Governing Bodies of Higher Education Institutions: Roles and Responsibilities

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Governing Board Responsibilities

- Approve the mission and public purpose of the institution (system).
- Recruit, appoint, support, and evaluate the chief executive officer.
- Fulfill the fiduciary responsibilities of the board:
  - Consider and approve institution/system budget;
  - Monitor resources and institution/system productivity;
  - Manage institution endowment;
  - Participate in fund-raising through personal philanthropy and advocacy; and
  - Meet the expectation of board accountability and transparency in the conduct of board affairs.
- Oversee and participate in periodic strategic planning (and advocate on behalf of its outcomes).
Governing Board Responsibilities
(continued)

- Be aware of educational, research, and service program and help assure that the institution’s academic priorities are being met.
- Engage in coordination with the institution/system administration with major institutional constituencies on a regular basis.
- Preserve institutional independence through participation in the periodic institution accrediting process and through advocacy with public policy makers.
- Remain informed of institution/system issues and challenges confronting higher education.
- Serve, as necessary, as a final court of appeals as it relates to governance responsibilities and institution/system policies in accordance with campus grievance procedures.
Board and Trustee Accountability

- Boards are responsible for values that guide the shape of higher education.
- Boards are accountable to the institution’s key stakeholders.
- Boards are accountable to the institution’s mission, values, and saga.
- Boards are responsible for their collective performance.
- Boards add value by staying focused on strategic issues.
- Boards perform best as a corporate body – not as lone rangers.
- Boards should establish a balance in their relationship with the president – support and independence.
- “Trustees must assume responsibility for their collective performance.” [Dick Chait]
The Development Committee’s Responsibilities

- Develop an understanding of development in the life of the institution.
- Educate and encourage board members to participate in development activities.
- Insist that the institution (and foundation) has a clear statement of mission and a current statement of priorities with broad consensus.
- Set fund-raising policies and guidelines.
- Help assess the development staff and budget.
- Assist in making the most effective use of fund-raising counsel.
- Help set goals for board member giving.
- Identify, assess the capacity of, and assign gift prospects.