



Board of Trustees Retreat:

Best Practices of Effective Boards

September 19, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and September 20, 9:00 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

Location: Endowment Room, Beth Tedrow Student Center

Facilitated by Dr. Pamila J. Fisher, ACCT Consultant

AGENDA:

Day One, September 19

I. Introduction and Retreat Goals

- A. Who We Are and Why We Are Here
- B. Observations on the Past Year

II. Board/President Relationships

- A. Characteristics of Effective Teams
- B. Expectations for the President and the Board

III. Effective Trusteeship

- A. Legal Authority and Parameters
- B. Open Meeting Laws, Executive Sessions and Confidentiality
- C. Accreditation
- D. Overview of Trustee Roles and Responsibilities

IV. Best Practices

- A. Policy vs. Operations
- B. Top Twenty Truths
- C. Communication Protocols
- D. Code of Ethics
- E. Board Self-Assessment

Day Two, September 20

I. Reflections and Follow-Up from Day One

II. Practical Applications

- A. Effective Meetings
- B. Fiduciary Accountability
- C. Monitoring Role
- D. Role of the Chair
- E. Coordinated Assessments
- F. Professional Development Plan for the Board

III. The College's Future

- A. Board Leadership During COVID 19
- B. Advocacy and Community Relations
- C. Critical Issues Facing the College and the Community
- D. Board Priorities for 2020-2021
- E. President's Goals for 2020-2021

IV. Next Steps

The Six Essentials of Good Board/CEO Relations

1. Good Board-President Relations Begin, Continue, and End with Ethical Behavior
2. The Board and President Must communicate with Each Other Openly, Appropriately, and Even-Handedly
3. The Board and President Must Each Know Their Separate Responsibilities
4. The Board and President Should Each Be Evaluated Annually
5. The Board and President Need to Encourage Each Other
6. Facilitating the Board Process is The Sixth Essential

The sixth essentials refers to how members talk to each other,
How they identify and solve problems,
How they make decisions and how they handle conflict.

The characteristics of the mature group include:

Involvement - Members feel a sense of ownership.

Responsibility - Members assume responsibility for their own behavior.

Trust and Caring - Open expression is based on trust and care for one another.

Use of Resources - Diversity of viewpoints is expected and encouraged.

Listening - Members actively listen to one another.

Self-Examination - The groups examines its own processes.

Source: Essentials of Good Board/CEO Relations by Vaughn Sherman, ACCT, 1999

Roles and Responsibilities

Instructions: In order to achieve optimal board effectiveness, the board and the President must be clear on what they expect from each other. Use the lines below to list what the board expects from the President (left side) and what the President needs from the board (right side).

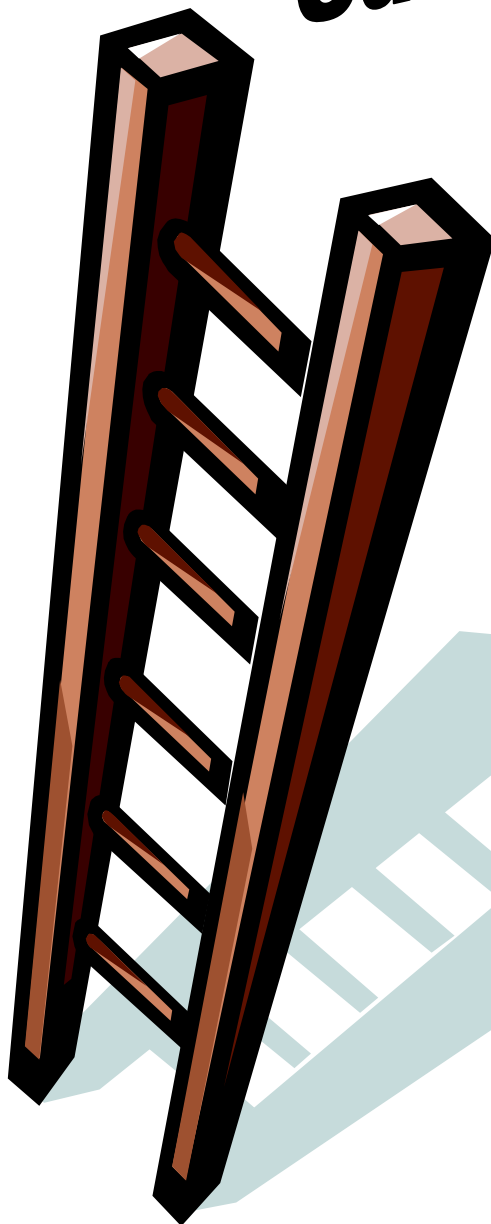
President

What the board expects from the President

Success!!!

Board of Trustees

What the President needs from the board



ACCREDITATION RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Prepared by Pamela J. Fisher, Ed.D., LLC

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1. Regional accreditation is required for a college to receive local, state or federal funds, for students to receive state or federal financial aid, and for students' completed units, certificates and degrees to be honored by other accredited colleges as well as most licensing agencies.
2. Accreditation standards are nationally based and regionally administered.
3. Regional accrediting commissions are accountable to the federal Department of Education who ensures that accrediting commissions operate according to the approved policies and procedures and requires that the accrediting commissions enforce the standards that have been set of colleges of that region.
4. Each accredited college is a member of a regional Accrediting Commission. Although commissions have paid staff, the governing board of a Commission is comprised of unpaid volunteers, most of whom are community college faculty, administrators, and governing board members.
5. The work of a commission is funded primarily by dues paid by member organizations who voluntarily seek membership.
6. Upon initially seeking candidacy for accreditation, and throughout the life of an accredited college, it is the responsibility of the college's leadership to prove continuously that the college meets or exceeds the standards set by the Commission.
7. The Governing Board of a college (or a system) is ultimately responsible for overseeing the preparation of the internal self-assessment document and ensuring that it is completely candid and forthcoming about all shortcomings and the status of plans to eliminate those problems. However, the standards required apply to advisory boards, administrators, faculty and staff.
8. The accreditation standards are non-negotiable. While there is some latitude about how the standards are operationally defined, the Visiting Team and the Commission have the final say as to whether or not the college's response and actions have been sufficient to meet the standard.
9. The Commission is not a political body nor is it influenced by political pressures. Its mission is to verify the quality of the institution to its student, the taxpayers who support the college, and the colleges, universities and licensing agencies to which students wish to transfer their units.
10. Commissions make their standards, guidelines and policies and procedures easily available and provide numerous opportunities and venues for technical assistance to colleges.

GUIDE TO TRUSTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Community college boards of trustees are responsible for ensuring that their colleges are integral parts of their communities and serve their ever-changing needs. Boards are accountable to the community for the performance and welfare of the institutions they govern.

Effective boards consist of people who come together to form a cohesive group to articulate and represent the public interest, establish a climate for learning and monitor the effectiveness of the institution. Boards of trustees do not do the work of their institutions; they establish standards for the work through the policies they set. Their specific responsibilities are to:

ACT AS A UNIT

The board is a corporate body. It governs as a unit, with one voice. This principle means that individual trustees have authority only when they are acting as a board. They have no power to act on their own or to direct college employees or operations.

In order for boards to be cohesive and well-functioning units, trustees must work together as a team toward common goals. Boards should have structures and rules for operating that ensure they conduct their business effectively and efficiently, board agendas are clear and informative, and board meetings are run in an appropriate manner.

The power of governance is expressed through one voice. As individuals, trustees make no commitments on behalf of the board to constituents, nor do they criticize or work against board decisions.

To be effective boards must:

- Integrate multiple perspectives into board decision-making
- Establish and abide by rules for conducting board business
- Speak with one voice, and support the decision of the board once it is made
- Recognize that power rests with the board, not individual trustees

REPRESENT THE COMMON GOOD

Boards of trustees exist to represent the general public. They are responsible for balancing and integrating the wide variety of interests and needs into policies that benefit the common good and the future of their region.

Therefore, board members learn as much as they can about the communities they serve. They gain this knowledge by studying demographic, economic and social trends, by being aware of issues facing the community, and by talking with other community leaders and members of other boards. They use what they learn to make decisions that respond to community interests, needs and values.

Boards discuss multiple viewpoints and issues in public, and have strategies to include the public in the policy-making process. Effective trustees and boards:

- Know community needs and trends
- Link with the community
- Seek out and consider multiple perspectives when making policy decisions
- Debate and discuss issues in public
- Serve the public good

SET THE POLICY DIRECTION

Governing boards establish policies that provide direction and guidance to the president and staff of the College. A major board responsibility is to define and uphold a vision and mission that clearly reflect student and community expectations. This responsibility challenges boards to think strategically, concentrate on the "big picture," and focus on the future learning needs of their communities. It requires that boards consult widely with community groups as well as the administration, faculty, staff, and students of the college. Trustees engage in exciting, creative, thoughtful discussions as they explore the future and envision what they want their communities to be. They:

- Are proactive, visionary and future-oriented
- Learn about and communicate with many different groups
- Focus on community needs and trends
- Establish the vision, mission and broad institutional goals as policy

EMPLOY, EVALUATE AND SUPPORT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Successful governance depends on a good relationship between the board and the chief executive officer (CEO). The chancellor or president is the single most influential person in creating an outstanding institution. Therefore selecting, evaluating and supporting the CEO are among the board's most important responsibilities.

The CEO and board function best as a partnership. The CEO implements board policies, while the board depends on the CEO for guidance and educational leadership. This occasionally paradoxical relationship works best when there are clear, mutually agreed-on expectations and role descriptions. The partnership thrives on open communication, confidence, trust, and support.

To be effective, trustees and boards must:

- Select and retain the best CEO possible
- Define clear parameters and expectations for performance
- Conduct periodic evaluations; provide honest and constructive feedback
- Act ethically in the relationship with the CEO
- Support the CEO; create an environment for success

DEFINE POLICY STANDARDS FOR COLLEGE OPERATIONS

Successful boards of trustees adopt policies that set standards for quality, ethics and prudence in college operations. Once policy standards are established, boards delegate significant authority to the CEO, allowing the CEO and staff the flexibility they need to exercise professional judgment. The policies:

- Define expectations for high quality educational programs
- Define expectations for student achievement and fair treatment of students
- Require wise and prudent use of funds and management of assets
- Set parameters to attract and retain high quality personnel and ensure fair treatment of employees

CREATE A POSITIVE CLIMATE

Boards set the tone for the entire system or institution. Through their behavior and policies, successful boards establish a climate in which learning is valued, professional growth is enhanced, and the most important goals are student success and adding value to the community. Alternatively, boards fail their institutions when they act in such a way that they create a stifling, negative, or dysfunctional atmosphere.

Boards of trustees create a positive climate when they look to the future, act with integrity, support risk-taking, and challenge the CEO and college staff to strive for excellence. Effective boards and trustees:

- Model a commitment to learning for students
- Focus on outcomes
- Support professional growth
- Seek consultation in developing policy
- Are ethical and act with integrity

MONITOR PERFORMANCE

Boards are responsible for holding colleges accountable for serving current and future community learning needs. The board adopts the college direction and broad goals as policy, and then monitors the progress made toward those goals. For instance, if a board adopts a policy goal that the college programs will result in skilled employees for area business, then the board should ask for periodic reports on how that goal is being met.

Boards also monitor adherence to their policies for programs, personnel, and fiscal and asset management.

They receive periodic reports from staff and review reports by and for external agencies, such as accreditation, audit, and state and federal accountability reports. All monitoring processes culminate in the evaluation of the CEO as the institutional leader.

A board's ability to monitor its institution is enhanced when it defines the criteria and standards to be used well in advance of when reports are required, so that the CEO and staff are clear about what is expected. Effective boards and trustees:

- Monitor progress toward goals
- Monitor adherence to operational policies
- Use pre-established criteria for monitoring
- Schedule a timetable for reports

SUPPORT AND BE ADVOCATES FOR THE COLLEGE

Trustees are essential links with their communities. They govern on behalf of the public and ensure that the College meets the needs of external constituents. They are also advocates and protectors of the College. They promote the College in the community, and seek support for the college from local, state, and national policymakers. They support the college foundation in seeking community contributions.

Competent boards protect the College from undue pressure on the institution from political and special interests. They support the professional freedom of administrators and faculty to create quality learning environments that incorporate many different perspectives. They protect the ability of the College to fulfill its mission and promise to their communities. Effective trustees and boards:

- Promote the College in the community
- Foster partnerships with other entities in the community
- Advocate the needs of the College with government officials
- Support the foundation and fundraising efforts
- Protect the College from inappropriate influence

LEAD AS A THOUGHTFUL EDUCATED TEAM

Good trusteeship requires the ability to function as part of a team, and a team functions best when all members are encouraged to contribute their unique strengths and are committed to working together.

Effective boards are thoughtful and educated. Trustees on those boards listen well, ask good questions, analyze options, think critically, and clarify their most important values and priorities. They explore issues thoroughly and make policy decisions based on thorough deliberation and comprehensive understanding.

The best boards are future-oriented. They recognize that today's world requires flexible institutions and personnel who are willing to adapt and grow in response to the changing needs of society. Trustees who act with vision, with intelligence, with curiosity and with enthusiasm create a board that is an agent for positive change. Effective boards and trustees:

- Engage in ongoing learning about board roles and responsibilities
- Are curious and inclusive
- Are positive and optimistic
- Support and respect each other

TOP TWENTY TRUTHS FOR EFFECTIVE TRUSTEESHIP

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' ROLES

1. The Board adopts broad policies and goals and does not direct the President or other staff as to how to implement those policies or achieve those goals.
2. The Board operates as a unit and honors Board decisions once they are made.
3. The Board ensures all board members follow board policy and intervenes when necessary.
4. The Board conducts effective and efficient meetings.
5. The Board strictly follows parliamentary procedure.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

6. The Board honors the confidentiality of all executive (closed) sessions.
7. Board members do not favor or protect any one college or community special group.
8. Board members operate ethically and without conflict of interests and honor commitments it makes to one another and to the President.
9. Board members always treat staff and each other respectfully in all public settings.
10. Board members do not meet directly with union representatives while negotiations are underway.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES/PRESIDENT RELATIONS

11. The Board of Trustees supports the President, does not undermine her/his authority and counters misinformed public criticism.
12. Board members refer all constituent concerns to the President.
13. Individual board members do not direct the President on what to do on any college-related decision, understanding that direction comes only from the entire Board of Trustees.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

14. The Board builds a positive image of the college.
15. Board members do not speak to the press in any way that reflects negatively on their colleagues or the college.
16. No individual board member speaks for the Board except on matters where the Board has taken an official action.
17. Board members do not use their position to further their political career.

ACCREDITATION RESPONSIBILITIES

18. Individual board members do not distract the attention of trustees, the President or other staff from the high priority of retaining its accreditation.
19. The Board understands that its performance is a contributing factor to whether or not a college retains its accreditation and stays open.
20. The Board demonstrates it makes the college's accreditation status a high priority.

Trustee Code of Ethics

Governing boards function better when the ethical standards for trustee behavior are clear. ACCT recommends that boards explore and adopt a set of standards, often called a “code of ethics” or “standards for good practice.” In fact some regional accrediting commissions for community colleges require that boards have a code of ethics or similar statement.

ACCT has developed the following model code. Boards of trustees are encouraged to use it as a starting point for discussion in developing a code or policy. It is important for trustees to explore together expectations for their own behavior.

As a governing board member, I am responsible to:

1. devote time, thought and study to the duties and responsibilities of a community college board member, so that I may render effective and creditable service;
2. work with my fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debates of points of issue;
3. base my personal decision upon all available facts in each situation; vote my honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind; and abide by and uphold the final majority decision to the board;
4. remember at all times that as an individual I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the board, and to conduct my relationships with the community college staff, the local citizenry, and all media of the community on the basis of this fact;
5. resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a community college board member to benefit myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the community college district;
6. recognize that it is as important for the board to understand and evaluate the educational program of the community college as it is to plan for the business of college operation;
7. bear in mind under all circumstances that the primary function of the board is to establish the policies by which the community college is to be administered;
8. welcome and encourage active cooperation by citizens, organizations, and the media of communication in the district with respect to establishing policy on current college operations and proposed future developments;
9. support the state and national community college trustees associations;
10. finally, strive step by step toward ideal conditions for the most effective community college board service to my community, in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and the perpetuation of our representative democracy.

Governing Board Self-Evaluation: A Practical Guide

Instructions:

Step 1: Rate each Board performance item by using the scale below (1 representing the lowest rating, and 4 representing the highest rating).

Step 2: Add your scores together and find your final score in the range below.

SCALE: **1. Poor** **2. Adequate** **3. Good** **4. Outstanding**

YOU (Self-Analysis)	BOARD	
_____	_____	1. The Board operates as a unit and honors Board decisions.
_____	_____	2. The Board understands that its constituency is the entire community.
_____	_____	3. The Board recognizes the difference between its policy role and the operational roles of the President and staff.
_____	_____	4. The Board operates ethically and without conflicts of interest.
_____	_____	5. Board members treat staff and each other respectfully in public.
_____	_____	6. Board decisions are based on the best interests of students.

YOU
(Self-Analysis)

BOARD

7. The Board and the CEO have a cooperative relationship.

8. The Board refers constituent concerns to the President.

9. The Board ensures all board members follow board policies.

10. The Board builds a positive image of the college.

TOTAL

If your board scored:

40-35: Your board is an outstanding, mean operating machine! What is working well?

34-29: Your board is in good shape—it needs some fine-tuning, but overall it does a good job! What areas require some attention?

28-20: Your board is doing ok but you need to pay attention to some red flags. On which areas do you need to focus?

19-10: Your board may not be doing the best job to serve your college. What should be included in your improvement plan?

Fiscal Questions Board Members Should Ask of Their President

Presented by Dr. Pamela Fisher, ACCT Consultant

1. What are the major sources of revenue for the college? What is the trend and projection for each of those? What is anticipated in the new budget and why?
2. What is the college's experience over the last 5 years of actual expenditures to budget and actual expenditures to actual revenue?
3. What are the college's fund balance reserves and what is the history of the reserves and of their use? Are the reserves restricted or generally available?
4. Does the college have long term debt and if it does, what are the plans for paying it off?
5. Does the college have a program of internal controls and if so, how often are they reviewed and by whom?
6. What percentage of the budget is spent on major categories including personnel, health benefits, facilities, maintenance, technology, equipment, and supplies?
7. How much of the budget is committed to personnel and is included in collective bargaining contract? What are the restrictions on reducing personnel expenditures should it become necessary?
8. What are the financial implications of the physical plant? Is new construction planned and, if so, how will it be paid for? Is there a backlog of deferred maintenance and, if so, what are the plans for addressing it?
9. When was the last audit done and by whom? What is the status of correcting all identified items including those in the management letter and exit interview?
10. What regular reports does the Board receive? How do new board members receive orientation regarding finance and the budget? Do all Board members take part in discussions related to finance and budget?

Coordinated President/CEO Evaluation and Board Self-Assessments

Prepared by Dr. Pamela Fisher, ACCT Leadership and Search Consultant

President Evaluation

Other documents describe in detail the President Evaluation Services available through ACCT. Sample instruments and item bank options are available online. (Visit: www.acct.org/services.) Other items are listed only by topic and specific language will be developed upon request. The President Evaluation Service is essentially the same process as that for the Board Self-Assessment Service.

An evaluation instrument is developed and customized to meet the needs of the college and president. Prior to the board's completion of the evaluation/assessment, it is recommended that the president prepare a self-evaluation/annual report that focuses on their adopted goals for the previous year, the state of the college, and any other relevant priorities. This self-evaluation is then distributed to the board, along with the customized evaluation/assessment instrument.

ACCT staff are responsible for distributing, collecting, analyzing and preparing a summary report. An ACCT consultant will facilitate the discussion of this summary report during the scheduled annual retreat. Following that discussion, draft goals and priorities for the upcoming year also should be developed.

Board's Self-Assessment

The board's self-assessment also includes a customized instrument which is distributed to all board members by ACCT. The results of this instrument are analyzed and summarized. Comparisons to previous years, when available, also will be made. The summary report is presented to the board by an ACCT consultant and he/she facilitates a discussion of the findings. Additionally, the consultant will assist the board and president in the development of priorities for the coming year.

Coordination of Efforts

Ideally, these two processes, the president's annual evaluation, and the Board's self-assessment occur in tandem. As a working team, there is considerable overlap in the goals and priorities of the board and the president, and in any case, there should be support of one another's goals. Thus, the process of self-reflection and consideration of others' performance go together well. Similarly, the goals set for the coming year need to be complimentary, if not comparable.

Timing

Approximately six weeks before the scheduled annual retreat, the president should complete his/her self-evaluation. This would be distributed to the board along with the president's evaluation instrument AND the board's self-assessment instrument. Board members would be given up to 10 days to complete both instruments and submit them to the ACCT office. There the data are compiled, and a summary document is created.

During the annual retreat, the morning session (closed) focuses on the president's evaluation. Time is allotted for the board to meet privately first with the consultant, and then with the president to go over the findings. The consultant facilitates the discussion to ensure everyone is together on what is being said and what is expected. Discussion also begins at that time about possible future goals.

In open session the board then receives the summary report of their self-assessment. These are discussed with the consultant and the president also is asked to comment on them. Priorities for the coming year also are tentatively identified.

Following both of these evaluation sessions, the focus is on the future. Relevant environmental information may be provided by the president. Everyone's input and perceptions are encouraged. The result is a draft set of goals for the president and for the board. These are later refined by a small committee.

Follow-Up

The "final" version of the president's annual goals and the board's annual goals are brought back to the board for formal approval at a subsequent public meeting. They become a working document to which everyone can refer throughout the year. Some boards choose to do a mid-year update to check on their own and the president's progress. At a minimum, these approved goals become the basis for the president's and the board's evaluation the following year at the next annual retreat.

EQUITY ACTION AGENDA

FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE

with the endorsement of the
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE



Overview

ACCT's **Equity Action Agenda for Community College Governance** is a guide based on the responsibilities of community college trustees and the college's leadership to promote policies that support access, affordability, equity and completion for all community college students. College diversity, equity, and inclusivity policies facilitate academic progress and economic and social mobility for all.

Equity in higher education refers to creating opportunities for equal access and success among historically underrepresented student populations to ensure:



Proportional participation occurs at all levels of an institution;



Adequate resources are directed at closing equity gaps (**resource equity**); and



Institutional leadership and willingness to address diversity, equity, and inclusivity issues are prioritized.

Educational equity depends on fairness and inclusion in the educational system and includes equity in various categories: socio-economic, racial, gender, and ability, among others. Institutions of higher education have an imperative to avoid discrimination based on these qualities and to support disadvantaged students whether the issues are income and class, race, gender, ability, or other factors. **Inclusive, equitable, and diverse environments are essential for all students to succeed.**

Purpose

This guide is intended to assist community and technical college boards and CEOs to:

- Engage in meaningful and productive discussions around equity and the role of the college in ensuring access and opportunity for **all** campus and community members;
- Embrace and reinforce a culture that values and promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion;
- Understand the board's role in shaping and supporting goals, policies, practices, and procedures that promote equitable experiences and outcomes;
- Identify and examine appropriate metrics and indicators of equity success (e.g., access, use of specialized student support services such as writing and speaking labs, tutors, specialized academic advisors, etc., course completion, English as a Second Language enrollment, degree and certificate completion, transfer, etc.), as well as diversity of staff, faculty, and students;
- Provide leadership, support, and assistance (where appropriate) in developing next steps for designing and implementing equitable institutional policies, practices, and processes;
- Establish appropriate reporting and accountability measures to monitor progress toward achieving equity goals and outcomes.

The Trustee Role

As leaders, policy makers, and advocates, trustees play a vital role in ensuring that equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and economic opportunity are priorities for their institutions and the communities they serve.

Trustee Leadership

- The president/CEO search process should be inclusive; outreach should be targeted to broad and diverse publications and outlets. The job description should reflect the college's commitment to equity.
- The college mission statement should reflect the institution's commitment to equity.
- Resources should be devoted to programs and services with demonstrated effectiveness in meeting student, community, and/or workforce needs and promoting equitable opportunities. For example, adequate resources should be allocated toward initiatives aimed at improving opportunities and outcomes for underserved or disadvantaged populations such as those from lower income brackets, men of color, or students with disabilities.
- The board should be visibly unified in its commitment to promoting access, success, and equity and to assuring the best hiring practices for addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the college or district.

Key Questions for Trustees

- Do the governing board and college leadership reflect the diversity of the community?
- Does the board have a fair and consistent policy for CEO selection and evaluation? Does it include clear and specific goals related to equity?
- Does the board have a policy that assures best hiring practices districtwide that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- How does the board's policy provide for the regular review of the mission statement to ensure relevance to the college's equity goals?

- To what extent do fiscal policies and allocation of resources align with the institution's equity goals?
- Do board practices promote an environment for open, frank, and confidential dialogue where all voices are welcomed?

Policy Development

- Integrate an equity agenda into institutional plans and clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and implementation timelines for initiatives designed to promote accountability, including the college's strategic plan, and departmental plans (HR, academic and student affairs/services, facilities/procurement, diverse contractors/suppliers).
- Ensure that plans are distributed broadly and often among all staff and administrators.
- Conduct an independent assessment of institutional practices in relation to equity across all departments and divisions.
- Identify effective programs/practices such as remediation, guided pathways, and alternative schedules that improve educational outcomes for all students. Monitor effectiveness and adjust as needed.
- Assess the diversity and equity of college leadership (including the governing board).
- Develop a plan that addresses CEO and board leadership transitions.

Key Questions for Trustees

- What college policies and procedures are needed to keep tuition affordable while ensuring the institution's financial health?
- Are existing policies examined regularly to identify those that may be barriers to equity, access, and success?
- Are adequate financial resources being allocated to achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion goals?
- Are human-resource policies fair, equitable, and inclusive? Do position descriptions include equity criteria?

Accountability and Continuous Improvement

- Monitor the progress being made on the institution's strategic priorities, including diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Regularly review disaggregated data (e.g., gender, ethnicity, income) on enrollment, retention, persistence, completion, and other indicators of student success, equity, and institutional effectiveness.
- Develop accountability measures and monitor and assess progress toward strategic priorities and goals of the college.

Key Questions for Trustees

- Is there a policy for regular review and assessment of student services?
- Is there a policy for regular review and assessment of recruitment and hiring practices?
- Are policy decisions informed by student success data and considerations of equity?

Community Engagement

- Conduct regular periodic reviews of labor-market data and other economic indicators to identify workforce needs such as growing/shrinking industries in the area, skill gaps, and opportunities.
- Assess current and projected demographic characteristics of the community (e.g., compare the college's demographics to the K-12 student population as well as the local and regional community). Determine if they are aligned and what gaps exist, if any.

- Engage with federal, state, and local labor departments and other agencies to advocate support for the college's equity goals.
- Partner with local funders and business and industry leaders to tap sources of support that can support the college's equity goals.
- Incorporate diverse student, faculty, and community voices in public statements, media and advertisements.

Key Questions for Trustees

- What policies are in place to facilitate effective and efficient sharing of data with other systems, such as K-12 sector and four-year institutions?
- Does the college have an equity plan or equity policies in place?

Next Steps

- Boards and all college staff should undertake professional development specifically related to equity training.
- Develop data systems to support equity and collect data on equity indicators to make positive change toward eliminating disparities.
- Develop accountability goals and measures of progress around equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Continually assess equity gaps and goals.
- The college should target resources, develop private-public partnerships, and proactively reach out to the community.
- Equity goals, plans, and activities should be advertised and celebrated throughout the college and the community to ensure a welcoming campus climate.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

A CHECKLIST AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARDS

With the endorsement of the
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE



PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to assist community and technical college boards of trustees and CEOs to actively implement and reinforce a culture that values and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion. The governing board's role is pivotal in impacting college culture by shaping and supporting goals, policies, practices and college procedures that promote equitable experiences, opportunities, and outcomes. This guide provides college leaders practical steps and institutional examples for designing and implementing equitable institutional policies, practices, processes and programs.

OVERVIEW

Community college trustees and college leaders promote the values and policies that support access, affordability, equity and completion for all community college students. America's demographic diversity is growing, and the way to economic and student success is to be more intentional in our efforts to expand equitable access to quality postsecondary education. College diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies facilitate academic progress and economic and social mobility for all. Governing boards must take a leading role to close the educational and economic gaps of underrepresented populations and eliminate their historic barriers to higher education. In tandem with ACCT's *Equity Action Agenda for Community College Governance*,¹ which informs leaders of a board's and college's readiness to undertake an equity agenda, this pamphlet provides guidelines, resources and practical examples from colleges for implementing diversity, equity and inclusion throughout our community colleges.

EQUITY IS MULTIFACETED

Equity is complex and impacts all facets and all programs in community colleges. Equity in higher education refers to creating opportunities for equal access and success among historically underrepresented student populations, to ensure:

- (1) Proportional participation at all levels of an institution (**equitable access**);
- (2) Adequate resources directed at closing equity gaps (**resource/financial equity**);
- (3) Institutional leadership addressing diversity, equity and inclusion issues (**adaptive leadership**);
- (4) A welcoming environment in which all diverse students can succeed (**racial, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, military status, incarceration status, ability equity**);
- (5) Social mobility and economic success for all learners (**socio-economic equity**).

Educational equity depends on fairness and inclusion in the educational system and includes equity in various categories: socio-economic, racial, ethnic, gender, gender identity, and disability, among others. Institutions of higher learning have an imperative to avoid discrimination and to support disadvantaged students whether the issues are income and class; race; religion; gender, sexual orientation or gender identity; immigration, incarceration or military status; country of origin or ability. Inclusive, equitable and diverse environments are essential for *all* students to succeed, and college leaders have a deep responsibility to ensure their colleges live up to the American promise of opportunity for all, including equal outcomes among all racial and ethnic student groups in higher education.

¹ *Equity Action Agenda for Community College Governance*, ACCT Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, 2018.

Critical Steps for Boards to Implement an Equity Lens

STEP I: CREATE AN EQUITY-MINDED BOARD AND INSTITUTION

❑ **Developing equity mindedness in board and college culture is the first step.**

Instead of deficit thinking which blames students for qualities they lack or unequal outcomes from a lack of motivation, boards and the college community must be made aware of inequities and reframe equity as an institutional responsibility. Together with the college president, boards can inspire commitment and change at a personal, professional, and systemic level starting with the makeup of the board itself, and the college's mission and vision statements and core values which set the direction of the college. It will also be important to highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion on college websites, particularly home pages, which often reflect a college's core values. Diverse seekers must be able to find DEI immediately and embedded everywhere in the institution.

❑ **Increase the institutional capacity for making change.**

Equity mindedness can mean changing people's underlying beliefs and attitudes and encouraging inquiry, reflection and deep conversations in and out of the classroom. Including impacting the mindset of board members, staff, faculty, and the community, for many colleges, a cultural shift is needed, and this is accomplished in many ways including:

- Ensuring diversity in the membership of the governing board;
- Diversity, equity and inclusion professional development at all levels of the institution;
- Courageous public all-campus conversations by the board, faculty, staff, and student groups;
- Disaggregated data analyses which provide success data on specific diverse student cohorts;
- Cross college collaboration to develop an Equity Lens for all college and learning transactions;
- Equitable outcomes for all diverse full-time and part-time students; and
- Boards and college administrators promoting equity as a public priority for the entire college and community.

❑ **Review all policies with Equity firmly in mind.**

"Equity is grounded in the principle of fairness. In higher education, equity refers to ensuring that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience."² More specifically, equity "is a set of principles, reflective questions, and processes that focus at individual, institutional, and systemic levels by deconstructing what is not working around equity; reconstructing and supporting what is working; shifting the way we make decisions and think about this work; and healing and transforming our structures, our environments, and ourselves."³

2 Achieving the Dream Equity Statement. (2020). Washington, D.C.: Achieving the Dream. Retrieved from: <https://www.achievingthedream.org/focus-areas/equity#:~:text=In%20higher%20education%2C%20equity%20refers,the%20barriers%20facing%20underserved%20students>

3 *Equity and Empowerment Lens*. (2020). Portland, Oregon: Multnomah County. Retrieved from: <https://multco.us/diversity-equity/equity-and-empowerment-lens>.

Strategies include to:

- Review and redraft or edit the college's mission and vision statements and core values.
- Develop, disseminate and publish on the college website a DEI values statement from the board.
- Redesign college hiring policies, particularly in hiring the CEO and other top-level college administrators and faculty.
- Provide diversity training specifically for college search committees, and, if using a search firm, select one with a proven track record of providing diverse qualified candidates.
- Develop broad policies about eliminating barriers to access, success and completion in all college departments and programs. Examples from the field include:
 - Micro grants to students with unmet needs (first-generation, low-income, homeless, etc.);
 - Addressing food and housing insecurity (food pantries, open campus showers, weekend parking, local housing agreements, etc.);
 - Using Open Educational Resources (OER) to reduce cost of student books and supplies;
 - Partnering with local childcare providers for student parents;
 - Improvements to the FAFSA process and financial aid advising including loan defaults;
 - Flexible curricular offerings (for working students, student parents, etc.).⁴

Community colleges have used these among many other strategies.

STEP 2: MONITOR AND EVALUATE COLLEGE PROGRESS ON EQUITY GOALS

Disaggregated data: Including compliance with state and federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, marital status, age, genetic information or disability, governing boards have oversight responsibility of college progress on meeting its diversity, equity and inclusion goals. To do this well, boards need a more mindful, systemic approach to data collection and analysis. The data need to be disaggregated so that boards better understand student demographics in their colleges and can proactively remove barriers for underserved students and others.

Equity Plans and Reports: Some states mandate that colleges submit annual equity plans and reports which include assessment of college's methods and strategies to achieve goals and timelines addressing areas of underrepresented minorities in its academic program, activities and employment. Some states and accrediting agencies require equity reports (and/or institutional effectiveness reports) supported by institutional data to evaluate progress on strategic goals. Some community college systems have advocated to include formerly incarcerated students and LGBTQ students in their Student Equity Plans.

⁴ *Policy Toolkit: Today's Students-Reforms to Make Higher Learning More Affordable and Valuable for Parents, Adults, Workers and All of Today's Students.* (April 2019). Washington, D.C.: Higher Learning Advocates. Retrieved from: <https://higherlearningadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Final-Todays-Students-Policy-Toolkit-1-1.pdf>

STEP 3: ANNUALLY EVALUATE BOARD LEADERSHIP, EFFECTIVENESS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION GOALS

Trustees have a leadership role in ensuring that the governing board itself actively promotes diversity, equity and inclusion. The following inventory is a checklist to further gauge board readiness and effectiveness in pursuing policies to increase institutional and student diversity, equity and inclusion. Questions below provide detailed ways for boards and colleges to discuss and intentionally implement diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) throughout the college and community.

Using the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Inventory below, boards can assess their progress and that of their colleges. Examples that follow come from ACCT's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (2019-2020) as well as from the websites of ACCT member institutions.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Implementation Inventory

THE BOARD

- Do the College Mission Statement, _____ Vision _____, Core Values _____ specifically include broad and inclusive (multifaceted) DEI language?
- Is there sufficient and significant racial and ethnic diversity on the governing board? Does board membership reflect the racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the college's student population and community?
- Are board members made aware of the college's history in educating underserved populations? Does the board receive disaggregated data on student access, progress and success and assess the college's past and current record in serving underrepresented populations?
- Does the college have a diversity, equity and inclusion policy approved by the board?
- Has the board developed and implemented a public DEI statement, white paper, philosophy or values statement for the college website?
- When hiring a new college CEO, does the board ensure DEI are clearly evident in the position description, in evaluating candidates, and then later in evaluating CEO performance?
- Do the college's strategic plan and institutional effectiveness reports reflect the board's DEI goals?
- Does the board ensure DEI in policy development and implementation? Do all relevant board and college policies and college procedures reflect diversity, equity and inclusion fully, including sexual orientation, gender identity or incarceration status whether or not federal or state law mandates against discrimination?
- Does the board have a regular schedule for conducting equity-minded policy reviews, i.e., with an equity lens?
- Does the board have a DEI policy regarding contracts, minority bidding, etc.

- Has the board prioritized equity through a multifaceted college Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan that includes the board and all departments throughout the institution?
- Does the board receive and monitor annual DEI/Equity reports on student demographics, community stakeholders, college partnerships, etc.
- Does the board allocate resources based on student data through an equity lens? Are sufficient resources aligned with the board's and the college's equity goals for underserved students?
- Do the board and the college provide the campus and community evidence of achieving its diversity, equity and inclusion goals and publish and celebrate milestones?

THE COLLEGE

- Does the President's Message on the website reflect DEI values or goals and their multiple facets?
- _____ Is DEI reflected in the CEO/ president's annual goals? _____ in public statements to the campus and _____ in the community and _____ in the CEO's evaluation process?
- Does the college review disaggregated access and success student data that highlight underserved populations? Is this data shared with the board? With other administrators? With the faculty?
- Is there a shared public Equity Scorecard?
- Does the college Strategic Plan have specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based (SMART) DEI goals?
- Does the college have an institutional Equity Plan?
- Does the college have an institutional effectiveness plan with explicit DEI goals and results?
- Has the college made a commitment of resources (human and financial) to diversity, equity and inclusion?
- Have the President, cabinet, and college staff and faculty had annual equity training and professional development?
- Does the college have a multicultural or equity center for students? _____ Do the president, staff and faculty participate in the center's programming? _____ Does the board allocate resources?
- Is equity mindedness an explicit goal across the institution's reform efforts?
- Are diversity, equity and inclusion goals explicit in hiring throughout the college?

FACULTY AND STAFF

- Is the staff diverse throughout the college?
- Does the faculty reflect the diversity of the students?
- Is equity mindedness an explicit goal for hiring faculty and staff?
- Have faculty and staff taken a proactive role in developing the college's equity goals, scorecard, and Equity lens or framework or other approaches to DEI?
- Do faculty and staff take an active and leading role in campus DEI activities?
- Do faculty and staff participate in the multicultural center's programming?
- Equity is interdisciplinary. Does the college's curriculum overall reflect equity-minded values?
- Do faculty annually engage in equity-minded program and course reviews?
- Do learning outcomes reflect broad and integrative knowledge of diverse histories, cultures, and societies? Are diversity, equity and inclusion part of classroom discussions and course outcomes?
- Are there specific courses, programs or departments that offer DEI education for students?
- Do faculty/staff have frank dialogues about the college climate for underserved students and examine attitudes about student success that may hinder or advance the college's ability to support these students?
- Do faculty and staff engage in equitable practices designed to accommodate differences in students' learning—and not treat all students the same?⁵
- Is equity mindedness a typical learning outcome for students? For faculty and staff training?
- Is equity-mindedness an explicit goal across the faculty's and staff's reform efforts?
- Do faculty and staff use equity-minded data analytics to track student's progress and provide proactive guidance or academic assistance, particularly for underserved populations?⁶

5 *America's Unmet Promise*. (January 2015). Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges & Universities.

6 Several items are adaptations of *Does Your Institution Do the Following? Step Up & Lead for Equity: What Higher Education Can Do to Reverse Our Deepening Divides*. (2015). Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges & Universities.



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Principles of Effective Boardmanship

A Comparison of Traditional Approaches and Policy Governance®

Principles of Effective Board Governance	Traditional Approach (ACCT, AGB, CCLC, & Others)	Policy Governance®
<i>Acts on behalf of the public; the public trust</i>	Represent and accountable to communities in district	"Ownership" (moral) Job #1, link with ownership
<i>Authority only as a unit; no individual authority; support decisions of the board</i>	Speaks with one voice; operate as a unit	Speaks with one voice; corporate unit
<i>Strong board-CEO partnership</i>	Hire, clearly delegate to, support; open communication & evaluation	Define delegation and accountability in policy; evaluate only against policy standards
<i>Focus on policy role</i>	Govern through policy and board action; policy categories tend to reflect college structure;	Board speaks only through policy in four categories: Ends, Limitations, Governing Process & Board/CEO relations
<i>Systematic approach to policy development</i>	General goals and acceptable practice; staff primarily responsible to draft and recommend policy	Start with large concepts and systematically narrow; board primarily responsible for policy development
<i>Delegation of authority</i>	Delegation through policy, board action, budgets & plans; ratify as required by law	Delegation through policy; ratify as required by law
<i>Policy direction (mission and goals)</i>	Adopt mission; maintain student success focus; require strategic/long range planning and goal setting; work with CEO to set long-range and annual goals	Determine the Ends of the institution (what good is produced for which people at what cost). Obsess about Ends.
<i>Standards for college operations</i>	Fulfill fiduciary role; delegate authority and prescribe standards and expectations for college operations	Limitations policies contain <u>pro</u> scriptive limits for college operations.
<i>Define board responsibilities and standards for behavior</i>	Bylaws or board policy	Bylaws or board policy
<i>Monitor institutional performance</i>	System of monitoring institutional effectiveness and accountability	CEO accountable for accomplishment of Ends and adherence to means
<i>Community bridge and buffer</i>	Represent community needs and values in decision-making; advocate and protect college values and mission	Link with the community
<i>Establish a climate for excellence</i>	Board ethics; self-evaluation; board development focus	Governing style and ethics policy
<i>Productive board meetings</i>	CEO prepares agenda; consults with board chair	Board responsible for agenda

By Cindra Smith, Ed. D.

2020 Board Retreat Evaluation

College: Garden City Community College

Facilitator: Pamila Fisher, Ed.D.

Date of Retreat: September 19, 2020

Please circle the appropriate number -- 5 indicating strong agreement, 3 being neutral and 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The retreat met my expectations.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I gained knowledge on the focus topic of the retreat.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The retreat allowed me to know more about the other trustees.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The retreat had a clear sense of direction.	5	4	3	2	1
5. The facilitator was knowledgeable.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The facilitator was a skilled communicator.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The facilitator was a good listener.	5	4	3	2	1
8. The facilitator was helpful in bringing the board together.	5	4	3	2	1
9. The facilitator was courteous and fair.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I would recommend the ACCT Board Retreat Services to other community or technical colleges.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I would recommend this facilitator to other community or technical colleges.	5	4	3	2	1
12. The retreat helped me in my role as a board member.	5	4	3	2	1

13. What I enjoyed most about the retreat experience was:

14. What I enjoyed least about the retreat experience was:

15. Other comments:

16. May we refer to your comments in promoting the ACCT Board Retreat Service? Yes No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. The information you have provided is greatly appreciated. Your comments will help us to continually evaluate and improve our services.

OPTIONAL:

Name: _____
PLEASE PRINT

Title: _____

Email address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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