

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs)

Academic Business Officer Performance Appraisal Criteria

Expectation and Assessment

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Academic Business Officer Performance Appraisal Criteria

This performance appraisal document presents criteria as a “best practices” model for achieving CALS’ goal of a highly competent, motivated, and efficient/effective business operation. Unit heads will be encouraged to use this document as a tool for completing performance appraisals for their academic business leaders. Each senior business officer should strive to meet the metrics and attributes described in this outline. The Assistant Dean of Finance and Administration for the College has been asked by Dean Burgess to provide input to this annual appraisal in conjunction with the unit head’s in-depth knowledge of performance and achievements.

Below are the criteria families and non-exhaustive examples of specific issues that will be assessed by the Assistant Dean during the annual appraisals. These families and examples will be vetted with both unit heads and academic business leaders prior to adoption to ensure they are fair, representative of the work and expectations for business leaders, and clearly articulated with the outcomes. Criteria families and examples are subject to change based on business needs. Changes will be re-vetted and communicated to both unit heads and business leaders.

The outcomes of this appraisal process are twofold: 1) developing a highly performing, competent, and engaged business officer cadre who have clear expectations for how to succeed in their role, and 2) greater interaction and partnership between the academic units and the College. Business officers who have areas of improvement should actively work to improve those areas. Jeffrey Ratje is available to assist in advising and guidance on improvement strategies; but there are also a number of excellent training programs and classes at the UA. Books and off-site trainings may also be helpful. Business officers are strongly encouraged to consult with her/his unit head or direct supervisor for feedback and coaching as well. The goal is to avoid a documented repeat area of improvement.

Business leaders are expected to satisfactorily perform the following:

Management

- Appropriate style of mentoring and supervision of subordinate business staff
- Succession planning and developing the next generation of business leaders in the College
- Effectively and appropriately dealing with personnel or disciplinary issues of subordinate staff, consistent with UA policies
- Effectively training and encouraging attendance at trainings of subordinate staff; subordinate staff should be able to perform their assigned tasks at a high level and expected to grow in responsibilities

Financial & Accounting

- Provide accurate, timely, complete, and meaningful financial reports and accounting reconciliations including the Quarterly All Funds Report detailing the financial status of the unit for all types of funds.

- Identify shortcomings in the data, when present, and work to find solutions to data problems
- Regular and prudent reviews of accounts and transactions; fraud/misuse prevention and detection strategies employed; PCard reconciliations are performed timely; issues of misuse of state property are investigated and acted upon immediately using the appropriate reporting methods
- Operations are conducted in a way that complies with audits, UA and college best practices, GAAP, sponsors and donor expectations, etc.
- Transactions are accurate and timely such as DVs, IBs, RBCs, travel documents, etc.
- Work showcases understanding and competence with UA and UA Foundation financial information and systems; showcases comfort with both the transactional and unit big picture
- Financial projections and budgets are based on sound and reasonable assumptions

Professional Judgment

- Exercises good professional judgment; minimizes financial and legal risk to unit, college, and university
- Provides relevant, accurate, and timely policy information to decision makers
- Employs discretion and common sense when communicating and sharing sensitive or potentially sensitive information and correspondence
- Privileged or confidential information is kept private and physically secure
- Focuses effort on the most material issues first - "sees the dollars and not just the pennies"; maintains the mission of the university and the land grant mission of the college as the end result
- Work is performed in a fair and reasonable manner - avoiding favoritism or bias
- Appropriate enforcement of federal, state, ABOR, UA, and college policies; appropriate notification of and communication with hierarchy is followed
- Decision-making by the business leader is appropriate for her/his delegated authority, responsibility, accountability, and situation

Human Resources & Payroll

- Efficient, timely, and competent hiring and terminations of employees, showcasing knowledge of UA HR systems, policies, and procedures
- Line budgeting should be maintained and corrected throughout the year to the extent possible; correct use and knowledge of the Request for Budget Change (RBC) system
- Positive feedback from UA processing units such as HR, Payroll, and Systems Control
- Minimal number of retroactive pay requests and off-cycle pay requests; systems established in units to minimize additional workload and missed payroll deadlines

Communication

- Budgets and financial information are communicated to the audience in an understandable way with strong insight and meaning; business leader can articulate underlying assumptions and the meaning behind the numbers; communication is understood by the audience

- All communication and correspondence are professional and responsive
- Business leaders develop a strong working relationship with her/his unit head; uses positive communication as a tool to build and maintain that relationship

Innovation & Continuous Learning

- Business officers are expected to stay on the forefront of their field; seek out trainings, apply for relevant learning series and classes; enroll in a relevant degree program (with permission from their supervisor)
- Innovate business processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness, improve the service and support to achieve the mission
- Leverage resources and technologies to employ best practices and efficiencies, and share those best practices with colleagues
- Analyze and identify bottlenecks; investigate solutions to bottlenecks; find ways to transform and improve
- Regular attendance and active participation at UA, college, or department informational events, such as the UA Business Community Open Forum (BCOF), monthly college business officers meeting, all hands meetings, working groups, shared governance, etc.

Attitude

- Business leaders should exemplify a positive, proactive, competent, and service-oriented attitude; negative issues should be conveyed in a constructive way that showcases that problem(s) can be solved
- Engaged and passionate interest in the work and responsibilities of being a business leader; eager to grow, learn, and continue her/his professional development
- Actively working towards resolution of weaknesses and areas of improvement
- Business leaders set the tone for their staff and the way faculty, staff, and students view business operations. Expectation that business leaders "lead from the front." Professionalism is contagious.