GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE ASSESSMENT

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES'

COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE ASSESSMENT (CCA)

FIRST ASSESSMENT REPORT

GCC
GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Kulehon Kumunidát Guáhan
Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

This report was primarily prepared by Dr. Ray D. Somera, Chair of the Committee on College Assessment, GCC. Acknowledgement is given to Dr. Gina Charfauros, Assessment Program Specialist, for her valuable assistance in data collection and analysis. Comments and insights from Dr. John Rider, Vice President for Academic Affairs, substantively enriched the report. The thoughtful responses of all study participants are also acknowledged.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Guam Community College's Board of Trustees' Assessment Report* presents the results of a systematic process that attempted to gauge the effectiveness of board functioning among members of the board itself, as well as among other college stakeholders directly involved in board meetings and discussions. Two instruments, the Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (BSEQ) and the Governing Board Assessment Questionnaire (GBAQ) were utilized in a survey of perceptions among twenty (20) study participants. In addition, two structured focus group discussions (FGD) were held with the board members and the chief executive officer (CEO) to probe certain issues that dealt directly with board-CEO relations, board organization and dynamics, decision-making processes, trustee education and development, among other topics.

Survey and FGD results indicate that there exists a strong relationship built on mutual trust and respect between the board and the CEO. Among the board members themselves, the respect for the board chair's authority is also strong. Evidently, strength indicators such as members' interaction built on civility and personal demeanor that reflects the college's public image appear to validate these findings. Moreover, "outside voices" included in the survey lend credence to the board's efficient functioning in areas of information flow, both from the CEO to the board and the board chair to the members. There also exists a climate of dialogue that allows members the freedom to speak their minds on key issues. Yet, these very same strengths could also be the source of needed improvements in board functioning. The results likewise show that the board needs to work on improving its meeting procedures and processes. At the root of these improvements are two pressing issues that deserve utmost attention: (1) the board's

understanding of the difference between policy and operations; and (2) its commitment to undergo systematic assessment on a regular basis. The power of assessment to mobilize various voices should help keep the board continuously engaged in a meaningful conversation with all concerned stakeholders.

While the accomplishments identified by the board and the "outside voices" were in themselves praiseworthy, they nonetheless appear broad, uneven and fragmented. As such, they do not seem to be anchored upon specific goals and objectives that the board has set for itself as an organized body. Since the primary purpose of assessment is the measurement of success against set goals and outcomes, clearly, the board has to exert greater and coordinated effort in meeting this important criterion for sound assessment. What the board needs to do is to muster its wealth of resources to chart a clear direction for itself in terms of agenda-setting; one that should include short-term, mid-term and long-term goals. Indeed, this should pave the way for a more effective and efficient board functioning that is solidly grounded on results and outcomes.

Several recommendations given at the end of the report address the strengths in board functioning, as well as areas needing work and improvement.

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A REPORT ON GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S
BOARD OF TRUSTEES' ASSESSMENT

I. *Rationale and background*

On its last visit to Guam Community College (GCC) in March 2000, the Western Association of School and College's (WASC) accreditation team recommended that the GCC "Board of Trustees adopt a formal evaluation process." The report further added that "after discussions on this topic with members of the Board of Trustees, it is fully recognized that they do not yet have such a process in place" (Standard 8, Governance and Administration, WASC Report 2000, p. 10). In the succeeding year, several attempts by the board to do a self-evaluation met little success because they were not integrated with a broader assessment process.

Several developments in the past two years have served to rectify this situation. In Fall 2000, a campus-wide, comprehensive assessment initiative was launched at the college under the leadership of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. A comprehensive assessment plan for GCC's academic programs, student services, and administrative units saw its initial implementation that same semester. A key administrator was given primary responsibility to coordinate all assessment efforts at the college. Soon thereafter, a year-long workshop training agenda on assessment methods, tools, and perspectives for faculty, staff and other college constituents got underway.

The college's chief executive officer (CEO) set an example to the college community by being the first to undergo campus-wide assessment in May-June 2001. At its August 2002 meeting, the Board of Trustees adopted **Policy 306**, aptly titled *Comprehensive Assessment of Instructional Programs, Student Services, Administrative Units and the Board of Trustees,*

superseding an outdated Policy 305 which focused on a five-year cycle for program review. To date, the GCC assessment process is firmly in place, with procedures, protocols and templates developed to assist faculty, staff and administrators in completing their assessment requirements efficiently and effectively. It is anticipated that the institutionalization of GCC's assessment initiative will generate regularized and systematic data-gathering that will support the college's **institutional planning** processes.

This BOT assessment report presents the results of a systematic assessment process that attempted to gauge the effectiveness of board functioning among members of the Board itself, as well as among other college stakeholders directly involved in board meetings and discussions. Data collection for this assessment study occurred from September to December 2002.

II. *Objectives and methodology*

At the completion of the BOT assessment process, it is expected that board members, along with other key players in board activities, should have:

(1) identified areas of strength in board functioning that need reinforcement as well as areas of weakness that may need work and improvement;

(2) a better understanding of expectations from themselves and others about what it takes to be an effective and efficient board; and

(3) a summary of their accomplishments or activities which has given the college a meaningful presence in the community.

Following systematic and consistent procedures, the BOT assessment process was set up in several stages, as follows:

(a) an assessment plan was prepared by the Committee on College Assessment and was presented to the Board for comments and suggestions;

(b) the Board discussed and approved the plan at one of its bi-monthly meetings on October 2, 2002;

(c) a seven-page survey instrument, the **Governing Board Assessment Questionnaire** (hereafter referred to as **GBAQ**), was administered to the members of the board, as well as key players (i.e., attendees) at board meetings;

(d) a self-assessment questionnaire, **Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire** (hereafter referred to as **BSEQ**) was completed by board members only;

(e) two (2) board retreats, lasting about an hour each, were set up as focus group discussions (FGD) between the board and the CEO in order to identify and discuss areas to strengthen their partnership. A series of questions guided these focus group discussions between the board and the CEO.

As a slightly-modified version of the Assessment Questionnaire Model (courtesy of Edmonds Community College, Washington), the 39-item GBAQ survey instrument was utilized to gather perceptions on board functioning and effectiveness. Utilizing purposive sampling design, data was gathered from members of the Board of Trustees, as well as key players (e.g. GCC president, administrators, external agency representatives, etc.) who regularly participated in board activities. This latter group comprised the "outside voices" crucial to a better understanding of the board's effectiveness as the college's governing body. To complement the aforementioned survey instrument, the BSEQ was also administered to board members only. In addition, the focus group discussions were designed to probe certain issues that deal with policies and standards for performance at a

deeper level. In this report, the GBAQ and BSEQ instruments are included as Appendix A and B, respectively. Respondents' feedback on the three open-ended questions are in Appendix C. Guide questions for the focus group discussions (FGD1 & FGD2) are contained in Appendix C while the transcriptions are in Appendix D.

Survey data was analyzed using routines in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software while content analysis was utilized to render the qualitative data meaningful. In this case, the qualitative component of the survey (generated from the responses to the open-ended questions, as well as the focus group discussion results) was used to validate the quantitative data generated in the GBAQ and BSEQ surveys. In an effort to make the results of this assessment study practical, informative and useful, the section that follows attempts to integrate both quantitative and qualitative components of the study.

III. *Results and Discussion*

Although thirty one (31) respondents were asked to participate in the two aforementioned surveys, only twenty (20) took active interest by returning completed questionnaires. This special population included members of the GCC Board of Trustees, as well as the other key players in board meetings and activities (e.g. administrators, external agency representative, etc.). For the GBAQ instrument, 14 out of 22 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 64%. The BSEQ instrument, on the other hand, yielded 6 questionnaires (out of 9) for a response rate of 67%. Total response rate averaged about 65%. Table 1 and Table 2 below portray the socio-demographic profile of the BSEQ and GBAQ respondents, respectively:

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of BSEQ respondents (N=6)

	Frequency	**Percent**
Sex		
Female	2	33.3
Male	4	66.7
Respondent type		
Voting member	6	100.0
Non-voting member	0	0
Length of service with current Board of Trustees		
Less than one year	2	33.3
1-3 yrs.	2	33.3
4-6 yrs.	2	33.3
7-9 yrs.	0	0
10 or more yrs.	0	0
Number of terms served in the Board of Trustees		
Less than one term	4	66.7
One term	0	0
Two terms	2	33.3
Three or more terms	0	0
Legally appointed/elected to their positions on the board		
Yes	6	100.0
No	0	0
Legal resident of the precinct or district he/she represents		
Yes	6	100.0
No	0	0
Represent diverse backgrounds, experience, interests, gender, ethnicity, and areas of the district		
Yes	6	100.00
No	0	0

Table 2
Profile of GBAQ Respondents by Sex, Respondent Type, and Length of Participation (N=14)

	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Female	4	28.6
Male	9	64.3
Not indicated	1	7.1
Respondent Type		
Board of Trustees Member (including voting/non-voting)	4	28.6
Administrator	9	64.3
Guest	0	0
Not indicated	1	7.1
Length of participation in board meetings/activities		
Less than one year	3	21.4
1-3 yrs.	5	35.7
4-6 yrs.	4	28.6
7-9 yrs.	0	0
10 or more yrs.	2	14.3

The two tables presented above reflect the socio-demographic characteristics of the twenty (20) respondents that took active part in the BSEQ and GBAQ surveys. The BOT members who completed the BSEQ survey were represented by two females (33.3%) and four males (66.7%) while the GBAQ respondents comprised of four females (28.6%) and nine males (64.3%). One respondent chose not to disclose this requested gender information.

With regard to respondent type, all BOT member-respondents (n=6) in BSEQ were voting members. In GBAQ, four board members (28.6%) and nine administrators (64.3%) completed the survey. One respondent failed to indicate any identifier. Insofar as length of service is concerned, the present composition of the board includes a broad range of service

experience among the members. While two respondents (33.3%) indicated less than one year of service, another two (33.3%) indicated 1-3 years' service as a board member. The wealth of board experience --spanning 4 to 6 years-- is shared by the remaining two respondents (33.3%). Because of the participation of administrators and board members themselves in GBAQ, the indicated length of experience ranged from less than a year of participation to about a decade or more of active involvement in board activities. While three respondents (21.4%) indicated a brief experience of less than a year, five of them (35.7%) have had 1-3 years of participation. Another four respondents (28.6%) claimed participation in board meetings and activities for 4-6 years now. Finally, two respondents (14.3%) indicated the longest involvement in board affairs, having been involved in 10 or more years with board meetings and other activities.

Based on the BSEQ data, the following additional information completes the profile of the six BOT members who took active part in the survey:

(1) two board members have served two terms of office while four of them have served less than one term;

(2) they were all legally appointed/elected to their positions on the board;

(3) they are all legal residents of the precinct or district they represent; and

(4) they represent diverse backgrounds, experience, interests, gender, ethnicity and areas of the district.

The following table (on the next page, p. 8) reports the BSEQ respondents' modal responses, mean and standard deviation on five thematic categories listed in the questionnaire. These categories refer to BOT members' personal conduct, interaction

Table 3

BSEQ Respondents' MODAL RESPONSES, MEAN and STANDARD DEVIATION on Five Thematic Categories (N=6)

	MODE, or the most frequently occurring value (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Frequently, 5=Always)	**MEAN**, or the *average* of the value in all responses (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Frequently, 5=Always)	**STANDARD DEVIATION**, or the measure of how widely values are dispersed from the *mean* or the *average* value.
PERSONAL CONDUCT			
Board members respect the power of the chair to speak for the board as a whole.	5	5.00	.00000
Board members treat each other with courtesy.	5	4.83	.4082
Members of the board are always conscious that their demeanor is part of the college's public image.	5	4.83	.4082
BOARD MEETINGS, INTERACTION AND DYNAMICS			
Board meetings begin on time.	4	4.17	.4082
The collective demeanor of the board is poised and professional.	5	4.67	.5164
Board members ask questions relevant to the item(s) under discussion.	4	4.33	.5164
The board welcomes participation by members of the community at appropriate times designated on the agenda.	5	4.67	.5164
All board members attend board meetings.	4	3.83	.7528
Board members are able to disagree without being disagreeable.	4	4.17	.7528
BOARD/CEO RELATIONS			
There is a high level of trust and respect between the board and the president.	5	4.83	.4082
The president follows the rule of "no-surprises" by informing board members as soon as possible about important matters concerning the college, its students and its employees.	4	4.33	.5164

The board places clear limits on the authority of the president regarding decision-making powers it wishes to retain for itself.	4	4.33	.5164
The president keeps the members of the board well informed.	4	4.50	.5477
The board delegates administrative matters to the president and refrains from micromanaging the college.	4	4.50	.5477
EVALUATION:			
The board specifies its expectations for presidential performance in writing.	4	4.50	.5477
The board formally evaluates the president's performance at least once every year.	4	4.50	.5477
The board develops annual goals for the college and uses them as the basis for presidential evaluation.	5	4.33	.8165
The board evaluates its own performance at least once every year.	3	3.83	.9832
BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:			
The board plans with the president how to best develop and maintain relationships with local, state, and federal legislators for the benefit of the college.	4	4.17	.4082
The board focuses on ends in making policy and leaves the implementation to the president.	5	4.67	.5164
The board consistently follows its own board ethics policy.	4	4.50	.5477
The board is actively involved in the long-term planning process of the college.	4	4.50	.5477
The board formally orients new members as soon as possible after they have been sworn in as trustees.	4	4.00	.6325
The board conducts periodic reviews of its own policies.	4	3.83	.7528

and dynamics in board meetings, board/CEO relations, board responsibilities and evaluation.

It is apparent from the results that all board members unanimously agree that they perceive one another as beyond reproach when personal conduct is the issue. In one voice,

they indicated that they treat each other with courtesy (mean 4.83, s.d. .4082) and that they are always conscious that their demeanor is part of the college's public image (mean 4.83, s.d. .4082). Most important of all, the power of the chair to speak for the board as a body is respected by one and all (mean 5.0). Likewise, the interaction and dynamics of board meetings was rated highly by all respondents in terms of punctuality of board meetings (mean 4.17, s.d. .4082); collective, professional demeanor (mean 4.67, s.d. .5164); receptivity to discussion (mean 4.67, s.d. .5164); openness to the public (mean 4.67, s.d. .5164); and atmosphere of dialogue (mean 4.17, s.d. .7527). Full board attendance in meetings however is one area needing improvement (mean 3.83, s.d. .7527).

Overall, the mean scores for all variables relating to Board/CEO relations are consistently high. The standard deviation ranging from .4082 to .5477 for 5 items under this category points to the high level of trust and respect between the board and the president (mean 4.83, s.d. .4082); the "no-surprise" flow of information from the president to the board (mean 4.33, s.d. .5164); the board's clear limits on the authority of the president regarding decision-making powers (mean 4.33, s.d. .5164); the board's perception of being well-informed by the president (mean 4.50, s.d. .5477); and the board's acknowledgment of the president's administrative authority, thus veering away from micromanaging the college (mean 4.5, s.d. .5477).

With regard to assessment and evaluation, it is clear that the board recognizes its shortcomings in this area, as evidenced by the low mean (3.83) and relatively high standard deviation (.9832) of the statement, "The board evaluates its own performance at least once every year". They do recognize this as a responsibility however, and the board's need to improve in this area becomes imperative when its members rated this statement equally low,

"The board conducts periodic reviews of its policies" (mean 3.83, s.d. 7528). Quite expectedly, the board's lack of a structured assessment process in place seemed logical in light of the board's fair rating of this statement, "The board develops annual goals for the college and uses them as the basis for presidential evaluation" (mean 4.83, s.d. .8165). Consistent with these findings, two variables that dealt with how "the board specifies its expectations for presidential performance in writing" and "the board formally evaluates the president's performance at least once every year" were rated equally (mean 4.5, s.d. .5477) by the group. Based on these results, it is imperative that the board needs to muster its resources to engage in an annual, systematic assessment process that would consider all the aforementioned variables. The board's active participation in the college assessment process will contribute significantly to institutional efforts to comply with the new WASC standards.

With regard to board responsibilities, the members appear to agree most on its focus on policy-making and leaving "the implementation to the president" (mean 4.67, s.d. .5164). Consistent with its high regard for personal demeanor in an earlier variable, the members as a group remain bound to its own board ethics policy (mean 4.5, s.d. .5477). They also take their roles seriously as being engaged in the long-term planning process of the college (mean 4.5, s.d. .5477). They rated themselves fairly on two other variables: planning with the president how to bring about legislative support for the college's benefit (mean 4.17, s.d. .4082) and providing formal orientation to newly-sworn-in trustees (mean 4.0, s.d. .6325).

Table 4 below presents GBAQ respondent's perceptions on 39 variables that cover five thematic categories: interaction and dynamics in board meetings, relationship between the president and the board, responsibilities of the body, personal demeanor and self-evaluation.

Table 4

GBAQ Respondents' MODAL RESPONSES, MEAN, and STANDARD DEVIATION on Five Thematic Categories (N=20)

	MODE, or the most frequently occurring value (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=No opinion, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree)	**MEAN**, or the *average* of the value in all responses (on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=No opinion, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree)	**STANDARD DEVIATION**, or the measure of how widely values are dispersed from the *mean* or the *average* value.
BOARD MEETINGS: INTERACTION AND DYNAMICS			
The leadership of this board typically goes out of its way to make sure that all members have the same information on important issues.	4	4.36	.4972
I am able to speak my mind on key issues without fear that I will be ostracized by some members of this board.	4	4.00	.6794
The number and frequency of board meetings allow enough time for responsible discussion and resolution of key issues.	4	4.14	.7703
Board members honor divergent opinions without being intimidated by them.	4	3.93	.8287
Orientation programs for new board members specifically include a segment about the organization's history and traditions.	4	3.64	.8419
I have been present in board meetings where discussions of the history and mission of the college were key factors in reaching a conclusion on a problem.	4	3.43	.8516
There is a climate of mutual trust and support between board members.	4	4.00	.8771
Our board meetings tend to focus more on current concerns than on preparing for the future.	4	3.29	.91387
At our board meetings, there is as much dialogue among members as there is between members and administrators.	4	3.93	.9169

When a new member joins this board, someone serves as a mentor to help this person learn the ropes.	3	3.14	.9493
The board has an adequate process for the study of issues that will receive board action.	4	3.76	1.051
The board rotates leadership in key board offices.	3	3.50	1.092
The board has a satisfactory means of communicating its membership needs to the authorities responsible for trustee selection.	4	3.79	1.121
In discussing key issues, it is not unusual for board members to talk about what this organization stands for and how that is related to the matter at hand.	4	3.50	1.160
Board members are prepared to participate responsibly in board meetings.	4	3.43	1.284
Board meetings are conducted in a fair, efficient, and business-like manner.	4	3.64	1.336
BOARD/CEO RELATIONS			
The chief executive keeps the board informed regarding issues confronting the college.	4	4.21	.4258
There is a climate of mutual trust and support between board and president.	4	4.14	.5345
The board expresses approval, publicly and privately, for the successes of the CEO and the institution.	4	4.14	.7703
The board delegates the authority the chief executive needs to administer the institution effectively.	4	3.93	.9169
The board is clear and consistent in its expectations of the performance of the chief executive officer.	4	3.86	1.027
BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:			
The board's key decisions are consistent with the mission of this organization.	4	4.15	.6887
The board ensures that the college keeps the community well informed of the college's activities, educational perspectives and plans.	4	3.79	.8018

The board periodically sets aside time to learn more about important issues facing the college.	4	3.79	.8018
This board makes explicit use of the long-range priorities of this organization in dealing with current issues.	4	3.71	.9139
The board takes regular steps to keep informed about important trends in the larger environment that might affect the college.	4	3.71	.9139
The board has established channels for access and exchange between campus and community so each can deal adequately with the needs, interests and viewpoints of the other.	4	3.50	.9405
The board has an established procedure to orient new members to the institution and to their duties and responsibilities.	4	3.71	.9945
This board allocates organizational funds for the purpose of board education and development.	4	3.93	.9972
The members of the board have sufficient knowledge of the institution and its programs and services to judge the value of new ideas and practices with reasonable confidence in their decisions.	4	3.64	1.008
The board sets clear organizational priorities for the year ahead.	2	3.29	1.069
This board reviews the college's mission annually.	2	3.29	1.069
Board members remember that their identity is with the community, not the staff.	5	3.86	1.099
This board engages in strategic planning and strategic issues management discussions.	2	3.21	1.122
The board keeps well informed about educational and manpower training needs of the community.	4	3.50	1.160
The board works actively to improve and support our college foundation.	4	3.29	1.267

The GCC Foundation Board is an effective vehicle for the contributions of funds to support activities, goals, plans, projects, and programs at the college.	3	2.71	1.267
The board has an agreed upon philosophy as to the distinction between policy and administration.	5	3.43	1.555
PERSONAL CONDUCT:			
The members of the board are sensitive to the need to avoid even the appearance of conflicts of interest.	4	3.79	.9749
EVALUATION:			
The board participates in a self-evaluation process on an annual basis.	4	3.36	1.008

It must be recalled that the GBAQ survey instrument was administered to two distinct samples: the BOT members themselves and other stakeholders who participate actively in board meetings and other activities. This latter group comprises the "outside voices" in assessment deemed crucial to a better understanding of board functions, particularly relating to effectiveness and efficiency. For a more meaningful appreciation of board dynamics, the discussion that follows must be placed in this important context. The above table thus reflects the wide-ranging, differential perceptions of these two special populations tapped for the survey.

In terms of dynamics and interaction in board meetings, the 16 identified variables in the questionnaire mostly received a modal response of "4," thus indicating agreement among the majority of the respondents. Two variables, however– i.e., mentorship for a new member and leadership rotation in key functions— received "3" as modal response, implying that certain members of the group expressed ambivalence or neutrality with these aforementioned items. Among the notable statements that received high mean scores included the following: leadership is proactive in ensuring that members get similar information on important issues

(mean 4.36, s.d. .4972); number and frequency of board meetings allow for responsible discussion and resolution of key issues (mean 4.14, s.d. .7703). The low mean score attributed to the statement, "Our board meetings tend to focus more on current concerns than on preparing for the future" (mean 3.29, s.d. .9138) validates the earlier BSEQ perception that agenda and goal-setting is one recognized area needing improvement in board functioning. Board development and trustee education is another area of growth, as evidenced by a low mean score of 3.14 (s.d. .9493).

The majority of the respondents also indicated agreement with all five variables (modal response = 4) that address the relationship that currently exists between the board and the president. There appears to be greater agreement among the respondents when it comes to the president's provision of relevant information to the board (mean 4.21, s.d. .4258), the climate of mutual trust and support between the president and the board (mean 4.14, s.d. .5345), board expression of approval for the president's and the college's successes (mean 4.14, s.d. .5345) but lesser consensus when it comes to the board's delegation of authority to the CEO to administer the institution effectively (mean 3.93, s.d. .9169) and the board's clarity and consistency in its expectations of the performance of the CEO (mean 3.86, s.d. 1.027). On the surface, the former finding seems contradictory with the BSEQ perception (among the BOT member-respondents) that the board has indicated disapproval toward micromanagement, yet it must be re-emphasized that the GBAQ survey included "other people looking in" into board functioning. The *differential consensus* by the two groups of respondents (BOT members themselves and the "outside voices") on the delineation of **policy versus operations** thus necessitates the need for greater discussion and dialogue among the parties involved in trustee affairs. This becomes even more imperative in light of

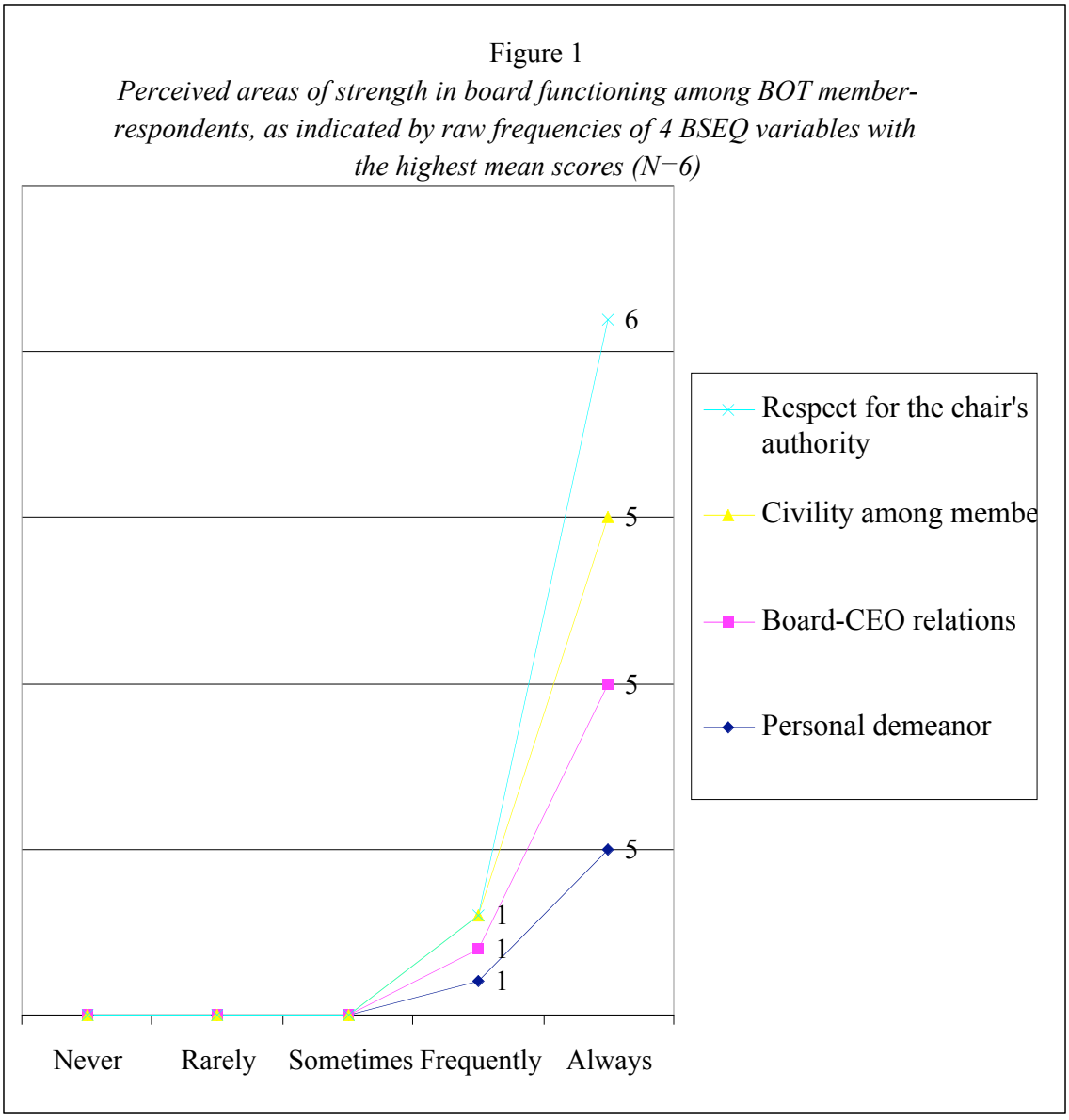
the modal response of "5" for the statement, "the board has an agreed upon philosophy as to the distinction between policy and administration," which nonetheless garnered a mean of 3.43. A noteworthy observation, however, is the relatively wide range of differential opinions among the GBAQ respondents, as evidenced by a standard deviation of 1.555. This drives home the point even more: an area needing improvement in board functioning is the resoluteness of the board itself to focus on its policy-making, rather than operational authority.

The theme of board responsibility (with 17 variables under this category) garnered the widest range of differential opinions among the 20 GBAQ respondents which included 6 BOT members and 14 administrators. Of the 17 items under this topic, a modal response of "5" (strongly agree) was seen in two variables "4" (agree) in 11 variables, "3" (no opinion) for one variable, and "2" (disagree) for the three remaining variables. Interestingly, those variables that received a modal response of "2" seem to validate earlier findings on the issue of board assessment. These responses seem to highlight the need for greater focus on the part of the board regarding the following areas of growth: the board's organizational priorities for the year ahead (mean 3.29, s.d. 1.069), the board's review of the college's mission annually" (mean 3.29, s.d. 1.069) and the board's engagement in strategic planning and strategic issues management discussions (mean 3.21, s.d. 1.122). Quite possibly, this is the reason why GBAQ respondents have little agreement on the statement, "the board participates in a self-evaluation process on an annual basis" (mean 3.36, s.d. 1.008) in light of the aforementioned perceptions.

Figure 1 below presents the perceptions of strength in board functioning among the six (6) BOT member-respondents in the BSEQ survey:

Figure 1

Perceived areas of strength in board functioning among BOT member-respondents, as indicated by raw frequencies of 4 BSEQ variables with the highest mean scores (N=6)



The four variables identified as strengths include the following: respect for the chair's authority, member relationship built on civility, board-CEO relationship characterized by trust and respect, and members' personal conduct that reflects the college's public image. As Figure 1 reflects, the perception revolving around the members' respect for "the power of the chair to speak for the board as a whole" was unanimous (n=6). Though the next three variables were rated highly as well, it is also important to note that at least one board member remained more cautious in his or her rating of the other three variables. Nonetheless, these

are the perceived areas of strength in board functioning that received the highest mean scores among 27 BSEQ variables.

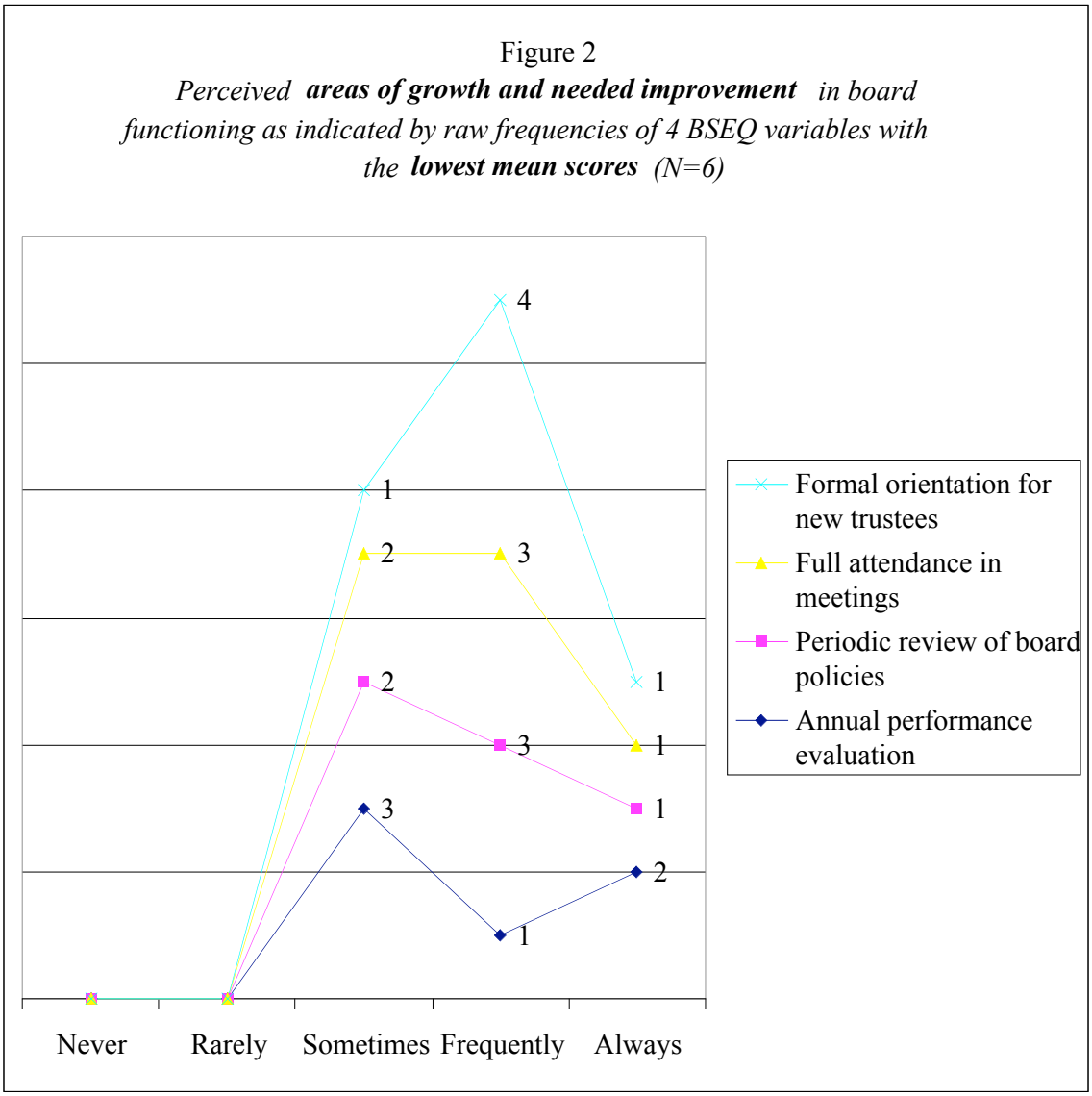
Yet, the richness of the focus group discussion data (Appendix D) likewise provides validation for these strengths as well. In terms of member relationship, one respondent shared this sentiment during the focus group discussion, " I feel that the roles are pretty clear, although there have been some little few instances that it seemed to be rocky, but it worked out. In other words, we didn't dwell on major differences, but went on for the benefit of the college" (FGD1, lines 211-214, p. 6). With regard to board-CEO relations, a participant indicated that there "is a sense of openness, even if there's a bit of controversy about some issues. As a result of discussion, we eventually meet to a point that is acceptable to all…"(FGD1, lines 221-223, p. 6). One participant further added that "we may have debates, discussions, but in the end we do respect each other's opinions" (FGD2, lines 161-162, p. 5). Quite clearly, the FGD data indicate that members have a "clear delineation of roles; in cases where there have been some miscommunication or misunderstandings, these have been worked out internally to the satisfaction of everyone" (FGD1, lines 228-230, p. 6). One participant tactfully phrased it in this manner: "I think this board argues actively but I don't think we argue to fight; I think we argue to understand. Because of that, we respect each other, and sometimes we refuse to budge but at least we know where we stand and we understand that and we respect each other for taking the position" (FGD2, lines 530-533, p. 13). The complex dynamics of role and responsibility that govern the relationship between and among the president, board chair and members is captured most vividly in the words of one FGD participant, "I've seen 98% of the time…in any activity, P1 always got a GCC shirt on. He wears it with pride and that's a part of that image building with the community.

I know that I've heard him speak very highly of the work that we do in the college and in working with constituents" (FGD1, lines 311-314, p. 8).

Figure 2 below presents the areas of needed improvement in board functioning as identified by the 6 BOT respondents in the BSEQ survey:

Figure 2

Perceived ***areas of growth and needed improvement*** *in board functioning as indicated by raw frequencies of 4 BSEQ variables with the* ***lowest mean scores*** *(N=6)*



These perceived areas of growth highlight the seeming lack of entrenched processes that make the following goals realizable: periodic reviews of board policy, orientation of new trustees, annual performance evaluation, and full attendance in board meetings. It must also

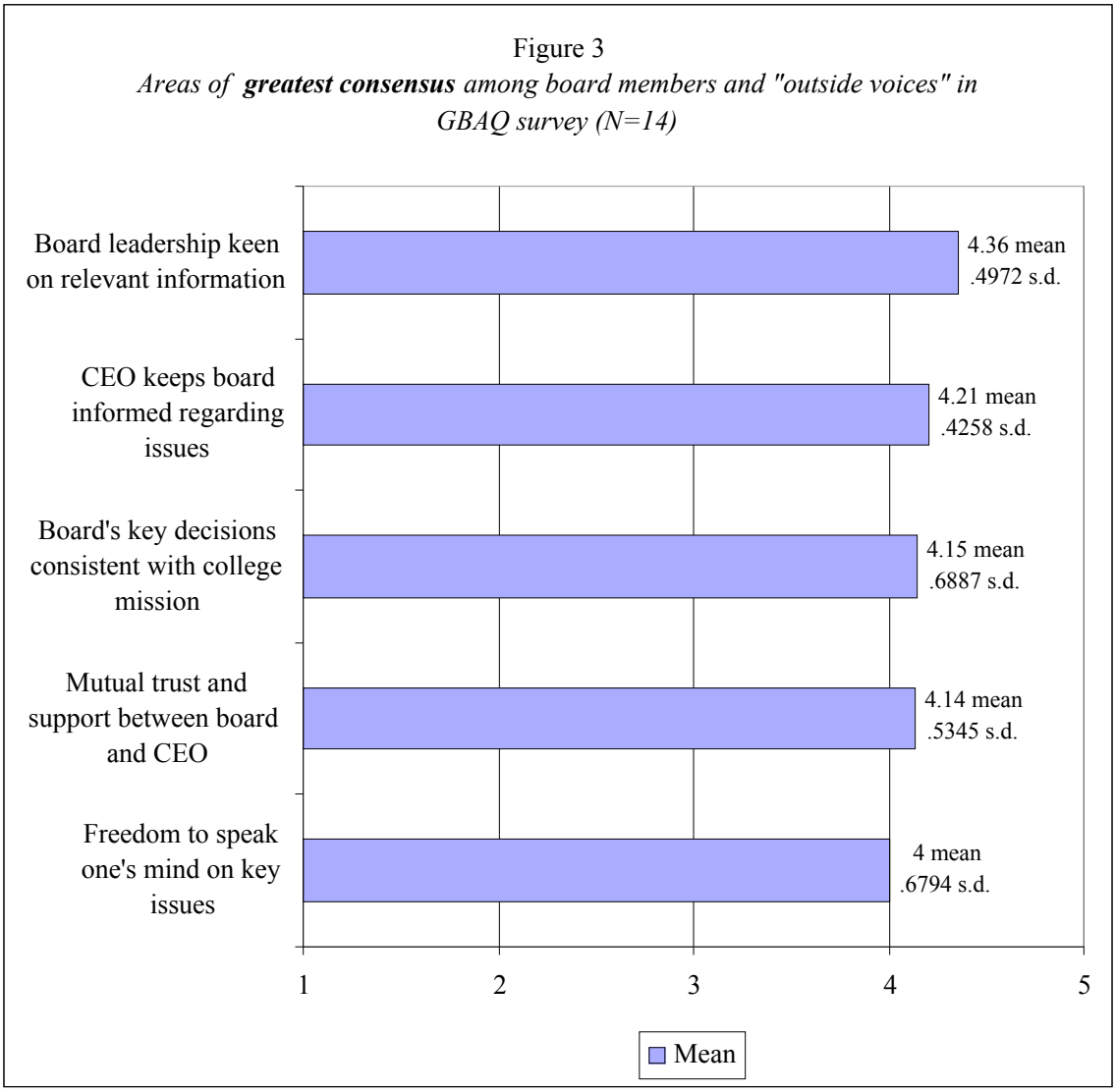
be emphasized that the areas of improvement identified above are those with the lowest mean scores in a field of 27 BSEQ variables. Interestingly, two of the four areas indicated touch on the issue of board assessment. It is worthwhile to note however that this assessment study gained impetus from board action itself when the board approved a Board of Trustees' Assessment Plan (prepared by the Committee on College Assessment) at its semi-monthly meeting in October 2002.

The survey results on areas of improvement attain greater meaning when viewed in the context of some selected answers to the open-ended questions in the BSAQ survey, as well as from the focus group discussions. Comments like "board development and education should be a priority;" and "attendance in BOT retreats should serve to educate/update BOT on current and future issues" underscore the need to institute formal trustee orientation for new members. With regard to the issue of policy review, one FGD participant conveys mixed feelings when he expressed that "I recall correctly (that) we do address policy review. I think we do a lot of that. But maybe we haven't been, perhaps as aggressive or responsible on some of the policies… Everytime we make a resolution, doesn't that affect policy? Or is there a consequence in policy perhaps?" (FGD1, lines 317-322, p. 8). This blurred understanding of board responsibility in policy review prompted one FGD participant to admit that "it's on a case- by-case basis. When the need arises, we do amend certain policies" (FGD1, line 346, p. 9). One participant admitted that "I think we made an attempt in one of our retreats to specifically make it a single item agenda to look at policy and say: which one needs to be updated? Which one needs to be taken out? But we, I got to admit that only three of us again, that was working on that…" (FGD1, lines 341-344, p. 8). This prompted one participant to pose a rhetorical question, "Now should we then say that on this

month every year we will review policy?" (FGD1. line 348, p. 9). It appears that this seeming lack of focus on this board responsibility has created some obvious frustration with some members of the board.

Figure 3 below shows the areas of agreement or consensus among the 6 board members and 8 "outside voices" who actively participated in this assessment study. In a field of 40 variables touching on five thematic areas in the questionnaire, these areas of greatest consensus deal specifically with (1) the board leadership's keenness on supplying relevant information to all members; (2) the board being informed by the CEO regarding issues that

Figure 3
*Areas of **greatest consensus** among board members and "outside voices" in GBAQ survey (N=14)*

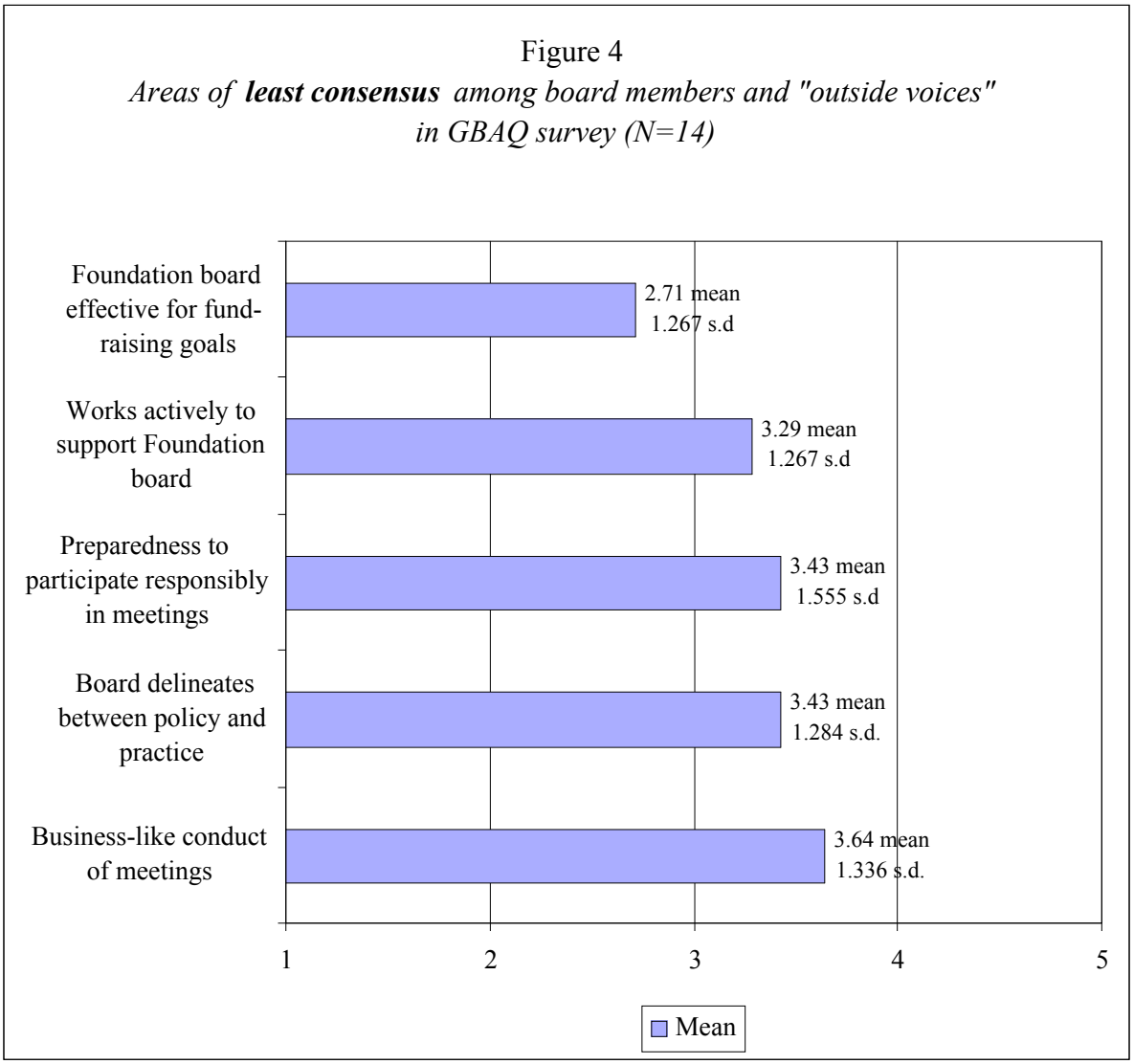


affect the college; (3) key decisions being consistent with the college mission; (4) mutual trust and respect as basis for board-CEO relations; and (5) the freedom to speak one's mind on key issues. As the results demonstrate, mean scores for these five variables –ranging from 4.36 to 4.0-- were consistently high. The low standard deviation in each of the identified variables –ranging from .4972 to .6794-- further confirm the extent of consensus amongst the respondents. Insights culled from the FGD data confirm most of these findings, though one issue that received considerable discussion was the "adequacy" of information given to the board. One participant expressed frustration over what he called "this kind of piece-bit information," yet in the end, *timeliness* ("no eleventh hour") was considered the important element of adequate information. It was revealed that the complex process and dynamics of information flow from CEO and the board followed this pattern: "…on the preliminary, we want to give them an idea as to what will be coming down the horizon in a week, next week or in a given month. And so you don't give them all the information right away so that they will get a chance to ponder over the situation first and the scenario in the beginning. Then we come back with specifics…we think we have given everything but then,…they will come back to you with a different angle coming from the constituents and the groups that they represent. It just adds to providing the necessary support documentation and facts for them to make a decision. But the nice thing is they do make a decision, and when they make a decision they make it stick and they stick with it. Different times, it comes back with several iterations, but that's okay. It just means sometimes you are not able to get it at that point in time… So we have to go back some more" (FGD2, lines 170-180, p. 6). This complex dimension in board-CEO relations, considered a strength by the survey data, is thereby enriched when viewed alongside the focus group discussion sessions.

The results presented in the figure below indicate low mean scores and high standard deviation in five identified areas. It must be emphasized that the lower the standard deviation, the higher the consensus among the respondents and conversely, the higher the standard deviation, the lower the consensus. Thus, the identified areas in Figure 4 highlight

Figure 4

*Areas of **least consensus** among board members and "outside voices" in GBAQ survey (N=14)*



the lack of agreement or consensus amongst the respondents on issues that deal with (1) the effectiveness of the foundation board for fund-raising goals; (2) the support given by the board to its sub-group, the Foundation board; (3) the members' preparedness to participate responsibly in meetings; (4) the board's understanding of policy versus operations; and (5)

the business-like conduct of board meetings. Curiously, two variables identified above touch on the dynamics of board meetings, specifically on perceptions of member preparedness and the conduct of meetings itself. These two variables garnered the highest standard deviation, 1.336 and 1.555 respectively, which could only mean that board meeting participants view the event itself (i.e, meeting) differentially. The issues of meeting procedures, as well as preparation for board meetings, seem to loom large as the areas of needed improvement in board functioning, in light of the aforementioned perceptions.

A number of qualitative responses, in fact, focus on these two aspects of board functioning. Several respondents suggested the following:

- "decrease the number of monthly meetings (because) trustees come to meetings unprepared;"
- "decrease number of meetings from bi-monthly to monthly —call special meetings only when necessary,"
- "meeting only monthly or quarterly,"
- "monthly meetings as opposed to bi-weekly"
- "board chairperson should not go page-by-page through minutes and reports; trustees should have already read the material provided;"
- "board members should receive packets ahead of time and come with their questions on the minutes or reports already prepared;" and
- "coming to meetings prepared to discuss information and issues."

The issue of policy versus operations also figured prominently in the qualitative comments, as demonstrated by the following respondent feedback:

- "board training to understand the difference between policy and operations;"
- "meetings are not run well, take too long. Too many questions that delve into operations – policy is the concern of the board, not operations;"
- "just to remember their role as a policy making body;"
- "understanding their individual and group roles;" and
- (improving) "communication from CEO to BOT."

When asked what were the one or two successes during the past year for which the board takes some satisfaction, the following were identified by the respondents:

- "the building of the student residential hall;"
- "BOT membership vacancies filled;"
- "education opportunities to BOT members via retreats, conferences and workshops;"
- "not firing or laying off employees due to financial crisis;"
- "on track on policy governance;"
- "accreditation progressing satisfactorily;"
- "opening of dormitory;"
- "excellence of programs even with decreased funding"
- "in spite of budget constraints due to a dwindling economy, the college continues to operate efficiently,"
- "ability to provide more thorough, adequate service to community and students with limited resources,"
- "the board's part in hiring the new President"
- "we have not actually allowed outside interference"

Most importantly, the board also recognizes its vital function in terms of supporting the teaching and learning processes at the college. One respondent's comment captured this most succinctly by suggesting "that the board connects with the college's student leadership in more direct ways." Truly, the connection between the college and the community remains entrenched in the board's vision, for as one respondent aptly put it, "the events of the last year have really focused on the community in community college." This last comment could perhaps sum up the efforts of the board to undergo systematic assessment (such as this study), with the members' knowing fully well that that the improvement of board processes and functioning will augur well for both the college and the larger community in years to come.

IV. *Conclusion*

This assessment study was set up as a systematic process to evaluate board functioning of the GCC Board of Trustees, in compliance with the WASC's accreditation

team recommendation in March 2000. Three objectives guided the implementation of this study, namely:

(1) to identify areas of strength in board functioning that need reinforcement as well as areas of weakness that may need work and improvement;

(2) to gain a better understanding of what it takes to be an efficient board from the members themselves and others involved in trustee affairs; and

(3) to highlight board accomplishments or activities which have given the college a meaningful presence in the community.

The first two objectives were accomplished through a careful analysis of both quantitative and qualitative components of the study. Survey and FGD data reflect a relationship built on mutual trust and respect between the board and the CEO. Among the board members themselves, the respect for the board chair's authority is as strong. Evidently, strength indicators such as members' interaction built on civility and personal demeanor that reflects the college's public image appear to validate these findings. Moreover, "outside voices" included in the survey lend credence to the board's efficient functioning in areas of information flow, both from the CEO to the board and the board chair to the members. There also exists a climate of dialogue that allows members the freedom to speak their minds on key issues. Yet, these very same strengths could also be the source of needed improvements in board functioning. The results indicate that the board needs to work on improving its meeting procedures and processes. At the root of these improvements are two pressing issues that deserve utmost attention: (1) the board's clear understanding of policy versus operations; and (2) its commitment to undergo systematic assessment on a

regular basis. The power of assessment to mobilize various voices should help keep the board continuously engaged in a meaningful conversation with all concerned stakeholders.

While the accomplishments identified by the board and the "outside voices" were in themselves praiseworthy, they nonetheless appear broad, uneven and fragmented. As such, they do not seem to be anchored upon specific goals and objectives that the board has set for itself as an organized body. Since the primary purpose of assessment is the measurement of success against set goals and outcomes, clearly, the board has to exert greater and coordinated effort in meeting this important criterion for sound assessment. What the board needs to do is to muster its wealth of resources to chart a clear direction for itself in terms of agenda-setting, one that should include both short-term, mid-term and long-term goals. Indeed, this should pave the way for a more effective and efficient board functioning that is solidly grounded on results and outcomes.

V. *Recommendations*

In light of the aforementioned discussion of results and conclusions, this report makes the following recommendations:

(1) Plan, organize, and implement activities according to a Board Development Plan that would ensure a process of continuous trustee education and development focusing on the following:

   (a) schedule an annual strategic planning working session at the beginning of the school year in order to formulate goals and objectives for the year and then utilize these goals for assessment purposes in the next evaluation

cycle; selected members of the Assessment Committee may be invited to assist the board in this task;

(b) develop a mentor-mentee system within the board itself so that new trustees are socialized into trustee affairs both through formal and informal means; the production of a GCC Trustee Manual should prove valuable in getting this training strategy work more effectively;

(c) plan and commit to hold workshop sessions that deal with trustee responsibilities, with a special focus on developing a common language that defines words such as "policy" and "operations;" trustees from other institutions may be invited as resource speakers for this purpose;

(2) Generate input from board members and other participants in board activities to develop procedures that would govern the conduct of board business, one that would explore the possibility of maximizing the use of various channels of communication that would include face-to-face meetings, as well as email and fax communication. In this vein, the board leadership also needs to strengthen board members' knowledge of Robert's Rules of Order through specially-scheduled retreats or workshops.

(3) Strive for the strengthening of institutional relationships with the various stakeholders of the college –e.g., students, staff, faculty, village leaders, legislators, etc.—through a system that would allow these connections to gain root and prosper; for example, the holding of an annual BOT Visitation Day (where trustees visit classes randomly and interact with faculty and students) may serve to familiarize constituents with the composition of the board and its

workings; or, attendance and interaction with village leaders at the Mayors' Council meetings may increase the college's visibility in the community;

(4) Set up a committee within the board to exert leadership in a methodical and customary review of extant board policies for review or revision, and build on this exercise for policy planning purposes;

(5) Transform the existing relationship with the GCC Foundation Board into a more productive co-existence through a feedback loop that would ensure better coordination and regular communication among members of both groups;

(6) Commit to a bi-annual, systematic assessment process (as stipulated in Policy 306) to ensure that goals and objectives are met and that assessment results are used to improve board functioning and processes.

Given these aforementioned initiatives, the "*will and the desire to improve"* must continue to drive the systematic assessment of the GCC Board of Trustees. The implementation and the follow-through of these initiatives can only proceed from a sound understanding of this noble aim. Only when the present board has taken this to heart will the following statement from the Community College League of California Trustee Handbook (1998, p. 69) ring true: *Just as boards are concerned with the effectiveness of the institutions they govern, so they should be concerned with their own effectiveness as a governing board.* Through its leadership by example, the board has presented itself as the prime model of compliance with WASC's accreditation standards to the college community as a whole. Indeed, this assessment report is a testament to the firm commitment of the policy-making body of GCC to govern an effective institution grounded in assessment excellence

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October 16, 2002

Dear Board of Trustees' meeting participant:

Attached is a Governing Board Assessment Questionnaire (GBAQ), which is being used to gather perceptions of board functioning and effectiveness. Your honest and thoughtful response to this survey is greatly appreciated. To preserve confidentiality, your name is not requested.

Please submit completed survey forms to Lou Bautista (board secretary) on or before October 30, 2002.

We would like to gather some basic demographic information in order to put your responses into a meaningful context.

Sex:	Female **1**	Male **2**			
Respondent Type:	Board of Trustees Member (including voting/non-voting) **1**		Administrator **2**	Guest **3**	
Length of participation in board meetings/ activities:	Less than one yr. **1**	1-3 yrs. **2**	4-6 yrs. **3**	7-9 yrs. **4**	10 or more yrs. **5**

GOVERNING BOARD ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (GBAQ)

Just as boards are concerned with the effectiveness of the institutions they govern, so they should be concerned with their own effectiveness as a governing board.

- Community College League of California Trustee Handbook, 1998, p. 69.

Please circle the number that best represents your answer. Your thoughtful responses will be greatly appreciated.

1. The board delegates the authority the chief executive needs to administer the institution successfully.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. The board is clear and consistent in its expectations of the performance of the CEO.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. The board expresses approval, publicly and privately, for the successes of the CEO and the institution.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. The chief executive keeps the board informed regarding issues that confront the college.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. There is a climate of mutual trust and support between board and president.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. At our board meetings, there is at least as much dialogue among members as there is between members and administrators.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. The board has an adequate process for the study of issues that will receive board action.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. The leadership of this board typically goes out of its way to make sure that all members have the same information on important issues.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. The number and frequency of board meetings allow enough time for responsible discussion and resolution of key issues.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. Board meetings are conducted in a fair, efficient, and business-like manner.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. The board rotates leadership in key board offices.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. The board has an established procedure to orient new members to the institution and to their duties and responsibilities.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. The members of the board have sufficient knowledge of the institution and its programs and services to judge the value of new ideas and practices with reasonable confidence in their decisions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. The members of the board are sensitive to the need to avoid even the appearance of conflicts of interest.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. The board has a satisfactory means of communicating its membership needs to the governor or other authority responsible for trustee selection.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. Board members honor divergent opinions without being intimidated by them.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. The board has an agreed upon philosophy as to the distinction between policy and administration.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. Our board meetings tend to focus more on current concerns than on preparing for the future.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. I am able to speak my mind on key issues without fear that I will be ostracized by some members of this board.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. This board allocates organizational funds for the purpose of board education and development.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

21. The board works actively to improve and support our college foundation.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. The board keeps well informed about educational and manpower training needs of the community.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. The board ensures that the college keeps the community well informed of the college=s activities, educational perspectives and plans.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

24. The board has established channels for access and exchange between campus and community so each can deal adequately with the needs, interests and viewpoints of the other.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

25. Board members remember that their identity is with the community, not the staff.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

26. Orientation programs for new board members specifically include a segment about the organization=s history and traditions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

27. When a new member joins this board, we make sure that someone serves as a mentor to help this person learn the ropes.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

28. The board sets clear organizational priorities for the year ahead.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

29. This board engages in strategic planning and strategic issues management discussions.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

30. This board makes explicit use of the long-range priorities of this organization in dealing with current issues.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

31. In discussing key issues, it is not unusual for someone on the board to talk about what this organization stands for and how that is related to the matter at hand.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

32. The board=s key decision are consistent with the mission of this organization.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

33. I have been present in board meetings where discussions of the history and mission of the college were key factors in reaching a conclusion on a problem.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

34. This board reviews the college=s mission annually.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

35. The board takes regular steps to keep informed about important trends in the larger environment that might affect the college.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

36. The board participates in a self-evaluation process on an annual basis.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

37. The board periodically sets aside time to learn more about important issues facing the college.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

38. Board members are prepared to participate responsibly in board meetings.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

39. There is a climate of mutual trust and support between board members.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

40. The GCC Foundation Board is an effective vehicle for the contributions of funds to the college's support activities, goals, plans, projects, and programs.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS:

1. What were the one or two successes during the past year for which the board takes some satisfaction?

2. What particular shortcomings do you see in the board's organization or performance that need attention?

3. What areas of improvement would you suggest?

Thank you for your participation.

Slightly modified version of
Assessment Questionnaire Model
Courtesy of Edmonds Community College
Lynnwood, WA

October 16, 2002

Dear Board of Trustees member:

Attached is a Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (BSEQ), which is being used to provide a "basic board health snap shot". Your honest and thoughtful response to this survey is greatly appreciated. To preserve confidentiality, your name is not requested.

Please submit completed survey forms to Lou Bautista (board secretary) on or before October 30, 2002.

We would like to gather some basic demographic information in order to put your responses into a meaningful context.

Sex:	Female **1**	Male **2**			
Respondent Type:	Voting member **1**	Non-voting member **2**			
Length of service with current Board of Trustees:	Less than one yr. **1**	1-3 yrs. **2**	4-6 yrs. **3**	7-9 yrs. **4**	10 or more yrs. **5**
Number of terms terms served in the Board of Trustees:	Less than one term **1**	One term **2**	Two terms **3**	Three or more **4**	

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE (BSEQ)

Please respond to the following questions by checking the option most applicable to your board's experience.

Board Members

1. All currently serving members of the college's Board of Trustees have been legally appointed/elected to their positions on the board.

   ☐ True
   ☐ False

2. Every currently serving member of the board is a legal resident of the precinct or district he/she represents.

   ☐ True
   ☐ False

3. Board members represent diverse backgrounds, experience, interests, gender, ethnicity, and areas of the district.

   ☐ True
   ☐ False

Personal Conduct

4. Board members treat each other with courtesy.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

5. Board members respect the power of the chair to speak for the board as a whole.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

6. Members of the board are always conscious that their demeanor is part of the college's public image.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Board Meetings

7. Board meetings begin on time.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

8. All board members attend board meetings.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

9. The collective demeanor of the board is poised and professional.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

10. Board members are able to disagree without being disagreeable.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

11. Board members ask questions relevant to the items(s) under discussion.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

12. The board welcomes participation by members of the community at appropriate times designated on the agenda.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

BOARD/CEO Relations

13. There is a high level of trust and respect between the board and the president.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

14. The president keeps the members of the board well informed.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

15. The president follows the rule of “no-surprises” by informing board members as soon as possible about important matters concerning the college, its students and its employees.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

16. The board delegates administrative matters to the president and refrains from micromanaging the college.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

17. The board places clear limits on the authority of the president regarding decision-making powers it wishes to retain for itself.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Evaluation

18. The board develops annual goals for the college and uses them as the basis for presidential evaluation.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

19. The board specifies its expectations for presidential performance in writing.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

20. The board formally evaluates the president's performance at least once every year.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

21. The board evaluates its own performance at least once every year.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Board Responsibilities

22. The board conducts periodic reviews of its own policies.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

23. The board formally orients new members as soon as possible after they have been sworn in as trustees.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

24. The board consistently follows its own board ethics policy.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

25. The board focuses on ends in making policy and leaves the implementation to the president.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

26. The board is actively involved in the long-term planning process of the college.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

27. The board plans with the president how to best develop and maintain relationships with local, state, and federal legislators for the benefit of the college.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	2	3	4	5

From the Community College League of California
1998 Trustee Handbook

GBAQ QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

(n=20)

1. What were the one or two successes during the past year for which the board takes some satisfaction?

    - The building of the student residential hall.
    - No comment at this time.
    - Fill BOT membership vacancies.
    - Provide education opportunities to BOT members via retreats, conferences, workshops.
    - Not firing or laying off employees due to financial crisis.
    - In spite of budget constraints due to a dwindling economy, the college continues to operate efficiently.
    - On track on policy governance. Ability to provide more thorough, adequate service to community and students with limited resources.
    - Accreditation progressing satisfactorily
    - Opening of dormitory.
    - Excellence of programs even with decreased funding.
    - Maybe—recognizing the importance of appropriating funds to support the 25th Anniversary activities—the events over the last year have really focused on the community in community college.

2. What particular shortcomings do you see in the board's organization or performance that need attention?

    - Board development and education should be a priority.
    - Fundraising activities should be done in a more aggressive and sustained manner.
    - No comment at this time.
    - Decrease the number of monthly meetings. Trustees come to meetings unprepared.
    - Performance-Attendance in BOT retreats which serve to educate/update BOT on current and future issues.
    - Understanding their individual and group roles. Coming to meetings prepared to discuss information and issues. Board leadership in moving through the agenda.
    - None so far.
    - Standards.
    - Difficulty in filling vacancies.
    - Meetings are not run well, take too long. Too many questions that delve into operations—policy is the concern of the board, not operations.

- Just to remember their role as a policy making body.

3. What areas of improvement would you suggest?

    - That the board connects with the colleges' student leadership in more direct ways.
    - No comment at this time.
    - Board chairperson should not go page-by-page through minutes and reports. Trustees should have already read the material provided.
    - Communication from CEO to BOT.
    - Board training to understand the difference between policy and operations. Meeting only monthly or quarterly.
    - None for now.
    - Performance evals.
    - Decrease number of meetings from bi-monthly to monthly—call special meetings only when necessary.
    - Work with Foundation Board in implementing effective fundraising campaign for the college.
    - Board members should receive packets ahead of time and come with their questions on the minutes or reports already prepared. Minutes and reports do not need to be gone over point by point.
    - Monthly meetings as opposed to bi-weekly.
    - The board needs to take more seriously the separation of policy and administration. Regular meetings should be limited to one per month instead of the two meetings a month. If more time is needed then special meetings should be called.

November 25, 2002

Dear Board of Trustees member:

During the GCC Board of Trustees retreat held on November 20, 2002, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted as part of the board's annual assessment activities. During the focus group meeting, similar topics found in the Board Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (BSEQ) were discussed. Due to time constraints and the fact that not all board members were present during the FGD, only 6 out of the 10 topics identified for discussion were addressed. Topics 7-10 were not discussed.

Consequently, Chairman Perez suggested that another round of discussions would be held during the next board retreat scheduled for December 4, 2002 at 5:00 p.m. The BOT members who were present concurred. In the meantime, a copy of the FGD topics is attached for your review.

For those who did not make it, please feel free to write down your thoughts on these 10 topics on the sheet provided. For board members who attended the recent FGD, please submit any additional comments that you may have regarding the topics discussed as well as your views on the remaining three topics to Rose Torres (acting recording secretary) at the GCC President's Office on or before December 4, 2002. You can also email your comments to me (rsomera@guamcc.net) or to Dr. Gina Charfauros (vcharfauros@guamcc.net).

Please feel free to call me at 735-5612 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ray Somera
Associate Dean, Technology and Student Services
Chair, Committee on College Assessment

GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD)

BOT ASSESSMENT

1. Board Priorities and Planning:

- How much time has the board spent on planning and providing a vision for the college?
- Is that enough time?
- What issues have most occupied the board's time and attention during the past year?
- Were these closely tied to the mission and goals of the institution?

2. Institutional Achievements:

- What were major successes of the institution during the past year?
- How did the board provide leadership or create an environment for the successes?

3. **Board Organization and Dynamics**:
    - Are the roles of the board chair and other officers clear?
    - Are meetings conducted in such a manner that the purposes are achieved effectively and efficiently?

4. **Board/Community Relations:**
    - Does the board represent the community that it serves?
    - Does the board have strategies for seeking input from diverse interests?
    - Does the board help promote the image of the college in the community?
    - Does the board have healthy relationships with key constituencies?

5. **Board Agendas:**
    - Do agendas focus on policy issues that are the board's responsibility?
    - Do they include legislative and state policy issues that may impact the college?
    - Do they provide adequate information and time for planning, analysis and discussion?

6. **Board/CEO Relations:**
    - Do the board and CEO have an open, respectful partnership with clearly defined roles?
    - Does the board keep the CEO informed of contacts with the community or college employees?

7. **Board/College Relations:**
    - Is the board knowledgeable about the institution's history, mission, values, strengths, and weaknesses?
    - Do board members support the college by attending various events?
    - Is the board sensitive to the concerns of students and employees while maintaining impartiality and support for the CEO?

8. **Decision-Making Processes:**
    - Do board members respect each other's opinions?
    - Are discussions structured so that all have an opportunity to contribute to the decision?
    - Do board members have adequate information upon which to base decisions?

9. Trustee Education and Development:

- Do new board members, including the student trustee, receive an orientation to the roles and responsibilities and to the district's mission and policies?
- Are all board members encouraged to engage in ongoing education about college and state issues?
- Is information shared among board members about important issues?

10. Goals and Objectives:

- Does the board have its own goals and objectives for the year and evaluate itself on how it has achieved them?

From the Community College League of California
1998 Trustee Handbook

FGD1

TRANSCRIPT OF Board of Trustees' Focus Group Discussion
November 20th 2002, 5 PM, President's Conference Room

FGD PARTICIPANTS:

Participant 1 (P1)
Participant 2 (P2)
Participant 3 (P3)
Participant 4 (P4)
Participant 5 (P5)
Participant 6 (P6)
Participant 7 (P7)
Participant 8 (P8)

P1: Introduction

P2: Introduction

P3: Introduction

P5: Introduction

P6: Introduction

P4: Introduction

P5: I will begin with a quote. You are familiar with this quote because it came with the survey questionnaire. It is adapted from the Community College League of California. The quote goes this way," Just as boards are concerned with the effectiveness of the institutions they govern, so they should be concerned with their own effectiveness as a governing board." I think that sets the spirit for this discussion. This focus group discussion is meant to elicit a variety of responses and viewpoints from members of the board in order to inform the processes that should take place in the coming year; perhaps the results should guide you in setting up goals and objectives for the coming year, and in essence, it should also help you come up with possible steps to further improve the functioning of the board as it is now. There are ten topics included in the guide questions in here and I invite you to take a look at these topics. Let me go over each one of them: Board Priorities and Planning, Institution of Achievements, Board Organization and Dynamics, Board Community Relations, Board Agendas, Board/CEO Relations, Board College Relations, Decision Making Processes, Trustee Education and Development, and then last but not least, Goals and Objectives. The whole point of this focus group discussion is that this is a homogenous group and what we are trying to accomplish is to get a general sense of the board's sentiments on each one of these topics. Surely, there will be a lot of overlaps, but because of the time constraint I will set certain

parameters as to the kind of discussion. There are just a very few of us in the room. I mean no disrespect, but I will remind you that we will need to move on to the next topic because we will need to cover all this, or if you wish, we have part one now and have part two later.....

P2: Can we ask questions during your.....

P5: It will be a candid discussion.

P2: So we could just step in?

P5: Yes P2. There will be no identifiers whatsoever in the report. This is meant for research purposes in terms of assessment and results will be reported according to themes indicated in this-- the 10 topics that are in here. You will get a draft of the report prior to it being finalized.

P2: Does it affect the new board members that are just coming in.....this question here? I mean, if they are new to the board, is it a.....?

P5: We will also welcome their perspectives and viewpoints and you will...As part of the discussion, they can also give their perspectives as well.

P2: If we are rating it 1 to 5 and the new board members rate it 1 or 2, will that affect the whole question?

P4: I think that for discussions, these are just questions to elicit responses.

P5: We will not rank you according to the survey that we had in terms of the likert-scale where you have to agree or disagree. A variety of opinions are welcome.

P3: I just want to comment..... this is on top of the survey?

P5: This will complement the survey in a sense. You have already filled out the survey. These questions are meant to validate some of those opinions. The survey serves for quantitative reasons because they are..... you came up with numbers in terms of agreement. These are qualitative responses that will allow validation. So let's get on with the first question. What I propose that we do in the interest of time is that these questions are meant to guide us but we should not stick to them if you feel that we need to move on to more questions under that same topic. So I'll begin with this general question under item No. 1: In your perspective, have there been priorities identified by the board in terms of agenda planning? Anyone can respond to this. What are these issues? This is the first question. Would you rather that we go through each of these questions? Let me have your thoughts.... P1.

P1: Maybe we should since we've got them written down. After we complete that, then perhaps we can answer your question. However, if the question you are asking is very

critical then maybe we need to address that. If it's critical and we need to address it, then we will do it.

P5: So if you feel that we need to go through each one of these questions, that's okay as well.

P1: If we are going to start answering, if I may, let me go ahead and start. In terms of priorities in planning the agendas, quite honestly, since we came in, the agendas were already pre-set for us. I don't recall myself getting involved in setting the agenda. But maybe that was done years ago by our predecessors and because of that the agendas have been set. If you remember, P3 and P2, when we would come in and the agenda for the year was prepared for us. It's kind of like-- "here it is, approve it." To be honest with you, I didn't oppose that because I didn't have anything else or anything better so I said—"Okay, I guess this is what we're supposed to be doing," so I said "sure."

P5: And then if you tie that in, P1, with the second part of the first question there: How much time has the board spent on planning and providing a vision for the college? in terms of the response, would you rather see the board getting together setting up the agenda for the coming year so that then it's owned by the board? Is that the sentiment of the other members of the board?

P2: I think that the agenda that was proposed already, that we've been receiving, is an annual agenda for the board. Whatever the President comes down with like the President's travel of so and so and whatever item that's coming up for discussion, they put it in the agenda. We have the annual planning of the agenda already prepared for the board's meeting.

P1: P5, my input would be, rather than changing it, let's just add if we think there is something that is critical, that needs to be included. My input would be, leave that as it is and we can add later because, apparently, it is given to us at the beginning of the year. The president gives it to us and says, "Here board approve." I think that would be the appropriate time for us to....

P4: In terms of the annual agenda or in terms of meeting agenda? We need to clarify this.

P3: Are we talking about the meeting agenda or the annual agenda?

P5: I think the spirit of the question here is not in terms of individual meeting agendas but in terms of what the board prioritizes, in terms of what issues are supposed to be taken for this year. Because if you look at the last question it says: Were these closely tied to the mission and goals of the institution? In other words, this is the big picture of what the board seeks to do for the coming year.

P3: I think we do need to get more involved along with the management as far as setting agendas. Definitely.

P5: So in other words, the sentiment is that the board needs to participate in identifying the issues and the items that need to be put in terms of prioritizing them. If given a set of ten items within the year with which to accomplish a given set of goals and objectives, you would say we would put this-- number one, number two, number three. So the board agrees, therefore, in terms of board priorities and planning, that they would like to see more board input in terms of doing the prioritizing and in terms of setting the agenda for the coming year. Do you think there are other points that need to be included?

P1: Yes. P5, I would like to add to the first question: How much time does the board spend on planning and providing a vision? Here's another thing, I think our effort has been concentrating on the mission. We recently, in the past year, updated our mission statement. But I don't recall that we looked at our vision and really had a good discussion of our near term, mid-term, and long-term vision. I don't remember participating in that.

P5: We are slated to review the mission statement by next year according to the last evaluation report that we had. So surely, that would be taken into account and I think the board needs to recognize...The board needs to tie the prioritizing of those items in terms of what the institution needs to do.

P1: I think the process of updating our mission statement will take us back to the vision statement because first we have to see what we would like or what we think GCC should look like in the near, mid, and long-term future. Then the mission would be okay. This is how we accomplish it.

P5: So in answer to that question, there should be more board focus in participating in the shaping of the institutional vision so that it serves the purpose of setting the priorities for the board. What about the question on issues that have occupied the board's time and attention during the past year? Are there issues that you can readily identify? Land, water, accreditation, dormitory, water problem....

P4: And personnel and finances.....

P1: Unfortunately, land is still an unfinished issue; the water is still an unfinished issue and very frustrating, and the budget too.

P5: And in terms of prioritizing again, if we are given a list of issues in terms of planning for the next year, which of those issues would occupy the board's time? So let's move on to number 2, institutional achievements. How did the board provide leadership or create an environment for the successes? Off the top of your head, are there successes of the institution that you can readily see?

P3: The accreditation definitely. That's an ongoing thing actually.

P5: The accreditation and the ongoing assessment process of which the board is now an

active participant. That is an achievement because you are setting the trail. We are being trailblazers in that respect.

P1: At the same time, I'd like to add, P5 and P4 that you guys have made it easy for us. You've made our jobs easy because of the fact that you guys run this organization in a very professional manner and it is acknowledged by the public. And so, I wish I could claim a bigger leadership role, but at the same time, I've got to be honest and say "you've made it easy for us guys." You know, by doing your job well.

P3: I think a major success also is the board's part in hiring the new President. You know some colleges have problems. In fact, during one convention, one trustee mentioned that they hired a President and in less than a week the President left. You know, leaving the college in shambles and all that. So I feel that we had a smooth transition.

P1: And even also after negotiating the contract, because again, coming back from that one conference, almost everybody I spoke to went year-to-year. In my mind I said, "gosh, how can you guys afford to do that in terms of time and everything?" That's tough. Every year they go through this exercise. That's going to take up all of their time.

P4: The dormitory in terms of facilities and I think we shouldn't forget the event that took place last Friday, the 25th anniversary dinner. That was a success not just for those who organized it but I think all who participated and those who gave their time to the institution in the past and present, including former presidents.

P3: Next year we can claim the 25th anniversary as a success (laughter).

P1: I'd like to also add to that, P4 and P5, that the board was courageous enough not to just sit in terms of our vacancies. I think we all agree that we have to move forward and to see what the law allows us to do, and we did that. I think that was a plus on the board.

P3: I think the one success too, that the board has had, and I find it interesting, is that we have not actually allowed outside interference. As you know, we went ahead and did what we had to do in upholding the President and in other .....

P5: So several successes have been identified by the responses that you've given. The one that was stated regarding the maintenance of the integrity of the board, I think, is very important as part of what you see as an achievement. Can we move on to the third topic, organization and dynamics? What processes do you feel are in place that could relate to the board's effectiveness as a body? Are there processes in terms of how the board functions that have contributed to it being an effective body?

P3: I feel that the roles are pretty clear. Although there have been some little....a few instances that it seemed to be rocky, it was worked out. And it was worked out to everyone's satisfaction. In other words, we didn't dwell on any major differences, but

went on for the benefit of the college.

P2: Anybody can express their own opinion, you know, when we discuss it.

P5: The freedom to express one's opinion in board meetings contributes to the acceptance of the variety of viewpoints during board meetings?

P4: There is a sense of openness, even if there's a bit of controversy and one is thinking about a given issue. As a result of the discussions, we eventually meet a point that is acceptable to all. Although there have been times.....but we have healthy discussions, good healthy discussions.

P5: Would it be fair to say that it reflects focus in terms of what the board sets to do so that it's task-oriented rather than personality-oriented? Alright, are there other points you wish to bring up regarding board organization and dynamics? It has been said that there is clear delineation of roles; in cases where there has been some mis-communication or misunderstanding, these have been worked out internally to the satisfaction of everyone.

P2: In the end, everybody is a winner.

P5: Okay, let's move on to the fourth topic. In your view, has the board done enough in involving the community in its processes? Do you believe that the board should represent the community more? In what sense? I think this is what these questions, these series of questions, are asking. How do you perceive the board's connection to the community so that it reflects those interests?

P4: If you look at the mere make-up of those who are here now, and who they represent--they represent private industry, they represent labor union, they represent business, and they represent the general public. Each of these constituencies is represented very well in the body of this particular board.

P2: Since you mentioned about the community, I think we have a good relationship with the Guam Contractor's Association. We bring up the college as one of the sponsors. The Chamber of Commerce, GHRA.....

P1: And we also meet with our elected administrators and with our other board members. We have communicated with them. The president is aware of that. I'm often invited to attend..... I would just like to say, "yes" to that. I think at the same time, maybe one of the areas that we need to improve on is meeting at another level-somebody that has a direct hand to the villages that we serve, like the mayors. I have to admit; I have not been busy

contacting the mayors, perhaps, as often as I think I should. We as board members should contact the mayors of our respective villages because they have a pulse on their village. They know what they need in terms of vocational and technical training and/or

preparation to move to a four-year institution.

P5: That can be put under the second question, which asks, "does the board have strategies for certain inputs from interested members?" Perhaps, in the future planning processes, you can put a system in place that would seek input from the mayors at the village level.

P1: Yes. I think in terms of industry, as P2 pointed out, you know we work with the Contractor's Association and the Chamber of Commerce, but I think in terms of the community where the people we serve live, I think we need to do that.

P3. I agree. We need to go to the community level itself and try to reach those people that really need the help as far as getting access to the college. Oftentimes, they are the ones that don't really know much about what's going on or what benefits that they can derive.

P1: I think at this time it may be appropriate to suggest that perhaps the forum of the mayors might be a profitable or beneficial place to start.

P5: That can surely be included in how you plan for next year's activities. But is it fair to say that the board would like to see more input from the village level so that then the constituencies are informed about what GCC has to offer? A forum is suggested at the community level, at the village level, possibly with the mayors, in order to bring them into the fold, so to speak.

P3: More input and more visibility on our part.

P5: More visibility also on the part of the board, more connectedness to the people at the community level through forums or participation in other village activities. Would that be fair to say?

P2: Number 3 question, does the board help promote the image of the college community? I would say what about the satellite program, is that okay?

P5: Which program is that P2?

P2: Number 3, the satellite program.

P5: The satellite programs. If we're doing a good job in educating our secondary students so that they attain the skills or we give them entry-level skills, I think that also contributes to how well we are perceived by the community.

P2: Okay.

P5: But I think, don't you think that holds true also for the other programs that we have? The postsecondary programs as well? What about topic number 5? There are three questions in here and it speaks of how the board connects with policy issues and board responsibilities as well as legislative and state policy issues affecting the college. Do you

think that the board has done much on that area? What thoughts do you have on this topic? This, I think P2, would refer to the board meeting agendas, don't you think?

P5: P4…....

P4: I want to go back to number 4, let's talk about this in terms of how the board helps promote the image of the college in the community. I've seen 98% of the time, P1, in any activity, he's always got a GCC shirt on. He wears it with pride and that's a part of that image building with the community. I know that I've heard him speak very highly of the work that we do in the college and in working with constituents. I'm sorry, I had to go back to number 4, let us move on to number 5.

P1: P5, I'd like to.... okay the agendas focus on policy issues. I think on our annual agenda, if I recall correctly, I think there is one of them where we do address policy review. I think we do allow for that. But maybe we haven't been, perhaps, as aggressive or responsible on some of the policies. At the same time, I see something related to policy when we're going to do something, for example, with the capital. Every time we make a resolution doesn't that affect policy? Or it is a consequence of policy perhaps?

P3: Yes. I think we do that because at the last meeting, for example, the issues were brought up about money for capital improvement and all that and we insisted that it be drawn up in resolution form and then we'll consider it. So I think that we do focus on policy issues.

P1: I kind of got stuck in insisting that we make that part of the master plan, because after all, that is our guide. The institutional master plan is our guide.

P3: That was also included in the resolution itself. The language was contained there so we are...

P5: We have six minutes left, do you think we should move on to number six or should we have a round two? P2 Do you have something else to include?

P2: We have a policy, board policy, but we have to do some review on those because that's all the policy that the chairman gives to us, the chairman of the board. We need to update.

P1: And I think we made an attempt in one of our retreats to specifically make it a single item agenda to look at policy and say: Which one needs to be updated? Which one needs to be taken out? But we, I got to admit, that there was only three of us again, that was working on that...

P3: It's on a case-by-case basis. When the need arises, we do amend certain policies.

P1: Now, should we then say that on this month every year we will review policy?

P4: Or else set up a committee within the board to say, can we exert some leadership in terms of management along with board members to review policies for either revision or inclusion in preparation again for planning for the future?

P5: And in terms of board priorities again going back to number one, that can surely be put as one of your priorities and make it as part of the systems or processes in place that would allow for an effective board functioning. Should we go on to one more question? Okay, the Board/CEO relations. There are two questions in here, but I think in essence, what we're saying is: What is the board's assessment of the existing relationship with the CEO? P2. P1.

P1: Okay, I'll give my opinion, but I also need to hear from you guys because you guys are looking at me and you guys are looking at P4 and I and how we interact. I think I have moved in that area, to have a better working relationship. P4 and I try to set up either a lunch or breakfast so that we can discuss the agenda for the meeting.

P4: If not, then we do play telephone tag, but we do catch each other.

P1: Lou knows, and now Rose knows, that everything that I say to her must be repeated to the President. You know, because a lot of times we're playing tag--- he just left or he's in a meeting or he hasn't come back from this or from that. When he returns my phone calls I'm out also so that's why again, with Lou and with Rose, I say: "Ladies whatever I say to you, please repeat it to the President so he's aware." At the same time I say: "Okay, also shoot the message out to the board members,"-- so they know what I'm thinking and what direction I'm going so they can rein me in if necessary and say: "Okay, you're on track or you're totally lost."

P3: The question is do the board, meaning the entire board. As far as the rest, I think we do also have an open, respectful partnership and clearly defined roles.

P2: I have no objection to P4. I respect his opinions and he is doing a good job.

P4: In terms of openness, not only is there an openness that exists here in this room, but I think even in the outside when we meet individually or if we see each other at various functions. It's not unusual for me to get email two or three times a week. And that's a very good way of communicating with me. With the P1, P3 and P2, we see each other at various village functions. So if we're talking about last year to present, I think the fact that we're able to come to a conclusion in terms of a contract that is an indication of the openness that we have as a group.

P5: Any thoughts, P7?

P7: No, in the short time I've been here, I'm quite impressed... (inaudible)

P5: What do you propose we do P1 in terms of continuing on to the tenth question? Should we have a round two or would you rather that we just...because you already had the

survey and we covered six topics in here? There is one of two things we can do, we can have a round two and continue on with topics 7 through 10 and include the rest who are not here and have a bigger group and possibly move on very quickly and touch on some of these questions or we can send the very same questions through email or through courier to the board members who are not here and ask them to respond in writing so they will have enough opportunity to write their thoughts and opinions. What is your preference?

P1: My thought is that since we are working as a board, we can do a round two, if there's time, to include everybody else. Because, you know, everybody has a point to contribute or a point to argue and we need to hear that. At the same time it would expedite that or enhance that if we can go ahead and send it out to them and say: "Be prepared, we're going to have limited time but we need your input so be thinking about this and if necessary, put some notes down." So I guess I'm saying, let's do both. Let's send them the information and tell them that we want an answer. If time will allow us for the next meeting.... I don't mind....

P5: What you're saying is that during your next retreat which is two weeks from now... Can P6 and P5 come in again and do a round two beginning from the first question or beginning from the seventh question?

P3: Seventh

P5: Begin from the seventh and just send this in written form. If they (board members) have thoughts or verbal contributions they can express them at this time.

P3: Or they can write their comments and submit it to you?

P5: Yes, of course. My assessment deadline, in alignment with all of the other deadlines, is supposed to be December 3. We're still trying to input the survey data and we will need time to transcribe the tape to be able to capture the very rich data.

P1: We can call a special meeting, I mean a special retreat. You know we don't have to publicize or anything like that. This is really not a public meeting. This is just a board retreat.

P3: That's fine with me, I was going to suggest that we just email you our comments and you can compile them. Would that be also....?

P5: Yes. That's what I was thinking of doing as well.

P4: How many? 1 to 6? 7 to 10, okay.

P1: And for those who are more comfortable discussing it, maybe we can call P5 and just say: "Here are my thoughts," and go down the line.

P5: So then we don't need to schedule a round two. Is that what you're saying?

P1: Well, if December 3rd is your deadline, I don't know...we're not going to meet that unless we call a special meeting.

P5: But as I said, the December 3rd deadline was set before the assessment plan was developed. The one that you approved last time. I'm sure we can have an extension for that up until before the break. So if you feel that we need to seek input from the rest of the group so that it becomes a collective expression of views, I'm pretty open to it because the deadlines are artificial deadlines that we've set.

P4: They're not set in stone?

P5: They're not set in stone.

P1: You know, I like the group because it gives us an immediate exchange of views and it's a two-way discussion. If I read the comment from anyone of us and I have a question, I don't have that immediate answer. Or, if you made a comment, and I don't understand, you can elaborate on that. You can do that. But over the email.... unless we are sending it to everybody..

P5: P6 and P5 can come to your next board retreat if that's fine. Or, if you wish to call a special meeting, that's fine too. The next board meeting then.

P1: The next board retreat, that's the second meeting of the month and we're heading into the holidays. It is going to be really tough.

P3: Well, the next one is on December 4TH.

P1: December 4th. Okay, you can come in at that time.

P5: December 4th then.

P1: So December 4th. That's a Wednesday P3? For those that can make it, it's a great opportunity to get involved. I would say yes.

P3: So when do you want to meet?

P5: December 4th at 5 p.m.

P3: Okay.

P1: P8, we are going to redo this. P5 covered 1 to 7.

P3: So at that time we will start with 7, is that correct?

P2: Thank you P4.

P5: Thank you so much.

FGD2

TRANSCRIPT OF Board of Trustees' Focus Group Discussion
December 4, 2002 5 PM, President's Conference Room

FGD PARTICIPANTS:

Participant 1 (P1)
Participant 2 (P2)
Participant 3 (P3)
Participant 4 (P4)
Participant 5 (P5)
Participant 6 (P6)
Participant 7 (P7)
Participant 8 (P8)
Participant 9 (P9)

Introduction

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P8: Thank you once again for allowing us to conduct part two of our session which began last week. Before you are the same questions we had two weeks ago. The focus group discussion is a discussion with the President and members of the board. P9 and P8, as members of the assessment committee of the college, are facilitating this discussion with the goal of seeking your input in order to help you in taking the necessary steps to improve the functioning of the board for the purposes of assessment. There are 10 questions on the sheet before you; we covered questions 1 through 6 last time. How do you propose we do this P1? Do we continue with No. 7 or do we go back to No. 1?

P1: Let me ask the group. We have less than an hour to do that. Who was not here the last time? We could ask P8 to give us a quick review and maybe we can jump into number seven.

P8: Okay.

P1: I think that would help since we met two weeks ago.

P8: The input that we are seeking from you will complement the kinds of information that we've been able to gather from members of the board through the survey questionnaire that was distributed to you. The tape from our last meeting has been transcribed. It provides us very rich data for validating the kinds of information that we have already received from the survey. The end product of this would be a report from the board. You will see a draft copy before it's finally submitted as a report to the assessment committee. We've covered questions 1 through 6 and we now move on and continue with question 7. As a caveat, I should say, that these series of questions are meant to guide us to have an open discussion. They are not specifically meant to be answered, but if you want to go through each one of them that's fine as well. Board and college relations is question number 7. And maybe I should set the discussion going by asking a general question: Do you feel the board has a good relationship with the college community? In what sense do you feel that you have succeeded in doing that? Or would you like to do more?

P1: If I may, let me go ahead and try to answer that. I would say yes to that, to the community. One example I would like to give is as recent as today. I forwarded an email message to Lou from the Contractor's Association. They are sending a notice out to all their members and they're asking for OSHA 500 or 501 training. Normally everybody has to go off island for the training. The Contractor's Association has been able for 2 years now to have OSHA come out. The farthest west that they would go in the past is to Hawaii. Now they're coming to Guam and they're sending out notice to their membership saying we need at least 20 (members) and it's going to be held at GCC. At the same time they were sending messages to Lolita saying, give us feedback as to the classroom. To answer your question, that is one instance where I would say yes.

P8: Are there other examples?

P2: Yes. I do agree with P1 that the outside community, many times, has made very positive comments about the college. On the other hand, as recently as last week when we had the meeting of our joint board, it was mentioned from one of the GCC people that they really would like for the board to know them better. So I said that I'll bring this up to our President, of course this is a good time. There are faculty members and staff that feel they are not recognized or noticed by the board. So that is something that I would like to see strengthened, our connection with them. This is something we can discuss later on in more detail.

P1: Activity that involves faculty in some form or other.

P2: Not actually formally, but maybe informal. Maybe we can get to know them on a one-to-one basis. We already do know a lot of them, but I know there are probably some that kind of feel left out.

P8: So the strengthening of the relationship that should exist between the board and the faculty out there.

P2: Strengthening.

P8: Yes. Does that not address the question in No. 3 of that same topic—the board being sensitive to the concerns of the employees? Maybe in a sense, concern for a more strengthened relationship with the board.

P6: There was a Tritons Call not to long ago where the last student government body that was there did recognize and promote GCC for its classes that were easily related to UOG. They related to the cost and flexibility of courses. They talked about instructors being of high caliber and quality. Many of the conversations suggested that GCC makes it so much easier for the non-traditional students, and again, the ability to be able to afford classes at a far substantial difference and still have the same quality that they can take not only to off-island institutions but also to the institution next door. In speaking with the student trustee or the student regent at UOG as well, he's quite impressed with the students that come over. He knows many others who appreciate the services we provide over here, in particular the computer science programs. And if I'm not mistaken, Bill 375 is going to really help boost that. So it's just helping expanding our services to non-traditional students, to maybe folks who are lifetime learners, who only come here for enrichment. So our programs, in that respect, really are sensitive to the students' needs and also help to better the trades and skills that we are able to use as a platform and be able to help the students in high school as well. I've been approached by a number of private school students too who are anticipating their crossover and their ability to take credited courses that they can apply to their high school programs as well and translate that back and forth.

P8: So that speaks to the board's sensitivity to the concerns of the students' needs as well as in terms of affordability and in terms of the quality of the programs that we have here at GCC. Are there any other points that you wish to raise under this particular topic?

P7: Number 7.

P8: Number 7?

P7: In terms of support coming from the board members, I think an example is last week when there were various meetings that were held in relation to the transition team. The board members took the time to meet the transition team and to represent GCC. That evening, they also represented us in the joint board meeting. The attendance of P1 at these various events..... it seemed like he was at GCC meetings almost a good part of last week. We saw each other at least four times last week. So that's an indication of the support we are getting from the board, not just that one day. In terms of the transition and the joint board, he was also with us in a luncheon that week. So if you look at the major events we've had, we always have representation. P4 was there with us in the

COPSA and HOSA celebrations two or three weeks ago. There are numerous activities where we can point out their presence. Certainly, their presence adds to the support and the relationship that exists between the board and the school that they represent.

P8: Welcome, P3, to our discussion. This is a continuation of the discussion we had last week and we are now on topic number 7, board college relations. Let's move on to question number 8, decision-making processes.

P1: Before we leave 7, I'd like to add vision because we are talking about history, mission, and values and I know it's mentioned up there as one of the bullets, top priorities. We need to continually remind ourselves not only of our mission, but also of what we see: How will GCC look like in the future--- near term, mid-term and long-term?

P8: Rootedness in the mission of the college allows us to address the needs of the community. Is that what you're saying P1? At the back of our minds the board activities should always be rooted in the mission of the college because that's the only way we can address the needs of the community.

P1: Where do we see ourselves in the college in the future--near term, mid-term and long-term?

P7: There's no question that there is a focus on the mission of this particular college. The board members revisited the mission statement. Although I was not the President at that time, I remember a discussion that took place concerning our focus, the wording, and the inclusion of Voc Ed. in the mission statement. The focus will always remain in terms of being able to provide more course development.

P8: That was in 2000, in fact in the most recent accreditation report and visit. It is also included in the text that by January 2003, there will be a revisit of the same mission statement. The conversation will begin once the new year comes. So there will always be an open discussion regarding the mission statement of the college and what we represent in terms of our history, our values, and what we would like to be in the future in terms of the vision. Moving on to the decision-making processes, again, there are three questions under this topic, but you may wish to address one or all of them at the same time. Do you care to address any one of these questions?

P2: I feel that board members do respect each other's opinions. We may have debates, discussions, but in the end we do respect each other's opinions. When we don't have information, we always ask the President or whoever is handling the particular area to provide that information to us before we make any kind of decision.

P8: I am curious about your thoughts on what you feel adequate information should be. To follow that up, what do you feel is adequate information to make a decision?

P2: It depends on what we are looking for, for example, I think on the last meeting we wanted to ask Vice President Taylor about how he comes about making investment decisions. There were certain types of information we wanted to get from him so we could also be more knowledgeable in that area.

P1: From a technical standpoint, it's helpful to have individuals who are concentrating and focusing on the specific mission or goals that will be performed by the administration. As a student trustee sits on the board, he obtains historical knowledge and feel for what's been going on, particularly, on certain issues like a lot of unfinished business that continues to come to our table like the water project for instance. Having served two terms ago it's astounding as to how, for instance, how technicalities in the project's design and implementation get thrown about because of varying personalities that are affecting it. And again, going back knowing the politics of those who play a part in the decision made outside of our institution help to at least give us a better focus and feel for the situation-- maybe what course of action, what kind of action needs to be taken.

P8: Do you feel that you have always been given adequate information whenever it came to an important decision that the board had to make? Do you feel that the information you have in your pockets may not be enough for you to come to a decision?

P7: Something else is decided both ways. Because on the preliminary, we want to give them an idea as to what will be coming down the horizon in a week, next week or in a given month. And so you don't give them all the information right away so that they will get a chance to ponder over the situation first and the scenario in the beginning. Then we come back with specifics. Or there are times, in looking at the packet, that we think we've given everything. That's the beauty of having a board, you have diverse thinking. They will come back to you with a different angle coming from the constituents and the groups that they represent. It just adds to providing the necessary support documentation and facts for them to make a decision. But the nice thing is they do make a decision and when they make a decision they make it stick and they stick with it. Different times it comes back with several iterations but that's okay. It just means sometimes you are not able to get it at that point in time. So we have to go back some more.

P8: What you're saying is that sometimes, there could be information overload.

P7: If you look at our agenda, there are several items that have been with us since 2000. The ancestral land, we can't come to a conclusion on that.

P8: So sometimes it's the difficulty of accessing that information.

P7: Yes, it's not within our control. The ancestral land.... the water project has been an agenda item since 2000. So there are times when we think we are coming to an end and another snake comes out. We don't know what to do. Then I go back to them (board) and say I really have a situation here, can you help me with it? The decision making

process is one that's a group consensus. The voice is one. When they all come together as one, the voice is only one. And that's what we follow.

P3: I'm concerned about this adequate information. I've been here for six years and I've seen this eleventh hour information-- we have to pass it, we've got to do it tonight. I have seen that two or three times and I don't like that. It's the eleventh hour, we got to pass this resolution. The information is not adequate or sometimes the information that we're presented by management, they are not correct or accurate. And then the board members, not only myself, they fumble over it because they are not so sure. Is this information accurate or not? I find this several times, and I've been trying to address this and I'm glad that it surfaced now. I'm concerned that we're addressing it now because it's not adequate. I do not know whether this is done purposely or to deceive or not to provide the information correctly. There are times that I do find later on down the road, which is kind of late, that this was circumvented. And I do not like this kind of piece-bit information. I think that the information should be given to the trustee. Let the trustee, if he's a slow reader, let him go step by step, but provide the tools for him to make the decision. Do not give us the information that you would like, like a pet project that they want us to approve. Give us the whole nine yards so we will have weighed it ourselves. Don't weigh only the parts that you want us to approve. Give it to us in the whole universe so we can do it ourselves. This is what I've been seeing for the last six years and I don't like it. And I'm not a maverick in here, but if I see that they're not put together, it turns me off and I don't even want to address it. I'd rather say: "Let's table this thing and let's deal with it another day." But I hate this eleventh hour stuff, we gotta do this, we've gotta do this. I've been here for six years and several, two or three times, this came about. I think this should cease. They should give the trustee information so that they can make sound decisions, appropriate decisions. That's not the case all the time. I'm happy to voice this concern.

P8: So, P3, you think that information should be given in one whole bunch. If it is not, what steps do you think would be important to rectify the problem? In the case where an important issue is before the board and a decision has to be made right away but you feel that adequate information has not been given to you, is there any proposal that you can make?

P3: Yes, if there's an infraction by an employee here, like a security matter. I think that they should have a police report. They should do all the so called preliminary before they decide what action to take on the employee and then all this information is gathered so that the trustee knows what has been done so that we can prevent another occurrence and to make certain that the employee gets guidance and counseling. Rather than getting reports that the employee is appealing the action of the administration or management. Before that happens we want to talk to the employee too. We'll give them an equal opportunity, we want to hear the side of the employee. Since they are appealing to us, it's incumbent on us to carry out the responsibility of the public law. And if we don't know the background, then we are being coy or I'm remissing my responsibility when those things are not done correctly. So I think that those things should be so called faces.

There should be a trail for these things so that the trustees know that these things were done the way it's supposed to.

P8: So adequate information then, in that sense, really depends upon the kinds of things that you would like to do in a timely manner and you've just given an example. I think that's important because if you look at the next topic, it has something to do with how trustees are educated and developed in terms of the length of time that they spent in the college. If we look at these questions again it has something to do with orientation, it has something to do with ongoing education, and it also has something to do with information sharing. Are there any specific ideas, opinions, or perspectives you have on any of these three questions? Are there already practices in place or do you think you need to work more in terms of educating newly elected trustees or newly appointed trustees to the board? P4?

P4: I don't seem to have any problems getting information. I asked for financial reports five months ago and they provided them. So I don't have any problem there.

P8: Are you referring to the information packet P4?

P4: Yes.

P8: Okay. You are getting the information that is adequate for you in terms of being educated through the functioning of the board. P6 has been here the year before last so he does not need to be educated on board processes. From the perspective of the student P6.....

P6: >From the perspective of the students, we've talked about this before, as a matter of fact, in one conversation while we were in Saipan in the last board trustee regent training along with UOG and the Northern Marianas College. It's almost just a quick baptism. It's a shake in the woods and all of a sudden they are thrust into protocols they might not have known to exist before or have no experience with and then matters of policies versus management, how those roles differentiate. And again, how they are placed in a situation where they are representatives of a community, a greater community and without maybe somehow qualifying an individual prior to running. Some people have stepped into it and find out they're in over their heads. So maybe from that perspective, during the selection process, something like this can be reviewed and they can look at some of those qualifications. It's understandable that a student's purpose here is for education and also to gain experience and be able to translate that and hand that off to the student government who are also getting baptized in a way of governance and leadership and the trades and skills that are necessary for them. But it's so much better if a mentor could be assigned to an individual. Whether it's the past or present candidate, or student trustee, or it's someone in the surrogate relationship, maybe one of the staff advisors. Knowing Mr. Watson as a teacher has been helpful because prior to running I remember meeting Bernard and having a short conversation with him. Knowing those ties and being able to latch on to them and being able to have him as a mentor and a guide in the process, maybe even in the historical perspective of a student, has helped. What those

associations might mean and what they could be will tell well. But the training has been important. Going to the ACT conference with P1 as well, was an eye opener. I got to meet student trustees off island who were both voting and non-voting. I tell you it was an immersion at that point.

P8: So it was in the opportunities for trustee development and training and in terms of conferences that you attended. What other tools would make a resource for trustee education?

P1: Well, ACCB is coming up and the one I'm referring to is in Saipan. The other thing that we're trying to do is we've been trying to get our board members to come home from these conferences and train us, the rest of us that didn't go. In terms of what we're doing, I think we are realizing that we are sent on the retreats and it's happening more by accident than by design that it's working out to provide us the opportunity to train ourselves. For example, when (two board members) came back they kind of backed briefed and trained us on what was going on. The reading material was also important. It is available with Lou and anybody can come up and review it, or even at their request, have it delivered to their homes. So that's for the board members who are already in place. And while P6 was talking, it came to mind P6, I don't know how the students do it because the law allows only a year to serve. It's hard to expect anybody that is brand new to come in and be able to participate fully. How can we fix that? Here's a suggestion. If you're not already doing it, I wonder if the students, like P6 in your case, and let's face it one of the things they tell us in management is as soon as you get on board you identify and you start to groom your replacement or successor. I don't know P6 if you're already looking at somebody that's out there and saying, that person is showing initiative and showing interest in becoming a student trustee. Once that person is identified, or persons, maybe you could invite them to come to the meetings-- come to the board meetings and see what's involved. See how the president, the CEO, and the board interact. Maybe when we bring them on board, we will try to change the term and make it a two-year term. The law says only one year. I think that is a disadvantage to the student rep, but the law being the way it is, we need to live within that. But maybe how we can help ourselves is identify somebody. P6, for example, I don't know whether you're doing it, but maybe you can get a hold of them and say: "Hey look, my time is up twelve months from today." Maybe the pool that you select from shouldn't be freshman, maybe they should be someone who has been here one year or is going to be here for the graduation year. But anyway P6, and again, this is just a suggestion because I know that you respond to a committee that advises you. I think P8, as far as orientation, I think we try to orient ourselves. Maybe we need to be more visible to the students in the campus by attending the events. I see your point when you are saying, maybe we don't know everybody. We seem to know only those that come to the meetings and I don't think it's anybody's fault. Those of us that can come here other than just for the meetings, have the opportunity to meet and interact with the students, staff and faculty. But I know the board isn't avoiding or isn't trying to make contact. I think this is a very open and outgoing board.

P8: Maybe when we get on to the last topic in terms of objectives you have for the next year,

we can follow it up. But P3 also has some points to make.

P3: Yes. I'm more concerned about the regular board members here because I feel that most of the problems that we do see with our mission and our policies is coming from the administration of the institution. Not only for the student because that is only one aspect. But I think as regular board members, it encompasses a big responsibility in here, especially when you deal with the mission of GCC and the policies of GCC. You cannot just take this for granted because there are a lot of matters to be considered. The responsibility for the trustees in here is so big that you have to be careful about how to go about public laws and how the administration and educators perceive the so-called operational function of the agenda. I feel that perhaps the regular board members should come out and speak as they represent a certain community. Like I represent the general community and how does that face me? And then you have a trustee here representing the union. How does he interface with the institution? What is his perspective? Because I feel that some are slacking in here and I strongly feel that way. The trustee must understand the community he or she represents. Like labor, I think P4 here represents labor. How does he see that into the function of GCC? How do we reach out to get those people in here? You know, the so-called labor. Are we talking in terms of the interest of the institution?

P8: Are you saying that we also need to educate the other constituents of GCC regarding the sector you represent?

P3: Yes

P8: So that there's greater understanding of a broad role of being a board member.

P3: Because it's very broad.

P8: I think all of this will fall under goals and objectives, because basically, the kinds of goals and objectives that you set for this particular body address those kinds of issues. Like P3, for instance, is concerned about representing the true sentiments of the sector that he represents.

P3: Yes, that's correct.

P8: And so then, what kinds of goals and objectives do you think the board must set up that can be attained for the year and are measurable? Any thoughts? What about my friend P5, in terms of the staff perspective.

P5: I have to look at all these myself.

P3: For one thing, if I may P8, like P1 mentioned, I think we should revisit the mission often. It's like a creek you know. I think we should really frequently look at it--how we service

and how we deal with the mission and where we are, like you said.

P8: We will need to revisit the mission statement this year because that was part of our accreditation report.

P3: It's very broad. The mission statement is very broad and if you are going to digest that thing you need to dissect the mission. This is the way I feel. I feel that we should dissect and really understand and really know our sector of responsibility.

P8: I'm thinking aloud now. Is this the kind of question you would like to ask: How do I represent the sentiments of the sectors that I represent so that it aligns with what the institution seeks to do in terms of its mission?

P3: Like I do, I attend the so-called municipal council. I attend it to find out what we can do for the community in Agat. I attend the meeting to find out what we can do in terms of training education. So I make sure that I go and attend the meeting even though I am not a member of the planning council. But that is a source of activity as a trustee to the community.

P8: P1.

P1: This number 10 is a tough one. I am saying to myself, "I don't know if we do this formally or informally". At the same time, maybe you guys on the outside can look at us and maybe you can tell us. We set goals and objectives for ourselves. I just made some notes for myself and I just put down FY03 goals and FY03 objectives. So going back to what you said and what P3 said, okay. One of the things that always comes to my mind is the mission statement. That's our job. We have a mission that has been given to us. So then to accomplish that mission we set our goals to measure our progress towards those goals. We set objectives to mark our way to make sure that we are on track. The other thing that we look at is compliance. What have we been mandated to do? Compliance is a big thing because that is something that will bite us hard. The mandates will hit us hard. What are we mandated to do and are we complying. Public law 17 whatever that enacted or created GCC and the following amendments that you might recall back.....

P1: What are the other regulatory laws of Guam and federal government that we need to be in compliance with? We need to identify categories and see how all that affects or enables us to meet our goals and objectives and in the end complete the mission. So if I may at this time, let me suggest this to the board. On one of our retreats, and 03 has already started, maybe we need to make a single line agenda item and say we are going to set our goals and then our objectives. P8 do you have that down already?

P8: In fact, I was going to point out to you the assessment plan template that I gave to the board for your review. I spelled out three goals of the board and these are the goals that I spelled out. You may be able to clip this and it may become your own goals and objectives. Goals are just general, broad statements of what you intend to do. Objectives

are much more specific and more narrow. This goal number one, board of trustees will continue to establish policies consistent with the college's mission statement in support of the teaching and learning processes of the college is a really broad one. Do you want to put the language so that we can be much more specific to address those issues of compliance that you did mention. The board of trustees will further strengthen its partnership with the college's CEO, faculty, staff and students through professional development activities, which cover board education. And the other one is, the Board of Trustees will provide the necessary resources to support the quality of human and physical work environment that will foster the improvement of student learning outcomes of the college. Because much of the WASC assessment that is being mandated will have to address the learning outcomes of our students and that's what I try to relate in here. Maybe you want to take a look at this again or maybe you can set up goals that are really your own goals and/or pick what is existing in here. If you have a retreat at the beginning of the year and you set up goals, general objectives and specific objectives, you can convene again and ask: Did we accomplish this? Did we accomplish that? That may be a good exercise for the board so that you can keep track of your accomplishments in terms of agenda setting because you do set the agenda for yourselves.

P2: I do know that more work needs to be done in this area so I do agree with P1 that we should get together during a workshop. We can take those goals and make it our goals and maybe narrow it down to specific objectives for each goal. That is something we can work on.

P3: Agreed. I think those three things that you mentioned, I think that those are the things that make things practical and operational.

P8: And you can even go beyond that if you have goals. You can have activities that go with the objectives. You can even have a timeline so that at the end when you sit down again you can ask: Did we do what we said we will do by the time we said we should be able to do it? It's a good exercise. The way we do it with the other units of the college, that's what we are doing with assessment. So we ask people: Did you do what you said you will do? You can ask the same question as a board, as a body. Any other last points? P1?

P1: I want to go back to number eight. And I hear, but I think that at the same time in terms of accurate information and this last minute decision.... I know that it has happened in the past but I see improvement and I think in terms of fairness to the president and his staff, we did ask him in the beginning-- please no surprises, no eleventh hour request for a decision. I know sometimes they do come to us last minute. And at the same time whenever we ask questions, he responds. Even before the next meeting, he says–"Okay, here are the answers to your questions." I think that gives us enough time, and again with the additional information, to decide it. But I wanted to throw that in because I don't want you to get the impression that the president is ignoring our concerns in terms of requests for decisions. That does occur, and I think sometimes it is beyond his control if

he gets new information and he says that this thing is going to happen tomorrow and he just found out two minutes ago or just one minute before now. So sometimes we find ourselves in that situation but I want you to know that there's no real problem in that area. He is abiding by our request about no eleventh hour decision.

P3: I understand. I see that communication is there and we're doing great. It's just that when I mentioned it, it was through my experience here for the six years, and there was a predecessor besides our CEO here. So when I mentioned that, it was the six years that I've been here. But it has tremendously improved. And I would like to continue on that basis that we have those information so we can make sound decisions.

P8: I heard the word improve and that is exactly the whole point of this focus group discussion, that we can all get together as a group and take those steps necessary for those improvements. P7.

P7: In going back to number ten, in terms of goals and objectives, although those were broad goals that we set up, they are good goals. It needs to be noted that when we look at objectives we're looking at the future. It's not just a binary type of response, either yes or no. Although we in Voc Ed. like to think of past conditions as standards, we look at tasks we can achieve at 100% at all times. Maybe a matrix should be set up where, not just a two dimensional matrix, maybe a three dimensional matrix where time is a factor also in the degree of completeness of that particular activity, that particular objective, that particular goal.

P8: And success criteria

P7: Yes, that's true. So that when we do report at the end of the year we can say: "Maybe we only went as far as one step on this, but look how far we've gone on this particular objective, we've gone 100%."

P8: We can say we met expectations, and with the others, we've exceeded expectations. At least there is a standard for us to work towards a common goal. So I think the idea about the retreat, P1, is a good step to take so that then you can formulate and articulate.

P2: And perhaps you can also help us in that area.

P8: I can. The assessment committee is always willing to help the Board in terms of making those goals and objectives more specific.

P1: What's important is how you guys see us. How we view ourselves, we can say: "Yes, we're looking good", but how do we really appear to the people that we serve. Are we really doing what we're supposed to be doing? One more thing, in answer to the question whether the members respect each other's opinion, my answer to this is yes, very much so. I think this board argues actively but I don't think we argue to fight, I think we argue to understand. Because of that, we respect each other, and sometimes we refuse to budge but at least we know where we stand and we understand that and we respect each other

for taking the position.

P7: The refusal to budge may be on that given evening, but after a week or after two weeks, they've had a chance to reflect over a given issue.

P8: This focus group discussion is a step in the right direction. Thank you so much.

P7: Thank you.