

MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES SELF-EVALUATION
COMPILATION**

January 2017

Just as Boards are concerned with the effectiveness of the institutions they govern, so they should be concerned with their own effectiveness as a Governing Board. Effective Boards engage in a continuing process of self-assessment and evaluation of their performance in order to identify areas of strength and strategies for improvement.

Accrediting Commission standards require Boards to define processes for assessing their performance in policy or bylaws, and to act in a manner consistent with the statements. The processes may be as formal or informal as the Board wishes—the most important thing is to use a process that provides useful information for the Board members.

Evaluating the performance of the Board as a unit is not the same as evaluating individual trustee performance. The accreditation standards do not require individual self-assessment, although many trustees find it beneficial.

The Board self-evaluation is very different from the political evaluation that takes place every few years at the ballot box. The election process has many variables, and it is extremely difficult to determine how a Board can specifically improve its own effectiveness through election results.

The purpose of the Board self-evaluation is to identify areas of Board functioning that are working well and those that may need improvement. In addition, the discussion of Board roles and responsibilities builds communication and understanding among the members and leads to a stronger, more cohesive working group. At the end of an evaluation discussion, Board members should have:

- identified areas for improvement, perhaps stated as goals and criteria for future evaluations;
- an understanding of what they expect from themselves and each other to be an effective Board; and
- a summary of accomplishments and characteristics of which they can be proud.

Beside each question is a space for you to give a general evaluation mark. The following rating scale should be used:

A = Excellent
B = Above Average
C = Average
D = Below Average
F = Unsatisfactory

Rating

Board Organization

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • The board operates as a unit. | <u>AAAAAAB</u> |
| • Board members uphold the final majority decision of the board. | <u>AAAAAAA</u> |
| • Board members understand that they have no legal authority outside board meetings. | <u>AAAAAAB</u> |
| • The board's decisions are independent of partisan bias. | <u>AAABBBC</u> |

Policy Role

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • Board members understand and support the concept that board policy is the primary voice of the board. | <u>AAAAAAB</u> |
| • The board assures a systematic, comprehensive review of board policies. | <u>AAAABBB</u> |
| • The board focuses on policy in board discussions, not administrative matters. | <u>AAAABBB</u> |
| • The board has clarified the difference between its policy role and the roles of the CEO and staff. | <u>AAAABBB</u> |

Community Relations

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • The board is committed to protecting the public interest. | <u>AAAAAAA</u> |
| • Board members act on behalf of the entire community. | <u>AAABBBB</u> |
| • Board members maintain good relationships with community leaders. | <u>AAAABBB</u> |
| • Board members keep the CEO informed of community contacts. | <u>AAABBBB</u> |

Policy Direction

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • The board is knowledgeable about the mission and purpose of the institution. | <u>AAAAAAA</u> |
| • The board bases its decisions in terms of what is best for students and the community. | <u>AAAAAAB</u> |
| • The board maintains a future-oriented, visionary focus in board discussions. | <u>AAAABBB</u> |

Rating

Board-CEO Relations

- The board and CEO have a positive, cooperative relationship. AAAAAAB
- A climate of mutual trust and respect exists between the board and CEO. AAAAAAB
- The board has clear protocols for communicating with staff that include the CEO. AAABBBB
- The board clearly delegates the administration of the college to the CEO. AAAAAAA

Fiscal Oversight

- The board understands the fiscal condition of the organization. AAAAAAA
- The Board provides fiscal oversight to assure the financial stability of the College. AAAAABB
- The board understands the financial audit and its recommendations. AAABBBB

Institutional Performance

- The board demonstrates a concern for the success of all students. AAAAAAA
- The board is appropriately involved in the accreditation process. AAAAAAA
- The board is committed to equal opportunity. AAAAAAB

Board Leadership

- The board understands its roles and responsibilities. AAAAAAA
- Board members are prepared for board meetings. AAAAAAA
- The board maintains confidentiality of privileged information. AAAAAAA
- The board understands the political implications of its actions. AAAAAAB

Advocating the College

- The board recognizes positive accomplishments of the college. AAAAAAA
- Board members speak positively about the institution in the community. AAAAAAB
- The board plays a leadership role in the local community. AAAAAAB
- The board helps educate the local community about community college needs and issues. AAAABBB
- The board works to secure adequate public funding. AAAABBB

Board Education

Rating

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| • Board members are engaged in a continuous process of training and development. | <u>AAAABBB</u> |
| • The board adequately studies issues prior to board action. | <u>AAAAABB</u> |
| • The information provided to the board is appropriate and relevant. | <u>AAAAAAA</u> |

The following questions are open-ended. Your response will assist in institutional evaluation and determining future priorities.

1. What are the Board's greatest strengths?

- Its extensive personal experience in educational issues and activities.
- Its diversity in geography, ethnicity, and experiences.
- Its commitment to what is best for the College.
- Its lack of bickering and in-fighting.
- The Board takes pride in its students, faculty, and staff accomplishments and actively participates in College events with enthusiasm and support.
- The Board Members act collegially toward each other.
- Board Members actively engage the community and advocate for Mt. SAC.
- That it works as a unit and provides a collegial environment in which Members are able to communicate issues and varying ideas freely.
- The Board is a cohesive governing body that supports the interests of the College and students.
- The Board is collegial during all Board Meetings even if there are varying or differing perspectives.
- Trustees are visible in the community and at public events throughout the District.
- Our Board reflects the diversity of our District in gender and ethnicity. The make-up of the Board usually reflects what is best for the College, however, in some cases, partisan politics skew Board discussions.
- The Board has been diligent in studying and understanding the complex legal issues before us (e.g., the solar project).
- Professional, respectful conduct with others and among its Members, even on the rare occasion when its Members disagree.
- Board includes diverse perspectives from many communities in the College's large District which help ensure all constituents are represented and at the table.
- Moving to a seven member Board which allows both greater coverage and deeper involvement in our respective communities.
- The diversity of experiences and backgrounds of our Board.
- All of our Board Members have significant elected experience, either as veterans of Mt. SAC Board or in prior elected roles.

2. What are the major accomplishments of the Board in the past year?

- Its insistence on a balanced budget and employment contracts consistent with that goal.
- Support for the President as he makes changes that further improve the College.
- Visible support for Mt. SAC throughout the District.
- Continued preservation and improvement of the fiscal stability of the institution with the expansion of new programs.
- Students' and staffs' accomplishments in academics and athletics at the national and state level.
- Continuing the Board's efficient functioning with new structure (re-districting) and new Board Members.
- Having been able to stay united and focused on what is in the best interest of students as it has faced significant legal challenges.
- The Board continues to demonstrate a solid financial standing with healthy reserves.
- The Board came together to allow students to express their concerns about undocumented students in the wake of the presidential election.
- Providing leadership statewide on state boards and committees. In particular, I am especially proud of the accomplishments of our President/CEO who is widely respected and well-known for his knowledge of community colleges throughout the state of California.
- Supporting our Accreditation Team as we prepare for the state visit.
- The agreement with Foothill Transit to provide better access to the campus as we provide for a Transit Center on campus.
- Expansion of student services facilities and programs.
- Support for additional bachelor degree programs, workforce development, and great athletic programs.
- Providing support for DACA students and other groups potentially at risk because of new federal administration.
- Supporting the President during his application for a state position and, subsequently, in renewing his contract.
- The biggest accomplishment may be approval of a trust fund for future payment of pension cost (despite a tiny staff grumbling in opposition).
- Opening the new Student Services Center and cafeteria.
- Navigating the politics of development with Walnut.
- Planning for the Transit Center.

3. What are areas in which the Board could improve?

- We can always do more to increase the private financial support for the College.
- Be mindful that the Board's decisions must be independent of partisan bias. Any suggestion influenced by any particular interest group or solely for his or her own district will create controversies and jeopardize the integrity of the Board.
- It could work in a more direct manner to improve relations with the Walnut City Council members (although at least one Member has done so). This might mean, among other things, responding to attacks (those without merit) as a Board. This could be risky, but a meaningful context might be effective in changing the narrative.
- Communication with our neighbors should remain open even if there is some disagreement or disapproval about the College's facilities plans.
- More participation in student activities.
- Better attendance at College events such as sporting events, the Fair celebration, Foundation activities.
- Work on bettering relations with the City of Walnut.
- Stress positive publicity for all the excellent programs we have at Mt. SAC.
- Although it's difficult because the College District is so large, it would be beneficial for the Board to have closer and stronger ties with constituents, groups, and communities in the College District.
- Since DACA and other groups may be at risk, and some students and communities seem to be struggling with day to day survival, the Board should address, track, and determine appropriate steps the College to take to help in these areas. For example, when we received a student request to allow homeless students to sleep in their cars parked on campus, staff strongly refused and said that there are other options for homeless students, but the Board did not ask for details or do any follow up.
- Hungry students have come up, and recently faculty mentioned to me that the numbers are increasing but the Board hasn't followed up.
- Finding a way to win, or better yet end, our disputes with Walnut.
- We can always improve our connections with surrounding communities and leaders.

4. As a Trustee, I am most pleased with:

- Mt. SAC's growing reputation as one of the nation's elite community colleges.
- The camaraderie among the Trustees as they discuss and debate important College issues.
- The solid working relationship we have with the College President.
- Mt. SAC has been ranked as the fourth best community college in California for 2017 by Niche.
- The outstanding performance of the Grants office.

- The CEO's capability of continuing to lead the College in its success and growth.
- The general state of the College and the many, many achievements of our faculty, students, and staff.
- The strong reputation Mt. SAC possesses in the region and state.
- Our students and their numerous state and national accolades.
- The inclusive efforts to share and solicit input from a newly formed community facilities committee that reaches across Trustee areas.
- Mt. SAC's well-deserved reputation as the state's premier community college.
- Our programs in music, aviation, nursing, forensics, robotics, cyber security, and our athletic teams continue to excel.
- Our faculty and administrators are highly regarded throughout the state.
- The respect and professionalism among Board Members and between the Board and other individuals and groups at the College.
- Upcoming master planning road show.
- Efficient and effective operations.
- How efficient our meetings are and how dedicated and committed our Board is.
- Our rapid response to student concerns.

5. As a Trustee, I have concerns about:

- Our legal battles with the City of Walnut, even though I consider most of these to be unavoidable given Walnut politics.
- The rising cost of pension benefits to the College.
- Upcoming accreditation.
- The working relationship with City of Walnut.
- Financial resources and energy spent in dealing with the ongoing opposition to any construction projects by certain groups of Walnut residents.
- Future fiscal impact due to the increase of STRS and PERS contributions.
- The seemingly endless string of legal challenges and our present inability to move forward with major construction projects.
- Delays in some construction projects.
- The possible impact on our Dreamers and DACA students as a result of Trump's campaign threat to rescind President Obama's executive order.
- The precedent-setting legal decision regarding the parking structure which has given credence to the UWT and the City of Walnut as they attempt to affect the decision-making of our professionals here at Mt. SAC - particularly in facilities planning.
- The potential risk from the new federal administration to DACA students and families, and other groups.
- Growing homelessness and food insecurity.
- Disputes with Walnut and the risk to our future progress.

- The lawsuit with Walnut continues and it's not clear which side has the advantage. As a Board Member, I don't feel that I have the full picture of what is happening, as it is happening, which impacts my ability to be a vocal advocate for the College.

6. As a Trustee, I would like to see the following changes in how the Board operates:

- Perhaps a few standing committees of three Trustees in key areas, which would increase Trustee knowledge of the College's operations.
- Be more involved in the next bond measure planning.
- End the litigation!
- Ensure that we protect, to the best of our ability, our most vulnerable students from unwarranted and ill-conceived infringements.
- Successfully participate in this year's accreditation review.
- Move further along with our new bond measure planning.
- I don't see any major issues with how the board currently operates.
- More emphasis on our outreach with political representatives in our district.
- Develop closer ties with all communities in our District so they feel closer to the College and have a sense of ownership (i.e., feel like Mt SAC is my community college).
- To help community members get over feeling that Mt SAC is looking down at them or feeling superior (e.g., Charter Oak School District Board Member said recently that when Mt SAC counselors work with Charter Oak counselors all our counselors do is tell them that they are not doing a good job).
- We should be willing to have more special sessions to cover items that need more attention.

7. I recommend that the Board has the following goals for the coming year:

- To ensure that the newly-elected representatives in our area (Chen, Rubio, Newman, Portantino, Barger) are fully briefed on and exposed to our college.
- Approve another balanced budget.
- Increase private financial support.
- More update from CEO for the campus planning of the future bond measure.
- Have comprehensive campus security plan in place.
- Have a plan in place for recruiting international students, so it can be a financial resource to deal with the next budget cuts.
- The administration to have a more vigorous communication plan with the elected officials at the local, state, and federal level and to better prepare the board's advocacy at the state and national level.
- Come up with a comprehensive parking facilities plan to address student parking concerns that includes input from students, faculty, and community members.

- Examine using a Diversity Dashboard, similar to that of some other colleges in the state, with an annual presentation given to the Board.
- Support the phasing in of a Mt. SAC police department that is trained to respond to students attending our College.
- Improved relations with the City of Walnut.
- Our upcoming community meetings in various cities regarding our facilities master planning is a great idea.
- Cultivate closer relationship with communities in our District that are not already in the fold.
- Achieve six year accreditation.
- Prepare for a successful 2018 bond measure.
- Collaborate with others so, if worse comes to worse, our DACA students and other at-risk groups are protected.
- Resolve disputes with Walnut so they stop impeding progress (or beat them so badly they don't mess with the College anymore).
- Carefully consider a thorough and fair presentation on construction community benefit agreement (PLA) and decide on terms to include in the 2018 bond that will benefit Mt SAC, students, and our communities.
- Get the Walnut lawsuit behind us.

8. Additional Comments:

- Mt. SAC continues to make great strides in student success, visual and performing arts, athletics, and providing state-of-the-art facilities.
- Trustees make every effort to represent the college and its accomplishments when in the community.
- I gave grades lower than A in some areas because it is an area where I personally need improvement or it's an area that I don't believe is the best criteria for board performance.