



EL CAMINO COLLEGE
Office of Institutional Research & Planning

October 23, 2014

TO: President Thomas M. Fallo

SUBJECT: Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation

At the Monday, October 20, 2014 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the El Camino Community College District Trustees began discussion of its annual self-evaluation and goal setting for the coming year. In support of this process, please find attached information and resources on community college board of trustees' self-evaluation. These resources, found in the Appendix, include:

1. The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Standard on board self-evaluation (Standard IV.C.10.),
2. Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation from the Community College League of California (CCLC)/California Community College Trustees (CCCT),
3. Best practices on board self-evaluations from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and
4. Example board policies from peer institutions, where available.

The question was also raised at the same meeting regarding whether standard duties or expectations of office should be included in the self-evaluation (in addition to annual board goals). From my knowledge of assessment and evaluation, groups or organizations may assess themselves on both their normal duties of office and on established annual goals. These may be separated into different sections with different measurements scales, as appropriate.

Irene M. Graff, Director

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) require that all Board of Trustees self-evaluate their progress. Accreditation Standard IV, requires that “Board policies and/or bylaws clearly establish a process for board evaluation. The evaluation assesses the board’s effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The governing board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in board training, and makes public the results. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness” (Section C.10.). Currently, El Camino Community College District Board Policy 2745, mandates the Board of Trustees to evaluate their performance based on the previous year’s goals. The evaluation period occurs in October via questionnaire and results are presented in November; however, the policy does not lay out a clear or precise method of evaluation. The policy requires all Board members to participate and any resulting report be made public.

Table 1 provides a brief summary of six Board Self-Evaluation Policies. Policies presented below include: El Camino Community College District (ECCCD), Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD), Cerritos Community College District (CCCD), Long Beach Community College District (LBCCD), Mt. San Antonio College District (MSACD), and Pasadena Area Community College District (PACCD).

Table 1. Comparison of Board Self-Evaluation Policies

District	Evaluation Period	Evaluates	Method	Participants
ECCCD	Oct-Nov	Met previous goals	Questionnaire	Board
LACCD	Fall	---	Formal Survey	Stakeholders, Constituents, and Board
CCCD	March	Identifies strengths and areas for growth	Determined by committee appointed by Board.	Board
LBCCD	Yearly Determined by Board	Identifies strengths and areas for growth	Survey approved by Board President	Board
MSACD	Yearly	Identifies strengths and areas for growth	Self-Assessment Instruments	Board
PACCD	June	Identifies strengths and areas for growth and improved operations	Objective measures approved by Board; revised periodically by appointed committee	Board

Source: District Board Policies (see appendix)

Comparing El Camino Community College District to peer districts, we find that many policies are similar if not almost identical to that of ECCCD. All districts conduct yearly evaluations and take place as early as March and late into the year. Four local districts also

use questionnaires/surveys as their form of data collection. Cerritos Community College District differs slightly and determines the methodology to be used based upon that year's assessment needs. The Los Angeles Community College District Policy is the only district whose participants include both stakeholders and constituents in addition to Board members in the assessment process. Overall, Board policies on Board Self-Evaluation differ in terms of methodology, assessment participants, and detail of the evaluation process.

The following appendix contains resources to guide Board Self-Evaluation and sample Board evaluation policies from peer college districts. Resources include the ACCJC, Community College League of California (CCLC)—for California Community College Trustees (CCCT), and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT).

APPENDIX

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
 Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Accreditation Standards
(Adopted June 2014)
Pages 14-17

Source: http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Accreditation_Standards_Adopted_June_2014.pdf

Standard IV: Leadership Governance

- A. Decision-Making Roles and Process
 - 6. The processes for decision-making and the resulting decisions are documented and widely communicated across the institution.
 - 7. Leadership roles and the institution's governance and decision-making policies, procedures, and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.
- C. Governing Board
 - 8. To ensure the institution is accomplishing its goals for student success, the governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality.
 - 10. Board policies and/or bylaws clearly establish a process for board evaluation. The evaluation assesses the board's effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The governing board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in board training, and makes public the results. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness.

Community College League of California
Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation

Source:

<http://www.ccleague.org/files/public/BoardSelfEvalweb.pdf>

“Effective governing boards are committed to assessing how well they perform their governance responsibilities and to using the results of the assessment to enhance board effectiveness.” This resource contains guiding information on Board self-evaluation including sample evaluation policies (Appendix A) and sample evaluation instruments (Appendix B).

Association of Community College Trustees Guide to Board Self-Assessments

Source:

<http://www.acct.org/guide-board-self-assessments>

This webpage addresses the “Who, What, How, and Why’s of Board Self-Assessments.” An item bank of sample questions is available for members of the ACCT.

El Camino Community College District Board Policy 2745: Board Self-Evaluation

Source:

<http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/boarddocs/2740%20Board%20Education.pdf>

The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning. To that end, the Board establishes goals and evaluates its performance on the previous year’s goals. In its October meeting the Board goals are re-presented for the previous year and a questionnaire is completed for discussion of those goals at the November meeting. At the November and December meetings, the Board establishes its goals for the subsequent year.
Reference: Accreditation Standard IV.B.1.e & g (2012 Standards).

Los Angeles Community College District Board Rules 2301.10: Board Self-Evaluation

Source:

<https://www.laccd.edu/Board/Documents/BoardRules/Ch.II-ArticleIII.pdf>

Each Fall, the Board of Trustees will perform a self-evaluation. The Board’s self-evaluation process may include a formal survey of stakeholders and constituents such as senior District management, College Presidents, the District Academic Senate President, representatives of collective bargaining units, and others. The Board will conduct its annual self-evaluation during a public session during which the Board will review the results of any data collection or survey process, assess its performance during the preceding year, and establish new annual goals.

Adopted 10-17-07

**Cerritos Community College District
Board Policy 2745 Board Self-Evaluation**

Source:

<http://cms.cerritos.edu/uploads/Board/Board%20Policies/Chapter%202/BP%202745.pdf>

References: Accreditation Standards IV.B.1.e and g (2012 Standards)

The Board of Trustees is committed to assessing its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning. To that end, the Board of Trustees has established the following processes:

A committee of the Board shall be appointed in March to determine the instrument or process to be used in Board self-evaluation. Any evaluation instrument shall incorporate criteria contained in these Board Policies regarding Board operations, as well as criteria defining Board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field.

The process for evaluation shall be recommended to and approved by the Board of Trustees.

If an instrument is used, all Board members will be asked to complete the evaluation instrument and submit them to the Secretary to the President/Superintendent.

A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at a Board session scheduled for that purpose. The results will be used to identify accomplishments in the past year and goals for the following year.

Office of Primary Responsibility: President/Superintendent
Date Adopted: December 12, 2007

**Long Beach Community College District
Board Policy 2018: Policy on Board Self-Evaluation**

Source: <http://www.lbcc.edu/Policies/documents/2018pol1.pdf>

Reference: Accreditation Standard IV.B.1.e and g

The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

A self-assessment survey form, approved by the Board President, will be used as a tool in the Board self-evaluation process and will incorporate criteria contained in Board Policy

regarding board operations as well as criteria defining board effectiveness. Each Board member will complete a self-evaluation survey form and submit it to the Board Secretary. The self-assessment will occur once each year at a time established by the Board.

A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at a board session scheduled for that purpose. The results will be used to identify accomplishments in the past year and goals for the following year.

Adopted: February 17, 2009

Revised: July 24, 2012

**Mt. San Antonio College District
Board Policy 2745 Board Self-Evaluation**

Source: http://www.mtsac.edu/governance/trustees/docs/bp_complete_BOT.pdf

Reference: Accreditation

The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

The Board of Trustees will conduct a self-assessment process every year to include:

- A. The completion of a self-assessment instrument by each member of the Board.
- B. A discussion of the compilation of the results.
- C. The development of a set of objectives for the next year.

Adopted March 24, 2004

Revised December 16, 2009

**Pasadena Area Community College District
Board Policy 2740: Board Self-Evaluation**

Source:

http://www.pasadena.edu/ipro/documents/BP_2745_Board_Self-Evaluation_Adopted_8_20_2014.pdf

References:

Education Code Section 70902;

ACCJC Accreditation Standard IV.B.1.e & g

The Board of Trustees is committed to assessing its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

To that end, the Board has established the following processes:

1. The Board of Trustees shall conduct an annual self-assessment in accordance with applicable regional accreditation standards. The goal of the assessment is to provide for improvement in the Board's operation and, where possible, the assessment will be based on objective measures.
2. The assessment shall be based upon performance of duties according to the Board's Code of Ethics and upon progress made in achieving the goals and objectives developed annually by the Board.
3. The Board shall review the Code of Ethics annually. Instruments used in the self-assessment will be reviewed periodically and revised as appropriate.
4. A committee of the Board shall be appointed in June to determine the instrument or process to be used in Board self-evaluation. Any evaluation instrument shall incorporate criteria contained in these Board policies regarding board operations, as well as criteria defining board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field.
5. The process for evaluation shall be recommended to and approved by the Board.
6. If an instrument is used, all board members will be asked to complete the evaluation instrument and submit them to the Board president.
7. A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at a Board session scheduled for that purpose. The results will be used to identify accomplishments in the past year and goals for the following year.
8. All the documents referred to herein shall constitute public records and all discussion and actions taken shall be in open session of the Board.
9. In addition to the foregoing process, all Board members are subject to ultimate evaluation by the voters of their respective areas.

Date Adopted: August 20, 2014

Approved by the Board of Trustees (original version as Resolution No. 227) on December 20, 1994 and revised on September 20, 2000; June 4, 2008; and August 15, 2012(Replaces current PCC Bylaw 1490)



ASSESSING BOARD EFFECTIVENESS:

**RESOURCES FOR BOARD
OF TRUSTEES SELF-EVALUATION**

Community College League of California



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ASSESSING BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

Successful colleges are the result of effective leadership and governance. Effective leadership and governance are the result of ensuring that highly qualified people serve in leadership positions and that they embrace their responsibilities and continually improve their performance. Effective governing boards are committed to assessing how well they perform their governance responsibilities and to using the results of the assessment to enhance board effectiveness.

Community college boards are under more scrutiny than ever before by the public, media, government, the accrediting commission, and college constituencies; these entities expect and deserve a high degree of professionalism and performance from their trustees. An effective board self-evaluation process responds to these expectations.

While it is true that the public “evaluates” board performance when it re-elects (or not) trustees to the board, this political evaluation provides only the broadest feedback to the board. To assess and improve its performance, a board needs ongoing information on how it is doing on specific roles and responsibilities – information that simply cannot be obtained through the election process.

Assessing board performance involves looking at the board as a unit. While individual trustee behavior contributes to effective board functioning, the focus of a board self-evaluation is not on individuals, but on how they work together to govern the district. The evaluation focuses on board policies and practices and the role of the board in representing the community, setting policy direction, working with the CEO, and monitoring institutional effectiveness.

Board Responsibilities:

- Adopt a board self-evaluation policy and process;
- Implement the policy – regularly conduct a board self-evaluation;
- Discuss the results of the evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvement; and
- Use the results to enhance board effectiveness and set annual board goals.

Given the unique nature of the relationship between the board and CEO, the evaluations of the board and the CEO are intertwined. When the board evaluates itself, it is evaluating in part how well the CEO supports the board; when it evaluates the CEO, it is evaluating the direction and support the board provides for that position. The CEO contributes to board evaluation and evaluates his or her support and leadership to the board. The board conducts the CEO evaluation and looks at its own behavior in fostering CEO effectiveness. A number of boards schedule their CEO and board self-evaluation discussions in conjunction with each other to capitalize on this link.

The importance of regular board self-evaluations is underscored by the Western Association's Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. Standard IV.B.1.g states that "The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws." The accreditation self study, conducted every six years, should include evidence that boards have a policy and procedure and have conducted regular self-evaluations.

Purpose and Outcomes

The purpose of the board self-evaluation is to identify areas of board functioning that are working well and those that may need improvement. It is an opportunity for an open and candid discussion about board and trustee responsibilities, and trustees' interests and desires for the college(s). Exploring these areas fosters communication among the members and leads to more cohesive board teams. Reports from boards that regularly conduct self-evaluations include that they gain an increased appreciation for and understanding of their fellow trustees, their board meetings run more smoothly and they receive better information, and they increase the time they spend on college policy, goals and accomplishments.

The desired outcomes of a board self-evaluation include:

- a summary of what the board does well and its accomplishments;
- a better understanding of what is needed from each trustee and the CEO to be an effective board and board/CEO team;
- an assessment of progress on the prior year's goals and identify what needs to be completed; *and*
- goals and tasks for the coming year related to board performance and its leadership for district goals.

When planning an evaluation, boards should ask themselves what they want to learn from it. The emphasis may change from year to year; the evaluation may be tweaked to focus on a specific area. For instance, during an accreditation self-study, the board may want to focus on the accreditation standards. If the board has hired a new CEO in the past year, the evaluation may focus on the board/CEO relationship. Colleges generally undergo comprehensive planning every four to six year – boards may wish to focus on their role in planning during that process. Or, if a board has not been functioning well, it may wish to focus on teamwork and ethics.

Evaluation Process

Self-evaluation processes range from informal discussions to formal, structured assessment surveys or interviews. A board evaluation, whether formal or informal, should result in a report that describes the process, summarizes the results, and identifies actions that the board may take as a result of the evaluation. The self-evaluation process and results are public information under California's Brown Act.

Annual board self-evaluations provide a time for the board to review the past year and set priorities for the coming year. A comprehensive self-evaluation, involving more extensive surveys, may occur every two or three years. Boards may choose to select processes to review more often; for instance, some boards will quickly assess a board meeting discussion and agenda content at the end of each meeting, which provides immediate feedback. Another example is a board assessing how it oriented and integrated newly elected trustees, or its process of hiring a new CEO, after those events occurred.

Informal Evaluation. Informal processes do not use surveys or structured interviews to gather information. Rather, the board allots time for a substantive discussion of board strengths, accomplishments, weaknesses and areas for improvement. It is recommended that such discussions be structured and facilitated by a consultant working with the board to allow the board chair ample opportunity to participate. The consultant, a member of the board, or the CEO prepares a report that summarizes the discussion and identifies further board action.

Surveys. In recent years, surveys have become the most common approach to gathering information about board performance. There are a number of models and examples; however, the board should review any survey prior to its distribution to ensure that the questions address areas of interest to the board.

Surveys should be designed to assess two areas of board functioning:

- The progress made on achieving board priorities and tasks set the previous year; *and*
- Board performance on characteristics of effective board functioning.

Survey instruments that assess achievement on board priorities need to be developed at the local level as the criteria vary from district to district (and perhaps from year to year). Board priorities are derived from two main sources. One key source is the college's goals and plans; the board's priorities are developed in conjunction with the CEO's priorities. The second source may be areas of board functioning on which the board chooses to focus. *Some examples are included in the section on criteria in these resources and in Sample 3 in Appendix B.*

There are two primary types of instruments that assess board functioning. The first involves using a generic survey based on criteria that reflect commonly accepted standards that define board effectiveness. The second involves developing a survey using criteria in local board policy and practice related to ethics, board meetings, delegation to the CEO, monitoring policy implementation, and other

board roles. An alternative approach is to use accreditation standards on the board as criteria – this approach would be appropriate when the district is undergoing the self-study.

The criteria in these surveys are further explored in the section on criteria, and samples are provided in Appendix B.

Interviews. Another evaluation strategy is for someone, usually a consultant, to conduct structured interviews of all board members, the CEO and others (if any) identified by the board. Through a series of questions, the interviewer gathers information about board performance, summarizes the results of the interviews and writes a report to the board. It is a qualitative approach to evaluation.

An interview approach allows for more in-depth exploration of issues, highlights accomplishments, and identifies specific areas of concern and suggestions for improvement. It is beneficial to use when the board has not had an evaluation for some time, when trustees prefer this method and don't want to complete surveys or don't find survey information useful, or when there are ongoing concerns about board functioning. Drawbacks include that it is a time-consuming process, and does not, in itself, result in numerical ratings that can be compared from year to year.

Designing the Evaluation Process

All boards should have a policy on the self-evaluation process. Periodically, the board should review the policy and process to ensure it continues to provide useful information to the board. *Sample policies are in Appendix A.*

A committee of the board may be assigned to develop and recommend the process and criteria to the board; the CEO and board executive assistant usually provides support to the committee. Alternatively, the CEO and his or her staff may be asked to research and recommend a self-evaluation process to the board. The board will decide on specific purposes of the evaluation, whether or not the evaluation will include a survey and/or interviews, who will participate, which criteria will be used, consultant roles (if any), how the results will be shared and discussed, and who will write the report.

Designing the process involves answering the following questions:

- Will the self evaluation be conducted through an evaluation discussion, survey, interviews, or a combination of approaches?
- Who will be asked to evaluate the board?
- Who will gather the information and compile the results?
- How and when will the results be shared with the board?

Who Participates in the Board's Self-Evaluation?

The expectation is that the board evaluates itself. Each and every publicly elected trustee should be involved in assessing board performance and in discussing the results of the evaluation. Newly elected trustees may think they don't have enough experience on the board to provide useful feedback; however, virtually all new trustees have spent time observing the board prior to being elected, and their input can be very valuable. Student trustees should be encouraged to contribute feedback and participate in the evaluation discussion.

The CEO is in a position to provide essential feedback to the board on its performance, and is key to ensuring that the board has the information and other resources to fulfill its responsibilities on many evaluation criteria. Therefore, the CEO should participate in some way, although the method of contributing feedback may be different than for the trustees or others. For instance, the CEO may provide feedback during a discussion of the results of a survey rather than completing a survey form.

A growing trend is providing an opportunity for college constituents and selected community representatives (such as those on foundation boards or advisory committees) to complete surveys on board performance. Some districts allow any employee to complete a board evaluation; others only request survey information from those college leaders (senior administration, faculty and staff representatives) who regularly attend board meetings and have the opportunity to see the board in action.

The benefit of seeking broad input is that the board gathers information on how it is perceived by others. However, the results of such an evaluation may or may not be useful and must be considered with care. Respondents may have expectations for the board that do not reflect appropriate roles and responsibilities. It is not unusual that trustees learn that college constituencies are unaware of governing board roles and responsibilities. A negative evaluation may result from board decisions that were unpopular with one or more internal constituencies, even though the board was acting for the good of the entire district or community.

If the board evaluation process includes feedback from college and community, the summary of the survey or feedback should be presented separately from the board's self-evaluation data, so that the board may compare trustee perceptions with those of others.

Evaluation Discussion & Report

The evaluation session must take place in an open meeting, which could be a regular business meeting, workshop, or retreat. The schedule should allow for enough time to discuss the evaluation and identify priorities for the following year. The discussion of what the results mean and what can be improved is generally more useful and valuable than the specific numbers or ratings obtained from the instrument. It may be useful to hold the discussion early in the budget development process to ensure that board and CEO priorities can be incorporated.

Consultants and facilitators are often helpful to boards in developing and conducting an evaluation. They can provide an independent, non-biased influence to help keep board discussions focused and productive. They allow the board chair, who would normally chair the discussion, to participate fully.

An evaluation is not complete until a final report is prepared that summarizes the discussion of the results and identifies actions to be taken as a result of the evaluation. Doing a report helps ensure that the results will be used and that any issues will be addressed. It is evidence for the public and college community that the board is serious about assessing its performance and that trustees are committed to being an effective governing body.

Evaluation Criteria

Boards may use a variety of types of criteria to assess performance, and may use a combination of approaches. A good practice is to combine assessing progress on board priorities (#1) with criteria from one of the other types (#2, 3, 4):

1. Progress on annual board goals or priorities established by the board, including board roles in furthering the strategic goals of the district.
2. Commonly accepted standards for community college boards of trustees.
3. Criteria gleaned from the board's own policies, including, but not limited to, the code of ethics policy, practices related to conducting board meetings, and delegation to the CEO.
4. During an accreditation self study, compliance with the Accrediting Commission standards for governing boards.

Annual Board Goals or Priorities

Effective boards identify specific goals or priorities that guide their work for the coming year. These priorities are designed to accomplish long-range institutional goals, respond to current issues, and improve performance. They are developed in conjunction with the CEO and complement the CEO's annual goals and priorities.

Annual goals clarify where board and CEO resources and time should be spent in the coming year. They comprise steps toward longer-range goals and help determine specific tasks for the board. Evaluating how well the priorities were addressed and if the board has achieved the tasks become key criteria in the board's annual self evaluation and its evaluation of the CEO the following year. Benchmarks or measures may be established as appropriate for certain goals.

On the following page are just a few examples of district goals, related board priorities or tasks, and a possible benchmark. There are countless possibilities; priorities and goals will vary from district to district and year to year.

EXAMPLE 1. District Strategic Goal: Improve Student Learning and Achievement of their Educational Goals.

Board Priority: Expect and monitor progress on establishing and assessing student learning outcomes.

Board Task: Review and discuss progress reports presented by staff on establishing and assessing student learning outcomes. (The board and CEO may establish a benchmark, such as “SLOs will be established at the program level for all career and technical education programs.”)

EXAMPLE 2. District Strategic Goal: Maintain the Fiscal Stability of the District.

Board Priority: Ensure that all board members are knowledgeable about the district’s fiscal condition.

Board Task: Hold board study sessions on state and other revenues, long-range budget projections. Support trustee education on understanding budgets, financial statements and audit reports.

Board Priority: Maintain a 7% unrestricted general fund balance.

Board Task: Expect that the budget presented for review will include a 7% unrestricted general fund balance.

EXAMPLE 3. District Strategic Goal: Promote a college culture that fosters innovation, excellence, and commitment to education.

District Objective: Strengthen professional and leadership development opportunities for all staff.

Board Priority: Focus on enhancing management and leadership development to address retirements and turnover in administration.

Board Task: Expect and review a report on leadership development within the administration.

Board Task: Expect that the budget will include resources for professional and leadership development.

These examples barely scratch the surface of possible criteria and approaches to goal setting. Governing boards and CEOs will have their own approach and language to describe goals, objectives, priorities and/or tasks. *Other examples are included in Sample 3 in Appendix B.*

Board Development Goals

In addition to priorities related to achieving institutional goals, effective boards will set goals related to improving their own performance as a governing body. These goals may reflect areas that respond to current conditions (such as passing a bond election or hiring a new CEO), foster board leadership, and/or respond to accreditation recommendations or areas that were not rated highly in a board self-evaluation. Examples include:

1. **Board Priority:** Strengthen the board's connections with and knowledge of K-12 trends and issues.

Board Task: Participate in a joint workshop with local K-12 boards of trustees.

2. **Board Priority:** Ensure that board meetings are positive and productive.

Board Task: Revise the board meeting agenda to include a consent agenda on routine items to allow more time to discuss issues.

Board Task: Maintain respectful, inclusive and professional attitudes and language during board meetings.

3. **Board Priority:** Strengthen the board's policy role.

Board Task: Approve an updated board policy manual by the end of the academic year.

Board Task: Uphold the principle that delegation to the CEO is only through the board as a unit.

Sample 3 in Appendix B, Sample Evaluation Instruments, provides one illustration of this approach.

Board Performance Standards

A common approach to board self-evaluation is to use a survey based on commonly accepted criteria for effective boards. Boards may develop their own survey based on general criteria or adapt or adopt instruments used by others. *Appendix B, Sample Evaluation Instructions includes a comprehensive survey as well as a short form.*

The survey should help the board assess its performance in the areas on the following pages.

District Mission and Planning: Does the board regularly review the mission? How involved is the board in planning? What issues have most occupied the board's time and attention during the past year? Were these closely tied to the mission and goals of the institution?

Board Policy Role: Does the board understand and fulfill its policy role? Is the board policy manual up to date? Does the board clearly differentiate between its role and the administrative role of the CEO?

Board/CEO Relationship: Is there an open, respectful partnership and good communication between the board and the CEO? Does the board clearly delegate to and set clear expectations for the CEO? Is there an effective CEO evaluation process? Does the board create an environment that supports CEO success?

Board/Community Relationship: Does the board represent the community it serves? Is the board knowledgeable about community trends and needs? Does the board help promote the image of the college in the community? Does the board effectively advocate on behalf of the college?

Educational Programs and Quality: Does the board understand the educational programs and services? Is there a process in place that enables the board to monitor the educational quality? Does the board ensure that the faculty is appropriately involved in decision-making? Does the board support academic freedom?

Fiduciary Responsibilities: Does the board ensure that the district is fiscally healthy? Does it approve a budget that supports educational and strategic goals? Does it effectively monitor fiscal management? Does it approve and monitor a facilities plan that addresses construction and maintenance?

Board/Staff Relations & Human Resources: Does board policy provide for equitable treatment of staff? Does the board provide leadership and clear parameters for the collective bargaining process? Does the board refrain from micromanaging staff work? Does board policy and practice ensure faculty, staff, and student participation in decision-making?

Board Leadership: Does the board understand and uphold its role and responsibilities? Does it have and adhere to a code of ethics? Does the board deal effectively with perceived ethical violations? Do board members declare and avoid conflicts of interests? Do board members work together as a unit for the good of the district? Do board members respect each other's opinions? Does the board have its own annual goals and objectives and evaluate itself on how it has achieved them?

Board Meetings and Agendas: Do meeting agendas focus on key policy issues and board responsibilities? Does the board have the information it needs to make good decisions? Are meetings conducted in such a manner that the purposes are achieved effectively and efficiently?

Trustee Education: Do new board members, including the student trustee, receive an orientation to the roles and responsibilities and to the district's mission and policies? Are all board members encouraged to engage in ongoing education about college and state issues? Is information shared among board members about important issues?

Criteria from Local Board Policy

One of the purposes of self-evaluation is to answer the question, "Are we doing what we say we are going to do?" A board may decide to use criteria derived from its local policies. The code of ethics policy, and policies on board roles, meetings, delegation to the CEO, and how the board monitors policy implementation are all rich sources of criteria. A benefit of this approach is that the board reviews its policies during the course of the evaluation.

Legal Authority and Responsibilities.

Education Code 70902 defines the authority and responsibilities for community college boards of trustees. Governing boards fulfill these responsibilities through adopting relevant policies and exercising their authority at board meetings.

Evaluating a board's performance of these responsibilities is addressed through the other criteria described in this chapter, including that the board has an up-to-date policy manual, complies with its policies, and is satisfied with their board meeting agendas and discussion.

Using this approach requires a board committee and/or staff to develop a customized survey instrument. The following are examples of items found in various board policies:

1. Individual trustees have no legal authority outside the meetings of the board; they shall conduct their relationships with the community college staff, the local citizenry, and all media of the community on the basis of this fact.
(From a board code of ethics policy.)
2. The board delegates to the CEO the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.
(From a board policy on delegation to the CEO.)
3. Board members shall not communicate among themselves by the use of any form of communication (e.g., personal intermediaries, e-mail, or other technological device) in order to reach a collective concurrence regarding any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board.
(From a policy on communication among board members.)

Sample 4 in Appendix B, Sample Evaluation Instruments, provides an illustrative example based on ACCT's Standards of Practice.

Accreditation Standards

Every six years, colleges undergo the reaccreditation process, which includes a comprehensive self-study. As part of the self-study, boards may wish to assess whether or not they are meeting the specific standards in ACCJC's Standard IV.B.1. This assessment should be done the year prior to or early in the self-study process to allow the board time to correct any deficiencies.

The Commission appoints teams that visit colleges to confirm the self-study and review college's compliance with all standards. They review evidence that boards uphold Standard IV.B.1, including that they have regularly evaluated themselves. Annual evaluation results and evidence of how boards have used the results to improve board performance reflect well on the college and the board.

See Sample 5 in Appendix B, Sample Evaluation Instruments, for a common approach.

Summary

This resource guide and the appendices are intended to help boards of trustees design a self-evaluation process that meets specific board needs and cultures. The information should help boards determine the approach they will use, which criteria will provide the best information for the board, who will be asked to evaluate the board, and how the results will be used.

Governing boards that engage in the self-evaluation process and thoughtfully consider and use the results to improve their performance provide excellent leadership for their communities and colleges. They are embracing their responsibilities and ensuring that board members have the skills and knowledge to lead and govern. High performing boards of trustees add value to their districts, thereby ensuring that their colleges make a difference in the lives of students and for the community.

Resources

The Community College League of California provides consultants skilled in helping boards design and evaluation process, conducting self-evaluations and facilitating the self-evaluation discussion.
www.ccleague.org

The Association of Community College Trustees has information on board self evaluation on its website, and provides consultants to assist boards in the process.
www.acct.org

The Association of Governing Boards for Colleges and Universities provides consultant services and sample criteria, which may be adapted to fit community colleges.
www.agb.org

BoardSource is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations by strengthening their boards of directors.
www.boardsource.org

APPENDIX A

Sample Policies on Board Self-Evaluation

Board policy should include a policy on the board self-evaluation, which may be accompanied by implementing procedures. The following examples are from districts that subscribe to the Community College League's Board Policy and Administrative Procedure Subscription Service; some examples reflect language provided in the League's policy template. The Service encourages districts to develop policy that reflects local practice. The reference for the board self-evaluation policy is Accreditation Standard IV.b.1.e & g.

The samples on the following pages are provided for illustrative purposes and may not reflect recent policy changes at the respective districts.

SAMPLE 1. YOSEMITE CCD

The board is committed to assessing its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

To that end, the board has established the following processes:

- Once a year, at the annual Board Retreat, the board will conduct a self-evaluation.
- The evaluation instrument incorporates criteria contained in these Board policies regarding Board operations, as well as criteria defining Board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field.
- Board members will be asked to complete the evaluation instruments and submit them to the Secretary/Clerk of the Board prior to the retreat.
- A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at the Board retreat session.

SAMPLE 2. MT. SAN ANTONIO CCD

The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

The Board of Trustees will conduct a self-assessment process every two years to include:

- The completion of a self-assessment instrument by each member of the Board.
- A discussion of the compilation of the results.
- The development of a set of objectives for the next year (or next two years).

SAMPLE 3. NORTH ORANGE COUNTY CCD

Policy

- 1.0 The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.
- 2.0 The Board shall conduct an evaluation process in April of odd-numbered years and place the results on a regular board meeting agenda for review and appropriate action.

Procedure

- 1.0 The following process will be used to conduct the self evaluation of the Board:
 - 1.1 An assessment form will be distributed to all Board members and members of the District staff who regularly participate at Board meetings at the first meeting in April of each odd-numbered year.
 - 1.2 The completed assessment forms shall be submitted to the Chancellor's Office on or before the second meeting in April of odd-numbered years.
 - 1.3 The Chancellor's Office shall complete results of the assessment for distribution at the first meeting in May of odd-numbered years.
 - 1.4 The assessment results shall be included as an agenda item for review and appropriate action at the second meeting in May of odd-numbered years.

SAMPLE 4. PALOMAR COLLEGE

The Governing Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a Board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

To that end, the Governing Board has established the following processes:

- A committee of the Governing Board shall be appointed in March to determine the instrument or process to be used in Board self-evaluation. Any evaluation instrument shall incorporate criteria contained in these Board Policies regarding Governing Board operations, as well as criteria defining Board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field.
- The process for evaluation shall be recommended to and approved by the Governing Board.

- If an instrument is used, all Governing Board members will be asked to complete the evaluation instrument and submit them to Secretary to the Board.
- A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at a Board session scheduled for that purpose. The results will be used to identify accomplishments in the past year and goals for the following year.
- The goals of the self-evaluation are to clarify roles, to enhance harmony and understanding among Board members, and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Board meetings. The ultimate goal is to improve College District operations and policies for the benefit of the students and employees of Palomar College and the citizens of the Palomar Community College District.
- The evaluation instrument will be completed by each individual Board member, discussed at an annual Board retreat, and maintained in the District Office.

SAMPLE 5: PALO VERDE CCD

The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

To that end, the Board has established the following processes:

- The Board shall, in April, determine the instrument or process to be used in board self-evaluation.
- Any evaluation instrument shall incorporate criteria contained in these board policies regarding the board operations, as well as criteria defining board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field.
- The process for evaluation shall be recommended to and approved by the Board.
- If an instrument is used, all board members will be asked to complete the evaluation instrument and submit them to the Secretary of the Board.
- A summary of the evaluations will be presented and discussed at a board session scheduled for that purpose. The results will be used to identify accomplishments in the past year and goals for the following year.

SAMPLE 6. SIERRA CCD

The Board of Trustees realizes they are the legal owners and final authority for the institution whose assets and operations they hold in trust. The Board is committed to assessing its own performance as a board in order to identify its strengths and areas in which it may improve its functioning.

To that end, the Board has established the following process:

The Board will annually evaluate and assess its own performance, using the Trustee Evaluation Instrument and process as determined by the Board.

The instrument shall incorporate criteria contained in these board policies regarding Board operations, as well as criteria defining board effectiveness promulgated by recognized practitioners in the field. All trustees will be asked to complete the evaluation instrument, from which a summary will

be presented and discussed in a Board meeting scheduled for that purpose.

The purpose of the Board self-evaluation is to identify those areas of Board functions which are working well and those which may need improvement. In addition to identifying specific issues, the discussion of the Board's roles and responsibilities can build communication and understanding among Board members of each others' values and strengths and lead to a stronger, more cohesive working group. The Superintendent/President may also provide the Board with comments and perspectives about the performance and accomplishments of the Board during the previous year and may suggest goals for the following year.

APPENDIX B

Sample Evaluation Instruments and Approaches

SAMPLE 1

GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA COMPREHENSIVE LONG FORM

Sample 1 consists of a comprehensive set of criteria reflecting commonly-accepted standards of board effectiveness. Boards may delete items and add others than address issues specific to the board.

If boards wish to add criteria such as local policy and board goals, it is suggested they select a limited number of items from this comprehensive survey, or use the short form survey provided as Sample 2.

Rating Scales

Two commonly used rating scales are:

A. Rate your level of agreement

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

B. Rate how the board performs:

- 4 Outstanding
- 3 Good
- 2 Needs Improvement
- 1 Unable to evaluate

Survey Items

I. Mission and Planning

1. Board members are knowledgeable about the culture, history, and values of the district.
2. The board regularly reviews the mission and purposes of the institution.
3. The board spends adequate time discussing future needs and direction of the district.
4. The board assures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process.
5. The board assures that district plans are responsive to community needs.

6. The board has adopted and monitors the implementation of the district's strategic, educational and facilities master plans.
7. The board sets annual goals or priorities in conjunction with the CEO and monitors progress toward them.

II. Policy Role

8. The board clearly understands its policy role and differentiates its role from those of the CEO and college staff.
9. The board assures that the district complies with relevant laws, regulations and accreditation standards.
10. The board's policy manual is up-to-date and comprehensive.
11. The board relies on board policy in making decisions and in guiding the work of the district.

III. Board–CEO Relations

12. The board maintains a positive working relationship with the CEO.
13. The board clearly delegates the administration of the district to the CEO.
14. The board sets and communicates clear expectations for CEO performance.
15. The board regularly evaluates CEO performance.
16. The board periodically reviews the CEO contract to assure appropriate support and compensation.

IV. Community Relations & Advocacy

17. Board members act on behalf of the public and citizens in the district when making decisions.
18. Board members are active in community affairs
19. The board advocates on behalf of the district to local, state, and federal governments.
20. The board actively supports the district's foundation(s) and fundraising efforts.

V. Educational Programs and Quality

21. The board is knowledgeable about the district's programs and services.
22. The board is knowledgeable about the educational and workforce training needs in the community.

23. The board has established expectations or standards that enable it to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the educational program.
24. The board regularly receives and reviews reports on institutional effectiveness.
25. The board is appropriately involved in the accreditation process.
26. The board understands and protects academic freedom.

VI. Fiduciary Role

27. The board assures that the budget reflects priorities in the district's plans.
28. Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls.
29. The board regularly receives and reviews reports on the financial status of the institution.
30. The board reviews the annual audit and monitors responses to recommendations.
31. The board adopts and monitors the implementation of a facilities master plan.
32. The board has provided appropriate direction for seeking external funding.
33. The board maintains an adequate financial reserve.

VII. Human Resources and Staff Relations

34. The board's human resources policies provide for fair and equitable treatment of staff.
35. The board has established and follows clear parameters for collective bargaining.
36. The board has and follows protocols regarding communication with college employees.
37. Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work.
38. The board expects and supports faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making.

VIII. Board Leadership

39. The board understands its roles and responsibilities.
40. The board expresses its authority only as a unit.
41. Board members understand that they have no legal authority outside board meetings.

42. The board regularly reviews its code of ethics or standards of practice and has a policy on addressing violations of the code.
43. Board members uphold and comply with the board's code of ethics.
44. Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts.
45. Board members annually file a statement of economic interests.
46. Once a decision is made, board members uphold the decision of the board.
47. Board discussions and relationships reflect a climate of trust and respect.

IX. Board Meetings

48. Board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner.
49. Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.
50. Agenda items provide sufficient information to enable good board decision-making.
51. The board understands and adheres to the Brown Act.
52. The board maintains confidentiality of privileged information.

X. Board Education

53. New members participate in a comprehensive orientation to the board and district.
54. Board members participate in trustee development activities.
55. The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance.
56. The Board measures its accomplishments against board goals.

SAMPLE 2

GENERAL BOARD EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA

SHORT FORM

The “short form” evaluation may be used when the self-evaluation includes assessing progress on annual board priorities or tasks or evaluating performance on local board codes of ethics. It may also be appropriate as a basis for college employee evaluations of the board.

Possible Rating Scales:

- A. Please rate how the board performs on the following:
 - 4 Outstanding
 - 3 Good
 - 2 Needs Improvement
 - 1 Unable to evaluate

- B. Please rate your level of agreement with the following criteria:
 - 5 Strongly Agree
 - 4 Agree
 - 3 Neutral
 - 2 Disagree
 - 1 Strongly Disagree

I. Mission, Planning, and Policy

1. The board assures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process.
2. The board regularly reviews the district’s mission and goals and monitors progress toward the goals.
3. The board fulfills its policy role; the board’s policies are up-to-date and regularly reviewed.

II. Board–CEO Relations

4. The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.
5. The board sets clear expectations for and effectively evaluates the CEO.
6. The board delegates authority to and supports the CEO.

III. Community Relations & Advocacy

7. Board members represent the interests of the citizens in the district.
8. The board advocates on behalf of the college to local, state, and federal governments.

IV. Educational Programs and Quality

9. The board effectively monitors the quality and effectiveness of the educational program and services.
10. Board members are knowledgeable about the districts educational programs and services.

V. Fiduciary Role

11. The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the district.
12. The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan.

VI. Human Resources and Staff Relations

13. Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work.
14. The board respects faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making.

VII. Board Leadership

15. The board understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities.
16. The board expresses its authority only as a unit.
17. The board regularly reviews and adheres to its code of ethics or standards of practice.
18. Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts.

VIII. Board Meetings

19. Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues.
20. The board understands and adheres to the Brown Act.

IX. Board Education

21. New members receive orientation to board roles and the institution.
22. Board members participate in trustee development activities.
23. The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance.

SAMPLE 3

EVALUATING PROGRESS ON BOARD GOALS, PRIORITIES AND/OR TASKS

Annual board goals or priorities are developed in conjunction with the CEO; they are the most important tasks for college leadership. Boards may also identify what the board should do – its tasks or roles – to ensure that the priorities are accomplished. These tasks reflect board responsibilities to make policy, set expectations for and delegate to the CEO, and monitor institutional performance.

Board-identified priorities and tasks become criteria for the board self-evaluation. The board rates itself on how well it performed the task or role, and how well the priority was achieved.

The evaluation criteria are established through the board setting annual priorities and tasks. Therefore the criteria are different for each board, and may vary from year to year.

The following example is for illustrative purposes only. The example reflects an approach where the board identified tasks for itself related to district strategic directions. Other examples are provided in the “Criteria” section in the resources material.

Suggested Rating Scale:

- 5 Outstanding progress or performance
- 4 Good progress or performance
- 3 Performance met barely acceptable minimum standard
- 2 Poor progress or performance
- 1 No performance or progress

	RATING
District Direction: Maintain Enrollment Growth to Better Serve Our Community	
<i>Board Task.</i> Monitor enrollment patterns by review and discussion of relevant reports.	
<i>Board Task.</i> Assure that appropriate resources are allocated to foster enrollment growth through the budget approval process and the Board's ongoing monitoring of expenditure categories.	
District Direction: Strengthen the Fiscal Health of the District	
<i>Board Task.</i> Ensure that all Board members have adequate and appropriate knowledge related to fiscal standards and accountability.	
<i>Board Task.</i> Make sound fiscal decisions, based on district priorities and good information that ensure the long term financial health of the district.	
<i>Board Task.</i> Monitor the fiscal health of the district through review and discussion of fiscal reports that provide accurate and timely information, and by conducting and reviewing the annual audit.	
District Direction: Strengthen Communication and Organizational Functioning throughout the District	
<i>Board Task.</i> The board maintains an open and respectful partnership with the CEO.	
<i>Board Task.</i> Board members fully participate in regular board retreats and study sessions to promote thoughtful and thorough discussion of issues.	
<i>Board Task.</i> Board members are knowledgeable about and adhere to principles of effective boardsmanship.	

SAMPLE 4

CRITERIA DERIVED FROM LOCAL BOARD POLICY

Criteria that are derived from local board policies help the board respond to the question, “Are we doing what we say we are going to do?” A primary source for criteria is the board’s code of ethics policy; other sources include policies on delegation to the CEO, board meetings, board roles and responsibilities, and other policies on board operations. Evaluation instruments that use this approach must be developed locally.

The criteria on the following page are provided as examples only and are derived from the Association of Community College Trustees Standards of Practice. Boards would use the statement in their own policies as criteria in a board self evaluation instrument. A few other examples are provided in the “Criteria” section of the resource guide.

Possible Rating Scales:

A. Board performance is:

- 4 Outstanding
- 3 Good
- 2 Needs Improvement
- 1 Unable to evaluate

B. Level of agreement with the statement:

- 5 Strongly Agree
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Strongly Disagree

	RATING
The board believes it derives its authority from the community, and that it must always act as an advocate on behalf of the entire community.	
The board clearly defines and articulates its role.	
The board creates and maintains a spirit of true cooperation and a mutually supportive relationship with its CEO.	
The board always strives to differentiate between external and internal processes in the exercise of its authority.	
Trustee members engage in a regular and ongoing process of in-service training and continuous improvement.	
Trustees come to each meeting prepared and ready to debate issues fully and openly.	
Board members vote their conscience and support the decision or policy made.	
Board behavior, and that of its members, exemplifies ethical behavior and conduct that is above reproach.	
The board endeavors to remain always accountable to the community.	
The board honestly debates the issues affecting its community and speaks with one voice once a decision or policy is made.	

SAMPLE 5 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AS CRITERIA

Every six years, colleges undergo the reaccreditation process, which involves a self-study of colleges' compliance with accreditation standards and a visit by an accreditation team that results in recommendations from the Accrediting Commission. As part of the self-study, the board may wish to use the standards that apply to the board as criteria in an evaluation instrument. The same instrument may be used by both trustees and college employees to review board performance. Following is a sample instrument, using criteria from Standard IV.B.1 and other standards on boards and board policy.

A suggested rating scale for this approach is:

- 3 The board fully meets the standards
- 2 The board partially meets the standard
- 1 The board does not meet the standard

	RATING
1. The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution.	
2. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.	
3. The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions.	
4. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole.	
5. The board advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.	
6. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.	
7. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.	
8. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.	

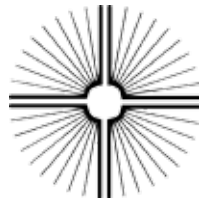
9. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.	
10. The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.	
11. The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws.	
12. The governing board has a code of ethics that includes a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code.	
13. The governing board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.	
14. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district.	
15. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.	
16. The board regularly reviews the mission statement.	
17. The board adopts policies on academic freedom and responsibility, student academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs or worldviews.	
18. The board has adopted personnel policies that are available for information and review. Such policies are equitably and consistently administered.	
19. The board has a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes.	
20. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution.	

SAMPLE 6

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The previous five samples include items that require an evaluative rating and provide quantifiable data. Another approach, which may be used in combination with any of the five samples, is to ask open-ended questions that gather qualitative information. Following are some examples of questions that may be asked either on a survey or in an interview process. A board may develop other questions that address specific issues and concerns.

1. What are the board's greatest strengths?
2. What are the major accomplishments of the board in the past year?
3. What are areas in which the board could improve?
4. In order for our board to become a high performing board we need to
5. As a trustee, I am most pleased about _____
6. As a trustee, I have concerns about _____
7. As a trustee, I would like to see the following changes in how the board operates _____
8. What issues have most occupied the Board's time and attention during the past year? Were these closely tied to the mission and goals of the District and the Board?
9. Please describe how the board functions as a team. Is it functioning as a team as well as it should? Why or why not?
10. Please describe the board's relationship with the CEO? What does the board do to maintain a positive relationship? What does the board needs to change, if anything?
11. Describe a typical board meeting. Do the agendas and conduct of the meeting effectively meet the purposes of board meetings? Why or why not?
12. I recommend that the board has the following goals for the coming year _____



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Guide to Board Self-Assessments [1]

Here we answer the Who, What, How, and Why's of Board Self-Assessments

Why Should Boards Engage In Self-Assessment?

- In order to identify where they are performing well as a board, and where they might improve.
- Discussion about board roles and responsibilities can strengthen communication and understanding among board members. The discussions can lead to stronger, more cohesive working groups.
- A board's willingness to engage in self-assessment is a model for the rest of the institution. It indicates that board members take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Their interest in self-improvement sets a tone for others in the college to engage in an ongoing review of how education is delivered.

What Should We Expect From a Self-Assessment?

Well-conducted board self-assessments lead to better boards. The results include:

- a summary of board accomplishments
- a better understanding of what it means to be an effective board
- clarification of what trustees expect from each other and themselves
- improved communications among trustees and between the board and CEO
- identification of problems, potential issues, and areas to improve
- an opportunity to discuss and solve problems that may hurt board performance
- identification of strategies to enhance board performance
- renewed dedication to the board
- agreement on board roles and trustee responsibilities
- board goals and objectives for the coming year

Evaluating the performance of the board is not the same as evaluating individual trustee performance. The purpose of the evaluation is to look at the board as a whole, although a side benefit may be that individual board members gain appreciation for the roles and responsibilities of trusteeship.

How Should Boards Evaluate Themselves?

The process generally involves the use of self-assessment instruments. The results of the survey instruments then become the basis for discussion.

ACCT can assist by interviewing each board member, the CEO and others named by the board. The results of the interviews become the basis for discussion.

Who Should Be Involved In The Evaluation?

Each and every board member should participate in the self-evaluation by completing a board self-assessment instrument (if used), and be involved in the discussion.

The CEO is also an important resource. Varying levels of involvement by the CEO are appropriate, from being a full participant in the process, to contributing advice and support for the process, to providing comments on the board/CEO relationship. Most boards conduct the board and CEO evaluations in tandem, since the success of one entity depends on the effectiveness of the other.

In addition, boards may consider inviting comments from those who are part of the management team. Their perspectives can add valuable insight to the board process. However, evaluations that involve others need to be carefully designed so that the information is based on a board established criteria of effectiveness.

ACCT Consultants and facilitators are often helpful to boards in developing and conducting an evaluation. They can provide an independent, non-biased influence to help keep board discussions focused and positive. ACCT's Board Leadership Services arranges for consultants to assist in the process.

Should the Board and CEO Evaluations be Linked?

The board and CEO work together in leading the institution - the board governs, and the CEO leads and administers on a day-to-day basis. It is difficult to evaluate the board without reference to the CEO's contributions, and vice versa.

No matter the process, boards should recognize that when evaluating the CEO, their support of the CEO is an important contribution to the success of the CEO. Conversely, when conducting self-assessments, the CEO's support and advice contributes to board success.

How Often Should Boards Evaluate Themselves?

Formal self-assessments should occur annually. Getting into the habit of regular evaluations makes the process part of the board and college culture, and lessens resistance to self-assessment.

New boards, or boards with a significant number of new members, may wish to hold sessions more often as the members are learning to work together as a team.

What Criteria Should We Use?

A basic self-assessment question is: "Are we doing what we said we will do?" If the purpose of the evaluation is to answer that question the criteria used in the self-assessment process includes what the board has defined as its roles and the policies the board has for its own operations and behavior. Another question is: "How does the board rank itself against commonly accepted standards of boardsmanship?" In this case, the criteria used may be those established by national and state associations.

In either case, some possible categories are listed below.

- Board Organization
- Community Representation

- Policy Direction
- Board-CEO Relations
- College Operations
- Monitor Institutional Performance
- Board Behavior
- Advocacy
- Board Education

How Do We Design an Instrument?

The first step in designing an instrument is to identify what the board wants to get from the evaluation. If the major question is "Are we doing what we said we will do?" then whoever is designing the instrument needs to review board policies, practices and other statements that set out the board's expectations for itself.

For instance, if the board has a policy or practice that the board represents the community in its policy discussions, the evaluation instrument or checklist may include items that read:

1. The board has a comprehensive understanding of community educational needs.
2. The board considers the interests and needs of the community in its policy discussions.

On the other hand, if the major question is "How do we compare with state or national standards for governing boards?" then the instrument will be based on other standards, including the ACCT code of ethics and Standards for Effective Governance.

Sample Structures

Rating Scales

Trustees and others doing the evaluation will rate statements on an instrument according to how well they perceive the board performing. Every college has staff members who can assist with setting up rating scales. Following are a few examples of rating a statement in the board self-assessment process. Respondents would be asked to circle or write the letter of the response.

Agreement

Respondents rate how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement

Performance

Respondents rate the quality of a particular item (i.e. excellent, fair, poor, etc.)

Meets Standards

Respondents may be asked to simply state "yes" or "no" in response to a standard

Board Self-Assessment Instrument Item Bank

The Board Self-Assessment Instrument Item Bank is a composite of sample items that may be used in board self-assessment forms. Self-assessment instruments generally have 30-40 items. Boards should select statements from the item bank that are most useful to them. Possible question topics include:

- Board Organization
- Policy Role
- Community Relations
- Policy Direction
- Board-CEO Relations
- College Operations
- Institutional Performance
- Board Leadership
- Advocating the College
- Board Education
- Open-ended Questions

To see a complete list of sample questions click [here](#).

How Should We Use The Results of a Board Self-Assessment?

The average ratings on a board self-assessment instrument, a summary of interviews, or key points in a group discussion identify the strengths of the board and areas for improvement.

The strengths should be celebrated and boards should congratulate themselves on their good work. The strengths are used to help the board improve.

Areas of improvement should be explored to identify the dynamics that contribute to any problems or weaknesses. Strategies to address the issues may include board retreats or workshops on a specific topic, study sessions or reading in an area where knowledge or clarification is needed.

Three to six board goals or activities for the coming year may be established, based on the evaluation and performance on prior year goals. These goals become the basis for the board's long-range or annual agenda.

For more information please contact:

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