

2019 Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Trustees Conference



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Higher Education

Comprehensive Presidential Evaluations

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Presenters



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Agenda

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

Why Presidential 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; informs 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, competing goals
- 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

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

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

Periodic Comprehensive Evaluations: Multi-Source or 360 Reviews

Purposes

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

Periodic

- every 3 to 5 years
- comprehensive look at years under review
- avoid crises and public controversies

Periodic Comprehensive Evaluations: Protocols and Participants

Protocols for Multi-Source or 360 Reviews

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

Typical participants

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

Comprehensive Evaluation Process

1. Board selects committee member(s); committee selects consultant
2. Board chair sends email to participants or the campus community explaining the purpose of the evaluation
3. President prepares self-assessment and supporting materials
4. Committee/consultant in consultation with board chair and president prepares list of interviewees
5. Committee and president establish criteria for review (goals and leadership characteristics)
6. Committee/consultant develops interview protocol and questionnaires

Comprehensive Evaluation Process (cont.)

7. Consultant conducts individual and group interviews on campus and some by phone
8. Consultant shares preliminary findings with president and committee chair/board chair
9. Consultant reports findings & recommendations to the president and committee chair/board chair who share with board including plan for leadership development and improved organizational effectiveness
10. Committee documents process, submits summary by deadline, sends follow-up communications
11. Process completed in about 3 months

Topics for Interviews on President's Performance

- Strategic Leadership
- Academic Leadership
- General Management
- Financial Management
- Fundraising
- External Relations
- Internal Relations
- Governance
- Leadership Style & Values (this is often a focus)
- Other

Survey or No Survey?

Advantages

- Expands participation
- May cost less than and complement interviews
- Quantifiable responses

Disadvantages

- Review isn't a democratic process
- Challenge to design a good instrument
- Quantifiable responses

Potential Survey Items—open ended

- What have been the president's major accomplishments in leading the institution over the past three years?
- What would you suggest to improve the president's effectiveness?
- Suggestions for goals for the president and the University for the next three years?

Leadership Development

- Coaching and mentoring: conflict resolution and team building
- Leadership seminars and peer discussions, some at national meetings
- Re-organizing decision-making processes and positions
- Personal renewal: writing and professional travel
- Renewing board/president communication

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

- Dena Papanikolaou, CPapanikolaou@dhe.mass.edu

- 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

AGB

- Merrill Schwartz, mschwartz@agb.org

- www.agb.org

- [Assessing Presidential Effectiveness](#)

Questions and Discussion

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>