OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
STATE OF MINNESOTA • James Nobles, Legislative Auditor

Date: November 6, 2019

To: Members, Legislative Audit Commission

From: Judy Randall, Deputy Legislative Auditor
Program Evaluation Division

Subject: Accomplishments, Challenges, and Goals

Thank you for considering my reappointment as Deputy Legislative Auditor for OLA's Program Evaluation Division (PED). Below, I briefly outline my key accomplishments over the past four years; the challenges the Program Evaluation Division faces; and my goals for the future, should I be reappointed. I have also attached a copy of my resume and the PED Deputy position description for your review. I welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters with the commission.

## Past Accomplishments

OLA's mission is to produce reports that are accurate, objective, timely, and useful, and much of my work as PED Deputy is focused on achieving that mission. Standards guide PED's work, and an important part of my role is to ensure that teams are meeting those standards. Below is a sample of my efforts over the past four years to ensure that PED produces quality reports.

- I led a division-wide effort to review and update our evaluation standards.
- I edited, reviewed, and approved all evaluation "milestone" documents, including work plans, statements of findings, draft reports, and final reports.
- I regularly "rolled up my sleeves" to manage or work on evaluations.

Ensuring that our reports are useful requires OLA to work closely with the Legislature and the public. Below are a few of the initiatives I have undertaken over the past several years to ensure we are meeting the needs of the Legislature and the public.

- I managed the Legislative Audit Commission's topic-selection process.
- I facilitated and approved significant revisions to our evaluation reports to make them more readable and to include more graphics, callout boxes, and color.
- I worked to improve the accessibility of OLA materials.
- I implemented a survey to gather public input on the selected evaluation topics.

Finally, over the past four years, I have spent a significant amount of time on management and personnel issues. I have implemented some standard practices (listed on the next page), but there have also been unexpected issues (most notably turnover) that take considerable time.

- I instituted annual written reviews of managers.
- I instituted weekly meetings with managers to discuss their current evaluation projects and to offer guidance.
- I instituted periodic meetings (2-3 times a year) with nonmanagerial staff to discuss their individual performance and their projects overall.
- I developed and implemented an internal feedback form whereby nonmanagerial staff can provide written feedback on their most recent project.
- I spent a significant amount of time hiring evaluators and instituted a preliminary screening process.

## Key Challenges

Staff turnover is the biggest challenge I have faced over the past four years. Hiring and developing new staff takes time. Even when we hire highly qualified individuals, it takes several years before they can independently meet our rigorous standards. I have spent significant time hiring staff and helping teams conduct evaluations, rather than developing and implementing strategic changes.

Another key challenge is ensuring that our evaluation reports meet the high standards legislators, the public, and we expect. Meeting our evaluation standards requires extraordinary time and effort by all staff and contributes to staff burnout (and turnover).

## Goals

If I am reappointed as Deputy Legislative Auditor for OLA's Program Evaluation Division, I have several goals for the coming six years. Some key goals are briefly detailed below.

**Redesigning evaluation reports.** OLA's evaluation reports have followed generally the same format for more than 20 years. Although we use more color and graphics now, the reports are still long, dense, and text-heavy. I would like to embark on a thoughtful effort to revamp our reports in a way that is most useful to legislators and the public. I would welcome the opportunity to talk with members of the Legislative Audit Commission about changes they would like to see.

**Minimize turnover.** Turnover makes everything we do harder; it also means I am spending more time conducting evaluations (or hiring and developing new staff) than leading the division. Among other things, I plan to continue to make PED an attractive place to work and try to reduce staff stress. Having happier staff would lead to less burnout and help to reduce turnover.

**Internal initiatives.** There are several internal initiatives that deserve some attention, including updating internal policies and position descriptions, developing additional internal training, and developing a more robust way to follow-up on the extent to which agencies have implemented our recommendations.

Attachments

## SKILLS SUMMARY

- Respected office leader, team builder, and mentor. Quick and enthusiastic learner.
- Strong communication skills, including ability to enable decision-making and facilitate consensus building. Skilled writer of evaluation reports, summaries, and external communications.
- Effective presentation skills sharpened through testifying at legislative committees and regularly communicating with media personnel and external stakeholders.
- Highly analytical with a strong ability to master the details and devise big-picture solutions.
- Significant evaluation skills developed over more than 20 years of evaluating programs. Proven track record of designing and delivering objective, accurate, and useful evaluations.
- Broad research skills, including extensive experience working with quantitative and qualitative data.
- Extremely organized with proven ability to set priorities. Focused on meeting or beating deadlines with quality products.

## EVALUATION EXPERIENCE

**MINNESOTA OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR,** St. Paul, Minnesota
*Deputy Legislative Auditor, Program Evaluation Division—June 2015 to present*
*Evaluation Manager—2005 to 2015*
*Program Evaluator—1998 to 2005*

Office leader who directs evaluations of state-funded programs. Manages a division of 16 staff who produce timely, objective, and useful reports and analysis for the Minnesota Legislature. Reports have resulted in significant changes to state laws and policies.

***Office Leadership.*** Proactive problem solver and office leader. Manage 16 professionals. Lead division-wide initiatives, including recruiting, hiring, and developing professional staff; developing and ensuring compliance with formal evaluation standards; and improving and overseeing division-wide practices. Lead annual process for selecting programs for future evaluations. Assist in developing and implementing office-wide policies and practices.

***Communication.*** Strong communicator with effective presentation skills. Formally and informally present recommendations for change to legislative committees, individual legislators, and other stakeholders. Regularly testify in front of legislative committees. Adapt presentation of findings to meet needs of diverse audiences. Frequently talk with media personnel about evaluation process and results, often about controversial topics.

***Project Management.*** Effective project manager with demonstrated ability to execute. Manage teams of researchers to analyze and form recommendations on issues identified by a bipartisan legislative committee. Responsible for determining project scope, design, and schedule. Produce quality deliverables on time. Serve as primary contact person for internal and external stakeholders, including legislators, policymakers, community leaders, and media personnel.

***Research and Analysis.*** Creative researcher with significant practical experience. Employ a variety of research tools, including quantitative analysis, surveys, interviews, site visits, file reviews, database analyses, legal research, compliance reviews, and literature reviews. For all methods, responsible for designing research tools and analyzing results.

## PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE

**THE CENTER FOR SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY,** Ann Arbor, Michigan
*Researcher—1996 to 1998*

**JP MORGAN & COMPANY,** New York, New York
*Analyst—1992 to 1994*

## EDUCATION

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON,** Madison, Wisconsin

- Master of Science Degree, Economics
- Master of Science Degree, Educational Administration

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY,** Evanston, Illinois

- Bachelor of Arts Degree, Economics and Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences
- Phi Beta Kappa

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Tickets Chair, Edina High School Band
- Tickets Co-Chair, Edina High School Theater
- Volunteer, Gigi's Playhouse
- Guest Speaker, Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs

State of Minnesota

EMPLOYEE'S NAME

POSITION DESCRIPTION **A**

AGENCY/DIVISION
Office of the Legislative Auditor
Program Evaluation Division

POSITION CONTROL NUMBER: _____

CLASSIFICATION TITLE
Deputy Legislative Auditor

COMPENSATION LEVEL: _____

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE (this position description accurately reflects my current job) | DATE | SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE (this position description accurately reflects the employee's current job) | DATE |

**Position Purpose:**

To assist the Legislative Auditor in directing the Office of the Legislative Auditor and to supervise and manage the Program Evaluation Division.

**Reports to:**

Legislative Auditor
Legislative Audit Commission

**Supervises:**

Permanent staff of the Program Evaluation Division
Support staff of the Office of the Legislative Auditor
Contract and temporary employees

**Clientele:**

Legislative Audit Commission
Legislature
State agencies
Various interest groups
General public

**POSITION DESCRIPTION B** **EMPLOYEE'S NAME** _____

| Priority | % of Time | Dis-cretion | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 75 | A | * | 1. Supervise the work of the Program Evaluation Division.<br>a. Define and communicate the mission and objectives of the division.<br>b. Define and communicate the policies and procedures of the division.<br>c. Recruit professional staff.<br>d. Evaluate staff performance annually.<br>e. Recruit temporary and contract staff.<br>f. Assist the Legislative Audit Commission in the selection of appropriate evaluation topics.<br>g. Supervise evaluation research projects.<br>h. Ensure the quality and accuracy of evaluation research.<br>i. Edit evaluation reports and other written materials.<br>j. Review and approve evaluation reports.<br>k. Maintain effective communication with all affected parties.<br>l. Design effective written and oral communications strategies.<br>m. Coordinate the work of the division with that of the Financial Audit Division.<br>n. Maintain effective communications with the legislative auditor. |
| A | 10 | A | * | 2. To maintain effective external communications.<br>a. Communicate with legislators and legislative staff, executive branch officials, interest groups, and others interested in the work of the office.<br>b. Give presentations before committees and outside groups.<br>c. Write reports, articles, and other materials as needed. |
| A | 5 | B | * | 3. To assist the Legislative Auditor in supervising support staff.<br>a. Give direction to confidential secretary. |
| A | 5 | B | * | 4. To assist the Legislative Auditor in directing the Office of the Legislative Auditor.<br>a. Give advice and assistance when requested.<br>b. Fulfill the duties of the legislative auditor in his or her absence in collaboration with the Deputy Legislative Auditor for the Financial Audit Division. |
| B | 5 | A | * | 5. To be active in the field of public policy analysis and program evaluation research.<br>a. Establish and maintain contacts among auditors, program evaluators, and applied policy research professionals.<br>b. Study and contribute to the literature on public policy and program evaluation.<br>c. Participate in professional organizations and meetings. |

**POSITION DESCRIPTION C** **EMPLOYEE'S NAME** _____

NATURE AND SCOPE (relationships; knowledges, skills and abilities; problem solving and creativity; and freedom to act)

## Relationships:

The Deputy Legislative Auditor has overall administrative and leadership responsibility for the operation of the Program Evaluation Division. He or she must have good professional relationships with the Legislative Auditor, program evaluation staff, and legislative program evaluation staff in other states. He or she must also have good relationships with legislators, legislative staff, agency officials, interest groups, public policy scholars, financial auditors, media representatives, and others interested in the work of the office. Relationships often involve sensitive, complex, and sometimes confidential information. Honesty and trust are essential.

## Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

1. Ability to supervise a staff of highly skilled professionals from various disciplines doing complex and sensitive work in a political, non-partisan environment.

2. Ability to work within the legislative process, including a knowledge of politics and policy-making processes.

3. Thorough knowledge of public administration, program evaluation, policy analysis, performance audit, and social science research methods.

4. Familiarity with policy research techniques, including cost-benefit analysis, survey research, simulation, regression analysis, and statistics.

5. Knowledge about state government history, organization, process, and issues.

6. Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

7. Strong self-direction.

8. Leadership.

## Problem-Solving:

The position requires extraordinary personal resources for solving complex political and social problems. Personal judgment is needed in deciding what issues are important, in studying those issues, and in giving sound and practical advice to policy makers. Problems must be solved independently, in consultation with the Legislative Auditor, and in concert with legislators and legislative staff.

## Freedom to Act:

The Deputy Legislative Auditor has wide discretion to act, limited only by the formal powers of the office and by the directives of the Legislative Auditor. The Deputy is appointed for a six-year term, co-terminous with the Legislative Auditor, and cannot be removed, except for "cause." He or she is expected to act independently in a non-partisan way.

## Education/Training/Licenses/Certifications

The minimum qualifications for this position are a masters degree or equivalent in a discipline that incorprates the fundamentals of social science research and at least five years of experience supervising the research of others in a governmental or other public policy environment.