




EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE

Dr. David Gyertson
ABHE Board Governance Coach

1



ESSENTIALS FOR EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE



EMBRACES

Embraces the value proposition of the institution, its mission & culture



UNDERSTANDS

Understands and exercises steward board authority



ENSURES

Ensures the sustainability of the institution via strategic thinking and planning



PRACTICES

Practices strategic board development and evaluation



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

2



ESSENTIAL 4: PRACTICES STRATEGIC BOARD DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION



- ▶ A robust and highly effective board governance committee
- ▶ Strategic board member selection and a comprehensive orientation program
- ▶ Board evaluations
- ▶ Continuous board development



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

3



THE IMPERATIVE OF, AND BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR, EXCELLENCE



“Holy Shoddy is Still Shoddy”

Dr. Elton Trueblood



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

4



THE IMPERATIVE OF A ROBUST BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Premise: Robust Board Governance Committees are an imperative for becoming a highly effective board.

“Effective governance by a (higher education) board of trustees is a relatively rare and unnatural act.”*

**Improving the Performance of Governing Boards*



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

5



The Governance Committee and Effective Board Governance

1:1 Correlation

- ▶ To have an effective institution:
 - ▶ You must have an effective board.
- ▶ To have an effective board:
 - ▶ You must have an effective governance committee.

Robust Governance Committee → Strong Board → Effective Institution



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

6



BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- ▶ Oversight of the Board Policy Manual & Other Governing Documents
 - ▶ Before each decisions asks: Do we have a policy on this? Is it current/relevant? If none, should we have one? How are we monitoring its compliance and results?
- ▶ New Trustee Identification and Recruitment – an essential commitments & skills profile
- ▶ Comprehensive Board Orientation Program
- ▶ Board Evaluation System & Board Development Program



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

7



BOARD DEVELOPMENT BEGINS WITH IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT OF TRUSTEES WHO ARE:

- ▶ Strongly aligned with the institution's founding purposes, core values, and mission.
- ▶ Highly capable of providing the expertise needed for faithful mission fulfillment
- ▶ Deeply committed to the institution's mission willing and able to give the time needed for effective service.

Mission Alignment is Imperative



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

8



CREATING A BOARD COMPOSITION MATRIX/PROFILE



- ▶ What skill sets and professional and demographic backgrounds does the Board require to increase its overall effectiveness?
- ▶ What are the three most important goals the board must accomplish in the next 3-5 years?
- ▶ Do we have the expertise on the board to help facilitate those goals?

CAVEAT: Select individuals based on **skill sets/experience** the board needs and not just a professional/demographic category.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

9



BENEFITS OF BOARD/PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORY COUNCILS



- ▶ Increased Expertise
- ▶ Enriched Deliberations
- ▶ Individual and Corporate Donors
- ▶ Extended Contacts in the Community, Church and Corporate Sector
- ▶ Venue for Recruiting New Trustees



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

10



NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

An effective board has an exemplary and comprehensive New Trustee Orientation Program.

Ensure responsibility for New Trustee Orientation is assigned to the appropriate individuals and the Board Governance Committee.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

11



BOARD ORIENTATION TOPICS

- ▶ The Sacred Trust
- ▶ Mission Statement
- ▶ By-laws
- ▶ Board meeting agendas & minutes from previous year
- ▶ Financial statements & audit report
- ▶ Strategic planning documents
- ▶ Board Policies Manual
- ▶ Organizational Charts
- ▶ President's Reports
- ▶ Dashboard KPIs
- ▶ Alumni magazines
- ▶ Executive summary of accreditation reports
- ▶ Lexicon of higher ed terms
- ▶ Discuss Conflict of Interest and sign statement
- ▶ Campus tour



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

12



BOARD ORIENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Assign a mentor to new trustees.

Have new trustees evaluate Board Orientation
after attending two meetings.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

13



BOARD EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

*Do you have the most
effective (strongest) board possible?*

Key Principles

- ▶ That which is not evaluated does not improve.
- ▶ There is no progress without change.
- ▶ Behavior is based on beliefs.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

14



IMPLEMENTING A BOARD PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

PRINCIPLE: The goal and fundamental purpose of board evaluations should be improvement and increased effectiveness.

Key Components

- ▶ President – Your “One” Employee through which you assure missional fidelity and ensure operational viability
- ▶ Individual Trustees – Skills and Commitments needed
- ▶ Board Operations and Processes - time well spent.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

15



BOARD EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT

- ▶ Assigned to executive committee or another small group to manage.
- ▶ Annual process is good for board and president.
- ▶ Best to start with mutually agreed upon goals for the year and evaluation criteria.
- ▶ Always invite president to write a self-evaluation based on the agreed upon goals.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

16



BOARD EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT

- ▶ Invite trustees to comment on the written self-evaluation.
- ▶ Board discusses performance review in executive session.
- ▶ Always debrief president orally and in writing.
- ▶ Every 5 years or so, utilize an outside evaluator who would interview key constituents (faculty, staff, donors, etc.) and prepare a report for the board.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

17



EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEES

Evaluation Criteria

- ▶ Mission Fit
- ▶ Attendance
- ▶ Preparation for Meetings
- ▶ Quality of Engagement
- ▶ Institutional Ambassador/Advocate
- ▶ Giving



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

18



BOARD EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL TRUSTEES

- ▶ No trustee should be elected to a 2nd term without an evaluation.
- ▶ A potentially useful tool: Annual Board Affirmation Statement
- ▶ A requirement: Annual Conflict of Interest Statement



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

19



ANNUAL AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

1. I continue to support our mission, purpose, creed and leadership.
2. I understand board membership requires the equivalent of “X” days per year of my time, including preparation and meetings. I am able to give that time during the twelve months ahead and expect to attend all board meetings and committee meetings unless I give the respective chairman advance notice of my need to be absent for good cause.
3. I intend to contribute financially to our organization during the year and will help open doors to friends who may be interested in contributing.
4. I have reviewed, signed and intend to comply with our Board Conflict of Interest Policy.
5. Add items important to your board.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

20



ANNUAL AFFIRMATION STATEMENT

___ If anything should occur during the year which would not allow me to keep these intentions of being a positive contributor to our board, I will take the initiative to talk with the officers about a voluntary resignation to allow another to serve who is able to meet these common expectations of all board members.

___ I am able to affirm all of the above items and look forward to continued service.

___ Given my current circumstances, I am unable to affirm all of the above and request that the Board accept my resignation effective _____ and seek a replacement who can meet all expectations of board members.

Signed _____

Date _____



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

21



ANNUAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authority and Governance: ABHE Accreditation Standard 4.7

“A conflict of interest policy for board members that addresses issues such as financial interests, contracts, employment, family, or other personal interests in the institution.”



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

22



EVALUATION OF BOARD OPERATIONS

- ▶ What are our major responsibilities to ensure mission faithfulness and operating effectiveness?
- ▶ How well are we fulfilling our responsibilities?
- ▶ Are we spending our time on the right questions & issues?
- ▶ Do we have the best possible board in terms of the skills and commitments needed to assure mission faithfulness **and** operating effectiveness as a “Steward Board”?



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

23



EVALUATION OF BOARD MEETINGS

- ▶ What might we have done differently today to improve our meeting?
- ▶ In light of today’s meeting, what are the most important topics to be addressed at our next meeting?
- ▶ What was the most valuable contribution we made today to the college’s welfare?
- ▶ Are there topics about which you would like to learn more such as college or board operations, higher education, etc.?



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

24



BOARD MEMBER SELF-EVALUATION CONSIDERATIONS



- ▶ Attendance
- ▶ Participation
- ▶ Giving
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Meetings
- ▶ Committees
- ▶ Decisions
- ▶ Composition



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

25



BOARD DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



- ▶ Devote 10-15 minutes at every board meeting to a board development topic. Topics/questions should be solicited from trustees with input from president & board chair.
- ▶ Conduct board retreats with resource person focusing on attributes of effective boards & roles & responsibilities of effective trustees.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

26



EFFECTIVE BOARDS ENGAGE IN INTENTIONAL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- ▶ Work to create a **culture** of continuous improvement.
- ▶ Key Questions
 - ▶ What are we not doing that we should be doing?
 - ▶ What are we doing that we should not be doing?
 - ▶ What are we doing that needs to be improved?



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

27



REVIEW OF PRINCIPLES

- ▶ 1:1 Correlation
- ▶ There is no progress without change.
- ▶ That which is not evaluated does not improve.
- ▶ Behavior is based on beliefs.
- ▶ No trustee should be re-elected to a second term without an evaluation.
- ▶ The goal and fundamental purpose of board evaluations should be improvement and increased effectiveness.
- ▶ Organizations are in a state of either progress or decline.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

28

Discussion Questions and Assessment Exercise



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

29

Assessment Statements:

Please evaluate your board on each of these items, using the scale below to assign a number according to the level of follow-up needed. 1 = This is a current board practice, no work needed. 2 = This is perhaps an area of need; further study might be warranted. 3 = This is a significant issue we need to address. 4 = This is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed soon. 5 = This is the most significant and urgent issue, and our board needs to follow up in a timely manner.

- 1. Our board is actively engaged in recruiting highly capable and deeply committed, mission-fit candidates for board membership.
- 2. A board composition matrix is used to monitor the skill sets, professional backgrounds, and demographic composition the board requires to be effective.
- 3. We sign an annual Conflict of Interest statement and an annual Affirmation of Service commitment.
- 4. We have a board portal that is user-friendly and includes all the necessary tools.
- 5. Our board orientation program is comprehensive in preparing new trustees for effective service.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

30

Assessment Statements Continued:

- 6. Our board has an active Governance Committee that coordinates board education, trustee recruitment, and related governance concerns.
- 7. Board meetings are well-organized and an efficient use of time.
- 8. Board committees have a charter and are clear on their responsibilities.
- 9. Our board conducts meaningful, regular education and board development sessions with the goal of continuous improvement.
- 10. Board and individual trustee evaluations take place on an annual basis.



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

31



New ABHE Resource Board Governance Community

- ▶ Designed to provide interactive community on governance issues
- ▶ Contains board development training videos and suggestions
- ▶ Repository of board resources



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

32

Board Governance

Community Home

Threads0

Library47

Blogs0

Events0

Members155

Settings

Engage, Collaborate, Learn, and Share!

Welcome to the Board Governance Community! This platform allows you to connect to your peers in the ABHE member community.

Here are a few simple steps to get you started.

- Post your own question or discussion topic, and contribute to discussions started by others.
- Share interesting content: videos, documents, and links. If linking to other content, please do so with the intention of sparking discussion and provide a brief summary of that content.
- Complete your profile by adding your bio and a photo.
- Keep exchanging, learning from other leaders, and sharing your knowledge and experiences!

Latest Discussions

Start a Discussion

This Discussion has no recent posts. Gain insight by starting a conversation with your fellow community members.

Start a Discussion

Announcements

Add Announcement

Create a new announcement for display here.

Add Announcement

Latest Library Entries

EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE

33

No folder selected: Showing all entries

View: [List Icon] [Grid Icon] [User Icon]

Filter By: File Type [v]

Sort By: Date Created - Descending [v]

Main

- Board Authority and Responsibilities
- Board Culture
- Board Development and Evaluation
- Board Governance Training Videos
- Mission and Value Proposition
- Strategic Thinking and Planning

Responsibilities of Christian College Boards

Posted By John Derry

01-23-2025 16:04

...

Downloads • 1 Views • 1

Trustee Orientation Checklist

Posted By John Derry

01-23-2025 12:55

...

Downloads • 1 Views • 3

Assessment Template - Governing Board

Posted By Carol Dibble

07-17-2024 12:17

...

In Moderation

Assessment Template - Board Member

Posted By Carol Dibble

07-17-2024 12:14

...

In Moderation

34

17



ABHE Leadership Academy Board Governance Course

- ▶ Designed for individual instruction or group discussion
- ▶ Available at no cost to member schools
- ▶ May be taken for certification credit
- ▶ Five Modules with video and instructional material
 - ▶ Board Orientation
 - ▶ Sustainable Colleges and Universities
 - ▶ Mission Accountability
 - ▶ Strategic Thinking and Planning
 - ▶ Board Development



EXCELLENCE IN BOARD GOVERNANCE | WWW.ABHE.ORG/BOARD-GOVERNANCE