

OHLONE COLLEGE
Progress Report
Due October 15, 2008

FORMAT FOR REPORT

1. Cover Sheet Include the date of submission, the name and address of the institution, and a notation that this is a Progress Report.
 2. Table of Contents
 3. Statement on Report Preparation The statement, signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the institution, describes the process of report preparation and identifies those who were involved in its preparation, review, and approval.
 4. Response to the Request of the Commission in the Action Letter Each recommendation identified by the Commission in its action letter should be identified and discussed. The report should describe the progress made on each recommendation, analyze the results achieved to date, provide evidence of the results, and indicate what additional plans the institution has developed.
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Recommendation 5: The team recommends that the Board of Trustees ceases involvement in College operations and delegate all non-policy issues and policy implementation at the college level to the president (IV.B.1.e.j).

Description of Progress

The Board of Trustees of the Ohlone Community College District acted to respond swiftly to the recommendations from the visiting accreditation team. Immediately following the team visit, on March 12, 2008, the Board of Trustees scheduled a workshop with an Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) expert on community college boards. The Commission recommendations and Standard IVB were reviewed, and a variety of materials directed at improving trustee understanding and execution of the Board's role were discussed. Central to the workshop, a mini self-assessment was completed with the intention of careful analysis and future improvement planning. The workshop also included preparation for a smooth transition for the new president.

[March Board Workshop Agenda](#)

There were several important outcomes of the March workshop. First, the board heard from a neutral and external source what their roles should be with respect to college policy and operations. They were provided articles and other written references for their review. They performed a self assessment to identify specific areas in need of improvement regarding their role. Finally, the Board issued a statement committing to address the accreditation recommendations. [Board Self Assessment form; Board Meeting Video, April 2008](#)

A second workshop with the consultant occurred on July 19 with the new president in attendance. The following comprised the session goals:

- Plan for how we practice trusteeship
- Expectations of trustee behavior in and outside of meetings
- Actions trustees are willing to perform to self monitor
- Expectations regarding the kind and parameters of information from the president
- Plan for what happens regarding the accreditation recommendations in the next 90 days

The discussion was focused and candid with many suggestions for improvement resulting including changes to the Board meeting structure, participants, and agenda; and development of communication protocols between trustees and the campus community, the president's staff, the press, and the president.

The results of the self assessment conducted at the March session were reviewed. The following three items, those with the lowest score (below 3.29 on a 5-point scale), were identified for initial attention.

- *Individual board members follow appropriate guidelines when visiting the College.* 2.57
- *Board members are given adequate information on the issues they are requested to make decisions on.* 2.86
- *Board members appropriately represent the College when speaking with the media.* 3.14 [Board Self Assessment Summary Analysis](#)

During the discussion it became apparent that the Board did not have written guidelines for many of the topics identified as problems. Plans to articulate appropriate trustee and college behavior in each area were identified. Ideas for improving communication and policing trustee comments during board meetings were listed. [July 19 Workshop Agenda and Notes](#)

Since the July 19 workshop, ideas expressed have been codified in the form of a Board Improvement Plan (previously referred to as the "Get Well Plan"). The Board chair has created a Board Member Guide that describes appropriate action in all areas identified in the workshop. The Board has also scrutinized the accreditation team report carefully to understand the context of the recommendations and to provide information for this report. Progress on meeting recommendations is reviewed at each meeting. [Board Improvement Plan; Board Member Guide; Initial Review of Team Report](#)

Several changes designed to clarify the role of the Board and to improve the Board meeting have been made to the Board meeting structure and agenda. They include the following:

- Board members receive supporting documentation for each agenda item with the agenda. Trustees forward questions to the college President prior to the meeting to ensure that needed information is presented at the meeting. The board meeting agenda does not contain place holders.
- Each agenda item subject to board action references a board policy number.
- Members of the audience complete a form if they wish to address the Board. The form can be completed at any time during the meeting.
- The Presidents of the Faculty Senate and the Associated Students of Ohlone College (ASOC) make a standing report to the Board and have a designated item on the agenda to do so.

- The elected trustees, the student trustee, the college President/Superintendent, and the President's support staff member comprise those seated at the Board table.
- The student trustee is asked for an advisory vote on each action item prior to the elected trustees' vote.
- Communication between the Board and the President's staff is directed through the President.
- Trustees have the opportunity to make announcements and report briefly on events in which they have participated since the last meeting during "Reports & Announcements". [Board Meeting and Agenda Changes memo](#)

The new president observed that there were several College structures and practices in place that seemed to invite the Board of Trustees to discuss and question college operations. Perhaps the most obvious was the "extended board," which included representatives from all three unions, the academic senate president, the college council co-chair, and the senior administrative staff seated at the table with the elected trustees. The original concept was to enhance trustee understanding of shared governance. However, the issue in the context of the Commission findings was the scope of such a body. The Board's domain is policy, the unions' domain is work conditions, the faculty senate's is academic issues as spelled out in the collegial consultation model, and the college council's is as the shared governance body advising the president. In other words, all of these groups have necessary, but separate and distinct functions. As such, putting them in a single group meant they would be discussing each other's areas. Exchanges turned naturally to the operations of the college, thus undermining the role of the president as the sole employee of the Board. Having members of the "extended board" sitting at the Board table also invited the Board chair to ask each individual what he or she thought about issues.

To eliminate this body while elevating the College Council to its full function and facilitating the role of the Faculty Senate and Associated Student of Ohlone College, the President met with leaders of each group represented on the "extended board" to articulate her rationale for the change. She also discussed it with the College Council as a whole. All groups expressed their comprehension of the concept and support for the proposed changes to the Board meeting and agenda. [College Council Agenda](#)

The structure of Board agendas seemed to contribute to micromanagement, as well. They did not contain regular items for the academic senate or the associated students to make reports to the Board, and these groups were not making regular reports. Instead, reports were open and lent themselves to discussion of topics not appearing on the agenda. The agenda item was changed to read "Reports and Announcements: This is an opportunity for the Trustees to report on activities attended or to announce upcoming events." The changes were implemented at the August 13 meeting. [Sample Board Agenda](#)

Analysis of Results

Since the changes described above were implemented, the campus community has reported greater ease and satisfaction with the tenor of the board meetings and with their role in them. Trustees have agreed to all of the changes, and there is a general sense that

they are comfortable with them so far. Meetings since the changes are more civil and shorter. [Board meeting videos, July-Sept.](#)

Additional Plans

Going forward, the following Board actions have been scheduled:

September 24, 2008—Regular Board Meeting (Workshop Format).

- The President will conduct a session on a topic from *Handbook on CEO-Board Relations and Responsibilities* by George Boggs.
- Trustees will be provided a form for comments or information they wish to supply to the president during the meeting.
- Reminders regarding discussion self monitoring will be displayed on the back of the name plates.
- The Board will discuss progress and plans for the accreditation recommendations in the context of the president's goals.

October 8, 2008—Regular Board Meeting (Business Meeting Format).

- The Board will review/adopt a working copy of the Board Member Guide.

October 23, 2008—Regular Board Meeting (Workshop Format)

- The Board will assess how it has been doing on the three issues addressed in the workshop and presented to the board on August 13, 2008.
- The Board will review/address three additional areas for improvement from the ACCT sponsored Board Self-Assessment.
- The President will conduct a session on a topic from *Handbook on CEO-Board Relations and Responsibilities*.

November 12, 2008—Regular Board Meeting (Business Meeting Format)

- The Board will adopt New Board Member Orientation process.
- If Accreditation Team follow-up visit occurs prior to this meeting, there will be a debriefing on the visit with the Board.

December 1, 2008—Regular Board Meeting (Business Meeting Format)

- The Board will receive an information item on Shared Governance.

January 28, 2009—Regular Board Meeting (Workshop Format).

- The new Board will participate in Strength Quest assessment.

February 11, 2009—Regular Board Meeting.

- The Board will review the Commission Action Letter, if available.

April 22, 2009—Regular Board Meeting.

- The Board will complete its Annual Board Self-Assessment Survey (ACCT). [Board planning timeline](#)

Recommendation 6:

The Board of Trustees, District leadership and College leadership define, publish, adhere to, regularly evaluate, and continuously improve the respective leadership roles and scopes of authority of college and district constituent groups and governance committees in meaningful, collegial decision-making processes. (Standard IV.A.1, 2, 3, 5)

Description of Progress

In addition to the President's discussions with campus groups regarding changes to the Board meeting and the publication of those changes, there have been a number of other discussions relevant to leadership roles and scopes of authority. Discussion with the Board and review of meeting agendas revealed that the trustees had not received regular informational updates, and placeholders appeared on the Board agendas. The review of previous self-assessments and discussion with trustees suggested that there were instances when supporting materials for action items were not supplied in a timely fashion.

The President has provided the trustees with three updates so far, each including information for action items, potential action items, and other points of interest and college efforts and progress. Guidance has been provided to the trustees regarding follow-up questions on this update in order to distinguish policy items or potential policy items from those that are purely informational. [Sample President's Updates](#)

The President instituted the requirement that all materials for the agenda be provided to her prior to their posting on the college webpage. This timeline enables her to assure their completeness and accuracy. Trustees thus far have called or emailed their questions about the agenda prior to the meeting, avoiding confusion, lack of preparation, and inappropriate exchanges during the meeting. At the August meeting, one item was pulled from the agenda to allow better preparation and appropriate changes to occur prior to public discussion.

A Shared Governance document describing college committees and decision-making roles is in draft form and has been reviewed by the College Council. The role of College Council as the college planning and budgeting committee has been discussed and a task force appointed to address this role more fully. The College Council By Laws have been revised to articulate its role clearly. To implement its function as the shared governance body for the campus, the Council is developing methods of getting feedback from all campus groups on potential decisions and key topics. [Shared Governance Document](#); [College Council By Laws](#); [College Council minutes](#); [Planning Task Force meeting notes](#)

Analysis of Results

Discussions in College Council meetings and to a lesser extent during Planning Task Force meetings suggest that understanding of leadership roles is improving.

Additional Plans

In the future, the president's updates to the Board will continue. The Board will hear a series of reports from deans about their areas beginning September 24.

Recommendation 7:

The Board of Trustees take measures to bring all constituent groups together to enable the campus toward:

a) Developing a positive and in-depth dialog on decision making roles and responsibilities that will ultimately lead to strengthening student learning and success at the college. (Standards I.A.3, I.B1)

Description of Progress

The response to Recommendation 5 above indicates that substantive, positive, and in-depth dialog has taken place since the site visit in March. The initial reaction by the Board was immediate and drew upon facilitation services from the ACCT. The resulting actions taken by the President, college constituency groups, and the Board to restructure the Board meetings required significant and focused dialog about shared governance processes and roles.

At each of the Board meetings since the recommendations were received, the Board Chair and President have made reports on progress. Initial feedback from constituent groups, including the Board, indicates good and positive progress is being made. It is clear from the Additional Plans described above in Recommendation 5 that subsequent Board Meetings and Workshops over the coming year include frequently planned dialog sessions to further address and clarify decision making roles and responsibilities.

B. Creating an environment which ensures greater administrative stability and empowerment at the college. (Standards IV.A.1, IV.A.2, A.2.a, A.2.b, A.3, A.5, IV.B.1, IV.B.2, and IV.B.3)

Description of Progress

Interpreting the intent of the phrase "greater administrative stability" has been somewhat difficult. It would seem, at first glance, to imply that there have been turnover issues in administrative staff. However, there has been little turnover in administrative staff at the college. The fact that the phrase is linked to concept of "administrative empowerment" indicates the visiting team was concerned about administrative instability that can result from micromanagement at the Board level. Micromanagement can create an atmosphere of role confusion and, thus instability.

Within this context the changes being pursued by the President and the Board are designed to provide clarity about administrative communication flow and decision making processes. Although anecdotal at this point, top administrators indicate a lessening of tension and better understanding of the relationship between the President and the Board. Subsequent assessment of administrative stability, as defined here, will be ongoing.

Recommendation 8:**The Board of Trustees develops a process to implement identified improvements derived from regular self-evaluations. (Standard IV.B.1 .g)****Description of Progress**

The evaluation report from the visiting team acknowledged the Board had made good progress in developing a formal evaluation instrument, which was based on the accreditation standards for good Board practice. The instrument has been used for the past three years, including input from constituent groups, providing a rich source of longitudinal data. However, the visiting team found that little had been done to turn the evaluations results into formal improvement plans with measurable outcomes.

As described in the response to Recommendation 5 above, the Board has conducted several workshops since the visiting team recommendations were received. The workshop in March included a formal self assessment using an instrument developed by ACCT. The results of this assessment, along with the existing longitudinal self-evaluation data, have been codified in the form of a Board Improvement Plan. The ACCT facilitator will be invited back in January for February for an assessment of the Board's progress on meeting Recommendation 8.

As mentioned in the response to Recommendation 5 above, the Board has also scrutinized the team report carefully to understand the context of the recommendations and to provide information for this report and progress on meeting recommendations has been, and will be, reviewed at each meeting. [Extended Board Evaluation Results; Board Self Assessment Summary Analysis; Board Improvement Plan; Board Member Guide](#)