

FORT SCOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES – SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 2026 – 12:00 p.m.

Ellis Fine Arts Building

The board of Trustees of Fort Scott Community College, Fort Scott, Kansas met in special session at the Ellis Fine Arts Building at 12:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Ronda Bailey, Destry Brown, Chad Cosens, Marilyn Hoyt, Chad McKinnis, Doug Ropp

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: President Dr. Jack Welch, Clerk Gina Shelton, Dr. Larry Guerrero, Lindsay Hill, Vanessa Poyner, Dave Wiemers, members of the faculty, staff, and public.

1.0 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m.

2.0 Flag Salute & Invocation

This was completed, followed by a roll call of the board members

3.0 Oath of Office

New trustees Destry Brown, Chad Cosens, and Marilyn Hoyt took the Oath of Office.

4.0 Appointments (Action)

4.1 Chair: Motion by Bailey to appoint Doug Ropp as Chair; second by McKinnis; approved unanimously.

4.2 Clerk: Motion by Brown to appoint Gina Shelton as Clerk; second by Bailey; approved unanimously.

5.0 Leadership Reports & Updates

Dr. Larry Guerrero, Vice-President of Academic Affairs, spoke in the area of Academics: the 2025-26 Academic Calendar; and the increase in credit hours for the spring semester. There was discussion regarding changes in programs in relation to credit hours and if there had been consideration of students not returning after Christmas Break.

Lindsay Hill, Foundation Director, spoke in the area of Advancement: Monthly giving by staff is at \$815; \$114,000+ was awarded in fall scholarships; Gordon Parks Museum's strategic plan was enclosed; and there has been a Facilities Master Plan initiated. In addition, a fundraising effort through the Foundation raised \$100,000 for the athletic field.

Dave Wiemers, Athletic Director, spoke in the area of Athletics: All teams achieved cumulative GPA above 3.0; soccer coach hires are pending; enrollment target of 100 additional athletes next year; and Arnold Arena security updates are needed.

Gina Shelton, CFO/Vice-President of Finance and Operations, spoke in the area of Finance: Audit expected late March; financial system integration underway; Debt Map reviewed; and HVAC and facility challenges noted.

Vanessa Poyner, Vice-President of Student Affairs, spoke in the area of Student Services: Inclement weather procedures updated; Honorary Associate Degree selection due Feb/Mar; scholarship committee updates for students and employees; and INA Alert door security plans.

President Dr. Jack Welch spoke to increases in credit hours for the spring semester; continued legislative outreach; community college funding mechanisms, including state aid; and security of students and staff as the highest priority.

6.0 Review of January 26 Agenda

The board reviewed upcoming action items; including appointment of positions which included a student liaison for the board; consent agenda, 701 N. National sale documents, academic calendar, scholarships, and mission update. Jared Wheeler, Director of Admissions presented on the proposed mission statement update which is "Empowering students and communities through education."

No action was taken by the board.

7.0 Executive Session – Security Measures (Action)

Motion by Ropp: The board recess to classroom for into executive session to discuss security measures, pursuant to the exception to protect infrastructure and security of information systems, under K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(12), and that the open meeting shall resume at 1:20 p.m. in the Ellis Fine Arts.

The board invites President Dr. Jack Welch, Joseph Fusz, Lindsay Hill, and Gina Shelton to join the session.

Second by Cosens; approved unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 1:00 p.m. for 20 minutes in classroom.

8.0 Return to Open Session – Security Measures (Action)

Motion by Hoyt, second by Cosens for the board to return to open session; approved unanimously.

The board returned to open session at 1:20 p.m.

9.0 Executive Session – Personnel Matters (Action)

Motion by Brown: The board recess to classroom into executive session to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel, pursuant to the exception to protect the privacy interests of the employees, under K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(1), and that the open meeting shall resume at 1:43 p.m. in the Ellis Fine Arts.

The board invites President Dr. Jack Welch, Lindsay Hill, and Gina Shelton to join the session.

Second by Cosens; approved unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 1:23 p.m. for 20 minutes in classroom.

10.0 Return to Open Session – Personnel Matters (Action)

Motion by Bailey, second by Cosens for the board to return to open session; approved unanimously.

The board returned to open session at 1:43 p.m.

11.0 Board Training – Governance 101

Training was provided by Dr. Welch and Lindsay Hill regarding board governance. The board was provided additional resources in the form of KORA, KOMA, and Trustee communication protocols. The training visuals are attached:



The Association of Community College Trustees

The Voice of Community College Trustees

Governance 101

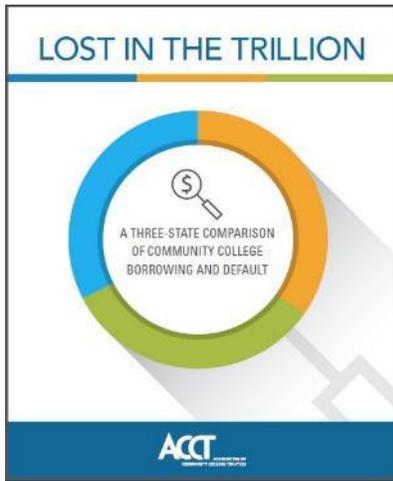
Module 1 – What is Good Governance?

Module 2 - Board Roles and Responsibilities

Module 3 – Policy Governance

Module 4 - Board-CEO Relationships

Module 5 – Setting the Board and CEO up for Success



Introduction

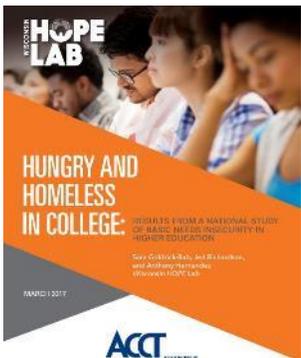
What is Good Governance?

Board's power comes from acting as a team

No individual power

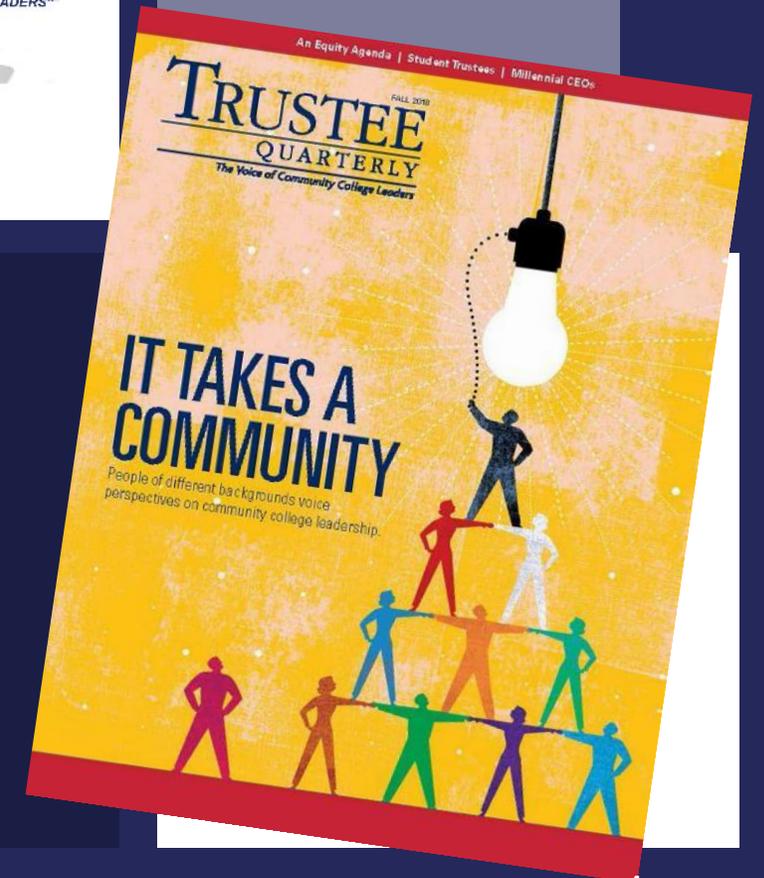
Paradox of hierarchy and partnership

Board and CEO on the same team



Good Governance

- Board's power comes from acting as a team
- No individual power
- Paradox of hierarchy and partnership
- Board and CEO on the same team





GOOD GOVERNANCE



- Focusing on the big picture and the future
- Maintaining an external focus
- Creating & maintaining the vision, values and mission
- Organizing around outcomes
- Clarity of roles between board and president (CEO)
- Board and CEO on the same team



- Policy making and direction setting – the what
- Accountability and monitoring
- Deliberating in many voices -speaking in one voice
- Setting the tone
- Commitment to institution and students it serves



Meeting the Test of Strategic Governance

Highly effective boards:

Create a culture of inclusion and partnership

Uphold basic fiduciary principles

Operate from a policy and strategy level, not tactical

Cultivate a healthy relationship with the president

Select an effective board chair

Establish committees with appropriate decision-making authority

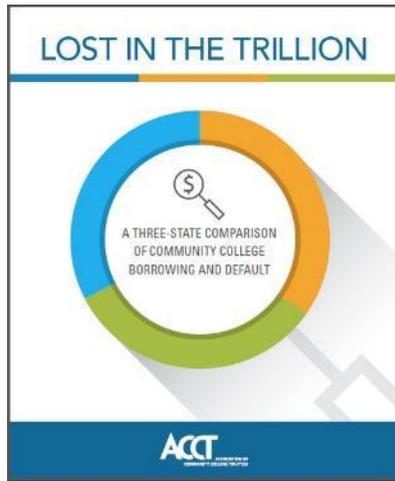
Focus strategically on the future

Focus on accountability and appropriate oversight

Are the eyes and ears of the college in the external community

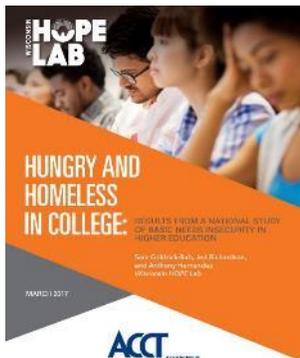
Assure the college meets the needs of the community it serves





Module 1

Board Roles and Responsibilities



Board Roles and Responsibilities

Board:

Leadership – tone setting and creating a climate
Direct through policy making and planning
Oversight/monitoring
Delegation
Support
Protect
Allocation of Resources

President:

- Administration
- Execution of policies and planning
- Management
- Day-to day operations

Fiduciary Duties

- Duty of Care - engagement, attendance, informed, strategic, monitor
- Duty of Loyalty – operate in the interest of the college, and entire community -not a special interest
- Duty of Obedience – follow state and federal laws, system and college policies, act within the scope of these documents

Common Statutory Responsibilities



- Establish policies and regulations to implement state law
- Establish policies for and approve institutional plans
- Approve annual budget and monitor the fiscal condition

- Establish policies for and approve educational programs
- Establish employment policies
- Manage and control district property
- Establish local tax rates or mill levies

Board Purpose

- Stewardship of the institution in service of the public interest
- Protect institution
- Assure fulfillment of mission
- Strategically plan for future

Board's Role

Govern through policy

- Govern as a whole body, not as an individual
- Set a tone of respect and civility
- Focus on listening to and learning from the external community
- Exercise fiduciary responsibility –duty of care, duty of loyalty, duty of obedience
- Focus on strategic planning and leadership
- Focus on policy making, not administering – the what
- Powerfully delegate
- Publicly support the CEO
- Hold the CEO accountable through monitoring
- Provide a contract with the CEO
- Hire and evaluate the CEO
- Monitor successes & deficiencies of college
- Know the financial status of the college

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Set standards through policy setting
- Act as a unit with one voice –no power to act on own
- Work as a member of the board team
- Discourage partisan politics –allegiance to college not political party
- Represent the public for whom they hold the college in trust
- Govern transparently
- Set the college’s strategic direction
- Employ, evaluate and support the CEO
- Set realistic goals in collaboration with the president
- Define standards for quality and prudence through policy making
- Assure fiscal health and stability through establishing policy standards for stewardship of public funds
- Create a positive climate
- Monitor institutional performance
- Support and advocate for the college
- Make board a priority- do homework, attend college events, be an ambassador

Effective Trusteeship

Work as a member of the board unit – Abide by board principles and support board decisions

Prioritize being a trustee – doing homework, showing up

Understand the college and its role

Know the community and represent its interests



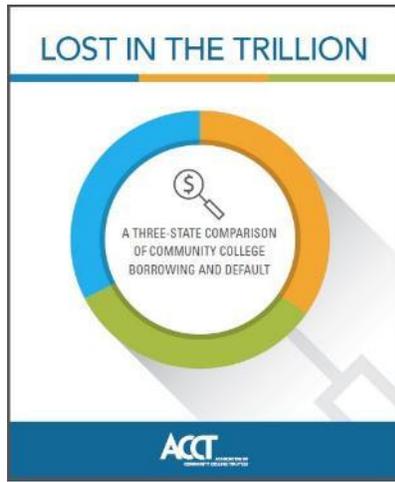
Be visionary and thoughtful

Support the college's pursuit of its mission

Act with integrity, respect and civility

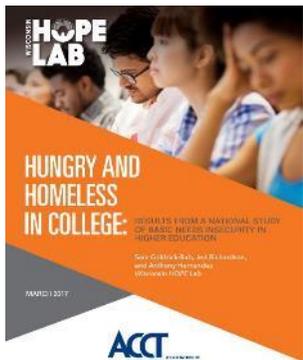
Use influence effectively

Avoid conflicts of interest



Module 2

Policy Governance



Policy Categories

- Outcome or Results Policies – (the “what”) defines what will be produced or offered, for whom and at what cost. Ends are not the services the college provides- they are the **results** of the services. The “means”)the “how” by which these policies are achieved is the work of the administration, faculty and staff
- Executive Limitations Policies define the boundaries or parameters for the President and employees within which the must work
- Governance Process – roles and responsibilities of the board
- Board-Staff Relationship Policies describe the delegation to and accountability of the CEO

Board Power

- The board's power lies in its policy making role
- If the board believes the college is moving in the wrong direction that can be rectified through developing new policy or adding executive limitations



What is Governing through policy?

Three Principles:

- Board decisions are predominantly policy decisions - Look at all issues through a policy lens (the “what”) leaving the “how” to administration
- Policies are broad statements that set direction and standards for college operations
- Boards define and delegate – identify the direction up-front and parameters within which the staff operates

Board and CEO Role in Policy Development

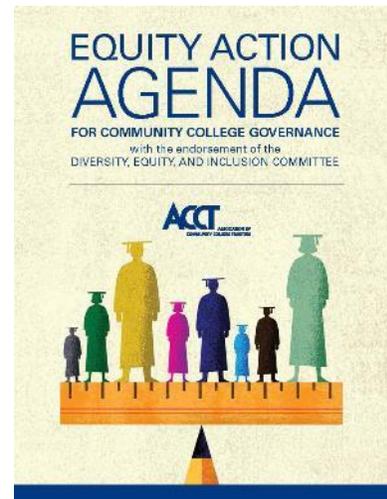
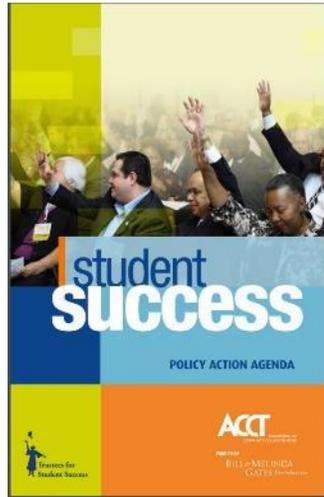
- Policy making is a joint effort between the Board and the CEO
- Establishment of of a systematic approach that defines roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, the steps in the process to create a policy and how the policy will be monitored
- Know the difference between policy and operations

Board Role in Policy Making

- Establish a thoughtful and public policy making process
- Analyze policy proposals in light of ethical and legal standards
- Assure multiple perspectives have been considered
- Adopt broad policies that provide visionary direction and establish clear parameters
- Monitor policy implementation
- Ensure the policy is periodically reviewed and updated
- Center policy making on creating positive impacts on students and the community

CEO's Role in Policy Making

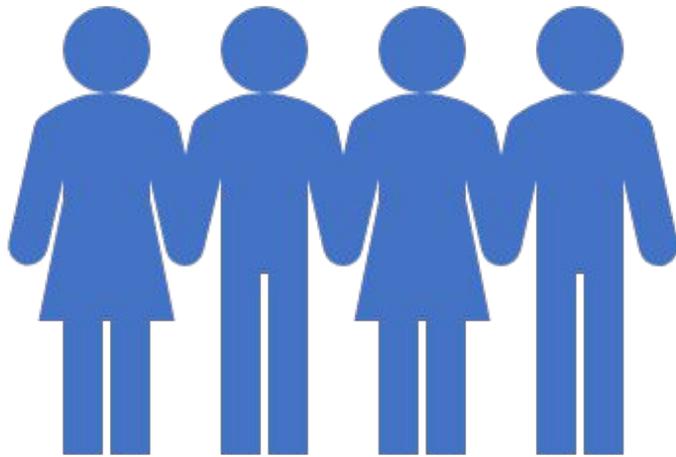
- Help define and manage a thoughtful and public policymaking process
- Provide policy analyses and present alternatives for board discussion
- Alert the board to political ramifications of proposed policy alternatives
- Provides information that enables the board to monitor policy implementation
- Ensures the board regularly evaluates and updates its policies



Effective boards adopt, live by and monitor their own policies; CEOs help boards adhere to their policies and ties agenda items to policy statements

Pamila Fisher

How are Policies Developed?



Policy on policies describing the process for policy development – who initiates, opportunities for input and feedback, roles of different stakeholders, who decides

Stages of Policy Development

Identify the need for a policy

Determine who should be involved

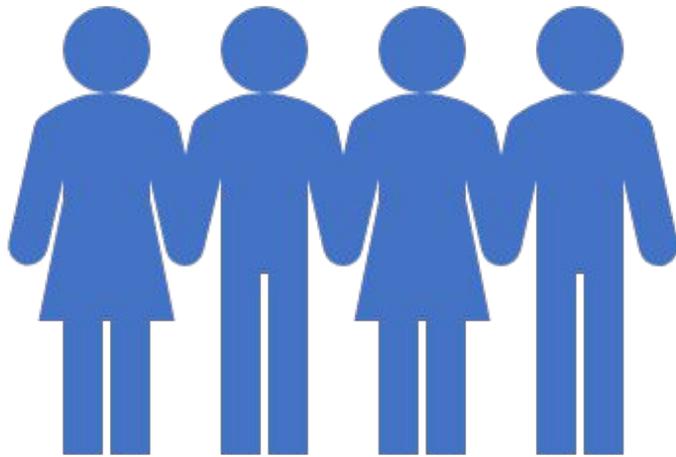
Gather information and generate alternatives

Analyze and discuss implications of alternatives

Adopt policy

Implement policy

Monitor and evaluate policy

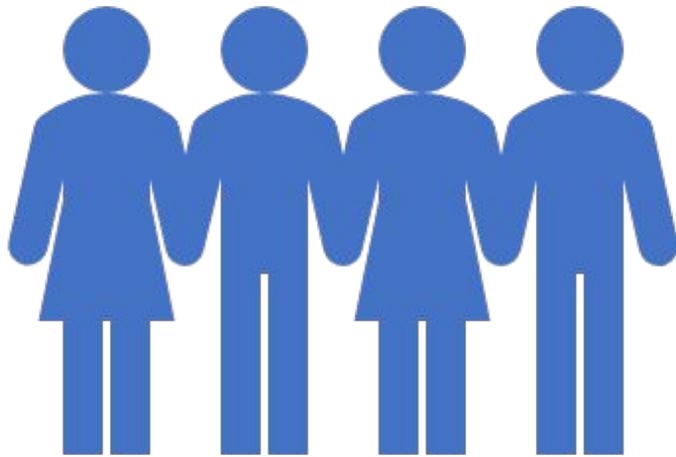


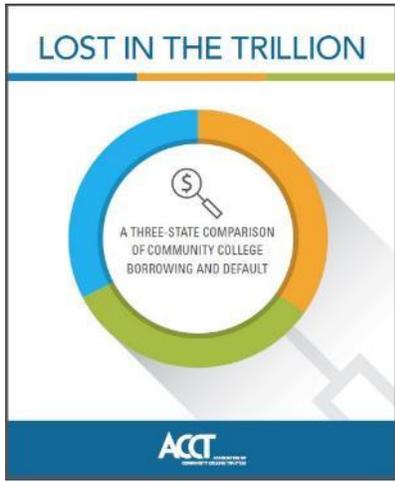
SUMMARY

- Policies are the voice of the board

- They are living statements that frame the work of the board and the staff

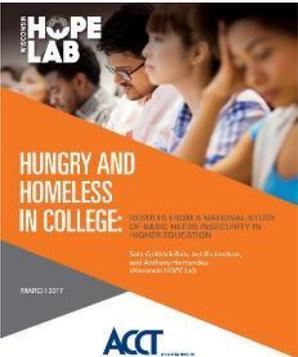
- Policies must be used by the board and staff – policy implications are discussed when issues are being explored

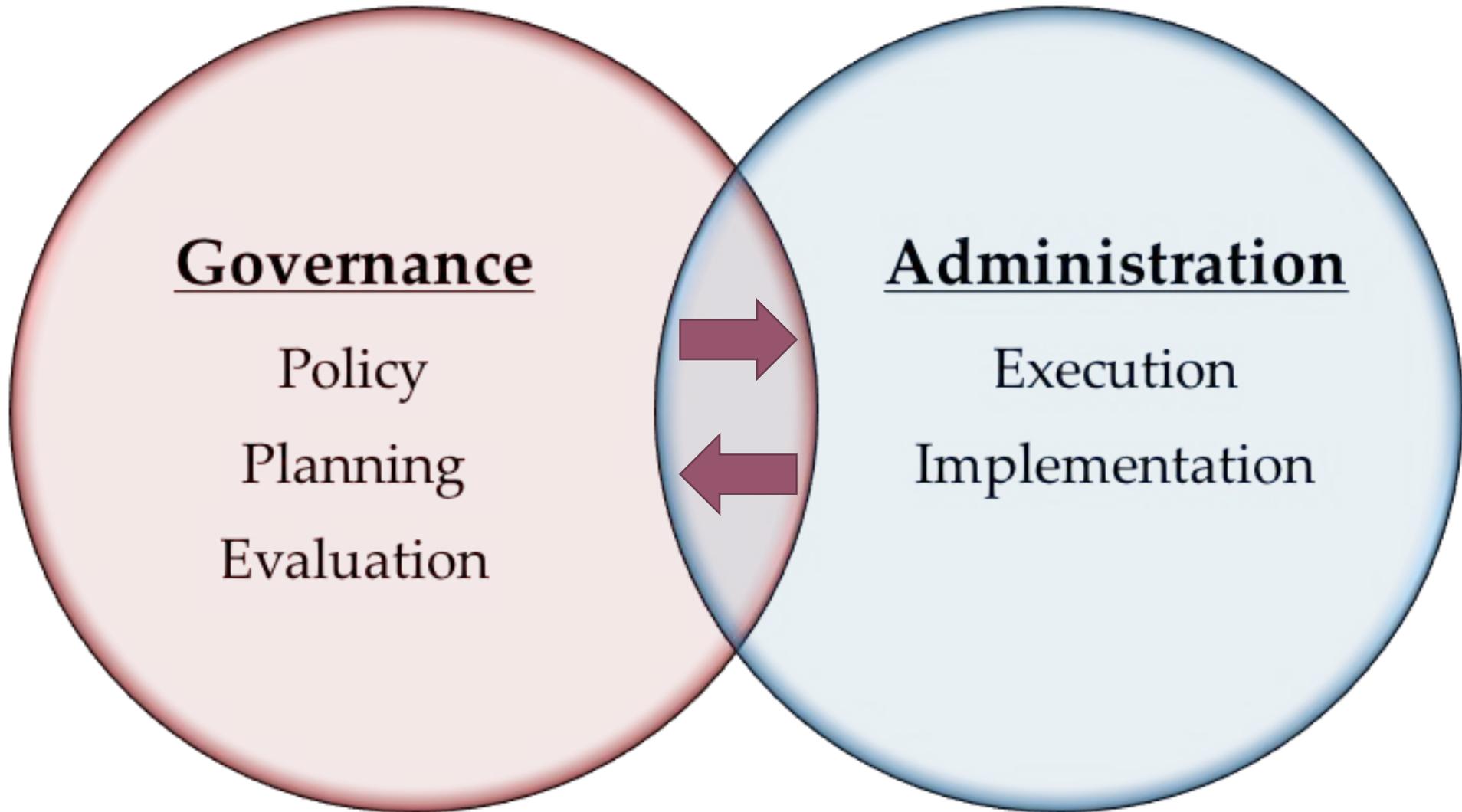




Module 3

Board – CEO Relationship





Governance

Consultation

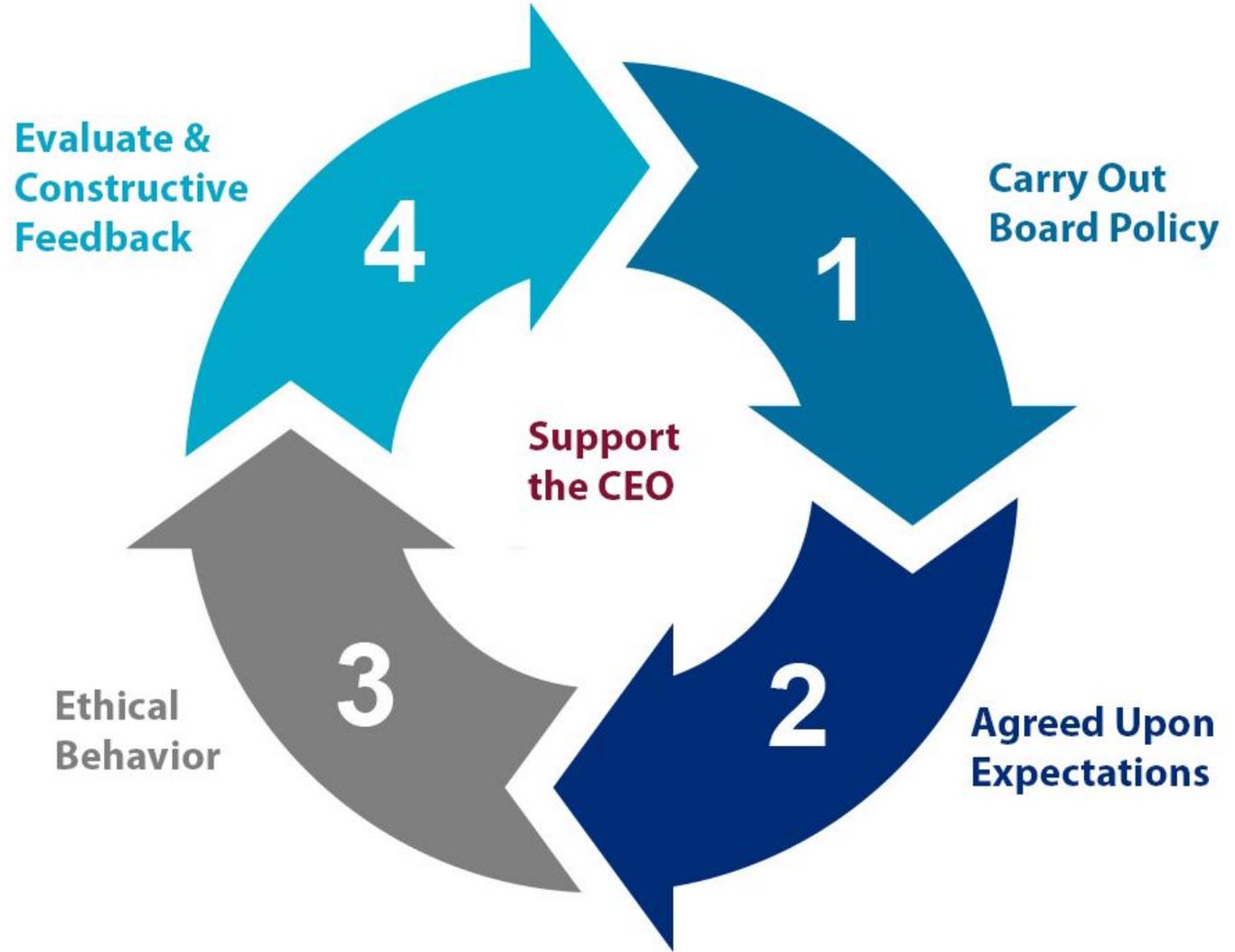
Administration

Statutory
Fiduciary
Policy Making
Direction
Delegation
Oversight/monitoring
Support and
Protection

Strategic Planning
Advocacy

Administration
Management
Day-to-day
guidance

CEO AND BOARD AS A TEAM

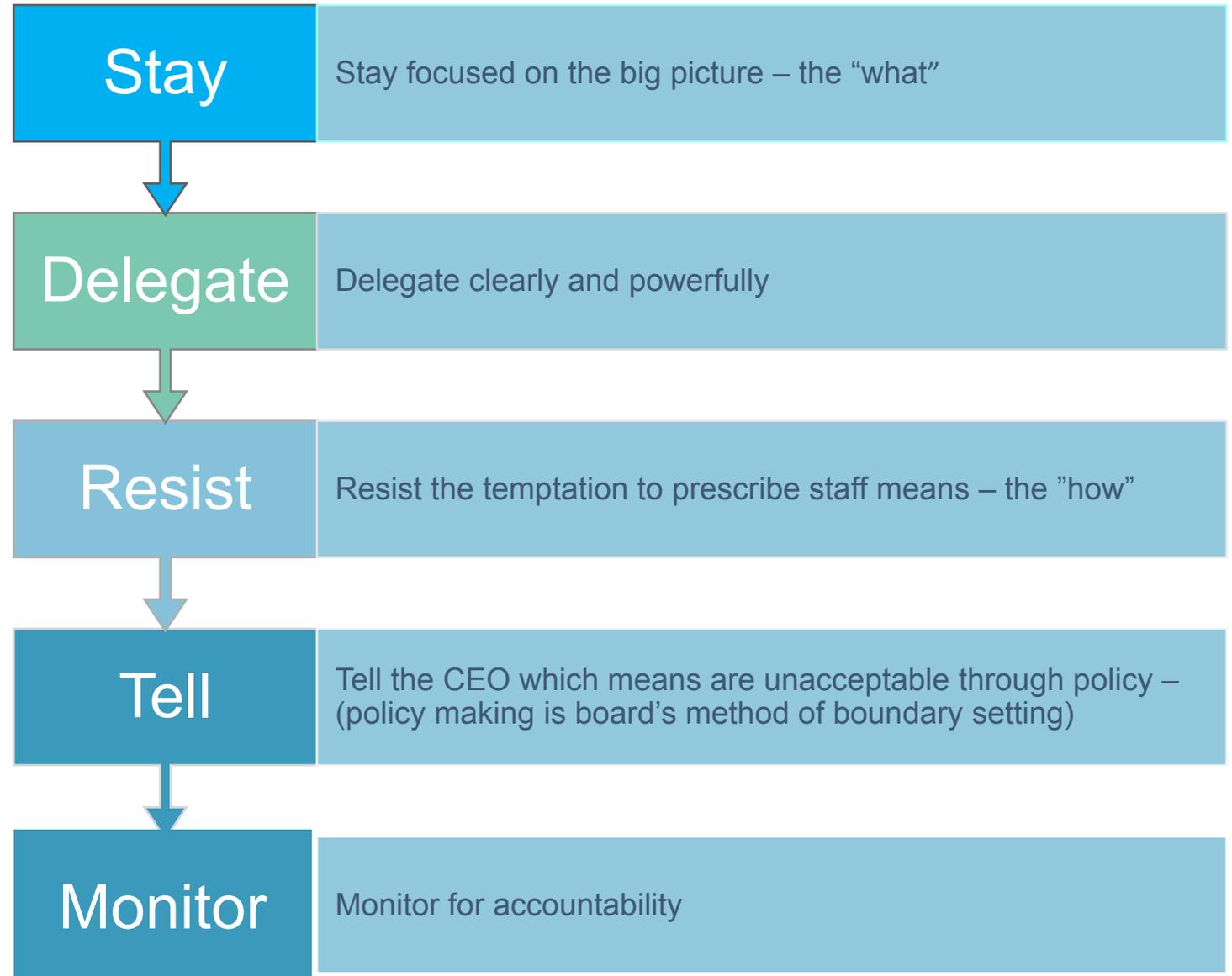


Govern through policy

Board's Role

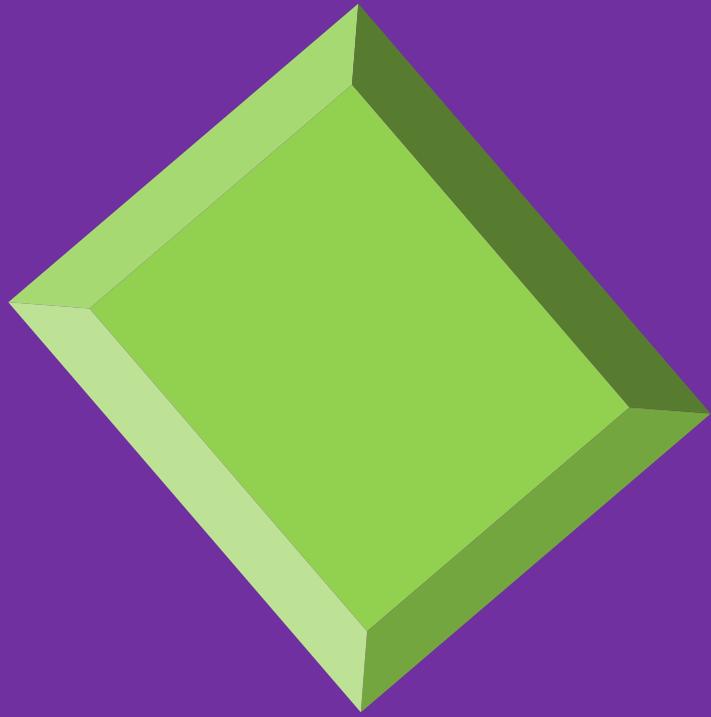
- Govern as a whole body, not as an individual
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- Focus on policy making, not administering
- Powerfully delegate
- Publicly support the CEO
- Hold the CEO accountable through monitoring
- Provide a contract with the CEO
- Evaluate the CEO
- Monitor successes & deficiencies of college
- Know the financial status of the college

Board Role



CEO's Role

- Respect the Board and its role
- Listen
- Engage the board in policy level discussions
- Make recommendations that include analysis and options
- Publicly support the board
- Adhere to board policy
- Facilitate trustee involvement in community and college
- Do not ask to make decisions without advance preparation
- Provide all board members with same information
- Treat all equally
- Respect time
- Stay out of board politics
- Keep Board informed of financial condition of college
- Manage/administer all aspects of the operations of the college within policy framework



Board-CEO Partnership

Communication

- Open, appropriate and even-handed
- Explore issues to achieve mutual understanding
- Provide the board with comprehensive, relevant, timely information (clarify what information is needed to inform board's decision making)
- Establish protocol for connecting with internal stakeholders
- Share concerns with the CEO
- No surprises
- Sounding board
- Exhibit mutual respect and support



Communication

Board communicates all requests for information through the CEO

Communication with individual employees/groups must begin with the Board Member indicating that any information shared will be shared with the CEO

The CEO must communicate (and not just good news) to the board

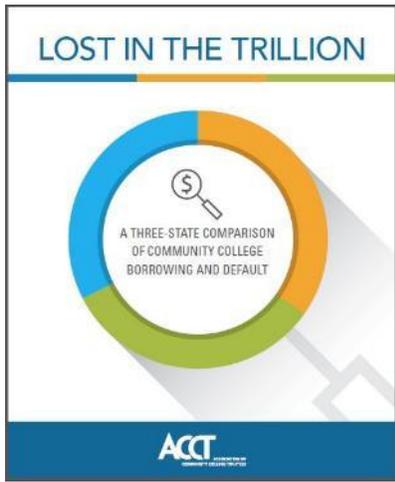
**What does it look
like on the ground?**

Clarity, clarity, clarity

A trusting relationship among
board members and with the CEO

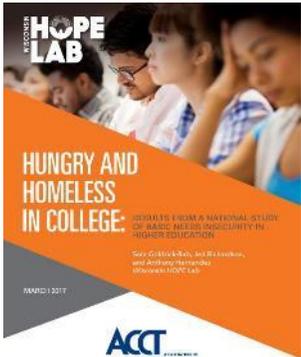
Vigorous debate...but once vote
taken -speak with one voice

Enhanced dialogue, consultation,
advice seeking and giving



Module 4

Setting the Board and the President up for Success



Set up for Success

- Good Board Governance
- Effective Board/President Relations
- Clear expectations and strategic priorities
- Agreed upon evaluation system
- Communication Protocols
- Identifying what support looks like



ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

Board Retreats at least annually – time for deeper and richer conversations about issues that matter

Annual Board Assessment resulting in Board Goals relating to board operations and behavior

Agreement on what constitutes a high performing board and a commitment to act in compliance with that agreement

Professional Learning for Trustees – local onboarding/orientation, state associations, ACCT

Take time to team build and get to know each other

Use tools such as agenda development that focuses the board on action

Study sessions (also called work sessions or conference sessions) where boards take a more in-depth look at issues e.g. student success, equity to provide shared and deeper understanding of the issues and the policy implications

Identifying a short set of high level strategic priorities and expectations annually which constitutes the CEO's work plan and upon which they will be evaluated

Development of trusting relationships among board members and with the CEO

Candid discussion and agreement on what reciprocal support looks like for individual board members, for president and for the board as a whole

The Board and Accreditation Standards – an example

- An accredited institution possesses and demonstrates the following attributes or activities:
 - 1. a clearly articulated and transparent governance structure that outlines roles, responsibilities, and accountability for decision making by each constituency, including governing body, administration, faculty, staff and students;
 - 2. a legally constituted governing body that:
 - a. serves the public interest, ensures that the institution clearly states and fulfills its mission and goals, has fiduciary responsibility for the institution, and is ultimately accountable for the academic quality, planning, and fiscal well-being of the institution;
 - b. has sufficient independence and expertise to ensure the integrity of the institution. Members must have primary responsibility to the accredited institution and not allow political, financial, or other influences to interfere with their governing responsibilities;
 - c. ensures that neither the governing body nor its individual members interferes in the day-to-day operations of the institution;
 - d. oversees at the policy level the quality of teaching and learning, the approval of degree programs and the awarding of degrees, the establishment of personnel policies and procedures, the approval of policies and by-laws, and the assurance of strong fiscal management;
 - e. plays a basic policy-making role in financial affairs to ensure integrity and strong financial management. This may include a timely review of audited financial statements and/or other documents related to the fiscal viability of the institution;
 - f. appoints and regularly evaluates the performance of the Chief Executive Officer

--Middle States Commission on Higher Education



The voice of community college leaders.

Contact Us

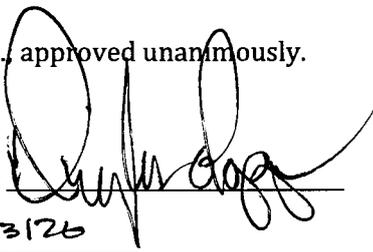
Email:
acctinfo@acct.org

Phone:
202-775-4667

Website:
www.acct.org

12.0 Adjournment (Action)

Motion by Brown, second by Cosens to adjourn at 2:03 p.m. approved unanimously.

Board Chair: 
Date: 2/13/26

Attest:

Clerk, Board of Trustees: 

Date: 02/13/2026