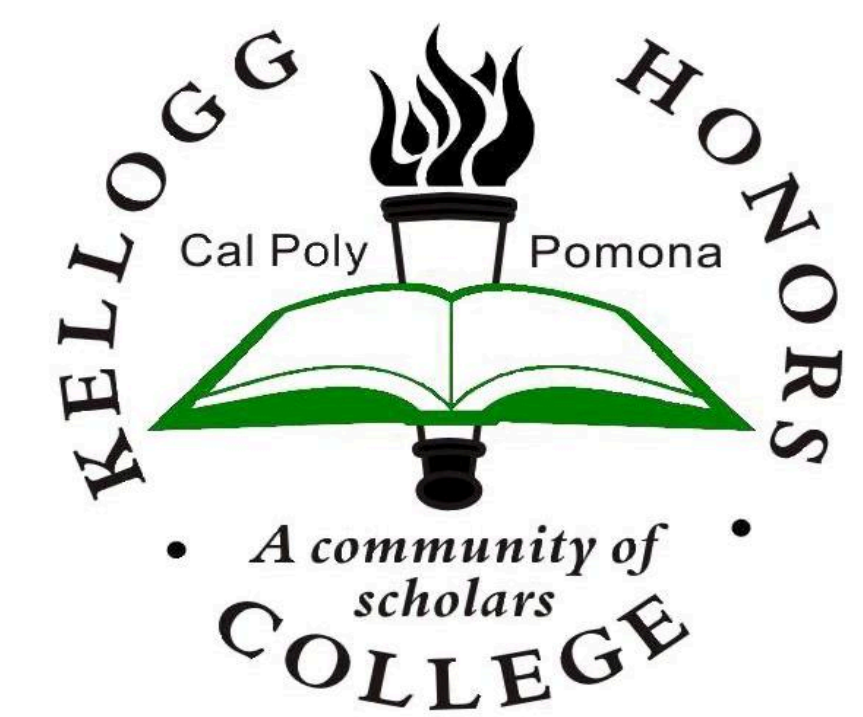


Effective Board Governance:

An Analysis of the CSU Board of Trustees



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Introduction

Summary

- My research was not meant to render a final verdict on whether the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) is an effective board. Given that a board's performance can be affected by an immeasurable number of factors, my analysis is limited to an assessment of various components of the BOT and indeed determines where the board performs effectively as well as the areas in which performance can be improved

Importance of Studying Governing Boards

- With over 480,000 students enrolled at twenty-three campuses and a network of over 3.7 million living alumni, the CSU is the largest public four-year institution of higher learning in the United States. It is an economic engine for California and the nation; given its national and global impact, it is critical that the governing board of such an influential system performs as effectively as possible

Experience

- In August of 2018, I was appointed by California Governor Jerry Brown to be the Student Trustee for the California State University (CSU)
- My term lasted two years, where I was expected to represent the student voice on all issues, debates, and votes before the board

Analysis

CSU Trustee Appointment Process

- Trustees appointed by the governor and confirmed by the CA State Senate
- Senate confirmation hearings are often regarded as merely rubber stamping or highly political activity and are thus not considered to provide much scrutiny as a selection mechanism for trustees (Minor, 2008)

Committees and the Chair of the Board

- Scholars recommend the development of ad hoc committees as a key strategy for improving structure (Kezar, 2006)
- Experts recommend multiyear chair appointments to avoid rotating too quickly (Kezar, 2006)
- The BOT has no policy for multiyear appointments, though in practice chairs often serve for more than one year. The board does not utilize ad hoc committees

Trustee Education

- Building the capacity for learning differentiates effective from ineffective boards (Holland et al., 1989). Others have argued that a board's education is an ongoing process, not simply a "one and done" event (Kezar, 2006)
- CSU trustees participate in an initial orientation process. My first year on the board, the board participated in a mid-year leadership retreat, though it was only the third board retreat since 2005

Analysis Continued

Performance Reviews

- Performance reviews are indicators of board effectiveness (Cornforth, 2001)
- Though the BOT does not review its own performance, it conducts regularly reviews campus presidents

Stakeholder Input

- Employee engagement can help an organization perform more effectively (Shaffer, 2009)
- The BOT engages with staff and faculty through employee unions and the Academic Senate, while it also interacts with students through the Cal State Student Association

Conclusion

The CSU Board of Trustees performs outstandingly well in many areas identified by the scholars as practices of effective boards. Moreover, in places where the board needs improvement, it does not fall short by too great a margin and only requires simple policy fixes, while the rest are out of the university's control.

Full Reference List

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vFNUOV3XmNrbZaMlrWhXIXL4z8kFcZOlJWRSq9_iadA/edit?usp=sharing