Executive Summary

The Performance Evaluation (PE) Task Force was created to review the current staff evaluation forms and determine if a new form might be needed, or if the current form could benefit from some modification. Kim Wilson, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, gave the following charge to the Task Force:

_To produce recommendations for changes to the performance evaluation tool used by the University. This includes, but is not exclusive to, the criteria for evaluation (i.e., major job responsibilities, goals, competencies) and the rating system used. The revised tool should have two primary purposes: to directly support accomplishment of institutional goals and to provide employees meaningful feedback about their performance and contribution to achieving goals._

The current performance evaluation tool was reviewed to determine what parts might be useful in a new form. The Task Force engaged in extensive study and comparison of the tools used by benchmark institutions, and the group reached consensus regarding which components should be kept from the existing tool as well as additional components from our benchmarks’ tools.

Several themes emerged from the Task Force discussions about how to improve the current system; however the main theme was to stimulate ongoing dialogue between employee and supervisor about performance, expectations, and professional development.

Some overall characteristics of the proposed tool are: online form with extensive online tutorials and multimedia training; applicable to both main campus and UK HealthCare employees; all inclusive with both Supervisor and Self-Evaluation on one form; continued use of MJRs along with percentages; available for edit by employees throughout the service year; inclusive of definitions for the metrics upfront; adjusted evaluation cycle to coordinate with completion of goals; overall PE rating would be tied to merit increase should there be one available; multimedia classes and written training documents would be provided to supervisors to ensure they are maximizing the tool’s benefits; and the appeals process would be noted on the form so that it is obvious to the employee.

The new form’s design would include: Section 1: Core Competencies; Section 2: Major Job Responsibilities, Including section for Additional Duties/Special Projects and Including Methods of Evaluation for each MJR, which generates goals for each MJR; Section 3: Professional Development and Section 4: Overall Evaluation.

We all want to see a better evaluation tool and we are confident that our recommendations create a better tool that will spark broader dialogues between employees and supervisors. We will also understand that questions will need to be addressed as a new performance evaluation tool is implemented. The Task Force members appreciate the opportunity to serve the University of Kentucky.
Task Force Members

Co-Chairs: Dr. Robert Mock, Student Affairs, and Kristen Brown, UK HealthCare Ambulatory Services

Stephanie Aken, Libraries, Faculty Representative
Leigh Baker, IT Enterprise Application Group
Ronda Beck, Controller’s Office
Lance Broeking, Parking & Transportation
JoLynn Noe, Financial Aid
Russ Pear, Athletics
Megan Perry, UK HealthCare Internal Medicine

TJ Pettrey, UK HealthCare Cardiology
Jim Ryder, Medical Center Physical Plant Division
Kirsten Turner, College of Arts & Sciences
Skip Van Hook, Physical Plant Division, Staff Senate Representative
Rosemary Veach, College of Agriculture
Bill Verble, Human Resources, Ex-officio
Maria Fischer, Human Resources, Facilitator

Charge

The Performance Evaluation (PE) Task Force was created to review the current staff evaluation forms, which had not changed since 2002, and determine if a new form might be needed, or if the current form could benefit from some modification. Kim Wilson, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, gave the following charge to the Task Force:

To produce recommendations for changes to the performance evaluation tool used by the University. This includes, but is not exclusive to, the criteria for evaluation (i.e., major job responsibilities, goals, competencies) and the rating system used. The revised tool should have two primary purposes: to directly support accomplishment of institutional goals and to provide employees meaningful feedback about their performance and contribution to achieving goals.

Ms. Wilson further added that the tool should include the following elements:

- Alignment to institutional goals
- Goals-setting section
- Objectivity, including metrics
- Discussion on career development

Findings

Current Tool

The current performance evaluation tool was reviewed to determine what parts might be useful in a new form. Many agreed that the form was not “broken,” but it simply did not address all aspects of an individual’s total evaluation. The Task Force engaged in extensive study and comparison of the tools used by benchmark institutions, most notably the University of Georgia. The group reached consensus regarding which components should be kept from the existing tool as well as additional components from our benchmarks’ tools.
Pros of existing tool:
  - Tied to Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ)/Position Description
  - PE section weights align with JAQ/Position Description major job responsibility (MJR) weights
  - Allowed for supervisor’s subjective review
  - Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is clear and applicable, aligning with JAQ/Position Description
  - Clearly defined appeals process
  - Current pilot of online form in process

Cons
  - Only paper (except pilot groups), move towards electronic
  - Unclear instructions, supervisor training available but not widely used
  - No opportunity for development/learning plans
  - Not tied to University or Departmental goals
  - No place for individual goals (qualitative or quantitative)

Benchmarks

As part of the findings the Task Force closely examined performance evaluation forms from benchmark institutions as a way to understand commonly-used performance evaluation criteria for public research universities and to identify practices that would improve the performance evaluation process at UK. A combination of Council on Postsecondary Education and Top 20 Business Plan institutions were used for a total of 24 institutions listed below.

Georgia Institute of Technology       University of Florida
Michigan State University              University of Georgia
North Carolina State University       University of Illinois
Ohio State University                 University of Iowa
Pennsylvania State University          University of Maryland
Rutgers University                    University of Michigan (Healthcare Only)
Texas A&M University                  University of Minnesota
University of Arizona                 University of North Carolina
University of California - Berkeley    University of Pittsburgh
University of California – Davis      University of Texas
University of California - Los Angeles University of Washington
University of California - San Diego  University of Wisconsin

The Task Force found that our benchmark universities had performance tools as varied as each campus. No single institution stood out to the Task Force as being better than the rest. Indeed, the Task Force agreed that our current tool already exceeds what some benchmarks use. After extensive review, Task Force members were able to determine like-components of PE tools that met the charge of the committee, while being supervisor and staff-friendly. From this research, the Task Force pulled best practices to be a part of the new recommended tool. The practices incorporated are:
Themes

Several themes emerged from the Task Force discussions about how to improve the current system.

1. **Improve, not Replace** – The current form should not be discarded entirely. Elements of it work well, but it can be improved.

2. **Focus on Coaching and Discussion** – While the assessment is important, the performance evaluation should be the culmination of year-round coaching from the supervisor and discussion about expectations between the supervisor and employee.

3. **Goals and Professional Development** – The current form does not incorporate goals and professional development, which should be a part of the discussion. The performance evaluation should include discussion of past performance and future goals and development needs.

4. **Deemphasize the Score** – The current format puts a lot of emphasis on the final numerical score. A new process should have less emphasis on a final numerical score and more on the discussion around how they are performing their major job responsibilities and how they may improve and develop.

5. **More Staff Input** – The process will work better if employees can have input throughout the year instead just at the end.

6. **Training is Critical** – Many managers have not been adequately trained in providing feedback and assessing performance. The Task Force believes that detailed, comprehensive multimedia training needs to be offered to supervisors and managers on the new form and process.
7. **Timing of the Evaluation Cycle** – Performance timed to fiscal year, rather than calendar year, will facilitate alignment with departmental strategic plan goals.

**Recommendations**

Our proposed PE would combine the newly created form designed to stimulate ongoing dialogue between employee and supervisor about performance, expectations, and professional development.

Some overall characteristics of the proposed tool include:

- The new form would be online, and there would be extensive online tutorials and multimedia training available. Additional instructions and definitions would be included on the form itself.
- This proposed tool would apply to both main campus and UK HealthCare employees.
- The new form would combine the Supervisor and Self-Evaluation form, enabling supervisor and staff member to engage in a meaningful discussion regarding both the employee’s and the unit’s goals as they are tied to the University’s goals and mission. These discussions may reveal additional training or resources that might be required to identify and achieve employee contributions to the unit and to the university that might not otherwise appear on the PE form.
- The use of MJRs along with percentages would be retained because of the afforded flexibility.
- Employees would be able to add content throughout the service year.
- Definitions for the metrics would appear upfront.
- Adjust the evaluation cycle to coordinate with completion of goals tied to academic calendar, or fiscal calendar as appropriate.
- Overall PE rating would be tied to merit increase should there be one available.
- Multimedia classes and written training documents would be provided to supervisors to ensure they are maximizing the tool’s benefits. This includes general training on how to complete an effective performance evaluation.
- The appeals process would be noted on the form so that it is obvious to the employee.

The new form’s design would include:

- **Section 1: Core Competencies**
- **Section 2: Major Job Responsibilities**
  - Including section for Additional Duties/Special Projects
  - Including Methods of Evaluation for each MJR, which generates goals for each MJR
- **Section 3: Professional Development**
- **Section 4: Overall Evaluation**

**Section 1: Core Competencies**

The Task Force incorporated the core competencies into the performance evaluation because the current form does not give an adequate means to discuss these and other behaviors. The Task Force agreed that the behaviors captured by the Core Competencies section need to be a part of the evaluation discussion.
Each core competency would include examples of illustrative behavioral characteristics to aid in supervisor and employee’s evaluation. These core competencies should apply to all employees regardless of the type or level of work or where it is performed as they form the foundation upon which all employees should perform on behalf of the University.

The core competencies are not a means of judging individual values but rather the behaviors needed to be successful at work. “Competency” is rooted in the word “competence” defined as “the state or quality of being adequately or well qualified; ability” and “a specific range of skill, knowledge, or ability” (definition can be found at http://www.thefreedictionary.com/competence).

These core competencies were selected after great and lengthy discussion by the Task Force based upon review of core competencies used at benchmark institutions and University of Kentucky’s mission, vision and values. Ultimately, the core competencies recommended are unique to the University of Kentucky and not replicated from other institutions.

They are:

1.) Dependability^  
2.) Interpersonal Relations^  
3.) Integrity*  
4.) Initiative/Resourcefulness^  
5.) Diversity & Inclusion*

*Direct UK Core Value  
^Culmination of more than one UK Core Value

In the proposed tool, core competencies are valued on a 3-tier scale: Needs Improvement, Meets Expectations, and Exceeds Expectations. The tri-level evaluation was intentional compared to the 4-tier level of Section 2, mainly to set the core competencies apart from the major job responsibilities. The Task Force also realized that there needed to be a venue to recognize those employees that demonstrate exceptional behavior relative to core competencies, and allowed for a 3-tier scale to provide an opportunity for additional employee recognition.

As these core competencies are truly a foundation for employment, if an employee receives a Needs Improvement in any of the core competencies, it is grounds for immediate Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) and the employee is not eligible for any increase should there be one. Meeting or Exceeding core competencies are considered a standard requirement for employment and thus do not formally count towards overall evaluation.

A draft of the Core Competencies with rating descriptions is included in Appendix C.

Section 2: Major Job Responsibilities (MJR)

During the review of the current PE tool, the Task Force agreed that since the University uses the current Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ)/Position Description format, that we continue to use the current tool’s format relative to the MJRs in that position description.

In the proposed tool, each MJR would be weighted based upon the weight of the MJR in the JAQ/Position Description. In addition however, we propose the implementation of a Method of
Evaluation tool, which would accompany each MJR. This tool would assist the supervisor in setting quantifiable goals, and discuss with the employee how they will be gauged upon this portion of their work performance. Managers will be able to link individual goals to department and University goals. In addition to quantifiable goals, methods include: Supervisory Observation, Third Party Feedback, Peer Feedback, 360 Report, Spot Checks/Audits, Sampling/Statistics, Project Results, and Self-Report. The deployment of a Method of Evaluation tool also ties to the goal-driven UK HealthCare Leader Performance System.

Instead of the current 5-point number scale, we proposed that each MJR will be gauged on 4-tier verbal scale of: Does Not Meet Expectations, Meets Expectations, Occasionally Exceeds Expectations, and Consistently Exceeds Expectations. Verbal categorization follows precedence set by our benchmark institutions. We specifically moved away from a 5-tier number scale to set this tool apart from the current system. Note that no number is assigned to these tiers for the employee. The members of the Task Force found through their collective experience that employees focused more on the number of their evaluation, rather than what that number meant as a reflection of their performance. Employees often debated with each other and their supervisor over fractions of a point, leading the focus away from what the Task Force envisions as the performance evaluation’s key theme, stimulating dialogue between supervisor and employee relative to the latter’s performance and development.

Through the Task Force’s review of benchmark organizations, we found that many incorporated both the employee’s self-evaluation with the supervisor’s evaluation on one document, rather than two separate which is current state at the University of Kentucky. We propose therefore, that both the employee and supervisor’s evaluation be alongside the other on the same integrated online form. From a workflow perspective, the online system would allow for the employee to rate themselves first, and then have the supervisor follow at a later time, again rating the same metrics. When the employee and supervisor meet to review, they are able to discuss areas of similarity and where there may be a disconnect on evaluation of performance.

The Task Force also found that many benchmarks afforded an opportunity for performance review on work completed beyond those responsibilities found in the JAQ/Position Description. To that end, we also propose that a section is created to allow for the supervisor to comment on any additional duties (long term and time consuming) that the employee may have completed in the year.

Section 3: Professional Development

While professional development is currently on the employee self-evaluation, it does not reside on the performance evaluation that the supervisor reviews. Since development of its staff is a goal of the University, the Task Force felt that a formal professional development section was needed, and should be required, with the supervisor indicating that they had a planning conversation with the employee. The section would have an open content box to populate the employee’s professional development plan for the year, including specific goals and outlining any needed resources.
Section 4: Overall Evaluation

At the end of the review, considering performance on the core competencies and the MJRs, the supervisor would assign an overall evaluation rating. As mentioned above, Meeting Expectations and above in the Core Competencies section is considered baseline performance and does not count towards the overall evaluation. However, if an employee receives a Needs Improvement on any one core competency, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) around that competency would be required.

The overall evaluation therefore, is mainly driven by the performance exhibited on the MJRs, and the attainment of reaching those goals set forth in the Methods of Evaluation tool. Again, the overall evaluation would coincide with the 4-tier verbal scale of: Does Not Meet Expectations, Meets Expectations, Occasionally Exceeds Expectations, and Consistently Exceeds Expectations. Since the overall evaluation is comprised of the MJRs that are differently weighted, the electronic software system can calculate a number on the backend to guide the supervisor in assessing the correct overall evaluation tier. This is where positive performance on the core competencies may come in to play; where meeting or exhibiting outstanding performance around the core competencies can afford the supervisor justification for rounding the evaluation up into the next tier should the average overall evaluation fall in between two tiers.

Should an employee receive a Does Not Meet Expectations on any one MJR, a PIP would be required, following current Human Resources guidelines. The Task Force recommends continued use of existing form and current appeals process.

Feedback

The Task Force produced initial recommendations in May 2012. The co-chairs began presenting the findings and recommendations for feedback in August 2012 to key leadership groups and constituencies. The following summarizes the feedback received.

President and Interim Provost

Suggestions from President Capilouto and Interim Provost Tracy included:

- Move up for the current PE cycle
- Make Professional Development section more prescriptive/specific (include staff development office in design)
- Adjust new cycle for campus to follow academic calendar; HealthCare remain on fiscal year cycle
- Training for supervisors to administer PEs
- Develop an implementation timeline

Staff Senate

The co-chairs presented to the Staff Senate Executive Committee and then the full Staff Senate at the September 2012 meeting. As a result of lengthy discussion at the full meeting, the co-chairs agreed to be a part of a brown-bag session where senators could ask further questions about the
recommendations. The Staff Senate sent a response to the Task Force listing concerns about the recommendations (see Appendix B). The Task Force reconvened for two meetings to formulate a reply to the Staff Senate. The reply is found in Appendix C and amended recommendations are discussed below.

Some of the discussion comments included:

- Significant concerns about the core competencies
- Have the legal department review the proposed tool
- Supervisors should do evaluations more than once a year
- Multiple supervisors access, especially for overload assignments
- Train employees to use the system too
- 360 a great tool, especially if it can go outside of department and across units
- Inquire how core competencies were rolled out at other universities
- More time needed for discussion of the recommendations

**Academic Leadership – Deans, Department Chairs, and Directors**

The recommendations were presented at the September 2012 Academic Leadership meeting. Comments included:

- 4 point scale isn’t statistically sound; a 3 or 5 point scale is
- Some concern about the core competencies
- The PE and recommendations don’t meet the needs of technical staff

**Healthcare Senior Leadership**

The recommendations were presented at two meetings of UK HealthCare seniors leaders. One meeting focused on the specific needs of Nursing. Comments included:

- Does an employee get separate Performance Improvement Plans (PIP) if Needs Improvement for a core competency and Not Meeting Expectations in an MJR if they are already on similar corrective action? This would seem to be double whammy.
- Make documentation of Consistently Exceeds Expectations as onerous as Does Not Meet Expectations. Where if rated low they have to do additional work, if supervisors want to give the highest rating, they should support that with documentation also. Current set up lends towards higher ratings, its “easier” to give high(er) ratings.
- Nursing managers need to be able to rate each job standard as they currently do.
- The overall score should be calculated, not assigned by the manager.
- Use the Behavioral Expectations in place of the Core Competencies. The Behavioral Expectations are: Customer Centered, Service Focused, Quality Driven, Resource Wise, Growth Oriented.

**Vice President for Financial Operations and Treasurer/Associate Provost for Finance and Operations**

The recommendation on changing the PE cycle was discussed with Angie Martin, Vice President for Financial Operations and Treasurer, and Lisa Wilson, Associate Provost for Finance and Operations, to
determine the impact on the budgetary process. Also discussed with them was the recommendation for the four-level rating scale to determine any impact with merit increase distribution.

Response to PE Cycle Recommendation

While we support the effort to better align performance evaluations with University goals, shifting the PE cycle to the fiscal year would significantly impact the fiscal year budget process. We support the President’s desire to continue to put merit increases for non-HealthCare employees into effect July 1. Adjusting the PE cycle to a March- February cycle, with evaluations due March 31, may be feasible within the budget process. However, because of changes to the budgeting model for the University, we recommend postponing any change to the PE cycle until the implications of the change within the new budget model can be better understood. We will revisit the issue of changing the PE cycle in one year.

Response to Rating Scale Recommendation

We find no issue with the change to a four-level rating scale. We do recommend that the overall rating be calculated from the Major Job Responsibility ratings without the supervisor’s discretion to adjust the overall rating. We believe merit increase distribution can work with the four-level rating scale in place of a numerical scale, however, we do recommend that more guidance be developed for department and unit leaders on how merit increase will work using the new scale.

Revisions to the Recommendations

In response to the Staff Senate’s concerns, the Task Force is amending our recommendations to include the following:

1. For the first year of the new performance evaluation, the Core Competencies will only be rated for supervisors. During the first year, we recommend the core competencies be discussed for non-supervisory employees, but not rated. The Core Competencies will be rated for all employees beginning with the second year.

2. The definitions for the levels of the Core Competencies in the draft form will be amended to state that they are some of the behaviors captured by the core competencies but not all. The form will further state that there must be supporting statements from the evaluator for the rating.

We all want to see a better evaluation tool and we are confident that our recommendations create a better tool that will spark broader dialogues between employees and supervisors. We will also understand that questions will need to be addressed as a new performance evaluation tool is implemented. The Task Force members appreciate the opportunity to serve the University of Kentucky.