UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT AND STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW POLICY

Policy

The Board of Trustees should annually review the performance of the president. In addition, the board should conduct a comprehensive presidential performance review covering a period of a minimum of three years and maximum of five years.

The purpose of the annual review is to assess progress on institutional priorities and strategic goals; acknowledge accomplishments, strengths, areas for growth, challenges, and support needed to help ensure success; confirm alignment with the university's mission and identified strategic priorities; and to allow the President and the Board to set mutually agreeable goals for the coming year. The annual review will help inform annual decisions on compensation adjustments and other terms of presidential employment.

The purpose of the comprehensive review is broader than the annual review. The comprehensive review assesses long-term effectiveness and progress over multiple years in furthering institutional priorities and strategic goals. The comprehensive review should include a presidential self-assessment; feedback from key constituents on the progress of the President in achieving institutional priorities; and feedback from members of the board that includes focus on the effectiveness of the relationship between the president and the board in the discharge of their respective and collective governance responsibilities.

The review processes are not intended as a substitute for regular, ongoing communication about progress toward goals between the president and the board.

The board shall periodically review and, as necessary or desirable, revise this policy and its associated procedures in light of experience gained, best practices, and legal developments as applicable.

Procedures

Annual review

Criteria and Scope

The annual review will cover the preceding year. The criteria for evaluation and information responsive to those criteria will be based principally on the president's self-assessment with respect to goals mutually set by the board chair and the president, in consultation with the board, for the year in review. The review will encompass input from Trustees, solicited in the manner described below, and such additional information as the board Annual Review Subcommittee may request of the president to assist in its assessment of progress toward the mutually established goals.

President's Self-Assessment

The *retrospective* elements of the president's self-assessment will customarily include:

- A copy of the mutually-agreed upon goals, with a description of efforts to meet them and the president's progress assessment.

- A description of other personal or institutional achievements of which the Annual Review Subcommittee should, or might, be informed by the president as aspects of performance or accomplishment.

- Identification of significant institutional or personal challenges the president faced over the course of the review year that affected progress toward goals, with particular focus on those that are likely to persist into the upcoming year or beyond.

- Presidential self-assessment of relationships with the board, key governance and constituency group leaders, or other significant stakeholders.

- Key areas in which the board has been especially supportive.

The *prospective* elements of the president's self-assessment will customarily include:

- Goals the president proposes for him/herself and the institution over the course of the upcoming year, and (2) next five years.

- The president's professional development plans and any associated requests of the board.

- The president's assessment of the university's principal current opportunities and challenges.

- Key areas in which the president would especially benefit from board support.

The Annual Review Subcommittee

The board chair will appoint an *ad hoc* Annual Review Subcommittee from the membership of the executive committee. The subcommittee ordinarily will be comprised of no fewer than five members. The board chair may, in the chair's discretion, serve as a member of the subcommittee. If the chair serves on the subcommittee, the chair will serve *ex officio* as chair of the subcommittee.

The review and the review process shall be confidential. Following consideration by the subcommittee of the president's self-assessment and input solicited from other trustees, the subcommittee will advise the executive committee (in an executive session from which the president will be excused) of the status of its review. Subsequent to the executive committee meeting, the board chair will, in an executive session from which the president will be excused, convey to the full board the results of the review and provide adequate opportunity for board discussion and deliberations regarding the findings. Promptly thereafter, the board chair will meet with the president to discuss the results of the review. A significant portion of the latter meeting shall include articulation of performance goals for the upcoming year.

The annual review process should generally be initiated in the summer and completed by the fall board meeting.

Setting of Goals

Subsequent to the completion of the annual review process described above, the board chair will, in consultation with the president, establish and memorialize in writing performance goals for the upcoming year. In addition, the chair will convey to the president any recommendations, concerns, or priorities arising out of the review process and the board's discussion of review outcomes. The board shall promptly approve or ratify the goals established by the chair and president for the upcoming year.

Setting of Compensation and other Terms of Employment

In conjunction with its review process, the subcommittee will make a recommendation to the board chair regarding any component of an annual salary adjustment based on merit. Compensation and other terms of employment will otherwise be set pursuant to guidelines adopted by the board, provided that the annual compensation review process shall occur subsequent to completion of the annual performance review.

Comprehensive Review

At approximately three or five-year intervals, the board chair will initiate a comprehensive review process.

Criteria and Scope

The comprehensive review, the purpose of which is described above, will be based on the president's self-assessment of progress toward goals mutually set by the board and the president, including those articulated in the institutional strategic plan; all previous reviews, including annual reviews; input solicited from trustees, leaders of governance groups, senior administrators, and significant constituencies and stakeholders with direct and substantial knowledge and experience with the president and the university, regarding progress toward established institutional goals and the effectiveness of relationships necessary to furthering those goals and to maintaining sound institutional governance.

The Review Committee

The board chair will appoint an *ad hoc* Comprehensive Review Committee from the membership of the board to be comprised of no fewer than five members. The board chair will serve as a member and chair of the review committee. In addition, the chair may, following consultation with the board, retain a qualified consultant to assist in the review process, including creation of interview questions, conduct of interviews, and development of recommendations for enhancement of the performance effectiveness of the president and the president-board relationship.

The Review Process

In addition to the procedures outlined above for the comprehensive review, the following procedures will apply:

- Prior to commencement of the comprehensive review process, the chair will summarize for the board the steps associated with the process.

- The university community will be informed of commencement of the review through a communication from the board chair and president. The purpose, scope, and procedures associated with the review will be described in the communication.

- The substance of the review process, including deliberations, shall be confidential.

- The review process will customarily be completed within approximately 6 months of its initiation.

- The results of the review, including recommendations, will be discussed and synthesized by the review committee, with the assistance of any consultant the university may have retained.

- The chair will review the results of the review with the full board in executive session, from which the president will be excused. Following provision of an adequate opportunity to deliberate regarding the review results, the chair will promptly meet with the president to share the result of the review. The chair will convey to the president any recommendations or specific requests and expectations associated with the review, which will be memorialized as an amendment to the President's annual performance goals.

- At the conclusion of the foregoing steps, the Board Chair will issue a final communication to the University community announcing completion of the review process.

Adapted from: AGB Board Basics *Annual Presidential Performance Reviews* (2001)
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