

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START: FIRST YEAR PRESIDENTIAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

Why is the first year performance assessment critical?

- **Communication:** Establishes a precedent of open and honest communication between Board and president.
- **Leadership:** Reinforces, early on, effective leadership behaviors. Identifies less effective behaviors.
- **Feedback:** Provides balanced and objective feedback so that the President can accurately reflect on performance. Informal feedback given to the new President from other constituencies is often mixed and unclear.
- **Compliance:** A necessary component of an effective presidential compensation process and helps fulfill IRS requirements for compensation review.
- **Strategic Plan:** Helps the Board to oversee the strategic direction of the institution. Assesses the extent to which presidential goals are aligned with Board and institutional goals.
- **Board Knowledge/Engagement:** Identifies Board knowledge and engagement with the institution by percentage of Board members who provide input and offer tangible examples of presidential performance.

Before the first year begins

- **Priorities:** Establish clear and specific priorities for the president upon hiring.
- **Process:** Clearly delineate the process and criteria for the annual performance review. Identify the committee or group charged with conducting the performance assessment.
- **Assessment Criteria:** Include goal-specific accomplishments as well as a review of overall leadership abilities (i.e., effective communication, decision making, relationship building, etc.)

During the first year

- **Progress Check:** Include a midpoint progress check to keep the process flexible. It allows for the addition or alteration of the original goals and expectations as new challenges and opportunities emerge.

After the first year

- **Past Performance/Future Goals:** The process looks back over the past year's performance as well as to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Presidents have few persons with whom to discuss the joys and frustrations of the job; the process offers the president the opportunity to do so. It also results in a first draft of goals for the coming year.
- **Assessment Contents:** The process includes presidential self-assessment, Board member assessment, a face-face discussion of both, and finally a written summary shared with the president.
- **Institutional Performance:** The Board should understand how presidential performance review fits within the larger performance review processes of the institution, particularly that of the senior leadership team.