
Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and uses the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for promoting student success, sustaining academic quality, integrity, fiscal stability, and continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are defined in policy and 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 executive officer. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. In multi-college districts or systems, the roles within the district/system are clearly delineated. The multi-college district or system has policies for allocation of resources to adequately support and sustain the colleges.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

1. Institutional leaders create and encourage innovation leading to institutional excellence. They support administrators, faculty, staff, and students, no matter what their official titles, in taking initiative for 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 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?*
 - *What information about institutional performance is available to staff and students? How is the information kept current? Is it easily accessed, is it understandable? Is it regularly used in institutional dialog 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?*
2. The institution establishes and implements policy and procedures authorizing administrator, faculty, and staff participation in decision-making processes. The policy makes provisions for student participation and consideration of student views in those matters in which students have a direct and reasonable interest. Policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose committees.
 - *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?*

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- *What documents describe the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other educational matters?*
 - *What provisions are made for student involvement in the decision-making processes?*
3. Administrators and faculty, through policy and procedures, 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.
- *What do institutional policies and procedures describe as the roles for each group in governance, including planning and budget development?*
4. Faculty and academic administrators, through policy and procedures, and through well-defined structures, have responsibility for recommendations about curriculum and student learning programs and services.
- *What institutional policies and procedures describe as the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other educational matters?*
 - *What evidence demonstrates that these policies and procedures are functioning effectively?*
 - *Have programs, degrees, and certificates available 50% or more via DE/CE been reviewed through the ACCJC Substantive Change process?*
5. Through its system of board and institutional governance, the institution ensures the appropriate consideration of relevant perspectives; decision-making aligned with expertise and responsibility; and timely action on institutional plans, policies, curricular change, and other key considerations.
- *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?*
 - *Do staff at the college know essential information about institutional efforts to achieve goals and improve learning?*
6. The processes for decision-making and the resulting decisions are documented and widely communicated across the institution.
- *What process does the institution use to document and communicate these decisions?*
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7. Leadership roles and the institution's governance and decision-making policies, procedures, and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The 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. Chief Executive Officer

1. The institutional chief executive officer (CEO) has primary responsibility for the quality of the institution. The CEO provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.
 - *What does the CEO do to communicate institutional values, goals (institution-set standards) and direction?*
 - *How familiar is the CEO with data and analyses of institutional performance?*
 - *How does the CEO 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 CEO's office?*
 - *What mechanisms has the CEO put in place to link institutional research, particularly research on student learning, to 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?*
2. The CEO plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. The CEO delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.
3. Through established policies and procedures, the CEO guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by:
 - *establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;*
 - *ensuring the college sets institutional performance standards for student achievement;*
 - *ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis of external and internal conditions;*
 - *ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and allocation to support student achievement and learning;*

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- *ensuring that the allocation of resources supports and improves achievement and learning; and*
 - *establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts to achieve the mission of the institution.*
 - *What does the CEO do to communicate institutional values, goals (institution-set standards) and direction?*
 - *How familiar is the CEO with data and analyses of institutional performance?*
 - *How does the CEO communicate the importance of a culture of evidence and a focus on student learning?*
 - *What mechanisms has the CEO put in place to link institutional research, particularly research on student learning, to 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?*

Effective Practices The CEO uses data in decision making, identifying priorities, and measuring progress in building a culture of evidence and inquiry. The CEO directs the hiring of faculty, administrators, and staff who are committed to student learning and achievement.
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| <p>4. The CEO has the primary leadership role for accreditation, ensuring that the institution meets or exceeds Eligibility Requirements, Accreditation Standards, and Commission policies at all times. Faculty, staff, and administrative leaders of the institution also have responsibility for assuring compliance with accreditation requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How does the CEO take a lead role in accreditation processes?</i> • <i>How does the CEO ensure others on campus also understand accreditation?</i> |
| <p>5. The CEO assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies, including effective control of budget and expenditures.</p> |
| <p>6. The CEO works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.</p> |

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. (ER 7)
 - *Does the institution have a policy manual or other compilation of policy documents that demonstrate that the governing board's role in academic quality, integrity, and effectiveness of learning programs and services, and financial stability? Are these policies reviewed 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?*
2. The governing board acts as a collective entity. Once the board reaches a decision, all board members act in support of the decision.
 - *How does the Board demonstrate its support for its own policies and decisions?*
3. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the CEO of the college and/or the district/system.
 - *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?*
 - *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?*
 - *What is the written policy describing selection and evaluation of the chief administrator? Has the board followed it?*
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. (ER 7)
 - *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?*

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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.

- *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?*
- *Is the governing board independent? Are its actions final and not subject to the actions of any other entity?*
- *Is the governing board aware of the institution-set standards and the analysis of results for improvement of student achievement and learning?*

Effective Practices

The governing board supports resource allocation (and re-allocation) for capacity building within the institution to promote and sustain student learning, equity, success, and achievement.

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.
- *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?*
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.
- *What data on student performance does the Board regularly evaluate?*

Effective Practices

Include an item on each board agenda relevant to improving academic quality and student learning and achievement, closing the achievement gaps, and increasing success and completion of educational goals.

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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.
- *What is the governing board's program for development and orientation?*
 - *Does the board have a formal, written method of providing for continuing 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.
- *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?*
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. (ER 7)
- *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?*
 - *Are less than half of the board members owners of the institution? Are a majority of governing board members non-owners of the institution?*
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.
- *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?*
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- *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?*
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.
- *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 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?*
 - *Does the governing board development program address the need to learn about Accreditation Standards and expectations?*

D. Multi-College Districts or Systems

1. In multi-college districts or systems, the district/system CEO provides 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. Working with the colleges, the district/system CEO establishes clearly defined roles, authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system.
 - *What policies and practices demonstrate the delineation of roles and responsibilities for the district/system and the colleges?*
2. The district/system CEO clearly delineates, documents, and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice. The district/system CEO ensures that the colleges receive effective and adequate district/system provided services to support the colleges in achieving their missions. Where a district/system has responsibility for resources, allocation of resources, and planning, it is evaluated against the Standards, and its performance is reflected in the accredited status of the institution.
 - *Does the district/system have a written delineation of responsibilities? Are institutional and district/system staff knowledgeable of this delineation?*

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- *Is the delineation of responsibilities evaluated for effectiveness?*
 - *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?*
3. The district/system has a policy for allocation and reallocation of resources that are adequate to support the effective operations and sustainability of the colleges and district/system. The district/system CEO ensures effective control of expenditures.
- *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 it well-understood across the district/system?*
 - *Is the district/system's resource distribution method data-driven? Does it reflect the needs and priorities of the institutions?*
 - *What do the institution's most recent annual independent audit reports and audited financial statements reveal about control of expenditures?*
4. The CEO of the district or system delegates full responsibility and authority to the CEOs of the colleges to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without interference and holds college CEO's accountable for the operation of the colleges.
- *What policies and practices demonstrate delegation of authority to college CEO's that meets the criteria of the Standard?*
5. District/system planning and evaluation are integrated with college planning and evaluation to improve student learning and achievement and institutional effectiveness.
- *How are planning and evaluation integrated between district/system and the colleges?*
 - *How do the district/system and the colleges determine the effectiveness of the integrated planning?*
6. Communication between colleges and districts/systems ensures effective operations of the colleges and should be timely, accurate, and complete in order for the colleges to make decisions effectively.
- *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?*
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7. The district/system CEO regularly evaluates district/system and college role delineations, governance and decision-making processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals for student achievement and learning. 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?*
 - *What changes/improvements have been made as a result of these evaluations?*

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard IV

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
- ☐ Evidence that includes copies of governance policies and procedures, the composition of governance bodies, minutes of meetings, and documents showing the roles relevant faculty play in reviewing and planning student learning including in DE/CE programs and services
- ☐ Evidence that the governance structures, processes and practices include opportunities for staff, faculty and students involved in DE/CE to provide input to the development of the institution
- ☐ Evidence that a Substantive Change Proposal was submitted to the Commission when 50% or more of a program, degree, or certificate is offered through DE/CE

B. Chief Executive Officer

- ☐ Evidence that includes budget documents and independent audit reports and audited financial statements showing ending year balances, and audit exceptions (if any)
- ☐ Evidence that includes the results of surveys, other evaluations of the president's activities directed toward the communities served by the institutions
- ☐ 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

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- ☐ 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

C. Governing Board

- ☐ 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 the governing board has taken the quality of the institution's DE/CE into consideration in the development of the relevant policies.
- ☐ Examples of governing board statements on DE/CE program quality and integrity.

D. Multi-College Districts or Systems

- ☐ 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