

R209, Evaluation of Presidents¹

R209-1 Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the comprehensive performance evaluation of presidents in the Utah System of Higher Education. The comprehensive evaluation process will reflect the full scope of the president's duties, general institutional oversight, and provide meaningful, substantive feedback from key constituents regarding the president's efforts and areas of strength as well as areas that need improvement.²

R209-2 References

- 2.1** Utah Code § 53H-3-302, Appointment of Institution of Higher Education Presidents
- 2.2** Utah Code § 63G-2-302, Private Records
- 2.3** Board Policy R481, Academic Freedom, Professional Responsibility, Tenure, Termination, and Post-Tenure Review

R209-3 Definitions

- 3.1 “Key Performance Indicators”** mean indicators of progress toward the institution's and the Board of Higher Education's (“Board”) strategic plans.

R209-4 Annual Key Performance Indicators: Each year, each president shall meet with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees to develop at least three key performance indicators (“performance indicators”) on which to focus that align with the Board's strategic plan.

- 4.1** Except for new presidents who shall submit their first performance indicators within the first four months of their start date, presidents shall submit their performance indicators and progress reports to the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (“OCHE”) no later than October 31 of each year.

- 4.2** The performance indicators must be approved by the Commissioner of Higher Education (“Commissioner”) and the Executive Committee of the Board. The OCHE will share the performance indicators with the Board. The Board and/or Commissioner may require the president to reconsider some or all the performance indicators.

¹ Adopted April 26, 1977; amended July 27, 1977; May 17, 1983; September 11, 1987; July 21, 1989; November 4, 1994; November 3, 1995; April 22, 2005; April 3, 2009; April 1, 2010; March 29, 2013; March 28, 2014; February 9, 2018; May 18, 2023; December 1, 2023; June 6, 2024; March 27, 2025; and June 6, 2025.

² Technical edits September 10, 2024; and December 1, 2025.

4.3 Upon approval of the key performance indicators, the Commissioner will notify the president and the Board of Trustees Chair.

4.4 Beginning the year after they have first developed performance indicators, each president shall annually file a report with the Board outlining their progress on the prior year's performance indicators from September 1 of the prior year through August 31 of the current year.

R209-5 Comprehensive Evaluation: At least every fourth year, each president shall undergo a comprehensive evaluation of the prior three years of their performance. The evaluation will assess the president's performance of the criteria outlined in subsection 5.2 and their progress toward the key performance indicators under section R209-4. The OCHE may conduct the evaluation or the Board may retain a qualified consultant to conduct the evaluation including seeking information about the president's performance from the president and relevant internal and external stakeholders which may include students, faculty, staff, administration, Trustees, donors, and/or lawmakers. Evaluations will begin in the fall of the third year and will be completed in the spring. To ensure adequate time and resources to conduct a meaningful evaluation of each president, the Board may adjust the schedules of individual presidents to provide for a relatively equal number of presidential evaluations each year. Either the Board or the president may request more frequent comprehensive evaluations, and the Board may request a follow-up to a performance evaluation at any time.

5.1 Guidelines for Evaluation: To make the evaluation process fair, meaningful, and effective, the comprehensive evaluation shall adhere to the following guidelines:

5.1.1 Objectivity: Objectivity extends to the criteria to be assessed, the use of verifiable data wherever possible, the process for completion of the evaluation, and the selection of persons who will participate in the evaluation.

5.1.2 Clearly Defined Criteria Related to the Institution's Missions and Goals: The criteria for evaluation must encompass an appropriate scope. The criteria shall include outcome standards that relate the actions of the president to the mission and goals of the institution as well as process criteria that describe the critical behaviors of effective leaders.

5.1.3 Meaningful Evaluation: Appraisal of a president's job performance should be made only by those in a position to observe that performance or who are directly impacted by the president's performance. Opinions concerning the president's performance will be limited to the president and those faculty, students, staff, and others in positions that afford them sufficient interaction with the president to make meaningful judgments.

5.1.4 Well Planned Implementation Schedule: The consultant shall establish a reasonable timetable for evaluation to provide an adequate period for collecting data, interviews, review, and feedback.

5.1.5 Self-Report: The president shall prepare a confidential self-evaluation based upon the evaluation criteria outlined in subsection 5.2 of this policy and the annual key performance indicators and shall submit the self-report to the evaluation consultant.

5.1.6 Confidentiality: Participants in the evaluation process shall maintain confidentiality. The consultant will assure those being interviewed that their responses will remain confidential and that only a composite of responses will be made available to the Board and the president.

5.1.7 Interviews: The Commissioner, the Board, the Board of Trustees, and the president may make recommendations to the consultant of relevant internal and external stakeholders the consultant should interview or seek comment from as part of the evaluation.

5.1.8 Responsibility for Cost: Although the Board will contract with the consultant, the president's institution shall be responsible for paying for the evaluation.

5.2 Evaluation Criteria: The consultant shall use the following criteria to evaluate the president's performance.

5.2.1 Vision, Mission, Strategic Planning, and Goals

5.2.1.1 The president has established a clear vision for the institution in line with its statutory mission, for the good of the System of Higher Education and tied to the Board's strategic goals, and the president understands their role in implementing that vision. The president's vision includes modeling and fostering safety and belonging for students, staff, and faculty, closing attainment gaps for underrepresented students, and creating equal opportunity for faculty and staff.

5.2.1.2 The president has established long-range and short-range strategic goals around the mission and vision. The president has established baseline measurements for the strategic goals and is tracking measurable outcomes to assess the institution's progress toward achieving those goals.

5.2.1.3 The president has established strategies, tactics, benchmarks, and timelines to accomplish the strategic goals, and has effectively delegated responsibility for those goals.

5.2.1.4 The president has clearly and effectively communicated the strategic plan and its goals to the campus community and has kept the community informed about the institution's progress made toward those goals.

5.2.2 Campus Safety: The president creates a safe campus environment and programs and activities in which sexual misconduct and discrimination are unacceptable. The president ensures adequate resources for campus safety, and sexual misconduct and discrimination training, prevention, and grievance processes.

5.2.3 Belonging: The president prioritizes belonging and fosters an optimal environment that meets each student's needs.

5.2.4 Free Expression: The president encourages free expression and diversity of thought.

5.2.5 Federal and State Legal and Regulatory Compliance: The president is aware of legal, regulatory, and grant requirements applicable to their institution and is responsible for ensuring the institution's compliance with such requirements.

5.2.6 Institutional Fiscal Health

5.2.6.1 The president oversees and ensures the institution's fiscal health, including setting budget priorities that require efficient, effective, and appropriate use of resources.

5.2.6.2 The president establishes priorities for fiscal resources in a manner that is conducive to achieving institutional goals and objectives.

5.2.6.3 The president evaluates fiscal and budget matters as often and rigorously as is necessary to properly oversee their budget and finance officers' performances.

5.2.7 Academic/Instructional Leadership and Planning

5.2.7.1 The president's strategic planning, priorities, and goals support the critical roles of scholarship, intellectual diversity, and academic freedom under Board Policy R481, *Academic Freedom, Professional Responsibility, Tenure, Termination, and Post-Tenure Review*.

5.2.7.2 In overseeing the institution's academic/instructional mission, the president has appropriately prioritized teaching quality and focused on students and curriculum to ensure student success.

5.2.7.3 The president has directed their academic staff to maintain an effective academic program review procedure designed to serve as a basis for allocating staff, evaluating the quality of instruction, and implementing the institution's strategic goals.

5.2.7.4 The president has fostered collaboration with businesses, industries, and government to identify workforce needs and adjusted program offerings to support workforce needs.

5.2.7.5 In addition to the criteria listed in this section, the Board, in consultation with the president, may establish review criteria that is specific to the institution's mission and role, such as research, teaching, outreach, public engagement, or technical education.

5.2.8 Personnel

5.2.8.1 The president's leadership fosters a positive work environment for faculty and staff.

5.2.8.2 The president holds their executive team members and direct reports accountable for their performance through regular performance evaluations. The president takes corrective action, when necessary, to address misconduct and further enhance the institution's effectiveness. When a president plans to take personnel action related to an institutional employee whose role has a significant impact on the campus community, the president will inform the institution's Board of Trustees as soon as practicable.

5.2.8.3 The president seeks the counsel of their executive team and ensures they are focused on the institution's strategic priorities.

5.2.8.4 The president effectively determines which issues are the proper responsibility of their executive team and which issues require the action by the president, and appropriately delegates responsibility.

5.2.9 Decision Making and Problem Solving

5.2.9.1 The president assumes responsibility for their decisions and endeavors to fully understand issues prior to making a decision.

5.2.9.2 The president effectively prioritizes to ensure the most important issues are adequately resourced and addressed.

5.2.9.3 The president shows an ability to identify potential areas of conflict and proactively find solutions before problems escalate.

5.2.9.4 The president demonstrates an understanding of how the interrelated natures of budgeting, curriculum, equity, social and political realities, group interests and pressures, and laws and regulations impact the management of the institution.

5.2.9.5 The president initiates new ideas and embraces change when necessary to meet the institution's strategic goals and vision. The president seeks to obtain support from stakeholders and sees new ideas to completion.

5.2.9.6 The president participates in and utilizes executive coaching as provided in section 8.

5.2.10 External Relations and Fundraising

5.2.10.1 The president establishes positive relationships with the community in which the institution is located.

5.2.10.2 The president oversees and encourages a robust alumni program.

5.2.10.3 The president oversees a fundraising/development program that has clear goals and strategies. The president actively cultivates relationships with donors, effectively promotes the institution's vision, and shows successful fundraising efforts.

5.2.10.4 The president successfully navigates relationships with legislators, the Governor's office, other state and federal agencies, and with other public officials on matters affecting the institution. The president shows a strong understanding of the political environment's impact on the institution and is able to properly adjust strategies in the face of those realities.

5.2.11 Relationship to the Institutional Board of Trustees and to the Board of Higher Education

5.2.11.1 The president must make progress toward System-wide priorities.

5.2.11.2 The president provides professional leadership to the Board of Trustees.

5.2.11.3 The president has presented a strategic plan and vision for the Board of Trustees to review and approve. The president regularly updates the Board of Trustees and Board of Higher Education about the institution's progress towards its strategic goals and seeks counsel or assistance when issues arise that may prevent the institution from reaching a goal.

5.2.11.4 The president engages with the Board of Trustees regularly to report progress, involve the Trustees in decisions, and update the Trustees on institutional issues.

5.2.11.5 When serious challenges for the institution arise, the president engages the Board of Trustees and the Board of Higher Education appropriately and recommends the best course of action.

5.2.11.6 The president successfully oversees the institution's day-to-day operations and is able to carry out duties which have been or may be delegated or assigned by the Board of Higher Education or the Board of Trustees.

5.2.12 Student Success: The president establishes expectations and goals for themselves, faculty, and staff regarding retention, completion rates, affordability, safety and mental health, student success and well-being, and career and academic counseling.

5.2.13 System Impact and Collaboration

5.2.13.1 The president promotes collegiality among presidents in the System.

5.2.13.2 The president collaborates with other presidents including through regional partnerships.

5.2.13.3 The president supports the Board's strategic initiatives and seeks ways to improve the Utah System of Higher Education as a whole.

5.2.13.4 The president informs the Commissioner and Board Chair of major institutional issues or issues that may have an impact on the Utah System of Higher Education as a whole.

5.3 Evaluation Report

5.3.1 Report Content: The evaluation consultant shall compile information gathered during the evaluation in a confidential, written report, documenting the president's strengths and areas for future focus and improvement.

5.3.2 Opportunity for Response: The consultant will submit the final report to the president and the president will have an opportunity to provide a written response to the report.

5.3.3 Review by Board of Higher Education: The consultant shall send the final report and the president's response and self-evaluation to the Commissioner and the Commissioner shall share the report with the Board.

5.3.4 Meeting with Commissioner and Board of Higher Education Officers: As soon as practical, the president will meet with the Commissioner, the Board Chair and Vice-Chair, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees to review the findings and recommendations.

5.3.5 Retention of Report in Personnel File: A copy of the evaluation report, together with a copy of the president's self-evaluation and response to the report, will be retained as a confidential record in the president's personnel file.

5.4 Supervision and Leadership Support: As directed by the Board, the Commissioner shall provide supervision, guidance, and support to presidents based on comprehensive performance evaluations and annual key performance indicators. Presidents may seek leadership support and guidance from the Board as needed through the Commissioner and OCHE.

5.5 Corrective Action: Presidents are at will and serve at the pleasure of the Board. Due to a president's at will status, the Board may terminate a president with or without cause. However, at any point during a president's tenure, including immediately following a performance evaluation, the Board Chair and Vice-Chair have discretion to take corrective action against a president. A president may be terminated only upon approval of the Board.

R209-6 Informal Evaluations: In addition to the comprehensive evaluation listed in section 5, presidents shall receive ongoing informal performance evaluations.

R209-7 Confidentiality: All performance-related records, including those developed during a formal or informal evaluation process, are classified as private personnel records and are therefore protected from disclosure under [Utah Code section 63G-2-302\(2\)\(a\)](#).

R209-8 Executive Coaching and Professional Development: Presidents are expected to seek leadership support and coaching. Executive coaching is required for a president in their first year of service and is encouraged for all presidents every three years thereafter. The Board will send a president in their first year to an approved leadership course and reimburse the president for executive coaching costs up to \$20,000 in their first year and up to \$10,000 every three years thereafter. Additionally, the Office of the Commissioner will invest in institution presidents by connecting them with and providing management and leadership resources and professional development opportunities related to the evaluation criteria outlined in subsection 5.2. These resources and opportunities may be funded by the institution(s).

8.1 Reporting Requirement: Presidents are required to report annually by July 1 to the Commissioner on whether they are receiving leadership support/coaching, from whom, and the nature of the engagement. Reports are confidential and are classified as private personnel records and are therefore protected from disclosure under [Utah Code section 63G-2-302\(2\)\(a\)](#).