

DEVELOPING A BOARD POLICY MANUAL

W. Sherrill Babb




so.....What is a policy?

A Policy is a principle or rule made by Boards to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes or meaningful results in the life of a college/university.

Why do we need Board Policies?

- The Board needs to spell out how the Board manages its own affairs.
- Assists in the recruitment and orientation of new Board members.
- The President, faculty and staff need to be clear on exactly what they are supposed to implement.

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- Gives explicit understanding that someone has authority and responsibility to make decisions or take actions within the context of these policies.
 - Aids in the self-assessment of the Board
 - The Board is liable for its activities and policies in a court of law.




○ KEY IDEA:

- A BOARD POLICY MANUAL WILL DESCRIBE HOW THE BOARD GOVERNS



John Gardner says:

A Board Governance Model enables a part-time, inexperienced group of persons to lead a college. These persons have neither the time, nor the ability to control every action, circumstance, goal, and decision. And, even if they did, the college would slow to a halt as they carried out their tasks.



A Board Governance Model defines who has the power, who is in charge, and who is responsible for all issues in a college. The Board shares its authority with the President and an administrative team, the faculty, staff, students and alumni.




ILLUSTRATION OF A PHILOSOPHY OF SHARED GOVERNANCE



SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A BOARD POLICIES MANUAL

HOW TO CREATE A BOARD POLICY MANUAL STARTING FROM ZERO

- APPOINT SOMEONE TO RESEARCH POLICY STATEMENTS BY LOOKING AT PAST BOARD MEETINGS
- BEGIN TO FILL IN POLICIES IN APPROPRIATE SECTIONS OF THE SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR THE MANUAL USING SINGLE SHEETS FOR EACH
- CREATE OTHER POLICIES NEEDED FOR THE SUGGESTED OUTLINE
- SEEK LEGAL REVIEW AND BOARD APPROVAL

MONITORING OF THE BOARD POLICY MANUAL

- ❖ APPOINT SOMEONE (NORMALLY THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD) TO MAINTAIN AND MONITOR THE POLICY MANUAL AND ITS APPLICATION
- ❖ CHARGE THE BOARD STANDING COMMITTEES TO ANNUALLY REVIEW AND SUGGEST CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS IN POLICY STATEMENTS WHICH IMPACT THEIR AREAS
- ❖ MAKE THE PRESIDENT ANNUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR POLICIES THAT RELATE TO OPERATIONS

BENEFITS OF A BOARD POLICY MANUAL

- IT KEEPS THE BOARD FOCUSED ON ITS POLICIES SO THAT THEY CAN REMAIN ALIVE AND FAMILIAR TO BOARD MEMBERS
- IT PREVENTS THE ACCUMULATION OVER TIME OF BOARD DECISIONS BECOMING UNTRACEABLE
- IT GUIDES THE ENTIRE INSTITUTION AND ITS STAFF IN MAKING RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS
- IT IS AN ESSENTIAL TOOL IN ORIENTING NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND EVALUATING BOARD PERFORMANCE

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- John Carver. Reinventing Your Board.
Jossey-Bass, 1997.
Boards That Make a Difference.
- John Andringa & Ted Engstrom. Nonprofit Board Answer Book, A Practical Guide for Board Members & Chief Executives.
Boardsource, 2002.