Accreditation and Trustee Roles and Responsibilities

A workshop for Trustees of the City College of San Francisco Board of Trustees

by

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Ground Rules

• Be on time (from breaks).
• Everyone participates.
• Stay within the agreed upon objective / agenda.
• No private conversations.
• Say what’s on your mind to all.
• Listen for content before forming an opinion (open your mind to others).
• Suspend judgment until there has been sufficient discussion and information.
• Be specific when asking questions.
• It is okay to disagree but be open to new ideas and don’t be caught up in your own visions.
• Give all trustees a chance to participate: No Hogging / Frogging /or Bogging.
What We’ll Discuss

• Accreditation’s Purposes, Process and Standards
• The Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees
• Advice for Board Excellence and Examples
Accreditation Purposes, Processes and Standards
The Purposes of Regional Accreditation

• Provide quality assurance to the public, to students, to other institutions *that an institution is achieving its stated mission*

• Give credibility to degrees and credentials awarded to students

• Stimulate institutional improvement through evaluation, planning, implementation and evaluation again
The Quality Assurance Purpose of Accreditation

• Conduct regular reviews of quality (six-year cycle) through a comprehensive evaluation
• Monitor certain aspects of institutional quality (USDE Regulations)
  ▪ Student Achievement/Institutional Effectiveness
  ▪ Substantive Changes/Distance Learning
  ▪ Financial Integrity/Financial Aid Issues
  ▪ Integrity in Relation to Students, the Public
• Inform the USDE, Students the Public of Results
• Evaluation reports and visits as needed
The Improvement Purpose of Accreditation

• The accreditation process is designed to help institutions focus on helping students learn what they are supposed to learn, and to complete courses, certificates, degrees, and transfer or get jobs.

• The accreditation process builds institutional capacity for educational excellence and institutional effectiveness that produces desired forms of student success.
What is the Process for Comprehensive Review?

• Institutional self evaluation

• External evaluation by professional peers

• Commission evaluation -- the body of 19 Commissioners renders a judgment on the accreditation status of the institution

• Institutional improvement

* A Six-Year Cycle of Review
Who Are the Commissioners? Peers and the Public!

• 5 Faculty from Member Institutions
• 3 Administrators from Member Institutions
• 1 from California Community Colleges System
• 1 from Pacific Institutions
• 1 from University of Hawaii System
• 1 ACSCU and 1 from ACS
• 1 from the private Member Institutions
• 5 from the public
What are the Accreditation Standards?

• **Standard I: Mission and Institutional Effectiveness**
  ▪ Data-driven assessment and improvement, focus on learning

• **Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services**
  ▪ Instructional, Support and Learning Services, focus on learning and student outcomes

• **Standard III: Resources**
  ▪ Deployment of resources toward achievement of mission, fiscal integrity maintained to insure continued operation

• **Standard IV: Leadership and Governance**
  ▪ Leadership to *focus institution on mission and student success*, roles of governance structures, CEO and governing board
Important Ideas Embedded in the Standards

• Focus on achieving institutional mission, avoiding diversion to other purposes
• Integrity and honesty in institutional policies and actions
• Focus on student outcomes – completion of meaningful education, learning, demonstrable knowledge and skills
• Metrics and evidence used to assess institutional quality
• Ongoing internal Quality Assurance Practices
• Continuous improvement for high performance
Metrics: Institutional Measures

- Key metrics, or measures, must be identified by the institution to assess achievement of institutional mission
  - These may be mission specific/ are related to the institution’s set of educational programs
  - There should be data over five years prior to the Institutional Self Evaluation Report
  - Institution should set targets or goals, or benchmarks
  - Institutional performance on key metrics should be examined regularly and used for decision making at the institution
Trustees Have Two Challenges:

1) Mission Directed Leadership, and
2) High Performance

Setting standards of excellence and measuring performance linked to the District’s goals will help meet both challenges. To perform well Trustees must be accountable as well as hold others accountable.
Measuring Performance

• The Board leads the College – the Board representing the entire community establishes the mission and vision for the College and from that staff develops the strategic plan goals and methods of achieving them. The roles are iterative, the final mission and vision must be approved by the Board.

• The Board must then assure itself that the College goals are achieved (as an example, the 2012 target date for the completion of the SLO process as required by ACCJC).

• Focus on the “what” not the “how.”
Metrics: ACCJC Measures

• Common measures of institutional effectiveness include:
  - Course completion
  - Enrollment in next course in sequence
  - Completion of sequences, certificates, degrees
  - Graduation, transfer, job placement
  - Student learning of general skills and knowledge areas broadly applicable to life and work* -- degree SLOs
  - Student learning of specific skill sets* and knowledge associated with the area of study – program SLOs

*Federal and national pressures are strong in this area.
Accountability Responsibilities

• Process / Frequency / Accountability
• Focus on Data such as Lagging & Leading Indicators not stories / feelings
• Coordination with Strategic Plan / Mission and Vision
• Ethical Behavior

• TIP: Wise Boards embrace the effectiveness tiger or face being eaten by it!
Are Institutions Expected to Meet All Accreditation Standards at All Times?

• Member institutions agree to adhere to Accreditation Standards at all times when they seek initial accreditation

• Institutions should have *ongoing internal quality review and quality improvement processes* – program review, planning, implementation of changes, assessment of learning outcomes, evaluation of institutional effectiveness

• Six-year cycle of accreditation checks on what should be *ongoing institutional practices* to review and improve quality
Importance of College Planning Documents

• Sample Planning Documents that must fit together to help organize and direct college efforts:
  ▪ The Mission and Vision of the College.
  ▪ The College’s Strategic Plan and Educational Master Plan
  ▪ The Facilities Master Plan, a Technology Master Plan, and Annual Budget.
  ▪ Unit Plans and Program Plans

• College resource allocation should reflect plans and priorities

• How does the Board hold the College accountable to assure compliance and timeliness?
If the Institution is found to be Non-Compliant with the Standards, how long may it take to Comply?

• Federal two-year rule

• Commission works with institutions as they improve, and can extend the time allowed for “good cause”
  - Accreditation team recommendations feed into institutional plans for improvement

• Accreditors’ recognition is threatened by non-compliant institutions
### ACCJC Data on Sanctions – 4 years

**Colleges on Sanction January 2009 – January 2012**

*Top Deficiencies Causing Sanctions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLLEGES ON SANCTION</th>
<th>PROGRAM REVIEW</th>
<th>PLANNING</th>
<th>INTERNAL GOVERNANCE</th>
<th>BOARD</th>
<th>FINANCIAL STABILITY OR MANAGEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 SANCTIONS (n=24)</td>
<td>71% (17)</td>
<td>92% (22)</td>
<td>46% (11)</td>
<td>46% (11)</td>
<td>54% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 SANCTIONS (n=19)</td>
<td>68% (13)</td>
<td>89% (17)</td>
<td>42% (8)</td>
<td>58% (11)</td>
<td>58% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 SANCTIONS (n=21)</td>
<td>19% (4)</td>
<td>71% (15)</td>
<td>24% (5)</td>
<td>67% (14)</td>
<td>62% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 SANCTIONS (n=28)</td>
<td>21% (6)</td>
<td>71% (20)</td>
<td>18% (5)</td>
<td>71% (20)</td>
<td>50% (14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Please note category increasing in frequency in table above*
Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

and

Advice for Board Excellence and Examples
STEWARDSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND FISCAL STABILITY

• The governing board is responsible for the quality, integrity and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring that the mission is being carried out.
  
  ▪ The mission of a college is student learning and student success!

• The governing board is responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program.

Eligibility Requirement #3
Financial Health

• State budget projections are for at least 4 more years of deficits. No near term financial improvement even if the state tax measure passes.

• It may be that funding, mission for California community colleges is being permanently restructured.

• Thus, the Board’s role is to redefine the focus of the District’s educational mission to assure continued high performance with fewer resources.
Good to Great

• Poor Boards respect their “sacred cows.”

• Good Boards try to work around the cows.

• Great Boards hold barbeques!

• Your challenge is to identify your “sacred cows” and eliminate them in order to focus on your core mission and goals. Remember “sacred cows” will have defenders.
Role of Trustees, continued

• The governing board is an independent policy-making body capable of reflecting constituent and public interest in board activities and decisions.

• The governing board has a conflict of interest policy that ensures that its interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing board members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution.

*Eligibility Requirement #3*
Board Self-Evaluations

• Performed annually / timely review of results / establishment of goals / corrective actions.

• Watch out for conflicts of interest and poor preparation by Board members.

• More specifically, Boards must recognize which Trustees need help, and then provide the help through mentoring, education, coaching, establishing ground rules, and enforcing state and local laws, policies, regulations and ground rules.

• Only the Board can regulate its members!
Steps for Performance Changes

- Board Policies
- New Trustee Orientation / Changes in BOT
- Mentoring
- Prompt feedback/correction when behaviors stray
- Continuous Training
- Individual Coaching
- Board Warning
- Board Censorship
- Legal Action
Trustee Development

• Does your Board’s Policy on Conflict of Interest need to be updated?

• Does your Board’s Policy on Trustee Code of Conduct / Practices meet the accreditation standards by including remedial steps?

• If either policy needs to be updated, when can this be accomplished?
Role of Trustees, continued

- The institution’s educational mission is clearly defined, adopted and published by its governing board consistent with its legal authorization, and is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and the constituency it seeks to serve. The mission statement defines institutional commitment to achieving student learning.

*Eligibility Requirement #2*
Responsibility of Trustees: Wise Use of Resources to Achieve Mission

- Financial Resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness.
- The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance and enhancement of programs and services.
- The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability.
- The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short term and long term financial solvency.
- Financial planning is integrated with institutional planning.

Standard III.D.
Good to Great

• Good Boards assure that the College’s mission is periodically re-evaluated and is adequately funded.

• Good Boards protect their core mission by not creating potential unfunded liabilities for the College.

• Great Boards assure their policies and budget allocations are linked and correspond to the educational priorities in the College’s Missions and Strategic Plans.
Responsibility of Trustees: Financial Integrity

• To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making.

• Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. Responses to external audit findings are timely and comprehensive.

Standard III.D.2
Budget Policy & Monitoring

• **Budget Approval (Policy Adoption)**
  - Balanced
  - Focused on Student Success / College Goals
  - Long Term / Multi-year Impacts

• **Monthly /Quarterly Financial Performance Reports**
  - Follows approved budget / Reports on benchmarks
  - Identifies potential fiscal issues

• **Annual Financial Audits**
  - Provides budgetary accountability
Role of Trustees: Policy-Making

• Institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution.

• The institution has a governing board responsible for setting policies to assure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution.

Standard IV.B.1
College Policies

• Periodically update policies on a scheduled basis

• Test policies by linking to Mission, Strategic Plan, Budget, and do a “Sacred Cow” test!

• Policies (and thus the Board) determine the “What” not the “How”

• Hold all accountable to approved College policies including Board Members

• Fulfills Board’s responsibility as Leaders
Responsibility of Trustees: *Coherent Action and Direction*

- Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.

- The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity.

- The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation, and a mechanism for providing continuity of membership and staggered terms of office.

*Standards IV.B.1.a, c, and f*
Build a Team

• To achieve high performance, Trustees need to work as a team and critical to being a team is retaining a climate of trust and respect. The CEO is also part of the team.

• To achieve high performance, Trustees must adhere to their role so that the CEO, President and others can perform their roles.

• Only the Board has any authority and not individual trustees.
Diversity of Opinions / Single Direction

• Many boards are unclear about how to engage in open discussion of policy issues.

• To do so effectively you need a base of Trust & Respect, a focus on Student Success, the use of data not feelings or rumors, and most importantly a College-wide perspective.

• Once a Board decision is made all Trustees are expected to support the majority decision.
Responsibility of Trustees: Integrity in Board Operations

- The governing Board publishes board bylaws and policies specifying the board’s size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures (e.g., Robert’s Rules, Brown Act, etc.)

- The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws, and evaluates and revises its own practices as needed.

- The governing board’s self evaluation processes are clearly defined, implemented, and published.

- The board has a code of ethics and a policy for dealing with behavior that violates the code. *(The board members are willing to require proper behavior of their colleagues.)*

*Standard IV.B.1, d, e, g, and h*
Board Quality is Job 1

• Board building is an on-going process of continuous improvement.

• Ask yourself, “What can I do as a Trustee….
  ▪ “To make our Board more effective?”
  ▪ “To help our CEO be successful?”
  ▪ “To help the College be successful?”
  ▪ Then ask. “What can our Board do better?”
Self-Assessment / Quality Improvement

• Self-assessment should not be a cursory glance in the mirror or performed in a vacuum.

• Rather it needs to be a periodic & exhaustive culling of quantitative and qualitative data, some of it longitudinal.

• Once you identify the issues, the Board needs a self-improvement plan or goals and time lines.

• Return to the issues at 6 months or a year and re-evaluate. Complete the Quality Improvement circle.
Board Behavior

• Board behavior sends a message
  ▪ Focus on Student Success & Learning
  ▪ Represent the entire Community / College
  ▪ Support College leadership
  ▪ Develop a team culture / Build Trust & Respect
Role of Trustees: Partnership with the CEO

- The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the college CEO.
- The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the chief administrator to implement and administer board policies *without board interference* and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the college.

*Standard IV.B.1.j*
The Board / CEO Team

• Build Trust between the Board & the CEO

• Avoid Public Conflict – Be Respectful (Prevent a hostile work environment)

• Expect & Provide Commitment to Board decisions

• Hold the CEO **Accountable**

• Focus on Results

• Maintain Open Communication

• The CEO is not only an employee but also a team member!
Focus on the right work!

Establishing and sticking to an overarching level of engagement helps Trustees set expectations and ground rules for their roles relative to the CEO’s role.

(Focus on “what” not the “how”, and don’t allow your focus to be diverted.)
What’s next?

• How can the Board become a High Performing Board?

• What actions / steps must the Trustees take in the next critical eight months?
Summary

• Work as a Team with CEO and with BOT

• Build trust, avoid destructive conflict, provide commitment, be accountable, and focus on retaining the College’s accreditation.

• Act with intelligence, respect, care, and integrity

• Base decisions on data not stories

• Be future-oriented

• Represent the entire community / not single interests.
ACCJC Publications of Interest to Governing Boards

• Twelve Common Questions and Answers About Accreditation

• Newsletters at www.accjc.org

• Manual for Institutional Self Evaluation
  - General Information about Accreditation
  - Role of CEO is articulated
  (Role of Trustees is in the works for next year)
Thank you for your attention

Dr. Barbara Beno, ACCJC President

William McGinnis, Butte-Glenn CCD Trustee

www.accjc.org