

Good governance calls on us to develop the capacity of the State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) to improve both our personal and collective contributions to fulfill the fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and obedience. Towards this end, and as outlined in SBHE policy 302.5, the Governance Committee will conduct regular board self-assessments. The assessments, both board and individual, are designed to strengthen board culture, develop strategies for improved performance, increase effectiveness, create a vehicle for feedback, and address concerns.

The information below serves as an interview protocol to collect information regarding the perceptions of individual board members regarding the work of the Board and to note areas for strengths as well as areas for continuous improvement.

*I would like to thank you for taking time to speak with me regarding the performance of the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education. The purpose of our conversation is to strengthen board culture, develop strategies for improved performance, increase effectiveness, provide board members with a formal opportunity to provide feedback regarding the work of the board, and address any concerns. Our conversation today will last approximately **one hour** during which I will be asking you about your perceptions on how Board practices align with policy, the Board's relationship with the Chancellor, meeting effectiveness, communication, and overall perceptions regarding significant accomplishments and opportunities. Following conversations with each Board member, answers will be compiled. The SBHE Governance Committee will receive an aggregate for discussion and consideration. The Governance Committee will identify next steps prior to sharing with the full Board.*

*Before we begin, do you have any questions?*

### **Policy**

*This first section addresses the alignment of policy and practice. For each statement, please indicate how well you believe the board is doing in each area, provide examples of the statement in action, and if possible, suggestions for improvement.*

- ❖ The Board has a full and shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the SBHE as stated in policy.
- ❖ The SBHE meets its legal responsibilities as stated in constitutional and statutory authority.
- ❖ Board members understand the mission and vision of the NDUS (SBHE Policy 100.4)
- ❖ Board members understand the beliefs and core values of the SBHE (SBHE Policy 100.5)
- ❖ The SBHE has clear goals.
- ❖ The SBHE regularly evaluates its bylaws and policies.
- ❖ The SBHE reviews the strategic plan regularly to discuss the progress of the system toward fulfillment of the plan.

- ❖ Board leadership effectively perform their roles.

### **Relationship with the Chancellor**

*Thank you. The next couple of questions address the Board's relationship with the Chancellor. According to AGB, the most fundamental element of achieving a higher level of board performance centers around a strong working relationship between the board and the CEO. Strategic governance is about the board as a "thought partner" with the chief executive. With that framework in mind, please comment on the following.*

- ❖ Would you describe the relationship between the SBHE and the Chancellor as a strong partnership? Please explain.
- ❖ Has the Board agreed on the goals and priorities for the Chancellor to achieve? If so, describe when and how this happens. If not, how would you envision this process?
- ❖ Do you believe the policy and procedure for assessing the Chancellor is understood by all Board members? Why or why not?
- ❖ What ideas might you offer for improved SBHE operations, effectiveness, communication, and relationship with Chancellor?

### **Meeting/Process Effectiveness**

*Thank you for your feedback. I would now like to focus our conversation on meeting effectiveness. Please share with me your reaction to the following statements – and again, make comment where you see opportunities and specific suggestions for improvement.*

- ❖ Board meetings have a good balance of information sharing, discussion, and decision making.
- ❖ The Board's decision making processes are effective.
- ❖ Board members avoid representing particular campuses or constituencies when deliberating policy or actions.
- ❖ The Board advocates for all institutions and the system.
- ❖ The Board receives the appropriate amount of financial information to carry out its fiduciary responsibilities.
- ❖ Board meeting materials are at the appropriate level of detail to enable the Board to conduct its business.
- ❖ The committee structure is effective.

- ❖ The meeting schedule is effective.

### **Communication**

*I appreciate your comments regarding board meetings. I would now like to discuss communication. Like the set of questions we just discussed, please share with me your reaction to the following statements – and again, make comment where you see opportunities and specific suggestions for improvement.*

- ❖ Board members effectively represent the SBHE to the community.
- ❖ The SBHE collectively demonstrates strong problem-solving skills.
- ❖ Conflict on the Board is managed productively.
- ❖ The quality of communication among Board members is high.
- ❖ The current time demand for SBHE responsibilities is appropriate.

*My final set of questions are focused on your reflections on the effectiveness of the SBHE during the past year.*

- ❖ Please list identify any significant accomplishments made by the SBHE during the past year.
- ❖ What future challenges or new issues do you believe the SBHE should address.
- ❖ In your view, if there were important matters the SBHE failed to address during this past year, please identify and explain.

*Before we conclude this interview, is there something about your experience as a member of the SBHE that we have not yet had a chance to discuss?*