

BOARD OF REGENTS

BRIEFING PAPER

1. **AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** HANDBOOK Revision, Self-Evaluation Process for the Board of Regents

MEETING DATE: November 30-December 1, 2017

2. BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

At its special meeting on August 25-26, 2016, the Board discussed multiple topics relating to strategic planning and Board governance. At that time, the Board approved a new policy for self-evaluation that includes twenty specific areas that must be evaluated annually (*Title 1, Article V, Section 25*). At its October 19-20, 2017, Special Meeting and Workshop, the Board conducted the required annual self-evaluation facilitated by AGB (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges).

Following this first cycle of the annual self-evaluation and based on the broad range of the topics covered, System staff recommends revising Board policy to provide the Board more flexibility in determining the timing and topics of regular self-evaluation going forward, but in no event should the time between the regular self-evaluation exceed five years.

3. SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend the policy to require the Board to conduct a self-evaluation at least every five years, instead of annually, and to clarify the Board's discretion in identifying the areas to be reviewed with each self-evaluation (*Title 1, Article V, Section 25*). See the attached policy proposal.

4. IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

The policy revision is proposed based upon the self-evaluation that was conducted at the Board's special meeting on October 19-20, 2017.

5. BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- **Board and System Resources** – Effectively preparing for the annual evaluation, including the twenty mandated areas for review, requires significant preparation and work for Board members and system and institutional staff, as well as an outside consultant, if any. While the self-evaluation process is critically important for an effective board and must be conducted on a regular basis, conducting this extensive review annually may not be an optimal use of resources.
- **Accreditation Standards** – Standard 2.A.8 of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) requires that the governing board “*regularly* evaluates its performance to ensure its duties and responsibilities are fulfilled in an effective and efficient manner.” Regular self-evaluation is required, but a timeframe is not specified.
- **Timing of Self-Evaluation** – Providing for “regular” instead of “annual” self-evaluation enables the Board to determine the timing of its evaluation, which could be annually or up to a maximum period of years (five years under the policy proposal). The Board's effectiveness and performance as a governing and policy making body are, in part, driven by and in response to factors and decisions that evolve over a period of more than one year.
- **Topics Reviewed under the Self-Evaluation** – The revised policy proposal allows the Board to conduct the self-evaluation of its performance and effectiveness in any number of areas, instead of all twenty areas annually. The Board may elect to conduct one comprehensive review every five years or to review a small number of areas in a shorter timeframe. The content and timing would be at the Board's discretion. Many of the issues driving the Board's responsibilities – and the listed areas that must be reviewed every year under the existing policy – may be based on cycles longer than one year (progress made in achieving goals; policy development; stewardship of investments; relations with business, community and political leaders; oversight of financial affairs and budgeting, for example) or may not change within a year (board organization, for example). Annual self-evaluation of all of these areas may be too narrow for accurately assessing the Board's performance and effectiveness.
- **Longer Review/Evaluation Cycles within Nevada and NSHE** – Examples of other relevant reporting/policy cycles include the following:
 - The NSCCU seven-year accreditation cycle for NSHE institutions; and
 - Updates from institutions required on multiple topics including master plans (two years), institutional strategic plans and mission statements (at least every seven years); and DRI research programs (five-year cycle).

6. POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

Annual self-evaluation provides a better opportunity for more immediate feedback and corrective action, where needed.

7. ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

- Retain the existing policy requiring annual evaluation.
- Require a different minimum number of years in between regular self-evaluations (i.e. two, three or four years instead of five years, as proposed).

8. COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

Consistent with Current Board Policy: Title #_____ Chapter #_____ Section #_____

X Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 1, Article V, Section 25*

Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #_____ Section #_____

Other: _____

Fiscal Impact: Yes_____ No X_____

Explain: _____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 1, ARTICLE V, SECTION 25
Annual Board Self-Evaluation

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 25. [~~Annual~~ *Regular Board Self-Evaluation*]

On *a regular* [~~an annual~~] basis the Board of Regents will conduct a self-evaluation of its performance as a governing and policy making body. The purpose of the [~~annual~~] self-evaluation is to identify ways to strengthen the Board's effectiveness and to meet relevant accreditation standards for NSHE's institutions. The self-evaluation process will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. [~~Each year~~] *At least every five years*, the Board will review its performance and effectiveness [~~for the prior calendar year~~], in *multiple areas, which may include but are not limited to* the following areas:
 - a. Board organization;
 - b. Policy development and review of policies;
 - c. Relations with business, community and political leaders;
 - d. Board/Chancellor/Presidents and staff relations;
 - e. System and institutional operations and performance;
 - f. Board commitment to legal requirements, policies and responsibilities, including state and Board of Regents Ethics Codes, Open Meeting and Public Records laws;
 - g. Board commitment to diversity and inclusiveness;
 - h. Board oversight of financial affairs and budgeting;
 - i. Board stewardship of System investments/endowments;
 - j. Ensuring adequate and safe physical facilities;
 - k. Board role in approving academic programs;
 - l. Commitment to protection of academic freedom;
 - m. Board leadership;
 - n. Quality of Board meetings;
 - o. Orientation and training of new Board members;
 - p. Training opportunities for Board members;
 - q. Strengths and accomplishments;
 - r. Weaknesses and areas in need of improvement; and
 - s. Progress made in achieving goals and the effectiveness of the Board's strategies for achieving its goals.
2. In consultation with the Chair, the Chief of Staff of the Board and the Chancellor will compile data and information relevant to the Board's performance [~~in each of these areas for the prior calendar year~~] for presentation to the Board at the meeting. With the approval of the Chair, additional areas may be added to the self-evaluation. The data and information gathered may also include the use of self-evaluation instruments such as surveys, on-line assessments or questionnaires, personal interviews, and opportunities for input from internal and external constituencies.
3. At the meeting, the Board will review the data and information gathered by the Chief of Staff and Chancellor, make findings regarding the Board's performance and effectiveness, and identify goals and strategies for improvement. In consultation with the Chair, a final report that summarizes the results of the self-evaluation will be prepared by the Chief of Staff and the Chancellor, and presented to the Board for approval at *a future* [~~the next~~] meeting of the Board.
4. The self-evaluation process will be conducted in compliance with all applicable legal requirements, including the Nevada Open Meeting and Public Records laws.