



Public Records Advocate – Director Review Complete Comments

Comments are extracted in full and unedited for content. One redaction has been made to #16 Comment 11 to preserve the anonymity of the commentor.

16. What are some leadership strengths you've observed in this individual?

1. When providing guidance to our agency, Todd was very helpful, knowledgeable, and transparent. He has been able to swiftly navigate us through a handful of questions surrounding public records.
2. Engaging, open, and communicative. Listens and asks questions working to come to resolution. Is good at training. Is skilled and has a vast amount of knowledge of the public records law. Provides good advice and direction.
3. He's good at delegating work and letting people know when he does.
4. Todd Albert is serious about the importance of public records and making the process as easy and transparent as possible. I often attend/observe the PRAC meetings. There was a time during public testimony [I think that is what it was called] where the speaker referred to repeat public records requestors as "crazy" and others on the "call" joined the sentiment; Mr. Albert sternly, yet professionally, affirmed that public records requestors need to be respected regardless of the number of requests they submit and recommended a more careful dialog moving forward. He earned a lot of respect from me on that day. He shows a lot of professionalism and commitment to the cause. I appreciate having an advocacy office in Oregon.
5. Understands Oregon's Public Records laws, is prepared, always open and transparent, and treats everyone in a highly professional manner.
6. The predominant way to express an intent for an inclusive environment is by hiring individuals that reflect that goal. Mr. Albert definitely did that.
7. Very kind, caring and dedicated. Conscientious, polite, good at keeping the council organized.
8. Todd is always professional in his demeanor and communication and his leadership derives largely from the seriousness he brings to the Advocate role. He expresses his knowledge in helpful dialogue during Council meetings and when meeting with constituent groups or individuals. I think he brings his experience, knowledge of the law, and courteous



demeanor to the table in a way that makes him a natural leader and a good fit for the Advocate position.

9. Very good public speaker. Explained without speaking down – respectful. Thoughtful answers.

10. Todd has always been responsive to emails and phone calls. He is knowledgeable and if he doesn't readily have the answer, he will find it and return calls and emails in a timely manner. He is an excellent presenter of information, easy to understand and follow as a student/participant. His demeanor is always pleasant and welcoming and inclusive of more people in the conversation when needed.

11. Mr. Albert was excellent with communication, quick response, explanations and advocacy. We were unable to resolve our issue, but that was absolutely through no fault of our advocate who did everything he could. The dispute ended up being resolved [redaction made].

12. Mr. Albert has led our district through some difficult conversations with patrons. His leadership voice, process + compliance is truly appreciated.

13. He is always well prepared, is responsive and understands his role in the system.

17. What are some leadership opportunities for growth in this individual?

1. The office has had some instances where they have not followed up on requests.

2. I do not have feedback in leadership opportunities as I have not observed Mr. Albert enough to make comment. Although I would like to note that I do perceive him as a respected leader in his field.

3. I think he would benefit from understanding the legislative process better.

4. The Advocate role was envisioned as someone who would... advocate. You know, fight for the little guy. I don't see Todd doing that enough. The reports are OK, but don't give information that would help the council to see where the trouble spots are and if there are any "bad actors." I just don't see the advocate's office moving the needle enough on the big picture. A lot of this is in how the job is approached and I wish it were being approached more as an auditor or slightly more adversarial rather than just another part of the bureaucracy.



5. As Todd served as the deputy advocate prior to being named Advocate, I think he had an opportunity to see the previous Advocate in action and get a good sense for how to operate in the position. Given my role as a PRAC member I do not know of any leadership growth as a department head that he might need to explore, and I have found his participation at Council meetings to be appropriate. I have no growth areas to note.

6. Perhaps some more specific trainings to different entities in public safety. Dispatch public records needs are different than police or corrections so some directed trainings would be welcomed.

7. Mr. Albert continues to progress in his leadership opportunities as legislation and statute grow, he also grows. We are grateful for his leadership.

8. Potentially there might be a need for more frequent meetings on substantive issues of the PRAC.

18. Additional comments or feedback

1. He is good at what he does!

2. I have learned a tremendous amount from Mr. Albert. The training video offered on the website is suffice, however a more current version may be useful. I would like to learn more about disclosure exemptions, though the longer I work on public records requests, the more I learn that each situation is unique; so, I think a more detailed disclosure exemption training could be difficult. I think Mr. Albert is a fantastic advocate for both the public/requestors and public agencies. I know my agency has benefited greatly from the Advocate's office and has deepened my commitment to government transparency and accountability. Although this comment may be unrelated to Mr. Albert's survey - I would love to see the office grow and receive more resources. And perhaps an administrative assistant could also help out. I have no complaints and I have found the office to be timely and resourceful when I have requested service, however I sense they are super busy and the work they do is so important and affirms Oregon's commitment to improve government effectiveness and increase trust.

3. I find Mr. Albert to be an excellent public servant who has successfully stabilized an office that seen better days. He also is engaging with the public and is well prepared. He works diligently and professionally.



4. Sometimes I find the analysis of certain aspects of the OPRL either unhelpful or an adoption of a public body view slanted towards nondisclosure that may or may not be consistent with the OPRL. That's frustrating. I would like to see the office become more involved in promoting transparency. It's difficult for anyone to do that when (a) the paycheck comes from the same source as the state agency budgets and (b) there is no real power vested in the advocate.

While I'm at it, the PRAC and Sunshine Committee processes were good ideas that have not turned out to be consistent with each's mandate. From 2017 to current, I don't think we have more narrow interpretations of exemptions or fewer exemptions. Instead we have increased complications and more excuses for public bodies to avoid disclosing records that are public. That's suboptimal. Until the legislature tells the public bodies in no uncertain terms that public records are a core function of a public body, I don't see change happening and the system, including the advocate, will continue to be gamed by public bodies trying to avoid embarrassment or just the principle of transparency.

5. The work is seen and appreciated. Comments above do not reflect on the dedication but rather the approach.

6. Mr. Albert has been very responsive and helpful when I've needed his office's assistance. He's clearly knowledgeable and an excellent communicator. I also refer people who need his office's assistance to them w/ confidence.

7. It has been a pleasure to work with Todd and I am glad he is interested in seeking to continue serving Oregon as our Public Records Advocate.

8. I only had one interaction with this individual through email correspondence. This individual was responding to a question I had. The individual responded in a reasonable amount of time and was thorough with the response.

9. We look forward to another term for Mr. Albert and invite the opportunity to work + partner alongside the state of Oregon.

10. I have enjoyed interacting with him. He is good and effective leader for the PRAC.