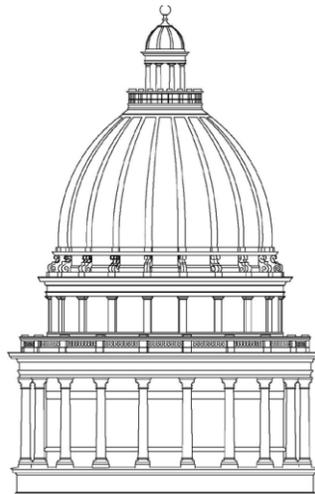


REPORT TO THE
UTAH LEGISLATURE

Number 2018-13



**A Performance Audit of Employee
Evaluation Processes in Higher Education**

December 2018

Office of the
LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR GENERAL
State of Utah



STATE OF UTAH

Office of the Legislative Auditor General

315 HOUSE BUILDING • PO BOX 145315 • SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84114-5315
(801) 538-1033 • FAX (801) 538-1063

Audit Subcommittee of the Legislative Management Committee

President Wayne L. Niederhauser, Co-Chair • Speaker Gregory H. Hughes, Co-Chair
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KADE R. MINCHEY, CIA, CFE
AUDITOR GENERAL

December 2018

TO: THE UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

Transmitted herewith is our report, **A Performance Audit of Employee Evaluation Processes in Higher Education** (Report #2018-13). A digest is found on the blue pages located at the front of the report. The objectives and scope of the audit are explained in the Introduction.

We will be happy to meet with appropriate legislative committees, individual legislators, and other state officials to discuss any item contained in the report in order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kade minchey".

Kade R. Minchey, CIA, CFE
Auditor General

Digest of A Performance Audit of Employee Evaluation Processes in Higher Education

Institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) have separate processes in place to evaluate staff and faculty. Most institutions have policies in place requiring at least annual evaluations for both groups. We found that staff evaluations are not completed as frequently as required by policy and could be more effective. Faculty evaluations could be more comprehensive but do generally follow prescribed processes.

Chapter II Staff Evaluation Process Needs Improvement

The Percentage of Staff Evaluated Could Be Improved at Most Institutions.

Employee evaluations are a common workplace tool among institutions in USHE. Although five of the six institutions we visited and reviewed have a written policy requiring at least a yearly performance evaluation for staff, only Dixie State University and Utah Valley University evaluated over 90 percent of their applicable staff employees last year. The four other institutions had completion rates that were much lower.

Evaluation Processes Do Not Effectively Manage Performance. Supervisors who fail to conduct employee performance reviews miss opportunities to formally address performance or behavioral concerns that could lead to disciplinary actions. In a review of employees' disciplinary actions and prior annual reviews, we found that half or fewer of the reviews mentioned the performance problems leading to the discipline. It is important that supervisors be trained on how to use evaluation systems to address staff deficiencies and other performance issues.

Chapter III Faculty Reviews Could Be Improved by Ensuring Evaluations Are Comprehensive

Faculty Evaluations Do Not Always Evaluate All Aspects of Job Performance.

Faculty evaluations at USHE institutions typically cover three areas— teaching, service, and research/professional activity. At Southern Utah University, collegiality is included in the evaluation. While the tenure and post-tenure review process ensures the teaching, service, and research/professional activity components are adequately included in reviews, if collegiality is not addressed either in the service component or as a separate measure, the evaluation may not be able to address issues that are commonly the cause for discipline.

Faculty Evaluations Follow Prescribed Processes. The six institutions we visited have similar processes in place for the granting of tenure. Faculty on tenure track are reviewed all or most years for six or seven years, culminating in an in-depth review that results either in the granting of tenure or dismissal from the institution. Board of Regents policy requires yearly competency reviews and periodic post-tenure evaluations after a faculty member receives tenure.

REPORT TO THE UTAH LEGISLATURE

Report No. 2018-13

A Performance Audit of Employee Evaluation Processes in Higher Education

December 2018

Audit Performed By:

Audit Manager	Kade Minchey, CIA, CFE
Audit Supervisor	Benn Buys, CPA
Audit Staff	August Lehman, CFE

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Chapter I

Introduction

Each of Utah's institutions of higher education that we visited uses two main evaluation systems: one for staff, and one for faculty. Staff evaluations are typically annual reviews that are common in many industries, while faculty evaluations are based around the tenure system. Employee evaluations for those who have attained academic tenure are crucial because of the nature of the protection that tenure provides. Evaluations for both groups should promote communication between employees and supervisors, provide feedback to employees on job performance, and encourage professional development. These reviews can include goal setting and ranking of employees and are recommended to be completed at least once a year.

Employee Evaluation Processes Are Evolving

All institutions we reviewed have a separate employee evaluation process for staff and faculty. While faculty reviews are conducted by faculty leadership and are specifically designed for each department, all nonteaching staff are typically evaluated by their supervisors using a similar institutionally approved format.

Our review of performance evaluation literature shows that the concept of employee evaluations may be changing. Two articles written in 2015 from the Society of Human Resource Management report that up to 10 percent of Fortune 500 companies are moving from annual reviews to ongoing reviews. These companies are moving away from annual performance rankings to more frequent, real-time feedback. There are several reasons for this change, including the following:

- Review processes can be time-consuming.
- Performance ratings have no correlation to business results.
- Reviews may be demotivating.
- Annual reviews are not timely.

We report in Chapter II that one higher education institution we visited changed its staff performance evaluations from a once-a-year

Evaluations should promote communication, provide feedback, and encourage professional development.

All institutions we reviewed have a separate employee evaluation process for staff and faculty.

event to more frequent and less formal supervisor interviews. Most of the institutions we reviewed have policies requiring at least a yearly performance review. However, we found that two-thirds of the institutions we reviewed could improve the percentage of staff receiving evaluations and the quality of their reviews.

Academic Tenure Systems Are Common but Need Effective Evaluation Processes

Tenure is widely used in academia and is similar to a merit system in that tenured appointees can only be terminated for cause, financial constraints, or program cessation. The purpose of tenure for academics is often stated as providing academic freedom by affording a level of security. This report does not examine the benefits and drawbacks of tenure; it only looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation processes used for faculty and staff. Effective evaluation processes for tenured faculty can be used to address performance issues and help faculty remain productive throughout their careers.

The Use of Tenure Is Widespread

In 1940, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) codified the goals of tenure as “freedom of teaching and research” and “a sufficient degree of economic security to make the profession attractive.” An AAUP report shows that the use of academic tenure has changed over the years. A sample of 78 universities in 1935 showed that fewer than half had formal tenure policies. By the 1970s, nearly all universities had tenure policies.

Effective Evaluations Keep Faculty Productive

Like a merit system, academic tenure does not safeguard faculty from termination for any reason. Effective management of faculty requires performance management and evaluations, the lack of which may enable some faculty to be non-productive or avoid discipline. As we show in Chapter III of this report, there are established processes to evaluate the performance of faculty at Utah higher education institutions, although we do believe evaluations could be more comprehensive.

This report does not examine the benefits and drawbacks of tenure; it only looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation processes.

Effective performance management will help faculty remain productive following tenure.

Audit Scope and Objectives

We were asked to review the effectiveness of university staff and faculty evaluations in relation to job performance. We were also asked to review how those evaluations are used in terms of job development, raises, and promotions.

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Chapter II

Staff Evaluation Process Needs Improvement

Staff evaluations at higher education institutions need to be completed more regularly to realize the benefits of this aspect of employee performance management. Most institutions we reviewed have policies requiring at least a yearly formal staff performance evaluation. Most institutions could improve their required performance evaluation processes. Our review shows that two-thirds of the institutions we visited could increase both the percentage of employees receiving regular reviews and the effectiveness of these performance reviews.

The Percentage of Staff Evaluated Could Be Improved at Most Institutions

The benefits of an employee evaluation system are widely recognized. As a result, most Utah higher education institutions require regular performance evaluations. They are not alone in requiring yearly reviews as *Utah Administrative Code* requires that every state employee receive a performance evaluation each fiscal year. Our review shows that the completion rates of staff evaluations at two-thirds of the institutions we reviewed are not in compliance with policies.

Benefits of Employee Performance Evaluations Are Widely Recognized

Employee evaluations are a common workplace tool among institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). One university we reviewed identified some of the benefits of an effective employee performance evaluation. Effective evaluations can:

- Provide feedback on how well job duties and responsibilities are being accomplished within a uniform standard.
- Increase communication between the supervisor and the employee, including goal setting, assessing previous goals, recognizing excellence, and improving efficiency.

Two-thirds of institutions we visited could improve the effectiveness and percentage of employees receiving required reviews.

Effective evaluations can provide feedback on how well job duties and responsibilities are being accomplished.

- Ensure that job descriptions for each staff position are up to date and accurate.
- Assist with human resource planning by identifying individuals whose present performance and future potential warrant promotions.
- Identify individuals whose performance on the present job does not meet standards and indicates needs for disciplinary action, demotion, or termination.

Other institutions we reviewed have identified similar benefits. This is not an inclusive list of benefits that an effective performance evaluation system may provide, but it highlights the potentially positive impact that regular employee performance reviews can have on an organization.

Most Institutions Have A Performance Review Policy

Five of the six institutions we visited and reviewed have a written policy requiring at least a yearly performance evaluation for staff. While the University of Utah has implemented a performance evaluation process, the university does not have a policy requiring it be completed for staff.

All institutions we looked at recognize the importance of regularly evaluating staff performance, and most incorporate requirements for at least a yearly staff review into their policies. Some in the human resource profession have recently begun leaning toward a more frequent and less formal review process so that concerns can be addressed in a timelier manner. Salt Lake Community College has begun implementing this type of program over the past two years, with quarterly performance evaluations for staff. While we recognize good performance management often requires more frequent interactions than annual evaluations, we reviewed the evaluation processes established in institution policy. Whether an institution uses a yearly evaluation process or more frequent contacts to evaluate employee performance, the process should continue to achieve many of the benefits previously listed, and documentation is needed to verify the process is being followed.

Five of the six institutions we visited have a written policy requiring at least a yearly performance evaluation for staff.

Two-Thirds of Institutions Could Improve Employee Appraisal Frequency

As Figure 2.1 shows, of the six USHE institutions we visited, Dixie State University and Utah Valley University evaluated over 90 percent of their applicable staff employees last year. The four other institutions had completion rates that were much lower, despite most of them requiring evaluations to be completed every year.

Figure 2.1 Most Institutions Could Improve the Completion Rates of Their Staff Evaluations. Only two of the six institutions completed over 90 percent of their reviews.

Institution	Percent of Employee Evaluated
Dixie State University	98%
Utah Valley University	96
Salt Lake Community College	67*
Utah State University	65
Southern Utah University	64
University of Utah	40

**SLCC HR department does not collect staff evaluation information. Our sample of 18 managers shows that 67 percent of them evaluated their employees.*

While most institutions have policies requiring at least a yearly employee performance review, these policies do not appear to be consistently enforced, as the figure illustrates. Of the six institutions we looked at, two-thirds appraised fewer than 68 percent of their employees in 2017. For example, 40 percent of U of U staff received performance evaluations in 2017.

DSU and UVU have achieved greater than 90 percent completion rates of annual performance reviews through two different methods. At DSU, human resources staff and university administrators are diligent in reminding supervisors and managers to complete staff reviews. At UVU, neither supervisors nor staff members can receive merit pay increases unless evaluations are completed.

Performance management of employees has many potential benefits, including correcting behavioral and performance concerns. We recognize that required formal evaluations are only one aspect of performance management. When a staff member is performing below expectations, rather than wait for the yearly review, supervisors should provide timely feedback, clarify expectations, and provide training where necessary. At what level informal evaluations are occurring we cannot determine because of the lack of documentation and formalized

While most institutions have policies requiring at least a yearly employee performance review, these policies do not appear to be consistently enforced.

Required formal evaluations are only one aspect of performance management.

processes. A required yearly review provides a least one formal opportunity to document feedback with staff as well as set written goals and expectations for employees.

Evaluation Processes Do Not Effectively Manage Performance

Without frequent and effective staff performance management, either formal or informal, opportunities to correct poor performance early and provide training will be missed. One reason for conducting yearly performance evaluations is to assess and improve performance by formally setting written goals and expectations. For most institutions a yearly formal performance review is required, but good management practices would address concerns at least informally as they occur throughout the year. However, failure to conduct regular formal reviews results in missed opportunities to address and document ongoing poor performance and behavioral concerns before formal disciplinary procedures are needed.

Evaluations Provide Opportunities To Address Performance Issues

Supervisors who fail to conduct employee performance reviews miss opportunities to formally address performance or behavioral concerns that could lead to disciplinary actions. Early intervention should address poor performance by providing direction or training to help avert later discipline.

To determine if performance evaluation processes were effective at identifying concerns with employee performance, we looked at employee disciplinary actions from four institutions, as reported over the last three years, and compared those disciplinary actions with their corresponding performance evaluations. Two of the six institutions we visited were unable to provide us with a list of employees who had been disciplined. From each institution, we requested all staff disciplines and all performance evaluations for each staff member disciplined in the past three years. UVU keeps discipline records and evaluations in a centralized database and could easily provide us with all disciplinary documentation and performance reviews. Other institutions, like SLCC, keep the documentation in separate departments and even with individual supervisors. Because some supervisors no longer worked for the institutions, we could not be

Failing to conduct formal reviews results in missed opportunities to address and document issues.

sure we acquired a complete set of evaluations. Because of the size of the U of U and the number of disciplinary actions, we only collected a sample of records.

Employees with disciplinary issues need regular evaluations and should have more performance management than employees without performance concerns. Figure 2.2 shows the percentage of disciplinary records that were missing employee evaluations.

Employees with disciplinary issues need regular evaluations.

Figure 2.2 Missing Performance Evaluations for Disciplined Employees May Mean Missed Opportunities to Document Performance Concerns. SLCC could not provide us with performance evaluations for 63 percent of their disciplined employees.

Institution	Number of Disciplinary Actions Reviewed	Number of Disciplinary Actions Missing Performance Evaluations	Percentage of Disciplinary Actions Missing Evaluations
Salt Lake Community College	32	20	63%
University of Utah	37	16	43
Dixie State University	12	3	25
Utah Valley University	52	3	6
Utah State University	Could Not Provide Discipline Data		
Southern Utah University	Could Not Provide Discipline Data		

Source: Auditor generated

SLCC could not provide performance evaluations for 63 percent of employees disciplined, while the U of U could not provide performance reviews for 43 percent. We expect some employees will be missing evaluations due to being terminated before they were evaluated. However, less emphasis on reviews has led to lower review rates for these institutions, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, as well as fewer reviews for employees most in need of being evaluated. DSU and UVU have high rates of compliance with their yearly review policies (see Figure 2.1), and that is shown in their lower rates of missing evaluations for disciplined employees. Poor-performing employees need to be evaluated, and an effective evaluation process ensures that reviews are conducted regularly. Evaluations give

DSU and UVU have high rates of compliance with their yearly review policies.

supervisors the opportunity to adequately address concerns and provide staff with needed training.

Disciplinary Issues Were Addressed in Half of Evaluations

In a review of employees’ disciplinary actions and prior annual reviews, we found that half or fewer of the reviews mentioned the performance problems leading to the discipline. Supervisors who fail to adequately address performance and behavioral concerns during an employee’s evaluation miss an opportunity to redirect that employee and provide further training if needed. They also may lack supporting documentation for a later disciplinary process.

To assess how often performance concerns are showing up in performance reviews, we only looked at staff disciplinary records that had corresponding evaluations. We examined disciplined employees’ prior performance evaluations to see if any performance or disciplinary concerns were mentioned. Our findings are shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3 Disciplinary Issues Were Discussed in Half or Fewer of the Employee Evaluations. Two of the four institutions we reviewed were addressing employee performance concerns in about half of the disciplines we reviewed.

Institution	Number of Disciplinary Actions with Reviews	Number of Evaluations Addressing Performance Concerns	Percentage of Evaluations Addressing Concerns
University of Utah	21	11	52%
Salt Lake Community College	12	6	50
Utah Valley University	49	21	43
Dixie State University	9	3	33
Utah State University	Could Not Provide Discipline Data		
Southern Utah University	Could Not Provide Discipline Data		

Source: Auditor generated

Supervisors who fail to adequately address concerns during an employee’s evaluation miss an opportunity to redirect that employee and provide further training.

Because of the nature of disciplinary actions, not all activities subject to discipline are expected to be captured in a yearly performance review. However, this can be an effective way to document issues.

Nearly half of the previous annual evaluations from SLCC and the U of U mentioned issues that could have later contributed to an employee being disciplined. This positively suggests that supervisors are bringing up concerns in their evaluations. However, since half of the reviews made no mention of concerns, there is still room to improve the quality of employee reviews and increase their effectiveness.

Because of the nature of disciplinary actions, not all activities subject to discipline will be captured in a yearly performance review, so we would not expect every evaluation to address performance concerns. A single policy violation may warrant a written warning but may not be relevant to a performance evaluation, or issues may be corrected well before a yearly evaluation occurs. Notwithstanding, the staff performance evaluation system should be considered a useful tool in identifying and addressing concerns early before they lead to discipline.

Since USU and SUU do not consolidate the tracking of disciplinary actions, they are unable to identify disciplinary trends, such as reasons for discipline or departments where these actions occur. With this information, areas of concern could be identified and targeted training developed. We recommend USU and SUU implement institution-wide methods for tracking employees' disciplinary actions.

Managers Need Training on Using Evaluations Effectively

Our review shows that there is room to improve both the frequency and quality of performance evaluations at USHE institutions. As previously shown, some reviews are not addressing staff deficiencies which decreases the usefulness of evaluations. Institutional processes need to be more effective at documenting and addressing concerns with employee performance.

As discussed previously, SLCC has implemented a quarterly performance review process. The process implemented is based on setting professional goals for the staff. In our discussions with supervisors, we found that some did not understand how to use the reviews to address poor performance issues. Instead, the process was used more as a coaching and growth tool. While the system could likely be effective in managing performance as well, it is important

Half of employee reviews made no mention of disciplinary concerns.

Institutional processes need to be more effective at documenting and addressing concerns with employee performance.

that supervisors be trained on how to use the system to address staff deficiencies and other performance issues.

Recommendations

1. We recommend USHE institutions implement policies to require staff evaluations and track their completion rates.
2. We recommend USHE institutions develop and encourage staff evaluations that are effective at managing performance.
3. We recommend USU and SUU implement tracking methods for employee disciplinary actions.

Chapter III

Faculty Reviews Could Be Improved by Ensuring Evaluations Are Comprehensive

As discussed in Chapter I, faculty members at institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) operate under tenure systems, which grant protections to faculty members to ensure academic freedom. We did not audit the use of tenure systems, since tenure is an established practice in higher education throughout the country. Our analysis of USHE institutions focused on how reviews occur within the tenure system and found they are not inclusive of all aspects of faculty job performance.

The faculty evaluation system used by most USHE institutions does not evaluate general work behaviors, which has led to a system where common behavioral issues cannot be addressed in the evaluation. While we think this process can be more comprehensive, we found there are well defined processes in place for faculty reviews at USHE institutions. Policies require most faculty members to receive a review every year of their career.

Faculty Evaluations Do Not Always Evaluate All Aspects of Job Performance

Faculty evaluations at USHE institutions typically cover three areas— teaching, service, and research/professional activity. While these areas seem to be well defined and thoroughly evaluated at institutions, general work behaviors or collegiality aspects are not necessarily included in this review. Of the six institutions we visited, only one specifically included collegiality as part of its review. While some provosts and deans told us that these aspects of job performance are evaluated in the service section of the review, inconsistent responses of how collegiality is handled highlight the need for a more detailed evaluation policy that includes collegiality as an aspect of service, or provides faculty administrators with another way to address professional conduct issues prior to discipline. This is especially important considering that the disciplinary actions we documented were more often related to collegiality than to the three main areas of evaluation.

Faculty evaluations used by most institutions do not evaluate general work behaviors.

Collegiality is not evaluated in a consistent way in faculty evaluations.

All institutions evaluate faculty on teaching, service, and scholarship or research.

Most Institutions Do Not Have A Direct Way to Evaluate Collegiality

At the six institutions we visited, faculty are evaluated on three similar areas. The first two, teaching and service, are consistent across all institutions. The third area changed slightly based on the type of institution. For the University of Utah and Utah State University, research is the third area. In other institutions, it may be referred to as professional activity or scholarship. This third area typically has something to do with work relating to a faculty member's field of study.

At Southern Utah University, collegiality is included in the evaluation and comprises 10 percent of the faculty evaluation. SUU policy defines collegiality as faculty responsibilities toward students, peers, and the institution. Collegiality generally encompasses general work behaviors or faculty conduct that are not necessarily included in the other three categories of the faculty evaluation.

We asked academic administrators at the other institutions if their evaluation system allows them to address issues of faculty members who may be successful in their job duties but have behavioral issues. While some deans said these issues could be included in the service component of the evaluation, this was not consistently reported within institutions. Additionally, there is typically no guidance on how to address behavioral issues in the evaluation, and as shown in Figure 3.1, service definitions in policy do not mention these types of issues at most institutions.

Service descriptions at USHE institutions do not typically mention behavior or collegiality aspects.

Figure 3.1 Institution Service Descriptions. While some faculty administrators stated collegiality issues could be addressed in the service component of reviews, it was not typically included in descriptions of service in faculty policies. Only SUU has an institution-wide policy that includes collegiality as a separate component of faculty reviews, while only SLCC addresses these issues in their service description.

Institution	Includes Collegiality in Evaluation	Service Descriptions
Southern Utah University	Yes: Faculty responsibilities toward students, peers and the institution	Service to the University and profession, but professional service to the community may also be considered.
Salt Lake Community College	No	Creates and supports a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere of fairness, equity, and civility; Provides service to the institution through appropriate participation in academic and campus committee assignments.
Utah Valley University	No	Faculty members are expected to participate in the academic organizations and professional communities of their disciplines, evaluate colleagues professionally and objectively, and participate in committees at the department, college/school, or university levels.
University of Utah	No	Varies by department. Examples: Service at the department, college and/or university levels along with service off-campus through local, national and/or international organizations. Contribute significantly to departmental, college and/or university affairs through involvement in faculty governance, committee service, and other assignments.
Utah State University	No	Membership in department committees, participation in regional and national professional organizations, consulting activities, public speaking and/or information dissemination, and engagement in local communities.
Dixie State University	No	Maintenance of office hours, advising and mentoring students, membership on committees and attendance at meetings, administrative duties, work on curriculum development, and participation in regional and national professional organizations.

Source: Institution policies

Only SUU includes collegiality as a separate component of faculty reviews.

Some tenure decisions have been affected by collegiality concerns.

Despite SUU having a separate component to address collegiality, its service description is similar to the other five institutions we visited. In most institutions, service descriptions do not clearly define a collegiality requirement. This is important as deans at SUU said that a faculty member had been denied tenure because of collegiality concerns, and faculty administrators at three other institutions commented that their institution's faculty review process was weak on collegiality aspects.

In one documented instance, a faculty committee considering a tenure applicant was unsure how to address collegiality concerns. In the recommendation letter, the committee stated concern that "her lack of collegiality is harmful to the department" and expressed reservations regarding her methods of working with others. They also stated that these issues "frequently outweighed her contributions." Despite these concerns, the committee recommended tenure while noting that there was confusion on how to apply the department guidelines as they related to collegiality. A policy that more clearly explains how to take these issues into account would have been helpful in the evaluation of this faculty member.

Evaluating Collegiality Could Help with Faculty Personnel Issues

Collegiality is an important aspect of a faculty member's job. While the tenure and post-tenure review process ensures the teaching, scholarship/research, and service components are adequately included in reviews completed throughout a faculty member's career, these components do not necessarily address many issues for which faculty are commonly disciplined. At most institutions, human resources departments do not typically deal with disciplinary issues for faculty which are often handled at the school or department level. However, through the human resource departments we were able to look at staff disciplines for four of the six schools we visited. Between 40 and 94 percent of staff disciplines were for areas other than performance, such as policy violations and behavior issues. At two of these schools, human resource departments did collect faculty discipline information as well. At these schools, 8 of 12 (67 percent) and 11 of 11 (100 percent) disciplines included issues other than performance.

At some other universities in the country, collegiality is included within their faculty reviews, typically in the service area of the evaluation. For example, at Auburn University, a tenure candidate

Most disciplinary actions are related to policy and behavior concerns, not performance.

“must demonstrate that he or she contributes as a productive and collegial member of the academic unit.” Arizona State University and the University of North Carolina incorporate collegiality into their definition of service. At ASU, service includes “a collegial atmosphere at all levels of interaction within the university” and at UNC service contains a “contribution to a positive culture of collegiality.”

At USHE institutions, a faculty member’s performance would likely be addressed in the current faculty review process. If collegiality is not addressed either in the service component or as a separate measure, the evaluation may not be able to address issues commonly the cause for discipline. Including this element in the review, as is done at some institutions in other states, would give deans and department heads an opportunity to address issues prior to escalation to discipline.

While a separate component for collegiality ensures that these general work behaviors can be addressed, we do not believe that is necessary since other universities as well as faculty administrators in the state told us that it could be addressed in the service component. For instance, an administrator in the provost’s office at the University of Utah told us that personnel issues should be addressed in the service section of the review, which requires being a good citizen of the department. Deans at USU, DSU, and UVU shared this thought. If collegiality is part of the service component of reviews, policy and evaluation forms should be written to ensure that the service component not only includes the traditional aspects of service, as shown in Figure 3.1, but also allows for collegiality areas to be addressed. Alternatively, a separate process of addressing collegiality or professional conduct concerns that ensures these issues do not go unaddressed could be used. We recommend that institutions provide faculty administrators with a process for addressing these concerns.

Faculty Evaluations Follow Prescribed Processes

Faculty evaluations for tenure-track faculty are an important part of the tenure process. These evaluations are typically required every year for each faculty member, culminating with an intensive tenure review in the sixth or seventh year. Institutional policies call for continued annual reviews, along with more in-depth post-tenure reviews every

Universities in other states include collegiality as a component of service.

Service descriptions and evaluations should allow for the evaluation of collegiality.

few years. Evaluations are an expected part of a faculty job that follow well-defined policies.

Faculty Are Reviewed Frequently And Many Do Not Receive Tenure

The six institutions we visited have similar processes in place for the granting of tenure. Faculty on tenure track are reviewed all or most years for six or seven years, culminating in an in-depth review that results either in the granting of tenure or dismissal from the institution. These reviews are a crucial part of the process of granting tenure, and deans we spoke to made it clear that these are completed on a consistent basis. Receiving tenure requires successful evaluations from multiple administrative levels over several years.

Institutions often have a more in-depth mid-tenure review that is meant to ensure the faculty member is on track for tenure. Faculty administrators at different institutions discussed the desire to identify candidates who would not be tenured and encourage them to self-select out of the institution during this probationary period. Because denial of tenure will cause a faculty member to lose his or her job and may create a negative perception of that faculty member in future job searches, institutions and faculty members are incentivized to part ways as soon as possible. As shown in Figure 3.2, many faculty members hired into tenured positions do not receive tenure.

Receiving tenure is a six or seven-year process with reviews during most years.

Many faculty hired to tenure positions leave prior to receiving tenure.

Figure 3.2 Many Faculty Members Do Not Receive Tenure. For faculty members hired in 2010 or 2011, between 35 and 71 percent received tenure at the institution. Multiple reviews during the tenure process ensure that tenure-candidates are well vetted.

Institution	Eligible Faculty	Awarded Tenure	Percent
Weber State University	45	32	71%
Snow College	17	12	71%
Utah Valley University	79	54	68%
Dixie State University	23	14	61%
University of Utah	164	86	52%
Utah State University	115	54	47%
Salt Lake Community College	37	14	38%
Southern Utah University	37	13	35%

Source: USHE Faculty Tenure Reports

The data in Figure 3.2 shows the number of faculty members hired by each institution for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. Faculty hired during this time frame should have the required number of years to receive tenure. There are many reasons why an individual may not receive tenure. Some high-performing faculty members will leave for other faculty opportunities while others may self-select out, not be renewed during the early tenure-track years, or be denied tenure. Because of the different types and locations of institutions in the state, variances in the percentage of faculty receiving tenure are expected. However we do see faculty members being carefully reviewed and, if necessary, terminated during the tenure process.

Mid-term and final tenure reviews go through many levels, typically including, at the minimum, the department chair or dean, a committee of faculty members from the department, the provost, and the institutional president or Board of Trustees. By the time a faculty member receives tenure, he or she has received extensive reviews from faculty and administrators at many levels of the institution. An important aspect of the tenure process is that candidates are evaluated by their peers. This helps ensure that the same standards are maintained for new faculty members.

Institutions also employ faculty members who are not on tenure track, including contract and adjunct faculty. For full-time faculty who are not tenured, most institutions use the same annual review process as tenure-track faculty. Although these faculty do not receive the in-depth reviews that occur at mid-tenure and final tenure reviews, they are also reviewed on a consistent basis.

Faculty Reviews Continue Following Tenure

Board of Regents policy details two requirements for reviews once faculty receive tenure. As shown in Figure 3.3, yearly competency reviews and post-tenure evaluations occur at all institutions, however the Board should examine the annual competency review processes to determine if they are sufficient across the system.

Mid-term and final tenure reviews go through many levels at the institution.

Board of Regent policy requires faculty to continue being evaluated following tenure.

Figure 3.3 Faculty Post-Tenure Evaluation Schedules. Each institution requires yearly competency reviews and more in-depth post-tenure reviews on a periodic basis.

Institution	Annual Competency Review	Post-Tenure Evaluation Schedule
Salt Lake Community College	Informal review of previous year's activity	Three Years
Dixie State University	Self-assessment and role statement review	Six Years
University of Utah	Peer/Department chair evaluation	Five Years
Utah State University	Department head evaluation	Five Years
Southern Utah University	Department chair, department committee, dean evaluation	Five Years
Utah Valley University	Supervisor evaluation	Five Years

Source: Institution Policies

SLCC completes annual competency reviews of tenured faculty through informal discussions.

All faculty members are required by Board of Regents policy to have a yearly review to assess competence. These reviews are much less in-depth than a tenure decision. For example, SLCC policy states that the required annual competency reviews are completed through informal reviews of the previous year's activities with an academic administrator. In our interviews with assistant deans at SLCC, only one of the seven we spoke with indicated that a yearly review was completed. If the assistant deans are completing these informal discussions, it does not appear they are being recognized as an evaluation of the faculty member.

At Dixie State, tenured faculty complete both a role statement that outlines their work plan for the year and a self-assessment that is reviewed by their chair. Both SLCC and Dixie State also use classroom observations and student class surveys to assess the teaching of the faculty member; however, a full evaluation of the faculty member is not completed at either institution. The Board of Regents should ensure that these reviews meet the expectations of the faculty competence review as required by policy.

Post-tenure evaluations vary by time and thoroughness of the review.

As shown in Figure 3.3, institutions are also requiring in-depth post-tenure reviews, typically every five years. These reviews are meant to recognize performance, communicate areas in need of improvement, and enhance productivity. The post-tenure reviews vary by institution. For some institutions, the review is similar to the tenure

review, and the faculty member's entire portfolio is reviewed. At one institution, the dean examines the previous five annual competency reviews, and if no issues are identified, a more in-depth review is not completed.

Post-tenure reviews are also used for faculty who apply for rank advancement from associate professor to professor. Professors are expected to be high performers and take on increased roles in the department. These reviews are typically similar in scope to the final tenure review, with several layers of recommendations culminating in the final approval or denial of rank, which is ultimately determined by the institutional provost, president, or Board of Trustees.

We did not examine faculty evaluation completion rates throughout the system, since often this is tracked at a department level. However, based on our discussions and documentation acquired it appears that faculty are typically evaluated on timelines consistent with institutional policies.

Recommendations

1. We recommend USHE institutions ensure that faculty administrators are provided a process to address professional conduct or collegiality concerns.
2. We recommend the Board of Regents ensure institution compliance with the board's policy of annual reviews on faculty competence.

Additional reviews are required for faculty seeking promotions.

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Agency Response

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November 30, 2018

Mr. Kade R. Minchey, CIA
Legislative Auditor General
W315 Utah State Capitol Complex
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5315

Dear Mr. Minchey,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the audit report entitled "A Performance Audit of Employee Evaluation Processes in Higher Education." We appreciate the auditors' work to identify areas for improvement in evaluating faculty and staff at six of the eight institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE).

We have been in communication with each of the institutions and received feedback from institutional academic vice presidents, human resource officers, and others. We agree with all five of the audit report's recommendations and we are actively working to ensure all recommendations are fully implemented in a timely manner. While this audit reviewed only six of the eight USHE institutions, we believe all institutions could benefit from implementing the recommendations made in this report. We attached plans to implement each of these recommendations.

Sincerely,



David L. Buhler, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education

Chapter I

No recommendations made.

Chapter II

Recommendation 1:

We recommend USHE institutions implement policies to require staff evaluations and track their completion rates.

Response: We concur. Institutions are currently reviewing their staff evaluation policies and tracking mechanisms. Each institution will implement policies to require managers and supervisors to evaluate assigned staff. Additionally, each institution's human resource office will track compliance with these institution policies and report statistics to the Commissioner's Office, as requested.

Implementation Date: March 2019

Recommendation 2:

We recommend USHE institutions develop and encourage staff evaluations that are effective at managing performance.

Response: We concur. Each institution will incorporate a staff evaluation processes that includes effective performance management, as outlined in individual institution policies. Institutions will also regularly review evaluation processes in an effort to continuously improve the evaluation process.

Implementation Date: January 2019

Recommendation 3:

We recommend USU and SUU implement tracking methods for employee disciplinary actions.

Response: We concur. Utah State University (USU) already began tracking employee disciplinary actions centrally in its human resources office. Southern Utah University's (SUU) human resources office is in the process of updating its performance evaluation training for supervisors to improve the quality and reliability of staff performance evaluations. This updated training will be provided to university supervisors in March of 2019 in preparation for the upcoming end of the fiscal year performance evaluations. These actions will develop and encourage staff evaluations that are effective at assessing and managing performance.

Implementation Date: November 2018 (USU), March 2019 (SUU)

Chapter III

Recommendation 5:

We recommend USHE institutions ensure that faculty administrators are provided a process to address professional conduct or collegiality concern.

Response: We concur. Institutions already began implementing this recommendation to ensure that evaluators consider professional conduct and collegiality on faculty performance evaluations. Utah Valley University (UVU), for example, recently revised its faculty review policy to include an assessment of “civil” and “respectful” treatment of others in annual faculty evaluations. Additionally, neither faculty nor staff at UVU are eligible for salary increases without an annual review.

Implementation Date: January 2019

Recommendation 6:

We recommend the Board of Regents ensure institution compliance with the board’s policy on faculty competence.

Response: We concur. The Board of Regents will instruct staff to regularly review institution compliance with the Regent policy that addresses faculty competence. These reviews will occur as early as January 2019 and subsequent reviews will continue as needed.

Implementation Date: January 2019