

Performance Review of
DR. M. CHRISTOPHER BROWN II
PRESIDENT
KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

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EVALUATION FACILITATOR

June 7, 2018

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Kentucky State Board of Regents adopted a yearly presidential evaluation procedure and process that includes the president's self-evaluation, a completed performance evaluation questionnaire completed by Regents, students, faculty, staff as well as interviews with campus senior leaders, students, faculty, alumni and staff. This multi-faceted approach to the review will provide a very comprehensive view of the president's annual performance. A consultant/facilitator from TM2 Executive Search was engaged to facilitate the review process.

The purpose of this presidential review of President M. Christopher Brown II is **(1)** to foster improved performance of the institution; **(2)** to encourage improved performance of the president as part of his ongoing professional development; and **(3)** to inform the president and the Regents about how others are responding to the president's efforts, and how others perceive his accomplishments, and his prospects.

The emphasis throughout the interview process is on constructive, collegial thinking. A deliberate effort is made to obtain helpful suggestions to improve the effectiveness of Kentucky State University and President Brown. In the end, the review should be thorough, fair and constructive.

Special mention must be made regarding the substantial assistance provided by KSU General Counsel Lisa Lang and Elise Borne. Ms. Borne served as the on-site coordinator for this review. She elicited the cooperation of the participants, arranged and rearranged schedules to accommodate conferees. Their patience and skills are appreciated. Additional mention to Dr. Yuliana Sustanto, director of institutional research, and her staff for conducting the surveys associated with this review. Regent Farris provided very helpful guidance during the review process.

Likewise, it must be said that President Brown cooperated fully with the review. Throughout the process, the president maintained the proper "arm's length" distance from the process, while cooperating fully with it. The method used to conduct and report interview does not involve rigidly controlled statistical processes. We are dealing with perceptions first. "Facts" are not unearthed and reported with certainty. We are dealing with perceptions first. In the same way that "facts are events, objects, and phenomena about which the majority of competent observers can agree," those perceptions that are frequently and strongly held by reasonably competent observers might or might not lead to consensus; it is this consensus, its relative presence or absence, that the review facilitator listens and probes for, and reports.

The accuracy and value of the report reside, then, in the perceptions and suggestions of the individuals who participated, individuals who are well grounded in Kentucky State University, its realities and potentials, and who have a keen interest in its welfare.

The purposes of the review were made clear by the facilitator on the outset of each conference. Ground-rules with regard to confidentiality, non-attribution, and anonymity were articulated, and conferees were asked to concur on all counts. In virtually all cases, the tone of the conferences was both professional and amicable even when disagreements were expressed.

At the conclusion of each conference, participants were asked, "Were there any questions you wanted me to ask that we did not ask?" Conferees were also asked if there was anything they wished to say that they did not have a chance to say up to this point. Many interviewees expressed appreciation for the opportunity to present their views.

CONFEREES CONSULTED

One hundred and fifty-two (152) participants were involved in this review. Fifty-nine were interviewed in face-to-face conferences and ninety-three participants, identified through a random sample process, completed questionnaires.

The performance questionnaire targeted the following areas: Strategy and Priorities, Leadership, Relationships With Constituencies, Financial Management, Fund-Raising and Future Positioning. The questionnaire was based on a Likert scale of 1-5, with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. The questionnaire results indicated that the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with President Brown's focus/performance in the six areas mentioned above.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The accomplishments identified here are the reports and perceptions of conferees. An accomplishment or perceived accomplishment is not listed unless it has been mentioned at least two times during the course of interviews.

1. Fall enrollment increases
2. Increased visibility for KSU
3. Recruitment of high caliber staff
4. Improvement in relationship with state legislators
5. Positive community engagement
6. Enhanced relationship with press
7. Enhanced Image of KSU in the community
8. Building constructive relationship with the faculty

PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

These perceptions were shared by conferees in response to the question, "What personal attributes do you believe the President brings to his position.". These responses are reported here verbatim or virtually verbatim. To appear here, an attribute had to be mentioned at least two times.

1. Motivator
2. Engaging speaker
3. Open
4. Forward Looking
5. Personable
6. Student Oriented
7. Transparent
8. Energetic
9. Scholar
10. Charismatic
11. Inclusive
12. Engaging
13. Approachable
14. Willing to listen

PERCEPTIONS OF NEEDS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Conferees were asked to offer suggestions to the president for improvement. The facilitator stressed the need for comments to have a constructive purpose. In order to encourage helpful, rather than only negative or hostile responses, the facilitator asked conferees, “If you could whisper in the ear of the president a constructive suggestion that would be the greatest help to him or the university, what would you most want to whisper?” These are the answers, presented in the language of respondents. The statements are made in direct address to the president. While the conferees were willing to comment on potential areas for enhancing the president’s performance, it is very clear from the feedback that the campus community is solidly behind the direction the president has charted for Kentucky State University. This is especially striking, given the newness of the president’s tenure.

1. Keep alumni (local as well as national) in the loop so we can be more supportive.
2. Continue to expand communications internally as well as externally
3. Continue to tell the KSU story in the community
4. Increase visibility on campus
5. Promote more from within
6. Keep doing what you are doing
7. Continue to focus on recruitment and retention
8. Increase fundraising
9. Consider relocating student support services back to student center

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

These concluding comments are largely drawn from proceeding sections, from the facilitator’s experience with this and other institutions and from comparisons with many presidents around the country. The facilitator understands that the university president and Regents will make their own observation from their closer-hands perspective.

It should be apparent that President Brown has worked hard to benefit the university and the community. His accomplishments in a very short period of time are “rock solid.” He has made significant change in the context of understanding the significant challenges and opportunities facing KSU. The participant responses are clear. The KSU community support President Brown’s initial efforts. He is providing leadership and direction the vast majority believe is good for Kentucky State University. The data support this conclusion. This seems to be more than just a first year “honeymoon” response to a desire to have more stability in the president’s office. The support for his leadership runs deep.



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