

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF
ACADEMIC PRESIDENTS

Merrill Pellows Schwartz, Doctor of Philosophy, 1998

Dissertation directed by: Professor Robert Birnbaum
Department of Education Policy, Planning
and Administration

Previous research on assessing the performance of college and university presidents reveals little about the procedures used or the consequences of those reviews, beyond that most presidents are evaluated annually by the governing board. Much of the literature is based on anecdotal evidence and claims that reviews are often poorly conducted and harmful to presidents. Though the practice is widespread, and potentially destructive, little is known about presidents' experiences with performance reviews.

This study posed three research questions: 1) What are the processes used to evaluate the performance of academic presidents?; 2) What are the outcomes of these reviews, according to presidents and board chairs?; and 3)

What are the relationships between how assessments are conducted and the outcomes reported? A national survey was conducted, using questionnaires developed by the researcher; respondents included 1,348 college and university presidents (64% response rate) and 535 governing board chairs (33% response rate).

Findings revealed that most presidential assessments were confidential, limited in participation to trustees, completed in about one month, included a self-assessment statement and face to face meetings with members of the board, and resulted in an increase in compensation. This described an informal review process and was similar to the process recommended for most corporate CEOs.

Contrary to the claims of critics, most presidents were satisfied with the way their review was conducted and found it to be useful; very few presidents or board chairs reported any negative impact for presidents from reviews.

Bivariate analyses revealed that the most useful reviews for presidents were those that: provided the president with more adequate performance feedback from the board; were conducted less than once a year; and were used to set goals, clarify criteria for good performance, and evaluate performance against agreed upon goals. Presidents were most satisfied with reviews which were used to set goals and clarify criteria for good performance, and allowed greater participation of presidents in the review process. Significant relationships were also found between: presidents seeking critical performance feedback and both higher performance ratings and greater

improvement in performance; and presidents seeking positive performance feedback and lower performance ratings.

Based on the research and data, the study suggests that: presidential assessments should have as the primary purpose improving the president's performance; presidents should be actively involved in developing the process and conducting the review, including a self-assessment statement; reviews should be used to plan future goals and agree upon the criteria for evaluating future performance; previously agreed upon goals should be used as criteria; presidents should routinely receive performance feedback from the board; boards should consider less frequent, more thorough reviews; and presidents should actively seek critical performance feedback, but avoid asking for positive feedback.

ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC PRESIDENTS

by

Merrill Pellows Schwartz

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Dept. of Education Policy, Planning and Administration

Advisory Committee:

Professor Robert Birnbaum, Chair
Professor Robert O. Berdahl
Professor Monique Clague
Professor Jennifer King Rice
Professor Henry P. Sims, Jr.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The concern about formal evaluation is that by institutionalizing we may detract from what ought to be done in order to meet the evaluation system's expectations... In the area of higher education, presidential evaluation has been predicated on a governance model that is more a myth than a reality; on decision making that is more political than rational; and on criteria or objectives that are often in the eye of the beholder rather than observable for objective assessment. (Kauffman, 1978, p. 63 in Munitz, 1980, p. 379)

Evaluating Presidents

The evaluation of college presidents has been identified as an important topic for over twenty-five years. In 1969 Yale President Kingman Brewster endorsed the periodic evaluation of presidents in a speech and the Yale Corporation acted upon his suggestion (Brewster, 1970). Then, as now, there is little empirical research regarding evaluation practices, though reports and recommendations based on anecdotal information abound. It remains unclear what constitutes good practice, what value evaluation of college presidents may have, and what the future will bring.

While it is unclear exactly what is being done by whom, it is apparent that the practice of evaluating college presidents has increased. In the mid-seventies, Surwill and Heywood (1976) estimated that twenty-five percent of institutions evaluated their presidents. Surveys of colleges and universities by the College and University Personnel Association (CUPA, 1991, p. 6, and 1996, p. 74) showed that the practice of evaluating presidents increased from 55% in 1984 to 81% in 1995.

Like so many other efforts to demonstrate to the public that higher education is accountable and performing up to expectations, presidential evaluation has taken hold. "Current interest in appraising administrative performance grows out of the demand by government, the general public and every sector of the academic community for more accountability" (Seldin, 1988, p. xi).

Governing boards are now experiencing the same kind of pressure to demonstrate accountability as did corporate boards in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Chait, 1995). Trustees are advised to uphold the public trust by monitoring institutional and CEO performance. In an examination of the implication for higher education of "the new activism of corporate boards," Chait observes:

Casual, informal annual appraisals by an inner circle of the board or the chair alone no longer will suffice. The pressure on boards to be accountable, the genuine desire to enhance the president's performance, and a concern to protect both parties will lead to greater

use of methodical evaluations based upon explicit performance objectives. (p. 19)

Calls for presidential evaluation come from all corners. From the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU, 1988) to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) (Ingram, 1993a, 1993b), from Kauffman (1980) to Nason (1984), presidential evaluation is regarded as a valuable effort to improve presidential performance and fulfill board responsibilities. Boards of trustees are encouraged to do it; presidents are advised to ask for it. It is even referred to as "the board's second most crucial duty" (Michaels, 1990), ranked just below the board's responsibility for the mission of an organization.

Most academic presidents are evaluated on an annual basis by the board of trustees, a board committee, or the board chair, according to a recent survey by the College and University Personnel Association (CUPA, 1996, p. 74-75). Yet beyond the matter of how often evaluations are done and who has the responsibility for carrying out the review, there is a dearth of empirical data.

The literature on the evaluation of academic presidents encourages boards to undertake this key responsibility and stresses the importance of using reviews for improving presidential performance (Nason, 1984; Kauffman, 1993; Kerr, 1984; Seldin, 1988). In fact, they say, no other reason is as important: "The primary reason to evaluate administrative performance

systematically is to improve it" (Seldin, 1988, p. 10). Yet whether presidential assessments improve performance has not been systematically examined.

Though it has become a common practice, the evaluation of college and university presidents remains controversial because the stakes are so high. Rather than improve the president's performance, some fear assessment will damage it. Fisher (1988, p. 27) says that "a poorly conducted presidential review can compromise an otherwise effective presidency" and that "[m]ost presidential assessments are poorly conducted." Seldin (1988, p. 197) voices a similar concern, "Well done, it can be beneficial; poorly done it can damage both president and institution." Since the consequences of presidential assessment may be grave (Fisher and Quehl, 1984; Nason, 1984), information that supports good practice could be of great significance for higher education.

Performance Appraisal

The options for system design, relating performance appraisal to other personnel functions, and the role of feedback in improving performance have been the subject of extensive study in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors during the last half of the twentieth century. Much may be learned from the wealth of experience evaluating employees and chief executive officers in public, private, and nonprofit organizations that could inform the practice of presidential assessment.

The literature on performance appraisal suggests that feedback on performance plays an essential role in improving performance. "Perhaps the best way to summarize the positive outcomes of appraisal is to say that a well-done appraisal has the potential of increasing both individual and organizational performance (Mohrman, Resnick-West, & Lawler, 1989, p. 4). Performance feedback is part of a learning cycle that involves setting goals, sensing one's position in relation to those goals, and adjusting one's behavior to stay on track (Ashford and Tsui, 1991). For managers, this self-regulating behavior is an increasingly important ability as one rises in an organization (Ashford and Tsui, 1991). Compared with other employees, executives' work is more complex and ambiguous, performance evaluation more subjective, and stakeholders' interests more diverse. No where is this more characteristic of the leader's role than in America's colleges and universities, a class of organizations dubbed "organized anarchies," by Cohen and March (1974).

In this environment, formal mechanisms are not enough to "control" managers. As one would expect, leaders must be responsible for their own behavior:

Such traditional control mechanisms as job descriptions, standard operating procedures, and formal performance appraisal systems may only loosely control managers. Because organizational systems cannot be used to completely regulate managers, those who run organizations are dependent upon managers' self-regulatory activities in order to

achieve control and coordinated action. (Ashford and Tsui, 1991, p. 252)

While systematic performance appraisal may have as its primary purpose improving performance, the active feedback seeking behavior of the individual may also play an important role. Ashford and Tsui (1991) found that managers who actively seek feedback on performance, especially negative feedback, know more accurately how their constituents will rate them and are rated as more effective by constituents than those who do not. This is consistent with a study of college and university presidents which found that constituents gave higher ratings to new presidents, who characteristically encourage open communication and criticism, and to those presidents who had been in office longer who maintained these habits of engagement. Presidents who did not maintain open communication lines and who insulated themselves from their constituents, lost constituent support (Birnbaum, 1992; Fujita, 1990).

Whether feedback is actively sought, volunteered, or provided by a systematic review process, the ability to use the information to improve performance may involve the same steps: "standard setting, discrepancy detecting, and discrepancy reducing" (Ashford and Tsui, 1991, p. 253). This is the essence of control theory (Carver and Scheier, 1981) and an underlying principle of performance appraisal. It is also consistent with experiential learning theory which emphasizes both dissonance and reflection (Hutchings and Wutzdorff, 1988): "Related to dissonance, and a key to turning both

dissonance and involvement into learning, is reflection, the ability to step back and ponder one's own experience, to abstract from it some meaning or knowledge relevant to other experiences. The capacity for reflection is what transforms experience into learning" (p. 15).

This suggests that presidents who complete self-assessments, seek negative performance feedback, and report changes in behavior as a result of reviews should receive higher performance ratings, see more value in presidential assessment, and be more satisfied with the process. In this light, the role the president plays in the appraisal process takes on added importance.

Statement of Problem

This research is exploratory and will seek to answer three primary questions:

Question One - How are the presidents of colleges and universities evaluated?

Question Two - What are the outcomes of the assessment process, according to both presidents and board chairs?

Question Three - What relationships are there, if any, between how presidential assessments are conducted and the outcomes presidents and board chairs report, particularly in regard to satisfaction, usefulness, performance rating, and improvement in the president's performance?

These three primary research questions were investigated through questionnaires developed by the researcher and administered to college presidents and board chairs, in a survey of selected American higher education institutions. Questions for the survey were grounded in the literature on academic presidents, presidential assessment, performance appraisal, and human resource management. The literature also provided the basis for the data analysis performed to examine relationships, if any, between and among process and outcome variables.

Question One, "How are the presidents of colleges and universities evaluated?" sought to describe in detail the survey respondents and the characteristics of the assessment processes they used. Since the focus was on obtaining a thorough description, rather than a comparison of reported data by respondent role, the president was used as the primary source of information on the assessment process.

Question One explored the following areas: institutional characteristics; personal data for respondents; policies and guidelines for conducting presidential assessments; the role of the president; and the relationship

between the president and the board. See Appendix A for the complete questionnaires.

Question Two, "What are the outcomes of the assessment process, according to both presidents and board chairs?" sought to identify the reported impact of, or changes resulting from, the review from the perspective of the two respondents' roles. In particular, attention was given to reported changes in the president's performance and his or her performance rating following the review, and whether the changes were for the better or for the worse. This included, for example, the president's overall performance rating and the level of various constituents' support. Overall satisfaction with the experience and suggestions for improving presidential assessment practices were also requested.

Questions One and Two sought to flesh out what is already known about as well as extend our understanding of presidential assessment policies and practices. Typically, the literature on presidential assessment has focused on the distinction made between formal and informal practices (Beaudoin, 1986; Hubert, 1986; Kauffman, 1993; Nason, 1984) though the terms "informal" and "formal" have not always been defined. As an exploratory study, this research sought to clarify the distinction between formal and informal presidential assessments and more accurately report the variety of practices in use.

According to Nason (1984), informal evaluations tend to be frequent or on-going, limit participation to members of the board, and are confidential.

Formal evaluations tend to be periodic (three to five years), have systematic participation of representatives of constituent groups, and are more public. These often cited characteristics provided the basis for the development of many of the questionnaire items regarding the frequency, participation, confidentiality, purposes, and responsibility for conducting presidential assessments.

Several subsidiary research questions were posed to answer Question Three, "What relationships are there, if any, between how presidential assessments are conducted and the outcomes presidents and board chairs report?" These subsidiary research questions (3A-3D) highlight important assessment outcomes: the utility of reviews for presidents, presidents' satisfaction with the review process, the president's overall performance rating, and improvement in presidential performance.

Question Three explores relationships between these outcome variables (dependent variables) and several variables regarding assessment policies and practices (independent variables). Related research helped identify appropriate assessment process variables to include in the analysis: frequency of reviews, goals, goal setting, personal participation, confidentiality, negative feedback seeking behavior, positive feedback seeking behavior, and adequate feedback. Bivariate analysis was used to examine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

The outcome and process variables in questions 3A-3D are identified here, briefly, and described in detail in Chapter Three.

Research Question 3A

Is there a relationship between the usefulness of reviews for presidents, **(utility)**, and:

- 3A.1 the frequency of reviews?;
- 3A.2 setting specific objectives, clarifying criteria, and reviewing performance against previously agreed upon goals?; or
- 3A.3 receiving adequate feedback from the board?

Research Question 3B

Is there a relationship between the president's **satisfaction** with the performance appraisal and:

- 3B.1 setting specific objectives and clarifying criteria for good performance?;
- 3B.2 the president's participation in developing the review process and conducting the review?; or
- 3B.3 the confidentiality of the review process?

Research Question 3C

Is there a relationship between the **president's overall performance rating** and the president's positive or negative feedback seeking behavior, as reported by the board chair?

Research Question 3D

Is there a relationship between **improvement in the president's performance**, as reported by the board chair, and either:

- 3D.1 the president's negative feedback seeking behavior?; or
- 3D.2 the adequacy of feedback the president reportedly receives from the governing board?

Previous research by Greller (1978) and Ashford and Tsui (1991) was particularly important for identifying these variables, as was the literature on presidential assessment (see Chapter Two).

For example, special attention was given to the president's role in the appraisal process, for at least two reasons: 1) self-assessment was emphasized in the literature on performance reviews for executives, including reviews of academic presidents; and 2) the literature on performance appraisal suggests that ownership (personal participation) enhances the utility and satisfaction of performance reviews. In questions 3A and 3B, measures of ownership,

goals, goal setting, utility, and satisfaction were based on research by Greller (1978). Confidentiality (see question 3B) was suggested by many authors on presidential assessment as a key factor for successful reviews.

In questions 3C and 3D, the dependent variables were the board chair's rating of presidential performance and improvement in performance since the last review. These variables were examined in relation to several independent variables, suggested by the literature on performance appraisal: 1) the president's positive and negative feedback-seeking behavior (Ashford and Tsui, 1991); and 2) the adequacy of performance feedback provided by the board. The review of the literature in Chapter Two provides details.

Significance of Study

Research in this area will be of interest both to presidents and to trustees, the volunteers who serve on the governing boards of America's colleges and universities. Trustees generally conduct the assessment of the president, yet are not always knowledgeable about human resource management or even higher education governance. Presidents deserve to have this controversial procedure well managed and sensitively handled.

Information about the elements of a presidential review, the diversity of practices, and associated outcomes may allow trustees and other policy makers to make better decisions about the kind of assessment most appropriate for their institutions. The study will describe a typical process for

conducting a presidential assessment and identify practices associated with greater presidential satisfaction, more useful reviews for presidents, higher performance ratings, or greater improvement in performance.

Presidents play a key role in educating boards, and empirical information about assessment practices will provide them with an authoritative resource. Knowing how to use the assessment process to improve their own performance could benefit presidents as well as the institutions they serve.

A more thorough understanding of presidential assessment may also prove useful in the evaluation of the chief executives of other nonprofit organizations and for-profit corporations. Though higher education institutions have unique characteristics, the evaluation of leaders in other professional settings may follow some of the same principles.

Limitations of the Study

This study was exploratory in many respects. It was based upon prior research which did not clearly define formal and informal evaluation and did not explore the details of other approaches to presidential assessment. As an exploratory study, it served to identify the variety of presidential assessment practices in higher education.

Furthermore, the survey data are not in the form of documented, observed behavior. The survey relied upon self-reported data from

presidents and board chairs, based upon their personal experiences with presidential evaluation. The data are their perceptions of, and reactions to, presidential evaluation. As such, the data lacks the reliability of multiple sources of information on performance and performance appraisal.

The methodology created other limitations. The subjects for the study were limited to presidents and chairs whose institutions were active or former members of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), or had used AGB's services (e.g. conferences, meetings, or literature). The ways in which the subjects differed from the total population of American colleges and universities, and response rates, are detailed in Chapter Three.

In addition, since the study included only current presidents, those former presidents whose assessment contributed in some way to their departure were unrepresented. This omitted a group that may have been least satisfied with the process for their own presidential assessment.

Furthermore, while it was possible to ask each president in the study to report on his or her own experience, it was not feasible to ask chairs of multicampus system boards to provide detailed reports on the assessment of the system head and each president. The questionnaire for chairs of multicampus system boards was more general and policy oriented. Consequently, more detailed information is available for single-campus institutions than for systems.

This study was not intended to determine what form of presidential assessment would be right or wrong for any particular institution. However, a greater understanding of presidential assessment may help leaders of colleges and universities make these decisions for themselves.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study the terms "evaluate," "assess," "appraise," and "review" are used interchangeably. In referring to presidential evaluation, no difference is implied when it is called performance appraisal, performance review, or any of the other terms commonly found in the literature. A variety of terms was used to avoid repetition in words which appear with frequency in the text.

The two roles, "president" and "board chair," are used to describe the persons evaluated and the persons generally responsible for carrying out the evaluation, though in practice their titles may vary. While imperfect, these terms seem better suited to the situation than "employee" and "supervisor" or any other alternatives.

Organization

Chapter One provides background on presidential evaluation and performance appraisal, introduces the problem, explains its significance, and

briefly describes the methodology used in this study. Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature on performance evaluation, with special attention to chief executive officers, and comprehensively reviews the literature on presidential evaluation in higher education. Chapter Three details the methodology used for data collection and data analysis in the study. Chapter Four reports the results and findings in two parts. The first part describes assessment practices in higher education (Research Questions One and Two). The second part examines the relationships, if any, between assessment variables (Research Question Three). Finally, Chapter Five offers interpretations of the data, insights into the problem, and suggestions for further research. The survey instruments are included in Appendix A.

Sponsorship of the Study

This study was sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). AGB's interest and support has been of great assistance and contributed to the quality of the questions asked as well as the willingness of presidents and board chairs to respond. Special thanks are extended to Richard T. Ingram, President and Barbara E. Taylor, former Vice President for Programs and Research for their gracious help. However, the interpretations of the data and the recommendations made reflect the author's views alone, and are not necessarily shared by AGB or its staff.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review provides a brief overview of the historical trends that led to the growth of performance appraisal in work organizations and an analysis of the principles of performance appraisal, the current practices for performance appraisal of chief executive officers in corporations and nonprofit organizations, and the state of the art for presidential assessment in higher education. Attention is given to the issues of employee role and type of organization to highlight the unique challenges of assessing the performance of college and university presidents.

Personnel Evaluation

General History and Trends

The field of human resource management has grown significantly in the last half of the twentieth century for a variety of reasons: increased global competition, growth in the size of large corporations, increased governmental regulation, and a more educated and diverse work force, among many factors (Anderson, 1993; Beer, Lawrence, Mills, Spector & Walton, 1984; Molander & Winterton, 1994). Workers are not just labor to be used, but have become assets to be developed. "One consequence of the fight for survival and success

is the now widespread realization within organizations that people are their most important asset" (Anderson, 1993, p. xi).

Evidence of the changes in value attributed to the personnel function is the addition in 1981 of a required course in human resource management at the Harvard Business School, the first required course added in nearly twenty years (Beer et al., 1984, p. ix). The emergence and naming of the field was indicative of the changing role of people in the work place:

The abandonment of the term 'personnel management' in favour [sic] of 'human resource management' was designed to emphasize a new, harder-headed look at the handling of people at work. Employees were just as much a resource as any other asset and needed to be carefully acquired, used and maintained. (Molander & Winterton, 1994, p. 8)

Human resource management is a system that includes many functions: "labor relations, compensation, staffing (recruitment, replacement, and promotion), performance appraisal, training, organizational development, equal employment opportunity, and health and safety" (Beer et al., 1984, p. 3). While these functions are interrelated and interdependent, the focus here is on performance appraisal, regarded by some as the central part of human resource management (Anderson, 1993, p. 5).

Performance appraisal has become a common practice in the business world. A study done in 1983 by the Bureau of National Affairs estimated that 91% of its sample of American business organizations had performance appraisal systems. Similar results were found in surveys of businesses in the

United Kingdom (Anderson, 1993, p. 6). Several trends have been noted: more employee involvement, more openness with employees, more objective-based and less trait-based systems, multiple criteria and sources of information for evaluations, more involvement of managers, broader inclusion of all categories of employees, and integration of performance appraisal with systems for rewarding and developing personnel (Anderson, 1993).

Purposes and Outcomes for Performance Appraisal

Several purposes were given for performance appraisal, variously described as: administrative, informative, and motivational (McGregor, 1960) and evaluative and developmental (Schwab, 1973). In Schwab's scheme, evaluative purposes included making decisions on personnel actions such as retention, promotion, transfer, and compensation. Developmental purposes focused on improving performance, including setting performance goals, monitoring performance, identifying individual needs, planning professional development activities, and reconciling personal and organizational needs. Motivation was often cited as a key developmental goal; Anderson emphasized that managers must know what motivates their employees and be able to use the appraisal process "in releasing the potential of the employee" (Anderson, 1993, p. 13-14).

Similar to Schwab's categorization of evaluative and developmental purposes, Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler referred to "organizational" and "individual" purposes for assessment (1989, pp. 5-11). Their scheme emphasized the potential for conflict between competing purposes. Organizations need information to plan and control their use of human resources, such as evaluating employee potential, identifying training needs, and motivating performance. Individuals' purposes are equally complex; they want to learn from feedback on their performance and maximize potential rewards for performance. These purposes can create conflicts within the individual and between employees and the organization. Employees, for example, may try to avoid negative feedback and the consequences of poor performance ratings, thereby impeding the organization's need for honest disclosure of performance to inform personnel actions. This potential for conflict in purposes has figured in the work of other researchers (Meyer, Kay, & French, 1965) as well.

In addition to the stated purposes of performance appraisal, there are the potential positive and negative outcomes to consider. Assuming the process is conscientiously and thoughtfully carried out, benefits may accrue at three levels, for the employee, the appraiser, and the organization, according to Anderson (1993, pp. 18-21): For the **employee**, clarification of expectations, feedback on performance, knowledge of strengths and weaknesses, input to superiors about the job, clarification of objectives and priorities, and discussion of prospects; for the **appraiser**, clarification of staff performance,

clarification of own objectives, motivation of employees, employee development, and refinement of assigned duties; and for the **organization**, improvement in the areas of communication, motivation, shared objectives, and organizational performance.

Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler (1989, pp. 3-5) cited similar positive results but cautioned that the possible negative effects are of equal concern: employees may resign, sue, or suffer loss of self-esteem and motivation; time and money may be wasted; relationships may be damaged; and "false and misleading data may be created" (1989, p. 4). The unintended consequences can be so damaging that Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler recommended performance appraisal be avoided if it cannot be done well.

In practice, then, the several purposes for appraisal may conflict. The greatest concern centered on the interference of evaluative activities with developmental goals; these affect the person evaluated as well as the supervisor and organization. For the employee, a process that may result in negative personnel actions is unlikely to be open and honest, thus hampering developmental goals (Mohrman, Resnick-West, & Lawler, 1989, pp. 8-9). Assessment may also threaten the ego and self-esteem of the person evaluated. Though research found that as many as eighty percent of employees evaluated their own performance as above average, (Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler, 1989, p. 10), self-evaluations may vary in either direction (too high or too low) reflecting the self-esteem of the individual (Ashford, 1989). Negative feedback or a less favorable than expected

evaluation may make the person evaluated react defensively and hamper development discussions.

It can also be difficult for the evaluator. The disclosure of weaknesses may damage rewards for the employee, weaken the employee's motivation, worsen relations between the supervisor and employee, and be unpleasant for the evaluator to deliver. The supervisor may find the conflicting roles of judge and confidant difficult, if not impossible, to combine.

Meyer, Kay and French (1965) recommended that evaluative and developmental performance appraisal meetings be held on separate occasions, to avoid as much as possible the problem for managers of "split roles," that is, playing the parts of both helper and judge. Many experts, (including Beer et al., 1984, p. 85) advised that salary decisions be made at a time other than the occasion for performance appraisal, to dampen the conflict. "While it may be logical for performance appraisal and salary decisions to be linked, there should be a separation in time and in procedure between appraisal systems and salary review systems" (Anderson, 1993, p.14).

Expert opinion is not, however, unanimous. In their research, Lawler, Mohrman, and Resnick found that it was unrealistic to keep the discussion of pay and promotion out of a discussion on performance appraisal. Furthermore, they found that more satisfying discussions occurred when these matters were included (1984, p. 34). Since experts disagreed, it is unclear how performance appraisal can be linked most effectively to the reward

structure in an organization to meet both administrative and developmental goals.

This controversy over the purposes of performance appraisal and the best way to maximize the development goals is of particular salience to the evaluation of college presidents. Nason (1984) had two clear recommendations in approaching presidential assessment: assessment should be for improving performance and the purposes for the assessment should determine the process for assessment. Purpose, or the "why" of assessment, is essential in deciding how, what, when, and, who. Determining whether this conflict between developmental and administrative purposes applies to presidential assessment or what factors are associated with positive development outcomes would provide the empirical evidence needed to inform decisions about assessment practices.

Appraisal Methods

At its most basic, performance appraisal is "the process of identifying, measuring and developing human performance in organizations" (Schneier & Beatty, 1982, p. 4). Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler (1989, p. 12) discussed the tools and methods of assessment in terms of the "performance cycle," by which they meant "defining performance, measuring performance, and feeding back the results of measurement." It is not an easy task and several difficulties quickly become evident, particularly specifying the

“requirements for job success” and the subjective nature of the judgments regarding performance (Beer et al., 1984, p. 80).

Cascio (1982, pp. 42-52) looked at performance data in two categories, objective measures and subjective measures. Objective measures used quantitative production and personnel indicators such as sales volume in dollars, waste in dollars, and number of absences. Relevant measures were identified in relation to the job. Subjective measures were based on human judgment about employee behavior using ratings that may be either relative or absolute. Relative measures included rankings, paired comparisons, or forced distributions, and looked at individual performance in comparison with others. Absolute ratings looked at each individual alone using essays, critical incidents, checklists, and rating scales.

Similarly, Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler (1989, p. 50-89) identified four categories of approaches:

1. performer-oriented (traits, skills);
2. behavior-oriented (critical incidents, behaviorally anchored rating scales, mixed-choice scales, forced-choice scales);
3. results-oriented (management by objectives, work planning and review, summary performance rating); and
4. comparison-oriented (ranking, forced distribution, paired comparisons).

As others have stressed, Mohrman, Resnick-West, and Lawler recommended that the choice of methods match the purposes served. Recognizing that

multiple purposes are common, multiple measures were suggested. For example, critical incidents support feedback and training purposes, but are relatively weak for decisions on rewards. Results-oriented measures are well suited for the purposes of job definition, feedback, and career planning, but are not as well suited as comparisons or forced choice measures for human resource planning (p. 89).

Cascio (1982) also pointed out the short-comings of various approaches. Quantitative production measures, for example, fail to capture the influence of factors beyond an individual's control, look at results without regard to process, and ignore many significant managerial responsibilities. Developing and conducting evaluations using subjective measures also suffer a variety of problems: the expense in developing rating scales or instruments, difficulty of comparing employees using qualitative data, unreliability of raters, time and stress in conducting evaluations, and costly training needed for evaluators. Despite the problems, Cascio reported that most researchers and managers rely on subjective measures of performance (p. 43).

Many factors make it difficult to develop an appraisal system that captures the important parts of an employee's performance, especially at the managerial level: the difficulty of defining effectiveness for employees other than clerical and technical; the importance of nonquantifiable characteristics, such as shared culture and values; and the difficulty in defining requirements for job success (Beer et al., 1984)). Often the process, how things are done, is as important as results, for managerial employees.

Much of the literature on performance appraisal appeared to be geared toward managerial or lower level employees in corporate settings. However, the context and the role of the employee are relevant to determining appraisal methods:

Performance appraisal takes place in organizations, which are made up of many features and systems. Performance appraisal is also part of an ongoing relationship between the individual and the organization. It is impossible to wall appraisal off from other things that happen to individuals or from other features of the organization...Similarly, the way jobs are structured can have a major impact on the choice of appraisal methods. For example, the work of the corporate president is very different from that of a machinist, and so it is hard to argue that the same methods would be appropriate for both. (Mohrman, Resnick-West, & Lawler, 1989, p. 12-13)

The issue of role is emphasized here because the treatment of instrumentation for performance appraisal in the literature raised special problems when applied to executives or presidents. When it comes to the evaluation of employees at the top, self-assessments became a common feature, in addition to the evaluation of performance by a supervisor or board. The next section, on the evaluation of chief executive officers (CEOs), reveals that CEOs are not evaluated in the same manner as other employees. CEOs are alone at the top; their performance is considered in regard to organizational goals, which they may be largely responsible for setting, and

measured by the progress they themselves report. Recognizing the importance of self-assessment for CEOs, special attention is given to this here.

Self-Assessment

In a comprehensive review of the literature on self-assessment in organizations, Ashford (1989) identified three tasks individuals must perform and three problems in performing those tasks:

They must establish environment-specific standards on which they should judge their performance; they must learn which feedback cues among the many available they should attend to; and they must correctly interpret those cues. Individuals have three problems in successfully completing these tasks. First, they must complete them in an organizational environment that often provides only random and conflictual cues. These cues must be decoded accurately. Second, they must resolve the tension within them between wanting assessment information for its instrumental value while also wanting to protect their egos and self-esteem. Finally, they must reconcile their needs to maintain a self-presentation as a self-confident performer. The tension exists because such self-presentations often do not allow one to show an interest in how one is performing. (p. 133)

Self-assessment takes place in complex organizational settings and involves many factors: selectively attending to information, interpreting information,

seeking information, projecting a confident self-image, and defending one's ego. These may come into play as part of the appraisal interview, the written self-assessment, or the casual accumulation of feedback on a daily basis.

Ashford pointed to two theoretical perspectives for understanding the significance of self-assessment in individual behavior, control theory and symbolic interactionism (Ashford, 1989, p. 141). Both explain the role of feedback in shaping behavior.

Control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Campion & Lord, 1982) describes behavior as a self-correcting negative feedback loop. It involves setting standards or goals, obtaining feedback on discrepancies between actual and desired outcomes, and changing behavior to reduce the discrepancies between the two (Ashford, 1989, p. 142). Ashford suggested that work organizations impose two additional constraints: the need for individuals to assess the congruence between both individual and organizational goals and the individual's and others' views of their own performance.

Symbolic interactionism refers to the role of the interpretation of events and the environment for the development of a self-concept. Seeing yourself as others see you is a basic tenet of a useful self-theory (Ashford, 1989, p. 143). While control theory suggests how individuals regulate their own behavior, symbolic interactionism explains how people develop a sense of self. Ashford (p. 144-5) suggested that both are relevant to the process of self-assessment in work organizations:

Symbolic interactionism and control theory provide the basis upon which to discuss how individuals regulate their behavior. Control theory articulates the structure of self-regulation and highlights the importance of standards (goals) and discrepancies. Symbolic interactionism leads us to highlight the importance of seeing ourselves as others see us, of developing accurate appraisals and of the role our interpretations play in the process.

As mentioned, problems with information, ego, and self-presentation can thwart the self-assessment process. These problems may be even greater, the higher up in an organization one goes. Longenecker and Gioia found several myths about managers that relate to feedback and self-assessment, namely that managers are expected to be autonomous and self-directing, and know what to do and how well they are doing it, without outside input (1991, p. 88). Longenecker and Gioia regard these as myths because they found that managers want and need more feedback than they get. Formal feedback is especially important for leaders; they have more ambiguous roles and often find themselves surrounded by people who share their views (Longenecker & Gioia, 1988; Ashford, 1989).

Emphasizing the importance for leaders of an accurate self-view, Bass observed:

Probably the most effective aspect of management and leadership development is the provision of feedback to promote greater accuracy between self-reports and those received from others. More studies that

demonstrate the increasing congruence and subsequent outcomes generated from the provision of such feedback should be conducted.”

(Bass, 1990, pp. 889-890)

Ashford provided a succinct summary of the problems CEOs face in self-assessment:

When the CEO tries to determine whether he or she has chosen the best strategy for the firm, he or she faces an information problem consisting of random, or sometimes systematically, biased cues, an ego defense problem in that he or she chose the strategy and may not comfortably accept criticism, and a self-presentation problem in that seeking other's opinions may especially be inconsistent with our images of how a strong, capable leader acts. (Ashford, 1989, p. 165)

Negative feedback.

Negative feedback plays an important role in self-correcting behavior and in developing a useful self-theory, yet it is often avoided by both individuals and their supervisors in performance appraisals. And when supervisors do criticize the performance of subordinates, it does not always have the desired effects. Kay, Meyer, and French (1965) found that when supervisors offered criticism of subordinates, it was threatening to the employee and had negative implications for performance: “A manager's attempt to assist a subordinate by pointing up improvement needs were likely

to be perceived by the subordinate as threatening to his self-esteem and to result in defensive behavior. The greater the threat, the less favorable the attitude toward the appraisal system and the less the subsequent constructive improvement in job performance realized" (p. 311).

Self-regulation has been used on an organizational level to describe the "cybernetic institution" (Birnbaum, 1988). Cybernetic organizations respond to structural and social controls that serve as "organizational thermostats" (p. 182), keeping activities within acceptable bounds, neither too hot nor too cold. Organizations selectively attend and respond to negative feedback. It is based on a view of organizations as essentially healthy, if not rational, organisms with self-regulating features that correct organizational functioning.

Negative feedback plays a key role in identifying institutional needs and priorities. Negative feedback loops alert leaders to problems and serve to keep the organization on track. Birnbaum (1989, 1992) used this model to describe how colleges and universities, and their presidents, work.

In this regard, Ashford (1989, p. 160) poses an essential question for further research: "How do we provide individuals with feedback that is negative, indicating that they are off track in their goal-related efforts, in such a way as to avoid reducing their efficacy expectations and thereby their effort?"

The role of negative feedback seeking.

Though not a solution to the supervisor's problem of providing constructive criticism, Ashford and Tsui (1991) found that asking for negative feedback can provide important performance information. In a study involving 387 managers, they found that employees who tended to seek negative feedback on performance also tended to receive higher effectiveness ratings and more accurately project ratings of their performance by others. Conversely, Ashford and Tsui found that the tendency to seek positive feedback was negatively associated with supervisors' and constituents' ratings of managers' overall effectiveness.

In their analysis, Ashford and Tsui pointed out that positive feedback is more likely to be provided spontaneously than is negative feedback, hence seeking negative feedback is more likely to yield novel information. Though college and university presidents may feel there is no shortage of critics, they may share the feelings of other managers that little performance feedback is provided by those to whom they report (Longenecker & Gioia, 1988, 1991).

Negative feedback may provide managers with needed information for a more accurate self-theory and more effective self-regulation. Seeing oneself as others do may also enable managers to be more influential in changing constituents' goals or expectations (Ashford & Tsui, 1991, p. 271). Perhaps the question should be how to encourage employees to be more reflective about

their own performance, rather than how to provide constructive criticism more effectively.

Evaluation of Chief Executives

Myths about Appraising CEOs' Performance

In studies of managerial performance appraisal, Longenecker and Gioia (1988, 1991) found that executives want and need feedback on their performance but that, paradoxically, those higher up the organizational ladder were least likely to receive performance appraisals:

Our study suggests that executives may need appraisal more than other members of the organization for a number of reasons: the sophisticated and more ambiguous nature of their jobs, the fact that their responsibilities tend to change often, the serious organizational consequences of ineffective performance on their part, and their typically high need for achievement, recognition, and career progress...It is somewhat disturbing that the quality of appraisal goes down as a manager rises in the organization. Executives attribute this pattern to a "myth" that higher-level people should be self-directive and that, therefore, executive appraisals should be more or less unnecessary (1988, p. 46).

Their work was based upon interviews with executives and managers from large, private-sector, service and manufacturing organizations. Though their research was originally intended to collect data on how the executives conducted appraisals of others, the focus changed when it became clear that the executives wanted to talk about their own, often frustrating, appraisal experiences (1988, p. 41). Longenecker and Gioia reported that appraisal systems were used in over ninety percent of US organizations but that less than twenty percent were done effectively, and perhaps even fewer in the case of executives (1988, pp. 41-42).

Longenecker and Gioia recommended that executives receive ongoing feedback, at least monthly, as well as formal annual appraisals. Their description of the qualities of good appraisals was hardly formulaic. They should: be frequent, honest, specific, formal, unambiguous, and based on trust; overcome political trappings; include planning features like a review of "job description," "specific accountabilities," and "jurisdiction and authority"; and invite feedback regarding the performance of superiors.

Longenecker and Gioia pointed out many benefits of performance appraisal, including improved performance and motivation (1988, p. 42). Executive appraisals also serve as an example for subordinates more meaningfully than an official sanction of policy with a letter from the president (1988, p. 46).

In a subsequent article, Longenecker and Gioia (1992) identified and debunked several "myths," among them the beliefs that performance

appraisal for executives is unwanted, unneeded, undignified, too time consuming, hinders autonomy and creativity, is simply measured by results, and is otherwise unmeasurable. Their suggestions included: avoiding rating forms, including written self-evaluations, using agreed upon long and short term goals, relating performance to rewards, providing specific feedback, and including development plans in the discussion (1992, p. 27). In no uncertain terms, they recommended that executives be included in an organization's performance appraisal plans (1988, p. 41).

CEO Evaluation: A Key Board Responsibility

The call for CEO evaluation comes not just from CEOs, themselves, but from those who want to strengthen and improve corporate governance (Aggarwal & Aggarwal, 1985; Alderfer, 1986; Firstenberg & Malkiel, 1994; Lorsch, 1995; National Association of Corporate Directors, 1994; Pound, 1995; Harvard Business Review Perspectives, 1995; Vennat, 1995; Working Group on Corporate Governance, 1991):

Evaluating the CEO annually is central to effective monitoring for several reasons. Fundamentally, it is a major step toward empowering the board because it delivers a clear message to both the CEO and directors that the former is accountable to the latter. It also provides outside directors with an impetus to engage in an open and frank discussion about the CEO's and the company's performances at least

once a year....Finally, an evaluation benefits the CEO personally by directly communicating the director's concerns and suggestions for improvement, as well as praise. (Lorsch, 1995, pp. 113-114)

The National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) similarly embraces the evaluation of chief executive officers (NACD, 1994). NACD presents itself as the only nonprofit association in the US concerned with the needs of corporate directors and has over 1,500 members; it might be considered one of the loudest, if not the official, voice of corporate boards. NACD's blue ribbon commission issued recommendations on this topic, as part of a study of evaluation practices for CEOs, boards, and directors:

[F]ormal performance reviews are necessary--especially for the CEO, who has broad job duties, a large span of control, and a high degree of discretion in decision making. We believe that CEO evaluations make sense not only for the inexperienced CEO or for the CEO whose company is experiencing difficulties, but for all CEOs (NACD, 1994, p. 1).

According to the commission, the benefits of CEO performance appraisal include: clarifying expectations for and providing feedback on performance; informing the board and CEO about strengths, weaknesses, and problems; providing a basis for compensation decisions; fostering board-CEO relations; and demonstrably fulfilling the board's responsibility to monitor and evaluate the CEO (pp. 1-2).

Evaluations should be based on clear, agreed upon goals, including a detailed position description, annual objectives, and long-term business plans. Qualitative and quantitative factors might include “integrity,” “vision,” “leadership,” “ability to meet corporate performance objectives,” “succession planning,” “shareholder relations,” “stakeholder relations,” and “CEO-board relations” (pp. 3-4).

Two factors peculiar to corporate boards were also addressed: the common practice of a joint position of CEO-chairman of the board and the inclusion of inside directors (the company’s employees) on the board. Both of these practices have been criticized by advocates of corporate governance reform who recommend separating the CEO and chair positions and eliminating all employees from the board, other than the CEO (Firstenberg & Malkiel, 1994). For CEO evaluations, NACD recommended that the joint CEO-chair roles be separately defined, the process be headed by someone other than the CEO-chair, outside directors conduct the review, and review committees exclude inside directors.

Though approximately seventy-five to eighty percent of US corporations are headed by a CEO-chair (Berenbeim, 1995, p. 35; Lorsch, 1995, p.107), nonprofit organizations generally escape this problem. The inclusion of insiders on nonprofit boards, however, does occasionally occur. In higher education, for example, faculty serve on nine percent of the boards of public four-year single-campus colleges and students (“insiders,” though not employees) serve on forty percent of those boards (Ingram, 1993b, p. 385).

Some have suggested that it is a conflict of interest for employees and students to serve on the boards of their own college or university (Ingram, 1993a, p. 310-311), let alone participate in evaluating the president.

Common Practices

In regard to the process for assessing the CEO, NACD recommended that evaluations reflect the corporate culture. The process could be either formal or informal, written or oral, or a combination. Some companies, they reported, have found an outside facilitator useful. From a legal stand point, the commission recommended that a well-documented *process* may reduce liability but suggests caution regarding the legal implications of “documentation of the *details* or *personal aspects* of any individual evaluation” (p. ix). A strong recommendation was that the process must be confidential (p. 4).

NACD suggested that the following might typically occur, on an annual basis: the board assigns responsibility to a director or committee; the CEO completes a self-assessment; the board’s representatives review the self-assessment and prepare their own evaluation of the CEO; a meeting is held with the CEO and the board’s representatives to discuss the review; and a second meeting is held, with the CEO and all outside directors, to discuss the review and plan further steps.

Similar “essential” elements were outlined by Lorsch (1995) in an article on board empowerment. The trend is for outside directors to evaluate corporate CEOs annually, confidentially, and face-to-face, using established individual and corporate goals, and the CEO’s own self-assessment.

An international perspective was added by a study of CEO evaluation practices in six countries (Canada, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States), sponsored by The Conference Board (Berenbeim, 1995). This study, too, found that accountability pressures led to more active boards and that assessing the CEO was part of fulfilling this role (p. 6).

While board structures and laws varied, several generalizations and recommendations were made about assessment practices: most boards evaluated the CEO, few had detailed written procedures, evaluations were commonly linked to annual compensation reviews, participation was typically limited to outside directors, consultants were rarely used and mostly for comparative salary data, and in cases where the CEO and chairman roles were filled by one person, CEO performance should be assessed separately.

The CEO’s participation in the process was considered an important aspect: “To be credible, any evaluation (including the CEO’s) must take into account the employee’s view of goals, priorities, and tasks that he or she has been assigned. The potential for disagreement between boards and CEOs on these matters is considerable” (p. 34).

It was suggested that the selection process play a key role in setting performance goals. Boards should make the expectations for job performance clear from the start and CEOs should ensure that there is tacit agreement on goals on an ongoing basis, "if only until the next meeting" (p. 10).

NACD and The Conference Board generally agreed in their reports and recommendations on the state of the art. Boards recognize CEO assessment as a key responsibility and outside directors, along with the CEO, review CEO performance on an annual basis. It is a confidential matter, usually without benefit of written procedures.

A controversial aspect of assessment, in corporations and elsewhere, is the matter of participation. U.S. and international experts alike have described assessment as a joint board-CEO responsibility and cooperative venture. Almost universally, they recommended that participation in the process be limited to outside directors (Berenbeim, 1995; Lorsch, 1995; National Association of Corporate Directors, 1994; Vennat, 1995; Working Group on Corporate Governance). A noteworthy exception, however, was Aggarwal and Aggarwal (1985) who painted an ugly picture of board/CEO relations. They recommended that boards overcome their dependence on the CEO or "his loyalists" for information on performance and that they: solicit annual anonymous letters evaluating the CEO from the top ten or so direct subordinates; appoint technical experts to the board, for independent assessments of management decisions; monitor expenses paid for consultants used for management proposals; and appoint a formal control group of

managers, reporting directly to the board, with special board protection from reprisal. While this was an extreme position, it voiced the concern boards may have about their reliance on the CEO.

An empowered board does have the potential to exacerbate relations between the board and CEO, but most see this trend as a positive change that can improve relations. Since CEO assessment is part of this governance trend, doing it well could be essential. In an article profiling the experiences of several corporate leaders, a Harvard Business Review Perspective offered this insight:

The age of the empowered board of directors is here. Virtually all major public corporations now acknowledge that they have no choice but to make their managements more accountable....Most directors and managers seem to agree that the objective is to make the board a more effective watchdog without undermining management's ability to run the business. They also say boards need to figure out how to distance themselves more from their CEOs without turning a constructive relationship into an adversarial one. (1995, p. 153).

One of the fundamental questions they posed was "how should boards evaluate management, especially the CEO?" (1995, p. 153).

Evaluation of Chief Executives in Other Nonprofit Organizations

As might be expected, there is no definitive resource on evaluating chief executives in nonprofit organizations. For comparison with practices in colleges and universities, several sources were consulted: the United Way of America, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Foundation Center, and Nonprofit World. These provided examples of how things are done in large voluntary organizations and private schools, as well as recommendations from authoritative sources.

Brian O'Connell (1985) wrote a guide for boards, published by The Foundation Center, The Board Member's Book: Making a Difference in Voluntary Organizations. The book, over two hundred pages long, devoted only one page to the evaluation of the chief executive officer. In his brief treatment of the topic, O'Connell made several suggestions: the CEO should not be given a contract (boards must be free to remove the CEO); evaluations should be conducted annually; at least one hour of the board meeting should be designated for this purpose, annually; and criteria should include the job description, board/CEO relations, accomplishment of organizational goals, and volunteer matters. The suggestion that contracts are inappropriate in the independent sector is not supported by other sources; it is difficult to understand why the independent sector, more than the for-profit sector, needs unlimited authority to remove the CEO. Furthermore, one hour hardly seems adequate for the purpose of evaluating the CEO, board/CEO

relations, and more. One would hope this is not indicative of the attention this procedure commands in the independent sector.

In contrast, NAIS has written a thoughtful publication devoted to this topic, "Evaluating the Performance of Trustees and School Heads" (Johnson, 1986). It acknowledged the variety of practices among its member institutions and provided diverse examples without prescribing methods. Johnson identified improving the performance of the school head as the primary purpose of evaluation. Procedural suggestions included: annual or biannual evaluations, a self-assessment by the head, involvement of the full board, the use of short questionnaires or open essay instruments for trustee input, and solicitation of faculty and staff input. The process should include a meeting between the head and full board to discuss the self-assessment, a closed board session to discuss the head's performance, and a meeting between the chair and head to review the evaluation results, all within a matter of days. The examples ranged from a very informal periodic discussion between the chair and head to a more formal process involving a canvass of all school employees by a board committee, followed by a written report and chair/head meeting. Although intended for use by primary and secondary schools, this could be a useful resource for private colleges.

United Way of America did not have a standardized procedure, nationwide, but provided its state chapters with extensive guidelines and examples to develop their own evaluation procedures. Some states specified that evaluations will be done, by whom, the time frame, and other details;

others had no written policies. The national office provided a copy of the June 1991 manual, developed by United Way of Pennsylvania, as exemplary of practices in its chapters, as well as a copy of the handouts from the May 1991 Volunteer Leaders Conference on "Chief Professional Officer Performance Evaluation: A Volunteer/Professional Partnership" (unpublished materials, United Way of America, Alexandria, VA).

The Pennsylvania chapter's manual clearly identified the purposes, procedures, and criteria for evaluating the CEO. The purposes included: setting goals, providing feedback, recognizing and rewarding good performance, and strengthening the relationship between the CEO and the board. Performance criteria were evaluated on a five-point scale, in the form of a checklist, and included: the relationship with the board, management skills, mission, fiscal management, personal and professional attributes, community and public relations, and leadership of staff. The evaluation also included several general short-answer questions regarding accomplishments, recommendations for the CEO, and priorities.

Volunteers played a central role, as illustrated by The Volunteer Leaders Conference. The conference handouts provided examples of job descriptions, performance criteria, performance objectives, and a self-appraisal form, as well as basic information about collecting evaluation data, developing performance objectives and conducting an evaluation meeting. This central volunteer role has no parallel in colleges and universities.

In two articles for Nonprofit World, Mark Michaels (1989, 1990) outlined procedures for board self-assessment as well as for assessment of the chief executive. Michaels' recommendations followed a management-by-objectives approach and identified planning as the primary purpose. Procedures relied heavily on generating concrete goals; explicit, quantitative performance standards; and behavioral benchmarks for performance. Unfortunately, the important points Michaels raised about an integrative approach to evaluation in "Board Self-Assessment" (1989), linking the performance of the board, CEO, and institution, were not included in "CEO Evaluation: The Board's Second Most Crucial Duty" (1990). This weakness was also found among authors who wrote about this topic in regard to higher education.

Michaels recommended that the board: rely on concrete criteria, such as a work plan, job description, and performance standards; participate as a whole in the evaluation of the CEO; begin the process with a self-evaluation by the CEO; and keep the process goal oriented and non-adversarial. The reliance on concrete goals, quantifiable standards, and MBO approaches may be particularly problematic for colleges and universities and other nonprofit organizations, which resist this bottom-line approach.

It seems fitting to allow John Nason, a noted authority on higher education, to have the last word here on CEO evaluations in nonprofit organizations. In Board Assessment of the Chief Executive: A Responsibility Essential to Good Governance, published by the National Center for

Nonprofit Boards, Nason discussed evaluation purposes, criteria, types, guidelines, and procedures (Nason, 1990).

Nason suggested that organizations develop procedures to fit their unique characteristics and was prescriptive only in recommending three essentials: "1. do it; 2. do it in a humane and sensitive way; and 3. make it a constructive, regular exercise for the chief executive, for the board, and for the organization" (p. 12). In most respects, Nason reflected the same concerns for nonprofit organizations as did his earlier book on higher education institutions, reviewed in the next section (Nason, 1984).

While Nason hesitated to prescribe a single approach, he seemed to condemn formal procedures, in any setting (1990, p. 6):

A few nonprofit organizations employ this approach, chiefly in higher education. Usually an outside consultant is retained to conduct the elaborate and time-consuming process and to present findings to the board. This method has the alleged advantage of involving all interested parties, and places the assessment of the chief executive in the context of the total governance of the institution. It usually carries a high cost in time and human emotions, and is therefore inappropriate for most nonprofit organizations.

Presidential Assessment

The Higher Education Environment

Based on a speech given in 1969, Kingman Brewster, President of Yale, has been credited over and over again with predicting, if not accelerating, the rapid increase in the practice of evaluating college presidents. In his speech, (Brewster, 1970) he suggested that boards should evaluate their presidents periodically to make a determination on reappointment. "The fact that the Yale Corporation acted on Brewster's proposal in 1971 lent a certain respectability to the new procedure," (Hubert, 1986, p. 36).

Unique characteristics of higher education institutions make evaluation of the chief executive an especially difficult process. Several factors contribute to this: ambiguous goals, multiple constituencies, shared governance, interdependence of the president and the governing board, the limited power of presidents, and the growth of influence by internal and external players (Cohen & March, 1986; Kauffman, 1980; Nason, 1984). With no clear bottom line, multiple stakeholders, and overlapping lines of authority, it's hard to define, let alone evaluate, a job well done. Though a difficult task, it is a common practice; most boards evaluate their president every year (CUPA, 1996, p. 74).

The current climate for higher education has contributed to the increased interest in evaluating college presidents. Fisher, a former college

president, observed: "Twenty-seven years after Brewster's article, according to national panels, commissions, and scholars, presidential leadership in colleges and universities is at its nadir" (Fisher, 1996, p. 58). According to Fisher, there is a strong public perception that there is a vacuum of leadership in higher education and strong decisive leadership is needed.

Managing in the '80s and '90s is more difficult and makes the presidency less appealing than in the post W.W.II period of growth and expansion. Tougher times and limited resources have focused attention on evaluating higher education, including the performance of the president. And times are going to get even tougher for presidents, according to Clark Kerr (Kerr, Gade & Kawaoka, 1994, p. 33): "The greater the problems, the greater the testing of governance mechanisms, and the more likely it is that 'presidents make a difference.' Everybody behaves more or less alike at a cocktail party (the 1980s), but not on the firing lines (the 1990s)."

Reports from national educational organizations and governmental agencies and advisory groups proliferated in the eighties, claiming that primary, secondary, and higher education were failing the American public and that corrective action must be taken. Millett (1987, p. 194) identified several reports, "A Nation at Risk (1983), America's Competitive Challenge (1983), Academic Preparation for College (1983), Involvement in Learning (1984), To Reclaim a Legacy (1984) and Integrity in the College Curriculum (1985)," and concluded that colleges and universities had failed to provide the

quality of undergraduate education needed to maintain America's competitive edge.

Whether real or imagined, there is a climate of crisis and a critical view of American colleges and universities. In the name of accountability, the public has demanded that the performance of students, faculty and administrators be subject to evaluation. Boards, too, are feeling the heat. A new interest in "empowered boards," spurred perhaps by corporate failures and executive excesses in the 1980s, has encouraged trustees to reexamine their role in governance.

In general, evaluation of members of the work force became more common starting in the 1960s. The extension of this practice to chief executives was a natural progression and served as an example of good practice. Student activism and consumerism in the 1960s extended evaluation practices to faculty through student course evaluations. This, in turn, made the evaluation of college presidents more likely (Kauffman, 1980; Seldin, 1988; Tucker & Mautz, 1979).

The literature on presidential assessment has focused on the distinction made between formal and informal practices (Beaudoin, 1986; Hubert, 1986; Kauffman, 1993; Nason, 1984). The terms "informal" and "formal" have not always been defined, however, which has been especially problematic in interpreting past research. According to Nason (1984), informal evaluations tend to be frequent or on-going, have participation limited to members of the board, and are confidential. Formal evaluations

tend to be periodic (three to five years), have systematic participation of representatives of constituent groups, and are more public. Much attention has focused on the supposed costs and benefits of formal evaluation.

Seldin (1988, p. 191) described the trend to formally evaluate presidents as "a fresh wind...blowing in presidential corridors....Casual, piecemeal, and limited-vision judgments by board members behind closed doors are being exchanged for a more public, systematic search for genuine evidence of a candidate's qualifications." Seldin said that institutions benefited from evaluating their presidents and that formal procedures improved the process.

Munitz (1980) acknowledged the controversy over formal evaluation, but found that "a majority of those studying administrative circumstances at our colleges and universities - particularly those at public institutions - believe that there are many situations that require, or at least could strongly benefit from, a more formal approach to assessment" (p. 381-2). Munitz found formal evaluation better for clarifying goals, building support among constituents, and educating the board about the complex role of the president. He went so far as to suggest that it will result in longer presidential terms, smoother transitions in presidential succession, and improved governance.

Others saw this "fresh wind" of formal evaluation as so much hot air. While Seldin lauded the introduction of evidence from constituents, others pointed to this as the major fault in evaluation trends. The limitations of formal assessment in terms of meaningful feedback to improve presidential performance have been noted by Fisher and Quehl (1984), Kauffman (1980),

and Shaw (1988). Their position was that the public nature of more formal assessments, especially where open meeting laws apply, inhibits open discussion and politicizes the process.

Critics of presidential evaluation (Fisher, 1988, 1996; Fisher & Koch, 1996; Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Shaw, 1988) also warned that formal presidential evaluation undermines the power and authority of the president. The public nature of evaluation, especially in public institutions, and the inclusion in the process of constituents, such as faculty, staff, and students, make evaluation of the president a damaging process, in their view. They saw the costs outweighing the benefits, unless the process was private and confidential.

Hubert (1984, p. 160) found strong negative reactions to formal evaluation in higher education, on a gut level as well as in regard to the resources it demands: "For many presidents and trustees... 'formal evaluation' appeared to conjure up some kind of archetypal evil in their collective unconscious. To others it meant a commitment of time, energy and courage that they could not make." A great deal of suspicion existed among those responsible for evaluating presidents and among presidents, themselves.

Opposing opinions and claims have been offered on such issues as whether formal evaluation strengthens or weakens constituent support, strengthens or weakens the influence of the president, lengthens or shortens presidential tenure, and evades or embodies the board's responsibility. A systematic examination of how assessments are conducted and the outcomes

reported may provide the empirical evidence needed to challenge or support these claims.

Perhaps one of the most interesting trends observed was the surge in popularity of formal evaluation in the late seventies and the apparent retreat to less formal approaches in the late eighties and early nineties (Hubert, 1986; Kauffman, 1993). The belief by many that evaluation practices are becoming more formal (Nason, 1984; Seldin, 1988) may be wrong, or at least over-rated. From the seventies to the nineties, the University of Florida system went from no presidential evaluations, to formal evaluations with full constituent participation and public disclosure of results, to informal meetings between president and chancellor with no disclosure of written records (personal communication, Emoryette McDonald, Florida Board of Regents, July 1991). The experiences of institutions such as SUNY, University of Florida, and California State University, which adopted more formal evaluation procedures, then returned to less formal practices, provided evidence of a reversal of the supposed trend toward formal evaluations (Hubert, 1986; Kauffman, 1993).

One reason for this change may be the limitations of formal assessment in terms of providing meaningful feedback to improve presidential performance (Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Kauffman, 1980; Shaw, 1988). The public nature of more formal assessments, especially where open meeting laws apply, may inhibit open discussion.

Type of institution, as may be expected, has influenced the choice of evaluation techniques. Two-year and four-year, public and private institutions, seem to prefer different approaches. Public institutions, which must respond to public demands for accountability, have favored more formal procedures, including broad, systematic constituent participation and more public disclosure of the process and results. Private institutions, which are generally smaller and more autonomous, have preferred more casual approaches (Nason, 1984; Hubert, 1986). Ongoing, informal communication between the chair and president, an ideal which Nason (1984) advocates, is more likely in smaller, private institutions.

The one facet of evaluation on which most authors concurred was that practices must reflect the characteristics of the institutions and persons involved. Kauffman (1993) advised, "Assessment procedures should be tailored to your institution or system. The history, political culture, and expectations, will differ from state to state and institution to institution." No magic formula will meet the needs of all situations, and, as needs change, so too should an institution's evaluation practices.

Those who seek a model will have to start with an examination of their own institutional needs and expectations. With few exceptions (Fisher and Koch, 1996; Sheikholeslami, 1985; Johnson & Associates, 1977) which offer a standardized or workbook approach to the evaluation of presidents, most suggest that practices will vary widely in terms of such variables as

participation, timing, purposes, confidentiality, procedures, and use of information.

Even when an ideal model was conceptualized, as in Nason's guide to presidential assessment, practical problems intruded. Nason suggested that a close cooperative working relationship between board chair and president, founded on trust and mutual respect, supported by on-going feedback and frequent communication was the best approach to presidential assessment (Nason, 1984). In essence, making a separate occasion for assessment superfluous was the best way to ensure good presidential assessment. Were this more commonly the case, there wouldn't be so much interest in presidential assessment practices.

Empirical Research

Little has been written on what colleges and universities do to evaluate their presidents or on whether this effort is valuable. As one author on presidential assessment noted, "For a procedure so critical to the conduct of an institution, there is a dearth of literature and virtually no significant substantive research (Fisher, 1996, p. 58). Limited studies (Nason, 1984; Surwill & Heywood, 1976; CUPA, 1991, 1994, 1996; Ingram, 1993a, 1993b) suggest some trends. However, more has been written about the nature of the college presidency and about the process of selecting college presidents than about their evaluation.

Evidence of the paucity of research has been the frequent references to the few published studies on presidential evaluation. The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) published the most extensive text on the subject, Presidential Assessment: A Guide to the Periodic Review of the Performance of Chief Executives (Nason, 1984). Nason found that there has never been "an accurate census of the 3300 postsecondary institutions on this subject," (p. 2). Included in the text was Nason's own survey of evaluation practices. The subjects included 900 boards belonging to AGB, representing over 1300 institutions; the 318 respondents included 202 private and 116 public institutions, a 24.5 percent rate of response. Trends were noted but caution advised regarding the generalizability of results. The date of the survey was not given but would be on or before 1980, when the first edition was published.

Nason found that although public and private institutions were just as likely to conduct evaluations of presidents (about eighty-six percent), private institutions were much more likely to use informal procedures (fifty-five percent) and public institutions formal procedures (forty-nine percent). See Table B-1 in Appendix B for more details.

Nason found that evaluation practices varied widely on several variables: criteria, frequency, participation, procedures, confidentiality, and purposes. Nason conceptually arrayed assessment practices along a continuum of informal to formal, and found many characteristics fell on one or the other extreme. Informal evaluations were characterized as frequent or

continuous, private and confidential, casual, based primarily on first-hand knowledge of the president, and confined to few participants outside of the board. Formal evaluations tended to be scheduled at regular intervals, involve the systematic collection of data from representatives of constituencies, and were highly structured and more public events. These distinctions were commonly noted by other authors.

Nason's book on presidential assessment was as close to a guide as higher education has come. Even so, it must be pointed out that the data were collected more than fifteen years ago and were based on a response rate of less than twenty-five percent. While it has served as the best guide for evaluation practices, it is less than ideal today.

Another frequently cited study involved a survey of 321 institutions by Surwill and Heywood (1976) for the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). This study, which involved public four-year institutions, found that only fourteen percent evaluated their presidents formally and that eleven percent did so informally. Surwill and Heywood found that many institutions which did not evaluate their presidents intended to do so within a few years and they projected an increase from twenty-five to forty-five percent. This low percentage of institutions which evaluated the president (twenty-five percent), may be considered a benchmark for trends in the public sector.

Surwill and Heywood's study provided a starting point for further research, but evidenced several limitations. The authors never defined the

terms informal and formal, did not account for variations in practices and offered little analysis. As they stated, themselves, "This study clearly substantiates the fact that evaluation of administrators in higher education is a woefully neglected area and at its best the state of the art is very primitive," (p. 12).

A more recent study involved presidential evaluations in the state of California. Hubert (1986) conducted a survey of the policies for presidential assessment for all (236) public and private, two-year and four-year, accredited, nonprofit institutions. Results of the survey were based on data received from 187 institutions, a response rate of seventy-nine percent. The survey was supplemented by in-depth interviews with selected presidents.

Hubert sorted practices into three categories: casual, informal and formal. The distinctions between informal and formal were much like those used by Nason (1984). Hubert's characterization of casual assessment sounded much like no assessment at all: "[P]residents and trustees feel that regular board meetings and other informal contacts are sufficient to measure performance of the president," (p. 113).

Hubert also analyzed evaluations by format (instrumentation), using four categories: rating scales, ad hoc committee, management by objectives, and growth contracts. In addition to sixty-nine independent institutions, public institutions belonged to three systems: University of California (UC), California State University (CSU) and the Community Colleges of California (CCC).

University of California and California State University had system-wide policies, used ad hoc committees, and conducted formal reviews. The independent colleges favored casual reviews but also favored ad hoc committees, an apparent contradiction since Hubert considers a casual review to be more like no review at all.

The community colleges did not have a system-wide policy. About half, (forty-one percent) used rating scales based on a model provided by an association of community college trustees. The other half (forty-three percent), used an M.B.O. approach. Interestingly, procedures were described as informal for seventy-five percent of the community colleges. This reflected that rating scales were used just among trustees and that the M.B.O. style of review was limited to the board and president. See Tables B-2 and B-3 in Appendix B for additional details.

Two other dissertations on presidential evaluation were noteworthy, both involving formal assessment approaches. Beaudoin (1986) did a case study of one private institution which implemented a formal evaluation of a new president. The study included an extensive literature review and interviews with thirty-nine educational experts, including presidents, former presidents, trustees, and consultants. All identities were masked to assure confidentiality.

Beaudoin concluded that there was no evidence to support that formal evaluations have produced valuable results. "Despite the controversy surrounding formal presidential assessment, no empirical verification exists

that presidential performance reviews enhance student learning or ensure better leadership for a campus," (p. 29).

Sheikholeslami (1985) developed a formal process and questionnaire for evaluating academic presidents, a proscriptive approach that allowed for some customizing. On the assumption that formal evaluation was "desirable and constructive" (p. 10), the author used a survey of experts to pilot test and refine a rating scale instrument for presidential assessment. The instrument was intended to be used by multiple constituencies, and criteria as well as raters may be weighted. Limitations of the study included that the study did not take into account other approaches or the "readiness" of some institutions for this formal assessment approach.

Surveys conducted by CUPA (1991, p. 6), showed that from 1984 to 1991 the practice of conducting presidential evaluations increased from fifty-five to seventy-eight percent of the institutions responding. CUPA's most recent study (conducted in 1995 and published in 1996), reported a slight increase, to eighty-one percent. Of those institutions which responded, seventy-seven percent of those which conducted reviews did so annually. The responsibility, in descending order, was most likely that of: a committee of the board (29.2%), the entire governing board (28.7%), other (18.9%), the board chair (13.7%), or a special review committee (8.3%), (1996, pp. 74-75).

CUPA's data were based on 916 respondents to a survey of approximately 3,400 institutions of higher education, which was as close to a

census as could be found, to date (CUPA, 1996, p. ix). The survey covered a broad range of issues related to CEO compensation and benefits.

The survey question regarding assessment was phrased, "Is the chief executive provided a formal performance review?" (CUPA, 1994, p. 138). For those responding affirmatively, two follow-up questions ascertained the frequency of and person or body responsible for the review. The survey did not ask about informal evaluations, define "formal performance review," or distinguish between various types of evaluation practices. This presented some limitations on the interpretation of data.

Information on presidential evaluation practices was collected by the Association of Governing Boards in a 1991 survey of its member institutions regarding board characteristics, policies and practices (Ingram, 1993a, 1993b). The survey asked, "With regard to performance assessment, is the chief executive formally and comprehensively reviewed as a matter of established, written board policy?"

Although surveys were returned by 874 institutions, only 685 responded to this question. Of those which responded, fifty-eight percent of the public and forty-eight percent of the private institutions reported that their presidents were formally reviewed. The average for this group, fifty-one percent, was considerably lower than that reported by CUPA for the same year (78%). It would appear sensible to expect AGB's population to have a higher percentage of institutions reporting that they evaluate their presidents, since these institutions have a commitment to board governance, evidenced by

their AGB membership; the opposite was found. The difference in the wording of the questions, then, takes on greater importance. To respond affirmatively to the AGB survey question, the presidential evaluation must have been the result of written board policy. This could have eliminated institutions which evaluated their presidents but lacked a written board directive or did not consider the evaluation formal. The frequency of presidential assessments was also investigated. See Table B-4 and B-5 in Appendix B for details.

Presidential terms and contracts.

Concern about leadership in higher education has raised the issue of length of presidential terms. Seldin (1988, p. 193) reported that tenure in office declined from an average of eleven years in 1960 to seven years in 1988, a finding supported by others (Kerr, 1984; Ingram 1993a, 1993b). Whether longer terms are better is controversial. Kerr cautioned that presidents can only be expected to be effective about eighty percent of their term, since arrival and departure periods are disruptive (1984, p. 63). However, Birnbaum (1992) noted a tendency for presidents to lose faculty support over time.

It has been suggested that the proliferation of term contracts and the concomitant increase in presidential evaluations may be related to shorter presidential terms (Beaudoin, 1986, p. 50). However, as Nason noted, "It is

not clear whether the recent trend towards term appointments for presidents has been the cause or the consequence of more formal assessments," (1984, p. 4). While it seems more likely that trends in term appointments, shorter terms, and evaluations were the result of larger constraints, it still begs the question of whether term contracts and evaluation procedures have encouraged presidents to leave.

Wood (1985, p. 19) saw shorter presidential terms as reflective of management trends, nationwide and cited high turnover in the private sector as evidence: "In The New Republic, an article on 'America's Management Crisis' pointed out that the tenure of chief executive officers now averages just five years, and Business Week concluded that 'turnover at the top is hitting levels without precedent in recent history.'" It appeared that colleges and universities were not alone in facing the high turnover and short tenure of their chief executive officers.

Trends in contracts for college and university presidents revealed that from 1984 to 1991 the percentage of contractual agreements was fairly stable, increasing from seventy-five to seventy-seven percent (CUPA, 1991, p. 6). Contracts became more formal, though: formal contracts and letters of agreement increased, oral agreements remained the same, and board resolutions declined to near zero.

In 1995, seventy-six percent of chief executives reported contractual agreements with their institutions (CUPA, 1996, p. 72). Most presidents had a formal written contract (62%) or letter of agreement (29%) or a combination of

written and/or oral agreements (5%). Contract length was specified in eighty percent of agreements (p. 73) and, in declining order of frequency, were for terms of: three years (37%), one year (25%), five years (16%), two years (11%), four years (8%), or six or more years (4%), (all figures rounded).

A 1991 survey by AGB (Ingram, 1993a, p. 378, 1993b, p. 393) similarly showed that more than half of the presidents (64%) had written contracts. The figure was higher for four-year public sector presidents (68%) and two-year public sector presidents (96%), than for private four-year presidents (61%) and private two-year presidents (61%).

Purposes.

The literature on performance evaluation - for employees generally, for administrators in educational organizations, and for college presidents - has identified a host of different purposes for evaluating performance. Most commonly, evaluation is said to document performance, provide a basis for personnel actions, and improve performance (Joint Committee, 1988; Lombardi, 1988; Seldin, 1988).

In regard to the college president, the purposes for evaluating tend to focus less on personnel actions like promotion, compensation, and retention, than on performance improvement (AASCU and AAU, 1988; Kauffman, 1980; Nason, 1984; Seldin, 1988). "Ideally, the prime purpose of presidential evaluation (and all administrative evaluations) should be to foster improved

institutional as well as individual performance," (AASCU and AAU, 1988, p. 1). Kauffman concluded that evaluation should: attract and retain the best presidents; improve productivity and satisfaction; and quickly "weed out" the bad ones, in a process regarded as legitimate (1980, p.94). Perhaps the biggest failing of research in this area is the lack of evidence that presidential evaluation does in fact lead to improvement in either presidential or institutional performance.

According to Farmer, purposes can be grouped into three broad categories: formative, summative, and institutional (1979, pp. 10-11). Formative purposes focus on improvement of an individual's performance. Evaluations provide feedback intended to correct areas of weakness. Summative purposes include decisions on personnel actions such as promotion, salary, and reappointment. Institutional evaluation purposes go beyond individual performance to administrative functioning, and may look at relations between the institution and its environment (Hubert, 1986, p. 49).

Nason (1984, pp. 9-12) identified four primary (1-4) and four secondary (5-8) reasons for engaging in evaluation, which include formative, summative, and institutional purposes: 1. meeting the board's responsibilities, 2. strengthening and improving the president, 3. improving governance, 4. revising institutional goals, 5. clarifying the president's role for trustees and constituents, 6. informing decisions on retention, 7. serving as an example for others, and 8. setting salary. Seldin (1988, pp. 197-198) also

divided the reasons for presidential evaluation into primary and secondary purposes, echoing many of Nason's points.

Fisher was more narrow and protective: "Successful presidential evaluation should accomplish two things: first, fulfill the board's responsibility to evaluate the president, and second, increase the legitimacy of the president's authority" (1996, p. 57). Fisher's focus on presidential authority emphasized his assertion that including constituents (particularly faculty) in the process undermines the president's ability to lead.

The reasons for evaluating a president can be thorny and political, despite the lofty purposes already mentioned. Caution was advised in situations where the real goal was dismissing the president or raising objections to a particular action, especially in response to a crisis. Nason (1984, p. 62) noted that the board generally has the power to replace the president, without an "inquisition," and that it was inappropriate to make constituent reaction to a particular event the basis for evaluation of the president's overall performance.

Many aspects of evaluation hinge on its purposes. Purposes have an impact on the process used and on who participates in the process. As an AASCU/AAUA publication advised, "Presidential evaluations, whether formal or informal, should be conducted only after their purposes and potential use are clearly proscribed, in advance, by the governing board," (1988, p. 7).

Confidentiality.

Confidentiality may be the most significant issue for presidential evaluation. Though taken for granted in evaluations of corporate CEOs (Berenbeim, 1995; NACD, 1994), confidentiality remains controversial in performance appraisals for academic presidents. Several authors have lamented the damage wrought by formal assessments and pointed to the public nature of the process as the problem (Kerr, 1984; Fisher and Koch, 1996; Fisher and Quehl, 1984; Kauffman, 1993; Shaw, 1988). Critics have generally suggested that if evaluations cannot be done well, including the assurance of confidentiality, they should not be done at all.

For public institutions, open meeting laws may compel formal evaluations to be done publicly. Some institutions have gone to great lengths to avoid the requirement, by never discussing the evaluation. Shaw told of a board that went so far as to hire a consultant to conduct the evaluation, who then met with board members individually (1988, p. 21).

In the state of Montana, a suit was brought against a university for refusing to permit the press to attend a presidential review meeting of the board of regents. In Missouliau v. Board of Regents of Higher Education, 657 P 2d 962 (1984), the Supreme Court of Montana held that "the demands of individual privacy of the university presidents and other university personnel in confidential job performance evaluation sessions of the Board of

Regents clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure," (at 973). Sessions could remain confidential.

In their testimony, educational administrators in the Missoulian case were quite adamant regarding the need for confidentiality. The Commissioner of Higher Education and Chair of the Board of Regents said evaluations of presidents would probably be abolished if they had to be public (at 972). Confidentiality was considered essential for effective reviews, without which evaluations would have a detrimental impact. It appears that this case stands as a precedent, at least in this region, since no subsequent cases were found.

Confidentially refers not only to the extent to which the process is public or private (for example, meetings, conversations, and documents) but also the extent to which evaluation results are disclosed to the president. Common sense suggests that the president be fully informed of the assessment of his or her performance. Seldin (1988, p. 207) suggested that, "Fairness requires that the president receive, or have access to, all evaluative information except that which by prior agreement is to remain confidential. The latter category should be as close to zero as possible."

Timing.

There is no consensus on the appropriate frequency with which evaluations should be conducted. As many authors observed, presidential

evaluation has to reflect the unique characteristics and needs of the institutions; there is no one way to do things (Munitz, 1980; Nason, 1984; and Seldin, 1988). Nonetheless, most institutions appear to conduct presidential assessments annually (CUPA, 1996; Ingram, 1993a and 1993b); increasing from fifty-five percent in 1984 to seventy-seven percent in 1995 (CUPA, 1996, p. 8).

Timing also refers to the time it takes to complete an evaluation. On this topic, at least, there was greater agreement--as quickly as possible:

A few institutions have experimented with procedures stretching over a year and even longer, but the trend is toward limiting the period of investigation to two to four months. A longer time tends to make everyone upset and uncertain...The shorter and more quickly over, the better for all concerned. (Nason, 1984, p. 61)

Participation in the process.

As with other aspects of evaluation, there were a variety of perspectives on who should participate in the evaluation of the president. In most cases, the responsibility for evaluating the president lies with the board of trustees, in whole or in part (CUPA, 1996, p. 75). The controversy has centered on whether the board has either invited representatives of constituent groups to participate or delegated to them a primary role. Faculty have often been the focus of this controversy.

College and university trustees may feel they need information from beyond the boardroom to fairly evaluate presidential performance. Even more so than their corporate counterparts, they are dependent upon the professional expertise of their presidents. This partnership has been described as a paradox: "Technically the board is the president's employer, yet trustees usually acknowledge the president as the board's de facto leader" (Chait, Holland and Taylor, 1991, p. 114).

Wood (1985) found it ironic that the board depended, largely, on information provided by the president to evaluate the president's performance: "How can trustees arrive at an independent judgment about the president's competence in the performance of duties when the president, as the board's agent on campus, is the trustees' official source of information on all institutional matters?" (p. 20).

In a study involving ten private institutions which used informal evaluation procedures, Wood found that most trustees (75%) felt that sources of information other than the president were needed. Most of them, she found, relied on the local and student newspapers as well as the "rumor mill" (p. 22). Since informal evaluations do not involve systematic and public involvement of constituents, perhaps these observations should be expected.

In higher education, theories of organization and leadership highlight shared governance, emphasizing the participation of faculty in management decisions (Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum, 1989). Faculty, the professional core of the institution, maintain considerable authority over the

curriculum and academic affairs, while the board and administration manage and lead the institution. Shared governance reflects that faculty are more than just employees; through their departments and campus senates they make essential decisions on who will be educated, what will be taught, and how it will be taught.

The inclusion of constituents is a key difference between formal and informal evaluation procedures. While presidents are said to serve at the pleasure of the board (Kauffman, 1980), formal evaluation procedures introduce others into the process. In particular, whether or not faculty are included may greatly influence presidential evaluations.

Past studies revealed that the expectations of the evaluator influenced performance ratings and that the relative importance of criteria depended upon the evaluator's role. Fujita (1990, p. 4) found that trustees, administrators, and faculty used many of the same dimensions to evaluate presidents but that the weight given to those dimensions and the overall performance ratings varied. Trustees and administrators overwhelmingly rated their presidents as good (87% and 88%, respectively) while only fifty-one percent of the faculty did so. Including faculty could influence the criteria used as well as the outcomes of presidential evaluation.

The decision of who shall evaluate the president also has political ramifications. Some (Fisher, 1988, 1996; Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Tucker & Mautz, 1979) have suggested that presidential evaluations should be the prerogative of the board, alone; any constituent participation would foul the

process and undermine the authority of the president. As Fisher (1988, p. 28) put it:

The major problem with most methods of presidential review used today is that they all, formal or informal, directly (and often publicly) involve members of the president's primary leadership constituency (faculty, students, staff) in the review process. By doing so they, albeit unintentionally, diminish the status of the presidential office and the leadership ability and potential of the president.

Similarly, Tucker and Mautz (1979, p. 256) concluded that no president is going to win a "popularity contest" among his or her constituents and questioned the qualifications of constituents or subordinates to participate in the evaluation of the president.

To moderate the potential role of constituents in a formal review, Fisher and Koch (1996) suggested using a professional outside consultant. They recommend that boards conduct an annual evaluation of the president, limited to a prospective and retrospective review of the president's written statement of goals and objectives, complimented every five years by a more formal review, conducted by a consultant (pp. 318-19). In their view, in a formal review the consultant provided a buffer between the faculty, president, and board, by selecting who to interview and ensuring the confidentiality of meetings and reports. In the guide "Evaluating College and University Presidents," (AASCU and AAUA, 1988) two associations of public

colleges and universities also recommended the use of consultants, particularly current or former presidents of other institutions.

McKerrow and Dennis (1989) suggested that critics of formal evaluation were primarily presidents and former presidents who objected to the inclusion of faculty not because of the potential threat to presidential leadership, but to the potential threat to autocratic presidential power. They argued that, "In order to secure serious consideration of all concerns, groups most affected by presidential action must be involved in presidential evaluation and in more than an informal way" (p. 11). Seldin concurred (1988, p. 201). Others added that constituent information should be collected in a private manner, but no anonymous information accepted (AASCU and AAUA, 1988).

Even if constituent participation were advocated, opinions differed about the reasons for doing so and information to be collected. Kauffman (1980) suggested that interest groups can be a valuable source of information for institutional priorities but cautioned, "We are talking about gathering perceptions that can be instructive for the president. Gathering such perceptions is **not** to be confused with evaluation of presidential performance," (p. 103).

Institutional characteristics may influence participation decisions. For example, faculty may play a primary role in the evaluation of the president in a large research university. In the University of California system (policy of the Academic Senate, 1985 and 1987, unpublished materials) policy directed

that, every five years, the Academic Senate for the University of California, through an evaluation committee, review the head of each campus (the Chancellor) and report to the head of the system (the President). The information was to be shared with the Chancellor and the President, but the Academic Senate was to be informed of the effectiveness of the procedure, only. The process was supposed to be confidential and all Senate copies of the report destroyed.

It is difficult to estimate the percentage of institutions which have included constituents in the evaluation of the president. The distinctions between formal and informal evaluations in the research have not been well defined or made clear whether "formal" means a systematic and broad search for information on performance (Nason, 1984) or that the process has been established by a board bylaw (Ingram, 1993a, 1993b). In addition, data on the frequency with which consultants have been used are not available.

Criteria for evaluation.

What should be included in the criteria for the evaluation of college presidents? There was no shortage of advice or recommendations on this subject (AASCU, 1988; Beaudoin, 1986; Munitz, 1980; Nason, 1984; Seldin, 1988). Most focused on several specific areas and, although grouped in various ways, they were very similar. Nason (1984, pp. 37-38) developed six categories, based on a survey: academic management and leadership,

administrative management and leadership, budget and finance, fund raising, external relations, and personal characteristics. Munitz (1980, pp. 389-391) listed nineteen points grouped in four categories: planning and administration, decision making and problem solving, tone of presidential office, and external relations. Seldin's (1988, p. 206) survey yielded a list of twenty-one points, grouped in three areas: administration and management, leadership, and personal qualities.

This is not to say that there was consensus, however. AASCU eschewed the idea of a checklist and advocated using the job description as well as "the institution's mission, goals, characteristics, traditions, and any mutually acknowledged objectives and/or priorities" (AASCU, 1988, pp. 3-4). Others have suggested that creating a job description be a preliminary step in any presidential search; that way, expectations would be clarified at the start and could be applied at the time of evaluation.

The idea of a cookbook approach to evaluation criteria may seem insensitive to the complexities of the office or cause concern over the ability to capture those attributes of leadership which distinguish great presidents:

Indispensable and intangible human qualities are difficult, if not impossible, to measure, yet they may offer far more insights into the leadership of an institution. Although formal evaluation may assess competency in administration and managerial responsibilities, there is the danger it may substitute management for leadership, efficiency for effectiveness, or technique for substance. (Beaudoin, 1986, p. 26.)

Kauffman also expressed concern over the criteria for evaluation. "Because I believe that colleges and universities, as organizations, have multiple and ambiguous criteria for success, the presidents of such organizations also inherit that complexity and ambiguity when it comes to judging or assessing their own success," (1980, p. 93). The complexity of the president's role and the competing interests of various constituencies contribute to the problem of establishing meaningful, agreed upon criteria.

In evaluating higher education, Cohen and March (1988) questioned the wisdom of specifying any criteria in advance. They suggested that it inhibits creativity and is unresponsive to changing values. "The prior specification of criteria and the prior specification of evaluation procedures that depend on criteria are common presumptions in contemporary policymaking. They are presumptions that inhibit the serendipitous discovery of new criteria," (p. 228). While this position may appear extreme, it points out that priorities may, appropriately, change over time.

Does the difficulty in specifying criteria suggest that the job is impossible? After reviewing the criteria suggested by educational leaders such as Kauffman, Bok, Patrick and Caruthers, and others, Seldin (1988) concluded that, "If all the criteria listed here as essential for an academic president were strictly applied, it would probably eliminate the species," (p. 207). In considering the qualifications for the ideal candidate for president, a similar conclusion was reached by a Yale trustee:

He had to be a leader, a magnificent speaker and a great writer, a good public relations man and fund raiser, a man of iron health and stamina, married to a paragon - a combination of Queen Victoria, Florence Nightingale, and best dressed woman of the year - a man of the world, but with great spiritual qualities, an experienced administrator who can delegate authority, a Yale man and a great scholar, and a social philosopher who has at his fingertips a solution to all of the world's problems. I don't doubt that you have concluded that there is only One who has most of these qualifications. But, we had to ask ourselves - is God a Yale man? (Demerath in Kauffman, 1980, p. 20)

Self-assessment and the role of the president.

Most experts suggested that presidents be active participants in their own evaluation, including the formulation of the process, preparation of a self-evaluation, and discussion of the results (AASCU and AAU, 1988; Nason, 1984; Seldin, 1988). Active involvement in the process is generally advocated for all professional employees in evaluation literature (Nash, 1983).

A self-assessment statement was considered to be a key component of the evaluation process. "In general, the review process begins with a statement from the president spelling out his or her objectives on assuming office and analyzing progress toward their achievement," (Seldin, 1988, p.

201). "The logical place to begin an evaluation is with the president's statement of stewardship or self-assessment of performance in office" (Nason, 1984, p. 43). The self-assessment provides a useful starting point for the board and "is customary, though by no means universal, in formal evaluations" (Nason, 1984, p. 43).

Nason (1984, p. 44) observed that self-assessment takes a wide variety of forms and cited the guidelines followed by the City University of New York (CUNY) as a model:

- a. A resume of expectations and objectives held on assumption of office.
- b. The degree to which such expectations and objectives held true or were achieved.
- c. An assessment of the major factors which altered expectations and objectives, and in the manner in which they changed.
- d. An assessment of the mechanisms used to redefine goals and objectives and the degree to which they led to achieving redefined goals.
- e. A description of major areas of institutional concern over the next five years.
- f. A description of possible institutional changes that might address areas of institutional concern.
- g. A statement of goals and objectives which the president would like to achieve in the next two years.

Munitz (1980, p. 388) provided a similar list and added that it is appropriate for the president to play a central role throughout the evaluation process; the self-evaluation should be the beginning not the end of the president's involvement. As a political strategy, Nason (1984) and Munitz (1980) suggested that a self-assessment is the president's best defense. It allows the chief executive to highlight accomplishments that might otherwise go unnoticed and to point out shortcomings before anyone else has the opportunity.

Self-assessment, goals, and motivation.

The president's participation in performance reviews may be particularly important in regard to goals. The president's role in reviewing and setting goals, as part of the self-assessment statement, a discussion of past performance, or planning for the future, may influence the outcomes of the assessment process.

Studies have linked goals to motivation and satisfaction as well as performance levels. Goal theory suggests that intentions motivate behavior: "intentions to achieve a goal constitute the primary motivating force behind work behavior (Hoy and Miskel, 1987, p. 194). In addition, setting more difficult goals has been shown to elicit higher levels of performance (p. 195).

Reviewing goals and setting future goals, as part of a performance appraisal meeting, has been shown to enhance employee satisfaction with the

appraisal process and employees' perceptions about its utility (Greller, 1978). Feedback is a key aspect of the process, allowing the employee to reassess and adjust efforts to achieve goals (Ashford and Tsui, 1991). This suggests that the president's role in the appraisal process could have consequences for motivation, satisfaction, and achievement.

Goal setting and management by objectives (MBO) appear to be related practices and concepts. As theories of individual motivation and organizational management, they suggest an approach to the assessment of presidents based on clearly articulated organizational goals and priorities, ongoing monitoring of individual effort and institutional performance, and feedback to the individual on goal attainment, coupled with appropriate incentives. Reviewing and setting goals may renew the board's and president's commitment to organizational goals and provide the president with needed feedback on past performance and support for future objectives. A major obstacle in complex nonprofit organizations such as colleges and universities, however, is the meaningful specification of goals and objectives. As Cohen and March (1986) artfully described, colleges and universities may be viewed as organized anarchies with vague and conflicting goals. Presidential assessment in such circumstances is a special challenge if the key is clear, measurable, agreed upon goals.

Summary of the Literature Review

The review of the literature revealed trends in the field of personnel evaluation, CEO assessment, and the evaluation of academic presidents. This foundation of information, including several key studies, was instrumental in shaping the three research questions which were the focus of this study. By understanding what was known, disputed, or remained to be explained, it was possible to develop appropriate research questions, survey instruments, and strategies for data analysis.

Personnel Evaluation

Personnel evaluation became a common practice in the business world in the twentieth century. Methods varied, but the process generally involved defining, measuring and providing feedback on performance. Purposes also varied, and typically involved improving performance, making personnel decisions, and organizational planning (formative, summative, and institutional goals). Criteria were qualitative or quantitative, or both. Qualitative data helped identify training needs but was less useful to gauge performance, relative to others. Quantitative data was useful for comparisons of personnel and to chart progress, but had many limitations, especially regarding managers; it failed to capture influences beyond the individual's control, emphasized the end product without regard to the

process, and often missed significant responsibilities, especially those related to values and culture. Assessment practices were different for general staff and CEOs.

Self-assessment was an important aspect of the appraisal process. Individuals may rely on several sources of information: feedback presented by others, passive observations, and actively solicited feedback. Feedback on performance was found to contribute to performance improvement; it helped the individual to accurately interpret information and regulate their own behavior, as explained by control theory and symbolic interactionism.

Negative feedback was especially useful for this self-regulating behavior, since it pointed out deficiencies in performance, but it may threaten employees and have unintended consequences. Employees who tend to seek negative performance feedback have been found to receive higher performance ratings.

Motivation theory suggests that goals play an important role in achievement. Participation in the process has also been shown to enhance the usefulness of the review, or the employee's satisfaction with the process, or both. Greller's (1978) work in this area was particularly influential for this study. Greller's study explored relationships between two independent variables, goals and personal participation, and two dependent variables, satisfaction and utility. Greller found that greater personal participation in the assessment process was related to greater utility of the review and greater satisfaction with the process. Also, that greater use of goals as part of the

review was related to greater utility and greater satisfaction. These concepts, variables, and their measures, were adapted for this study.

CEO Evaluation

Evaluation of CEOs may be much more important than most boards recognize. Though CEOs are expected to be self-reliant, most actually want and need more feedback about their performance than they receive. This independent image is responsible for many myths about CEO evaluation.

Evaluation of the CEO may be one of the board's most important responsibilities, second only to hiring the chief executive. Performance evaluation is recommended by NACD for all corporate CEOs and should include a self-assessment statement, face to face meetings, review of goals and compensation, and a report to, or discussion with, the board of directors. Similar recommendations were offered for the assessment of leaders of organizations in the independent sector, in a publication from an association of nonprofit boards.

Self-assessment is a common element of performance appraisals, but is especially important in regard to chief executives. CEOs often have to contend with ambiguous and competing goals as well as unclear criteria for success. They may be expected to be autonomous and self-directed and may not be provided with adequate feedback. In this environment, seeking out feedback, especially negative feedback, may be especially valuable.

Ashford and Tsui (1991) examined feedback seeking behavior in managers and the role that negative and positive feedback seeking played in performance ratings. They found that the tendency to seek negative feedback was related to higher performance ratings and greater improvement in performance and that the tendency to seek positive feedback was related to lower performance ratings. These concepts, variables, and their measures, were adapted for this study.

Presidential Assessment

There was enormous growth in higher education enrollment following W.W.II. By the 1980s, growth had slowed, as had the economy, and public funding of higher education tightened, or in some states declined. This period was also marked by a growing trend to evaluate educational institutions at all levels, including the performance of students and teachers; the growth of presidential assessment practices was part of this pattern.

There was a critical climate for American colleges and universities in the 80s, evidenced by a series of often cited reports which pointed out the failures of higher education institutions and their leaders. Whether real or imagined, several authors suggested that there was a crisis in leadership. Calls for empowered boards and greater accountability fueled interest in presidential assessment. The practice of assessing presidents grew from about

55% of institutions in 1984 to about 81% in 1995; most presidents were evaluated annually by their governing boards.

Most of the literature on presidential assessment focused on whether the process used was formal or informal, this difference hinging on factors such as frequency of reviews, confidentiality, reliance on objective or subjective evidence, and participation in the process. One of the most controversial factors was constituent participation in the process.

Little empirical evidence was available about practices in colleges and universities, other than how often and by whom the president was evaluated. Much of the literature tended to focus on the supposed dangers of formal assessment and claimed that most assessments were done poorly.

The most comprehensive book on the topic, Presidential Assessment by John Nason (1984), provided a thorough examination of the various aspects of presidential reviews, including: purposes, informal versus formal reviews (confidentiality, timing, participation), criteria, and the president's self-assessment statement. Nason did not suggest that any one way was best, rather he provided examples and suggested that institutions tailor the process to suit their needs.

Though presidential assessment had become a near universal practice on an annual basis, limited empirical data was available. Critics warned that most reviews were poorly conducted and that formal reviews, in particular, threatened to undermine rather than strengthen presidents. It was unclear how boards could best fulfill this important responsibility.

Research Questions One, Two, and Three

Several concepts which emerged from the literature review were important for this study and shaped the three research questions. The first two research questions were exploratory and sought to answer basic questions about the process and outcomes for presidential assessments. To answer these questions detailed information was collected about: policies, guidelines and practices; the role of the president; the relationship between the president and the board; and the impact of the review on conditions of employment.

Research Question Three concerned the relationships between how assessments were conducted and the outcomes reported. These possible relationships were suggested primarily by the works of Greller (1978) and Ashford and Tsui (1991). These studies were the source of the dependent variables of utility, satisfaction, performance rating, and improvement in performance and the independent variables of personal participation, use of goals, and positive and negative feedback seeking behavior. Other, more general concerns, emerged from the literature about CEO and presidential assessment, and suggested the independent variables of frequency of reviews, confidentiality, and the adequacy of feedback provided by the board.

In conclusion, previous surveys conducted by CUPA and AGB answered only a few basic questions about presidential assessment. Much remained unanswered about how evaluations were conducted, the outcomes of those reviews, and whether there was a relationship between the

procedures used and the outcomes reported. With better definitions of terms, more specific information about policies and practices, and empirical data about the outcomes of presidential evaluation, much more could be learned. This study was designed to provide that missing information.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Plan

This survey of selected presidents and chairs of governing boards of American colleges and universities was designed to learn about the processes used for evaluating academic presidents and president and board chair perceptions of the outcomes of presidential assessment.

The study was designed to collect from a broad population more comprehensive, current data on presidential assessment than has previously been available. Questionnaire items were based on previous studies in higher education (CUPA, 1996; Ingram, 1993a, 1993b; Nason, 1984) as well as practical and theoretical literature about performance appraisal in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

Three survey instruments were developed: one for presidents, one for board chairs of single campus institutions, and one for chairs of multicampus system boards. Self-administered questionnaires were mailed in January, 1997 to the presidents and board chairs of all accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States which were active, former, or prospective members of AGB. One follow-up mailing to non-respondents was done immediately after the initial deadline (February 14, 1997) passed.

Data were analyzed to determine frequency and distribution of responses by the position of the respondent (all presidents and all board chairs) and, for some items, for pairs of presidents and board chairs from the same institution. Selected elements of presidential assessment policies, practices, and outcomes were also examined using bivariate analysis to reveal the relationships, if any, among variables.

Survey Methodology

Surveys are well established as effective tools for research in social science and are employed in "a substantial portion" of research in education (Borg and Gall, 1989, p. 416). Bernard (1988) suggests that there are no clear guidelines that would make in-person interviews, telephone interviews, or mailed questionnaires the ideal method, but identifies three conditions under which mailed questionnaires are preferred: a high response is expected, the questions do not depend upon visual aids or a personal interview, and the respondents are literate. All three conditions were met in this case. In addition, the size and dispersion of the population, the quantitative nature of the data sought, and the cost of alternatives supported the choice of a mailed questionnaire and one follow-up effort.

The survey design was based upon established standards for survey research in the social sciences (Borg and Gall, 1989; Dooley, 1990; and Bernard, 1988). Issues of item construction, item ordering, scaling, format, and

response rate were addressed. The survey design followed, as much as possible, Dillman's Total Design Method (Bernard, 1988) to maximize the rate of response. This included: an attractive, easy to read presentation; uncluttered pages; introducing potentially threatening questions later in the item order, with a preamble; limiting the total number of pages and questions; using first class postage; and packaging a personalized cover letter, survey instrument, and return envelope in a personally addressed envelope (pp. 259-264).

Survey Population and Respondents

Survey Population

The survey population included 2,112 presidents and 1,792 governing board chairs (1,627 board chairs of single campus institutions and 165 chairs of multicampus system boards) of accredited postsecondary institutions in the United States whose institutions were active, former, or prospective members of AGB. AGB is a voluntary association of governing boards and presidents of accredited, degree granting postsecondary institutions; proprietary schools were not eligible for AGB membership and foreign institutions were excluded from the study.

There were more presidents than board chairs in the study for two reasons: institutions in systems share the same governing board but have

individual presidents and there was no published directory of the chairs of governing boards of American colleges and universities from which to generate personalized correspondence.

According to a recent study by the American Council on Education (ACE), (Ross, Green, & Henderson, 1993, p. 3), there were 3,158 presidents of regionally accredited American colleges and universities. The survey population included 67% of the total number in the ACE population or the universe of presidents; more than half of those missing were presidents of two-year institutions. AGB is the only national membership organization for governing boards of two-year and four-year institutions, although two-year college boards may choose to join AGB or the Association of Community College Trustees (or both).

By Carnegie classification, the survey population included between 54% and 86% of the universe of presidents: best represented were presidents of liberal arts (86%) and specialized institutions (73%); less well represented were presidents of doctoral (59%), comprehensive (59%), and two-year institutions (54%). A comparison of the survey population, survey respondents, and the universe of presidents, stratified by type of institution, is presented in the next section, "Respondents," including Table 1.

For the purposes of this study, "president" means the chief executive officer of an institution or system, regardless of title. For example, it included the Chancellor of the California State University System, the President of SUNY Stonybrook, and the Rector of the Seminary of the Immaculate

Conception. However, while system heads as well as chief executives of institutions in multicampus systems were included, the provosts of branch campuses or heads of subcampuses of an institution were excluded (e.g. the Provost of Montgomery College's Takoma Park Campus).

"Board chair" means the head of the institution's **governing board**, regardless of the title given to the body or the person who heads it, such as President of the Board of Visitors. The chairs of state coordinating boards were not included unless the coordinating board also served as the governing board for the colleges and universities under it.

Distinctions were made between systems, flagship institutions with branch campuses, and sets of systems, each with their own governing board, using the definitions and lists developed by the National Association of System Heads (NASH):

A university system, as defined by NASH, is two or more campuses, each with substantial institutional autonomy and headed by a chief executive/operating officer with the title of "president" or "chancellor," all under a single governing board. NASH, 1993, p. i.

For example, chief executives of branch campuses were excluded from the survey population of presidents but the presidents of each institution in a community college district within a larger system were included. Board chairs of systems (institutions with more than one president) were categorized as a population of chairs of multicampus system boards, separate

from the population of chairs of single campus governing boards (institutions with one president).

In addition to fifty public systems identified by NASH (NASH, 1997), other public and private multicampus systems, identified by AGB, were included. These systems, which were not eligible to be NASH members, included public two-year college systems, private two and four-year college systems, and public four-year college systems with alternative administrative structures (e.g. the University of South Carolina system, where the system head is also the president of a university in the system; or Board of Regents of Oklahoma A & M Colleges, where the presidents report directly to the board, not the system head/executive director).

In recognition of the distinctive nature of systems, survey questions were modified for the chairs of multicampus system boards. They received a different survey instrument than the board chairs of single campus institutions. Details are provided throughout this section.

Institutions of respondents were categorized according to public or private affiliation, size defined in full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE), and Carnegie classification, as reported by the US Department of Education (Higher Education Publications, 1996). Some levels of the Carnegie classifications were combined (i.e. Research I and II) to create seven categories including: Multicampus System, Research I and II, Doctorate I and II, Comprehensive I and II, Liberal Arts I and II, Specialized (Bible College and Seminaries; Theological; Medical; Other Health; Engineering; Business

Management; Art, Music and Design; Law; Teachers; and Other Specialized), and Two-Year.

Respondents

Presidents

Respondents to this survey included 1,348 college and university presidents, a response rate of 63.8% of the survey population of 2,112. The total population or universe of presidents of American colleges and universities was 3,158, according to a study of academic presidents conducted by the American Council on Education (Ross, Green & Henderson, 1993, p. 3). The respondents comprised 42.7% of the universe, ranging from 32.1% to 60.8% of the presidents in each Carnegie classification. Best represented were presidents of liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, and specialized institutions; research and doctoral universities and two-year colleges were less well represented. Table 1 shows respondents as a percentage of the survey population and the universe of presidents.

Table 1

Respondents as a Percentage of the Universe and Population of Presidents

| Carnegie Code | Universe <u>N</u> | Population <u>N</u> | <u>Respondents</u> | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | | <u>N</u> | as % of <u>Universe</u> | as % of <u>Population</u> |
| RU 1&2 and DOC 1&2 ^a | 244 | 145 | 80 | 32.8% | 55.2% |
| CU 1&2 | 611 | 360 | 264 | 43.2 | 73.3 |
| Lib Arts 1&2 | 577 | 497 | 351 | 60.8 | 70.6 |
| Two Year | 1,300 | 702 | 417 | 32.1 | 59.4 |
| Specialized | 426 | 309 | 203 | 47.7 | 65.7 |
| Systems ^b | --- | --- | 33 | --- | --- |
| Blank ^c | --- | 99 | --- | --- | --- |
| Total | 3,158 | 2,112 | 1,348 | 42.7% | 63.8% |

Note. Carnegie codes now include: research universities 1 and 2, comprehensive universities 1 and 2, liberal arts colleges 1 and 2, two year colleges, specialized institutions, and multicampus systems.

^a Doctoral and research universities were reported together in the study of the universe of presidents. ^b Systems was not a Carnegie code at the time of the study of the total population. ^c Carnegie codes were identified for all respondents.

The 1,348 respondent presidents included 39.3% (530) public sector presidents and 60.7% (818) private sector presidents, compared to the universe of presidents (3,158) with 55.5% (1,754) in the public sector and 44.5% (1,404) in the private sector (Ross, Green & Henderson, 1993, p. 3).

Respondents included a larger percentage of private sector presidents, a larger percentage of liberal arts institutions, and a smaller percentage of two-year institutions, compared to the universe of presidents, but otherwise a similar distribution of public and private sector presidents among Carnegie classifications. For both populations, about two-thirds of public sector presidents headed two-year institutions and about 40% of private sector presidents headed liberal arts institutions. Some of the differences in the two populations may be accounted for by the introduction of a category for systems since the study of the universe of presidents was conducted. Though survey respondents over-represent private sector presidents, reporting data by sector when there is a notable difference in responses should compensate for this factor. See Table 2 for details.

Table 2

Universe of Presidents and Respondent Presidents by Carnegie Classification and Sector

| | <u>Universe</u> | | | <u>Respondents</u> | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|--------------------|---------|-------|
| | Public | Private | Total | Public | Private | Total |
| Research & Doctoral ^a | 9.5% | 5.5% | 7.7% | 7.3% | 5.1% | 6.0% |
| Comprehensive 1&2 | 20.0 | 18.5 | 19.3 | 16.1 | 21.8 | 19.6 |
| Liberal Arts 1&2 | 2.4 | 38.1 | 18.3 | 1.3 | 42.1 | 26.0 |
| Two-Year | 63.9 | 12.5 | 41.2 | 67.2 | 7.5 | 30.9 |
| Specialized | 4.2 | 25.1 | 13.5 | 2.5 | 23.3 | 15.0 |
| System ^b | --- | --- | --- | 5.7 | 0.4 | 2.4 |
| Totals | 100.0% | 99.7% | 100.0% | 100.1% | 100.2% | 99.9% |

^a Research 1 and 2 and Doctoral 1 and 2 were combined in the study of the universe of presidents. ^b This was not a category in the study of the universe of presidents.

Characteristics of respondent presidents.

More than half (51.6%) of the respondents served in office for five or more years, while about one quarter (23.3%) were relatively new presidents, having served less than two years (item 1). See Table 3. More than half of the respondents were fifty to fifty-nine years old (57.8%), none were under thirty,

and only one was eighty or more years old (item 2). See Table 4. There were 230 female (17.1%) and 1,113 male (82.6%) respondents (item 3).

Table 3

Respondent Presidents' Years in Office in Current Presidency

| | Years | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-------|
| | >1 | 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-9 | 10+ | NA | TOTAL |
| N | 170 | 144 | 134 | 98 | 104 | 317 | 379 | 2 | 1348 |
| % | 12.6 | 10.7 | 9.9 | 7.3 | 7.7 | 23.5 | 28.1 | 0.1 | 100% |

Table 4

Age of Respondent Presidents

| | Age | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|
| | <30 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80+ | NA | TOTAL |
| N | 0 | 12 | 191 | 779 | 334 | 23 | 1 | 8 | 1348 |
| % | 0.0 | 0.9 | 14.2 | 57.8 | 24.8 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 0.6 | 100% |

Seventy percent of respondents served under the terms of a written contract (item 4), though more in the public sector (76.2%) than in the private sector (66.0%). For those who had written contracts or agreements (N = 944), contracts were most commonly for terms of three to four years (35.9%), (item 4a). See Table 5.

Table 5

Length of Written Contracts or Agreements for Respondent Presidents

| | Years | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| | >1 | 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-9 | 10+ | Other | NA | TOTAL |
| N | 2 | 153 | 85 | 339 | 85 | 202 | 10 | 28 | 40 | 994 |
| % | 0.2 | 16.2 | 9.0 | 35.9 | 9.0 | 21.4 | 1.1 | 3.0 | 4.2 | 100% |

If a composite were constructed from the most frequent responses, the modal president could be described as a man in his fifties, in at least his fifth year in office, serving in either a private liberal arts college or a public two-year college, under the terms of a three or four year contract.

Despite the differences already mentioned, it appears that respondents were fairly representative of American college and university presidents and that one can have confidence in generalizations about presidents based on this population. A high response rate, large number of respondents, and reasonable representation of the universe of presidents were achieved.

Board Chairs

There were 535 respondents to the survey of board chairs, a response rate of 32.9%. The survey population included 1627 chairs of governing boards of institutions headed by a single president. Chairs of multicampus

system boards, with multiple presidents, were treated as a separate population and were sent a different survey instrument.

The respondents included 166 (31.0%) public and 369 (69.0%) private sector board chairs. Almost half of the private sector chairs were from liberal arts institutions and over two-thirds of the public sector chairs were from two-year institutions. Respondents' institutions are reported by Carnegie classification and sector in Table 6. The distribution was quite similar for respondent board chairs and respondent presidents. See Table 7. Compared with the universe of presidents, chairs under represented two-year institutions and over represented liberal arts institutions, as did respondent presidents, reflecting the private sector bias in the respondent populations.

Table 6

Respondent Board Chairs by Carnegie Classification and Sector

| Carnegie Classification | <u>Total</u> | | <u>Public</u> | | <u>Private</u> | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------|---------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| Research 1&2 | 13 | 2.4 | 6 | 3.6 | 7 | 1.9 |
| Doctoral 1&2 | 12 | 2.2 | 7 | 4.2 | 5 | 1.3 |
| Comprehensive 1&2 | 115 | 21.5 | 32 | 19.3 | 83 | 22.5 |
| Liberal Arts 1&2 | 173 | 32.4 | 3 | 1.8 | 170 | 46.1 |
| Two-Year | 139 | 26.0 | 115 | 69.3 | 24 | 6.5 |
| Specialized | 83 | 15.5 | 3 | 1.8 | 80 | 21.7 |
| Total | 535 | 100.0% | 166 | 100.0% | 369 | 100.0% |

Table 7

Respondent Board Chairs, Respondent Presidents, and Universe of Presidents
by Carnegie Classification and Sector

| | Respondent <u>Board Chairs</u> | Respondent <u>Presidents</u> | Universe of <u>Presidents</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Carnegie</u> | | | |
| <u>Classification</u> | % | % | % |
| Research 1&2 and Doctoral 1&2 ^a | 4.6 | 6.0 | 7.7 |
| Comprehensive 1&2 | 21.5 | 19.6 | 19.3 |
| Liberal Arts 1&2 | 32.4 | 26.0 | 18.3 |
| Two-Year | 26.0 | 30.9 | 41.2 |
| Specialized | 15.5 | 15.0 | 13.5 |
| System ^b | --- | 2.4 | --- |
| Total | 100.0% | 99.9% | 100.0% |
| | | | |
| <u>Sector</u> | | | |
| Public | 31.0 | 39.3 | 55.5 |
| Private | 69.0 | 60.7 | 44.5 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

^a Research 1 and 2 and Doctoral 1 and 2 were combined in the study of the universe of presidents. ^b This was not a category in the study of the universe of presidents.

Characteristics of respondent board chairs.

The respondents to this survey have had considerable experience as trustees. More than half of the board chairs (51.0%) served on the governing board of their institution for ten or more years and almost another third (28.8%) served for five to nine years (Section 2, item 26). Chairs in the private sector tended to have more years of board service than did those in the public sector. See Appendix B, Table B-6.

Respondents' years of service as chief board officer varied, with an average of about three years (Section 2, item 27). Private sector board chairs tended to have more years in office than did those in the public sector. See Appendix B, Table B-7.

Most board chairs were in their fifties (32.3%) or sixties (39.3%); compared with the private sector chairs, public sector institutions tended to have more chairs that were under fifty or seventy years old or more (Section 2, item 28). See Appendix B, Table B-8.

Most board chairs were men (78.3%); only 19.4% were women and 2% did not respond (Section 2, item 29). Public institutions were twice as likely to have a woman as chair of the governing board (29.5%) as were institutions in the private sector (14.9%).

If a composite were constructed from the most frequent responses, the modal board chair could be described as a man in his sixties, with more than

ten years of experience serving on the governing board of a private liberal arts or public two-year college, three years of which he has served as board chair.

Chairs of Governing Boards Multicampus Systems

Chairs of governing boards of multicampus systems were treated separately from board chairs of institutions with one president. Questions which required detailed responses and first hand knowledge of actual reviews were deemed appropriate for chairs with one president but problematic for chairs of systems with many presidents. Different survey instruments were developed for each of these populations of board chairs.

The survey population included 165 chairs of multicampus system governing boards. Unfortunately, only 36 usable responses were returned, 33 from public sector institutions and 3 from private sector institutions, a response rate of 21.8%. Given the small number of respondents and low response rate, the researcher determined that the data on presidential assessment could not be reported, with confidence, as representative of the population. None will be reported here. The data from board chairs that is reported in this study came from the survey of board chairs of institutions with one president.

Data Collection

This study was sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) and the AGB logo and address appeared on all survey materials. AGB is the largest voluntary membership organization of college and university governing boards and their presidents. It was hoped that visibly associating the study with AGB would enhance the credibility of the research and the rate of response of subjects.

A packet including a questionnaire, personalized cover letter, and postage paid return envelope was sent by first class mail to each president and board chair in January, 1997. A response was requested by February 14, 1997. Each address label included the name and title of the subject and a unique institutional code number, to identify respondents solely to the researcher. The same code number was affixed to the enclosed questionnaire. The mailing date took into account peak work periods and long holidays in the academic calendar. A second mailing to nonrespondents was sent within one week of the return deadline and a response requested by March 7, 1997. Sample cover letters and questionnaires are included in Appendix A.

The personally addressed cover letter explained the selection of subjects, reasons to complete the questionnaire, and purpose of the study. As an incentive to participate, a complimentary copy of the published results of the study was offered to all respondents. The confidentiality of all responses was also assured and the use of a code number explained. Neither the

subject's name nor the name of the institution appeared on the survey instrument.

The unique institutional code number was used to protect the confidentiality of respondents and ensure that information about the type of institution was accurate and standardized. A label was affixed to the lower edge of the cover page of each questionnaire and included a unique institutional code number as well as the institution's Carnegie classification, public or private affiliation, and full-time equivalent enrollment.

Standardized classification codes (e.g. Carnegie classification and public or private affiliation) allowed for reliable classification of data. The unique institutional code numbers allowed respondents to be acknowledged and a second mailing to be sent to nonrespondents. It also permitted the comparison of data from pairs of respondents (board chair and president) from the same institution. In assembling each package of survey materials, care was taken to ensure that the questionnaire, cover letter, and address label matched.

To protect confidentiality, the researcher assured respondents that all data would be reported anonymously in the aggregate. Quotations would be anonymous and identifying information redacted, though the role (president or board chair) and type of institution would be noted. A data processing service was used which had a reliable history of confidential service to AGB; the data processing service did not have access to information identifying institutions by code numbers.

A pilot study was conducted using a small group, comparable to the subjects, who completed preliminary versions of the three questionnaires. These former presidents and board chairs were asked to comment on the clarity and relevance of the questions and to suggest items of interest to them. Experts and statisticians reviewed the instruments to suggest improvements in content, format, and data analysis. The final versions of the questionnaires reflect their suggestions: language was clarified, scales made consistent, answers coded for data entry, and a few items added and deleted.

Survey Instruments

Three survey instruments were created: one for presidents, one for board chairs of single campus institutions, and one for chairs of multicampus system boards. In order to obtain detailed information, questions were based upon the respondents' most recent evaluation experiences. This provided the most current data on policies and practices and was the most accessible in terms of respondents' memory. Respondents who had not participated in or had no knowledge of a presidential evaluation were able to so indicate and return the survey without answering additional questions. Most questions provided a structured format for responses; only a few questions used open-ended written responses.

The questionnaire for chairs of single campus institutions was modified for chairs of multicampus system boards to make it more policy

oriented and less concerned with the specific evaluation of individuals. Chairs of multicampus systems answered questions based on typical assessments, rather than the most recent one. In regard to Research Question One, "How are the presidents of colleges and universities evaluated?", questions for chairs of single campus institutions (items one through nine) and multicampus system boards (items one through 18) were comparable, though questions were repeated on the multicampus system version in regard to practices for system heads as well as practices for campus presidents.

Items which would have required separate answers on the assessment outcomes of each president, however, were eliminated from the survey instrument of chairs of multicampus system boards. The size of some systems, with up to sixty-five institutions, made detailed reporting by board chairs impractical. Consequently, multicampus systems were excluded from consideration in regard to Research Questions Two and Three, which would have required that the chair have personal, detailed knowledge of the impact or outcomes for each president's assessment. Research Question Two asked, "What are the outcomes of the assessment process, according to both presidents and board chairs?" Research Question Three asked, "What relationships are there, if any, between how presidential assessments are conducted and the outcomes presidents and board chairs report?"

Data and Methodology of Analysis

Data were collected on the processes used for conducting assessments (Research Question One), the outcomes reported (Research Question Two), and relationships, if any, between process and outcomes variables (Research Question Three). Since the purposes of various questionnaire items varied, so too did the tools of analysis.

To answer Questions One and Two, data which describe the process and outcomes were generally reported using descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency. Where appropriate, the minimum and maximum values of responses were also included. Data were generally stratified by type of institution, using standardized categories: public or private institutions and Carnegie classifications. Data are displayed in tables showing the grand total for all respondents and subtotals for public institutions and private institutions. Some tables in the appendix also include subtotals for two-year, four-year, multicampus, and specialized institutions in each sector (public and private), respectively.

To answer Research Question Three, which concerned possible relationships among variables, bivariate relationships were investigated. Where several questionnaire items were used to describe a characteristic of the process, such as "confidentiality," or a characteristic of an outcome, such as "utility," a composite score was constructed for the variable. Elements of

each composite variable are detailed in this section, in regard to Research Question Three.

Data handling is described in greater detail throughout this section, in regard to specific research questions and questionnaire items. Results are discussed in detail, including trends for public and private institutions, in Chapter Four.

Research Question One, "How are the Presidents of Colleges and Universities Evaluated?"

At its most basic level, this research sought to answer Research Question One, "How are the presidents of colleges and universities evaluated?" The survey instrument for presidents requested information on policies and guidelines for the assessment process, and details about the role of the president in the assessment process. This section reviews the variables and their measures for Research Question One, as summarized in Table 8.

Table 8

Research Question One: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 5 | written policy | yes, no |
| 5a | type of policy | board, law, other |
| 6 | frequency of reviews | not required to > 6 yrs |
| 7 | last reviewed | never to > 5 yrs |
| 8 | responsibility for review | entire board, board chair, standing committee, other, special committee, consultant |
| 9 | contributed to review | no one, alumni, foundation trustees, advisory board members, donors, faculty, government officials, other presidents, president's staff, staff-nonprof, staff-prof, students, trustees, others ^a |
| 10a | confidentiality/self-assessment | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10b | confidentiality/questionnaires | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10c | confidentiality/interviews | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10d | confidentiality/summary report | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10e | confidentiality/discussions, meetings | yes, no, not applicable |
| 11a | academic leadership & management | 5 point scale re: thoroughness of review, very satisfied to very unsatisfied |

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

Research Question One: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|------|------------------------------------|---|
| 11b | admin. leadership & management | same as 11a |
| 11c | budget & finance | same as 11a |
| 11d | fund raising | same as 11a |
| 11e | external relations | same as 11a |
| 11f | personal characteristics | same as 11a |
| 12a | contract renewal | yes, no |
| 12b | bonus pay | yes, no |
| 12c | salary adjustments | yes, no |
| 12d | benefits adjustments | yes, no |
| 12e | sabbatical leave | yes, no |
| 12f | vacation or other leave | yes, no |
| 12g | seminars or conferences | yes, no |
| 12h | family considerations | yes, no |
| 13 | duration of assessment process | < 1 mo to > 1 yr |
| 14 | informed of process when appointed | yes, no |
| 15 | new, revised or existing process | new, revised, existing, other |
| 16 | role in developing process | no role, consulted, approved process, requested changes made, contributed to new process, primary role in new process ^a |

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

Research Question One: Variables and Measures

| Item ^b | Variable Name | Measures |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 17 | comment on draft report | yes, no, no report |
| 18 | received written report | yes, no, no report |
| 19 | meet face to face | yes, no |
| 19a | meet with | board chair alone, committee chair alone, committee members, entire board, other ^a |
| 20a | board feedback re: assessment | 5 point scale, very satisfied to very unsatisfied |
| 20b | board feedback re: regular work | same as 20a |
| 20c | level of trust & openness | same as 20a |
| 23 | process typical of reviews | yes, no |
| 23a | if no | no typical review, process recently changed, process expected to change, process varies, unusual year, other |
| BC6 | report presented to entire board | yes, no |
| BC6a | report format | oral, written, both |
| BC15 | process typical of reviews | same as item 23 |

^a Check all that apply, multiple answers.

^b Items beginning with "BC" are from the board chair's questionnaire.

Questions in regard to policies and guidelines examined: whether a written policy required assessment (item 5); the frequency of reviews (item 6); when the most recent review occurred (item 7); who conducted the review (item 8), and from whom information was collected (item 9). Additional questions concerned whether, for the most recent assessment, the following were confidential, not confidential, or not applicable: the president's self-assessment statement, a summary of information from others using questionnaires, a summary of information from others using interviews, a summary report of assessment results, and discussions or meetings with the president (items 10a-e, in order). Item 13 inquired about the duration of the process.

Presidents were asked whether the performance review was used as the occasion for related administrative or benefits decisions, including: contract renewal, bonus pay, salary adjustment, benefits adjustments, sabbatical leave, vacation or other leave, participation in seminars or conferences, or family considerations (items 12a-h, respectively).

They were also asked to rate, on a five point scale, how thoroughly various aspects of presidential performance were covered by the review, including: academic leadership and management, administrative leadership and management, budget and finance, fund raising, external relations, and personal characteristics (items 11a-f, respectively), (Nason, 1984, pp. 37-38).

Questions regarding the role of the president examined the nature and extent of the president's involvement in his or her own assessment,

including: knowledge of the process before appointment (item 14); extent to which the president shaped the process (items 15-16); use of a self-assessment statement (item 10a); whether the president had an opportunity to comment on the final draft of a written report, if any (item 17); and presentation of assessment results to the president, in writing (item 18), or in person (item 19).

Board chairs were asked whether a final report was presented to the entire board (item 6) and whether the report was oral, written, or both (item 6a).

Presidents were asked to rate on a five point scale their satisfaction with their relationship with the board in these areas: the quality of feedback provided by the board during the presidential review (item 20a), the quality of performance feedback the president generally receives from the board (item 20b), and the general level of trust and openness between the president and board (item 20c).

Presidents were asked whether the process used for their most recent review was typical of presidential reviews at that institution, and if not, to choose one of several explanations (item 23). This would provide a measure of the extent to which the researcher could generalize about current practice, from the descriptions provided by the survey. The explanations (no typical review, process recently changed, process expected to change, review varies between formal and informal, unusual year, other, or don't know) would add further clarification.

Presidents were assumed to be a more authoritative source than board chairs and were relied on to provide descriptions of the policies and guidelines for assessment; presidents are full-time professionals and chairs are part-time volunteers, whose position often rotates.

Research Question Two, "What are the Outcomes of the Assessment Process, According to Both Presidents and Board Chairs?"

The second goal of this research was to answer the question "What are the outcomes of the assessment process, according to both presidents and board chairs?" Presidents and board chairs were asked about changes in the president's performance and in conditions of employment, since the last review. Presidents were also asked about satisfaction with and usefulness of the review. Open ended questions provided presidents and board chairs an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions. See Table 9 for a summary of the variables and their measures for Research Question Two.

Table 9

Research Question Two: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 21a | goals/specific objectives set | 5 point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree |
| 21b | goals/clear criteria | same as 21a |
| 21c | goals/reviewed against goals | same as 21a |
| 21d | utility/strengthened effectiveness | same as 21a |
| 21e | utility/learned a lot | same as 21a |
| 21f | utility/helped me see shortcomings | same as 21a |
| 21g | utility/clarified expectations | same as 21a |
| 21h | satisfaction/satisfied with review | same as 21a |
| 21i | satisfaction/feel good way conducted | same as 21a |
| 21j | satisfaction/like it to be different | same as 21a ^a |
| 22a | impact/compensation & benefits | positive (generally or somewhat improved), negative (generally or somewhat became worse), stayed about the same, not applicable |
| 22b | impact/relations with board | same as 22a |
| 22c | impact/relations with faculty | same as 22a |
| 22d | impact/relations w/community | same as 22a |
| 22e | impact/ability to lead | same as 22a |

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

Research Question Two: Variables and Measures

| Item ^c | Variable Name | Measures |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 22f | impact/sense of being valued | same as 22a |
| 22g | impact/performance since last review | same as 22a |
| 22h | impact/quality of board feedback | same as 22a |
| 26 | assistance for future reviews | literature on assessment, sample criteria, sample forms, sample policies, workshops for presidents, workshops for chairs, consulting services, counsel, survey data, other ^b |
| BC11a | impact/pres compensation & benefits | same as 22a |
| BC11b | impact/pres relations with board | same as 22a |
| BC11c | impact/pres relations with faculty | same as 22a |
| BC11d | impact/pres relations w/community | same as 22a |
| BC11e | impact/pres ability to lead | same as 22a |
| BC11f | impact/pres's performance | same as 22a |
| BC11g | impact/quality of board feedback | same as 22a |
| BC11h | impact/understanding of board needs | same as 22a |
| BC12 | president's performance rating | 5 point scale, outstanding to very unsatisfactory |

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

Research Question Two: Variables and Measures

| Item ^c | Variable Name | Measures |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| BC13 | frequency seeks feedback from chair | about once per month, less than once per month, not at all |
| BC14a | ask others for critical feedback | 5 point scale, very characteristic to very uncharacteristic |
| BC14b | prefer detailed critical appraisals | same as BC14a |
| BC14c | tend to seek good news about self | same as BC14a |
| BC14d | ask for positive feedback | same as BC14a |
| BC16 | assistance for future reviews | same as 26 ^b |

^a Scoring reversed.

^b Check all that apply, multiple answers.

^c Items beginning with "BC" are from the board chair's questionnaire.

Presidents were asked to rate changes in the following outcomes, using a five point scale: compensation and benefits (item 22a); relationships with the board (item 22b), faculty (item 22c), and the community (item 22d); ability to lead (item 22e); sense of being valued and appreciated (item 22f); performance level since the last review (item 22g); and quality of performance feedback from the board (item 22h).

Items 22a-h on the president's survey instrument appeared as items 11a-g on the survey of single campus board chairs, with wording changed to reflect the respondent's role; chairs were also asked to rate the president's understanding of what the board needs to function more effectively (item 11h), but were not asked about the president's sense of being valued and appreciated (item 22f). Data were displayed by respondent role, in total and by type of institution.

Board chairs were asked to translate the board's appraisal of the president's performance into an overall rating using a five point scale (item 12). Data were displayed in total and by type of institution.

Board chairs also rated the frequency with which the president asked the board chair for feedback on his or her performance (item 13), on a scale ranging from about once a day to not at all in the last six months. Board chairs also rated how characteristic it was for the president to seek positive and negative feedback on his or her own performance, (items 14a-d), using a five point scale. Data were displayed, in total and by type of institution.

Presidents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the review, using a five point scale, indicating the degree to which they agreed with three statements: "I was satisfied with the review" (item 21h); "I feel good about the way the review was conducted" (item 21i); and "There are many ways in which I would have liked the appraisal to be different" (item 21j).

Using the same five point scale, presidents were asked about the utility of the assessment process (items 21d-g, in order): "The appraisal helped me

learn how I can strengthen my effectiveness"; "I learned a lot from the appraisal"; "The appraisal helped me to see some of my shortcomings"; and "I have a clearer idea of what the board expects from me."

Using the same five point scale, presidents were asked how well three statements described the role of goals in the assessment process (items 21a-c, in order): "Specific future objectives were set"; "I left with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance"; and "My performance was reviewed against previously agreed upon goals."

The statements and scales for items 21a-j were based upon previous research regarding performance assessment, goals, and employee satisfaction and utility (Greller, 1978, p. 648). Questions were rephrased, as needed, to be more appropriate for college presidents and boards. Data were displayed in total and by type of institution.

Open-ended questions permitted presidents to identify the most significant change they made as a result of the last review (item 24), comment on the least useful part of the review process (item 25), and offer comments or suggestions (item 27). Verbatim comments were analyzed for trends in content and summarized, with illustrative quotations, in Chapter Four.

Using a checklist of options, presidents (item 26) and board chairs (item 16) indicated what assistance would be helpful for future reviews. Data were displayed separately, by respondent role, in total and by type of institution. Responses of board chairs and presidents were also compared.

Items 1-10 in the single campus board chair's survey instrument provided a needed preamble to the sensitive questions on outcomes of the assessment process, which followed. Several questions regarding outcomes were asked of both presidents and chairs to allow comparisons to be made; results are presented in Chapter Four.

Research Question Three, "What Relationships Are There, If Any, Between How Presidential Assessments Are Conducted and the Outcomes Presidents and Board Chairs Report?"

Research Question Three examined possible relationships between how presidential assessments were conducted and the outcomes presidents and board chairs reported. Many of the variables described above in Questions One and Two were re-examined in this context using correlation analysis and t-tests. Possible relationships among these variables were suggested by the work of several researchers in the field of performance appraisal (Ashford, 1989; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Greller, 1978; Longenecker & Gioia, 1992, 1991, 1988).

Research Question Three has four parts (3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D), each of which examines an important assessment outcome: the **utility** of reviews for presidents, presidents' **satisfaction** with the review process, the president's overall performance **rating**, and **improvement** in presidential performance.

Research Question Three explores relationships between these outcome variables and various assessment policies and practices:

3A Is there a relationship between the usefulness of reviews for presidents, (**utility**), and:

3A.1 the frequency of reviews?;

3A.2 setting specific objectives, clarifying criteria, and reviewing performance against previously agreed upon goals?; or

3A.3 receiving adequate feedback from the board?

3B Is there a relationship between the president's **satisfaction** with the performance appraisal and:

3B.1 setting specific objectives and clarifying criteria for good performance?;

3B.2 the president's participation in developing the review process and conducting the review?; or

3B.3 the confidentiality of the review process?

3C Is there a relationship between the **president's overall performance rating** and the president's positive or negative feedback seeking behavior, as reported by the board chair?

3D Is there a relationship between **improvement in the president's performance**, as reported by the board chair, and either:

3D.1 the president's negative feedback seeking behavior?; or

3D.2 the adequacy of feedback the president reportedly receives from the governing board?

Rather than just describing the state of the art, these questions may reveal information that can enhance the value of assessment practices by improving presidential performance, the usefulness of the process, and presidents' satisfaction with this undertaking.

Questions 3A and 3B were based on, though not a replication of, research conducted by Greller (1978). Items 21 a-g of the survey instrument for presidents were the same as Greller's or only slightly modified to suit academic presidents (e.g. changing "boss" to "board" and "mistakes" to "shortcomings"). This line of inquiry was also prompted by research conducted by Longenecker and Gioia (1992) on executive performance appraisal.

Questions 3C and 3D were derived from research conducted by Ashford and Tsui (1991). Items 14a-d in the questionnaire for board chairs were the same as those used by Ashford and Tsui.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Advanced PowerMac Version, (SPSS), was used to perform statistical analyses. The two most

frequently used statistical tools used were Pearson's correlation coefficient and Levene's t-test.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine the relatedness of variables, that is, whether variance in one variable explained variance in another variable at a statistically significant level. In social science research, correlation coefficients in the range of .20 to .40 were considered to be sufficiently large enough to "signify important relationships between variables" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 633). Relationships at various coefficient levels have typically been interpreted as: 0.0 to 0.3 - weak; 0.3 to 0.7 - moderate; and 0.7 to 0.9 - strong. This convention will be observed here.

Levene's t-test for Equality of Variance and Equality of Means were used to determine whether significant differences existed between groups (at confidence levels of .01 or .05). These tests were useful in examining whether the cases grouped by scores on one variable had significantly different mean scores on another variable, and whether those differences were in the direction anticipated. This proved to be useful for several variables where information about group differences, rather than relatedness of variables, was sought. For some analyses, both t-tests and correlation coefficients were used.

What follows is a detailed description of the methodology used for the four questions which make up Research Question Three, including the process and outcome variables, scales, scoring, composite variables, and statistical tools.

3A Is there a relationship between the usefulness of reviews for presidents, (**utility**), and:

3A.1 the frequency of reviews?;

3A.2 setting specific objectives, clarifying criteria, and reviewing performance against previously agreed upon goals?; or

3A.3 receiving adequate feedback from the board?

In this research question, "**Utility**" (usefulness of reviews for presidents) was the assessment outcome variable. "Utility" was represented by the degree to which the president agreed with four statements, items 21d-g (in order): "The appraisal helped me learn how I can strengthen my effectiveness"; "I learned a lot from the appraisal"; "The appraisal helped me to see some of my shortcomings"; and "I have a clearer idea of what the board expects from me." Respondents used a five point scale, where one = strongly agree and five = strongly disagree. A composite "Utility" score was constructed using the total score for responses to 21d-g. Interitem reliability for the variables comprising the composite "Utility" variable were noted.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine items 21d-g, individually and as a composite "Utility" variable, in relation to two assessment process variables: goals (items 21a-c), and adequate feedback (items 20a-b). "Utility" and a third assessment process variable, frequency of reviews (item 6), were examined using a t-test. A summary of the variables and their measures for Research Question 3A appears in Table 10.

Table 10

Research Question 3A: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|------|---------------|----------|
|------|---------------|----------|

3A Dependent Variables

| | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|--|
| 21d-g | "utility" | 20 point scale, sum of 21 d-g |
| 21d | utility/strengthened effectiveness | 5 point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree |
| 21e | utility/learned a lot | same as 21d |
| 21f | utility/helped me see shortcomings | same as 21d |
| 21g | utility/clarified expectations | same as 21d |

3A.1 Independent Variables

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 | 3A.1 frequency of reviews | not required to > 6 yrs |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|

3A.2 Independent Variables

| | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|--|
| 21a-c | 3A.2 "goals" | 15 point scale, sum of 21a-c |
| 21a | 3A.2 goals/specific objectives set | 5 point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree |
| 21b | 3A.2 goals/clear criteria | same as 21a |
| 21c | 3A.2 goals/reviewed against goals | same as 21a |

(continued)

Table 10 (continued)

Research Question 3A: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| 3A.3 Independent Variables | | |
| 20a-b | 3A.3 "adequate feedback" | 10 point scale, sum of 20a&b |
| 20a | 3A.3 adequate feedback/board feedback re: assessment | 5 point scale, very satisfied to very unsatisfied |
| 20b | 3A.3 adequate feedback/board feedback re: regular work | same as 20a |

3A.1 Utility and frequency of reviews.

The **frequency of reviews** (item 6) was indicated by choosing one of twelve responses ranging from "no requirement that I be assessed" to "every six or more years." Since most presidents were assessed annually, the response categories were combined to form three groups: at least once a year, less often than once a year, and unknown frequencies. T-tests were used to examine the mean "Utility" scores.

3A.2 Utility and goals.

Three items were used to examine the role of **goals**, measured by agreement with the following statements: "Specific future objectives were set" (item 21a); "I [the president] left with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance" (item 21b); and "My [the president's] performance was reviewed against previously agreed upon goals" (item 21c). The same five point scale was used for all three items, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine items 21d-g, individually and as a composite "Utility" variable in relation to each of the three goal items, 21a-c.

3A.3 Utility and adequate feedback.

A two part question inquired about how satisfied the president was with the quality and specificity of the performance **feedback** received from the board: 1) in regard to the assessment process (item 20a) and 2) in the regular course of work (item 20b). A five point scale, ranging from very satisfied to very unsatisfied, was used for responses. Responses were summed to construct a composite "Adequate Feedback" scale. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine items 21d-g, individually and as a composite "Utility" variable in relation to items 20a-b, individually and as a composite "Adequate Feedback" variable.

3B Is there a relationship between the president's **satisfaction** with the performance appraisal and:

3B.1 setting specific objectives and clarifying criteria for good performance?;

3B.2 the president's participation in developing the review process and conducting the review?; or

3B.3 the confidentiality of the review process?

In this research question, presidents' perceived **satisfaction** with the assessment was the outcome variable. "Satisfaction" was indicated on a five point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree, for the following three statements (items 21h-j, in order): "I was satisfied with the review"; "I feel good about the way the review was conducted"; and "There are many ways in which I would have liked the appraisal to be different." As in Greller's study, the scoring for item 21j was reversed. A composite "Satisfaction" score was constructed using the total score for these three items, after adjusting the score of item 21j. Interitem reliability for the variables comprising "Satisfaction" were noted.

Correlation analysis and t-tests were used to examine the relationship of several process variables to "Satisfaction": **3B.1**, "Goal Setting"; **3B.2**, "Personal Participation" in the assessment process; and **3B.3**, "Confidentiality." A summary of the variables and their measures for Research Question 3B appears in Table 11.

Table 11

Research Question 3B: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 3B Dependent Variables | | |
| 21h-j | "satisfaction" | 15 point scale, sum of 21h-j |
| 21h | satisfaction/satisfied with review | 5 point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree |
| 21i | satisfaction/feel good way conducted | same as 21h |
| 21j | satisfaction/like it to be different | same as 21h, but scale reversed |

3B.1 Independent Variables

| Item | # Variable Name | Measures |
|-------|---|--|
| 21a-b | 3B.1 "goal setting" | 10 point scale, sum of 21a&b |
| 21a | 3B.1 goal setting/specific objectives set | 5 point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree |
| 21b | 3B.1 goal setting/clear criteria | same as 21a |

(continued)

Table 11 (continued)

Research Question 3B: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| 3B.2 Independent Variables | | |
| 10a& 16-19 | 3B.2 "personal participation" | 10 point scale, sum of 10a&16-19, where yes = 2 and no = 0, except item 16 for which primarily role = 2, some role = 1, no role = 0 |
| 10a | 3B.2 personal participation/ self-assessment | confidential or not confidential self-assessment = yes, not applicable = no |
| 16 | 3B.2 personal participation/ role in developing process | no role = 0; consulted, approved process or requested changes made (some role) = 1; contributed to new process or primary role in new process = 2 yes = 2, no or no report = 0 |
| 17 | 3B.2 personal participation/ comment on draft report | yes = 2, no or no report = 0 |
| 18 | 3B.2 personal participation/ receive written report | yes = 2, no = 0 |
| 19 | 3B.2 personal participation/ meet face to face | |

(continued)

Table 11 (continued)

Research Question 3B: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3B.3 Independent Variables | | |
| 10a-e | 3B.3 "confidentiality" | confidential/not confidential: confidential = all <u>yes</u> or at least one <u>yes</u> and the rest <u>not applicable</u> ; not confidential = at least one <u>no</u> ; excluded = <u>not applicable</u> to all |
| 10a | 3B.3 confidentiality/self-assessment | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10b | 3B.3 confidentiality/questionnaires | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10c | 3B.3 confidentiality/interviews | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10d | 3B.3 confidentiality/summary report | yes, no, not applicable |
| 10e | 3B.3 confidentiality/discuss or meet | yes, no, not applicable |

3B.1 Satisfaction and goal setting.

Goal setting was represented by the responses on a five point scale, strongly agree to strongly disagree, for two items, 21a-b, "Specific future objectives were set" and "I left with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance." A composite goal setting score was constructed using the total

score for these two items and interitem reliability was noted. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships among variables.

3B.2 Satisfaction and personal participation.

Five variables were used to gauge the president's "**Personal Participation**" in the assessment process. These five variables concerned whether the president: 1) completed a self-assessment statement (item 10a), 2) played a role in developing the review process (item 16); 3) had an opportunity to comment on a final draft of the assessment report (item 17); 4) received a written report or summary of the results of the assessment (item 18); and 5) had face-to-face meetings as part of the review (item 19). These variables emerged from the literature and from the development of the survey instrument as important factors regarding the president's participation in the assessment process.

Four of the items (10a, 17, 18, and 19) were treated as dichotomous variables, with responses which indicated that the president participated in the activity treated as "yes" and nonparticipation treated as "no." The fifth item (16), had seven possible responses, ranging from "no role" to "primarily responsible for creating or selecting the review process." Responses for item 16 were combined to create three groups: "no role," "some role," and "primary role." For each of these variables, t-tests were used to examine the mean Satisfaction scores for presidents in each response group.

3B.3 Satisfaction and confidentiality.

Confidentiality was represented by the responses to five items, (10a-e), which asked presidents to "Indicate whether, for your most recent assessment, the following items were confidential, not confidential, or not applicable: (a) your self-assessment statement, (b) summary of information from others using written questionnaires, (c) summary of information from others using interviews, (d) summary report of assessment results, and (e) discussions/meetings with you. Respondents were divided into three groups, based on their responses. Interitem reliability for the variables comprising the composite confidentiality variable were noted. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships among variables.

3C Is there a relationship between the **president's overall performance rating** and the president's positive or negative feedback seeking behavior, as reported by the board chair?

In this research question, the **president's overall performance rating**, as reported by the board chair, was the outcome variable. Using a five point scale, ranging from outstanding to very unsatisfactory, board chairs were asked, "If you were to translate the president's most recent performance review into an overall rating, how did the board (or designees) rate the president's performance?" (item 12). The question and scale were developed

by the researcher in place of Ashford and Tsui's schema (Ashford & Tsui, 1991, p. 262), which was deemed too complex, lengthy, and managerial. Although using a single item to rate performance, rather than multiple items, did not allow reliability testing, a single question was considered more likely to be answered. The possible relationship between performance level and feedback seeking behavior was investigated using correlation analysis. A summary of the variables and their measures for Research Question 3C appears in Table 12.

Table 12

Research Question 3C: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 3C Dependent Variable | | |
| BC12 | president's performance rating | 5 point scale, outstanding to very unsatisfactory |
| 3C Independent Variables | | |
| BC14a&b | "negative feedback seeking" | sum of BC14a&b |
| BC14c&d | "positive feedback seeking" | sum of BC14c&d |
| BC14a ^a | ask others for critical feedback | 5 point scale, very characteristic to very uncharacteristic |
| BC14b ^a | prefer detailed critical appraisals | same as BC14a |
| BC14c ^a | tend seek good news about self | same as BC14a |
| BC14d ^a | ask for positive feedback | same as BC14a |

^aThese variables were used as components of composite variables, not independently.

Board chairs were asked a four-part question on feedback seeking style, to identify the president's tendencies to seek positive and negative types of feedback (items 14a-d, in order): "On a scale of one to five, thinking about the past six months, how characteristic of the president was it to: (a) Ask others to

be critical when they gave him or her feedback?; (b) Prefer detailed, critical appraisals even though they might hurt?; (c) Tend to seek good news about himself or herself?; and (d) Ask for feedback if he or she knew it would be positive rather than negative?"

Items 14a and 14b (on the survey of board chairs) concerned negative feedback seeking and were used for questions 3C and 3D; items 14c and 14d concerned positive feedback seeking and were used only for question 3C. Items 14a-d were identical to questions used by Ashford and Tsui (1991, p. 264). They based their use of a six month time frame on previous research on recall (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980). A five point scale was created for this question, since Ashford and Tsui's scale was not included in their published research.

As was done in Ashford and Tsui's study, a composite score was constructed for the president's negative feedback seeking tendencies using the total for the board chair's responses to items 14a and 14b, and a composite score was constructed for the president's positive feedback seeking tendencies using the total for items 14c and 14d. Interitem reliability for the positive and negative feedback seeking variables were noted.

3D Is there a relationship between **improvement in the president's performance**, as reported by the board chair, and either:

3D.1 the president's negative feedback seeking behavior?; or

3D.2 the adequacy of feedback the president reportedly receives from the governing board?

In this research question, improvement in the president's performance since the last review was the outcome variable. Board chairs were asked three questions about improvement in the president's performance, using a five point scale: "What was the impact of the most recent presidential assessment [on the]: relationship between the president and the board [item 11b]?; president's performance [item 11f]?; and president's ability to lead [item 11e]?" A composite "Performance Improved" variable was constructed using the sum of these three variables and interitem reliability was noted.

Correlation analysis and t-tests were used to examine the possible relationship between "Performance Improved" and two process variables: (3D.1) presidents' reportedly seeking negative performance feedback and (3D.2) presidents' reporting that they received adequate performance feedback. This line of inquiry was suggested by research conducted by Ashford (1989) and Ashford and Tsui (1991). A summary of the variables and their measures for Research Question 3D appears in Table 13.

Table 13

Research Question 3D: Variables and Measures

| Item | Variable Name | Measures |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 3D Dependent Variables | | |
| BC11bef | "performance improved" | sum of BC11b,e,&f |
| BC11b | board/president relations | 5 point scale, generally increased or improved to generally decreased or became worse |
| BC11e | president's ability to lead | same as BC11b |
| BC11f | president's performance | same as BC11b |
| 3D.1 Independent Variables | | |
| BC14a&b | "negative feedback seeking" | sum of BC14a&b |
| BC14a | ask others for critical feedback | 5 point scale, very characteristic to very uncharacteristic |
| BC14b | prefer detailed critical appraisals | same as BC14a |
| 3D.2 Independent Variables | | |
| 20a&b | "adequate feedback" | sum of 20a&b |
| 20a | board feedback re: assessment | 5 point scale, very satisfied to very unsatisfied |
| 20b | board feedback re: regular work | same as 20a |

3D.1 Performance improved and negative feedback seeking.

Board chairs were asked a two-part question to identify the president's tendencies to seek negative feedback (items 14a and 14b; see 3C, above). A composite "**Negative Feedback Seeking**" variable was constructed using the total for items 14a and 14b and interitem reliability was noted. Correlation analysis and t-tests were used to examine the relationship between "Negative Feedback Seeking" and "Performance Improved."

3D.2 Performance improved and adequate feedback.

To look at the relationship between the process variable "**Adequate Feedback**" and the outcome variable "Performance Improved," data was required from pairs of respondents (president and chair) from the same institution. Pairs were matched by a code number identifying the presidents' and chairs' institutions and unmatched cases excluded, prior to further data analysis.

Items 20a and 20b (in order) asked presidents to rate, on a five-point scale, "How satisfied are you with the following: The quality and specificity of the performance feedback you received from the board in regard to the presidential assessment process? [and] The quality and specificity of the performance feedback you receive from the board in the regular course of your work?" Items 20a and 20b were examined independently and as a

composite "Adequate Feedback" variable in relation to "Performance Improved" using correlation analysis.

Results of the study are reported in detail in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The results of the study are reported here in several sections: the modal presidential review, Research Question One, Research Question Two, and Research Question Three.

To provide an overview of the results, a summary of the modal presidential assessment is presented first. This summary was constructed from the most frequent responses to questionnaire items, using a model (the modal president) adapted from How Academic Leadership Works (Birnbaum, 1992). The mode was chosen from among the measures of central tendency since, by definition, it is what occurs most often. The mode provides a more succinct description than the mean, since it avoids the problem of long names for values which fall between points on a scale.

Research Question One describes the procedures and guidelines used to evaluate the performance of college and university presidents, using responses from the survey of presidents (items 5-20 and 23) and board chairs (item 6 and 15). Research Question Two reports the outcomes of the assessment process, from the perspectives of presidents (items 21, 22, and 24-27) and board chairs (items 11-14 and 16). Research Question Three explores possible relationships between how presidential assessments were conducted and the outcomes reported by presidents and board chairs. The items and variables considered are reported in detail.

Data are reported by sector (i.e. private and public institutions) for respondent presidents and board chairs only where there is a notable difference (e.g. ten percentage points or more). Otherwise, only total responses are discussed and it should be assumed that there is little difference in the data by sector.

Most of the respondent presidents (72.0%, item 23) and board chairs (69.2%, item 15) reported that the most recent presidential assessment was typical of reviews the president has had or would expect to have. This suggests that it is reasonable to have confidence that the data reported in this study is representative of the practices at the respondents' institutions. Most of those who reported that the most recent review was not typical responded there is no typical review. See Appendix B, Table B-9.

Summary of The Modal Presidential Assessment

The survey data show a variety of policies and practices regarding presidential assessment, yet there are some trends that emerge. Here is a summary of the presidential assessment process experienced by the modal president or the most commonly reported presidential assessment practices. The modal president is referred to as a man, since most respondents were male.

The modal president was not informed about the process for his own presidential assessment at the time he was appointed. However, there was in

place a written board policy requiring assessment of the president. The modal president's last review was conducted by the board less than one year ago, using a new process, which the president was consulted about and helped shape. The process lasted about one month and was typical of past reviews or those the president or board chair would anticipate.

Information about his performance was contributed by other trustees but constituents were not included, interviewed or surveyed. The modal president prepared a confidential self-assessment statement and confidential meetings were held with him, including a face-to-face meeting with the board chair. A confidential, written summary of the assessment was prepared; he had an opportunity to comment on the final draft and was provided with a copy of the final summary. A final report on the president's review was presented to the entire governing board, both orally and in writing.

In describing the review process, the modal president agreed that specific future objectives were set, he left with a clear idea of the criteria for good performance, and he has a clearer idea of what the board expects from him. Also, his performance was reviewed against agreed upon goals, he learned how to strengthen his performance, and the review helped him to see some of his shortcomings.

The review was used as the occasion for a decision on compensation and there was an increase. There was neither discussion of nor changes in other benefits during the review.

After the review, the modal president felt more valued and appreciated. The president and chair found that the president's relations with the board, the feedback he received from the board, the level of his own performance, and his ability to lead either improved or stayed about the same. For the most part, his relations with the community and faculty were unchanged. The chair also thought that the president's understanding of what the board needs to function more effectively had improved. Neither the chair nor the president found any negative impact from the president's review in any of these areas.

The president was satisfied with the thoroughness of the review, ranging from academic leadership and management to personal characteristics. He was also satisfied with the current level of trust and openness between himself and the board, and with the feedback he received from the board, both in the normal course of his work and as part of the last review.

Overall, the modal president was satisfied with the review, felt good about how the appraisal was conducted, and there weren't many ways in which he wanted the appraisal to be different.

The board rated the president's performance level "outstanding," according to the board chair. The chair also noted that the president sought feedback on his own performance from the chair about once a month.

In general, the chair thought it was characteristic of the president to ask others for detailed, critical feedback about his own performance. But the

president did not usually look for good news or positive feedback about himself.

The president and chair thought literature on presidential assessment would be useful for future reviews, but they weren't interested in attending workshops or arranging consulting services. See Table 14, Modal Presidential Review, for the modal response to each of these variables.

Table 14

Modal Presidential Review

| Item | Variable Name | Modal Response |
|------|---|---------------------|
| 5 | written policy requiring assessment | yes |
| 5a | type of policy | board |
| 6 | frequency of reviews | annually |
| 7 | when last reviewed | < 1 year ago |
| 8 | responsibility for review | entire board |
| 9 | contributed to review ^a | trustees |
| 10a | confidentiality/self-assessment | yes |
| 10b | confidentiality/written questionnaires | not applicable |
| 10c | confidentiality/interviews | not applicable |
| 10d | confidentiality/summary report | yes |
| 10e | confidentiality/discussions, meetings | yes |
| 11a | thoroughness of review/ academic leadership and management | satisfactorily |
| 11b | thoroughness of review/ administrative leadership and management | very satisfactorily |
| 11c | thoroughness of review/budget and finance | very satisfactorily |
| 11d | thoroughness of review/fund raising | satisfactorily |
| 11e | thoroughness of review/external relations | very satisfactorily |
| 11f | thoroughness of review/ personal characteristics | very satisfactorily |
| 12a | related decision/contract renewal | no |
| 12b | related decision/bonus pay | no |

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Modal Presidential Review

| Item | Variable Name | Modal Response |
|------|--|---|
| 12c | related decision/salary adjustments | yes |
| 12d | related decision/benefits adjustments | no |
| 12e | related decision/sabbatical leave | no |
| 12f | related decision/vacation or other leave | no |
| 12g | related decision/seminars or conferences | no |
| 12h | related decision/family considerations | no |
| 13 | duration of assessment process | < 1 mo |
| 14 | informed of process when appointed | no |
| 15 | new, revised or existing process | new |
| 16 | role in developing review process ^a | consulted, and/or contributed to new process |
| 17 | comment on draft report | yes |
| 18 | receive written report | yes |
| 19 | meet face to face | yes |
| 19a | meet with ^a | board chair |
| 20a | board feedback re: assessment | satisfied |
| 20b | board feedback re: regular work | satisfied |
| 20c | current level of trust and openness | satisfied |
| BC6 | report presented to entire board | yes |
| BC6a | report format | both oral and written |

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Modal Presidential Review

| Item | Variable Name | Modal Response |
|------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 21a | goals/specific objectives set | agree |
| 21b | goals/clear criteria | agree |
| 21c | goals/reviewed against goals | agree |
| 21d | utility/strengthened effectiveness | agree |
| 21e | utility/learned a lot | agree |
| 21f | utility/helped me see shortcomings | agree |
| 21g | utility/clarified expectations | agree |
| 21h | satisfaction/satisfied with review | agree |
| 21i | satisfaction/feel good way conducted | agree |
| 21j | satisfaction/like it to be different | disagree |
| 22a | impact/compensation & benefits | generally increased/improved |
| 22b | impact/relations with board | stayed about the same |
| 22c | impact/relations with faculty | stayed about the same |
| 22d | impact/relations w/community | stayed about the same |
| 22e | impact/ability to lead | stayed about the same |
| 22f | impact/sense of being valued | somewhat increased/improved |
| 22g | impact/performance since last review | stayed about the same |
| 22h | impact/quality of board feedback | stayed about the same |

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Modal Presidential Review

| Item ^b | Variable Name | Modal Response |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 23 | process typical of reviews | yes |
| 26 | assistance for future reviews ^a | literature on assessment, sample criteria, sample forms, sample policies about once per month |
| BC13 | frequency seeks feedback from chair | generally characteristic |
| BC14a | ask others for critical feedback | generally characteristic |
| BC14b | prefer detailed critical appraisals | generally uncharacteristic |
| BC14c | tend to seek good news about self | generally uncharacteristic |
| BC14d | ask for positive feedback | generally uncharacteristic |

^a Choose all that apply/multiple answers possible.

^b Items beginning with "BC" are from the board chair's questionnaire.

Research Question One

"How are the Presidents of Colleges and Universities Evaluated?"

The survey of presidents was used to provide a description of the process used to conduct a review of the president, including the guidelines for assessment and role of the president. Data on delivering reports on

presidential assessment to the governing board came from the survey of board chairs (item 6). Research Question One topics appear in Table 15.

Table 15

Research Question One Topics

Guidelines for assessment

- written policies
- frequency of reviews
- responsibility for reviews
- participation
- confidentiality
- content
- duration

Role of the president

- developing the review process
 - written reports and meetings
 - the president and the board
-

Guidelines for Assessment

Written policies.

More than half of the presidents (56.7%) had a written policy that required assessment of their performance (item 5) and most were policies of the governing board. More presidents in the public sector (66.4%) than private sector (50.4%) had this requirement in writing. See Table 16.

Table 16

Written Policy Requiring Assessment of the President

| | Total | Public | Private |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| No | 40.4 | 30.8 | 46.7 |
| Yes | 56.7 | 66.4 | 50.4 |
| NA | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.9 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| <u>If yes, type of policy:</u> | | | |
| Board Policy | 79.5 | 73.9 | 84.2 |
| Legislative/Legal Requirement | 3.9 | 6.8 | 1.5 |
| Other Written Policy | 10.9 | 11.6 | 10.2 |
| NA | 5.8 | 7.7 | 4.1 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Frequency of reviews.

When asked how often their performance was supposed to be assessed (item 6a), only 35.6% of the respondents indicated that reviews occurred at a specified interval, more in the public sector (41.5%) than in the private sector (31.8%). Most of the remaining presidents did not respond (39.8%). Of those who specified (N=480), most (84.2%) indicated that reviews were supposed to occur annually (item 6b). See Table 17.

More than half of the presidents, (54.2%), reported that their most recent presidential assessment was conducted less than one year ago, while one-quarter of the presidents, (26.1%), had never been assessed (item 7). Public sector presidents were more likely to have been assessed than were presidents in the private sector, and their assessments tended to be more frequent. See Table 18. Presidents who had served for less than one year (12.6% of respondents, item 1), may account for almost half of those who had never been assessed, since less than 1% of respondents indicated that reviews were supposed to be conducted more than once per year (item 6).

Table 17

Frequency for Conducting Presidential Reviews

| | Total | Public | Private |
|------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| No requirement | 13.5 | 10.0 | 15.8 |
| No schedule | 5.7 | 2.8 | 7.6 |
| Schedule varies | 5.4 | 3.0 | 7.0 |
| Scheduled as indicated | 35.6 | 41.5 | 31.8 |
| No answer | 39.8 | 42.6 | 37.9 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Frequency in Years

| | | | |
|------------|--------|--------|--------|
| > Annually | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.4 |
| Annually | 84.2 | 90.9 | 78.5 |
| Every 2 | 4.6 | 2.3 | 6.5 |
| Every 3 | 5.2 | 2.7 | 7.3 |
| Every 4 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 1.9 |
| Every 5 | 3.5 | 1.8 | 5.0 |
| Every 6+ | --- | --- | --- |
| Other | 0.2 | --- | 0.4 |
| NA | 0.4 | 0.9 | --- |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Table 18

When Presidents' Most Recent Assessment Was Completed

| | Total | Public | Private |
|---------------|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| Never | 26.1 | 20.4 | 29.8 |
| < 1 year ago | 54.2 | 64.2 | 47.8 |
| 1-2 years ago | 10.4 | 8.7 | 11.5 |
| 2-3 years ago | 3.3 | 2.8 | 3.5 |
| 3-4 years ago | 1.4 | 0.4 | 2.1 |
| 4-5 years ago | 1.2 | 0.6 | 1.6 |
| > 5 years ago | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.3 |
| NA | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.3 |
| Total | | | |

Respondents who had never been assessed (N = 352, item 7) were excluded from subsequent survey questions, which were based on personal experience with presidential assessment. The number of respondents dropped from 1348 to 996 for items 8 through 27, 42.4% (N = 442) from public institutions and 57.6% (N = 574) from private institutions. This group was slightly more like that of the universe of presidents than were all survey respondents.

Responsibility for reviews.

Primary responsibility for conducting presidential assessments (item 8) was given with about equal frequency to the entire governing board, the board chair, or a standing committee of the board. However, practices differed by sector. In the public sector, responsibility was given to the entire governing board in more than half of the cases (52%), more than six times the frequency in the private sector (8%). Private institutions were more likely to give primary responsibility to the board chair (34%) or a board committee (35%) than public institutions (16% and 10%, respectively). External consultants were rarely given primary responsibility (1%). See Table 19.

A special committee was used for 9.4% of assessments and most often consisted of trustees. Membership included, in descending order of frequency: trustees (89%), faculty (21%), staff (17%), students (10%), alumni (9%), "others" (7%), an external consultant (6%), and no answer (6%). The total exceeds 100% due to multiple answers.

Table 19

Primary Responsibility for Conducting Presidential Reviews

| | Total | Public | Private |
|---------------------|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| Entire Board | 26.6 | 51.7 | 8.2 |
| Board Chair | 26.3 | 15.9 | 34.0 |
| Standing Committee | 24.3 | 10.4 | 34.5 |
| Other | 9.4 | 11.8 | 7.7 |
| Special Committee | 8.9 | 5.9 | 11.1 |
| External Consultant | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.0 |
| NA | 3.4 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| Total | 99.9% | 99.9% | 100.0% |

Participation.

From a list of sixteen categories, including "no one," presidents indicated that information for their most recent review was most commonly solicited from trustees (68.1%), the president's executive cabinet (32.0%), and faculty (31.6%), (item 9). Ten to twenty percent included professional staff, students, the president's staff, college or university foundation trustees, nonprofessional staff, alumni, or "others" (in descending order of frequency). Less than 10% indicated participation by advisory board members, donors,

government officials, or other presidents. Alumni and donors were more commonly included in the private sector, while government officials and all categories of staff were more commonly included in public institutions. Only 6% indicated that "no one" was solicited for information, a predictably small percentage given that trustees were among those listed. See Table 20.

Table 20

Persons Solicited to Contribute to Presidential Assessments

| | Total | Public | Private |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| Trustees | 68.1 | 65.6 | 69.9 |
| Executive Cabinet | 32.0 | 26.5 | 36.1 |
| Faculty | 31.6 | 27.7 | 34.5 |
| Professional Staff | 18.8 | 19.7 | 18.3 |
| Students | 18.0 | 15.6 | 19.7 |
| Presidents' Staff | 16.3 | 17.5 | 15.3 |
| College/University | | | |
| Foundation Trustees | 15.9 | 15.2 | 16.4 |
| Nonprofessional Staff | 15.8 | 18.5 | 13.8 |
| Alumni | 13.3 | 7.6 | 17.4 |
| "Others" | 11.8 | 12.1 | 11.7 |
| Advisory Brd. Members | 8.6 | 8.5 | 8.7 |
| Donors | 8.3 | 6.2 | 9.9 |
| Government Officials | 5.9 | 10.9 | 2.3 |
| Other Presidents | 3.9 | 6.4 | 2.1 |
| No One | 6.1 | 6.4 | 5.9 |
| Don't Know/NA | 11.4 | 12.1 | 11.0 |

Note. Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple answers.

Confidentiality.

Presidents were asked whether several steps were part of their most recent assessment, either confidentially or nonconfidentially, including: a self-assessment statement, summary information from others using written questionnaires, summary information from others using interviews, a summary report of assessment results, and discussions/meetings with the president (item 10). Though "confidentiality" was not defined in the survey instrument, it was meant to imply that the items referred were kept private among those conducting the review, including the president, and not publicly disclosed.

Most reviews included self-assessment statements (71.9%), summary reports (69.7), and meetings or discussions with the president (89.6). Less than half the reviews employed questionnaires (46.3%) or interviews (42.0%) to collect information from others. While these aspects of the review were included with varying frequency, they were most often kept confidential. See Table 21.

Table 21

Aspects of Review Which Were Confidential

| | Yes | No | NA | Total |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|--------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Self-Assessment Statement | 56.3 | 15.6 | 28.1 | 100.0% |
| Information From Questionnaires | 36.6 | 9.7 | 53.7 | 100.0% |
| Information From Interviews | 35.6 | 6.4 | 58.0 | 100.0% |
| Summary Report | 51.5 | 18.2 | 30.3 | 100.0% |
| Discussions/Meetings W/President | 79.3 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 99.9% |

Content.

Presidents were asked to rate, on a five point scale, how thoroughly six aspects of their performance were covered in their most recent assessment: administrative leadership and management, budget and finance, external relations, personal characteristics, academic leadership and management, and fundraising (item 11). Most presidents, (more than 78%), rated the thoroughness of reviews for each of these six factors satisfactory or very satisfactory. Ratings of unsatisfactory or very unsatisfactory for all six factors were very low, less than 6%. Undecided or no response accounted for the balance. There were notable differences by sector only in regard to fund raising; 70.6% public sector and 83.8% private sector presidents were satisfied or very satisfied. See Table 22.

Table 22

Presidential Ratings of Thoroughness of Reviews

| | Satisfied | Unsatisfied | NA or Undecided | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|-------|
| | % | % | % | % |
| Administrative Leadership | 89.0 | 2.8 | 8.2 | 100.0 |
| Budget and Finance | 86.4 | 2.9 | 10.6 | 99.9 |
| External Relations | 84.8 | 4.3 | 10.8 | 99.9 |
| Personal Characteristics | 83.5 | 3.2 | 13.2 | 99.9 |
| Academic Leadership | 83.1 | 5.5 | 11.3 | 99.9 |
| Fund Raising | 78.2 | 4.5 | 17.2 | 99.9 |

In about half the cases, presidential assessments were used as the occasion for discussions or decisions regarding salary adjustments (52%) or contract renewal (48%). Less common were discussions or decisions regarding benefits adjustments (23%), bonus pay (17%), or family considerations (11%). Less than 10% used assessments as the occasion for discussions or decisions regarding the president's sabbatical leave, vacation or other leave, or participation in seminars and conferences (item 12). Public institutions were more likely than private ones to link assessment with contract renewal (55% vs. 43%) while private institutions were more likely than public ones to link assessment with bonus pay (22% vs. 10%) or family considerations (15% vs. 4%). See Table 23.

Table 23

Institutions Which Use Presidential Reviews for Discussions or Decisions
on Conditions of Employment

| | Total | Public | Private |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| Salary Adjustment | 52.3 | 50.2 | 53.8 |
| Contract Renewal | 48.1 | 54.7 | 43.2 |
| Benefits Adjustment | 23.2 | 21.6 | 24.4 |
| Bonus Pay | 16.9 | 10.2 | 21.8 |
| Family Considerations | 10.5 | 4.3 | 15.2 |
| Sabbatical Leave | 9.1 | 5.0 | 12.2 |
| Other Leave | 8.0 | 7.8 | 8.2 |
| Seminars/Conferences | 6.5 | 6.9 | 6.3 |

Duration.

Most presidential assessments were completed in three months or less: half were completed in less than one month (49.6%) and another third were completed in one to three months (34.3%). Less than 12% took more than three months. See Table 24.

Table 24

Duration of Presidential Assessment Process, in Months

| <1 | 1-3 | 4-6 | 7-9 | 10-12 | >12 | NA | Total |
|------|------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|
| % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| 49.6 | 34.3 | 6.7 | 1.2 | 2.8 | 0.7 | 4.6 | 99.9 |

Role of the President

Developing the review process.

Less than half of the presidents (46%) were informed about the process to be used for assessing their performance before or at the time of their appointments (item 14). Most of those who were not informed reported that there was no process in place (43.1%), though some (8%) reported that the process in place was simply not discussed with them. More presidents in private than public institutions found there was no assessment process in place. See Table 25.

Table 25

Presidents Who Were Informed About the Assessment Process When

Appointed

| | Total | Public | Private |
|-----------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| Yes | 45.7 | 50.5 | 42.2 |
| No (no process in place) | 43.1 | 34.6 | 49.3 |
| No (there was a process in place) | 8.0 | 12.3 | 4.9 |
| NA | 3.2 | 2.6 | 3.7 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.1% |

Most presidents were assessed using a process that was either new (55.6%) or revised (20.4%), (item 15). Only 17.4% reported using an existing process without revisions. Presidents in the private sector were more likely to use a new process than were public sector presidents. See Table 26.

Table 26

New, Revised, or Existing Process for Presidential Assessment

| | Total | Public | Private |
|----------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| New | 55.6 | 47.4 | 61.7 |
| Revised | 20.4 | 23.2 | 18.3 |
| Existing | 17.4 | 24.9 | 11.8 |
| Other | 2.7 | 0.9 | 4.0 |
| NA | 3.9 | 3.6 | 4.2 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Presidents were asked to indicate how involved they were in developing the process used to assess their performance, using a scale ranging from no role in determining the process to primarily responsible for creating or selecting the process (item 16). Multiple answers were possible. At the extremes, only 13.9% reported no role and 21.9% had primary responsibility. More often, presidents were consulted (42.6%) or contributed to a new process (31.6%). See Table 27.

Table 27

Role of the President in Developing the Assessment Process

| | Total | Public | Private |
|--------------------------------|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| No Role in Determining Process | 13.9 | 18.5 | 10.5 |
| Consulted Regarding Process | 42.6 | 40.0 | 44.4 |
| Approved of the Process | 16.8 | 14.0 | 18.8 |
| Changes Made at My Request | 9.4 | 9.0 | 9.8 |
| Contributed to New Process | 31.6 | 31.3 | 31.9 |
| Primarily Role in New Process | 21.9 | 20.6 | 22.8 |
| Other | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| No Answer | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.7 |

Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple answers.

Written reports and meetings.

About half of the presidents had a written report as part of their performance appraisal (51.3%), though fewer in the private sector (42.0%) than in the public sector (63.7%), (item 17). Only 13.5% had a written report but were not provided an opportunity to comment on the final draft. Details are provided for public and private sector presidents in Table 28.

Table 28

Written Assessment Summary and President's Comments on Draft

| | Total | Public | Private |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| No Written Report | 44.5 | 32.9 | 53.0 |
| Written Report, No Comments | 13.5 | 14.2 | 12.9 |
| Written Report With Comments | 37.8 | 49.5 | 29.1 |
| N.A. | 4.3 | 3.3 | 5.1 |
| Total | 100.1% | 99.9% | 100.1% |

In those cases where a written report or summary of results was prepared (55.4%), almost all of the presidents (93.7%) were provided with a copy (item 18); 40.6% of respondents had no written report. As was reported in regard to item 17, a written report was more common in public than in private institutions. See Table 29.

Table 29

President Received a Written Report or Summary of Results

| | <u>Total</u> | | <u>Public</u> | | <u>Private</u> | |
|-------------------|--------------|-----|---------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| No Written Report | 40.6 | 404 | 29.9 | 126 | 48.4 | 278 |
| No | 3.5 | 35 | 3.8 | 16 | 3.3 | 19 |
| Yes | 51.9 | 517 | 63.3 | 267 | 43.6 | 250 |
| NA | 4.0 | 40 | 3.1 | 13 | 4.7 | 27 |
| Total | 100.0% | 996 | 100.1% | 422 | 100.0% | 574 |

According to board chairs, a final written report on the president's performance review was presented to the entire governing board in 74.7% of the cases (item 6). Boards were about evenly divided between those which received only an oral report (42.2%) and those which received both an oral and a written report (45.7%); written reports, alone, were rare (7.7%). Reports to the entire governing board were more common in the public sector (86.2%) than in the private sector (68.9%) and private sector boards were twice as likely to have only an oral report (52.9%) than were public sector boards (25.2%). See Table 30.

Table 30

Final Report Presented to the Entire Governing Board

| | Total | Public | Private |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| No | 19.6 | 10.5 | 24.2 |
| Yes | 74.7 | 86.2 | 68.9 |
| NA | 5.7 | 3.3 | 7.0 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.1% |
| <u>If yes, written or oral?</u> | | | |
| Oral only | 42.2 | 25.2 | 52.9 |
| Written only | 7.7 | 13.7 | 3.8 |
| Both | 45.7 | 53.4 | 40.9 |
| NA | 4.4 | 7.6 | 2.4 |
| Total | 100.0% | 99.9% | 100.0% |

Most presidents (80.7%) had as part of their review a face-to-face meeting with one or more of the following: 50% with the board chair, alone; 36% with the entire governing board; 28% with some or all members of the committee conducting the review; 15% with the chair of the committee conducting the review, alone; 7% with "other"; and 1% no answer (item 19). Public sector presidents were more than three times as likely to meet with the entire governing board as were private sector presidents. See Table 31.

Differences by sector appear to reflect differences in primary responsibility for conducting reviews (item 8) and may also be influenced by the relatively larger size of private sector boards. In the public sector, presidents tended to meet with the board chair and the entire governing board, not with the chair or members of a committee conducting the review. The average number of members for public sector governing boards was eleven (Ingram and Associates, 1993b, p. 381) and more (51.7%) reported that the entire board was primarily responsible for conducting reviews (see item 8).

In the private sector, presidents tended to meet with the board chair and members of the review committee, but not with the entire governing board. The average size of private sector governing boards was thirty (Ingram and Associates, 1993a, p. 366) and more reported that the board chair (34.0%) or a board committee (34.5%) was primarily responsible for conducting reviews (see item 8).

Table 31

Face-to-Face Meetings With the President, as Part of the Review

| | Total | Public | Private |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| No | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.2 |
| Yes | 80.7 | 81.0 | 80.5 |
| NA | 15.0 | 14.5 | 15.3 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

If yes, check all that apply:^a

| | | | |
|---|------|------|------|
| Board Chair, Alone | 50.2 | 39.8 | 58.0 |
| Entire Governing Board | 35.9 | 59.1 | 18.8 |
| Some/All Members of Review Committee | 28.4 | 12.9 | 39.8 |
| Chair of Committee Conducting Review | 14.8 | 8.8 | 19.3 |
| Other | 7.2 | 11.1 | 4.3 |
| NA | 1.1 | 1.8 | 0.6 |

^a Totals do not equal 100% due to multiple answers

The president and the board.

Presidents rated on a five-point scale their satisfaction with their relationship with the board in three areas: the feedback they received from

the board in regard to the assessment process, the feedback they received from the board in the regular course of their work, and the current level of trust and openness in their relationship with the board (item 20). Overall, most presidents were satisfied or very satisfied in all three areas (76% to 88%). See Table 32.

Table 32
Presidents' Rating of Feedback, Trust and Openness in Relationship With Board

| | <u>Satisfied or Very Satisfied</u> | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| | Total | Public | Private |
| | % | % | % |
| Feedback re: assessment | 76.4 | 75.1 | 77.4 |
| Feedback re: regular work | 77.2 | 77.0 | 77.4 |
| Level of trust and openness | 88.1 | 84.1 | 90.9 |

Research Question Two

"What are the Outcomes of the Assessment Process, According to Both Presidents and Board Chairs?"

Data regarding the outcomes of presidential assessments came from the survey of presidents as well as the survey of board chairs. The outcomes presidents' addressed included: goals, usefulness, and satisfaction with the

process; the impact of the review on conditions of employment; changes made as a result of the last review; the least useful aspects of the review process; future assistance that may be helpful; and related comments or suggestions. Board chairs addressed: the impact of the review on the president's conditions of employment; the president's performance rating; the frequency with which the president sought feedback from the chair; the president's style in seeking feedback; future assistance that may be helpful; and related comments or suggestions. Comparisons were made when the same information was sought from both presidents and board chairs.

Outcomes Reported By Presidents

Goals, utility, and satisfaction.

Presidents were asked multiple questions regarding their most recent assessment in three areas: the role of **goals** in the review process, the **utility** of the review, and **satisfaction** with the review process (items 21a-j). For each item presidents rated their agreement with how well a statement described their most recent assessment, using a five point scale: strongly agreed, agreed, undecided, disagreed, and strongly disagreed.

Overall, the majority of presidents agreed or strongly agreed with all ten of the goal, utility, and satisfaction statements (including 21j, after adjusting the score) though more presidents expressed satisfaction with reviews than found them useful or reported that goals were part of the

process. (No more than 20.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed with any of the items, 21 a-i.) The results are displayed in Table 33.

Table 33

Presidents Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed With Goal, Utility, and

Satisfaction Statements

| | Total | Public | Private |
|--|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | % | % |
| <u>Goals</u> | | | |
| Specific Objectives Set | 66.4 | 69.0 | 64.5 |
| Clear Criteria Good Performance | 69.6 | 66.8 | 71.6 |
| Reviewed Against Agreed Goals | 65.7 | 68.7 | 63.4 |
| <u>Utility</u> | | | |
| Strengthened My Effectiveness | 65.1 | 67.1 | 63.6 |
| Learned a Lot From Appraisal | 51.5 | 53.3 | 50.2 |
| Helped Me See Shortcomings | 57.8 | 57.8 | 57.8 |
| Clarified Board Expectations | 58.7 | 60.7 | 57.3 |
| <u>Satisfaction</u> | | | |
| Satisfied With Review | 76.8 | 76.1 | 77.4 |
| Feel Good About Way Conducted | 71.1 | 72.0 | 70.4 |
| Would Like It To Be Different ^a | 26.4 | 28.9 | 24.6 |

^a For this item, satisfaction was reflected by responses of disagree or strongly disagree which were: Total, 51.9%; Public, 53.3%; and Private, 50.2%.

In regard to **goals**, approximately two-thirds of the presidents agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements: "Specific future objectives were set" (item 21a); "I left with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance" (item 21b); and "My performance was reviewed against previously agreed upon goals" (item 21c).

More than half of the presidents agreed or strongly agreed with statements regarding the **utility** or usefulness of their reviews: "The appraisal helped me learn how I can strengthen my performance" (item 21d); "I learned a lot from the appraisal" (item 21e); "The appraisal helped me to see some of my shortcomings" (item 21f); and "I have a clearer idea of what the board expects from me" (item 21g).

About three-quarters of the presidents agreed or strongly agreed with two statements regarding **satisfaction**: "I was satisfied with the review" (item 21h) and "I feel good about the way the appraisal was conducted" (item 21i). Just over half, 52%, disagreed or strongly disagreed with item 21j, "There are many ways in which I would have like the appraisal to be different." For item 21j, satisfaction was reflected by *disagreement* with the statement.

Impact on Conditions of Employment

Presidents were asked eight questions concerning the impact of their most recent assessment on: compensation and benefits; relationships with the board, faculty, and community; ability to lead; sense of being valued and appreciated; performance since the last review; and quality of feedback from the board. Responses were rated on a five point scale: generally increased and improved, somewhat increased or improved, stayed about the same, somewhat decreased or became worse, and generally decreased or became worse. Responses of generally increased and improved or somewhat increased or improved were considered to indicate a **positive** impact whereas responses of somewhat decreased or became worse or generally decreased or became worse were considered to indicate a **negative** impact; not applicable and no responses were combined. Results are summarized in Table 34. Differences by sector were not notable (less than 10% for any item).

Table 34

Overall Impact of Most Recent Presidential Assessment in Eight Areas

| | Pos. | Neg. | Same | NA | Total |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| | % | % | % | % | |
| Valued & Appreciated | 60.3 | 4.7 | 26.8 | 8.1 | 99.9% |
| Compensation & Benefits | 57.0 | 0.1 | 18.9 | 24.0 | 100.0% |
| Relations With Board | 49.6 | 1.6 | 38.5 | 10.3 | 100.0% |
| Performance | 43.8 | 0.6 | 38.6 | 17.0 | 100.0% |
| Ability to Lead | 42.5 | 1.7 | 43.2 | 12.6 | 100.0% |
| Feedback From Board | 40.1 | 2.9 | 45.4 | 11.6 | 100.0% |
| Relations With Community | 17.3 | 0.8 | 52.9 | 29.0 | 100.0% |
| Relations With Faculty | 15.1 | 1.3 | 55.3 | 28.3 | 100.0% |

Note. Scale: Positive = generally or somewhat increased and improved,
 Negative = generally or somewhat decreased or became worse, Same = stayed
about the same, and NA = not applicable or no answer.

More presidents (60.3%) reported a positive impact in their sense of being valued and appreciated than in the other seven areas. Of the eight items, this also garnered the greatest reported negative impact, albeit a small percentage of presidents (4.7%). Almost as many presidents (57.0%) reported a positive impact in compensation and benefits, with almost no reported negative impact (0.1%).

Around half of the presidents reported a positive impact from their review in another four areas, with almost no negative impact: their relationship with the board, their ability to lead, their performance since the last review, and the quality of feedback they received from the board.

The fewest presidents reported a positive impact from their review in regard to their relations with the faculty (15.1%) and with the community (17.3%), but with almost no negative impact. For most presidents, relations stayed the same.

Overall, the reported impact of most presidential reviews on conditions on employment was either positive or stable; only a very small percentage of presidents reported any negative impact from their most recent review.

Assistance for future reviews.

Presidents (item 26) and board chairs (item 16) were offered nine suggested options for assistance for future assessments. Responses of presidents and chairs were very similar. About half reported interest in printed information: a sample checklist of presidential performance criteria, sample evaluation forms, literature on presidential assessment, sample evaluation policies, and data from this study. There was little interest in workshops or training for either presidents or trustees, or consulting services. See Table 35. See Appendix B, Tables B-10 and B-11 for data reported by sector.

Table 35

Assistance of Interest to Presidents and Board Chairs

| | Presidents | Chairs |
|---|------------|--------|
| | % | % |
| Sample checklist of performance criteria | 59.3 | 68.3 |
| Sample evaluation forms | 53.2 | 59.0 |
| Literature on presidential assessment | 45.8 | 56.2 |
| Sample evaluation policies | 45.3 | 47.8 |
| Summary data from this survey | 38.4 | 47.6 |
| Workshops for chairs or trustees | 21.0 | 17.0 |
| Workshops for presidents | 14.4 | 8.4 |
| Informal counsel by phone | 10.4 | 9.3 |
| Presidential assessment consulting services | 6.3 | 3.5 |

Presidents' comments and suggestions.

Three questions provided the opportunity for presidents to write comments about their assessments. Seventy point three percent commented about the most significant change they made as a result of their last review (item 24), 54.7% commented on the least useful part of the process or the most important thing they would like to change (item 25), and 15.8% offered general comments and suggestions (item 27).

Presidents made many different kinds of changes following their reviews, (item 24), which have been grouped here into several categories. One of the most common areas mentioned was **board relations**. Many presidents introduced changes to achieve more organized, meaningful or frequent communication with board members. One president noted, "Increased simplicity, clarity and repetitiveness of my message to the Board about my priorities for the college and what progress we are making on achieving them." Other examples included a more interactive agenda for board meetings, more consistent communications with all trustees, a periodic newsletter to the board, communication (board reports, updates, new initiatives) focused around previously identified goals or long range plans, more candor, and better information provided in a more timely manner. One president said, "I used a complete written five year report, but presented an outline with a power point presentation. This works!" Another "proceeded to develop a series of Board retreats to deal with strategic planning." Another president said: "I structure my Report at each Board meeting around annual goals/strategies of the college -- tie new initiatives to annual goals and strategic plan -- I'm more explicit."

Others found that their **priorities** changed. For some it was expressed in terms of shifting personal priorities, such as the amount of time spent on particular activities, issues, or people. Following the review, the president may have been more concerned with financial matters, annual objectives, faculty communication, or external relations. For others it may have marked

a shift of institutional priorities, such as new initiatives, more realistic goals, or better long and short term planning. For many it simply “renewed focus on mission and goals.”

In the area of **leadership and management**, presidents took decisive actions to solve problems more immediately, restructure management, manage more collaboratively with constituents, make meetings more productive, delegate to and use more effectively their management team, or make needed changes in senior administrators. One president said he “took bolder positions on difficult issues, sensing the Board was firmly behind me.”

In **academic affairs**, presidents reported that they clarified goals for the provost and increased their communication or time spent with faculty, deans, department heads, or students. Some tried to become more sensitive to faculty relations or to pay more attention to their academic leadership.

In **financial affairs or fund raising**, presidents improved fiscal management, increased their own fund raising efforts, focused on the capital campaign, changed the development vice president, and worked with the board on solicitations.

Some presidents made changes in their **communication style**, using new technologies, speaking more extemporaneously, listening more to others, becoming more visible on campus, exercising greater patience, increasing community outreach, or giving “more strokes to senior staff.” One president said, “I put my performance plan on the web and everyone can see it. More people are connected.”

Many presidents made changes to allow greater **personal time**, some at the board's urging: "Made plans for sabbatical."; "Trying to have some time each day to relax and renew."; and "They asked me to slow down; they think I'm heading towards burn out."

The review also increased the **confidence** of many presidents and their **commitment** to their institutions. One said, "I began working immediately on the two areas cited as needing improvement. I experienced an improved sense of being valued; this changed my approach to day-to-day work: greater confidence." Another noted, "The Board made clear its commitment to my success (long term) as President, and I renewed my commitment to remain."

Some made changes in the **assessment process**, based on their experiences, including changing the committee responsible for the review, the timing of the process, formalizing the review, or adding a meeting with the board in executive session.

There were a few changes that reflected **painful learning experiences** from reviews. Some became more guarded in their relations with trustees, saying simply, "I have learned to trust the board less" or [I] "Limited information distributed in writing as confidential to trustees (two trustees distributed confidential material to faculty unions)." Another president said he "Hired a professional lawyer to look at my contract and advise me as to the pros and cons." One said he just stopped having reviews.

The next open-ended question (item 25) asked what presidents would like to change or found least useful about their last review. Many noted that

the review was just **too superficial**; it **failed as a formative process**. Said one president, "Our overwhelmingly positive review gave me little information about where and how I might improve my performance." Many presidents said they wanted more meaningful participation and feedback from trustees, including written feedback or reports that were pointed and critical. Also, more attention to goal setting and the review of goals, mutually agreed upon criteria, and better long range planning for the board. Many presidents said they wanted specific detailed feedback and suggestions for improving performance, even if they were doing an excellent job.

Others noted problems with the **process, criteria, or instruments**. One public sector president complained about the inadequacy of the form which was used to evaluate the heads of all state agencies. Another objected to the use of "corporate criteria and standards." Another objected that the board was "Trying to alter my management style in the direction of the latest fad! i.e., 'What is your vision? Are you leading rather than managing?'" A president who had served for many years said that the process needed to change over time: "The process should be modified as the length of service increases. Different institutional needs and changing presidential skills and experience should lead to a changed evaluation."

Complaints about the **lack of agreed upon criteria** echoed the complaints about inadequate feedback. Though this is a particularly difficult area for complex nonprofit organizations, many presidents said they expected to set mutually agreed upon goals with their boards and to be held to those

expectations--but were not. Simply said, "There is a need to establish specific goals and objectives on an annual basis." One characterized his evaluation this way: "It was neither focused nor comprehensive. It had no relationship to the goals the board had set out for me when I was hired."

However, discussion of narrow, agreed upon criteria was not enough to fulfill the needs for assessment. One president noted:

The current board chair primarily responsible for the evaluation believes that completion of a specific list of tasks makes for a successful year. He is not a 'big' picture person. The mission of the institution rarely is the reference for our discussion. I know he thinks very highly of me and is passionately dedicated to his role as trustee.

Some noted **inappropriate behavior**, from trustees and others, during the review. One said the review "Seemed to provide a forum for undisciplined and unrestrained attack by emotionally charged dissidents." Another said, "The process agreed upon was ignored since certain trustees came into the board with an 'ax' to grind." Another complained that the least useful part was, "The opportunity for irresponsible Board members to attack you in the process and to leak confidential information."

Participation was also a concern. For some, **participation was too broad**, particularly for frequent reviews. One president noted, "My board does not seem to understand that annual reviews, if comprehensive with all constituencies, have the potential to be destabilizing." Another said, "The crazies came out of the woodwork." One found that the least useful part of

the review was, "The 'beauty contest' part where selected employees, including union officers, are invited to complete a survey form appraising the college president's job performance."

For others, **important voices were excluded from the process**. There may have been too little conversation with trustees or too few trustees involved. Presidents wanted to hear from board members beyond the board chair or executive committee. Said one president, "Most of the feedback comes from a few board members. I would like to have a clearer sense of what others are thinking." Some wanted to include their executive staff, alumni, students, or faculty. Other presidents were not allowed enough participation themselves; one said, "The board met in closed session. I was unable to present my side."

Some wanted the review to **encompass their lives** more fully. One president said, "I really would like the board to take an interest in me, my family, and our future. I am feeling 'alone' and being used up!" Another noted that "Integration of family concerns was included but minimally. This could improve."

The last question on the presidents' survey (item 27) invited them to offer any other comments or suggestions and their responses were quite varied. Those more common, broadly applicable, or interesting are included here.

There were several comments from chief executives of an institution in a **system** who reported to and were evaluated by a system head. They

found that questions which focused on the board did not capture well their situations. One president said, "My board is an advisory board. While I report to it, I am primarily answerable to the chancellor of our system. Thus many questions in this survey simply do not apply..."

Several presidents remarked about the crucial **role of the board chair**. The chair's interests and abilities, the tone he or she sets, the level of trust between the president and chair, all contributed to the success of the process-- or the lack thereof. Some were very appreciative of the good rapport and confidence they shared with their chairs. Another commented that the "[l]argest drawback was the inability of the Board Chair to lead."

Several presidents noted the difficulty in **linking compensation with performance**. For some presidents, the concern was limiting the increase to that comparable for faculty. For others, it was disappointing that high performance did not result in a commensurate increase in pay. "The board does not always connect positive performance of a president with compensation. There needs to be a discussion on how good performance results in adequate compensation." Another wondered, "How can we best do annual salary/compensation reviews and multi-year goal setting?"

While some presidents were pleased to see a survey that might help "fill the void" with needed, **current information**, and many asked for copies of the results, others were concerned that the researcher or sponsor of the survey would advocate a **more activist role for boards** or **more formal procedures** for presidential assessment. One said, "Do not make life more

difficult for us by suggesting more stuff! It's hard enough without boards getting more ideas."

Some presidents thought that the survey questions **failed to capture informal assessment procedures or assumed a more formal approach to assessment**. These comments were typical: "Assessment was informal and oral."; "I like an informal review."; "Our process is very collegial and unstructured! Hope it can stay that way."; and "There is a presumption in this entire survey that 'formal' assessment and feedback is the only way. I may be an exception, but in my case, as president of a small college with an involved board, the assessment is continuous and multifaceted. You may be asking the wrong questions."

Lastly, some presidents found the **assessment process useless** in their second decade in office, and noted that it was perfunctory. Others said they really didn't need or have a review because their performance was fine; "Clear indicators of progress made a formal performance [review] unnecessary. Board chair articulates verbally the president's very successful leadership." Conversely, one president wondered if reviews were used only prior to dismissal: "Several presidents I have asked about assessment have responded saying that presidential assessment/evaluation happens only when a board wants to 'get rid' of you. Is that true?"

Outcomes Reported By Board Chairs

This section reports the responses of board chairs regarding the outcomes of the most recent assessment of their current president, including: the impact on president's conditions of employment, the board's rating of president's performance, the president's feedback seeking behavior, and chairs' comments and suggestions. Items regarding the impact of the review on the president's conditions of employment were the same on the questionnaires for board chairs and presidents; the presidents' and board chairs' responses were compared.

Of the 535 respondents to the survey, 81 board chairs reported that the current president had never had a performance review in his or her current position (item three). Those respondents were excluded from additional questions which were based upon direct experience with presidential assessment. The 454 chairs with assessment experience with their current presidents included 152 (33.5%) from the public sector and 302 (66.5%) from the private sector.

Impact on president's conditions of employment.

Board chairs were asked eight questions concerning the impact of the president's most recent assessment on: the president's compensation and benefits; the president's relationships with the board, faculty, and community;

the president's ability to lead; the president's performance since the last review; the quality of feedback the president gets from the board; and the president's understanding of what the board needs to function more effectively (item 11a-h). Responses were rated on a five point scale: generally increased and improved, somewhat increased or improved, stayed about the same, somewhat decreased or became worse, and generally decreased or became worse. Responses of generally increased and improved or somewhat increased or improved were considered to indicate a positive impact whereas responses of somewhat decreased or became worse or generally decreased or became worse were considered to indicate a negative impact. No answer and not applicable responses (NA) were combined. Results are reported in Table 36.

Table 36

Overall Impact of Most Recent Presidential Assessment in Eight Areas,
as Reported by Board Chairs

| | Pos | Neg | Same | NA | Total |
|--------------------------|------|-----|------|------|--------|
| | % | % | % | % | |
| Compensation & Benefits | 59.7 | 0.2 | 16.3 | 23.8 | 100.0% |
| Knows Board's Needs | 50.9 | 1.5 | 33.9 | 13.7 | 100.0% |
| Feedback From Board | 50.4 | 1.3 | 35.7 | 12.5 | 99.9% |
| Performance | 46.5 | 2.0 | 36.6 | 15.0 | 100.1% |
| Relations With Board | 45.8 | 2.9 | 38.5 | 12.8 | 100.0% |
| Ability to Lead | 43.2 | 1.8 | 40.3 | 14.7 | 100.0% |
| Relations With Community | 23.6 | 1.3 | 49.6 | 25.5 | 100.0% |
| Relations With Faculty | 22.5 | 2.0 | 52.0 | 23.5 | 100.0% |

Note. Scale: Positive = generally or somewhat increased and improved,
 Negative = generally or somewhat decreased or became worse, Same = stayed
about the same, and NA = not applicable or no answer.

More than half of the board chairs reported that the review had a positive impact on the president's compensation and benefits; 59.7% responded that this generally or somewhat increased or improved and with almost no negative impact. About half of the board chairs (43.2% to 50.9%) reported a positive impact on the president's understanding of what the board needs to function more effectively, relationship with the board, performance

since the last review, ability to lead, and the quality of feedback the president received from the board; less than three percent saw any negative impact. The least positive impact was reported in regard to the president's relations with the faculty (22.5%) or community (23.6%), though only 2% or less reported a negative impact in these areas.

With the exception of one item on each questionnaire, these questions were also asked of presidents, with much the same results (chairs' items 11a-g and presidents' items 21 a-e and g-h). Responses of board chairs and presidents on the seven identical items were very similar (less than 8% difference), except in regard to the impact of the review on the quality of feedback the president receives from the board. Chairs were more likely to report improvement (50.4%) than were presidents (40.1%). Details are reported in Appendix B, Table B-12.

Overall, according to both board chairs and presidents, the impact of most presidential reviews on conditions of employment was either positive or stable, and chairs were generally more positive than presidents. Only a very small percentage of either chairs or presidents reported a negative impact from the president's most recent review.

The board's rating of the president's performance.

Board chairs were asked to use a five-point scale, ranging from very unsatisfactory to outstanding, to translate the board's rating of the president's

performance in the last review (item 12). Most board chairs reported that the board rated the performance of the president quite high: 48.7% outstanding, 31.3% very satisfactory, 11.5% satisfactory, and 0.9% unsatisfactory. No presidents were rated very unsatisfactory and 8% of respondents did not answer. Though a single item rating was not a reliable indicator of the president's actual performance level, it provided insight into the board chair's perception of the quality of the president's performance.

In a related survey conducted by the researcher of the same population at the same time, board chairs' rated the performance of their own board (Schwartz, 1998a). Interestingly, chairs were more generous in their rating of the president's performance; chair's rated the board's performance: 14.5% outstanding, 50.8% very satisfactory, 29.2% satisfactory, 0.9% unsatisfactory, and 0.5% very unsatisfactory.

The president's feedback seeking behavior.

Several items queried the board chair about the president's style in seeking feedback about his or her own performance, including **how frequently feedback was sought and whether he or she tended to seek positive or negative feedback**. Using the past six months as the frame of reference, board chairs reported that 37.8% of the presidents sought feedback directly from the chair at least once per month, 27.5% less than once per month, and

25.1% not at all during the last six months (item 13). The remaining 9.4% didn't know or didn't answer.

Board chairs were asked two questions to gauge the president's tendency to seek **negative feedback** using a five point scale of very characteristic to very uncharacteristic: "Thinking about the past six months, how characteristic of the president was it to ask others to be critical when they gave him or feedback" or to "prefer detailed, critical appraisals, even though they might hurt?" (items 14a and 14b). In response to both questions, chairs reported that negative feedback seeking was characteristic for about half of the presidents and uncharacteristic for only about one-quarter. See Table 37.

Negative feedback seeking has been identified as an important characteristic of successful leaders. Those who tended to seek negative rather than positive feedback also tended to receive higher effectiveness ratings and more accurately project their ratings by others (Ashford and Tsui, 1991). This could be an important skill to develop and will be looked at more closely in Question Three.

Chairs were also asked two questions about the president's **positive feedback** seeking behavior. Using the last six months as the frame of reference, chairs were asked how characteristic it was for the president to "tend to seek good news about him or herself" or "ask for feedback if he or she knew it would be positive rather than negative?" (items 14c and 14d). The same five point scale was used.

Using these two items to define behavior, positive feedback seeking was characteristic of only about one fifth of presidents and was uncharacteristic of more than half of presidents. See Table 37.

Table 37

Positive and Negative Feedback Seeking Behavior in Presidents

| | <u>Negative</u> | | <u>Positive</u> | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|-------|
| | 14a | 14b | 14c | 14d |
| | % | % | % | % |
| Very Characteristic | 18.5 | 14.1 | 4.4 | 3.7 |
| Generally Characteristic | 35.2 | 31.7 | 16.5 | 12.3 |
| Undecided | 15.2 | 18.1 | 12.3 | 16.7 |
| Generally Uncharacteristic | 13.9 | 15.0 | 32.8 | 29.7 |
| Very Uncharacteristic | 7.9 | 11.5 | 23.6 | 27.3 |
| NA | 9.3 | 9.7 | 10.4 | 10.1 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.1% | 100.0% | 99.8% |

To summarize, presidents tended to seek out negative feedback about themselves but did not tend to seek out positive feedback about themselves. Seeking negative feedback was **characteristic** of about half of the presidents, but seeking positive feedback **characteristic** of only about one-fifth. Seeking positive feedback was **uncharacteristic** of more than half the presidents, but

seeking negative feedback was **uncharacteristic** of only about one-quarter. About one-third of presidents sought feedback on their performance directly from their chairs on a monthly basis, while the remaining presidents sought it less often, if at all. The relationship of negative and positive feedback seeking to presidential performance ratings will be examined in Question Three.

Board chairs' comments and suggestions.

Twenty percent of the board chairs provided written comments or suggestions. However, few of the comments were on presidential assessment; most were on board self-assessment, the topic of a related research project, for which questions were incorporated into the board chairs' survey instrument.

Comments relevant here dealt with the board's past actions, future intentions, and current needs. Many noted their appreciation for information that AGB has provided in the past and asked for data from this survey. A few chairs noted that they have just instituted a process for evaluating the performance of the president, or intend to do so shortly. A few more acknowledged that they should be planning such activity soon.

The chair of the governing board of a public institution noted, "Much of the presidential assessment process is dictated by the state government. A separate body of the state HR department defines the process and sets

compensation for all agency heads, including college/university presidents. The process is quite detailed and exhaustive, so we don't try to invent a separate one. We do use it as a starting point for further discussion of performance and goals." Like it or not, some institutions in the public sector may not have much, if any, choice about the process used to evaluate the president.

Another chair offered this advice: "This survey should provide meaningful input to chairs and boards. AGB materials have been very helpful in past. My advice to chairs, as painful as it may be, [conduct] honest and frank and timely evaluation of the CEO. [It w]ill always make him or her [a] more effective leader."

Research Question Three

The data reported here came from two sources, the survey of presidents and the survey of board chairs. Research Question Three consists of four separate questions, 3A-3D, each of which examines the relationships between one or more outcome variables and one or more independent variables having to do with the assessment process. Univariate statistics for each variable were already reported in Chapter Four, in regard to Research Question One and Research Question Two. These data were re-examined to reveal the relationships, if any, between the way in which assessments were

conducted and the outcomes reported by presidents and board chairs. The data, data handling, and results are reported here in detail.

3A Is there a relationship between the usefulness of reviews for presidents, (utility), and: 3A.1 the frequency of reviews?; 3A.2 setting specific objectives, clarifying criteria, and reviewing performance against previously agreed upon goals?; or 3A.3 receiving adequate feedback from the board?

Question 3A examined the assessment outcome "Utility," or the perceived usefulness of the assessment as reported by presidents, in relation to several assessment process variables: frequency of reviews, goals, and adequate feedback. The hypotheses were that "Utility" would be positively related to: (3A.1) more frequent reviews; (3A.2) using goals, objectives, and clear criteria in the review process; and (3A.3) presidents reportedly receiving adequate feedback.

"Utility" was measured by four items (21d-g), using a five point scale; these items were summed to construct a composite "Utility" scale, ranging from 1=most useful to 20=least useful. Interitem reliability for items 21d-g was high (Alpha=.87 and N=910) and equal to earlier research using the same four items (Greller, 1978, p. 648).

3A.1 Utility and Frequency of Reviews

The first independent variable considered in relation to "Utility" was the frequency of reviews (item 6). Of the twelve response categories, most presidents reported that the frequency of reviews was once a year. Due to the skewedness of responses, to determine whether there was a difference in the "Utility" reported by presidents with different frequencies of reviews, respondents were divided into two categories, those reviewed at least once a year and those reviewed less frequently than once a year but not less than every five years; those with unknown frequencies were excluded. A t-test (Levene's Test for Equality of Variance and Equality of Means) indicated that there was a small but significant difference (at the .01 level of confidence) in the mean score for "Utility" for these two groups (mean difference=.86), with greater "Utility" for those reviewed less frequently than annually (mean=8.88) than those evaluated at least annually (mean=9.74). Although the data supports rejecting the null hypothesis (that the difference between the two groups was due to chance), the difference was not in the direction expected. Therefore, the hypothesis that "Utility" is associated with more frequent reviews is rejected. See Table 38.

Table 38

Utility and Frequency of Presidential Reviews

| Frequency | N | Mean Utility Score |
|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Reviewed at Least Annually | 688 | 9.74 |
| Reviewed Less Than Annually | 124 | 8.88 |

Mean Difference = 0.86*.

T-value = 2.56**

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater "Utility."

* P = .241. **Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

3A.2 Utility and Goals

"Utility" was also examined in relation to three goal-related independent variables: whether specific future objectives were set (item 21a); whether the president left with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance (item 21b); and whether the president's performance was reviewed against previously agreed upon goals (item 21c). Respondents used the same five-point scale for items 21a-c and 21d-g. Pearson's correlation was used to examine these variables, since all used a five-point Likert-like scale and could be treated as continuous scale variables. Though items 21a-c were not used to construct a composite variable, they were found to have high interitem reliability (Alpha=.80). The coefficients for the variables appear in Table 39.

Table 39

Correlation Coefficients for Utility and Goal-Related Variables

| | Future Objectives Item 21a | Clear Criteria Item 21b | Agreed Upon Goals Item 21c |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Utility (Items 21d-g) | .51* | .63* | .47* |
| Effectiveness (Item 21d) | .48* | .59* | .43* |
| Learned a Lot (Item 21e) | .42* | .57* | .38* |
| See Shortcomings (Item 21f) | .34* | .43* | .29* |
| What Board Expects (Item 21g) | .48* | .58* | .49* |

Note. N = or > 903 (N=903 to 927).

* P = or < .001.

"Utility" had a moderate relationship with all three goal-related variables, supporting the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between the use of goals, clear criteria, and objectives in reviews and how useful the president finds the review. The strongest relationship was between "Utility" and leaving with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance (coefficient = .63), followed by setting specific future objectives (coefficient = .51), and reviewing the president's performance against previously agreed upon goals (coefficient = .47). The three goal-related variables showed stronger relationships with two of the four items on the "Utility" scale: "The

appraisal helped me learn how I can strengthen my performance" and "I have a clearer idea of what the board expects from me," (coefficients = .43 to .59). The goal-related variables were less strongly related with the "Utility" variables measured by the statements, "I learned a lot from the appraisal" and "The appraisal helped me to see my shortcomings," (coefficients = .29 to .57). There appears to be a moderately strong, positive relationship between presidents' reporting that they found the appraisal process useful and using concrete criteria, goals, and objectives as part of the review.

3A.3 Utility and Adequate Feedback

The relationship between "Utility" and presidents reportedly receiving adequate performance feedback was also examined. Using a five-point scale of 1 = very satisfied to 5 = very unsatisfied, presidents reported how satisfied they were with: (item 20a) "The quality and specificity of the performance feedback you received from the board **in regard to the presidential assessment process?**" and (item 20b) "The quality and specificity of the performance feedback you received from the board **in the regular course of your work?**" A composite "Adequate Feedback" scale was constructed, summing the two variables; interitem reliability for items 20a and 20b was high, (Alpha=.78). Pearson's correlation was used to examine these variables, since all were continuous scale variables. The coefficients for the variables appear in Table 40.

Table 40

Correlation Coefficients for Utility and Adequate Feedback

| | Re: Review Item 20a | Re: Work Item 20b | "Adequate Feedback" Items 20a&b |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| "Utility" (Items 21d-g) | .61* | .44* | .57* |
| Effectiveness (Item 21d) | .55* | .40* | .52* |
| Learned a Lot (Item 21e) | .55* | .39* | .52* |
| See Shortcomings (Item 21f) | .41* | .25* | .38* |
| What Board Expects (Item 21g) | .57* | .45* | .55* |

Note. N = or > 899 (N=899 to 910).

* P = or < .001.

Overall, there was a moderate relationship (coefficient = .57) between the composite variables "Utility" and "Adequate Feedback." This data supports the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between presidents receiving adequate feedback from the board and how useful presidents find their reviews.

There was a stronger relationship between "Utility" and receiving adequate feedback in regard to the presidential assessment (coefficient = .61) than between "Utility" and receiving adequate feedback in the regular course of work (coefficient = .44). In examining the items comprising the composite

variables, the strongest relationship was between feedback regarding the review and having a clearer idea of what the board expects (coefficient =.57); the weakest relationship was between feedback in the regular course of work and the appraisal helping to reveal shortcomings (coefficient =.25).

3B Is there a relationship between the president's satisfaction with the performance appraisal and: 3B.1 setting specific objectives and clarifying criteria for good performance?; 3B.2 the president's participation in developing the review process and conducting the review?; or 3B.3 the confidentiality of the review process?

Question 3B examined the relationship of the outcome variable of presidents' satisfaction with the review process, ("Satisfaction"), and several independent variables related to the assessment process: (3B.1) goal setting, (3B.2) personal participation in the review, and (3B.3) confidentiality. A composite "Satisfaction" score was constructed for the outcome variable using the total score for three items, 21h-j, after reversing the score of item 21j. Items 21h-j, in order, were: "I was satisfied with the review"; "I feel good about the way the review was conducted"; and "There are many ways in which I would have liked the appraisal to be different."

Responses were scored on a five-point scale, ranging from one = strongly agree to five = strongly disagree. Interitem reliability for the three items comprising the "Satisfaction" variable was high (Alpha = .83), about the

same as in previous research using the same three items (Alpha = .81; Greller, 1978, p. 648).

3B.1 Satisfaction and Goal Setting

Two variables were used to measure **"Goal Setting"** as part of the review process. With the same five-point scale used for the "Satisfaction" variables, respondents rated their agreement with two statements: (item 21a) "Specific future objectives were set," and (item 21b) "I left with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance." A composite "Goal Setting" variable was constructed using the sum of these two variables; interitem reliability was high (Alpha=.72). Correlation coefficients for "Goal Setting" and "Satisfaction," and each of the variables which make up the constructed composite variables, appear in Table 41.

Table 41

Correlation Coefficients for Satisfaction and Goal Setting

| | Composite Satisfaction Score <u>Items 21h-j</u> | Satisfied with review <u>Item 21h</u> | Feel good way it was conducted <u>Item 21i</u> | Many ways I want it to be different <u>Item 21j</u> |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Goal Setting Items 21a&b | .63* | .65* | .62* | .41* |
| Future Objectives Item 21a | .45* | .48* | .46* | .28* |
| Clear Criteria Item 21b | .68* | .70* | .67* | .47* |

Note. N = or > 914 (N = 914 to 934).

* P = or < .001.

The results reveal a moderate relationship between the composite variables "Satisfaction" and "Goal Setting" (coefficient = .63). This supports the hypothesis that presidents' satisfaction with the review is positively related to the use of goals; setting future objectives and making clear the criteria of good performance were positively correlated with presidents' satisfaction with the review.

For all four constituent "Satisfaction" variables, the relationship was stronger in regard to leaving with clear criteria of good performance (item 21b, coefficients = .47 to .70) than in regard to setting specific future objectives (item 21a, coefficients = .28 to .48). This suggests that although both are important, having a clear idea of the criteria of good performance is even more important for presidential satisfaction than setting specific future objectives. If item 21j were omitted, (the statement that the president would like the appraisal to be different), there were moderate to strong relationships, (coefficients = .67 to .70), between leaving with clear criteria of good performance (item 21b) and the other two "Satisfaction" variables (21h and 21i). Clear criteria was also an important factor in relation to the president's perceived utility of the assessment process (see 3A, above).

Given the vagaries of measuring successful presidential performance and often competing goals, it's not surprising that leaving with a clear sense of the criteria for evaluation would be even more important than setting specific goals, for increasing the president's satisfaction with the review.

3B.2 Satisfaction and Personal Participation

"Satisfaction" was also examined in relation to presidents' participation in the assessment process. Based on previous research (Greller, 1978), the hypothesis is that greater participation in the assessment process is positively related to the satisfaction of the person evaluated; that is, there will be a

positive relationship between the variables used to measure "Personal Participation" and "Satisfaction."

There were five "**Personal Participation**" variables, with varied scales. These items concerned whether the president: completed a **self-assessment statement** (item 10 a), played a role in **developing the review** process (item 16); had an opportunity to **comment on a final draft** of the assessment report (item 17); received a **written report** or summary of the results of the assessment (item 18); or had a **face-to-face meeting** as part of the review (item 19). T-tests were used to examine the mean Satisfaction scores for four variables with dichotomous responses (yes/no); did the president: complete a self-assessment statement, comment on the final draft, receive a written report, or meet face-to-face? Satisfaction and the president's role in developing the review process were also examined using t-tests, by examining the mean satisfaction scores for three groups: no role, some role, and a primary role.

The results were mixed for the relationships between these five participation factors and presidential satisfaction. There was support for the hypotheses that meeting face-to-face or having the opportunity to comment on a final draft of the assessment report were related to greater presidential satisfaction. There were significant differences in the mean Satisfaction scores for these two variables (at the .01 level of confidence), with greater satisfaction for those who participated in these activities. See Tables 42 and 43.

Table 42

Presidents' Satisfaction and Meeting Face-to-Face as Part of the Review

| Meetings Face-to-Face | N | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|-----------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Yes | 785 | 6.53 |
| No | 41 | 8.10 |

Mean Difference = 1.56*

t-value = 2.68**

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater satisfaction.

* P = .001. **Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

Table 43

Presidents' Satisfaction and Commenting on Draft Summary Report

| Opportunity to Comment | N | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Yes | 372 | 6.12 |
| No | 130 | 7.43 |

Mean Difference = 1.30*

t-value = 4.30**

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater satisfaction.

* P = .002. ** Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

There was also support for the hypothesis that having a role in developing the review process and Satisfaction were positively related. There were significant differences in the mean Satisfaction scores (at the .01 level of confidence) between presidents who had no role and presidents who had some role and between presidents who had some role and presidents who had a primary role, with greater Satisfaction for those who played a greater role in developing the review process. See Table 44.

Table 44

Presidents' Satisfaction and Role in Developing Review Process

| Role | N | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|---------|-----|-------------------------|
| None | 126 | 7.72 |
| Some | 325 | 6.71 |
| Primary | 485 | 6.24 |

Mean Difference None/Some = 1.01*; t-value = 2.97***.

Mean Difference Some/Primary = 0.47**; t-value = 2.47***.

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater satisfaction.

* P = or < .001. **P = .001-.05. *** Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

There was no support for the hypotheses that either completing a self-assessment statement or receiving a copy of the assessment report were related to presidential satisfaction; there were no significant differences (at the

.05 level of confidence) in the mean Satisfaction scores for either of these two variables. See Tables 45 and 46.

Table 45

Presidents' Satisfaction and Self-Assessment Statement

| Self-Assessment Statement | N | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|---------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Yes | 546 | 5.58 |
| No | 151 | 5.57 |

Mean Difference = .01*

t-value = .04**

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater satisfaction.

* P = .240. **Level of Confidence > .05.

Table 46

Presidents' Satisfaction and Received Summary Report of Assessment

| Received Report | N | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|-----------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Yes | 509 | 6.32 |
| No | 33 | 7.12 |

Mean Difference = 0.80*

t-value = 1.64**

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater satisfaction.

* P = .610. **Level of Confidence > .05.

To summarize, those aspects of participation which appear related to presidents' satisfaction with the assessment include: the opportunity to meet face-to-face with reviewers, comment on a draft of the summary report, and participate in developing the review process. Completing a self-assessment statement or receiving a copy of the final report did not appear to be related to presidents' satisfaction.

3B.3 Satisfaction and Confidentiality

"Satisfaction" was also examined in relation to the "Confidentiality" of the review process. The hypothesis was that there would be a positive relationship between the two variables "Satisfaction" and "Confidentiality." Many authors have suggested that confidentiality of the assessment process was essential and that a nonconfidential review might be damaging to presidents (Fisher & Koch, 1996; Kauffman, 1993).

"Confidentiality" was a constructed variable using items 10a-e, in order, "Indicate whether, for your most recent assessment, the following items were confidential, not confidential, or not applicable: (a) your self assessment statement; (b) summary information from others using written questionnaires; (c) summary information from others using interviews; (d) summary report of the assessment results; (e) discussions/meetings with you. Interitem reliability for the five items was high (Alpha = .88).

A t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the mean "Satisfaction" scores for those whose reviews were confidential and those whose reviews were not confidential. Respondents were divided into three groups: "Not Applicable," "Confidential," and "Not Confidential." Respondents who answered not applicable to all five items comprised the "Not Applicable" group and were excluded. Respondents who answered not confidential to at least one of the five items comprised the "Not Confidential" group. Respondents who answered confidential to all five items or had a combination of confidential and not applicable responses comprised the "Confidential" group.

A t-test revealed no significant difference in the mean "Satisfaction" scores for the "Confidential" and "Not Confidential" groups (mean difference = -0.25). See Table 47. There was no support for the hypothesis that "Confidentiality" and "Satisfaction" are positively related.

Table 47

Presidents' Satisfaction and Confidentiality of Reviews

| Confidentiality | N | Mean Satisfaction Score |
|------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Confidential | 641 | 6.68 |
| Not Confidential | 274 | 6.43 |

Mean Difference = -0.25*

t-value = -1.23**

Note. On this scale, lower mean score = greater satisfaction.

*P = .565. **Level of Confidence > .05.

3C Is there a relationship between the **president's overall performance rating** and the president's positive or negative feedback seeking behavior, as reported by the board chair?

Based upon the research of Ashford and Tsui (1991), this study expected to find a positive relationship between the outcome variable "President's Overall Performance Rating" and the independent variable "**Negative Feedback Seeking**" and a negative relationship between "President's Overall Performance Rating" and the independent variable "**Positive Feedback Seeking**." That is, presidents who tended to seek negative feedback were expected to have higher performance ratings than those who did not and

presidents who tended to seek positive feedback were expected to have lower performance ratings than those who did not.

For the outcome variable, "President's Overall Performance Rating," board chairs were asked, "If you were to translate the president's most recent performance review into an overall rating, how did the board (or designees) rate the president's performance?" (item 12). A five point scale was used, from 1 = outstanding to 5 = very unsatisfactory. Although a single item rating did not permit reliability testing of the outcome variable, the large number of cases (N = 454) increases confidence in the results and helps compensate for this factor.

As in previous research (Ashford & Tsui, 1991), board chairs were asked a four-part question on feedback seeking style, to identify the president's tendencies to seek positive and negative types of feedback (items 14a-d, in order): "On a scale of one to five, thinking about the past six months, how characteristic of the president was it to: (a) Ask others to be critical when they gave him or her feedback?; (b) Prefer detailed, critical appraisals even though they might hurt?; (c) Tend to seek good news about himself or herself?; and (d) Ask for feedback if he or she knew it would be positive rather than negative?" The five point scale ranged from very characteristic to very uncharacteristic.

As in Ashford and Tsui's study, a composite score was constructed for "Negative Feedback Seeking" using the total for the board chair's responses to items 14a and 14b, and a composite score was constructed for "Positive

Feedback Seeking" using the total for items 14c and 14d. Interitem reliability for the scales was high; Alpha = .83 for "Negative Feedback Seeking," and Alpha=.82 for "Positive Feedback Seeking." Interitem reliability was higher in this study than in previous research (Ashford & Tsui 1991, p. 264).

The relationship between the "President's Overall Performance Rating" and "Negative Feedback Seeking" was in the direction predicted but relatively weak (coefficient = .25) as was the relationship between the "President's Overall Performance Rating" and "Positive Feedback Seeking" (coefficient = -.29), nonetheless supporting the hypotheses. See Table 48. Findings were consistent with those in previous research, though not as strong in regard to negative feedback seeking; Ashford and Tsui (1991, p. 267) reported coefficient = .46 for superiors' overall effectiveness ratings and managers' negative feedback seeking and coefficient = -.25 for superiors' overall effectiveness ratings and managers' positive feedback seeking ($p < .001$). Factors other than negative feedback seeking may effect the performance ratings of presidents differently than those of managers and contribute to the differences in these findings.

Table 48

Correlation Coefficient for Feedback Seeking and President's Overall Rating

| Feedback Seeking Behavior | President's Rating |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Negative Feedback Seeking | .25* |
| Positive Feedback Seeking | -.29* |

* P = or < .001

3D Is there a relationship between improvement in the president's performance, as reported by the board chair, and either: 3D.1 the president's negative feedback seeking behavior?; or 3D.2 the adequacy of feedback the president reportedly receives from the governing board?

Based upon the research of Ashford and Tsui (1991), this study expected to find that improvement in performance would be positively related to presidents' tendencies to seek negative feedback (3D.1); that is, greater performance improvement would be associated with more characteristic negative feedback seeking behavior. A related assumption (3D.2) was that improvement in performance would be positively related to presidents' reporting that they found the feedback that they received from the board adequate.

"Performance Improved" was a constructed variable using the sum of three items: "What was the impact of the most recent presidential assessment [on the]: relationship between the president and the board [item 11b]?; president's performance [item 11f]?; and president's ability to lead [item 11e]?" Responses were scored on a five point scale, ranging from generally increased or improved to generally decreased or became worse. Interitem reliability for the three variables was high ($\alpha=.87$).

3D.1 Performance Improved and Negative Feedback Seeking

Correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships between the "Performance Improved" and "Negative Feedback Seeking" variables, both as composite variables and separate items. There were weak but positive relationships between the "Performance Improved" and "Negative Feedback Seeking" variables (coefficient = .18 to .26), consistent with the hypothesis. See Table 49.

Table 49

Correlation Coefficients for Performance Improved and Negative FeedbackSeeking Behavior

| | Composite Performance Improved Items 11b&e&f | Relations With the Board Item 11b | Ability to Lead Item 11e | President's Performance Item 11f |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Negative Feedback Seeking 14a&b | .25* | | | |
| Item 14a | | .26* | .24* | .20* |
| Item 14b | | .22* | .21* | .18* |

*P = or < .001.

T-tests were used to examine further the relationship between these variables. Presidents were divided into four groups, based on their composite "Performance Improved" score (the last two categories had few cases and were combined): Group 1, generally increased or improved; Group 2, somewhat increased or improved; Group 3, stayed about the same; and Group 4, somewhat or generally decreased or became worse. T-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences in the mean scores for these four groups for "Negative Feedback Seeking" (items 14a and 14b). See

Research Question 3C for details on the "Negative Feedback Seeking" variable. See Tables 50 and 51 for results.

Consistent with the hypothesis, there was a significant difference (at the .01 level of confidence) in the mean scores for "Negative Feedback Seeking" for Groups 1 and 2 and Groups 2 and 3, with the scores indicating that greater performance improvement was associated with more characteristic negative feedback seeking behavior. The difference between the mean scores for Groups 3 and 4 was in the direction predicted, but was not significant at the .05 level of confidence.

These findings support that there were significant differences in the negative feedback seeking behavior of presidents whose performance generally improved, somewhat improved, or stayed the same, with more characteristic negative feedback seeking behavior associated with greater improvement in performance. There was no significant difference in the mean negative feedback seeking scores for those whose performance stayed the same and those whose performance grew worse.

Table 50

Mean Negative Feedback Seeking Scores for Four Performance ImprovedGroups

| <u>Performance Improved Group</u> | <u>Negative Feedback Seeking</u> | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| | <u>N</u> | <u>Mean</u> |
| 1 (Generally Increased/Improved) | 48 | 3.79 |
| 2 (Somewhat Increased/Improved) | 113 | 4.97 |
| 3 (Stayed About the Same) | 210 | 5.61 |
| 4 (Somewhat/Generally Worse) | 22 | 6.18 |

Note. On this scale, lower scores = more characteristic negative feedback seeking behavior.

Table 51

T-test for Performance Improved and Negative Feedback Seeking

| <u>Performance Improved Groups</u> | <u>t-value</u> | <u>Negative Feedback Score</u> | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| | | <u>Mean Difference^a</u> | <u>P</u> |
| 1 and 2 | -3.23* | -1.18 | .002 |
| 2 and 3 | -2.52* | -0.64 | .012 |
| 3 and 4 | -1.11** | -0.57 | .362 |

^a Lower scores = more characteristic negative feedback seeking behavior.

* Significant at the .01 level of confidence.

** Level of confidence > .05.

3D.2 Performance Improved and Adequate Feedback

To explore the related assumption that there would be a positive relationship between the outcome variable "Performance Improved" and the independent variable of presidents receiving "Adequate Feedback" from the board, the variables were examined using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Both variables used similar five-point scales. Since "Performance Improved" was constructed from items in the survey of board chairs and "Adequate Feedback" was constructed from items in the survey of presidents, only data from pairs of presidents and chairs from the same institution were included in the analysis.

There was no significant relationship between the composite "Performance Improved" and "Adequate Feedback" variables (coefficient = -.02, $P > .05$) or between those items which comprised the two composite variable scales (coefficients = -.05 to .03, $P > .05$). See Table 52, for results. There is no support for the hypothesis that there is a relationship between president's reporting that they received adequate feedback from the board and board chairs reporting that the president's performance improved.

Table 52

Correlation Coefficient for Adequate Feedback and Performance Improved

| Composite "Performance Improved" Items 11bef | Relations With the Board Item 11b | Ability to Lead Item 11e | President's Performance Item 11f |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Composite | | | |
| "Adequate Feedback" | | | |
| Items 20a&b | -.02* | | |
| Item 20a | .03* | .01* | -.05* |
| Item 20b | .03* | .01* | .00* |

Note. N = or > 266.

*P > .05 (.428 to .936).

Table 53 summarizes the relationships among the many process and outcome variables examined in Research Questions 3A-3D, categorizing the strength of the relationships as moderate, weak, or not significant; none were strongly correlated.

Table 53

Summary of Relationships Among Variables for Research Questions 3A-3D

| Outcome Variable | Process Variable | 3A-D | Sign | Level |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|------|------------------|
| Moderate/Significant | | | | |
| Utility | Frequency of Reviews | 3A.1 | neg | * |
| Utility | Goals/Specific future objectives set | 3A.2 | pos | .51 ^a |
| Utility | Goals/Clear criteria good performance | 3A.2 | pos | .63 ^a |
| Utility | Goals/Reviewed against agreed goals | 3A.2 | pos | .47 ^a |
| Utility | Adequate Feedback | 3A.3 | pos | .57 ^a |
| Satisfaction | Goal Setting | 3B.1 | pos | .63 ^a |
| Satisfaction | Participate/Comment on Draft | 3B.2 | pos | * |
| Satisfaction | Participate/Develop Process | 3B.2 | pos | * |
| Satisfaction | Participate/Meet Face-to-Face | 3B.2 | pos | * |
| Weak/Significant | | | | |
| Performance Rating | Negative Feedback Seeking | 3C | pos | .25 ^a |
| Performance Rating | Positive Feedback Seeking | 3C | neg | .29 ^a |
| Performance Improved | Negative Feedback Seeking | 3D.1 | pos | .25 ^a |
| Not Significant | | | | |
| Satisfaction | Participate/Self-Assessment | 3B.2 | neg | ** |
| Satisfaction | Participate/Receive Report | 3B.2 | pos | ** |
| Satisfaction | Confidentiality | 3B.3 | neg | ** |
| Performance Improved | Adequate Feedback | 3D.2 | neg | .02 ^b |

^aCorrelation coefficient, $P = \text{or} < .001$. ^bCorrelation coefficient, $P > .05$.

*T-test significant at .01 level of confidence. ** T-test level of confidence $> .05$.

Many factors were significantly related to or moderately correlated with greater satisfaction or usefulness of reviews for presidents. Receiving adequate feedback had a moderately strong relationship with the usefulness of reviews for presidents. Presidents' satisfaction with reviews and the usefulness of reviews for presidents both had a moderately strong relationship with the use of goals. Some aspects of participation in the process were also significantly related to presidents' satisfaction: commenting on a draft report of the assessment, meeting face-to-face with reviewers, or playing a role in developing the review process. The relationship between frequency and utility of reviews was significant, but not in the direction predicted.

The relationship was significant but weak between presidents seeking negative feedback and both the president's performance rating and improvement in the president's performance. Seeking positive feedback was weakly and negatively related to improvement in the president's performance.

There were no significant relationships between: presidents' satisfaction with reviews and either the confidentiality of reviews, president's completing a self-assessment statement, or presidents receiving a copy of the summary of the assessment report; or improvement in the president's performance and presidents receiving adequate feedback.

Conclusions and recommendations based on this research appear in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions will be presented here in two parts, first those related to how presidential evaluations were conducted and the outcomes reported (Research Questions One and Two), followed by conclusions regarding the relationships between process and outcome variables (Research Question Three). Personal observations and recommendations to improve presidential assessment practices will be offered, based on these findings and my experience in this field. Opportunities for future research and limitations of the study will also be discussed.

Conclusions

How are Presidents Evaluated and What are the Outcomes of the Process?

(Research Questions One and Two)

Based on the most frequent (modal) responses from board chairs and Presidents, the modal presidential evaluation can be characterized as a new process, based on board policy to which the president contributed, conducted annually by the board, lasting about one month, typical of past or anticipated reviews, and limited in participation to trustees. It included a confidential self-assessment statement, face-to-face meetings, a written summary, and an oral and written report to the board. It resulted in an increase in

compensation and sense of being valued for the president and his other conditions of employment remained stable or improved. Almost no negative impact from the review was reported by the president or board chair. The board rated the president's performance as outstanding and the chair found that the president tended to seek critical feedback, not positive feedback, on his own performance. The president was satisfied with the process, learned from it, and it clarified future goals.

Three important findings stand out from the data from this study: 1) presidents and board chairs reported almost no negative impact from reviews, 2) most presidents appear to be evaluated using an informal review procedure, and 3) the procedures used to evaluate the performance of academic presidents and corporate CEOs were very similar.

Minimal Negative Impact

The most powerful finding may be that presidents and board chairs reported almost no negative impact from presidential assessments, even in regard to the president's ability to lead or the president's relations with the faculty. Though poorly conducted presidential reviews may indeed have the potential to be harmful to presidents or the presidency, it appears that the claims of damaging effects of typical presidential assessments have been exaggerated. In fact, most presidents reported that they were satisfied with the way their review was conducted and found it to be useful. Despite the

warnings of critics, most reviews did not appear to be conducted carelessly, even if there were ways in which practice could be improved.

Informal Reviews Were the Norm

The second finding was that most presidential assessments appeared to use informal evaluation procedures, as defined by Nason (1984, p. 13).

According to Nason, informal evaluations tend to be frequent or on-going, confidential, limited in participation to members of the board, and based on first-hand or casually collected information; formal evaluations tend to be periodic (every three to five years), involve the systematic collection of data from and participation of constituent groups, and are more public.

This study found that most reviews were conducted annually, completed in less than one month, limited in participation to members of the board, conducted without questionnaires or interviews, and included confidential self-evaluation statements, meetings and reports. Looking at the range of approaches, from informal to formal, the data revealed that most presidents were assessed using an informal review process. Though Nason reported in 1980 that, "The past decade has seen a pronounced trend toward more formal assessments" (1984, p. 57), formal assessments have not become the norm in the '90s. While presidential assessment has become a more common practice, it typically involves an informal procedure.

Some confusion about the extent to which formal evaluation procedures are used may be due to semantics. Some studies have failed to distinguish between policies that were formally established by the board and reviews that involved formal evaluation procedures, making it difficult to know what a "formal" review meant. Future research and discussion on this topic could benefit from agreement on what is meant by formal and informal presidential reviews and more precise use of these terms.

There may be a relationship between the findings that most presidents and board chairs reported no negative effects from reviews and that most reviews appear to have used informal evaluation procedures. It may be that informal reviews are less likely to produce negative results for the president. Critics have focused specifically on the dangers posed by the public nature of the process and the broad inclusion of constituents, features characteristic of more formal reviews. These features, it was feared, could undermine the president's authority and convey the impression that the board was deferring to the judgment of faculty, students, and other constituents, in evaluating the performance of the president. This study found that most reviews avoided these supposed pitfalls; participation was typically limited to members of the board and reviews were confidential.

Procedures Were Similar for Corporate CEOs and Academic Presidents

The third finding was that the assessment practices for academic presidents and those recommended for corporate CEOs appear to be quite similar. When the results of this study were compared to the guidelines recommended for the assessment of corporate CEOs by the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD, 1994), one finds that both feature written policies, annual confidential reviews conducted by members of the board, a self-assessment statement, face-to-face meetings, and a concluding discussion with or oral presentation to the board. As different as the cultures of colleges and universities and for-profit corporations may be, it seems they share a common, informal approach to CEO assessment.

Overall, these findings suggest that presidential assessment is a wide spread and generally successful practice: presidents are satisfied with the procedures used to evaluate their performance, boards are satisfied with the president's performance and the process for assessing it, the review process is useful, and the negative impact is minimal. The results are somewhat surprising, in light of the criticism of assessment practices and fear of potential damage to the presidency voiced by many authors on this topic. There are several possible explanations why presidents and board reported that presidential assessments were generally successful and satisfying experiences.

The study may have excluded those presidents most likely to be dissatisfied. Presidents who anticipated a damaging performance review could have left before their assessment or after their last assessment but before this survey was conducted. An impending assessment or a poor one could have driven away the strongest critics. If so, the negative effects of presidential reviews may have been underestimated.

Or, perhaps most presidential assessments were a positive experience because presidents found them to be more confirming than critical. The board, after all, wants the president to succeed, having spent so much time and effort selecting the president and working with him or her. As this study and another found (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 60), most boards support their presidents and assess their performance positively. And presidents, after all, are presidents; they are a select group of high achievers, with a great deal of experience and expertise. Since presidents generally have an opportunity to shape the process and participate in it, and the review affirms the board's support for the president's achievements, why shouldn't presidents be satisfied with the assessment process?

Lastly, according to Longenecker and Gioia (1988), managers really want feedback and don't get enough of it from their superiors. Presidents may have found the process satisfactory, even helpful, because it provided them with the feedback they were waiting for. Given the opportunity to shape and participate in the process, it was a productive and satisfying experience for presidents.

What Relationships are There, if any, Between How Presidential Assessments Were Conducted and the Outcomes Reported by Presidents and Board Chairs?

(Research Question 3)

Several outcome variables were targeted to examine their relationship to how presidential assessments were conducted: the usefulness of reviews for presidents (utility), presidents' satisfaction with reviews (satisfaction), the president's performance rating (ratings), and improvement in the president's performance (improvement).

Bivariate analyses revealed statistically significant relationships between these outcome variables and several assessment process variables: 1) greater **utility** and presidents receiving more adequate performance feedback; 2) greater **utility** and less frequent reviews; 3) greater **utility** and greater use of the review to set goals, clarify criteria, and evaluate performance against agreed upon goals; 4) greater **satisfaction** and greater use of the review to set goals and clarify criteria; 5) greater **satisfaction** and greater participation of presidents in the review; 6) higher performance **ratings** and a greater tendency for presidents to seek critical feedback; 7) greater **improvement** in performance and a greater tendency for presidents to seek critical feedback; and 8) lower performance **ratings** and a greater tendency for presidents to seek positive feedback.

The relationships between these process and outcome variables are explained in greater detail and possible explanations or implications explored in the following section.

Utility

There were statistically significant relationships found between the usefulness of reviews for presidents and 1) less frequent reviews; 2) presidents receiving more adequate performance feedback from the board; and 3) greater use of the review to set goals, clarify criteria, and evaluate performance against agreed upon goals.

3A.1 Utility and Frequency.

The frequency and utility of reviews were expected to have a positive relationship, so that more frequent reviews would have greater reported utility. Contrary to expectations, the opposite was found; reviews conducted less frequently were more useful.

While feedback generally needs to be frequent or immediate enough to be useful, perhaps only days or week after the events under discussion, the frequency of presidential reviews was examined in terms of years. Rather than reflecting the timeliness of feedback, this variable may have had more to do with the depth of coverage or comprehensiveness of reviews.

It may be that feedback from annual presidential reviews tended to be relatively superficial, compared with those conducted less often, suggesting that an inverse relationship could be expected between frequency and utility. Not only are formal reviews too time consuming to be conducted on an annual basis, it may take years to gauge the impact of many actions taken by a president; appropriately, the scope of annual reviews may be limited to the incremental changes of one year to the next. It's not be surprising, then, that there was no support for the hypothesis that frequency and utility would be positively related.

3A.2 Utility and Goals.

The hypothesis that the greater the use of goals in the review process, the greater the utility of the process to the president, was confirmed. Presidents found the assessment process more useful when goals played a greater role. The relationship was strongest between utility and two future looking goal variables: 1) the president leaving with a clear idea of the criteria for good future performance, and 2) setting specific future objectives; the third goal-related variable, reviewing the president's performance against agreed upon goals, was also moderately correlated with utility.

Goal theory suggests that setting goals has important consequences for motivation, satisfaction and achievement. Consistent with Greller's research (1978), this study confirmed that setting goals and using previously agreed

upon goals as the basis for evaluating performance were significantly correlated with the usefulness of reviews for presidents.

3A.3 Utility and Adequate Feedback.

The hypothesis that the greater the adequacy of feedback received from the board, the greater the utility of the review for presidents, was supported. A positive relationship was found between the utility of the review for presidents and presidents reporting that they received adequate feedback on their performance from the board. A basic premise of performance appraisal is that feedback is an important source of information for developing an accurate self theory (Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Carver & Scheier, 1981); simply put, it helps you to see yourself as others do. Performance feedback is part of a feedback loop, allowing the individual to adjust his or her own behavior in response to the environment, much like the sensors in a guidance system keep a ship on course. The data supported that receiving adequate feedback and reporting greater utility were related.

Satisfaction

There were statistically significant relationships found between greater satisfaction of presidents with the review process and two process variables: 1) greater use of the review to set future objectives and to clarify criteria for good

performance and 2) greater participation of presidents in the review process. No statistically significant relationship was found between presidents' satisfaction with reviews and the confidentiality of reviews.

3B.1 Satisfaction and Goal Setting.

The hypothesis that the greater the use of goals in the review, the greater the president's satisfaction with the review, was supported. The use of goals in the review and presidents' satisfaction with the process were positively related. Both of the variables in the goal setting scale were moderately correlated with satisfaction: 1) the president leaving the review with a clear idea of the criteria of good performance; and 2) setting specific future objectives.

Not only was goal setting found to be positively correlated with the satisfaction of the review for presidents, goal setting was positively correlated with the usefulness of reviews for presidents. The data supports that goals play an important role in assessing performance and suggests that the use of goals in the review will enhance the reviews' usefulness for presidents and their satisfaction with the process.

3B.2 Satisfaction and Participation.

The hypothesis that the greater the president's participation in the review process, the greater the president's satisfaction, was supported. It was expected that the president's participation in the review process would be positively related to the president's satisfaction with the review and the relationships between satisfaction and three of the five variables used to measure participation were statistically significant.

As was found in other studies on performance appraisal (Greller, 1978), enhanced ownership through participation in the process was correlated with enhanced satisfaction with the review process, for the person being reviewed. This suggests that presidents will be more satisfied with the review process, the more they play a meaningful role in determining the procedure, meeting with reviewers, responding to written reports, and (as was said in regard to goal setting), setting the goals and agreeing upon the criteria by which future performance will be evaluated.

Though no significant differences were found in the satisfaction scores for those who completed a self-assessment statement or received a copy of the review, and those who did not, these practices are, nonetheless, typically part of a performance appraisal and are widely recommended.

3B.3 Satisfaction and Confidentiality.

The hypothesis that the greater the confidentiality of reviews, the greater the president's satisfaction with reviews, was not supported. There were no significant differences in the satisfaction scores for presidents with confidential reviews and those whose reviews were not confidential. This hypothesis was based on the importance given to confidentiality, particularly in the literature regarding academic presidents.

There are two likely explanations why confidential reviews were not found to be related to greater satisfaction. It's possible that either the scale developed for this study failed to capture those aspects of confidentiality that do matter to presidents or that confidentiality is not an important issue for those presidents who have more public reviews. This issue pertains to both public and private institutions, since confidentiality (or the lack thereof) was about as common in both sectors. Perhaps what matters is whether the level of confidentiality is appropriate for the culture of the particular institution and the kind of information to be disclosed.

Confidentiality of reviews still seems like an important and very sensitive matter, even if no significant relationship to satisfaction was found here. Most authors have emphasized the importance of confidentiality for meaningful reviews and this has been supported by the courts (see *Missouliau v. Board of Regents of Higher Education*). In most reviews, confidentiality was the norm.

Ratings

3C Performance Ratings and Feedback Seeking Behavior.

The hypothesis that the greater the tendency to seek **negative** feedback, the higher the performance rating, was supported; the hypothesis that the greater the tendency to seek **positive** feedback, the lower the performance rating, was also supported. However, these relationships were relatively weak.

Seeking negative feedback is important for developing an accurate self-theory, contributes to more effective self-regulation, and may project a confident self-image (Ashford & Tsui, 1991, p. 271). Asking for critical feedback can provide valuable information, not otherwise available, and may convey to others the impression that the individual wants to improve his or her performance and face challenges (ibid., p. 255). Not surprisingly, then, presidents who tended to seek critical performance feedback were found to have higher ratings.

Seeking positive feedback tended to have the opposite impact on effectiveness ratings, in this study and in research conducted by Ashford and Tsui (1991). Effectiveness ratings were lower for the presidents and managers who were more likely to ask others to tell them what a good job they were doing. Seeking positive feedback may convey to others the impression of weakness or insecurity, is unlikely to produce new or useful information, and leads others to judge performance as less effective (ibid.).

This research suggests that presidents may have much to gain by seeking critical performance feedback but that there are costs involved, in terms of effectiveness ratings, for asking for positive feedback.

The relatively weak relationship found between seeking negative feedback and higher effectiveness ratings for presidents by boards, may be explained in part by the complexity of rating presidential performance. It is likely that performance ratings for academic presidents were strongly influenced by other unrelated factors, even those beyond the president's control (the timely death of a large donor, demographics, or a change in the ratings formula used by US News and World Report, for example). It was beyond the scope of this study to analyze the impact of other potentially important variables on ratings.

Since this study found only a weak relationship between the tendency to seek negative feedback and higher performance ratings from superiors, while Ashford and Tsui reported a moderate relationship, it is worth considering the differences between the two studies. The differences between the subjects whose performance was evaluated and the respondents who provided these ratings may be relevant.

Ashford and Tsui looked at three sources for effectiveness ratings (superiors, peers, and subordinates), and reported that the correlation coefficients for negative feedback seeking and effectiveness ratings for all three groups were very similar. The situation for college and university presidents may be very different. Research has found that trustees,

administrators, and faculty use different criteria to rate academic presidents' performance (Fujita, 1990). The performance ratings (and success) of academic presidents may be more strongly influenced by whether or not they tend to seek negative feedback from subordinates, specifically faculty; the relationship between negative feedback seeking and performance ratings may be much more dependent upon the respondent (trustees, administrators, or faculty) than was the case in previous research with managers (superiors, peers, and subordinates).

A study conducted by Birnbaum (1992) found that "exemplary presidents" maintained the support of faculty over the course of their presidencies and that a key to their success was "that they are seen as continuing to respond to faculty and willing to open themselves to faculty influence" (p. 98). Birnbaum (1992, p. 193) also found that presidents who assessed their own performance on the basis of constituent feelings, in addition to outcomes, enhanced how faculty and researchers judged institutional improvement. This openness and responsiveness may share characteristics with negative feedback seeking.

In contrast to the most successful presidents, Birnbaum's "modal presidents" tended to maintain board and administrative support over time, but lose faculty support, as part of a pattern of diminishing two-way communication with faculty. "Failed presidents" lost faculty support as well as both administrative and board support.

Faculty support appears to be a key factor in determining academic presidents' success and research supports that actively seeking critical feedback may enhance effectiveness. This suggests that a consultive and collegial communication strategy will contribute to presidents' effectiveness.

This conclusion stands in direct opposition to the characterization of "the effective college president" as aloof and authoritarian, an image made popular by Fisher and Tack (1988). Their research, based on reputational ratings by other presidents, recommended that "presidents should maintain social and psychological distance in order to enhance respect and appreciation" (p. 13). This strategy, which enhanced reputational ratings by peers, may have the opposite effect on effectiveness ratings of faculty.

Faculty involvement in presidential assessments may provide valuable feedback to presidents to help improve their performance, a primary purpose of most reviews. It may also signal to faculty that their opinions matter and lead to greater support for the president. It may prove valuable to periodically conduct a more formal evaluation of the president which provides the opportunity for faculty input.

Improvement

A significant relationship was found between greater negative feedback seeking and more improvement in the president's performance, but no

significant relationship was found between greater adequacy of feedback the president received from the board and more improvement in performance.

3D.1 Improvement and Negative Feedback Seeking.

The hypothesis that the greater the tendency to seek negative feedback, the greater the improvement in performance, was supported. A significant relationship was found between greater negative feedback seeking and more improvement in performance. Critical performance feedback is an important source of information for developing an accurate view of one's performance and sensing what has to change to improve it. This is a basic premise of performance appraisal, specifically in regard to its formative purposes. Not surprisingly, then, the hypothesis was supported.

3D.2 Improvement and Adequate Feedback.

There was no support for the hypothesis that the greater the adequacy of feedback the president received from the board, the greater the improvement in the president's performance. Though seeking negative feedback and improvement in the president's performance were positively related, and receiving adequate feedback and the president's satisfaction with the review were positively related, adequate feedback and improvement in performance were not found to be related.

There may be several reasons why a relationship was found between negative feedback seeking and improvement in performance, while none was found between receiving adequate feedback from the board and improvement in performance. Actively seeking critical performance feedback and being satisfied with the performance feedback one receives from the board may involve very different kinds of behaviors from presidents and perhaps quite different kinds of information. Though feedback is an important source of information for self-regulation (Ashford and Tsui, 1991), the quality of the information and readiness of presidents to use it to improve performance may be greater when presidents specifically seek critical information about performance. Perhaps what presidents regard as adequate feedback tends to be information which affirms their own perceptions of good performance rather than helps to identify ways to improve it.

Other factors may have obscured the relationship between these variables, if one exists. Perhaps the variable used to measure adequate feedback failed to distinguish between presidents who received more specific and insightful feedback and those who did not. It's also possible that those whose performance had the most room for improvement received the highest ratings for improvement in performance; this group would not necessarily be directly correlated with those who were most satisfied with the feedback they received from the board. It might be necessary to use a more qualitative measure to capture the quality and specificity of the performance

feedback variable or more complex statistical analysis to reveal its relationship, if any, to improvement in performance.

In conclusion, presidential assessment has become a common and accepted practice at colleges and universities. Informal annual reviews appear to be the norm, and practices for academic presidents share much in common with the performance appraisals of corporate CEOs. Academic presidents were generally satisfied with the process used for their reviews and found the reviews to be useful. Few reported any negative effects. Previous reports that there have been widespread negative experiences with presidential assessment and that there has been a trend toward more formal reviews appear to have been exaggerated.

Important features of reviews were: providing opportunities for the president to participate in meaningful ways in the process; providing the president with adequate feedback from the board on his or her performance; using previously agreed upon goals to evaluate performance; and using the review as the occasion to set specific future goals and benchmarks for performance. These were related to greater usefulness of reviews for presidents or presidents' satisfaction with reviews, or both. Whether presidents tended to seek out critical performance feedback on a regular basis also seemed to make a difference. Those presidents who did so had higher performance ratings and greater improvement in performance than those who did not. In contrast, those presidents who sought out positive feedback on their performance were rated lower.

Personal Observations and Recommendations

Personal Observations

My choice of this topic for my dissertation grew out of an assignment I received as a graduate research assistant to Professor Richard Chait, at the University of Maryland. He wanted me to conduct a review of the literature on presidential assessment and any related research in the nonprofit and business sectors. My interest was raised when I found a lack of empirical data regarding presidential assessment in colleges and universities as well as strong negative views expressed by some about this practice. There seemed to be a great deal of interest in, as well as suspicion about, the consequences of presidential assessment for academic presidents.

Over the course of the last five or six years, I have observed that there seems to be growing acceptance of the practice of presidential assessment. In workshops for presidents and trustees sponsored by AGB, at which I was a participant or facilitator, there has been noticeably less suspicion and fear, and a more strongly voiced need for information. Whereas considerable time used to be spent addressing questions about whether to conduct presidential assessments, increasingly trustees and presidents have wanted to know specifically what they can do to ensure a successful, responsible review process. Also, there have been fewer presidents attending these workshops with their chairs, and more teams of trustees and chairs. Though I see great value in teamwork between the president and chair, this may be a signal that

presidents have grown more comfortable with being reviewed. These observations were shared by a colleague, William Weary, with whom I was a co-presenter at the most recent AGB workshop on board and presidential assessment (personal conversations, April 1998, Nashville, TN).

During the several years that I served as the Director of Board Education Services for AGB, I received many requests for information and advice on this topic, from presidents as well as board members. They wanted examples of and information about what was done at other institutions and suggestions for improving their own procedures. They also taught me a great deal about assessment practices. The recommendations I offer to practitioners, here, come from those years of conversations, as well as from this study.

Recommendations

I remain an admirer of John Nason and recommend his book, Presidential Assessment, as a solid introduction to the topic. It's a practical handbook and provides advice and options. In addition, I offer a **checklist** to use in planning reviews and specific **suggestions** for improving the assessment process.

Checklist

Most of the presidents and trustees with whom I have spoken were less interested in research and theory than in advice for best practice that might grow out of it. However, as Nason (1984) advised, there is no one best way to conduct a review; presidential assessment should reflect the culture and traditions of the institution.

There are some basic decisions to be made in planning a review, which allow the process to be tailored to fit each unique situation. These questions may help shape a process that will be fair, responsible, and suited to an institution's needs:

1. Timing. What is the schedule for reviews over the course of the presidency (e.g. annual, periodic, alternating annual informal and periodic formal review, or other)?
2. Purposes. What are the purposes for conducting a review at this time (e.g. improve performance, fulfill board's responsibility, determine salary, contract renewal, build consensus on priorities, etc.)?
3. Responsibility. Who will be responsible for leading the process (e.g. board chair, chair of board or ad hoc committee, consultant, other)?
4. Participation. Who will participate in the process (ranging from narrow participation limited to trustees, to broad participation of representative constituencies)?

5. Confidentiality. What will remain confidential (e.g. documents, meetings, reports)?
6. Self-Assessment. Will the president complete a self-assessment statement or report? To whom will it be presented?
7. Data Collection. From whom will information be collected (narrow vs. broad participation) and how (interviews, questionnaires, outside consultant)?
8. Reporting. What information will be reported, to whom, and how (to the president, to the board, to the college or university community; orally or in writing)?
9. Follow-up/Decisions. What actions, if any, will follow the review (e.g. contract renewal, salary recommendation, board resolution, monitoring president's goals)?
10. Assessing Governance. How and when will the performance of the board be reviewed (retreat, meeting, study)? How does this relate to presidential assessment?

Suggestions

Prescriptive recommendations for presidential assessments are fraught with danger. One need only consider the variety of colleges and universities, from seminaries to research universities, to realize that one size won't fit all. In addition, each institution has its own history, as does the incumbent

president. Presidential assessment does not take place in a vacuum; it should complement the various other ways in which institutional plans are developed and evaluated---the long range planning processes, regional accreditation reviews, presidential searches, restructuring efforts, board self-assessment, and the annual budget process. How well these satisfy the need to plan and evaluate institutional goals may determine how formal or informal a process the board chooses to use for presidential assessment.

With those reservations in mind, these suggestions are offered. They are organized around the same themes or variables that were the focus of this study: formal versus informal reviews, purposes, timing, confidentiality, participation, criteria, the role of the president, and board/presidential relations. They are variously supported by the findings, related research, or my experience in this field.

Formal versus informal reviews.

Some institutions may find that informal annual presidential reviews best meets their needs because setting long range goals for the institution and evaluating progress takes place at another time, with other players. Others may be looking for a way to provide more meaningful feedback to the president and governing board and an opportunity to involve more campus constituents in a discussion of institutional priorities.

In general, I would recommend that the board evaluate the performance of the president on an annual basis, using an informal review process, then every three to five years use a more formal review process. This has the benefit of providing the president and the board with the opportunity to discuss concerns and make incremental changes on an annual basis. It also provides the opportunity for a more thorough, periodic examination of the institution and its priorities, with input from constituents, though constituent involvement remains controversial. The benefits of a formal review would be lost if conducted more often.

Since the data show that the norm is conducting informal, annual reviews, presidents and boards should consider whether adding a more formal assessment periodically would address needs that are not otherwise met.

Purposes.

As most authors have emphasized, presidential assessment should be a formative, not summative process; the primary purpose of presidential assessment should be improving the performance of the president. While the board may conduct reviews for a variety of other reasons, those responsible should try to develop a process that will, overall, enhance the president's performance and support the office of the president.

One key to that may be emphasizing the planning function of reviews by ensuring that the process includes setting clear goals, agreeing upon the criteria by which future performance will be evaluated, and using previously agreed upon goals as the basis for evaluating performance. This study and others revealed that greater use of goals in reviews is related to increased usefulness of reviews for presidents and to greater presidential satisfaction with the process. For annual reviews, the president's self-assessment statement should set goals and assess progress over the past year, and serve as the basis for discussions with the board. More formal, periodic reviews may include input on goals from administrators, faculty, students, and others.

It appears that decisions regarding compensation and contract renewal were routinely linked to presidential assessment. However, it remains unclear whether linking compensation decisions to performance appraisal is a good idea; opinion in the literature is divided. In this study, presidents voiced concerns about the amount of increases being both too large or too small; some wanted limited increases, comparable to faculty, while others found their increases disappointingly small.

In practice, separating performance appraisal and pay may appear somewhat artificial, especially if both are examined annually. Nonetheless, it seems worthwhile to do so. Separating the two could serve to emphasize the formative value of reviews: reviews are done to improve performance, not just to set compensation. It can also make clear that compensation decisions are based on many factors, only one of which is performance. If both are

reviewed annually, they may be separated by six months, the compensation decision to coincide with the start of the fiscal year or the review on the anniversary of hire. Since it is questionable whether compensation is an effective source of motivation for performance, separating appraisal and pay is advisable, at least until more data is available.

Confidentiality.

Confidentiality reportedly contributes to more candid, meaningful discussions and useful feedback for the president. The literature on presidential assessment and NACD's guidelines for the assessment of corporate CEOs strongly endorsed confidential reviews. Privacy is generally afforded to such personnel matters and confidential reviews are the norm in public and private institutions, as well as in the corporate sector. There is also legal precedent for holding closed meetings of the governing board for presidential assessments in colleges and universities, based on the primacy of confidentiality over the public's need to know.

Though this study found no difference in the levels of satisfaction among those presidents whose reviews were confidential and those whose reviews were not confidential, this should not be interpreted as an endorsement of more public reviews; most reviews were confidential and presumably should remain so. It has been said already that the process for reviews should reflect the culture and values of each institution and, though

there may be instances where non-confidential reviews are considered to be more appropriate, this is the exception among colleges and universities.

Timing.

The literature on presidential assessment strongly advises that reviews be regarded as routine events. Reviews should be scheduled on a regular basis, as a matter of board policy, never initiated in response to a crisis or incident. In addition, how frequently reviews should be conducted depends upon the purposes, though the data shows that most presidents are reviewed annually, using an informal process.

There is empirical support for conducting reviews less often, if the goal is more useful reviews; this study found that presidents with less frequent reviews found them more useful than those whose reviews were conducted annually. Periodic, formal reviews are, by definition, more comprehensive, more inclusive, and more public events. While annual reviews may serve many other purposes, such as fulfilling the board's responsibility to guide the institution, presidents may get more out of less frequent or presumably more thorough reviews.

Participation in the process.

Participation in the process is a key decision. While informal reviews tend to limit participation to board members and rely on more subjective information about performance, more formal reviews include broad representation of constituents and use more objective, systematically collected data. This study showed that most reviews limited participation to members of the governing board. Less than one-third indicated that either faculty or the executive cabinet were included; participation of other constituents was even less common. As with most aspects of the review, the purposes for the review should help determine who participates.

Constituent participation, specifically faculty participation, remains controversial. Two arguments can be made for including faculty in reviews: 1) faculty rely on different criteria and may yield important information about Presidential performance and 2) their participation may have useful symbolic value. Constituent feelings about presidential performance may be valid criteria for evaluation and including constituents, especially faculty, may actually increase support for the president, even if their ratings are less flattering: "[F]rom an interpretive perspective, activities that make presidents more visible on campus, indicate their interest in receiving feedback, and provide greater opportunities for interaction may have positive consequences themselves, regardless of the nature of the information collected or the use to which it is put" (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 193).

The argument for constituent participation is more persuasive to me than the opposing view offered by Fisher (1984); he cautions that including faculty in reviews could undermine the president's ability to lead and signal abdication of the board's authority. The concern that constituent participation may turn into a popularity poll may be addressed by: avoiding rating scales and questionnaires; using interviews and focus groups; selecting an appropriate range of representatives; and focusing input on goals and priorities, not personal qualities of the president. Broad participation should not be considered more often than every three to five years; in any case, the decision to include constituents should be made with care.

Criteria.

Goals play an important role in performance appraisal. The findings of this study (and others) support that using goals in reviews is related to greater presidential satisfaction and more useful reviews. Establishing benchmarks for good performance, reaching consensus on priorities, and confronting the problems posed by competing and ambiguous goals could be especially valuable to academic presidents.

Taking advantage of the review to develop specific goals and agree upon the criteria by which those goals will be measured could prove to make the process more useful and satisfying for the president. Each time a review is undertaken, those goals mutually agreed upon at the previous review

should be used to evaluate performance. For new presidents, the job description or statement of expectations resulting from the presidential search, could serve this purpose.

The role of the president.

Previous research and the findings from this study support that increased participation in the assessment process enhances the satisfaction of the person being reviewed. In principle, it also makes sense to develop a process collaboratively, rather than imposing an evaluation unilaterally.

There are several ways the president is typically involved in the process, including: participation in developing the review process and planning the review; a written self-assessment statement; face-to-face meetings with those conducting the review and the board chair; an opportunity to comment on a draft of the written summary, if any; and a summary discussion with or final report to the entire board. Participation can even start with the appointment process, when goals are established for the presidency and when the occasion for the first review should be discussed.

One thing that presidents can initiate on their own is to actively seek out critical or negative performance feedback. Presidents may enjoy better relations with constituents if they are more consultive. This study (and previous research) found that the tendency to seek negative feedback was related to higher performance ratings and greater improvement in

performance. While positive feedback may indeed seem scarce at times, it is even less likely that negative feedback will be volunteered. Presidents may be able to improve their image, relationships, and evaluations by finding ways to ask how they can do better.

Board/president relations.

Reviews are just one part of the relationship between the president and the board. A review cannot make up for or take the place of the ongoing, regular feedback and communication needed between the president and board. The literature suggests that presidents need ongoing, regular feedback from the board and this study supports that they find their reviews more useful if they get it.

It was surprising that this study found that not all institutions reported the results of presidential reviews to the entire board. This is an opportunity to assert board support for the president, clarify institutional goals, and reflect on ways in which the president and board can work together better to achieve those goals. More boards should consider doing so.

The board should ensure that high ethical standards and mutual respect prevail. This includes protecting the confidentiality of information and using the occasion to demonstrate the boards' support for the president. The most memorable comments in this study came from presidents who complained about trustees who behaved in inappropriate ways, ranging from

emotional outbursts to leaked information. The actions of one person can spoil the process.

The literature on performance appraisal and results of this study suggest that boards which provide the president with useful feedback on his or her performance can enhance the formative purposes of presidential assessment. Trustees should try to provide critical comments and clear suggestions as well as praise; while negative feedback needs to be delivered in a helpful way, more presidents complained that reviews were too superficial than too critical.

Boards should consider how to best coordinate presidential assessment, board assessment, and institutional planning. A more comprehensive examination of governance can assess the strengths, weaknesses, and goals of the institution as well as the performance of the president. A more in-depth review, every three to five years, may be useful to complement more frequent informal reviews.

Limitations of the Study

This study failed to capture the responses of presidents who left prior to reviews or after reviews but before questionnaires for this study were sent out. This may have excluded, and thereby underrepresented, those who were potentially the least satisfied with presidential assessment practices.

The bivariate correlation analysis in Research Question Three in some instances arbitrarily designated variables as independent and dependent, and thereby made inferences of causality. In some cases, (e.g. Research Question 3C) reverse causality may have been a factor (e.g. low performance ratings may have caused presidents to seek positive feedback).

Research Question 3C relied upon a single item variable to measure the president's performance rating, which is less reliable than using multiple indicators. Future research should avoid this shortcoming.

Due to the low response rate among chairs of multicampus systems, their data was not reported. Future studies should use a more traditional definition of systems (only members of NASH) and anticipate a greater need for follow-up with non-respondents. Obtaining support for the study from NASH would be an asset.

The study did not examine the experiences of presidents who had never been evaluated (26.1% of respondents). Though half of this group may have been new presidents who had not yet been reviewed (based on the number of respondents who had served less than one year) it would be interesting to know more about the performance and work life of presidents who were not ordinarily reviewed.

This study focused on the practices of accredited, postsecondary institutions. It did not include proprietary schools, a growing sector in higher education, whose practices may vary. A similar study of this population could be of interest.

Questions for Further Research

This study was exploratory and collected basic information about the procedures used to conduct presidential assessments and the outcomes of those assessments, according to presidents and board chairs. Many questions remain.

Should performance appraisal and compensation be linked? Whether and how to link compensation and performance appraisal remains controversial. The literature has proponents on both sides of the argument. On one extreme, the author of Punished By Rewards provides research that demonstrates that intrinsic motivation is destroyed by monetary rewards (Kohn, 1993); on the other hand, motivation theory shows that setting goals, and appropriately rewarding performance, enhances achievement. In practice, it appears that annual reviews and compensation decisions are linked for more than half of academic presidents.

It would be useful to know more about the costs and benefits involved in this matter, the various purposes that might be served, and how this pertains to colleges and universities as well as in other settings. Since annual performance reviews are the norm and they may in many cases be motivated by the need to set compensation, establishing the appropriateness of this link could have important implications for employment practices.

How does including faculty as participants in assessing the performance of academic presidents affect the outcomes of the process?

Rather than concentrating on whether institutions use formal or informal review processes to assess the president's performance, we may learn more from looking closely at the most controversial aspect of formal reviews - faculty participation. Does faculty participation tend to undermine presidential authority and weaken the president's ability to lead, as Fisher claimed (1984) or does it tend to enhance the president's ratings and faculty support, as Birnbaum has found (1992)? What are the circumstances that seems to make a difference, including the type of institution and the president's length of service? The potential costs and benefits for including faculty in reviews remain disputed.

Do presidents leave office to avoid an impending performance review or get driven out shortly after a review is conducted? Several authors have speculated that presidential assessment has contributed to shorter presidential terms for otherwise successful presidents. This study was unable to capture or examine the experiences of presidents who left to avoid an assessment or shortly after one occurred. This group could reveal important information about the problems reviews create and the concerns reviews raise for presidents. Information from this group would also help to more accurately assess the negative impact of reviews. We may be able to learn from these experiences and avoid practices which cause presidents to leave prematurely.

How should presidential assessment practices be tailored to meet the changing needs of presidents at different stages of their careers? It seems sensible that various aspects of the assessment process (purposes, timing, participation, criteria, and role of the president) should reflect the length of time the president has served in office. It would be useful to examine how presidential and institutional needs vary, and could best be addressed, by different assessment approaches for new and seasoned presidents.

How do multicampus systems evaluate the performance of system heads and institutional presidents? System CEOs and presidents of institutions in systems have complex reporting relationships, which may include the system head, governing board, board of visitors, foundation board, and others. It would be useful to trustees, systems heads, and presidents in multicampus systems to know more about practices in that sector. Research might be based on the population of institutions that are members of NASH, to clearly define the institutions in multicampus systems. The questionnaire used for the survey of chairs of multicampus system boards conducted for this study (from which insufficient data was collected) could be used with this better defined population.

How should the assessment of board and presidential performance be related? Board and presidential performance are inextricably linked, but few boards (12.8%) evaluate board and presidential performance jointly (Schwartz, 1998a, p. 11). Clark Kerr and Marion Gade (1989a, p. 2-3) remarked "that the performance of a president depends on the conduct of the board--above

almost all else except for the personality and character of the president him or herself--and that the performance of a board almost equally depends on the conduct of the president. The relationship, without too much exaggeration, may be looked upon as that of Siamese twins."

The dynamic relationship between the performance of the president and the performance of the board was beyond the scope of this study. Further research may reveal how coordinating assessment efforts can enhance or improve this relationship and the performance of both the president and the board.

What does it mean to be an effective leader or exemplary president?

How would one rate American college and university presidents? It was beyond the scope of this study to examine the relative levels of performance of presidents or establish objective or subjective criteria for conducting such an evaluation. One approach, reputational ratings, leaves much to be desired; it's impossible to determine the extent to which these ratings reflect the greatness of institutions rather than the greatness of the presidents who lead them.

American higher education is the envy of the world and most boards think the performance of their own president is outstanding. Still, some critics claim that our colleges and universities suffer from a crisis of leadership. We now know much more about the procedures by which academic presidents are evaluated, but there is still no agreed upon yardstick by which we can measure their excellence.

More complex definitions of effective leadership and better measures of those qualities, are needed. Additional studies, like those conducted by Birnbaum (1992), which examined presidential effectiveness in relation to cognitive complexity, or by Chait, Holland, and Taylor (1991) which identified behavioral differences in the way effective boards of trustees function, may provide presidents and boards with useful tools for enhancing the formative value of reviews.

APPENDIX A
COVER LETTERS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Sample cover letter to presidents, initial mailing.
2. Sample cover letter to presidents, follow-up mailing to nonrespondents.
3. Questionnaire for Presidents.
4. Questionnaire for Board Chairs (Single Campus Institutions).
5. Questionnaire for Chairs of Multicampus System Boards.



ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
One Dupont Circle • Suite 400 • Washington, D.C. 20036-1190
Tel: 202/296-8400 • Fax: 202/223-7053, 202/775-8790

January 17, 1997

Ms. Merrill Schwartz
Membership
8009 Sligo Creek Parkway
Takoma Park, MD 20912-6304

Dear Ms. Schwartz:

We write to ask your help with a national survey of **presidential assessment** policies and practices in colleges and universities, sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). This study is prompted by frequent requests from trustees and presidents for advice and information on presidential assessment and the lack of available empirical data. Your participation will ensure that the survey results are accurate, complete, and reflect your views. We have sent a similar questionnaire to the chair of your institution's governing board.

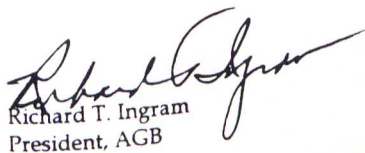
This study will provide presidents and boards with information on current assessment practices, the characteristics of the most useful assessments, and candid suggestions for improving practice. In addition to a doctoral dissertation based on the study, AGB will publish a summary of the survey results and send a copy to all respondents. The code number on the questionnaire will allow us to acknowledge your participation and to follow-up with non-respondents. All information is strictly confidential and results will be reported only in aggregate form. It should take about 15-20 minutes to complete the full questionnaire.

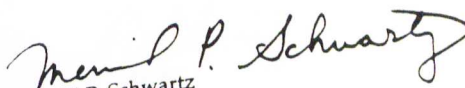
We ask that this questionnaire be completed only by you. **If you have not had an assessment** in your current position, complete only questions 1-7. It is just as important to have data about presidents whose performance has not been assessed, so please respond in either case.

Please return the completed questionnaire to Merrill Schwartz at AGB by **February 14, 1997** in the envelope provided or use AGB's address on the last page. Questions about the study may be directed to Merrill by mail or fax at AGB, or by e-mail at merrills@wam.umd.edu.

As you know, AGB's policy is not to burden you with surveys except when we believe them to be of especial timeliness and importance. Thus, we appreciate your help with this one.

Sincerely,


Richard T. Ingram
President, AGB


Merrill P. Schwartz
Research Associate

P.S. This questionnaire should be completed by the current president, even if this letter was not appropriately addressed. Please mark any corrections to your name or address directly on a copy of this letter and return it to Merrill separately from the questionnaire.

125549

Enclosures



ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
One Dupont Circle • Suite 400 • Washington, D.C. 20036-1190
Tel: 202/296-8400 • Fax: 202/223-7053

February 21, 1997

Dear Colleague:

We write to ask your help with a national survey of **presidential assessment** policies and practices in colleges and universities, sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). **This mailing is a second request**, which we have sent only to nonrespondents; please disregard this mailing if you have recently returned your questionnaire. This study is prompted by frequent requests from trustees and presidents for advice and information on presidential assessment and the lack of available empirical data. Your participation will ensure that the survey results are accurate, complete, and reflect your views. We have sent a similar questionnaire to the chair of your institution's governing board.

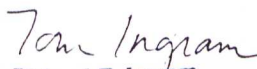
This study will provide presidents and boards with information on current assessment practices, the characteristics of the most useful assessments, and candid suggestions for improving practice. In addition to a doctoral dissertation based on the study, AGB will publish a summary of the survey results and send a copy to all respondents. The code number on the questionnaire will allow us to acknowledge your participation. All information is strictly confidential and results will be reported only in aggregate form. It should take about 15-20 minutes to complete the full questionnaire.

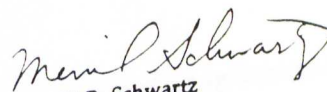
We ask that this questionnaire be completed only by you. We have included as "presidents" the chief executives of systems, institutions in systems, and single campus institutions, regardless of titles. If you **have not had an assessment** in your current position, complete only questions 1-7. It is just as important to have data about presidents whose performance has not been assessed, even for those recently appointed, so please respond in either case.

Please return the completed questionnaire to Merrill Schwartz at AGB by **March 7, 1997** in the envelope provided or use AGB's address on the last page. Questions about the study may be directed to Merrill by mail or fax at AGB, or by e-mail at merrills@wam.umd.edu.

As you know, AGB's policy is not to burden you with surveys except when we believe them to be of especial timeliness and importance. Thus, we appreciate your help with this one.

Sincerely,


Richard T. Ingram
President, AGB


Merrill P. Schwartz
Research Associate

P.S. This questionnaire should be completed by the current president, even if this letter was not appropriately addressed. Please mark any corrections to your name or address directly on a copy of this letter and return it to Merrill separately from the questionnaire.

Enclosures



Survey of Presidential Assessment Policies and Practices

Questionnaire for Presidents

Presidents are subject to constant scrutiny, but only periodically do they participate in a process they recognize as a performance review, ranging from casual and informal to formal and comprehensive. Please answer these questions about your current position and your most recent experience, if any, with a presidential assessment process. All information is strictly confidential and results will be reported only in aggregate form. Although titles and terminology vary, the terms "presidential assessment," "evaluation," and "performance review" are used interchangeably here. If you have not had a performance review in your current presidency, please answer only questions 1-7.

Personal Data for the President

1. Number of years you have served in your current presidency:

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-9 years
- 10 or more

2. Your age:

- less than 30 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-69 years
- 70-79 years
- 80 years or more

3. Your sex:

- female
- male

4. Do you currently serve under the terms of a written contract or agreement?

no

yes. If yes, number of years covered by contract/agreement? years.

[AFFIX LABEL HERE]

Policies, Guidelines, and Practices

5. Is there a written policy requiring assessment of the president's performance?

- no
- yes (if yes, check one):
 - board policy
 - legislative/legal requirement
 - other written policy

6. About how often is your performance supposed to be assessed?

- no requirement that I be assessed
- no schedule
- schedule for review varies
- scheduled reviews occur at the following interval (indicate below):
 - more than once a year
 - annually
 - every 2 years
 - every 3 years
 - every 4 years
 - every 5 years
 - every 6 or more years
 - other

7. When was your most recent presidential assessment in your current position completed?

- never (Stop here if you answered "never" and please return this questionnaire to AGB.)
- less than 1 year ago
- 1-2 years ago
- 2-3 years ago
- 3-4 years ago
- 4-5 years ago
- more than 5 years ago

8. Who was primarily responsible for conducting the assessment?

(choose one)

- the board chair
- the entire governing board
- a standing committee of the board
- an external consultant
- a special committee including

(check all that apply)

- alumni
- external consultant
- faculty
- staff
- students
- trustees
- others

other: _____

9. From whom was information collected as part of the most recent presidential assessment?

(check all that apply)

- no one
- alumni
- college/university foundation board members
- college/university advisory board members
- donors
- faculty
- government officials (legislators, legislative staff, governor, local officials)
- other college presidents
- president's executive cabinet
- president's staff (other than executive cabinet)
- staff - nonprofessional, clerical, maintenance
- staff - professional
- students
- trustees (governing board members)
- others: _____
- don't know

10. Indicate whether, for your most recent assessment, the following items were confidential, not confidential, or not applicable:

| | confidential | not confidential | not applicable |
|-------|--------------|------------------|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | (a) your self-assessment statement |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | (b) summary of information from others using written questionnaires |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | (c) summary of information from others using interviews |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | (d) summary report of assessment results |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | (e) discussions/meetings with you |

11. How thoroughly were the following aspects of presidential performance covered in your most recent assessment?

| | very satisfactorily | satisfactorily | undecided | unsatisfactorily | very unsatisfactorily |
|-------|---------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- (a) academic leadership and management
- (b) administrative leadership and management
- (c) budget and finance
- (d) fund raising
- (e) external relations
- (f) personal characteristics

12. Was the presidential assessment process used as the occasion for either discussions or decisions regarding any of the following?

| no or not applicable | yes | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (a) contract renewal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (b) bonus pay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (c) salary adjustment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) benefits adjustments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (e) sabbatical leave |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (f) vacation or other leave |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (g) participation in seminars or conferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (h) family considerations |

13. About how long did the entire process for the most recent assessment last?

- less than a month
- 1-3 months
- 4-6 months
- 7-9 months
- 10-12 months
- more than a year

Role of the President

14. Were you informed about the process for presidential assessment before, or at the time of, your appointment?

- no (there was no process in place)
- no (there was a process in place, but it wasn't discussed with me)
- yes

15. Was the process used for your presidential assessment existing, revised, or new?

- an existing process was used, without changes
- an existing process was used, with revisions
- a new process was used or developed
- other

16. Which statements best describe your involvement in developing the process used for your presidential assessment?

- (check all that apply)
- I had no role in determining the process.
 - I was consulted regarding the process.
 - I approved the process.
 - Changes in an existing process were made at my request.
 - I contributed to creating or selecting a new process.
 - I was primarily responsible for creating or selecting the process.
 - Other

17. If a written report was prepared, were you given an opportunity to comment on the final draft?

- no written report
- no
- yes

18. Did you receive a written report or summary of the results of the presidential assessment?

- no written report
- no
- yes

19. Were face-to-face meetings held with you and any of the following to discuss the results of the assessment?

- no
- yes (check all that apply):
 - board chair, alone
 - chair of committee conducting the review, alone
 - some or all of the members of the committee conducting the review
 - entire governing board
 - other

The President and The Board

The relationship between the president and the board can be of special significance in a presidential performance review. This section focuses on board/presidential relations.

20. How satisfied are you with the following:

| | very satisfied | satisfied | undecided | unsatisfied | very unsatisfied |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(a) The quality and specificity of the performance feedback you received from the board in regard to the presidential assessment process?

(b) The quality and specificity of the performance feedback you receive from the board in the regular course of your work?

(c) The current level of trust and openness in your relationship with the board?

23. Was the process used for your most recent performance review typical of reviews you have had (or expect to have) in your current position?

yes

no If no, please choose the best explanation:

There is no typical review process.

The process was recently changed.

The process is expected to change.

The review process is informal for several years, then a more formal review is done.

This was an unusual year.

other

don't know/can't say

24. What was the most significant change you made, as a result of the last review?

25. What was the least useful part of the review process or the most important thing you would like changed?

26. What assistance, if any, would be helpful to you or your board for future assessments?

(check all that apply)

literature on presidential assessment

sample checklist of presidential performance criteria

sample evaluation forms from other institutions

sample evaluation policies from other institutions

workshop or training on presidential assessment for presidents

presidential assessment consulting services for board chairs and trustees

informal counsel from practitioners by telephone

summary data from this survey

other: _____

27. Comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your valuable time and information. Please return the completed questionnaire by **February 14, 1997** in the envelope provided or mail to:

Merrill Schwartz, Research Associate
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
One Dupont Circle, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036



Survey of Board and Presidential Assessment Policies and Practices

Questionnaire for Board Chairs

SECTION I: PRESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

Presidents are subject to constant scrutiny, but only periodically do they participate in a process they recognize as a performance review, ranging from casual and informal to formal and comprehensive. Please answer these questions about the current president and your most recent experience, if any, with a presidential assessment process. All information is strictly confidential and results will be reported only in aggregate form. Although titles and terminology vary, the terms "presidential assessment," "evaluation," and "performance review" are used interchangeably here. If the current president has not had a performance review, please answer only questions 1-3 and proceed to page 6, Section II, Board Self-Assessment.

Policies, Guidelines, and Practices

1. Is there a written policy requiring assessment of the president's performance?
 no
 yes (if yes, check all that apply):
 - board policy
 - legislative/legal requirement
 - president's contract/agreement
 - other written policy

2. About how often is the president's performance supposed to be reviewed?
 - no requirement
 - schedule varies
 - no schedule
 - more than once a year
 - annually
 - every 2 years
 - every 3 years
 - every 4 years
 - every 5 years
 - every 6 or more years
 - other

3. When was the most recent assessment of the current president completed?
 - never (Stop here if you answered "never" and go to Section II, page 6.)
 - less than 1 year ago
 - 1-2 years ago
 - 2-3 years ago
 - 3-4 years ago
 - 4-5 years ago
 - more than 5 years ago

[AFFIX LABEL HERE]

4. Who was primarily responsible for conducting the assessment?

(choose one)

- the board chair
- the entire governing board
- a standing committee of the board
- an external consultant
- a special committee including:

(check all that apply)

- alumni
- external consultant
- faculty
- staff
- students
- trustees
- others
- other: _____

5. From whom was information collected as part of the most recent presidential assessment?

(check all that apply)

- no one
- alumni
- college/university foundation board members
- college/university advisory board members
- donors
- faculty
- government officials (legislators, legislative staff, governor, local officials)
- other college presidents
- president's executive cabinet
- president's staff (other than executive cabinet)
- staff—nonprofessional, clerical, maintenance
- staff—professional
- students
- trustees (governing board members)
- others: _____
- don't know

6. Was a final report presented to the entire board?

no

yes. If yes, was it (check one):

- oral?
- written?
- both oral and written?

7. Indicate whether, for your president's most recent assessment, the following items were confidential, not confidential, or not applicable:

| confidential | not confidential | not applicable | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| — | — | — | (a) president's self-assessment statement |
| — | — | — | (b) summary of information from others using written questionnaires |
| — | — | — | (c) summary of information from others using interviews |
| — | — | — | (d) summary report of assessment results |
| — | — | — | (e) discussions/meetings with the president |

8. How thoroughly were the following aspects of presidential performance covered in the president's most recent assessment?

| | very satisfactorily | satisfactorily | undecided | unsatisfactorily | very unsatisfactorily | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (a) academic leadership and management |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (b) administrative leadership and management |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (c) budget and finance |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (d) fund raising |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (e) external relations |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (f) personal characteristics |

9. Was the presidential assessment process used as the occasion for discussions or decisions regarding any of the following?

| no or not applicable | yes | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| — | — | (a) contract renewal |
| — | — | (b) bonus pay |
| — | — | (c) salary adjustment |
| — | — | (d) benefits adjustments |
| — | — | (e) sabbatical leave |
| — | — | (f) vacation or other leave |
| — | — | (g) participation in seminars or conferences |
| — | — | (h) family considerations |

10. About how long did the entire process for the most recent assessment last?
- less than a month
 - 1-3 months
 - 4-6 months
 - 7-9 months
 - 10-12 months
 - more than a year

Summary Comments on the Assessment Process

11. What was the impact of the most recent presidential assessment?

| | generally increased or improved | somewhat increased or improved | stayed about the same | somewhat decreased or became worse | generally decreased or became worse | not applicable | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (a) president's compensation and benefits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (b) relationship between the president and the board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (c) relationship between the president and the faculty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) relationship between the president and the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (e) president's ability to lead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (f) president's performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (g) quality of feedback the president gets from the board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (h) president's understanding of what the board needs to function more effectively |

12. If you were to translate the president's most recent performance review into an overall rating, how did the board (or designees) rate the president's performance?

- outstanding
- very satisfactory
- satisfactory
- unsatisfactory
- very unsatisfactory
- don't know/can't say

13. During the past 6 months how frequently did the president directly ask you for feedback concerning his or her performance?

- about once a day
- several times per week
- about once per week
- several times per month
- about once per month
- less than once per month
- not at all during past six months
- don't know

14. Thinking about the past six months, how characteristic of the president was it to:

| | very characteristic | generally characteristic | undecided/don't know | generally uncharacteristic | very uncharacteristic |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(a) Ask others to be critical when they gave him or her feedback?
 (b) Prefer detailed, critical appraisals even though they might hurt?
 (c) Tend to seek good news about himself or herself?
 (d) Ask for feedback if he or she knew it would be positive rather than negative?

15. Was the process used for the most recent presidential review typical of presidential reviews conducted (or that will be conducted) at your institution?

- yes
- no If no, please explain:
 - There is no typical review process.
 - The process was recently changed.
 - The process is expected to change.
 - The review process is informal for several years, then a more formal review is done.
 - This was an unusual year.
 - other
- don't know/can't say

16. What assistance, if any, would be helpful to you or the board for future assessments?

- literature on presidential assessment
- sample checklist of presidential performance criteria
- sample evaluation forms from other institutions
- sample evaluation policies from other institutions
- workshop or training on presidential assessment for presidents
- workshop or training on presidential assessment for board chairs and trustees
- presidential assessment consulting services
- informal counsel from practitioners by telephone
- summary data from this survey
- other: _____

SECTION II: BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Some governing boards periodically take time to reflect on the ways in which the board conducts its own business, the contributions of individual members, and the leadership roles of board officers. Although sometimes an outside facilitator is used, we refer to this as "board self-assessment" because these activities are generally initiated and conducted by members of the board. Board self-assessment may occur, for example, as part of a regular meeting, as a special event, or through a written survey. Please answer the following questions regarding your board's self-assessment activities. If your board has not engaged in self-assessment activities within the past five years, please start with question one and follow the directions carefully (certain sections will be skipped).

Policies, Guidelines, and Practices

1. Who is primarily responsible for initiating board self-assessment activities?

- no one
- board chair
- executive committee
- nominating, board affairs, or other board committee
- president of institution
- other
- don't know

2. On what basis are board self-assessment activities initiated?

- board policy requires periodic board self-assessment (Please enclose copy)
- by tradition, the board evaluates its own performance periodically
- no policy or tradition of board self-assessment
- other
- don't know

3. Either by written board policy or tradition, about how often are board assessments supposed to be conducted?

- no requirement or tradition of board self-assessment
- once a year
- every 2 or 3 years
- every 4 or 5 years
- less often than every five years
- periodically, not a set time
- other
- don't know

4. Has the governing board conducted a board self-assessment within the past five years?

- no (Skip to question 18)
- yes
- don't know (Skip to question 18)

5. Did the board use a facilitator from outside of the institution to conduct the last assessment?

- no
- yes
- don't know

6. Did trustees participate in either interviews or a written survey as part of the last assessment?

- no
- yes
- don't know

7. What was the setting for the last discussion of the board's performance?

- a board retreat
- a board meeting
- a meeting of board leaders or a board committee
- other: (please elaborate) _____
- don't know

8. What issues or topics received the most attention in the board's most recent self-assessment?

(check all that apply):

- institutional mission and education policy
- institutional and strategic planning
- physical plant
- financial management
- financial support and/or fund raising
- board membership or composition
- board organization or committee structure
- board orientation and education
- board information needs
- board/chief executive relations
- board/faculty relations
- board/student relations
- performance of individual board members
- group process/how board functions as a group
- board goals
- board bylaws
- other: _____

9. Were previously agreed upon goals for the board's performance used as criteria for evaluating the board?

- no
- yes

10. Were any indicators of institutional performance used as criteria for evaluating board performance?

- no
- yes

11. What was the impact of the last board self-assessment?

| | better | worse | about the same | not applicable | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (a) trustee commitment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (b) relationship between board and president |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (c) board structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) board composition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (e) content of board agendas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (f) how board meetings are conducted |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (g) trustee orientation or education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (h) clarity of board priorities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (i) clarity of trustees' roles and responsibilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (j) use of board's time |

12. How satisfied do you think the board was with the process for the last board assessment?

- very unsatisfied
- unsatisfied
- satisfied
- very satisfied
- don't know, can't say

13. In your opinion, what would improve the board's self-assessment process?

- (check all that apply):
- greater commitment from board, higher rate of participation
 - new board policy on board assessment
 - better facilitation or assistance from an experienced consultant
 - written materials, such as self-study criteria
 - don't know, can't say
 - other

14. What was the most significant change made as a result of the last board self-assessment?

15. What was the least useful part of the last board self-assessment?

The President and the Board

16. In what ways, if any, was the last board self-assessment related to assessment of the president's performance?

- there is no process for presidential assessment
- presidential and board assessment are done together
- presidential assessment takes place at another time
- other

17. What aspects of board and presidential relations are included in the board assessment?

(check all that apply)

- policy making and management responsibilities
- fund raising responsibilities
- board support for the president
- board information needs
- trustee selection
- board orientation and education
- presidential succession planning
- other: (please elaborate) _____
- none of the above

Board Leadership

18. Does the board, or a board committee, assess the performance of board leaders?

- no
- yes

19. Within the past year, were board members asked to provide feedback on how board meetings can be improved?

- no
- yes

Individual Board Members

20. Does the board have a process for reviewing the performance of individual members?

- no (Skip to question 23)
- yes

21. When is individual trustee performance assessed?

(check all that apply):

- as part of an overall board self-assessment
- when prompted by a problem or need
- at the end of terms or when considered for reappointment
- annually
- other

22. What are the criteria for individual trustee assessment?

(check all that apply)

- attendance
- committee work
- personal financial support
- fund raising assistance
- public relations efforts
- varies according to individual
- other
- don't know/can't say

Summary Comments on Board Self-Assessment

23. What are the greatest barriers to board assessment?

(check all that apply)

- lack of good models for an assessment process
- lack of clear benchmarks for "good" board performance
- lack of interest in board assessment among trustees
- lack of interest in board assessment by the president
- lack of time
- expense
- other

24. Overall, how would you rate your board's performance?

- outstanding
- very satisfactory
- satisfactory
- unsatisfactory
- very unsatisfactory
- don't know/can't say

25. What assistance, if any, is of interest to you?

(check all that apply)

- literature on board assessment
- sample trustee position descriptions
- sample board evaluation forms
- sample board evaluation policies
- workshop or training for presidents
- workshop or training for board chairs and trustees
- names of consultants
- board assessment consulting services
- informal counsel from practitioners by telephone
- summary data from this survey

Personal Data for the Board Chair

26. Total number of years you have served on this governing board:

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-9
- 10 or more

27. Total number of years you have served as the chair of this governing board:

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-9
- 10 or more

28. Your age:

- less than 30 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-69 years
- 70-79 years
- 80 years or more

29. Your sex:

- female
- male

30. Comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your valuable time and information. Please return the completed questionnaire upon receipt in the envelope provided or mail to:

Merrill Schwartz, Research Associate
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
One Dupont Circle, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036



Survey of Board and Presidential Assessment Policies and Practices

Questionnaire for Chairs of Multicampus System Boards

This questionnaire is designed for the **chair of a governing board of a multicampus system**. "System" refers to two or more campuses with substantial institutional authority, headed by a chief executive, under a single governing board. This should describe the governance of your "system" even if it is not referred to as such.

Though titles and terminology do vary, here "**system head**" refers to the chief executive officer of the system and "**president**" refers to the head of each institution or campus belonging to the system. Please observe this convention and interpret these terms as they apply to your own system, regardless of the titles you use.

The questionnaire has two sections. Section One concerns the evaluation of the system head and presidents. Section Two concerns the system board's own self-evaluation activities. All information is strictly confidential and results will be reported only in aggregate form.

SECTION I: ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM HEADS AND PRESIDENTS

Presidents and system heads are subject to constant scrutiny, but only periodically do they participate in a process they recognize as a performance review, ranging from casual and informal to formal and comprehensive. There are several questions regarding the policies for assessment of the system head, followed by similar questions regarding assessment of the presidents of each institution in the system. Please answer these in regard to a typical assessment, if you can, or in regard to the intent of the policies, as appropriate.

Assessment of the System Head

1. Is there a written policy requiring assessment of the system head:

- no
- yes (if yes, check all that apply):
 - board policy
 - legislative/legal requirement
 - system head's contract/agreement
 - other written policy

2. About how often is the system head's performance supposed to be reviewed?

- no requirement
- schedule varies
- no schedule
- more than once a year
- annually
- every 2 years
- every 3 years
- every 4 years
- every 5 years
- every 6 or more years
- other

[AFFIX LABEL HERE]

3. When was the most recent assessment of the current system head completed?
- never (may include recent appointees)
 - less than 1 year ago
 - 1-2 years ago
 - 2-3 years ago
 - 3-4 years ago
 - 4-5 years ago
 - more than 5 years ago

4. Who, typically, is primarily responsible for conducting the assessment of the system head's performance?

(choose one)

- the chair of the system's governing board
- the entire governing board
- a standing committee of the governing board
- an external consultant
- a special committee including:

(check all that apply)

- alumni
- external consultant
- faculty
- institutional presidents
- institutional staff
- system staff
- students
- trustees (system governing board members)
- others

- other: _____
- don't know

5. From whom is information typically collected as part of the assessment of the system head?

(check all that apply)

- no one
- alumni
- college/university foundation board members
- college/university advisory board members
- donors
- faculty
- government officials (legislators, legislative staff, governor, local officials)
- other college presidents
- president's executive cabinet
- president's staff (other than executive cabinet)
- staff—nonprofessional, clerical, maintenance
- staff—professional
- students
- trustees (system governing board members)
- others: _____
- don't know

6. Is a final report typically presented to the entire board?

- no
- yes. If yes, is it typically (choose one):
 - oral?
 - written?
 - both oral and written?

7. Indicate whether, for the system head's assessment, the following items are typically confidential, not confidential, or not applicable:

| confidential | not confidential | not applicable | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| — | — | — | (a) system head's self-assessment statement |
| — | — | — | (b) summary of information from others using written questionnaires |
| — | — | — | (c) summary of information from others using interviews |
| — | — | — | (d) summary report of assessment results |
| — | — | — | (e) discussions/meetings with the system head |

8. How thoroughly were the following aspects of performance covered in the system head's most recent assessment?

| | very satisfactorily | satisfactorily | undecided | unsatisfactorily | very unsatisfactorily | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (a) academic leadership and management |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (b) administrative leadership and management |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (c) budget and finance |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (d) fund raising |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (e) external relations |
| — | — | — | — | — | — | (f) personal characteristics |

9. Is the assessment process for the system head typically used as the occasion for discussions or decisions regarding any of the following?

| no or not applicable | yes | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| — | — | (a) contract renewal |
| — | — | (b) bonus pay |
| — | — | (c) salary adjustment |
| — | — | (d) benefits adjustments |
| — | — | (e) sabbatical leave |
| — | — | (f) vacation or other leave |
| — | — | (g) participation in seminars or conferences |
| — | — | (h) family considerations |

Assessment of Presidential Performance in Multicampus System Institutions

10. Is there a written policy requiring assessment of the presidents of institutions in the system?

- no
- yes (if yes, check all that apply):
 - board policy
 - legislative/legal requirement
 - president's contract/agreement
 - other written policy

11. About how often are presidents typically supposed to be reviewed?

- no requirement
- varies
- no schedules
- more than once a year
- annually
- every 2 years
- every 3 years
- every 4 years
- every 5 years
- every 6 or more years
- other: _____

12. How many institutions or campuses, headed by presidents, are there in the system?

- 3 or less
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10-14
- 15-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40 or more

13. Who, typically, is primarily responsible for conducting an assessment of the president of an institution in the system?

(choose one)

- 1 the chair of the system's governing board
- 2 the entire governing board of the system
- 3 a standing committee of the system's governing board
- 4 the system chief executive officer
- 5 institutional (local) advisory boards
- 6 institutional faculty committees
- 7 an external consultant
- 8 a special committee including:

(check all that apply)

- 9 alumni
- 10 external consultant
- 11 faculty
- 12 staff
- 13 students
- 14 system chief executive officer
- 15 system governing board members (trustees)
- 16 institutional (local) advisory boards
- 17 others: _____
- 18 other: _____
- 19 don't know

14. From whom is information collected, typically, as part of a presidential assessment?

(check all that apply)

- 1 no one
- 2 alumni
- 3 college/university foundation board members
- 4 college/university advisory board members
- 5 donors
- 6 faculty
- 7 government officials (legislators, legislative staff, governor, local officials)
- 8 president's executive cabinet
- 9 president's staff (other than executive cabinet)
- 10 institutional staff—nonprofessional, clerical, maintenance
- 11 institutional staff—professional
- 12 other presidents in the system
- 13 students
- 14 system chief executive officer
- 15 system staff
- 16 trustees (system governing board members)
- 17 others: _____
- 18 don't know

15. Is a final report typically presented to the entire board?

- 1 no
- 2 yes. If yes, is it typically (choose one):
 - 3 oral?
 - 4 written?
 - 5 both oral and written?

16. Indicate whether, for a presidential assessment, the following items are typically confidential, not confidential, or not applicable:

| confidential | not confidential | not applicable | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|---|
| — | — | — | (a) president's self-assessment statement |
| — | — | — | (b) summary of information from others using written questionnaires |
| — | — | — | (c) summary of information from others using interviews |
| — | — | — | (d) summary report of assessment results |
| — | — | — | (e) discussions/meetings with the president |

17. How thoroughly are the following aspects of performance covered in a typical presidential assessment?

| very satisfactorily | satisfactorily | undecided | unsatisfactorily | very unsatisfactorily | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| — | — | — | — | — | (a) academic leadership and management |
| — | — | — | — | — | (b) administrative leadership and management |
| — | — | — | — | — | (c) budget and finance |
| — | — | — | — | — | (d) fund raising |
| — | — | — | — | — | (e) external relations |
| — | — | — | — | — | (f) personal characteristics |

18. Is the presidential assessment process typically used as the occasion for discussions or decisions regarding any of the following?

| no or not applicable | yes | |
|----------------------|-----|--|
| — | — | (a) contract renewal |
| — | — | (b) bonus pay |
| — | — | (c) salary adjustment |
| — | — | (d) benefits adjustments |
| — | — | (e) sabbatical leave |
| — | — | (f) vacation or other leave |
| — | — | (g) participation in seminars or conferences |
| — | — | (h) family considerations |

Summary Comments

19. What assistance, if any, would be helpful to you or the board for future assessments of the performance of system heads or presidents?

(check all that apply)

- literature on presidential assessment
- descriptions of how other institutions conduct assessments
- sample job descriptions
- sample evaluation forms or policies
- workshop or training on presidential assessment for system heads
- workshop or training on presidential assessment for presidents
- workshop or training on presidential assessment for board chairs and trustees
- presidential assessment consulting services
- informal counsel from practitioners by telephone
- summary data from this survey
- other: _____

SECTION II: BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Some governing boards periodically take time to reflect on the ways in which the board conducts its own business, the contributions of individual members, and the leadership roles of board officers. Although sometimes an outside facilitator is used, we refer to this as "board self-assessment" because these activities are generally initiated and conducted by members of the board. Board self-assessment may occur, for example, as part of a regular meeting, as a special event, or through a written survey. Please answer the following questions regarding your board's self-assessment activities. If your board has not engaged in self-assessment activities within the past five years, please start with question one and follow the directions carefully (certain sections will be skipped).

Policies, Guidelines, and Practices

1. Who is primarily responsible for initiating board self-assessment activities?

- no one
- board chair
- executive committee
- nominating, board affairs, or other board committee
- president of institution
- other
- don't know

2. On what basis are board self-assessment activities initiated?

- board policy requires periodic board self-assessment (Please enclose copy)
- by tradition, the board evaluates its own performance periodically
- no policy or tradition of board self-assessment
- other
- don't know

3. Either by written board policy or tradition, about how often are board assessments supposed to be conducted?
- no requirement or tradition of board self-assessment
 - once a year
 - every 2 or 3 years
 - every 4 or 5 years
 - less often than every five years
 - periodically, not a set time
 - other
 - don't know
4. Has the governing board conducted a board self-assessment within the past five years?
- no (Skip to question 18)
 - yes
 - don't know (Skip to question 18)
5. Did the board use a facilitator from outside of the institution to conduct the last assessment?
- no
 - yes
 - don't know
6. Did trustees participate in either interviews or a written survey as part of the last assessment?
- no
 - yes
 - don't know
7. What was the setting for the last discussion of the board's performance?
- a board retreat
 - a board meeting
 - a meeting of board leaders or a board committee
 - other: (please elaborate) _____
 - don't know
8. What issues or topics received the most attention in the board's most recent self-assessment?
- (check all that apply):
- institutional mission and education policy
 - institutional and strategic planning
 - physical plant
 - financial management
 - financial support and/or fund raising
 - board membership or composition
 - board organization or committee structure
 - board orientation and education
 - board information needs
 - board/chief executive relations
 - board/faculty relations
 - board/student relations
 - performance of individual board members
 - group process/how board functions as a group
 - board goals
 - board bylaws
 - other: _____

9. Were previously agreed upon goals for the board's performance used as criteria for evaluating the board?

- no
- yes

10. Were any indicators of institutional performance used as criteria for evaluating board performance?

- no
- yes

11. What was the impact of the last board self-assessment?

| | better | worse | about the same | not applicable |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- (a) trustee commitment
- (b) relationship between board and president
- (c) board structure
- (d) board composition
- (e) content of board agendas
- (f) how board meetings are conducted
- (g) trustee orientation or education
- (h) clarity of board priorities
- (i) clarity of trustees' roles and responsibilities
- (j) use of board's time

12. How satisfied do you think the board was with the process for the last board assessment?

- very unsatisfied
- unsatisfied
- satisfied
- very satisfied
- don't know, can't say

13. In your opinion, what would improve the board's self-assessment process?

- (check all that apply):
- greater commitment from board, higher rate of participation
 - new board policy on board assessment
 - better facilitation or assistance from an experienced consultant
 - written materials, such as self-study criteria
 - don't know, can't say
 - other

14. What was the most significant change made as a result of the last board self-assessment?

21. When is individual trustee performance assessed?

(check all that apply):

- as part of an overall board self-assessment
- when prompted by a problem or need
- at the end of terms or when considered for reappointment
- annually
- other

22. What are the criteria for individual trustee assessment?

(check all that apply)

- attendance
- committee work
- personal financial support
- fund raising assistance
- public relations efforts
- varies according to individual
- other
- don't know/can't say

Summary Comments on Board Self-Assessment

23. What are the greatest barriers to board assessment?

(check all that apply)

- lack of good models for an assessment process
- lack of clear benchmarks for "good" board performance
- lack of interest in board assessment among trustees
- lack of interest in board assessment by the president
- lack of time
- expense
- other

24. Overall, how would you rate your board's performance?

- outstanding
- very satisfactory
- satisfactory
- unsatisfactory
- very unsatisfactory
- don't know/can't say

25. What assistance, if any, is of interest to you?

(check all that apply)

- literature on board assessment
- sample trustee position descriptions
- sample board evaluation forms
- sample board evaluation policies
- workshop or training for presidents
- workshop or training for board chairs and trustees
- names of consultants
- board assessment consulting services
- informal counsel from practitioners by telephone
- summary data from this survey

Personal Data for the Board Chair

26. Total number of years you have served on this governing board:

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-9
- 10 or more

27. Total number of years you have served as the chair of this governing board:

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-9
- 10 or more

28. Your age:

- less than 30 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-69 years
- 70-79 years
- 80 years or more

29. Your sex:

- female
- male

30. Comments or suggestions:

Thank you for your valuable time and information. Please return the completed questionnaire upon receipt in the envelope provided or mail to:

Merrill Schwartz, Research Associate
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
One Dupont Circle, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

APPENDIX B

Table B-1

Evaluation Method by Type of Institution (Nason, 1984, p. 2)

| | Method of Evaluation | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------|
| | Formal % | Informal % | None % |
| Private | | | 26 |
| universities (23) | 13 | 61 | 13 |
| colleges (173) | 33 | 54 | - |
| junior colleges (6) | 33 | 66 | 14% |
| total private (202) | 31% | 55% | |
| Public | | | 24 |
| four-year (49) | 43 | 33 | 9 |
| multicampus (23) | 64 | 27 | - |
| coordinating boards (6) | 17 | 83 | 9 |
| community colleges (33) | 58 | 33 | - |
| 2-year multicampus (5) | 40 | 60 | 15% |
| total public (116) | 49% | 36% | |
| Totals for public and private | | | 16 |
| four-year (274) | 35 | 49 | 7 |
| two-year (44) | 52 | 41 | 14% |
| overall total (318) | 38% | 48% | |

Table B-2

Assessment Procedures by Type of Institution (Hubert, 1986, p. 145).

| <u>Institution</u> | <u>Assessment Procedure</u> | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| | Formal | Informal | Casual |
| UC | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| CSU | 19 | 0 | 10 |
| CCC | 5 | 75 | 47 |
| Independents | 5 | 17 | 57 (31%) |
| Total | 38 (20%) | 92 (49%) | |

Table B-3

Instrumentation by Type of Institution (Hubert, 1986, p. 145).

| <u>Institution</u> | <u>Instrumentation</u> | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------|-----------------|
| | Rating Scales | Ad Hoc Committee | MBO | Growth Contract |
| UC | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| CSU | 0 | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| CCC | 41 | 6 | 43 | 0 |
| Independents | 5 | 62 | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 46 (25%) | 96 (51%) | 45 (24%) | 0 (0%) |

Table B-4

Institutions Which Formally Assess the President (Ingram, 1993a, p. 377;
1993b, p. 392)

| | Total | <u>Public Institutions</u> | | | | | <u>Private Institutions</u> | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | | All | 2 yr | 4 yr | Mult | Spec | All | 2 yr | 4 yr | Theo | Spec |
| <u>Population</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (n) | 685 | 214 | 47 | 87 | 75 | 5 | 471 | 29 | 349 | 38 | 55 |
| (%) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| <u>Yes</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (n) | 349 | 123 | 30 | 55 | 36 | 2 | 226 | 15 | 154 | 24 | 33 |
| (%) | 51% | 58 | 64 | 63 | 48 | 40 | 48 | 52 | 44 | 63 | 60 |
| <u>No</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (n) | 331 | 91 | 17 | 32 | 39 | 3 | 240 | 14 | 192 | 13 | 21 |
| (%) | 48 | 43 | 36 | 37 | 52 | 60 | 51 | 48 | 55 | 34 | 38 |
| <u>No Response</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (n) | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | 3 | 1 | 1 |

Note.: "mult" = multicampus, "spec" = specialized, and "theo" = theological.

Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table B-5

Frequency of Chief Executive Evaluations by Type of Institution

(AGB, 1991)

| | Total | <u>Public Institutions</u> | | | | | <u>Private Institutions</u> | | | | |
|--------------|-------|----------------------------|------|------------|------|------|-----------------------------|------|------------|------|------|
| | | All | 2 yr | 4 yr | Mult | Spec | All | 2 yr | 4 yr | Theo | Spec |
| | | Population | 349 | 123 | 30 | 55 | 36 | 2 | 226 | 15 | 154 |
| Blank | 33 | 13 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 20 | 3 | 14 | 1 | 2 |
| Answering | 316 | 110 | 28 | 47 | 33 | 2 | 206 | 12 | 140 | 23 | 31 |
| <u>Years</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Minimum | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Maximum | 6 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Median | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Mean | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 1.8 |

Note: "mult" = multicampus, "spec" = specialized, and "theo" = theological.

Table B-6

Board Chairs' Years of Service on the Governing Board of Their Institution

| | Total | Public | Private |
|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| Years | % | % | % |
| <1 | --- | --- | --- |
| 1-2 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| 2-3 | 3.2 | 4.8 | 2.4 |
| 3-4 | 6.9 | 10.8 | 5.1 |
| 4-5 | 6.9 | 10.8 | 5.1 |
| 5-9 | 28.8 | 33.1 | 26.8 |
| 10+ | 51.0 | 38.6 | 56.6 |
| NA | 2.4 | 1.2 | 3.0 |
| Total | 99.9% | 99.9% | 99.8% |

Table B-7

Years of Service as Chair of the Governing Board

| | Total | Public | Private |
|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| Years | % | % | % |
| <1 | 11.2 | 14.5 | 9.8 |
| 1-2 | 25.8 | 31.9 | 23.0 |
| 2-3 | 16.8 | 17.5 | 16.5 |
| 3-4 | 12.5 | 15.1 | 11.4 |
| 4-5 | 10.5 | 5.4 | 12.7 |
| 5-9 | 14.8 | 9.0 | 17.3 |
| 10+ | 6.2 | 6.0 | 6.2 |
| NA | 2.2 | 0.6 | 3.0 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 99.9% |

Table B-8

Age of Respondent Board Chairs

| | Age | | | | | | | NA | TOTAL |
|---------------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|--------|
| | <30 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70-79 | 80+ | | |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | |
| <u>Sector</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Public | --- | 1.2 | 21.7 | 25.3 | 35.5 | 14.5 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 100.0% |
| Private | --- | --- | 13.0 | 35.5 | 40.9 | 6.5 | 1.1 | 3.0 | 100.0% |
| Total | --- | .04 | 15.7 | 32.3 | 39.3 | 9.0 | 1.1 | 2.2 | 100.0% |

Table B-9

Presidents and Chairs: Are These Typical Reviews?

| | Presidents | Board Chairs |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| | % | % |
| Yes | 72.0 | 69.2 |
| NA | 11.2 | 10.8 |
| No | 16.8 | 20.0 |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| <u>If no:</u> | | |
| No typical review | 38.3 | 33.0 |
| Process recently changed | 16.2 | 28.6 |
| Process expected to change | 19.8 | 18.7 |
| Alternates between | | |
| formal and informal | 13.8 | 8.8 |
| Unusual year | 7.2 | 5.5 |
| Other | 2.4 | 4.4 |
| NA | 6.6 | 1.1 |
| Total ^a | 104.3% | 101.1% |

^a Total exceeds 100% due to multiple responses.

Table B-10

Assistance of Interest to Presidents, by Sector

| | Total | Public | Private |
|---|-------|--------|---------|
| | % | | |
| Sample checklist of performance criteria | 59.3 | 52.8 | 64.1 |
| Sample evaluation forms | 53.2 | 48.1 | 57.0 |
| Literature on presidential assessment | 45.8 | 41.5 | 49.0 |
| Sample evaluation policies | 45.3 | 38.9 | 50.0 |
| Summary data from this survey | 38.4 | 34.1 | 41.5 |
| Workshops for chairs or trustees | 21.0 | 25.6 | 17.6 |
| Workshops for presidents | 14.4 | 17.3 | 12.2 |
| Informal counsel by phone | 10.4 | 8.8 | 11.7 |
| Presidential assessment consulting services | 6.3 | 7.3 | 5.6 |

Table B-11

Assistance of Interest to Board Chairs, by Sector

| | Total Public Private | | |
|---|----------------------|------|------|
| | % | % | % |
| Sample checklist of performance criteria | 68.3 | 63.8 | 70.5 |
| Sample evaluation forms | 59.0 | 59.2 | 58.9 |
| Literature on presidential assessment | 56.2 | 46.1 | 61.3 |
| Sample evaluation policies | 47.8 | 44.7 | 49.3 |
| Summary data from this survey | 47.6 | 44.7 | 49.0 |
| Workshops for chairs or trustees | 17.0 | 21.7 | 14.6 |
| Workshops for presidents | 8.4 | 11.2 | 7.0 |
| Informal counsel by phone | 9.3 | 7.2 | 10.3 |
| Presidential assessment consulting services | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.6 |

Table B-12
Overall Impact of Most Recent Presidential Assessment in Eight Areas,
Comparing Responses of Presidents and Board Chairs

| | <u>Positive</u> | | <u>Negative</u> | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| | Pres | Chair | Pres | Chair |
| | % | % | % | % |
| Compensation & Benefits | 57.0 | 59.7 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Relations With Board | 49.6 | 45.8 | 1.6 | 2.9 |
| Performance | 43.8 | 46.5 | 0.6 | 2.0 |
| Ability to Lead | 42.5 | 43.2 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| Feedback From Board | 40.1 | 50.4 | 2.9 | 1.3 |
| Relations With Community | 17.3 | 23.6 | 0.8 | 1.3 |
| Relations With Faculty | 15.1 | 22.5 | 1.3 | 2.0 |

Note. Scale: Positive = generally or somewhat increased and improved and Negative = generally or somewhat decreased or became worse; responses of stayed about the same, not applicable, or no answer were omitted.

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