

Checking in *and* Brushing Up

Being a dedicated board member means being dedicated to ongoing education and self-development.

BY DAVID CONNER



SERVICE TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF directors is a great responsibility. It is a commitment that requires an ongoing dedication to developing one's governance knowledge and regular self-assessments, both individually and as a full board, to fulfill the charge of being an effective and ethical board member. New trustees often are directed toward governance education to build a foundation upon which to serve on their boards. Longer-serving trustees and their board as a whole also can benefit from refreshers and ongoing upskilling. Whether you've been on a board for two years or 10 years, every board benefits from trustees who periodically review their governance knowledge.

Here are some steps that a board member who has been on their board for several years can take to brush up on their governance knowledge and evaluate their performance as a trustee and the full board's performance.

1. Attend governance training and professional development programs.

ACCT's Governance Leadership Institutes and the annual ACCT Leadership Congress are training programs designed to help board members develop their governance knowledge and skills. We're also excited to launch ACCT Connect, a new online social-learning platform with a Facebook-like interface that includes governance-education courses as well as a variety of ways to connect with your fellow trustees for peer-to-peer education (see p. 12). Foundational topics include governance principles, board roles and responsibilities, ethical and legal obligations, financial management, and board communication. Attending these programs can help board members stay up to date on the latest governance practices and trends in a supportive environment designed to reinforce learning and add nuance through interactive discussions with instructors and peers.

2. Review governance resources.

ACCT offers a number of governance resources, including *Trustee Quarterly* magazine, *Trusteeship in Community Colleges* and other books, and ACCT Connect instructional videos and guides that cover different aspects of governance. Most boards also follow Robert's Rules of Order for meeting procedures, and trustees should be familiar with parliamentary procedures so that they can conduct themselves appropriately during formal board meetings.

3. Conduct self-assessments.

A self-assessment of governance knowledge and performance is a great way to objectively gauge what knowledge and skills could stand to be improved upon. Self-assessment involves reviewing one's strengths and weaknesses, identifying areas for improvement, and setting goals for improvement. ACCT can help member boards to perform objective self-assessments upon request.

4. Regularly evaluate board performance.

Board members can also assess the full board's performance through a board performance evaluation. This involves evaluating the board's effectiveness in carrying out its governance responsibilities and board goals, identifying areas for improvement, and developing action plans to address those areas. Board members can use a board evaluation tool to help them evaluate the board's performance, such as a questionnaire that asks about the board's performance in different areas of governance.

For more information about ACCT's governance education offerings, contact Kielo Savilaakso at ksavilaakso@acct.org. For information about facilitated self-assessments, board performance evaluations, presidential assessments or any other evaluation service, contact Colleen Allen at callen@acct.org.