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ABSTRACT

Criteria for self-study for governing boards of public multicampus higher education systems are presented. For each criterion, questions are presented, along with three response options: "yes," "no," and "do not know or can not judge." A response option for judging the board's overall performance on each criterion is also included. The criteria are as follows: system and institutional missions, board membership, board organization, basic educational policy, selection and assessment of executive officers, board relations with executive officers, board/faculty relations, board/student relations, financial resources and management, physical plant, court of final appeal, and accountability/autonomy. A checklist designed to help board members assess the extent to which they have absorbed their roles and institutions is also presented, which covers the trustee's background and traits, knowledge of the institution, board and committee meetings, and fund-raising and public relations. Finally, the following considerations are addressed by open-ended questions: issues that have most occupied the board's time and attention during the past year; one or two successes of the board; and shortcomings of the board's organization or performance.

(SW)

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ED238365



# self-study criteria

**for governing boards  
of public multicampus  
higher education systems**

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**Suggestion to Users:** If there are items which you cannot respond to for any reason, please leave them blank and elaborate any difficulty briefly in the "comment" section for each criterion.

*Self-Study Criteria for Governing Boards of Public Multicampus Higher Education Systems* was developed with the assistance of a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc., and with the co-sponsorship of the Education Commission of the States and the State Higher Education Executive Officers.

## Criterion 1

### System and Institutional Missions

No university or college can be all things to all people. Each should have a clearly defined mission—a statement of purpose—if it is to be given rational direction. The board that governs a system of institutions must be cognizant of the educational needs of the people of the state, and the special abilities of each institution within the system to fulfill its part of those needs. It must also be keenly aware of the resources available to adequately fund each perceived educational need.

The board should carefully plan educational programs on a systemwide basis to avoid unnecessary duplication of programs of high unit costs and programs of high necessity but low enrollment potential. The board should make certain that the specific and unique goals of each institution are clearly enunciated to each academic community so that these goals can serve as guides to the faculty, to prospective students, and to the general public.

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Is there a statement of mission and related goals which is applicable to the system as a whole?	_____	_____	_____
a. If not, do you feel that such a statement should be prepared at this time?	_____	_____	_____
b. If so, is that statement timely and adequate?	_____	_____	_____
2. Does each institution within the system have a single statement of institutional mission?	_____	_____	_____
a. Are you personally familiar (in general terms) with each of them?	_____	_____	_____
b. Have these statements been developed in relation to each other and to the system statement of mission?	_____	_____	_____
c. Were these statements developed by, or in consultation with, the institutions?	_____	_____	_____
d. Are these statements sufficiently clear and specific so that they can serve as guides to academic planning, decision making, and budgeting?	_____	_____	_____
e. Are they used to help assess institutional performance?	_____	_____	_____
f. Are these statements of mission periodically reviewed and discussed with the system's executive officer and campus executives?	_____	_____	_____
3. Were members of the board personally involved in the development of statements of mission for:	_____	_____	_____
a. The system as a whole?	_____	_____	_____
b. Each institution within the system?	_____	_____	_____
4. Have the statements of mission been related to the statewide plans, and the plans of other sectors (such as private higher education)?	_____	_____	_____

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ \* Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 2****Board Membership**

The concept of a "balanced board" with sufficiently diverse personal backgrounds, points of view, interests, and skills has been given increased attention; particularly as it applies to lay governing boards of public institutions. These boards need responsible and dedicated persons with an array of specialized knowledge and skills if they are to govern effectively. The opportunity for the governing board of a state system to select its own members may be limited, but a board should be aware of its membership needs and make these known through whatever means are appropriate.

Yes    No    Don't Know/  
Can't Judge

1. Do you feel that the board contains a sufficient range of personal attributes, expertise, and external relationships to make an effective board?

2. Is there an effective means of communicating membership needs to the governor's office, legislature, or other appointing or confirming authority?

3. Do you feel that the members of the board have sufficient knowledge of the system and its institutions—their history and their role in higher education in the state—to judge the value of new ideas and practices with reasonable confidence in their decisions?

4. Do you feel that the board members understand their responsibilities to the whole system—not just to certain parts of it, or to certain of its constituencies?

5. Does the board have an established procedure for orienting new members to their duties and responsibilities?

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

### Criterion 3

#### Board Organization

The effectiveness of a board depends greatly on the structure of its organization and the conduct of its meetings. The board's own rules, formulated over time and frequently out of habit or tradition, determine these matters. A productive board is usually one that has periodically taken the time to assign priorities to its duties, critically review its organizational structures and rules of procedure, and update as needed sections of its bylaws, policy manual or operations manual.

The board should also review the procedures for formulating agendas and conducting meetings to see that necessary business is dispatched promptly, that implications of key policy decisions are carefully considered, and that time is not wasted on trivia or administrative detail.

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Within the past three or four years, has the board empowered a committee or enlisted counsel to review its procedures, committee practices, policies and bylaws, and to recommend improvements?			
2. Is the board's agenda and supporting information sent to you in the right amount and far enough in advance to allow proper preparation for meetings?			
3. Do you feel that the board's present committee structure:			
a. Makes for efficient handling of the board's work?			
b. Gives the <i>whole board</i> the opportunity to consider fully all matters of key importance to the institution?			
4. Do you feel that the organization of the board and the conduct of its meetings are such that the interests of every campus are adequately considered?			
a. Do the particular interests of the "flagship campus," or any other single campus or group of campuses, tend to dominate the whole system?			
b. Does the board routinely make itself available to institutional executives at its meetings?			
5. Does the board ensure that it has access to reports or the viewpoints of:			
a. Faculty leaders/union representatives?			
b. Student leaders?			
c. "Classified" employees?			
d. The general public?			
6. Does the board provide for reasonable rotation of its leadership?			

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 4**

**Basic Educational Policy**

The board should assume responsibility for making certain that each institution's declared mission is being fulfilled. With the aid and professional expertise of the faculty and administration, the board should ensure that necessary educational policies are formulated to guide the institutions toward stated goals. In addition, it should assess periodically the manner in which these policies are being implemented.

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Does the board keep itself generally informed (through staff reports or other means) of the trends and changes in society's educational needs — and the needs of today's students?			
2. Do you feel that all the institutions your board governs are living up to their stated missions through the education programs they are now offering?			
3. Does the board regularly receive reports from the chief executive officer on the progress of educational policy implementation?			
a. Are these reports useful in assessing the quality of educational programs and their appropriateness to the institutions?			
b. Are academic personnel policies reviewed adequately (tenure, promotion, sabbaticals, retirement, etc.)?			
4. Does the board take an active role, in close collaboration with administration and faculty, in long-range academic program and personnel planning?			
5. Does the board receive copies or summaries of the reports of reaccreditation visiting teams?			

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 5**

**Selection and Assessment of Executive Officers**

The selection of a system executive officer and the campus executive officers are major responsibilities of the governing board. Each selection should be preceded with a clear definition of the qualifications sought and expected accomplishments. Selection committees should solicit the viewpoints of all segments of the academic community. Unless this is done, the welfare of the community and that of the new executive may suffer.

It is also important that the board and each executive officer formally agree upon performance goals that will provide guidelines for his/her conduct of the office. If termination becomes necessary, it should be done in a manner which will not harm the reputation of the individual or the institution.

Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
-----	----	----------------------------

1. Has the board adopted written procedure or guidelines for the process of selecting its principal executive officers?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

2. Does the search committee (or its mandated procedures) provide for meaningful participation by members or groups of constituents such as administration, faculty, students, or alumni?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

3. When the present incumbents were selected, were there:

a. Statements of specific duties and responsibilities?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

b. Written sets of performance expectations?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

c. Specific lists of perquisites (home, car, retirement plan, etc.)?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

4. Has a procedure and schedule been established for formal presidential assessment?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

a. Is it known and understood by all concerned?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

b. Have the executives had a voice in the formulation of this procedure?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

## Criterion 6

### Board Relations with Executive Officers

The quality of the "working relationship" between the board and its principal campus or institutional officers is of critical importance to the effectiveness of the entire system. While the board must take responsibility for basic policies and their consequences, it must also give the system and campus executives the authority they need to act decisively. This is particularly necessary in crisis situations and in extended negotiations, but it is also true of day-to-day decision making. The board must not hamper these executives by becoming excessively involved in operational matters.

Yes    No    Don't Know/  
Can't Judge

1. Do you feel that there is an overall climate of mutual trust and support in the board's relationships with its system executive?

a. With the system office's key staff person?

b. With its campus executive officers?

2. Are the role and authority of each principal executive clearly set forth in written form (in bylaws, operating manual, or other documents)?

3. Is the board satisfied that it has reasonable access to the advice and concerns of institutional executives and the system executive?

4. Has the board clearly stipulated each executive officer's authority to act decisively and negotiate firm settlements in crisis situations?

5. Do you feel that the board becomes excessively involved in operational matters?

6. [If appropriate] During collective bargaining negotiations, has the board supported its administrators, offered advice when requested, and expressed confidence when deserved and needed?

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ ? Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 7**

**Board Relations with Faculty**

In the area of academic affairs a very important part of a board's success in governing wisely is the nature of its relationship with the faculty. Most lay board members lack the professional expertise to legislate in the area of academic affairs, yet they share the burden of responsibility for the quality of the institution and for the manner in which the institution fulfills its academic goals. The board should rely upon professionals for advice in formulating governing policy, and delegate to them authority to carry out operational policies and procedures.

The avenue for this relationship should be through the system and campus executives because these persons work with the faculty on a day-to-day basis. The line between governing policy and operating policy should be established with reasonable clarity. The institution needs to be given academic direction, yet the faculty should have necessary freedom in the performance of its professional work.

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Does the board have a satisfactory organizational channel for continuing two-way communication with the faculty for information, opinions or advice?	_____	_____	_____
2. Have the respective roles of the board, the administration, and the faculty been effectively delineated in the formulation of academic policy?	_____	_____	_____
3. Do you feel that the board exercises authority over:			
a. _____ More aspects of educational affairs than it needs to?	_____	_____	_____
b. _____ Fewer aspects of educational affairs than it needs to?	_____	_____	_____
c. _____ Neither; its participation in educational affairs is appropriate.	_____	_____	_____
4. Has the faculty and/or administration formulated, and the board approved, up-to-date policies relating to:			
a. Faculty promotion and tenure?	_____	_____	_____
b. Selection of new faculty?	_____	_____	_____
c. Faculty retrenchment whenever or wherever it may be necessary?	_____	_____	_____
d. Standards of performance?	_____	_____	_____
e. Acceptance of "outside" work or consultancies?	_____	_____	_____
f. Faculty sabbaticals or professional leave?	_____	_____	_____
g. Faculty grievance?	_____	_____	_____
h. Information that should be part of a faculty member's permanent record and the conditions of its disclosure?	_____	_____	_____
i. Conflict of interest?	_____	_____	_____

Summary: In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

## Criterion 8

### Board Relations With Students

The board has a clear obligation to protect the welfare of students and their right to a campus environment that is conducive to scholarship, intellectual development and personal development. The students' health and comfort are essential to learning. The students' freedom to learn independently is a basic tenet of academic freedom, and like other freedoms it must be exercised under the obligation to protect the welfare of the community as a whole. The board must be sure that it has clear lines of communication through appropriate channels to and from students.

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Do you feel that the board has a satisfactory organizational channel for continuing two-way communication with students?			
2. Is there an effective mechanism for reviewing periodically student satisfaction with the institution regarding:			
a. The academic program?			
b. Faculty performance?			
c. Student services?			
d. Extra-curricular programs?			
3. Has the board approved policies that make adequate provision for the students' non-curricular (cultural, educational, recreational) activities?			
4. Do the institutions and the system have governing policies for student appeal of perceived injustices (academic or other)?			
5. Are there adequate policies and procedures for the smooth operation of the student financial assistance programs?			

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 9**

**Financial Resources and Management**

Requesting public funds from state financial departments, the governor, and the legislature, is a most important function and, perhaps, the most difficult for the governing board. Louis H. Heilbron, veteran trustee in public higher education, has said: "The condition of success is credibility. The trustees must have a record of fiscal responsibility in operations. They also should have a reputation for making supportable budgetary requests, for asking for what is needed, taking into consideration a realistic approach to the state finances. . . . This posture — affirmative to obtain appropriations to meet demonstrated needs, yet restrained to show credibility — is difficult to establish and maintain." (Louis H. Heilbron, *The College and University Trustee*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1973)

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Do you feel that the board's review of budget requests is carried out with sufficient care, so that the resulting submission to the state is truly the board's own considered decision?			
a. Is the board then willing and able to defend it before appropriate state officials or agencies?			
b. Has the board demonstrated its ability to be effective with state agencies in this regard?			
2. Do you feel that the board has established credibility in its funding requests by reasonably equating the necessity for programs with the availability of funds to support them?			
3. Are the fiscal plans and budgets related to institutional and system master plan goals?			
4. Is the board provided with meaningful and useful "yardstick information" to judge expenditures, such as trend comparisons, data on economic inflation factors, and comparisons with institutional costs in other states?			
5. Has the board adopted guidelines that will regularly assure all concerned that the funds made available are managed wisely and spent prudently?			
6. Does the board have an objective and clearly understood method to guide allocation of funds fairly and equitably among the institutions?			
7. Are the campuses or institutions in your system encouraged to raise monies from private sources for specified purposes?			
8. Are guidelines or policies for such fund raising adequate, particularly with regard to the role of the institutional foundation (if any)?			

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

### Criterion 10

#### Physical Plant

It is the board's responsibility to create and maintain a physical environment that is conducive to scholarship and learning and consistent with reasonable expectations of future funds. Decisions that involve campus master plans and the capital outlay budget requests are the major concerns. Prudence demands that maximum use be made of existing physical plants before construction or remodeling is considered. Efficiency of the board's time and effort require that it be concerned only with those matters that cannot be properly delegated to the administrative staff.

Yes    No    Don't Know/  
Can't Judge

1. Has the board approved master plans for the campuses that reflect both present and anticipated needs?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are the physical plans related to educational master plan goals?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Prior to its consideration of requests for remodeling or new construction, is the board satisfied that present space is being used effectively and instructional areas are scheduled for maximum use?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel that the board has established credibility in its capital funding requests by equating the necessity of proposed projects with the ability of the state to support them?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you feel that the board makes decisions on details related to buildings and grounds that should have been delegated to the administrative staff?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Is the board informed about and does it review periodically its position concerning:

a. Deferred maintenance?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Energy conservation methods?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Renovation versus new construction?

\_\_\_\_\_

Summary: In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good   ✓   Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 11**

**Court of Final Appeal**

Governing boards may be called upon to fulfill a quasi-judicial function in the settlement of disputes arising within institutional communities. If possible, disputes should be settled at the administrative level where they originate. If this is not possible, the governing board may be asked to intervene. The board can control abuse of this privilege by carefully delegating authority for settlement of disputes at the administrative level, supporting these administrative decisions, and selectively refusing further involvement.

Yes      No      Don't Know/  
Can't Judge

1. Do you feel that the board has been called upon to adjudicate cases of conflict that should have been settled before they came to the board?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Has the board developed procedures for delegating the management of conflict situations to its executive officers, academic administrators, appropriate committees, or appropriate faculty or student organizations?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are the disputes that have been brought to the board:

- a. Accurately and concisely briefed for your study?
- b. Done so before they have escalated to crisis proportion?
- c. Settled without unduly prolonged debate?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you feel that the board has sought to settle disputes with sympathetic understanding of the human and institutional issues involved?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the board have a history of consistently supporting those decisions made by its executive and administrative officers that have been in line with established policy and procedure?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_      Good \_\_\_\_\_      Adequate \_\_\_\_\_      Poor \_\_\_\_\_      Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:

**Criterion 12**

**Accountability/Autonomy,**

Every university or college needs to reassure its constituencies that it is adhering to its stated mission. The system is accountable for the quality of its educational programs, for prudent use of public resources, and for performance standards stemming from direct or indirect acceptance of certain public funds. However, the call for accountability must not become a demand for added control or ill-advised intrusions on essential autonomy. The system and its institutions must not only serve the public interest, they must be perceived as doing so.

	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Can't Judge
1. Do you feel that the system and its institutions have the confidence of the general public?	_____	_____	_____
a. Of the legislature?	_____	_____	_____
b. Of the governor's office?	_____	_____	_____
c. Do you feel that the expectations of these groups have changed in recent years? (If so, please elaborate below)	_____	_____	_____
2. Does the board ensure that the institutions take advantage of opportunities to inform the public and other interested parties about educational and scholarly attainments, administrative objectives and accomplishments, and evidence of how funds have been utilized?	_____	_____	_____
3. Has the board or its representatives established good working relationships with state offices, the legislature, and state agencies dealing with postsecondary education, that include recognition of the system's legitimate goals and necessary programs?	_____	_____	_____
4. Are the majority of board members effective spokespersons for the system and its institution?	_____	_____	_____
5. Has the board been willing to take a stand against unwarranted controls or other intrusions on the autonomy of institutions within the system?	_____	_____	_____

**Summary:** In relation to this criterion, I feel that the board's performance has been:

Very Good \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Adequate \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know/Can't Judge \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments or suggestions related to this criterion:





**Knowledge of the System**

Yes	No	Somewhat or Sometimes
-----	----	-----------------------------

10. Do you feel well informed about the type and quality of your system's educational programs?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

11. Have you visited one or more campus(es) within the past year?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

12. Are you familiar with the leadership effectiveness of:

- a. The key administrators of your system office?
- b. The chief executives of your individual campuses?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

13. Are you acquainted with the physical plant and maintenance needs of all your institutions?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

**Board and Committee Meetings**

14. Are you satisfied with your attendance at board and committee meetings?

_____	_____	_____
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15. Do you read the minutes of meetings to determine whether they faithfully represent the proceeding and decisions as you recall them?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

16. Do you prepare for board meetings by reading the agendas and supporting materials?

_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------

17. Do you suggest agenda items?

_____	_____	_____
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18. Do you help board and committee meetings to steer clear of non-policy matters better left to the administration?

_____	_____	_____
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**Fund Raising and Public Relations**

19. Have you recently taken advantage of an opportunity to say a good word about your system to a policymaker or organization at the state level?

_____	_____	_____
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20. Do you take advantage of opportunities to inform other groups or persons about your system or higher education generally?

_____	_____	_____
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# NOTES

[The main body of the page contains extremely faint and illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the paper. The text is scattered and difficult to discern.]