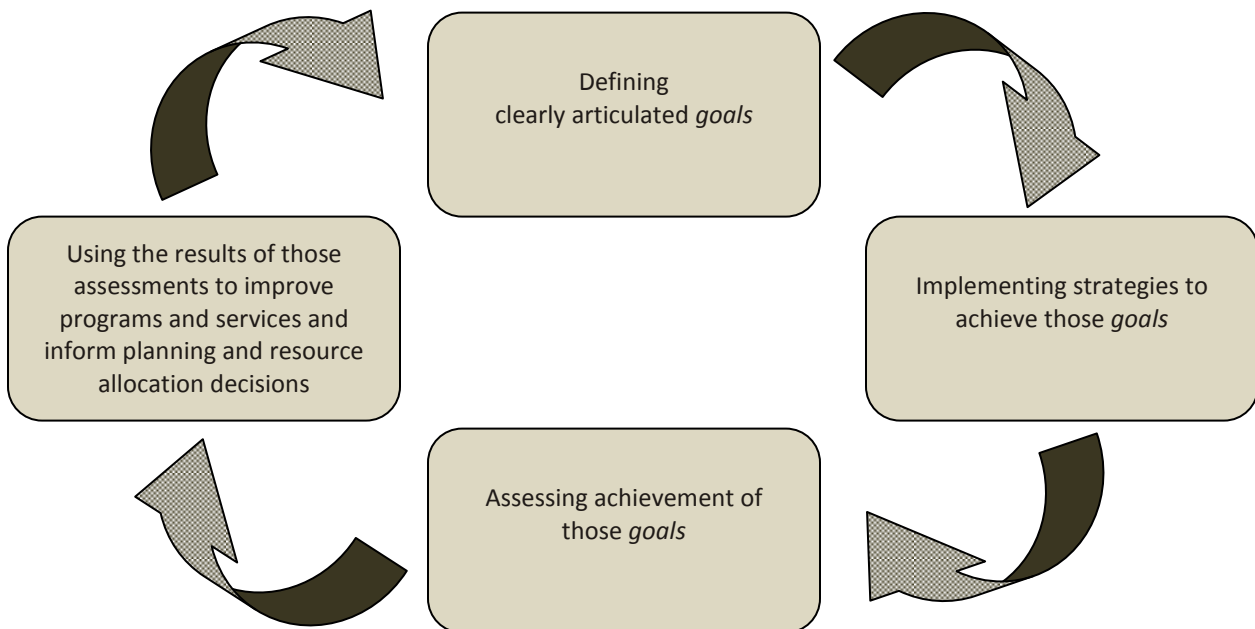


Five-Year Administrative Review

*For Deans, Associate Vice Presidents, and Directors on the VP Council
Division of Academic Affairs*

Introduction

Regular review is an important part of the assessment process in every division, and the same principles of assessment in other areas of the university apply in judging the effectiveness of senior academic administrators. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education¹ identifies these four stages in the recursive institutional assessment cycle:



To provide a fuller perspective on the performance of senior administrators in the division, the Vice President for Academic Affairs conducts periodic reviews of deans, associate vice presidents, and directors who serve on the Vice President's Council. Usually, these reviews occur every five years; the Vice President will announce each September a list of those to be reviewed that academic year.

This is not a reappointment process, as Management Confidential employees have no contract, and UUP Professionals are reappointed annually through the regular process until permanent appointment. Each year, all Management Confidential employees and UUP Professional staff are evaluated by their supervisors. The goals of this broader periodic review are to offer an opportunity for the person under review to develop an administrative portfolio that reflects on accomplishments and challenges, for the campus to provide constructive feedback about performance in achieving goals, and for the Review Committee to offer systematic internal assessment that can be used to improve performance and inform planning. The Vice President's report at the end of the process will be based on the report of the Review Committee, on feedback from the survey, and on his or her own assessment of the process and the administrator's performance for the period under review.

The review focuses on the administrator’s responsibilities, roles, accomplishments, and effectiveness in the period under review by focusing on these important areas:

- Unit mission and accomplishments since the last review or point of hire
- Leadership in developing programs, facilities, or curricula
- Resource management
- Staff development
- Communication
- Relationships with internal and external constituent groups
- Other areas specific to the administrator’s role

Each of these areas may be modified, depending on the specific role of the administrator and special circumstances at a particular time.

Philosophy Underlying Administrative Review

The Academic Affairs division approach to this review process is based in part on Appreciative Inquiry, a model developed by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University² that encourages positive change in individuals and organizations. As Cooperrider and Diana Whitney explain, asking the “unconditional positive question” is an effective approach to inquiry and real change:

AI [Appreciative Inquiry] involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. . . . In AI the arduous task of intervention gives way to the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design. AI seeks, fundamentally, to build a constructive union between a whole people and the massive entirety of what people talk about as past and present capacities: *achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, strategic competencies, stories, expressions of wisdom, insights into the deeper corporate spirit or soul—and visions of valued and possible futures*. Taking all of these together as a gestalt, AI deliberately, in everything it does, seeks to work from accounts of this “positive change core”—and it assumes that every living system has many untapped and rich and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link the energy of this core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.³

Consistent with the principles of good assessment, the goals are to encourage both the administrator and campus community to reflect on what is working well, to envision the ideal, and to identify issues that may prevent that ideal from becoming reality. The Review Committee is likely to uncover many areas of valued accomplishments, as well as areas the administrator needs to address.

The Review Committee

The Review Committee’s charge is to provide the Vice President for Academic Affairs with its overall confidential assessment, based on review of the administrative portfolio, survey results, and other

feedback offered in the process. The Review Committee will use an assessment survey tool to obtain systematic feedback from faculty and staff.

The Review Committee should meet with the administrator under review for discussion of the portfolio, and the Committee should offer opportunities for individuals to meet with them privately. Because an effective review involves seeking many perspectives on leadership and accomplishment, the Committee's role is to implement a clear and fair process for review that engages critical stakeholders across campus and includes external review.

The Committee is appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, based in part on nominations from the administrator under review. Members of the committee should be beyond the decision for continuing appointment (faculty) or permanent appointment (professionals). Each five-person Committee will have these members:

- 2 members from within the unit (4 nominations from Administrator; VPAA selects 2)
- 1 member from a cognate area (3 nominations from Administrator; VPAA selects 1)
- 1 member from outside Academic Affairs (3 nominations from Administrator; VPAA selects 1)
- 1 member from VP Council (selected by VPAA)

Should any Committee member be unable to complete this process, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will appoint a replacement to keep the composition of the Committee consistent.

Administrative Portfolio

The administrator under review develops a portfolio that provides background on the unit and the administrator's accomplishments and challenges. In some ways, an administrator's performance is based on his or her work as an individual—with distinct talents, preferences, priorities, and personal style. But as the leader of a division, the administrator also operates in a larger context, and performance is related to the university and unit positions, the directives from supervisors, and the collective strength of a unit. The administrative portfolio provides this context for understanding an individual's performance.

The portfolio, a website accessible from the main page of the Academic Affairs webpage, includes these sections, each of which should provide an overview rather than an exhaustive list:

- Introduction
- Unit mission and annual goals since the last review
- Accomplishments since the last review or point of hire
- Leadership in developing programs, facilities, or curricula
- Resource management
- Staff development
- Communication
- Relationships with internal and external constituent groups
- Other areas specific to the administrator's role

The administrator should upload documents that may be useful to the review committee and external evaluators. The Vice President for Academic Affairs or the Review Committee may ask the administrator under review to provide additional information. The portfolio is available to all through the website.

External Reviewers

To provide an additional perspective on the administrator's effectiveness, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will ask external reviewers to comment on the administrative portfolio. Each administrator under review will submit 4 nominations of people outside SUNY Fredonia; the Vice President for Academic Affairs will select 2 reviewers from this list and add 1 more who is knowledgeable about the field but who may be unknown to the administrator under review.

Survey

All SUNY Fredonia faculty and staff are invited to participate in an anonymous, electronic survey about the work of the administrator under review. The survey will be administered by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will ensure that confidentiality is protected and that all have an opportunity to provide comments.

The survey asks participants to evaluate the administrator in each of the focus areas; the survey also invites open-ended responses. For the most part, survey questions are consistent for the division, regardless of the administrator under review. There may be reasons, however, to add or adapt questions based on the individual's role.

The survey results are available to the administrator, the review committee, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A copy of the summary results will be kept in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.

Meetings with the Review Committee

In addition to the responses offered through the survey, there should be opportunities for members of the campus community to meet privately with the Review Committee to share comments about the administrator under review. Details about how to arrange a meeting with the Review Committee should be shared with the campus community when the review process is introduced.

Vice President's Report and Response

The Vice President will work with the administrator under review to use the information and perspectives from the review process to assist in strengthening the unit, reflecting on the administrator's performance, and planning.

The Vice President will also develop a brief summary report to be shared with faculty and staff, based on the confidential report of the Review Committee, on feedback from the survey, and on his or her own assessment of the process and the administrator's performance for the period under review. The administrator under review is welcome to provide a response for his or her personnel file.

Timetable for the Review

Although the specific dates will be announced as each review is introduced to the campus, and some adjustments may be made based on special circumstances, this is the typical schedule for five-year administrative reviews:

Announcement of reviews to occur that academic year	September
Distribution of Administrative Review process guidelines	November
Appointment of Review Committee	Mid December
Selection of external reviewers	Mid December
Completion and posting of administrative portfolio	Early February
Collection of survey responses (<i>two weeks</i>)	Mid February – Early March
Deadline for external reviewers' evaluations	Early March
Confidential meetings with the Review Committee	March
Submission of Review Committee's confidential report	Mid April
Completion of Vice President's summary report	Early May

Changes to this Process

These guidelines were developed for the 2009-10 academic year by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, based on consultation with the Vice President's Council, the University Senate Planning and Budget Committee, the Human Resources Office, and the President's Cabinet. Each year, as the review process is completed, the Vice President will review and revise the guidelines as needed, using suggestions about the process that may have arisen as the administrative review occurred. The most current guidelines will be provided to the administrators under review and to the Review Committee in the fall semester before the review occurs, as outlined in the timetable above.

¹ *Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness*. Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2005. http://www.msche.org/publications/Assessment_Expectations051222081842.pdf

² See <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>.

³ David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney. "A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry." <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/whatisai.pdf>.