Memorandum to Presidents

Date:        July 9, 1979                      Vol. 79 No. 6
From:       Office of the Chancellor
Subject:    New Guidelines for the Review Process for the Presidents

The Board of Trustees, on June 27, 1979, adopted a new set of Guidelines for the Review Process for the Presidents. These become effective immediately and replace the previous procedures which were last revised on October 25, 1977. A companion set of guidelines for the review of the Chancellor will be presented to the Trustees in the fall.

There are several basic changes from the previous guidelines:

1. The evaluation will be conducted by a visiting team, appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the President, selected from a panel of college and university presidents, or comparably experienced peers.

2. The time frame for reviews is more flexible. The review will be made within a five-year period of the initial appointment and/or a five-year period from the last review.

3. The length of the review process is reduced from a ten-month period to no more than four months.

4. Provision is made for sharing the final team report with the campus after it has been presented to and discussed with the Trustees.

5. Provision is made for broad constituent interaction with the visiting team.

The new guidelines were based on a report prepared by a committee chaired by President Robert MacVittie of Geneseo. In adopting these guidelines, the Trustees stated it was their intention to have these new procedures shift the emphasis more toward an evaluation of the condition of each campus under the leadership of the President, rather than concentrating exclusively upon the individual.

The new process will involve certain costs for the activities of the visiting teams. These will be borne locally and planned into the budgets of the campuses where reviews are scheduled.
A list of those campuses to be reviewed this year will be prepared shortly. In preparation, it would be most helpful to have suggestions from Presidents, Council Chairmen, and others for the panel of peers to be developed. Recommendations for the panel should be submitted to Murray Block. Also, any questions concerning the new guidelines should be directed to him.

Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.

Attachment

This memorandum addressed to:
  Presidents, State-operated campuses

Copies for information only to:
  Presidents, Community Colleges
  Deans, Statutory Colleges
  Acting President Odle
  Vice President Cook
  Chairmen, College Councils
  Executive Staff
GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW PROCESS
FOR THE PRESIDENTS

June 27, 1979

The Trustees of State University of New York have acted to strengthen the role of the President by the designation of evaluation periods coupled with continuing status in academic rank and provision for study leaves. These offer each President a more flexible approach to his or her duties, while emphasizing accountability in the leadership role.

Responsibility for the evaluation of the President's performance is clearly vested in the Trustees (Article IX, Policies of the Board of Trustees) and must be carried out by the Chancellor, as the Board's chief administrative officer. The Trustees intend that the guidelines for a presidential review process will provide the Chancellor and Trustees with an effective mechanism for a comprehensive and fair evaluation; that they will involve constituent groups, as necessary; and, most importantly, that they will be of assistance to the President in defining and strengthening his or her leadership role. While proposing that these guidelines normally will be applied, the Trustees explicitly reserve the right to modify them in particular instances.

A. Principles

The presidential review process is distinct from the initial search process for a President. In the latter, the various constituents of the campus join to search for, and the College Council recommends to the Trustees, the best possible candidate or candidates for the position. The search is extensive, and the screening process may be both lengthy and complex. The Chancellor, through his representative, offers guidance and assistance. The major work of the screening process remains a campus undertaking and is coordinated by the College Council.
The presidential review process differs from the preceding in that the broad search element is not a factor, for the President being evaluated is known to all concerned. He or she has already served under the direction of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor as the chief administrative officer of the campus. The review is a Trustee function and process initiated by the Chancellor in behalf of the Trustees. Since the President also has interacted during the period of service with various constituent groups on campus, it is both appropriate and desirable that, in conducting the review, the Chancellor and Trustees consult with the College Council and, that appropriate consultation also be assured with representative spokesmen of the faculty, the administrative staff, and the students. Care should be taken to provide input to the process by alumni, non-teaching professionals, classified employees, and local community groups.

In article IX of the Policies of the Board of Trustees 1976, the Trustees have defined the responsibilities of the chief administrative officer of the campus. These provide the criteria against which the President's effectiveness will be reviewed.

The principle of confidentiality will be observed throughout the review process. This will apply to discussions among all those who participate; and to written documents other than the Presidential Statement: Condition of the Campus. The team report will be shared with the campus following its review by the Trustees.

With these principles to guide the review, the following process is established.

B. **Procedural Steps**

1. The Chancellor shall contact a selected number of presidents to establish a readiness for a professional performance review. The contact shall be made within a five year period of the initial appointment and/or a five year period from the last performance review.
The reviews shall be conducted periodically. The dates shall be determined by the Chancellor and the President in conference. The design of the periodic reviews shall be flexible and personal.

2. The Chancellor, with the President, shall establish a schedule for the performance review activities. In no case shall the review process exceed four months. The on site schedule shall be developed for a period when the college is in operation. However, preparatory activities may be completed during the summer months.

a. The Chancellor shall request the President to prepare and submit a Presidential Statement: Condition of the Campus, with particular reference to administration in recent past, the present and the immediate future. The Statement shall be no longer than twenty pages. The President may decide to append necessary and appropriate materials. Such documents as the President's annual report and the current Middle States Association self-study report may be used as appropriate in the review. The contents addressed in the Statement must relate to Trustees' criteria for presidential responsibility.

b. The President shall submit the Statement to the Chancellor, and, at the same time, to the Chairperson of the College Council. The Statement shall be considered a public document.

c. The Chairperson of the College Council shall make copies available to the members of the Council. The Chairperson of the College Council shall request the President to discuss the Statement with the council.
d. After having received the Statement from the President, and a response to it from the Chairperson of the Council, the Chancellor shall consult with the President on the formation of a visiting team from a panel of selected college and university presidents, or comparably experienced peers, from outside of SUNY. The team shall number three, with the addition of a person who will serve as a representative of the Chancellor, ex-officio.

e. The Chancellor shall appoint one member of the visiting team to serve as a Chairperson. The team will be given the President's Statement: Condition of the Campus, the Council Chairperson's response, and such other documents deemed to be necessary by the Chancellor.

f. The Chairperson of the visiting team shall make a site visit to the campus to determine a schedule, including interviews and such meetings with campus personnel which will assure a careful assessment of leadership and condition of the campus.

g. The team site visit of up to three days shall be used to talk with and receive the views of the President, Chairperson of the College Council, and the elected presiding officers of the campus faculty and campus student bodies, as well as such other persons and constituents deemed necessary by the team Chairperson to obtain an accurate impression of the leadership and campus condition. Campus leaders may receive input from their constituencies in oral or written form. Evaluative information thus obtained, if included, must be attributable. This would preclude the use of an opinion polling or survey procedure for constituent input. The team Chairperson shall be responsible for drafting
a team report to the Chancellor. The general approach and format for the review will be similar to, but not identical with, a Middle States team visit and report. There shall be an oral report by the visiting team to the President prior to leaving the campus.

h. The President, upon receipt of the written team report, in draft form, shall share a copy with the Council Chairperson. The draft team report shall be reviewed by the President and by the Chairperson. Questions of fact and such other matters as deemed appropriate by the President and/or Chairperson shall be communicated to the Team Chairperson and to the President and Council Chairperson. The Chairperson of the visiting team shall then prepare and forward to the Chairperson of the Council a final team report on the presidential review and condition of the campus, with copies to the President.

i. The Council shall transmit the final team report to the Chancellor, along with any appropriate commentary.

j. The Chancellor shall discuss the final report with the President in conference. A report shall be made by the Chancellor, assisted by the President, to the Trustees.

3. The Chancellor shall share the report with the campus after the report has been presented and discussed with the Trustees.