

*2020 Contra Costa
Governing Board
Self-Evaluation*

Today's discussion

- **History of Board evaluation process**
- **Summary of current Board-completed self-evaluation instrument**
- **Summary of individual Board member conversations**
- **Analysis of evaluation material**
- **Discussion on improving performance**
- **Conversation on Chancellor selection process**

*Board
Self-Evaluation
History*

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.**

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.

Accreditation Standards

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.**

*History of
League On Call Facilitated
Contra Costa Board
Self-Evaluations Retreats*

2017

2018

2019

*2020 Contra Costa
Governing Board
Self-Evaluation
Process*

2020 Self-Evaluation Process

- 1. Board completion of self-evaluation instrument**
- 2. Conversations with individual board members**
- 3. Consultant analysis of interviews and questionnaires**
- 4. Facilitated open conversation at retreat**

*Board
Self-Evaluation
Instrument Analysis*

Questionnaire Specifics

- **37 total questions in six areas**
- **1 – 5 scale (higher the better)**
- **5 were ranked average (3)**
- **14 above average (4 or 5)**
- **17 below average (1 or 2)**
- **Board has used same instrument for the past four years**

Self-Evaluation Components

- **Governing Board operation**
- **Financial management**
- **Mission of the District**
- **Board goals**
- **Relationship with the colleges**
- **Relationship with the Chancellor**

Governing Board Operation	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The Board conducts discussions at public meetings so that all trustees have an opportunity to participate in the discussion and decision-making.	X		X	X	XX	2.4
2. The Board receives adequate information from staff on which to base decisions.	XX	X		X	X	3.4
3. The Board conducts its meetings in an orderly, efficient manner and encourages public comment.		XX	XX		X	3.0
4. The Board effectively responds to input from members of the college and community.		XXX	X	X		3.4
5. Board members treat one another with respect and civility, in public meetings and closed sessions.		X		X	XXX	1.8
6. Board members share significant information about pertinent issues at public meetings.		XX	X	XX		3.0

Governing Board Operation	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
7. Once the Board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole.		X	X		XXX	2.0
8. The Board understands and appropriately contributes to the accreditation process.			XXX	XX		2.6
9. New Board members are appropriately oriented and fellow Board members participate in that process.		XX	XXX			3.4
10. Board members participate in professional development through attendance at seminars, conferences and retreats.		XX	XXX			3.4
11. Board members behave in accordance with the Board <i>Code of Ethics</i> and other District policies and procedures.		X			XXXX	1.6
12. Board members uphold the confidentiality of discussions and actions taken in closed session.	X	XX	X		X	3.4

Financial Management	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The Board understands the finances of the District and its current fiscal condition.		XXX	XX			3.6
2. The Board is informed and discusses the fiscal aspects of the District on a regular basis.	X	X	XXX			3.6
3. The Board strives to link the District planning with the allocation of resources.		X	XX	X	X	2.6
4. The Board regularly discusses the District finances and makes financial decisions to ensure the long-term financial health of the organization.	X	X	XX	X		3.4
5. The Board oversees the financing of new District facilities as well as the maintenance and repair of existing facilities.	X	XX	XX			3.8

Mission of the District	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The Board understands the Mission of the District.		XXX		X	X	3.0
2. The Board periodically discusses the District Mission to ensure that it represents the needs of the community and students it serves.			X	X	XXX	1.6
3. The Board ensures the District Mission reflects the diversity of the community it serves.		X	XX	X	X	2.6
4. The Board develops policy and makes decisions consistent with the Mission of the District and in accordance with appropriate local, state and federal law.			XXXX		X	2.6

Board Goals for 2019-20	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
1. Improve student learning and completion across District colleges.		XX	X	XX		3.0
2. Decrease equity gaps for all students.			XXX	XX		2.6
3. Advance existing community partnerships and create new educational collaborations to strengthen student pathways.		X	XXX	X		3.0
4. Cultivate a culture of engagement throughout the District.			XXXX		X	2.6
5. Responsibly, effectively, and sustainably steward District resources.		XXX	X		X	3.2

Relationship with the Colleges	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The Board understands the shared and participatory governance process of the District and colleges.		XX	X	X	X	2.8
2. The Board understands the division of responsibilities between the District Office and the colleges.		XXX	XX			3.6
3. The Board understands the role of the faculty in the development of courses and curriculum and in related academic matters.	XX	X	XX			4.0
4. The Board works to stay informed of the activities of the colleges and to keep open lines of communication between the Board, District and colleges.		XXXX		X		3.6

Relationship with the Chancellor	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The Board regularly communicates with the Chancellor on matters concerning the District.	X	XX		X	X	3.2
2. The Board regularly receives information from the Chancellor regarding matters concerning the District.		X	XX	X	X	2.6
3. Board members respect the role of the Chancellor as the Board's employee, who is responsible for the operation of the District.	X		XX	X	X	2.8
4. The Board works to maintain a climate of mutual trust with the Chancellor			XX	X	XX	2.0

Relationship with the Chancellor	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs to Improve	AVERAGE SCORE
5. Individual Board members do not direct the actions of the Chancellor but work to achieve consensus and provide direction from the Board as a whole.			X	X	XXX	1.6
6. Individual Board member inform the Chancellor of significant contacts with members of the college or community that impact the operation of the District.		XXX	X	X		3.4
7. The Board effectively and regularly evaluates the Chancellor so that the Chancellor understands the Board's opinion of his performance.				XX	XXX	1.4

Board Operation

➤ General positive agreement

- ~~– Open meeting discussions~~
- ~~– Adequate information from staff~~
- ~~– Orderly meetings seeking public input~~
- ~~– Understands and contributes to accreditation~~
- Orient new members
- Participate in professional development

Board Operation

➤ Disagreement and/or improvement needed

- Board effectively responds to members of college and community
- Members treat one another with respect
- When a decision is reached Board acts as a whole
- Understands and contributes to accreditation
- Members behave in accordance with code of ethics
- Members uphold confidentiality
- Conducts discussions at public meetings
- Understands and contributes to accreditation

Supporting Mission of the District

➤ Positive agreement

- ~~Understand the complex nature of the district's mission~~

➤ Disagreement and/or improvement needed

- Periodically discusses the Mission to ensure it represents the needs of the community and students
- Ensures the District reflects the diversity of the community
- Develops policy and makes decisions consistent with the Mission
- Understand the complex nature of the district's mission

Relationship with the Chancellor

➤ General positive agreement

- ~~Regularly communicates with the Chancellor~~
- ~~Regularly receives information from the chancellor~~

➤ Disagreement and/or improvement needed

- Individual members do not direct the actions of the Chancellor
- Members respect the role of the Chancellor as the Board's employee
- Regularly receive information from the Chancellor
- Regularly evaluates the Chancellor
- Members work to maintain a climate of mutual trust

*Board
Member
Comments on
Survey*

Board member comments on strengths of the Board

- We have a “very diversified board with age, gender and ethnicity
- Three trustees have been “classroom teachers”
- “Supporting the district when it was in crisis mode with COVID”
- The “past working relationship amongst most Board members”
- “We do all understand our wards and voice our positions well.”

Board member comments on ways to improve Board performance

- “Receive education information available to staff and not always to Board members”
- “More Board training especially in the Brown Act”
- “study the other 21 CA community college Boards with more than one college”
- “Board needs to respect each other and leave personal interest and political gain behind”
- Get beyond “petty problems with each other”

Board member comments on ways to improve Board performance

- We need to “be willing to have open and hard conversations. We dance around differences of opinion and conflict instead of talking respectfully”
- We need to “refocus on our mission of serving students, we are completely focused on petty politics.”
- We need to “have respect for each others point of view”

Board member comments on greatest satisfaction

- “Glad to see our district has great leadership team with solid financial status”
- “Knowing our professors are educating our students to be prepared” for their careers
- “Working on behalf of our students, helping them to fulfill their educational goals”
- “To participate in Graduation ceremonies and see the successes of students”
- “When I am able to bring a new perspective to an issue that wouldn’t normally be discussed”

Board member comments on greatest concern

- “We have a single Board member who likes to have full control of the Board as well as the district”
- “Will the Board, especially its officers, be able to guide the District through the current recession, pandemic, civil unrest...?”
- “I hope to complete the Chancellor search very soon...”
- “To see the start of Board descensions with the start of the election season...”

Board member comments on greatest concern

- With the COVID crisis, “I am sad to say my greatest concern is our own Board’s behavior”
- My greatest concerns is from “one board member who bullies other board members and staff to gain control and power.”
- As a Board we need to, “move past our grievances with each other, it is the only way we are going to be able to do the work we need to do.”

Board member comments on greatest concern

- We have begun to have “political votes that proactively hurt the district, our employees and our student without any discussion or explanation.”
- “I know some board members will be horrified that I have been this honest...there are just some things you don’t say in public because it airs our dirty laundry and brings shame to our district, but maybe we need to be ashamed.”

*Summary of
Individual Board
Member Interviews*

Individual interview questions

1. How do you think things are going in the Contra Costa District?
2. How do you think the district has responded to the Pandemic crisis?
3. Do you feel the district is ready for the upcoming accreditation visit?
4. What is your opinion of the current dynamics of the Governing Board?

Individual interview questions

5. How do you assess your individual performance as a member of the Board?
6. What is your assessment of the overall performance of the Board?
7. What is your opinion of the currently paused search for a new Chancellor?
8. What is your opinion of the search calendar which suggests open forums and final interviews in September?

Individual interview questions

9. What do you feel the Governing Board could do to enhance their performance as a whole?
10. Are you enjoying your service on the Board and do you find that service professionally rewarding?
11. What have I not asked you about that you think I should know or about which you want to comment?

How do you think things are going in the Contra Costa District?

- The District is “moving smoothly”
- Staff are “mostly happy, no big problems, financially good”
- District is doing “Okay”
- “We face great uncertainty”
- The “worst they have ever been”
- Not good...”the Board is running things”
- The “fundamentals are sound, but we are rapidly deteriorating”

How has the District responded to the pandemic?

- I “laude” the District for the response
- I “feel good about the steps taken”
- This is a “bright spot in a dark time”
- I am “proud of our response – everyone has come together”
- “Given the uncertainty we have done well”
- We have “moved quickly to remake the district”
- So far “no one in the District has contracted it”

Is the District ready for the accreditation team?

- “We are ready for the visits”
- We are headed in the “right direction, but don’t know how the preparation is going”
- I think the “colleges are ready”
- “Yes, we are ready...all the docs are ready”
- “No...can we be ready? Yes”
- “I think we may get a finding about the Board”

What is your opinion of the current Governing Board member dynamics?

- We are “very frustrated...not happy as a Board”
- The Board is “functioning, but there is dissention”
- I think “we are not getting the correct information from staff”
- There is “too much politics” instead of students
- “Hell in a handbasket”
- There is a “2/2 split and then a swing vote”
- Board members “feel attacked”

How do you assess your individual performance as a Board member?

- “My college is doing well”
- “I helped the District get a new leadership team”
- “Performance-wise Okay”
- I’m a “veteran Board member and feel I am doing well”
- I am “limping through”
- I “don’t know”

What is your assessment of the overall performance of the Board?

- “Not well”
- I am “concerned about the friction between Board members”
- The Board is “limping through”
- We are “terrible”
- We can’t make any “long-term decisions”
- We “don’t trust one another so we can’t find agreement”

What is your opinion of the currently paused Chancellor's search?

- It is “symptomatic of our inability to make a decision”
- We would “not be here if not for the pandemic”
- I am “still supportive of the process we are on”
- I am supportive but “think we need an early start date”
- I am most worried about “doing this now during the pandemic”

What is your opinion of the current Chancellor search calendar?

- I don't think "this Board should make a decision"
- At this point I would "prefer to start again next year"
- I am "still supportive of completing the process in September"
- We need a "specific date when the Board will make a decision about continuing"

What do you feel the Board could do to enhance their performance?

- Change the Board size “from five members to seven”
- “Work together and respect each other”
- “Work together more even via Zoom”
- I think “the Board is engaged in personalities and may not be workable”
- “Grow up...when we say we will move on we need to”

Are you enjoying your service on the Board and do you find it professionally rewarding?

- “Interesting question...I am willing to tolerate the nonsense to serve students”
- I feel “a little better, but still don’t like the vibe”
- “Lately I have become re-energized”
- I “was until lately”
- “No – I’m scared all the time”
- Sometimes “I feel like the only adult in the room”

What have I not asked about that you think I should know?

- We need to do a “better job of encouraging HS students to take college courses while in HS”
- We need to “keep the Board from running the District”
- The Board recently took a negative action that “did not meet the crime”
- The election in November will be “key for this District”

Analysis of the Survey and Interviews

Board Performance

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Board Performance

- The Board is often dysfunctional
- Too often the Board seems unable and unwilling to make decisions and take action
- There is a clear split on the Board on many issues resulting in increasing frustration of all trustees*
- The upcoming November Board elections have caused greater division on the Board
- **Board members do not trust one another and are often unwilling to work together***

Board Performance

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Board Performance

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- The Board performs best when they deal with issues related to students*
- Unfortunately, the Board spends far too much of their time on issues that have no impact on teaching, learning and students

*To Improve
The Board Must*

- Always put students, teaching and learning first*

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- Embrace difference of opinion*

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- Be willing to make decisions even in the face of significant difference of opinion*

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- Always put students, teaching and learning first*
- Embrace difference of opinion*
- Develop positive relationships with one another and the Chancellor*
- Listen to one another*
- Be willing to make decisions even in the face of significant difference of opinion*
- **Disagree with one another with respect and civility***

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- **Make a decision about the process for selecting a new Chancellor**

To Improve The Board Must

- Stop living in the past and forget past disagreements
- Stop using Board policy, the Brown Act, and other state rules and regulations as weapons to delay or suppress honest Board discussion
- Make a decision about the process for selecting a new Chancellor
- Stop seeking advice on improved Board performance and then ignoring the advice given

*Let's have an
open and honest
conversation!*