

2022-2023 AIR Board Self-Monitoring Report
Karen L. Webber
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Governance Process GP-XIV, Board Self-Monitoring, requires the AIR board of directors to monitor its performance for excellence in governance. The following report highlights board member activities conducted during performance year 2022-2023, and as such, complies with requirements noted in GP-XIV.

The policy requires the outgoing President to submit an annual report of engaged work activities to the incoming Vice President/President Elect. Report submission occurs prior to commencement of the annual business meeting. Required transition report ensures knowledge continuity in board leadership, operations, and governance. Knowledge continuity as required by GP-XIII addresses the following five report categories:

- Accomplishments
- Cost of Governance
- Membership Voice Responsiveness
- Board and Executive Director Relationship
- Adherence to Governance Style

I. Accomplishments

Continuing to uphold the successes established by previous Boards and BOD Presidents, members of the 2022-2023 Board took an intentional and focused review and assessment of high priority issues for the future of IR. Under the excellent leadership of Board member Laura Palucki Blake, the Future of IR Committee spent approximately four months exploring topics, reviewing relevant resources, and developing a graphically-illuminating way to identify and show the interconnections between issues that are important to the success of IR/IE professionals and the profession. This committee's activities assumed a conscious mindfulness of the revisions to the Global Ends Statement to emphasize the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion of all members and actions. Following their four-month review and draft of an image that visualized issues and their connections, the IR & The Future committee continued its work by articulating four critical issues that will be used to focus their work (demonstrating the value of IR/IR, promoting diversity, equity, & inclusion, amplifying student and institutional success, and cultivating leadership for the IR/IE profession). These four issues were reviewed by all Board members and following discussion, the Board voted to approve the critical issues as those of high priority for future Board discussions and possible activities implemented. As the Board continues its work on this important topic in the year ahead, it will be challenging but critical to keep a regular focus on what activities appropriately fit into areas of responsibility for the Board versus those for the Executive office as well as how/when/where the Board and the Association are implementing activities that relate to the future of IR/IE.

A second accomplishment relates to the completion of a multi-year conversation, debate, and ultimately membership vote related to the change the Board leader title from president to chair (also vice president to vice chair) and for chair successor to be voted from within the Board

rather than from the full AIR membership. Extended efforts were undertaken over the past three+ years to examine, critique, and refine the decision. Former colleagues including Heather Kelly and the Board Structure and Accountability Committee were key in maintaining this discussion throughout the review, seeing it to vote, and now in creating policy documents and plans for its implementation.

Additional accomplishments during the 2022-2023 year included:

- Completed successful Governance Policy training session in June and October 2022, receiving very high evaluation scores from participating Board members
- Successful completion of fiduciary responsibilities in overseeing and working with the ED on working toward organizational financial stability and strength (led by Board Treasurer, B. Hosch)
- Reviewed membership targets, engaged in full Board discussion on membership (Membership Committee, B. Hosch, chair)
- Board approved to plan to offer an institutional membership (beginning in 2024)
- Reviewed and updated of AIR awards (Awards Committee, M.Nesler, chair)
- Completion of five (5) listening sessions (SAIR, TENNAIR, PNAIR, NEAIR, NCAIR)
- Continued support to and for ED in transitions out of the Covid pandemic

II. Cost of Governance

Funding allotment for board operational expenses was \$130,000. Board operational expenses as noted in GP-XIII includes but not limited to training, audit reviews, membership engagement initiatives, and meeting costs.

Through fiscal prudence and because of the number of video-based meetings, actual board expenses for 2022-2023 were less than the identified allotment. Total spent (through May 2023) was approximately \$100,000. In addition to quarterly reporting, the treasurer provided regular updates on fiscal operations that required board awareness.

Although the total amount was not spent in 2022-2023, I recommend keeping the allotment at \$130,000 to ensure that additional training for policy governance or in-person BOD meetings can occur if needed.

III. Responsiveness to Membership Voice

Overall, the Board and AIR Executive staff remain interested in and responsive to engaging with AIR members and prospective members. During 2022-2023, the following Board activities were held to engage the membership:

- Board members conducted five (5) listening sessions at the following state and regional conferences: TENNAIR (August, 2022); SAIR (October 2022), NEAIR (2022), PNAIRP (January 2023), and NCAIR (2023). Attendees were generally positive and aware of AIR's activities and services and were positive. A few participants commented on the difficulty retaining or hiring new employees due to individuals' interest in remote work.

Listening sessions (and other informal conversations such as remote coffee chats) are a valuable way to relay information about IR and the IR profession with a variety of institution and organizational stakeholders. I recommend that listening sessions continue or other forms of proactive conversations with AIR members and affiliated members, with a stronger emphasis in engaging with international affiliates.

- Board members held “office hours”/personed a table at the 2022 Forum, with the primary goal to share information on how to nominate colleagues or themselves for the upcoming election, to learn about how to become involved as a volunteer and/or to simply say hello. The AIR Board table appeared to be quite successful, was a good way to encourage leadership and volunteer nominations, and I recommend this activity continue each year at The Forum. A similar table at the regional conferences could also be positive in offering visibility and providing information about the organization.
- I wrote the “Board Corner” articles for the quarterly eAIR that communicated the Board’s initiatives and activities; and
- In March 2023 the CEO/ED and BOD members received a letter from three AIR members regarding concerns related to the need for stronger efforts to include a diverse and inclusive body of members, especially in AIR volunteers and leaders. Following numerous discussions among Board leaders and the CEO/ED (hereon referred to as ED), a videoconference was held with the authors of the letter as well as a subsequent videoconference with a larger set of concerned AIR members. Additional activities and possible ‘town hall’ style meetings are currently being discussed. The letter of concern affirms AIR’s EO and Board of their commitment to diversity and inclusion and to remain consciously aware of and proactive in seeking to carry out the goals of keeping AIR diverse, inclusive, and with equitable goals. I believe that activities completed this year, particularly discussions in NEC, were mindful of the needs for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and I believe that Board leaders following me will remain vigilant in monitoring this issue. As is already underway, a review of NEC procedures and its constant communication with the full Board is important and I encourage all members of the Board and Executive Office to continue efforts already under way to assure AIR members and prospective members of the association’s dedication to addressing this important issue.

In concert with the Association’s dedication to ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion, I believe more proactive efforts would be helpful with specific groups, namely graduate students and international members. Graduate students remain an important group of members (and prospective members) who bring strength in scholarship-based inquiry and research methods which will continue to keep the IR profession perceived as valuable by campus peers. In addition, as work tasks related to IR and quality assurance continue to increase in all global regions of higher education, AIR has a particular opportunity to support current members as well as increase additional members. Especially as our world becomes increasingly globalized and when we know that the IR/IE function is growing in international institutions, it is essential that AIR reach out to international members more eagerly. The Board should consider the inclusion of international members as part of AIR leadership on committees and Board roles. While costs

for face-to-face Board meeting travel may be cost-prohibitive, perhaps there are ways to use videoconferencing or other remote communication. I realize this recommendation brings up a number of complex issues on how to include international members, yet I believe that if AIR calls itself an international organization, it should do more to include the international members.

I also recommend that Board members plan to attend state and regional meetings as often as possible. Affiliate organizations include important and valued colleagues, and Board members who attend affiliate meetings can utilize their attendance to carry out their role as ambassadors to provide information on AIR activities as well as encourage AIR engagement and membership.

IV. Board and Executive Director Relationship

From my vantage point, the relationship between the ED and Board members is positive and respectful. ED Keller remains extremely helpful and positive in all interactions. I have appreciated her patience with questions I have asked, at least some of which I suspect she receives with each new President/Board Chair cycle.

While in general, Board members appear to be positively engaged with the ED, in the early part of the Board year, I received a few comments from a couple BOD members who said they felt they had received negative feedback when they asked questions (e.g., on monitoring reports), so they subsequently chose to not ask questions. This was concerning to me, and I sought to encourage members to ask all questions, either in person or in written form. Over the course of the year, I believe all members became more comfortable with the policy governance process which may have alleviated some earlier questions. However, in general, the incoming President/Chair may wish to be mindful of questions that exist early in the Board year and how to find the balance between encouraging members to ask questions while also providing support for knowledge of policy governance nuance. Additional discussion about the PG process with an external consultant may help new board members feel more comfortable with the processes used to carry out AIR's Board governing schedule and process.

Along with a variety of information shared on the website (i.e., findings from AIR sponsored surveys, eAIR, Annual Report, etc.) and other regular information shared in Board meetings (i.e., incidental reports, AIR At-A-Glance, and verbal updates), the series of prescribed monitoring reports form a primary mechanism to gauge ED fulfilment of organizational goals.

At times, I believe I would have been better able to review some monitoring reports, particularly those related to membership and finance, if more trend data had been available. Examples include greater trend data (perhaps 5 years) in the number of members, Forum attendees, EO staff (FT vs. PT), annual revenues and expenses, and other relevant trend data that supports completion of goals. Under Policy Governance, Board members can discuss whether they have the data needed, but the current Board members tended to (in general) not to ask for more information. If additional questions remain after review of a monitoring report, I encourage future Board members to openly express their questions regarding additional data and to recognize that doing so does not, in and of itself, violate Policy Governance.

CEO/ED Keller chose to use Microsoft Teams as the platform to store and share BOD documents. Although it required a small learning curve to understand the organization of documents, it seemed to work fine for all storage and retrieval of BOD documents. In hindsight, it might have been helpful for me to provide a short tutorial with new Board members during their first or second meetings. To this end, the in-coming Board president may wish to spend a few minutes during the first one or two Board meetings to walk through the Teams folder access to ensure prompt and confident access to new Board members.

V. Adherence to Policy Governance Style

Completion of monthly evaluation reports were requested (via electronic survey) following each monthly Board meeting. Although the response rates were, on average, approximately 50%, Board members appear to feel satisfied with the preparation for, completion, and follow-up of BOD meetings. For example, from the March 2023 meeting, when asked to rate the overall effectiveness of the Board meeting, 83.3% of the respondents said “very good” and 16.7% said ‘good.’ When asked what went well during this meeting, one respondent said “we were very focused on the agenda, so we managed our time well overall.” Another said, ‘We were able to cover the agenda with plenty of time for meaningful discussion – this was an accomplishment!’

Based on evaluation responses, as well as a few in-person comments, the online question sheet available from the ED for monthly monitoring reports was seen by all as a good way to answer questions without taking time in the Board meeting. I appreciate that Christine’s comments in her monthly updates sometimes addressed some of the questions may have been mentioned in the ‘Question sheet.’ About mid-year, I made a concerted effort to move the ED updates earlier in the agenda to ensure that the ED was afforded ample time to share her activities and vision. I believe it gave more time for the ED to share plans related to major goals, and that in turn helped all members be more informed and possibly, with fewer questions. In the March 2023 evaluation, one respondent said that “hearing from Christine about finances always puts me at ease.”

Overall, my perception of Board member engagement during monthly Board meetings became more positive over the year. For about the first half of the year, there were very few questions or comments made. I began, and grew increasingly concerned, that members were unfamiliar enough with the policy governance structure to relevant formulate questions.

As a final point on the March 2023 agenda, specific discussion of board effectiveness revealed similar levels of overall positive perceptions and satisfaction with board events. However, during the discussion a member mentioned that expectations of Board members are clear, but operationalizing those expectations are not always equally clear. A few members mentioned (or nodded in agreement) that there were times when confusion about how closely BOD meetings must adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order or lack of clarity on nuances between means and ends may have contributed to hesitation to ask a question. Further discussion ensued and the reiteration that all questions are welcomed and encouraged, and that only through discussion can we all gain deeper insight into the nuances that will sharpen our understanding.

As I reflect on the year prior (from June 2022 through May 2023), I now more fully appreciate the structure of the Policy Governance document, and the wise insight that was embedded in the policies written by the original developers and subsequent Board leaders. Although current policy statements have evolved to a degree over the past decade, they reflect relevant organizational goals and they remain the primary mechanism that guides organizational operations. Collectively, the current monitoring reports provided over the past year, in my opinion, reflected reasonable interpretations of the policies and have included data that is reasonable for that interpretation. These are primary criteria from which the ED's annual performance is based, and this is a reasonable and relevant process for annual evaluation.

In addition to the review of the monitoring reports over the 2022-2023 period, I found data tables that appeared in the AIR At-A-Glance document to be helpful and informative, and I encourage the ED to consider the addition of more trend analyses as further evidence for ED completion of goals and tasks. In addition to descriptive trend tables, analysis of some topics such as membership and webinar participants (by the type or level of participant, number of years each has been a member, geographic location, differences in demographics between paid and unpaid educational training) could help determine who is using AIR services and how to market subsequent programs and services.

To go further in offering evidence of the relationship between Ends statements and activities completed, I also recommend consideration of a comprehensive map or matrix that allows Board members and all AIR community members to see how each program and activity relates to each Ends statement. While the matrix would include activities that may overlap across two or more goal areas, such a matrix would allow both Board members, EO staff and all AIR members to see precisely how and for which Ends efforts are focused. As a further benefit, such a mapping would allow members to see how current grant awards appropriately address Ends goals. Attached below is the start of such a matrix example. I applaud the EO's efforts and success in obtaining some large and relevant external funds from agencies such as the Gates Foundation. If or as that continues, it might be helpful to provide greater detail to AIR Board and all members on how the grant activities relate to Ends goals. This can help all members see the value in partnerships with such agencies as well as how they assist in achievement of organizational goals.

As a final reflection, I recognize that some lingering tensions exist related to the move to policy governance framework as the chosen tool for AIR's organizational management. As mentioned above, time was required to fully understand the PG approach (which was different from AIR's previous style of organizational management) and, after the past two years of BOD involvement, I more fully appreciate the efforts and care that were put into initial and subsequent documents for AIR governance. Extensive work by the ED and good working relationships between the ED and BOD members have enabled policy governance to be successful in general. I applaud the ED for dedicated and deep efforts to carry the organization forward in a positive and overall successful way.

However, since its inception approximately a decade ago, and although some statements have been revised over time, a comprehensive review of the policy governance statements has not occurred. As soon as the organization is perceived to be stable following the transitions of the

Covid pandemic, and in concert with goals affirmed in the IR & The Future Committee, I believe a comprehensive review of the organization's policy statements would be beneficial. This recommendation does not infer my suggestion to move away from policy governance; it simply suggests a comprehensive review to ensure the affirmation of AIR's global vision and the alignment between means and ends statements. Like all higher education organizations who engage in long-term strategic planning, AIR may benefit from a reflective review of its goals and consider when, how, and where specific strategies can help the organization move strongly into the future. Such a comprehensive review can affirm the alignment between means (ED-prescribed actions and activities) and ends (organizational outcomes), ever mindful of how members of IR/IE professionals can strongly and successfully contribute to the needs of the higher education sector.

Matrix to Align all AIR Activities to Relevant Ends Statements

2022 Activities* (or by Board Year)

	Global Mission: To empower individuals to use data, analytics, information, and evidence to make decisions that are effective, ethical, ...
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		Priority A: Educate IR, HE leaders, & professionals and organizations on the value of IR	Priority B: Empowers and supports HE professionals through:				Priority C: Provide opps. for the devel. of professional & interpersonal skills	Priority D: Promote the development of professional networks
			Iia: Contextualizing data across campus	Iib: Learning methods & tools of the profession	Iic: Evaluating effectiveness of institution	Iid: conducting research & scholarship		
Activity 1	X					X		
Activity 2		X				X		
Activity 3			X					
Activity 4						X	X	
etc.								

*Although all activities could be included in one comprehensive list, if desired, a similar matrix could be developed to show how each large grant received relates to each Ends statement.