2020 Contra Costa Governing Board Self-Evaluation
Today’s discussion

• History of Board evaluation process
• Summary of current Board-completed self-evaluation instrument
• Summary of individual Board member conversations
• Analysis of evaluation material
• Discussion on improving performance
• Conversation on Chancellor selection process
Board Self-Evaluation History
C. Governing Board

1. The institution has a governing board that has authority over and responsibility for policies to assure the academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution.

2. The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision.
Accreditation Standards

3. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the CEO of the college and/or the district/system.

4. The governing board is an independent, policy-making body that reflects the public interest in the institution’s educational quality. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or political pressure.
Accreditation Standards

5. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the college/district/system mission to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity and stability.
Accreditation Standards

6. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board’s size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.

7. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly assesses its policies and bylaws for their effectiveness in fulfilling the college/district/system mission and revises them as necessary.
Accreditation Standards

8. To ensure the institution is accomplishing its goals for student success, the governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and institutional plans for improving academic quality.

9. The governing board has an ongoing training program for board development, including new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.
10. Board policies and/or bylaws clearly establish a process for board evaluation. The evaluation assesses the board’s effectiveness in promoting and sustaining academic quality and institutional effectiveness. The governing board regularly evaluates its practices and performance, including full participation in board training, and makes public the results. The results are used to improve board performance, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness.
Accreditation Standards

11. The governing board upholds a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy, and individual board members adhere to the code. The board has a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code and implements it when necessary. A majority of the board members have no employment, family, ownership, or other personal financial interest in the institution. Board member interests are disclosed and do not interfere with the impartiality of governing body members or outweigh the greater duty to secure and ensure the academic and fiscal integrity of the institution.
Accreditation Standards

12. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEO to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds the CEO accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively.
13. The governing board is informed about the Eligibility Requirements, the Accreditation Standards, Commission policies, accreditation processes, and the college’s accredited status, and supports through policy the college’s efforts to improve and excel. The board participates in evaluation of governing board roles and functions in the accreditation process.
History of League On Call Facilitated Contra Costa Board Self-Evaluations Retreats

2017
2018
2019
2020 Contra Costa Governing Board Self-Evaluation Process
2020 Self-Evaluation Process

1. Board completion of self-evaluation instrument
2. Conversations with individual board members
3. Consultant analysis of interviews and questionnaires
4. Facilitated open conversation at retreat
Board Self-Evaluation Instrument Analysis
Questionnaire Specifics

- 37 total questions in six areas
- 1 – 5 scale (higher the better)
- 5 were ranked average (3)
- 14 above average (4 or 5)
- 17 below average (1 or 2)
- Board has used same instrument for the past four years
Self-Evaluation Components

- Governing Board operation
- Financial management
- Mission of the District
- Board goals
- Relationship with the colleges
- Relationship with the Chancellor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Board Operation</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Needs to Improve</th>
<th>AVERAGE SCORE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Board conducts discussions at public meetings so that all trustees have an opportunity to participate in the discussion and decision-making.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Board receives adequate information from staff on which to base decisions.</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The Board conducts its meetings in an orderly, efficient manner and encourages public comment.</td>
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<td>XX</td>
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<td>4. The Board effectively responds to input from members of the college and community.</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Board members treat one another with respect and civility, in public meetings and closed sessions.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Board members share significant information about pertinent issues at public meetings.</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td>7. Once the Board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>8. The Board understands and appropriately contributes to the accreditation process.</td>
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<td>9. New Board members are appropriately oriented and fellow Board members participate in that process.</td>
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<td>10. Board members participate in professional development through attendance at seminars, conferences and retreats.</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Board members behave in accordance with the Board Code of Ethics and other District policies and procedures.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
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<td>12. Board members uphold the confidentiality of discussions and actions taken in closed session.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
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## Financial Management

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<th>Needs to Improve</th>
<th>AVERAGE SCORE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Board understands the finances of the District and its current fiscal condition.</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>3.6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Board is informed and discusses the fiscal aspects of the District on a regular basis.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<td><strong>3.6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The Board strives to link the District planning with the allocation of resources.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td><strong>2.6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Board regularly discusses the District finances and makes financial decisions to ensure the long-term financial health of the organization.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td><strong>3.4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Board oversees the financing of new District facilities as well as the maintenance and repair of existing facilities.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
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## Mission of the District

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<th></th>
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<th>Above Average</th>
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<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Needs to Improve</th>
<th>AVERAGE SCORE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Board understands the Mission of the District.</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Board periodically discusses the District Mission to ensure that it represents the needs of the community and students it serves.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The Board ensures the District Mission reflects the diversity of the community it serves.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Board develops policy and makes decisions consistent with the Mission of the District and in accordance with appropriate local, state and federal law.</td>
<td>XXXX</td>
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## Board Goals for 2019-20

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
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<th>Below Average</th>
<th>Needs to Improve</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improve student learning and completion across District colleges.</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>2. Decrease equity gaps for all students.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Advance existing community partnerships and create new educational collaborations to strengthen student pathways.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Cultivate a culture of engagement throughout the District.</td>
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<td>XXXX</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td><strong>2.6</strong></td>
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<td>5. Responsibly, effectively, and sustainably steward District resources.</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td><strong>3.2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship with the Colleges</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Needs to Improve</td>
<td>AVERAGE SCORE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Board understands the shared and participatory governance process of the District and colleges.</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Board understands the division of responsibilities between the District Office and the colleges.</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The Board understands the role of the faculty in the development of courses and curriculum and in related academic matters.</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Board works to stay informed of the activities of the colleges and to keep open lines of communication between the Board, District and colleges.</td>
<td>XXXXX</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship with the Chancellor</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>Average</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Needs to Improve</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Board regularly communicates with the Chancellor on matters concerning the District.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Board regularly receives information from the Chancellor regarding matters concerning the District.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Board members respect the role of the Chancellor as the Board’s employee, who is responsible for the operation of the District.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Board works to maintain a climate of mutual trust with the Chancellor</td>
<td>XX</td>
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<td>XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Individual Board members do not direct the actions of the Chancellor but work to achieve consensus and provide direction from the Board as a whole.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Individual Board member inform the Chancellor of significant contacts with members of the college or community that impact the operation of the District.</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>The Board effectively and regularly evaluates the Chancellor so that the Chancellor understands the Board’s opinion of his performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>XX</td>
<td>XXX</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Board Operation

- General positive agreement
  - Open meeting discussions
  - Adequate information from staff
  - Orderly meetings seeking public input
  - Understands and contributes to accreditation
  - Orient new members
  - Participate in professional development
Board Operation

Disagreement and/or improvement needed

- Board effectively responds to members of college and community
- Members treat one another with respect
- When a decision is reached Board acts as a whole
- Understands and contributes to accreditation
- Members behave in accordance with code of ethics
- Members uphold confidentiality
- Conducts discussions at public meetings
- Understands and contributes to accreditation
Supporting Mission of the District

➢ Positive agreement
  – Understand the complex nature of the district’s mission

➢ Disagreement and/or improvement needed
  – Periodically discusses the Mission to ensure it represents the needs of the community and students
  – Ensures the District reflects the diversity of the community
  – Develops policy and makes decisions consistent with the Mission
  – Understand the complex nature of the district’s mission
Relationship with the Chancellor

- **General positive agreement**
  - Regularly communicates with the Chancellor
  - Regularly receives information from the Chancellor

- **Disagreement and/or improvement needed**
  - Individual members do not direct the actions of the Chancellor
  - Members respect the role of the Chancellor as the Board’s employee
  - Regularly receive information from the Chancellor
  - Regularly evaluates the Chancellor
  - Members work to maintain a climate of mutual trust
Board Member Comments on Survey
Board member comments on strengths of the Board

- We have a “very diversified board with age, gender and ethnicity
- Three trustees have been “classroom teachers”
- “Supporting the district when it was in crisis mode with COVID”
- The “past working relationship amongst most Board members”
- “We do all understand our wards and voice our positions well.”
Board member comments on ways to improve Board performance

- “Receive education information available to staff and not always to Board members”
- “More Board training especially in the Brown Act”
- “study the other 21 CA community college Boards with more than one college”
- “Board needs to respect each other and leave personal interest and political gain behind”
- Get beyond “petty problems with each other”
Board member comments on ways to improve Board performance

- We need to “be willing to have open and hard conversations. We dance around differences of opinion and conflict instead of talking respectfully”

- We need to “refocus on our mission of serving students, we are completely focused on petty politics.”

- We need to “have respect for each others point of view”
Board member comments on greatest satisfaction

– “Glad to see our district has great leadership team with solid financial status”
– “Knowing our professors are educating our students to be prepared” for their careers
– “Working on behalf of our students, helping them to fulfill their educational goals”
– “To participate in Graduation ceremonies and see the successes of students”
– “When I am able to bring a new perspective to an issue that wouldn’t normally be discussed”
“We have a single Board member who likes to have full control of the Board as well as the district”

“Will the Board, especially its officers, be able to guide the District through the current recession, pandemic, civil unrest…?”

“I hope to complete the Chancellor search very soon…”

“To see the start of Board descensions with the start of the election season…”
Board member comments on greatest concern

– With the COVID crisis, “I am sad to say my greatest concern is our own Board’s behavior”

– My greatest concerns is from “one board member who bullies other board members and staff to gain control and power.”

– As a Board we need to, “move past our grievances with each other, it is the only way we are going to be able to do the work we need to do.”
Board member comments on greatest concern

– We have begun to have “political votes that proactively hurt the district, our employees and our student without any discussion or explanation.”

– “I know some board members will be horrified that I have been this honest...there are just some things you don’t say in public because it airs our dirty laundry and brings shame to our district, but maybe we need to be ashamed.”
Summary of Individual Board Member Interviews
Individual interview questions

1. How do you think things are going in the Contra Costa District?

2. How do you think the district has responded to the Pandemic crisis?

3. Do you feel the district is ready for the upcoming accreditation visit?

4. What is your opinion of the current dynamics of the Governing Board?
Individual interview questions

5. How do you assess your individual performance as a member of the Board?

6. What is your assessment of the overall performance of the Board?

7. What is your opinion of the currently paused search for a new Chancellor?

8. What is your opinion of the search calendar which suggests open forums and final interviews in September?
Individual interview questions

9. What do you feel the Governing Board could do to enhance their performance as a whole?

10. Are you enjoying your service on the Board and do you find that service professionally rewarding?

11. What have I not asked you about that you think I should know or about which you want to comment?
How do you think things are going in the Contra Costa District?

- The District is “moving smoothly”
- Staff are “mostly happy, no big problems, financially good”
- District is doing “Okay”
- “We face great uncertainty”
- The “worst they have ever been”
- Not good…”the Board is running things”
- The “fundamentals are sound, but we are rapidly deteriorating”
How has the District responded to the pandemic?

- I “laude” the District for the response
- I “feel good about the steps taken”
- This is a “bright spot in a dark time”
- I am “proud of our response – everyone has come together”
- “Given the uncertainty we have done well”
- We have “moved quickly to remake the district”
- So far “no one in the District has contracted it”
Is the District ready for the accreditation team?

- “We are ready for the visits”
- We are headed in the “right direction, but don’t know how the preparation is going”
- I think the “colleges are ready”
- “Yes, we are ready…all the docs are ready”
- “No…can we be ready? Yes”
- “I think we may get a finding about the Board”
What is your opinion of the current Governing Board member dynamics?

- We are “very frustrated…not happy as a Board”
- The Board is “functioning, but there is dissention”
- I think “we are not getting the correct information from staff”
- There is “too much politics” instead of students
- “Hell in a handbasket”
- There is a “2/2 split and then a swing vote”
- Board members “feel attacked”
How do you assess your individual performance as a Board member?

- “My college is doing well”
- “I helped the District get a new leadership team”
- “Performance-wise Okay”
- I’m a “veteran Board member and feel I am doing well”
- I am “limping through”
- I “don’t know”
What is your assessment of the overall performance of the Board?

- “Not well”
- I am “concerned about the friction between Board members”
- The Board is “limping through”
- We are “terrible”
- We can’t make any “long-term decisions”
- We “don’t trust one another so we can’t find agreement”
What is your opinion of the currently paused Chancellor’s search?

- It is “symptomatic of our inability to make a decision”
- We would “not be here if not for the pandemic”
- I am “still supportive of the process we are on”
- I am supportive but “think we need an early start date”
- I am most worried about “doing this now during the pandemic”
What is your opinion of the current Chancellor search calendar?

- I don’t think “this Board should make a decision”
- At this point I would “prefer to start again next year”
- I am “still supportive of completing the process in September”
- We need a “specific date when the Board will make a decision about continuing”
What do you feel the Board could do to enhance their performance?

- Change the Board size “from five members to seven”
- “Work together and respect each other”
- “Work together more even via Zoom”
- I think “the Board is engaged in personalities and may not be workable”
- “Grow up…when we say we will move on we need to”
Are you enjoying your service on the Board and do you find it professionally rewarding?

- “Interesting question…I am willing to tolerate the nonsense to serve students”
- I feel “a little better, but still don’t like the vibe”
- “Lately I have become re-energized”
- I “was until lately”
- “No – I’m scared all the time”
- Sometimes “I feel like the only adult in the room”
What have I not asked about that you think I should know?

- We need to do a “better job of encouraging HS students to take college courses while in HS”
- We need to “keep the Board from running the District”
- The Board recently took a negative action that “did not meet the crime”
- The election in November will be “key for this District”
Analysis of the Survey and Interviews
Board Performance

- The Board is often dysfunctional
Board Performance

• The Board is often dysfunctional
• Too often the Board seems unable and unwilling to make decisions and take action
Board Performance

• The Board is often dysfunctional
• Too often the Board seems unable and unwilling to make decisions and take action
• There is a clear split on the Board on many issues resulting in increasing frustration of all trustees*
Board Performance

• The Board is often dysfunctional
• Too often the Board seems unable and unwilling to make decisions and take action
• There is a clear split on the Board on many issues resulting in increasing frustration of all trustees*
• The upcoming November Board elections have caused greater division on the Board
Board Performance

• The Board is often dysfunctional
• Too often the Board seems unable and unwilling to make decisions and take action
• There is a clear split on the Board on many issues resulting in increasing frustration of all trustees*
• The upcoming November Board elections have caused greater division on the Board
• Board members do not trust one another and are often unwilling to work together*
Board Performance

- Board members constantly relive the past, hold grudges and refuse to move on from prior disagreements
Board Performance

• Board members constantly relive the past, hold grudges and refuse to move on from prior disagreements

• The Board performs best when they deal with issues related to students*
Board Performance

• Board members constantly relive the past, hold grudges and refuse to move on from prior disagreements

• The Board performs best when they deal with issues related to students*

• Unfortunately, the Board spends far too much of their time on issues that have no impact on teaching, learning and students
To Improve
The Board Must

• Always put students, teaching and learning first*
To Improve
The Board Must

- Always put students, teaching and learning first*
- Embrace difference of opinion*
To Improve
The Board Must

- Always put students, teaching and learning first*
- Embrace difference of opinion*
- Develop positive relationships with one another and the Chancellor*
To Improve
The Board Must

• Always put students, teaching and learning first*
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• Be willing to make decisions even in the face of significant difference of opinion*
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• Develop positive relationships with one another and the Chancellor*
• Listen to one another*
• Be willing to make decisions even in the face of significant difference of opinion*
• Disagree with one another with respect and civility*
To Improve
The Board Must

• Stop living in the past and forget past disagreements
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• Stop using Board policy, the Brown Act, and other state rules and regulations as weapons to delay or suppress honest Board discussion
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• Make a decision about the process for selecting a new Chancellor
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• Make a decision about the process for selecting a new Chancellor
• Stop seeking advice on improved Board performance and then ignoring the advice given
Let’s have an open and honest conversation!