

2018 Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Trustees Conference



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

The Board's Role in Presidential Assessment, Support, and Accountability

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AGB ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNING BOARDS
OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Presenters



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Agenda

- Why Assessment Matters
- Boards and Presidents
- The Massachusetts Context
- Annual Assessment
- Periodic Comprehensive Assessment
- Discussion and Q & A

Why Assessment Matters

Good practice—set goals and assess progress, enhance performance, improve board/president relationship

State law—requires assessment annually and comprehensively every 3 or 5 years; inform compensation

Institutional accreditation—NEASC standard 3.10:
The board appoints and periodically reviews the performance of the chief executive officer...

Boards and Presidents

- Select, support, *and* assess
- Trustees as fiduciaries—act collectively, independent of appointing authority (no Lone Rangers)
- Board chair/president relationship key—but chair and board must act together
- Regular communication, not once a year
- Accountability: transparency; communication; shared vision, goals, and priorities

The Academic Presidency

"The president acts within an institutional context which is determined by the attitude of the **faculty**, the behavior of the **student** body, the presence or absence of **collective bargaining**, the influence of **alumni**, **legislators** and **self-interest groups**, the degree of control by the central office in a **statewide system**, and most critically the extent of authority and responsibility of the **governing board**. An adequate appraisal of the president's role must take into account the attitudes, prerogatives and behavior of these groups."

John Nason

Challenges Assessing Leadership in the Academic Presidency

- Metrics of performance: no single bottom line, operational and strategic indicators, qualitative and quantitative data, many constituencies
- Like steering a battleship
- Complex role of governing board, supporting *and* evaluating the president
- Trustees at a distance, from diverse fields; board conflicts and back channels
- Social media, 24/7 job

The Massachusetts Context

- Open meeting laws: 7 exceptions—presidential assessment is not one
- Institutional and system/state goals
- Institutional board and MBHE roles
- Fiscal realities for compensation

MBHE Annual Presidential Evaluation: Outline of Report

- Executive Summary
- Process used
- Review of institutional goals
- Review of system-level goals
- Recommendation for compensation adjustment
- Attachments (goals, self-assessment, data, metrics, etc.)

<http://www.mass.edu/foradmin/trustees/documents/AnnualPresidentialEvaluationOutline.pdf>

Annual Assessment Process

Assessment Committee Review

- President's self-assessment
- feedback from other board members
- feedback from other sources
- questionnaires and surveys: not typical

Review with President

- board chair and chair of the committee meet promptly with the president to provide feedback
- documented oral and/or written review focusing on the future

Areas and Criteria for Assessment

What areas do you focus on in assessing presidential performance?

What does your board use for criteria for assessment of performance?

Periodic Comprehensive Assessment

Multi-Source or 360 Reviews

Purposes

- systematic feedback
- leadership development
- reflect on the evolution of a presidency

Periodic

- every 3 to 5 years
- complex circumstances
- avoid crises and public controversies

Periodic Comprehensive Assessment

Protocols for Multi-Source or 360 Reviews

- board assessment committee including president
- staff support
- notify participants about their roles and the purposes of the review

Typical participants

- governing board, senior staff, representatives of faculty, students, staff, alumni, local leaders and officials

Periodic Comprehensive Assessment: Steps

Multi-Source or 360 Reviews with Interviews

- board member(s) or external consultant(s)
- confidential but not anonymous
- individuals and/or small groups of 50+ total participants
- interview questions and questionnaires: aspects of leadership
- document process; send follow-up communications
- plans for leadership development and improved organizational effectiveness

Leadership Development

- Coaching and mentoring: conflict resolution and team building, giving apologies and making commitments
- Leadership seminars and peer discussions, some at national meetings
- Re-organizing decision-making processes and positions
- Personal renewal: writing and professional travel

Process Issues and Special Situations

- Risk Management: political, financial, reputational and other risks, off-campus with media, governor, legislators, and alumni, and on campus with unions, faculty, staff, and students
- Divisions within the board
- Dealing with votes of no confidence
- Other topics

Resources

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education,
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Online Trustee Resources

<http://www.mass.edu/foradmin/trustees/home.asp>

<http://www.mass.edu/foradmin/trustees/preseval.asp>

- Compensation and Evaluation Guidelines and Procedures
- Annual Presidential Evaluation Outline

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