

# Professionals & Professional Faculty Assembly's Performance Planning and Evaluation Surveys—Fall 2012: Report

revised and approved by the PPFA 2/6/2013

**Background and Purpose.** In 2011-12, the Professionals & Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA) identified the performance planning and evaluation process as a key issue for College of William & Mary and Virginia Institute of Marine Science professional staff. To learn how the process works for both professional staff and their supervisors, and how it might be improved, the PPFA designed two surveys – one for professional employees, the other for supervisors of professional staff.

Complete survey results, including questions and comments, are appended to this report.

## Methodology:

- Separate but parallel surveys were administered to all W&M and VIMS professional staff and for supervisors of those professional staff.
- Questions were designed to be concrete, asking for actual experience and process (e.g., “There are written goals and objectives for my job”).
- Survey questions were created by the Professionals & Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA), with review and endorsement by Provost Michael Halleran and Human Resources Associate Vice President Ron Price.
- Question wording and survey design were vetted with survey expert Prof. Tom Ward (School of Education) and Qualtrics expert Gene Roche (IT), respectively. Surveys were then tested at least three times by members of the PPFA.
- Surveys were anonymous, could be taken only once by each recipient, and were open from November 5 through 19, 2012.

**Response Rates.** Solid levels of eligible participants completed the surveys, thus ensuring valid sample sizes: *(note: data for partial completions was retained)*

**Professionals & professional faculty employees: 36.2% (158/436)**

**Supervisors of professionals & professional faculty: 32.1% (53/165)**

Of the respondents, 40% of employees and 65% of supervisors have worked at the College for more than 10 years.

**Results Overview.** The surveys’ results provided valuable information, with many aspects of the performance planning and evaluation process benefitting from improvement.

- Many professionals need updated job descriptions.
- Most professionals’ goals & objectives need measurable attributes.
- A significant majority of professionals and their supervisors note the need to focus more on long-term professional development plans.

- Communication between professionals and supervisors can be improved in several ways – from immediate feedback about work performance to review of projects and goals.
- Professionals and supervisors want training: employees especially on designing goals and long-term professional development plans; supervisors especially on writing evaluations and designing long-term professional development plans.

**Recommendations.** The Professionals & Professional Faculty Assembly recommends that:

- The College set a goal of ensuring that all professional staff receive complete and thorough performance planning and evaluation processes. Areas that both employees and supervisors identified as most pressing for this goal include:
  - ✓ long-term professional development for professional staff.
  - ✓ better communication between professional staff and supervisors, especially through up-to-date job descriptions, measurable goals and objectives, and effective annual evaluations.
- A task force be created, to include representatives from the Provost’s Office, Human Resources, and the PPFA. This task force would set measurable objectives that would include recommendations for education, training, and accountability.
- The task force explore all training options -- workshops, tutorials, webpages, printed checklists and guides, etc. – and that training be hands-on/interactive, whenever possible, and assessed for its effectiveness.
- To assess progress in achieving the goal, these surveys be re-administered by the PPFA in three (3) years.

**Statistics Highlights (*selected*).** Below are highlights from the results. The attached documents provide complete results, including respondents’ comments.

*[E numbers = Employee survey question numbers; S numbers = Supervisor survey question numbers]*

**E4/S3. Job descriptions:**

56% of professional staff and 60% of supervisors report that the professional staff’s job descriptions are up-to-date and accurate.

This indicates significant numbers of professional staff who do need updated job descriptions.

**E5/S4. Written goals & objectives:**

69% of professional staff report having current written goals and objectives.

71% of supervisors indicate that each of their professional staff have written goals and objectives, with another 19% reporting that some of their professional staff have such documents.

**E6/S5. Writing goals & objectives:**

38% of professional staff report that they write their own goals, which are then reviewed and approved by their supervisor.

18% of supervisors report the same.

44% of professional staff report that they collaborate with the supervisor on goal writing.

64% of supervisors report the same.

The significant differences in the staff and supervisor responses warrants further investigation (possibilities include how the two groups perceive the process of writing goals and objectives or even in the terminology used in the survey question).

**E7/S6. Measurable goals & objectives:**

38% of professional staff **and** of supervisors coincidentally report that these goals and objectives lack measures of quantity, quality, and deadline dates.

**S7. Department/unit written goals & objectives:**

58% of supervisors report that their departments/units have written goals & objectives.

**E8/S9. Long-term professional development plan:**

89% of professional staff report that they do not have a long-term professional development plan or that they do not know if they do.

81% of supervisors report that their professional employees either lack a plan or that some do/some don't.

This is a significant finding that the PPFA hopes will be a focus of the recommended task force.

**E9/S10. Meeting frequency of employees and supervisors for ongoing projects and work performance:**

52% of professional staff report meeting weekly or monthly.

68% of supervisors report the same frequency of meeting.

Although there is a somewhat significant difference in the staff and supervisor results, this does indicate that most staff and supervisors are meeting individually on a regular basis.

**E11/S12. Meeting frequency for long-term professional development:**

42% of professional staff report never meeting with their supervisor re long-term professional development.

13% of supervisors report never meeting with their professional staff on this topic.

As noted above for E8/E9, the survey results identify a need for more investment in the long-term professional development of professional staff. Also, as in other survey results where there is a significant difference between the staff and supervisor results, further investigation would help determine the nature and scope of this issue – such as how long-term professional development is defined by staff and supervisors, what resources are available to foster such development, etc.

**E12/S13. Positive feedback from supervisor at the time of the event/within days or at a regularly scheduled meeting:**

76% of professional staff report yes.

98% of supervisors report yes.

**E13/S14. Constructive feedback from supervisor at the time of the event/within days or at a regularly scheduled meeting:**

77% of professional staff report yes.

99% of supervisors report yes.

These results for the preceding two questions indicate that the majority of professional staff feel that they receive timely positive feedback and that supervisors feel that they are doing a very good job at providing feedback. The gap in the percentages for staff and supervisors again indicates a need for exploring how this process is perceived by both groups.

**E14. Self-assessments:**

93% of professional staff report that they are given the opportunity to write a self-assessment.

This is a positive response, but it is hoped that – with further training or communication – all professional staff would know that the College’s policy gives them this opportunity.

**E15/S15. Annual performance evaluation document:**

25% of professional staff report that the annual evaluation includes evaluative comments not previously discussed.

11% of supervisors report the same.

20% of professional staff report that their supervisor asks them to write a report or uses their self-assessment as the performance evaluation.

11% of supervisors report the same.

These results, plus other results for this question, indicate a need for more training about the performance evaluation process and improved communication throughout the year.

**S16. Reviewer:**

48% of supervisors report that they gave performance evaluation documents to their own supervisors for review and approval before the documents were given to professional staff.

**E16/S17. Annual performance evaluation meeting:**

59% of professional staff report and 69% of supervisors report meeting for 30 or more minutes.

**S18. Performance planning & evaluation policy consulted:**

69% of supervisors report consulting the Performance Planning and Evaluation Policy for Professionals & Professional Faculty” at some point during the past year.

**E19/S19. Performance evaluation paperwork:**

43% of professional staff prefer continuing to allow departments to use paperwork of own design. 52% of supervisors report the same.

**E17/S21. Training:** although many areas of training found support, long-term professional development scored highest for both professional staff and their supervisors. This correlates with the results for questions **E8/S9** and **E11/S12** (above).

Professional Staff		Supervisors	
Writing and updating job descriptions.	39%	Writing and updating job descriptions.	34%
Developing effective annual goals and/or objectives.	61%	Developing effective annual goals and/or objectives.	39%
Designing and implementing long-term professional development goals.	<b>71%</b>	Designing and implementing long-term professional development goals.	<b>49%</b>
Compiling and writing self-assessments.	41%	Writing annual evaluation reports of my employees.	46%
Communicating effectively with my supervisor.	42%	Communicating effectively with my employees, including providing constructive feedback.	32%
Other:	7%	Other:	12%