statement to Board members with a request for comments to be addressed to him/her about the President's performance with respect to them.

Late April-Early May: President prepares self-assessment re previously approved goals and objective statement; also prepared draft of forthcoming year's goals and objectives; President has discussions of both documents with Executive Committee.

Mid-to late May: Chair and Vice-Chair of Board meet with President to review outcome of assessment, convey any advice or guidance from the Executive Committee; communicate decisions about compensation changes.

June: Chair gives summary report re assessment in camera to Board.

**Review Period:** 7 years;

**Date for Next Review:** 2021-2022;

**Related Policies and Procedures:** None;

**Policy Superseded by this Policy:** None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

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