The Contract and Evaluation:
The Board/CEO Partnership for Student Success

Community College League of California
Annual Trustee Conference
San Diego, CA – May 4, 2012

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CEO Evaluation Components

Note: The process of evaluating the CEO is one of the most important roles of the Board of Trustees. It is also one of the most important responsibilities of the CEO, and both should take the process very seriously. There is no one way to conduct the CEO evaluation, but listed below are some of the components of typical CEO evaluations. The evaluation process and expectations should be clearly spelled out in the CEO contract in order to avoid any misunderstandings.

Goals and Objectives (Desired Outcomes): Any good evaluation system is based on a clear and shared set of goals and objectives. Although many Boards describe these as "goals of the chancellor or president," another method of casting them can be "goals of the CEO and Board of Trustees." This approach suggests that the Board and CEO have a clear and joint understanding of the desired outcomes of the organization within a set period of time. If planning and budgeting are truly integrated, these same desired outcomes should be evident in the college strategic plan, budget, and in other individual and college-wide planning documents.

Frequency and Format: A good CEO evaluation system should specify how frequently the Board will evaluate the CEO and on what schedule that evaluation will take place. Although an annual formal evaluation is standard, many Boards and CEOs are discussing the CEO's performance much more often. Best practice suggests that the Board and CEO have a conversation at least one time in addition to the annual formal evaluation, and many now conduct informal evaluations two or three times in additional to the annual formal evaluation. These "conversations" help the Board and CEO stay in alignment even as the environment changes. If performance is discussed only once annually, the Board and CEO risk losing touch with one another related to performance and having what could be a significant gap in expectations when the annual evaluation rolls around. The formal evaluation month and format should be specified in the CEO contract.

Self-Evaluation: Most Boards prefer the CEO to conduct a self-evaluation prior to the formal evaluation session. This self-evaluation should reference the stated goals or outcomes, as well as address other issues that have come up throughout the year and/or issues raised by the Board. A good self-evaluation is appropriately self-critical as well as complimentary.

<u>Performance Questionnaire:</u> In an environment of participatory governance, many CEOs and Boards are seeking input on CEO performance of various constituent group leaders, student leaders and community members. This can be accomplished in the form of a survey which relates to the specific areas such as leadership, management, and personal/professional. Care should be taken to identify the appropriate number and type of individuals surveyed, and good evaluation instruments also include an opportunity for the evaluator to expand on areas of strength or weakness. Some Boards also complete individual Board member ratings of the CEO which include their opinions of the relationship of the CEO with the Board. These questionnaires must be tabulated by a third party in order to ensure anonymity, but allowing the rater to sign the questionnaire is also not uncommon.

<u>Annual Evaluation Session:</u> The annual formal evaluation of the CEO is generally conducted in closed session. The CEO often begins with a verbal re-cap of the self-evaluation as well as other comments she/he believes are important to the conversation. Typically the Board Chair then summarizes the feedback received through any evaluation questionnaires, and summarizes the progress made on the stated goals. All Board members then have an opportunity to talk with the CEO regarding his/her performance, and then the CEO is generally excused for the Board to deliberate on the performance. Finally, the CEO returns to the meeting for the Board to summarize her/his performance. This is generally done by the Board Chair and should include a formal statement as to the performance of the CEO being "successful" or "unsuccessful" or some other clear expression of the Board's feeling about the performance of the CEO.