

THE BOARD AND EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Why a Focus Now on Student Learning?

- Tremendous Investments
- The Questioning of Value and Worth of Degrees
- Increased Focus on Accountability



BLD087215 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com

Overseeing Educational Quality

The Role of the Board



Board Duties: Deliver and Sustain the Mission

Fulfill the
mission

- **DELIVER:** Are we delivering on our promise?

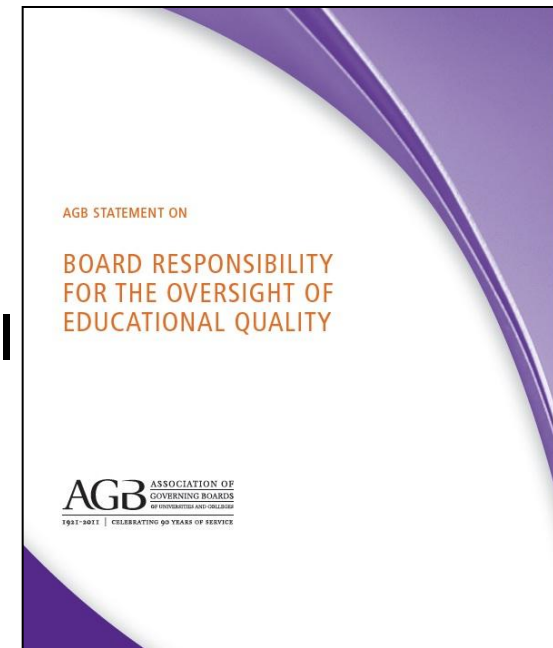
Ensure
long-term
viability

- **SUSTAIN:** Will we exist and succeed “forever?”
-

The Board's Role in the Oversight of Educational Quality (2011)

5

1. Develop board capacity for ensuring educational quality
2. Ensure policies and practices promote educational quality
3. Ensure learning is assessed, data are used, and improvements tracked
4. Approve and monitor necessary financial resources
5. Develop understanding of academic programs
6. Focus on total educational experience
7. Understand accreditation

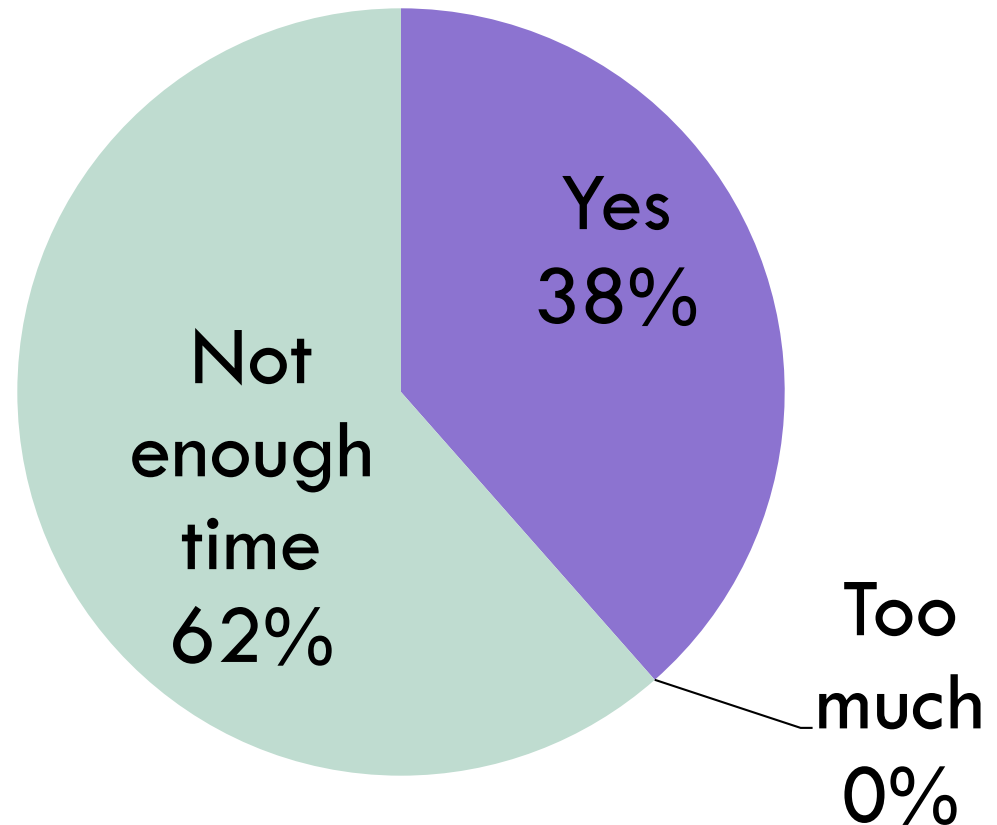


Board (In)Sufficient Time on Student Learning

HOW BOARDS
OVERSEE EDUCATIONAL
QUALITY: A REPORT ON A
SURVEY ON BOARDS AND
THE ASSESSMENT OF
STUDENT LEARNING

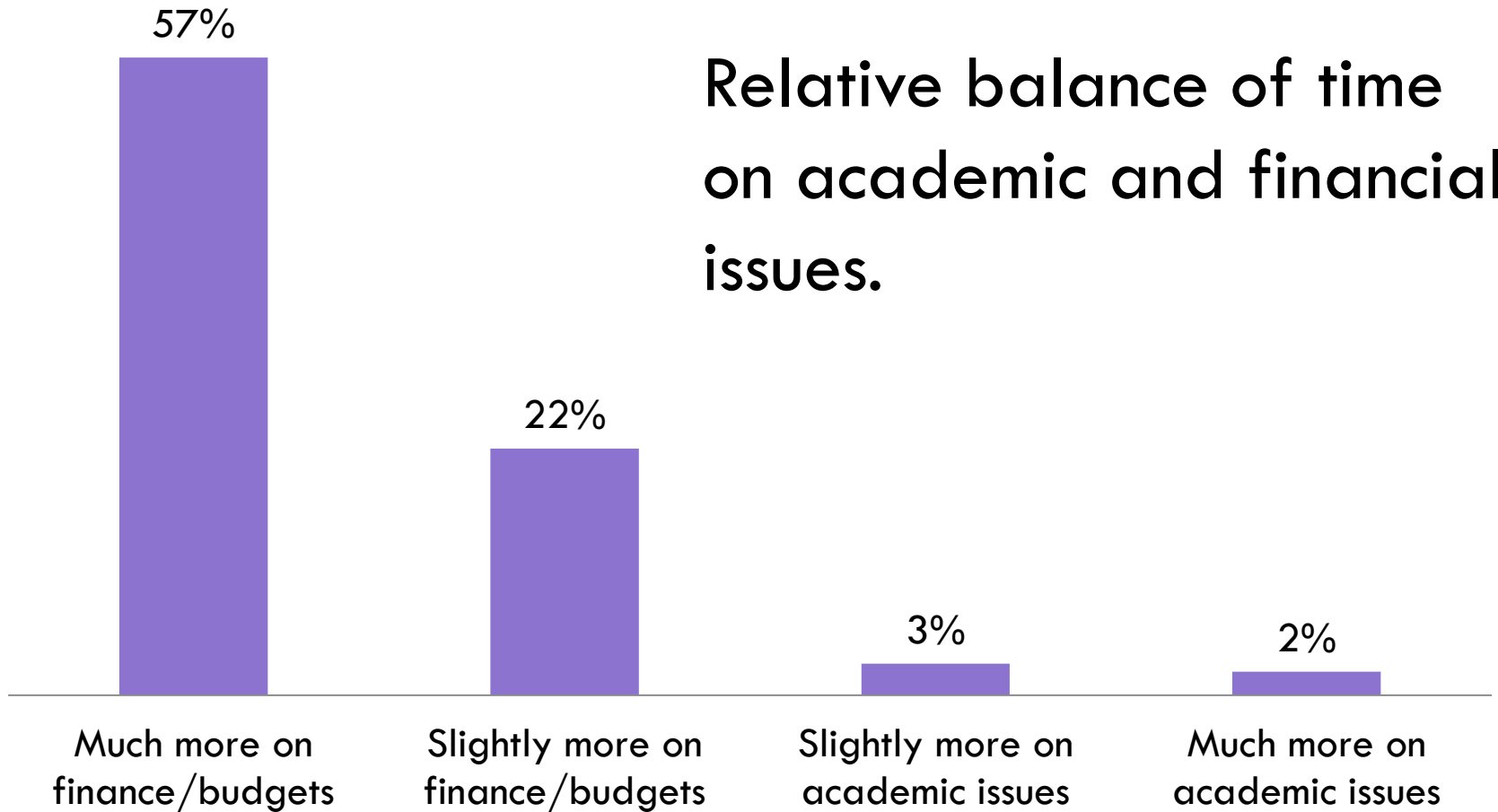
AGB ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNING BOARDS
OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
1921-2011 | CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF SERVICE

2010



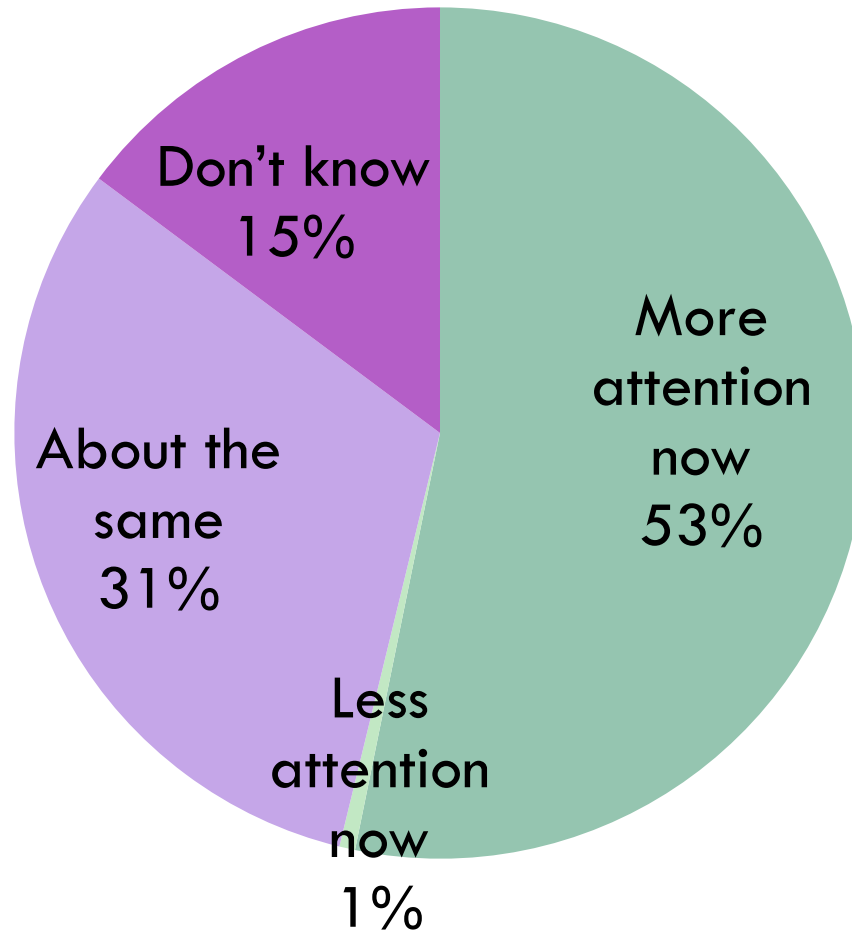
AGB ASSOCIATION OF
GOVERNING BOARDS
OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Time Spent: Money vs. Mission



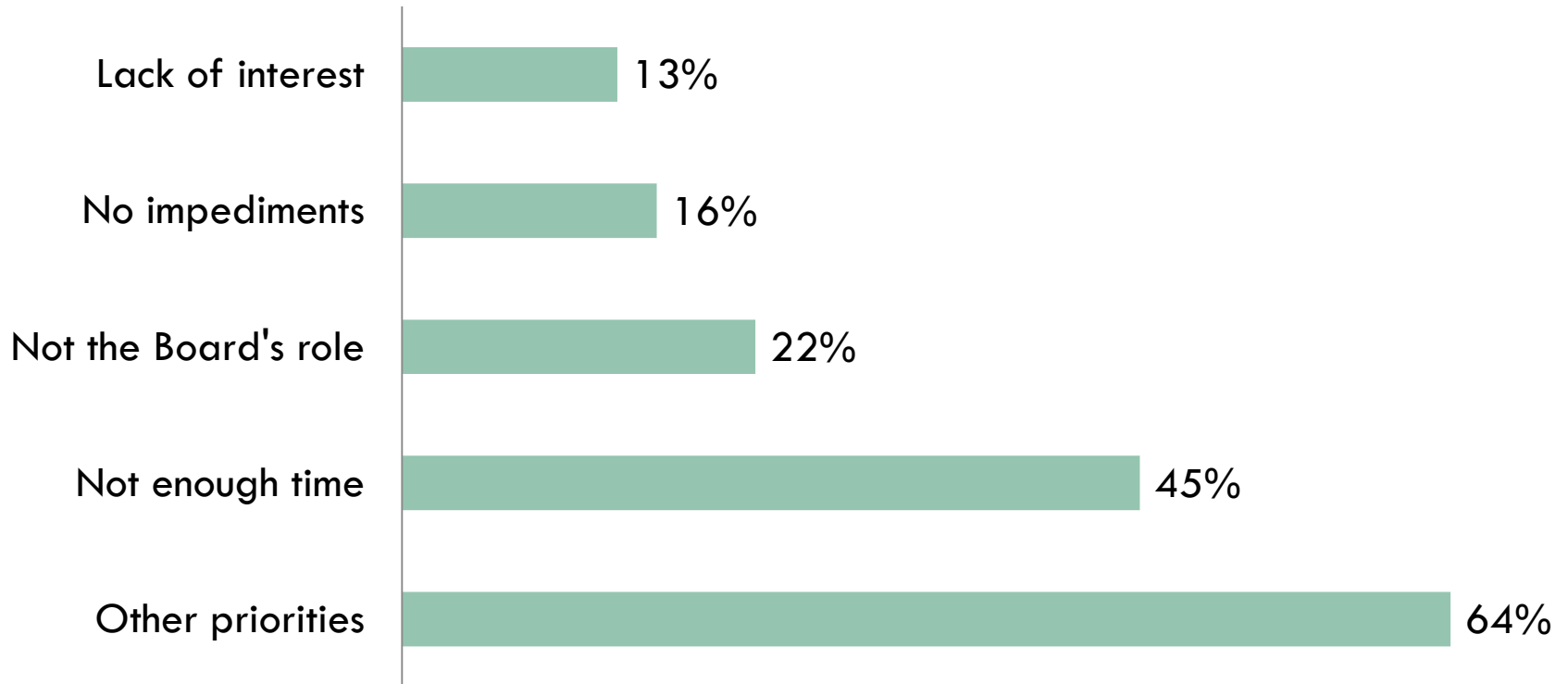
More Time and Attention (or Not)?

How has the board's attention changed in the last five years?



Impediments to Overseeing Learning

Impediments, if any, to the board's understanding of student learning outcomes



The Curriculum is the Faculty's Responsibility...

The Board's Role is to Remind Them of This Responsibility

- Ensure that the institution has an appropriate set of learning outcomes statements
- Ensure that efforts to determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning are in place and ongoing
- Ensure that institutions use the data they collect for improvement

Key Board Questions: Our “Product”

- How good is our product?
- How good are we at producing our product?
- Are our customers satisfied?
- Do we have the right mix of products?
- Do we make the grade?

Source: *Making the Grade: How Boards Can Ensure Academic Quality*, Peter Ewell (AGB, 2012)

12

Improving Board Oversight of Educational Quality

AGB Project Funded by
The Teagle Foundation

AGB Project:

- Drake University (IA)
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Morgan State University (MD)
- Salem State University (MA)
- St. Olaf College (MN)
- Rhodes College (TN)
- Rochester Institute of Technology (NY)
- Valparaiso University (IN)

Project Cornerstones

14

1. Metrics regarding student learning and educational quality
2. Institutional processes for educational quality and student learning
3. Board processes, practices, habits
4. Effective strategies for productive faculty and trustee relations

Early Returns

- Mission matters for metrics
- Definitions vary
- To standardize or not to standardize
- Start with what you have; determine what you need
 - Drake University (16 different assessment tools)
- It's difficult and time-consuming work that requires intentional attention
 - Unfamiliar conversations
 - No foundation upon which to build
 - Challenge of rolling up

Early Returns

- Know where the board thinks it is (and know where it really is)
- Engage meaningfully: Risky showing “pounds of data”
- Challenge to align elements:
 - ▣ Faculty work
 - ▣ Board meeting schedules
 - ▣ Accreditation reviews

Questions for Boards: True or False?

- ❑ My institution/system has a well-defined set of student learning outcomes.
- ❑ My college/university/system gathers sound and useful evidence of those student learning outcomes.
- ❑ The board receives regular information about the achievement of student learning outcomes.
- ❑ I would be able to explain what “educational quality” means for this institution to a new board member.
- ❑ I view the oversight of educational quality as an important element of the board’s fiduciary role.

Questions for Boards: True or False?

- ❑ The responsibility for “doing” educational quality is with the faculty. The board ensures it’s being done.
- ❑ Compared to other board agenda items, the board gives sufficient time and attention to the institution’s evidence of student learning outcomes.
- ❑ The board has appropriate processes in place to effectively oversee student learning outcomes.
- ❑ The board receives regular updates on decisions that the institution makes based on student learning outcomes assessment.

Low vs. High Performing Boards

Low Performance

- ❑ Over/Under-Engaged
- ❑ Not truly independent
- ❑ CEO “Owns” Agenda
- ❑ Avoids difficult discussions
- ❑ Meetings dominated by reports
- ❑ Never evaluates CEO
- ❑ Confuses philanthropy with good governance
- ❑ Never evaluates board performance
- ❑ Focuses on oversight
- ❑ Limited monitoring of board performance by board

High Performance

- ❑ Engaged and informed
- ❑ Forward/critical thinking
- ❑ Opportunity for meaningful deliberation (and appropriately skeptical)
- ❑ Creative and inquiring
- ❑ Applies risk assessment
- ❑ Collaborative partnership with CEO
- ❑ Focuses on strategy

Questions and Thoughts



Thank You!

21

Please visit agb.org for resources on governance.

Ellen Chaffee, Ph.D.
AGB Senior Fellow
(ellen.chaffee@gmail.com)