2018-2019 Board Self Monitoring Report
Submitted by Michelle Appel, AIR President
May 28, 2019

The report that follows is being submitted in compliance with GP-XIII Self Monitoring. This report reflects information from: approved minutes; an end-of-year Board survey; personal observations; and Board conversations. The survey and its results are included as an appendix to this report.

Section 1: 2018-19 Board Accomplishments

At the June 1, 2018 meeting of the Board, I set out my priorities for the year: ethics (particularly addressing the ethics related to analytics), Board expectations and structure (including an associated handbook), and completion of the Ends policy revision. Each of these was addressed during the year, though not all were completed or addressed as initially envisioned. A Board Handbook committee was formed and then dismissed after discussion with Miriam Carver, the policy governance consultant. An Ethics Workgroup made considerable progress but its work will be finalized during summer 2019.

During this year, the Board (in chronological order):

- Changed the language in the Nominations and Elections Committee charge to include specific qualities desired in candidates for the Board and for the Nominations and Elections Committee;
- Concluded the review of the 2017-18 Listening Session Report and shared it with the membership;
- Identified themes for the IR Future Committee to pursue over the year: professional development; working across campus (including with IT): coaching on data use; data stories and communications; and knowledge and skills;
- Updated the Association's Ends Policy;
- Convened a working group of past presidents and Board members to discuss the Board structure and potential enhancements, discussed their recommendations, and incorporated them into relevant policies and practices;
- Approved a bylaws change in the membership cycle from a calendar year cycle to an "anniversary" year which will be voted on by the membership at the Annual Business Meeting;
- Created an ad hoc committee to explore updates to the Code of Ethics;
- Began exploration of a change to an organizational membership which would promote wider engagement with AIR across an institution;

- Changed the Financial Conditions and Activities policy to require that net assets not fall below six months of operating expenses, more closely aligning with other higher education associations;
- Codified a structure for Board self-evaluation that will document a given board's performance as well as promote longer term institutional memory (this report is a direct result of that change);
- Provided feedback and support for the Executive Office's strategic planning initiatives;
- Identified opportunities to connect with members at the Forum in order to get feedback and to promote leadership opportunities;
- Identified a new policy governance consultant to replace Miriam Carver who has retired;
- Worked with the Executive Office to create a combined Annual Report that reflects the work of the whole Association, regardless of whether it was done by the Board or the Executive Office;
- Developed a vision statement for the Association that can be used in strategic planning and promotional efforts; and
- Included the use of an annual calendar, maintained by the President and Secretary, in the Agenda Planning policy.

When asked to reflect, Board members identified two items as of particular import this year - the Statement of Ethical Principles and the Ends revision. The ethical principles separate the foundational values related to our work from the elements of best professional practice. They provide a clear and concise direction related to working with higher education data and can be an example for others in related fields. These will be presented at the Forum and then a final version will be approved during the summer. The remaining items related from the current Code of Ethics and Professional Practice that relate to professional practice will be integrated into materials maintained by the Executive Office. The new Ends statement is more inclusive (reflecting the need to support IR professionals as well as those doing similar work in offices without the IR title). This was the culmination of work started by previous Boards and included input from the Executive Office and lessons learned from the Listening Sessions conducted last year. The Executive Office is using this Ends statement as the foundation for the strategic planning process and has translated it into a mission statement and mission objectives for use on the website and promotional materials.

The Board had two areas where some "churn" appeared, particularly in the second half of the year - cost of governance (to be addressed in the next section) and policy governance training. Though the Governance Training and Orientation committee identified and the Board approved a new consultant in January, there were significant delays in finalizing the contract and scheduling training. The Board shifted its plan for governance training over the course of the year (initially, it was to occur at the Forum but that later

proved unworkable). The Board also had difficulty coming to agreement on the nature of the agreement with the new consultant, exploring options for more intense coaching that were ultimately deemed too expensive. This speaks to what I perceive as a lack of consensus around the purpose of the policy governance consultant and the Association's level of maturity with regard to the policy governance style of operating. This is an area for exploration in the coming year as the new consultant relationship begins.

Section 2: Cost of Governance

As noted earlier, the Board had some churn over the cost of governance, and particularly the cost of meetings, during the year. At the midpoint, we expected to exceed our budget of $100,000 due to a convening for ethics related work, and thus allotted an additional $30,000 to cover potential expenses. We now anticipate ending the year well within the $130,000 budget but likely somewhat above the original $100,000 budget. These adjustments to the budget were made within the appropriate policy governance processes. However, the Ethics Workgroup did not contact the treasurer when it first proposed the convening, instead it was a part of the committee charge and the Board never approved the expense for it. Ultimately the convening was deemed not necessary and was not held.

This year's Financial Planning monitoring report included information on the cost of governance, not just in terms of the Board's budget but also in terms of staff hours (and the corresponding dollar value). This was a matter of conversation during the review of that monitoring report and brought further attention to the costs the Association incurs related to the Board.

Two underlying issues seemed salient to me: 1) the Board does not seem to have an explicit, shared understanding of what is reasonable with regard to Board related expenses; and 2) the treasurer was not looped into conversations that happened regarding the finances of the Board. The first of these issues was addressed during the May Board meeting at the Forum. The Board agreed that the time spent together is worth a reasonable investment for food and lodging. Reasonable was defined as hotels similar in quality to those used for a Forum or other member event, shared meals with healthy options and provided in convenient locations during daytime meetings. The latter (communication with the Treasurer) is something the incoming President and new Treasurer will be working on in the coming year.

Section 3: Responsiveness to the Voice of the Members

This was the area the Board reported the least success with in the end-of-year survey. Though Listening Sessions had been conducted during the prior year and the

results reviewed, none were conducted this year. The following were Board activities meant to engage the membership:

- Held "office hours" during the 2018 Forum, though only a few members attended (the 2018 office hours were not well advertised) and will again, with better advertising, in 2019;
- Wrote monthly "Board Corner" articles for eAIR that communicated the Board's initiatives and activities;
- Asked the Executive Office to survey members regarding the vision statement (the results of this will be used in Board discussions to finalize the statement);
- Asked the Executive Office to schedule focus groups regarding organizational memberships; and
- Planned several sessions at the Forum to solicit feedback on the Statement of Ethical Principles and to engage members regarding leadership.

There had been some initial discussion around a convening in March to solicit feedback on both ethics and governance structure. However, this would only have included a small proportion of members (30 or so) and the expense did not seem justified as there were not major governance issues to be discussed and the ethics feedback could be gathered in another manner.

Listening to members and ensuring their voices are heard is the foundation of the Board's responsibilities. Board members are to act on behalf of all members, rather than based on their own opinions and perspectives. This flow of information from the members to the Board (rather than from the Board to the members) is vital and requires continuous attention and care. At its January and May face-to-face meetings, the Board discussed the struggle of engaging with members without any concrete tasks that are the purview of the Board. The Board should identify more intentional and systematic ways to embed member interaction into its standard practices. The Board and the Executive Office should work to develop ways to share information from members with each other.

Section 4: Adherence to Policy Regarding Board Relationship to the Executive Director

This area appeared to go relatively smoothly. As is always the case, new members had to learn to funnel requests through the CEO, but this was dealt with efficiently. The CEO agreed with this assessment.

Section 5: Adherence to Policy Regarding Governing Style

Board members reported feeling that all voices were heard in both the full Board meetings and committee meetings (about ¾ of respondents indicated we were "very

successful" on these items). Draft agendas were distributed in advance and modifications made when needed. A full quorum was reached for all meetings (and typically easily reached within minutes of the stated start time).

One potentially significant issue was the late consideration of the CEO's compensation. By policy, this should have happened during December. Instead, it was addressed during the January meeting. While this was in time for any salary adjustments, it should not have been delayed, particularly as a result of an oversight forgetfulness. The Secretary and President are working on a standard operating schedule that will highlight significant deadlines to avoid such mistakes in the future.

A second issue of concern related to the Governance Process, though not explicitly related to Governance Style, was communication with the Treasurer. There were several points throughout the year where the Treasurer was not brought into conversations in a timely fashion. While this was not intentional, it still impacted her ability to ensure that the board had sufficient information to make sound financial policies. The new President and new Treasurer should work to develop more intentional systems of communication.

Section 6: Practices that Worked and Suggestions for Improvement

Board members who responded to the end-of-year survey indicated that they felt the use of Google Docs for collaboration was helpful. Additionally they noted the face-to- face meetings, particularly collaboration on the Ends statement, was effective and that discussions around ethics were productive. Summarizing the voice of the Board prior to a decision or vote was also noted as helpful.

Areas for improvement noted in the survey involved time management and member engagement. Adjusting agendas to include time estimates, rearranging the order of items so that critical issues are discussed earlier (and thus can't get pushed to the end), and better use of teleconference features (raising hands, for example) were ideas for better management of the teleconference time. Another member suggested more face-to-face time (though the Board considered and dismissed that at its January meeting).

I relied heavily on the use of Google Docs and Google Forms to organize work and to get feedback. My sense was that, as with any group, not all Board members had the same level of comfort toward speaking during meetings - perhaps because a similar comment had already been made, perhaps because of concerns about time, or perhaps just because of personal preference. Regardless, on items for which I felt we needed to hear from every person (e.g., Ends, ethics, IR Future) I tried techniques that would ensure contribution across the Board. I utilized surveys to get a pulse ahead of meetings, hands on

"sticky note" assignments, and timed "around the table" comment periods. I think each of these was helpful and added variety in addition to getting more voices heard.

I agree with the survey respondents that time management during teleconferences was an issue. On at least two occasions we had to skip portions of the agenda because we spent too much time discussing a single topic. We tended to start teleconferences a bit late as we waited for everyone to connect and we occasionally had technical difficulties that stopped the meeting entirely. The teleconferences seem well suited for routine tasks - review of monitoring reports, approval of NEC items - and smaller committee groups, but less suited for more in depth conversation among all members around a more complex topic. This makes strategic use of face-to-face meetings more important.

Finally, the Board appreciated and utilized the Incidental Information reports that it received from the Executive Office, particularly information relating to presentations and meetings being attended. The Board expressed a desire for a similar document to share information on presentations and engagements in which Board members are involved.

End of Year Board Survey

Please reflect on what we have done as a Board this year as you answer the questions below.

1. **Generally speaking, how successful would you say we, as a full Board, were this year in accomplishing the following items:**
   Mark only one oval per row.

	Not at all successful	Somewhat successful	Very successful	No opinion/Decline to respond
Identifying areas that needed attention	◯	◯	◯	◯
Making meaningful changes for the Association	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ensuring all voices were heard	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ensuring member perspectives were represented	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using our face-to-face time effectively	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using our teleconference time effectively	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using email communication effectively	◯	◯	◯	◯

2. **How would you rate the committees you worked on for each of the following items**
   Mark only one oval per row.

	Not at all successful	Somewhat successful	Very successful	No opinion/Decline to respond
Accomplishing the charge given to the committee	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ensuring all voices were heard	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ensuring member perspectives were represented	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using teleconference time effectively	◯	◯	◯	◯
Using email effectively	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reporting back to the Board	◯	◯	◯	◯

3. **What one thing did the Board do this year that you are most proud of?**

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4. **What worked particularly well this year?**

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5. **What changes would you suggest to future Boards?**

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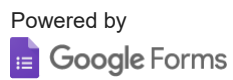
Summary of End of Year Board Survey		
	Mean	% Very Successful
Success as a Board in accomplishing:		
Identifying areas that needed attention	2.50	50%
Making meaningful changes for the Association	2.58	58%
Ensuring all voices were heard	2.75	75%
Ensuring member perspectives were represented	2.30	40%
Using face-to-face time effectively	2.58	75%
Using teleconference time effectively	2.33	42%
Using email communication effectively	2.80	80%
Success of Committees:		
Accomplishing committee charge	2.36	45%
Ensuring all voices were heard	2.80	80%
Ensuring member perspectives were represented	2.60	60%
Using teleconference time effectively	2.70	70%
Using email communication effectively	2.70	70%
Reporting back to the Board	2.75	75%
Note: all responses were on a 3 point scale where 3 was very successful.		