PRESENTED TO

Oregon University Governance Work Group
Excerpt from NWCCU standard 2.A.4 on governance:

(Northwest Commission and Colleges and Universities)

“If the institution is governed by a hierarchical structure of multiple boards, the roles, responsibilities, and authority of each board—as they relate to the institution—are clearly defined, widely communicated, and broadly understood.”
Purpose of AGB presentation (based on advance discussions with Board Chair and staff):

- Discussion and definition of terms such as system, multi-campus system, and affiliation
- Advantages and disadvantages of various governance models
- Reminder of AGB guidelines on the fundamental responsibilities of governance
- Glance at NWCCU governance standards for regional accreditation
“Effective Governing Boards” (AGB, 2010)

“Building Effective Boards at Public Institutions” by Merrill P. Schwartz, *Trusteeship*, March/April 2010
Oregon usage in some references uses "consortium" to describe a scaled-down system of universities. The term of art for this nationally is a multi-campus system. Larger states especially, such as Texas, have several multi-campus systems within their states.
Multi-campus System Characteristics

- Each institution serves as educational anchor in community and region
- Member universities share common board and rely on board staff for many services
- Board oversight of collaboration among member universities
Multi-campus System Board — Advantages

- Just one governing board instead of 3 or 4
- Ease of access to system or board staff and services
- Collaboration and efficiency based on common policy goals set by system board
Multi-campus System Board — Disadvantages

- Policy and governance meetings potentially duplicative of other boards
- Board staff services potentially duplicative of Shared Services Entity
In some states, this means universities statutorily affiliated or merged, or legally tethered to one another, generally based on similarities in mission or overlapping regional presence.
Affiliated Universities — Advantages

- Two or more universities and their CEO’s working together for common purposes and accountability
- Expansion of “the bench” for all participating universities, especially smaller ones
- Can maintain individual campus identities, logos, foundations, athletics, while sharing administrative services
Affiliated Universities — Disadvantages

- More meetings. The single life is simpler (though not always better)
- Real or perceived sense of subservience or bureaucratic meddling by some of the universities within the affiliation
- Who’s the boss? (The CEO elsewhere, or president’s own campus/community/alumni constituency?)
One governing board for each regionally accredited university. Outside of public state higher education, this is a very common model for university governance.
- Focused policy leadership, oversight, and advocacy for each university
- Expanded engagement of community, regional, alumni, and philanthropic partners in supporting the university, the CEO, and securing statewide support
Single Campus Board — Disadvantages

- Yet another layer of governance in states with existing strong central statewide authority over higher education
- Each campus responsible for board orientation, TLC, continuing board professional development, board performance self-evaluation, staff and travel budgets and logistics, etc.
- Increased temptation for some boards or board members to focus on local management details rather than policy leadership
- Relationships sometimes too close and cozy between CEO and board members to respond to failure or recognize mediocrity
NWCCU governance standards, 2.A.4 through 2.A.8

- Clarification of roles and responsibilities in hierarchical structures
- Board acts as a committee of the whole
- Broad authority to set and review policies
- Selection and evaluation of CEO
- Board self-evaluation of its own performance
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