

STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Operational Plans and Agreements

December 20, 2002

Organizational options for the Board were presented to the Executive Committee at the November 15, 2002 meeting. The options covered the areas of:

- Board meeting structure, frequency, and content;
- Use of Board Committees;
- Board Orientation and on-going Board development;
- Board goal setting and evaluation of performance; and
- Campus visitations.

Thoughtful responses were received from six present Board members, one Board member-designate, and one institution president. There was at once, diversity of responses and common themes. For example, one set of suggestions was for six one and one-half day Board meetings per year with only meetings of the whole Board and no committees and another was for quarterly meetings of the Board, each meeting to be on a campus, with quarterly meetings of the committees on the alternating months.

What follows is an attempt to incorporate as many of the ideas as possible into a recommendation for consideration by the Board.

Board Meeting Structure and Frequency

(NOTE: the practice of regularly using an Executive Committee on alternating months is not consistent with the by-laws of the Board that state: "Between Board meetings, the Executive Committee shall act for the Board in minor matters and any matter where a timely response is required prior to the next Board meeting, subject to Board approval at its first subsequent meeting." Additionally, if public notice is given that a meeting is an Executive Committee meeting, it cannot be made a full meeting of the Board at the time it convenes.)

From the information gathered, staff makes the following recommendations concerning Board and Committee meetings.

- There should be eight meetings of the full Board each year (draft schedule for 2003 is in Attachment 1).
- There will be three standing committees (Executive, System Strategic Planning, and Budget and Finance). The chairs of the Committees will, in agreement with other Board members and dependent on level of activity, determine the number of meetings.
- Board meetings will be scheduled for Thursday afternoon and evening and Friday until noon.

- Committee meetings will run sequentially on Thursday afternoon/evening to enable all Board members to attend both Committee meetings if they choose.

Content of Board Meetings

There were thoughtful comments about the content of the Board meetings and requests that Board members have more input into the agendas. Some recommendations:

- End each Board meeting by asking Board members if there is an item/s they would like to see placed on a future agenda.
- Streamline Board meetings as much as possible, with attention as to whether an item really has to come to the Board or if it has already been delegated to the Chancellor for action or approval.
- Allow sufficient time for Board deliberation on critical issues.

Campus Visits

The general sense from those who responded was that Board visits to campuses should continue in the same manner as they are at the present time. A suggestion from a president is that campus visits might be better used “as demonstration projects – how has each campus helped to achieve the Board’s strategic goals.”

Recommendations

- Campus visits will continue as presently scheduled – each campus will have a Board visit and meeting every-other-year.
- The purpose of the visits will be examined and, if warranted, changes will be explored in terms of the purpose and content of the visits.
- Campus visits will occur during the late afternoon (following Committee meetings) and evening.
- Campus visits should be “mandatory” for Board members.

Board Orientation and On-going Development

New Board Member Orientation

More attention needs to be paid to orientation for new Board members. The elements of the orientation should include:

- The Board’s office must be prepared to provide the Governor’s office with a full disclosure of the time requirements of service on the Board of Higher Education. It seems increasingly important that individuals realize that

being a member of a public board is not the same as serving on a private corporate board.

- A one-half day overview of the mission, purpose, organization, and legal aspects of being a member of the Board of Higher Education should occur within the first month after confirmation. These sessions should be tailored to the individual, dependent on past experience, knowledge of public higher education, and the requirements of service to a public governing body.
- One staff person and one Board member should be named as mentor/guide for at least a one-year period to provide on-going information, guidance, and act as a sounding board for questions and/or concerns.

On-going Board Development

A plan should be developed for on-going Board development. In the words of one responder, “. . .in the past several years we have spent far too much time on Board Development (which often seems like Group Therapy).”

The following recommendations are suggested:

- Ask Chancellor to identify three-five key issues about which they believe the Board should be knowledgeable and plan sessions around the chosen topics.
- Ask staff to identify national meetings that might be of interest to Board members and would address relevant issues.
- Encourage Board members to identify areas where they would like either further information (formally or informally) or extended work sessions.

Board Goal Setting and Self-Evaluation

Board operations might be more effective if there were a more regular method of setting goals and participating in self-evaluation of effectiveness. The literature on board effectiveness also underscores the importance of having operational agreements that Board members honor and regular times to assess how the Board is functioning.

Several recommendations are:

- Complete the goal setting begun by President Lussier with timelines and benchmarks for assessing successful completion of goals.
- Establish Board working agreements that are reviewed with and agreed to each year and that are presented to new Board members as part of the orientation. At the end of each year, during the Renewal Work Session,

the agreements will be reviewed, changed if required, and reaffirmed by the full Board.

- Each year Board members will complete a self-assessment of his/her effectiveness on the Board. These will be compiled for the full Board and areas of weakness will be targeted for work in the new year.

ATTACHMENT #1

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**OREGON STATE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2003**

January 16 –17	Portland State University
February 20 – 21	Oregon State University (Visitation)
March	NO MEETING SCHEDULED
April 17 - 18	Western Oregon University (Visitation)
May 15 - 16	Eastern Oregon University (Visitation)
June 20	IF REQUIRED – TELECONFERENCE
July 17 – 18	Portland State University (Renewal/Board Evaluation)
August	NO MEETING SCHEDULED
September 18 – 19	Portland State University
October 16 - 17	Oregon Institute of Technology (Visitation)
November 20 – 21	Portland State University
December 19	IF REQUIRED -- TELECONFERENCE

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