

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

A. Decision-Making Process

The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.
 - What do the statements about institutional mission and goals reveal about the institution's commitment to student success and educational excellence?
 - Are the institution's goals and values clearly articulated and understood by all? Can college staff list what those goals and values are?
 - Can staff describe their roles in assisting the institution to achieve its goals?
 - What information about institutional performance is circulating and available to staff and students? How is the information kept current? Is it easily accessed, is it understandable? Is it regularly used in institutional dialogue and decision-making sessions?
 - Do the institution's processes for institutional evaluation and review, and planning for improvements, provide venues where the evaluations of the institution's performance are made available to all staff?
 - Do institutional planning efforts provide opportunity for appropriate staff participation?
 - How do individuals bring forward ideas for institutional improvement?
 - How does the institution articulate the responsibilities of individuals to develop ideas for improvements in their areas of responsibility?
 - How do individuals and groups at the institution use the governance process to enhance student learning?
2. The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.
 - a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.

- What do institutional policies and procedures describe as the roles for each group in governance, including planning and budget development?
 - What evidence demonstrates that these policies and procedures are functioning effectively?
- b. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.
- What documents describe the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other educational matters?
3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.
- Do the written policies on governance procedures specify appropriate roles for all staff and students? Do these policies specify the academic roles of faculty in areas of student educational programs and services planning?
 - Are staff and students well informed of their respective roles? Do staff participate as encouraged by these policies? Do the various groups work in collaborative effort on behalf of institutional improvements? Is the result of this effort actual institutional improvement?
 - Is there effective communication at the college - clear, understood, widely available, current communication?
 - Do staff at the college know essential information about institutional efforts to achieve goals and improve learning?
4. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self evaluation, and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission.
- What does documentation of the institution's past accreditation history demonstrate about integrity in its relationship with the Commission - has it responded expeditiously and honestly to recommendations, are there citations indicating difficulty, etc.?
-
- Are the institution's communications of educational quality and institutional effectiveness to the public accurate?
 - What is the institution's evidence of compliance with the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) regulations?
5. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

- What process does the institution use to evaluate its governance and decision-making structures? Are the results communicated within the campus community?
- How does the institution use identified weaknesses to make needed improvements?

B. Board and Administrative Organization

In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.

1. The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.
 - Does the institution have a policy manual or other compilation of policy documents that demonstrate that the governing board's role in establishing a policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or district/system and reviewing it on a regular basis?
 - What statements about quality of programs, integrity of institutional actions, and about effectiveness of student learning programs and services are to be found in the institution's board-established policies, mission statement, vision or philosophy statement, planning documents, or other statements of direction?
 - What is the written policy describing selection and evaluation of the chief administrator? Has the board followed it?
- a. The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.
 - Is the governing board appropriately representative of the public interest and lacking conflict of interest? Does the composition of the governing board reflect public interest in the institution?
 - Are less than half of the board members owners of the institution? Are a majority of governing board members non-owners of the institution?
- b. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.
 - What policies, institutional goals or other formal statements exist that describe governing board expectations for quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs and services?
 - Is the governing board aware of the institution-set standards and analysis of results for improvement of student achievement and learning?

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

- c. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.
 - Is the governing board independent; are its actions final and not subject to the actions of any other entity?
- d. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.
- e. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.
 - Do the records of governing board actions (minutes, resolutions) indicate that its actions are consistent with its policies and bylaws?
 - Does the governing board have a system for evaluating and revising its policies on a regular basis? Is this system implemented?
- f. The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.
 - What is the governing board's program for development and orientation?
 - Does the governing board development program address the need to learn about Accreditation Standards and expectations?
 - Does the board have a formal, written method of providing for continuing membership and staggered terms of office?
- g. The governing board's self evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws.
 - What is the board self evaluation process as defined in its policies? Does the process as described present as an effective review?
 - Does the governing board policy call for regular self evaluation? Does the institution's board regularly evaluate its own performance?
- h. The governing board has a code of ethics that includes a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code.
 - What is the board's stated process for dealing with board behavior that is unethical? Does the governing board implement this process? Is there evidence of results?
- i. The governing board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.
 - What training is provided to the board about the accreditation process and Accreditation Standards?
 - How does the board participate appropriately in institutional self-evaluation and planning efforts?
 - How do board actions indicate a commitment to improvements planned as part of institutional self evaluation and accreditation processes?
 - How do board actions reflect the commitment to supporting and improving

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

- student learning outcomes as reflected in the Accreditation Standards and expectations for institutional improvement?
- Is the board informed of institutional reports due to the Commission, and of Commission recommendations to the institution?
 - Is the board knowledgeable about Accreditation Standards, including those that apply to the board?
 - Does the board assess its own performance using Accreditation Standards?
- j. The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor) in a multi-college district/system or the college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.
- What is the established board process for conducting search and selection processes for the chief administrator? Are those processes documented?
 - Has the board used these processes in its most recent chief administrator searches?
 - How is the board delegation of administrative authority to the chief administrator defined? (In policy documents? In a contract with the chief administrator?)
 - Is this delegation clear to all parties?
 - How effective is the governing board in focusing at the policy level?
 - What mechanisms does the board use in its evaluation of the chief administrator's performance on implementation of board policies and achievement of institutional goals?
 - How does the board set clear expectations for regular reports on institutional performance from the chief administrator?
 - How does the board set expectations for sufficient information on institutional performance to ensure that it can fulfill its responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity?
2. The president has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.
- a. The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.
- b. The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:
1. establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

2. ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;
3. ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and
4. establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.
 - What does the president do to communicate institutional values, goals (institution-set standards) and direction?
 - How familiar is the president with data and analyses of institutional performance?
 - How does the president communicate the importance of a culture of evidence and a focus on student learning?
 - Where does the research office report in the institution; does it have easy access to the president's office?
 - What mechanisms has the president put in place to link institutional research, particularly research on student learning, institutional planning processes, and resource allocation processes?
 - How does the district chief executive officer follow the component parts of this Standard in the role of providing effective district leadership?
- c. The president assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies.
- d. The president effectively controls budget and expenditures.
- e. The president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.
3. In multi-college districts or systems, the district/system provides primary leadership in setting and communicating expectations of educational excellence and integrity throughout the district/system and assures support for the effective operation of the colleges. It establishes clearly defined roles of authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system and acts as the liaison between the colleges and the governing board.⁷
 - a. The district /system clearly delineates and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice.
 - Does the district/system have a written delineation of responsibilities? Are institutional and district/system staff knowledgeable of this delineation?
 - Is the delineation of responsibilities evaluated for effectiveness?
 - b. The district/system provides effective services that support the colleges in their missions and functions.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

- What feedback mechanisms does the district/system have in place to provide assessment of the effectiveness of district/system services?
 - Is the assessment of district/system services data driven? Does it reflect the needs and priorities of the institutions?
 - Are district/system services regularly evaluated with regard to their support for institutional missions and functions?
- c. The district/system provides fair distribution of resources that are adequate to support the effective operations of the colleges.
- What is the district/system's method of distributing resources to its institutions? Is the district/system based in a realistic assessment of needs of each institution? Is it a fair process?
 - Is the district/system's resource distribution method data-driven? Does it reflect the needs and priorities of the institutions?
- d. The district/system effectively controls its expenditures.
- What are the institution's financial control mechanisms? Does the institution follow standard good practice in fiscal management?
 - Does the institution consistently end the fiscal year with a positive ending balance?
 - What do the institution's most recent annual independent audit reports and audited financial statements reveal about control of expenditures?
- e. The chancellor gives full responsibility and authority to the presidents of the colleges to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without his/her interference and holds them accountable for the operation of the colleges.
- f. The district/system acts as the liaison between the colleges and the governing board. The district/system and the colleges use effective methods of communication, and they exchange information in a timely manner.
- What methods of working jointly do the district/system and institutions use?
 - Do these methods result in clear and timely communications in all directions?
 - Are the institutions well informed about district/system issues, governing board actions and interests that have an impact on operations, educational quality, stability or ability to provide high quality education?
- g. The district/system regularly evaluates district/system role delineation and governance and decision-making structures and processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals. The district/system widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.
- What are the district/system's methods for evaluating its effectiveness?
 - Does it conduct regular assessments? How does it communicate the results?

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard IVA&B

Listed below are examples of potential sources of evidence for Standard IV. There may be many other sources relevant to each college's unique mission that institutions should provide and teams should consider.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

- Evidence that demonstrates board and other governance policies and descriptions of the participation of constituencies in decision-making bodies
- Evidence that includes documents showing the transmission of recommendations from faculty and academic administrators to decision-making bodies, and descriptions of the institution's information and decision-making process
- Evidence that includes copies of governance policies and procedures, the composition of governance bodies, minutes of meetings, and documents showing the roles academic staff play in reviewing and planning student learning programs and services
- Evidence that includes evaluations and analyses the institution conducts of its governing and decision-making processes, and the form of communication of same to the college community
- Evidence that includes the policy manual, institutional statement of mission, vision or philosophy, and institutional planning documents

B. Board and Administrative Organization

- Evidence that includes published statements of institutional goals that reference the governing board's expectations for student learning and quality of education
- Evidence that includes documents describing the authority of the governing board; the absence of any external, higher authority than the board; descriptions of the board appointment and replacement process
- Evidence of the published bylaws
- Evidence of board minutes or a schedule showing board evaluation of policies
- Evidence of the materials from board training workshops
- Evidence of the policy on board membership, appointment and replacement
- Evidence that includes the board's policy and instruments used for self evaluation, analyses and reports on the last few self-evaluations completed
- Evidence of the governing board policy statement of ethics
- Evidence that includes board minutes, statements to college constituents on the delegation of authority, the board policy manual, any contracts with administrators that specify delegation of authority, board agreements with faculty bodies regarding delegation of authority
- Evidence that includes budget documents and independent audit reports and audited financial statements showing ending year balances, and audit exceptions (if any)
- D Evidence that includes the results of surveys, other evaluations of the president's activities directed toward the communities served by the institutions

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard IVA&B

- Evidence that includes surveys and other evaluative instruments, and the results of evaluation. Evidence that includes descriptions of funding rules or formulas, committee minutes or other documents demonstrating that the system has assessed the needs of each institution
- Evidence that includes financial policies and manuals, the content of internal audits and reviews, annual independent external audits, fiscal program reviews conducted by other agencies, and the annual budget documents
- Evidence that includes any formal delineation of responsibilities that might be found in district/college documents, including descriptions of job duties, descriptions contained in employment contracts, and the district mapping provided to the institutions and the Commission
- Evidence of other documented or recorded communications
- Evidence that would include institutional analyses of performance, including fact books, reports, website data, portfolios, and publications that describe research on institutional performance
- Evidence of documented information about institutional planning processes, minutes of meetings, records of participation in institutional evaluation and planning sessions
- Evidence that includes the district/system's evaluation instruments, the results of the evaluation, and plans for improvement increasing
- Evidence the multi-college district/system has developed a "functional map" or description of district and college functions that delineates and distinguishes roles and responsibilities clearly