2019-2020 Board Self Monitoring Report

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Perspectives in Review

Governance Process GP-XIII, Board Self-Monitoring, requires the AIR board of directors to monitor its performance for excellence in governance. The following report, which highlights board work activities conducted during performance year 2019 – 20, complies with requirements as noted in GP-XIII.

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:

1. Accomplishments
2. Cost of Governance
3. Membership Voice Responsiveness
4. Board and Executive Director Relationship
5. Governance Style

My leadership agenda established for the 2019 – 20 performance period centered on enhancing operational processes crucial to the five report categories. As such, the 2019 -20 board agenda items focused on mission critical initiatives below:

- Policy Governance Consultant Transition (Board Effectiveness)
- Improvements in Board Operations (Financial Reporting & Ad Hoc Committee Review)
- Chief Governance Office (CGO) Leadership Continuity
- Reconvening Membership Listening Sessions (Affiliate Organization)
- Board/Executive Office Collaborations (Strategic Planning/Membership Responsiveness)

Presented agenda represented a continuation of previous board initiatives with emphasis on operational agility for effectiveness and responsiveness to membership voice. Support documentation for the 2019-20 monitoring report includes approved minutes, monitoring reports, operational meetings, membership listening sessions, and governance policy revisions. In addition, documentation includes an end-of-year board survey.

Section 1: 2019 Board Accomplishments

Work activity for the 2019-20 report period resulted in the following accomplishments:

- Successful transition of new policy governance consultant
- Reconvened affiliate organization listening sessions
- Policy governance refresher (2.0) - Measuring Operational Effectiveness
- Improvements in Board Operations (Transparency: Cost of Governance)
- Restructure meeting agenda (Board Education/Development)
- Increased board accountability to the membership (Ad Hoc committee reviews)
- Established Board Committee for Accountability & Effectiveness
- Board/Executive Office Collaborations
    a. Peer organizational statements
    b. Membership Category Review
    c. COVID-19 Contingencies

<u>Context for Accomplishments</u>

Board accomplishments occurred despite two unique challenges, which affected planned work activities. I considered such challenges as either operational or external. Our first challenge was operational and occurred at the beginning of the report year. Specifically, this challenge involved board consensus on the focus of our training engagement with the new policy governance consultant. Varied perspectives existed regarding the costs of training needed to achieve board operational excellence under Policy Governance.

Board consensus occurred in June 2019. However, consensus achieved, coupled with consultant/board member scheduling conflicts, and site location logistics, resulted in rescheduling governance training during the first week in October 2019. Historically, required board governance training occurs shortly after the annual AIR forum.

This delay generated concern among members regarding the board's ability to achieve the articulated agenda. However, the October session proved beneficial to a common understanding of policy governance as an effective tool for operational excellence and membership accountability. The training session resulted in an inventory of [action] items for consideration and subsequent implementation. A significant portion of the January face-to-face [meeting] addressed action items implementation.

Of note, common perspectives acquired from the delayed orientation proved timely to the board's quest for agility in operational effectiveness during COVID-19. COVID 19 was the second challenge affecting board performance. The effects of this external calamity created a new normal for daily living and resulted in cancellation of the 2020 forum.

Through acquired insights, the board pivoted fiduciary oversight attention on the adequacy of policy governance requirements for continued financial sustainability. Within sustainability, the board demonstrated operational agility to seek alternative virtual venues for continuation of IR engagement, information sharing, networking, and professional development. Such efforts ensure the association's role as a beacon of light for relevancy in data informed decision- making within higher education.

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, actual board expenses for 2019-20 were less than the identified allotment. In addition to quarterly reporting, the treasurer provided monthly updates on fiscal operations that required board awareness.

Responsiveness to Membership Voice

The successful launching of our Ethics Statement coupled with regional affiliates listening sessions provided the board with confirmation regarding membership perspectives on the current condition and future of the IR profession. During the performance period, the board convened seven (7) regional and state affiliated group listening sessions.

Of note, were sessions convened with the Upper Midwest regional and Indiana State affiliated groups. Convened sessions reflected on areas of major concern to regional and state membership:

- Operationalizing concepts of data literacy and contextualization within institutional environments of "data democracy"
- Continuation of professional development pathways which are aligned with Terenzini's three tiered IR Organizational Intelligence Construct
- Leverage state/regional/national partnerships for enhanced IR professional development and increased visibility within higher education
- Implication of the AIR Statement of Ethical Principles on future challenges confronting the Institutional Research profession

Obtained results were instrumental in board adoption of specific language addressing the future of institutional research in higher education to be included in job descriptions as a critical mission requirement.   Another derivative was creation of the Board Structure for Accountability and Effectiveness committee, which addressed formulation of recommendations for continuity and accountability with implementation options.

Board Relationship to the Executive Director

The board's collaborative relationship to the executive director remains exceptional. This relationship proved beneficial to steering the association through uncharted waters during the COVID 19. The Executive Director is in agreement with this assessment.

Governance Style

83 percent of the current board members responded to the end of the year survey. The survey focused on the following operational categories:

Full Board

- Identifying areas that needed attention
- Making meaningful changes for the Association
- Ensuring all voices were heard
- Ensuring member perspectives were represented
- Effective use of face to face meetings
- Effective use of teleconference time schedule
- Effective use of email communications

Board Committees

- Accomplishment of committee charge
- Ensuring all voices are heard
- Ensuring member perspectives were represented
- Effective use of teleconference time
- Effective use of email communication
- Reporting committee results to the board

For overall board performance, 89 percent of responses for identified categories ranged from Somewhat successful to Very successful with the somewhat indicator predominant. Conversely, 80 percent of board committee responses ranged from Somewhat successful to Very successful with the Very successful indicator predominant.

The survey included open ended questions regarding items of significance, processes that worked well, and opportunities for improvement. Obtained responses reflect consistency with quantitative operational findings cited earlier. Survey results accompany this report.