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# ACCREDITATION AND TRUSTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A Presentation for Trustees  
Barbara Beno, ACCJC President  
*for*

The California Community College Trustees  
Annual Conference  
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## WHAT WE'LL DISCUSS

- Accreditation's Purposes, Process and Standards
- The Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

Advice for Board Excellence and Examples  
are Interspersed Throughout!



# THE PURPOSES OF REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

1. Provide quality assurance to the public, to students, to other institutions *that an institution is achieving its stated mission* and that the graduates are educated at a level expected by U.S. higher education (the commons)
  - Give credibility to degrees and credentials awarded to students
  - Provide institutional eligibility for federal financial aid
  - Meet California requirements for public colleges



# THE PURPOSES OF REGIONAL ACCREDITATION

2. The accreditation process is designed to help institutions focus on helping students *learn* what they are supposed to learn, and to *complete courses, certificates, degrees, and transfer or get jobs*



Institutions must have an *Internal Quality Assurance system* that collects and analyzes data on student outcomes to allow the institution to plan and make improvements. Program review, assessment of learning, planning, resource allocation, improvements and assessment are components.



# PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION USING STANDARDS





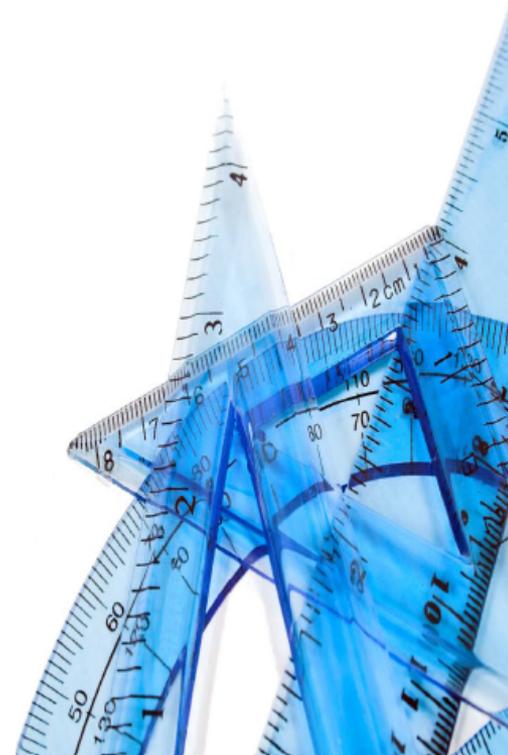
# WHAT ARE THE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS?

- **\*Standard I: Mission and Institutional Effectiveness**
  - Data-driven assessment and improvement, focus on learning
- **Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services**
  - Instructional, Support and Learning Services, focus on learning
- **\*Standard III: Resources**
  - Deployment of resources toward achievement of mission, fiscal integrity
- **\*Standard IV: Leadership and Governance**
  - Leadership to *focus institution on mission and student success*, roles of governance structures, CEO and governing board



## FOCUS ON EVIDENCE: METRICS

- Key metrics, or measures, must be identified by the institution to assess achievement of institutional mission
  - Many are data elements in the MIS system
  - National/federal metrics and state metrics being developed will allow comparisons: AACC and IPEDS
  - Institution should set targets or goals, or benchmarks - *boards can adopt goals*
  - Institutional performance on key metrics should be examined regularly and used for decision making – *boards should discuss outcomes*

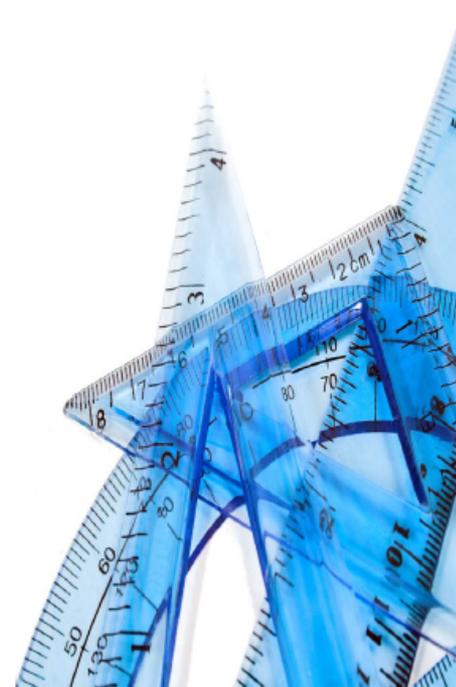




## FOCUS ON EVIDENCE: METRICS

- Common measures of institutional effectiveness include:
  - Course completion
  - Enrollment in next course in sequence
  - Completion of sequences, certificates, degrees
  - Graduation, transfer, job placement
  - Student learning of general skills and knowledge areas broadly applicable to life and work\* – degree SLOs
  - Student learning of specific skill sets\* and knowledge associated with the area of study – program SLOs

*\*Federal and national pressures are strong in this area.*





# BOARDS SET EXPECTATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE THROUGH POLICY

Policy can be set to define:

- Process/frequency of institutional assessments
- Links between assessment and planning
- Requirements of labor market data, advisory committee participation, benchmarking to like institutions
- Requirements for staff work on assessment, planning and improvement
- Coordination with Strategic Plan / Mission and Vision





## ARE INSTITUTIONS EXPECTED TO MEET ALL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AT ALL TIMES?

- Member institutions agree to adhere to Accreditation Standards – to maintain quality - at all times when they seek initial accreditation
- Accreditation Standards call for institutions to have an *Internal Quality Assurance system* in order to maintain quality between accreditation visits
- Accreditation is granted or removed, and the public and students cannot be expected to tolerate long term institutional deficiencies in quality



## IF THE INSTITUTION IS FOUND TO BE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE STANDARDS, HOW LONG MAY IT TAKE TO COMPLY?

- Federal two-year rule
- Commission works with institutions as they improve, and can extend the time allowed for “good cause”
- Accreditation team recommendations feed into institutional plans for improvement



# ACCJC DATA ON SANCTIONS – 3 YEARS

**Colleges on Sanction January 2009 – January 2011**  
*Top Deficiencies Causing Sanctions*

COLLEGES ON SANCTION	PROGRAM REVIEW	PLANNING	INTERNAL GOVERNANCE	BOARD	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OR STABILITY
<b>2009 SANCTIONS (N=24)</b>	<b>71%</b> (17)	<b>92%</b> (22)	<b>46%</b> (11)	<b>46%</b> (11)	<b>54%</b> (13)
<b>2010 SANCTIONS (N=19)</b>	<b>68%</b> (13)	<b>89%</b> (17)	<b>42%</b> (8)	<b>58%</b> (11)	<b>58%</b> (11)
<b>2011 SANCTIONS (N=21)</b>	<b>19%</b> (4)	<b>71%</b> (15)	<b>24%</b> (5)	<b>67%</b> (14)	<b>62%</b> (13)

*Please note categories increasing in frequency in table above*



## TRUSTEES HAVE TWO CHALLENGES:

- 1) Mission-Directed Leadership, and
- 2) High Performance

**Setting standards** of excellence and **measuring performance** linked to the District's goals will help meet both challenges. To perform well Trustees must be **prepared** for Board meetings.



## GROUND RULES FOR FOCUS ON MISSION

- Prepare for board meetings by reading agenda materials
- Stay within the agreed upon objective / agenda for a meeting
- Adopt policies requiring data-driven assessment, planning, budgeting and improvement
- Schedule reports and discussions of institutional performance along with other important agenda items
- Expect reports on student outcomes from the academic staff, be prepared to ask reasonable questions
- Support institutional efforts to assess performance, to report it truthfully without negative sanction, and to plan and improve performance
- Assure institutional capacity for research and for assessment of learning \$\$
- Focus board energies on providing leadership for educational excellence and institutional quality improvement, demonstrate the importance of these
- At times, decide when performance is “too low” and ask the CEO to take needed action



## MEASURING PERFORMANCE

- The Board leads the District –representing the entire community, the Board establishes the mission and vision for the college and from that develops/approves the strategic plan and goals.
  - Focus on the “what” not the “how”
- The Board must then assure itself that the District goals are achieved (as an example, the 2012 target date for the completion of the SLO process as required by ACCJC).
  - Request regular updates on achievement of timelines and goals



# ACCREDITATION STANDARDS ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES



## ROLE OF TRUSTEES: POLICY-MAKING

- Institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution.
- The institution has a governing board responsible for **setting policies** to assure the quality, integrity and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution.

*Standard IV.B.1*



# ROLE OF GOVERNING BOARD IN EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

## STEWARDSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND FISCAL STABILITY

- The governing board is responsible for the quality, integrity and financial stability of the institution and for ensuring that the mission is being carried out.
  - The mission of a *college* is student learning and student success!
- The governing board is responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program.



## THE BOARD ADOPTS THE INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

- The institution's educational mission is clearly defined, adopted and published *by its governing board* consistent with its legal authorization, and is appropriate to a degree-granting institution of higher education and the constituency it seeks to serve. The mission statement defines institutional commitment to achieving student learning.

*Eligibility Requirement #2*



## RESPONSIBILITY OF TRUSTEES: FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

- To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of its financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making.
- Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. Responses to external audit findings are timely and comprehensive.

*Standard III.D.2*



## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD FOR OVERSIGHT OF FINANCES

- Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness.
- The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance and enhancement of programs and services.
- The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability.
- The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short term and long term financial solvency.
- Financial planning is integrated with institutional planning.

***Standard III.D.***



## ROLE IN FISCAL OVERSIGHT **TODAY**: PRESERVE QUALITY WHILE RESOURCES DECLINE

- Adopt balanced institutional budgets, require three year projections, avoid “betting” on future revenue increases
  - State budget projections are poor for at least four more years
  - **Limited FCMAT or State help** on the horizon
  - Be cautious about overly optimistic investment strategies and assumptions
- Learn to understand the external audit, require college to address findings within a year
- Examine carefully the short and long term impact of all institutional borrowing



## INTEGRITY IN BOARD GOVERNANCE

- The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest.
- The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws, and evaluates and revises its own practices as needed.
- The governing board has a **Conflict of Interest Policy** that ensures that its interests are disclosed and that they do not interfere with the impartiality of governing board members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the **academic** and fiscal **integrity** of the institution.
- The board has a **Code of Ethics** that includes a clearly defined process for dealing with behavior that violates that code.

*Eligibility Requirement #3  
Standard IV.B.1.a.,h. and e*



## BOARD SELF-EVALUATIONS

- The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented and published. *Standard IV.B.1.g.*
  - An evaluation that involves the college community is *recommended*
  - Performed annually / timely review of results / establishment of goals / corrective actions
  - More specifically, boards must recognize which members need help, and then provide the help
  - **Only the board can regulate its members!**



# STEPS FOR IMPROVING BOARD PERFORMANCE

- Board Policies
- New Trustee Orientation / Changes in BOT
- Mentoring
- Prompt Feedback/Correction When Behaviors Stray
- Continuous Training
- Individual Coaching
- **Board Warning**
- **Board Censorship**
- Legal Action



# SELF-ASSESSMENT / QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

- Self-assessment should not be a cursory glance in the mirror or performed in a vacuum.
- Rather it needs to be a periodic & exhaustive culling of quantitative and qualitative data, some of it longitudinal.
- Once you identify the issues, the Board needs a self-improvement plan or goals and time lines.
- Return to the issues at six months or a year and re-evaluate. Complete the Quality Improvement circle.



## RESPONSIBILITY OF TRUSTEES: *COHERENT* ACTION AND DIRECTION

- Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.
- The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters and financial integrity.
- The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation, and a mechanism for providing continuity of membership and staggered terms of office.

*Standards IV.B.1.a, c, and f*



## RESPONSIBILITY OF TRUSTEES: INTEGRITY IN BOARD OPERATIONS

- The governing board publishes board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures (e.g., Robert's Rules, Brown Act, etc.)
- The governing board's self evaluation processes are clearly defined, implemented, and published.
- The board has a code of ethics and a policy for dealing with behavior that violates the code. *(The board members are willing to require proper behavior of their colleagues.)*

***Standard IV.B.1, d, e, g, and h***



## ROLE OF TRUSTEES: PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CEO

- The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator.
- The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the chief administrator to implement and administer board policies *without board interference* and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district or college.



*Standard IV.B.1.j*



## THE BOARD / CEO TEAM

- Build trust between the board & the CEO
- Avoid public conflict – be respectful (prevent a hostile work environment)
- Expect & provide commitment to board decisions
- Hold the CEO **accountable** for leading the institution
- Focus on results
- Maintain open communication
- The CEO is not only an employee but also a team member!



- All district staff report to the CEO/Chancellor
- The CEO plans, oversees, and evaluates the administrative structure to insure it is staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity
- In multi-campus districts, the CEO/Chancellor delegates authority to college presidents to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without his/her interference and holds them accountable for the operation of the colleges.



## SUMMARY

- Work as a Team with CEO and with BOT
- Build trust, avoid destructive conflict, provide commitment, be accountable, and focus on student success
- Act with intelligence, respect, care, and integrity
- Base decisions on data not stories
- Be present and future-oriented, focus on improvement
- Represent the entire community / not single interests



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

**DR. BARBARA A. BENO, ACCJC PRESIDENT**  
**DR. JOHN NIXON, VICE PRESIDENT**

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