

Auburn University

Edward R. Richardson, Interim President

Office of the President  
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First Monitoring Report after Reaffirmation of Accreditation  
(Second Monitoring Report after Review of Governance Issues in December 2003)

Prepared by:  
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**CS 3.2.1 (Governance and Administration) :The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the evaluation of the chief executive officer.**

**Commission’s Request: The institution should provide a report on progress concerning the search for a president.**

**CONCERNS:**

As part of its review of governance issues conducted September 28-29, 2004, the Special Committee made the following suggestion: “A search process for the new President of Auburn University should (a) begin the groundwork for a formal search by July 1, 2005, with the appointment of the new president by July 1, 2006, and (b) include appropriate participation by faculty, administration, students, alumni and the university foundation” (Report of the Special Committee, 18).

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE:**

The Board of Trustees of Auburn University has taken the following steps to lay the groundwork for a formal search for a new president:

1) In April 2005, seven members of the Board of Trustees (Mr. Charles Ball, Dr. Dwight Carlisle, Mr. Sam Ginn, Mr. Earlon McWhorter, Mr. Jack Miller, Ms. Sarah Newton, and Ms. Virginia Thompson) attended the National Conference on Trusteeship sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards. Members of the Board attended sessions on an array of topics related to the roles and responsibilities of the trustees.

2) On April 12, 2005, Mr. Grant Davis, Secretary to the Board of Trustees, forwarded to each member of the Board recommendations on the process and timing of the search for a new president for Auburn University from the Administrative and Professional Assembly of Auburn

University. On April 22, 2005, Mr. Davis provided each member of the Board a copy of the final report on “Process, Criteria, and Timing of a Presidential Search” from the Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Chair of the University Senate. (Copies of both sets of recommendations will be available at the time of the actual visit).

3) At its annual meeting on June 17, 2005, Mr. Earlon McWhorter, President Pro-Tempore of the Board of Trustees, distributed three publications related to the presidential search (*AGB Presidential and Board Assessment Service: An Investment in Leadership*; William A. Weary, *Essentials of Presidential Search*, Washington, D.C: Association of Governing Boards, 1998; and *AGB Presidential Search Guidelines and Directory*). He asked each member of the Board to review the three publications prior to the next Board meeting, scheduled for September 16, 2005. He charged Mr. Jack Miller, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, to interview search firms and to provide the Board his recommendations at its September 2005 meeting. Several members of the Board indicated that they wanted Dr. Richardson to advance the agenda that he had outlined in his presidential report earlier in the meeting prior to the search for a new president. To allow time to complete his agenda, Dr. Richardson recommended that the Board commence the presidential search and set the end of 2006 as the target for completion. This information is documented in the Minutes of the June 17 meeting, which will be approved at the September 16, 2005 meeting of the Board.

**CS 3.2.3 (Governance and Administration): The board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members.**

**Commission's Request: The institution should provide a report on the results of the review by an external body of possible conflicts of interest in relation to the Code of Ethics and whether the board of trustees has followed its own policies.**

**CONCERNS:**

As part of its review of governance issues conducted September 28-29, 2004, the Special Committee reviewed the governing board's Code of Ethics policy and its implementation and asserted that the business relationships between two of the thirteen members "appear to violate the Board Code of Ethics" (Report of the Special Committee, 11). Consequently, the Special Committee recommends that "the Board of Trustees take appropriate actions to ensure that it lives up to its own Code of Ethics" (Report of the Special Committee, 11). In particular, the Committee informally suggested that "the Board may want to consider engaging one or more appropriate external, independent organizations to determine if business relationships of members of the Board of Trustees are in compliance with Board Code of Ethics and other reasonable ethical practices, and then insist on and implement appropriate remedial actions" (Report of the Special Committee, 11-12).

**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE:**

In response to this recommendation and suggestion, the Board of Trustees approved the following resolution at its November 12, 2004 meeting:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION

AUTHORIZATION FOR EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT REVIEW

WHEREAS, Auburn University and the Board of Trustees have received the report of the Special Committee of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools related to Auburn University's probationary status;

WHEREAS, Auburn University and the Board of Trustees are fully committed to the accreditation process, a commitment that each Trustee has acknowledged in a separate writing signed today;

WHEREAS, Auburn University and the Board of Trustees are committed to full disclosure to the Auburn community and to the public of Auburn University's status with respect to probation;

WHEREAS, Auburn University and the Board of Trustees will comply fully with the additional steps recommended in the Special Committee's Report;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Interim President Edward R. Richardson, or such other person who may be acting as President, be, and he hereby is, empowered to select one or more appropriate external, independent organizations to determine if business relationships of members of the Board are in compliance with (i) the Board Code of Ethics and (ii) other reasonable ethical practices, and to suggest appropriate remedial actions, if any are advisable.

To carry out this resolution, the University secured three external, independent reviews of business relationships between Board members in light of the Board's Code of Ethics and reasonable ethical practices. These reviews were conducted by Fred David Gray, John J. McMahon, Jr., and Dr. William A. Weary. In sum, the reports of the external, independent reviewers found no evidence of non-compliance with the Board's own Code of Ethics. The reviewers reached their conclusions through a process that included review of the Commission's criteria, the Code of Ethics, the Code of Ethics Compliance Forms and a personal interview with each Trustee. A copy of the credentials of the reviewers and their assessments follows.

On December 2, 2004, Dr. Edward Richardson submitted to the Commission the results of the external, independent reviews conducted by Fred David Gray, John J. McMahon, Jr., and Dr. William A. Weary. Given the brief time between the receipt of the report of the Special Committee and the distribution of materials for the annual COC meeting, the Criteria and Reports Committee was unable to review these independent reviews officially, but Dr. Richardson was allowed to discuss the results at his meeting with the Criteria and Reports Committee in December 2004. Furthermore, as the institution has reported in its November 12, 2004 Response to the Report of the Special Committee, “it may be helpful to put the University’s actions in response to the Commission’s concerns in context. The Commission and the University agreed to the appointment of an independent investigator to review several issues including relationships between Trustees. The independent investigator twice reported upon the relevant relationships in reports which have been submitted by the investigator to the Commission” (Response to the Report of the Special Committee, 5). In sum, the reviews conducted by Fred David Gray, John J. McMahon, Jr. and Dr. William A. Weary are the third such review of business relationships between members of the Board of Trustees.

As evidence of its continuing commitment to the Code of Ethics, the Board of Trustees has just completed the Compliance Forms for its second annual review. In order to ensure that compliance with the Code of Ethics is an effective, ongoing process, Ms. Virginia Thompson, Chair of the Audit Committee, asked the members of the Board of Trustees at the April 22, 2005 meeting to “review the Code of Ethics Compliance Form and Resolution for possible approval of non-substantive changes to the form that would make the form easier to complete” (Minutes, 7). In addition, “she indicated that the new forms would be sent out to all Board members with a request that each member complete and return [a copy] to the Audit Committee for review and

that the Board will be asked to formally adopt the revised forms at the June meeting” (Minutes, April 22, 2005, 7).

Prior to the June 17 meeting, the Board members were sent the Code of Ethics Compliance Form. According to the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on June 16, 2005, Ms. Thompson reported that during the previous week, she had opened and reviewed all the Code of Ethics Compliance Forms with the help of Mr. Lee Armstrong, the University’s General Counsel. She stated that “with the exception of the newest Board member, Sam Ginn, who has completed his form for the first time, all information reported is not materially different from those received last year” (Minutes, Audit Committee, June 16, 2005). She added that Mr. Ginn’s form did not identify any relationship with any other board member. Trustee Charles D. McCrary, another member of the Audit Committee, confirmed that he had also reviewed the forms and that there were fewer business connections than in 2004 after the replacement of one trustee. According to the minutes, “Mr. McCrary believes that in his opinion, no one is in violation of the code of ethics” (Audit Committee June 16, 2005). Mr. McWhorter also agreed with the assessment of the other members of the Committee that there is no violation. Copies of the completed compliance forms were made available to the public upon the conclusion of the Board meeting on June 17, 2005. (Copies of the forms will be available to the Special Committee at the time of the visit.)

**CS 3.2.10 (Governance and Administration): The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators, including the chief executive officer, on a periodic basis.**

**Commission's Request: The institution should provide a report on the periodic evaluation of the president.**

**CONCERNS:**

As part of its review of governance issues conducted September 28-29, 2004, the Special Committee "found that there apparently had not been a formal evaluation of a President of Auburn University for nearly a decade or more," and the Committee made the following formal recommendation: "The Special Committee recommends that the President of Auburn University be formally evaluated before July 1, 2005" (Report of the Special Committee, 18-19).

**INSITUTIONAL RESPONSE:**

At the April 22, 2005 meeting, the Board of Trustees approved the following resolution that established a process and procedure for the annual assessment of the President's performance:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION

PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of Auburn University will perform annually a Presidential Performance Assessment; and

WHEREAS, the primary purpose of the assessment is to strengthen the effectiveness of the President by providing an annual assessment of overall performance; and

WHEREAS, a Presidential Assessment also enables the Board and the President to assess current goals and set mutually agreed upon goals; and

WHEREAS, an assessment process would provide valuable information for consideration by the Board in establishing appropriate presidential compensation.

WHEREAS, within five years of the appointment of the next President, a comprehensive performance assessment will be conducted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Auburn University Board of Trustees hereby approves the Presidential Assessment Instrument shown in Attachment A and that the President Pro Tempore appoint three members of the Board of Trustees to conduct the assessment and report to the full board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Presidential Assessment will take place annually, typically on or before the Board of Trustees Annual meeting.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
ANNUAL PRESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

The Board of Trustees will perform annually a Presidential Performance Assessment, typically on or before the Annual Board Meeting.

**Primary Purposes**

- \* To evaluate overall performance in a manner which enables the Board to assess the President and strengthen Presidential performance.
- \* To enable the Board and President to assess current goals and set mutually agreed upon goals.

**Presidential Self-Assessment**

The President, in consultation with the President Pro Tempore, and prior to the Performance Assessment, must submit a report regarding the assessment period including, but not limited to the following:

- \* Provide a list of ways that the Board can support the President more effectively.
- \* Summarize performance in addressing previously established goals and objectives.
- \* Highlight particularly significant accomplishments during the assessment period.
- \* Identify continuing problems the President is facing and recommend how the Board and President might work together to address these problems.
- \* Describe three major challenges and three opportunities the University will face in the upcoming year and what role the President will play in addressing them.
- \* Briefly discuss the strengths and overall performance of the Senior Administrative Staff.
- \* Provide a brief summary of goals and objectives for the University for the

year ahead as well as longer range.

- \* The Interim President should provide recommendations concerning timing of a Presidential Search and Appointment.

### **Assessment Criteria**

#### General Administrative Effectiveness

- \* Management of human, fiscal and physical resources. Including planning, decision making, solving problems, leading change, linking plans and actions, developing a management team, delegating responsibility.
- \* Provide dynamic and visionary academic leadership.
- \* Establishment and supervision of an effective administrative team.
- \* Development, maintenance and renewal of plans to meet long-term needs.
- \* Provision of leadership, direction, and support for periodic assessment of academic and co-curricular programs and accomplishments which stimulate teaching, learning, research, scholarship, outreach, and professional development.

#### Communications

- \* Encouragement and support for open lines of communication throughout the University.
- \* Consultation within, participation in and promotion of a shared vision within the University community.
- \* Encouragement of community involvement and shared vision within the University.
- \* Facilitation of regular communication with Board members concerning pertinent University issues.

#### Advancement

- \* Demonstrated evidence of community understanding and support for University advancement.
- \* Establishment and maintenance of constructive relations with federal, state and local governments..

- \* Establishment and maintenance of constructive relations with the media.
- \* Effective leadership and support for institutional advancement and development programs.
- \* Successful enhancement of the University=s local, regional, and national reputation.

Personal Attributes

The President:

- \* Effectively articulates concepts and initiatives.
- \* Efficiently and innovatively solves problems.
- \* Considers the public relations and political implications of his actions.
- \* Manages multiple problems and events simultaneously.
- \* Withstands criticism and directs opposition into productive channels.
- \* Understands issues and facts before making decisions.
- \* Identifies and addresses central issues in complex problems.
- \* Promotes coordinated and efficient programs and operations.
- \* Is readily available to consult with necessary University constituents and Board members.

Summary Comments of the Assessment Committee:

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President

Chairman, Presidential Assessment Committee

\*Primary Resource: Dr. William A. Weary

At the same meeting, Mr. McWhorter informed the Board that he had appointed “Dr. Dwight Carlisle, Mr. Jack Miller, and Ms. Virginia Thompson to assist with the evaluation of the President. He charged them individually with the task of assessing the President and to then report back to the full Board at the June 17 meeting” (Minutes, April 22, 2005, 25).

At the Annual Board Meeting, held on June 17, 2005, Dr. Dwight Carlisle reported that he had met with the President and performed an evaluation. He also indicated that he had discussed the assessment with Mr. Jack Miller and Ms. Virginia Thompson. He read the following summary statement of that assessment, which will form part of the minutes of the annual June meeting:

#### PRESIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

Our task was to individually assess President Richardson=s performance from the time that he took office in January 2004 until April 2005.

His accomplishments are as follows:

- \* Removal of the SACS probation which required months of time and attention
- \* NCAA infractions Committee investigation into the basketball probation
- \* A complete and successful reorganization of our lobbying effort in Montgomery, which led to an increase in funding for the next fiscal year
- \* A change in management of the Athletics Department, including changes in men=s and women=s basketball coaches and the men=s baseball coach
- \* A change in leadership of the Alumni Association
- \* A reorganization of the management of the Property and Facilities Division,

which has the responsibility of managing wisely our huge construction program.

Yet to be finalized, but on the drawing board are these major initiatives:

- \* A Strategic Plan for Auburn University
- \* A plan for the review of the organization of the College of Agriculture, AUM, Academic Review, Airport, Gulf Shores Project and the Research Park

We find that Dr. Richardson has shown great initiative and intelligent decision making in the past 15 months. In other words, we think that Dr. Richardson has shown all the leadership qualities of an inspired President of a potentially great University.

Individually Reviewed and Submitted

Dwight Carlisle

Jack Miller

Virginia Thompson

Copies of the signed forms will be available at the time of the Special Visit.

According to Board policy, this procedure will be ongoing. The President will make an annual report to the Board relative to previously established goals and objectives, and the Board will conduct a Performance Assessment annually. Further, the Board will also conduct periodic summative assessments of presidential performance, with the first occurring within five years of the appointment of the next President.

According to the January 6, 2005 letter, the Commission also requests that “institutions at the end of their two-year monitoring period should also include evidence supporting the conditions of good cause” as described in the Commission policy “Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.” In compliance with the Commission’s request, Auburn University reports that there are no other issues that would affect our accreditation.