



## **Resolution on Collecting Feedback Regarding Supervisors and Leaders**

*(Approved by ASA 4/27/22)*

WHEREAS governance groups approved resolutions in the spring of 2021 requesting upward evaluations, but those resolutions were rejected based on concerns expressed by the Chancellor;

WHEREAS the governance groups created the "Supervisor Feedback Working Group," which included appointees from each governance group and a representative from Human Resources and Diversity (HR&D), to address these concerns and craft a process that would provide ongoing benefits to the institution;

WHEREAS supervisors and leaders at UW-W already conduct regular reviews of their direct reports, though these reviews take different forms and occur at different intervals;

WHEREAS the working group reviewed various evaluation, review, and feedback processes that already take place at UW-W and similar processes at other institutions;

WHEREAS that working group transmitted a summary of their request to the Chancellor and Provost in October 2021, but conversations remained ongoing;

WHEREAS UW-W already conducts wide-spread evaluations for instructors (via student evaluations each semester) and academic programs (via Audit & Review every 5 years), we believe that other elements of UW-W should be similarly evaluated as a way to ensure ongoing improvement in our service to our students and the region;

WHEREAS the working group attended each college's Administrative Council meeting to discuss ideas, questions, and concerns with Department Chairs and Deans;

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate passed a Resolution recommending the following policy on April 12, 2022;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Staff Assembly recommends that the following policy, which resulted from that work, be adopted by the institution.



## **Collecting Feedback Regarding Employees in Supervisory or Leadership Positions With the Aim of Continuous Improvement and Development**

### **Rationale:**

In response to a desire from all campus constituencies to be able to safely and confidentially provide ongoing feedback about employment experiences, UW-W will establish a trustworthy feedback collection process, in partnership with governance groups. Because UW-Whitewater supports a “Performance Management” approach, meaning ongoing feedback with coaching and training to improve campus community processes, employees in supervisory or leadership positions need to regularly receive feedback from individuals with whom they work closely as a way to continually develop their skills as well as improve campus practices.

### **Goal:**

To provide a process to celebrate successes and identify opportunities for ongoing improvement and professional development. This is to be formative, not summative. Additionally, this process includes filtering out feedback that is discriminatory or offensive in nature, such that employees are protected from unnecessary/personal harm.

### **Key features:**

- Timing (minimum frequency)
- Identifying relevant individuals from whom feedback is needed (at minimum all direct reports and others with significant interactions, for more information see below)
- Identification of Training Opportunities (supporting professional development needs related to leadership and communication skills)
- Feedback is moderated by the supervisor’s supervisor or the Dean so that results are formative, provide an opportunity for continuous improvement, and exclude harmful comments.

### **Definitions:**

1. Supervisor - This term refers to anyone who is hired to supervise direct reports within the organizational chart. This includes:
  - a. Those with titles that include Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Dean, or Director.
  - b. Those who assign daily/weekly work tasks to two or more employees, excluding student employees in academic departments and limited term/seasonal employees whose work lasts for less than 2 months.<sup>1</sup>
2. Supervisor’s supervisor - This term refers to the person who is directly above, in the organizational chart, anyone who meets the definition of supervisor (above). This is the person to whom the supervisor reports for tasks and responsibilities.
3. Department Chairs- UW-Whitewater acknowledges that Department Chairs are not hired to supervise direct reports, and for this reason, Department Chairs are not supervisors in the same way as those described above. Department Chairs are primarily members of the Faculty and are only temporarily serving their department in the role of Chair.

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<sup>1</sup> The supervisory experiences for student employees, graduate assistants, and limited-term employees may need additional investigation before launch of this policy. It is the recommendation of the working group that this investigation include representatives from the affected groups.



4. Dean - This term refers to people who are in roles with the title of Dean. Deans are hired to supervise direct reports, namely Department Chairs.

**Process for Supervisor Feedback:**

As a part of the launch of this policy, UW-W should provide a training opportunity for all employees about how to provide feedback that is appropriate and useful; and going forward, new employees should be provided this opportunity as well. Furthermore, UW-W should provide ongoing training opportunities for supervisors of supervisors regarding methods for effectively filtering anonymous feedback.

The Internal Audit and Quality Assurance Improvement Office will ensure that a survey is conducted within a supervisor's first 9-15 months in a new role and every 3 years thereafter (unless additional surveys are requested by either the supervisor or the supervisor's supervisor). This survey should collect anonymous feedback from relevant individuals and campus partners.

Prior to the launch of a survey, the supervisor and the supervisor's supervisor should agree on the list of people to receive an invitation to respond. This list should include the full array of individuals receiving supervision under that position (not merely direct reports) and others with significant interaction.

This review would be folded into any reviews that are already occurring; it is not a duplicate review. Units that already conduct rigorous reviews are encouraged to continue using those instruments as a part of this process.

The Internal Audit and Quality Assurance Improvement Office would manage survey instruments and the distribution of the surveys. The survey instrument would utilize a digital survey tool (i.e. Qualtrics or similar). The survey should cover some consistent topic areas for all supervisors institution-wide (to be determined as the policy is developed), but it could also allow individual departments and units to add questions to focus on their own priority areas.

These reviews are not to be used as part of any grievance process.

The Internal Audit and Quality Assurance Improvement Office would be the sole manager of the survey results, and the results would be shared only with the supervisor's supervisor and no other entities. After a survey is conducted, the report will be sent only to the supervisor's supervisor.

The supervisor's supervisor would review the results for themes and important elements, which the supervisor's supervisor could use as a mechanism to guide quality and process improvement for the workplace. The supervisor's supervisor may request additional surveys to address trends and gauge improvement. Information from these surveys may also be used for training purposes.

Direct results of the survey will not appear in the personnel records of the employees; however, the supervisor's supervisor may use the themes that emerge from the survey to develop recommendations regarding professional goals, and those recommendations can be included in personnel evaluations.



**Process for Department Chair Feedback:**

As a part of the launch of this policy, UW-W should provide a training opportunity for all employees about how to provide feedback that is appropriate and useful, and going forward, new employees should be provided this opportunity as well. Furthermore, UW-W should provide ongoing training opportunities for Deans regarding methods for effectively filtering anonymous feedback.

The Dean's Office within each college will ensure that a survey is conducted within a Department Chair's third academic semester and at the end of each term as Department Chair thereafter (unless additional surveys are requested by either the Department Chair or the Dean). This survey should collect anonymous feedback from relevant individuals and campus partners.

Prior to the launch of a survey, the Chair and the Dean should agree on the list of people to receive an invitation to respond. This list should include the full array of individuals employed in that Department and others with significant interaction.

This review would be folded into any reviews that are already occurring; it is not a duplicate review. Units that already conduct rigorous reviews are encouraged to continue using those instruments as a part of this process.

The Dean's Office would manage survey instruments and the distribution of the surveys. The survey instrument would utilize a digital survey tool (i.e. Qualtrics or similar). The survey should cover some topic areas related to leadership/communication skills, but it could also allow individual Deans to add questions to focus on their own priority areas. These reviews are not to be used as part of any grievance process.

The Dean's Office within each college would be the sole manager of the survey results, and the results would be available only to the Dean and no other entities.

The Dean would review the results for themes and important elements, which the Dean could use as a mechanism to guide quality and process improvement for the workplace. The Dean may request additional surveys to address trends and gauge improvement. Information from these surveys may also be used for training purposes. [A Dean or all of the Deans may elect to provide training to the whole group of Department Chairs based on these results or at the request of Department Chairs themselves.]

Direct results of the survey will not appear in the personnel records of the Department Chairs and will not be used in reviews for promotion or tenure; however, the Dean may use the themes that emerge from the survey to develop recommendations regarding professional goals, and those recommendations can be included in personnel evaluations.

**Implementation:**

Once this process is approved by all governance groups and the Chancellor, we recommend that a working group, inclusive of governance groups, HR&D, the Internal Audit and Quality Assurance Improvement Office, Deans, and Department Chairs, be pulled together to explore survey instruments and address other logistics.



We request that this process begin within one academic year of final approval.

**FAQ:**

- The personnel records of employees (except the Chancellor and Provost) are exempt from open records requests.
- Reviews of supervisors of 9-month employees must be conducted within the 9-month contract period.
- The direct results of these surveys are not included in personnel records and are not subject to open records requests. The intention is that the direct results of these surveys are confidential.
- Note: If we can make an institutional commitment to combat discriminatory comments in feedback, we could also bring this to the conversation about revising student evaluations of courses.

<b>Action Date</b>	4/27/2022			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>	Rejected	Tabled	Other
<b>Vote Detail</b>	Ayes 11	Nays 0	Abstentions 1	Other 0