

## BOARD GOVERNANCE

March 2, 1976

There is no one model or plan that can be considered ideal for the governance of Universities in general. Study and planning is going on throughout the country in order to develop a form of Board organization and structure that seems best in tune with the changing demands of society with particular emphasis on the demands on Universities for such things as an increased accountability. In the present status of societal and University changes, it seems that each University must develop a plan that relates to its own needs, constraints and resources.

In attempting to develop the best plan for a particular University, it is not only necessary to look at the needs, problems and constraints on the University but also it is necessary to look at the constituency of the Board itself. The interest, commitment and capabilities of the Board along with the time that it can give to the governing process are important considerations.

The demand for greater accountability on the part of Governing Boards relates not only to fiscal affairs but also the effectiveness with which the University is meeting its goals and mission. A prelude to effective accountability on the part of Board members is an effective flow of information, plus time for planning and appraisal. Board members themselves have to determine the kind of informational flow that is desired as a basis for making intelligent decisions, the amount of time that they are able to give to study, visitation, conferences and meetings. The pressure for a greater degree of accountability on the part of Governing Boards carries with it a demand for more time that is closely related to whatever plan may be set up for Board orientation and continuing in-service training. The development of such a plan requires certain specific steps such as:

1. Identify time constraints on part of Board members.
2. Review the Board organization in terms of its effect on in-service training and orientation.
3. Set up a plan for informational flow and two-way channels of communication.
4. Identify time for planning and appraisal process.
5. Consider the feasibility of visitation programs within and outside the University.
6. Review attendance at state, regional and national meetings.
7. Explore feasibility of conferences with key administrators, faculty, staff, students and community leaders.
8. Supply special reference materials designed to keep Board members informed concerning national problems, innovations and trends.

To state the matter simply, any plan of University Governance relates to the commitment, desires and available time of Board members to engage effectively in the Governing Process. Such a plan of Governance also relates to the existing relationships between the Board, the President and his administrative staff. The Board with the President must develop guidelines designed to produce a high degree of understanding concerning the respective roles of Board and administration in the decision making process. This will of necessity be an evolving process with a new administration as the Board and administration develop increasing confidence in each other and understanding of acceptable styles of operation. The Board must be deeply involved in determining the kinds of information and activities that will make it possible for them to perform the Governing process most effectively in order to see that the University is fulfilling its mission within the framework of good business management and fiscal responsibility.