

Association of Community College Trustees Board Self-Assessment Instrument Item Bank

The Board self-assessment Instrument Item Bank is a composite of sample items that may be used in board self-assessment forms. Board self-evaluation instruments usually contain 30-40 items plus a few open-ended questions. The following item bank provides over 100 possible statements from which to choose. DO NOT use all of the items in the bank; there are many items that are similar and lengthy instruments are neither useful nor recommended.

Boards should adapt statements to fit their needs. The statements may need to be reworded depending on the type of rating scale used.

The items are based on criteria outlined in Board Roles and Responsibilities, as well as ACCT's statement "On the Effective Governance of Community Colleges" and the ACCT Code of Ethics.

Board Organization

- The board operates as a unit.
- Board members uphold the final majority decision of the board.
- The board considers and respects minority opinions.
- Board members understand that they have no legal authority outside board meetings.
- Board members represent board policy in responding to public and employee questions.
- Board members make decisions after thorough discussion and exploration of many perspectives.
- The board's decisions are independent of partisan bias.
- Board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner that allows for sufficient discussion.
- The meeting agendas are relevant to the work of the board.
- The board has adequate input into the planning of meeting agendas.
- Meeting agenda items contain sufficient background information and recommendations for the board.
- Closed sessions are held only when needed.
- Board officer responsibilities are clear.

- Board officer responsibilities are appropriate for the work of the board.
- Board committees have clear and appropriate responsibilities.
- Board committees effectively assist the board to do its work.
- The board's recruitment and selection processes reflect well on the college.
- The board's recruitment and selection processes attract excellent candidates.

Policy Role

- The board understands that the primary function of the board is to establish the policies by which the community college is to be administered.
- Board members understand and support the concept that board policy is the primary voice of the board.
- The board periodically reviews and evaluates its policies.
- The board assures a systematic, comprehensive review of board policies and the procedures that implement them.
- The board focuses on policy in board discussions, not on administrative matters.
- The board has clarified the difference between its policy role and the roles of the CEO and staff.
- The board policy manual is current, relevant, and useful.
- Policy recommendations contain adequate information and are presented so that sufficient time is allowed for study and discussion.
- The policy-making process is clear, public and inclusive.
- The board, through the CEO, seeks advice and recommendations from faculty, staff and students in developing educational policy.
- The board openly discusses issues and seeks the views of college constituents.
- The board seeks community input in developing policies that affect the community at large.

Community Relations

- The board is committed to protecting the public interest.
- The board effectively represents the "voice" of the community.
- The board has determined how the community should benefit from the College.
- Board members act on behalf of the entire community.
- The board is knowledgeable about community and regional needs and expectations.

- The board has strategies for involving the community in discussion of issues that impact the community.
- Board members maintain good relationships with community leaders.
- The board has protocols for dealing with citizens and the media.
- Board members adhere to protocols for dealing with citizens and the media.
- Board members keep the CEO informed of community contacts.
- The board encourages active cooperation by citizens, organizations, and the media with respect to establishing policy on current college operations and proposed future developments.
- The board assists in developing educational partnerships with community agencies, businesses and local government, where appropriate.

Policy Direction

- The board is knowledgeable about the mission and purposes of the institution.
- The board is appropriately involved in defining the vision, mission and goals.
- The vision and goals of the institution adequately address community needs.
- The board has ensured that the mission and goals are sufficiently responsive to current and future community needs.
- The board bases its decisions in terms of what is best for students and the community.
- The board spends sufficient time discussing the future direction of the college.
- The board regularly reviews the mission and purposes of the institution.
- The board is knowledgeable about the educational programs that implement the mission of the college.
- The board is involved in setting expectations for broad student learning outcomes.
- The board maintains a future-oriented, visionary focus in board discussions.
- The board annually sets annual priorities in conjunction with the CEO.
- The board requires long-range strategic planning.
- The board is appropriately involved in the planning process.
- The board understands the educational and legal context in which planning occurs.
- The board is familiar with the strategic and master plans of the institution.
- The board encourages partnerships and other cooperative agreements with business, government, community agencies, and other educational institutions.

Board-CEO Relations

- The board and CEO have a positive, cooperative relationship.
- A climate of mutual trust and respect exists between the board and CEO.
- The board sets clear expectations for the CEO.
- The CEO's job description is current and accurate.
- The board provides a high level of support to the chief executive.
- The board maintains open communication with the CEO.
- Board members are available to the CEO for support and feedback.
- The board effectively evaluates the CEO.
- The board has clear protocols for communicating with staff that include the CEO.
- The board clearly delegates the administration of the college to the CEO.
- Board members keep the CEO informed about contacts with the community and staff.
- Board members respect the role of the CEO as the link between the board and staff.
- The board encourages the professional growth of the CEO.
- The board and CEO work cooperatively to maintain a broad perspective

Standards for College Operations

- The board is knowledgeable about the educational programs and services of the college.
- The board understands the fiscal condition of the organization.
- The board has established parameters for college budget planning.
- The board requires and is involved in long-range fiscal planning.
- The board understands the budget document.
- The board assures that the budget reflects college priorities in the mission and goals.
- The board has a long-range facilities plan.
- Board policies adequately address parameters for facilities maintenance and appearance.
- Board policies adequately address parameters regarding safety and security.
- Board policies adequately address parameters for investments and management of assets.
- Board policies adequately address parameters for fiscal management that meets audit standards.
- The board has established clear parameters for collective bargaining with employee groups.
- The board has policies that require fair and equitable employment processes.

- The board is committed to equal opportunity.
- The board has policies that require fair employee due process and grievance procedures.
- The board has policies that require adequate participation in decision-making within the institution.
- The board meets its responsibility as a court of appeal.

Institutional Performance

- The board has a system to evaluate effectiveness of the educational program of the college.
- The board monitors the effectiveness of the college in fulfilling the mission.
- The board requires the college to regularly evaluate program effectiveness.
- The board regularly reviews reports on student learning outcomes.
- The board demonstrates a concern for the success of all students.
- The board adequately monitors the impact the college has on the community.
- The board is appropriately involved in the accreditation process.
- The board understands state and federal accountability requirements.
- The board reviews accountability reports to state and federal agencies.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies for facilities development, maintenance and appearance.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies regarding safety and security.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies on investments and asset management.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies on fiscal management
- The board understands the financial audit and its recommendations.
- The board monitors its policies for collective bargaining.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies on employment.
- The board monitors performance related to its policies on employee discipline and grievance.

Board Leadership

- The board has a clear description of board roles and responsibilities.

- The board understands its roles and responsibilities.
- The board meets its roles and responsibilities.
- The board understands and adheres to its legal responsibilities.
- The board follows a code of ethics or standards of practice.
- Board members treat one another with respect.
- Board members work together as a team to accomplish the work of the board.
- Board members are prepared for board meetings.
- The board accommodates the differences of opinion that arise during debates of issues.
- The board bases its decisions upon all available facts in each situation.
- Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of conflicts of interest.
- Board members may contribute single interest or their own professional perspectives to discussions, but always vote on behalf of the community as a whole.
- Once a decision is made, board members cease debate and uphold the decision of the board.
- The board maintains confidentiality of privileged information.
- The board works together in a spirit of harmony and cooperation.
- Through its behavior, the board has set a positive example for the CEO and other employees.
- The board actively encourages creativity and innovation.
- The board is willing to take a stand for what it believes is right for students and the community.
- The board understands the political implications of its actions.
- The board works to build positive relationships with all stakeholders.
- The board considers the political ramifications of its decisions.

Advocating for the College

- Board members are knowledgeable about the college's history, mission, and values.
- The board recognizes positive accomplishments of the college.
- Board members actively support the mission and values of the college.
- Board members speak positively about the institution in the community.

- Board members support the colleges by attending various events.
- The board plays a leadership role in the local community.
- Board members participate in community activities as representatives of the college.
- The board helps educate the local community about community college needs and issues.
- Board members are knowledgeable about state laws and regulations.
- Board members are knowledgeable about state and national educational policy issues.
- The board advocates college interests to state and national agencies and legislators.
- The board actively seeks political and civic support for the college.
- The board works to secure adequate public funding.
- The board actively supports the college's foundation and fundraising efforts.
- The board understands and protects the academic freedom of the faculty and administrators.
- The board supports the state and national community college trustee associations.

Board Education

- Candidates for the board are educated about board responsibilities and the college.
- New members receive an orientation to the board and the institution.
- The board strives to become increasingly more effective.
- Board members are engaged in a continuous process of training and development.
- The board has an ongoing program of board development.
- Board members are knowledgeable about the roles and responsibilities of trusteeship.
- The board is knowledgeable about state and national laws and issues related to community colleges.
- The board is knowledgeable about major social and economic trends and issues that affect the institution.
- The board adequately studies issues prior to board action.
- The information provided to the board is appropriate and relevant.
- The information requested by and provided to board members does not put an undue burden on staff.
- Sufficient resources are allocated for board members to attend conferences.
- Board members are up-to-date on community college issues through reading and attendance at conferences.

- Board members devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a community college board member.
- The board periodically evaluates itself.
- The board self-evaluation process provides useful information on board performance.

Board Goals

One of the outcomes of a self-evaluation is the establishment of board goals for the following year. Therefore, the self-evaluation process may include a request that respondents assess how well the goals set in the prior evaluation were achieved.

Open-Ended Questions

- A self-evaluation instrument may be designed with space for general comments under each item or at the end of each section of the form. Some general questions include:
 - What are the board's greatest strengths?
 - What are the major accomplishments of the board in the past year?
 - What are areas in which the board could improve?
 - As a trustee, I am most pleased about _____
 - As a trustee, I have concerns about _____
 - As a trustee, I would like to see the following changes in how the board operates:

- I recommend that the board has the following goals for the coming year:
