

The President and the Board Enhancing the Partnership

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Rationale for Enhanced Relationships Between the Board and the President

- Boards of Trustees must increase their roles in monitoring, evaluating and guiding the mission of their institutions. (legal, governmental, accreditation and supporter demands for accountability increasing)
- Boards must enhance their skills and commitments to both their explicit duties as well as their implicit obligations to fulfill these roles.
- Current financial realities require new levels of monitored stewardship
 - Thin margins, limited reserves, aging facilities, competition for donor dollars and costs of operation are growing exponentially.
 - Boards need assistance understanding and addressing their fiduciary responsibilities

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- Marketplace shifts are creating significant changes in the educational priorities and delivery modalities needed to respond to current realities and shifts in student demographics.
- Senior leadership is under stress that is unprecedented in our lifetimes due to a variety of disruptive factors that are present in our current culture.
- The threats to the essential spiritual foundations of intentional Christ-centered institutions are growing at an alarming rate.
 - Faith-based Boards and Presidents must be equipped to guide, guard and courageously communicate the spiritual centers of their institutions.
- Enhanced collaboration between Presidents and their Boards will be needed to address and resolve the dramatic changes in delivering on our missions and its promises.

Purposes of This Session

- To consider some key principles that enhance the partnership between the President/CEO, the Board Chair and Board of Trustees
- To explore how Board's can steward the caring for their President in these difficult times of disruption and division.
- If time permits, to overview some basic insights for leadership transitions and succession.

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Defining the Roles of Chair and President

- Chair manages the Board.
- President manages the College.
- Chair should seek Presidential input on managing the Board.
- President should seek Chair input on managing the College.
- Relationship must be mutually supportive—a true partnership, open and honest.
- President and Board Chair should communicate regularly, be available 24/7.
- Chair is not supervisor of the President but a counselor.

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Defining the Roles

- President is CEO, accountable only to the full Board.
- Board should give the President direction by formal action and with the establishment of policies stated in a BPM.
- Chair should make sure the Board looks out for the President's welfare and is supportive.
- President should provide all necessary information for policy development and Board action.
- President and Chair partner in Board development.

Defining the Roles

- Chair should keep the Board focused on the one legitimate subject for an executive session without the President—presidential performance or related issues.
- Chair should make sure all Board members are productive.
- Chair keeps the Board focused on policy not administration and sets the tone of the Board meetings.
- President gives full disclosure to the Board – no surprises!.

The Care and Feeding of the President

- Clear performance expectations – detailed executive parameters established in a Board Policy Manual with “regular” feedback on progress and outcomes.
- Respecting the distinction between policy setting and policy implementation
- Daily prayer for the President and leadership team with individual Board members assigned specific days each month for prayer.
- Available for counsel on matters that do not have specific policies in place to guide
- Respecting the principles of unanimity and confidentiality in all matters related to the President’s work, responsibilities and performance effectiveness
- Attention to the President’s work/life balance
- Interest in and appropriate support for the President’s spouse and family

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President and Board Evaluations

- Regularly scheduled evaluations of both the Board's effectiveness and the President's performance are important for creating the best partnership between the Board and President across time.
- Presidential Evaluations:
 - Annual evaluation of President's goals for the year
 - Review of the President's goals for the year to come and agreement upon measurements
 - Comprehensive 360 review of President's performance every three years.
- Board Evaluations:
 - Survey of Board meeting effectiveness after each meeting
 - Empowering of a Board Governance/Personnel Committee to evaluate effectiveness
 - Annual self evaluation of Board members reviewed by Board Governance Committee
 - Input from President on Board effectiveness at the annual meeting of the Board
 - Creation of a Board Development strategy for ongoing assessment and training

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The Leadership Succession/Transition Plan

- It is essential that every institution have a clearly defined and articulated plan to handle leadership transitions
- This needs to be established at the beginning of a new leader's appointment and in place before a transition is anticipated.
- Such a plan must cover both planned as well as unanticipated transitions
- Limits misunderstandings and confusion when leadership changes become necessary.
- Email me for a copy of "Successful Leadership Transitions" as well as examples of succession plans and policies if interested.

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