PREPARING FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE: A MODULE-BASED ORIENTATION FOR
NEW TRUSTEES

by

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ABSTRACT

Community colleges are under tremendous pressure to meet their mission of providing affordable and accessible post-secondary learning and to serve their constituents in an arena filled with political pressures, unstable funding streams, declining enrollments, an increase in CEO turnover with a narrow pipeline of qualified and experienced successors, and unforeseen post-covid learning modalities and competition. Leadership at the governance level is critical for the community college sector to navigate this changing landscape. Well prepared and oriented trustees have a distinct advantage in understanding their board roles to successfully fulfill governance oversight responsibilities.

This research is focused on understanding the role of trustees in community college governance, how they arrive at these roles, consideration of their qualifications to govern a community college, and the orientation practices that would prepare new trustees to be successful. The purpose of this product dissertation is to create a product, specifically an orientation program for new trustees, using as an example an orientation I created for the College of Southern Maryland.

The Orientation Learning Modules (OLM) were initially designed for the College of Southern Maryland to be used as a new trustee onboarding and Board orientation process. The model uses adult learning theories and theoretical frameworks for information delivery, recognition of best practices in andragogy, and a pacing of information flow to build confidence

and understanding in new trustees to support early and effective participation in their role of governance by employing best practices for community college governing boards.

This governance-centered approach is designed to allow trustees to navigate the environment at the local, state, and federal levels while demonstrating a healthy trustee–president relationship. The intended outcome of using this model is to ensure the clarity and understanding of trustee roles and responsibilities to build the confidence and performance of these civic -minded citizens.

KEY WORDS: Community college, board of trustees, governance, onboarding, orientation

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who own my entire heart and for who I do all things. I am inherently aware that my ancestors have poured into me, and I have a responsibility to do good works that will pour into future generations. I believe my children and their children will do great and wonderful things for the good of the order. For in each of us lies the ability to make choices, every single day, to do the best we can and then, God willing, to wake up the next day and be able to commit to doing a little bit better than we did the day before.

To my father, Major General Larry G. Lehowicz (retired), who generously poured pride, encouragement, insight, and an incredible knowledge of human dynamics and leadership into my work: Thank you for always answering my phone calls and never rushing a conversation, for making me believe that you found my efforts and work both worthy and fascinating. I cannot thank you enough for your support and love.

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stay in touch with your parents as you lead amazing and wonderful adult lives. You are my

greatest pride and joy and, in every way, my most significant legacy.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to identify the content and delivery strategies of an orientation program for community college board of trustees, specifically the College of Southern Maryland, in order to prepare them for their fiduciary responsibilities to successfully govern the institution and ensure the mission of providing affordable and accessible post-secondary learning takes place. This work was focused on the following research goals:

1. What are the community college trustee fiduciary responsibilities?

2. What are the current best practices for community college trustees?

3. What are the knowledge sets required for governing boards?

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE PROFESSION

One of the greatest challenges facing American higher education today is how to professionalize governance. The failures of trusteeship and the negative impacts on community colleges are almost too numerous to mention; some are self-inflicted, while others reflect poor optics, a lack of paying attention, or, worse, the violation of fiduciary responsibilities (Mitchell & King, p. 11). Community colleges today face unprecedented challenges in an environment that is volatile, inequitable, faces political unrest, financial stress, a failing business model, declining enrollments, a growing suspicion of the value of higher education, and competition from unforeseen quarters, including each other: "Done well, the practice of governance in higher

education should be a purposeful, impactful, and collaborative undertaking that results in outcomes consistent with those on whose behalf the board serves" (Phelan, 2022, p. 51). Community College governance exists today as it has for decades; the absence of a routine update to a board's own style and efficacy foretells an inability for meaningful impact and gains in their service (Phelan, 2022). Trustees of a community college are the stewards of their institution and responsible for guiding their institution both strategically and financially (Seiler, 2020, p. 1). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), leadership changes frequently with an average 30% turnover every two years at the presidential level. In a survey conducted by AACC in 2012, about 75% of community college CEOs planned to retire in the next ten years — we have now arrived at that anticipated doorstep. The most important fiduciary responsibility a trustee has is to hire and assess an institutional president to lead and direct the administration of the college (Smith, 2000). Compounding a leadership void are the risks of a derailed presidency. Trachtenberg, Kauver, and Bogue's (2013) "Presidencies Derailed: Why University Presidents Fail and How to Prevent It" states that a derailment can undermine an institution's image, damage its alumni relations, and destroy campus morale, but it can also cost millions of dollars. Sometimes presidents are dismissed for performance, financial, or institutional "fit" reasons, but there are nearly always political reasons as well. The details of these employment situations, often masked by confidentiality clauses, increasingly emerge as social networks and media buzz with speculation (Trachtenberg, Kauver, & Bogue, 2013). According to Leigh Ann Touzeau, the analysis of derailment is not a fault-finding exercise; it is rare that the fault lies wholly with either the board or the president. The analytics repeatedly remind us of the delicate balance and intricate calculations that any president must maintain in

order to thrive at any institution at any time (cited in Trachtenberg et al., 2013, p. 60). In order to succeed, a community college president needs strong working relationships with key constituencies, including the board of trustees. A prepared, committed, and knowledgeable board of trustees that makes informed decisions and has a firm understanding of its role — as well as the role of the president and the duties of governance — are necessary for a supportive and positive president-trustee relationship.

Trustees have continuous learning opportunities, outside of institutional onboarding, to support and strengthen their knowledge and networking skills. The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) offers resources and opportunities for trustees to engage and enhance their ability to serve. The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) offers resources for four- and two-year board members as well as continuing the body of work and research into effective board governance. American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), American Council on Education (ACE), and the Aspen Institute all offer literature and learning opportunities for governance in higher education. In addition to the education and resources on the roles, trustees have the opportunity to examine their own leadership styles, these are public roles and trustee behaviors observed by community, staff, faculty, and students through the provisions of the Open Meeting Act which requires public notice and access to board meetings. Governance, stewardship, and servant leadership intersect with trusteeship and will be discussed more in Chapter Two.

The composition of community college trustees is changing as well. In 2016, AGB reported that most board members were between the ages of 50–69, remaining mostly male and Caucasian. The report states that since 1969 the percentage of women increased from 12%

to 32%. Removing minority-serving institutions from the data indicates that minority trustees represent 11.1% of public and private boards, respectively (Mitchell & King, p. 10).

Between 2016 and 2022 there have been intentional efforts to create gender and ethnic representation on community college boards. ACCT now recognizes the need for affinity groups among trustee groups and has created space for African American Trustees, Pacific Islander, and Latinex Trustees to build networks and share knowledge. In order to embrace the benefits of equity and inclusion of a diverse board, the college needs to understand the learning needs, especially as it applies to governance, of all trustees. Doing so allows all members to engage in collaborative work in a collegial and supportive environment which allows their multiple voices to be heard in the decision-making process, and then move toward the use of representing board decisions with one voice when communicating decisions to stakeholders.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Several key terms are used throughout this dissertation and are defined as follows:

- *Fiduciary* – involving trust, especially with regard to the relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary. The trustee as a fiduciary has responsibilities to the stakeholders they serve, specifically the community college they govern and their relationship with the president.

- *Governance* – the action or manner of governing.

- *Governance Leadership* – the willingness and ability to take ownership in a part of an organization and to continually do what is best for the organization.

- *Boardsmanship* – trustees feel free to express their opinions and are open to hearing the opinions of others.

- *Association of Community College Trustees* – The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is a non-profit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond.

- *American Association of Community Colleges* –The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) is the primary advocacy organization for the nation's community colleges. The association represents more than 1,000 2-year, associate degree-granting institutions and nearly 12 million students.

- *Association of Governing Boards* – is the premier organization focused on empowering college, university, and foundation boards to govern with knowledge and confidence.

FOCUS AND GOALS OF THIS WORK

This dissertation was developed in response to needs identified in one community college system for improving and enhancing board professional development. In Maryland, the changing public perception on the value proposition of higher education, alongside the combined demographic and socioeconomic changes of the counties that the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) serves, underscore the need for best practices and processes for new trustee orientation. New trustee orientation — paired with regularly scheduled learning refreshers for current trustees — will provide focus and context for board decisions. New and current trustees should be prepared and informed for stewardship within the construct of their fiduciary responsibilities.

This product dissertation provides criteria for addressing the adult learning needs of CSM trustees, as well as providing a construct for inclusive group decision-making. The dissertation draws attention to the difficulties that arise from boards that are not collaborative and the negative impact that lack of collaboration may have on the community college and its ability to serve its constituents. Finally, the dissertation provides content and delivery strategies for an effective orientation model for the college trustees.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MISSION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Colonial and frontier leaders held to the Enlightenment belief that education was key to citizenship (Mitchell & King, 2018, p. 1). Colleges founded in the colonial period are recognized today as Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth (Lucas, 2006, p. 104-5). Between 1782 and 1802, revolutionaries established nineteen more colleges (p. 117). During the nineteenth century, the federal government introduced the Morrill Acts, establishing land-grant institutions that accelerated growth, resulting in hundreds of colleges being founded as new states and territories were added to the union (Mitchell & King, 2018, p. 1). This growth continued throughout the twentieth century, although it wasn't until 1901 that the first public community college was founded through the shared vision of J. Stanley Brown and William Rainey Harper to create a path to higher education for all citizenries. Their innovation created a junior college that academically paralleled the first two years of a four-year college or university.

This new college format was designed to allow local residents the ability to pursue a college education (Joliet Junior College, n.d). By the 1970s the community college became the point of entry for new student populations who typically were older and economically disadvantaged, but the resources did not exist to help serve these new populations. About 75% of low-achieving students dropped out during their first year in urban community colleges (Beach, 2010, p. xxxiii). At this time, the community college model began to shift to recognize the unique needs and demands of educating the economically disadvantaged, ethnic/racialized minorities, immigrants, the disabled, and dislocated low-skilled workers (p. xxxiii). The growth continued throughout the twentieth century, especially in the postwar periods. In 1980, there

were 1,500 public four-year institutions, 1,700 private four-year institutions, and more than 1,000 public and private two-year institutions (Mitchell & King, 2018, p. 1). The open-access comprehensive community college model is now responsible to the needs of local residents, local businesses, state systems of secondary and post-secondary education, and state and regional economies, and the myriad needs of many different types of students (p. 1).

MARYLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A BRIEF HISTORY AND THEIR GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Community Colleges in Maryland are state-assisted local institutions, with trustees appointed by the governor. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has statewide coordinating responsibility for the community colleges and establishes general policies for their operation and coordinates relationships between the community colleges, the state and county public school systems, and the private high schools to facilitate cooperation among them in the guidance and admission of students to the community colleges and arrange for the most advantageous use of facilities (Maryland General Assembly, n.d). Advocacy and liaison representation with the governor and the Maryland General Assembly is coordinated by the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) that has represented the sixteen colleges with a unified voice since 1992. The association works with businesses, communities, government, and other organizations to improve student success, provide job training, and promote economic development across the state (Maryland Association of Community Colleges, n.d.).

The sixteen Maryland community colleges differ in size, demographic and socio-economic representation, workforce partnerships, and academic program offerings. There is a strong history of autonomy of operation at the individual college level and an equally strong

level of collaboration among college leaders as a statewide enterprise at the state and national level.

All fifty states currently have some form of state oversight for higher education, typically referred to as a board of trustees, governor, or overseers (Davis, 2002). These community-based boards can provide immediate input and response to any number of college issues (Cloud & Kater, 2008). The board of trustees for the sixteen Maryland Community Colleges are appointed by the governor of the State of Maryland through activities of the Governor's Appointments Office (GAO). All interested citizens fill out an online form stating their interest in trusteeship. Membership, term length, and limits are found in the articles contained in Maryland statute of higher education and described in reports of the GAO (Table 1).

Table 1: Maryland Community College Board Structure

COLLEGE NAME	NUMBER OF TRUSTEES	TERM LENGTH	TERM LIMITS
Allegany College of Maryland	7 members	6 years from July 1	May be reappointed
Anne Arundel Community College	8 members	4 years	No more than 3 consecutive terms
Baltimore City Community College	9 members	6 years from July 1	May serve 2 consecutive terms
Community College of Baltimore County	15 members	5 years from July 1	May serve 2 consecutive terms
Carroll Community College	7 members	6 years from July 1	May be reappointed
Cecil College	7 members	6 years from July 1	May be reappointed
Chesapeake College	2 members from each county	5 years from July 1	May serve 3 terms

COLLEGE NAME	NUMBER OF TRUSTEES	TERM LENGTH	TERM LIMITS
Frederick Community College	7 members	5 years	May serve 3 terms
Garrett Community College	7 members	6 years from July 1	May be reappointed
Hagerstown Community College	7 members	6 years from July 1	May be reappointed
Harford Community College	9 members	5 years	May serve 2 consecutive terms
Howard Community College	7 members	6 years from July 1	May be reappointed
Prince George	9 members	5 years	May serve 2 consecutive terms
Montgomery	10 members	6 years	May be reappointed
College of Southern Maryland	9 members	5 years	May serve two consecutive terms
Wor-Wic Community College	7 members	6 years from July 1	Until a successor is appointed

Maryland Governors Appointment Office, 2021

The total of the state's 134 trustees, in partnership with the 16 presidents, make fiduciary decisions that impact 164,310 credit students, 180,278 non-credit students, and 18,610 employees (MACC, 2020). Thus, collectively, the trustees are the voice for 344,588 Maryland students. Being prepared and knowledgeable for their role ensures trustees are able to sustain the mission and reach of higher education for local, state, and national community college students.

The trustee term's start and end dates are staggered to allow for a continuity of operations and succession planning in board roles within the larger board. This creates an

opportunity for current trustees to have refresher learning opportunities as new trustees each become familiar with their roles. Trustees, however, do not have to demonstrate knowledge of the higher education system or have community college trusteeship experience in order to be appointed. It is the responsibility of the leadership of the college to make trustees aware of the mission of the community college, the culture of the college and the board, the issues that are important to stakeholder groups, effective communication and query processes, and the knowledge necessary to be part of an effective, uniform, and collegial governing body of the institution.

The setting for this dissertation work, the College of Southern Maryland (CSM), serves three counties; the nine-member appointed board of trustees has a membership requirement to ensure there is equal representation for each county the institution serves; three trustees each from Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert counties represent the nine-member board.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is expected that trustees arrive at the community college governance as responsible, thoughtful, and well-intentioned individuals, though the majority may have not received, or received very little, orientation to the college, the board, its culture, or specific duties. Some trustees may have a heightened interest in some topics, perhaps due to their political leanings, work experience, or loyalty to those they perceive they are on the board to represent (Phelan, 2022, p. 52). An understanding of the psychology of human motivation by Abraham Maslow presents a progression of human needs, which builds on the preceding level, until the ultimate goal of self-actualization is reached (Cherry, 2022) as seen in the image of pyramid ascension below:

Figure 1: Self-Actualization Pyramid

Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

Community college boards also exist in a hierarchy with lower levels of viability and efficacy at the foundation, formative and norming levels in the center, and the optimum level of efficacy reached at the highest point. Board governance, like the Maslovian model, will move up and down the continuum as internal and external forces appear; individual trustees, too, may experience varying stages of comfort, skill, and effectiveness with their governance role (Phelan, 2022, p. 53).

In 2013, the Association of Community College Trustees published An Overview of Exemplary Community College Governance which highlights key trustee principles, including (1) the importance of "trust" in trusteeship; (2) the board's role as an advocate of the college; (3) the importance of the board speaking with one voice or none at all; (4) the fact that most board decisions are policy decisions; (5) that community benefit is the central focus of governance; (6) that the board creates a relationship with the CEO / president that is empowering and safe; and (7) that the board exemplifies ethical behavior and conduct that is above reproach (ACCT,

Orientation Handbook, 2013). These topics are covered in the ACCT document and include informed conversations, expectations, and duties of board and president.

Another key resource for college trustee boards is the Association of Governing Board's (2018) "An Anatomy of Good Board Governance" that includes these key characteristics of healthy boards:

- A good board is diverse

- A good board is well informed about their roles and responsibilities

- A good board includes all members actively participating in the work of the board

- A good board includes all members are committed to the institution they serve

- A good board focuses on the big picture and takes the long view

- A good board uses its time productively

- A good board seeks and obtains the information it needs

- A good board recognizes the paramount importance of its relationship with the president

- A good board basis their relationships with each other on mutual respect and trust

- A good board includes advocacy with internal and external constituencies

AGB stresses that the keys to good governance rely on composition, focus, and relationships (AGB, 2018).

While these key resources provide strong emphasis on what trusteeship should be, there is little discussion about how institutions should deliver this information for implementation; the assumption is that the reading of these publications provides what is needed. According to Finkelstein (2009), "The support of the college president and the fiscal and policy oversight of college may, therefore, be left to untested and untrained political

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appointees who have never served on a governing board and have not been trained in appropriate board protocol or understand operational boundaries" (p. 4). Martin and Samels (2006) emphasized: "The challenges and opportunities faced by community college presidents are immense, but college presidents operate from a different perch than the chief executive in the corporate or philanthropic world and the lines of authority and decision-making responsibilities of presidents and college trustee boards are sometimes blurred, especially when the roles and responsibilities are not clearly expressed or delineated through orientation and training" (p. 4). Avoiding conflicts of interests and other self-serving standards, especially in financial decisions, possible breach of confidentiality, and role conflicts may be circumvented by proper orientation that clearly denotes the function and self-accountability measures: "The issue of acclimating new trustees to their roles on a community college governing board, therefore, is of paramount importance to the college president and community college. Forging a cohesive body from a group of unrelated individuals from varying backgrounds who are supportive of the college's mission and goals and, if needed, are willing to change the mission and goals, is a challenge for the college president" (Finkelstein, 2009, p. 5).

Orientation programs provide content and confidence as trustees prepare to be informed stewards for the community college. A purposeful informative introduction to their role building structurally to converge information with andragogical practices is appropriate training early in their term; scheduled refreshers create value through consistent exposure as they move through their tenure. This process ensures trustees have consistent exposure to the expectations of governance and access to the resources that allow for self and group accountability.

To be effective, an orientation program for trustees should highlight the mission of the institution and empower group decision-making. Good governance led by informed trustees is the key to success in higher education. The Orientation Learning Modules (OLM) are designed to employ a Governance-centered approach to enhance the trustee-college relationship, the president- trustee relationship, and the effective use of trustee time, talents, and treasure as governors of the community college. Using this model ensures clarity of role and responsibilities of trustees which builds confidence and performance to execute their duties well.

The OLM is based on three main foundational beliefs: (1) an effective board needs systematic training in all aspects of the institution it serves, (2) an effective board needs systematic training in the principles of effective governance, and (3) by applying adult learning theory, an effective orientation program can support and develop an effective college board of trustees.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Trustees of community college boards must understand their fiduciary responsibilities and demonstrate effective governance by word and action. To achieve this level of comprehension, orientation programs need to recognize trustees as adult learners and implement andragogical practices that are designed to benefit the unique needs of the adult learner. Balancing orientation programs to adult learner motivations will complement both the expectations and actions of the participating trustees as they strive to become effective leaders.

The 1930s produced early publications that focused on the difference between how children learn, pedagogy, and how adults learn, andragogy. Those publications included *Adult Learning* and a second publication *Adult Interests* by Edward L. Thorndike, and *The Meaning of Adult Education,* by Herbert Sorneson. The outset of this work resulted in methodologies of andragogy that introduced the concept of the momentum of knowledge traction gained by complementing information accumulation with the analysis of experience and complemented with the effectiveness of situational learning over subject presentation.

The 1970s introduced the basic Whole-Part-Whole (WPW) Learning Model. The WPW purports there is a natural rhythm to learning that takes place through broad introduction of a new concept, followed by individual parts of the knowledge needed, commencing with enveloping the broad, the narrow, into the broad again, thus allowing anticipation, understanding, and application as a specific method of andragogy.

Fast-forward to the 2000s, the principles of andragogy matured with the work of Malcolm Knowles, who, along with co-authors Elwood F. Holton, III, and Richard A. Swanson, with the publication *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development,* suggested that adult learning occurs in many settings for many different reasons. Andragogy is a transactional model of adult learning that is designed to transcend specific applications and situations (Knowles, et al., 2005, p. 143). It is important to note that andragogy can be combined with other theories, for example social change (critical theory) or performance improvement (performance/human capital theory) (p. 144).

For this OLM, adult learning theory has been applied to the content of the orientation for the principles of effective governance. As trustees in 2022 are more inclusive and diverse than before, schemata awareness is recognized as a method for providing motivation, so the participants want to learn, by making the content meaningful and connecting it to the learner (Knowles, et al., 2002, p. 242).

Trusteeship is servant leadership and can be self-actualizing for well-intentioned leaders who commit to upholding their fiduciary responsibilities. Thus, acknowledging that there are a range of different motivations that motivate one to become a trustee, effective onboarding programs should capitalize on the trustees' own internal desire for goal attainment and personal achievement.

For an institution to be successful, and the people who lead it, a

common understanding of the basic purpose or mission and make decisions in alignment with that specific mission (Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, Dorman, 2013, p. 7). An effective orientation for trustees, then, must highlight the mission of the institution and empower group decision-making.

Based on these foundational principles of adult learning theory aligned with the principles of Whole-Part-Whole Learning Model, this OLM provides an orientation program focusing on the principles of governance leadership for a community college board of trustees. As emphasized above, the program seeks to capitalize on the trustees' own internal desire for goal attainment and personal achievement while highlighting the mission of the institution and empowering group decision-making.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation presents itself in four additional chapters. Chapter Two is the Review of Literature designed to provide a theoretical basis for this dissertation by analyzing and synthesizing a comprehensive selection of scholarly research related to the topics of community college board governance and adult learning that informs the product design and implementation strategies. Chapter Three describes the processes used to create the product including delimitations and assumptions. Chapter Four presents the Module Based Orientation designed for the College of Southern Maryland. Chapter Five discusses implementation of the program, as well as the assumptions, challenges, and recommendations for the further development of the tool.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Board of Trustees who govern a college represent the changing population of the community in age, gender, race, and experiences, creating a diverse and inclusive board. But, as communities change, so, too, does the membership of the Trustee Board. This change leaves the college responsible to create an orientation for trustees new to the world of community college governance. The theoretical frameworks and principles of andragogy for the adult learner are employed to create this orientation program model by implementing strategies and content in a manner that allows the learner to connect, retain, and use the information within the construct of community college governance.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

A unique feature of the American college and university system is the use of volunteers to govern these educational institutions; the volunteers are either appointed or elected at the state level and come together to form a group referred to as governing board. It is through their work that state and national control remains at bay. This level of independence and autonomy of higher education governance is truly an American tradition (Association of Governing Boards, 2009).

The educational institution is responsible for the onboarding and orientation of new trustees. The orientation provides context for trustee fiduciary responsibilities, the mission of the institution, the constituents served, meeting and committee roles and responsibilities, the role and responsibilities of the president, board expectations, behaviors, and advocacy.

EXISTING TRAINING MODELS AND APPROACHES FOR TRUSTEE BOARDS

Best practices orient new trustees to utilize their time, talents, and treasure in their role as fiduciaries. Carver and Mayhew (1994) note in their book on governing the community college that trustees have a legal and moral responsibility to represent the owners of the college — the stakeholders who are invested in ensuring the mission of their community colleges is presented unblemished under their watch. According to Cindra J. Smith (2000), one of the most important responsibilities of the trustees as a board is the hiring and assessing of

the institutional president to lead and direct institution operations. The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) conducts research and creates publications on trusteeship to address the unique role of trusteeship. Their publication on Fiduciary Duties (n.d.) and on effective governance states that governing boards must make good faith decisions in the best interest of their institutions by acting in accordance with the fiduciary duties of care, loyalty. Understanding that a board in good health is an asset to the college and the community; a board in poor health creates short- and long-term risks for the college, students, staff, faculty, and community. A separate AGB publication on Effective Board Governance (2009) states that high-achieving boards are able to think and plan strategically — focus more on forward-looking issues than on operational oversight. AGB stresses that effective boards understand their relationship to the institution; they recognize their responsibilities as fiduciaries and the necessity to remain independent in their decisions and diligent in their appropriate oversight.

Trustee leadership style matters to overall board health and satisfaction of serving, "Trustee are judged by their peers and others largely on their willingness to be team players and knowing when to lead and when to follow" (Ingram, AGB, 1997). Servant Leadership characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community (Spears, 1995) and is an appropriate leadership style for governance in that the symmetry between stewardship and college community empowerment meet the needs of governance and realizing the institutional mission. Greenleaf (1977) states that servant leaders are leaders who put other people's needs, aspirations and interests above their own – servant leaders, and good trustees,

know when to lead and when to serve or follow. The conflict, if any, is in the tendency among leadership scholars to treat leaders as lone individuals who command and control others and organizations align leaders with management roles, who have the authority to give orders to others. Servant leaders challenge accomplished intellectuals to embrace a "we" principality in order to "serve others". Trustees serve the college, community, and its constituents by supporting and serving, it is a position of great influence whose authority, in most part, is relegated to the CEO. Thus, the trustee or servant leader finds strength in being an altruistic partner in the endeavor (McMahon, 2010).

A 2010 publication by AGB stresses that all trustees are expected to carry out their fiduciary duties as stewards of the trust placed upon them by the appointment. This includes being educated on issues that impact their community college, understanding the needs of the constituents they serve, understanding the outcomes, intended or otherwise, of the decisions and non-decisions they make, and their role as advocate and representative of the institution (AGB, 2010). Orientation is an indispensable introductory tool for new board members and an essential refresher tool for continuing board members (AGB, Orientation, n.d.).

Kervinen (2012) states that the planning and implementation of orientation needs to be both comprehensive and efficient while avoiding information overload. Masterson's (2018) work emphasized that to avoid information saturation, orientation should include time between board meetings, spending time with trustees familiar with their roles, have check-ins, and be adjusted to meet the individual learner needs. Seifert (2020) also stated that orientation programs need to recognize trustees as adult learners and implement andragogical practices to

meet their learning needs. Connecting orientation programs to adult learner motivations allows

trustees to meet the expectations of their appointment and their role as a governance leader.

HISTORY OF THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Providing the history of community colleges in the U.S. creates the framework for

understanding the legacy and societal needs for effective governance at the national and local

levels.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman's Commission on Higher Education issued a report

calling for universal tuition-free public education through the fourteenth grade stating that

higher education was vital to preparing Americans to unite and to save humanity in the atomic

age and recognized that the cost of higher education was not obtainable for low-income

families. The report recommended establishing local and regional 2-year schools that are part

of a statewide system and funded by local and state taxes (United States, 1947). According to

Walsh (2005), community colleges are multi-disciplinary, post-secondary institutions offering

education and training from diverse entry points and leading to various tertiary levels.

Community colleges offer two main pathways to students. The first is preparation for higher

education, and the second is occupational skills for students who wish to enter the labor force

(p. 222). According to *Education Governance for the Twenty-first Century: Overcoming the*

Structural Barriers to School Reform, President Truman believed it was his duty to govern and

inspired generations of officials to engage in the complexity of governing America's diverse

society, including education, where multiple actors have some formal say over what happens in

the classroom, which contributes to the constant movement of education governance (Manna

& McGuinn, 2013, p. 1). This presidential directive continues in education governance today as

ordinary citizens want to understand the use of tax dollars, innovators in technology and

nonprofit sectors join industry leaders who want the nation to remain competitive yet struggle

to find ways to improve the educational experiences of the nation's students (Manna &

McGuinn, 2013, p. 1). The publication asserts that a fundamental issue has been overlooked:

Who governs American schools and with what results? The publication states that decades of

reforms, focusing on policy changes, have resulted in marginal gains in student achievement.

Additional reports from academic researchers, government at all levels, and think tanks across

the political spectrum have concluded that success for students to succeed in a rapidly changing

word is not being produced by either academic excellence nor equality for opportunity. The

text concludes that American governance is highly fragmented, decentralized, politicized, and

bureaucratic. Thus, creating a complex system for unified governance for the 1,167 community

colleges across the United States (AACC, 2012).

SUPPORT FOR GOVERNING BOARDS

The United States is home to more than 1,000 community colleges and several

associations and organizations have formed to provide advocacy, networking, policy making,

knowledge sharing in best practices, research, publication, and conference opportunities. Most

provide governance or trustee resources or engagement opportunities in order to ensure all

trustees are able to access information in a variety of modalities: publications (print and/or

digital), affinity groups, conferences, webinars, seminars, regular meetings, and content rich

websites. Trustees have access to learning opportunities outside institutional onboarding and

orientations to support and strengthen their knowledge of the higher education system, and

importantly to expand their network to the larger national trustee audience.

The American Council on Education (ACE) founded in 1918 strives to convene, organize, mobilize, and lead advocacy efforts to shape public policy to help colleges and universities best serve their students, communities, and the public good. Their goals include building capacity through higher education and to improve equity, expand access to higher education, and diversify the higher education leadership pipeline (acenet.edu).

The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) was founded in 1921 and their mission is to empower college, university, and foundation boards and board members to govern with knowledge and confidence, providing guidance and thought leadership through expert services and resources. Their values include focus on developing citizen trusteeship in higher education, development of consequential, strategic governance, and adherence to the highest ethical, legal, and moral standards in all endeavors (AGB.org).

The Aspen Institute was founded in 1949 and prides itself on earning a reputation for gathering diverse, nonpartisan thought leaders, creatives, scholars, and members of the public to address some of the world's most complex problems designed to provoke, further and improve actions taken in the real world. This includes an interest in United States education policy and design of a set of principles to undergird a new, positive, bipartisan agenda for improving public education — the community college excellence program that aims to advance higher education practices and leadership that significantly improve student learning, completion, and employment after college - especially for the growing population of students of color and low-income students on American campuses (highered.aspeninstitute.org)

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) was incorporated in 1972 to promote effective board governance through advocacy and education. Their goals include developing public policy for the achievement of the mission and goals of community colleges and to exemplify a standard of leadership behavior that is ethical and embraces diversity (ACCT.org).

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) was founded in 1992 as the unified voice for Maryland's 16 community colleges. The association works with businesses, communities, government, and other organizations to improve student success, provide job training, and promote economic development across the state. The association supports the colleges as liaison with the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the University System of Maryland, the Maryland Independent Colleges and University Association; engaging with state and federal organizations which relate to community college affairs. Additionally, they sponsor in-service programs which enhance the professional skills of trustees and administrators (Mdacc.org).

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is the leading organization focusing on community college boards and trustee engagement, as such it offers resources and opportunities for trustees to engage and enhance their ability to serve. The Association of Governing Boards (AGB) offers resources for four and two-year board members as well as continuing the body of work and research into effective board governance. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), American Council on Education (ACE), and the Aspen Institute all offer literature and learning opportunities for governance in higher education.

In 2009, AGB stated in *Effective Governing Boards* that a board works best when its members are confident that the president displays true leadership; the board remains focused on the strategic priorities: the board chair and president have a good working relationship; the president's cabinet is welcomed into board conversations; the faculty are engaged in institutional governance; and the board operates in a culture of cohesiveness, candor, and transparency.

Much of the current research focuses on the changing needs of boards. In 2003, Blumer suggested that these changing needs may be, in part, a byproduct of a recent "wave of scandal" across the nonprofit sector that has necessitated greater levels of specific expertise on public boards (Blumer, 2003, p. 42). Brown wrote in 2014 that professional backgrounds on college boards is growing due to the fact that most college presidents are traditional academics and have come to rely on their boards for professional expertise. A 2015 study conducted by the AGB concluded that nearly 62% of trustees on public governing boards were employed in business or professional services (i.e., accounting, law, or health care), and only 10% of trustees had been employed in education (AGB, 2016). Thus, there is a growing impetus to address the changing face of the board by providing solid orientation into the structure and approach of the college.

According to Brekken, Bernick, Gourrier & Kellogg (2021) in "The People's College: A Review of Local Community College Governing Boards through the Lens of Descriptive Representation," higher education governing boards have historically lacked diversity. Their study finds a lack of literature around proportional representation and examined boards that oversee a large portion of minority undergraduates. Their results provide evidence that those

boards are far from descriptively representative and that social and environmental characteristics impact board diversity. The authors further state that community college governing boards serve nearly half of the nation's minority undergraduates; understanding who serves on boards and why matters.

According to Eddy, Kater, Gillett-Karam (2022), reforms to the governance approach in community colleges require external pressures to advance thinking about board operations, using the example that student success and equity are primary challenges for governing boards and college leaders. Understanding how board actions advance this work is critical, and more research on governance and trustees is needed.

Amey (2022) notes that current challenges faced by college CEOs extend to the board of trustees, stating that writings and research about the college presidency continues to examine demographic representation with limited scholarship focused on the demographic representation of governing boards.

ROLES OF COLLEGE BOARDS

Trustees' varied backgrounds and professional experiences will not only impact the group dynamics, but the changing "face" of the board will have an effect on decision-making, a critical role of a trustee in governance leadership.

In 1997, Richard T. Ingram introduced *Board Basics: The Fundamentals of Trustee Responsibilities*, recognizing the complexity of informing citizen trusteeship in the unique context of public institutions of higher education. Through the lens of responsibility, Ingram posed a series of thought processes and questions that are useful for assessment of board behavior and contribution. While not addressing the aspect of training and education into the

role and responsibilities of board members, he focused on conduct and group decision-making. In 2000, the roles and responsibilities of community college governing boards was explored in-depth by the seminal work of Cindra. J. Smith, *ACCT Trusteeship in Community Colleges,* which provided the framework of describing the roles and responsibilities of ethical and effective governance.

Smith provided the basic structure of trusteeship into 8 categories: (1) Community College and Their Governing Boards, (2) the Governing Board, (3) the Board and the Community, (4) the Board and the CEO, (5) the Board and Its Policy Role, (6) Board Policy and the Institution, (7) the Board and Its Monitoring Role, and (8) Enhancing Board Effectiveness. Many of the published works that followed Smith's work on boardsmanship are iterations or explorations of these foundational topics. Earlier works on the topic can be found, but Smith's contribution to the body of knowledge has informed many of the later works and remain consistent with current theories and writings.

ACCT (Cindra Smith, 2000) published *Trusteeship 101* a stand-alone excerpt of Trusteeship in Community Colleges that outlines 9 principles of effective boardsmanship:

1. Act as a unit
2. Represent the common good
3. Set policy direction for the college
4. Employ, support, and evaluate the college's chief executive
5. Define policy standards for college operations
6. Monitor institutional performance
7. Create a positive college climate
8. Support and advocate the interests of the institution

9. Lead as a thoughtful, informed team

Building on these principles, ACCT programming includes the Governance Leadership

Institute (GLI), which covers 10 topics they determine all trustees should be familiar with in

order to be effective from fiduciary responsibilities and the Board-CEO relationship to

accreditation and campus safety.

Work by Dika and Janosik (2003) emphasized that trustees must ensure quality and

effectiveness for their institutions. Gilzene (2009) stressed that, to be effective board members,

trustees must possess demonstrated leadership skills, must have the ability to contribute and

support the mission and needs of the institution, must have a commitment to the institution,

must have personal integrity, must have good knowledge of higher education, and must be

familiar with the problems of higher education (p. 36).

Additional work by AGB (2009) defines the knowledge sets of an effective governing

board with 10 basic responsibilities: Establish, disseminate, and keep current the institution's

mission; select a chief executive to lead the institution; support and periodically assess the

performance of the chief executive and establish the review of the chief executive's

compensation; charge the chief executive with the task of leading a strategic planning process,

participate in that process, approve the strategic plan, and monitor its progress; ensure the

institution's fiscal integrity, preserve and protect its assets for posterity, and engage directly in

fundraising and philanthropy; ensure the educational quality of the institution; preserve and

protect institutional autonomy and academic freedom; ensure that institutional policies and

processes are current and properly implemented; in concert with senior administration, engage

regularly with the institution's major constituencies; conduct the board's business in an

exemplary fashion and with appropriate transparency; ensure the currency of board

governance policies and practices; and periodically assess the performance of the board, its

committees, and its members.

HIGH PERFORMING BOARDS

Another topic that became prevalent in the literature is the importance of healthy

trustee behaviors for high-performing boards. To address board behavior with a positive spin,

in 2013, the ACCT published *An Overview of Exemplary Community College Governance*, which

stresses that effective boardsmanship includes the "trust" in trusteeship, the fact that the

board acts as an advocate of the college, speaks with unified voice, that community benefit

should be the central focus of governance, that the board must establish and maintain a

relationship with the CEO that is empowering and safe, and that the board exemplifies ethical

behavior and conduct that is above reproach.

Building on the aspects of effective board culture, Legon's 2014 work emphasized that

the importance of board culture is highlighted in performance. Legon identified 10

characteristics and habits for strategic board governance that mirrored ACCT's, including create

a culture of inclusion, uphold basic fiduciary principles, cultivate a healthy relationship with the

president, develop a renewed commitment to shared governance, and focus on accountability.

Trower and Eckel (2016) also listed five areas of accountability for boards that included

upholding the mission, overseeing institutional fiscal health and integrity, and ensuring board

performance and conduct. These contributions supported Long's (2017) explanation that

strategic thinking is a way of seeing, supported by data and information, and understanding key

trends that impact the institution's ability to execute the mission and vision of the college.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BOARDS

When examining the literature related to effective governance boards, one topic that arises frequently is the issue surrounding group decision making, both the right ways to reach consensus and the challenges of avoiding "groupthink." An effective orientation for trustees, then, will highlight the mission of the institution, remain focused on this mission, and empower group decision-making.

In 1972, Irving L. Janis first published research on decisions from small-group analysis to the explain policy fiascoes and called the phenomenon "Groupthink" (a play on the term "doublethink" from Orwell's novel 1984) (Hart, 1991). In 1973, the fear of making serious decisions was labeled "decidophobia" by Walter Kaufmann at Princeton University (Overcoming Serious Indecisiveness, n.d.). Janis' research explained that groupthink stands for an excessive form of concurrence-seeking among members of high prestige, tightly knit policy-making groups (Hart, 1991). In 1982, Janis identified symptoms of defective decision-making to include making decisions based on incomplete survey of alternatives, objectives, and information; a failure to examine risks and reappraise rejected alternatives; applying a selective bias in processing information; and a failure to work out a contingency plan. To avoid defective decision-making, Janis emphasized the importance of maintaining an open climate for information exchange, using parallel work groups, inviting external experts to challenge inflexible members' views, and intentional review of decisions prior to launch.

In 1983, Bass stated that the board's most important role is organizational decision making. In 2009, French et al, noted that understanding the dangers of groupthink and group

decision-making processes are important in recognizing that consensus is determined in formalized ways for group decisions. Organizational decision-making at the trustee level takes place through the behaviors of group-decision making, using quorums, the processes of discussion and inquiry, and recording of votes for actions and decisions taken by the trustees.

Other early research focused on the centrality of the organization's mission and vision: Work by Ingram (1997) emphasized that decisions and actions taken by governing boards should reflect what the institution or system is and strives to be, while Vaugh & Wiseman (1997) stressed that comprehensive and ongoing improvement efforts must be a part of any board.

In 2012, research conducted by Ahmed and Omotudne analyzed decision making from different reference points: the kinds of decision making, the theories of decision making, approaches to decision-making, decision-making procedure, strategies of decision making, and contributors to bad decision making. Ahmed and Omotunde outlined several theories of decision-making, from casual decision theory and game theory to evidential decision theory and Bayesian theory. The authors also defined decision making in terms of various aspects of the process including the kind of decision (Yes/No, making choices, etc.), the approach and process to the decision (top-down, group analysis, etc.), the decision-making procedure (generating and evaluating options, selection of best option, communicating result), strategies and techniques of decision making (decision tree, cost-benefit, etc.), and characteristics of poor decision-making processes (limited data and information, weak evaluation, etc.).

In addition to examining the process and types of decision making, discussions of board governance also include the realm of governance as leadership. Organizational behavior and education have an abundance of theories on the topic of leadership and the leadership theories in both disciplines share many commonalities; the majority of leadership models draw directly from organizational science. Burke's (2010) work states that educators often maintain that business and managerial models of leadership do not provide an appropriate theory and practice for their particular contextual needs. Other leadership theories discussed in the literature include distributed leadership (Lumby, 2019), shared leadership (Zhu, Liao, Yam, & Johnson, 2018) and shared governance (Kater, 2017). Lumby (2019) suggests that both distributed leadership and bureaucracy are ideal types in the development of organizations. The article argues that there is little evidence that bureaucracy has the ability to shape and contain power in any sophisticated manner, arguing that bureaucracy offers a more realistic and deeper engagement with issues of power, and concluding that educational leaders need to engage positively in distributed leadership to transform higher education. Kater (2017) authored "Community college faculty conceptualizations of shared governance: Shared understandings of a sociopolitical reality," the findings indicated that having faculty participate in the shared governance structure creates an environment for shared accountability, support for strategic planning and fiscal allocations. According to Zhu, Liao, Yam & Johnson (2018) a growing body of research now examines shared leadership, broadly defined as an emergent team phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are distributed among team members; the authors find that literature on shared leadership has resulted in little consensus

for an overarching theoretical framework which has undermined developing knowledge in this domain.

Chait et al.'s (2005) work, discussed previously, also defined governance leadership theory in terms of the three types of governance: fiduciary, strategic, and generative. Their work linked the type of governance to the nature of the organization and leadership, the central purpose of the board and its core work, the key question guiding the board's work, as well as characteristics of the deliberative process and the communication process.

POLICY GOVERNANCE

Key research in the realm of policy governance is centered in the work of Carver (1996). The seminal work of Carver (1996) *Basic Principles of Policy Governance,* referred to as Carver Policy Governance Model, defines a board's actions as contributing value through policies. Bylaws or legal statutes, categories of board policy, communicate the board's input on organizational decisions, activities, practices, budgets, and goals. The emphasis of the value of policies is used in the Carver model as the expression of board leadership. Later work by Carver and Carver (2006) elaborated on the policy-making aspects, emphasizing that the role of the board is to be "accountable" and to maintain institutional authority. Carver's model requires boards to embrace a servant leadership approach to effectively govern the institution.

Policy Governance (Carver & Carver, 2006) colonized thousands of practitioners, researchers, and consultants dedicated to their principles (Phelan, 2022, p. 59) resulting in the organization Govern for Impact. The organization is committed to Policy Governance as a model to build a world where boards lead the organization to achieving clear purpose and critical outcomes in an ethical, prudent, just, and risk-aware manner (Govern for Impact, 2021, para 1).

The Governance Coach is a coaching service and solution resource on Policy Governance firmly rooted in the authoritative source of John Carver, the creator of *Policy Governance*, with Miriam Carver his fellow master teacher. This site states clearly that Policy Governance is not a set of individual "best practices" or tips for improvement or a specific board structure. It states that the Principles of Policy Governance are Ownership; Governance Position; Board Holism; Ends Policies; Board Means Policies; Executive Limitations Policies; Policy "Sizes": Delegation of Management: Any Reasonable Interpretation; and Monitoring. According to their site, these principles form a model and all the pieces listed above must be in place for effective practice (Govern for Impact, para. 5, 2021).

Covenant Governance, introduced by Daniel J. Phelan in 2022 in the research article "Uncommon governance," reassigns the levels of Abraham Maslow's psychology of hierarchal needs into five tiers of board functioning: Basic Fiduciary; Questioning Efficacy; Intentional Improvement; Aspirational Focus; and Covenant Fidelity (Phelan, 2022, p. 53). This model as described by the author proposes governance hierarchy effectiveness can be designed to make substantial strides and functioning at the highest level of governance, stating that the members are unincumbered by the minutiae of the college, but focused on the advancement of the organization on behalf of others. Covenant Governance in this text is defined as representing a "deep, abiding, and operationally-expressed commitment between the individual trustees, the board functioning as a whole, and the collaborative relationship with the CEO" (p. 58).

Community College Boards 2.0 concluded that Covenant Governance includes eight practices for governance and leadership effectiveness. These include Create a New Structure and Process for CEO Selection; Establish a Two-Way Contract Between the Board and the CEO;

Define the Board's Constituent(s); Be Mindful of Staying in Your Own Lane; Relentlessly Build

and Nurture a High-Performance Board Culture; Invest in CEO and Board Relationships for the

Long-Term; Be a Committed Student of Governance; Look to the Future while Committing as a

Board to the Relentless Discipline of Process Improvement (Phelan, 2021).

The goal of this process, outlined with a series of questions to identify a board's

placement in the hierarchy, is that trustees will be committed, engaged, and prepared to do the

essential work of governance-- intentionally being outward focused toward organizational and

board leadership excellence and student success; are more engaged in state legislative and

congressional issues, focusing on areas that lead to higher-order outcomes (Phelan, 2022, p.

57).

PITFALLS OF POOR TRUSTEESHIP

Underprepared trusteeship impacts the president and the president's ability to be

empowered to administer and direct the activities of the college. Kaufman (1980) stressed that

regular efforts must be made to clarify the mutual expectations of the president and board

because a lack of clarity reduces the president's ability to function effectively. According to

Boggs (2003) many community college presidents said they were unprepared for their roles and

work with the board of trustees, further adding that many presidents looked for ways to survive

their board rather than viewing themselves and the boards as teams with a common purpose of

providing direction and leadership to a complex organization. The work of March & Weiner

(2003) states that the president often faces challenges of members of the board of trustees

trying to establish their authority. The contribution of Drucker (2005) emphasizes that building

relationships with the board of trustees is a crucial and central part of the task of the president.

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Hua (2005) also noted that the success of the board-president relationship depends to a large extent on how well both understand their mutual roles and responsibilities. Hua further states that no single factor is more important to the success and effectiveness of the community college than both president's and board of trustees' relationship in their leadership roles.

The research of Gilzene (2009), described previously, also included data that identified a disparity between what trustees and presidents said they did and what they said they should do. The research showed statistically significant differences between *do* and *should do* average scores showing that trustees underperformed in several areas of leadership including creating a positive climate and providing effective leadership by modeling integrity, vision, and ethical behavior. Gilzene concluded that if the president loses credibility with the board of trustees, it creates an impossible situation that renders the president ineffective, concluding that it is to the benefit of the community college to have a strong board because the president will be more effective with a strong board.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

As the AGB states, serving on a board is not about the individual trustee, it is about the trustees acting as one voice; once a decision is made, the members of the board publicly support that unified decision (AGB, 2010). Understanding the content and context of the dynamic nature of the roles of trusteeship — and of the institutions they serve — is essential to preparing effective board members and effective boards. Reed (2017) reminds institutions that it is essential for new trustees to have a board orientation that provides a smooth transition from novice trustee to an effective board member, and Smith (2000) underscores the need for new trustee orientation to educate new members on their roles and responsibilities and inform

them of the college's history, programs, and culture. The institutional orientation prepares the

new trustee to engage early and appropriately to be followed by an introduction to the national

organizations and associations that will continue to play a key role in furthering the professional

development and networking of the trustee, allowing the combination of those experiences to

stack upon one another for effective board governance.

As noted by the seminal author Cindra Smith:

There is no one best approach to community college governance – each state has
evolved and continues to explore models to meet is needs. The search for successful
models, however, takes into account the importance of college's to be responsive to
current and future community learning needs…The structure of the colleges and roles of
the boards will continue to evolve in response to changing conditions. A number of
trends influence what colleges and their boards look like and how they will operate now
and in the future. (Smith, 2000, p. 8)

The absence of formalized orientation programs in the research is indicative of the

autonomous nature of trustee onboarding and orientations that exists due to the confluences

mentioned in the quote above. Thus, there is a notable gap in the literature of individual

community college published orientation programs, as in none exists. The literature referenced

in Chapter Two acknowledges the work of the governing bodies and associations dedicated to

community college governance to create a sense of best practices for trusteeship and a pool of

knowledge and resources for trusteeship. This dissertation addresses the gap by providing a

delivery method that utilizes the seminal works of the authors addressed in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE FOR CREATING THE ORIENTATION LEARNING MODULES (OLM)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides context for the content development process of the Orientation Learning Modules (OLM) for new trustees. The framework honors the research and published documents of a variety of sources that have trusteeship embedded into their mission including organizational material authored by the Association of Governing Boards and Association of Community College Trustees, the works of researchers and authors including but not limited to Cindra Smith, Vaughen & Weisman, Cloud and Kater, and Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson, and the literature, best practices, and studies that support andragogy, governance, and the whole-part-whole learning methods.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Two foundations of adult learning were created in the early twentieth century. Carnegie Corporation of New York founded the American Association of Adult Education applied scientific approaches to discovering new knowledge through rigorous and experiential investigation. in 1926, the publication *The Meaning of Adult Education* by Eduard C. Lindeman suggested that adult education will be via the route of situations, not subjects. A byproduct of this effort is the publication of *Adult Learning* by Edward L. Thorndike in 1932, though the knowledge on the processes of adult learning were neglected to the more appealing topic of

the adult ability to learn. This early publication simply stated that adults could learn, the author continued his research and published Adult Interests in 1935 which inspired Herbert Sorneson's *Adult Abilities* in 1938. Concurrently, there was an artistic stream of knowledge gaining traction which explored the relationship of new knowledge accumulation through intuition and the analysis of experience and how that played a role in adult learning. These combined early efforts created the field of educational science that formalized andragogy, the methods of teaching adults, as opposed to the singular option at the time of pedagogy, the methods of teaching children.

In 2005 Malcolm Knowles, along with co-authors Elwood F. Holton III and Richard A. Swanson, published *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. The core andragogical principles (which absorb the earlier methods of Lindeman) include

- Need to Know

- Learner self-concept (self-directed)

- Learner's Experience

- Readiness to Learn (life tasks)

- Orientation to Learning (problem-centered)

- Motivation to Learn (internal)

According to Knowles, adult learning occurs in many settings for many different reasons. Andragogy is a transactional model of adult learning that is designed to transcend specific applications and situations (Knowles, et al., 2005, p. 143). It is important to note that andragogy can be combined with other theories, for example social change (critical theory) or

performance improvement (performance/human capital theory) (p. 144). For the purposes of

this dissertation, adult learning will be balanced by governance leadership knowledge.

WHOLE – PART – WHOLE LEARNING MODEL

The processes of adult learning theories are too numerous to mention. For the purposes

of this study the 1972 introduction of the basic Whole-Part-Whole Learning Model (WPW) has

value in its roots of corporate training and educating personnel (Skinner, 1954, 1968). WPW

purports that there is a natural rhythm to learning: The first "Whole" introduces new content to

learners through organizational framework required to effectively and efficiently absorb

concepts into cognitive ability. The second "Whole" is found in the "Parts." After the learner

has achieved the criteria for the individual parts, the instructor links the parts together. The

"Parts" are the details of knowledge, expertise, and activity (Skinner, 1954, 1968).

Notwithstanding the gestalt psychology concept that the whole is greater than the sum of the

parts, the WPW Learning Model is not an attack on behaviorism, instead the focus is on the

"first whole" and "second whole" that envelop the "parts" (p. 242).

In 1991, Swanson wrote that the WPW experience provides the learner with the

complete understanding of the content at various levels of performance and allows for higher-

order cognitive development. The WPH system can be applied to planned program design and

to real-time instruction adjustments in a live learning environment.

Organizing and schemata alignment prepare learners for the new instruction they

receive. Organizing content that recognizes the generational gaps, ethnicity and cultural

framework, expectations, and motivators is critical to ensuring early organization of the

orientation content is embraced. Luiten, Ames, and Ackerman introduced the concept of

advance organizers in 1980 as a technique for helping students learn and retrieve information by making it meaningful and familiar. This is accomplished by introducing basic concepts of new material, from which students are able to organize the more specific information that will follow. Building on this technique Knowles stated in 1988 that the organization of knowledge should be an essential concern for the educational planner so that the direction from simple to complex is not arbitrary, meaningless parts to a meaningful whole, but instead from simplified wholes to more complex wholes. According to Gage and Berliner (1988), active learning takes place when rehearsed information is encoded for storage in the long-term memory. Knowles, et al. (2005) state that memory retention and retrieval are the result of intentional information organization in the beginning stages of instruction (Knowles, et all, 2005, p. 243). Repetitive practice aids in the transfer to long-term memory and provides the learner with a sense of comfort and eventually a relaxation of applying the knowledge (Knowles, et all. 2005, p. 246).

APPLICATION OF LEARNING THEORY TO THE TRUSTEE ORIENTATION MODEL

Based on the principles of adult learning theory, the trustee orientation program will allow for cyclical reviews for all trustees to commit the knowledge of their roles and responsibilities to memory for recall during their term of service, and to employ in the mentorship of new trustees being exposed to the knowledge for the first time. The instructor creates learning experiences that prepare the trustees to apply their knowledge in different applications; this creates an environment allowing trustees to build on their comprehension, allowing the learner to use the content and add to or refine as experiences dictate. This moves the learner from knowledge to wisdom (Knowles, et al., 2005, p. 247).

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As reflected in the Knowles, et al.'s (2015) work, basic student motivation to learn is innate and possible due to the fact that human behavior is goal oriented (p. 244). Because trusteeship in Maryland is a civic-minded commitment, the professionalism of serving on the CSM Board of Trustees is linked to the positive perception of association to the college in the community and the contribution value of decisions the individuals appointed to trusteeship make for the greater good. Trusteeship is servant leadership and self-actualizing for well-intentioned leaders that commit to upholding their board responsibilities. An effective onboarding program must capitalize on the trustees' own internal desire for goal attainment and personal achievement. Research identifies the two instructional motivational variables: Self-efficacy (one's belief that one can execute a given behavior in a given setting) and outcome expectancies (one's belief that the given outcome will occur if one engages in the behavior) (Latham, 1989, p. 25).

The content — the principles of governance leadership in the context of higher education — is, then, aligned with Adult Learning Theory and the principles of Whole-Part-Whole Learning Model and incorporated into the orientation program model of this dissertation.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM CONTENT

Grounded on a foundation of adult learning theory and the WPW learning model, the orientation model provides an effective means for educating new trustees on the principles of effective governance. The topics covered in this program follow current research and recommendations, as discussed in the literature review. These topics include boardsmanship, the requirements of board members, as well as a foundation of background information on

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community colleges and their role in the U.S. higher education system. Table 2 provides

additional detail on each of these broad areas.

Table 2: Trustee Orientation Program Topics

ORIENTATION TITLES (WHOLE)	ORIENTATION TOPICS (PARTS)
Boardsmanship/Trusteeship	• Governing body appointments and term • Fiduciary Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience • Qualities of Trustees • Effective Board Conduct • Healthy Board culture
Trusteeship in the Institution	• Attendance requirements – meetings, ceremonial, advocacy • Institutional Trustee governance structure – committees • Communication methods and guidelines • Meeting structure – Open Meetings Act, Robert's Rules of Order, Information access and preparation • Institutional Organization Structure and Governance • Mission, Vision, Value • Strategic Plan • Locations and Capital Investments • Elected officials • Institution facts on enrollment and programming • Revenue and expenditures • Funding cycles and engagement with local and state officials • Town-Gown relations
Community Colleges	• Associations and Organizations • State's higher education history and structure • Accreditation • Federal policies

PURPOSE AND OUTCOMES OF THE TRUSTEE ONBOARDING ORIENTATION PROGRAM

The purpose of this dissertation is to identify the content and delivery strategies of an

orientation program for community college trustees in order to prepare them for the board

responsibilities required to successfully govern the institution. This product dissertation

resulted in a model for College of Southern Maryland New Trustee Onboarding and Board

Orientation Process. The model recommends using different learning modalities, as a

recognition of best practices in andragogy, and a pacing of information introduction to allow

new trustees to early participation in their role of governance and use best practices for

community college governing boards.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

The purpose of this study is to develop an introductory orientation program to assist

new trustees in understanding their role as fiduciary and to actively participate in healthy board

governance. Successful outcomes will include:

- A new trustee understands the characteristics of healthy board governance as described by the Association of Governing Boards.

- A new trustee understands the characteristics of good board governance as described by the Association of Community College Trustees.

- A new trustee understands their fiduciary roles and responsibilities as described by the Association of Governing Boards.

- A new trustee understands the college's mission, vision, locations, and can communicate to these facts to stakeholders.

- A new trustee understands their terms and attendance responsibility as assigned to by the Maryland Governor's Appointment Office.

- A new trustee understands the college's board bylaws and policies and their importance to trusteeship.

- A new trustee is aware of the networking and resources available for continuous learning that is available to them through the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Governing Boards, and the Association of Community College Trustees, as well as future orientation development materials.

- A new trustee understands the value of healthy board communications and the relationship with the president.

The trustee onboarding process provides a systematic approach to the introduction of trusteeship all the way through the behaviors of good governance of trustees. During the planning stage the author had to make several decisions regarding the onboarding content. Various assumptions and delimitations were made in the writing process, as indicated below:

Assumptions

- Trustee knowledge can be obtained outside of the college through established industry recognized groups, such as the Association of Governing Boards and the Association of Community College Trustees

- Trustee orientation programs can be added to the onboarding process easily

- Committed and supported administration is necessary to sustain a successful onboarding program

- Sufficient resources within the institution are available to support effective implementation

- Institutions of higher education recognize formal, non-formal, and informal learning.

Delimitations

- This onboarding process was designed specifically for the College of Southern Maryland trustees; however, the structure and content should be applicable to most community college environments.

- The content focuses entirely on the institutional perspective of effective governance and does not include trustee perspectives.

- The content for this model is presented as a print document, in English, and does not include materials or approaches appropriate for trustees with disabilities or those who are non-English speakers.

- The OLM is not an all-inclusive tool, rather a process for the middle majority that are able to be onboarded within the instruction provided.

STRUCTURE OF THE TRUSTEE ONBOARDING MODEL

The OLM Phase One included in the following chapter was developed to assist newly

appointed trustees to their role in governance at the College of Southern Maryland, along with

the president, to build a successful onboarding process. The onboarding model is divided into

five modules:

- Module One – Orientation Introduction: Board membership, officer positions, president's role on the board, nomination cycle for officer positions, attendance, committees, meeting structure

- Module Two — College Information: Mission and vision, locations, campus structure

- Module Three – Trustee Qualities: Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, Duty of Obedience, Effective Board Conduct

- Module Four – Communication: Trustee Communication Guidelines to ensure a healthy board culture

- Module Five – Board Responsibilities: Bylaws and Policy an Overview

DELIVERY OF THE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

The OLM Phase One is designed to be delivered in sections or in its entirety. For the

Board that meets monthly, inviting trustees to arrive thirty minutes early before each meeting

would allow for individual module presentations to be delivered over five meetings. The self-

assessment portion at the end of each module, designed for successful knowledge

reinforcement, creates a moment of self-congratulations, peer recognition, and a shared

experience on the participants behalf as well as an opportunity for discussion on the recently

acquired and self-reinforced information.

The College of Southern Maryland supported the presentation of all five modules in

Level One during an evening Zoom meeting. The use of Zoom allowed for the self-assessment

to be conducted anonymously via the poll feature which was enjoyed by the learners. The

intent was to deliver all five modules in an hour; however, discussion and a conversation of

trustee experiences and perceptions surrounding the concepts extended the timeframe to two

hours. The trustees remained engaged, and their feedback indicated appreciation for the

delivery method and acknowledgement that all of the content was equally valuable to their

roles, expressing their greater understanding of their role in governance and the support of a

healthy trustee-president, trustee-college, relationship. Additional methods of OLM delivery

are independent study or inclusion in a board retreat or special work session.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The structure and design of the OLM model provides information presented in logical

steps as supported by the Whole-Part-Whole (WPW) method and andragogy theory. The model

content includes the critical elements needed for effective trusteeship at the College of

Southern Maryland and community colleges with similar structures and missions. The practical

information provided in the modules are not intended to be static but allow for a foundational

framework that can be easily updated. The product goal is to provide relevant information in a

delivery method that is based on academic research and the body of work that surrounds

trusteeship and adult learning theories.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ORIENTATION PROGRAM, A MODULE-BASED ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

The product was designed to be conducted as an independent self-study by individual trustees; however, the presentation of the product includes a facilitator script to provide the reader with both context for the information and to assign credit to the original authors.

Included with each slide is an accompanying suggested facilitator script.

Trustee Introduction

This short guide is designed to ease the transition from newly appointed trustee to active board member.

Welcome trustees and congratulations on your five-year appointment by the Governor of Maryland to serve as a governance leader for the College of Southern Maryland. Today's orientation is designed to prepare you for your fiduciary responsibilities. You have entered the American tradition of volunteerism; you are now a member of a unique community of service and governance. Along with learning about your full measure of responsibilities, we hope you will derive great satisfaction and pride from your role serving as a trustee of this college. Attending athletic events, lectures, concerts, and many other campus activities represents only the most obvious source of enjoyment and engagement. Helping shape the institution's mission, supporting strong leadership, garnering, and nurturing adequate resources, and

helping the institution respond to inevitable challenges and opportunities represent the less

obvious but equally vital dimensions of trusteeship (AGB, Effective Governing Boards, 2009, p.1)

An awareness of the community college landscape will provide context for the

importance of this orientation material:

Community colleges are under tremendous pressure to meet their mission and serve
their constituents in an arena filled with political pressures, unstable funding streams,
declining enrollments as a byproduct of population changes and the perception of the
value of higher education, an increase in CEO turnover with a narrow pipeline of
qualified and experienced successors, and unforeseen post-covid learning modalities
and competition. Leadership at the governance level is critical for the community
college sector to navigate this changing landscape. Well prepared and oriented trustees
have a distinct advantage in understanding their roles and fiduciary responsibilities.

MODULE ONE: ORIENTATION INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges facing American higher education today is how to

professionalize governance. The failures of trusteeship and the negative impacts on community

colleges are almost too numerous to mention; some are self-inflicted, while others reflect poor

optics, a lack of paying attention, or, worse, the violation of fiduciary responsibilities (Mitchell &

King, 2018, p. 11). Community colleges today face unprecedented challenges in an environment

that is volatile, inequitable, faces political unrest, financial stress, a failing business model,

declining enrollments, a growing suspicion of the value of higher education, and competition

from unforeseen quarters, including each other: "Done well, the practice of governance in

higher education should be a purposeful, impactful, and collaborative undertaking that results

in outcomes consistent with those on whose behalf the board serves" (Phelan, 2022, p. 51).

Community College governance exists today as it has for decades; the absence of a

routine update to a board's own style and efficacy foretells an inability for meaningful impact

and gains in their service (Phelan, 2022). Trustees of a community college are the stewards of

their institution and responsible for guiding their institution both strategically and financially

(Seiler, 2020, p. 1). According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC),

leadership changes frequently with an average 30% turnover every two years at the

presidential level. In a survey conducted by AACC in 2012, about 75% of community college

CEOs planned to retire in the next ten years — we have now arrived at that anticipated

doorstep. The most important fiduciary responsibility of a trustee is to hire and assess an

institutional president to lead and direct the administration of the college (Smith, 2000).

Compounding a leadership void are the risks of a derailed presidency. Trachtenberg, Kauver,

and Bogue's (2013), "Presidencies Derailed: Why University Presidents Fail and How to Prevent

It," states that a derailment can undermine an institution's image, damage its alumni relations,

and destroy campus morale, but it can also cost millions of dollars. Sometimes presidents are

dismissed for performance, financial, or institutional "fit" reasons, but there are nearly always

political reasons as well. The details of these employment situations, often masked by

confidentiality clauses, increasingly emerge as social networks and media buzz with speculation

(Trachtenberg, Kauver, & Bogue, 2013). According to Leigh Ann Touzeau (cited in Trachtenberg,

Kauver, & Bogue, 2013), the analysis of derailment is not a fault-finding exercise; it is rare that

the fault lies wholly with either the board or the president. The analytics repeatedly remind us

of the delicate balance and intricate calculations that any president must maintain in order to thrive at any institution at any time (p. 60). In order to succeed, a community college president needs strong working relationships with key constituencies, including the board of trustees.

A strong, supportive, and effective relationship between the board and the president is essential to good governance. The trustee - president relationship that is founded on mutual respect and trust, intentional listening and understanding, honesty and transparency, regular communication and close collaboration will set the tone for the full board and inspire confidence throughout the institution and beyond (AGB, Anatomy of Good Board Governance in Higher Ed, 2018, pg. 9).

A prepared, committed, and knowledgeable board of trustees that makes informed

decisions and has a firm understanding of its role — as well as the role of the president and the

duties of governance — are necessary for a supportive and positive president-trustee

relationship.

All fifty states currently have some form of state oversight for higher education, typically

referred to as a board of trustees, governor, or overseers (Davis, 2002). These community-

based boards can provide immediate input and response to any number of college issues (Cloud

& Kater, 2008). The board of trustees for the sixteen Maryland Community Colleges are

appointed by the governor of the State of Maryland through activities of the Governor's

Appointments Office (GAO).

The CSM Board of Trustees by bylaws has officer positions; the trustee positions are

Board chair and vice chair. These positions are one-year assignments and are determined

annually in June by the nominating committee; however, the nominating committee may

recommend a second year or even longer for the chair. The role of vice chair is seen both as a

successor to the chair position and the person in this position is expected to fill the chair

position if needed do to so because of absenteeism or other causes. The president of the

college serves on the board as Secretary/Treasurer — this role is slightly different in that the

president can delegate the duties of the secretary/treasurer role (in this case, the chief of staff

and vice president of Finance) and does not have voting power.

> The challenges and opportunities faced by community college presidents are immense,
> but college presidents operate from a different perch than the chief executive in the
> corporate or philanthropic world and the lines of authority and decision-making
> responsibilities of presidents and college trustee boards are sometimes blurred,
> especially when the roles and responsibilities are not clearly expressed or delineated
> through orientation and training. (Martin & Samels, 2006, p. 4)

Attendance

Board of Trustees meetings typically take place on the third Thursday of every month, with the exception of August.

There are two Full-Day Retreats — Summer and Winter

There are two Commencements — Spring and Winter

Functions — Official and Celebratory (invited by the Office of the President)

This orientation program is designed to build confidence as trustees prepare to be informed stewards for the community college. Attendance is not only required by the bylaws, but by the State of Maryland as well. The college submits an annual attendance report to the Governor's Appointment Office; any trustee attending less than 50% of meetings is considered to have left their fiduciary role of the board and the seat will become vacant for new appointment. The importance of attendance is knowledge — being prepared for board meetings, engaging in constructive conversations, and speaking in one voice as a board takes place through the act of being present — mentally and physically. Additionally, trustees are representatives of the college and will attend official and celebratory functions, such as commencement and ground breakings. Their public representation allows for advocacy
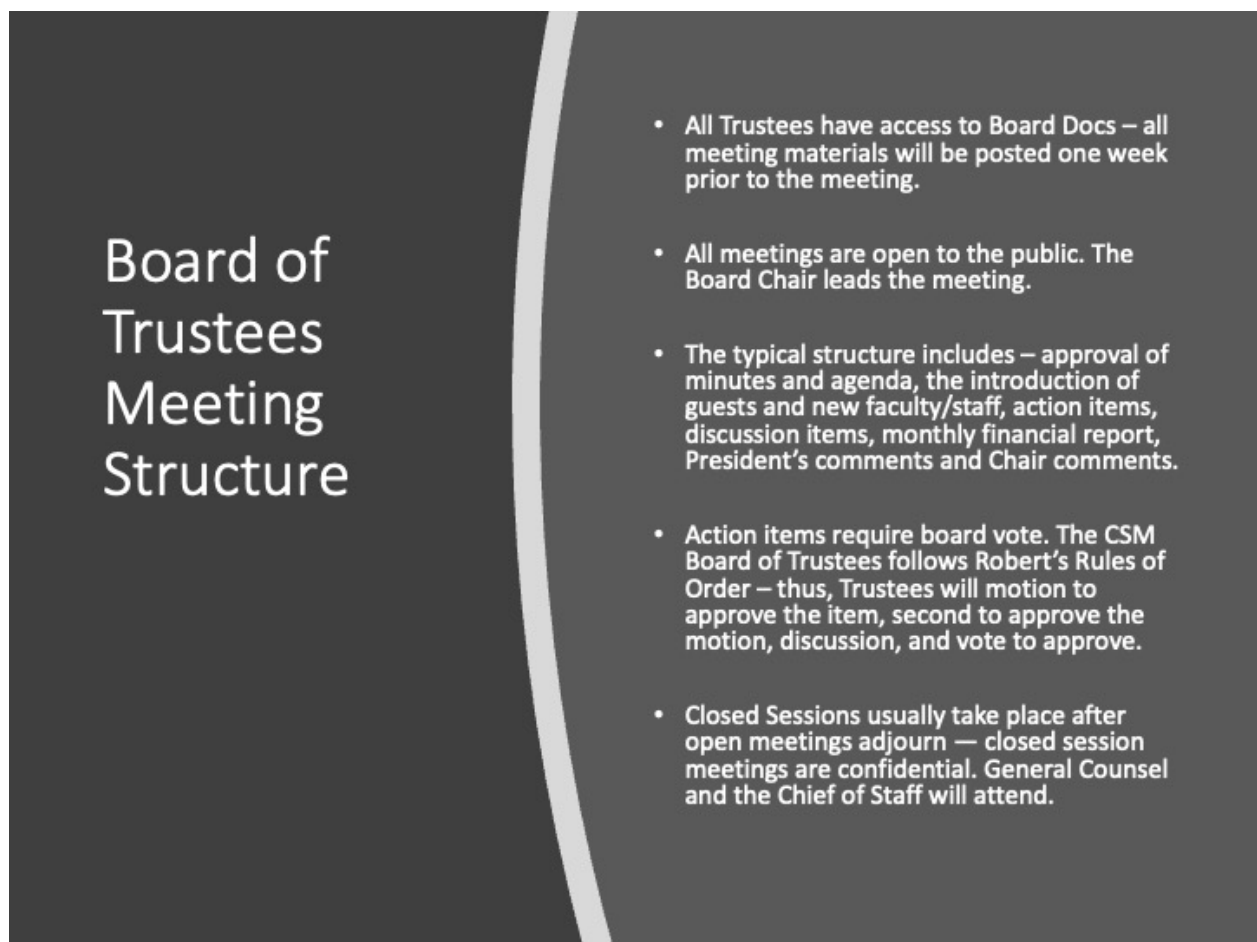
opportunities — those conversations are built on the knowledge learned through attending the

meetings.

Committees' Purpose:

To conduct due diligence for items requiring Board action

- Committee meetings take place on the same day of Board meetings.

- Committees meet quarterly and in emergency sessions.

- Board Members serve on committees as Chair and member. As Chair for only two terms, on any single committee.

- Board Members rotate committees and/or positions every two years.

- Positions are determined by Board Affairs and are announced in June.

❖ Board Affairs (Chair and Vice Chair)

❖ HR & Benefits (ex officio member of the community)

❖ Academic and Student Affairs

❖ Audit (Chair and ex officio)

AD HOC

❖ Board liaison to CSM Foundation Board of Directors

❖ Commencement Speaker (meets twice a year)

❖ Nomination of Board of Trustee Chair and Vice Chair (meets once a year with three members of the board; one trustee from each county, ideally.)

Trustees of the college also rotate seats on the various subcommittees — referred to as

committees. The trustees' role on a subcommittee is to be the representative of the board of

trustees; they become informed on the various action and discussion items as relating to their

specific committee and are the committee liaison to the entire board of trustees when that

agenda item is discussed. The purpose of the committees is to allow for the efficient use of

board meeting time. Without subcommittee meetings, these discussions and information

sessions would have to be built into the monthly meeting time for all trustees. This process also

allows for trustees to become familiar with the activities of college by a series of rotation throughout the committees during their term.

As the slide indicates, committee meetings take place on the same day as board meetings, typically quarterly or in an emergency session. There will be a trustee chair and member of each committee; a trustee can serve as committee chair for only two terms on any single committee. Trustees rotate committees or positions every two years. Positions are determined by Board Affairs (chair, vice chair, president, chief of staff, and general counsel) annually in June.

The committee chair and member are afforded a small departure on the communication policy (discussed later) in that this capacity allows the trustees to directly work with an assigned member of President's Cabinet to set the agenda of the committee meeting. The chair leads the meeting and provides updates to the full board in the monthly meeting. These committees have various members of the college staff attend as subject matter experts.
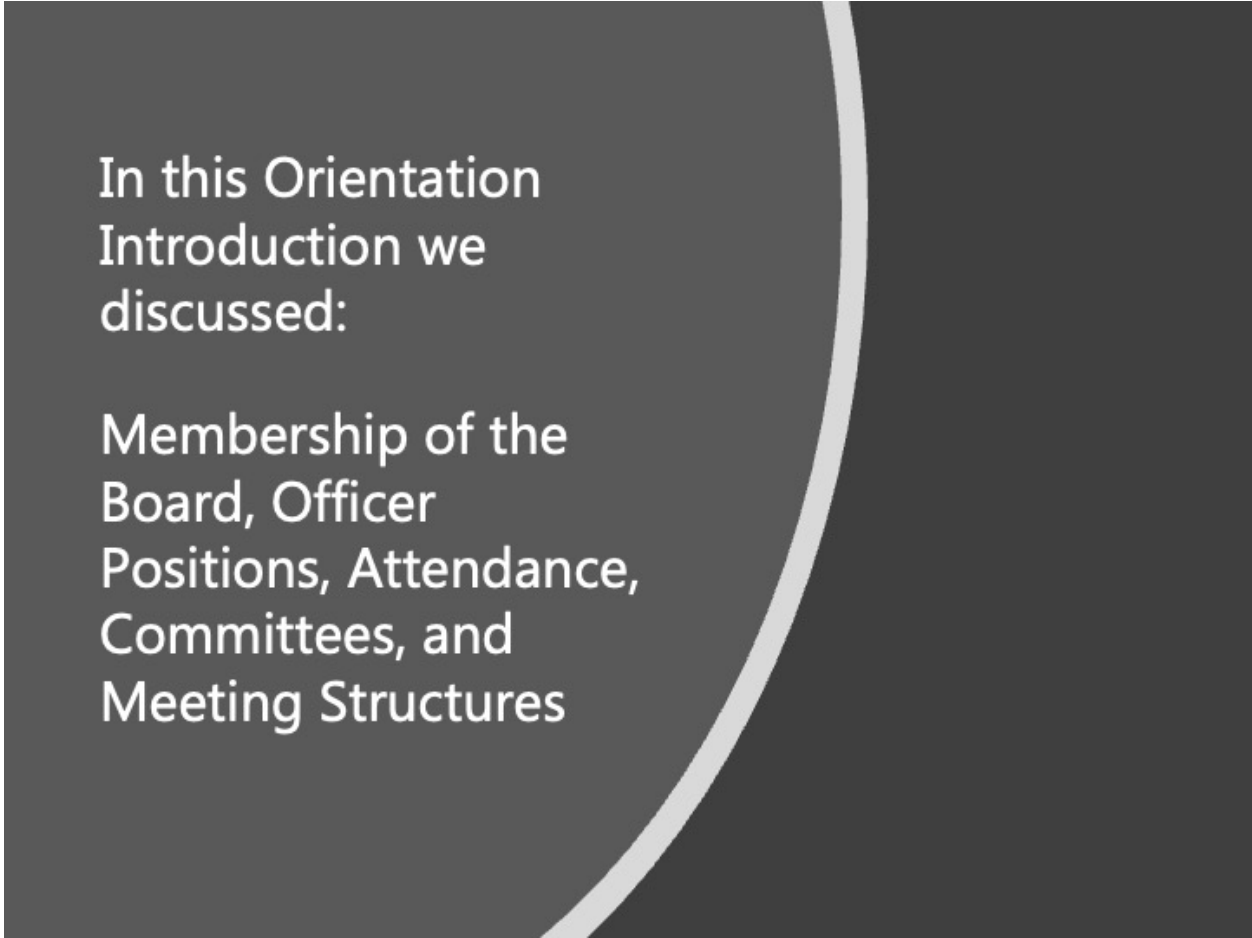
The monthly Board of Trustees meeting follows a specific protocol: Board Affairs (chair, vice chair, president, chief of staff, and general counsel) meet two weeks prior to the board meeting to set the agenda. The agenda, location, and time are published no later than one week prior to the meeting. The trustees will have access to all meeting materials for review and preparation one week prior to the scheduled meeting. The college follows Robert's Rules of Order processes for moving through the agenda. Closed sessions are private meetings of the board and are subject to the Open Meetings Act requirements as posted by the Maryland State Attorney General's office. They typically take place after the open meeting, the full board, president, chief of staff, and general counsel attend.

Board of Trustees Meeting Structure

- All Trustees have access to Board Docs – all meeting materials will be posted one week prior to the meeting.

- All meetings are open to the public. The Board Chair leads the meeting.

- The typical structure includes – approval of minutes and agenda, the introduction of guests and new faculty/staff, action items, discussion items, monthly financial report, President's comments and Chair comments.

- Action items require board vote. The CSM Board of Trustees follows Robert's Rules of Order – thus, Trustees will motion to approve the item, second to approve the motion, discussion, and vote to approve.

- Closed Sessions usually take place after open meetings adjourn — closed session meetings are confidential. General Counsel and the Chief of Staff will attend.

That was a lot of information! In this segment, you learned about membership of the board, officer positions, attendance, committees, and the meeting structure. Do you have any questions or comments?

In this Orientation
Introduction we
discussed:

Membership of the
Board, Officer
Positions, Attendance,
Committees, and
Meeting Structures

As we discussed, a good trustee is knowledgeable, and a vital part of the learning

process is recall and retention. This short assessment will allow you to test your knowledge on

the information presented in module one.

Self-Assessment

The College of Southern Maryland consists of trustees from Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert Counties. How many trustees on this nine - member board represent each county?

Board of Trustees meet 11 months of the year. Meetings typically take place on the third Thursday of every month, with the exception of which summer month?

Board members rotate committees and/or positions every year. They serve either as chair or member. How many terms may a trustee serve as chair, on any single committee?

Trustees are expected to arrive at board meetings prepared for agenda items. All information will be posted in Board Docs for trustees at least ___ week prior to the board meeting?

How did you do? Any questions or comments?

Questions to Consider

The College of Southern Maryland consists of trustees from Charles, St. Mary's, and Calvert Counties. How much do you know about the campus locations in each county?

Have you thought about the college's Mission and Vision statement? What does this mean for our stakeholders?
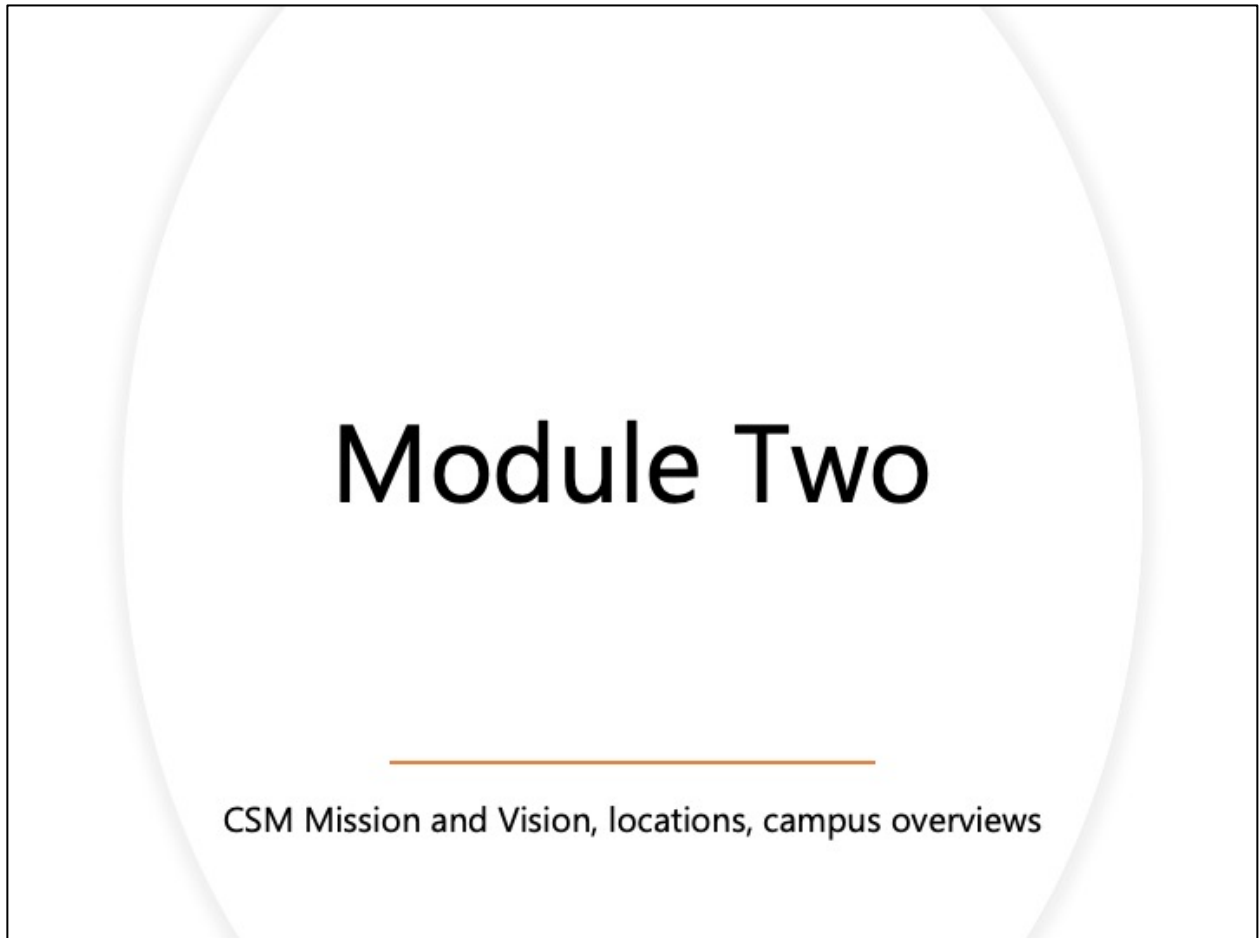
Additional thoughts to consider.

Congratulations! You successfully demonstrated knowledge on membership of the board, officer positions, attendance, committees, and meeting structure.

Trustees arrive at community college governance as responsible, thoughtful, and well-intentioned individuals, although the majority may have not received, or received very little, orientation to the college, the board, its culture, or specific duties. Some trustees may have a heightened interest in some topics, perhaps due to their political leanings, work experience, or loyalty to those they perceive they are on the board to represent (Phelan, 2022, p. 52). Thus, understanding the college mission and vision along with having a firm knowledge of the locations and campuses is a good starting point to ensuring trustees represent the college properly when in the community.

Mission Statement

The College of Southern Maryland enhances lives and strengthens the economic vitality of a diverse and changing region by providing affordable postsecondary education, workforce development, and cultural and personal enrichment opportunities
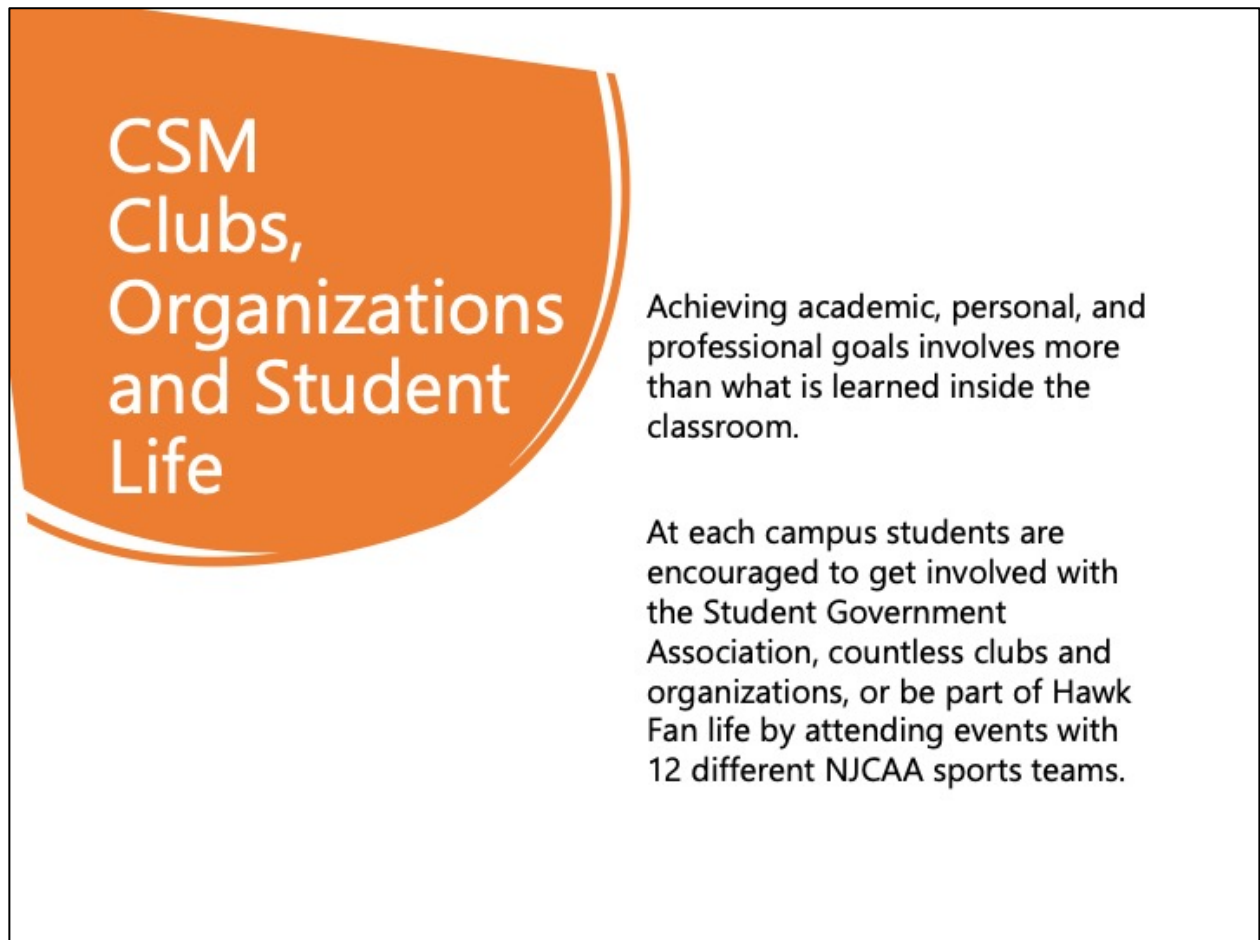
Vision

Transforming lives through lifelong learning and service.

The Mission Statement of the college goes under a review and edit, if deemed necessary, during the same three- year Strategic Plan review for the college. Both the Mission and the Strategic Plan are approved by the board of trustees before being incorporated into the publications and work of the college.

The current mission statement states: The College of Southern Maryland enhances lives and strengthens the economic vitality of a diverse and changing region by providing affordable postsecondary education, workforce development, and cultural and personal enrichment opportunities.

The mission statement directs the work of faculty, administrators, and staff and creates the boundaries of reasonable expectations for the college to engage with the community and the financial resources for the types of programs the college supports.

The vision statement has remained the same for two strategic planning cycles and states that the college's long-term aspiration is "transforming lives through lifelong learning and service." The vision statement is idealism and points to the direction the college aspires to reach through the culmination of all its endeavors.

The college serves the tri-county region and has a physical presence in each county along with additional locations that have specific training or geographical influences. The four

main campuses are the La Plata Campus, Leonardtown Campus, Prince Frederick Campus, and the Regional Hughesville Campus. There is also a CSM Center for Transportation Training located in La Plata but is separate from the main campus, as well as the Velocity Center in Indian Head, which is a collaboration with the military base located down the street from this facility.

This map provides a bird's-eye-view of the capital footprint the college has on the region.

The next section provides a more micro-level of each campus, highlighting the footprint and focus of each location.

Regional Hughesville Campus

- CSM's 74-acre Regional Hughesville Campus provides offerings and programs to serve the entire region in a more cost-effective and convenient way.

- The master plan is designed to create a sense of community and includes five phases of growth. The first phase was the construction of a 30,000-square-foot Center for Trades and Energy Training, opened in 2017. The second phase is the construction of the 50,000-square-foot Center for Health Sciences, which is scheduled to open in 2022

La Plata Campus

The La Plata campus in Charles County, Maryland, is nestled on 173 acres off Mitchell Road and has 14 buildings with winding pathways in several areas for students to enjoy campus life.

Prince Frederick Campus

The Prince Frederick Campus in Calvert County hosts a variety of amenities, including two state-of-the-art buildings consisting of nearly 90,000 square feet. The campus has specialized science labs, allied health labs, a distance learning classroom, a nuclear engineering technology lab, and fully equipped multi-media meeting space and is home of the Ward Virt's Concert Series, piano concerts held throughout the year, and a Farming For Hunger gardening space.

BUILDING A

BUILDING B

Leonardtown Campus

The Leonardtown Campus in St. Mary's County has four spacious modern facilities including a beautiful Wellness and Aquatic Center. The campus is conveniently located in the heart of Leonardtown and offers an open quad for student picnics, movies on the lawns, and more.

In this module we discussed :
CSM Mission and Vision, locations,
campus overviews

Now you know about CSM's vision and mission and the locations where we serve our communities. This information is useful for trustees as they engage in the community — the facts and data are important talking points to remember as you find yourself advocating for the college. Let's see what you recall.

Self Assessment

- Fill in the blanks: The College of Southern Maryland enhances _____ and strengthens the economic vitality of a diverse and changing region by providing affordable postsecondary _____, workforce development, and cultural and personal enrichment opportunities.

- The College of Southern Maryland has _____ campus locations that include La Plata, Prince Frederick, Leonardtown, and Regional Hughesville.

So, let's make sure you have your facts straight. Take a moment and see if you can correctly fill in the blanks of these two sentences.

- Let's review: as you learned, the mission statement is: The College of Southern Maryland enhances lives and strengthens the economic vitality of a diverse and changing region by providing affordable postsecondary education, workforce development, and cultural and personal enrichment opportunities.

And

- The College of Southern Maryland has 4 campus locations that include La Plata, Prince Frederick, Leonardtown, and Regional Hughesville.

Questions to Consider

- Trustees are successful professionals – as such many have taken leadership and personality quizzes. What is your awareness of servant leadership?

- Fiduciary has a couple of meanings – in banking it is related to fiscal responsibilities. In higher education it is related to conduct – what is your awareness of fiduciary behavior?
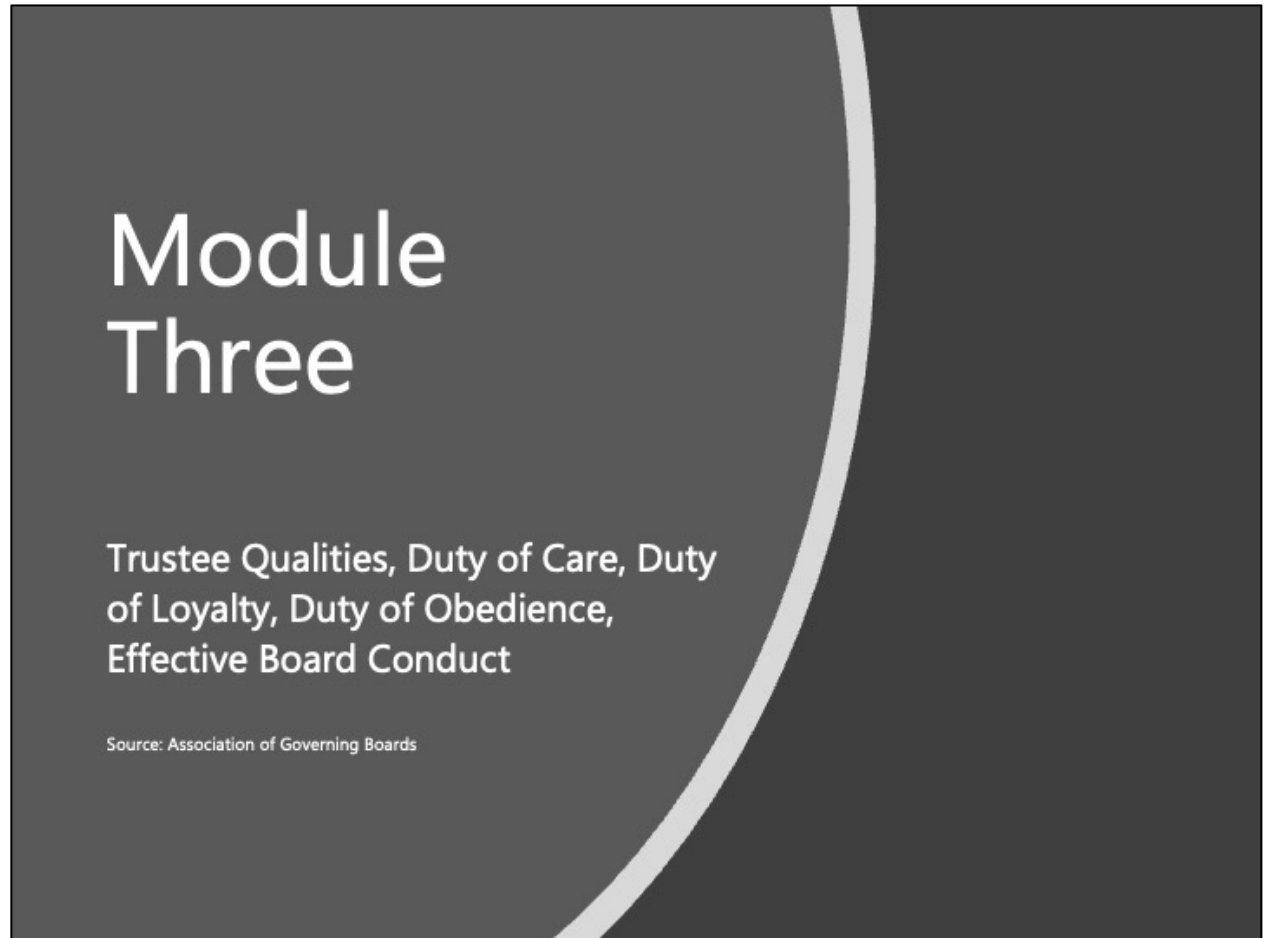
Additional points to consider.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Module Two! You are a

knowledgeable steward of our mission, vision, locations, and campus overviews.

Welcome to Module Three. This is an important module to help you, as a trustee,

understand the role and behaviors of a college trustee. The information in this module comes

from the Association of Governing Boards; their research and writings on the qualities of

trustees remains steadfast in the test of time. The qualities are broken down into three areas:

Care, Loyalty, and Obedience. We will also talk about how you know if you are upholding these

qualities by diving a little deeper into the conduct of each area.

Board of Trustee Qualities – Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community (Spears, 1995) and is an appropriate leadership style for governance in that the symmetry between stewardship and college community empowerment meet the needs of governance and the realizing the institutional mission.

Board of Trustee Qualities – Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1977) states that servant leaders are leaders who put other people's needs, aspirations and interests above their own – servant leaders, and good trustees, know when to lead and when to serve or follow. The conflict, if any, is in the tendency among leadership scholars to treat leaders as lone individuals who command and control others and organizations align leaders with management roles, who have the authority to give orders to others. Servant leaders challenge accomplished intellectuals to embrace a "we" principality in order to "serve others". Trustees serve the college, community, and its constituents by supporting and serving, it is a position of great influence whose authority, in most part, is relegated to the CEO. Thus, the trustee or servant leader finds strength in being an altruistic partner in the endeavor (McMahon, 2010).

Board members make careful, good-faith decisions in the best interest of the institution consistent with the mission, independent of undue influence from any party or from financial interests.

Central to these decisions are the principles of Servant Leadership, as defined by Greenleaf (1977).

Board of Trustee Qualities

- Under state statutory and common law, board members are fiduciaries and must act with care, loyalty, and obedience.

- A fiduciary relationship is one of trust or confidence between parties.

- Board Members make careful, good-faith decisions in the best interest of the institution consistent with the mission, independent of undue influence from any party or from financial interests.

Next, let's take the broad view to understand the big picture. Under state statutory and common law, board members are fiduciaries and must act with care, loyalty, and obedience.

The word "fiduciary" is used commonly in the world of trusteeship, but the simple meaning is that a fiduciary relationship is one of trust or confidence between parties.

Now we will learn a little more about the individual qualities. Recall that the three qualities are Duty of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience.

The Duty of Care

- Board members will carry out their responsibilities in good-faith, using a degree of diligence, care and skill.

- Board members will regularly attend meetings, read and evaluate meeting materials in advance, ask questions and participate actively in board discussions, and be knowledgeable of the purpose, operations, and environment.

- Board governance requires a balancing of interests and priorities to align the institutional mission and strategic priorities. This requires a balancing of employees' interests, student interests, physical assets, fiscal assets, consumer value of the degree, and community interests in the institution.
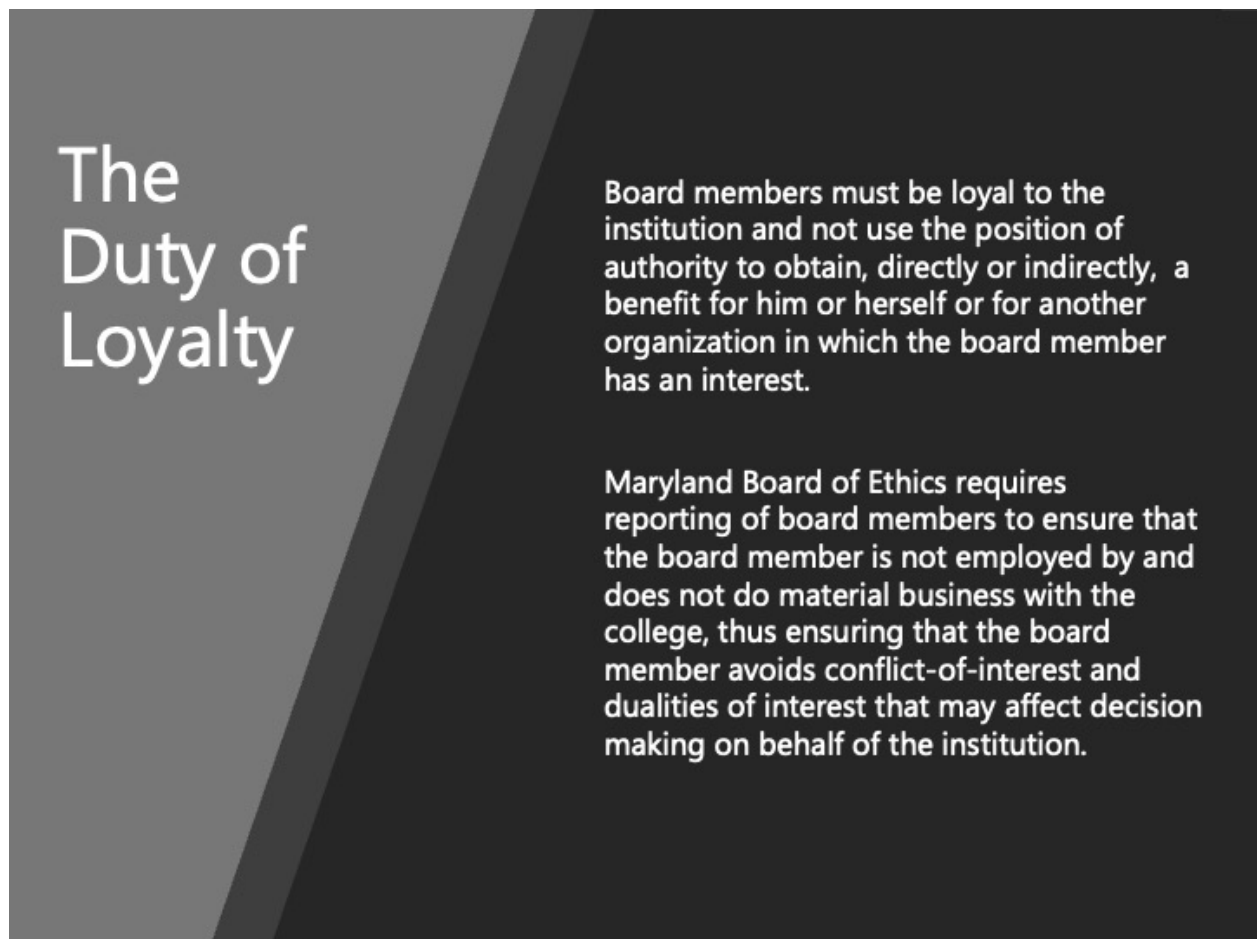
The Duty of Care is the agreement that board members will carry out their responsibilities in good faith, using a degree of diligence, care, and skill. They do this by attending meetings, coming prepared and asking questions, and actively participating in board discussions to be knowledgeable of the purpose, operations, and environment of the college.

Attendance is monitored by the State of Maryland and the college does submit an annual report of trustee attendance to the Governor's Appointment Office. If a trustee falls beneath the 50% line for attendance, the college will report it immediately to determine if the vacancy should become an open seat on the board for another to fill.

Board governance requires a balancing of interests and priorities to align the institutional mission and strategic priorities. This requires a balancing of employee's interests,

student interests, physical assets, fiscal assets, consumer value of the degree, and community interests in the institution. Sounds straightforward, doesn't it?

We will go over the broad definitions of the Loyalty and Obedience, and then I will walk you through a short explanation of each duty that you can use throughout your term to assess your level of fiduciary care.
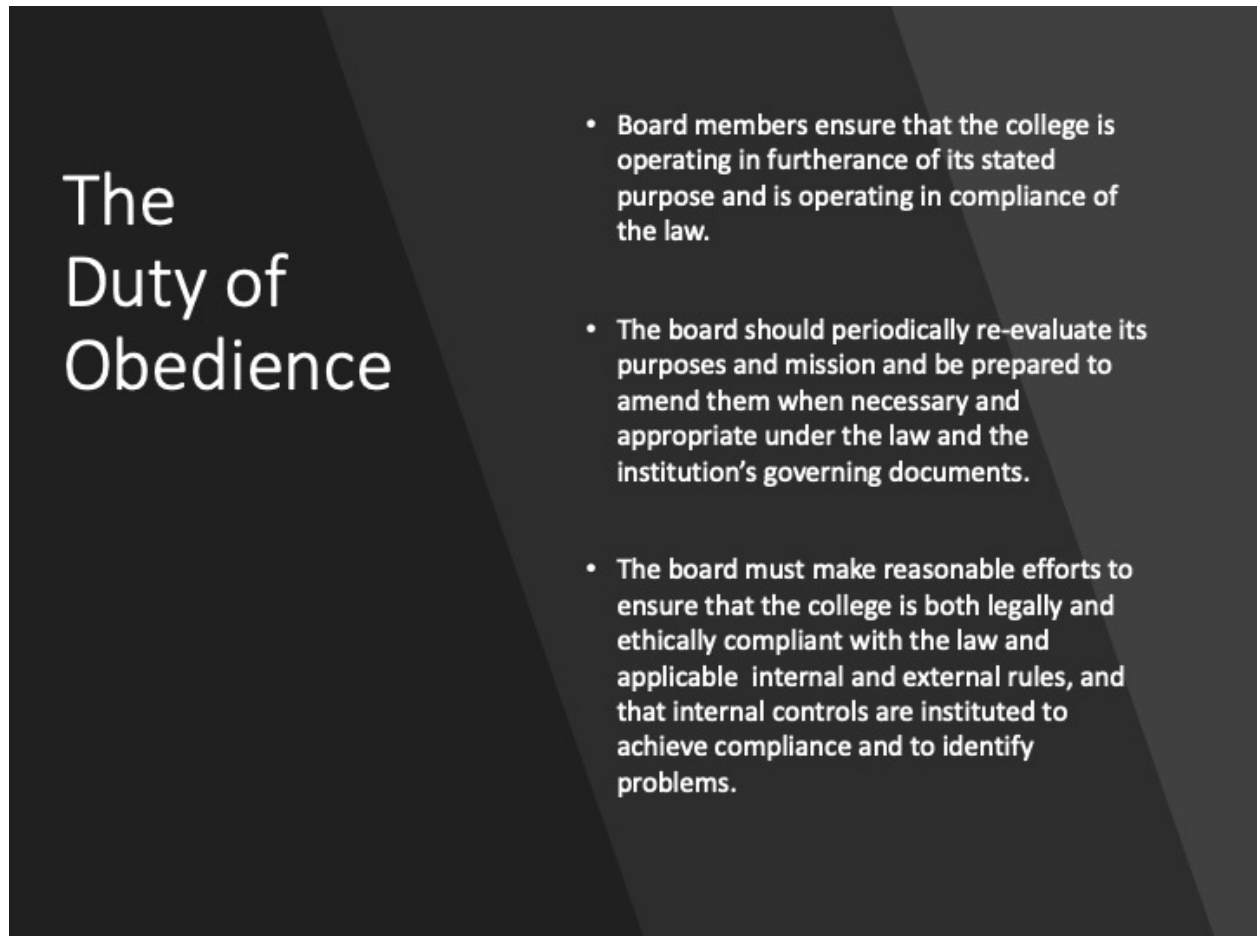

The Duty of Loyalty states that board members must be loyal to the institution and not use the position of authority to obtain, directly or indirectly, a benefit for him- or herself or for another organization in which the board member has an interest.

The Maryland Board of Ethics requires reporting of board members to ensure that the board member is not employed by, and does not do, material business with the college, thus ensuring that the board member avoids conflict-of-interest and dualities that may affect decision making on behalf of the institution.

The Duty of Obedience is very important and straightforward. It states that board members ensure the college is operating in furtherance of its stated purpose and is operating in compliance of the law. As you are aware, the college does have a general counsel in administration with a dual role in supporting the board as general counsel. This is a great asset in ensuring legal compliance by the board.

The board will periodically re-evaluate its purposes and mission to be prepared to amend them when necessary and appropriate under the law and the institution's governing documents. You will recall that the strategic plan and mission are reviewed and edited by the college every three years and approved by the board.

The board must make reasonable efforts to ensure that the college is both legally and ethically compliant with the law and applicable internal and external rules, and that internal controls are instituted to achieve compliance and to identify problems. The college undergoes an annual audit of financial activities, and the board receives a full brief from an independent accounting firm to assist in ensuring the board meets this level of obedience.

Effective Board Conduct

Duty of Care Conduct

- Acting in good-faith with diligence, care, and skill.

- Acting in a manner in the best interests of the institution.

- Actively attending and participating in all board and committee meetings, reading and evaluating the materials presented, asking questions about unexplained results and unfamiliar issues.

- Retiring from board service if one is no longer able to satisfy the time, effort, and attendance expectations.

Now that we understand the intents of each duty —care, loyalty, and obedience, we will talk about how you, as a trustee and fiduciary, demonstrate each quality. This is referred to as effective board conduct.

Let's start with Duty of Care Conduct. There are some simple behaviors that ensure you are demonstrating proper care of your role as a trustee of the college.

- Act in good faith with diligence, care, and skill. That means attend the meetings, be prepared, remain informed to be college centered.

- Act in a manner that is in the best interests of the institution — avoid conflicts of interests to the board and college.

- Attendance is a common theme, because your intentional physical presence and participation in the information and knowledge sharing that takes place in governance prepares the board to be equipped in any unexpected situation.

- And, if you are no longer able to invest in the time, effort, and attendance expectations, you agree to retire from board service.

Effective Board Conduct

Duty of Loyalty Conduct

- Faithfully pursuing the interests of the college rather than one's own interests or the interests of another person or organization.

- Actively disclosing existing or potential financial conflicts of interests and dual interests and recusing oneself from board discussions and votes on transactions or policy matters when appropriate.

- Maintaining complete confidentiality, unless directed by the board and subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

- Retaining independence from external stakeholders in the conduct of oversight and policy responsibilities.

Duty of Loyalty Conduct is the faithful pursuing of interests of the college rather than your own interest or the interests of another person or organization.

- This includes separating yourself from the interests of any elected official who may have recommended you for trusteeship.

- You are upfront and transparent in disclosing existing or potential financial conflicts of interests and dual interests, and you recuse yourself from board discussions and votes on transactions or policy matters when appropriate.

- Maintain complete confidentiality of institutional knowledge obtained in your role as a trustee, unless directed by the board and subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

- And retain independence from external stakeholders in the conduct of oversight and policy responsibilities. For example, a trustee would not engage directly with the accountants conducting the annual audits.

Effective Board Conduct

Duty of Obedience Conduct

- Ensure the college is, at all times, acting in accordance with its mission and purposes.

- Ensure the college is acting in legal and ethical compliance with the law and applicable internal and external rules.

- Instituting effective controls to achieve compliance and to identify and address problems.

What does effective Duty of Obedience conduct look like?

- You ensure the college is always acting in accordance with its mission and purposes. You do this when you thoughtfully vote on board decisions and engage in dialogue to help ensure full understanding of actions brought before the board.

- Additionally, you ensure the college is acting in legal and ethical compliance with the law and applicable internal and external rules.

Lastly, you institute effective controls to achieve compliance and to identify and address

problems. You do this by understanding audit findings and ensuring that any areas of follow-up

are met and maintained.

In this module we discussed:

Trustee Qualities, Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, Duty of Obedience, Effective Board Conduct

Source: Association of Governing Boards

The Association of Governing Boards provided great clarity and succinctness to help us understand the Duties of Care, Loyalty, and Obedience. Effective board conduct, as you learned, is grounded in integrity and ethical behavior.

Self Assessment

Under state statutory and common law, board members are fiduciaries and must act with care, _____, and obedience.

Board members must be loyal to the institution and not use the position of authority to obtain, directly or indirectly, a benefit for him or herself or for another organization in which the board member has an _____.

Duty of Care is effectively demonstrated when acting in a manner in the best interests of the _____.

Duty of Loyalty is effectively demonstrated by maintaining complete confidentiality, unless directed by the board and subject to the _____Open Meetings Act.

Duty of ____ is effectively demonstrated by retaining independence from external stakeholders in the conduct of oversight and policy responsibilities.

Understanding your role as a trustee is critical to your fiduciary success. Let's take a short assessment to ensure your understanding. Take a moment and fill in the blanks for the following five questions.

Let's see how you did:

1. Under state statutory and common law, board members are fiduciaries and must act with care, loyalty, and obedience.

2. Board members must be loyal to the institution and not use the position of authority to obtain, directly or indirectly, a benefit for him or herself or for another organization in which the board member has an interest.

3. Duty of Care is effectively demonstrated when acting in a manner in the best interests of the institution.

4. Duty of Loyalty is effectively demonstrated by maintaining complete confidentiality, unless directed by the board and subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

5. Duty of Obedience is effectively demonstrated by retaining independence from external stakeholders in the conduct of oversight and policy responsibilities.

Questions to Consider

Trustees work as a team – what qualities are demonstrated for a board designate itself as high performing?

The Trustee-CEO relationship is grounded in healthy communication. What efforts result in creating an environment where communication is open, transparent, and respectful? Why is this important?

Additional questions to consider.

Congratulations!

You have successfully completed
Module Three

Trustee Qualities, Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, Duty of Obedience, Effective Board Conduct

Source: Association of Governing Boards

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Module Three! Great job in learning about the trustee qualities of Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, and Duty of Obedience. You demonstrated that you understand effective board conduct in each of these areas as well! The Association of Governing Boards has more information on trusteeship if you would like to learn more about these or other areas.
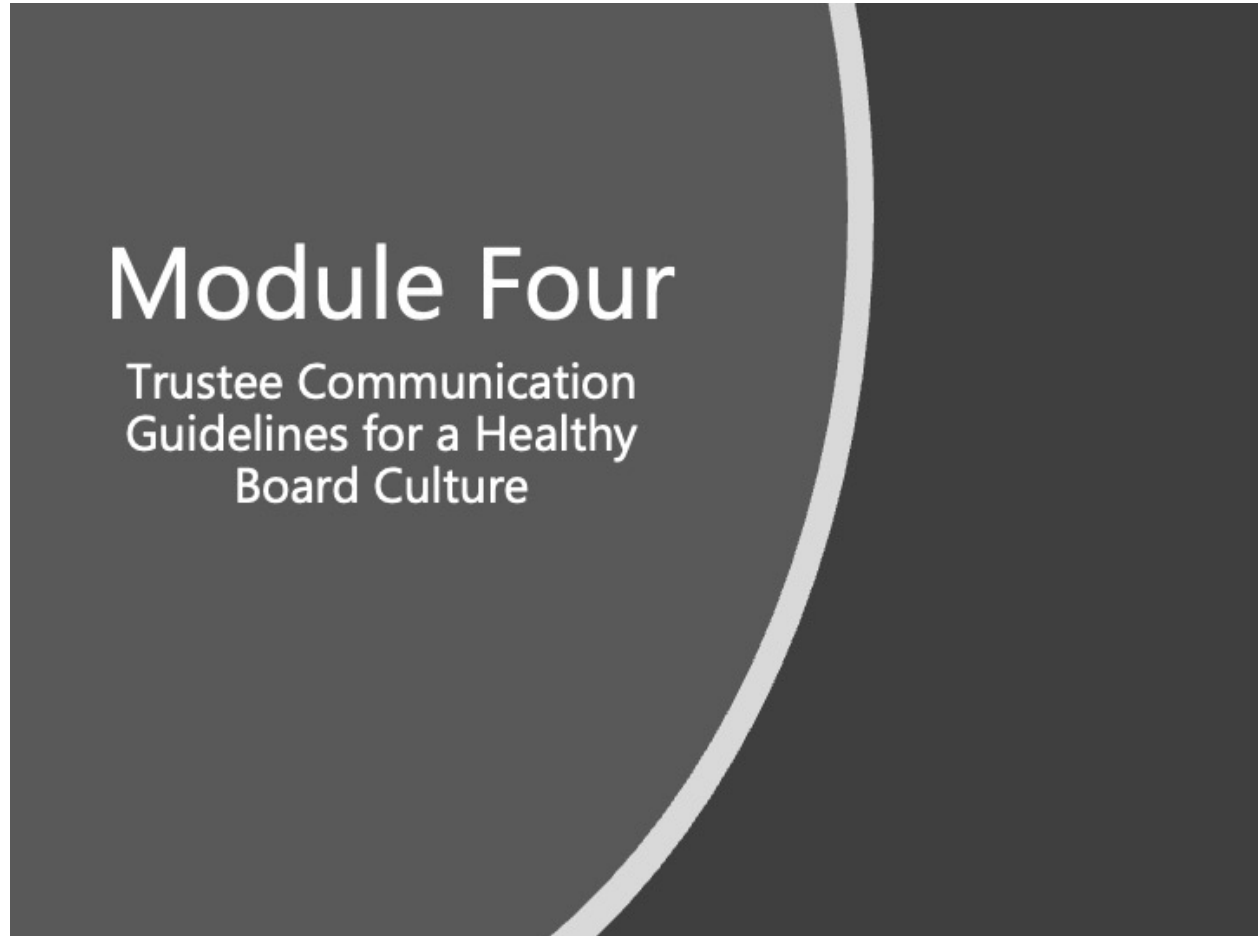
Welcome to Module Four: Trustee Communication Guidelines for a Healthy Board

Culture.

Trustee Communication Guidelines for a Healthy Board Culture

The College of Southern Maryland Board of Trustees is committed to a healthy board culture and to transparency in all its operations.

The board embraces its leadership role and is committed to modeling exemplary standards of board governance.

Open communication is a demonstration of mutual respect and support.

The information in this module is grounded in the 60 plus years of trusteeship and practice passed down through the decades that now exists as policy and practice to ensure healthy board and president relations as they, together, govern and lead the college.

The trustees and president should agree to commit to a healthy board culture and to transparency in all of its operations, the board embraces their leadership role and is committed to modeling exemplary standards of board governance for the health of the institution. The core premise is the understanding that open communication is a demonstration of mutual respect and support between the board and president.

Communications guidelines facilitate a healthy board culture

The board and the president shall maintain regular communication. All trustee communication shall include the board chair and the president.

The president shall send a weekly communication to all trustees regarding pertinent college issues and upcoming events.

All emails among trustees shall copy the chair and the president.

When trustees are visiting campus, they shall give the president a "heads up."

How we achieve a healthy board culture is through a mutual understanding of how communications take place. It is a standing practice that the board and president maintain regular communication. All trustee communication within the board will include the board chair and president. For example, a trustee who emails another trustee regarding college business will copy the board chair and president in their communication.

The president sends a weekly update to all the trustees to keep them abreast of college issues and upcoming events. When trustees visit campus, they will let the president know as a relationship courtesy. This courtesy is designed to build trust and congeniality between the president and the trustees — the trustees empower the president to be the leader of all institutional activities and thus, is the head of the institution's day-to-day activities.

Communications guidelines facilitate a healthy board culture

Trustees shall not communicate directly with college employees.

Chairs of board committees, however, are authorized to communicate directly with the senior staff members assigned to those committees, copying the board chair and the president.

All trustees shall have the same information and be treated equally. When trustees ask questions, the answers shall be shared among all.

When trustees hear complaints regarding the college, they shall refer those complaints to the president per ADM: 305.

The empowerment of the president to lead the institution comes with the professional respect of having trustees communicate directly with the president and not with college employees. This is done out of professional respect for the power dynamic and having the trustees empower the president's leadership.

The exception to this rule is the trustees serving on board subcommittees as senior staff members are assigned to the committees as subject matter experts. All trustee communications with these staff members shall copy the board chair and the president.

To ensure equity in information among trustees, all trustees will have the same information and be treated equally. When trustees ask questions, the answers will be shared with the entire group.

All press information requests to trustees will be directed to the Office of the President. The college has a Unified Communication Team and a Press Information Officer to engage with the press and media.

When trustees are in the community and hear complaints regarding the college, they shall refer those complaints to the president per Board Policy Administration Policy ADM:305. This further demonstrates trustees' decision to hire and support the president to lead the institution.

The college recognizes that all trustees belong to a larger network of community college trustees and encourage the use of external resources and networks for additional stewardship knowledge. For example, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) holds an annual Leadership Conference and an annual Governance Leadership Institute for which the college coordinates travel and registration. These conferences include role specific learning opportunities and national networking opportunities.

Additionally, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC) are a local resource. The board chair and president have seats on the MACC board of directors and participate in monthly meetings to keep informed on the state of community college legislation and changes in the political environment. MACC hosts an annual Legislative Summit, which all trustees are invited to attend. This is usually held in Annapolis, the state capital. The Legislative Summit includes a Student Advocacy Day where college students attend and deliver testimonials to their elected officials. MACC is the legislative liaison for the sixteen Maryland Community Colleges and is a great resource for trustees to stay informed on state issues.

In this module we discussed

Trustee Communication Guidelines for a Healthy Board Culture

In this module, you learned a lot about the guidelines for trustee communication to create a healthy board culture. These guidelines were created by the trustees and presidents who came before you. The college has had the privilege of having a high performing board and effective presidencies, and we believe it is in large part due to these communication parameters being respected.

Self Assessment

The board embraces its leadership role and is _____ to modeling exemplary standards of board governance.

Open communication is a demonstration of mutual _____ and support.

All trustees shall have the same _____ and be treated equally. When trustees ask questions, the answers shall be shared among all.

When trustees hear complaints regarding the college, they shall refer those complaints to the _____ per ADM: 305

Now it is time to test your knowledge of board communications. By filling in the blanks in these four questions correctly, you can do your part in ensuring a healthy board culture.

Let's see how you did:

1. The board embraces its leadership role and is committed to modeling exemplary standards of board governance.

2. Open communication is a demonstration of mutual respect and support.

3. All trustees shall have the same information and be treated equally. When trustees ask questions, the answers shall be shared among all.

4. When trustees hear complaints regarding the college, they shall refer those complaints to the president per ADM:305.

Questions to Consider

The board and the college adhere to bylaws and policies. What is your experience in creating and upholding each?

In what way are bylaws and policies instrumental to the institution and the communities it serves?

Here are two additional topics to discuss and consider.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Module Four! You are now equipped to demonstrate proper communication behaviors to ensure a healthy board culture.

Module Five

Bylaws and Policy, a Sample

Welcome to Module Five! This is the finish line of the first phase of your Trustee

Orientation! This module will touch on some of the bylaws and policies that are important to

your effective trusteeship. All trustees have access to the board manual through our online

repository. Please take the time to become familiar with the bylaws. Board manual policies

follow a cycle of evaluation; you will see policies come before the board at regularly scheduled

board meetings. The policies are reviewed by general counsels, the president, and the

members of the president's cabinet – the monthly policy reviews will include one of three

statuses: suggested edits for your approval are referred to as a revision; to approve the policy

as it stands is referred to as a reaffirmation; or to delete the policy because it is no longer

relevant is referred to as a deletion. During your five-year term, you will see all of the policies come before you with one of these three designations for your consideration.

You have been engaged with a lot of information over the past four modules. We appreciate your time and commitment to learn how you can be part of a healthy board.

The Association of Governing Board's has a listing of key characteristics of good board governance, they are:

- A good board is diverse

- A good board is well informed about their roles and responsibilities

- A good board includes all members being committed to the institution they serve

- A good board focuses on the big picture and takes the long view

- A good board uses its time productively

- A good board seeks and obtains the information it needs

- A good board recognizes the paramount importance of its relationship with the president

- A good board basis their relationships with each other on mutual respect and trust

- A good board includes advocacy with internal and external constituents.

As you just heard, AGB stresses that the keys to good governance are composition, focus, and relationships. (AGB, 2018)

Board Bylaws

Bylaws of the Board of Trustees derives its authority from Maryland Education code and Bylaws.*

The Board "shall exercise general control, adopt reasonable rules, regulations, and bylaws" and has certain listed powers.

Bylaws: Adopt listed powers and duties in Education Code; Describes Board structure; Operating rules for officers, meetings, and committee descriptions; Authorizes creation of a manual of policies for Board operations and governance of the college; Creates process for review and update of Bylaw and Policies.

*Statue sections: 16-103, 16-606, 16-301, 3012 of Education Code

Let's begin by understanding the role of having board bylaws.

Board bylaws for the college's trustees derive its authority from the Maryland Education Code and bylaws statute sections 16-603, 16-606, 16-301, 3012 of the Education Code. Bylaws are designed to ensure that the board "shall exercise general control, adopt reasonable rules, regulations and bylaws" and has certain listed powers.

The purpose of Bylaws is to adopt listed powers and duties as stated in the Education Code. They describe the board structure, how the board operates, how officers are chosen and their terms, when the board meets and how those meetings are run, including the subcommittees. The bylaws authorize a manual of policies for Board operations and

governance and allows for the creation of process for review and update of the bylaws and

policies.

The following slides will highlight major areas of the bylaws for your awareness. We will

begin at the beginning, Article 1: Responsibilities and Powers.

Article 1: Responsibilities and Powers.

This article establishes what many will say is the board's most important responsibility

— the hiring of the president. This section describes the appointment and terms of

employment and evaluation of the college president. The board has another important

responsibility as fiduciary — the acquisition and disposition of the property — the board of

trustees owns all the college real estate and as the principal owner needs to understand how to

buy and sell capital assets. Additionally, Article 1 discusses how the board handles proposed

gifts to the college and grants. This may seem minor, but it is important. For example, before a

board accepts the donation of property, it must conduct due diligence to ensure the college is

not inheriting a liability or risk.

Other areas that fall under Article 1 include the oversight of academic programs. For

example, if the college would like to add, amend, or delete a program, it must first be approved

by the board before petitioning the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

And, of course, the trustees approve the annual operating budget and attend

commissioner budget hearings alongside the president to ensure the college receives the

funding necessary to meet its mission.

Article II:
Composition,
Term of
Appointment,
Residency, and
Code of
Conduct

✓MEETING ATTENDANCE
✓ CODE OF CONDUCT

✓ETHICS POLICY
✓ CONFIDENTIALITY

✓DISSENT
✓ PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

✓RESPECT AND COURTESY
✓ CENSURE

Article 2: Composition, Term of Appointment, Residency, and Code of Conduct.

You are already familiar with many of these concepts from our earlier modules such as

meeting attendance, conduct, confidentiality, ethics, communications, respect, and courtesy.

Article 2 also contains language on how to censure a trustee who is disruptive to board

operations (this rarely happens and is necessary only as a last resort). The board chair and other

trustees will work together to help a trustee understand their role; thus, censure will not come

as a surprise, but instead as a last step. The goal is healthy board governance — and this

orientation is designed to avoid situations that lead to trustee censure.

Article 3: Board Officers and Their Duties.

In Module One, we touched on board roles; Article 3 is where the information resides in the bylaws. The Article covers officers of the board and subcommittees and terms. It also has rules on how to handle a special election, for example, if the board chair has to step down from the board, how the board officially elects another trustee to the seat.

Article 4: Committees of the board.

This section of the bylaws goes a little deeper into the subcommittees that we discussed

in Module One. Specifically, it describes the Standing Committees such as Academic and
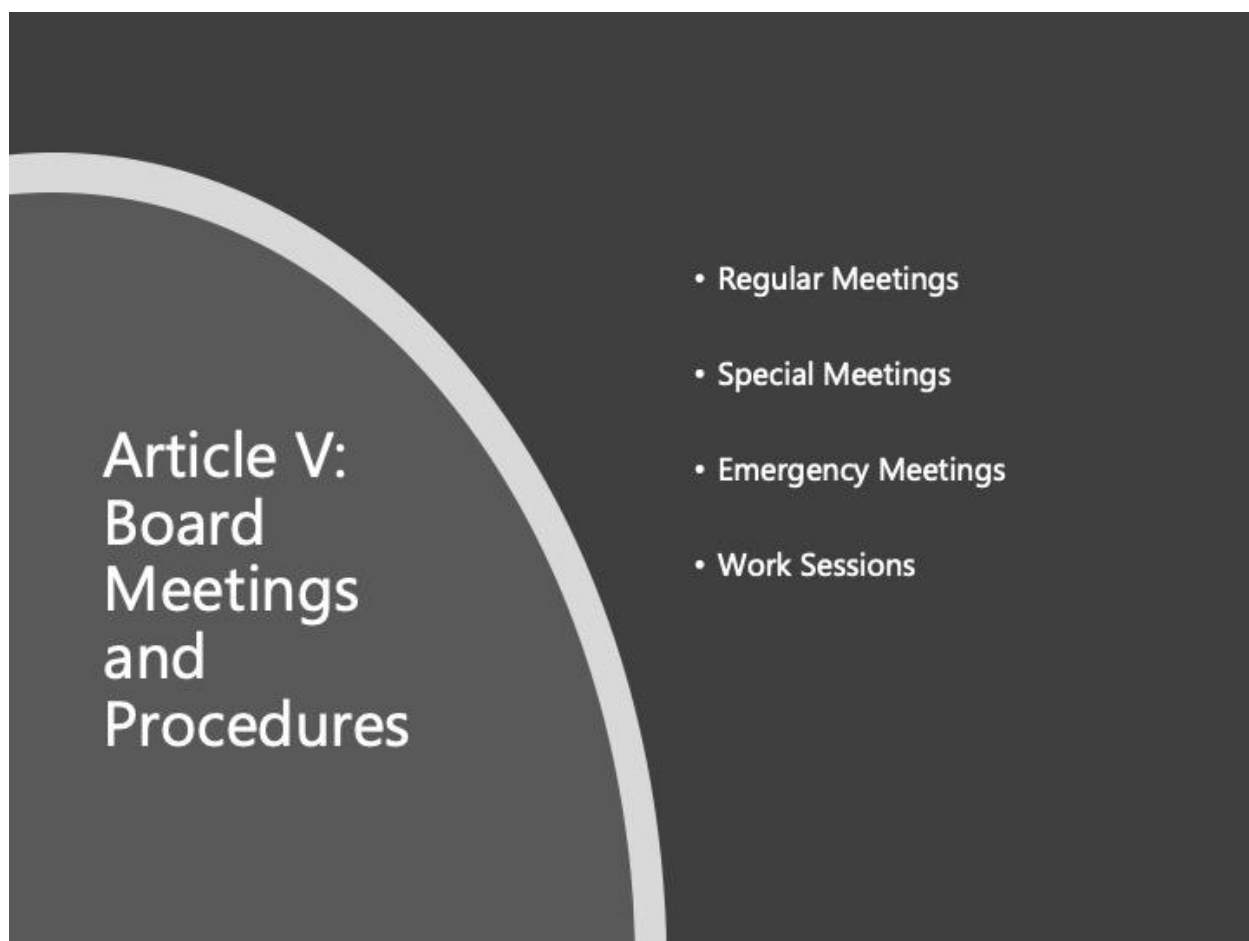
Student Affairs, Audit, Human Resources and Benefits, Nominating and Distinguished Awards,

and Ad Hoc, if needed.

Article V:
Board
Meetings
and
Procedures

- Regular Meetings
- Special Meetings
- Emergency Meetings
- Work Sessions

Article 5: Board Meetings and Procedures.

Again, you will find that the Module One orientation materials come from the foundation of the bylaws. Article Five discusses the regular meetings, special meetings, emergency meetings, and work sessions — all of which you are familiar with, but it is important to know that these are part of the bylaws.

Board Policies

BRD:201

- The Secretary-Treasurer or General Counsel is authorized to make revisions and updates to policies provided that such changes do not alter the meaning or intent of the policies.

- All Board policies are effective immediately upon approval by the Board unless otherwise explicitly indicated. Policies that are revised or updated by the Secretary-Treasurer or General Counsel without any change in meaning or intent become effective immediately upon the revision or update of the policy.

- The Board delegates to the President, or the President's designee, the authority to implement policies adopted by the Board and to promulgate further policies and procedures consistent with the policies approved by the Board.

There is also specific board policy language that you should be aware of as a new trustee.

For example, the following language is found in Board Policy BRD:201:

The Secretary-Treasurer (president) or General Counsel is authorized to make revisions and updates to policies provided that such changes do not alter the meaning or intent of the policies. Any policy changes that would alter the meaning or intent will result in the creation of a new policy for the board to consider.

All board policies with revisions become effective as soon as the board votes to accept the revised language.

The board delegates to the President, or the President's designee, the authority to implement policies adopted by the Board and to promulgate further policies and procedures consistent with the policies approved by the Board. This is consistent with the delegation of authority that the board empowers to the president to lead the institution and its day-to-day activities.

Board Policies (continued)

General Counsel presents policies to the board during for reaffirmation (no changes), revision (changes), or deletion.

Board Policies fall under nine areas :
• The College
• Board Operations
• College Administration
• General Policies
• Educational Policies
• Students
• Personnel
• Fiscal Management
• Facilities

Board Policies (Continued).

Board policies fall under nine topical areas: The College Board Operations; College Administration General Policies; Educational Policies and Students: Personnel and Fiscal Management; and Facilities.

As General Counsel brings each policy before the board in the review cycle, you will become more familiar with each. In the meantime, you are always able to review the entire manual which is found in the online repository.

Relations with the President

Relations with the President (ADM: 305)

- The President is the executive officer through whom the Board exercises its control of the institution.

- The President shall be the official channel of communication between all employees and the Board, except as may otherwise be explicitly assigned in writing or policy by the Board.

- Only decisions of the Board of Trustees acting as a body are binding on the President, except when the Board has explicitly delegated its authority. Requests by individual board members for assistance or information in and for official duties should be made to the President through the Board Chair.

As you have learned, healthy board governance is centered on the board relationship with the president and other board members. It is so important that there is a policy for it, ADM:305. In addition, it states that the president is the executive officer through whom the Board exercises its control of the institution. And it states that the board designates the president to lead the institution and is empowered to make decisions that impact the day-to-day operations. The board empowers the president to the be the official channel of communication between all employees and the board, except as may otherwise be explicitly assigned in writing or policy by the Board.

Only decisions of the board acting as a body are binding on the president, except when the board has explicitly delegated its authority. Trustees will request information or assistance

in understanding the official duties of the president directly to the board chair who will

communicate to the president.

In this module we discussed:

Bylaws and Policies
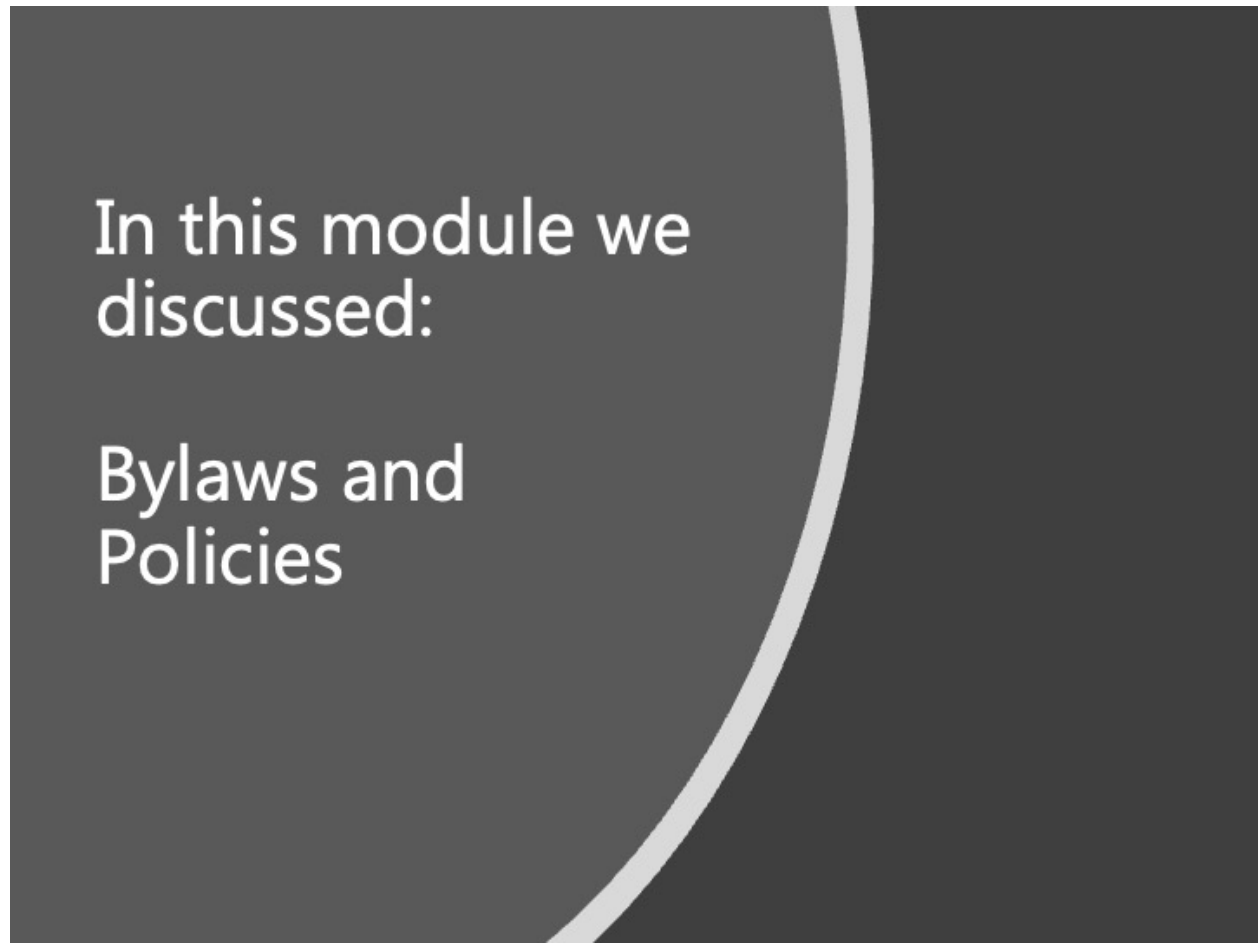
Bylaws and Policies are serious business for the governance of the college. Your

trusteeship relies heavily on understanding the framework of the rules, roles, and

responsibilities that the bylaws provide.

Self-Assessment

Of the five board bylaw articles presented: (1) Responsibilities and Powers: Composition (2) Term of Appointment, Residency, and Code of Conduct; (3) Board Officers and Their Duties (4) Committees of the Board and (5) Board Meetings and Procedures –

- Which one do you think is most important for new trustees?
- Which one would you like to mentor other trustees on for further understanding?
- Which one do you think is most difficult for new trustees?

Here is your opportunity to show off your board policy knowledge! Instead of an assessment we are going to celebrate your completion of the final module in Phase One of the CSM New Trustee Orientation by having a conversation. This will help us to understand what you think of the orientation and how useful you found the knowledge.

Let's get started:

Of the five board bylaw articles presented: Responsibilities and Powers: Composition, Term of Appointment, Residency, and Code of Conduct; Board Officers and their Duties: Committees of the Board: and Board Meetings and Procedures…

- Which one do you think is most important for new trustees?

- Which one would you like to learn more about? Would you consider mentoring new trustees on this subject?

- Which one do you think is the most difficult for new trustees to understand?

Questions to Consider

What other topics about your role as a trustee would you like to learn more about?

What topics, learned today or future learning topics, are you experienced in? Would you consider mentoring a new trustee on this topic or participating in creating new learning modules?

Again, let's consider some additional topics related to this module's content.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Module Five and Phase One of the New Trustee Orientation! We look forward to your contributions to effective board governance and to upholding the board's responsibilities of duties of care, loyalty, and obedience and contributing to the operations of a healthy board.

In the five modules of Phase One of the Orientation you covered a lot of material. Let's reflect on all of the information we covered together: In Module One we learned about the membership of the board, officer positions, attendance, committees, and meeting structures. In Module Two we learned about the colleges' mission, vision, locations, and campus overviews. In Module Three we learned about Trustee Qualities from the Association of Governing Boards: The Duty of Care, Duty of Loyalty, Duty of Obedience, and Effective Board

Governance. In Module Four we learned about Trustee Communication Guidelines for a Healthy Board Culture. In Module Five we learned about the college's bylaws and policies for the board of trustees.

On a closing note, I leave you with the following key trustees' principles as published by the Association of Community College Trustees in "An Overview of Exemplary Community College Governance": (1) the importance of "trust" in trusteeship; (2) the board's role as an advocate of the college; (3) the importance of the board speaking with one voice or none at all; (4) the fact that most board decisions are policy decisions; (5) that community benefit is the central focus of governance; (6) that the board creates a relationship with the CEO/president that is empowering and safe; (7) that the board exemplifies ethical behavior and conduct that is above reproach.

We look forward to your continuous commitment to learning about your role and trusteeship as you contribute meaningfully in board meetings, attend annual conferences and networking events with ACCT and MACC and coming soon, Phase Two of the new trustee orientation series.

Thank you for your service to the college, your time and dedication to learning about the college, your role as trustee, and the framework of governance with a healthy board. We are CSM proud of you!

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges are under tremendous pressure to meet their mission and serve their constituents in an arena filled with political pressures, unstable funding streams, declining enrollments as a byproduct of population changes and the perception of the value of higher education, an increase in CEO turnover with a narrow pipeline of qualified and experienced successors, and unforeseen post-covid learning modalities and competition. Leadership at the governance level is critical for the community college sector to navigate this changing landscape. Well prepared and oriented trustees have a distinct advantage in understanding their roles and fiduciary responsibilities allowing them to govern their colleges more effectively.

A review of the College of Southern Maryland's historical approaches to trustee orientations indicated a predominant and dated use of providing a large volume of printed material, holding a single briefing session, and delivery in a monologue lecture format. The large volume of information provided in that one session creates an unrealistic expectation that the trustee is prepared for their fiduciary responsibilities in community college governance. The consequence is a delay in new trustees participating with confidence and appropriateness, thus losing valuable opportunities to provide their intellectual contributions (Phelan, 2022).

This research focused on understanding the role of trustees in community college governance, how they arrive at these roles, considerations on their qualifications to govern a community college, and the orientation practices that would prepare new trustees to be

successful. The purpose of this product dissertation was to develop and present an orientation program for new trustees at the College of Southern Maryland.

Taking a governance centered approach for an orientation program will allow trustees to navigate the environment at the local, state, and federal levels, engage in healthy board behaviors, and uphold a healthy trustee-president relationship.

This product dissertation research resulted in Orientation Learning Modules (OLM) for one specific community college, the College of Southern Maryland, to use as a new trustee orientation process. The model uses adult learning theories and theoretical frameworks for information delivery, recognition of best practices in andragogy, and a pacing of information flow to build confidence and understanding in new trustees to support early and effective participation in their role of governance by employing best practices for community college governing boards. The overarching outcome of using this model is to ensure the clarity and understanding of trustee roles and responsibilities to build the confidence and performance of these civic minded citizens in ensuring the mission of community colleges preservers.

While developed for CSM, the OLM design provides information that is easily adaptable for other colleges to edit with their own unique information (mission, vision, values, campus locations, bylaws) but still utilize the information created by seminal authors and associations that have dedicated immense resources in research and publications. Thus, allowing the individual colleges to respond to the unique demands of their communities to ensure the opportunities and challenges taking place locally are not overlooked. Additional topics customized to address unique local needs could include local demographics, current political issues/topics, current survey result that indicate student and or employee satisfaction, and

accreditation status and standings. Trusteeship is both unique to the constituencies served and

broad enough to find similarities in governance leadership with national peers.

GOALS OF THE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify the content and delivery strategies for

an orientation program for a community college board of trustees, specifically for the College of

Southern Maryland, to prepare them for their fiduciary responsibilities to successfully govern

the institution. This work was focused on the following research goals:

1. What are the community college trustee fiduciary responsibilities?

2. What are the current best practices for community college trustees?

3. What are the knowledge sets required for community college governing boards?

IMPLEMENTING THE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

While this Orientation program was delivered in five face-to-face meetings, these

modules could be delivered in a variety of formats — asynchronous, synchronous, or hybrid —

to meet the schedule and learning environment preferences of trustees. If you are considering

adapting the program to suit your needs, consider asking your trustees how they would prefer

to learn (synchronous or asynchronous), how they would like to receive the information (one

module at a time, all the modules at once), what modality they prefer (printed, email, course

shell, video, group learning, one-on-one) and work with your president and board to meet the

individual needs of each trustee to ensure a balance of respect of time and learning

preferences.

The module information also could be transformed into animated content delivered

through your campus LMS (or You-Tube channel) with built-in technology to reinforce

advancement accomplishment through the modules, positive answers reinforcement, and providing correct information when the learner responds incorrectly during the self-assessment stage.

Additionally, the author's recommendation is to schedule the orientation early in the onboarding of a new trustee and to deliver the modules in consistent timeframes, being careful to pace the knowledge sharing to avoid information fatigue and overload. Additional research and study recommendations include post-orientation assessments to ascertain knowledge retention and determine the timing of refresher learning opportunities, if needed.

LIMITATIONS, DELIMITATIONS, AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THIS WORK

As noted in Chapter Three, the trustee onboarding process provides a systematic approach to the introduction of trusteeship through introducing the foundational knowledge and an understanding of the behaviors of healthy board governance for new trustees. During the planning stage the author had to make several decisions regarding the onboarding content. Various assumptions and delimitations were made in the writing process, as indicated below:

ASSUMPTIONS

Trustee knowledge can be obtained outside of the college through established industry recognized groups, such as the Association of Governing Boards and the Association of Community College Trustees. This dissertation compliments other learning opportunities for trustees to obtain knowledge on their roles and responsibilities and thus, does not propose to be a singular resource.

Trustee orientation programs can be added to the onboarding process easily. As individual colleges are responsible for their orientation and onboarding processes, the updating of institutional materials exists in practice, allowing modification to their approaches to be adapted to meet the institutional needs.

Committed and supported administration is necessary to sustain a successful onboarding program. The president, the board, and the staff that supports both must see value in the process to ensure the material is delivered and updated.

Sufficient resources within the institution are available to support effective implementation. Human capital and technology costs are associated with the development and delivery modalities for an onboarding program.

Institutions of higher education recognize formal, non-formal, and informal learning. The unique learning needs of individual trustees should be a consideration, colleges are uniquely equipped to be flexible in delivering knowledge to meet the adult learner needs.

DELIMITATIONS

This onboarding process was designed specifically for the College of Southern Maryland trustees; however, the structure and content should be applicable to most community college environments which is necessary to address local opportunities and challenges.

The content for this model is presented as a print document, in English, and does not include materials or approaches appropriate for trustees with disabilities or those who are non-English speakers or who may require ADA support.

The OLM is designed as an advantageous process for the middle majority that are able to onboard within the instruction provided. This model may not address the unique

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perspectives of trustees who fall outside the middle majority: those that are independently

motivated to research and learn prior to taking their role or the trustee who would be

suspicious of accepting an institutional created onboarding, in both cases trustees in those

categories should be offered the benefit of attending conferences and learning opportunities

created by affinity groups such as ACCT, AACC, or AGB.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Additional research and topics are derived from trustee feedback who participated in

the Phase One orientation. Second phase suggestions include additional topics that fit into the

categories of essential board knowledge and some additional institutional topics for interest

and information purposes. All information is presented with the understanding and respect for

the president's authority as delegated by the board. Those topics include but are not limited to:

- The Strategic Plan: the cycle, the committees, the process.

- The Budget: Overview, primary funds, operating budget, county budget, capital budget, capital improvement plan, budget cycles.

- The Maryland Open Meetings Act: the difference between open vs. closed meetings, reasons for moving into closed session, how minutes of closed sessions are approved and stored.

- Robert's Rules of Order: understanding the meeting process.

- Agenda: cycle of standing agenda items, retreats, work sessions.

- Accreditation: Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), cycle, timeline, activities of institution, why this matters, role of the board.

- The Policy Review Cycle – calendar, Board Manual vs. Administrative Manual

- The Roles of the President's Executive Cabinet – work of the divisions, organizational structure, leadership levels.

- Participatory Governance – The structure and process.

- Students: Grants, Scholarships, Loans, Tuition, Fees, Graduation Requirements, Transfer and Articulation Agreements.

- Employees: Vacancy reports, staffing levels, tenure, student support systems.

- Systems of shared governance (roles of stakeholder groups)

Each bulleted topic would be created as a stand-alone module with supporting information and talking points, following the OLM presented in this dissertation. Understanding the board's needs and wants for additional module topics could be obtained by creating a conducting a survey tool or facilitating a gap analysis in trustee knowledge and expectations and then prioritizing module topics. Allowing trustees and the CEO to be part of the module identification process and even the creation of content allows for buy-in, teamwork, and knowledge sharing, all which are helpful in becoming a high performing board.

Additional training topics and approaches that should be considered include alternative delivery methods, periodic assessments, and refresher courses.

CONCLUSION

Community colleges are a vital educational and workforce resource that ensures our society has access to the middle class. Open access, equity, and affordability are core to the community college mission and institutional survival weighs heavily upon the shoulders of those who are responsible for governing this asset, for they, through their actions and decisions, will determine the viability and value for our future generations.

The failures of trusteeship and the negative impacts on community colleges are almost too numerous to mention; some are self-inflicted, while others reflect poor optics, a lack of paying attention, or, worse the violation of fiduciary responsibilities (Mitchell & King, 2018, p. 11). However, "Done well, the practice of governance in higher education should be purposeful,

impactful, and collaborative undertaking that results in outcomes consistent with those on whose behalf the board serves" (Phelan, 2022, p. 51).

The research and development of this product dissertation resulted in a Module Based Orientation which introduces topics based on adult learning theories and governance best practices. Delivering this information in an intentional format allows the new trustee to anticipate the topical content, receive the information, reinforce the learning, and assess their short-term retention of the new information. By allowing trustees to understand their role, and the accompanying behaviors of healthy board governance, allows them to participate early and actively in their terms as well informed and prepared leaders of governance.

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