

Report from the Ad-Hoc Senate Committee on Administrator Reviews May 17, 2021

Charge: The charge was to (1) investigate the methods and processes for performance evaluations of upper administrators at PSU; (2) study models at other universities and organizations outside of the academy; and (3) develop recommendations for procedures to conduct a comprehensive administrator review process. If the Senate were to recommend updating policies so that they included input from faculty and others in the review process, a continuation of this work would be required.

Committee Members: Brenda Glascott, chair; Lynn Coupland, Yasmeen Hanoosh, Brad Hansen, Lee Shaker, Christopher Skinner, Gary Smith

Initial Research: The Ad Hoc Committee was formulated late in the Fall of 2020, and began meeting in Winter 2021. Subcommittees were formed to investigate review processes at comparator institutions, at other Oregon government agencies, and best practices used in review processes outside the academy. The commonplace “360-Degree Review” process used for evaluating management by most non-academic entities is not normally used in higher education or other government agencies. Selected results of research to date appear as Appendix I of this report.

Observations about Current Review Processes: A collection of forms, including self-evaluations, review templates to be completed by supervisors, and instructions for completing the forms resides on the Human Resources web page, and these are referenced on the OAA page. Since this is a personnel matter, developing University Policies and defining procedures for upper administrator review is the responsibility of Human Resources. It is not a Faculty Senate issue, except to the degree that faculty are involved in the review process. The lack of faculty input in these reviews is in sharp contrast to the 360 reviews used to evaluate non-academic managers and to the best practices employed by our peer institutions. In short, Portland State’s current approach to administrator reviews is underdeveloped. The assessment forms themselves are well-constructed and thorough, however they are completed by the person to whom an administrator reports with no formal process for collaboration or input from faculty or other sources, and no method of disseminating results. Strengthening this process is an opportunity for institutional stability and growth.

Upper Administrator Positions: The President is hired and reviewed by the Board of Trustees. This process was viewed by the committee as opaque; however, some involvement in the process has been afforded to faculty, students, and community members. The Board has historically sought input from these quarters and it is expected that they will continue to do so.

Upper administrators that are Unclassified/Unrepresented (Un-Uns) are evaluated by their supervisor. Performance reviews for excluded employees may differ from ranked and unranked positions. The particular positions involved in the committee’s charge are the Provost and her reporting lines, which include the four Vice Provosts in the Office of Academic Affairs and ten

Deans of various colleges and units. Along with the VP of Academic Affairs, direct reports to the President include five Vice Presidents, along with the CIO, General Counsel, and Directors of OIRP and Athletics. There are approximately 25-30 employees identified as holding upper administrative positions. This is a conservative estimate, and does not include the many Associate Vice Provosts or Associate Deans. Evaluating performance is a labor-intensive process, and the committee recommends starting with these upper-level positions and adding others as needed. A list of candidates for comprehensive review is included in Appendix II.

Making the Review Process more Transparent and Comprehensive: After examining processes for the evaluation of upper administrators at PSU, the committee found that there is no formal policy for a comprehensive review that involves input from a collaborative group of stakeholders. Reviews have traditionally been done by immediate supervisors, and have not been a matter of public record. The Senate Ad-Hoc committee proposes that a University Policy be formalized in conjunction with Human Resources to implement a comprehensive, developmental review process that includes input from peers, faculty, staff, students, and other parties affected by the performance of upper administrators. We find that a University Policy will be necessary, since the review process for administrators has widespread application, answers major operational issues, will be expressed in broad terms, and will not be frequently changed. Procedures for implementing the Administrator Review Policy are included in Appendix III.

Appendix I

External Resources Related to the Evaluation of Upper Administrators

Human Resources Policy used by the University of Arizona (model for PSU HR)

<https://policy.arizona.edu/employmenthuman-resources/annual-performance-reviews-administrative-personnel>

A study on Faculty Evaluation of Administrators by SUNY (comprehensive overview)

<https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/faculty-senate/FacultyEvaluation.pdf>

AAUP report on Administrator Review (background)

<https://www.aaup.org/report/faculty-evaluation-administrators>

PSU Office of Academic Affairs: Resources and Process Guidance

[https://www.pdx.edu/academic-affairs/sites/g/files/znlchr2396/files/2021-02/Annual Administrative Performance Review-Reviewer%27s Form 0.pdf](https://www.pdx.edu/academic-affairs/sites/g/files/znlchr2396/files/2021-02/Annual%20Administrative%20Performance%20Review-Reviewer%27s%20Form%200.pdf)

[https://www.pdx.edu/academic-affairs/sites/g/files/znlchr2396/files/2021-02/Process and Prompts for Annual Performance Review for A%26A Deans Chairs and Directors.pdf](https://www.pdx.edu/academic-affairs/sites/g/files/znlchr2396/files/2021-02/Process%20and%20Prompts%20for%20Annual%20Performance%20Review%20for%20A%26A%20Deans%20Chairs%20and%20Directors.pdf)

[Performance Review Process](#) [Word Document]

[Performance Review Self-Evaluation Form](#) [Word Document]

[Reviewer's Summary of Annual Performance Review of OAA Administrators](#) [Word Document]

PSU Office of Human Resources: Performance Management Forms

[Unclassified/Unrepresented Staff Performance Evaluation](#) (fillable pdf)

[Unclassified/Unrepresented Staff Performance Evaluation Instructions](#)

[Unclassified Staff Self-Evaluation](#) (Word)

[Unclassified Staff Self-Evaluation](#) (pdf)

Appendix II

Upper Administrative Positions at PSU

Vice Presidents (report to the President)

- Vice President – Academic Affairs
- Vice President – Enrollment Management
- Vice President – Finance and Administration
- Vice President – Global Diversity and Inclusion
- Vice President – University Relations
- Vice President – Research and Graduate Studies

Other Reports to the President

- Chief Information Officer – Office of Information Technology
- Director – Athletics
- Director – OIRP

Vice Provosts

- Vice Provost of Academic Personnel and Dean of Interdisciplinary General Studies
 - Executive Director of University Studies
 - Director of Honors College
- Vice Provost Position TBD
 - Assoc Vice Provost for Advising and Career Services
 - Assoc Vice Provost and Registrar
 - Assoc Vice Provost for Academic Innovation
- Vice Provost for Student Affairs
 - Assoc Vice Provost and Dean of Students
 - Assoc Vice Provost for Health and Well-Being (SHAC)
- Vice Provost for Academic Budget and Planning

Deans: (report to Provost)

- Dean – The School of Business
- Dean – College of the Arts
- Dean – College of Education
- Dean – School of Social Work
- Dean – College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Dean – College of Urban and Public Affairs
- Dean – Maseeh College of Engineering and Computer Science
- Dean – OHSU/PSU School of Public Health
- Dean – Graduate School (reports to Vice President for Research and Grad Studies)
- Dean – Library

There are Associates and Assistants at multiple levels supporting many of these positions.

Appendix III

Recommended Procedures for Comprehensive Administrator Review

Principles

1. A written policy that is easily accessible to all interested parties should specify periodic, regular, and collaborative comprehensive reviews of all PSU deans and more senior administrators. The policy should outline the process and purpose of reviews in language broad enough to apply to the range of administrators, yet flexible enough to be tailored for individual positions.
2. The purpose is to guide, refine, and improve administrator performance. The goal is not to intimidate or embarrass administrators. A balance between transparency and confidentiality is necessary. Feedback should be candid, with proper restraint. Facts and evidence (rather than hearsay) should form the basis of the review.
3. To inspire broad confidence, reviews should be shepherded by broad, diverse groups of stakeholders. A committee for the review of an administrator must include faculty, with consideration for diversity across discipline, race/ethnicity, gender, etc. Depending on the composition of the administrator's constituency, other relevant stakeholders such as peers, staff, students, and community members should be included. The chair of each committee should be a stakeholder (from either the administration or faculty) of commensurate stature, and may be the administrator's supervisor.
4. Comprehensive reviews must include a systematic mechanism for broad feedback from the campus community. A simple, campus-wide survey OR the confidential (signed) submission of feedback through another mechanism is possible. We recommend a single fixed procedure. For instance, a standard survey should be sent at a set time, to a set distribution list, with a planned number of reminders.
5. Comprehensive evaluation should assess administrators' success in adhering to and promoting PSU's stated mission and values. Principles such as collaboration, innovation, inclusion, integrity, and a commitment to engagement are examples. Though the specific responsibilities and actions that address these principles may vary by position, a commitment to them should inform work throughout.
6. Reviews should be scheduled for times when faculty are on contract.

Implementation

Initiating the Comprehensive Review

1. The Faculty Senate Committee on Committees may staff the committees for the periodic, regular review of university administrators in consultation with other stakeholder (students, staff, administrative) groups. Service on review committees should be considered in committee members' evaluation for purposes of promotion, tenure, and retention.
2. Reviews should be tethered to the duration of the administrators' length of appointment and the schedule should be established at the time of (re)appointment.

Separate from annual reviews from a supervisor, comprehensive review by a broad stakeholder committee at PSU may be most effectively achieved at the midpoint of administrators' contracts or on a repeating 3-5 year schedule.

Conducting the Comprehensive Review

1. Administrator will submit a self-appraisal that includes the goals previously set for the period under review, self-assessment of achievement toward goals, self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses.
2. Committee will meet as a whole to determine the process for evaluation. The committee will establish a clear timeline and scope of work that is known by all involved parties. This timeline should allow for information gathering as well as review periods for the committee and the candidate before deliberation to produce a final report.
3. Feedback from the broad campus community should be sought, following a set (and publicized) procedure.
4. Following the information gathering phase, the review committee should prepare a draft document that summarizes the process, findings, and recommendations of the committee. This draft should be shared with the administrator being evaluated and, in a follow-up meeting, comments, questions, and concerns should be discussed. Pending this conversation, the committee should finalize its report.
5. The proceedings of any review must remain confidential. This confidentiality must persist after the completion of the review process, even in the face of outside scrutiny or controversy.

Concluding the Comprehensive Review

1. The final report should be submitted to the supervisor. This report should clearly detail the review process as well as the committee's findings and recommendations. Care should be taken to identify strengths as well as weaknesses.
2. After submitting the report, a follow-up meeting with the supervisor should be held to discuss the findings. This meeting should occur before the results of the review are publicized which, in the case of adverse findings, will allow the institution to prepare a necessary response. This meeting is an opportunity to consider sensitive matters, such as termination, that may be nuanced.
3. Following receipt and discussion of the final report, the supervisor should produce an executive summary for dissemination to the public. The summary should adhere to the tenor of the report, but omit specific detail in order to protect confidentiality and shelter the institution. The committee should have an opportunity to review the summary before it is made public. In addition to the report, aggregate survey findings should be made public as a means of bolstering the accuracy of the summary.