

# Annual Presidential Assessment Policy and Procedures

**Category:** Governance and Legal;

**Jurisdiction:** University Secretary; Board Executive Committee;

**Approval Authority:** Board of Governors;

**Established on:** January 2014;

**Amendments:** March 28, 2014; April 26, 2024.

---

## 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 their 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;

- 
- 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,
  - effective governance;
  - academic excellence;
  - financial management;
  - government relations
  - advancing equity, diversity and inclusion goals;
  - indigenization;
  - sustainability and climate action;
  - stakeholder communications and engagement; and
  - 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 informally, where discussions focus on the opportunities and challenges of executive leadership and on how the Leadership 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 Governors 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 (the Board). An annual presidential assessment is hereby delegated to the Board Executive Committee (BEC) of the Board, to which the Board has assigned responsibility for matters involving employment conditions and compensation and for serving as an advisory body to the Board Chair and the President with respect to governance and administrative issues.

On recommendation of the Board Chair, the BEC 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 BEC. The BEC will retain its authority over proposed changes in compensation or other contractual terms for the President.
4. Members of the BEC, including the President, should undertake to discuss the work of the BEC only among themselves, except as authorized by this Policy. The University Secretary should provide support to the BEC, 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 Board 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 the first year of a new President's term, the Board Chair will request that the President, in proposing their 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. These goals and objectives articulated should be completed by the President and approved by the BEC within eight months of the assumption of their position.
7. 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 a BEC meeting, for discussion and recommendation for Board approval.
8. After the above BEC meeting, the President will present their 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.
9. In April of each year, the Board Chair will circulate to all Board members a copy of the President's current approved goals and objectives statement and invite Governors to provide the Board Chair, in confidence, any comments they have with respect to the President's progress on the approved goals and objectives.

10. By late April of each year of the President's term, the President should prepare a report on their administration's progress with respect to their current goals and objectives. The report should be presented to the BEC at a meeting in early May.
11. In addition, on an annual basis, the Board 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 Board Chair should use their 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.
12. During May, the BEC should meet with the President to discuss the President's report on their goals and objectives for the year coming to an end. Following discussion, the BEC will meet in camera to review and discuss all input. Subsequently, the Board Chair and Vice-Chair will meet with the President to review the BEC'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 BEC's feedback. The Board Chair and Vice-Chair should convey on behalf of the BEC the basis 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 BEC.
13. At the end of the process the Board Chair will:
  - a. brief the Board at an in camera session on the highlights and outcome of the process, and
  - b. summarize the process, the BEC's conclusions and relevant follow up conversations in a confidential letter to the President.

14. The Annual Assessment provisions and related meetings required by sections 9-11 and the first two sentences of section 12 above shall be suspended in a year when the BEC is involved in a comprehensive, multi-year review leading to a decision about the extension or renewal of a presidential term.

### **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 BEC 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 the approved goals and objectives statement to Board members with a request for comments to be addressed to the Board Chair about the President's performance with respect to those goals and objectives.

Late April-Early May: President prepares self-assessment regarding approved goals and objectives statement; also prepares draft of forthcoming year's goals and objectives; President has discussions of both documents with BEC.

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

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

**Review Period:** 7 years;

**Date for Next Review:** 2029-2030;

**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:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-343-8010 Ext. 7929 or Email: [univsec@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:univsec@lakeheadu.ca).