

TACTC Spring Convention May 20-21, 2010

Board Chair Training

Good Practices and Challenges

As part of the Board Chair Training session, participants were invited to identify good, successful practices of board chairs, as well as to identify potential challenges and problems they have experienced. Their responses are listed below, and became the basis for much of the discussion. In addition, the session reviewed running effective meetings and the general role of the board chair.

Good Practices

1. Ensuring that everyone participates
 - a. Encourage participation and discussion
 - b. Ask for comments from those who haven't spoken before hearing from others a second time
 - c. Help quiet people to speak up
 - d. Reach out to those who didn't participate after the meeting to check in
 - e. Call on everyone in turn, with the chair contributing at the end
2. Doing your homework; being prepared for the meeting.
3. Using a consent agenda to do routine business as one action item in order to free time for policy level discussions
4. Being knowledgeable about the board's culture and the styles and interests of each trustees
5. Ensuring board input into the agenda
6. Working with the CEO to develop the agenda.
7. Being willing to use the gavel and role of the chair to keep the process moving
8. Working outside the board meetings to build trust and relationships with all trustees; may meet with each trustee periodically
9. Maintaining a focus on and models civility in all communications; consistently showing respect
10. Knowing and upholding the board's role, protocols, and processes
11. Understanding how and being willing to address and manage conflict
12. Being available to the president and trustees
13. Participating in college and community events as appropriate
14. Discussing your role with the CEO and board chair at the beginning of your term.

Some Challenges of Being Board Chair

1. Understanding and adhering to the open and public meetings act (OPMA)
2. Finding out what board members think within the constraints of OPMA
3. Managing time and determining how much time to spend at the college, with the CEO, and in the community; knowing how to prioritize
4. Working with other board members
5. Evaluating the CEO, particularly when it is not positive
6. Handling conflicts on the board
7. Losing members and bringing new ones on board
8. Working with trustees who have separate or single agendas, and/or who are rogues or renegades
9. Leading during tough economic times, when resources are down and demands have increased
10. Responding to media and explaining difficult decisions to the public
11. Responding to competition from for-profit institutions.