

Trustee Handbook©  
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Additional copies may be purchased from the League for \$25.00, plus postage and handling.

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## The California Community College System

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The California Community College system is the largest system of higher education in the world, with 115 colleges organized into 73, serving over 2 million students.

By design, California's community college districts incorporate all of the state's territory. Virtually all Californians are within commuting distance of a community college. Districts vary in enrollment from the Lake Tahoe Community College District with 1,500 full-time equivalent students to the Los Angeles Community College District with 92,199 students.

The colleges are publicly supported and locally oriented institutions that offer associate degrees, transfer education, and workforce development programs. They are part of California's three-tiered, public postsecondary educational system – the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California.

### Governance

Each of the 72 community college districts in the state has a locally-elected board of trustees, responsive to local community needs and charged with the policy leadership for the district. Boards range in size from five to seven members who are elected by the local community either on a district-wide or area basis. Boards also have student members who are elected by the students. The role and responsibilities of local boards are described in other chapters of the *Trustee Handbook*.

The statewide California Community Colleges system is governed by a Board of Governors (BOG), which was created in 1967 to oversee the colleges comprising the system. The 17-member Board establishes policy and regulations, interacts with the Legislature and federal and state organizations, and selects the Chancellor for the system. Board members are appointed by the governor. Two seats on the Board are designated for trustees, two for community college faculty, one for classified staff and two for students. The Board of Governors is directed to maintain and continue, to the maximum degree permissible, local autonomy and control in the administration of the community colleges.

The Chancellor consults with the colleges through a formal system. The Consultation Council includes representatives from the chief executive officers, faculty members, chief instructional officers, chief student services officers, chief business officers, chief human resources officers, trustees, students, and the Community College League of California (the League). The board of the California Community College Trustees (part of the League) meets periodically with the Board of Governors to discuss topics of mutual concern.

The System Office is the administrative branch of the California Community Colleges System. The System Office implements Board of Governors' regulations and other legislation, allocates state funding, oversees the conduct of the colleges, and provides leadership for the system.

### Students and Employees

Over 2 million students are served by the community colleges each year. Students come from all walks of life and all educational backgrounds. Their average age is about 27. Sixty percent of the students attend on a part-time basis.

Approximate percentages of ethnic and gender groups are:

Students	Percent CCCs (2017-18)
Male	46.2
Female	54.8
African American	5.9
Asian	11.43
Filipino	2.83
Pacific Islander	0.45
Hispanic	43.09
Native American	0.43
White Non-Hispanic	26.42
Multi-Ethnic	3.85
Non-Respondent	5.15

The community colleges employ over 85,000 people, including 18,000 full-time faculty, 26,000 support staff, and 2,000 administrators. In addition, the colleges employ 39,000 part-time faculty.

## History

Community colleges are an American invention. The first institution of higher education in America, Harvard University, was established in 1636. The first junior college was founded in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois. A major impetus for the creation of junior colleges was a proposal by William Rainey Harper, then president of the University of Chicago, to shift the first two years of a university education to junior colleges.

The first community colleges in the United States were often private institutions. But by 1947, the number of public community colleges exceeded the number of private ones. The numbers of community colleges increased greatly in the 1940's and 1950's as our nation placed increased emphasis on post-high school education. Enrollment pressure in the 1960's created another boom of expansion and construction that continued through the late 1970's.

In California, the Legislature authorized junior college courses in 1907 as an extension of the public school system. Fresno was the first community to offer a post-high school course of study for students wishing to pursue a baccalaureate degree. In 1921, junior college districts were authorized to be separate from public school districts. A significant number of colleges were founded in the 1950's in response to the growing demand for higher education. The Legislature then began the study leading to the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, which still provides the blueprint for community colleges and universities.

In 1967, a review of the first Master Plan resulted in the Stiern Act, which created the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges and removed the college districts from oversight by the Department of Education. Local college districts maintained autonomous responsibility for curricula, facilities, personnel, budget, and local tax rates. During the late sixties and early seventies, the colleges expanded their offerings to today's broader community mission, and the name junior college was generally dropped in favor of community college.

Although the Master Plan originally recommended high proportions of state funding for colleges, they received the majority of their funds from local property taxes, and tax rates were established by local boards. However, Proposition 13, passed in 1978, resulted in a 60 percent reduction in property tax revenues and the loss of the board's ability to establish local tax rates. The state Legislature and System Office took on a greater role in financing and regulating the work of the colleges.

In 1988, landmark legislation (AB 1725) provided new direction and support for California's public community colleges. The legislation clarified and validated the mission of the community colleges, delegated specific authority to Academic Senates, and mandated an accountability system. It also established a system for minimum qualifications for faculty hire, established goals related to staff diversity and full-time and part-time faculty ratios, created special funds for faculty and staff development and diversity, and addressed a number of other issues.

The decade of the 1990's saw a maturing of the community college mission and a political recognition of the important contributions the colleges make to the economic and social health of their communities. Proposition 98 passed and set a minimum guarantee of the state budget for K-12 and community colleges. The first decade of the 21st century brought consistent state support, along with increases in student fees.

California's 112 community colleges celebrated their centennial anniversary in 2010. The first large-scale community college system in the country continues to be the nation's leader in adult participation.

In recent years, California has fallen in rankings and now lags behind many other states in the production of college graduates. In 2006, California ranked 23rd among states in its share of 25- to 34- year olds holding at least a bachelor's degree, down from eighth position in 1960.

National attention to this issue culminated in a proposal by President Barack Obama to reclaim the lead in adults earning associate's degrees among nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. As a strategy within this effort, entitled the "American Graduation Initiative," President Obama calls upon community colleges to increase degree and certificate completions by 5 million by 2020 as a component of the larger higher education attainment goal. In 2010, the Community College League of California convened its "Commission on the Future (COTF)," comprised of 33 college leaders to identify policy and practice changes to increase meaningful completions in California Community Colleges by 2020.

In January 2011, pursuant to SB 1143 (Ch. 409, Statutes of 2010), the California Community Colleges Board of Governors created a Student Success Task Force to identify best practices for student success. The task force report issued 22 recommendations, including several based on the League's COTF Report, which led to passage of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, SB 1456, (Ch.624, Statutes of 2012). Among other issues, this measure revises and recasts the matriculation program with the express purpose of increasing college access and success by providing effective core matriculation services of orientation, assessment and placement, counseling and other education planning services, and academic interventions. The complete task force report can be accessed by the Student Success Initiative link at [www.cccco.edu](http://www.cccco.edu).

In 2014, the Governor and Legislature authorized an eight-year pilot program allowing up to 15 colleges to offer one applied baccalaureate degree each that is not offered by, or duplicative of, UC or CSU degrees.

## Mission and Programs

Community colleges are committed to three major values in fulfilling their mission: access, equity, and success. They provide access to higher education for all – everyone who can benefit from education may attend a community college. Equity refers to the effort to ensure that people from all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds have the skills and knowledge to benefit from and succeed in the colleges – to close the "achievement gap" between students from different demographic groups. Success refers to the commitment to provide the programs and services needed to ensure that students are able to achieve their educational goals.

To further these values, California Education Code (§66010.4) establishes the following mission and functions for the community colleges:

- As a primary mission, academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for younger and older students.
- As a primary mission, advance California's economic growth and global competitiveness through education, training and services that contribute to workforce improvement.
- As essential and important functions, remedial instruction, and in conjunction with school districts, adult noncredit education, English as a Second Language, and support services that help students succeed.
- As authorized functions, community service courses and programs and institutional research concerning student learning and retention.

The colleges offer a wide variety of programs in the liberal arts and sciences and in over 400 occupational specialties. Most classes are small (the average size is 33) resulting in personalized learning environments.

Counseling and other student service programs, including matriculation services, career and transfer planning, disabled student services, financial aid, health services, re-entry programs, child care, and programs for educationally and economically disadvantaged students are designed to ensure student success at the college level.

Many colleges have built strong partnerships with business and industry and provide contract education courses, small business assistance programs, and other educational services to the economic community. The CCC Economic and Workforce Development Program ([www.cccedw.net](http://www.cccedw.net)) is a statewide resource system and training institute working with the colleges and business community to provide continuous workforce improvement, technology enhancement, and business development.

## Access and Fees

Community colleges have a unique, historical responsibility to provide open admission without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or prior educational status or any other basis for discrimination. The emphasis on access to the community colleges is one of the most basic educational values in California and is a major reason that fees have remained low over the years.

Community college enrollment in California is by law open to any person with a high school diploma or any person 18 or over who can benefit from instruction. The law also permits concurrent enrollment of high school and younger students according to agreements between college and school districts.

Many California community colleges established a number of student fees for specific services during the 1960's and 1970's. In 1984, the Legislature established a \$5 per unit fee for enrollment in credit classes for California residents (out-of-state students pay more). In 1993, the Legislature increased the fees to \$13 per unit and limited the ability of colleges to charge other fees. Since then, the Legislature has raised and lowered fees every few years; they were \$26 per unit in 2009-2010 and \$46 per unit as of Summer 2012.

## Other Systems and Agencies

### California State University (CSU)

The California State University consists of 23 campuses serving over 481,210 students. About 51 percent of CSU graduates have transferred from community colleges. In the Master Plan for Higher Education, the CSU is authorized to grant baccalaureate and master's degrees as well as teaching credentials. It admits the top one-third of high school graduates. Community college transfers have priority for admission. The CSU is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor.

### University of California (UC)

The University of California consists of 10 general campuses and a medical campus, plus a number of professional schools. Undergraduate enrollment at the University is over 216,747, and there are approximately 56,275 graduate and professional students. The University is authorized to grant baccalaureate, masters, doctoral, and professional degrees and credentials. It is constitutionally separate from the Legislature and is governed by an appointed Board of Regents. About 29 percent of UC graduates transferred from community colleges. In the Master Plan, the University has primary responsibility for research and graduate education.

### Private Institutions of Higher Education

There are approximately 110 private, accredited colleges and universities in California, over 70 of which are represented at the state level by the Association of California Independent Colleges and Universities.

### Public Schools

There are over 1,000 school districts in California attended by more than 6.2 million children. Since many community colleges were created by the public school districts, the systems have a number of connections and similarities. Both have districts governed by locally-elected boards and are subject to the funding provisions of Proposition 98. State-authorized adult education programs may be offered either by a public school district or a community college.

## Future

There will continue to be an increasing demand for higher education from a growing and increasingly diverse population. However, the state may not be able to provide major increases in state funding. Therefore, community colleges face continuing challenges to deliver high quality educational programs.

Many governmental, educational, and business groups continue to study the role and mission of the community colleges as well as other segments of higher education. Questions about governance, structure, educational delivery systems, relations with business, funding, fees, and mission priorities will continue to be discussed throughout the coming years and beyond.



## Governance of the Community Colleges

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The California community colleges are governed both by a statewide Board of Governors appointed by the Governor and local boards of trustees elected by the people. In September 1999, the state Board of Governors and California Community College Trustees Board adopted a joint statement of principles regarding this complex, bilateral governance structure. The statement was intended to lead to improved working relationships and common understandings between the state and local boards. It describes the roles and responsibilities of the governing entities.

### Joint Statement of Principles

Given the broad and comprehensive mission of the California community colleges, the people of the State and their local communities are best served by a bilaterally-governed system of community colleges with locally-elected boards of trustees and a gubernatorially-appointed board for the system.

The broad responsibilities of each of the governing components within the bilaterally-governed system should be established by the Legislature and be clear, consistent with the mission, and support a unified system meeting distinct local and state needs.

The Board of Governors should exercise general supervision over the system of community colleges and provide leadership and direction through planning and policymaking, technical assistance, positive incentives, enforcement of laws and regulations, and accountability in support of student success. The work of the system board should be directed to maintaining and continuing, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the community colleges.

*Board of Governors responsibilities should include:*

- Employing a chief executive officer who shall be responsible for recommending system policy to the board following consultation with local districts, their representatives, and community college organizations, and implementation of system board policy, and who shall act as the primary spokesperson for the system on system issues.
- Establishing, consistent with the mission of the system, minimum standards for the operation of each local district and minimum conditions entitling districts to receive state aid and conducting periodic reviews of each district related to the minimum standards and conditions.
- Reviewing and approving academic and facilities plans for each district.
- Conducting necessary system-wide research, evaluating and issuing annual reports on the educational and fiscal effectiveness of the districts based on indicators of performance.
- Providing technical assistance and support when districts encounter severe management or fiscal difficulties; and in cases where fiscal difficulties worsen despite assistance and support, appointing a fiscal monitor according to prescribed criteria.
- Providing representation, advocacy and accountability for the system before state and national legislative and executive agencies.
- Overseeing the administration of state and federal support programs, including: preparing and adopting the proposed system budget; determining the formulas for computing and allocating the state general apportionment; establishing a uniform budgeting and accounting structure and procedures; and establishing space and utilization standards for facilities planning and funding allocations.

- Coordinating and encouraging interdistrict, regional, and statewide development of programs, facilities, and services; and coordinating interdistrict attendance of students.
- Facilitating articulation with other segments of education.
- Exercising general supervision over the formation of new districts and the reorganization of existing districts.
- Establishing and implementing a consultation process to ensure that local governing boards, their representatives, and community college organizations have an opportunity to participate effectively in the review and development of system policy.
- Establishing standards for local district consultation processes that provide faculty, staff and students the right to participate effectively in district and college governance and Academic Senates have primary responsibility for formulating recommendations on academic and professional matters.

Each locally-elected governing board should exercise general supervision over its local district and provide leadership through planning and policymaking to assure local education programs and services meet the education needs of the communities the district serves, as well as regional and state needs. The work of the local boards should be consistent with law and the regulations and policies of the Board of Governors.

*Local board responsibilities should include:*

- Employing a district chief executive officer who is responsible for recommending district policy to the board in consultation with the Academic Senate, faculty, staff and students and implementation of local board policy and who acts as agent of the board.
- Establishing the educational priorities of the district, consistent with the legislatively established mission of the California community colleges; and, in so doing, local boards shall also respond to regional and statewide needs within the mission in concert with the goals established by the Board of Governors.
- Establishing policies for current and long-range academic and facilities plans and programs; for the approval of courses of instruction and educational programs; and for determining the academic calendar.
- Establishing academic standards, as well as probation, dismissal and readmission policies; graduation requirements; and policies for governing student conduct.
- Assuring the employment and assignment of all personnel and establishing employment practices, salaries, and benefits for all employees.
- Determining the district's operational and capital outlay budgets; determining the need for elections for tax levies and bond measures; establishing policies for student fees where permitted by law; and establishing policies for the receipt and administration of gifts, grants, and scholarships.
- Assuring the management and control of district property.
- Monitoring effectiveness and efficiency in the use of public resources and in meeting and addressing student needs and concerns.
- Participating in the review and development of system policy through the system's consultation process.

In furtherance of the mission of the community colleges within the bilateral governance functions specified in statute, it is appropriate for the local boards and Board of Governors to establish understandings and protocols for the exercise of governance functions. Although these understandings and protocols do not have the force of law and regulations, they set forth expected behaviors and rules of conduct which may be established, reviewed, and revised over time. The initial understandings and protocols are the following:

- Mission: In fulfilling the mission of the California Community Colleges, local boards recognize their responsibility not only to serve the needs of their respective communities, but also to respond to regional and statewide needs. The Board of Governors, recognizes its role to work in partnership with local boards to ensure that community, regional and statewide needs are addressed.
  - ◆ Primary authority to address community needs resides with local boards.
  - ◆ Primary authority to coordinate and assure that regional and statewide needs are addressed resides with the Board of Governors.

- **Accountability:** With the legislatively established bilateral structure of governance, the authority and responsibility of local boards and the Board of Governors flow from statute, and each local board and the Board of Governors therefore remain accountable to the State (Legislature and Governor) for the performance of their respective functions. However, except as provided by law, the Board of Governors is not legally responsible for the actions of local boards, and local boards are not legally responsible for the actions of the Board of Governors.

When conflicts arise about the appropriate exercise of legal or governance responsibilities, both the Board of Governors and local boards have an interest in resolving these conflicts without having to resort to legislative review or adjudication.

- ◆ The Board of Governors is accountable, not only to the State and the general public, but also to local governing boards.
  - ◆ Local boards are accountable, not only to the state and their local publics, but also to the Board of Governors.
- **Local District Assistance:** In fulfilling its role of leadership and assistance the Board of Governors and Chancellor should be prepared to support local districts.
    - ◆ As concerns arise that may require assistance, the Chancellor first should seek the advice and counsel of relevant parties, which, given the concern, would include: the state association of community colleges trustees and chief executive officers, the Academic Senate, the student association, the accrediting commission and other relevant parties. The Chancellor should work with these relevant parties in shaping the assistance to be provided. When this need for informal assistance is identified, local boards and their chief executive officers should be responsive to inquiries and offers of technical assistance from the Chancellor and should recognize that all districts within the system are prepared to help fellow districts.
    - ◆ If formal intervention into fiscal or management matters becomes necessary, and given the responsibility of the Board of Governors to maintain, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the community colleges, the Board of Governors should proceed deliberately and cautiously. Formal intervention should be predicated on the basis of established criteria and standards.
  - **Legislative Representation:** Local boards recognize that the Board of Governors has a responsibility to represent the collective interests of the system before state and national legislative and executive agencies. At the same time, the Board of Governors recognizes that local boards will remain respectful of the Board of Governors' role only if it provides for meaningful involvement of the local boards in the formulation of system priorities that are articulated before state and national legislative and executive agencies, and if it provides information to the local districts to help them advocate on statewide and national issues.
    - ◆ Local boards retain legal authority to represent their local communities' particular interests in these arenas.
    - ◆ Local boards will remain respectful of the Board of Governor's role to represent the best interests of all districts, the students, and the State.

Prior to advancing a local interest before state and national legislative and executive agencies, the local boards recognize the value of following these protocols:

- ◆ If the interest advances a new system policy or has an effect on other districts generally, the local board should first seek to have the matter addressed through the system's established consultation process. If the local board's interest is not incorporated or accommodated by a system position, the local board should strongly consider refraining from advancing the interest. If the local board determines it necessary to proceed, it should inform the Board of Governors or its Chancellor before proceeding.
- ◆ If the interest appears to only affect the local district and does not establish any system policy or put system policy in detriment, the local board should inform the Board of Governors, or its Chancellor, before proceeding.

- Resolution of Conflicts Between Districts: In a system as large and diverse as the California Community Colleges it is inevitable that there occasionally will be conflicts among or between districts, whether it be the duplication of programs, the location of facilities, or the primary right to serve students in certain areas. The practice of the Board of Governors should be to allow and enable a full opportunity for resolution of these disputes at the local level. At the early stages, the system should refrain from intervention unless a law has been broken, unless the system has a legal responsibility to act, or unless all parties to the dispute ask the Chancellor to assist. If, after reasonable opportunities for local resolution, the conflict persists, local boards should be responsive to offers of the Chancellor to provide assistance or otherwise mediate the conflict.

In order for a unified and bilaterally governed system to be fully effective, the Board of Governors must be enabled to fulfill its functions.

In order to fulfill its delineated leadership responsibilities, the Board of Governors should be granted authority to:

- ◆ Select the Chancellor and senior management, and determine the compensation levels for these employees.
- ◆ Determine the appropriate organizational structure for the agency.
- ◆ Determine the level of funding necessary for operation of the System Office.

The Legislature and Governor should allow the Board of Governors and local boards an opportunity to perform their respective governance roles before intervening in the governance and management of the colleges.

- ◆ The Legislature and Governor should give due weight to the system recommendations that attempt to balance the interests of all districts and further the best interests of students, the system and the State.
- ◆ The Legislature and Governor should refrain from approving legislation that advances narrow or district-specific issues to the detriment of the system.

While the system should be entrusted, enabled, and provided the opportunity to perform its delegated functions, the Board of Governors and local boards recognize that they exercise these responsibilities in response to the overall direction and oversight of the Legislature and the Governor. The Board of Governors and local boards recognize that there are a number of policy determinations and functions appropriate for the Legislature and Governor.

- ◆ Establishing the broad mission of the colleges.
- ◆ Establishing who is entitled to access to the colleges.
- ◆ Establishing the major functions of the Board of Governors and its membership.
- ◆ Establishing the major functions of the local boards, and provisions for election.
- ◆ Determining the amount of funding for the system through the annual state budget process.
- ◆ Establishing the general parameters for determining the apportionment formulas.
- ◆ Approving state-funded capital outlay projects.
- ◆ Determining mandatory student fees.
- ◆ Determining necessary categorical programs.
- ◆ Establishing policies for the employment of college staff.
- ◆ Establishing intersegmental education systems relationships.
- ◆ Determining policies for the sale, lease, and use of real and personal property.
- ◆ Establishing provisions to assure nondiscrimination.
- ◆ Establishing provisions for uniform residency determination.
- ◆ Determining mandatory holidays for colleges.

- ◆ Determining general policies regarding territory of districts and district reorganization.
- ◆ Determining broad policies on student rights and responsibilities.

Education governance ought to have as its main goal helping students achieve their educational goals. Those functions and responsibilities that reside at the state level in the Board of Governors and the System Office should reside there because doing so creates the best possibility of meeting student needs and insuring student success. Similarly, those functions that are in the hands of local boards of trustees should be there because those local boards are best positioned to perform those functions in the best interests of students and student success.

All systems and structures are imperfect. However, this statement does indeed attempt to place specific functions and responsibilities with those, who in exercising those responsibilities, may best be able to meet the needs of the students.



## The Community College League of California

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The Community College League of California is a nonprofit, public benefit, corporation. Its voluntary membership consists of the 72 local community college districts in California. It was formed in 1990 as the result of a merger of the California Association of Community Colleges, the California Community College Trustees, and the Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges.

Within the League are two major organizations that share a common mission, staff, and fiscal resources: the California Community College Trustees (CCCT) and the Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges (CEOCCC).

In addition, the California Community College Classified Senate (CCCCS) is affiliated with the League. The League affiliated organizations have many goals and objectives similar to CCCT and CEOCCC and recognize that the sharing of facilities and some resources helps strengthen those common purposes. It is also recognized that League affiliates maintains total independence to pursue the objectives of its members, which on occasion may be at variance with the positions taken by CCCT and CEOCCC.

### Mission and Values

The mission of the Community College League of California is to strengthen California's Community Colleges through advocacy, leadership development, and district services. Our vision is quality public community colleges for all Californians.

The mission will be accomplished in a manner which recognizes the values of:

**Visionary.** The League strives to foster creative and enterprising approaches to issues confronting California's Community College leaders through consideration of the future with imagination and rigor. Ethical leadership We are committed to practicing and supporting authentic, honest, equity-minded, respectful and purposeful leadership.

**Collaborative.** Twenty-first century community college leadership demands effective collaboration among and between the multiple constituencies and stakeholders in California. The League is uniquely qualified to create opportunities for collaborative and integrated approaches to advance our sector's critical mission.

**Service.** As a member-focused organization, the League embraces the servant-leadership approach by attending to our member districts' highest priority needs first.

**Inclusive.** Serving the most diverse public system of higher education in the U.S. is an honor and a privilege. The League continually seeks to lead and support our members' efforts to create the conditions for equitable and inclusive communities of learning.

**Deliberative.** Informed and enlightened discourse and debate is a necessary condition of a pluralistic and democratic community of learners. The League seeks to foster discussion and dialogue among our diverse stakeholders to advance our understanding and support for California's Community Colleges.

### Goals

In order to accomplish the mission of the League, the board has adopted the following goals:

**Goal One:** Strengthen colleges through proactive advocacy and policy development;

**Goal Two:** Enhance the partnership and effectiveness between and among trustees and CEOs;

**Goal Three:** Increase the awareness and optimize the value of the League's services to our constituencies;

**Goal Four:** Increase the League's profile; and

**Goal Five:** Enhance resource capacity and strengthen internal communication.

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## The Boards of the League

The CCCT has a 21-member board of directors elected by the 72 local governing boards. The CEOCCC has a 16-member board of directors elected by the local community college chancellors, superintendents and presidents. CCCT meets four times a year, and CEOCCC meets monthly. At those meetings, action is taken on education policy issues before the state Board of Governors and the legislature. Policy direction is also provided to staff concerning research initiatives, publications, workshops and conferences.

To coordinate League organizations and their affiliates and to ensure their adequate support, the organizations select representatives to serve on the League board. The League board establishes the budget and dues for the League, employs and evaluates an executive director, and approves a staff organization structure. It also establishes and evaluates the annual education policy agenda and annual legislative program. The board includes three representatives from CCCT and CEOCCC, and the CCC Classified Senate.

## Commissions and Committees

The CCCT and CEOCCC boards of the League are assisted in accomplishing their common goals and objectives through standing and ad hoc committees whose membership includes trustees, administrators, faculty, classified staff, and students. Standing committees include the Advisory Committee on Education Services, Advisory Committee on Legislation, and Advisory Committee on District Services.

The League's California Community College Athletics Association (CCCAA) operates as a quasi-independent body to govern intercollegiate athletics in the community colleges. The CCCAA staff reports to the commission, which is overseen by the CEOCCC board.

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### Education Services and Leadership Development

Annual statewide conferences include the Convention, Effective Trusteeship Workshop, Student Trustee Workshop, Trustee Conference, Legislative Seminar, and Classified Leadership Institute. Educational publications include the *Trustee Handbook*, resource packets on trusteeship, and *Board Focus*. The *League on Call* provides consultants for on-site workshops and retreats for member districts.

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## District Services and Communications

District services include: high-quality, convenient, cost-effective business, fiscal, fundraising and education services and products for local districts, including tax-exempt lines of credit, revenue lease bonds and TRANs, energy purchasing consortia, charitable gift annuities, policy and procedure subscription service, library Internet databases and student health insurance.

Publications and periodicals include the *Community College Directory* and *Board Focus*. Those publications and current information on League services and state and federal issues are provided through the League's web site, reports, and regular e-mail and fax alerts. The League also provides mailing address information to members and related organizations.

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## Legislative Office – Governmental Relations

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League staff represents the local community college perspective, as determined by the CEO and CCCT boards, to the Board of Governors and state and federal legislative and executive branches. Current information on legislative issues is provided through State Legislative Updates, Bills of Interest, State Budget Updates, Advocacy Handbook, and Legislative Alerts. This information and more is available on the League's Web site, [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).

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## California Community College Athletic Association

2017 O St, Sacramento, CA 95811

Voice: (916) 444-1600 / Fax: (916) 444-2616

E-mail: [info@ccaasports.org](mailto:info@ccaasports.org)

Web site: [www.ccaasports.org](http://www.ccaasports.org)

The California Community College Athletic Association coordinates the intercollegiate athletic programs and competitions for the community colleges.

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## California Community Colleges Strategic Plan

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*The following is excerpted and adapted from “Vision for Success: Strengthening the California Community Colleges to Meet California’s Needs” by the California Community College System Office. The executive summary, Strategic Plan, and implementation updates are posted on the Chancellor’s Office Website, <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/Portals/0/Reports/vision-for-success.pdf>.*

The System Strategic Plan for the California Community Colleges (CCCs) was adopted in 2017 and provides a comprehensive road map for improving student access and success. The Plan addresses the major demographic, economic, and educational issues that California will face over the coming decade. Developed through consultation with the colleges’ educational leaders and external partners, the Plan builds on the planning and work done by individual colleges and districts, and provides a framework for all constituencies to work together.

### Challenges and Opportunities

California is a dynamic state with a wonderfully diverse population, an innovative business environment, and a vibrant workforce. It is also a state where change is always on the horizon and where opportunities are endless.

The CCCs have made significant strides in the last five years through sustained reform efforts in the areas of student success, transfer, and career technical education. The colleges are now well-poised to build on this success and accelerate the pace of improvement. At the same time, the CCCs face very serious challenges today:

1. Most students who enter a community college never complete a degree or certificate or transfer to a 4-year university. Researchers project that California’s public higher education system is not producing nearly enough educated graduates to meet future workforce needs.
2. CCC students who do reach a defined educational goal such as a degree or transfer take a long time to do so, often accumulating many excess course credits along the way.
3. Older and working CCC students are often left behind in the system, lacking services and financial aid that suit their needs.
4. CCCs are more expensive than they appear—both to students and taxpayers— because of slow time-to-completion and a lack of financial aid to cover students’ living expenses.
5. Serious and stubborn achievement gaps persist across the CCCs and high-need regions of the state are not served equitably.

### Goals for Meeting California’s Needs

The success of California’s broader system of higher education and workforce development stands or falls with the CCCs. To meet California’s needs, the CCC system should strive to achieve the following goals by 2022:

- Increase by at least 20 percent the number of CCC students annually who acquire associates degrees, credentials, certificates, or specific skill sets that prepare them for an in-demand job.

- Increase by 35 percent the number of CCC students transferring annually to a UC or CSU.
- Decrease the average number of units accumulated by CCC students earning associate's degrees, from approximately 87 total units (the most recent system-wide average) to 79 total units—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure.
- Increase the percent of exiting CTE students who report being employed in their field of study, from the most recent statewide average of 60 percent to an improved rate of 69 percent—the average among the quintile of colleges showing the strongest performance on this measure.
- Reduce equity gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among traditionally underrepresented student groups, with the goal of cutting achievement gaps by 40 percent within 5 years and fully closing those achievement gaps within 10 years.
- Reduce regional achievement gaps across all of the above measures through faster improvements among colleges located in regions with the lowest educational attainment of adults, with the ultimate goal of fully closing regional achievement gaps within 10 years.

## Opportunities - A Vision for Change

Below are seven core commitments the community college system can make to achieve these ambitious goals and realize its full potential to meet the future workforce needs of California:

1. **Focus relentlessly on students' end goals.** Getting students to their individual educational goals—whether a degree, certificate, transfer, or specific skill set—should be the explicit focus of the CCCs. More than just offering courses, colleges need to be offering pathways to specific outcomes and providing supports for students to stay on those paths until completion.
2. **Always design and decide with the student in mind.** Colleges need to make it easy for all students, including working adults, to access the courses and services they need. Students should not bear the burden of misaligned policies between education systems.
3. **Pair high expectations with high support.** Students should be encouraged to go “all in” on their education, with support to meet their personal and academic challenges. Assessment and placement practices must be reformed so that students are placed at the highest appropriate course level, with ample supports to help them succeed.
4. **Foster the use of data, inquiry, and evidence.** Data analysis should be a regular practice used for improving services at all levels, not a compliance activity. Decisions should be based on evidence, not anecdotes or hunches.
5. **Take ownership of goals and performance.** The CCC system should be rigorously transparent about its performance, own its challenges, and adopt a solution-oriented mindset to those things it can control. Goals should be used to motivate and provide direction, not punish.
6. **Enable action and thoughtful innovation.** Moving the needle on student outcomes will require calculated risk, careful monitoring, and acceptance that failures will sometimes happen. Innovation should be thoughtful and aligned with goals; results should be tracked early and often.
7. **Lead the work of partnering across systems.** Education leaders across the education systems and workforce development systems need to meet much more frequently, in more depth, and with more personnel dedicated to the task.

By working together these systems can strengthen pathways for students and improve results. In each of these areas, there are clear steps for the CCC Chancellor's Office to lead and support the work of the colleges, from modeling the kinds of organizational changes and behaviors expected at the college level to advocating for CCC students at the highest levels of state government.



## California Community College Districts and Colleges

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District and college addresses, phone numbers, Web site addresses and other contact information is available in the *Community College Directory* published by the League and on the League Web site.

**Allan Hancock Joint CCD**

Allan Hancock College  
*Lompoc Valley Center*

**Antelope Valley CCD**

Antelope Valley College  
*Palmdale Center*

**Barstow CCD**

Barstow College

**Butte-Glenn CCD**

Butte College  
*Chico Center*

**Cabrillo CCD**

Cabrillo College  
*Watsonville Center*

**Cerritos CCD**

Cerritos College

**Chabot-Las Positas CCD**

Chabot College  
Las Positas College

**Chaffey CCD**

Chaffey College

**Citrus CCD**

Citrus College

**Coast CCD**

Coastline Community College  
Golden West College  
Orange Coast College

**Compton CCD**

Compton College

**Contra Costa CCD**

Contra Costa College  
Diablo Valley College  
*San Ramon Campus*  
Los Medanos College  
*Brentwood Center*

**Copper Mountain CCD**

Copper Mountain College

**Desert CCD**

College of the Desert

**El Camino CCD**

El Camino College

**Feather River CCD**

Feather River College

**Foothill-De Anza CCD**

De Anza College  
Foothill College

**Gavilan CCD**

Gavilan College

**Glendale CCD**

Glendale Community College

**Grossmont-Cuyamaca CCD**

Cuyamaca College  
Grossmont College

**Hartnell CCD**

Hartnell College

**Imperial CCD**

Imperial Valley College

**Kern CCD**

Bakersfield College  
Cerro Coso Community College  
Porterville College  
*Delano Center*  
*Eastern Sierra Center-Bishop*  
*Eastern Sierra Center-Mammoth*  
*Kern River Valley Center*  
*South Kern Center*

**Lake Tahoe CCD**

Lake Tahoe Community College

**Lassen CCD**

Lassen College

**Long Beach CCD**

Long Beach City College

**Los Angeles CCD**

East Los Angeles College  
Los Angeles City College  
Los Angeles Harbor College  
Los Angeles Mission College  
Los Angeles Pierce College  
Los Angeles Southwest College  
Los Angeles Trade-Tech College  
Los Angeles Valley College  
West Los Angeles College

**Los Rios CCD**

American River College  
Folsom Lake College  
Cosumnes River College  
Sacramento City College  
*El Dorado Center*

**Marin CCD**

College of Marin  
*Indian Valley Campus*

**Mendocino-Lake CCD**

Mendocino College

**Merced CCD**

Merced College  
*Los Banos Campus*

**MiraCosta CCD**

MiraCosta College  
*San Elijo Campus*

**Monterey Peninsula CCD**

Monterey Peninsula College

**Mt San Antonio CCD**

Mt San Antonio College

**Mt San Jacinto CCD**

Mt San Jacinto College  
*Menifee Valley Campus*

**Napa Valley CCD**

Napa Valley College  
*Upper Valley Campus*

**North Orange County CCD**

Cypress College  
Fullerton College

**Ohlone CCD**

Ohlone College

**Palo Verde CCD**

Palo Verde College

**Palomar CCD**

Palomar College  
*Escondido Campus*

**Pasadena Area CCD**

Pasadena City College

**Peralta CCD**

College of Alameda  
Laney College  
Merritt College  
Vista College

**Rancho Santiago CCD**

Santa Ana College  
Santiago Canyon College

**Redwoods CCD**

College of the Redwoods  
*Del Norte Campus*  
*Mendocino Coast Campus*

**Rio Hondo CCD**

Rio Hondo College

**Riverside CCD**

Riverside Community College  
Moreno Valley College  
Norco College

**San Bernardino CCD**

Crafton Hills College  
San Bernardino Valley College

**San Diego CCD**

San Diego City College  
San Diego Mesa College  
San Diego Miramar College  
San Diego Centers for Ed & Tech

**San Francisco CCD**

City College of San Francisco

**San Joaquin Delta CCD**

San Joaquin Delta College

**San Jose-Evergreen CCD**

Evergreen Valley College  
San Jose City College

**San Luis Obispo County CCD**

Cuesta College  
*North County Campus*

**San Mateo County CCD**

Cañada College  
College of San Mateo  
Skyline College

**Santa Barbara CCD**

Santa Barbara City College

**Santa Clarita CCD**

College of the Canyons

**Santa Monica CCD**

Santa Monica College

**Sequoias CCD**

College of the Sequoias

**Shasta-Tehama-Trinity CCD**

Shasta College

**Sierra Joint CCD**

Sierra College  
*Nevada City Center*

**Siskiyou Joint CCD**

College of the Siskiyous  
*Yreka Campus*

**Solano County CCD**

Solano Community College  
*Vacaville Center*  
*Vallejo Center*  
*Travis University Center*

**Sonoma County CCD**

Santa Rosa Junior College

**South Orange County CCD**

Irvine Valley College  
Saddleback College

**Southwestern CCD**

Southwestern College

**State Center CCD**

Fresno City College  
Reedley College  
Clovis Community College  
*Madera Center*  
*Vocational Training Center*

**Ventura County CCD**

Moorpark College  
Oxnard College  
Ventura College

**Victor Valley CCD**

Victor Valley College

**West Hills CCD**

West Hills College Coalinga  
West Hills College Lemoore  
*North District Center*  
*LNAS Center*

**West Kern CCD**

Taft College

**West Valley-Mission CCD**

Mission College  
West Valley College

**Yosemite CCD**

Columbia College  
Modesto Junior College

**Yuba CCD**

Yuba College  
Woodland College  
*Colusa Campus*  
*Lake County Campus*





## Governing Board Role

Community college boards ensure the wise and prudent delivery of education, a critical local and state resource, on behalf of the people in their communities. They are guardians of and stewards for the public's interests. Trustees, as members of boards, ensure that the community college district fulfills its responsibility to lead and serve its ever-changing communities.

Lay boards create a link between educational institutions and their communities. They also buffer colleges from undue intrusion by government and single interests. Boards are responsible for the resources, performance and welfare of the institutions they govern. The task is tremendous, but the rewards associated with successfully overseeing the vitality of a community college are countless.

### Community Colleges Make a Difference

The purpose of community colleges is to create a difference for their communities, regions, and the state. They exist in order that society benefits from educated citizens and a well-prepared workforce. They add to the economic, cultural, social, and intellectual health of their communities. They fulfill their role when students successfully achieve their goals.

Community colleges have long been known for opening their doors to many diverse groups of people and providing an opportunity for a better life. They are known for creating environments in which students learn, gain skills for employment, and become the kind of citizens that contribute back to society. Colleges are also known for being leaders in their communities to create a higher quality of life, promote collaboration and partnerships, adapt to rapid societal changes, and uphold values of open inquiry, integrity, and critical thinking.

The challenge for governing boards lies in establishing and focusing on a vision and mission that clearly define the expected impact of the district on the areas served by the college. It is the board's responsibility, on behalf of the public, to define what the end result of all of the colleges' efforts should be. Boards should define, in consultation with those they represent and with internal groups at the college, what the benefits of the college are for the community, who should receive those benefits, and the relative importance of the benefits. They explore and set expectations for the levels of success that students should achieve.

In meeting that challenge, boards look to the future and anticipate what will be needed for their communities. Trustees become involved in exciting, creative, thoughtful discussions as they explore the future and envision what they want their communities to be.

#### Trusteeship in a Nutshell

You are a member of a lay board that, as a unit—

- Governs through policy.
- Employs a chief executive officer as the institutional leader.
- Acts as a community bridge and buffer.
- Creates a climate for student success.
- Defines legal, ethical, and prudent standards for college operations.
- Assures fiscal health and stability.
- Maintains standards for good personnel relations.
- Monitors institutional performance.
- Leads as a thoughtful educated team.

## Responsibilities of the Board

Strong, effective boards help create strong effective institutions by focusing on their own unique responsibilities. The board's role is significantly different than the roles of the CEO and others employed at the college. One way to think of it is that the board does not do the work of the institution, but ensures that it is done.

### The Board is a Lay Board

Trustees are elected to a board that is responsible to represent the general citizenry for whom they hold the college in trust. The board should understand the values of its communities and should strive for decisions that incorporate the variety of external interests. Trustees come from all professions, including education, but are not on the board to practice their profession or represent a single interest.

### The Board as a Unit

Trustees have authority only when they are meeting as a board. The board as a whole is the legal governing unit. Trustees contribute their collective talents, skills, and perspectives to their boards, but have no individual power. Individual trustees have no authority to direct any college staff, make no statements representing the board (unless they are reports of adopted board positions and policy), and support board decisions once they are made.

### Governs through Policy

The most important board responsibility is to make good policy, which then provides guidance for college staff. Policy is defined as broad statements that set the general direction and standards for acceptable practice.

This emphasis on policy reflects the nature of trusteeship. Board members are community representatives who hire a CEO to lead the institution. The CEO hires staff members who have the expertise to implement board policy and fulfill the purposes of the institution. The system works best when trustees focus their efforts on representing community interests through the policies they adopt. The policies are most effective when they delegate the day-to-day operations to the CEO and college staff; the board can then concentrate on future needs and institutional effectiveness.

A primary policy focus for boards is the district's vision and mission. It requires that boards are strategic in their thinking and focused on the future learning needs of their communities. Trustees must be aware of broad and diverse community values and needs. They must provide leadership for the mission of the college to provide access, promote equity, and ensure that students are successful. They ensure that strategic and educational plans support what is needed for students and the community.

Boards adopt policies that guide the operations of the district. They periodically review their policy manual to ensure that it is both current and relevant.

#### Steps in Governing through Policy Direction

1. Allocate time to discuss policy values, future trends and community needs.
2. Periodically review, evaluate, and update college policies, including the mission and goals.
3. Consult with college employees on policy development.

### Employs and Supports the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Successful governance requires a good board/CEO relationship. The CEO is the primary agent of the board and is the single most influential person in creating an outstanding institution. The most important decision the board makes is hiring the right CEO for the district, one who reflects and is committed to the board's goals and values. The relationship is maintained through ongoing support and clear evaluation.

The CEO and board function best as a team. While the CEO is hired to carry out board policies, trustees look to the CEO for guidance and educational leadership. Mutually agreed-upon clear descriptions and expectations of roles and responsibilities help ensure open communication, confidence and trust.

The CEO is responsible for preparing meeting agendas to the board and for the recommendations brought to the board. If a problem or issue comes to the attention of a trustee that is a matter for the board, it may be placed on a board agenda. If the problem is one that should be solved through administrative channels, the CEO will refer it to the appropriate staff member.

### Goals in Board/CEO Relations

1. Select and retain the best CEO for the district.
2. Establish clear parameters and expectations for performance and evaluation.
3. Support the CEO.

### Acts as a Community Bridge and Buffer

Trustees are an essential link with the community. They govern on behalf of the public and must be responsive to the needs of external constituents. They both represent the community to the college, and advocate for the college in the community and state. They can be powerful influences in building partnerships with business, industry, and government.

Boards also act as buffers from undue pressure on the institution from government and special interests. They ensure that administrators and faculty have the freedom necessary in higher education to explore and address a wide variety of issues and to expand the boundaries of knowledge.

### Goals for Community Relations

1. Maintain a focus on external needs and trends.
2. Meet with community boards and groups to discuss and explore common issues.
3. Advocate for the college with the state and in the community.
4. Support the foundation and fundraising efforts.

### Creates a Climate for Student Success

Boards set the tone for the entire district. Through their actions and behavior, boards can establish a climate in which learning is valued, professional growth is enhanced, and the most important goals are student success and making a difference for the community.

Trustees create a positive climate when they focus on the future and on student success, support risk taking, and positively challenge the CEO and college staff to strive for excellence. They establish and maintain high expectations for student success. They ensure that the strategic plan addresses what is needed for students to succeed.

Effective trustees, as individuals, strive for the “high road,” seek full participation in decision-making, and encourage and model innovation, leadership, and professional development.

### Steps for a Positive Climate

1. Model a desire for learning and professional growth.
2. Focus on and monitor student success.
3. Support innovation.

### Defines Parameters for Operations

Board policies contain the standards for ethical, legal, and prudent operations in the district. These policies guide the decisions of administrators, faculty, and classified staff as they design and implement the programs, services, and practices that achieve the goals of the district. Administrative regulations, written by staff, define how policy standards are applied on a day-to-day basis. Two major areas for which boards have important policy responsibilities are fiscal practice and human resources development.

### Goals for Policy Parameters

1. Adopt legal, ethical, and prudent standards as policy.
2. Monitor adherence to legislative mandates and policy standards.
3. Adopt fiscal policies that ensure stability and effective use of funds.
4. Establish policy standards that employment practices are fair, legal, and designed to enhance employee performance.

### **Fiscal Health and Stability**

Boards are responsible for ensuring that the public's money is spent wisely and well. Boards fulfill this responsibility best by establishing, as policy, their parameters or boundaries on the use of public funds, and by reviewing annual audits conducted by firms that they hire.

As trustees participate in budget discussions and approve the budget document, they are setting policies that will have great impact on the college. Budget allocations should be tied to achieving the mission and goals of the college, and should reflect educational priorities.

### **Establish High Standards for Good Personnel Relations**

In essence, the CEO is the only employee the board has. However, boards should establish policy parameters that ensure that the selection, evaluation, and dismissal procedures for all employees are legal, fair, clear, and appropriate, and that equal opportunity philosophies are followed. Effective boards set a positive climate for collective bargaining and dispute resolution, and model principled negotiations.

### **Monitors the Performance of the Institution**

Boards have the responsibility to hold colleges accountable for achieving student success and serving their communities. As stated earlier, a major role of boards is to define the general outcomes or goals of the college in terms of student success and benefits to the community. . Once these are established, boards should monitor the progress made toward those ends. For instance, if the board determines that, because of the college, students should have the skills and knowledge needed to excel in employment and/or in universities, then the board should ask for reports related to progress toward those goals.

#### **Goals for Monitoring**

1. Monitor progress toward goals and adherence to policy.
2. Use pre-established criteria.
3. Establish a schedule for reports.

Boards also monitor adherence to the legal, ethical and prudent expectations defined in policy related to college operations. Boards should establish the criteria and indicators used to monitor progress and adherence to policies prior to the actual monitoring, so that the CEO and staff know what is expected of them.

### **Leads as a Thoughtful, Ethical, Educated Team**

Good trusteeship requires the ability to function as part of a team, and a team functions best when the members are well informed and act objectively. Trustees are expected to speak openly for their points of view during the decision-making process, and to support the position of the board once the decision is made.

Boards model civility and professionalism by working well together and handling conflict constructively. A fragmented, fractious board that is mired in administrative detail lowers morale, wastes resources, and reduces the ability of the district to achieve its goals. Dysfunctional boards hurt the perceived value of the colleges.

Good boards are also analytical in their thinking. Trustees contribute to board effectiveness by listening well, asking good questions, and clarifying for themselves and staff members their most important values and priorities. Asking questions and listening to answers ensures that issues are explored thoroughly and that policy decisions are based on thoughtful deliberation and comprehensive understanding.

Effective boards are future-oriented and strategic in their thinking. They recognize that today's world requires flexible institutions and personnel who are willing to evolve, adapt, and grow in response to the changing needs of society. Trustees who act with vision, intelligence, curiosity, and enthusiasm help create a board that is a positive agent for change.

#### **Leadership Steps**

1. Seek and consider many points of view and sources of information.
2. Focus on future needs and plans.
3. Be positive and supportive.
4. Show respect for each other and the staff.
5. Be ethical; act with integrity.

## Board Effectiveness

The ultimate criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the board and the CEO are how well the institution is meeting its goals and fulfilling its mission. If the institution is not succeeding in educating students, the board and the CEO must look at their own performance as the leadership team of the district. Positive assessments of board and CEO performance mean little if their colleges are in trouble.

Richard Chait conducted a study that found that boards associated with effective colleges were strong on six dimensions. Effective boards envision and shape institutional direction, cultivate processes that sharpen priorities, ensure a strategic approach to the future, and anticipate potential problems (strategic dimension). They draw upon multiple perspectives to make decisions and recognize the complexities and subtleties in the decisions they face (analytical dimension). Effective boards understand the contextual dimension of their decisions and take into account the culture and values of the institution. They rely on the institutional mission and traditions as guides for decision-making.

Effective boards ensure that trustees are educated about the institution and their roles (educational dimension). Effective boards also nurture the cohesiveness of the board as a group and are strong on the interpersonal dimension. They understand the political dimension and recognize the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships among key constituencies. They analyze problems and situations using diverse values and contributions from many different groups.

In a more recent study, Chait, Ryan and Taylor found that the most effective boards performed three roles very well: fiduciary, strategic, and generative. The fiduciary role addresses the stewardship of tangible assets such as the budget, the facilities, and compliance with laws and regulations. In its strategic role, the board focuses on the key issues related to fulfilling the district's mission. The board's attention shifts from conformance to fiduciary standards to institutional performance. The generative mode is when the board provides leadership to the college by ensuring that trustees and college leaders engage in productive and creative discussions on educational policy and issues. They have courageous conversations about student success outcomes and how they can be improved.

Clark Kerr and Miriam Gade conducted an earlier study and found that effective boards consisted of concerned members who acquiesced to the responsibilities and constraints of being a board member. The most effective boards were those that concentrated on results, attended to major aspects of policy and performance, and did not try to administer. Trustees on effective boards tended to operate in a consensual or collegial manner and supported decisions the board made as a whole.

## Statutory Responsibilities

The California Education Code contains laws that govern community colleges and define the roles and responsibilities of governing boards. Boards and trustees are also subject to provisions of the Open Meetings Act (Brown Act), Fair Political Practices Act, and laws pertaining to conflicts of interest. In addition, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges has established regulations and policies (contained in Title 5 of the California Administrative Code) that implement legislation and further delimit the authority of local governing boards.

The following responsibilities are stated in Education Code Section 70902, which authorizes and defines local boards. The section also authorizes local boards to delegate their power to the chief executive officer and other college staff and committees, unless specifically prohibited by law.

1. Establish rules and regulations not inconsistent with the regulations of the Board of Governors and the laws of this state.
2. Establish policies for and approve comprehensive, academic, and facilities plans.
3. Establish policies for and approve courses of instruction and educational programs.
4. Establish academic standards and graduation requirements.
5. Employ all personnel and establish employment practices.
6. Determine budgets within legal constraints, and determine the needs for tax and bond elections.
7. Manage and control district property.

8. Establish procedures for effective involvement in the local decision-making process.
9. Establish rules for student conduct.
10. Establish fees as required by law.
11. Accept grants, gifts, and scholarships.
12. Provide auxiliary services as necessary.
13. Determine the academic calendar.
14. Participate in the Board of Governors' state consultation process.

In general, boards of trustees in California delegate significant authority to the CEO, as well as to the Academic Senate according to Title 5 regulations. Effective boards limit their role to developing broad policy and providing oversight in the areas listed above, and delegate the responsibility for administrative and professional duties to the professionals in the colleges.

Legal responsibilities of boards are also touched on in other chapters of this Handbook.

## Summary

Community college governing boards are elected by and come from the community. In turn, they strive to be responsive to the immediate and long-term needs of the community. They are most effective when they focus on their relationship with external communities, their policy-making role, and their responsibility to monitor the progress of their institutions. Trustees face the awesome challenge to seek out, consider and balance many diverse values and interests as they engage in the policy-making process that guides their colleges to excellence and success.

## Trusteeship

Most trustees of California's community colleges seek the position because they have a sincere desire to serve and give back to the community. They believe in the mission and wish to play a role in ensuring access to and success in high quality education. They want to make a difference by serving as a member of the governing board.

Trustees are entrusted with the success of community colleges, institutions that fulfill an essential public good. Being a trustee for an educational institution is not the same as being a member of a legislative body, such as a city council. Their role and primary responsibility is to protect and promote the community college district. As elected officials, they must consider and represent the many interests in their communities. Therefore, they have the duty to uphold what is good for the college district above all other interests and rights.

The job is demanding and time-consuming. It requires sophisticated interpersonal skills as well as the abilities to understand complex information and balance multiple interests. However, the rewards are great and the results are essential for society's well-being.

### Trustee Responsibilities

- Honor the "team" nature of the board.
- Allocate time to prepare for and attend meetings.
- Participate in trustee development.
- Serve as an advocate and liaison between the college and the community.
- Actively support the college and the CEO and staff.
- Ensure that all district business is channeled through the CEO.
- Have a positive, visionary mindset; support the mission of the college to provide access, promote equity, and assure student success.

## Responsibilities of Trusteeship

Trustees are individuals. However, effective trusteeship occurs only through being a valuable member of a team of people who, together, comprise the legal unit that governs a district. Being successful as a trustee is measured by the effectiveness of the board as a whole.

Effective trustees are those who make sincere efforts to work with others on the board in a cooperative, collegial manner and who are willing to abide by principles that contribute to board effectiveness. Being a member of the leadership team involves respect and consideration for others and for the responsibilities of trusteeship.

As individuals, trustees are most successful when they fulfill the following responsibilities.

### Time Commitment

Being a trustee is a significant commitment of time and energy. On the average, trustees spend anywhere from 3 to 10 hours a week on work related to the board. Sufficient time should be allocated for studying board meeting agenda items and other materials related to governing the district, attending board meetings and others related to board work, participating in community events to represent the district, attending college events, and participating in conferences designed to strengthen trustee knowledge and skills.



## Attendance

Trustees should participate in board meetings and workshops, and ensure they arrive on time and are prepared for the meeting. In addition, effective trustees show their support for the district by attending college events and visibly supporting the college in the community. They support fundraising efforts, and may contribute to the foundation to the best of their ability. They advocate for the college in the community and with state and local officials.

Trustee involvement, however, should not extend into the day-to-day life of the college. Trustees should not be on campus to a degree that it is perceived as interfering or micromanaging college activities. They should not ask special favors of staff members or attempt to direct staff activities.

## Knowledge

Governing thoughtfully and making wise decisions require being knowledgeable about effective governance, the colleges, and the social and economic trends that affect education. This Trustee Handbook covers essential knowledge for trustees, including the state system and governance of the colleges, board roles and standards of practice, board and CEO relations, educational policy and quality, fiscal policy, human resources policy and relations with staff, and resources for trustees. The League also publishes numerous other materials for trustees and CEOs, and encourages trustees to learn from other organizations as well. The League's brochure, *Trusteeship: Tasks, Knowledge and Skills*, lists specific areas of knowledge trustees should have.

Trustees gain knowledge and skills through a thorough and ongoing orientation to the district and its colleges and centers. They understand their college's history, traditions, and culture. They read voraciously. They attend conferences to learn more about educational policy and to enhance their skills and effectiveness. They seek out and are aware of community needs and interests in order to better represent the community. They ask for and understand research on how students are succeeding and what is required for student success.

Trustees, particularly new ones, allocate significant time for reading and study. They prepare for board meetings by thoroughly reading the agenda and asking questions of the CEO and other board members to clarify items and gain background information.

## Mindset and Vision

Effective trustees are visionary. They focus about the future of the colleges and how societal trends might influence the district's mission. They act with intelligence and curiosity and engage in critical thinking when presented with problems and issues.

Effective trustees are analytical. They seek and consider many points of view and are able to recognize the complexities and subtleties in the decisions they face. They take into account the culture and values of the institution. They are "results-oriented" and help their boards and the CEO focus on student success.

Effective trustees are thoughtful. When faced with decisions, they take time to assess which course of action will best benefit the district and best reflects the appropriate role of the board. They also reflect on their own performance and that of the board. They are willing to engage in self-evaluation and to use the results to improve their own and the board's performance. They are willing to engage in courageous conversations about student and institutional performance.

## Communication

Open, straightforward and tactful communication builds trust; trustees with strong interpersonal skills contribute much to board functioning. They recognize the need to develop and maintain healthy relationships among key constituencies

Effective trustees show respect by honoring communication protocols and lines of authority within the district. Respect for the CEO and fellow board members includes following the principle of "no surprises." Publicly communicating one's support for and confidence in the CEO contributes to a strong CEO/board partnership.

## Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Trustees who understand and uphold the ethics and values inherent in being a member of the board contribute much. The chapter on ethics in this Trustee Handbook covers key principles in ethical public service. It is good practice and an accreditation standard that each board has and abides by a code of ethics; all trustees should be familiar with their own board's policy statement.

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By law, all elected state and local officials must avoid conflicts of interest in the performance of their duties, and must file statements of economic interests. Public officials have a conflict of interest when they use the position to influence a policy decision that will affect their financial interest in material ways.

Effective trustees are scrupulous about avoiding even the perception that there are conflicts of interest. They are aware that appearing to act to benefit their own interests (or those who are close to them) at the cost of the district will harm their credibility and trustworthiness.

### **Using Influence Effectively**

Given that trusteeship is best expressed as a member of the board, good trustees learn how to effectively influence board decisions and district direction. As community representatives, they bring perspectives that contribute to the policy direction of the district. They return from conferences and community meetings with ideas that they may want to see implemented in their own districts. A key to success is to use appropriate ways to share ideas, place items on board agendas, and influence discussions.

Savvy trustees use their influence on the board itself; they do not use it to direct staff activities. They understand that CEOs and board chairs are the contact points for specific ideas and suggestions.

Every board should have a process for individual trustees to place items on the board agenda. Trustees, particularly new ones, should discuss such items with the CEO or board chair in order to understand relevant history and background. Timing is often everything in ensuring that ideas are listened to; effective trustees research and plan the timing of their proposals.

Influencing board decisions involves being well prepared, having good information, and building strong relationships with other board members. People are more likely to listen to someone who has been supportive and positive, and is willing to listen to and respect all ideas.

## **Summary**

Community college trusteeship, done well, is an invaluable service to the board, the colleges, and the community. It requires a significant commitment of time and dedication to learning. The best trustees are open-minded, thoughtful, visionary, and capable of seeing the “big picture.” They have excellent interpersonal skills and work well with diverse people and personalities. They are supportive and benevolent, enthusiastic and energetic. They are trustworthy.

*"There is no other way that as few people can raise the quality of American society as far and as fast as can trustees and directors of our voluntary institutions, using the strengths they now have in the positions they now hold."*

– Robert K. Greenleaf



## The Student Trustee

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State law (Education Code 72023.5) requires the board of trustees of each community college district to have at least one non-voting student member to be chosen by the students in a manner determined by the board. To be eligible, the student must be enrolled in a community college of the district for at least five semester units. The term of office for the student trustee is one year, commencing on May 15 or June 1 of each year. Student trustees have the same general responsibilities as all trustees to represent the interests of the entire community; however, they also provide a student perspective on the issues facing the board.

Student trustees are not necessarily advocates for specific student issues, just as other trustees are not advocates for single interests. Student trustees provide their perspective to ensure that the students of the future will be served well.

### Student Member Rights

1. Right to attend all meetings. The student trustee has the right to attend all meetings of the governing board, with the exception of closed sessions.
2. Participation. During all meetings, the student member has the right to participate in discussion, ask questions, and be seated with the board. As an official member of the board, the student member is entitled to receive materials furnished to regular board members with the exception of materials related to closed sessions.
3. Mileage Reimbursement. The nonvoting student member is entitled to mileage reimbursement to the same extent and under the same policies as other governing board members.

### Student Member Privileges

Each local board has the discretion to grant certain privileges to the student trustees. These privileges must be approved for continuation on a year-to-year basis prior to May 15 and include:

1. Make and second motions. The board may grant the privilege of making and seconding motions.
2. Compensation. Receiving compensation for board service (Education Code 72425) is at the discretion of the governing board.
3. Advisory vote. The student trustee does not have the right to vote and shall not be afforded the right to vote by a district. However, although not referenced in statute, many districts have established an advisory vote for the student trustee. This advisory vote does not count in determining if an item passes, but may be logged in the official minutes.
4. Attending some closed sessions. The privilege to attend closed sessions other than those on personnel and collective bargaining may be granted by the board.

### Responsibilities

The extent to which the student trustee is viewed as an advocate for and representative of the current student body varies from board to board, and depends somewhat on the attitude of the person holding the position. Some feel the student trustee plays a similar role to the Associated Students organization and represents current students – in this case, the responsibilities are similar to A.S. leaders. However, as a trustee, the student member of the board has the same responsibility as all trustees – to make board decisions that benefit the community as a whole and students of the future, as well as the current student body. The League has published a paper, *Perspectives on the Role of Student Trustees*, that further explores the different views.

Student trustees have the following responsibilities to become acquainted with the issues, successfully perform the duties of their position, and be a contributing member of the board. Student trustees should be aware of current issues and prepare themselves for board meetings. Effective decision-making also requires understanding the role of a governing board member.

As with any obligation, the ability to be heard and to influence others depends on taking seriously the responsibility as a student board member. “Doing one’s homework” about the issues before the board enhances effectiveness. Following are other specific responsibilities:

**Become educated about board and district issues by attending:**

- Board meetings prior to taking office.
- College and state conferences.
- Campus committee meetings.
- Meetings of the student association(s).
- Meetings of community groups.

**Carefully read:**

- All board agendas.
- The board policy manual.
- Important district materials such as the most recent accreditation report and long-range planning documents.
- Material on trusteeship and the role of boards, including the League’s Trustee Handbook.

**Periodically meet with:**

- Chancellor or district superintendent/president.
- Board president and other board members.
- The advisor to the position.
- The Associated Student President and/or Council.

**Study the role and responsibilities of being a member of the board:**

- Meet with the past student trustee.
- Attend conferences and workshops on trusteeship.
- Learn from other trustees about how to be a good board member.
- Seek a mentor on the board.

## **Support for the Student Trustee**

In order to succeed, student trustees require support and assistance from the CEO, other trustees and college leaders. An orientation process similar to that of other newly elected trustees should be offered. Student trustees in multi-college districts have the challenge of learning about colleges other than their own, and need an introduction to district-wide issues and practices.

Student trustees will benefit from the same communication and assistance other trustees receive from the CEO and board secretaries. That support ensures they will receive the same information as all trustees.

A “mentor” on the board may be assigned to help the student trustee learn about how the board works and to review the agenda and related issues. Student trustees should be encouraged to talk with other members of their boards, attend conferences for trustees, and participate in community events and meetings as a trustee.

Advisors to student trustees should understand the unique role of governing boards and the trustees who serve on them. There are different expectations for the student trustee role than for student body officers.

Trustees and CEOs help student trustees balance their dual roles as students and as trustees by clarifying their assumptions about who the student trustee represents. Student trustees provide a student perspective and can contribute a great deal in their role as representatives of those who are central to the mission of the college.

## District Practices

Districts are required by law to annually adopt rules related to the privileges, and vary widely in their approach to granting privileges to student trustees. The League conducts and publishes a biennial survey of district practices related to number of student trustees, selection/election processes, compensation, motions and advisory votes, and attendance at closed sessions. The following is a summary of the 2017 survey; district-by-district results can be obtained by contacting the Community College League.

### 72 Total Districts

# of Student Representatives	
62	districts 1 representative
8	districts 2 representatives

Selection Process	
62	districts Elected by student body
2	districts elected by Student Body Committee
6	Student Body President assumes Student Trustee
2	districts Other

Associated Student (AS) Role	
11	districts Student trustee and AS president are the same person
58	districts Student trustee and AS president are separate roles

When Selected	
1	districts March
22	districts April
38	districts May
3	districts Varies

When Seated	
11	districts May
48	districts June
4	districts July
4	districts August
1	district September

Make Motions	
41	districts Yes
17	districts No
4	can second

Attend Closed Session (within legal limits)	
8	board decides
1	districts Yes, by invitation only
58	districts No

Advisory Vote	
49	districts Yes
14	districts No
4	board decides annually

Primary Staff Contact or Advisor	
16	districts CEO
14	districts Student activities advisor
12	districts Chief student services officer
5	districts CEO and another administrator
12	districts CEO executive assistant
10	districts other administrator

Compensation for Board Service	
18	maximum allowed by law
11	less than maximum
18	monthly stipend

Additional resources for and about student trustees are available on the League's Web site, [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org), and from the Community College League of California.

## Board Organization and Practices

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California's community colleges consist of 73 districts, each with its own governing board. State statutes create boards, define their authority, and establish parameters for the numbers of trustees on the board, officers, compensation, and organizational meetings. Local boards have some flexibility in determining election practices, compensation levels, and other board practices.

### Composition

The composition of local boards are:

32 districts	5 publicly elected trustees
40 district	7 publicly elected trustees

Each board also has one or more student trustees selected by the students in a manner determined by the board. There are 442 publicly elected trustees. Of the publicly elected trustees, approximately 42.3% are women and 57.4% men. The ethnic breakdown is roughly 66.92% Anglo, 20% Latino, 5% African American, and 5% Asian American, with 1.8% unknown.

### Organization

Boards are required to hold an annual organizational meeting (typically held in December) to seat any new members and elect officers. Required officers are a board president and a secretary. (The Education Code defines the chair position as president of the board; however, the position is often referred to as the chair to avoid confusion with the CEO's title as president.) Boards usually elect a vice chair to assume the responsibilities of the chair when necessary. Most boards designate the chief executive officer as the board secretary.

### Committees

California's community college boards tend not to have standing committees. With the relatively few members on boards and required monthly board meetings, committees are generally neither practical nor necessary. The broad policy discussions that are the domain of college boards usually take place in a meeting of the whole.

The purpose of board committees is to help the board do its work. Boards should not have committees that oversee staff work—the temptation then exists for committees to direct staff or for staff to go directly to committee members. This leads to abrogation of the CEO's authority and/or the board's authority as a unit.

The most common board standing committee is a finance or audit committee. This committee is assigned to review the district audit and college budget and to make recommendations to the board.

Boards may establish ad hoc committees or task forces for specific board activities, such as nominating officers or establishing and conducting a board self-evaluation process.

Open meeting requirements (the Brown Act) may apply to certain committees established by the board.



## Compensation

Local boards may determine compensation for meeting attendance within legal limits that are based on district enrollment (Education Code Section 72425). A 2011 survey indicated that in 42 districts, trustees receive the maximum compensation allowed by law; in 23 they receive compensation, but less than the maximum; and in seven districts, trustees receive no compensation for meeting attendance. Sixty-five districts provide health benefits for trustees.

Districts reimburse trustees for expenses incurred while performing their duties. The levels of reimbursement and support for trustee education vary from district to district.

## Elections

Of the 36 states that have local community college governing boards, California is one of 17 states that elect trustees. California trustees run for four-year terms. No district has term limits for locally elected trustees, although the Education Code (section 72103(c)) allows the local electorate to establish term limits.

Most boards hold elections for some of their seats every two years: 48 districts hold their elections in even years, 24 in odd years. Most elections are held in conjunction with the November election; three districts hold their election in the spring.

Districts organize elections in the following ways:

- trustee must live in a specific area and is elected at large (10)
- trustee must live in a specific area and is elected by voters residing in that area (48)
- trustee may live anywhere in the district and is elected at large (11)
- trustee is elected to represent a specific area in a primary, then the winners run in an at-large election (1)

Boards may initiate the process to change the method by which trustees are elected or change the number of members from 5 to 7 or vice versa. The processes and requirements for doing so are addressed in law, including Education Code sections 5019, 5020 – 5024, and 72022. Under most circumstances, the board would initiate the process by submitting a proposal to the county committee on school district organization, and approval by the county committee would trigger a local election on the issue. There has been a slight tendency over the years for districts to shift to electing trustees by area.

Each method of election has benefits and limitations. Those who support election by area state that any one area of the district is prevented from being “over-represented” on the board. It is also argued that minority groups will have a great opportunity to be elected to the board. Those who support at-large elections believe that the process encourages trustees to take a big picture approach to governance. Trustees elected at large are accountable to voters throughout the district. “Running by area and being elected at large” responds in part to both concerns.

The position of trustee is a non-partisan position, and party politics rarely play a role in local board elections. In fact, given the responsibility of trustees to be stewards for the public trust—the “common good”—partisan politics may hurt, rather than help, the board perform its responsibility for the institution. The board is responsible to include a myriad of perspectives in its decision-making.

## Recruiting and Educating Candidates

The governing board and CEO play an important leadership role in publicizing openings on the board and the expectations for being a trustee. Boards benefit themselves and their colleges if they have open and inclusive “recruitment” processes. They can help ensure that candidates for the board are prepared for the responsibilities of being on the board by educating and informing interested people about what it takes to be an excellent trustee. Openings and expectations for board members may be publicized through local news media, forums, and information to community leadership groups.

Candidates for the board should learn as much as possible about the district and the board. They should be encouraged to attend board meetings, read reports about the district, and meet with current board members and the CEO. The board may wish to hold an orientation session for all candidates. The Community College League publishes materials for candidates and potential candidates to help them learn about their role.

## Appointments

The two most common reasons for vacancies are when a trustee resigns or moves out of the area or district prior to the end of his or her term. Other reasons are listed in the Government Code (section 1770). The vacancy is official when the written resignation is filed with the county superintendent or a deferred date stated in the resignation (Education Code section 5090).

Filling vacancies requires the board to decide whether to provisionally appoint someone to fill the position or to hold a special election within 60 days (Ed Code section 5091). If someone is provisionally appointed, the registered voters of the district may petition to conduct a special election within 30 days of the appointment. If no petition is filed, the appointment is effective until the next regularly scheduled election for the board.

Boards may encourage community leaders to apply for appointment or consider running for office. Boards often help identify and recruit community leaders for other roles, such as membership on the foundation board and college advisory committees. These people may be good candidates to later run for the board.

Boards usually appoint someone to vacancies in order to save the cost of a special election. A typical appointment process is:

- Establish a timeline for the appointment process.
- Determine criteria for screening applications and interviewing candidates.
- Publicize the vacancy.
- Actively recruit applicants for the board.
- Identify strategies to educate interested people about the district and the roles and responsibilities of being a trustee.
- Ask applicants to submit resumes and letters of interest.
- Review applications using the pre-established criteria.
- Identify and invite people to interview.
- Interview candidates using a standard set of questions. (The interviews must be a public session.)
- Select and provisionally appoint a trustee.
- Publicize the appointment of the new trustee.

After 30 days, if no petition for a special election has been filed, the new person is appointed until the next regularly scheduled election.

## Campaigns

Running for the board when one is not an incumbent is governed by a myriad of laws and regulations. Running as an incumbent involves additional considerations, since incumbents represent and govern the college at the same time they are running for election.

Law specifically prohibits officers of the district from using district “funds, services, supplies or equipment” to urge support or defeat of candidates for election to the board (Ed Code 7054). Incumbent candidates must be diligent about separating what they do as a trustee from their efforts to win re-election. College staff cannot engage in campaigning while at work (Ed Code sections 7050 et seq describe limits and rights of school and college employees).

Incumbents’ ethical responsibilities as trustees may affect how they campaign. Since part of the fiduciary responsibility of trustees is to protect and enhance the value of the district, their campaign materials often reflect their support for the college(s). They use techniques and materials that promote the integrity of the district. As candidates, incumbents are freer to promote themselves and their opinions as individuals than when they represent the board as a sitting trustee. However, incumbents and non-incumbents alike carefully consider whether disagreeing with or attacking board decisions or college direction will hurt or harm the district and their own election.

Since 1995, the League has conducted post-election interviews of some of those who ran in the November election. The results have been published in the Winter issues of the League's quarterly newsletter, *The News*. The interviews indicate that:

- A well-run college helps incumbents win re-election.
- Ballot statements make a difference. It is important that the statement is positive and describes the person's qualifications and issues.
- Strong campaigns, particularly ones that include grass-roots efforts, are effective for both incumbents and challengers. Incumbents who fail to mount a campaign against organized opposition risk being defeated.
- Faculty discontent will result in challenges to incumbents.
- Candidates generally benefit from strong community ties or being a professional educator.

A wide variety of issues are discussed in campaigns. Over the years, candidates have focused on a number of topics, including the need for technology, new and upgraded facilities, accommodating growth, the need for new programs, and part-time and full-time faculty issues and ratios.

### **Campaign Costs**

Individual campaign costs vary widely depending on where the candidate is running, the number of challengers, and what is required to inform the voters about the candidacy. The League's interviews have discovered a range from spending only what is necessary for a ballot statement to spending over \$60,000. Most candidates fund their campaigns by donating their own money to their campaign account. However, it is helpful and in some cases necessary to have support from others. Employee political action committees (PACs) have been one source of funds—other sources of support, including endorsements and campaign support, may include chambers of commerce, civic groups, and community leaders.

Districts may choose to pay all or a portion of candidates' statements in the voter pamphlet. A 2013 survey of district practices reports that nine districts do so, and 63 do not.

Districts are responsible for paying the county for their share of the costs of holding elections. This amount varies from county to county, but can be quite significant.

### **Board Role in Election Campaigns**

Should boards or individual trustees endorse candidates for the board? A board, as a governing entity for a public institution, cannot endorse a candidate.

Individuals on the board may endorse candidates, but there are pitfalls to this practice. They face the risk of alienating an opponent should the opponent win. They must work very hard to separate their endorsement from their trustee role: it is difficult for the public to know when a trustee is speaking as an individual rather than on behalf of the board. Trustees who do not campaign for specific candidates consider their responsibility to support the board as a unit (and therefore the district) as more important than their right as citizens to express their political views in a campaign.

If sitting trustees support a specific candidate, their advocacy should be as clean and fair as possible to avoid problems if the candidate's opponent wins the election. Trustees who are leaving the board often campaign for a candidate who they hope will succeed them, which may be an important endorsement for the new candidate.

Occasionally, a group of candidates run as a formal or informal slate. Support for each other is certainly presumed in this case. Those who choose to run as a slate are clearly endorsing each other as individuals; the public is more likely to perceive the support as an individual choice, not a board position.

## **Resources and Laws**

The Elections Code of California governs the conduct of elections and campaigns. In addition, the Education Code includes laws related to school and community college board elections and appointments some of which have been referenced earlier. The following highlights a few important resources and considerations.

## County Offices

Each county has an office that conducts local elections. These offices provide potential candidates with the information they need to run for the board and campaign within regulations and the law. The information often covers:

- Positions up for election and their jurisdictions.
- Nomination and filing processes and deadlines.
- Ballot designation and candidate statement regulations.
- Statement of economic interests.
- Fair campaign practices.
- Campaign disclosure requirements.
- Campaign literature and outdoor advertising constraints.
- Registration and election data.

## Laws and the FPPC

The state's Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) has primary responsibility for interpretation and administration of laws and regulations related to the Political Reform Act of 1974 and subsequent amendments and initiatives. The Act is contained in Government Code sections 81000-91015 and sections 18000 et seq of the California Code of Regulations. The FPPC publishes information guides that cover:

- Campaign reporting requirements, including who must file.
- What candidate and officeholder disclosure forms need to be filed.
- Election filing schedules.
- Where statements must be filed.
- Bank accounts and expenditures.
- Mass mailings.
- Officeholder, candidates, and campaign treasurer duties.
- Record-keeping, audits, and enforcement.
- Contribution limits.
- Restrictions on use of campaign funds.
- Prohibitions.
- Campaign committees.

The FPPC conducts workshops that provide candidates with in-depth information about regulations and limits related to campaigns, donations, and expenditures. All candidates must follow the regulations; both elected and defeated candidates have specific forms that must be filed by certain dates.

Proposition 73, an initiative passed in 1988, places limits on what districts can include in mass mailings about elected trustees. Government Code section 83112 and Title 2 section 18901 contain the language that implements this proposition.

## Resources

For more information, see *Appointing Processes for California Community College Trustees*, on the League's Web site, [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).



## The Board Chair

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The role of the board chair is very important to the effectiveness of the board, the CEO/board relationship, and the institution. Careful thought must be given to the selection process for and expectations of the position. The chair is the leader of the board and facilitator of board process. If the district is undergoing major changes, such as hiring a new CEO, the chair position becomes even more important.

### Selection

There are a number of strategies for selecting the board chair. Whoever is selected should be willing to commit the extra energy and time it takes to fulfill the responsibilities as well as have the necessary skills to be effective. It is important also to consider complementary working and leadership styles with the chief executive officer.

Some districts traditionally rotate the responsibility of serving as chair among all members. The benefits of that practice are that all members gain experience in leading the board. However, not every member has the time and skills necessary to be an effective chair, and boards should carefully consider whether the benefits of rotating the responsibility are worth the risk of not having the best leadership possible.

Other districts elect the chair based on interest, time, experience, and good leadership and interpersonal skills. Some boards informally or formally designate the vice-chair as a chair-elect position, thereby allowing the person to anticipate the responsibilities and arrange his or her schedule to commit to the time needed.

### Responsibilities

The board chair, as all board members, has no legal authority as an individual other than that specifically delegated by the board. Boards should have a policy that describes the role and expectations of the board chair. He or she is a member of the board team, but has greater responsibility to create a positive climate, lead the board, and work closely with the chief executive officer. Specific areas of responsibility are:

#### Develop the board team

Trustees who work together well contribute to the effectiveness of their board. A good board chair will build a sense of team and help trustees work together. Board chairs ensure that there is respectful and ongoing communication among board members, and assist them in understanding their roles and responsibilities. Where there are significant disagreements or “split” boards, chairs need excellent conflict resolution skills to prevent discord from hurting the institution.

It is the chair’s responsibility to work directly with individuals who are being disruptive or not contributing to the board as a unit. The board chair must occasionally remind board members of legal, ethical, and appropriate board behavior. This takes tact and courage, but it is essential for an effective board.

Board chairs play an important role in orienting new trustees and encouraging all board members to participate in trustee development activities. The chair also ensures that the board engages in regular self-evaluation and uses the results of the evaluation to improve its effectiveness.

#### Represent the board and district

The board chair often acts as the spokesperson for the board. Therefore he or she must be knowledgeable about the district, board policy, and external issues and trends. The chair is often asked to explain, defend, and advocate board decisions and institutional actions, and must have a thorough grasp of the issues. He or she is an advocate for community college issues with locally elected officials and others in the community, state, and national governments. The chair must be articulate, informed, and willing to represent only the board’s actions, not personal views.

There are many ceremonial duties the chair performs within the college and external to the organization. They are as varied as handing out diplomas, helping raise funds for the foundation, and speaking on behalf of the college at community events. Board chairs should have excellent public relations skills and be comfortable dealing with the media.

### **Work closely with the CEO**

The board chair is a major source of support and counsel for the chancellor or superintendent/president. He or she should communicate regularly with the CEO and clearly state board expectations on behalf of the board. The chair ensures that the CEO is regularly evaluated. In addition, he or she defends the CEO from attack, serves as a sounding board, and monitors the workload so that it is not excessive.

When the CEO is new, the board chair has additional responsibility to ensure that the CEO has the necessary support and information to succeed and is introduced to community and state leaders.

### **Preside over board meetings**

The chair presides over board meetings and ensures that discussion and decision-making are orderly, deliberate, and appropriate. He or she continually seeks a balance between facilitating open exploration of diverse opinions, running the meeting efficiently, and reaching closure on issues. Chairs also may be required to handle disorderly audience conduct in firm but respectful ways. Knowledge of the Brown Act and basic parliamentary procedure is essential.

He or she works with the CEO to set the meeting agendas and is familiar with all items and pertinent issues. The chair ensures that all trustees stick to policy-making, avoid administrative-type actions, support the mission and goals of the college, and are oriented toward the future.

## **Summary**

Effective boards are those that are cohesive, inclusive, and seek consensus in decision-making. Board chairs play a major role in ensuring that boards are effective through their meeting management and human relationship skills. It is more than a ceremonial role: chairs are responsible for board processes and need to have the ability to build trust and create strong teams. The beneficiaries of well-functioning boards are the students, citizens of the district, and employees of the colleges.

## **Resources**

For more information, see the League's *Board Chair Handbook*, distributed at the annual Board Chair Workshop and online at [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).

## Community Relations

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Community college trustees hold the college in trust on behalf of the community. They are elected to ensure that the college responds to community needs in ways that balance diverse interests. Boards were created as lay boards to represent the general public's interests. A board's primary allegiance should be to the external community and public good.

The board acts as a bridge and buffer between the community and the college. Its role may also include fundraising, public relations and political advocacy. Trustees are powerful spokespersons for their colleges.

### Board Responsibilities

- Represent the public and communities served by the college.
- Create strategies to ensure strong bridges between the board and community groups.
- Become knowledgeable about the diverse needs and interests in the community.
- Be willing to buffer the college from undue influence in order to ensure academic freedom.
- Advocate for the college in the community and to government.
- Support the foundation and be willing to engage in fundraising.

The “bridge” role is fulfilled, in part, by creating and maintaining linkages with the different communities in a district. The connections made and information gained through them enable board members to better represent the external communities when they make board decisions. A major job of the board is to actively seek out and create those linkages. Trustees represent the college to the community and gain support for the district through their leadership.

Trustees are also a bridge from the community to college staff. They remind the college about the needs of the community and prevent the college from becoming too insular.

The “buffer” role involves resisting inappropriate intrusion into the internal affairs of the institution by outside groups and agencies or individuals. The board protects the college from undue influence and thereby provides for an atmosphere of academic freedom. Colleges should not simply be arms of government or external interest groups—as institutions, they must reflect, balance, and anticipate diverse societal needs. As buffers, boards balance the legitimate influence from external groups with the responsibility of the academy to push the edges of knowledge and to freely explore varying views and approaches.

Since, at times, the interests of the college and the interests of the community differ, the dual roles present trustees with dilemmas. Some community needs may go unmet due to the demands of internal constituencies, and vice versa. State boards, while powerful allies for local districts at the state level, may at times over-regulate local decisions. Local businesses, agencies, and groups that provide political and financial support may also make inappropriate demands on the college. Trustees face a fine balancing act in responding to external constituencies and internal demands.

## Who is the Community?

The General Public: Trustees, as elected leaders, must ensure that their districts and colleges make a positive difference for their communities. Colleges are “owned” by the general public, and boards must ensure that the “owners” receive good value for the money spent. A question that should guide all policy decisions is “How will this improve the effectiveness of the college in serving its community?”



However, there are many different publics and interests whose needs could legitimately be met, and it is not always easy to determine the “ownership” to whom boards are responsible. Trustees are faced with different levels of community needs: local, regional, state, and national.

**Electorate:** As elected officials, trustees have a real and natural concern to meet the needs of those who put them in office. Trustees elected by area feel responsible to represent that area’s interests. Trustees supported by interest groups are aware of the support they received. However, single interests should not have priority over the aggregated interests of many different groups.

**Diverse Communities:** The community colleges have a proud history of responding to a wide variety of communities. Our communities and student bodies are increasingly diverse. Senior citizens, ethnic groups, single parents, displaced workers, and those in different neighborhoods may all have different and often competing needs. However, when making board decisions, trustees should consider what is in the best long-term interest of the “ownership” of the college.

**Taxpayers:** Taxpayers ultimately pay for the education at the college. Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that public funds are spent well.

**The State:** The state has a natural interest in its community colleges to ensure the appropriate expenditure of state funds and that college programs are in the best interests of the state. Colleges and boards develop programs in response to state guidelines and needs. Conflicts occur when the demands of the state and its regulations are at odds with what the local districts believe is the best interests of its community and students.

**Business and Industry:** Business and industry look to the colleges to provide them with educated and skilled workers and to offer courses to their employees. Decisions to establish or expand firms often depend on local educational opportunities.

**Local and Regional Agencies:** City and county governments and regional agencies can be valuable allies for the college, particularly if they are aware of the college’s contributions to their communities. Trustees can play a valuable role in communicating with other elected local officials and representing the college to public boards for financial and political support.

**Other Educational Institutions:** Baccalaureate-level institutions receive transfer students. The K-12 system sends students to the colleges. Feedback among all segments of education is important to assess the success of our programs.

**Students:** Student learning and success in achieving goals are at the heart of all endeavors. Students are the “consumers” of the services provided by the college. Board members are entrusted with the responsibility to the ownership for establishing a climate in which students learn and succeed. Boards are also responsible for defining who the “students of the future” might be.

## **Community Linkage Strategies**

Boards should develop formal mechanisms for their roles as the bridge to the community, which may include board-to-board discussions, community conversations, focus groups, public forums, study sessions, and being trustee “ambassadors” to other groups. Joint meetings with such groups as the chambers of commerce, boards that govern human service agencies, business and industry boards, city councils, school boards, and other policy makers in the communities will provide the information necessary to create policies which truly link the college and community.

Board meetings agendas might include time for discussion related to ownership needs and priorities. Trustees should regularly review community needs and the ever-changing environment and discuss the implication of these forces on the mission of the college and on board policy.

Sources of information include results of meetings with stakeholders, results of the latest environmental scanning by college staff, summaries of community and student surveys, demographic trend updates, and state and national educational issues. By proactively seeking information about the environment and connections with external groups, boards help shape, rather than simply react to, the environment. This proactive mindset establishes a climate in which the institution is prepared to respond to what is necessary to meet future challenges.

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## Maintaining the Balance

It is not easy balancing or responding to the diverse interests and community needs. Our pluralistic society adds richness and complexity to the colleges. The information each interest group contributes is important and must be considered. However, the board's leadership is essential to process and integrate that information and establish a clear mission and set of goals to guide the college's response to the community.

When the needs of different groups are reasonably similar, then responding to them is easy. However, that is not usually the case. For many colleges, the mission and goals establish students as the primary focus for the programs of the college. Pressures from business and industry to provide programs that serve their needs create new groups of students. The state, through the legislature and System Office, establishes priorities and directions for the college. Different community groups may have different satisfaction levels related to the college response to their needs.

Being an effective "bridge and buffer" to all of these groups is a daunting task. Trustees must be open to, gather, and sift through often competing needs and demands to determine the direction that best meets the general interests of the students and community. They should determine the long-term interests of the district and students, and avoid quick fixes.

## Public Relations

Trustees, through their leadership, are responsible for enhancing the public image of the college. They actively work on behalf of the district through their involvement in the community and their professions. Trustees promote the mission, goals, and programs, and focus on setting the policies that guide the district in problem-solving. They control rumors and respond to questions from the media. As "disinterested" parties, their comments and support often carry more weight than those from college staff.

Trustees can contribute to and facilitate ongoing communication with the different publics described above. Communication about priorities, opportunities, and constraints may garner support for the college. Interest groups whose needs cannot be met will be more likely to support the decision if there has been ongoing communication during the decision-making process. Working effectively with the media includes building ongoing positive relationships and coordinating information through the chief executive and public information officer. Guidelines for dealing with the media when there are crises should be established and followed.

To be effective, trustees must be educated about the college. There must be constant communication and close cooperation between the chief executive and the board. The CEO should hear about community reactions and problems identified by the trustees, and trustees should receive information on college programs and potential problems.

The board has legal power only as a unit: trustees represent the board and have no authority as individuals. Therefore, a board member's public comments should represent board decisions and policies, even if the trustee did not vote for a board decision.

## Advocacy and Fundraising

Trustees are very important in lobbying on legislative proposals and for public funds. As elected officials and community representatives, their voices are influential with state legislators. Trustee leadership can motivate students, business and industry leaders, local government, alumni, voters and campaign contributors, and community activists. Trustees' support and leadership are also important at the local level in bond campaigns and redevelopment efforts.

While fundraising has long been a major role for trustees of private institutions, it has not been a role for community college trustees. However, ensuring a variety of sources of funds is everyone's job, and trustees are in a unique and important position to lead and support fundraising efforts.

Most community fundraising is conducted through college foundations. Board policies describe the relationship between the board and the foundation and establish criteria for accepting gifts. Trustees can enhance the success of their foundation by giving it a high priority and adequate staffing. They may use their personal and business contacts in the community to solicit donors and participants in the foundation. Trustees may also serve on the foundation board and provide a link between that board and the governing board to ensure that the college mission and goals are as important to the foundation as they are to the college.

## As a Lay Board

Colleges can be insular institutions. One of the values of lay boards in higher education is to provide disinterested leadership and ensure that colleges are responsive to the broader community. Board members use their perspectives and knowledge to insist that faculty and administration understand the framework of the larger world. They ensure that educators are aware of needs and changes in the external communities that may influence the college mission.

Board members who work full time in education, whether in a university, K-12 district, or another community college, are in an interesting position. On one hand, it is much easier for them to understand issues, regulations, and “educationese” during the board discussions. On the other hand, because of their familiarity, it can be tempting to get involved in day-to-day operations and to lose the broad policy perspective so valuable to boards. Educators who are board members must make extra efforts to maintain contact with and actively seek information from the community at large to avoid narrow thinking.

## The Advocacy Role

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Communities are asking their colleges to do more even as demands for many public services have increased and there are more limits on how those resources may be used. Trustees play an important role by linking with the community to advocate on behalf of the colleges for public support at the local, state, and national levels.

Local college advocacy for support at the state level is essential to community college funding. Authority to set tax rates shifted from local boards to the state in 1978 when Proposition 13 was passed. The Governor and Legislature establish the budget and pass laws – on student fees, hiring practices, and expenditure categories – that affect colleges. Numerous regulations promulgated by the state Board of Governors and other state agencies determine the operations of the colleges. Local boards share governance responsibilities with the state board: this bilateral governance means that local trustees, college employees, students, and community leaders must devote time and energy to influence state-level decisions.

A major contribution trustees make to their colleges is to use their skills, contacts and influence to shape public policy in favor of education, and to foster student access and programs that support student success. Trustees in particular have political clout as a result of being elected officials. They have moral clout as people who hold the college in trust for the community. Ongoing relationships between trustees and community leaders help secure resources to enable colleges to better meet community needs.

### Board Responsibilities

- Establish clear mission and goals and communicate them to state and federal policy-makers.
- Establish monitoring systems that ensure accountability.
- Be informed about and take positions on relevant legislative proposals.
- Get to know local, state, and national policy-makers who make decisions on the colleges or who represent the district.
- Be willing to actively advocate on behalf of the district and student success.

## Local Advocacy Strategies

Successfully advocating on behalf of the colleges requires three approaches. First, those who make educational policy must be made aware of the colleges' contribution to the community and state. Advocates must be able to describe the missions of the colleges and the benefit they add to the community through the education they provide. Data on student success and the impact of the colleges on the quality of life in their communities are very powerful; colleges should ensure that those advocating the college to community leaders, state agencies, and legislators have the data they need.

Second, establish ongoing communication between trustees and elected state and federal representatives as part of a cohesive, planned advocacy strategy. The best time to make friends with legislators is before their support is needed. Informed trustees, in their role as community representatives, bring credibility to discussions on policy matters and the impact of proposed legislation on the community. Bringing elected officials and other policy-makers on campus, following up on contacts, and building community support are important aspects of the advocacy role.

The last critical component is developing third-party relationships with people outside of the colleges in such a way that these people become advocates for the colleges. Boards develop friends and allies for the community college mission through their linkages with the community and other advocacy groups, and through their support of collaborative efforts. Business, community, and labor leaders are college partners with powerful voices that could seek support for the college. Ongoing communication and collaboration with these and other groups help ensure that the colleges have broad-based business and community support.

## Advocacy Resources

The Community College League of California actively advocates on behalf of the districts before the System Office, Board of Governors, other state agencies, the state legislative and executive branches. The trustee and CEO boards of the League adopt positions on regulations and legislation based on their knowledge of local issues. However, local district involvement is key to successful advocacy. Therefore, the League provides a number of resources to help trustees be effective advocates.

**Governmental Affairs Web site:** Information on the League's governmental affairs provides current and comprehensive information on news articles, legislative activities and links to government sources for further information.

**Legislative Advocacy Handbook:** The handbook covers the legislative process, League legislative activities and communication strategies, information on how to foster effective legislative relations, lists of legislators and state officials, a glossary, and other information. It is posted on the governmental affairs section of the Web site.

**Bills of Interest:** This document summarizes the bills that were presented to the League boards by the staff. It is posted on the governmental affairs section of the Web site.

**Legislative Update Report:** The monthly report outlines the current status of legislation, government activities, reports, and statewide staff changes. It is e-mailed to all trustees, CEOs, PIOs, and governmental relations staff and is posted on the League's Web site.

**Legislative and Budget Alerts:** These messages alert districts to and request local district action on urgent issues before the state's Legislature and administration. They are e-mailed to all CEOs on an "as needed" basis. They are also posted on the governmental affairs section of the Web site.

**Fast Facts:** This informational flyer is published every year, and provides a comprehensive summary of facts about the community colleges. It is posted to the League's Web site.

**Legislative Conference:** The League sponsors an annual conference in late January or early February that provides up-to-date information on pending budgetary and legislative issues and provides an opportunity for district personnel to meet with their state representatives.

## Ethics and Laws

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Trustees and governing boards have the responsibility to be both ethical and legal. Ethics are standards of right and wrong, good and bad. Ethics address what one ought to do to fulfill one's moral duty. Being legal means complying with the laws and regulations that apply to college boards and elected officials.

Legislation passed in 2005 (AB1234) requiring certain public officials to undergo ethics training every two years. While community college trustees do not have to meet the requirement, it is strongly encouraged, and the Community College League offers the training every year.

Ethics refers to moral responsibilities and may go beyond legal considerations. Being ethical and legal involves more than understanding what the right thing is to do; it means that one must perform in ethical and legal ways – one must actively “walk the talk.” First, one determines what is right or wrong, good or bad. Then, one does what is right, good, and required by law.

Many professions and groups have developed a set of rules of conduct for specific situations. These rules of conduct or standards of practice are based on ethical values.

### Ethical Values

The ethical values described below are from the Josephson Institute, and are called the “Six Pillars of Character”(see [www.josephsoninstitute.org](http://www.josephsoninstitute.org)). The pillars are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

**Trustworthiness.** When we are trustworthy, people believe in us. Being trustworthy requires honesty, integrity, reliability and loyalty.

Being honest means we are sincere, truthful, straightforward, and avoid deception. It does not mean violating confidentiality, being uncivil, or making promises that one might not be able to keep.

**Integrity** refers to “wholeness.” A person who has integrity is consistent in decision-making and behavior, and bases his or her behavior on a core set of ethics or values.

**Reliability** means we keep our promises. If we commit to a task, we follow through. Ethical trustees spend the hours each week that are required to perform the job well.

**Loyalty** means protecting and promoting the interests of people, a group or organization. As a trustee, the primary loyalty is to the college and the public good—loyalty to friends and single interest groups is subordinate.

**Respect.** The second “pillar of character” is respect. It includes civility, courtesy, decency, autonomy, and tolerance.

Civility and courtesy are particularly important when engaging in discussions with others with whom we disagree. Autonomy means that we do not try to live others' lives for them. Tolerance means we accept others' perspectives and judge others only on their core ethical values.

**Responsibility.** Responsibility means being willing to make decisions and choices and to be accountable for those. Responsible people do not shift the blame to others.

Responsibility means doing the best one can, and being diligent, careful, prepared, and informed. It means persevering, following through, and finishing tasks that one has promised to do.

Responsibility also involves self-restraint, prudence, and recognizing the importance to set a good example. Responsible trustees recognize that there are some limits on being able to say whatever one wants to, because people look to them as representatives of the college.

**Fairness.** The fourth pillar, fairness, involves equality, impartiality, openness and using due process. People say that “life is unfair,” and it can be very difficult to define what’s fair in a way that all would agree. Exhibiting fairness involves using open and impartial processes for gathering and evaluating information, so that even those who disagree with a decision can understand how it was made. It means seeking equity and avoiding favoritism or prejudice.

**Caring.** Caring means that we are genuinely concerned about the welfare of others. As public officials, we care about the common good and welfare of the community. Public education is a benevolent act and expresses caring for the public well being.

Trustees are often asked to care about many different people—community members, students, faculty, and others. Benevolence as a trustee involves seeking the well being of the entire community. Challenges arise when decisions must be made for the benefit of the public welfare that may not meet the needs of specific groups. Caring trustees understand those challenges, and realized that their role requires focusing on the public good.

Because we care about other people, we care about being ethical, about being respectful, responsible, and trustworthy. Being unethical is easier if we do not care about others.

**Citizenship.** The final “pillar” is citizenship, which involves how we behave as part of a community. Ethical citizens obey laws, contribute to the community through service and leadership, and protect the environment. Citizenship is concerned with the future health and welfare of society. Trusteeship is an expression of civic leadership, and the ethics of trusteeship reflect good citizenship practices.

### **Codes of Ethics**

Trusteeship brings with it certain responsibilities and expectations. Some of these are related to what is ethical and appropriate behavior for public officials. The public expects its leaders and representatives to uphold high standards in the performance of their duties. The Western Association’s Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges require boards of trustees to have a code of ethics.

Codes of ethics (or “standards of practice” as they are sometimes called) define specific expectations for board members. It is important for boards to clarify for themselves, the college, and the community, what behavior they think is appropriate. It is not enough to assume that because something is legal, that it is ethical, or that everyone knows how they are supposed to act as board members the minute they are elected or appointed to the position. Codes of ethics put in writing what the “oughts” are of trusteeship. They usually address board roles and responsibilities, and trustee conduct.

### **Board Roles**

**Represent common good.** Trusteeship is an expression of civic leadership and citizenship. Governing boards derive their authority from and are accountable to the community as a whole. As public officials, trustees fulfill the core value of responsibility to society by acting on behalf of the entire community. They express the value of benevolence by seeking well being of the entire community. They represent the interests of the community in their board decisions.

**Student success.** The college’s purpose is to educate students and produce people who contribute to society. Boards should expect their members to uphold the welfare and success of students as a primary concern. They should expect themselves to focus on mission and goals of the college in their meetings.

**Board as a unit.** One of the most basic tenets of effective trusteeship is the recognition that governing authority rests with the entire board, not with any individual trustee. As individuals, trustees have no authority to direct staff, determine programs and procedures, or represent the college, and ethical trustees do not try to do so.

The board’s voice is expressed through the policies and actions it takes in its official meetings. Once the board has decided a policy or position, a trustee must be prepared to support it publicly. It is unethical to try to use authority independently from the board, to speak out against, or to try to sabotage a board decision.

### **Four Questions to Ask Yourself**

To help determine ethical behavior, ask:

1. Am I doing to others what I would want done to me?
2. Would I mind seeing what I am doing on the front page of a newspaper?
3. Am I comfortable with members of my family knowing what I am doing?
4. Do I want to encourage employees and students to do this?

**Making decisions.** Making ethical decisions means applying core values in decision-making. Making good decisions also means seeking and considering all available facts and perspectives. It means studying and asking questions to clarify board agenda materials. Being ethical and responsible to the public means not making any promises about how one will vote prior to discussions at open meetings.

**Special interests.** Single and special interest groups play an important part in representing various segments of our diverse society, such as political parties, racial and ethnic groups, employee associations, religious groups, neighborhood associations, taxpayer groups. While all of these interests are important, trustees must remember that the first and foremost obligation of every trustee is to represent the general interests of the college's service area. Ethical behavior involves being aware of a wide variety of public and community needs, and integrating them into the interests of the whole.

**Policy-making.** Board responsibilities include establishing policies that direct the operations of the college and assuring that the college performs according to policies. Ethical trustees engage wisely in policy making and respect the delegation of authority to the chief executive to administer the college. Problems occur when boards and trustees become involved in the day-to-day operations and try to second guess or direct staff activities. Although often well intentioned, these acts are disrespectful of the college and chief executive.

### *Trustee Conduct*

**Civility, decorum, and consideration for others.** Remaining courteous and open-minded and treating others with honesty, decency, and respect are characteristic of ethical trustees. Ethical trustees practice responsible self-restraint and set a good example for others by communicating thoughtfully and representing the college well in their interactions with others. They avoid bitter arguments and use courteous, non-inflammatory language at board meetings.

Consideration for others means speaking well of others in public. Criticizing or belittling other trustees, college staff, or community members hurts the reputation of the entire board.

**Board/CEO relationship.** Respect, reliability, trustworthiness and justice are all key values in the board/CEO relationship. Specific ethical concepts include committing to thoughtful, thorough CEO search processes; fair and attractive contracts; "no surprises," and clear differentiation of roles, delegation and direction.

**Open communication.** All board members, as well as the CEO, are responsible for maintaining an open, cooperative environment and promoting a free exchange of information at the board meetings. Trustee deliberations are characterized by fairness and open and impartial processes for gathering and evaluating information. Trustees are honest and straightforward in civil and respectful ways.

**Communicating with staff and students.** The board and CEO should discuss and reach agreement on protocols for trustee contact with other college administrators, faculty, and classified staff members. Ethical trustees support the authority of the CEO position and respect established lines of communication.

Student and employee complaints to trustees should be referred directly through appropriate channels or to the chief executive officer. Every community college has, or should have, procedures that provide for fair treatment of students or employees.

**Communicating with community members and media.** A code of ethics may include statements about protocols for communicating with community members and media personnel. The protocols usually state that individual trustees do not speak for the board unless specifically delegated to do so, and refer and/or follow up with community members through appropriate channels. These protocols ensure reliability of information, and respect the board as a unit and the roles of those designated as spokespeople for the college.

**Function as a team member.** Being a good board member requires the ability to function as part of a team. Board members differ in personality, motivation, knowledge, attitude, experience, background, community stature, and capability. Differing points of view help develop alternatives, stimulate the imagination, and lead to creative solutions. Being open to and respectful of other members' viewpoints are skills that are necessary to reach consensus.

Trustees often bring specialized knowledge to the board by virtue of their backgrounds and professions. However, trustees are not on the board to be "experts" in their fields – they are there to represent broad community interests and do not play other roles while acting as a trustee.



**Maintaining confidentiality.** While most of what the board does is public, an important aspect of trustee ethics is maintaining confidentiality about issues discussed in closed session. Violating confidentiality occurs when individuals share closed session information, such as informing the union of the collective bargaining positions, leaking information to the media, or discussing private personnel information.

**Commitment.** There is a great deal to learn about the role of trustees and the governing board, the colleges, and educational issues and trends. This learning requires much time, effort, and thought. It is irresponsible to take on the trustee role without devoting time and attention to learning and performing the responsibilities.

**Compensation and expenses.** Trustees should accurately account for their expenses and follow local protocols and laws about receiving compensation of any kind. There should be appropriate reimbursement criteria and procedures, which define fair reimbursement for trustee expenses. Ethical trustees always ask themselves if their expenses are authorized, legitimate, direct, and reasonable.

**Consequences of violating the Code of Ethics.** Accreditation Standard IV.C states that boards must have a policy that addresses violations of the code of ethics. The statement should address steps to address potential or actual violations of ethics laws (open meetings, conflict of interest and use of public resources), as well as the board's own expectations for behavior.

### **Developing and Using Codes of Ethics**

Developing a code of ethics engages all trustees and the CEO in discussions of ethical values. One format for these discussions is a board retreat or workshop, which may be facilitated by an outside consultant to allow all present to fully participate in discussions.

First, those involved define and explore what they think is ethical behavior. The concepts presented in this chapter and other resources may be used as the basis for discussion. Then, working together, they agree on what the expectations are for board members and the CEO. The code of ethics or standards of practice is then adopted by the board at a public meeting and included in board policy.

There are models for board codes of ethics; the model code adopted by ACCT is at the end of this chapter. However, much of the benefit of a code derives from the discussion that goes into developing one that fits the board. Therefore, effective boards engage in discussions about ethical practices for themselves, instead of simply adopting a sample statement.

Codes of ethics are useful tools to orient new trustees to their responsibilities. They are used as references when there are questions about specific situations or behaviors. The policies and practices in a code are excellent criteria for board self-evaluations. Periodically reviewing the code helps keep it current, useful, and relevant to the board.

## **Dilemmas and Unethical Conduct**

Living by ethical standards is not always easy. Everyone may be seduced at times into being less than he or she can be due to self-interest, the perceived need to advance single interests, and the difficulty of fully respecting those with whom one disagrees. And, boards may be faced with ethical dilemmas and conflicting values.

Ethical dilemmas can occur on boards, when one ethical course of action may mean that another ethical value is not upheld. Resolving ethical dilemmas requires board members to engage in often very difficult discussions to determine which ethical values are most important in a specific situation. The criteria for decision-making often are those which uphold the public good and what is best for the community and college as a whole.

Unethical trustee behavior includes many activities, such as independently pursuing pet projects, breaking confidentiality, or not devoting time to the role. These activities hurt the college. Unethical trustee behavior can lead to loss of public support. It has caused problems in the re-accreditation process. Community members and legislators lose faith in the college, and may be more reluctant to support funding for the institution. Trustees who act unethically fail to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to protect the value of the college.

### **Responding to Ethical Violations**

Boards of trustees cannot afford to ignore illegal acts and violations of the code of ethics. The importance of upholding ethical behavior has been reinforced by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which, in 2002 adopted a standard that requires that the board's code of ethics include a "clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code."

Concepts that may be addressed in such a policy include who on the board is responsible to address charges or perceptions of violations, what steps will be taken to examine and address both legal and ethical violations, and possible consequences of violations. How a board responds will depend on whether the behavior potentially violates state laws or the board's own code of ethics. The board and CEO should seek legal counsel whenever there are actual or perceived violations of the law. CEOs help ensure the board is knowledgeable about laws and ethics, but the board has responsibility for monitoring itself, and the chair plays a key role in upholding laws and codes.

Among the first steps to take is examining the various perspectives and interpretations about the behavior, including the intention and motives of the trustee in question and those making the charge of illegal and unethical behavior. People may disagree on what is ethical. Then, the board chair may talk with the person to resolve the issue. Ongoing problems may be addressed by first by an ad hoc committee and the board as a whole. A vote of censure is usually a last resort.

A more thorough discussion of ethics laws, strategies to respond to violations, and sample policy statements are available in the January 2006 issue of *Board Focus*, "Upholding Board Ethics," published by the League and available online.

## Legal Responsibilities

There are many laws and regulations that affect what the board does and how it conducts itself. The statutes that designate board responsibilities are covered in chapter 6, and other chapters refer to many relevant laws and regulations. Two major sets of laws that affect trustees directly are covered below: conflicts of interest and open and public meetings.

### Conflicts of Interest

California has two sets of laws governing conflicts of interest of public officers and employees. The first, most restrictive statutes, are in Government Code sections 1090, et seq. The second is found in the Political Reform Act, at Government Code sections 81000, et seq. The basic intent of both sets of statutes is to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

It is important that all public officers and employees be aware of these laws and their implications, which include criminal prosecutions and bars from holding further public office. The statutes address personal interests that may be affected by the trustee's exercise of his or her official duties, including personal investments and businesses, and the employment of trustees and family members as college employees. Essentially, trustees may not participate in decisions that benefit them financially, or have the potential to do so.

In addition to the laws, trustees should be aware of activities that create the perception of favoritism or personal gain. Examples of potential problem areas are preferential treatment of other trustees or college staff, selectively sharing information only with certain people, or informally steering business to or seeking to have friends hired.

Public perceptions that board members are furthering their own interests rather than those of the district harm the college. Being sensitive to situations for potential conflicts, and seeking legal advice when necessary will help avoid problems.

Further information on conflict of interest laws is published in *Local Official's Reference to Ethics Laws*, and other publications available from the League of California Cities.

### Open and Public Meetings

State law requires that public boards do their work in public. Public service requires that issues affecting the public are shared and debated openly. Doing so promotes trustworthiness and reliability.

The Brown Act created the primary set of statutes (Government Code 54950-54961) that governs community the legislative bodies of local agencies. Community college governing boards, academic senates, and associated student governing bodies are among the groups to whom the Act applies.

The laws cover board meetings and agendas, public participation, and limits on how boards may meet. They provide for holding executive or closed sessions on a number of matters, including personnel, contract negotiations, and lawsuits. Closed sessions protect the rights of personnel and the college, and it is unlawful to reveal information discussed in these sessions.

Details on Brown Act provisions are covered in Open and Public IV, and other publications available from the League of California Cities.

### **Use of Public Funds**

It is a felony to misuse public funds for personal benefit. Examples include falsely claiming expenses and using college resources.

### **Other Areas**

There are many other laws and regulations that affect the district and board responsibilities. Key areas include: elections and campaigns, lawsuits, auxiliary organizations, fiscal management, confidentiality of records, bonds, construction, and personnel. Boards and CEOs should seek legal advice when they have questions.

### **Legal Advice**

Most districts rely on county counsel or retain a law firm or attorney to be available to answer questions; some districts have an attorney on staff. A college's attorney is there to advise the district. He or she is a resource that provides valuable information, but is not the decision-maker. Trustees who have legal questions should work through the CEO and/or board chair in seeking an answer.

When boards seek legal advice, they should:

- Plan ahead: give attorneys sufficient lead time to provide advice on a question.
- Ask about legal implications prior to making certain decisions: it is easier to prevent problems than solve them.
- Be open about all of the facts of a situation, both good and bad.
- Accept and expect realistic assessments of the legal position, including options and the risk involved in various alternatives.
- Understand that legal advice to public institutions is usually conservative, in order to protect the public trust.
- Get legal advice in writing to avoid misunderstandings.
- Avoid entering into adversarial situations, if possible: look for long-term solutions to problems.

## **Summary**

Ethical public service is based on a desire to do good for the community. Codes of ethics define in more detail for trustees and board members how public service is best expressed. Ethical behavior by trustees enhances the value of the college and sets a high standard for the rest of the college. Ethical leadership by trustees makes it more likely that the college will fulfill its mission to the community.

In addition to being ethical, boards must ensure that trustees and the college adhere to laws and regulations. Two major legal concerns for trustees are conflicts of interest and open and public meetings. Legal advice may be necessary from time to time in order to ensure compliance with a myriad of laws and regulations.

## **Resources**

The Community College League of California has resource packets for boards that contain additional writings on ethics, sample codes and policies for and approaches to dealing with violations. The League On Call service will suggest facilitators for workshops to review, assess, and develop codes of ethics.

## ACCT CODE OF ETHICS

*The following model code of ethics was developed by the Association of Community College Trustees.*

As a community college governing board member, I am responsible to:

1. devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a community college board member so that I may render effective and creditable service;
2. work with my fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debates on issues;
3. base my personal decision upon all available facts in each situation; vote my honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind; therefore, to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the board;
4. remember at all times that as an individual I have no legal authority outside the meetings of the board, and to conduct my relationships with the community college staff, the local citizenry, and all media of the community on the basis of this fact;
5. resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as a community college board member to benefit myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the community college district;
6. recognize that it is as important for the board to understand and evaluate the educational program of the community college as well as to plan for the business of the college operations;
7. bear in mind under all circumstances that the primary function of the board is to establish the policies by which the college is to be administered;
8. welcome and encourage active participation of the community in helping to establish the policies guiding the operations of the college and proposed future developments;
9. support the state and national community college organizations;
10. finally, strive step by step toward ideal conditions for the most effective community college board service to my community, in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and the perpetuation of our representative democracy.



## Board Self-Evaluation

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Effective governing boards assess how well they perform their governance responsibilities and use the results of the assessment to enhance board effectiveness. By doing so, they fulfill the public's expectations that elected trustees uphold high standards of performance.

The public "evaluates" board performance when it re-elects (or not) trustees to the board. However, 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. 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. The evaluation reminds each and every trustee to fulfill the responsibilities of trusteeship.

Given the unique nature of the relationship between the board and CEO, board self-evaluation and CEO evaluation are closely linked. It is difficult for the board to evaluate itself without considering CEO performance, and vice versa. A number of boards schedule their CEO and board self-evaluation discussions in conjunction with each other to capitalize on this link.

### 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 & areas for improvement.
- Use the results to enhance board effectiveness and set annual board goals.

The importance of regular board self-evaluations is underscored by the Western Association's Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. Standard IV.C.10 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 and used the results of regular self-evaluations.

## Purpose and Outcomes

The purpose of the evaluation is to identify areas of board functioning that are working well and those that may need improvement. It provides an opportunity for an open and candid discussion of board performance. 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 for the prior year.
- 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.
- 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. The emphasis may change from year to year; the evaluation can be tweaked to focus on a specific area. For instance, the board may wish to focus on its role in student success. 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 years – 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. And, boards may choose to select processes to review more often; for instance, some boards will quickly assess the 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 goals 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 a common approach to gathering information about board performance. There are a number of models and examples to choose from. The board should review any survey prior to its distribution to ensure that the questions address areas of interest of the board.

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

- The progress was made on achieving board priorities and tasks set the previous year.
- Board performance on measures 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). The board's annual priorities are developed in conjunction with the CEO's priorities, which are all designed to accomplish college goals.

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 boards. 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. A third approach is to use accreditation standards on the board as criteria – this approach would be most appropriate when the district is undergoing the self-study.

*Interviews.* Another evaluation strategy is for someone, usually a consultant, to interview 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.

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 they continue to provide useful information to the board. The policy and process should address the 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.

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. The student trustee 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.

A growing trend is providing an opportunity for college constituents. Boards may 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. A few districts provide an opportunity for any college employee to provide feedback.

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 not understand board roles and responsibilities and the rationale behind board decisions, and therefore the evaluation results may be skewed.

### **Evaluation Discussion & Report**

The discussion of what the results mean for board performance is generally the most useful part of the evaluation process. The evaluation discussion usually takes place in a workshop or retreat format to allow for enough time for review and to identify priorities for the following year.

Consultants and facilitators are often helpful used to provide an independent, non-biased influence to help keep board evaluation 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. 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 three categories (#2, 3, 4).

1. Progress on annual board goals or priorities established by the board, including board roles in promoting student success and furthering the strategic goals of the district.
2. Commonly accepted performance 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 for their work for the coming year. These priorities or tasks will reflect the board's role in accomplishing long-range institutional goals and student success, respond to current issues, and improve performance. They are developed in conjunction with the CEO and complement the CEO's annual goals and priorities.

Evaluating how well these priorities were addressed become the criteria in the board's annual self evaluation and its evaluation of the CEO the following year. There are countless possibilities: priorities and goals will vary from district to district and year to year. Examples may be found in the League's "Resources for Assessing Board Performance," available on the League's Web site.

### **Board Development Goals**

Effective boards also 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 of weakness identified in the board self-evaluation. They may address conduct of board meetings, ethics, communication among trustees, support for the CEO, teamwork, role of the board chair, preparation of the agenda, and the like.

### **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. Samples from other colleges are available on the League's Web site.

The survey should help the board assess its performance in the following areas:

*Student Success and Planning:* Does the board regularly review the mission? What issues have most occupied the board's time and attention during the past year? Has the board been appropriately involved in planning and fostering student success?

*Board Policy Role:* Does the board understand and fulfill its policy role? Does the board clearly differentiate between its role and the CEO's leadership?

*Board/CEO Relationship:* Is there an open, respectful partnership and good communication between the board and 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 that it serves? 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 student success and educational quality?

*Fiduciary Responsibilities:* Does the board ensure that the district is fiscally healthy? Does it approve a budget that supports educational and strategic goals?

*Board/Staff Relations & Human Resources:* Does board policy provide for equitable treatment of staff? 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? Do board members declare and avoid conflicts of interests? Do board members work together as a unit for the good of the district? Does the board have its own goals and objectives for the year and evaluate itself on how it has achieved them?

*Board Meetings and Agendas:* 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? Are all board members encouraged to engage in ongoing education about college and state 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.

### 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.C. 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.

#### Legal Authority and Responsibilities

Education Code 70902 states 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.

## Summary

This chapter and the more extensive set of resources developed by the League are designed to help boards of trustees develop 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

Further information and examples of self-evaluation forms are available in the publications section of the League’s Web site, [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).



## Board Education

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Once elected, trustees assume an extremely important responsibility to provide leadership for a complex educational institution. Learning about board roles and responsibilities, the communities' needs, and the district's services and programs is sometimes an overwhelming task. It takes a great deal of time and energy to gain the knowledge and skills to effectively and appropriately influence the direction of the educational enterprise.

Effective trustees recognize the value of trustee education. They are aware they cannot govern well without comprehensive knowledge and sophisticated governing skills. The importance of education is underscored by the Accrediting Commission standards, which require governing boards to have a program for new member orientation and governing board development.

### Orientation

The Community College League of California provides a statewide orientation each winter for newly-elected and appointed trustees, as well as a student trustee orientation in late summer. The orientation workshop is a day and a half, and covers board roles and responsibilities, as well as educational, legal, and fiscal policy.

Local districts provide orientation for newly elected and appointed trustees in numerous ways. The board chair and chief executive officer are usually the major points of contact for new trustees. Orientation is an ongoing process involving individual meetings, college and program visits, informational presentations, experienced trustee "mentors," and one or two-day workshops and retreats.

District documents are an important source of information. Accreditation self-studies and visiting team reports are excellent resources to get a comprehensive view of programs and plans. Strategic, educational and facilities master plans are important. Budgets and audit reports are useful to review with the CEO and/or his or her delegate. College catalogs and schedules will provide an overview of college offerings and board operations. Minutes and agendas of past board meetings are essential. Many boards also have developed a local board handbook containing information on ethics, protocols, policies, and board self-evaluation criteria.

The Community College League provides a number of resources, including this *Trustee Handbook*, to all new trustees and to each district office.

### Conferences and Workshops

All trustees should take advantage of the conferences, seminars, and workshops sponsored by the Community College League and California Community College Trustees (CCCT), the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and other organizations serving community colleges and governing boards. Some annual events are:

- League Annual Trustees Conference, held in May.
- ACCT Annual Convention, held in September or October.
- League Student Trustees Workshop, held in August.
- League Annual Convention, held in November.
- Legislative Conference and Effective Trusteeship Workshop, held in January in Sacramento.

These and other conferences and workshops are posted on the League's Web site, [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).

## Reading

Effective trustees schedule time to read board agendas and college documents. They contact the board chair or chief executive officer to ask for clarification of agenda items or to seek further information.

The resource section of the League's *Trustee Handbook* lists excellent reference books, periodicals, and resource materials for trustees. *Trusteeship in Community Colleges: A Guide to Effective Governance* (Smith, 2000), *Governing Boards* (Houle, 1989), *The Effective Board of Trustees* (Chait, Holland and Taylor, 1993) and *Boards That Make A Difference* (Carver, 1990) are "classics" on the role of boards. Local districts may have some of the references included in a trustee resource library. If not, contact the Association of Governing Boards, ACCT or the League for information on how to order materials.

New challenges arise quickly, issues are increasingly complex, demands on colleges are increasing, and decisions are not always easy. Trustees are only successful if they continually seek information, are open to new ideas, and engage in ongoing education.

The League has resource information designed to assist local boards in designing local trustee education and orientation programs. "Orientation, Education and Development for Community College Trustees" is available on the League's Web site.

## Effective Decision-Making

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Trustees engage in decision-making at every meeting. Effective boards take their responsibility to make decisions very seriously. They analyze background information and alternatives, work to understand the context for their decisions, practice strategic thinking, and seek multiple perspectives.

The decisions boards make result in policies related to institutional mission, goals, and prudent operations. Boards delegate decisions involving day-to-day operations to the CEO for further delegation. Faculty, classified staff, and students have the right to participate in policy decisions that affect them (see chapters 26 and 27).

Most board decisions are based on the democratic model. Boards use some form of parliamentary procedures to ensure fairness and equity in hearing all sides of the question. In most cases questions are decided by a majority vote of the board.

Making wise decisions involves understanding the steps in decision-making, effective discussion guidelines, conflict management, and how and when to involve others in the decision.

### Board Responsibilities

- Devote time, thought, and study to agenda item and proposal actions.
- Foster a spirit of harmony and cooperation that honors differences of opinion.
- Base personal decisions upon available facts in each situation.
- Vote honest convictions in every case.
- Abide by and uphold the board decision.

## Steps for Decision-Making

Trustees are responsible for spending a significant amount of time preparing for board meetings to ensure that they are able to make well-informed decisions. Experienced trustees set aside significant time for study and to gather information. Many have also developed a system to note questions, seek answers, and follow up on board decisions. As trustees deliberate agenda items, they may use the following steps:

1. **Clarify and Explore the Issues**  
Trustees seek a thorough understanding of what the issues and problems are, and what is to be accomplished by the decision. They gather as much information as needed, using appropriate channels of communication.
2. **Identify and Weigh Various Options**  
Effective trustees consider and evaluate many options. They clarify the criteria to be used in making the decision, and distinguish facts from beliefs, desires, and emotions. They consider the credibility of the information received. In addition, they assess the likely consequences of the decision on student learning, delivery of educational programs, and budgets, and explore both short and long range impacts.
3. **Decide as a Board**  
When participating in board discussions, trustees keep an open mind to others' points of view. Judgments are made after considering the best and worst case scenarios. If decisions are difficult, more information may be sought and the alternatives changed accordingly. Once the decision is made, all trustees support the decision of the board.

### Decision-Making Criteria and Questions

Some questions to ask in studying agenda items and making decisions are:

- Do I thoroughly understand the issue?
- What problem is it addressing? Is it the “real” problem?
- Is a decision really required at the board level? Or, is the item more appropriately an administrative matter? To whom should it be delegated?
- Is the decision able to be made through existing board policies and guidelines?
- What guidance do the mission, goals, and values of the institution provide?
- Does a proposal address the overall interests of the college, or is it limited to special interest needs?
- Is the proposal action legal and ethical?
- What will it cost in time and money? Is it within the budget?
- What evidence or data have been gathered related to the proposal?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal?
- What will be the short and long-range impact on the college?
- What other information is needed? Who can provide it?
- How will the decision be evaluated? What feedback does the board need? When?

#### 4. Monitor and Evaluate the Implementation

Working with the CEO, boards set a timeline and process for reviewing and assessing the results of their decisions and implementation.

## At Board Meetings

The manner in which trustees discuss and explore various issues at board meetings sets a tone for the entire college. The public and the staff are interested in the values, thoughts, contributions, and decisions of board members. Thoughtful, respectful discussions, particularly when there are diverse views, reflect well on the board and the entire institution. Guidelines for participation in board meeting discussions are:

1. Adopt and follow rules of order, usually adapted from Robert’s Rules or similar references.
2. Actively and thoughtfully participate.
3. During meetings, interact with other members of the board, but not with the public or press.
4. Ask questions to get facts related to the discussion.
5. State inquiries in non-hostile language.
6. Actively listen to others: listen to what is said as well as what is not said.
7. Respect others’ views.
8. Consider issues, not personalities.
9. Clarify the pros and cons of all alternatives.
10. Advocate for a position based on thorough study and after listening to all sides.
11. Help the chair by ceasing debate when all sides of a question have been explored.
12. Seek to table or postpone an item if there is not sufficient information or to avoid making a decision under stress.
13. Abstain from voting when there is a conflict of interest. Don’t abstain just to avoid offending a fellow board member or member of the public.

After the board meeting, all board members must:

- Accept and support the decision no matter how they voted;
- Convey their support for the decision to others;
- Follow up on expected action; and
- Monitor and review the decision regularly.

## Managing Conflict

Conflict is inevitable. Managed well, it allows for diverse needs and values, fosters creativity, and adapts programs to changing circumstances. Managed poorly, it divides institutions and groups and wastes the time and energy of those involved.

Poorly managed conflict at the board level creates a negative tone for the entire institution, diverting board and staff attention from delivering high quality services. A chronically conflicted board harms colleges. Alternatively, those boards that manage their conflicts well can lead their colleges to greatness.

Conflict results from both personal and relationship differences, as well as differences related to historical and cultural attitudes and values. Well-managed conflict asks those involved to abide by the following principles<sup>1</sup>:

1. Underneath incompatible positions lie compatible interests. The goal is to identify the compatible interests.
2. Every side has something valuable to say.
3. Discussions should include a dialogue process where participants search for common ground.
4. When there are highly-charged emotional issues, people may need to first express their feelings and concerns without debate.
5. It is easier to focus on areas of disagreement; therefore, participants should remember and keep reminding each other of areas of agreement.
6. Good will, non-accusatory communication, and good manners reduce defensiveness and hostility.
7. Different parties cannot express their needs and perspectives at the same time. Time must be allowed for all to feel they have fully expressed their point of view.
8. The goals of the different parties must be identified, and then possible alternatives explored so that all can achieve at least part of their goal.
9. Emotions will enter into the conflict. They should be validated but can be a barrier to thinking clearly. Find alternative ways to vent destructive emotion, rather than allowing it to hinder the conflict resolution process.
10. Listen, listen, and listen, but one needs to remember that listening is not the same as agreement.
11. Conflict should be viewed as a problem-solving process, not a contest.

## Involving Others in Decisions

Boards of trustees do not operate in a vacuum. There are different “levels” of decision-making that progressively involve more and more people within the organization. Being aware of the purpose and implications of each level provides a tool to decide who should be involved in which type of decisions. At level 1, the leader alone makes a decision and announces it to the group. More and more people are involved in and make the decision at different levels. At level 5, the leader delegates the responsibility to make decisions to others, within constraints.

Decision-making processes in community colleges are determined in part by laws and regulations that require that faculty, staff, and students play a role in contributing to decisions that affect them. They must be consulted on policies and procedures that have an impact on their responsibilities. These laws and regulations are described in more detail in chapters 26 and 27 in this book.

<sup>1</sup>ASTD. Coming to Agreement: How to Resolve Conflict. InfoLine Issue 8909. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development, September, 1989.



## Summary

Making good decisions is no easy task. In today's world, there are many different points of view, needs, and interests, as well as masses of information to assimilate and explore. Being a good trustee takes more time than ever before to study and understand all sides and the implications related to various alternatives. It is an awesome responsibility. To use their time wisely, boards should determine, with great care, which decisions are most important for the board to make and what can be delegated.

## Policy and Policymaking

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Boards of trustees govern through the policies they make. A classic definition of the difference between the board and administration is that the board sets policy and the administration carries it out. In studies of board effectiveness, the best boards are those that focus on broad policy concerns and do not involve themselves in the day-to-day work of the college.

Policy is the collective voice of the board and is the vehicle through which individual trustees express their values. In fact, one approach to boardsmanship, the Policy Governance® model, believes board policy is the sole expression of board authority.

### Board Responsibilities

Policy is the voice of the board. Boards are responsible to thoughtfully deliberate issues and policy proposals. They are responsible to be alert to the need for new or changed policy. Trustees should be willing to devote the time and study necessary for a thorough and thoughtful exploration of issues and options. They seek and consider multiple perspectives. They are responsible to act in accordance with and support board policy.

When reviewing potential policies, boards should always strive to make the broadest statements possible that provide sufficient direction and clarity. Trustees should ask, “What is the least amount of policy that we need?” The adage, “less is more,” applies to policymaking. Policies should clearly state the intent and direction of the board, but not be overly prescriptive or detailed. They should allow employees to exercise the professional discretion for which they were hired.

When boards vote in public meetings their actions have the force of policy. However, boards should not substitute a series of actions in board meetings for clear, powerful policy statements. If boards find themselves continually reacting to certain issues, they may wish to explore the policy implications of those issues and develop policy statements that proactively guide district actions.

Boards strengthen their own power and leadership by always referring to current policy and addressing the policy implications inherent in issues. If boards honor their policies and the importance of policy, they increase the respect that college staff and the community has for the board and board policy. “It doesn’t count if it’s not policy” reflects the belief of many effective boards.

Boards have a responsibility to periodically evaluate the policies they establish. Are the policies sufficiently clear? Do they provide adequate direction for CEO and staff decisions? Do they reflect current and future community values as represented by the elected trustees? Developing a master calendar for policy review ensures that policies remain current and useful.

Boards also have the responsibility to clearly delegate the authority to implement policy to the CEO and to support the use of that authority. They assure that board policy is followed by evaluating the CEO, reviewing how policies are adhered to, and attending to reports on institutional effectiveness.

Together, the board and the CEO determine and manage the policy-making process. The board should adopt a policy that addresses the process, which might include a definition of roles and responsibilities and a commitment to principles of inclusiveness and communication.

The CEO plays a major role in overseeing and supporting the policy development process and facilitating involvement in the shared governance process. He or she ensures that ideas and proposals are well researched and that policy options and analyses are presented to the board.

## Defining Policy

According to Webster's, governing policy is "a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures." Policy statements are brief, general statements of purpose, principles or philosophy that serve as guides for action. They should allow for the exercise of professional discretion in their implementation.

Policies generally result in the development of administrative regulations and procedures that further define for stakeholders how the policy should be implemented and who is responsible. Administrative regulations and procedures are not the domain of the board – responsibility for their development is delegated to the CEO and then to appropriate staff members.

Determining the difference between policy and administration is not always easy. While all boards agree that they are responsible to make decisions at the highest level of policy, studies have found that community college boards are often involved in making administrative decisions. Boards often find it easier to simply react to staff plans and initiatives than to tackle the complex, difficult process of making good policy. It requires self-discipline for trustees who are vitally interested in the college to focus only on policy and not get involved in day-to-day issues.

## Policy Levels

Policies should be broad and comprehensive and allow the CEO and staff to exercise professional expertise and judgment. When writing or adopting policy, boards start with a discussion of the broadest possible values related to an issue. Then, in a step-by-step fashion, proposed policy statements are narrowed until the board is willing to accept any reasonable interpretation of the policy. (See the examples below.)

Boards should avoid writing narrow, detailed and prescriptive policies. Implementation of policy almost always requires staff to develop administrative procedures or regulations, which can be changed internally as conditions change. Broad policies allow employees to adapt operations as needed.

### Examples of Policy Levels

The following is an example of four possible policy statements, ranging from very broad to narrow:

- Level 1 – Broad statement, which would be an umbrella policy: *The CEO shall ensure that all college operations are legal, ethical and prudent.*
- Level 2 – Further defines "prudent" in the operational area of maintaining a safe environment: *The campuses of the district shall be safe and secure.*
- Level 3 – Further defines delegation of authority and "safe and secure." *The CEO shall maintain a campus safety plan that establishes procedures to assure that employees, students, and others on campus are safe from threat or harm.*
- Level 4 – The following further defines one aspect of safety, but is so prescriptive and subject to change that it could easily be an administrative procedure. *There shall be no riding of bicycles, skateboards, scooters, or use of roller blades or roller skates in other than designated areas.*

## Policymaking Process

In general, the policymaking process has seven steps. The first step is identifying the need to establish new policy or change an existing policy. Usually, the CEO brings the need for new policy to the board's attention. The need may come from changes in laws or regulations, assessment of the effectiveness of current policies and institutional programs, or may be initiated by interest groups. Trustees also identify concerns that may be addressed through policy changes.

The second stage in policymaking is to determine who needs to be involved in the process. Good practice and state law and regulation require that those who are affected by the policy should be consulted (see chapters 26 and 27) Policies that apply to board members, such as a policy on board self-evaluation, may only involve the governing board. Policies that address “academic and professional” matters must include the Academic Senate. Policies that have a significant impact on staff or students must involve representatives from those groups. Being inclusive helps identify all alternatives, needs and barriers, and also garners support for new policies.

The third step involves determining and gathering the information needed to make a decision. The board and CEO:

- Determine the questions and issues they wish to explore.
- Identify related interests and variables affecting the issues.
- Request research and analysis from college staff.
- Engage in public discussion of the issues to gather input.

Here are some examples of questions boards ask:

- Why is this policy change needed? What’s wrong with current policy? Who “gains” and who “loses” in current policy? How will that change if the policy is modified?
- What research or other information supports the need for change?
- How have other successful institutions addressed this? What policies do they have?
- What are various options, implications, and costs and benefits of changing policy? What alternatives have the best chance of being implemented effectively?

By asking thoughtful questions, boards direct the generation and analysis of policy options. They ensure that comprehensive and relevant information is gathered so that they can make good decisions.

Boards should clearly identify what questions they want answered and the amount of information they desire. CEOs and college staff should work to provide timely, succinct, and relevant information.

The fourth stage in policymaking involves analyzing the information and developing and discussing alternatives. Experienced boards depend on CEOs and college staff to analyze and summarize the issues and background.

Thoughtful boards talk through the implications of each alternative. They assess the alternatives by asking: “How will this new policy improve student success and improve the use of public resources?”

The fifth step is to adopt new policy and approve changes to current policy at board meetings. The changes are then integrated into the board policy manual. Old policies that are no longer applicable are removed.

Once policy is adopted, the board expects the CEO to communicate it to those it affects, explaining its implications and discussing its implementation. The board and CEO also may need to communicate with the public to explain why policy changes were needed, particularly those that affect the direction of the institution. If the board has made a difficult or unpopular choice, the board and the CEO especially need to explain the rationale for why the choice was made.

Once policy is adopted, it is the voice of the board. Trustees who argued or voted against the policy should not continue to speak in opposition—they should support the decision of the board. Supporting board policy decisions as a team keeps the board working together and fosters institutional strength.

The sixth step is to implement the policy, which is the responsibility of the CEO and institutional staff members. They need to make the requisite changes in college programs, operations, and procedures to implement the policy direction or adhere to changes in policy parameters.

### Policy and Procedure Subscription Service

The League, in conjunction with the law firm of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore, offers a subscription service to member districts. The service provides samples or templates of board policies and administrative procedures that are legally required, legally advised and suggested as good practice. It includes two updates each year that address changes in law and regulation and respond to subscriber questions, as well as two subscribers’ workshops to review legal issues and how to use the service. Seventy-one districts are members.

For more information, visit  
[www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org),  
click on *District Services*,  
click on *Policy and Procedure Service*.

The final and ongoing step for boards is to monitor policy implementation and its effect. Boards gain a better understanding of the implications of their decisions when they have a sense of how policy is interpreted, what procedures and programs are implemented, and what the “ripple effects” are of new policy directions.

Information gathered at this phase often cycles back into policy initiation. If the board and others are dissatisfied with the effect of the policies, they will be revisited and the policymaking process will begin again. Those who supported new or amended policies can be assured that they made good decisions if the results are positive. Monitoring the effectiveness of policy “closes the loop” of the policymaking cycle.

## Policy Content and Categories

Effective board policy accomplishes the following purposes:

- Establish the direction and standards for the college’s educational programs and services
- Ensure that the district is in compliance with law
- Ensure that resources are wisely and prudently used
- Define clear expectations for college staff
- Establish standards for board operations and trustee involvement

There are two major approaches to categorizing policy topics. The first approach, which is more traditional, results in categories that parallel the functions and divisions within a college or district. The League’s Board Policy and Administrative Procedure Service is based on this approach. The following are examples of some common categories and related policy topics:

*Governing Board or Board of Trustees: Includes board bylaws or operating policies, role and responsibilities, policymaking process, code of ethics, board meetings, and standards for participation in decision-making. May include CEO authority, responsibility, job description, and evaluation processes.*

*Institutional: Defines the district, mission and goals; addresses topics that affect the entire institution, such as student success, equal opportunity, safety, computer use, etc.*

*Fiscal and Business Services: Includes parameters for fiscal areas such as budget development, expenditure limits, accounting and reporting; auxiliary services; insurance and risk management; safety; and facilities and construction.*

*Personnel or Human Resources: Includes standards for employment, salary schedules and benefits, evaluation, grievance processes, leaves, and professional development. Collective bargaining contracts are also considered to be policy.*

*Academic Affairs: Includes parameters for the student preparedness, pre-requisites, academic calendar, degrees and certificates, program and curriculum development and review, enrollment criteria, and academic freedom.*

*Student Services: Includes parameters for operations such as enrollment, student service programs, standards for student progress, records management, and student activities.*

The second approach is from the Policy Governance® model of boardsmanship. The categories in this model are based on the board’s role rather than internal structure of the college. There is a strong emphasis on having a few broad, succinct policies rather than many detailed policies. There are four policy categories in this model:

*Ends* policies establish what the desired results—the ends—of the institution’s efforts are to be. They define the populations that the college will serve and establish priorities. Ends policies provide direction and frame internal planning processes. They are futuristic and externally oriented.

*Limitations or Boundary* policies define the parameters for all of the means of the organization – the programs, services and activities. They state the limits beyond which the CEO and staff may not go in accomplishing the goals of the institution. They establish legal, prudent and ethical standards, and usually address fiscal and personnel areas as well as treatment of students and communication to the board.

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*Governing Process* policies define the board's job and responsibilities, how the board will govern itself, and expectations for trustee behavior. These policies are similar to the governing board policies in traditional manuals and board bylaws.

*Board-Staff Relationship* policies describe the delegation to and accountability of the CEO.

## Mandates and Standards

The California Education Code identifies a number of areas in which boards should make policy and authorizes boards to delegate power and authority (see the chapter on the governing board role). Title V regulations, adopted by the Board of Governors, implement state law and further determine district actions. Additional laws and regulations that affect all public or educational institutions and boards also influence board policy. Local community college governing boards have the responsibility to adopt policies that best meet the needs of their local communities within state and federal directions and constraints.

### Accrediting Standards

Accreditation standards define boards as policymaking entities that are responsible to reflect the public interest, ensure educational quality and fiscal health, and monitor the institution. The standards state that boards should establish broad policies, delegate responsibility to implement the policies, and regularly evaluate their policies and practices. In general, while the accreditation standards establish criteria and processes for institutions, the determination of whether the criteria are policies or administrative procedures is left up to the district.

## The Use of Policy

All districts and boards should have up-to-date and comprehensive policy manuals accessible on the district's website. The administrative procedures or regulations that implement the policy should also be accessible, but should not be confused with board policies.

CEO and staff decisions should implement board policy. Programs and services will be based on the direction established in board policy and strategic and educational plans adopted by the board. Once policies and plans are adopted, college staff should have the authority to do the work of the college; further board approval is not needed unless staff activities fall outside of the policy guidelines.

Board agenda items should include references to board policy when appropriate. When boards are faced with issues and decisions, one of the first questions should be, "Do we have a policy that addresses this?" If the answer is "yes," the policy guides the board's decision. If the answer is "no," the board and staff can then review the policy implications of the issue, ask for further information and analyses if necessary, and determine if new policy should be made.

In order to be used, policy needs to be public and accessible. Communication is very important. All staff members should be aware of the board policies and administrative procedures, particularly those that affect their responsibility. As accessibility to and use of computer technology increases, policies and procedures may be posted on line.

Ensuring that policy and procedures are useful means that they should not be overly prescriptive or too detailed, complex, or bureaucratic. Today's colleges and staff members need to be flexible, responsive, and creative to respond to the changing nature of today's world. Boards help ensure the success of their colleges by adopting policies that allow for professional discretion, yet provide clear direction and prudent limits for staff.



## Student Success and Education Policy

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*Appreciation is extended to Dr. Kay McClenney, Sid W. Richardson Endowed Fellow and Director, Center for Community College Student Engagement, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin for permission to use material from her presentations at the 2010 CCC Trustees Conference and California Leadership Alliance for Student Success Institutes in this chapter. Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Byron McClenney, Director, Achieving the Dream and Senior Lecturer, Educational Administration, Community College Leadership Program, The University of Texas at Austin for permission to use the “Top Ten Reasons for Progress in Achieving the Dream.”*

Community colleges provide educational opportunities that result in a better quality of life. Access, equity, and success are central to the community college mission. As guardians of the public’s interests, boards are responsible for ensuring that the colleges they govern have programs and services that ensure student success and that meet community needs.

### Board Responsibilities

- Provide and ensure visible, persistent leadership.
- Provide and expect a strategic focus on access, equity and student success.
- Build a culture of evidence and a climate for innovation and creativity.
- Expect effective education.
- Protect academic freedom.

## Board Role

Board leadership, expressed through policy and performance, sets the tone for the entire institution. If boards are focused on student success and quality education, their districts will be more successful in producing student learning.

Boards provide and expect visible and persistent leadership for student success. They ensure such leadership by hiring the right chief executive officer, one who is not just committed and knowledgeable, but is also passionate and relentless about student success. They honor administrators, faculty and staff who lead efforts that promote student success.

Boards focus on and are committed to student success over time; they realize that it may take years to change the culture of a college. Trustees expect that the district’s strategic and other plans put student success at the center. They expect that human resources process and professional development programs foster expectations and a climate for student success. When reviewing and adopting budgets, boards assure that spending priorities are aligned with the student access, equity and success goals.

Board meeting agendas regularly include discussion of student progress and achievement. Board members are patient but relentless in expecting and setting ambitious but realistic goals for student success. When making board decisions, they ask questions such as “How will this advance the student success mission? How is our work on accreditation/state initiatives/technology upgrades/facility renovations/hiring patterns connected to student success?”



Colleges that enjoy a culture of evidence or inquiry are more effective in fostering student success. Boards provide leadership in building a culture of evidence when they support inquiry and curiosity and avoid blame. Trustee discussions and questions are framed in a manner that makes it both safe and necessary for the college to engage in courageous conversations about equity and student success. The board supports and expects college employees to use data in decision-making, to risk innovatively, and to be willing to shift when programs don't work well. They celebrate and reward progress toward improving student success. *(More information on monitoring is in the chapter "Monitoring Student Success and Institutional Effectiveness")*

Finally, boards set policies that protect academic freedom. A unique and important contribution of colleges is to provide a forum in which people have the freedom and sanctuary to explore problems and issues. Boards protect the right and responsibilities of colleges to be independent voices in society to create, criticize, challenge, and advocate new ideas.

## **Student Access, Equity and Success are Central**

Effective community colleges reflect an environment in which learning is valued and celebrated. Since the mid-1990's, educational leaders and policymakers have increasingly focused on the outcomes of education. Trustees are more likely to become involved in discussions about student learning and success in addition to their traditional focus on budgets, buildings and legal accountability. Boards and colleges are now establishing and evaluating goals that focus on student learning.

Learning – becoming a more educated person – occurs in many ways. Students learn through traditional classroom instruction, collaborative approaches and learning communities, individual support and tutoring, counseling and advising, college activities and events, work experience, distance learning, independent study, and a wide variety of modes and schedules for delivering information.

Understanding the conditions that lead to student success enables boards to reinforce and allocate funds to programs and services that work well. Institutional and classroom-based research, including systematic student feedback, provides the information boards need to adopt appropriate policies and ensure funds are allocated well. Board leadership creates a climate in which educators are willing and encouraged to do education differently and by design – to do more of what works. Key principles of effective education include:

- Intensive student engagement in learning.
- High expectations for students.
- Focus on the front door, on student readiness.
- Making effective practice mandatory for students.

Boards should be aware of research on educational practice and quality, work with the CEO to foster effective practice, and expect the faculty to inquire into and capitalize on what works.

## **Board Policy**

The policies boards adopt are the public statements of their intent and leadership. A focus on student success may be reflected in any number of policies, including the vision, mission, values and goals. Boards also may choose to adopt an “umbrella” policy on student success.

### **Vision, Mission, and Values**

A primary function of the board of trustees is to create and affirm a broadly developed and compelling vision and mission. Visionary trustees, in partnership with the CEO and college leaders, anticipate what is needed to respond to community needs and environmental trends. Creating and re-creating a vision and mission requires the colleges to sharpen priorities, ensure a strategic approach to the future, and anticipate potential problems.

The vision states what the college will be in the future. The mission reflects the purposes. Values frame the operations of the college. The statements are developed through integrating values and ideas from trustees, college employees, students and community members. They are adopted as policy and periodically reviewed. They guide board and college deliberations.

**TOP TEN: REASONS FOR PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE DREAM**  
**Byron McClenney and the Coaches**  
**November 2010**

The 33 members of the coaching cadre for Achieving the Dream have written over 1,200 reports on their college visits during the six years of intensive work on transformation for student success. They met for a reflective work session in October 2007 and again in October 2010 to review what had been the “Top Ten” and “Top Eight” in earlier versions. This version emerged following electronic conversations about the subsequent draft document.

Following are foundational steps to be in place for institutions to make progress with institutional transformation to improve student success. All items are viewed as essential, but lower numbers represent the most important items.

1. Leaders, including board members and faculty, are engaged in, and pay continuous attention to, progress on the student success agenda.
2. A sustained focus on student success is practiced by the institution and demonstrably influences the development of policies, procedures, and practices.
3. There is broad and continuous faculty/staff/student/community engagement and collaboration in support of a student success agenda.
4. Planning and budgeting (including reallocation of resources) are aligned with the vision, priorities, and strategies of a student success agenda.
5. A culture of evidence and inquiry is pervasive in the institution (including cohort tracking of disaggregated data) with strong support from IR.
6. A sense of urgency drives a shared vision and communications around a student success agenda with internal and external stakeholders.
7. Professional development efforts (inclusive of board members, CEO, leadership throughout the institution, full-time and adjunct faculty, and staff) are aligned with the priorities and strategies of a student success agenda.
8. A systemic student success agenda is integrated with other significant initiatives such as accreditation, strategic planning, and Title V.
9. An equity agenda is integrated in the efforts to improve learning and college completion outcomes.
10. Student success interventions are informed by and adapted from demonstrably effective practices.

**COACHES**

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### **Ends and Student Success Goals**

John Carver developed the concept of Ends policies, which is helpful in defining the role of governing boards in educational policy-making. Ends policies define the value the district adds to the community by answering the question, “What good will be produced for which people, at what cost?” The “good” includes the learning produced by the institution. The people are those whom the college benefits outside of the organization, e.g. the students, different publics, and the community as a whole. The cost reflects the resources used as well as the alternatives not chosen.

Ends are not the services the college provides – they are the results of the services. Ends are not the activities in which the staff is engaged – those are the means the staff uses to achieve the Ends. Ends policies contain concepts that can be evaluated. As boards develop Ends policies and monitor their achievement, the need for good data becomes obvious. Boards must be informed about community demographics, economic projections, and educational needs in order to define ends goals. They must have information about student outcomes and program effectiveness in order to evaluate progress.

The following examples reflect three different perspectives on setting outcome goals or ends. The first perspective defines the difference the college should make for the community. It explicitly recognizes the responsibility and connections that colleges have to and with their communities, e.g.:

- Because of the College, the people in the region served by the college will have convenient and extensive access to postsecondary training and education.
- The adult population of the region will have the workforce knowledge and skills necessary to achieve an economically self-sufficient life.
- Because of the College, the region will be a caring, compassionate community.

The second perspective reflects a focus on what happens to the students, such as:

- Students will obtain the lower division courses, knowledge and skills needed to succeed in earning a baccalaureate degree.
- Students who lack college-level reading and comprehension skills will acquire literacy skills at a level that enables them to participate in college-level courses.
- As a result of their college experience, students will be able to critically think and participate in society as productive citizens.

Boards may set specific benchmarks in student success goals, such as:

- Increase completion of certificates and associate degrees by 5% each year until at least 2025.
- By 2025, close attainment gaps based on race/ethnicity and family income.
- Each year, significantly improve successful completion rates (C or better) in basic skills courses, compared to the college's baseline.

Specific policies vary from district to district and reflect differing priorities and needs within their communities. Boards should work closely with college employees to clearly define community needs and develop relevant educational priorities and goals.

### **Board Policy on Student Access, Equity and Success**

Developing a policy on student success would involve administrators, faculty, staff and students; such policy is within the purview of the Academic Senate as an “academic and professional matter.” Trustees should actively contribute to the policy concepts, which may include the following:

- Definition of the board's role and accountability.
- Definitions of student success and goals; statements of and/or delegation to identify key performance indicators and benchmarks.
- Direction or delegation to the CEO to ensure that student access, equity, and success is central to planning and budgeting.
- Processes that address key roles for administrative, faculty, and staff involvement, which may include the college committees focused on access, equity and success.
- Processes and a general schedule for monitoring student success.

## **Summary**

Students are successful when faculty, staff and administration work together to ensure that there are clear standards for student learning, effective teaching, and excellence in educational practice and support services. Leadership from the board of trustees and the chief executive is key to creating an environment in which students succeed. Through their policies and focus, governing boards can and must create this environment. They ensure systems are in place to enable the board to monitor student success and program quality, and that provide the board and public with sufficient assurances that the colleges are fulfilling their missions.

## Board Role in Planning

Successful colleges have strategies for planning and decision-making that engage the entire institution and ensure that its direction is shaped by the future learning needs of the communities it serves. This chapter reviews the importance of planning and the role of the board of trustees, including its responsibilities to establish an overall policy direction and ensure that the institution engages in planning.

Change is a given. The rapid and ongoing rate of change means that colleges must be more nimble and proactive in determining how to allocate time and resources. Colleges engage in planning in order that environmental factors such as student characteristics, community needs, demographic shifts, workforce patterns, the global economy, technology, changing lifestyles, and social attitudes are incorporated into the direction of their educational programs. These trends create and change learning needs, and require colleges to constantly adapt. These “big picture” factors are catalysts for ongoing innovation, change and renewal.

### Board Responsibilities

- Be aware of societal, demographic, economic, and technological changes influencing the college.
- Expect and model a culture of inquiry for ongoing planning and evaluation.
- Adopt a mission, vision, and strategic plans that put student success at the center.
- Insist on a limited number of clear priorities each year; set ambitious but realistic expectations.
- Monitor institutional progress and effectiveness.

## Planning

The importance of planning is reflected in state law and accreditation standards:

- Education Code Section 51008 (a) states, “The governing board of a community college district shall establish policies for, and approve, comprehensive or master plans which include academic master plans and long range master plans for facilities. The content of such plans shall be locally determined, except that the plans shall also address planning requirements specified by the Board of Governors.”
- Title 5 regulations require that institutions have plans for programs and processes such as deferred maintenance, matriculation, equal opportunity, student equity, vocational program review, staff development, and technology and telecommunications.
- The importance of planning is referenced throughout the standards published by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, which all colleges must meet. The standards require that planning is ongoing, systematic, and integrated and addresses and assures student learning.

### Effective planning accomplishes many purposes, including:

- Provide clear, shared direction for action.
- Allocate resources effectively.
- Communicate shared information.
- Provide opportunities for teamwork and collaboration.
- Maintain currency and relevance.
- Anticipate change, future opportunities, and trends.
- Strengthen organizations.
- Provide accountability to public.
- Ensure fulfillment of goals and objectives. (RP Group, 1997)

Long range and strategic plans and related board policies provide the direction and parameters for designing and implementing programs and activities. Since it is important that plans are “owned” by those who must do the implementing, it is important that staff at all levels are involved in assessing needs, contributing to the development of the policy direction, and designing and implementing strategies to meet needs and achieve policy goals.

## Planning is a Process

Planning is an ongoing process that continually incorporates new information about program effectiveness and changes in the external environment into the programs and services of the college. Good plans are not documents that remain on shelves, but are used and continually revised. The culture of the college should be one in which planning is an integral part of the functioning of the institution.

Effective planning is a part of a cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The cycle includes planning to plan, conducting research, writing plans, implementing them, and evaluating their effectiveness. Usually, a planning team or committee coordinates roles and responsibilities, timelines, information needs and flow, and follow-up systems.

The information that guides planning is generated from many sources and involves environmental scanning, research and analysis, and evaluation of current programs and services. A planning culture is established when people continually assess needs, scan for future trends, evaluate how well current programs meet current and future needs, and adjust programs as necessary.

## Board Role

Boards are responsible for ensuring that colleges anticipate and are responsive to the future needs of their communities and changing social, political, economic, and technological trends. Their role in planning is to:

1. establish an environment in which effective planning can occur;
2. adopt the vision, mission and goals; and assure that student success is at the core of all planning;
3. monitor institutional progress toward goals contained in the plans.

Boards are involved early in the planning process in the discussions of mission, vision and goals. They set priorities for institutional direction and student success. The plans are then developed through internal processes and brought back to the board for approval. While trustees are not involved in those internal process, they usually receive periodic reports on the status of the planning processes.

Boards are required by law or regulation to approve facilities and educational master plans, as well as some internal, subject-matter plans, such as matriculation and staff diversity. Approval should be contingent upon these conditions:

- criteria for effective planning have been met;
- the plans have been driven by mission, vision, and strategic goals;
- the plans are fiscally responsible; and
- they meet legal requirements and accreditation standards.

*“The most important work of any governing board is to create and re-create the reason for organizational existence.” –*

*John Carver, 1990*

## Ensure that Planning Occurs

First, boards ensure that planning occurs by adopting policies that establish standards for and require planning, guide their own behavior and roles, and set priorities for the CEO and staff. Board policies may establish a general schedule for planning and monitoring of progress. By stating that planning is required and is important, and by establishing standards for planning processes, the board creates an environment conducive to planning.

Policies that require planning may include some or all of the following concepts and values:

- Commitment and inclusion. Policy statements might set standards for commitment and participation in planning by the CEO, faculty, classified leadership, and department and division administrators. All employees should understand and be committed to the value of planning. Key personnel at all levels should have the opportunity to contribute to the vision, ends, mission and goals, and are responsible for developing related department and unit goals, and designing and implementing related activities to achieve the goals.
- Integration with mainstream of decision-making. Policy may require that existing participatory mechanisms are used in the planning process, that different planning efforts are linked, and that budgeting is tied to planning.
- Clear understanding of mission and focus on student success. Planning must be framed by a clear understanding of the institution's mission to improve student success and the goals required to fulfill that mission, vision, and policy ends. Governing board and CEO leadership is key to ensuring that the entire campus community supports the mission and goals.
- Commitment to act, change, and improve. Policy statements should recognize that planning is dynamic and ongoing. Trustee attitudes and behaviors should reflect the willingness to evaluate, plan, change as needed, and constantly improve performance.

### Set the Policy Direction

A second role for boards is to provide visible, persistent leadership for student success and to define and clarify the difference they expect their colleges to make for students and their communities. They do this at the beginning of a planning process. They articulate what the college contributes to the public good – the college's reason for being – the results or “ends” for which the college should be striving. This proactive role requires boards to focus their time and attention on student success, external issues and community trends.

By adopting vision, mission, and student success and other goals as policy, boards affirm and set the policy direction for the institution. This direction then frames all internal planning processes. Staff members have the authority and responsibility to develop internal college goals and objectives, establish action plans, and identify targets, outcomes, and benchmarks to evaluate progress. Plans for specific areas, such as facilities, matriculation, staff development, etc., should be linked to the strategic and master plans.

### Monitoring

The third role of the board in the area of planning is to monitor the progress of the college in fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals and student success. The board receives regular reports that allow it to assess the effectiveness of the institution in meeting student and community needs.

The board's monitoring role also includes being aware of changes and trends to enable the board to assess where the college should be headed in the future. In addition, boards should engage in regular reviews of the vision, mission and goals. A more complete discussion on the board's monitoring role is included in the chapter, “*Monitoring Institutional Effectiveness.*”

## Trustee Responsibilities

To effectively participate in establishing an environment for planning, setting the vision, mission, and direction for the college, and monitoring progress, individual trustees must be knowledgeable and educated. They understand the nature of community colleges and the culture, values, and traditions of their colleges as academic institutions. They are committed to the mission and to student success. They promote a “culture of inquiry” in the colleges by engaging in discussions to refine institutional priorities and direction.

Because they are elected to represent their communities, trustees must be aware of the diverse interests in their communities and knowledgeable about current and future social, educational, and economic needs. They must also be aware of state, national, and global trends that may affect their colleges. CEOs and college staff ensure that trustees have the information they need for effective policy-making. The reports that boards receive should be clear, succinct and targeted to their role as policy-makers.

Trustees will help their colleges be flexible and responsive if they are visionary, oriented toward external trends and needs, and seek out and integrate diverse perspectives. Trustees who are willing to anticipate future trends study how proposals are related to policy goals and how student success data is used in the planning processes. Visionary boards create an environment in which planning is valued and integrated into the culture of the organization.

## Monitoring Student Success and Institutional Effectiveness

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Community colleges are scrutinized for what they contribute to their local communities and to the state in return for public support and funds. State government and federal programs require community colleges to be accountable for student and institutional outcomes in such areas as student access, student success, employment, staff diversity, and fiscal operations. In the last decade, regional accrediting associations have added standards related to student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

### Board Responsibilities

- Adopt a mission and goals that are capable of being monitored.
- Establish system of monitoring student success and institutional effectiveness that includes key performance indicators.
- Regularly monitor progress toward the goals; support a culture of evidence and inquiry.
- Support district efforts to meet national and state accountability requirements.

### Board Role

One of the most important roles boards play is to monitor the effectiveness of their institutions. To do so, a board must first adopt a clear vision, mission, and broad goals as policy. Working with the CEO, they then establish key performance indicators that can be used to measure progress toward the goals. By adopting goals and setting measures, and then asking for reports on progress toward the goals, boards focus staff attention on achieving outcomes and improving institutional performance.

Monitoring institutional effectiveness helps boards and college leaders identify both strong and weak areas. Boards may choose to establish targets or “benchmarks” against which the performance of the institution is measured. Boards should commend and reward good performance and support efforts that help weaker areas improve.

Trustees play a key role in establishing a culture of inquiry, rather than one of blame. If they approach discussions of student success and goal achievement with curiosity and openness, they foster risk-taking and honest evaluation of programs. If board questions and discussions focus on the leadership and policies needed for improvement, rather than punishment for failure, college faculty, administrators and staff will prosper and program review processes will be much more effective.

### Trends in Accountability

In the past decade, there has been increased attention to accountability for the effectiveness of higher education, including community colleges. State and national research institutes and others have studied barriers and trends related to student success. Accrediting bodies throughout the nation have strengthened standards related to quality and student learning. Many states have adopted accountability and funding systems that reward performance; there is a trend in state legislatures toward basing a portion of public funding on student outcome measures. National groups are focusing on the need to reverse the relative decline in U.S. higher education achievement compared to other nations.

Community colleges must respond by strengthening their focus on and monitoring of student success. In California, three efforts reflect these trends. In 2010, The Community College League of California convened a commission of college leaders to explore and make recommendations for responding to these challenges. The group released the report, *2020 Vision: A Report of the Commission on the Future*, which makes a number of recommendations related to student success and institutional effectiveness. The California Leadership Alliance for Student Success, funded by the Irvine and Hewlett foundations, involved chief executives and trustees in a two-year project that strengthened local practice and resulted in a number of policy recommendations. The Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges is convening a student success task force, which will explore and recommend state-level policy change.

### **State Trends in Accountability**

The California Community Colleges are required to have a comprehensive management information and accountability system, and districts report data to the CCC System Office. The following are some of the data that colleges collect and report:

- Student characteristics: community participation rates; high school graduates participation; financial aid participation; categorical programs participation; basic skills and ESL enrollment.
- Student course activity and outcomes: Persistence in courses, programs and the college; completion of degrees and certificates; completion by field of study; transfer, job placement.
- Course inventory.
- Staff composition and workload, e.g. staff diversity, faculty assignments.
- Fiscal activity, including budget and expenditure levels.

A key requirement is the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC), adopted in 2006. ARCC provides information to the Legislature on community college performance and to local colleges to help them improve institutional performance. This framework for measuring student success was developed in consultation with community colleges groups and addresses four areas:

- Student progress and achievement in terms of degrees/certificates earned and transfer to four year institutions.
- Student progress and achievement in vocational and workforce development courses and programs.
- Pre-collegiate improvement (basic skills and English as a Second Language curricula).
- Adult participation rates in the community colleges.

Boards are required to approve the ARCC report each year. Boards should be asking questions about the report and what the data mean in terms of assessing how well the district is meeting its goals.

### **National Trends in Accountability**

The national call for improvement and accountability is widespread. President Barack Obama has called upon community colleges to increase degree and certificate completions through the "American Graduation Initiative." The National Governors Association has established a Complete to Compete campaign to mobilize governors to increase college completion rates. The American Association of Community Colleges and Association of Community College Trustees are developing a Voluntary Framework for Accountability. All colleges are accountable for certain performance standards in order to receive some federal financial aid and vocational education funds.

### **Accreditation and Student Learning Outcomes**

The accreditation process involves both a self-study and an important external review by a visiting team. Boards have the responsibility to ensure that the accreditation self-study process is thorough, approve the self-study report, receive and respond to the accrediting team's evaluation, and ensure that action plans for improvement are followed.

A number of accreditation standards are focused on student learning: they require colleges to engage in discussions to define student learning outcomes, measure student achievement, and use the analysis of student learning to guide institutional improvement efforts. Colleges are required to identify learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates, and degrees in a comprehensive and integrated manner. More on the accreditation process and the board's role is in the following chapter.



## Setting the Stage/Asking Good Questions

Boards of trustees are responsible for how well the colleges are meeting the learning needs of their communities. They monitor the achievement of the goals by first adopting as policy the most important educational student success outcomes for the communities served by the district. Then, they ask for reports from the college(s) on progress toward the goals.

The most important questions for boards are, “What difference is the college making in the community?

Are students successfully achieving their goals and becoming more productive citizens as a result of their experience at the college?”

Specific areas to explore when establishing goals and indicators might include:

- What important demographic, economic, and social trends in the state and in the local communities affect the colleges? How is the district responding to these trends?
- What kinds of students are currently enrolled? Do these students reflect the population of the community? Are they the students the college should be serving? What groups are not being served?
- What kinds of preparation do students bring to community colleges? Do the college programs respond to their needs?
- What are students’ educational goals? Do college programs align with their goals? Does the district have services to help students identify goals?
- How is the college evaluating the impact of various programs and strategies on student success? How do we know that programs “work”?
- What do students do after they leave the community college? Are they successful as transfers to four-year institutions? In finding jobs? In improving their skills and career potential, if currently employed?
- Are local business and industry satisfied with how well prepared their employees are as a result of attending the college?
- How has the college contributed to the cultural, economic, and social health and stability of the community? How is that measured?
- What action plans were identified in the most recent self-study? What were the recommendations of the accrediting team, and are they being addressed?

## Key Performance Indicators and Data

District strategic plans generally include five to ten broad goals related to the mission of the colleges to provide access, promote equity and assure student success. Each year, the district should establish a limited number of priorities related to the broad goals. Performance indicators should be established for each goal and priority that will enable progress to be measured. Departments within the college may also establish goals and indicators for their programs that are tied to the college goals. These goals and related measures are used to guide program review processes to assure ongoing program improvement.

There are two approaches in monitoring student success. One provides “snapshot” reports of student achievement at a point in time. The ARCC report (Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges) is a primary example. It is required by state law and provides information about student degrees, certificates, transfers, and progress and achievement in pre-collegiate and workshop development courses. It allows colleges to see trends and compare themselves to other institutions.

A second approach is “cohort tracking.” A cohort of students is identified (for example, all first-time students enrolled in Fall 2009). Data on students in the cohort is then gathered over a number of semesters that provides information on enrollment and course completion patterns, persistence, and progress toward student goals. This approach allows colleges to identify barriers to learning and progress, as well as strategies that are more effective than others in producing student success.

Each approach can be used in identifying and monitoring “momentum” or key progress measures of student success. Staying in and successfully completing courses is one measure of success. Completing pre-requisites for more advanced courses and then succeeding in the advanced courses is another measure.

Persisting in a course of study and earning a certificate or degree are additional measures. The indicators and related measures provide general information about performance and may be used to compare performance to a relevant benchmark or to measure trends in performance over time. Relevant benchmarks may be established by the board or delegated to staff, and may include target goals or comparison to similar institutions.

Both “snapshot” and “cohort tracking” data may be disaggregated by demographic groups, including race/ethnicity and family economic status. Disaggregated data allow college staff to identify situations that disproportionately affect certain groups and to evaluate the success of programs that target high-risk students.

Those reporting the research should ensure that it is in a form useful to boards as policy-makers. Reports should be succinct and may include quantitative data (numbers, percentages, and trends) as well as qualitative data (interviews and case examples). Summaries about the relationship of data to policy goals are much more effective than providing extensive tables of numbers to the board.

### Examples of measures of student success:

- Participation rates of demographic groups.
- Successful course completion rates.
- Student persistence.  
*(Fall to Spring and Fall to Fall)*
- Student achievement.  
*(certificates and degrees)*
- Placement rate in the work force.
- Employer assessment of students.
- Licensure/certification pass rates.
- Number and rate who transfer.
- Performance after transfer.
- Demonstration of critical literacy skills.

## Institutional Research Capacity

Comprehensive planning and institutional assessment efforts require staff and resources dedicated to gathering, maintaining, analyzing, and reporting the data and information needed for decision-making. Boards should be willing to allocate or re-allocate resources to ensure that the district has sufficient capacity to identify research questions, generate data to answer the questions, and turn data into information useful in making educational and policy decisions. Indicators of success for each goal may be similar to those reported to the state, or may be refined to meet local needs and situations.

As policymakers, trustees should ensure that the information they receive is directly related to the policy goals and the decisions they must make. Gathering and reporting information is a time-consuming process, and trustees can help ensure that research resources are efficiently used by asking only for information that helps them make policy decisions and evaluate progress toward goals.

Generally, research and planning are conducted throughout the institution, with a person or office responsible for facilitating and supporting the efforts of many, and ensuring that research is conducted related to institutional goals. Examples include:

**Institutional Research and Planning Office:** This office has the designated function of organizing, conducting, and facilitating college or district research and planning. Generally the office reports to the CEO or a senior vice president.

**Institutional Research Committee:** A formal research committee shares the responsibility for institutional research. A committee identifies research topics and divides the research tasks among various individuals or offices.

**Individual or Group Research:** Individual staff, faculty and administrators conduct research on specific topics of interest. For example, an English professor or faculty group might review the success rate of students in several levels of English composition courses.

## Conclusion

The governing board plays an important role in monitoring institutional effectiveness by adopting goals and requiring reports that enable it to monitor progress toward the goals. Institutional self-assessment and local accountability systems contribute to learning at many levels. The board learns how well the college is accomplishing its mission. The college learns how well students are learning and succeeding in meeting their goals. College trustees, faculty and staff learn where they have been effective and where not, and can develop plans for improving student success and service to the community. The state learns how institutions are meeting their goals and receives aggregated information for well-informed policymaking.

## Curriculum Approval Process

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Board policies state “the programs and curricula of the District shall be of high quality, relevant to community and student needs, and evaluated regularly to ensure quality and currency.” Boards retain authority to approve new programs and courses, and discontinue programs, and delegate the authority for all other actions to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Procedures for the development and review of all curricular offerings, including their establishment, modification, or discontinuance shall be established. Prior to submission to the governing board, curriculum approval includes:

- Appropriate involvement of the faculty and Academic Senate in all processes;
- Regular review and justification of programs and course descriptions;
- Opportunities for training for persons involved in aspects of curriculum development; and
- Consideration of job market and other related information for career education programs.

### Key Legal Requirements

California Code of Regulations, title 5, section 55002 states that the curriculum committee “shall be either a committee of the academic senate or a committee that includes faculty and is otherwise comprised in a way that is mutually agreeable to the college and/or district administration and the academic senate.”

The regulation provides that the curriculum committee shall recommend curriculum to the governing board for approval, either directly or through the academic senate depending on local processes.

The local governing board approves all new programs and program discontinuances. It is suggested that Boards not require program or course modifications be submitted to them for approval. All new programs are submitted to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office for approval as required. By contrast, individual degree-applicable credit courses offered as part of a permitted educational program only require approval by the local Board. Non-degree-applicable credit and degree-applicable courses that are not part of an existing approved program must satisfy the conditions authorized by California Code of Regulations, title 5, and shall also be approved by the Board.

Board approval is sufficient for implementation with the completion of a Credit Course Certification Form. The form covers the following areas: 1. Stand-alone credit courses; 2. Substantial changes to existing credit courses; 3. Non-substantial changes to existing credit courses; and 4. The addition of the new credit courses to an existing program.

The form must be completed by the Chief Instructional Officer and the Curriculum Chair for submission to the Chancellor’s Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI) to receive a control number. For further information on the approval process, please read the League resource, Curriculum Approval Process.

### References

California Education Code sections 70901(b), 70902(b), and 78016;  
California Code of Regulations, title 5, sections 51000, 51022, 55100, 55130 and 55150;  
U.S. Department of Education regulations on the Integrity of Federal Student Financial Aid Programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended;  
34 Code of Federal Regulations Sections 600.2, 602.24, 603.24, and 668.8;  
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Accreditation Standards II.A and II.A.9

## Accreditation and the Board's Role

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### Accreditation

California's community colleges are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Accreditation is a voluntary, nongovernmental process involving institutional self-study and professional peer review. Accreditation provides two essential services: quality assurance to the public and other institutions, and institutional improvement through a peer review process.

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges consists of three independent commissions: the Accrediting Commission for Schools (K-12), the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities. ACCJC accredits almost 140 colleges in California, Hawaii, and the former U.S. Trust Territories in the southern and western Pacific. The commission currently consists of 18 members: four faculty, three administrators, four public members (one of whom must have had trustee experience), and representatives from state agencies and other institutions.

Accreditation is a continuing process, the heart of which lies in periodic self-appraisal by an institution. In preparation for each accreditation visit, every institution prepares an extensive report with primary emphasis on self-analysis and evaluation. Preparing the report usually involves representatives from all employee groups and areas of the college. The report and other materials are sent to an evaluation team, which visits the college, meets with groups and individuals, validates the self-study report, evaluates compliance with the standards, and reviews the college's responses to the previous report.

The comprehensive self-study and evaluation are conducted at least every six years. Ongoing evaluation and planning enable colleges to integrate self-study processes into regular review processes of the institution; however, the self-study and planning for the accreditation report generally begin two years prior to the scheduled accreditation visit.

Between scheduled visits, each institution addresses its own and previous visiting team recommendations and submits periodic reports. The effectiveness of self-regulatory accreditation depends upon the institution's acceptance of specific responsibilities, including complying with all of the standards and abiding by the Commission's policies, procedures, and decisions.

### Accreditation Standards

The 2014 Accreditation Standards reflect the Commission's belief that accredited institutions must have to foster learning in their students as their primary purpose. Therefore, the standards require institutions to ensure that they support student learning, continually assess that learning and pursue institutional excellence. The self-study conducted to maintain accreditation must include a college-wide dialogue on the institution's effectiveness. The standards are designed to facilitate the dialogue.

The standards are presented in four parts:

Standard I, Mission, Academic Quality and Institutional Effectiveness, and Integrity, addresses the institutional mission, which provides the impetus for achieving student learning and achievement, and other college goals. Institutions must provide the means for students to learn, assess how well learning is occurring, and improve that learning through ongoing, systematic, and integrated planning.

Standard II, Student Learning Programs and Support Services, includes criteria for instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services, which assure the quality and improvement of all programs and services as they promote and foster student learning.

Standard III, Resources, addresses the human, physical, technological, and financial resources required to achieve the purposes of the college.

Standard IV, Leadership and Governance, tackles issues related to and includes the organization and roles of the board and CEOs, decision-making processes, and organization of multi-college districts.

## Board Role in Accreditation

Accreditation requires that the board of trustees is informed about and involved in the accreditation process. At the time the self-study report is submitted, the chairperson of the board signs the self-study document, which attests to the accuracy of the report in reflecting the nature and substance of the institution. The board of trustees, as the governing board of the district, will review the final report of the evaluation team, and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the college responds to the issues raised in the self-study, the recommendations of the evaluation team, and the decisions of the Commission. Boards may also assume leadership in ensuring that the self-study report and subsequent recommendations become an integral part of the institutional planning process.

How the board of trustees participates in the development of the self-study will vary among institutions with different missions and needs. Examples of trustee involvement might include preparing responses to the standards related to the governing board, receiving and discussing regular reports on board agendas about the process and progress of the self-study, or other appropriate activities developed cooperatively with the college.

Boards of trustees for multi-college districts may find themselves interacting with several colleges undergoing self-study at the same time. Accreditation is achieved by colleges, not districts. Governing boards should work closely with each of the institutions to achieve consistency in their participation.

The board and CEO should have a strategy to address Standard IVC Governing Board at the beginning of the accreditation self-study process. (See the box for the text of IVC for standards on the governing board. IVB addresses the role of the chief executive, and IVD addresses multi-college systems.) The strategy should be coordinated with the efforts of the college steering committee for the accreditation process. It may include:

- assessing the status of board policies related to the standard and updating policies if necessary.
- identifying the strategies used by the board to meet the standards, describing the results of those strategies, and developing new strategies if necessary.
- contributing to and reviewing drafts of the report for the self-study.

College boards are encouraged to devote significant time and thought to their responses to the standards. Through a thorough and deliberative exploration of the issues involved in each of the areas, boardmanship is enhanced and the district is ultimately strengthened. It is important that all board members be significantly involved in the discussion – it is through that involvement that a group commitment to the policies and processes developed is assured.

## Resource

### Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges

10 Commercial Blvd., Suite 204, Novato, CA 94949

Voice: (415) 506-0234 / Fax: (415) 506-2038

E-mail: [accjc@accjc.org](mailto:accjc@accjc.org)

Web site: [www.accjc.org](http://www.accjc.org)

## Standard IV.C Governing Board

1. The institution has a governing board that has authority over and responsibility for policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution.
2. The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision. Standard IV: Leadership and Governance 16
3. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the CEO of the college and/or the district/system.
4. The governing board is an independent, policy-making body that reflects the public interest in the institution's educational quality. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or political pressure.
5. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the college/district/system mission to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity and stability.
6. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.
7. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the college/district/system mission and revises them as necessary.
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.
9. The governing board has an ongoing training program for board development, including new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.
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.
11. The governing board upholds a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, and individual board members adhere to the code. The board has a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code and implements it when necessary. A majority of the board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. Board member interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution.
12. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. Standard IV: Leadership and Governance 17
13. The governing board is informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the college's accredited status, and supports through policy the college's efforts to improve and excel. The board participates in evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process.

*Resource: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges*



## Board/CEO Relationships

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The district chief executive officer (CEO) is the primary agent of the board—the person to whom the board delegates its authority to manage or administer the district in accordance with its policies. The success of an institution is most dependent on the quality of leadership provided by the CEO. Good board/CEO relationships create an environment that supports the success of the CEO and the colleges.

### Board Responsibilities

- Appoint a CEO who will meet the district's needs and is trusted by the board.
- Establish appropriate lines of authority and delegation.
- Define clear expectations for performance.
- Provide a mutually beneficial contract.
- Support the CEO's authority.
- Maintain open communication.
- Base the relationship on mutual respect and trust.
- Conduct regular evaluations.

## The Board/CEO Partnership

The relationship between the board and the CEO is multifaceted and paradoxical. It is paradoxical in the sense that while the CEO is employed by the board and carries out its policies, he or she is also looked to by trustees for guidance and educational leadership. A national survey found that 97 percent of college and university trustees cited the recommendations of the CEO as the most important factor in the decision-making process. CEOs are professional advisors to the board and help facilitate board processes.

Both parties in the relationship are responsible for creating and maintaining a strong partnership. The partnership is between the CEO and the board as a unit, not individual trustees. A strong partnership combines the strength of the board as community representatives and policy-makers with the strength of the CEO as an expert educational leader. The board is responsible to study and identify future community interests and needs. The CEO is responsible to translate the board's vision and expression of community interests into actions that ensure the institution is successful in providing education that benefits the community.

## Appointing a Chief Executive

Because the CEO is the most important single person in the district, it follows that the most important action a board can take to ensure the success of its district is to appoint and retain the best CEO possible. The conditions existing on most community college campuses today require energetic and thoughtful leaders as well as skilled managers. Community colleges need CEOs who can set clear priorities in implementing board policy, and then act on those priorities in ways that protect the quality and stability of the colleges.

The responsibility for the CEO selection lies squarely on the shoulders of district boards even when boards choose to hire a search consultant to assist them in the process. The search process for a new CEO should be designed to involve appropriate constituencies, determine the qualifications based on an analysis of institutional needs, and enable the board to select a person it can support fully. More discussion of the search process is contained in the chapter on the CEO search.



## Retaining and Supporting the CEO

Successful teamwork is based on the following elements, each of which is discussed in more detail below.

- Acknowledging and respecting different roles
- Sharing a common purpose
- Exhibiting mutual respect and support
- Maintaining ongoing, open communication
- Having clear expectations and standards for performance

### Board and CEO Roles Are Different

The roles and responsibilities of the board and the chief executive are profoundly different. The board is much different than a “super-CEO” or simply the next level above the CEO. The best boards and CEOs understand the subtleties and complexity of their roles.

Governing boards govern—they do not administer, manage, or provide day-to-day guidance. The board’s authority emanates from state law, but its strength comes from its connections to the community. Boards set policy and monitor institutional performance on the public’s behalf.

The CEO administers the institution and provides leadership on a daily basis. The CEO is an expert educational administrator and leader. The CEO translates the board’s expression of the public interest into concrete actions ensuring that the institution effectively serves its students and communities. CEOs work with their boards to set priorities and then they achieve those priorities in ways that ensure quality and stability.

The roles complement each other. The board embodies the community’s interests. The chief executive officer embodies the interests of the institution. Both parties care greatly about the quality of the education that students are receiving and the ultimate affect it has on their lives.

Once boards set policy for the direction and standards of college programs, services, and operations, the president is empowered to run the organization.

### Developing Shared Purpose

Successful teams share common goals and purposes. Boards and CEOs develop these goals and purposes through open dialogue that engages all team members. The board views its role not as second-guessing presidential decisions, but as providing a forum in which the best decisions can be made. The governing board becomes a sounding board for the CEO to explore different options. Trustees ask key questions about the success of the district’s students and about critical community issues and needs. Boards and CEOs engage in “courageous conversations” about how well the institution is serving students and the community.

Productive dialogue entails having sound information about key issues. The CEO fosters institutional and board success when she or he makes sure that trustees know what they need to know. The CEO gives the board clear and meaningful information that is focused on the most important issues facing the college. In turn, trustees are constantly alert to changing community needs and share what they learn with other board members and the CEO.

Trustees and the CEO focus on the “big picture.” Board members, the CEO, and other college leaders explore:

- The external environment: What is going on in the community, the state, and the nation that affects education? How satisfied is the community with the district’s mission and programs?
- Student success: How well does the college serve its community? How successful are its students?
- Future needs: What will students need to learn in the future? What is the institution’s role in responding to these needs?
- Education and training trends: What are potential competitors and partners doing? How are educational services being provided? What is happening in education?
- Potential strategies: What does the college have to do well to succeed? What are the barriers it faces?

Meaningful give-and-take about the direction of the college provides trustees the opportunity to make valuable contributions to setting policy. Such conversations also enable the CEO to capitalize on the strength of the board as community representatives, exploring ideas and strategies.

CEOs and boards that have the same information and engage in open dialogue are able to come together to establish a shared vision and set strategic goals for the institution. The board-CEO team then shares the same understanding of the major issues. The board upholds a common vision and goals; the CEO works to achieve them.

### **Mutual Respect and Support**

Even though the roles are different, the responsibilities that each has to the other members are similar. Boards are responsible for creating an environment in which the CEO has the power to lead the college. Boards empower CEOs to be outstanding leaders and knowledgeable managers. The CEO has the responsibility to foster the success of the board. CEOs empower their boards by creating an environment in which boards can successfully govern the college and by facilitating board process.

Trustees respect the expertise of the leaders they hire. They strongly affirm the authority of the president as the chief executive. They show their respect by:

- Delegating authority to the president to lead and administer.
- Keeping the CEO informed; adhering to the rule of “no surprises.”
- Honoring the CEO as the point of contact for the institution.
- Publicly supporting the CEO and backing his or her decisions.
- Fully considering information and recommendations offered by the CEO.
- Supporting professional development for the CEO.
- Adhering to standards of board ethics.
- Ensuring that the CEO has the resources needed to do the job.

CEOs respect and support their boards. They affirm the responsibility of boards to represent stakeholders and monitor performance. CEOs rely on their trustees to act together as a thoughtful sounding board to explore the college’s direction and vision. CEOs show their respect by:

- Honoring the board’s governing role.
- Providing the board with comprehensive, relevant, timely information.
- Engaging the board in policy-level discussions early in the planning and decision-making processes.
- Making recommendations that include analysis of options and their long-range implications.
- Publicly supporting the board and its members.
- Adhering to board policy.
- Facilitating trustee involvement in community leadership and advocacy.
- Following the rule of “no surprises.”
- Preparing reports that enable the board to monitor institutional performance.
- Ensuring that the board has the resources needed to do its job.
- Creating opportunities for trustee and board development.

Problems arise when presidents withdraw from working with their boards—withholding information, avoiding bad news, or neglecting individual board members. Trustees contribute to problems when they make end runs around the president, surprise the president at board meetings, and criticize the administration in public. Those practices reflect badly on the trustees and the CEO, and most importantly, hurt the college in the community.

When the CEO and board show mutual support and respect, the institution and community benefit. The CEO and trustees send a message that they value the institution and its goals above all else. By their behavior, they establish a standard for respectful behavior for community members and college employees.

## Ongoing and Open Communication

Constant open communication is a major component of expressing mutual support and respect and deserves further discussion. Many practices listed above enhance communication. So do the following:

*No Surprises.* This rule is one of the most often-mentioned keys to good board-CEO relationships. When possible, board members should hear about major problems, activities, and issues from the CEO before they hear about them from others, read about them in the press, or are asked to comment on them in public. Boards should not be asked to make major decisions with little or no advance preparation. At the same time, public statements by trustees should not be a surprise to CEOs—trustees should alert CEOs and board chairs about their concerns prior to going public with them. Trustees also let the CEO know what information they want to have available at board meetings prior to the meetings.

*Equal communication.* All members of the board should have the same information and be treated equally. CEOs generally make it a practice to provide information requested by one trustee to everyone on the board. They also avoid even the appearance of playing favorites or of aligning themselves with certain members or a faction on the board. The CEO and board chair may communicate more often, particularly when it comes to developing the agenda for the board meetings; however, the chair should not routinely be privy to communications that are not also open to the rest of the board.

Trustees also make it a practice to share information and questions with other board members and the CEO. They do not foster cliques on the board or put the CEO in a position where she or he is asked to keep information from other board members.

*Regular communication.* Boards expect that the CEO will keep the board informed about critical issues and college activities. Many presidents do so by providing the board with regular updates, such as a weekly e-mail that highlights college activities, alerts the board to relevant external trends and issues, and lets the board know what the CEO is doing. CEOs routinely touch base with board members prior to meetings to ensure that trustees have the information they need regarding board agenda items.

In turn, trustees keep the CEO informed about their contacts in the community, discussions with legislators and other policymakers, calls from citizens or college staff, and any visits to the college. They regularly let the CEO know about their work on behalf of the college and rely on the CEO's assistance.

*Communication styles.* Treating the CEO, board chair, or trustees equally does not necessarily mean that they treat each person the same. Different people have different communication styles and learning needs, and to the extent practical, CEOs and trustees honor those differences. Some like to meet in person, some are content with phone conversations, while others prefer to communicate via e-mail or receive information on paper.

Some trustees, particularly new ones, benefit from detailed person-to-person explanations of board agenda items. Others are comfortable with reading analyses of alternatives and long-range projections. Some trustees like to have frequent access to the president—others are satisfied to hear from the president only when there are major issues and meet with him or her only occasionally.

*Respecting Time.* There are many demands on the time and attention of both CEOs and trustees. Trustees help the CEO be effective by not making unnecessary demands on her or him. Boards understand that they have hired the CEO to lead the college and caring boards ensure that the majority of his or her time is devoted to the institution and the community, not to individual trustee needs. CEOs honor trustees and their busy schedules when they provide information in a timely manner and avoid asking trustees to make decisions without adequate time to consider the relevant issues.

## Clear Expectations

The board-CEO team performs best when their roles are clear and members seek to meet the expectations for their positions. The same principle is true in employer-employee relationships—employees perform best when they know what is expected of them and have helped craft the expectations.

As employers, boards define the expectations for the CEO in written policy, the job description, and annual goals. Boards that state their expectations up front help foster success—their CEOs do not have to “read trustees’ minds” or fear sudden shifts in board direction. Clear, public expectations provide CEOs with a framework for action and assure them that their actions will have board support. In addition, CEOs who state what they need from their boards help trustees perform their role and responsibilities. CEOs expect their trustees to provide guidance, support, dialogue, information, and feedback.

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Stating expectations “up front” can be risky and difficult. It is not easy to articulate a clear set of expectations and adhere to them. It is often simpler to react and respond to events. It takes discipline and courage to sit together as a group to think through values, contribute ideas, see issues from different perspectives, and come up with direction and guidelines. However, making the effort to live by clear expectations is just another way to help the CEO, board members, and the institution to flourish.

## Contracts

A well-crafted contract between the board and the CEO provides clarity and security to both the board and the chief executive. Many experts note that it is becoming more difficult to recruit and retain CEOs in recent years, due to a high number of retirements and the challenges inherent in the job, and an attractive contract may also be a recruiting tool (see “The CEO Search”). Boards should consult with an attorney when offering a contract to a new CEO and/or updating the current CEO’s contract.

Contracts typically address duties and expectations, salary, benefits, other compensation, evaluation, the term of the contract, and rollover provisions. Benefits and other compensation includes annuities, retirement packages, “golden handcuffs,” insurances, housing allowances, auto expenses, memberships, and expense allowances for professional and community activities. Retreat rights, provisions to engage in outside consulting, and leaves and sabbaticals are also included. Good contracts also include clauses for ending the contract, both voluntarily and involuntarily. Both boards and CEOs should periodically review the contract and update it to address the changing professional needs of the CEO.

## Summary

Effective boards and CEOs respect each other’s duties and value each other’s contributions to the leadership team. They are committed to working together to benefit the institution and the community. They recognize that struggling over who is in charge wastes time that is better spent supporting each other. While there are certainly instances where the board legitimately asserts its authority by not accepting a CEO recommendation, doing so with regularity signifies that something has gone wrong in the relationship.

Governing boards rely on their CEOs for leadership and have confidence in their recommendations. They contribute their perspectives early in policy discussions so that CEO recommendations to the board reflect board values and can be easily supported by the board.

Governing boards maintain healthy board-CEO relationships by working as partners with their CEOs. But first, they create healthy relationships by being exemplary employers and supervisors of their presidents.

## Resources

Additional resources, including *Board and CEO Roles: Different Jobs, Different Tasks* available on request from the Community College League of California and posted on the League’s Web site. Also see an article by Mark Drummond, published in the Fall 2000 issue of the League’s *Board Focus: Conflict or Consensus? Seven Steps to Creating an Effective Board*. Additional resources are listed in the Resources and Readings chapter of this handbook.



## CEO Evaluation

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Successful colleges depend on excellent CEO leadership. Excellent CEO leadership depends on strong board/CEO relations. Strong board/CEO relations depend on clear expectations and open communication.

Regularly assessing CEO performance fosters open communication and clarifies expectations, roles and responsibilities. Accreditation standards establish an expectation that boards adhere to a clearly defined policy for evaluating the chief executive. Effective boards and CEOs embrace the assessment process and often include it in board policy and CEO contracts. Given the unique nature of the partnership between the board and CEO, assessing CEO performance is, in many ways, assessing the performance of the board as well.

The board can expect the CEO to assist the board to develop the policy, process and criteria; provide information that enables the board to assess performance, and respond to board concerns and direction.

### Purposes and Outcomes

The primary purpose of an evaluation is to bring the CEO and the board together to discuss how their performance and priorities contribute to the effectiveness of the educational program and services for students and the community. The emphasis should be on identifying what works well and what needs improvement.

The CEO evaluation process should be designed to:

- Assess how well the institution is fulfilling its mission and fostering student success.
- Examine and re-set, if necessary, goals for the institution and the CEO.
- Support the CEO by providing constructive feedback on performance.
- Develop plans to address issues identified in the evaluation process.
- Provide an opportunity for the board to learn how its performance affects the board/CEO partnership.
- Foster communication between the board and CEO.

An evaluation process designed to “get the president” hurts the operations and morale of the entire institution and the image of the college in the community. Evaluations that have the potential for deciding to end an unproductive or unworkable situation need to be conducted in the most sensitive and professional manner possible.

The outcomes of an assessment should be:

- Clear expectations and realistic goals.
- Strengthened communication.
- Clarification of respective and distinctive responsibilities of the CEO and governing board.
- Mutual trust, respect, and support between the CEO and governing board.
- Renewed confidence in good governance.
- A better sense of the district’s agenda and the ways to address it.

## Process

There are many approaches to CEO evaluation. The approach and process to be used should be developed jointly and mutually agreed to by the CEO and the board. Throughout the evaluation process, all parties involved should continually evaluate it to ensure that it is working to achieve the purposes.

Developing the process involves the following decisions, each of which is discussed in the following sections:

- When should the CEO be evaluated?
- What should the criteria be?
- What types of instruments, if any, should be used?
- Who should conduct the evaluation?
- Who should participate in the evaluation?
- How should the results be communicated?
- Should the evaluation be tied to compensation or contract extensions?
- How do we ensure that the process is done well?

## Calendar and Timing

Ongoing evaluation occurs naturally as the CEO and board members discuss issues and come to mutual decisions on policy and directions for the college. However, a session devoted solely to an evaluation allows trustees and the CEO to pause and assess the past and plan for the future. Evaluations of this nature likely would occur annually. Districts with new CEOs or a significant number of new board members may wish to schedule evaluation sessions more often during the first year or two to ensure ongoing and productive communication.

## Evaluation Criteria

The criteria used to evaluate the CEO must be defined well before the actual evaluation takes place so that expectations are clear. There are two general categories of criteria: those derived from the mission, vision and district goals, and those which are based on general leadership responsibilities, skills and characteristics.

## District-Specific Criteria

Two types of criteria provide information on how the CEO and board are doing: information that measures the effectiveness of the institution, and the CEO's annual priorities related to the district's mission and goals.

Institutional Effectiveness. Chief executives are responsible to ensure that their institutions are successfully educating students and making a difference for their communities. Including student success and institutional effectiveness indicators in the CEO assessment process focuses both the CEO's and board's attention on important goals and leads to valuable discussions on the opportunities, challenges, strategies and tasks needed to achieve goals. However, given that many variables affect institutional outcomes, these indicators should never be the sole criteria for evaluating the CEO.

Using institutional effectiveness indicators require that the district have in place:

- Institutional goals related to student success and other end products of the institution.
- Key indicators or measures that assess progress on the institutional goals. There are dozens of possible indicators. The CEO and board together should determine a limited number (5-10) to use as evaluative data, selecting those deemed most important and that give the board an overview of institutional effectiveness.
- Regular reports that describe how the district is doing on the key indicators of student success.

Annual Priorities or Performance Objectives. Effective boards and CEOs annually establish a list of goals, priorities, or performance objectives that are the strategies and tasks deemed necessary to make progress toward student success and other district goals. Each year at a retreat, workshop, or as a part of the regular evaluation, the board and CEO review the district's mission and goals, major challenges and issues, and determine priorities for the coming year. This list of CEO (and board) priorities, objectives and/or tasks becomes the basis for the next year's evaluation: did the CEO do what was agreed upon.

## Leadership Roles, Skills and Characteristics

The second general category of criteria includes the tasks, skills, and characteristics inherent in being the chief executive. The criteria may be derived from the CEO's job description, the job announcement for a new CEO, general areas of administrative responsibility, and the personal qualities that contribute to effective leadership. They address the overall day-to-day performance of the CEO role.

### What to Expect

Should the criteria be such that trustees should expect to be fully satisfied with the CEO's performance? If that expectation is present, the goals that are set and the criteria developed may end up being safe and easily obtainable. CEOs of progressive, dynamic institutions often have risk-taking goals, some of which may not be able to be accomplished due to circumstances beyond his or her control.

### Evaluation Strategies

The methods used to assess performance range from informal discussions, discussion of a specific set of criteria and questions, survey forms, to more formal processes facilitated by consultants that may involve interviews, survey forms and/or facilitated discussions.

- *Informal discussion.* The CEO evaluation session consists of the board members and CEO reviewing the past year (often using annual priorities or goals as the criteria) and discussing how the year has gone, what was accomplished, and what key issues were. This type of evaluation is not unusual when boards and CEOs have worked together for a number of years.
- *Discussion of specific criteria and questions.* In this approach, board members and the CEO have identified specific criteria and questions prior to the evaluation session and the CEO has provided a report to the board. Trustees are prepared to discuss their assessment of the criteria and questions; in some cases, a committee of the board may have received trustee responses and prepared a summary.
- *Survey forms.* Survey forms consist of a list of performance criteria, and responders are asked to rate each item using a rating scale. They usually include a space for comments as well as open-ended questions. The questions to be discussed or items on a survey form should be based on specific criteria determined by the board and CEO.
- *Interviews.* The chair of the board, other designated trustees or a consultant may interview each board member, and information from the interviews is summarized and discussed with the CEO. The questions used in the interview are derived from the performance criteria.

No one method is best; the approach used depends on personal preference, the type of information, time available for the assessment process, and length of tenure of the CEO and board members.. The different approaches of evaluation processes and forms reflect the unique situation (which changes from year to year) and the preferences of the players involved.

### Who Should Participate

The CEO and the board decide who completes the survey or checklist and how the results are compiled. All voting trustees should contribute to the evaluation of the chief executive officer, and input may be sought from the student trustee.

A committee of the board might be assigned the task of summarizing ratings and comments individual trustees. In addition, the CEO should provide the board with a self-assessment of his or her performance, which may include input from the cabinet and campus leadership.

Outside consultants and facilitators can be useful in developing evaluation processes, conducting planning sessions that result in criteria for evaluation, and working with boards and CEOs when there are problems.

### “360” Degree Assessments

“360” degree assessment processes include board members, the CEO's self-evaluation, and assessments of the CEO's performance from college employees and perhaps even community members. Boards and CEOs may decide to conduct such an evaluation to broaden the scope of information they use.



“360” degree assessments require careful planning and significant time, thought, and resources if they are to result in useful information. Poorly planned and executed processes have the potential to harm the institution. Boards should carefully consider whether the time and cost of a well-conducted 360 evaluation is worth the relatively limited amount of information that can be gained by the process. If a board is interested in considering a “360” evaluation, it should consider the following questions:

- What type of evaluative information is the board seeking? Will a comprehensive assessment provide that information? Is it the only way to get that information?
- Is the board willing to hire a consultant or service to help design the evaluation process and criteria, receive and summarize the results, and provide them to the board? Is the cost of the consultant the best use of district resources?
- Is the board concerned about the performance of the CEO? If so, then the board should work directly with the CEO regarding the concerns and avoid the potential harm of a 360 degree evaluation.

Guidelines for and approaches to conducting “360” evaluations are detailed in *Assessing the Performance of the CEO*, available at [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org) and from the Community College League.

### Evaluation Session

Evaluations are confidential – evaluation sessions take place in closed sessions of the board. Written evaluations should be kept in a secure location.

The discussions between the trustees and the CEO about the assessment are generally the most valuable portion of the assessment process, and provide insights into ratings or written comments. Discussion will include a review of the ratings on the criteria, as well as such general questions as:

- What is your assessment of the past year, both successes and things that didn’t go well?
- What is the institution’s most significant achievement for the year?
- What difficulties were encountered?
- What aspects of the presidency are most interesting and rewarding?
- What aspects are most frustrating and least interesting?
- What do you, as the CEO, need from the board to ensure further success?

After an evaluation session, boards report in the public board session that the evaluation was conducted. Decisions about new goals and changes in policies may be discussed in more depth at board meetings. CEOs will share their annual goals with their cabinets, leadership groups and the campus community.

### Addressing Problems

Boards will want to address problems with a CEO in a manner that maintains support for the position of the presidency. Communication to and about the CEO should always be respectful and professional. Many problems can be prevented by establishing clear expectations and reasonable criteria, and ensuring that there are regular opportunities to discuss issues. Boards should not wait until the annual evaluation to raise questions and concerns...improving performance occurs best through ongoing feedback and discussion of how things are going.

## Relationship to Contracts and Compensation

There are different opinions on whether or not contract extensions and compensation issues should be tied directly to evaluation results. The purposes of the evaluation are more than simply determining how long the CEO should continue in the position or how much the person is paid. Those decisions depend on many factors in addition to CEO performance.

Many CEO contracts contain extension or rollover provisions. Extensions are generally perceived as a vote of confidence and a result of satisfactory performance. However, making extensions contingent on a positive evaluation may deflect the board and CEO from the purpose of the evaluation, which is to improve CEO and institutional performance. The criteria are more likely to be “safe” criteria and the focus becomes performing to a minimum standard rather than exploring what needs to be done to move the district forward.

Boards may wish to avoid tying compensation issues directly to the evaluation. Due to the many factors that determine compensation levels, the board may consider discussing and changing salary and other benefits separately from the evaluation process.

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## Common Pitfalls

Assessment processes that include the following are usually unsatisfactory for the participants and achieve few useful outcomes.

- Unstructured sessions or processes that encourage or allow feedback when no standards for performance have been set. Evaluating the CEO only against pre-established criteria is the fairest and best way to provide feedback.
- Violating the confidentiality of the process. The importance of maintaining confidentiality cannot be overemphasized. Rumors and leaks can divide a campus and exacerbate problems. They reflect poorly on the board and the institution, and are unfair to the chief executive officer.
- Spending more time on things that need fixing in a session, rather than focusing on what went well. Consider the motivating power of commendation and the debilitating effect of too much criticism.
- Focusing on a single issue, which does not provide a well-balanced assessment. Avoid too much emphasis on a current “hot topic” in an annual evaluation session.
- Don't allow personalities and personal agendas to play a significant role. They divert the focus of the evaluation from the achievement of institutional goals and performance against agreed-upon criteria.
- Scheduling evaluations during times of crisis on campus, as CEO and trustee energies will be focused on the crisis.

## Summary

Personnel evaluations are not always comfortable, and trustees and CEOs often find it easy to put off formal evaluation sessions. However, engaging in regular and professional reviews of expectations and performance strengthens the board/CEO relationship. CEOs benefit from a discussion of board policies and criteria, which then benefits the institution. Boards benefit from the opportunity for trustees to share their perspectives and perceptions on CEO performance.

Given the unique nature of the relationship of the governing board and the CEO, the evaluation of the CEO is in many ways an evaluation of the board as well. As a result of the evaluation, board policy and the board and CEO's roles and expectations are clarified and strengthened.

## Resources

The Community College League of California has additional resources for boards of trustees to assist them in developing a CEO evaluation process. The resources include additional information, sample criteria and evaluation processes. Please contact the League or visit [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org).



## The CEO Search

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Many experts on boardsmanship believe one of a college board's most important responsibility is the selection and appointment of the district's chief executive officer. The CEO occupies the central role in a community college district. As the agent of the board and the embodiment of its authority, she or he is the most powerful and influential individual in the campus community, as well as the primary representative of the district's values and mission in the general community.

### Board Responsibilities

- Determine and oversee the search process.
- Hire the consultant, if a decision is made to use one.
- Determine the type of leadership needed.
- Define the important characteristics for the job description.
- Make the final contract and hiring decisions.
- Orient and support the new CEO.

## The Search Process

A good search process is developed and directed by the board, involves appropriate constituencies in the institution and community, and is based on district goals and priorities. Because the outcome of the selection process is so important, the process must never be taken lightly or conducted in haste. A successful search results in the selection of a person that the board can fully support.

The steps in the process are:

**Assessment.** Assess the college district and the type of leadership needed. This is one of the most important steps in the process and requires trustees to clarify their assumptions and expectations about where the district should be headed and what leadership characteristics are needed to get it there.

**Consultant.** Decide if and how to use a consultant. Consultants are often used to help design the search process, recruit candidates, assist and advise the board throughout the steps in the process, do reference checks, and assist in appraisal of district leadership needs.

**Search Committee.** Establish a search committee consisting of key college personnel and community members. This committee may assist the board in designing the search process and defining the leadership needs and should be thoroughly educated about board expectations and criteria. The committee usually screens the initial set of applications, selects people to interview, and forwards names to the board for further consideration. (In multi-college districts, search committees for college presidents will forward the names to the district chancellor).

**Support.** Allocate sufficient personnel and funds to the process to ensure that it is professional as possible and enhances the image of the institution. Costs vary depending on the extent of the search and use of a consultant, but can easily be tens of thousands of dollars.

**Timeline.** Create a schedule that allows adequate time for recruitment, thought, and the involvement of important stakeholders, and avoids long delays. Decisions must be made promptly to protect the candidates and the district's interests.

Interim. If necessary, appoint an interim CEO. Decide in advance if that person will be eligible to apply for the position.

Job Description. Based on the assessment of the needs of the district, define the expected duties and responsibilities, qualifications and personal qualities, and salary range and benefits. The job announcement will be based on these board-defined criteria.

Recruit, Screen, and Interview. After planning the search, widely recruit candidates, screen applications, and conduct an initial set of interviews. These steps are usually the responsibility of the consultant and the search committee.

Make the Final Selection. This is the board's responsibility. It will interview the candidates forwarded to it by the committee and assure thorough reference checks are done. It is best, of course, if trustees can come to a unanimous decision. However, if that is not possible, every effort should be made to make an offer only after all board members have agreed to support the new CEO.

Contracts. The contract the board has with the CEO provides security and stability to both parties and clarifies the mutual understanding of all aspects of the employment relationships. Elements in the contract include the duties, term, salary, benefits, other compensation, extension provisions, and evaluation processes. Benefits and other compensation may address annuities, retirement packages, insurance, housing allowances, moving expenses, auto expense, memberships, retreat rights, rights to engage in outside consulting, and leaves and sabbaticals. The major parameters of the contract should be decided at the beginning of the search process so there are no major surprises in contract negotiations. However, early decisions should allow some flexibility so that the district doesn't lose an outstanding candidate.

## After the Selection

After the CEO is selected, the board continues to play an important role to create an environment for success and ensure the success of the CEO. Some strategies are:

- Announce the selection and introduce the CEO. The board may wish to sponsor news conferences, press releases, and receptions. A number of colleges inaugurate the president sometime during the first year of the term.
- All board members should take responsibility to introduce and welcome the new CEO to the community, using their community links.
- Hold a retreat workshop with the CEO to discuss expectations and establish first year goals.
- Schedule regular informal evaluation sessions throughout the first months of the new CEO's term to discuss and clarify expectations and provide support where needed. Ensure that a formal evaluation process is completed at the end of the first year.

## Common Mistakes in CEO Searches

A professionally conducted search reflects well on the district and the board. Boards hurt themselves and their colleges when they act hastily and make the following common mistakes:

- Don't give adequate thought to organizational needs.
- Don't thoroughly explore the type of leadership needed by the district.
- Don't involve key constituencies or communicate with the campus community about the process.
- Fail to communicate with the candidates about the timeline, particularly after people are invited for interviews.
- Skimp on allocating sufficient funds and personnel to the search.
- Delay in making an offer. Lengthy intervals between interviews and decisions may result in the withdrawal of excellent candidates.
- Fail to make an extra effort to communicate expectations to and support the new CEO.

## Summary

Selecting the chief executive officer of the district is the most important decision that a board will make. A well-designed search process reflects well on the board and the district. However, one of the most important factors in attracting outstanding candidates is for the board to be known as a strong, supportive board and for the institution to be operating in a sound fashion with a clear set of mission, vision, and goals.

Good candidates will want to work for a board that is cohesive, provides clear direction, respects the position of the presidency, delegates sufficient responsibility and flexibility to the CEO, and has the best interests of the community and institution as its priority. Many potential candidates will not apply for positions at colleges where the board is divided and dysfunctional.

Therefore, the best way for a board to begin a search process is for the board itself to ensure that it is operating effectively and cohesively. Outstanding candidates are eager to work with boards that provide clear direction to, work with, and support the CEO.

## Resources

The League has prepared a set of resource materials for boards that are faced with the need to conduct a CEO search. These materials include a more detailed description of the steps in the search process, a directory of consultants, and a list of districts that have recently hired new CEOs. The League also maintains a file of CEO contracts, which can be used as examples in drafting a new contract.



## Human Resources Policy

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Learning occurs through the interaction between those who work in the college and the students who seek skills and knowledge. Buildings, grounds, books, technology, and classrooms all create an environment for learning, but it is people that make it happen. Highly qualified, caring and dedicated employees are instrumental in creating and sustaining an effective community college learning environment.

Governing boards play important roles in ensuring the quality of the employees, the effective use of college resources for personnel, and an environment that supports excellence. The board's relationship with the CEO, its governing policies, and how trustees behave send vital messages about how staff and students are esteemed and how staff and students should conduct themselves.

### Board Responsibilities

- Require that the district adhere to federal and state laws and regulations.
- Maintain an excellent CEO/board relationship.
- Set policy standards that ensure fair and equitable employment practices, personnel procedures, a contract negotiations.
- Support internal lines of authority – avoid dealing directly with individual staff members.
- Acknowledge and support staff achievements and professional development programs.
- Foster an environment that promotes quality, caring and dedication to high moral and ethical standards.

## Laws and Regulations

State and federal laws and regulations heavily regulate human resources policies, practices, and negotiations in public institutions. The laws and regulations address:

- Qualifications for employment
- Hiring practices
- Non-discrimination and equal employment
- Sexual and other types of harassment
- Disability accommodation
- Grievances
- Due process
- Collective bargaining negotiations with employee groups

The laws and regulations provide significant protection for employees. They help ensure that hiring and personnel practices are open, fair, and equitable. Boards are responsible for ensuring that their districts adhere to the laws and regulations and may establish more specific policies.



While there are a myriad of regulations across a broad spectrum of issues, three important areas are how employees are categorized, parameters for how funds are budgeted, and the responsibility that is delegated by law to academic senates.

### **Employment Category**

Community college employees are generally categorized into one of the following: administrative, supervisory, confidential, faculty, classified staff, or student. Different laws, regulations, and practices apply to the different groups.

### **Constraints on Funds**

There are two state regulations that guide how funds are spent on staffing. One is that 50% of the expense of education must be spent on instruction. The second is that, given adequate funding, 75% of the contact hours taught must be taught by full-time faculty. The 75% rule means that districts continually weigh the benefits of full-time tenured faculty positions against the benefits of using part-time temporary faculty. Boards may be asked to discuss which has priority – the commitment to and value of full-time faculty, or the program and fiscal flexibility resulting from a strong contingent of part-timers.

### **Faculty Role**

State laws and regulations require that college academic senates play a major role in establishing personnel policies related to faculty members. The statewide Academic Senate developed statewide minimum qualifications (MQs) for faculty positions, and local hiring committees may add to the MQs when seeking new faculty.

State regulations also define general conditions for faculty tenure. Tenure is granted after three years of successful employment, assures continued employment and protects academic freedom. However, it not a protection against incompetence or non-performance of duties.

Local academic senates also have the responsibility to design and recommend faculty service areas (FSA's). These are discipline groups in which faculty retain seniority when positions are eliminated or there is a reduction of force.

## **Board Policies and Practices**

Boards may establish policies that define more specific standards than those contained in state and federal laws and regulations. Boards define how the district adheres to such laws as equal employment, sexual harassment, and the American Disabilities Act. They also set broad parameters for such areas as hiring standards and processes, organizational structure, leaves, consultants and contractors, employee handbooks, and professional development.

Boards have the ultimate authority for hiring personnel but, in practice, delegate that responsibility to the Chancellor or Superintendent. They enter into contracts with the CEO and employee unions, and establish policies for employment of non-union employees.

Governing boards essentially have only one employee, the chief executive officer. The board hires the CEO through a contract between it and the CEO, and is responsible for defining the provisions of that contract. The relationship between the board and the CEO provides a model for employer-employee relationships for the rest of the college. If the board/CEO relationship is respectful, supportive, and demands the best that each has to give, it sends a powerful message on how people in the district are to be treated. If trustees or CEOs show a lack of respect for each other, hide information, exhibit a lack of support, or do not hold each other accountable for professional behavior and quality achievements, that sends a different message – one which will harm the college.

The board relies on the CEO to ensure that personnel practices and procedures exist that implement state law and regulations as well as board policies and union contracts. The policies, practices, procedures, and contracts should be crafted with the purpose of ensuring that the district is comprised of highly qualified personnel who are dedicated to student success and learning.

## **Collective Bargaining**

Collective bargaining was established by the Rodda Act in 1975 and allows employees in the colleges to establish unions. These unions may be local and independent or may be connected with statewide and national organizations. Common unions are the California Federation of Teachers, California Teachers Association, and the California School Employees Association; there are many more.

Once a union is established, the board will enter into a contract with the union that addresses salaries, benefits and conditions of employment. The board's role in contract negotiations is to set broad parameters within which the board's designees should negotiate. Boards often set standards or benchmarks for the level of compensation and benefits and the proportion of the budget or revenues that can be dedicated to salaries and benefits. The contracts and agreements often contain specific language on hiring, work assignments and load, leaves, benefits, evaluation, promotion, grievances and due process, and conditions for continued employment, discipline, lay-off or dismissal.

Boards often play a similar role in establishing agreements and policy language with non-union employee groups.

Boards may wish to educate themselves on the variety of approaches used in collective bargaining. A number of boards and unions have adopted the use of "win-win" or interest-based bargaining.

Some negotiations are characterized by adversarial relationships between boards, unions, and administration. If these exist, board members respond best by not reacting negatively or getting caught up in adversarial tactics. Instead, they should continue to focus on the larger picture and the needs of the district.

## Board/Staff Relationships

As stated above, the board essentially has one employee – the CEO. Boards do not direct or evaluate other employees; instead, that responsibility is delegated to the CEO and expressed through an appropriate organizational structure. A cardinal rule of effective trusteeship is that no individual trustee directs or becomes involved in staff activities. In particular, trustees should protect the integrity of human resources decisions and collective bargaining practices by never discussing or indicating individual preferences to employees or employee groups.

Boards have a responsibility to treat all employees and employee groups fairly. They avoid even the appearance of treating people or employee groups differently. Once boards establish fair and equitable standards in policies, they then allow the administration to implement those policies.

When directly approached by individual staff, boards and trustees listen, but do not take action on employee requests. Employee concerns should be directed to internal lines of authority and should not be addressed by individual trustees or the board. However, boards should require that grievance procedures exist that protect the rights of both employees and the institution; boards may choose to hear unresolved problems that result from misapplication of board policy.

## Trustee Liability

There are two areas of potential liability for trustees related to personnel: conflicts of interest and the importance of maintaining confidentiality. The Political Reform Act prohibits public officials from acting on decisions in which they have a personal interest, which includes certain employment actions related to family members. (See the A Local Official's Guide to Ethics Laws and seek legal advice if there are questions.)

Maintaining confidentiality is extremely important. Publicly talking about personnel decisions or closed session discussions opens up the possibility of lawsuits and other legal actions against individual trustees.

## Creating a Positive Environment

Perhaps more than any other entity, boards help create a positive environment for staff when they support, through policy, processes that include faculty and staff groups in decision-making. An inclusive environment empowers faculty and classified staff, and enhances their dedication to achieve the mission of the district.

Boards also help create a positive environment when they support, through policy and budget decisions, the professional growth and development of all employees at the college. Encouraging staff to continually seek new learning and skills helps create a learning organization, and ultimately benefits students. Trustees who attend conferences and participate in trustee education activities model the importance of professional development.

Human resource policies may be monitored by reviewing pertinent staff reports, grievance patterns, employee satisfaction surveys, use of professional development funds, and staff involvement in community-building activities within the district. (In evaluating employee satisfaction and grievance patterns, trustees should remember that organizational growth and change always creates some tension. Some employee concerns may reflect individual reactions rather than general problems at the college).

Ultimately, trustees help create a positive climate by supporting their colleges, attending college events, complimenting employees on their achievements, and speaking well of the college and its employees in the community. Trustees who exhibit respect for everyone at the college and who are dedicated to its success help create an environment that motivates employees toward great achievements.

## Employee Participation in Decision-Making

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The practice of involving those who are affected by decisions in the decision-making process is mandated by law. The relevant Board of Governors regulations are contained in sections 53200 - 53204 Title V of the Administrative Code of California. Participation in decision-making does not necessarily imply total agreement, nor is the same level of involvement by all parties necessary. The ultimate responsibility for all decisions rests with the board of trustees.

### Faculty Involvement

The regulations state that faculty, classified staff, and students have the “right to participate effectively in governance.” The regulations that reference faculty add to and clarify their rights. They acknowledge the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards. Local boards are required to consult collegially with academic senates on academic and professional matters.

“Consult collegially” means that the governing board, when developing or adopting policies related to academic and professional matters must either:

1. rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate; or
2. reach mutual agreement with the senate.

“Academic and professional matters” is further defined in the regulations to include: curriculum, degree requirements, grading policies, student progress standards, faculty role in governance structures, accreditation, professional development, program review processes, and processes for planning and budgeting.

The state Academic Senate and the Community College League of California jointly prepared a set of guidelines (questions and answers) to assist local boards and senates in implementing the regulations. The guidelines are included in the next chapter.

### Staff

The regulations state that staff members should be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of policies, procedures and processes that have a significant effect on them. The regulations do not specify policy areas – that determination is left to the local district. The regulations state that staff recommendations be given every reasonable consideration when the board is considering related policies, procedures and processes.

The regulations apply to both management and classified staff. A law was passed in 2001 that names classified unions as the group with the authority to appoint representatives to committees established in accordance with these regulations.

### Students

The regulations for student involvement state that students should be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of policies, procedures and processes that have a significant effect on them. The regulations state that student recommendations be given every reasonable consideration when considering related policies.

The regulations list the areas that are considered to have a significant effect on students. Those areas include: grading, student codes of conduct, academic discipline, the curriculum, educational programs, processes for budgeting and planning, student standards, student services planning and development, fees, and faculty evaluation and hiring.

## Benefits and Challenges

The value of participatory decision-making is in its inclusive nature. Colleges that have an effective level of employee participation in the decision-making process cite a number of benefits. When inclusive processes are used, there is a greater understanding and acceptance of decisions, a greater commitment to their implementation, and an understanding of and commitment to the goals and objectives of the organization. Shared decision-making promotes trust, cooperation, a team identity, and coordination of efforts. Healthy practices involve awareness of conflict and the ability to use conflict resolution techniques. The decisions that are made will thus include many expert contributions and points of view.

Participation in decision-making also has its challenges. Those involved in the decisions must do their homework, and need to learn related skills and knowledge. Participation requires time away from the other duties of the job. Decisions take longer; therefore, the processes for gathering comments and making recommendations must take into account longer decision-making cycles.

Shared decisions lead to shared accountability. While many may feel some responsibility for the decision, who is ultimately responsible and accountable is often unclear.

There are differing expectations and understandings of the decision-making processes. Often disagreements about processes and representation become a substitute for addressing educational issues. The lack of clear authority and the discussions over processes and power can be frustrating.

## Summary

Participation in decision-making reflects a broad-based movement in organizations to involve people at various levels. It reflects a movement from autocratic, hierarchical structures to those in which decisions, responsibility, and accountability are distributed at all levels of the organizations. In order for it to be successful, people must have access to and use the information necessary to make good decisions. Conflict resolution, teamwork, and other communication and collaboration skills must be taught through professional development activities. Inclusive participation is empowering, but to be performed well and wisely, people must enter into it with an attitude of respect for others and a sincere desire to use their power to make decisions for the benefit of the entire organization.

## Faculty Participation in District and College Governance

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The following guidelines on local decision making processes were developed by a joint task force of representatives of the California Community College Trustees (CCCT), Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges (CEOCCC) and the Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges. They have been endorsed by the boards of directors of the CCCT and CEOCCC and by resolution of the Academic Senate. The guidelines augment ones developed in 1992 by a similar joint task force.

The guidelines are grouped by issue area and are in the form of questions and answers. The questions and answers are not intended to cover all situations that may be encountered, but address questions most frequently raised. In the answers developed, use of the word “should” refers to a good practice, but one that is not required. The word “must” indicates the action outlined is required by law or state regulation.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide assistance to trustees, CEOs, academic senate leaders, administrators, classified staff and students which will enable them to fulfill the intent of effective participation in local decision making as delineated in state law and Board of Governors regulations.

### Part I. The Local Board Policy on Collegial Consultation

1. QUESTION: What is meant by the term “shared governance?”

“Shared governance” is not a term that appears in law or regulation. Education Code ‘70902(b)(7) calls on the Board of Governors to enact regulations to “ensure faculty, staff, and students...the right to participate effectively in district and college governance” and, further, to ensure “the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.”

The intent of the Legislature in enacting this section of AB 1725 was “to authorize more responsibility for faculty members in duties that are incidental to their primary professional duties” and to assure that “increased faculty involvement in institutional governance and decision making” does not conflict with faculty rights in collective bargaining (Section 4n). This shared involvement in the decision making process does not necessarily imply total agreement nor does it abrogate the ultimate decision making responsibility of the local governing board.

Title 5 §51023.7 and §52023.5 state requirements for the “effective participation” of students and staff, respectively, in the development of recommendations to the governing board. Title 5 §53203 requires the governing board to “consult collegially” with the academic senate on academic and professional matters (defined in §53200).

Consequently, the more precise terms call for the governing board to assure effective participation of students and staff and to consult collegially with academic senates. Later questions will give guidance on these two processes. The term “shared governance” can take on many meanings and it is suggested that its use be curtailed in favor of the more precise terms.

2. QUESTION: What needs to be done by local boards and academic senates to implement the regulations to ensure the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of academic and professional matters?

The senate and the local board or its designee (usually the chancellor, superintendent/president, or president and senior administration) need to “consult collegially” on the development or modification of the district policy for board action to implement the regulations. This policy can be very general (i.e., a statement that the district will operate according to the provisions of Title 5, Sections 53200-53204) or more specific in terms of how the district carries out the regulations. Different boards and districts may include different amounts of procedural detail in district policy. (However, see recommendations in Questions 4 and 5 on selecting “rely primarily” or “mutual agreement” options.)

3. QUESTION: In adopting or modifying policy on academic and professional matters, does the governing board have to meet directly with the senate?

No. The governing board and the senate may each designate appropriate representatives as their voices in the mutual development or modification of policy on academic and professional matters. It is the responsibility of the designees to communicate with their respective constituencies on an ongoing basis so as to best represent them.

4. QUESTION: The regulations list eleven areas defined as academic and professional matters. The local board must adopt procedures identifying how it will consult collegially in these eleven areas. Those procedures include either to “rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate” or to “reach mutual agreement.” Must a local board select only one procedure for addressing all of the identified academic and professional matters or can there be a different approach used for the different matters?

Either one of the procedures can be used to address each of the eleven areas defined as academic and professional matters; the procedure need not be the same for all eleven. It is recommended, although not required, that the specific procedure selected be identified in policy for each of the academic and professional matters.

5. QUESTION: Who decides which of the two processes in the regulations (“rely primarily” or “mutual agreement”) should be used on a given issue related to academic and professional matters?

The local governing board. However, it is recommended that the eleven categories of academic and professional matters listed in the regulations be the subject of local discussions so that all concerned will know in advance which issues will be dealt with according to which process. These may then be included in adopted policy.

6. QUESTION: Why is it recommended that the governing board policy specify either the rely primarily or mutual agreement mode of collegial consultation for each of the eleven academic and professional matters?

In preparing recommendations to the governing board, it is necessary that all parties know in advance their responsibilities for determining recommendations. It is important for the governing board to communicate its expectations for the process of developing recommendations. Prior agreement on process has the advantage of allowing the board to focus on the content of recommendations rather than on procedural details.

## Part II. Academic and Professional Matters

7. QUESTION: The regulations list eleven areas defined as “academic and professional matters.” What is the scope of each of the academic and professional matters?

The intent of the list of academic and professional matters is to state more specifically the breadth of the legal requirement for the academic senate to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations on “curriculum and academic standards” [Ed. Code ‘70901(b)(7)]. These guidelines do not attempt to further define the list of academic and professional matters. Often it is the context of the issue which determines if it is an academic and professional matter. To assist in this determination, the companion document “Scenarios Illustrating Effective Participation in District and College Governance” gives examples of particular issues and good practice for their resolution through collegial consultation.

Furthermore, the eleventh item allows the academic senate and the governing board to mutually agree on adding other issues as being subject to collegial consultation. Academic senates, along with governing boards and their designees, are encouraged to establish processes through which the status of any issue as an academic and professional matter is determined.

8. QUESTION: Is it helpful to have a process by which issues are determined to be an academic and professional matter?

Yes. Because academic and professional matters are broad in scope, it is important that colleges and districts have an agreed-upon mechanism for clarifying when an item is an academic and professional matter and thus requiring collegial consultation. Good practice for developing this mechanism involves agreement between the academic senate or its representative(s) and the Board or its designee.

9. QUESTION: One of the eleven areas of academic and professional matters is district and college governance structures, as related to faculty roles. Must the district consult collegially on the administrative organization chart of the district and/or college?

No. How the administration is organized may be a matter for wide participation by the affected parties but is outside the scope of the district's responsibility to consult collegially with the senate. However, organizational changes which affect academic and professional matters such as curriculum or faculty role in governance would require consultation with the academic senate.

10. QUESTION: Another one of the eleven areas of academic and professional matters is "processes for institutional planning and budget development." Does this regulation relate to the institutional plans and budgets themselves, or only to the process by which plans and budgets are developed for presentation to the board?

The regulation relates only to the process. The academic senate is to be consulted collegially in shaping the processes used for developing the plans and budgets to be acted upon by the governing board. The board is not required to either "rely primarily" on the senate's recommendations or reach mutual agreement with the senate on the plans and budgets themselves.

### Part III. Mutual Agreement and Rely Primarily

11. QUESTION: If the governing board chooses the option to "rely primarily" on the advice of the academic senate in any of the eleven areas of academic and professional matters, is the board required to accept the recommendation of the senate?

No. Title 5 regulations clearly state that in most cases under the "rely primarily" option the recommendation of the academic senate will be adopted. However, there are conditions under which the local board may need to make a decision different from the senate's recommendation. (The circumstances covering such a decision are addressed in the next Question.)

12. QUESTION: A district governing board which chooses the "rely primarily" procedure is normally supposed to accept recommendations of the senate in any of the eleven areas of academic and professional matters unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and "compelling reasons." What do these mean?

The regulations do not define the terms "exceptional circumstances" and "compelling reasons," and these terms are not intended to have a legal definition outside the context of this law. (However, these regulations do have the force of law. See Question 35.) These terms mean that boards must usually accept senate recommendations, and that in instances where a recommendation is not accepted the reasons for the board's decision must be in writing and based on a clear and substantive rationale which puts the explanation for the decision in an accurate, appropriate, and relevant context.

Boards tempted to reject a recommendation might, instead, ask the senate to reconsider the recommendation in light of the issues that have not been resolved to the board's satisfaction or in cases in which the clarity, accuracy or completeness of the recommendation needs improvement.



13. QUESTION: A district governing board that chooses the “mutual agreement” procedure is supposed to reach written agreement with the senate in any of the eleven areas of academic and professional matters. When may the board act if it is not able to reach mutual agreement with the academic senate?

If there is no existing policy, the regulations say the board may act without reaching mutual agreement if there are “compelling legal, fiscal or organizational reasons” why it must do so. Again, the word “compelling” is not defined in the regulations and is not intended to have a legal definition outside the context of this law. (Again, the regulations have the force of law. See Question 35.) It means that in instances where mutual agreement with the senate is not reached, a board decision must be based on a clear and substantive rationale that puts the explanation for the decision in an accurate, appropriate and relevant context.

14. QUESTION: When there is an existing policy, is the board permitted to act without mutual agreement?

Generally, no. If there is an existing policy, that policy simply stays in effect until mutual agreement is reached. However, there may be cases when the existing policy “exposes the district to legal liability or causes substantial fiscal hardship.” In these circumstances, a board may act without reaching mutual agreement provided that it has made a good faith effort to reach agreement and has “compelling legal, fiscal or organizational reasons” to act (as the term “compelling” is described in the previous question) without waiting any longer for agreement.

15. QUESTION: The “mutual agreement” procedure appears to contain de facto ability to block changes in policy when an existing policy is in place by failing to agree to needed action. What would happen if this occurs?

It would be bad faith to use the regulations in order to block changes in policy when an existing policy is in place by failing to agree to needed action. If a board refuses or fails to participate or consult constructively in the attempt to reach mutual agreement, a senate may choose to initiate the technical assistance process delineated in the Academic Senate/CCLC document “Assistance to Assure Effective Participation in District and College Governance.” On the other hand, if the senate attempts to use the regulations process to block board action by refusing or failing to participate or consult constructively, the board and chief executive officer may seek help through the technical assistance process as well.

## Part IV. Implementing the Collegial Consultation Process

16. QUESTION: Once board policies on collegial consultation and effective participation have been approved, how can the implementing procedures, structures and committees be developed to ensure the process follows the intent of policy?

Adoption of the governing board policy on collegial consultation is only the first step in complying with the regulations. Procedures, structures, and committees must be reviewed and revised to implement the policy.

The academic senate and the governing board designee should examine existing structures that deal with academic and professional matters. Those committees that are already charged with academic and professional matters, such as curriculum and staff development, should be reviewed to assure that their structures and charges are appropriate. (See Question 17 on committee structure.) Where committees may not exist to deal specifically with an academic and professional matter, a new committee may be needed or, perhaps, the charge of a related committee can be modified. For example, the matriculation advisory committee might be charged with developing proposals for student preparation and success.

Throughout this document, the work products of committees pertaining to academic and professional policies and procedures will be referred to as “proposals.” These proposals are available for review by college groups as part of the process to assure effective participation of those affected by such proposals. As part of their reporting processes, committees forward these proposals to the academic senate for consideration and refinement. After approval by the senate, the “proposal” becomes a “recommendation” of the academic senate. Beyond their charge to develop such proposals, committees also may be involved in implementation of existing policies and procedures. (See Question 19 for a distinction among policy, procedure, and implementation.)

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For example, curriculum committees implement curriculum policies by reviewing proposals for new and revised courses.

In all procedures, structures, and committees, students and staff should be assured of effective participation in matters that affect them. (See Questions 31 and 32 for more on effective participation of staff and students.)

17. QUESTION: What essential elements need to be defined in order to ensure that the committee structure, used in collegial consultation and to provide effective participation, is functional?

It is recommended that the charge to a college committee be clearly defined. This permits matters within the scope of the charge to be handled by the committee without overlapping responsibilities with other groups. A clear charge also lessens the tendency to create a new committee for every new issue. (For use of a college council to do issue management for committee referrals, see the next Question.)

Committees should have definite membership. Members should be chosen for their expertise and area of responsibility, not just to represent a constituent group. For each place on the committee the following should be specified: appointing body, term length, and voting status (if votes are to be taken).

The expected reports or other work products should be delineated, including to whom the reports are submitted. Committee proposals for policies and procedures on all academic and professional matters should be submitted to the academic senate as well as being available for review by other affected groups. (See the previous Question regarding how a committee proposal becomes an academic senate recommendation.)

Operation of the college committee structure takes a commitment of the time and effort of the participants as well as a commitment of resources by the institution. All parties should weigh carefully the developmental needs of the college. To the extent possible, there should be consideration of and accommodation for the time required for student, faculty and staff participation that may be above and beyond their regular duties. Examples of accommodation include convenient times and locations of meetings, reassigned time, and granting of flexibility in work schedules. Consideration is also needed for technical and clerical support for committees with special needs. Operational requirements should not be ignored: Written minutes should be kept of all committee meetings. Meeting times should be arranged so that all members are available. Agendas should be distributed with adequate time (and all needed reference materials) for members to prepare for meetings. Orientation and training of members should be provided regularly.

18. QUESTION: Some institutions have college or district coordinating councils consisting of representatives of the academic senate, unions, classified staff, administrative staff and students. What is the role of such a council within the dictates of the law and regulations?

Neither the law nor regulations call for any specific committees or structures, nor is a coordinating council prohibited. Many colleges have found coordinating councils useful, but some cautions are warranted. A forum for communication on common issues and for reporting group activities are important functions coordinating councils can play. Often a particular matter may have implications for other groups that are not evident without discussion.

Issue management can be another useful activity for such councils. Broaching topics when they initially arise can give all parties the opportunity to participate in devising a common strategy for addressing that topic. It can be within this forum that the academic senate may identify issues which are academic and professional in nature. These discussions can assure that topics are properly referred to the committee charged with handling that matter. Coordinating councils also provide a venue to resolve conflicts that may arise as issues work their way through the governance process.

However, a coordinating council is not the appropriate body to make recommendations to the governing board or designee on academic and professional matters. These issues are appropriately within the purview of the academic senate. Furthermore, care should be taken in placing decision-making authority in the hands of coordinating councils. The strength of participatory governance lies in recommendations being made by those who have the necessary expertise and are most affected by the decision.

19. QUESTION: The law and regulations use the terms “district and college governance,” “policies,” “policy development and implementation” and “policies and procedures.” What are the distinctions among policy, procedures and implementation?

Distinctions among policy, procedures, and implementation are not exact, and specific delineations should be made locally on a case-by-case basis. That said, some generalizations may be useful.

Policies give the college general direction to accomplish its mission. They create the context for action as well as foster a positive climate in which change can occur. Policies delineate the conditions that procedures must meet and state the expectations for what is to be accomplished. They are of a sufficient scope and significance that they are adopted by public action of the governing board. Procedures define the steps to be taken to carry out a policy. They specify those responsible for carrying out each step and may include a timeline by which tasks are to be completed. Implementation means carrying out the steps called for in the procedure.

20. QUESTION: For those matters which the governing board delegates to the chief executive officer, does collegial consultation still apply? Is the governing board still responsible to assure the effective participation of affected groups?

Yes to both questions. Ed. Code §70902(d) gives the governing board authority to delegate certain responsibilities to groups or individuals employed within the district. Those to whom those responsibilities are delegated must themselves consult collegially with the academic senate on academic and professional matters. Before agreeing to delegation, boards should carefully consider whether decisions are of a nature that they should be made in the public forum of the board meeting. Note that the Brown Act, Government Code §54950 54962, specifically requires open meetings of groups to whom boards have delegated authority, such as the academic senate.

Even on matters delegated to others, the governing board still maintains the responsibility to assure effective participation of students, faculty, and staff. The academic senate still retains its right to place issues on the board agenda and to present its views to the board (Title 5 §53203), with the understanding that reasonable, accepted procedures will be followed.

21. QUESTION: What features characterize an effective collegial consultation process?

Collegial consultation requires mutual understanding among the faculty, administration, and the governing board. Such understanding requires an awareness of interdependence, a commitment to communication, and the exchange of ideas as well as a commitment to joint action in the interests of solving educational problems or setting educational policy.

There is no one best method for implementing collegial consultation. Each college tends to develop a culture of its own within which collegial consultation takes place. Nevertheless, a few features seem to be common among those colleges with effective processes.

One such feature is a clearly defined governance structure that includes an organizational chart, charges of the councils or committees, and defined memberships and processes. A regular program should be established for old and new members of the governing board, administration, and faculty to acquaint them with the principles and practices of the collegial consultation structure. When everyone understands how the process works, and the structure is used consistently, it allows for success.

Communication is also a hallmark of a good collegial consultation process. Venues are created for key leaders to discuss matters in formal settings such as a coordinating council. (See Question 18 in the Senate/CCLC document on the role of councils.) Informal meetings can be held between key leaders between formal meetings to further understanding, but official conclusions should be a part of the formal process. All participants must make a conscientious effort to keep one another informed.

The need for trust will often be raised in the context of shared decision-making. Trust is fostered when well established principles and practices of collegiality are adhered to by all. In addition, trust can be built by creating opportunities for individuals to establish professional relationships in a variety of venues.

Collegial consultation works best in well-run districts where expertise and delegation of authority is respected, and where representatives are open and honest and are committed to working together for the benefit of the students.

22. QUESTION: Can a CEO make faculty appointments to committees, task forces, or other groups dealing with academic and professional matters?

No. Title 5 §53203(f) requires that appointments of faculty to groups dealing with academic and professional matters be made by the academic senate after consultation with the CEO or designee. Furthermore, consultation is required in establishing committees if the purpose of the committee is to develop policy or procedures related to an academic and professional matter or as part of the basic governance structures set forth in the board's policy on collegial consultation (see System Office Legal Opinion M 97-20, 10/23/97).

23. QUESTION: What do the law and regulations say about participation in collegial consultation of college and district senates in multi-campus districts?

Delegation of authority and responsibility by a governing board under Title 5 §53203(a) can be to its college senate, district senate, or both. In districts with a district senate established pursuant to Title 5 §53202, governing boards may establish policies delineating collegial consultation with college senates only, district senates only, or to both.

When collegial consultation involves both college and district senates, distinction should be made between recommendations that involve college matters only and those that have district scope. This is a local matter to be worked out among the senates and the board or its designee(s). It is recommended that on district matters the board specify the chancellor as its designee and on college matters the designee be the college president.

24. QUESTION: How can the timelines of collegial consultation be respected while addressing opportunities and requirements to which a college must respond quickly?

Development of effective policies and procedures takes time. Issues requiring the development or revision of policies and procedures should be identified as early as possible and the consultation process initiated right away. Development of proposals in isolation, which are then brought into consultation is not a productive methodology. Prolonged debate without constructive recommendations needlessly extends resolution of the issue. All parties should agree to reasonable timelines at the beginning of the consultation process.

Particularly stressful is the need to make a decision in a short timeframe imposed by external considerations. Districts that seem to handle these situations best are those which have a comprehensive planning process. If the institution has foresight and agreed upon goals and objectives, it is likely that new challenges can be more quickly integrated into the district's plans. An atmosphere of trust in the leadership is critical as well, considering that recommendations on items with short deadlines often necessitate the academic senate president and college president collaborating without opportunity to obtain full input from the various constituents. Even in such circumstances, it is expected that the actions of both presidents will not be inconsistent with the established positions of their respective groups.

## Part V. Roles of the Academic Senate and Exclusive

### Bargaining Agent

25. QUESTION: Can the local board choose the academic senate to be the organization that represents faculty in matters that have previously been collectively bargained or are within the legal scope of bargaining? Can the local board accept recommendations from the academic senate or reach agreements with the academic senate which contradict a collective bargaining agreement?

The answer to both questions is no. The governing board may not legally delegate to the senate any responsibilities or functions which belong to the exclusive representative. AB 1725 did not change collective bargaining law (i.e., the Educational Employment Relations Act, Government Code Section 3540 et sec.) nor the legal scope of bargaining. The regulations specifically point out that nothing in the

Board of Governors' regulations may be construed to "detract from any negotiated agreements between collective bargaining and district governing boards."

26. QUESTION: Can a board and union through a collective bargaining agreement change a policy previously adopted by a board based upon recommendation of the academic senate or mutually agreed to with the academic senate?

Yes. Matters appropriately within the scope of collective bargaining may be negotiated between collective bargaining representatives and district governing boards regardless of previous policies. Citing the EERA in GC §3543.2(a), "The scope of representation shall be limited to matters relating to wages, hours of employment, and other terms and conditions of employment." These terms and conditions are then enumerated in the Act. Furthermore, exclusive bargaining agents have the right to "consult on the definition of educational objectives, the determination of the content of courses and curriculum, and the selection of textbooks..." However, the EERA does not supercede Education Code provisions and, as stated in GC §3540, "shall not restrict, limit, or prohibit the full exercise of the functions of any academic senate or faculty council established by a school district in a community college to represent the faculty in making recommendations to the administration and governing board of the school district with respect to district policies on academic and professional matters, so long as the exercise of the functions does not conflict with lawful collective agreements."

27. QUESTION: May the collective bargaining agent delegate matters within the scope of bargaining to the local senate and may the senate delegate matters within the scope of the eleven defined areas of academic and professional matters to the collective bargaining agent?

Yes, to the extent permitted by collective bargaining laws. The regulations state that the intent is to "respect agreements between academic senates and collective bargaining representatives..."

## Part VI. Students and Staff

28. QUESTION: Does the phrase "rely primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate" mean that the governing board should not receive and consider the advice and judgment of others on issues of academic and professional matters?

No. Indeed, there are other regulations and laws that address the participation of the public, students, staff and unions in district governance.

Title 5 §51023.7 requires the governing board to "adopt policies and procedures that provide students the opportunity to participate effectively in district and college governance." Students are to participate in "formulation and development" of policies and procedures that have a "significant effect" on them. The regulation lists 10 areas of such significant effect, most of which are quite similar to the senate's academic and professional matters. Boards are not to act unless students have had the opportunity to participate, with the exception of "unforeseeable, emergency situations" and shall give positions of the students "reasonable consideration." The regulation states the intent that boards are to respect the agreements with senates and unions while working with students.

Title 5 §51023.5 requires the governing board to "adopt policies and procedures that provide district and college staff the opportunity to participate effectively in district and college governance," However, areas that affect staff are not defined in the regulation but remain matters "that the governing board reasonably determines, in consultation with staff, have or will have a significant effect on staff."

The role of the exclusive bargaining agents is explicitly protected in Title 5 and is cited in the Educational Employment Relations Act. (See Section 3543.2 of the Government Code.) The public is granted access to the governing board through the open meeting provisions of the Brown Act. (See Government Code Sections 54950 54962.)

29. QUESTION: What are good practices to assure effective participation of students and staff in the process of formulating recommendations that affect them?

Student participation can be strengthened in several ways. Student leaders can work with the college leadership to identify committees whose charges incorporate the ten areas of significant effect on

students. Student membership can be specified on those committees. The names of those who will participate on committees can be identified early in the year. It is important that committees meet at regularly scheduled times convenient to students interested in being members.

Student members can benefit from orientation and training and from having an assigned mentor to assist in getting to know the work of the committee. An effective strategy to strengthen leadership skills is to have a student government course as part of the curriculum. Communication between the student government, the academic senate, and other groups can be improved by having liaisons attend one another's board meetings.

Administrative staff have a role beyond that of the chief executive officer functioning as the board's designee. It is advised that committees dealing with specific topics have the participation of mid-level administrators in whose areas of responsibility those topics fall. That participation may be as a resource, as a member, or as chair, depending on the local college decision-making process.

Classified staff should participate in the formation and development of policies and procedures on matters that significantly affect staff. Committees and task forces on campus that deal with those issues should have classified staff as members. As with all committee members, classified staff can benefit from orientation and training and from a mentor relationship with a seasoned committee member.

30. QUESTION: Should the advice and judgement of the academic senate be accorded greater weight than the advice and judgement of other groups and constituencies in connection with academic and professional matters?

Yes. Subject to Questions 25, 26, and 27, the intent of the regulations is to ensure that, while all relevant constituencies should have the opportunity to participate, boards must accord the greater weight to academic senates in academic and professional matters by consulting collegially with the senates, as described in these guidelines.

31. QUESTION: What are the responsibilities of the academic senate to obtain input from staff and students on academic and professional matters that have a significant effect on these groups?

In the creation of the structures, procedures and committees for collegial consultation (see Question 16) provisions must be included for the effective participation of students and staff on matters that affect them. Proposals that come from committees on academic and professional matters are available for review by all college constituencies and are considered in open deliberations at academic senate meetings. When such proposals are heard by the academic senate, every effort should be made to engage affected parties in the deliberations. In this manner the academic senate will have considered the input of students and staff before making recommendations to the governing board (or its designee) on matters that affect students and staff. Of course, all parties may directly address the board as it deliberates on its ultimate decision.

32. QUESTION: What can be done to educate all members of the college community participating in the collegial processes concerning the law, regulations, best practices of decision making and the issues under discussion?

Good practices might include the following. All participants in the governance process should be provided copies of the relevant laws, regulations, and district policies and procedures. It is recommended that each standing governance committee have a handbook of such information as well as reports and minutes generated in previous years. The first annual organizational meeting of each committee should be devoted to orientation and training on the committee charge and procedures. The leadership of constituency groups might get together in a retreat format at the beginning of each academic year to review the governance process, consider priorities for the coming year, and build personal relationships.

## Part VII. Keeping Participatory Governance Strong

33. QUESTION: Are effective participation and collegial consultation policies and practices subject to regular evaluation and revision as necessary by the governing board?

While there is no requirement that such policies be regularly reviewed, it is a good idea. The review process

should be mutually agreed upon, and, further, the board policy should specify that recommendations for change should be by collegial consultation with the academic senate (on the board policy affecting the academic senate) and by effective participation of staff and students (on policies affecting them).

It should be possible for any of the parties to initiate the process for review of these policies. It may be the case, for example, that a change in leadership might bring new perspectives to the decision making process that might engender a desire for certain improvements. However, districts should take care that the collegial consultation process is not built on individual strengths that may be idiosyncratic to particular leaders.

34. QUESTION: How can the academic senate and other constituent groups and the local governing board engage in mutually productive dialogue?

Engaging in mutually productive dialogue is based on respect, trust and willingness to seek information. Mutually productive dialogue may take place at regular business meetings of the board, at open college and community forums and board study sessions and retreats, and by sharing written information. Under the provisions of the Brown Act, governing board meetings are open to everyone. All constituent members have the right to address the board on items on its agenda and matters under the board's purview.

Beyond legal requirements, boards should recognize the special role that academic senates and student and staff organizations play in developing recommendations for board action. Following are some suggestions to strengthen that role. Organizational representatives may be seated prominently to facilitate discourse with the board. Reports from each organization may be regularly agendaized. Items on the board agenda that were developed through significant senate, student, or staff involvement can be jointly presented by the appropriate organizational representatives. Commentary on board agenda items can be solicited from the senate, student, and staff representatives without restrictions such as filling out speaker cards and being subject to short time limitations.

In addition to regular business meetings of the board, other opportunities can be structured for mutually productive dialogue and education. Study sessions, workshops, and college and community forums often provide a more open environment for board members, key community groups, and college leaders to engage in discussion about external trends and broad policy direction and for the board to share its vision and to hear about activities in the district related to achieving the vision and mission. Sessions such as these enable constituent groups to identify and address areas of agreement and concern early in policy discussions.

## PART VIII. Compliance

35. QUESTION: Do these regulations have the force of law?

Yes. If a district board does not make a good faith effort and does not ultimately abide by these regulations it would be in violation of law.

36. QUESTION: What powers do the Board of Governors have to enforce Title 5 regulations such as the ones on ensuring the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of academic and professional matters?

Education Code Section 70901 mandates that the Board of Governors establish minimum conditions entitling districts to receive state aid. The Board of Governors can withhold funding from any district that does not meet established minimum conditions. One of these minimum conditions is adoption of procedures consistent with sections 53200 – 53204 of the California Code of Regulations. Thus, one of the minimum conditions that districts must substantially meet in order to receive state aid is to assure the effective participation of local academic senates as per the regulations.

37. QUESTION: What are the responsibilities of the governing board and chief executive officer to implement the regulations to ensure the effective participation of faculty, staff and students in district and college governance? What obligations does a governing board have to ensure that recommendations regarding academic and professional matters have gone through the collegial consultation process?

The board must uphold the requirements of Ed. Code 70902(b)(7) and Title 5 §53200-204 (academic

senates), §52023.7 (students) and §51023.5 (staff). As the designee of the board, the CEO is likewise bound to carry out these regulations. When considering action on an academic and professional matter, the local governing board must first ascertain that the collegial consultation process has been followed. If not, action on the item would then be delayed until such consultation has been obtained.

38. QUESTION: If the regulations are violated, will the state System Office intervene and/or investigate the case for possible noncompliance?

Violations of Title 5 regulations may be reported in writing by filing a written complaint with the Legal Affairs Division of the System Office. The General Counsel will review complaints and determine appropriate course of action to assure compliance with the regulations.

39. QUESTION: If a local senate or CEO and governing board feels that it has exhausted all sincere internal efforts to work cooperatively and believes the regulations continue to be ignored, what remedies can be sought?

The following steps are recommended. First, the representative group – the statewide Academic Senate or the Community College League – should be contacted for useful advice and direct support. Secondly, the local academic senate and governing board may mutually request technical assistance through the process established jointly by the Academic Senate and the League. Thirdly, if the local academic senate believes that there is clear noncompliance, it may file a complaint with the Legal Affairs Division of the System Office. Finally, the local senate may pursue remedies with the state Attorney General or in court.





## The Fiscal Environment

Understanding the fiscal role and responsibilities of the governing board means understanding the fiscal environment in which the community colleges operate. California's community colleges are publicly funded institutions; therefore they depend on and respond to the general economy, public support, and the political process. Many factors in the environment influence the decisions boards make. Trustees must consider a complex interplay of economic, political, social, demographic, and legal forces.

Until 1978, local boards of trustees had authority to establish local tax rates for community colleges. Most of the resources used by the colleges came from local property taxes. The tax rates set by the boards determined, to a large extent, the level of funding for the local colleges. However, in 1978, Proposition 13 removed local taxing authority and put limits on property tax rates and increases. The responsibility for determining the level of public funding for the colleges shifted from local boards to state government.

The shift in responsibility changed the role of the boards to what it is today. Boards work within state-determined allocations to establish budget priorities that best serve their local communities. They do so within the constraints of state statutes and Board of Governors regulations on how funds may be used. Their major accountability to the voters is ensuring that the education and services offered by their colleges serves local community needs.

Governing boards, as well as individual trustees, also play a major role by advocating to the legislature and Board of Governors for adequate funding and funding formulas. They may seek support from their local community in their advocacy efforts. They also determine whether to seek local bonds for capital construction and the amount. Boards may support seeking alternative sources of funds through foundations and grants.

### Revenue Sources

As stated above, colleges receive the bulk of their resources from the state. The state's appropriation is based on three major sources: state monies, local property taxes, and student fees. In addition, funds from the federal government support specific programs in the colleges. In general, revenues for the California Community Colleges come from the following sources:

State general fund .....	43 percent
Local property tax .....	35 percent
Education Protection Act (EPA) .....	14 percent
Student fees .....	7 percent
RDA Dissolution .....	2 percent

State funds include general apportionment, categorical funds, capital construction, the lottery (less than 3 percent), and other minor sources.

The colleges collect resident student enrollment fees, but the state considers 98% of the fees as part of the state appropriation. The fees are set by the legislature and the revenue received is considered "within" the Proposition 98 guarantee. However, when fees decline, the Legislature has tended to backfill only the fee revenue, but not the administrative portion of the fees, thus leaving the colleges with less money than anticipated. Federal resources include financial aid, vocational education, and minor funds designated for specific purposes. Other federal initiatives (such as welfare reform) impact how much revenue comes from the national level. The responsibility to allocate federal funds to colleges is usually delegated to state agencies.

## Factors in State Appropriations

How much community colleges may expect depends on the state's economy, how much money the state government has, and the spending priorities of the Governor and Legislature. The recession in the early 1990s resulted in tight budgets for the colleges, but they enjoyed increased funding with the economic growth in the second half of that decade.

The declines in state revenue from the stock market collapse of 2000 and the lost revenue from the state's vehicle license fee led to a return to austere years in the early 2000s. While the state's economy has largely recovered, it will take several years and policy decisions to either cut programs or increase taxes to bring the state's long term budget into balance.

State revenue projections can change dramatically from the initial budget proposed in January to the actual income the state receives during the fiscal year, so the amount of money that is provided to the colleges is often uncertain, even after the prior fiscal year is over.

The amount of state funding for community colleges is determined in large part by Proposition 98, which guarantees a minimum percentage of the state budget for the public school system and community colleges. The precise share of Prop 98 funds for community colleges is negotiated each year in the political process and varies annually, but is just over 10%.

## State Appropriations Process

Building the state budget is at least a yearlong process involving local entities, state agencies, the Legislature, and Governor.

Each fall, proposals for changes in the state budget for the following fiscal year are submitted to the Department of Finance (DOF) by every state agency, including the System Office of the California Community Colleges. These proposals are submitted in the form of budget change proposals (BCPs), which are lengthy and detailed analyses of needs, proposed solutions, and expected outcomes. The BCPs for the community college system are developed by the System Office in consultation with state associations (such as the League) and the districts. Department of Finance staff members meet with state agency personnel on each proposal, asking questions and seeking more data or justification. The DOF makes recommendations to the Governor in December, who also meets with agency heads, including the Chancellor of the Community Colleges

By January 10, the Governor presents a proposed state budget to the Legislature. Throughout the spring, the Assembly and Senate hold hearings on the Governor's budget proposal and develop their own budget proposals.

In May, the Governor releases a revised budget proposal known as the May Revise. This proposal takes into account changes in the level of revenue the state expects to receive, as well as the debate and advocacy that has occurred since the initial proposal in January.

June 15 is the constitutional deadline for the Legislature to submit its proposed budget to the Governor. This budget is a result of negotiations within the Budget conference committee to resolve differences between the Assembly and Senate's adopted budgets. It is based on the budgets proposed by each house of the legislature, as well as the Governor's initial proposal and May Revise. If the Legislature's budget is different from what the Governor wants, additional negotiations often occur.

June 30 is the target date for the Governor to sign the budget. Delays in this date often have occurred due to negotiations between the Governor and Legislature. The Governor may veto ("blue pencil") line items in the budget, but cannot add funds.

If a budget is not enacted by June 30, recent court decisions prohibit the State Controller from distributing funds to some public agencies, including community colleges. While most colleges can operate on reserve funds for a month or two, a prolonged budget impasse could require colleges to cease operations until the budget is enacted.

Throughout this process, colleges, state associations, and the System Office closely follow what funds are proposed for community colleges. Local district budgeting is based on educated projections of what the final budget will be. However, due to the state political process and changing revenue projections, colleges often enter the fiscal year without knowing for certain what their state appropriation will be, what student fees can be charged, and what constraints will exist.

In addition, actual revenues from property taxes and other sources may differ from what the state projected. The state's allocation to community colleges has changed during the fiscal year and even after it has ended.

## System Office Apportionments to Districts

Once the state budget is approved, the Board of Governors and System Office are responsible for allocating the state appropriation for community colleges to the districts. District allocations take into account revenues from state and local sources, including student fees, as well as the monies targeted for specific purposes in the state's budget.

The general fund allocations are based on a formula established in 2006 by Senate Bill 361, which amended and added to California Education Code Sections 84750 – 84760.5. This funding formula replaced program-based funding, which had been in place since 1990. SB 361:

- Designated a basic allocation for each district, determined by the size of the district and number of colleges and centers. This allocation recognized the fixed costs incurred by an institution. (see Table 1)
- Equalized funding across community college districts, so that all colleges receive essentially the same funds for a full time equivalent student (FTES)<sup>1</sup>. (Prior to SB 361, colleges could receive widely varying amounts per full-time student).
- Stipulated a uniform funding rate for all non credit FTES
- Created the Career Development and College Preparation Program for educational disadvantaged residents and established a specific non-credit funding rate for this purpose.
- Reformed the calculation of the system-wide budget request for enrollment growth to incorporate factors for state unemployment, age-specific population cohorts, and persistent instances of unfunded FTES.

Table 2 shows the funding rates for the different types of FTES. The basic allocation and rates per FTES are revised annually based on cost of living adjustments (COLA).

Table 1: Basic Allocation (including 2017-2018 Restoration Payment)	
FTES	Allocation (in millions)
Single College Districts	
> 20,000 FTES	\$6
10,000 – 20,000 FTES	\$4.5
< 10,000	\$3.5
approved centers	\$1

Table 2: 2017-18 Rates per FTES		
Credit \$5,457	Non-Credit (Career Development & College Preparation) \$5,457	Non Credit (Regular) \$3,347

Essentially, the allocation from the state general fund depends on enrollment, which varies from year to year based on the economy, employment rates, and other factors. A district's apportionment is based on either current year or prior year level of FTES, whichever is greater. Decreases in FTES will result in a revenue reduction at the district's average level of apportionment funding per FTES and is made in the year following the initial year of decrease in FTES. Therefore, colleges would have time to prepare for revenue reduction.

Throughout the state's budget development process, the System Office provides projections to the districts based on its "educated guess" of what the state budget will be. Districts develop their proposed budgets based on these projected allocations (the local budget development process is covered in the next chapter).

<sup>1</sup>A full time equivalent student (FTES) represents 525 hours of class instruction.

## Local District Advocacy

The System Office, the Community College League, and other state associations spend significant time and effort to influence the state appropriations process to ensure that colleges have sufficient funds. Local districts, led by their governing boards, also are important players in the advocacy process.

Therefore, local boards should be knowledgeable about the state budget process. Legislative advocacy on behalf of the local districts is coordinated by the League working with the System Office, Board of Governors, and other organizations that represent community college interests.

Local district efforts begin in January when they work with the League and the System Office to develop priorities for the Budget Change Proposals that the System Office will submit. The two League boards (California Community College Trustees and Chief Executive Officers) identify and review proposals for increases in or changes to the following year's state budget proposal. The BCPs are reviewed and negotiated in the Chancellor's Consultation process, which involves representatives from the League as well as faculty, student, and administrative groups. The Chancellor then presents a proposed budget request to the Board of Governors in July and September, and after its review and approval, the budget is submitted to the state Department of Finance.

The League depends on local trustees, CEOs, and college staff to keep in touch with their legislators on a year-round basis to assure the visibility of community college concerns during the legislative session. Districts that have legislative representatives on key committees in the Legislature are particularly important in ensuring that community college interests are heard.

## Constraints on Local Districts

### State Laws and Regulations

There are a number of factors that influence local budget decisions. The state allocation includes general apportionment and increases (if any) designated for cost of living, enrollment growth, and equalization. These are the most flexible sources of revenue and districts may allocate those for individual college needs.

The state allocation may also contain funds targeted or allocated for specific purposes. Categorical funds are expected to be used for certain purposes, and must be spent for specific services according to regulations developed by the System Office. Examples include programs for certain categories of students, scheduled maintenance, and telecommunications.

State law sets the level for student enrollment fees. State law and regulations also place strict limits on board authority to charge students for other administrative or user fees.

Other laws and regulations determine local allocation of state funds. One law is that 50% of the amount defined as "current expense of education" must be spent on instruction. Another consideration is the goal that at least 75% of student contact hours are taught by full time faculty (commonly known as the 75/25 rule). Districts that do not meet the 50% law must seek waivers from the state. Since the 75/25 ratio is a goal, there is no penalty as long as districts hire the number of full-time faculty designated by the System Office for that year. This is known as the full time faculty obligation.

## Other Funding Sources

Funds for capital construction and other major development efforts may be raised through local bonds. Many districts have also turned to other funding sources, including foundations, fundraising and grant-seeking. Partnerships with industry and government have also financially benefited colleges.

### Bonds

Major building and facilities development can be funded by lease revenue and local general obligation (GO) bonds. Lease revenue bonds provide districts large infusions of cash by selling district-backed bonds to investors and institutions. Boards may decide to seek voter approval for GO bonds. Proposition 39 bonds require approval from 55 percent of the electorate and the bond election must meet certain conditions.

### Foundations and Fundraising

Baccalaureate level institutions have long depended on grants and private funds as a significant source of income. In the past decade, community colleges have significantly increased their use of private fundraising

strategies. They have established or expanded foundations to oversee these efforts. They have capitalized on their colleges' unique roles and contributions to the community to garner increased local support for the college.

Foundations are separate entities established by governing boards to raise and administer private funds. Boards should maintain close ties to their foundations to ensure that the foundations' efforts support the policy direction and goals of the district.

Some of the strategies used by foundations include raising money for scholarships, establishing alumni associations and soliciting gifts from alumni, implementing planned giving, and holding special events. Trustees should be willing to fully support such efforts. That support is an important aspect of the board's community relations role.

### **Asset Management**

Assets of the district include land, buildings, and intellectual capital. Certain assets of some districts can be managed to produce income, such as leasing land or space to businesses.

### **Grants**

Grants for specific purposes and programs are available from local, state, and federal governments, as well as private companies and foundations. They make it possible for the college to augment and expand its programs and services for students and the community.

Some state grants are "entitlement" grants, awarded to all districts that qualify. Most grants are competitive and the colleges are required to submit proposals for consideration by the granting agency. Successful grant-seeking requires an investment in people and resources, which may depend on board support.

### **Partnerships**

Partnerships with local businesses and governments often provide additional sources of revenue and support. Business and industry have partnered with colleges to provide funds, space and equipment for instructional programs and services that will serve both the businesses and the local community. Colleges have partnered with local government to build joint facilities, such as recreation areas or libraries. Local redevelopment funds have also been used to help fund improvements in which both the college and community have an interest. Partnerships with K-12 and baccalaureate-level institutions have resulted in shared facilities and programs that enable more students to be served.

The governing board plays an important role in linking with local government officials and community, business, and industry leaders to support and maintain partnership efforts.

## **Summary**

California's community colleges, as public institutions, receive the bulk of their funds through the state budget process. The revenues and allocations are influenced by many complex factors, including the state's economy and the political environment. The amount of money provided to community colleges from the state budget is determined through discussions with the Governor, Assembly and Senate committees, the Board of Governors and System Office, and state associations that represent local interests. Locally elected trustees can be very influential before and during the state budget development process—the Community College League provides much information to assist their advocacy efforts.

Local budget decisions depend on the state appropriation and how it is allocated to the districts. The state budget, state laws, and the Board Governors' regulations determine local budget decisions. Understanding how the state budget and allocations are determined is an important first step for boards in fulfilling their responsibility for the fiscal health of their districts. The next chapter describes the budget process and the role the board plays by setting policy priorities for and adopting the budget.

## **Resource**

For more information, see *Introduction to Fiscal Responsibilities: A Resource for Governing Boards* published by the League in 2007 and revised in 2018.



## Budgets and Budgeting

On or before September 15 of each year, district boards of trustees are required to adopt a balanced budget for that fiscal year. The district budget development process begins many months prior to that action.

The budget itself is a policy document. It translates short-range and long-range planning decisions into financial allocations. The approved budget reflects the values, educational priorities, and future goals of the district and meets all other policy parameters established by the board. The budget is a one-year education and fiscal plan for the district.

### Board Responsibilities

- Establish policy criteria to guide the budgeting process.
- Set general priorities for the budget early in the process.
- Study and understand budget proposals.
- Adopt budgets after assessing proposals against policy criteria and priorities.

## Purposes and Nature of Budgets

When the budget document is approved, it establishes the priorities for the institution for the ensuing year and links short- and long-range planning. Trustees should spend the time needed to understand the budget proposal, supporting documentation, and any special recommendations.

The budget is a planning and management document. How funds are allocated dictates the operations of the institution; allocations therefore must reflect the specific mission and goals of the college(s). Budget proposals usually contain descriptions of how the goals and objectives are supported by the budget.

The budget also provides the basis for managing and monitoring the expenditures throughout the year; actual revenues and expenditures are compared with budget projections. The projected expenditures alert college officials to cash flow needs.

Once the board adopts the budget, it becomes a policy document. It is the board's statement of priorities for spending money and reserving funds for future expenses. Therefore, the budget should reflect what the board believes is in the best interests of its communities and the future of the district. The budget should reflect and adhere to other board policies.

The budget is also a political document. Budget proposals are negotiated and discussed with many different constituencies—those in the college have asked for what they believe is in the best interests of their programs and the students. Chief executives try to propose a budget to the board that is supported by all. However, there will be times when boards are asked to consider changes to the budget, such as when employee unions desire greater salary increases than are proposed by the CEO. Successful boards are able to justify the budgets they adopt to the general public that they represent.

### Approaches to Budgeting

Because revenues and expenditures change throughout the year, alternative budgets are often proposed that reflect different scenarios. A conservative budget proposal will estimate expenditures at a high level and revenues at a low level. An optimistic proposal might take into account all possible savings and limits on spending, and project revenues at the highest feasible level. Generally, the end result is somewhere in between, although there have been years when there have been significant shortfalls in state funds beyond those projected, or natural disasters have created unexpected expenses.



The budget that a board adopts may depend on many factors. Boards will assess the assumptions on which budget proposals are based (discussed later in this chapter). They may not want to be too optimistic because if revenues are not available, they do not want to have made major commitments that will hurt the long-range fiscal health of the district. Nor do boards want to be too conservative in allocating expenditures that will support student success.

### **Long-Range Projections**

Responsible budgeting is more than a year-to-year process. Responsible boards review and discuss long-range plans and implications for the budget for at least the next three to five years. These discussions clarify future fiscal needs. They ensure that the district establishes appropriate reserves for long-range needs and contingencies, and develops strategies for ensuring adequate resources. The discussions may explore the implications for future budgets of the following:

- Projected growth and enrollment trends. How much is the community growing, if at all? What is the anticipated enrollment in the future? What type of students will the district serve? How can we manage our enrollment?
- State and regional trends. What state and other revenues can we expect? What is the economic and political support for community colleges? What other sources of revenues can we seek? What is occurring in our region that will have implications for long-range budgeting?
- Collective bargaining agreements, including employee and retiree benefits. What are the implications for future budgets for the increases proposed and/or agreed to in bargaining? What reserves need to be created to ensure support for retiree benefits? Are projected salaries and benefits an appropriate percentage of the budget? What impact do the proportion of salaries and benefits have on the rest of the budget?
- Contract commitments and other long-term liabilities. What proportion of the budget is committed to long-term contracts, debt service, and other ongoing costs? Will revenues be adequate to support these commitments?
- Facility and maintenance needs. What new facilities are needed? What are the remodeling and maintenance needs in the next ten or so years? Where will the funds come from to support these costs? Does the district need to go to the voters for capital improvement bonds?
- Upgrades and replacement of technology and equipment. The cost of technology will continue to be significant: is there a plan to continually upgrade and replace technology and instructional equipment? What proportion of the budget is allocated to maintain currency? Where will the revenues come from to support these ongoing costs?

### **Constraints**

The previous chapter noted some state laws and regulations that determine local budgets. Local conditions also constrain the decisions boards make about the budget. Education is people-intensive: personnel costs make up, by far, the largest portion of the budget. At least 80% or more of the budget goes to wages, salaries and benefits. Collectively bargained contracts, tenure, and due process provide security and protection for employees and the district, but they also make it difficult to quickly change employment levels to accommodate changes in revenues.

Other major constraints that limit budget flexibility include long-term liabilities, such as health benefit packages for retirees, leases, vendor contracts, capital construction, and technology and other equipment upgrade and maintenance needs. In addition, insurance, debt service, and other fixed costs limit the discretion of the college staff and board members in developing the budget.

### **The Budget is Dynamic**

The budget is a dynamic document. The budget approved at the beginning of the year is the college's best estimate of projected income and expenditures at that time. It is updated and modified throughout the year as operational and program changes occur.

Projecting revenues is often as difficult as identifying and prioritizing actual expenditures. The amount of state revenues that will be available is rarely known until late in the planning process, and often changes even after budgets are approved.

Boards should delegate sufficient authority to the CEO to allow the flexibility needed to make changes to meet unanticipated needs or respond to revisions in income estimates. Boards generally have policies, practices, or other criteria that describe when board approval is needed to change the budget. The criteria usually state that a major level, percentage, or category of change in the budget is presented to the board for approval, and other changes are delegated to the CEO.

Trustees, as well as college staff, receive periodic reports throughout the year as to how the budget is faring. At a minimum, boards are required to review the quarterly fiscal reports that the district submits to the System Office. Boards should receive sufficient notice about any major changes in assumptions, revenues, and major expenditures, and have an opportunity to discuss their implications, particularly those that affect the ability of the college to meet board policy criteria.

## Budget Development Process

Boards are asked to adopt tentative budgets no later than June 15 prior to the beginning of the fiscal year (the fiscal year is from July through June). The purpose of the tentative budget is to provide the district with an operating plan for the next few months. Districts are required to have a final, board-approved budget on or before September 15 for the fiscal year. The final budget takes into account the official state budget and allocations as well as the actual ending balance from the previous fiscal year. Prior to the adoption of the tentative and final budgets, boards hold study sessions or public hearings to review and discuss the proposals.

However, before budget proposals come to the board for review, much work has been done in the colleges. Colleges usually begin planning for the next fiscal year in late fall or no later than January. Various departments and constituencies are engaged in reviewing programs and needs, planning, and establishing assumptions and criteria for the next year's budget. Boards are usually informed about the budget development calendar.

The CEO is responsible to manage the budget building process. The budget is built using policy direction and parameters established by the board as well as a set of general assumptions about revenues and costs.

### Assumptions and Policy Criteria

Budgets are based in part on policy level criteria that boards have adopted. For instance, boards may adopt policies or criteria that state that the budget will be balanced using current year revenues, that there will be a contingency reserve of a specified percentage and that no long-term commitments may be made without assurance of future revenues to cover them. Boards have entered into contracts with employee unions that determine salaries and benefits, or board policy may set a target for salaries (for instance that they are competitive with like colleges). Boards may require that technology equipment be up-to-date and that the facilities be well maintained. All of these policies and others influence the budget.

The development of the budget is also guided by assumptions made about the future needs of the district and the revenue the college is likely to receive. They are widely discussed with the board and staff members and usually describe:

- What funds are expected from the state, including the amount of COLA (cost of living increases), growth, lottery, and other additional funds.
- What revenues are expected from federal and local sources, including investments.
- What the enrollment is projected to be, since state funding is dependent in large part on enrollment.
- What reserves are needed for general contingencies, equipment and long-range commitments.
- What major expenditures are planned, including equipment purchase and replacement, technology upgrades, scheduled maintenance, and salary and benefit adjustments.
- What major program changes are planned, including adding, expanding, or reducing programs. What new personnel are needed? What investment in professional development will keep personnel current? What will be the space and equipment needs of new programs?

### Constituency Involvement

Identifying projected expenses requires input from the various departments and constituencies in the district and careful prioritization of the many needs and requests. Effective budget processes are inclusive and result in comprehensive information about projected expenses and fiscal needs.

State regulations provide for faculty, staff, and student involvement in the budget development process. The process used to develop the budget proposal varies from college to college. However, the local academic senate is to be consulted collegially in shaping the processes used for developing institutional plans and the budget. The board is not required, though, to rely primarily on the senate's recommendations or reach mutual agreement with the senate on the plans and budget themselves.

The process may include programs or divisions in the college submitting budget requests and needs to an administrative group or college-wide committee to be prioritized. These requests are considered in conjunction with all potential expenditures, including long-term commitments and possible salary and benefit increases. The public also has an opportunity to comment on the budget, although it is rare that members of the public do so. The board acts for the public when it establishes criteria for the budget and reviews and approves the final document.

### **Relationship to Strategic Planning**

An initial phase of budget development is the planning process. The district's accomplishments and programs are reviewed in the context of future trends, demographic changes, economic constraints, program reviews, and community needs. The review may result in adjustments to the vision, mission, and policy goals, and usually leads to refinements in college plans for the coming year. Budget priorities for the coming year should support implementing the various plans within the district.

The board is often involved in establishing policy criteria for planning, revisiting the vision, mission and goal policies, and identifying broad policy direction and parameters for budget priorities. (See the chapters on planning and educational policy.)

## **Board Review and Approval**

In evaluating the proposed budget, the board should carefully review all projected income and expenditures to make sure that they are realistic. The board should compare the projections against the criteria and assumptions that they discussed earlier. Some of the questions trustees often ask are:

- How does the budget support the vision, mission, and goals of the college(s)?
- What are the assumptions used to build this budget? Have circumstances changed that would change the assumptions?
- Is it balanced? How is it balanced (with projected income, prior year ending balance, one-time funds)?
- Are there significant changes from last year? What are they? Why are they proposed?
- What is the projected ending balance? Is it realistic?
- How large are the reserves? Are reserves being used to balance the budget? Are they adequate to cover long term liabilities? Will they cover fiscal extremes or unforeseen emergencies?
- In multi-college districts, does the allocation formula to each college adequately address its needs?

Prudent boards also ensure that the budget does not contain the following problems:

- unfunded liabilities;
- unrestricted general fund balance drops below the 5 percent minimum prudent level;
- long term commitments that depend on optimistic revenues;
- too much unfunded enrollment growth;
- reductions in projected enrollment or revenue that are not accompanied by reductions in expenditures;
- too large a percentage dedicated to salaries and benefits (e.g. 90 – 95%);
- unrealistic projections of income;
- lack of planning for maintenance and upgrading of equipment and facilities;
- lack of connection to long range plans of the district;
- a decline or an abnormal increase in the projected ending balances over a number of years; or
- lack of clarity between restricted and unrestricted funds.

## Understanding Budget Summaries

Budget proposals presented to the board should be clear and understandable. Boards benefit from having a brief summary of the budget and key issues. How the proposed budget takes into account assumptions about revenues and expenditures, and how it meets district goals and policy criteria should be emphasized. For instance, if the board has a policy that the district will have a certain percentage in the reserve, that should be clearly stated.

Trustees are not expected to review individual line items in the budget. Focusing on too much detail obscures how the overall budget meets policy criteria and invites trustee micromanagement. Instead, boards should look at fund and major program categories.

How budgets are summarized and presented varies significantly from district to district—trustees are encouraged to meet with their CEOs and chief business officers to become familiar with the format used in their district. If a board finds the summary difficult to understand, it should request a format that is clear and succinctly responds to policy level questions.

Districts may provide additional detail in the summary: some will list each fund in each major category, including relatively minor funds. Others provide a broad, succinct overview and make the detail available as back-up information. Some of the major terms and concepts in a budget summary are:

- **Beginning Balance:** The money that the district begins the year with. It is based on the ending balance from the prior year (which is budgeted), unexpended funds, monies that are expected to be received and other cash on hand.
- **Revenues:** Income that is expected from state, federal and local sources (highlighted in the last chapter), as well as from specific student fees and fines, interest, non-resident tuition, community services, grants, contracts, etc.
- **Transfers:** Monies that are transferred to and from reserve accounts.
- **Unrestricted:** Revenues that are not limited to a specific purpose, including the state general apportionment, Partnership for Excellence, and lottery funds. Expenditures are also categorized as unrestricted to indicate that the local board has the discretion of allocating the expenditures.
- **Restricted:** Revenues and expenditures that are restricted for specific purposes. Law, regulation, or board policy may restrict funds. Funds restricted by board action may be called “designated” or “committed” to differentiate them from those restricted by external agencies. Examples include the federal vocational education act and other federal program funds; state “categorical” programs such as those for disabled and disadvantaged students; state monies targeted for specific purposes, such as instructional equipment replacement; grants for specific programs; and locally generated revenues such as the health and parking fees. Separate and auxiliary service funds (bookstores, associated students, child development centers, etc.) are reported separately from other funds.
- **Reserves:** Monies that are set aside for specific purposes. The System Office recommends a minimum prudent unrestricted general fund reserve of 5 percent to all expenditures. The board creates other reserves for specific expenses, such as major capital outlay, scheduled maintenance, growth, retiree benefits, sabbaticals, and accrued vacation time.
- **Projected Ending Balance:** Healthy ending balances provides protection for the district. However, unrestricted or undesignated balances and reserves that are quite large in comparison to the budget (8% or more) may be questioned in that the funds are not being used to deliver programs and services.

## Summary

Boards have an important responsibility to review and approve the budget for the district. They are required to adopt a tentative budget by June 15 and a final budget by September 15 (when more accurate financial information is available). When they do so, they make an important policy statement.

The budget is powerful policy—it determines what the district and colleges do. Boards perform their budget responsibilities well when they establish policy criteria and set general priorities for the budget early in the development process. Effective boards study and understand budget proposals and the budgeting process, ask cogent questions, and adopt budgets only after assessing the proposed budget against their policy criteria and priorities. They ensure that the budget includes realistic projections and expenditures that are designed to deliver quality education.

## Resource

For more information, see *Introduction to Fiscal Responsibilities: A Resource for Governing Boards* published by the League in 2007, and revised in 2018.

## Fiscal Management Policies

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Boards of trustees have a responsibility to ensure the financial strength and stability of the institutions they govern. Boards fulfill that responsibility through adopting useful and relevant board policies and criteria that guide how the district manages its money.

This chapter covers the types of board policies that are often found in the fiscal, business, or administrative operations sections of a board policy manual. It outlines many of the questions and concepts that boards address as they set standards and parameters for the CEO.

### Laws, Regulations, and Other Constraints

Boards do not make fiscal policy nor do administrators make implementing regulations in a vacuum. Board policies and administrative procedures in the fiscal area are constrained and informed by state and federal law, state regulations, accreditation standards, and commonly accepted accounting principles used by auditors as standards.

As described in the previous chapters, state law and regulations determine to a large part the revenue colleges receive and put limits on how funds are budgeted. These laws and regulations provide the direction that the legislature has determined is necessary to manage and safeguard public funds. The Education Code also contains laws that cover accounting systems, budget controls, audits, special funds, bonds and their use, equipment replacement, budget transfers, management of property, requisitions and warrants, and a variety of other fiscal operations. The California Code of Regulations, Title 5, contains further detail on how funds are budgeted, accounted for, expended, and reported. The California Community College Budget and Accounting Manual, developed by the System Office, further defines budgeting, accounting, and reporting systems.

Regional accrediting standards also contain references to fiscal operations. Standard Three of the 2014 Accreditation Reference Handbook contains standards related to physical resources and their management. Standard Three also lists standards in the areas of financial planning, financial management, and financial stability. The standards are designed to assure that the management of a district's resources is realistic, long-range, tied to educational planning and student learning outcomes. A recent addition to the accreditation financial review involves Other Post Employment Retirement Benefits and whether districts have completed an actuarial study to determine their unfunded liability and have developed a strategy to fund the liability. The accrediting standards also require that financial management practices are timely, dependable and maintain institutional integrity; and that there are policies that ensure current and future fiscal stability.

Many board policies reflect and reinforce laws, regulations, and accrediting standards. Effective boards clearly state that their CEOs and staff will adhere to laws and standards and avoid unethical and imprudent practices in managing the finances.

District accounting practices are also subject to standards adopted by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB). For instance, GASB 34 standard requires governmental entities to prepare an end-of-the-year balance sheet that includes revenues, expenditures, fund balances, current assets, investments, capital assets, and short- and long-term liabilities. These financial reports look more like those of private business.

Prior to GASB 34, long-term liabilities and capital assets were not necessarily reported as separate items. Now, governmental agencies must make adjustments at the end of the fiscal year to use accrual accounting methods, which show long-term debt obligations and the value and depreciation of capital assets. The reports more clearly identify the capital assets (land and buildings) of the district, as well as significant long-term liabilities, such as retiree health benefits.

## Fiscal Policy Categories and Concepts

The types, range, and specificity of fiscal policies adopted by boards vary widely from district to district. The following examples illustrate some of those varying approaches.

### Delegation to the CEO

The chief executive officer is responsible to make recommendations to the board, carry out board policy and administer the institution. In the fiscal area, board policies often delegate to the CEO the responsibility and authority to:

- develop the budget in accordance with laws and regulations, board policies, and college priorities;
- efficiently and prudently manage resources; and
- provide adequate information to the board for its decision-making and monitoring.

### Financial Planning

Policies in the planning and budgeting area require that budgeting is tied to long-range institutional and educational plans, and that key people have appropriate opportunities to participate in budgeting and planning.

Board policies may require that long-range projections of enrollment, revenue, and expenditures are provided to the board. The projections clarify future fiscal needs, establish a broad fiscal roadmap, and identify appropriate reserves. They also help assure the board that projections are realistic when long-term commitments are made in areas such as multi-year contracts with unions, capital construction, and new program development.

### Budgeting and Budgets

Budgets and the board's role in budgeting were described in the last chapter. Board policies and expectations may address:

- a target or percentage for the general reserve;
- criteria for contingency and special reserve accounts;
- the proportion of budget to be devoted to salaries, benefits, and/or infrastructure;
- budget assumptions are made public and discussed;
- an inclusive budget process that appropriately involves employee groups; and
- sufficient information to ensure that the board understands the budget and how it furthers district and college goals.

### Fiscal and Cash Flow Management

Fiscal management policies set standards for the appropriate expenditure of funds and the accounting practices used by the district. If adopted by the board, they might require that spending is done in accordance with the budget and commonly accepted principles of sound accounting practice.

Wise boards delegate significant authority to the CEO and staff to expend funds within the approved budget and policy constraints. Once the budget is adopted, boards limit their actions to legally required approvals and those required by their own policies, such as:

- long-term contracts
- purchases of real property
- major (as defined by the board) equipment purchases or leases
- board travel
- gifts received
- disposal of major property
- claims against the district
- major grants

Boards also may establish broad policy parameters that guide administrative regulations in such areas as payment of debts, payroll, purchasing, seeking bids, and accounting. The standards usually reflect the values that institutional practices are prudent, fair, flexible, and maintain the long-term fiscal integrity and reputation of the district.

Boards also are responsible to authorize alternative financial resources needed to manage the cash flow of the district and fund capital purchases. Colleges are eligible for tax-exempt lines of credit to meet short-term needs. Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANs) are short-term loans issued in anticipation of receiving public funds—careful investment of these notes may result in some net revenue for the district in addition to providing solid working capital.

Revenue bonds, lease purchases, and certificates of participation (COPs) are different options used by districts for major equipment and facility-related purchases. Boards are also responsible for seeking voter approval for general obligation bonds for major building and program development.

### **Facilities, Asset Protection and Risk Management**

Asset protection and risk management policies speak to the need to adequately maintain, insure, and protect the assets of the district and manage areas of risk. These policies include general standards for protection for the people and property in the colleges and guide decisions as to when to transfer funds, insure, or accept risk. The standards may address:

- liability
- investments
- insurance
- security
- management of debt
- the image of the colleges
- intellectual property
- facility use
- scheduled maintenance
- depreciation of equipment
- buildings and grounds

### **Compensation and Collective Bargaining**

Boards approve compensation levels, including salary schedules and benefits. They depend on the CEO to recommend salaries and benefits that are fair, equitable, competitive, and which can be supported by projected revenues. Illustrations of possible parameters or targets for salaries and benefits such as:

- faculty and administrative salaries shall be in the top half of the salary schedules at comparative colleges (or some other criterion);
- classified salaries shall be comparable to public agencies in the region served by the college; and
- administrative salary and benefit increases shall be similar to those negotiated for faculty unions.

Collective bargaining was authorized in the late 1970's. Most districts negotiate faculty and classified salaries and benefits with employee unions (a few districts do not have faculty unions and salaries and benefits are negotiated through a more informal "meet and confer" process). Board policies include delegation to, authority of, and parameters for district representatives in the negotiating process.

## **Summary**

Governing boards are responsible for the short and long-term fiscal health and stability of their districts. They fulfill their responsibility by adopting policies that contain criteria for financial planning and budgeting, expending and accounting for monies, and managing the assets of the district. These policy criteria provide the framework for administrative regulations and procedures and guide the decisions of the CEO and other college staff.

## **Resources**

For more information, see *Introduction to Fiscal Responsibilities: A Resource for Governing Boards* published by the League in 2007, and revised in 2018. The League's Policy and Procedures Service provides samples of the policies and procedures that boards are legally required and advised to have.





## Monitoring Fiscal Status

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The previous chapters have described the board's responsibilities for understanding the fiscal environment, adopting policies to guide fiscal practices, and developing and approving a budget. This chapter completes the cycle of board fiscal responsibilities—monitoring the fiscal health of the district. Prudent boards require that systems are in place that assures their communities and the state that public funds are expended wisely and prudently.

To fulfill the monitoring role, governing boards receive periodic reports on expenditures and revenues as measured against criteria for fiscal health. These reports provide the CEO an opportunity to assure the board that its policy standards are met. The reports may alert the board to major changes in revenues and expenditures and allow for discussion about the implications for the long-range fiscal status of the district. In addition to considering periodic reports, each district is required to conduct an independent, external audit of programs and funds.

### Benchmarks for Monitoring

It is important that a board work with the CEO to identify specific benchmarks (criteria) the board will use as it monitors and assures the fiscal health of the district. Examples of possible criteria include:

- Revenues and financial commitments are projected far into the future.
- There are sufficient resources for planned expenditures.
- Fiscal and educational planning are linked.
- An adequate cash reserve level is defined.
- Plans are in place and funds are allocated for repair and replacement of equipment and facilities.
- A management information system exists that provides timely and accurate fiscal information.
- Fiscal policies and procedures are known and adhered to.
- Effective internal controls are in place and followed.
- Auxiliary activities (such as the foundation and bookstore) support the mission of the college and are fiscally accountable.
- Risks are assessed and a plan exists for fiscal emergencies.
- General fund balances or reserves do not drop below a specified limit.
- General fund balances are stable over the years.
- There is no deficit spending.
- Borrowing or transferring funds to meet cash flow needs is limited.
- Long-range salary, benefits, or debt commitments do not exceed projected revenues.
- Enrollment does not significantly decline over time.
- Staffing adjustments consistent with enrollment trends.
- Categorical, special, or restricted funds are not used to support general expenses.
- An actuarial calculation to determine unfunded retiree health benefit liability has been completed.

- There are no significant delays in submitting required reports.
- Bills and debts are paid in a timely manner.

Financial statements, external audits and periodic reports covering the identified and agreed upon criteria are usually sufficient for the board to assume compliance with its policies and standards. It is unusual and unnecessary for trustees or boards to review individual warrants or expenditures. Boards may wish to occasionally hold a study session to enable them to understand and become comfortable with the processes and controls used to manage the finances of the district.

## Financial Statements

In addition to locally developed fiscal monitoring reports, the CCC System Office requires districts to submit a brief Quarterly Financial Status Report on a specific form (CCFS-311Q), which is presented to the board for review and discussion prior to submission. The contents of this report are:

### Section I:

- Revenues from the general fund and other financing sources received in the three prior years and projected for the current year.
- Expenditures from the general fund and other outgo spent in the prior three years and projected for the current year.
- Contingency reserves (restricted and unrestricted) projected for the current year.
- General fund ending balances for the three prior years.
- FTES (enrollment) for the three prior years and projected for the current year.
- General fund cash balances for the same quarter in the prior three years and projected for current year.

This information allows boards to compare revenues, expenditures, reserves, balances, and enrollment information and to assess how the financial situation is changing. Significant changes in these numbers should be discussed and the implications for the college explored.

Section II of the Report compares the projected current year budget with year to date expenditures. Trustees may look at whether spending is occurring at the rate expected. For instance, if half the year is gone but a category of expenditure is significantly below or over half of the budget, the board will want to understand why.

Section III of the Report requests districts to report employee contracts settled during the quarter and to provide salary and benefit increases. Sections IV and V ask the district to report significant financial events and problems. Most boards will have already discussed items in these sections separate from the report.

As stated above, boards generally receive other financial statements to assist them in monitoring. Formats for these financial statements vary considerably from district to district. Trustees are encouraged to meet with the chief executive and perhaps the chief business officer to become familiar with the report format used in their district.

As boards review the fiscal statements and monitoring reports, they will want to think about the following:

- Are there any significant changes in the assumptions upon which the budget was built? What unanticipated problems or issues have cropped up?
- Are there major differences between projected and actual amounts of revenues and expenditures? Why?
- Are the projected reserves still adequate? Have greater-than-anticipated transfers been required? Why?
- Are revenues adequate to meet projected expenditures?
- Are the different types of funds being managed appropriately, according to their purposes?
- In multi-college districts, are there significant issues at any of the campuses or differences between campuses?
- Are debts and bills being paid in a timely manner? Are receivables being collected in a timely manner?
- Does the college have sufficient cash on hand to meet its obligations?

## The External Audit

A board of trustees helps assure good practices in fiscal management by contracting with an independent firm to audit the fiscal operations of the district. Independent local audits are required annually under Section 84040 of the California Education Code. The board selects the auditor, expects the administration and staff to cooperate with the audit process, reviews the audit findings, and ensures that appropriate corrective action is taken.

### Hiring an auditor

Boards generally establish criteria for the selection of the audit firm and ask the chief executive to solicit proposals from a number of auditing firms to conduct the external audit. The responsibilities of the auditor are to:

- report on financial statements;
- prepare a management letter highlighting weaknesses in internal control and ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness; and
- report on compliance with federal and state requirements.

The board selects the auditing firm, the CEO manages the audit process, and the board has final authority to review the audit findings. Boards often follow the practice of changing the audit partner every few years in order to ensure fresh, objective perspectives. The board monitors that corrective actions recommended in the management letter are implemented.

## Monitoring by the State

The System Office is responsible for adopting criteria and standards for periodic assessment of the fiscal condition of local districts (Education Code Section 84040). As stated earlier, districts are required by law to submit quarterly reports, certified by the local board, to the System Office. The System Office uses these reports along with the annual financial and budget report, the annual district audit, and apportionment attendance reports to assess a districts fiscal health. The System Office has established standards for sound fiscal management and a process to monitor and evaluate the financial health of districts. This process involves the monitoring and periodic assessment of a districts financial condition to determine whether a district requires preventative management assistance or fiscal crisis intervention. The assessment of a district's financial condition includes the following:

### Primary Criteria:

- Review of current, historical and projected general fund balance.
- Assessment of the percentage of unrestricted general fund balance to all expenditures and other outgo of unrestricted general fund.
- Minimum prudent unrestricted general fund balance is 5 percent. If a district falls below this minimum prudent level, further review will be performed to determine if any fiscal problems exist.

### Secondary Criteria:

- Analysis of spending patterns; greater scrutiny will occur if there is a history of deficit spending.
- Review of full time equivalent students in relation to statewide patterns and the potential impact upon revenue.
- Staffing expenditure increases that are expected to exceed projected revenue increases.
- Other factors will be reviewed for pertinent information that could have an impact upon a district's financial condition.

Based upon the overall assessment and severity of problems identified, the System Office will take follow-up actions to investigate and validate whether or not a district requires periodic monitoring, management assistance and/or fiscal crisis intervention. In some cases, the System Office may request the completion of the "Sound Fiscal Management Self-Assessment Checklist" and a written action plan that satisfactorily addresses the identified fiscal concerns. In more serious situations the district will update the 311Q monthly, submit a management assistance plan developed with the aid of the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), and submit a detailed recovery plan for achieving fiscal stability. In extreme cases, the System Office may take over control of a district to get its finances in order.

In October 2005, the System Office published a “Sound Fiscal Management Self Assessment Checklist.” Districts are encouraged to regularly complete the assessment as it is intended to provide early detection indicators of potential fiscal concerns and provide districts with the opportunity to identify and address problems.

## Summary

Governing boards hold the property of the community college district in trust for the benefit of their communities. Part of their responsibility as trustee boards is to ensure that public funds are budgeted and used prudently, legally, and effectively. They do so by understanding and influencing the fiscal environment that surrounds the college; establishing clear policy criteria that guides budgeting and fiscal operations; approving budgets that support the achievement of the educational mission; and finally, monitoring the fiscal status of the district to ensure that it is healthy for both the short and long-term.

Boards monitor the fiscal health and stability of the district by ensuring adherence to policies, monitoring the status through review of financial statements and reports, overseeing an external audit, and following the criteria and standards established by the System Office and Accrediting Commission. The future of the colleges and their communities depends on the effectiveness of boards in performing their fiscal responsibilities.

## Resources

For more information on monitoring fiscal health and audits, see *Introduction to Fiscal Responsibilities: A Resource for Governing Boards* published by the League in 2007, and revised in 2018.

## Glossary of Financial Terms

Accounts Payable	Accounts due and owing to persons, business firms, governmental units or others for goods and services not yet paid.
Accounts Receivable	Amounts due and owing from persons, business firms, governmental units or others for goods and services provided, but not yet collected.
AGI	American Graduation Initiative
Allocation	Division or distribution of resources according to a predetermined plan.
Apportionment	Federal, state or local monies distributed to college districts or other governmental units according to certain formulas.
Assessed Value	The value of land, homes or businesses set by the county assessor for property tax purposes. Assessed value is either the appraised value of any newly built or purchased property or the value on March 1, 1975 of continuously owned property, plus an annual increase. This increase is tied to the California Consumer Price Index but may not exceed 2 percent.
Assessment Districts	A geographical area – much like a school, water or college district – created by residents to pay for special projects, such as capital improvement programs.
Asset Management	Managing assets, such as excess district property or facilities to reduce costs or generate revenue. Common examples are golf driving ranges and leased property for private development.
Audit	An examination of documents, records and accounts for the purpose of determining 1) that all present fairly the financial position of the district; 2) that they are in conformity with prescribed accounting procedures; and 3) that they are consistent with the preceding year.
Auxiliary Operations	Service activities indirectly related to teaching and learning. Food service and dormitories are considered auxiliary operations.
Backfill	Funds allocated by the Legislature to make up for revenues (e.g. student fees, property taxes) that were projected but not received.
Base Allocation	A component of SB 361. The allocation is based on the number of colleges and centers in the district. This grant recognizes the fixed costs incurred regardless of institution size.
Base Year	A year to which comparisons are made when projecting a current condition.
Block Grant	A fixed sum of money, not linked to enrollment measures, provided to a college district by the state.
Bonds	Investment securities (encumbrances) sold by a district through a financial firm for the purpose of raising funds for various capital expenditures.

Bonded Debt Limit	The maximum amount of bonded debt for which a community college may legally obligate itself. The total amount of bonds issued cannot exceed a stipulated percent of the assessed valuation of the district.
Budget Document	A written statement translating the educational plan or programs into costs, usually for one future fiscal year, and estimating income by sources to meet these costs.
Budget Act	The legislative vehicle for the State's appropriations. The Constitution requires that it be passed by a two-thirds vote of each house and sent to the Governor by June 15 each year. The governor may reduce or delete, but not increase, individual items.
Budget Change Proposals (BCPs)	Documents developed by the Chancellor and provided to the Governor to request changes and increases in the amount of money the state provides to community colleges.
Capital Projects	Capital Projects Funds are used for the acquisition or construction of capital outlay items, e.g. buildings, major equipment.
Categorical Funds	Also called restricted funds, these are monies that can only be spent for the designated purpose. Examples: funding to serve students with disabilities (DSPS) or the economically disadvantaged, low-income (EOPS), scheduled maintenance, instructional equipment, and matriculation.
Certificates of Participation (COPs)	Certificates of Participation are used to finance the lease/purchase of capital projects. Essentially, they are the issuance of shares in the lease for a specified term.
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	A measure of the cost of living compiled by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. These indices of inflation are calculated regularly for the United States, California, some regions within California, and selected cities. The CPI is one of several measures of economic stability or change.
Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA)	An increase in funding for revenue limits or categorical programs. Current law ties COLAs to indices of inflation, although different amounts are appropriated in some years.
Current Expense of Education	Usually regarded as expenses other than capital outlay, community services, transportation (buses) and selected categorical funds.
Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS)	Categorical funds designated to integrate disabled students into the general college program.
Education Code	The body of law which regulates education in California. Implementing regulations are contained in the California Administrative Code, Title 5, the Government Code, and general statutes.
Encumbered Funds	Obligations in the form of purchase orders, contracts, salaries, and other commitments for which part of an appropriation is reserved.
Ending Balance	A sum of money available in the district's account at year end after subtracting accounts payable from accounts receivable.
Enrollment Cap	A limit on the number of students (FTES) for which the state will provide funding.
Enrollment Fee	Charges to students on a per-unit basis, and established in the Education Code.
Equalization	Funds allocated by the legislature to raise districts with lower revenues toward the statewide average.

Estimated Income	Expected receipt or accruals of monies from revenue or non-revenue sources (abatements, loan receipts) during a given period.
Expenditures	Amounts disbursed for all purposes. Accounts kept on an accrual basis include all charges whether paid or not. Accounts kept on a cash basis include only actual cash disbursements.
Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS)	Categorical funds designated for supplemental services for disadvantaged students.
Fee	A charge to students for services related to their education.
Fifty-Percent Law	Requires that fifty percent of district expenditures in certain categories must be spent for classroom instruction.
Final Budget	The district budget that is approved by the board in September, after the state allocation is determined.
Fiscal Year	Twelve calendar months; in California, it is the period beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Some special projects use a fiscal year beginning October 1 and ending September 30, which is consistent with the federal government's fiscal year.
Foundation	A separate entity created by the districts as an auxiliary organization to receive, raise and manage funds from private sources.
Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES)	A measure used to indicate enrollment and workload. The State General Apportionment is based on FTES.
Fund	An independent fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balanced set of accounts for recording cash and other financial resources, together with all related liabilities and residual equities or balances, and changes therein.
Fund Balance	The difference between assets and liabilities.
Gann Limitation	A ceiling on each year's appropriations supported by tax dollars. The limit applies to all governmental entities, including school districts. The base year was 1978-79. The amount is adjusted each year, based on a price index and the growth of the student population.
Governor's Budget	The Governor proposes a budget for the state each January.
Inflation Factor	An increase in apportionment provided by the state to reflect the increased cost of operation due to inflation.
Lease Revenue Bonds	Bonds secured by a lease agreement and rental payments. Community colleges use lease revenue bonds to finance construction or purchase of facilities.
Lottery Funds	The minimum of 34 percent of lottery revenues distributed to public schools and colleges must be used for "education of pupils." Lottery income has added about 1-3 percent to community college funding.
Mandated Costs	College district expenditures that occur as a result of federal or state law, court decisions, administrative regulations, or initiative measures.
May Revise	The Governor revises his budget proposal in May in accordance with up-to-date projections in revenues and expenses.
Noncredit FTES	FTES earned in noncredit courses, generally Adult Education.
Nonresident Tuition	A student who is not a resident of California is required, under the uniform student residency requirements, to pay tuition. The fee shall not be less than the average statewide cost per student, and is set by the board.



Object Code	Classification category of an item or a service purchase. The general classification numbers are: 1000 Certificated salaries 2000 Classified salaries 3000 Employee benefits 4000 Books, supplies, materials 5000 Operation expenses 6000 Capital outlay 7000 Other outgo 8000 Revenues
Outsourcing	The practice of contracting with private companies for services such as financial aid programs or food services.
Partnership For Excellence	Funds that are specially allocated to the colleges to be used to improve student performance in five areas.
Per Capita Personal Income	The average income before taxes of all residents as estimated by the U.S. Department of Commerce.
PERS (or CalPERS)	Public Employees' Retirement System. State law requires school district classified employees, school districts and the State to contribute to the fund for full-time classified employees.
Program-Based Funding	The budget formula used by the System Office to determine state allocations to local districts. It does not specify where and how the funds must be spent.
Proposition 13	An initiative amendment passed in June 1978 adding Article XIII A to the California Constitution. Tax rates on secured property are restricted to no more than 1 percent of full cash value. Proposition 13 also defined assessed value and required a two-thirds vote to change existing or levy new taxes.
Proposition 98	An initiative passed in November 1988, guaranteeing a portion of the state's budget for K-12 and the community colleges. The split was proposed to be 89 percent (K-12) and 11 (CCC), although the split has not been maintained.
Reserves	Funds set aside in a college district budget to provide for future expenditures or to offset future losses, for working capital, or for other purposes. There are different categories of reserves, including contingency, general, restricted and reserves for long-term liabilities.
Restricted Funds	Money that must be spent for a specific purpose either by law or by local board action.
Revenue	Income from all sources.
Revenue Limit	The specific amount of student enrollment fees, state and local taxes a college district may receive per student for its general education budget. Annual increases are determined by Proposition 98 formula or the Legislature.
Revolving Fund	A revolving cash account to use in securing or purchasing services or materials.
SB 361	Legislation authored by State Senator Jack Scott which repealed program based funding and established a new funding allocation model effective October 1, 2006.
75/25 Ratio	The goal established by AB1725 for the ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty.
Scheduled Maintenance	Major repairs of buildings and equipment. Some matching state funds are available to districts to establish a scheduled maintenance program.

Shortfall	An insufficient allocation of money, requiring an additional appropriation, and expenditures reduction, or deficits.
State Apportionment	An allocation of state money to a district, determined by multiplying the district's total FTES times its base revenue per FTES.
STRS (or CalSTRS)	State Teachers' Retirement System. State law requires that school district employees, school districts and the State contribute to the fund for full-time certificated employees.
Student Financial Aid Funds	Funds designated for grants and loans to students. Includes federal Pell grants, College Work-Study, and the state funds EOPS grants and fee waiver programs.
Subventions	Provision of assistance or financial support, usually from higher governmental units to local governments or college districts, for example to compensate for loss of funds due to tax exemptions.
Sunset	The termination of the regulations for a categorical program or regulation.
Tentative Budget	The budget approved by the board in June, prior to when state allocations have been finalized.
Tidelands Oil Revenues	Money from oil sales on state-owned lands. When available, some of the revenues are appropriated for community college capital outlay needs.
Title 5	The Section of the Administrative Code that governs community colleges. The Board of Governors may change or add to Title 5.
TOP Code	Taxonomy of Programs. Numbers assigned to programs to use in budgeting and reporting.
TRANS	Districts finance short-term cash flow needs by issuing Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes (TRANS) through bond underwriters. The notes are paid off with operating revenue.
Unencumbered Balance	That portion of an appropriation or allotment not yet expended or obligated.
Unfunded FTES	FTES that are generated in excess of the enrollment/FTES cap.
Unrestricted Funds	Generally those monies of the General Fund that are not designated by law or a donor agency for a specific purpose. They are legally regarded as unrestricted since their use is at the Board's discretion.
Warrants	A written order drawn to pay a specified amount to a designated payee.
WSCH	Weekly Student Contact Hours is part of the formula used to determine faculty workload.



## Resources and Readings

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### Web Site

The League's Web site is located at [www.ccleague.org](http://www.ccleague.org). The site includes updated information on legislation and other educational policy issues, the directory for the California community colleges, announcements of conferences and seminars, and information about League services.

### League Periodicals and Publications

The Community College League publishes the following, which are mailed to trustees, CEOs and other campus leaders, posted on the web site or are available from the League:

*LeagueMatters* – Updates member colleges on the activities of the League and its organizations.

*Board Focus* – Addresses specific issues of interest to trustees.

*Budget Advocacy Packet* – Contains information useful in state budget advocacy efforts.

*Monthly Government Relations Newsletter* - Covers the most current state, federal and budget issues.

*Education and Policy Papers* – The League regularly publishes reports and discussion papers. Recent publications include: *The Curriculum Approval Process*, *Bilateral Governance in California Community Colleges*, *Perspectives on Student Trustees*, and *Accountability in the California Community Colleges*.

### Other Publications

National publications pertinent to trustees are:

*Trustee Quarterly and Advisor* – Association of Community College Trustees, Washington, DC.

*Community College Journal* – American Association of Community Colleges, Washington, DC.

*Trusteeship* – Association of Governing Boards, Washington, DC.

*Board Leadership* – Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco. (Discussion and application of Policy Governance principles)

### Books and Articles

The following publications are excellent resources on trusteeship and issues important to trustees. They form the body of literature that contributed to the Trustee Handbook.

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## National Organizations

### **American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)**

One Dupont Circle, NW, Ste. 410, Washington, DC 20036  
 Voice: (202) 728-0200 / Fax: (202) 833-2467  
 Web site: [www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)

### **Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)**

1101 17th Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036  
 Voice: (202) 775-4667 or Toll Free: (866) 895-ACCT (2228)  
 Fax: (202) 223-1297 or Toll Free (866) 904-ACCT (2228)  
 Web site: [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)

### **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB)**

1133 20th Street N.W., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036  
 Voice: (202) 296-8400 / Fax: (202) 223-7053  
 Web site: [www.agb.org](http://www.agb.org)



## Acronyms and Terms

The following contains many acronyms and terms used in community colleges. Financial terms are listed in Chapter 32.

3C4A	Community Colleges Counselors/ Academic Advisors Association for Athletics
4CS	California Community College Classified Senate, represents and classified staff members related to policy issues not in the purview of unions.
4C/SD	California Community College Council for Staff and Organizational Development
75/25	Refers to the Education Code language that sets 75% of student contact hours as a goal for classes to be taught by full time faculty.
Academic Employees	Those persons who are employed in positions for which Minimum Qualifications have been established by the Board of Governors. The terms generally includes faculty (including librarians, counselors and other student service professionals) and academic administrators.
Affirmative Action	The practice of actively promoting the recruitment of students and hiring of staff in order that the student population and college staff reflect the diversity of population in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and disabilities. Prop 209 and subsequent court cases prohibited affirmative action in public institutions; colleges now abide by equal employment opportunity.
AACC	American Association of Community Colleges
AAWCC	American Association of Women in Community Colleges
AB	Assembly Bill
AB 1725	Comprehensive California community college reform legislation, passed in 1988 that covers community college mission, governance, finance, employment, accountability, staff diversity and staff development.
ACA	Assembly Constitutional Amendment
ACBO	Association of Chief Business Officials
ACCCA	Association of California Community College Administrators
ACCE	Association of Community and Continuing Education
ACCJC	Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
ACCT	Association of Community College Trustees
ACCTLA	Association of California College Tutoring and Learning Assistance
ACHRO	Association of Chief Human Resources Officers
APAHE	Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education



ASCCC	Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges. The statewide organization represents, by law, the faculty on matters of educational policy. Local academic senates also have legal rights and responsibilities related to local district decision-making.
Accountability	A system that measures outcomes against stated goals. Colleges are required to establish accountability systems and provide information related to student outcomes and program and institutional effectiveness.
ACR	Assembly Concurrent Resolution
Accreditation	Process of peer review that assures institutional quality. Colleges must be accredited to receive federal funds and ensure course transferability. California colleges are accredited by WASC/ACCJC, one of six regional accrediting commissions in the nation.
ACT	American College Testing Company; develops tests for use in assessing student skills.
ADA	Average Daily Attendance, a past funding measure, replaced by FTES (full-time equivalent student).
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act. A federal act that mandates full accessibility for students and employees with disabilities.
Articulation	The process of reaching agreement on the transferability and applicability of courses from the community college to baccalaureate institutions.
Assessed Valuation	Value placed upon personal and real property by a governmental agency for taxation purposes.
ASB, AS, SBG	Associated Student Body; the official organization of students at a college.
ASSIST	Articulation System to Stimulate Inter-institutional Student Transfer, a computer-based information system of courses that are articulated with CSU and UC.
Basic Skills	Courses in reading, writing and computation that prepare students for college level work. There are special funds that partially support these programs. May also be called development or remedial skills.
BCP	Budget Change Proposal. The CCC Board of Governors develops proposals for specific programs to increase the state budget for the colleges during spring and summer. They are sent to Department of Finance and Governor's office in fall for the January budget.
Bilateral Governance	The specific and different responsibilities of the state Board of Governors and local district boards of trustees.
BGCCC or BOG	Board of Governors. Appointed by the Governor, the board oversees the System Office and establishes policy for the California Community Colleges.
Brown Act	The law that specifies official operating procedures for meetings of public boards, commissions, councils and agencies, requiring that board business be conducted openly and in public.
CACCRAO	California Association of Community College Registrars and Admissions Officers
CAHSEE	California High School Equivalency Exit Exam required for high school graduation.
CalWORKS	California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids; replaced previous welfare programs in response to federal welfare reform.

California Educational Roundtable	Made up of the leaders of the four segments of public education UC, CSU, CCC and K-12, it establishes policy and coordinates intersegmental issues.
CAN	California Articulation Number; higher education course numbering system that assigns a common number to courses that are similar.
Cap	An enrollment limit beyond which districts do not receive funds for additional students.
Categorical Funds	Revenues provided in the budget by the state for specific uses over and above general funding; e.g., EOPS, DSPS, Deferred Maintenance.
CB	Collective Bargaining; negotiations between management and union personnel on salary and working conditions. Established by the Rodda Act.
CBO	Chief Business Officer
CCC/CFT/AFT	Community College Council/California Federation of Teachers/American Federation of Teachers
CCCI	California Community College Independents, a coalition of independent faculty unions, not affiliated with state or national unions.
CCCT	California Community College Trustees organization, representing local districts.
CCCCO	System Office of the California Community Colleges
CCD	Community College District
CCIA	Community College Internal Auditors
CCLC	Community College League of California, also known as "The League"
CCLDI	Community College Leadership Development Initiatives
CCN	Common Course Numbering. Mandated by legislation, an attempt to develop similar numbers within districts and between community colleges.
CCPRO	Community College Public Relations Organization
Census Week	The week during the semester used to count enrollment; funding is based on these counts.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer, a term used to reflect a chancellor, superintendent/president of a district or president of a college in a multi-college district. The CEOCCC organization involves all CEOs.
CEOCCC	Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges
Certificated	Prior to AB1725, certificated personnel referred to those staff members (faculty, administrators, supervisors, nurses, librarians, etc.) who, by law, had to have a credential to perform their duty. Credentials have been superseded by minimum qualifications and the term is no longer applicable. Generally, it has been replaced by the term "academic employees."
Certificates of completion and achievement	Granted by colleges to students for specific vocational and workforce training programs. Do not require general education or elective units.
CFT	California Federation of Teachers, a faculty union affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers.

CO, CCCCCO, or System Office	The statewide system office that is responsible for implementing legislation and providing statewide leadership for the system.
CHRO	Chief Human Resources Officer
CIO	Chief Instructional Officer or Chief Information Officer
CIOCCC	Chief Instructional Officers of the California Community Colleges
CISOA	Chief Information Systems Officers Association
Classified Staff	Employees of a district not in academic positions (secretarial staff, computer technicians, instructional aides, accountants, maintenance personnel, etc.)
COLA	Cost of Living Adjustment
COFHE	Capital Outlay Fund for Higher Education
COFO	Council of Faculty Organizations; representatives of ASCCC, CTA, CFT, CCCI, and FACCC.
Community Service	One of the missions of the community colleges; the Ed Code authorizes colleges to offer non-credit courses and events of interest to the community.
Conference Committee	A legislative committee that settles differences between Assembly and Senate versions of bills.
Consultation	The System Officer confers with the field on major issues prior to presenting them to the Board of Governors. The Consultation Council consists of representatives from the CEOs, CIOs, CSSOs, CBOs, CalSACC, Academic Senate, faculty unions, and CCLC.
Contract Education or Training	Courses or programs that provide customized training for businesses and government agencies.
Course Classification	All courses offered by a college are classified by area (e.g., letters and science, vocational, community services, etc.), by credit given, and by transferability, and by submitted to the state System Office.
CPEC	California Postsecondary Education Commission. Established by the Legislature to advise it on higher education policy matters, conducts research and policy analysis, and reviews and approves new facilities.
CSAC	California Student Aid Commission; regulates student financial aid in California
CSEA	California School Employees Association
CSSO	Chief Student Services Officer
CSU	California State University. One of the three segments of public higher education. 23 campuses.
CTA	California Teachers Association, a faculty union affiliated with the National Education Association.
Curricula, curriculum	The educational programs of the college organized by disciplines and levels.
Developmental Education	Courses and programs that are below college-level, designed to prepare students for college-level work. Also called basic skills and remedial education.
Disciplines	Curricular subject matter areas adopted by Board of Governors (relying on work of Academic Senate), used in establishing Minimum Qualifications (MQ's) and Field Service Areas (FSA's) for faculty.
Distance Learning	Classes and other educational services offered via television, the Internet, or other technological means of teaching at a distance.

Donahoe Higher Education Act	Established the Master Plan for Higher Education and delineated the roles of the CCC, CSU, and UC.
DOF	State Department of Finance. A state agency that works closely with the Governor's Office in shaping budgetary priorities and thus, indirectly, state policy.
DSPS	Disabled Students Programs and Services. A specially funded program that supports the additional costs related to supporting disabled students in community colleges.
EDD	Employment Development Department, a state agency charged with (among other things) workforce preparation and development
ED>Net	Economic Development Network, a statewide consortium that initiates and coordinates economic development programs.
Education Code or Ed Code	The body of law concerned with education.
EERA	Educational Employment Relations Act, which regulates collective bargaining for K-12 and community college districts.
Emeritus	An honor that may be awarded to retiring faculty and administrators to connote distinguished service.
Enrollment management	The term used to describe processes related to setting priorities for student enrollment.
EOPS	Extended Opportunity Program and Services, a categorically funded program for programs to support disadvantaged students in the colleges.
Equalization	A state budget category intended provides additional funds to lowest funded districts.
ESL	English as a Second Language.
FACCC	Faculty Association of the California Community colleges; a membership association that lobbies on behalf of and provides services to faculty.
Faculty and Staff Development Fund	A State categorical fund that supported professional development for faculty, administrators, and staff. It has not been funded in recent years.
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid; the uniform application for federal, state and campus-based financial aid.
FAO	Financial Aid Office (or Officer)
FAQ's	Frequently Asked Questions, a document that responds to questions frequently asked about an issue.
Federal Funds	Funding for programs that comes from the federal government, usually categorical. The two largest areas are vocational education and financial aid.
Field	A term used by the System Office referring to local community trustees, students, faculty, and administrators—those functioning within the system who are outside of the state office.
Field Act	Laws related to earthquake standards for school and community college facilities.
Fifty-Percent Law	Requires at least 50 percent of each district's current expense of education to be spent on direct instruction (classroom teaching, teaching aides, supplies, etc.). Excludes student services, libraries, administration, etc.
FII	Fund for Instructional Improvement. Sponsored by the System Office , it provides competitively awarded grants and loans to colleges.

FIPSE	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. A national program which supports, through grants, innovative programs in education.
FISL	Federally Insured Student Loan
Fiscal Data Abstracts	Annual System Office Publication of Budget and Enrollment statistics for each district. Arranged by Object and Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) Codes.
Flexible Calendar (Flex)	Colleges may designate up to 10 instructional days for professional development. "Flex" activities are faculty activities to meet the commitment.
FNAR	Financial Need Analysis Report. A report generated for students who applied for financial aid that determines their level of financial need.
FSA	Faculty Service Area; replaced credentials for layoff and reassignment purposes. Determined at the college level through collective bargaining.
FTES	Full Time Equivalent Student, replaced ADA as workload measure for Instruction and Instructional Services. A "full-time student" is defined as one who is enrolled in 12 units. The workload measure is determined by dividing 12 into the total number of units in which students are enrolled.
FTEF	Full Time Equivalent Faculty, the total number of full and part time faculty counted in terms of full teaching loads, not headcount.
FT or FTF	Full Time Faculty, includes regular (those who have tenure) and contract faculty (those hired on a year to year basis, prior to achieving tenure) who are hired as full-time employees.
GASB	Governmental Accounting Standards Board, which sets standards for Financial management, accounting and reporting for public agencies.
GE	General Education. A required pattern of courses covering a breadth of subjects thought to be useful for all college students regardless of major. A common transfer curriculum has been approved by all three segments of higher education.
GED	General Educational Development (High school equivalency test)
Golden Handcuffs	Contract provisions for individuals that provide incentives to remain in the position a certain period of time.
Golden Handshake	Programs that provide incentives for employees to retire.
Grandfathering	Assures those already in a program will not be affected by changes in regulation, law or policy.
Great Teachers	Refers to a particular professional development seminar format applicable to faculty, staff, administrators and college-wide groups.
GSL	Guaranteed Student Loan
HBCUs	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Headcount	Number of students enrolled. Weighted headcount gives a higher or lower value to different types of students, e.g., new, continuing, probationary.
Hold Harmless	Any mechanism that assures that no district will receive fewer funds under a new funding system than under a prior one.
IBB	Interest Based Bargaining. A "win-win" or principled approach to collective bargaining designed to reduce unproductive conflict.

ICAS	Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates; includes academic senate representatives from CCCs, UCs, and CSUs, and addresses academic issues that affect all systems.
I-ECC	Industry-Education Council of California
IGETC	Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum. A set of courses meeting lower division general education requirements in CSU, UC and the community colleges.
IJE	Interjurisdictional Exchange. Designates a type of contract that allows the System Office to temporarily hire an employee from a local community college district to work in the System Office
IMPAC	Intersegmental Major Program Articulated Curriculum; a joint effort of the UC/CSU/CCC academic senates related to lower division coursework in college majors.
Instructional Services	Services that support the teaching-learning processes such as libraries, media centers, etc.
IT	Information Technology; includes educational applications of technology.
ITV	Instructional Television
JPA	Joint Powers Authority, a consortium of institutions for insurance or other fiscal purposes.
LAN	Local Area Network, a network that connects computers in a local area, such as a college or district.
LAO	Legislative Analysts Office, provides non-partisan analysis of state policy.
Learning Paradigm or Learning College	A concept or approach that emphasizes an institutional focus on student learning and learning outcomes.
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
MALDEF	Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, addresses educational policy and legal issues related to Mexican-American students.
Master Plan for Higher Education	Legislation that established priorities within higher education and defined the missions for the community colleges, CSU and UC Systems.
MESA	Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement; a program designed to encourage participation in those areas by underrepresented students.
MIS	Management Information System; refers to computer-based systems that manage student, fiscal and other information.
MQs	Minimum Qualifications, statewide standards adopted by the Board of Governors (relying on the Academic Senate) that faculty must have in order to be hired. They are discipline based.
NSF	National Science Foundation
OAL	Office of Administrative Law. A state agency that reviews state regulations prior to adoption.
Object Codes	Used by System Office to code types of expenditures, such as salary, supplies, and capital outlay. Often confused with TOP codes, since numbering systems for both overlap. See also TOP codes, Fiscal Data Abstracts.
OCR	Office of Civil Rights; a federal agency that can conduct reviews of colleges.

Occ Ed	Occupational Education, refers to business, technical and allied health programs in the colleges. Also is called Vocational Education or Voc Ed.
OE	Office of Education, a federal agency that provides input to the President through the Secretary of Education, and that regulates federal education programs, such as financial aid.
One-Stop Centers	Centers for students that provide comprehensive services related to job training and employment; may involve partnerships with EDD and other workforce related agencies in addition to the community college.
OSE	Office of the Secretary of Education, a cabinet-level appointment of the Governor, charged with providing policy input on K-University issues.
Overload	Refers to classes taught by faculty that are over the standard full-time faculty workload.
Pell Grant	A federal program that provides funds for student expenses related to education (including living expenses, fees, and supplies).
PERB	Public Employment Relations Board; “court of appeal” for collective bargaining conflicts.
Performance Based Funding	State level funding that is contingent upon achieving specified performance measures.
PERS	Public Employees Retirement System, one of two major statewide retirement programs. Academic employees generally belong to the State Teachers Retirement System—all others belong to PERS.
Phi Theta Kappa	The honors society for community college students.
PIO	Public Information Officer
Positive Attendance	Alternative to census week counts, counts actual number of persons present in class each day.
Proposition 98	Constitutional provisions that set minimum funding levels for K-12 and CCs.
Puente Project	A state funded, voluntary, program for colleges that provides mentoring, counseling, and courses for ESL students.
Q & A	Questions and Answer document; usually refers to a document that lists and answers questions on a specific topic.
RFP	Request for Proposal. Announcement of availability grant funds; outlines process for application. RFPs are also used by districts to select vendors for equipment, services, etc. The term “RFA” or request for applications, may also be used.
Rodda Act	The act that established collective bargaining for K-12 and community colleges (also called EERA).
Rolling Contracts	Multiyear contracts that are renewed prior to expiration.
RP Group	Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges
RWPEDA	Regional Workforce Preparation and Economic Development Act
SAT	Scholarship Aptitude Test, used for admission into universities.
SB	Senate Bill
SCA	Senate Constitutional Amendment
SCANS	Secretary of Labor’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, outlines workforce skills all students should gain.
SCR	Senate Concurrent Resolution

Service Learning	A policy and programs that advocate community service as an integrated component of a student's education.
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
Shared Governance	The practice of involving faculty, staff and students in policy discussions at the local and state levels. The concept is more accurately called "participation in local decision making."
SLO	Student Learning Outcomes. Generally refers to accreditation's emphasis in discussion, establishing and assessing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels.
Small College Factor	A factor in funding that recognizes the disproportionately higher costs of operation for small colleges.
STRS	State Teachers Retirement System, involving K-12 and community college faculty.
Student Senate	The statewide representative student organization recognized by the Board of Governors.
STW	School to Work, a federal program to increase job readiness.
SSCCC	Student Senate of the California Community Colleges
Sunset	A fixed date by which a program, unless reauthorized, will terminate.
TANF	Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the welfare program that replaced Aid for Families with Dependent Children.
TBA	To Be Announced
Tenure	Protection provided to faculty to allow academic freedom.
Tidal Wave II	Refers to the large number of students graduating from high school and entering college in the late 1990's and early 2000's.
Title 5	The volume of regulations promulgated by the Board of Governors to carry out legislation. They are contained in the California Administrative Code.
TMI	Technology Mediated Instruction
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOP Codes	Taxonomy of Programs, used by System Office to code teaching disciplines and other program areas, particularly in financial records. See also Object Codes and Fiscal Data Abstracts.
TQM or CQI	Total Quality Management. An approach to organizational functioning which stresses ongoing assessment and improvement of the effectiveness of services and programs involving the service providers in the decision making process. Also called Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).
Trailer Legislation or Trailer Bill	Legislation that follows other adopted legislation to clean up or correct technical issues.
Transfer	One of the missions of the community colleges; transfer programs assist students move from the community college to baccalaureate institutions, transfer students are those who intend to transfer.
TRANS	Tax Revenue Anticipation Notes. A cash management tool used by districts to borrow money in anticipation of receiving state and local tax revenues.
TRDP	Teacher and Reading Development Partnership, a program to encourage community college students to pursue a career in teaching through development of an partnership with local K-12 districts and CSU campuses.



UC	University of California (9 general campuses and a medical campus).
VATEA	Vocational and Applied Technical Education Act, a federal program to support vocational training programs.
WIA	Workforce Investment Act. A federal program to support workforce training.
Workforce Development	One of the missions of the community colleges; programs designed to prepare students for jobs when they leave the college.
Work Study	College Work Study, a financial aid program that provides money for students in return for working at the college.
WSCH	Weekly Student Contact Hours, a measure of the hours students are in classes, including lecture, laboratory and other modes of instruction.