

Performance Evaluation of the University Council



Performance Evaluation of the University Council

Article VII of the By-laws of the UAEU University Council requires that the Council conduct a self-assessment every two years.

Purpose

The purpose of the Council's semi-annual self-assessment is to provide the University Council with an opportunity to identify its strengths and weaknesses, to determine how effectively the Council is advancing the mission of the UAEU, and to provide information which will enable the Council to continuously improve its performance.

Process

1. As stipulated in Article VII of the By-Laws of the University Council, assessments of the Vice Chancellor and of the Council will be conducted every two years. Assessment of the Vice Chancellor and the University Council will be conducted simultaneously so that the Council can evaluate the effectiveness of UAEU's leadership in a comprehensive way.
2. The Executive Committee is responsible for the evaluation of Council performance.
3. No less than one month in advance of this meeting, the Chair of the University Council's Assessment Committee will circulate a questionnaire to all members of the Council asking them to assess the effectiveness of the University Council in advancing the mission of UAE University and achieving the purposes of the Council as defined in the By-Laws. (Questionnaire attached).
4. Members of the Council will return the completed assessments to the Chair of the Assessment Committee at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
5. The Chair of the Assessment Committee will tabulate the responses and prepare a summary and recommendations for discussion by the full University Council.



Performance Assessment: University Council

Adaption of the Non-Profit Assessment Tool developed by McKinsey and Company.



Performance Assessment: University Council

The Nonprofit Board Self Assessment Tool has three sections:

1. Performance of the board (or board committee) on its core responsibilities
2. Perceived importance of responsibilities for the next 1-2 years
3. Quality of enablers in place to support board effectiveness

In sections 1 and 3, "Performance of board on its core responsibilities" and "Enablers of board effectiveness," circle the box in each row that is closest to describing the situation at hand; descriptions will rarely be a perfect match, so use the comments section to expand on any aspect of performance that you wish.

If a row is not relevant to the organization assessed, write "N/A" in the score section; if you simply have no knowledge, write "D/K."

For each of the responsibilities in Section 2, "Perceived importance of responsibilities for the next 1-2 years," indicate how important you believe it will be for the board to focus on each area in order to make the most positive impact on the performance of the organization. Since the board cannot focus on all responsibilities with equal weight at the same time, the ratings are intended to indicate relative priorities for each responsibility.

Please return your completed tool to the Chair of the Assessment Committee who will collate the results and compile an anonymous summary of comments for board discussion.

Approximate time needed for completion: 30 minutes



Areas Covered by the Assessment's Three Sections

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Shape mission and strategic direction

- Clarify mission and vision
- Engage in strategic planning and policy decisions

Ensure leadership and resources

- Select, evaluate, and develop CEO
- Ensure adequate financial resources
- Provide expertise and access for organizational needs
- Build reputation

Monitor and improve performance

- Oversee financial performance and ensure risk management
- Monitor performance and ensure accountability
- Improve board performance

Section 2: Perceived Importance of Responsibilities for the Next 1-2 Years

Section 3: Quality of Board Effectiveness Enablers

- Size and structure
- Composition
- Leadership
- Processes

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

1-1 Shape Mission and Strategic Direction

Clarify mission and vision	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comment
Common understanding of mission	Active and open disagreement about mission	Board members appear to share surface understanding of mission; disagreements may exist at deeper level although they have not been raised	Board members share common understanding of mission although it has not been stressed tested through discussion	All board members share a common understanding of the mission that has been stress tested through discussion	
Common understanding of vision (i.e., what the organization aspires to become in 5 years)	Board members lack understanding of vision is as distinct from mission	Vision not formalized; board members' understanding of vision not aligned with likely disagreement over what is achievable	Board members appear to have a common understanding of the vision; vision not documented and/or lacks concrete goals	All board members share common understanding of where organization wants to be in 5-10 years; vision is well documented with concrete goals	
Use of mission and vision in policy/strategy decisions	Board members do not refer to mission and vision in their discussions on policy/strategy	Board members infrequently refer to mission and vision in discussions on policy/ strategy	Although not formalized, board members frequently refer to mission and vision in discussions on policy/strategy	All major policy/strategy discussions include explicit consideration of fit with mission and vision	
Process for raising mission and vision issues	Board has no formal process to engage board in reviewing the mission and vision	Informal discussion within small groups on mission or vision; Issues of mission/vision rarely raised to board for broad discussion	Informal and active discussion within small groups with issues (e.g., relevance of mission) brought before the board on ad-hoc basis when there is enough momentum	Formalized process (e.g., board retreats) to foster active board member participation in examining mission-related issues	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Engage in strategic planning and policy decisions	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comment
Process for strategic planning and quality of board participation	No formal process for strategic planning and little takes place	Formal process exists but used on ad-hoc basis; mainly staff driven with very little involvement by board members in developing the plan; board largely “rubber stamps” plan with limited discussion	Process exists for developing strategic plan but does not specify the framework for strategic planning (e.g., main elements/issues that plan must address); mainly staff-driven; active discussion by the entire board before approving the strategic plan	Formal process for board involvement that specifies broad framework (timing and content) for strategic planning; joint board and staff ownership of strategic plan with some board members heavily involved; active discussion by the entire board supported by needed facts/materials before final approval	
Quality of strategic plan	No formal plan; board members/staff would not describe key points of the strategy in the same way	Strategic plan exists but has major holes in one or more of: goals, situation analysis, options considered, expected outcomes, resource implications, responsibilities	All key strategic elements addressed in plan; clear linkage of programs to mission and vision; unresolved issues identified for further investigation	Robust plan covers all key strategic elements; agreed upon program outcomes are tightly linked to mission and vision and results inform subsequent decisions; clear plan for closing resource gaps if any	
Agreement on distinction between board-level and management-level decisions	There is frequent disagreement between board/individual members and staff on appropriate level of board involvement in issues; CEO/staff feel “micromanaged” or “unsupported”; board feels disconnected	Debates, when they occur, usually involve the behaviors of one/a few members; board/staff feel surprises (need for rapid decisions or surprising decision outcomes) occur more frequently than necessary	Board and staff have high-level understanding of distinction between board and management decisions; all parties believe current model generally works well, but a few notable surprises mark recent history	Board and staff have a shared understanding of relative roles (written or explicitly discussed); all parties feel their views are heard in the process; frequent interaction between CEO and Board Chair ensure “no surprises” environment	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

1-2 Ensure Leadership and Resources

Select, evaluate, and develop CEO	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comment
Evaluation and development process	Evaluations are subjective and occur on ad-hoc basis; most board members are unaware of process or feedback messages	Evaluations performed annually against pre-agreed criteria; board members have opportunity to provide input to process	Evaluations performed formally and at least annually against pre- agreed criteria; written feedback messages reinforced through CEO compensation	Evaluations performed at least annually against pre-defined criteria; evaluation includes 360-degree feedback and includes a self-assessment by the CEO. Written feedback includes skill development plan. CEO compensation decision reinforces view of performance	
Search process (when required)	Little discussion of criteria for new CEO; roles/ decision-making process unclear	Limited discussion of criteria and search plan by board; board members feel “left out” of process; frustration with quality of candidates considered	Formal criteria and plan discussed at board; internal and external candidates considered and at least one strong candidate emerges	Formal search criteria, expectations for first 2 years, and search plan receive broad board support; internal and external candidates reviewed and “true choice” between qualified candidates can be made	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Ensure adequate financial resources	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comment
Financial needs assessment	No clear understanding of gaps in resources needed	Board has some understanding of resources needed, mainly from discussions around budget	Board understands gaps in resources needed for coming year and feels “ownership” of need, given the potential impact on current programs	Board works with staff as a part of strategic planning process to develop a multi-year view of funding requirements and trade-offs embedded in different resource levels; board feels strong ownership for the targets	
Involvement in fundraising planning and execution	Board members’ role in raising funds is not commonly shared and involvement in fund-raising is isolated in a few directors.	Board occasionally introduces staff to contacts for fund-raising but no systematic effort undertaken	Directors acknowledge fund-raising responsibility and work with staff to develop fund-raising plan and introduce staff to contacts with some frequency	Board and staff develop clear plan to meet fund-raising targets; board introduces staff to potential donors and drives fund-raising activities when necessary	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Provide expertise and access for organizational needs	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comment
Board understanding of needed access and influence to support organizational objectives, (e.g., legislative access, community access)	Topic of access not specifically discussed or seen as source of board assistance to organization	Board understanding of needs for access based on periodic requests from CEO; needs largely determined on reactive basis to need of the moment	Board understands needs based on strategic planning discussions with CEO/staff, although specific plans or relationship goals are not identified	Needs for access and influence based on strategic view of organizational objectives; needs identified in detail to allow meaningful roles to be identified for individual directors	
Ability of board to provide access and influence needed	Board plays no role providing access or influence for organizational needs	Board provides access and influence sporadically but many needs not addressed, or support is seen to be of little value to the organization	Board provides access to most needed individuals and institutions; access and influence seen as of moderate value to institution	Board proactively reaches out to further organizational goals and is frequently very influential in achieving them	
Board understanding of expertise needed for organizational objectives, e.g., financial, strategic, subject matter expertise	Topic of expertise not specifically discussed or seen as source of board assistance to organization	Board understanding of needs for expertise based on periodic requests from CEO, needs largely determined on reactive basis to need of the moment	Board understands needs based on strategic planning discussions with CEO/staff	Needs for expertise based on strategic view of organizational objectives; needs identified in detail to allow meaningful roles to be identified for individual directors	
Ability of board to provide expertise	Board does not see providing expertise as a vital role and rarely offers assistance	CEO reaches out to individuals for assistance; help generally seen as of modest value to organization; some gaps in available expertise versus needs	Board members volunteer/ access expertise and can cover most typical needs; skills seen as valuable to organization	Board expertise addresses most needs and is seen as source of distinctive value to organization	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Build reputation	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Board understanding of reputation objectives and of the role the board can play in enhancing reputation	Topic of building reputation not a priority and not specifically discussed/seen as a board role	Reputation objectives understood in vague terms with little differentiation of the message between target communities	Board understands key goals and differences between target communities; plan for board activity is largely undeveloped	Needs for reputation building based on strategic view of organizational objectives; needs identified in detail to allow meaningful roles to be identified for individual directors	
Board effectiveness in enhancing reputation of organization in the relevant communities	Board plays almost no role in helping build/enhance the reputation of the organization in relevant community	Individual board members participate when invited to community events; effectiveness of board activity unclear	Gaps exist vis-à-vis some key constituencies; board member effectiveness as reputation builders varies greatly	Board members proactively reach out in community to build awareness and excitement about the organization; board members seen to be very effective ambassadors for organization	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

1-3 Monitor and Improve Performance

Oversee financial performance, ensure risk management	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Board role in financial planning	1-year budgets prepared with little input from board	Board actively reviews annual financial plan; investment objectives generally understood, but not clearly communicated to fund managers	Board reviews and approves 3- to 5-year financial plan; written investment policy guides actions of fund managers	Board's active involvement in preparing/reviewing multi-year financial plan results in robust discussion of resource allocation, funding plans, and investment objectives in context of strategic goals	
Ongoing monitoring of financial and investment performance	Sporadic or infrequent review of results vs. budget with little opportunity for timely intervention; few board members feel they understand financial reports	Board monitors financial statements at set intervals (monthly or quarterly); open issues requiring more investigation or "surprise results" are common occurrences	Board monitors financial results regularly; staff can answer most questions and responds in timely and thoughtful manner to more complex inquiries; discussion not as "forward-looking" as some board members would like	Board monitors financial statements regularly; key performance indicators routinely reported to whole board; well-prepared staff can explain variances and discuss potential corrective actions; "no surprises" because of trust-based communication with staff	
Fiduciary and other regulatory compliance	No independent audit of financial results or processes; Limited understanding of the compliance required to regulatory bodies	Independent audit performed and results discussed between board and auditor; little board involvement with compliance to other regulatory bodies	Independent audit performed; results discussed with the board; board reviews reports to/from key regulatory bodies	Board ensures timely, independent audit of results and internal processes; board understands compliance required to regulatory bodies; feedback from auditors/regulators forms basis of recovery plan monitored by board	
Board role in risk management	No clear understanding or discussion of risks/ exposures facing organization	Some discussion of key risks and mitigation strategies (insurance), but effort is largely ad hoc or in response to an event and does not cover all major exposure categories	Board annually reviews financial and other risks as well as mitigation policies, but surprises regarding exposure or gaps in coverage do occur	Board annually reviews potential sources of risk and mitigation plans; surprises or gaps in coverage are few	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Monitor performance and ensure accountability	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Board involvement in developing performance metrics	Performance against mission is discussed infrequently with no pre-determined goals	Discussion of strategy leads to setting programmatic goals for year. Most goals focus on activity levels (e.g., meals served)	Board works with staff to set goals for 1- to 3-year period; metrics include activity levels and some efficiency or effectiveness measures	Board works with staff to set outcome based metrics and goals as well as activity/efficiency metrics; targets set for 1 to 3 year period. Performance of comparable institutions is used to inform targets	
Process for monitoring performance	No formal process for monitoring program performance exists	Infrequent discussion of performance and no feedback to the strategic planning or CEO evaluation	Routine discussion of performance against programmatic objectives but no clear feedback mechanism into strategic planning or CEO evaluation	Board routinely monitors and discusses the performance of program/organization and uses results to inform the strategic plan, resource allocation, and evaluation of the CEO	
Board understanding of accountability	Board does not view itself accountable to any stakeholders	Limited discussion of accountability. Divergent views regarding key stakeholders	Board discussion of accountability occurs in unstructured format results in consensus; discussion not turned into action, e.g., stakeholders communications	Board identifies primary stakeholders and ensures that performance results are communicated effectively to the stakeholders	
Process for obtaining and using feedback from stakeholders	Board has no process to obtain feedback from mechanism stakeholders	Feedback from stakeholders is limited to presentations by staff or “highlights”/ presentations/ interactions with service recipients at board meetings; not all stakeholders represented.	Board does receive positive and negative feedback from stakeholders but feedback is anecdotal; board discusses feedback with CEO/staff and agrees on areas of improvement	Board has formal process in place (e.g., stakeholder committee) to obtain feedback from stakeholders without filters by the staff; board ensures that the results from the stakeholder feedback are used to inform strategy and resource allocation	

Section 1: Performance of Board on its Core Responsibilities

Improve board performance	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Goal setting for the board as a follow-on to strategic planning	No specific goals exist for the board	Board translates strategic plan into goals in an ad-hoc manner and does not assign responsibilities to board committees	Board translates strategic plan into goals only in certain categories like fund-raising	Board translates the strategic plan for the organization into a set of concrete goals for the board and board committees, including timelines and required staff support	
Evaluation of board performance against goals	No evaluation is conducted by the board on its performance against the goals	Board informally evaluates its performance on major objectives	Board formally evaluates its performance on major goals but no feedback mechanism exists to improve board functioning	Board evaluates its performance against the goals and uses the lessons learned to develop plans to improve board effectiveness	
Developing a plan for improving board performance over time	Board discussion of its own performance is very limited and largely unstructured	Informal process for evaluating board performance is largely CEO/chair driven and plan for improvement is not widely known by directors	Board organizes to review performance every several years; board leadership generally seen to have a plan for improving performance	Formal process (e.g., annual self assessment) results in a clear plan for improvement; board collectively owns the topic of improving its value to the organization	

Section 2: Perceived Importance of Responsibilities for the Next 1-2 Years

A nonprofit board adds value by undertaking each of the nine responsibilities identified; however, boards rarely have time to focus on all the responsibilities. Good nonprofits prioritize their activities depending the context of the organization. As you complete this section please choose those areas of potential board focus that are most needed over the next 1 to 2 years to ensure the organization succeeds against its mission.

How important is it for your board to focus on	Low	Medium	High
Clarifying the organization's mission or vision			
Resolving key strategic or policy issues (please identify issues below)			
Developing the CEO			
Developing the financial resources needed to support the strategy			
Providing expertise or access to support organizational priorities (please identify priorities below)			
Building/enhancing reputation of organization with key stakeholders/community (please identify stakeholders/community targets below)			
Overseeing financial performance and ensuring adequate risk management			
Assessing institutional performance against mission and key program priorities			
Improving board performance			

Please add any additional thoughts to explain your answers or identify additional needs:

Section 3: Enablers of Board Effectiveness

Size and structure	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Board size	Board either too small, creating heavy work for volunteer members or inadequate coverage of key responsibilities, or too large to form cohesive group; board has not addressed size as issue to be resolved	Board size is largely legacy of past decisions; imbalances exist in workload and/or coverage of board roles.	While not a topic of discussion, board size for most part adequately meets the board's needs	Board discusses issue of size explicitly and directors widely believe the current size adequately balances: Coverage of roles Cohesiveness among members Work load	
Executive committee	Executive committee acts as de-facto board, which tends to demoralize other board members	Executive committee exists although role is not clearly understood by all board members; emerging sense that executive committee may overstep its appropriate bounds	Executive committee has clear role, well understood and supported by all board members; value of executive committee as resource not completely exploited by the organization	Executive committee has clear role, well understood and supported by all board members; serves as a valuable resource to the board chair and CEO in guiding the organization and also in improving the overall board performance	
Committee structure: Purpose and charter of committees	Committee structure mirrors staff functions and not organizational priorities; charter unclear or indistinguishable from staff functions	Committees are logically organized and reflect organizational priorities but few have clear charter/ goals	Most standing committees have clear charter and reflect organizational priorities with few exceptions	Committee structure explicitly designed with clear charter around organizational priorities; board effectively uses mix of ad-hoc and standing committees to fulfill objectives	

Section 3: Enablers of Board Effectiveness

Composition	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Understanding of board composition needed to meet organizational goals	There is little discussion of desired board member skills/attributes; as a result board composition seems to be a legacy of random conversations/initiatives	Needs discussed are largely about how we can get more large donors. Significant gaps exist in skills needed by board	The process of identifying board needs is not as strong as it could be, but for the most part few gaps exist	Systematic process for identifying needed board skills driven by strategic plan; gaps are understood and agreed to by the entire board; most new board members seem to “fit our needs well”	
Process and criteria for recruitment	Recruitment process is ad-hoc; Board is largely reactive to the suggestions of a few board members/ CEO	Formal process exists to identify and cultivate potential members. Candidate pool is generally seen as more narrow and a sense exists that other boards in area attract a stronger pool of directors	Formal recruitment process with clear criteria in place; Board seems to surface a strong list of potential candidates, but converts on a smaller percentage than it would like	Formal process with clear evaluative criteria in place; whole board reaches out to potential members from a wide range sources; recruitment process is continuous and with multi-year horizon; new members are seen as great additions to the board	
Diversity on the board	Diversity not a topic of conversation and no material representation of potentially useful sources of diversity	Board’s view of diversity not tailored to the needs of the organization and board has not achieved the desired composition	Board understands the types of diversity needed, has a plan to achieve the desired diversity and is on its way to fulfilling it	Board understands types of diversity needed for organization and the value of diversity; current diversity on the board adequately reflects the diversity needed	

Composition	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Term limits	No clear policy on term limits exists	Term limits policy exists, but the board tends to reappoint current members until term limits are reached	Although term limits works for the most part, exceptions exist, tilting to either the need for new members or the desire to retain a few exceptional long-standing members. Exiting directors are frequently “lost” to the organization	Term limits effectively balance: Need for new members/skills Retention of valuable directors Mechanisms are in place for ensuring continued involvement of high-performing retiring board members	
Orientation of new members	No formal orientation for new board members	Formal orientation exists but misses key topics; new directors feel welcomed, but take a while to get up to speed	Effective formal orientation covers key topics, but misses the opportunity to welcome/listen to new directors. Initial new director roles sometimes don’t make sense/inspire new members	Formal orientation process covers key topics (mission, organization, finances, responsibilities of directors); committee assignments are welcomed by new directors who quickly become effective members of the board	

Section 3: Enablers of Board Effectiveness

Leadership (board chair and committee leaders)	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Process for deciding who leads and for how long	No clear process exists for selecting the leadership and/or most members do not know the selection process	Process exists for selecting/transitioning board and committee leadership; Some confusion within board about process or election criteria or leadership tenures	Process exists for selecting leadership at board and committee levels although leadership criteria not articulated. Expected duration of leadership positions not articulated	Clear, well-understood, and accepted process is in place to select and transition board and committee leadership. Board leadership decisions seen to strengthen performance of institution	
Succession planning and development of board leaders	No process (formal or informal) in place to cultivate next generation of board leaders	Next generation of leaders has yet to be identified by current leaders. Succession decisions result in need for much learning on the job	Future leaders are identified and given opportunities to lead. Most transitions are seen as appropriate and timely	Process in place to identify and develop board leaders; committee assignments rotated to give board members experience and opportunity to lead; board seen to have a rich set of future leaders	
Quality of leadership relationship with CEO/ key staff	Leadership working relationship with the CEO is strained	Board chair has a good relationship with CEO though relationships with staff are under-developed; committee leaders do not interact with CEO or staff very often or effectively	The board chair has an effective relationship with the CEO and key staff although at the committee level, the quality of relationship varies	Board leadership has an effective working relationship with the CEO and key staff	

Section 3: Enablers of Board Effectiveness

Processes	1 Poor	2 Average	3 Good	4 Distinctive	Comments
Quality of preparation	Calendar of meetings for the year and agenda for individual meetings not established in timely manner; Board receives materials during meetings	Calendar of meetings established although anticipated content not included; Board receives agenda and some materials ahead of meeting; Materials not of appropriate quality for board to prepare; Additional meeting time required to get board up to speed	Board receives agenda and meeting materials for individual meetings in a timely manner; Annual calendar allows appropriate time for previewing/ consideration of key decisions	Calendar of meetings set and distributed for the year; agenda for the individual meetings sent out ahead of time with indication of expected focus/ high impact areas for board consideration; board receives quality background materials well in advance of meetings and arrive prepared	
Effective meeting processes	Meetings often start late and run long; Majority of time spend on presentations to board without sufficient time for board debate and discussion	Meetings start and end on time although structure of agenda revolves around CEO/staff 'show and tell'; Significant board debate on issues not expected or desired	Significant amount of agenda is CEO/staff 'show and tell'; Board has some time to debate but discussion is often cut short due to time constraints. Some members do not contribute, although they could	Meetings start and end on time and time is managed to ensure board discussion on all important topics; minimal 'show and tell' by the CEO/staff; most time dedicated to board discussion and debate on important issues. Board members feel involved and their contributions valued	
Board Engagement	Board views meetings as a chore; board members do not socialize before or after the meetings	Board meetings are for the most part work driven and lack opportunities for camaraderie building and connecting to the mission; Members don't mind having to miss a meeting now and then	Board meetings are for the most part productive and fun; some attempts are made to include activities to build camaraderie and connect board members with the mission; attendance is typically high	Board interactions are productive and enjoyable; good mixture of work and fun activities including effective efforts to connect board members to the mission (e.g., site visits); board members hate to miss meetings	

OTHER COMMENTS: