

Annual Employee Performance Review Evaluation (2020)

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Chris Shults with assistance from Martha Kelly, Tomi Rogers and Steve Thompson conducted an evaluation of the Institute for Public Service (IPS) Employee Annual Performance Review process. The evaluation was conducted at the request of the IPS Leadership Team to accomplish IPS Strategic Plan 2017-2022 workforce micro-goal *Evaluate the APR process and report recommendations by 2020*. The purpose of the report is to identify patterns in the APR process and utility across IPS agencies, create a benchmark study comparing different methods used to evaluate employees, identify areas of high and low performance in the APR process and utility and compile a report of findings and make recommendations to the IPS Leadership Team. This report is a tool for each agency/unit to take a critical look at their APR process and decide the best way forward.

Methodology

To evaluate the IPS APR process and utility, data were gathered from individual interviews with a representative from IPS administration and the six agencies within IPS, an IPS employee survey¹ and fourteen institutes that were identified as appropriate benchmark organizations. Once data were gathered, descriptive analysis and content analysis were used to identify patterns and trends in the APR process and use. Then, areas of high performance and low performance were identified by comparing the observed APR practices at IPS with evaluation criteria that were developed based on industry recognized best practices in employee performance reviews.

The three evaluation criteria include:

- Strategic Integration
- Transparency
- Internal Consistency

Taken together, the three criteria provided a holistic picture of the IPS APR process and its utility. This step provided a basis for developing recommendations for improving the APR process at IPS. The recommendations were based on best practices and the observed practices of benchmarking organizations.

Summary of Findings

Through descriptive and content analysis general patterns were discerned regarding the IPS APR process and utility.

First, the majority of employees do not think the APR process improves their performance nor do they think the PRS form is a useful tool to improve their performance.

Second, most agencies/units are performing very well with regards to strategic integration. Various factors of strategic integration indicated success, but there are clear areas of improvement.

¹ The employee annual performance review was conducted using Questionpro software. Surveys were sent to 166 IPS employees. 129 responses were submitted yielding a response rate of about 78%.

Third, designated metrics for transparency in the annual performance review process suggested most organizations are moderately transparent prompting employees to have a grasp on the APR process but not a full understanding. Other agencies/units were missing multiple characteristics of a transparent employee performance process suggesting employees may not understand the process very well.

Fourth, most agencies are moderately successful at instilling internal consistency in the APR process. Survey responses suggests there are clear differences in managerial practices across agencies/units and even across departments within agencies/units. Those differences are having a negative impact on the internal consistency of the APR process.

Recommendations

In response to the observed deficiencies with the IPS APR process the researcher recommends:

- Work with agency/unit leadership to establish a clear purpose and value of APR process.
 - Ensure each agency/unit has an active strategic plan.
 - Create an information resource displaying how each employee position aligns with and contributes to the organizational goals and objectives.
 - Encourage all employees especially managers/supervisors to participate in employee performance review training at least once every three years.
 - Develop an information resource outlining the purpose and value of the APR process.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to improve the flow of the APR process.
 - Adjust the timing of the APR cycle to better align with the work year.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to increase objectivity of the APR process.
 - Develop organizational performance metrics ensuring there is a clear connection between organizational work goals and objectives and the goals and objectives of each employee position.
 - Develop documentation clarifying the Performance Review Summary form.
 - Define the current metrics to improve clarity.
 - Develop a weighted scoring process based on employee positions.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to increase consistency of the APR process across agency/unit departments.
 - Develop work performance standards for each employee position.
 - Develop a system of flexible work goals allowing employees to better align their work activities to the employee performance review process.
 - Clarify the merit-based salary process.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to increase the connection between managers and employees.
 - Utilize employee performance management software to track performance and increase communication options.
 - The University of Tennessee currently uses an employee performance management program called Interfolio.
 - Strongly encourage all managers/supervisors “meet” with their employees either in-person or electronically four times a year to discuss employee performance and progress toward work goals.
 - Strongly encourage all employees complete the employee self-assessment form.

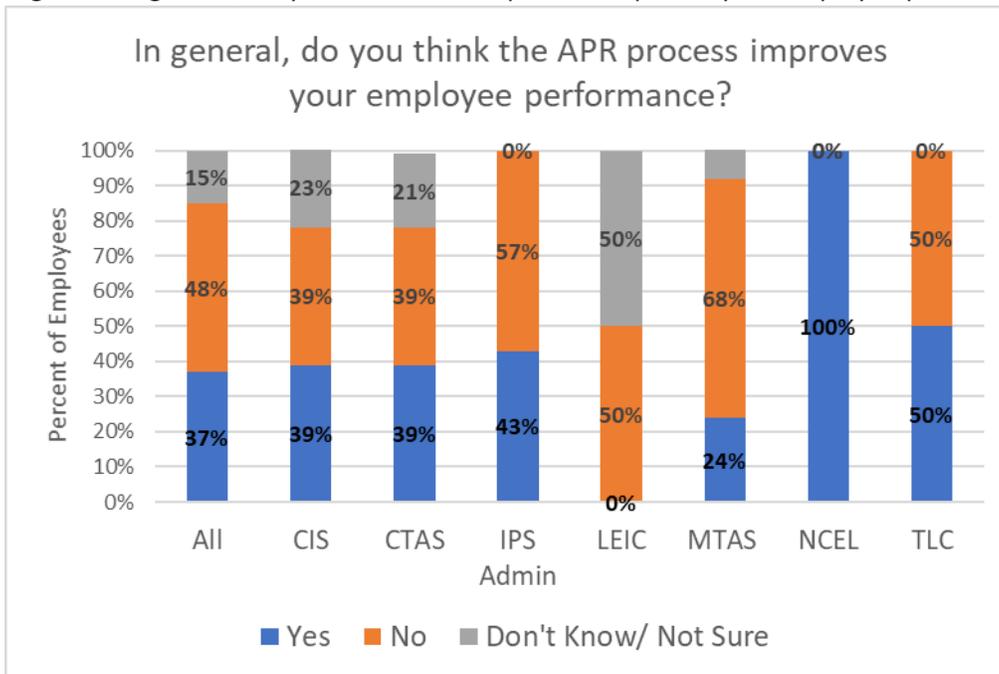
Employee Perceptions of the APR Process and PRS Form

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that employees are generally dissatisfied with employee performance reviews. They do not work to improve performance and are not much more than a required activity to check a box. This is a grim accusation for management practices, but does it hold true for employees at IPS?

To look at the perceived effectiveness of the annual performance review process at IPS, researchers conducted a survey of all IPS employees. In one question employees were asked, “In general, do you think the APR process improves your employee performance?” Thirty-seven percent of respondents (46) said yes it does while forty-eight percent (60) indicated that it does not improve performance. This suggests that more often than not IPS employees do not see the APR process as an effective tool for improving employee performance. Interestingly, this pattern generally holds true across the IPS agencies/units.

As shown in figure 1, the majority of employees in six IPS agencies/units either do not think the APR process improves performance or are unsure about its effectiveness. The extremes in both cases are also represented among the agencies. In NCEL, all employees indicated that the APR process is effective for improving performance. In contrast, in LEIC zero (0) employees found the APR process to be effective.

Figure 1. In general, do you think the APR process improves your employee performance?

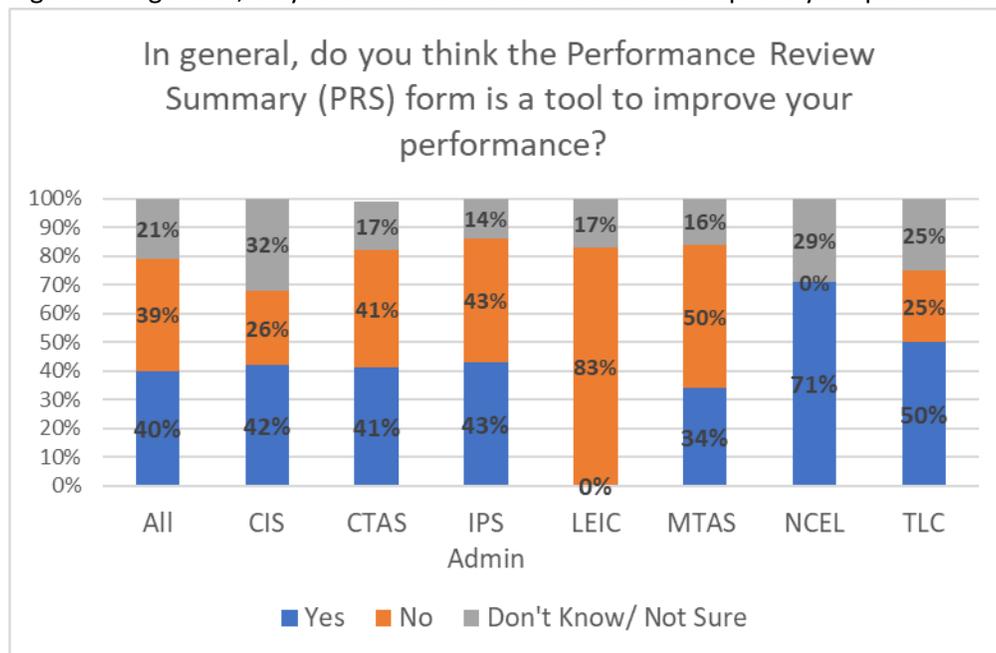


Employees were asked to comment as to why or why not they think the APR process improves performance. Looking at the responses,² there were fifty-five comments identified as favorable toward the APR process and ninety-eight comments that were negative. Of the positive comments, thirty-one indicated that the APR process was a useful tool for knowing what’s important, planning their work goals and monitoring progress. Another thirteen comments noted that their supervisor was involved in the process and/or uses the APR to provide feedback.

Nineteen negative responses conveyed that the APR process does not change work performance because employees are professionals and work ethic is intrinsic and not motivated by a score. Other comments suggested that the process is a waste of time and demoralizing, hard work is not recognized, scores are subjective, and scores are always average (16 comments). The most troubling comments indicated a lack of managerial involvement in the process (23 comments) or managerial bias that favors some employees and punishes others (4 comments).

One facet of the APR process is the Performance Review Summary (PRS) form. Employees were asked, “In general, do you think the Performance Review Summary (PRS) form is a tool to improve your performance?” Figure 2 shows that employees are less likely to say that the PRS form is a tool used to improve employee performance when compared to those who answered no or who are unsure. That pattern is also seen across most of the IPS agencies/units.

Figure 2. In general, do you think the PRS form is a tool to improve your performance?



Again, employees were asked to comment on why or why not they thought the PRS form was a tool to improve employee performance. There were thirty-eight identified comments in favor of the PRS form

² Content analysis techniques followed the methods outlined in Krippendorff, Klaus (2013) *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methods. Third Edition*. In Excel, the comments were reviewed and grouped into two general categories of either favorable or unfavorable. Once comments were grouped as either favorable or unfavorable, they were broken into subgroups based on common terms and connotations. After all comments were separated into subgroups, they were analyzed for patterns and trends that indicated successes and failures.

and sixty-eight that were negative. The positive responses indicated that the PRS form helped employees clarify priorities, is a tool for feedback and reflection and is easy to understand. Negative comments centered on the PRS form being too subjective, unrelated to employee work activities and agency goals, not applicable across different job duties and unused by management.

Based on the survey responses, there is an apparent disconnect between the APR process, the PRS form and the employees' perceptions of their impact and usefulness in improving employee performance. Next, this report will examine the nuances of the APR process at IPS, evaluate the process and identify areas of high and low performance. Evaluation criteria were developed based on industry recognized best practices in employee performance reviews.

The three evaluation criteria are:

- Strategic Integration
- Transparency
- Internal Consistency

Strategic Integration

Strategic integration occurs when there is a vertical alignment and connection between employee work goals and objectives and the goals and objectives of the organization. Strategic integration helps convey the purpose and value of the work of the organization to employees and allows employees to see how their work efforts contribute to the organization overall. Organizational management should seek to align and link employee goals and objectives with organizational goals and objectives because doing so leads to a greater level of employee satisfaction, fosters a greater sense of employee effectiveness and commitment, and has a positive impact on employee longevity (Decramer et al., 2012).

For strategic integration:

1. Organizations must have a strategic plan with goals and objectives.
2. Employees must see how their work goals and objectives are linked to organizational goals and objectives.

To evaluate strategic integration at IPS researchers analyzed data collected from individual interviews with representatives from each agency/unit at IPS and the IPS employee survey. The employee survey was designed to capture the employee's experience with the APR process. The Interviews were designed to gather information about the APR process from a management perspective focusing on the established APR procedures and resources available to employees.

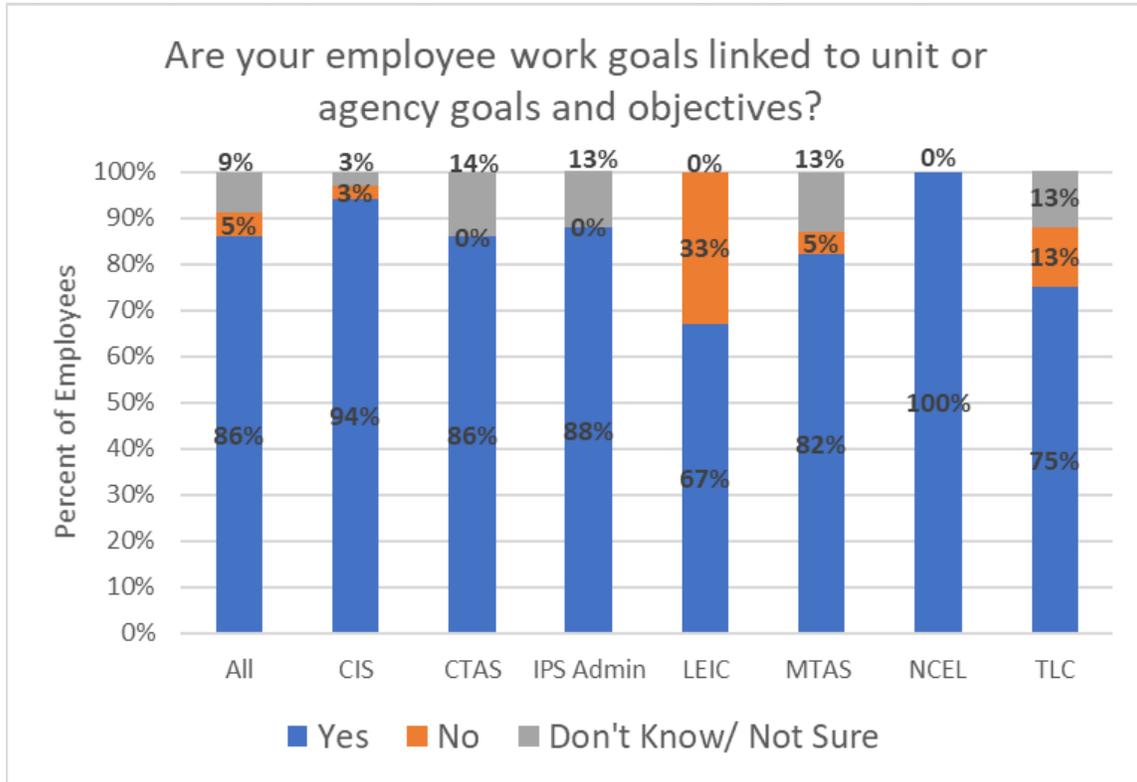
Table 1. Metrics of Strategic Integration							
	CIS	CTAS	IPS Admin	LEIC	MTAS	NCEL	TLC
Presence of a Strategic Plan with Goals and Objectives	X	X	X		X	X*	
Employee Annual Work Goals are Required to be Tied to Organization Goals and Objectives	X	X			X	X	X
Established Organizational Performance Metrics	X	X		X	X	X	
Performance Metrics Linked to Organizational Goals and Objectives	X	X				X	
Performance Metrics Linked to Employee Work Goals and Objectives	X	X			X	X	

* NCEL does not have an agency strategic plan but they follow the IPS strategic plan for agency guidance.

Table 1 contains features of strategic integration and indicates if each agency/unit is currently meeting designated metrics. As shown in Table 1, agency/unit practices vary across IPS. Some agencies/units displayed a high level of strategic integration while others did not. The varying levels could point to areas of improvement however, it should be noted that not all aspects of strategic integration are applicable across all agencies/unit. Additionally, some agency/unit representatives indicated that their organization does not meet a metric as specified but they do rely on IPS and/or University guidelines. For example, NCEL does not have a strategic plan but NCEL defers to the IPS strategic plan for organizational guidance.

To look further into the connection between employee work goals and agency/unit goals, employees were asked, “Are your employee work goals linked to unit or agency goals and objectives?” The responses indicated a very high level of connection between employee work goals and objectives and agency/unit work goals and objectives. As shown in Figure 3, more than eighty-five percent of all respondents indicated their employee work goals are tied to agency goals. This pattern is seen across the IPS agencies/units. Most agencies/units exhibited a connection greater than eighty percent with no agency/unit falling below sixty percent. This is favorable but still leaves room for improvement in all but one agency.

Figure 3. Are your employee work goals linked to unit or agency goals and objectives?



Transparency

Transparency in an employee performance review refers to employees having knowledge and a clear understanding of the employee performance review process and evaluation outcomes. Transparency is critical in an employee performance review system because employee knowledge and understanding of the system is a significant and positive influence on employee perceptions of the system (Decramer et al., 2012). Without transparency employees are more likely to leave a performance evaluation feeling confused or surprised both of which exhibit a negative relationship in regards to perceptions of fairness and employee trust.

Transparency requires:

1. Organizations to have an established employee performance review process.
2. Employees to be aware of and understand the employee performance review process.
3. Employees to understand their work duties and goals.
4. Employees to know and understand their work expectations as established by management.
5. Employees to know and understand how their work duties and expectations are related to performance indicators and evaluation outcomes.

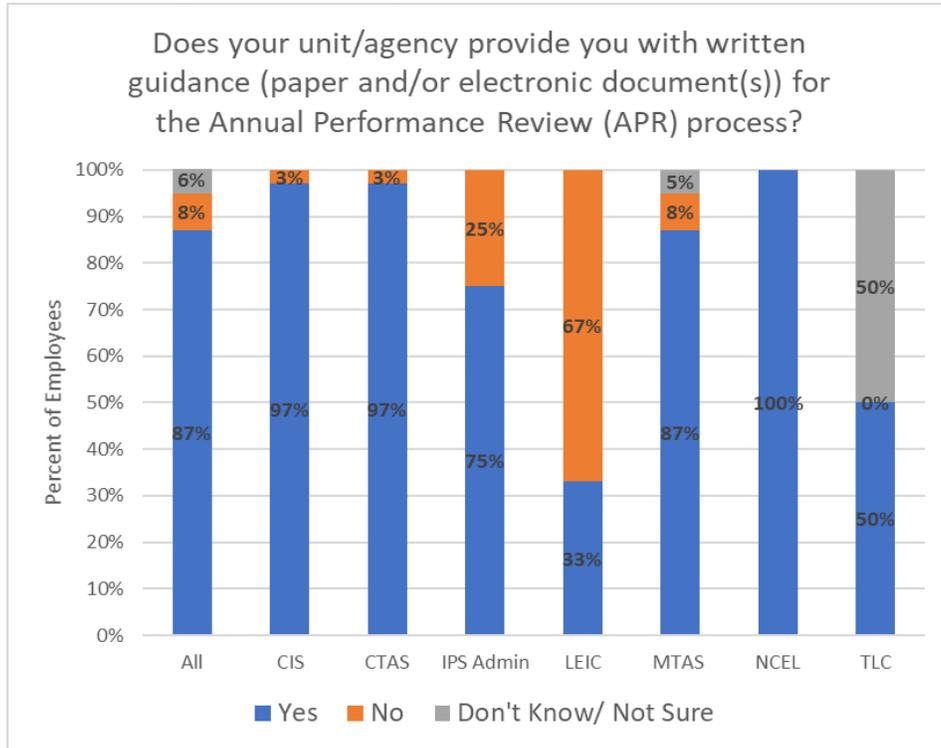
Table 2. Metrics of Transparency							
	CIS	CTAS	IPS Admin	LEIC	MTAS	NCEL	TLC
Have a Formal Written Annual Performance Review (APR) Procedure	X	X			X	X	
All Supervisors Given a Copy (paper/electronic) of the APR Procedure	X	X			X	X	
All Supervisors Required to Acknowledge they have Received and Understand the APR Procedure							
All Regular Staff Employees Given a Copy (paper/electronic) of the APR Procedure	X	X			X	X	X
All Regular Staff Employees Required to Acknowledge they have Received and Understand the APR Procedure						X	
Have a Formal Appeal Process if an Employee is Unhappy with their Performance Review*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

* The University of Tennessee has an APR appeal policy and all agencies/units follow the process as outlined in the University policy.

Table 2 contains features of transparency and indicates if each agency/unit is currently meeting designated metrics. As shown, agency/unit practices vary across IPS. Some agencies/units displayed a moderate level of transparency while others did not. The varying levels could point to areas of improvement; however, it should be noted that not all aspects of transparency are applicable across all agencies/units. Again, some agency/unit representatives indicated that their organization does not meet the criteria specified, but they do rely on IPS and/or University guidelines as the case for all agencies/units in regards to having an appeal process if an employee is dissatisfied with their performance review. Relying on the University policy was also seen in acknowledging the APR procedure. None of the agencies/unit require supervisors to acknowledge they received and understand the APR procedure and only one agency requires it from employees. This can be troubling however, per the UT employee performance review policy, an employee must sign their PRS form. Across IPS, signing the PRS form is considered as an acknowledgement that they have received their employee performance review score. This form of acknowledgement is acceptable and increases the credibility of the process, however best practices would suggest that employees also acknowledge their understanding of the procedure beforehand.

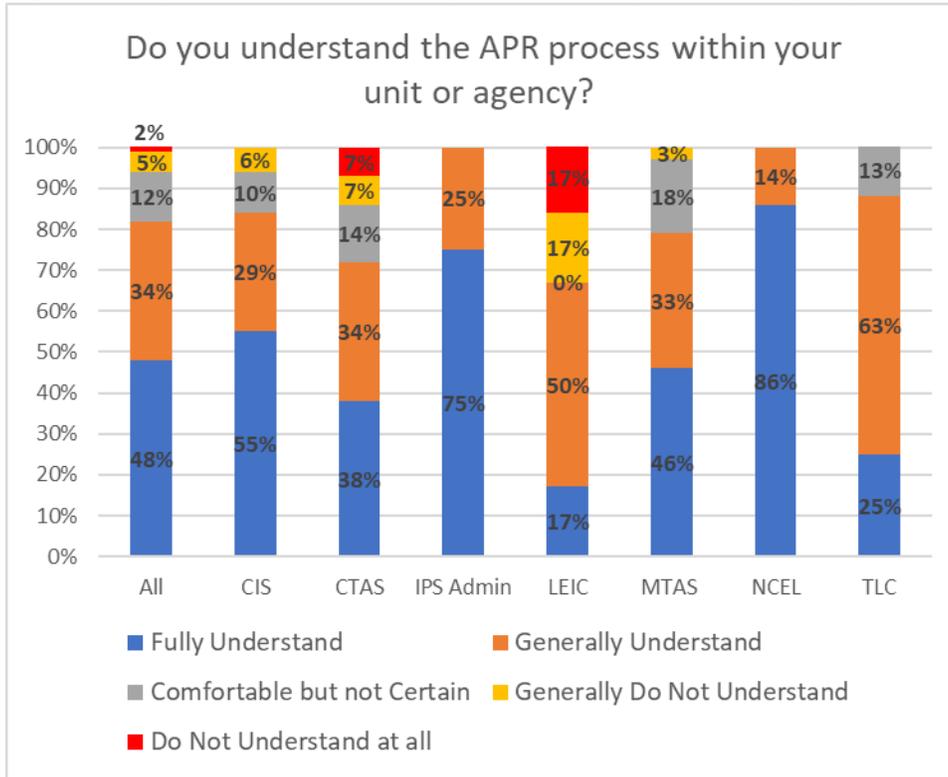
Employee survey responses were used to further examine transparency in the employee performance review process. Employees were asked, “Does your unit or agency provide you with written guidance (paper and/or electronic document(s)) for the Annual Performance Review (APR) process?” Figure 4 shows that within all agencies/units most employees acknowledge that they were provided written guidance for the APR process. This is a promising finding; however, only one agency achieved 100 percent. The other agencies/units had varying levels of success.

Figure 4. Does your unit/agency provide you with written guidance of the APR process?



Although employees received the guidance for the APR process that does not mean they understand it. Figure 5 shows eighty-two percent of all respondents generally or fully understand the APR process within their agency/unit. This suggest that about twenty percent of employees are either comfortable but not certain with the APR process or do not understand it. There are noted differences across the agencies/units at IPS. Two agencies/units exhibited 100 percent of respondents understanding the APR process while three other agencies/units fell below the eighty-two percent mark established by all respondents.

Figure 5. Do you understand the APR process within your unit or agency?



Two other aspects of transparency in the APR process are does an employee understand their employee work goals and do they understand their work expectations as established by management. Research suggests that for employees to truly understand and embrace their work goals they need to participate in developing them. Figure 6 shows that ninety-five percent of all respondents at IPS either take the primary role or share influence equally with a manger when developing their annual work goals. This pattern is consistent across IPS agencies/units with very few employees at only two agencies/units indicating that their supervisor takes a primary role in developing employee work goals.

Figure 7 illustrates eighty-one percent of all respondents either generally understand or fully understand their work performance expectations. This metric is considerably lower across all but one IPS agency/unit. This may suggest that although employees are highly involved in developing their work goals, they are still unclear about their performance expectations.

Figure 6. How involved are you in developing your annual employee work goals?

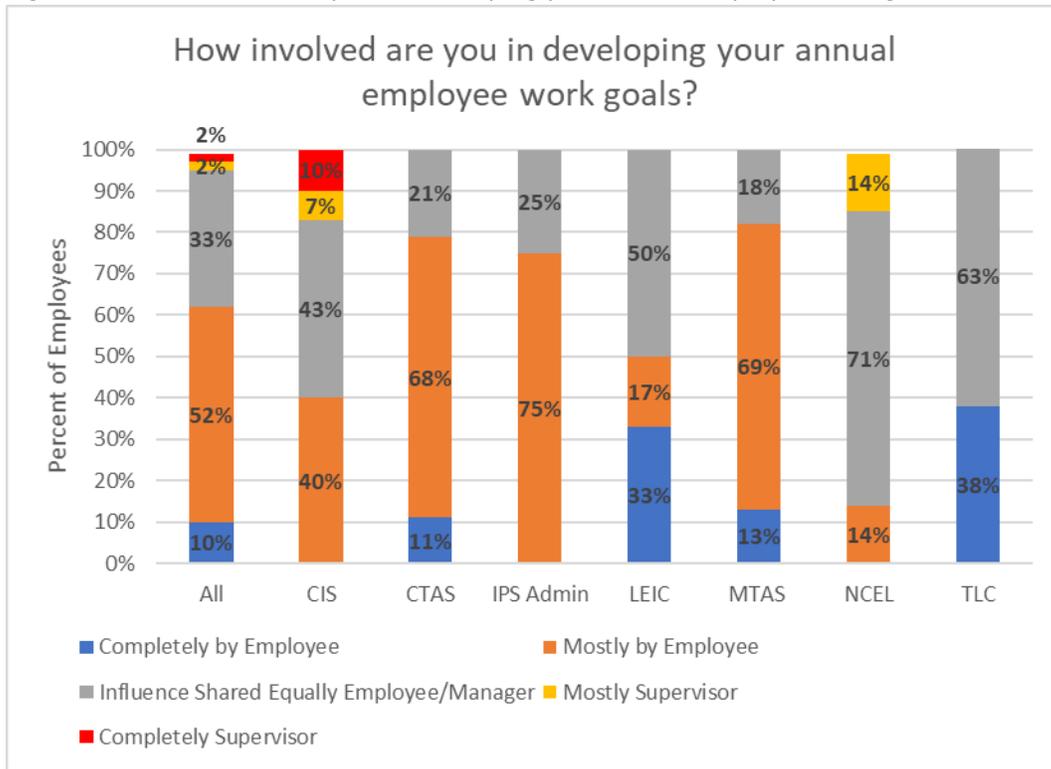
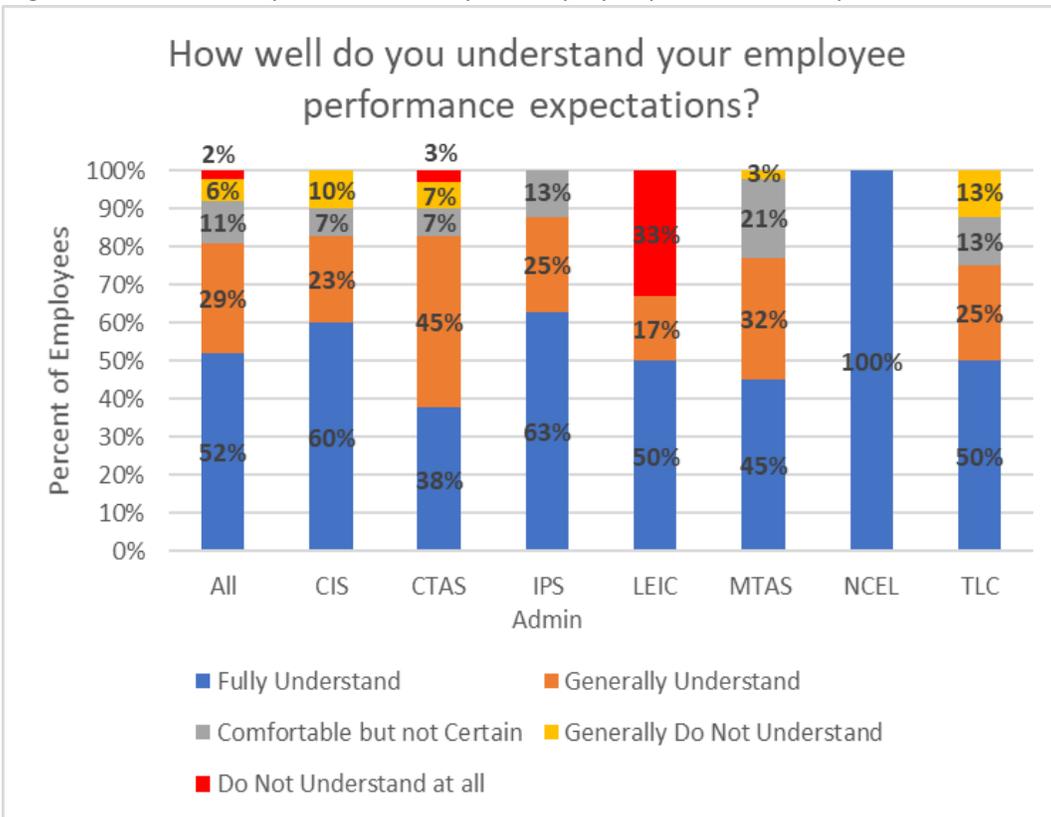


Figure 7. How well do you understand your employee performance expectations?



Internal Consistency

Internal consistency is most closely compared to the idea of procedural justice or, in this case, procedural fairness. Transparency is important in that employees need to know and understand the employee performance review process. However, and perhaps even more importantly, employees need to perceive the review process as being based on a fair procedure that is applied equitably across all employees. Internal consistency is not a question of the process but rather the fairness of the procedure used to conduct the review process. If employees feel as if the procedure is not fair and equitable, employees are more likely to contest performance evaluation outcomes and are less likely to improve their performance over time (Decramer et al., 2012). This is counterproductive to both the employee and the organization. Internal consistency is bolstered through having a clear understanding of the expectations of the process so that employees' expectations of the process aligns with observed practices, increasing two-way communication between the employee and manager throughout the APR process and increasing the observed objectivity of the process by including objective performance indicators over subjective indicators.

Internal consistency requires:

1. Managers and employees to follow the established APR process.
2. Clear and consistent evaluation tools that are applied across all employees.
3. The absence of perceived favoritism in manager-employee relationships.

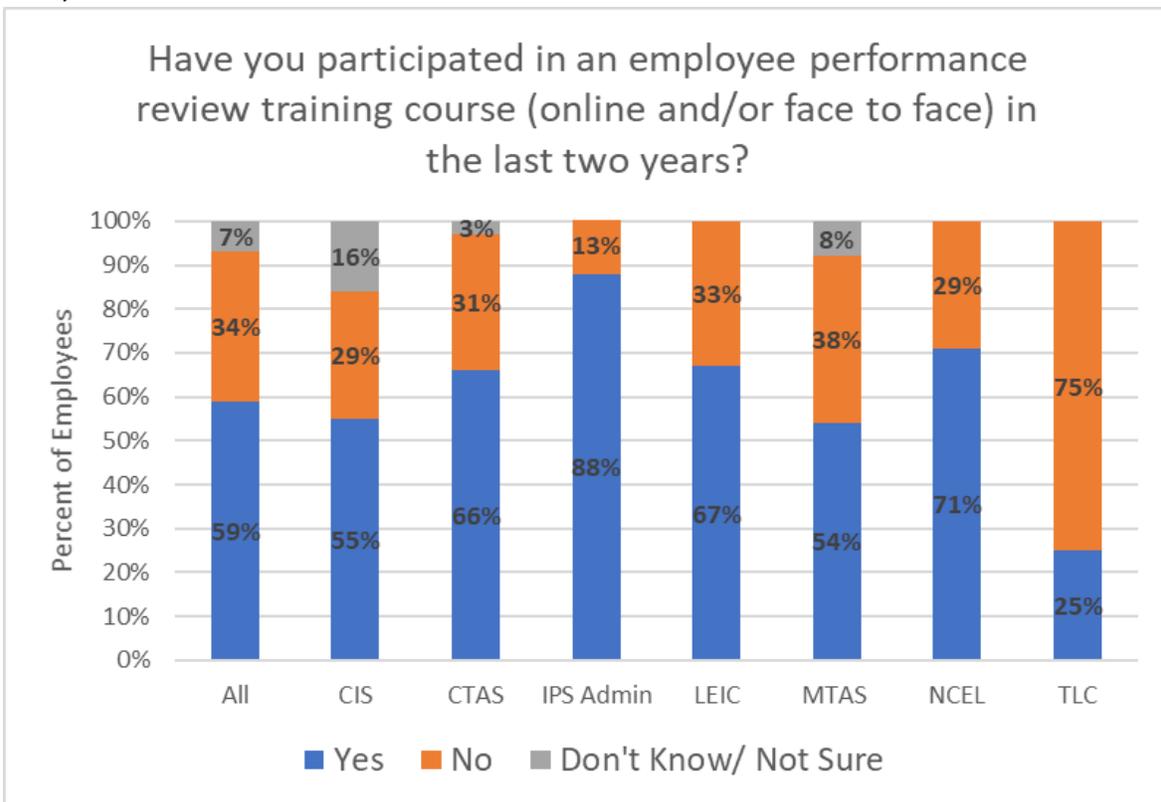
Table 3. Metrics of Internal Consistency							
	CIS	CTAS	IPS Admin	LEIC	MTAS	NCEL	TLC
All Supervisors Required to Complete Training on how to Properly Conduct an Employee Performance Review		X				X	
All Regular Staff Employees Required to Complete APR Training							
Organizational Performance Metrics Used by Supervisors to Aid in Determining Employee Performance Scores	X	X		X	X	X	
Employees Required to Complete a Self-Evaluation of the Employee's Performance	X		X			X	X

Table 3 contains features of internal consistency and indicates if each agency/unit is currently meeting designated metrics. As shown in Table 3, agency/unit practices vary across IPS. Some agencies/units displayed a moderate level of internal consistency while others did not. The varying levels could point

to areas of improvement; however, it should be noted that not all aspects of internal consistency are applicable across all agencies/units.

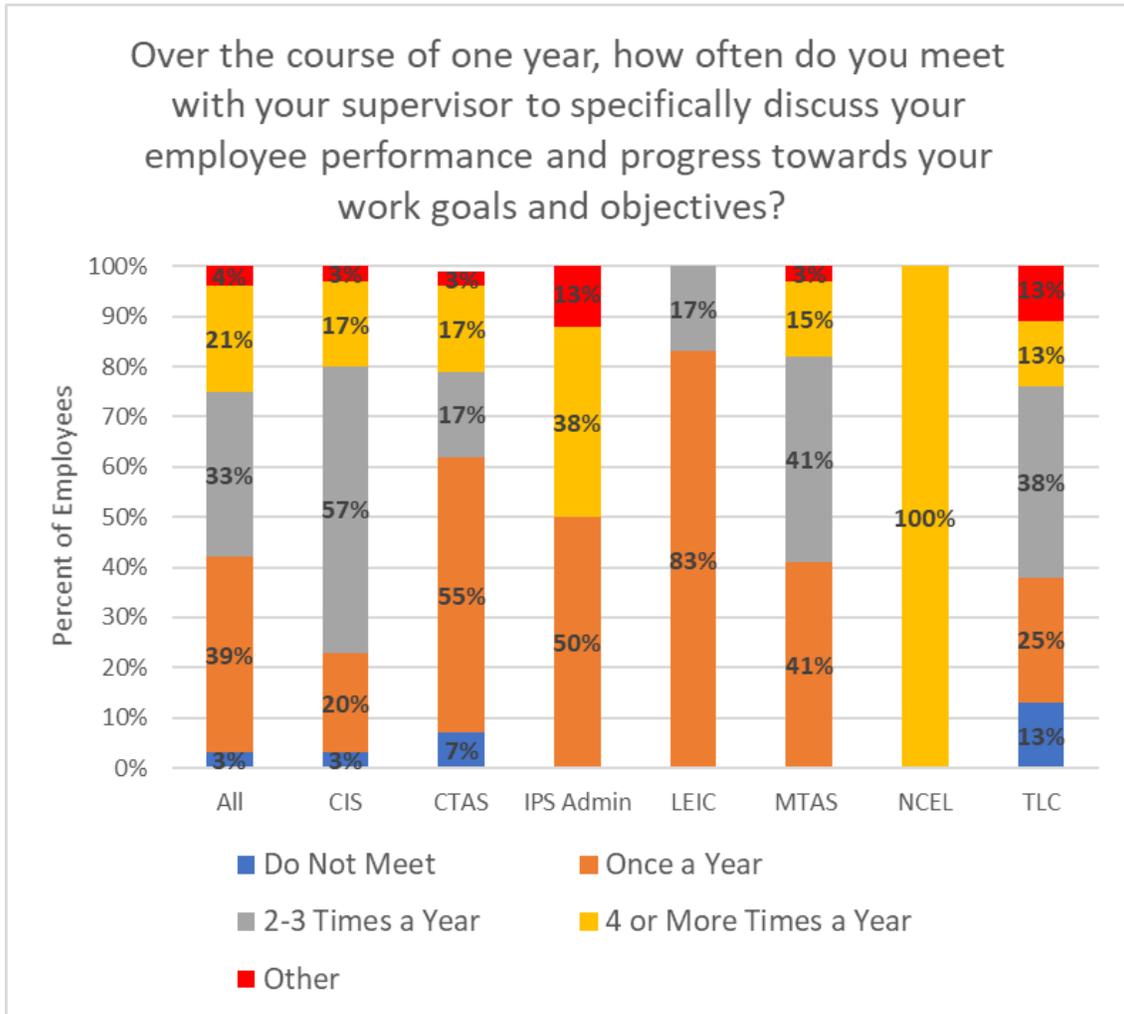
Table 3 indicates that most agencies/units do not require supervisors to complete employee performance review training and no agency/unit requires employees to complete APR training. A lack of training can lead to confusion about the APR process and a disconnect between employee expectations and observed practices. Although training is not required, Figure 8 shows that more than fifty percent of all employees have participated in an employee performance review training course in the last two years. This pattern is consistent across most of the agencies/units suggesting the majority of employees take steps to better understand the employee performance review process. This is promising, however, more than thirty percent of employees in most agencies/units are not pursuing training and are more likely to be confused or misunderstand the APR process.

Figure 8. Have you participated in an employee performance review training course in the last two years?



Another indicator of internal consistency is two-way communication between an employee and their manager. Employees were asked, “Over the course of one year, how often do you meet with your supervisor to specifically discuss your employee performance and progress towards your work goals and objectives?” Figure 9 shows that most employees meet with their manager once a year or two to three times a year to discuss their employee performance. Research suggests employees and managers should meet at least once a quarter (four times a year) to discuss employee performance to ensure there are no surprises during the evaluation.

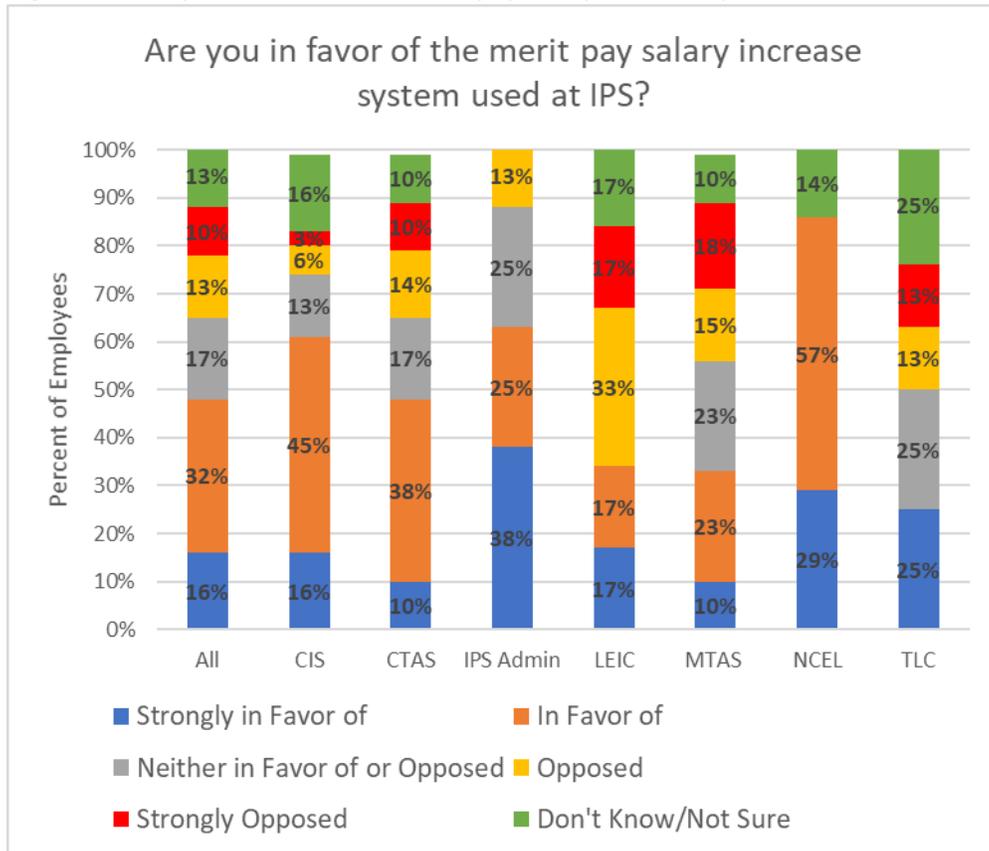
Figure 9. Over the course of one year, how often do you meet with your supervisor to specifically discuss your employee performance?



The metrics for internal consistency identify shortcomings in the implementation of the APR process at IPS. The APR process does not appear to be implemented consistently across IPS or even within agencies/units. The apparent lack of internal consistency could be attributed to a lack of understanding and unclear expectations for the APR process and a disconnect between managers and employees. This is supported when looking at the employee comments in the IPS APR employee survey. Employees were asked, “In general, do you think the APR process improves your employee performance?” Many of the positive comments involved aspects related to the APR process implementation and a high level of engagement from managers. Employees wrote that their supervisor goes over goals and uses the APR process to set expectations. Similarly, many of the negative comments focused on managerial involvement or lack thereof. Employees wrote that their managers did not use the APR process, did not help them develop goals, provided no explanations of evaluation scores, and offered no ideas to improve employee performance.

A similar pattern was identified when looking at the employee comments regarding the merit pay system at IPS. Figure 10 shows that forty-eight percent of all respondents are in favor of the merit pay system used at IPS. Twenty-three percent are opposed to it, and thirteen percent are unsure. Looking at the agencies/units with IPS, more than fifty percent of the employees in three agencies noted that they are in favor of the merit pay system. Employees in the other four agencies/units were more likely to be neither in favor of or opposed to, opposed to or unsure about the merit pay system.

Figure 10. Are you in favor of the merit pay salary increase system used at IPS?



When employees were asked why they were in favor of or opposed to the merit pay system many of the positive comments expressed that the system is a source of motivation and accountability and those who are performing at a higher level should receive a raise. Negative comments suggested that the system was unfair and favored some employee positions over others, scoring employees and deciding who gets the raise is too subjective and confusing, the amount of the raise is insignificant, and some employees are favored or punished through the process. Again, many of the negative comments focused on the implementation of the merit pay system not the process itself. This would suggest that there is a lack of internal consistency in the APR process and a disconnect between managers and employees.

Understandably, managers are easy targets when employees are dissatisfied or underperforming. With that being said, the comments suggest that there are clear differences in managerial practices across agencies/units and even across departments within agencies and those differences are having a negative impact on the internal consistency of the APR process.

Benchmark Organizations

Recommendations for improving the APR process were developed by comparing the APR process at IPS with employee performance review best practices found in literature and the employee performance review efforts of benchmark organizations. Benchmark organizations included:

1. Auburn University, Government and Economic Development Institute
2. **Mississippi State University, the Stennis Institute of Government**
3. Montana State University
4. Northwestern University, Center of Public Safety
5. North Carolina State University, Institute of Emerging Issues and Industrial Extension Services
6. University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
7. **University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute**
8. University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute
9. University of Missouri, Institute of Public Policy and MU extension
10. **University of Nevada, Center for Economic Development**
11. **University of North Carolina, School of Government**
12. **University of Tennessee, Howard Baker Center**
13. **University of Virginia, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service**
14. **Wichita State University Public Policy and Management Center**

Human resources documents explaining the employee performance review process were gathered from university human resources websites. Surveys were sent to all benchmark organizations with seven responses gathered. The seven organizations that responded are indicated with boldface type in the list above. Data from the benchmark organizations are shown in Table 4. Benchmark Organization Responses.

Looking at Table 4 there does not appear to be a lot of variation in the annual employee performance review (AEPR) process across comparable institutes. Every institute shown requires a formal AEPR. Most institutes utilize both paper on online formats to conduct the review and most institutes use a 5-point rating scale when developing an employee performance review score. A merit-based salary increase was the most commonly used incentive offered to high performing employees and that incentive was usually directly tied to an employee's annual employee performance review score. There are also some key differences to note. Two institutes utilized an employee performance review software program. The program allowed the employees and manager to continually track work progress. Both institutes were satisfied with the software and indicated that it helped improve their AEPR process. Lastly, the most commonly noted problems associated with the AEPR process was that the process should be clearer and easier to complete and the timing of the process is problematic.

Table 4. Benchmark Organization Responses								
	UT, IPS	MSU, Stennis Institute of Government	UG, Carl Vinson Institute	UN, Center for Economic Development	UNC, School of Government	UT, Howard Baker Center	UVA, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service	WSU, Public Policy and Management Center
Do you require a formal annual employee performance review (AEPR)?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
What format do you use for the AEPR?	Paper, online	Paper, online	Paper, online	Paper, online	Paper, online	Paper, online	EPR software: Workday	EPR software, myperformance
How often do supervisors meet with employee to discuss performance?	Required once, Depends on the manager	2-3 times a year	Required once, Depends on the manager	Once a year	Once a year	Once a year, but small office so we talk often	Required once, Depends on the manager	4 or more times a year.
When are employee work goals set?	Once at the beginning of the work year	Once at the beginning of the work year	Depends on employee position	Once at the beginning of the work year	Once at the beginning of the work year	Once at the beginning of the work year	Once at the beginning of the work year	Once at the beginning of the work year
What rating scale is used for the AEPR?	5-point scale	5-point scale	4-point scale	5-point scale	3-point scale	5-point scale	5-point scale	5-point scale
What incentives do you offer to high performing employees?	Merit based salary increase	Merit based salary increase, preferential assignments	Merit based salary increase	Merit based salary increase, monetary bonus, preferential assignments	Merit based Salary increase	Merit based salary increase	There are no set incentives for high performers. Incentives are driven by revenue.	Merit based salary increase, promotion consideration
Are incentives tied to AEPR?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. All incentives must go through UV	No. The director recommends higher raises to individual employees
Additional comments?	N/A	Forms should be simple and peer evaluations would improve the process	The process is continually reviewed for improvement Timing is problematic	Nevada is unionized and University decisions are dictated by State Legislature	It is a detailed and convoluted process that really is unique to our work	Employees are required to complete the self-assessment.	The AEPR is very important but the timing is problematic, and it takes too long	We use a quarterly review process and it works very well.

Recommendations

In response to the observed deficiencies with the IPS APR process the APR evaluation researcher recommends:

- Work with agency/unit leadership to establish a clear purpose and value of APR process.
 - Ensure each agency/unit has an active strategic plan.
 - Create an information resource displaying how each employee position aligns with or contributes to the organizational goals and objectives.
 - Encourage all employees especially managers/supervisors to participate in employee performance review training at least once every three years.
 - Develop an information resource outlining the purpose and value of the APR process.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to improve the flow of the APR process.
 - Adjust the timing of the APR cycle to better align with the work year.
 - IPS could separate the employee performance review process from the employee work planning process. Employee performance reviews could still be conducted between January and March, but the work planning process for the upcoming work year could occur in November/ December of the current work year. This would allow employees and managers to plan the upcoming work year earlier while still following the UT employee performance review timeline.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to increase objectivity of the APR process.
 - Develop organizational performance metrics ensuring there is a clear connection between organizational work goals and objectives and the goals and objectives of each employee position.
 - Develop documentation clarifying the Performance Review Summary form.
 - Define the current metrics to improve clarity.
 - Develop a weighted scoring process based on employee positions.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to increase consistency of the APR process across agency/unit departments.
 - Develop work performance standards for each employee position.
 - Develop a system of flexible work goals allowing employees to better align their work activities to the employee performance review process.
 - Clarify the merit-based salary process.
- Work with agency/unit leadership to increase the connection between managers and employees.
 - Utilize employee performance management software to track performance and increase communication options.
 - The University of Tennessee currently uses an employee performance management program called Interfolio.
 - Strongly encourage all managers/supervisors “meet” with their employees either in-person or electronically four times a year to discuss employee performance and progress toward work goals.
 - Strongly encourage all employees complete the employee self-assessment form.

Appendix

Additional Resources from Benchmark Organizations

Benchmark Organization	Additional Resource Link
Auburn University, Government and Economic Development Institute	http://www.auburn.edu/administration/human_resources/hrd/performance-management.html
Mississippi State University, the Stennis Institute of Government	https://www.hrm.msstate.edu/performance/appraisals/
Montana State University	https://www.montana.edu/policy/hr_policies/performance_evaluation.html
Northwestern University, Center of Public Safety	https://www.northwestern.edu/hr/learning/performance-excellence/
North Carolina State University, Institute of Emerging Issues and Industrial Extension Services	https://er.hr.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2017/02/SHRA-Perf-App-Policy_Eff-4-1-16.pdf
University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration	https://www.udel.edu/faculty-staff/human-resources/hr-systems/appraisals-employee/
University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute	https://studentaffairs.uga.edu/vp/administrative_page/employee-performance-reviews
University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute	https://www.umass.edu/humres/sites/default/files/PMPHand.pdf
University of Missouri, Institute of Public Policy and MU extension	https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/hr/myperformance_appraisal_process_and_forms
University of Nevada, Center for Economic Development	https://www.unr.edu/hr/compensation-evaluation/evaluation
University of North Carolina, School of Government	https://hr.unc.edu/managers/performance/ehra-evaluation/
University of Tennessee, Howard Baker Center	
University of Virginia, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service	https://hr.virginia.edu/career-development/performance-management/appeals-annual-performance-evaluations
Wichita State University Public Policy and Management Center	https://www.wichita.edu/services/humanresources/Organizational_Development/myPerformance/Annual_Performance_Review_Process.php