

# Workshop 1 - Governance Considerations in a Changing Higher Education Landscape



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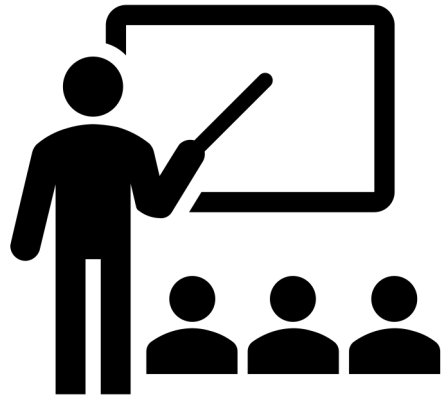
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# Governance Considerations in a Changing Higher Education Landscape – Agenda



**1.** What is Governance and Why Does it Matter?

**2.** How to Connect Accreditation and Governance?

**3.** What are Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them?

# Introductions and Warm Up

In your table groups:

- your name, institution, and the institutional or governance related issue/challenge/question keeping you up at night
- Identify a few questions or topics you would like to see addressed in this session & report out

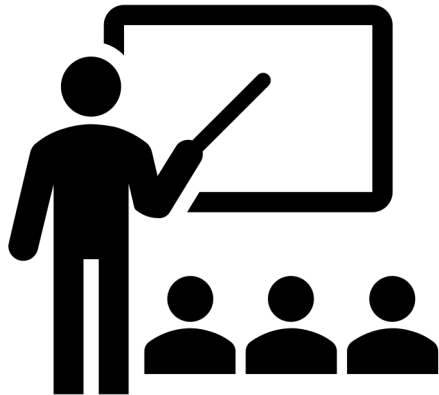
# Introductions and Warm Up - Key Topics – 1/2

- Distributed campus but one board
- Turnover with boards – training, onboarding, roles
- Board vs. Cabinet – responsibilities
- DEI
- Governance separation and roles (keep levels straight) – avoid overreach
- Political influences and “possible interference”
- Connection to campus governance and within a campus
- Shared governance and Robert’s Rules of Order
- Funding for athletics
- What kind of information to the board – the right level and type
- Student representatives – training and engagement
- Tribal council and board – representatives and integration
- Accreditation interaction

# Introductions and Warm Up - Key Topics – 2/2

- Board structure and complicated reporting to joint boards
- Documents and approaches to formalize roles, responsibilities, etc.
- How can boards help with cultural change?
- Alignment and buy in on governance at multiple levels from oversight to strategic planning
- Appointed vs. elected (70% vs. 30%)
- Use of metrics for decision making (and “Dashboards”) and synergy for decision processes
- The board’s desire to be strategic and ask the right questions but need guidance not to operational
- Communication and interaction
- Changing landscape and new formation of the board

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# Higher Ed is Under the Microscope

- Questions of value
- Questions of purpose
- Questions of control and influence
- Questions of core principles and integrity
  - USC (Varsity Blues Tuition Scandal)
  - TAMU (Academic Freedom/Faculty Hiring)
  - UNC System (Academic Freedom/Tenure)
  - Liberty University (Clergy Act Non-Compliance)(and the list goes on...)



# Governance and Leadership Are Critical

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- **Leadership v. Administration**

- Boards and Presidents must be in sync and aligned.
- Leadership is not the same as administration – but often conflated.

- **Accountability v. Avoidance**

- Boards, individual trustees, and leaders are accountable for mission, vision, values and outcomes.

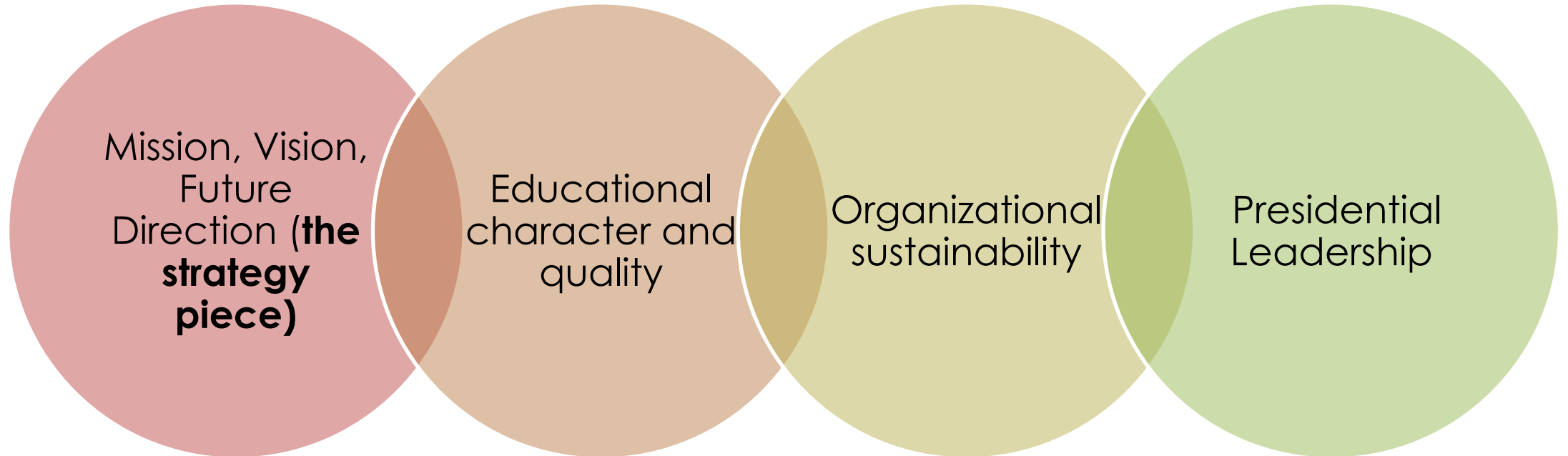
- **Mission/Org. First v. Ego-Centric / “Me” First**

- “There’s no ‘I’ in Team, but there is a ‘me’
- In the current context, it’s critical that the board and institutional leaders be mission/vision/value aligned and organizationally focused.



# FOCUS on Fiduciary Responsibilities

**Four fiduciary assets that boards should sustain and enhance:**



# Check In – Table Group Discussion

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- What is the health of our leadership and status of our leadership culture from the board down through the institution?
- Does the board, leadership, and organization embrace a culture of accountability and is this reflected beyond words?
- Are we truly mission and organization first in our mindset, or derailed by “I” and ego driven foci, personalities, and challenges?

# Quick Poll

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## Quick Poll:

Our board focuses most of its time and attention on the issues or challenges of greatest importance to the mission and long-term viability and prosperity of our college or university.

# Exercise Strategic Governance

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## Strategic Governance

describes both a **general philosophy** and **practical framework** for board discussion and engagement across all institution types.

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# Strategic Governance

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## Strategic Governance

**General Philosophy:** The critical responsibilities of boards are to act as ethical fiduciaries, help define the parameters of strategy, and support the allocation of resources for critical strategic initiatives.

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**Practical Framework:** To embody the philosophy of strategic governance, boards should:

(1) have trust and vision alignment with the president/CEO

(2) maintain a purposeful focus on the future and what matters most

(3) own their actions, culture, and accountability

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# Why Does Strategic Governance Matter? How Do We Develop a More Strategic Board?



**There is a significant, positive correlation between:**

- Strategic governance and governing boards
- The development and successful implementation of institutional strategies
- Mission fulfillment, student outcomes/ROI, and long-term institutional prosperity

# Facets of Strategic Governance

**1. Independent institutions:**  
build a board with the “the right people” on it

**2. Public institutions and systems:** reinforce a strong culture of “institution first” and accountability

3. Focus the board on the “right” issues – requires board education and knowledge about the institution’s context, outcomes, and higher ed trends

4. Board members must be engaged and understand and own their roles, responsibilities and what is *NOT* in their responsibility set

# Grounded in the Core Principles of Trusteeship





# Understand and Embrace Core Principles of Trusteeship

1. build a board  
with the “the  
right people” on  
it

Building a strategic board is simpler when you can include the “right” people – easier done at private than public institutions.

## “Right people” means:

1. Context specific – the right people for *your* institution
2. Diversity by race, gender, SES, work experience, alumni v. non-alumni status, etc.
3. Capable of setting aside ego and being self-aware
4. Empathic and willing to show up and be there for the institution and its leadership



# Understand and Embrace Core Principles of Trusteeship

**2. Public institutions and systems**: reinforce a strong culture of “institution first” and accountability

Public institutions often have less control over board composition. This means even more emphasis on understanding governance and leading by example!

**Understand governance** – know and respect board v. admin roles; understand and embrace trustee responsibilities; be a positive ambassador for the institution and Higher Ed

**Lead by example** – act with integrity and humility; act collectively; be a champion for positive outcomes and core principles of the institution.



# Understand and Embrace Core Principles of Trusteeship

3. Focus the board on the “right” issues – requires board education and knowledge about the institution’s context, outcomes, and higher ed trends

4. Board members must be engaged and understand and own their roles, responsibilities and what is *NOT* in their responsibility set

**Trustees must increasingly think strategically** – which enables the board to become more strategic. This requires professional development.

## **Think Strategically:**

Learn about mission, vision, context, outcomes

Understand ROI, critical data

Understand key trends – how to orient to them and allocate resources

Be open, creative, supportive

Ask insightful questions and listen

Ensure accountability for implementation but don’t micromanage it.



# Questions for Reflection – Table Group Discussion

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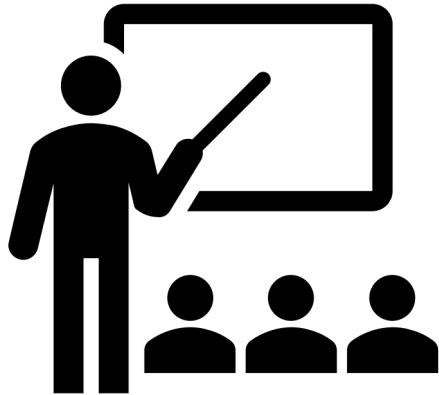
- In what ways do you see your board and trustees embracing the concepts of strategic governance and principles of trusteeship?
- What role do you think you can play in advancing strategic governance?

# 10 Min Break

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- Let's take a 10 min break and reconvene for the final two sections.

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# Strategic Governance and Accreditation

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Why is our institution here and what is the unique value we bring to the landscape of colleges and universities?

# Accreditor Focus

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Accreditors are concerned with governance.

- NWCCU – “effective governance structures” ... “provisions for consideration of views...” (aka: *shared governance*)



# Governance Issues Impact Accreditation

Increasingly, governance is negatively impacting accreditation.

- Violating academic freedom
- Broken or non-existent shared governance systems
- Integrity failures or missteps
- Policy and procedural breakdowns
- Political interference and autonomy

Industry disruption is also intersecting with governance and accreditation

- Broken business models
- Non-sustainability or viability
- Financial challenges impacting delivery / mission fulfillment

# Good Governance is Strategic Governance ...and it's critical for institutional success!

Strategic governance and governing boards are critical to successful accreditation.

Increasingly, boards must, at minimum, play active role in helping set strategy, monitoring results, and ensuring institutions have the capacity and capability to fulfil accreditation requirements – namely mission fulfillment and student success.

# NWCCU Standards

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**NWCCU - Standards for Accreditation** are statements that articulate the quality and effectiveness expected of Accredited institutions, and collectively they provide a framework for continuous improvement within institutions.

The standards are designed to guide institutions in a process of self-reflection that blends analysis and synthesis in a holistic examination of:

- The institution's Mission;
- The translation of the Mission into assessable objectives supported by programs and services;
- **The appraisal of the institution's potential to fulfill the Mission;**
- The planning and implementation involved in achieving and assessing the desired outcomes of programs and services; and
- **An evaluation of the results of the institution's efforts to fulfill the Mission and assess its ability to monitor its environment, adapt, and sustain itself as a viable institution.**

# NWCCU Standards – Additional Information on Areas of Board Focus

## Standard 1 – Student Success, and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

- Mission
- Effectiveness
- Student Learning and Student Achievement

## Standard Two – Governance, Resources, and Capacity

- Governance
- Academic Freedom
- Policies, Procedures
- Institutional Integrity
- Financial Resources
- Human Resources
- Student Support Resources
- Library and Information Resources
- Physical and Technology Infrastructure

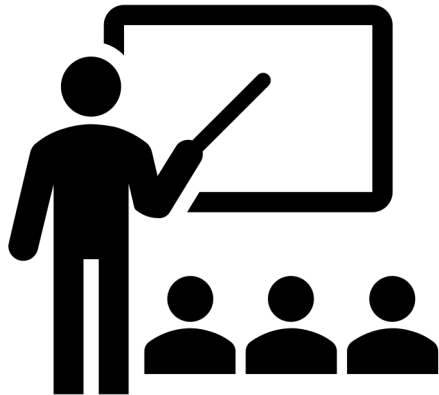
\*Yellow denotes an area of significance for boards in particular

# Questions Boards Should be Asking...and You Can Help

## Questions you can help your board ask:

- What are the three most important trends or forces that will affect our ability to execute on our strategic plan and fulfill our mission?
- Are we operating at a positive operating margin and what are our future projections?
- Do we offer degrees and non-degree programs that are aligned with student and employer demand?
- What resources do we need or should we explore to augment our mission fulfillment capacity and capability?

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# Common Pitfalls that Derail Strategic Thinking and Action

Dysfunction	In Practice	Solution(s)
<b>1. Ignorance – Arrogance</b>	Trustees have expertise and success in one area and are prone to pass judgment in other areas both because things always look simpler from the outside and because passing judgment is a familiar go-to behavior for any “expert.”	Self-awareness and becoming less ego-centric. Open minds / open ears Become a student of Higher Education and don't assume it is a “simpler” industry.
<b>2. Bright shiny object syndrome</b>	The board's belief that there is one yet-to-be discovered thing that will put the institution on the map and/or solve its financial problem. Can create inertia and offset accountability.	Ground in reality and focus on unique value and differentiation. Ask: Why should our institution exist and continue to exist – what need in the world does it solve? If we were to start today, would we still create X institution?
<b>3. Nostalgia</b>	Most board members in Higher Ed lack experience with Higher Ed, except as students.	Level set on current context and realities. Educate on current and anticipated trends; engage in professional development.
<b>4. Misplaced accountability</b>	Board's request more and more data in hopes of locating silver bullet solution to fix all problems.	Regular self-assessment. Institute term limits and intentional onboarding practices. Truthful answers to: Have our decisions as they relate to our primary board responsibilities, such as hiring/firing presidents and maintaining fiduciary oversight, had positive results?
<b>5. Limited or bad information from both internal and external sources</b>	Board's obtain info from the President or direct reports. These may not mirror reality. Data quality and integrity are critical, but often taken for granted.	360 comprehensive reviews of President (and cabinet). Read industry news – IHE, CHE, HigherEd Dive – and stay on top of emerging issues.

# Boards and Accreditation - Recommendations

## Education

- Trustees must understand what accreditation is and the standards (and stakes) at play.
  - Don't assume they know.
- Discuss conflicts of interest and undue influence
- Understand how accreditation factors into MAP (mergers, affiliations, partnerships)

## Assessment

- Governance (and shared governance) trip up too many institutions during accreditation.
- Boards should be:
  - Regularly (~3yrs) comprehensively assessed by an external entity
  - Knowledgeable about shared governance.
  - Seeking to improve or strengthen bylaws, policies, and committees.

## Engagement

- Regular professional development can help trustees (and boards) avoid common pitfalls and strengthen board culture.
- Presidents/CEOs can ensure the right balance of data and information sharing.
- Review accreditation reports and self study results



# General Guidance and Advice for Action

Focus board and individual work on adding value

Balance board focus:

Recipe of 1/3 oversight; 1/3 insight; 1/3 foresight

Align committees and board agendas with institutional strategies rather than organizational charts.

Fulfill the board's "**Duty of Inquiry**" role --- asking the right strategic question, of the right person, at the right time.

# Utilize Strategic Governance Diagnostic Questions

## Board Focus

- What issues or topics occupy most of the board's attention?
- Is the board focused on the *right* strategic issues?
- Is the board united and able to act collectively?
- Do trustees consistently think strategically?

## Board Time

- Where is the bulk of the board's time spent in conversation?
- Are board meetings strategic in focus?
- Do committees focus on the right strategic issues?
- Does the board embrace a culture of professional development?

## Board Contributions

- Is the board offering the right types of questions and strategic insights?
- Is the board supportive of leadership's goals and appreciative of the challenges of leadership?
- Is the board appropriately contributing financially to the health of the institution?
- Do trustees / does the board represent the institution well in public and at events?

# Individual Level Actions for Trustees (or those who support them)

## Think and act more strategically

### Soft Skills

- Be genuinely curious
- Ask probing questions that frame problems, and move things forward
- Engage in collaborative back and forth
- Be reflective – do you have enough information to make a sound decision? What more do you need?
- Calibrate when to ask what of whom

### Professional Development

- Learn about the institution's mission, constituents, and context
- Know and value what makes your institution unique
- Think about your unique role as an outside voice who cares.

### Focus

- Truly understand the business model not just of the institution but Higher Ed...and what's broken
- Help define what success looks like both now and for the future
- Encourage innovative thinking grounded in priorities that reflect strategy

# Exercise in Tables

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- Brainstorm specific actions their campus can take to help support the board and a health governance structure
- Table groups report out ideas

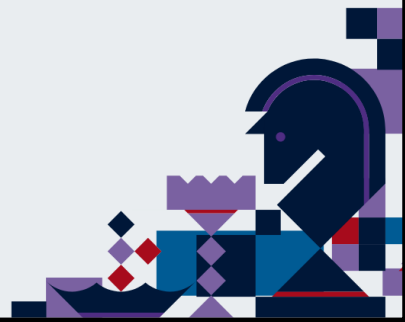
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# Upcoming Webinars and Opportunities to Engage

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- **Nov. 28, 2pm ET** – *Navigating Financial Challenges: Strategies for Small to Mid-Sized Independent Institutions* Register [here](#) or via [www.agb.org/webinars](http://www.agb.org/webinars).
- **December 14, 2pm ET** – Navigating Turbulence: Modern Strategy for Presidents and Trustees – for Private Institutions (with Marjorie Hass, President of CIC)
- **January 10, 2pm ET** – Navigating Turbulence: Modern Strategy for Presidents and Trustees – for Public Institutions (with Mark Becker, President of APLU)
- Paul Friga’s [website](#) has videos and articles related to strategy and higher education
- Engage us in a strategy conversation – we’d like to learn how we can help your board!
  - Email [consulting@agb.org](mailto:consulting@agb.org), [cmoloney@agb.org](mailto:cmoloney@agb.org), or [pfriga@agb.org](mailto:pfriga@agb.org)

# Discussion With Attendees

