

# 2010 Policies, Practices, and Composition of Higher Education Coordinating Boards and Commissions

July 2010

Ingram Center for Public Trusteeship and Governance  
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

**AGB** ASSOCIATION OF  
GOVERNING BOARDS  
OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

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## INTRODUCTION

Coordinating boards and commissions have long been members of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), but we have never attempted to systematically collect data about how they are structured internally or about the citizens who serve on them. This report does that. It provides us considerable information about the citizens who serve on these boards and commissions (a demographic profile), as well as some of the internal policies and operations of such boards and their members.

This report delves much deeper than a November 2008 AGB Ingram Center report, *Public Higher Education Governing and Coordinating Boards: Composition, Characteristics, and Structure*. In addition to the information in that report, this report provides data on basic board and committee structures, as well as the frequency and number of board meetings and the time commitment required of board members. One interesting finding in this report, for example, is that coordinating boards meet, on average, eight times a year and spend just over 10 days in full board meetings (some additional time is spent in standing and ad hoc committee meetings). This may be sufficient time for the challenges facing states and their higher education systems, and is only slightly less than the time spent by public governing boards. Or is it sufficient? Do today's challenges require more of these boards and their members; and, indeed, of all higher education boards?

The survey for this report asked questions about the state higher education executive-board relationship, and those questions were limited to hiring practices, evaluation, and compensation. A fuller examination of this relationship may be worthwhile given the relatively high turnover rate among state coordinating board executives, for example: what responsibility rests with the board in terms of selection, meaningful performance assessment, expectations, and support that could improve the service of coordinating agency executives (at least for the 20 boards that retain authority to select executives)?

Statutorily created citizen coordinating boards and commissions wield considerable authority; a few have governing board-related powers. Even in those states in which the board and the state agency they oversee are officially advisory, the board is often made up of prominent citizens whose leadership and guidance on state policy is sought often. Examining how board authority and leadership are exercised is not the purpose of this report. We view it as the first step in what will be a further examination of state coordinating boards and commissions, their individual members, and the nature of their work and engagement—in partnership with their executives and agency staffs—on the critical education-related policies facing states and their higher education systems.

Much is at stake for asserting state higher-education policy and in creating and advancing public agendas for higher education. Public colleges and universities and the states need highly effective, high-performing governing and state coordinating boards to help ensure that our nation achieves its educational goals. We believe the information in this report will contribute to an understanding of the work and structure of state coordinating boards and commissions as they address the educational challenges ahead.

Richard Novak



Senior Vice President for Programs and Research  
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## ABOUT THE SURVEY

AGB's 2010 *Survey of Policies, Practices and Composition of Coordinating Boards and Commissions* collects and analyzes the characteristics of state higher education coordinating boards and board members. To put this information into perspective, comparisons to public institution and university system governing boards from AGB's 2004 *Policies, Practices and Composition of Governing Boards of Public Colleges and Universities* are included where such comparisons are illuminating. This report builds upon earlier work by Dr. Aims McGuiness for the Education Commission of the States.

This report provides chief executives, board members, government leaders, staff, scholars, and others with a basis for comparing the attributes of their boards to those in other states. The survey results reveal data and information regarding the following:

- Board member age, gender, and ethnicity;
- Board member occupations;
- Board size;
- Length of terms for board members and chairs, as well as appointment methods;
- Board meetings;
- Service on other types of boards;
- Use of executive sessions;
- Most common board committees;
- Written policies for removing board members;
- Board education, training, and assessment practices; and
- Coordinating board executive officers.

Out of 26 possible respondents (coordinating boards and commissions), 25 responded to part I of this survey (multiple choice and brief response questions regarding board member terms of service, board meetings, chief executives, board committees, and related policies).<sup>1</sup> Twenty-four boards responded to part II of this survey (questions regarding board member characteristics—age, ethnicity, occupation, and service on other boards). Averaging the surveys submitted, the overall response rate was 94 percent.

The surveys were conducted electronically and responses are confidential unless boards granted AGB permission to use the data provided in identifying ways. Where specific coordinating boards and commission are cited, information is provided with permission from survey respondents. Generally, most survey data are reported in aggregate form. Please note that voting students and faculty representatives are included in the data.

The following statewide coordinating boards and commissions are described in this report:

1. Alabama Commission on Higher Education
2. Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board
3. California Postsecondary Education Commission
4. Colorado Commission on Higher Education
5. Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education
6. Delaware Higher Education Commission
7. Illinois Board of Higher Education
8. Indiana Commission for Higher Education
9. Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education
10. Louisiana Board of Regents
11. Maryland Higher Education Commission
12. Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

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1. The Delaware Higher Education Commission was able to submit part I of the survey, but could not complete part II—this includes questions regarding board member age, gender, ethnicity, occupations, and service to other boards. DHEC's Board has not met since October 2002, when the Department of Education went through transition/restructuring. Since DHEC has no active board members, the Commission was unable to complete part II.

13. Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education
14. Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Higher Education
15. New Hampshire Postsecondary Education Commission
16. Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York
17. Ohio Board of Regents
18. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
19. Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education
20. South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
21. Tennessee Higher Education Commission
22. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
23. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
24. Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board
25. West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

### ***Report Descriptors***

Members of the coordinating boards and commissions go by various names: commissioner, regent, governor, board member, etc. For this report, we use “board member” generically. Likewise, the citizen boards advising and overseeing the state higher education agencies and coordinating higher education systems go by many different names: state council, state commission, board of regents, board of governors, and coordinating board. For this report, we use “coordinating board” inclusively.

When considering the information provided about coordinating boards in this report, it might be helpful to know that 24 of the 25 reporting boards coordinate both two- and four-year colleges and universities in their states.

### ***Comparisons of Coordinating Boards to Public Governing Boards***

In addition, and as mentioned previously, when we compare coordinating boards to “public governing boards,” this aggregated value includes data from two-year, four-year, and system governing boards.

## PROFILE OF THE TYPICAL COORDINATING BOARD OR COMMISSION

Averaging the data from respondents reveals the following prototypical characteristics:

*Board Size, Gender, and Ethnicity.* The typical public higher education coordinating board has 12 voting members (four women and eight men) of whom nine are Caucasian, one is Black or African American, one is Hispanic or Latino, and one is Asian or American Indian/Alaska Native, or an ethnicity not listed.

*Age, Occupation, and Service.* Two board members are 49 years old or younger, eight are 50 to 69 years old, and two are 70 or older. The average length of a single term of service is 5.5 years.

The typical board includes two members who are retired and 10 who are currently employed. Of those employed, four are in business, two in professional services, two in education, one is an elected official (or in a government position), and one is in an occupation not listed. Of the two retired board members, one had a career in education and the other in business.

In addition, the typical board includes one member who serves on a college or university governing board, six members who also serve on another nonprofit organization board, and 1.5 members who serve on a for-profit corporate board.

*Board Policies and Practices.* The chief executive is not a voting member of the board. However, in almost all cases, he/she routinely participates in executive session meetings.

Over half of all board members attend about 76 to 90 percent of all board meetings. The typical board meets eight times each year for three or more hours each time. The board has four standing committees: academic programs/certification/instructional affairs, finance/budget, executive, and other committees. "Other committees" may include: cultural education; facilities planning; investment; policy and planning; research; strategic communication, and others.

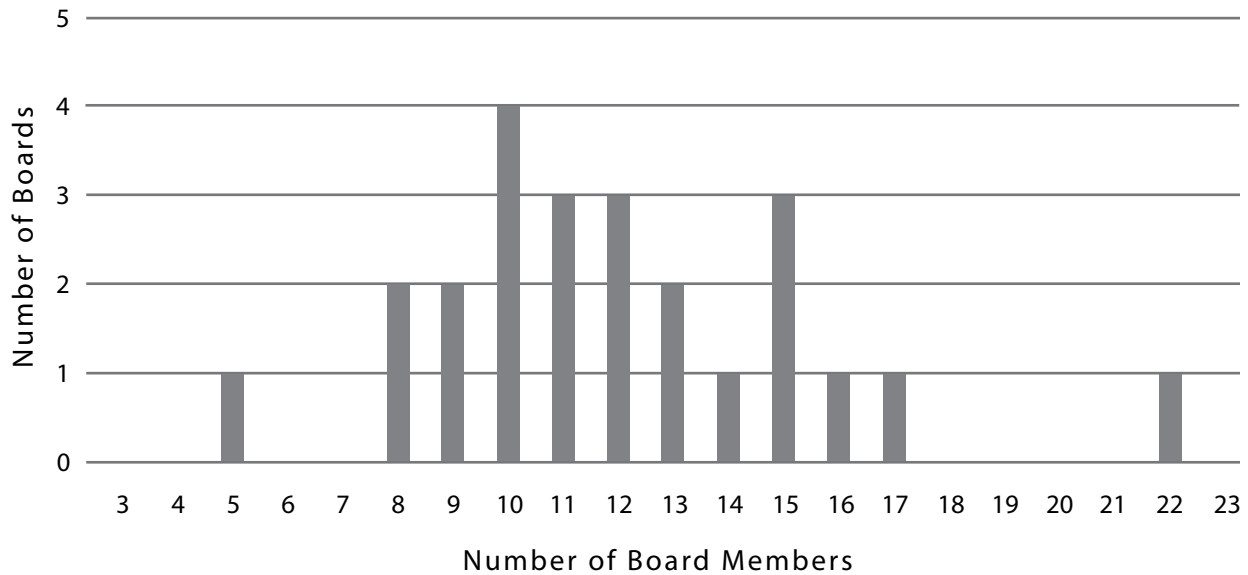
## CHARACTERISTICS OF COORDINATING BOARDS AND BOARD MEMBERS

### Board Size

Considering the most common board size, four boards report 10 members while others indicate three boards with 11 members, three with 12, and three with 15 members. The sizes of the coordinating boards in this study range from five to 22 members. The mean is 12.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* The average public governing board has 10.5 members.

**Graph 1: Frequency of Board Size**



### Gender and Ethnicity

Coordinating boards are composed of more than twice as many men as women, with a gender breakdown of 69 percent men and 31 percent women.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* The gender imbalance in coordinating boards mirrors that of public governing boards, where men outnumber women by almost a two and a half to one ratio: in 2004, the gender breakdown of public governing boards was 71 percent men and 29 percent women.

The ethnic composition of coordinating boards is as follows: 79 percent Caucasian, 11 percent Black or African American, and seven percent Hispanic or Latino. Public governing boards increased their representation of minorities from 1997 to 2004. It is highly likely that coordinating boards parallel these increases but data is unavailable to confirm this. Future research will demonstrate if coordinating boards increase their diversity.

**Table 1: What is the gender and ethnic breakdown of voting board members?**

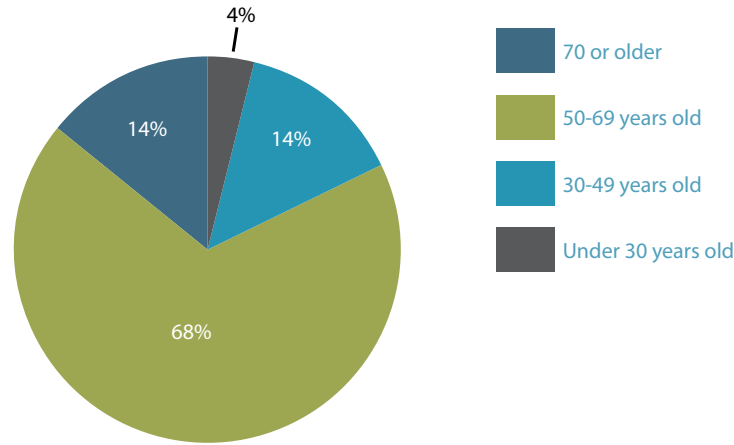
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American (non-Hispanic)	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	White (non-Hispanic)	Other
Men	0%	1%	7%	4%	0%	56%	1%
Women	0%	1%	4%	3%	0%	23%	0%

### Age Distribution

The vast majority (68 percent) of board members on coordinating boards tend to be between the ages of 50 to 69 years old. Two categories, board members between the ages of 30 to 49 years old and board members 70 or more years old, each make up 14 percent of coordinating boards.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Similar to coordinating boards, 65 percent of public governing board trustees are between the ages of 50 and 60 years old. However, public governing boards have more trustees (20 percent) who are between the ages of 30 and 49 years old than at the age of 70 or older (11 percent).

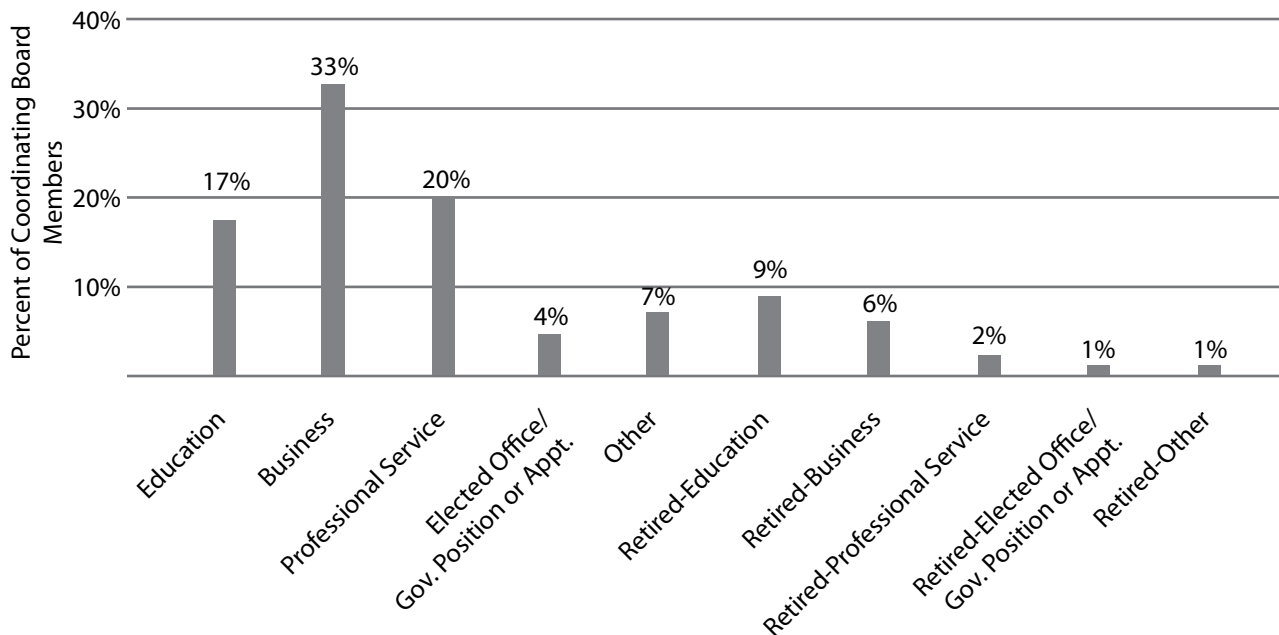
**Chart 1: What is the age distribution of voting members of the board?**



### Occupations

Among employed board members, 33 percent are in business, 20 percent in professional service, 17 percent in education, seven percent in other occupations,<sup>2</sup> and four percent are in elected office or serving in a government position/appointment. Altogether, retired citizens make up 19 percent of coordinating boards. Of retired trustees, more had careers in education (9 percent) and business (6 percent). Others who have retired (as a percentage of all board members) include two percent in professional services and one percent in both elected office or government position/appointment, and retired from another occupation not listed.

**Graph 2: What are the occupations of the voting members of your board?**



2. "Other occupations" includes nonprofit executives, members of the clergy, homemakers, artists, and others.

Descriptions of top occupation categories:

*Education.* Includes: officer, administrator, or faculty member of a college, university or higher-education organization; full-time student; teacher/administrator of a primary/secondary school; and others.

*Business.* Includes: executive, administrator, or employee of: a large business corporation; a banking, financial, insurance, or real estate company; a small business; and others.

*Professional Service.* Includes: accountant; attorney/law; dentist, physician/medical professional; psychologist/mental health professional; and others.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Similar to today’s coordinating boards, over half of trustees of public governing boards (50.7 percent) were employed in business, 25 percent in professional service, 13.2 percent in education, and 11.1 percent in other occupations. As a percentage of all board members, 38.1 percent of retired trustees had careers in education, 37.2 percent in business, 15 percent in professional services, and 9.7 percent in other occupations.

***Service on Other Boards***

The average coordinating board has 6.1 members who also serve as board members of one or more nonprofit organization boards, and 1.5 members who serve as board members of one or more for-profit corporate boards. The average board also includes one member serving as a board member of one or more college or university governing boards. Service to another college or university governing board is considered a conflict of interest in some states. This value might represent that coordinating board members are also serving on governing boards of out-of-state colleges and universities.

**Table 2: How many voting board members also serve as a board member of the following types of organizations?**

	One or more college or university governing board(s)	One or more for-profit corporate board(s)	One or more nonprofit organization board(s)
Average Number of Members on the Typical Coordinating Board	1	1.5	6.1
Percent of Coordinating Board Members	13%	16%	71%

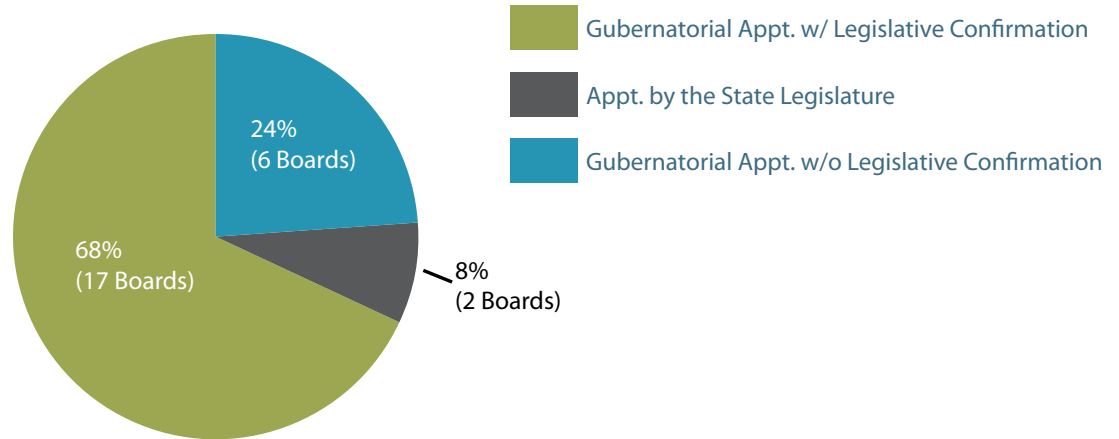
*Comparison to public governing boards.* The average public governing board included four trustees who also served on a nonprofit organization board, 2.1 who served on a corporate board, and 1.5 who served on another college or university foundation board. The average number of public trustees who served on another college or university governing board was less than one (0.4).

## BOARD POLICIES AND PRACTICES

### *Appointment and Selection Processes for Board Members*

Seventeen coordinating boards (68 percent) report that members serve by gubernatorial appointment with legislative confirmation. Six boards (24 percent) indicate appointments are gubernatorial without legislative confirmation, and two boards (eight percent) report that members are appointed by state legislatures.

**Chart 2: Who appoints board members?**



The California Postsecondary Education Commission and the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York make up the eight percent reporting state legislative appointments. When taking a closer look at the California Postsecondary Education Commission, board members are appointed by both the state legislature and the governor. Six members are appointed by the governor, three by the senate rules committee, and three by the speaker of the assembly. The Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York is composed of 17 members elected by the state legislature: one from each of the state’s 13 judicial districts and four members who serve at large.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Board member appointment methods for public governing boards include the following: 38.4 percent are gubernatorial appointments with legislative confirmation; 9.9 percent are gubernatorial without legislative confirmation; 26.1 percent are elected; and 19.9 percent are appointments by some other method not listed in the original survey. The large number of community college trustees included in the above values deflates the number of trustee gubernatorial appointments. Gubernatorial appointment is the selection process for the vast majority of four-year institutions.

### *Conditions for Appointment and Selection of Board Members*

*State officials serving as board members.* Sixty-four percent of coordinating boards report that state employees (including elected officials) may serve as voting board members.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Similarly, most public governing boards (71.6 percent) allow state employees and elected officials to serve and vote as well.

**Table 3:**

Other than ex-officio appointments, are state employees (including elected officials) prohibited from serving as voting members of the board?	Number of Boards
No	16 (64%)
Yes	9 (36%)

Also, recognizing special situations, if a new member is not appointed at the time a scheduled vacancy occurs, 23 boards (92 percent) report that the current board member may continue to serve until an appointment is made.

### ***Board Member Terms of Service***

On average, the length of a single term for board members is 5.5 years. The range of term length is four to nine years. All but one board (96 percent) reported that the length of term for board members has not changed over the past five years. The board that reported a change indicated that a single term is now shorter.

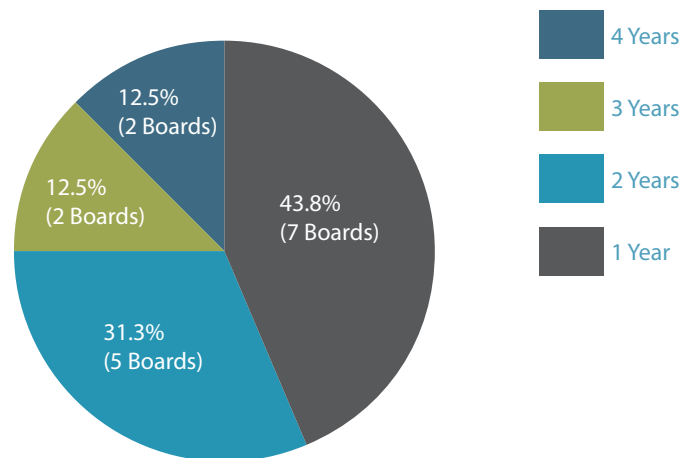
When asked whether or not there is a limit on the number of consecutive terms board members may serve, 19 boards (64 percent) responded “no” and nine boards (36 percent) responded “yes.” For those that responded in the affirmative, the average number of consecutive terms board members may serve is two.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* One-fourth of public governing boards reported policies that limit the number of terms a board member may serve; the maximum number of consecutive terms allowed was the same, two.

In addition, 17 coordinating boards (70.8 percent) reported that board member terms are staggered. Seven boards do not have staggered terms and one board did not respond to this question. Staggered terms are considered good practice as they may provide continuity by lessening the chance of substantial board member turnover at a specific time. For these 17 coordinating boards, 43.8 percent have a one-year interval between appointment classes.

The following chart demonstrates the intervals between appointment classes.

**Chart 3: If board member terms are staggered, what is the interval between appointment classes?**



### ***Policies for Removing Board Members***

Twelve of the 25 responding coordinating boards and commissions operate under policies for removing board members. Attendance (number of absences), board member conflicts of interest, and misconduct are most frequently cited as reasons for removing members.

*Attendance clauses.* Seven boards report a maximum number of absences allowed. On average, board members are expected to miss no more than 2.5 meetings in a 12-month period. For six out of the seven boards, personal illness, family illness, or board-approved absence(s) will not lead to dismissal. Policies regarding who has the authority to remove board members were also documented. For example, regarding the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, if the commissioner and presiding officer of the board inform the governor and/or attorney general that a board member was absent from more than half the regularly scheduled meetings without board approval, the governor and attorney general have the authority to remove the board member. The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board provided another process: the board chair can ask the governor to remove any board member who misses two meetings in a year without cause.

*Misconduct or conflict of interest.* Six of the seven coordinating boards with board removal policies also address conflicts of interest and board member misconduct. Three boards report that in these circumstances, charges must be presented and the board member in question must be provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations. For

example, regarding the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Higher Education, a member can be removed by the governor for cause, but must be presented with the charges and given a hearing to defend him or herself. Another process, presented in the state constitution of Maryland, allows the governor to remove members (and all other executive-appointed civil officers) for incompetence or misconduct.

**Board Chairs**

*Board chair’s term.* The average length of a single term for coordinating board chairs is 2.3 years. All but one coordinating board (96 percent) report that the length of a single board chair term has not changed over the past five years.

**Table 4:**

Within the past five years, has the length of the term for a board chair changed?	Percent of Boards
No	96%
Yes, it is now shorter	0%
Yes, it is now longer	4%

It is also noteworthy that board chairs of two coordinating boards do not serve for a specified term. In these states, board chairs are appointed by governors.

For 17 coordinating boards (68 percent), there is no policy limiting the number of consecutive terms board chairs may serve. For the eight boards (32 percent) that indicated there is a limit on the number of consecutive terms board chairs may serve, the average maximum number of terms is 2.5.

**Table 5:**

Is there a limit on the number of consecutive terms the board chair may serve?	Percent of Boards
No	68%
Yes	32%

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Twenty-nine percent of governing boards reported policies for limiting the number of terms board chairs may serve. For these boards, the average maximum number of terms is two years.

*Gender.* Assessing the gender of board chairs, 20 coordinating boards (80 percent) have board chairs that are male, and five boards (20 percent) reported female board chairs.

**Table 6:**

What is the gender of the current board chair?	Percent of Boards
Male	80%
Female	20%

*Comparison to public governing boards.* This is comparable to public governing boards, which reported that 72.7 percent of board chairs were male and 26.4 percent were female.

*Ethnicity.* Survey responses also reveal that 19 coordinating boards (76 percent) include current board chairs that are Caucasian, three (12 percent) are Black or African American, and three (12 percent) are Hispanic or Latino. There were no reported board chairs that are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

**Table 7:**

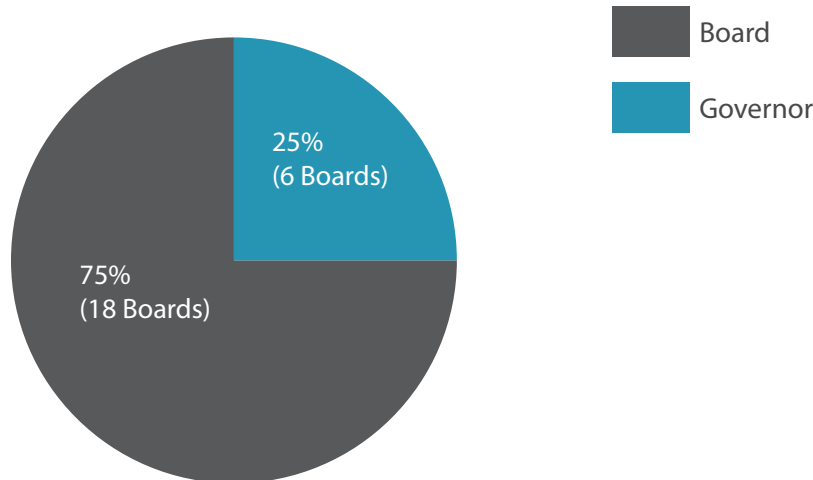
Ethnicities of Current Boards Chairs	Percent of Board Chairs
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0%
Asian	0%
Black or African American (non-Hispanic)	12%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	12%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0%
White (non-Hispanic)	76%
Other	0%

*Comparison to public governing boards.* The make-up of board chairs for governing boards was: 82.1 percent Caucasian, 7.7 percent Black or African American, 3.4 percent Hispanic or Latino, 2.6 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native, 0.6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.6 percent “Other,” and 3.1 percent unknown.

*Selection.* Fifteen coordinating boards (62.5 percent) indicated that board by-laws are the source of current board chair selection policies; nine boards (37.5 percent) reported that board chair selection policies are defined in state statutes. One board did not respond to this question.

In practice, three-fourths (75 percent) of chairpersons serving coordinating boards are selected by the board, 25 percent are selected by governors, and no board chairs are selected by state legislatures.

**Chart 4: In practice, who selects the board chair?**



*Comparison to public governing boards.* By comparison, board chair selection practices differ for public governing boards. Data reveal that 90 percent of boards selected board chairs, a mere 1.7 percent were selected by the governor, and 6.8 percent were selected by another method; two percent of boards did not report this information.

### ***Coordinating Board Chief Executive Officers***

Twenty boards (80 percent) reported having the authority to appoint state higher education executive officers. For the five coordinating boards that do not have this authority, four are appointed by governors and one is appointed by the state’s secretary of education.

*Gubernatorial influence.* In considering the influence of governors, it is noteworthy that they appoint 25 percent of board chairs (six board chairs) and 20 percent of chief executives (five chief executives).

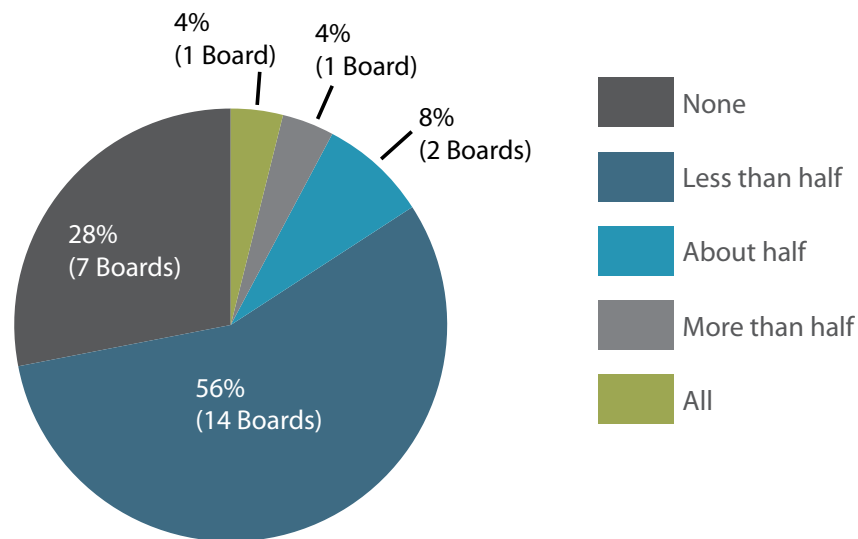
*Comparison to public governing boards.* For all governing boards, it is common practice for the board to select and appoint chief executives.

### ***Meetings***

When coordinating boards were asked whether or not they use a consent agenda (combining routine agenda items for board approval without discussion), 15 boards (60 percent) responded in the affirmative. Ten boards (40 percent) do not use a consent agenda.

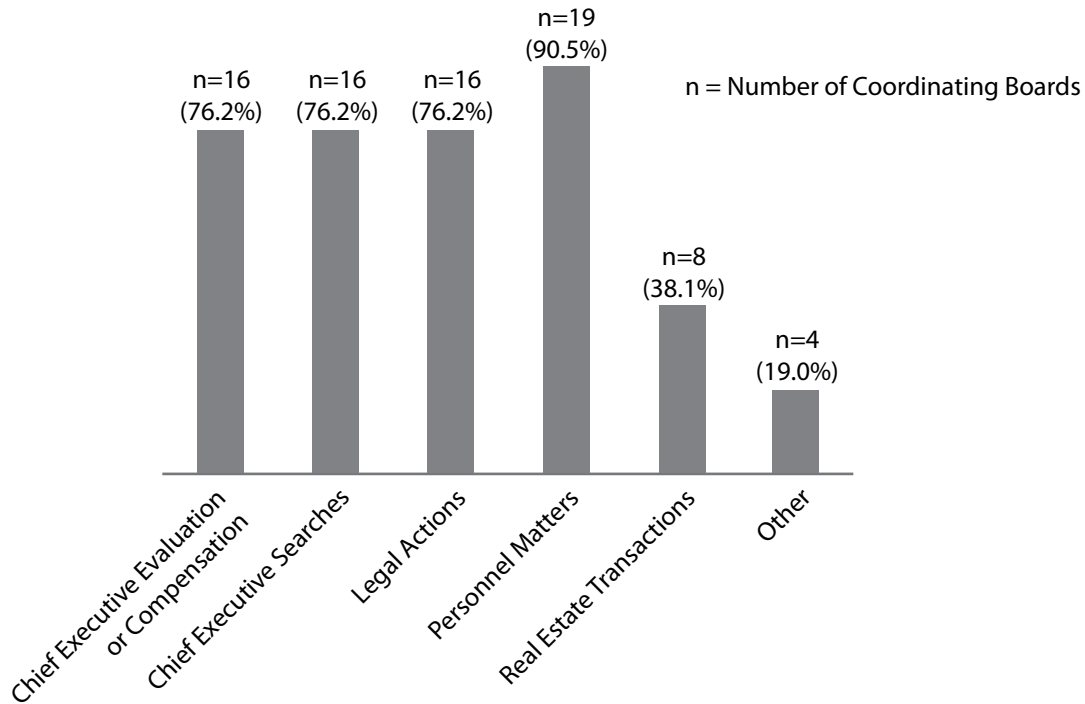
When asked if coordinating boards convene “executive sessions” (a portion of the board meeting restricted only to board members) at scheduled full-board meetings, 20 boards (80 percent) reported using this practice. For eighteen boards (72 percent), chief executives routinely participate in at least part of each executive session. *Note: Five boards (20 percent) are not able to hold executive sessions at full-board meetings.*

**Chart 5: At how many of its meetings during the past year did your coordinating board convene in executive session?**



Twenty boards (83.3 percent of responding boards) report that under state laws, executive sessions are limited to certain issues. *Note: One board did not respond.* In addition, boards were also asked to identify all issues for which boards are permitted to meet in executive session. As shown in Graph 3, responding coordinating boards report the following issues for executive sessions: general personnel matters (19 boards, 90.5 percent), chief executive searches (16 boards, 76.2 percent), chief executive evaluations or compensation (16 boards, 76.2 percent), legal actions (16 boards, 76.2 percent), and real estate transactions (eight boards, 38.1 percent). Four boards (19 percent of responding boards) reported that executive sessions are limited to “other” issues, including but not limited to: personnel, contractual, and discipline matters; special appointments; security issues; investigative proceedings; location of companies; and other purposes specified in statute. It was also reported that state Freedom of Information Acts may limit reasons for executive sessions and might prohibit action from being taken while board members are in session.

**Graph 3: Issues for which Coordinating Boards are Permitted to Meet in Executive Session.**



Note: Four boards did not respond to this question.

### ***Frequency of Board Meetings***

The typical board met an average of eight times over the course of a year (this includes full-board meetings, not committee meetings or social events). In addition to their scheduled meetings, two boards held extra/special meetings of the board to address policy issues as they arose. One board held an additional two meetings of the full board, while another board held an additional three meetings.

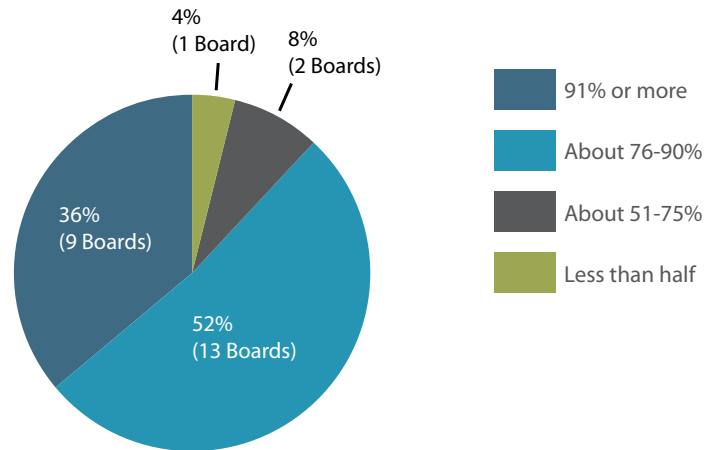
*Comparison to public governing boards.* The typical public governing board met an average of 10 times over the course of a year (not including committee meetings or social events).

*Number of hours for business portions of board meetings.* For the typical coordinating board, the business portion of board meetings lasts an average of 3.5 hours. This does not include committee meetings or social events.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* The typical public governing board spent slightly more time (4.3 hours) addressing the business portion of meetings.

*Percentage of board members attending a typical board meeting.* Overall, attendance at scheduled coordinating board meetings was high. When boards were asked what percentage of voting board members attended a typical full board meeting during the past 12 months, board responses reveal the following: 13 boards (52 percent) report that board members attend 76 to 90 percent of meetings; nine boards (36 percent) report board members attend more than 91 percent of meetings; two boards (8 percent) report board members attend 51 to 75 percent of meetings; and one board (4 percent) reports that board members attend less than half of full board meetings.

**Chart 6: During the past 12 months, what percentage of voting board members attended a typical full board meeting?**



*Participation in board meetings.* Given that not all board members may reside within close proximity to meeting locations, it is not surprising that 16 coordinating boards (64 percent) allow members to participate in regularly scheduled board meetings via telephone, internet, or video broadcast.

**Table 8:**

Does participation in a board meeting by telephone, internet, or video count as attendance at the meeting?	Percent of Boards
No	36%
Yes	64%

While attendance and participation in board meetings is one matter, voting is another. Fewer boards (13 boards, 52 percent) allow voting on resolutions electronically—by phone, video, conference, fax, or internet.

**Table 9:**

Does your board allow voting on resolutions electronically (phone, video conference, fax, or Internet)?	Percent of Boards
No	48%
Yes	52%

*Coordinating board Web sites.* Additionally, when asked whether or not coordinating boards have their own Web sites, with use restricted to board members and authorized staff, five boards (20 percent) responded “yes,” while 16 boards (64 percent) reported “no,” but they did indicate that a public Web site with board information is available.

**Table 10:**

Does your board have its own Web site, with use restricted to board members and authorized staff?	Number of Boards
Yes, there is a restricted Web site for board members	5 (20%)
No, but a public Web site with board information is available	16 (64%)
No	4 (16%)

### Committees

On average, the typical coordinating board includes four standing committees, excluding ad hoc committees and subcommittees. Two coordinating boards (Louisiana Board of Regents and the Board of Regents of The University of the State of New York) tie for having the most standing committees (a total of six each). The following are the most common coordinating board standing committees.

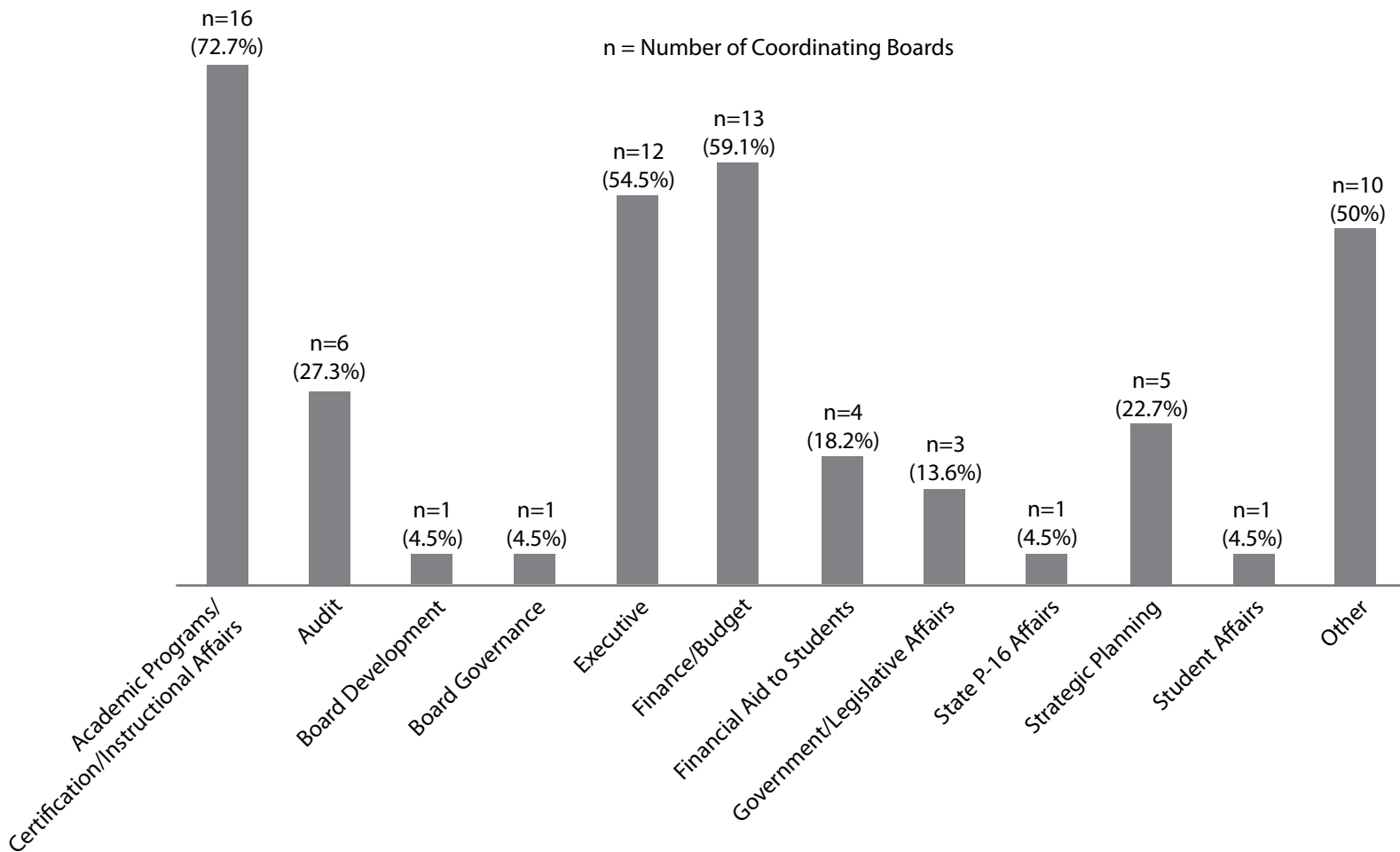
**Table 11:**

Top Standing Committees	Percent of Boards
Academic Programs/Certification/Instructional Affairs	72.7%
Finance/Budget	59.1%
Executive	54.5%
Other	50%

Note: Three boards did not respond.

“Other” includes: consumer information; continuing education; cultural education; elementary, middle, and secondary education; facilities planning; investment; online learning; personnel and human resources; policy and planning; professional practice; research; strategic communication; technology; and vocational and educational services for persons with disabilities.

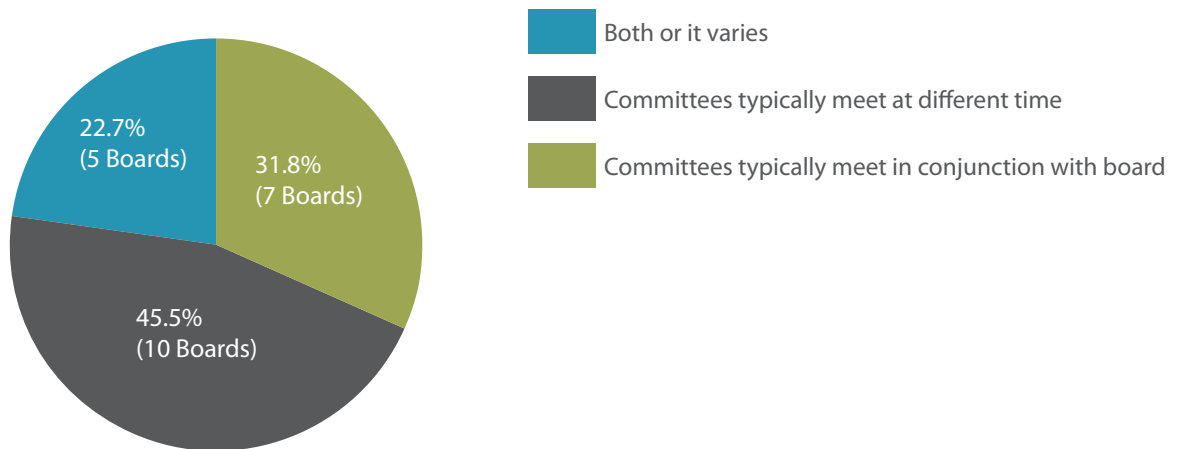
**Graph 4: Coordinating Boards Standing Committees**



*Comparison to public governing boards.* The top governing board committees are: finance (81.1 percent), academic affairs (46.1 percent), buildings and grounds (40.3 percent), and executive (30.5 percent). In 2004, audit committees were reported by 23 percent of public governing boards, of which 40 percent were system boards, 25.4 percent were four-year boards, and 11.8 percent were two-year boards.

*When do coordinating board committees meet?* When asked if coordinating board committees typically meet in conjunction with regularly scheduled board meetings or at different times, 10 coordinating boards (45.5 percent) report that committees typically meet at a time other than at board meetings; seven boards (31.8 percent) responded that committees typically meet in conjunction with board meetings; and approximately five boards (22.7 percent) meet at various times.

**Chart 7: Excluding the executive committee, do board committees typically meet in conjunction with regularly scheduled board meetings or at a different time?**



*Note: Three boards did not respond to this question.*

### ***Ad Hoc Committees***

In addition to standing committees, 15 coordinating boards (60 percent) use ad hoc committees. It is noteworthy that many of these committees aim to address specific goals of statewide master plans for higher education. For example, if states are trying to increase access and student attainment, they may establish specific groups to study transfer and articulation agreements along with a special focus on degree completion and productivity. For this report, coordinating boards listed their most utilized ad hoc committees, which include:

- strategic vision and planning committees (three boards);
- cost efficiency committee (one board);
- council of presidents, advisory group (one board);
- degree completion committee (one board);
- committee on diversity (one board);
- early childhood education committee (one board);
- governance restructuring subcommittee (one board);
- a legislatively mandated study of Nebraska’s community colleges (one board);
- presidential evaluation committee (one board);
- science and graduate scholarships, advisory group (one board);
- transfer and articulation committee (one board); and
- veterans affairs committee (one board).

### ***Board Executive Committee Meetings***

Twelve coordinating boards (48 percent) report that there is either no executive committee or that the executive committee did not meet during the past 12 months. In addition, there was variation among the boards that reported they did have an executive committee. One board's executive committee reported meeting 12 times (once per month) during the year, while another board's executive committee met six times and convened regular monthly teleconferences prior to full board meetings. It was also reported that executives and board chairs held frequent (sometimes weekly) conference calls.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Overall, coordinating board executive committees met an average of 2.7 times during the past 12 months. The average for public governing boards was 2.6 times over a 12-month period.

### ***Board Education and Training***

Board member education can be essential to developing a greater understanding of board member responsibilities and board productivity. According to our survey, 10 coordinating boards (41.7 percent) budget for board education activities (such as conference registration and travel, speakers at meetings, and publications). *Note: One board did not respond to this question.*

Budgeted amounts for board education and training range from \$1,000 to \$30,450 (median is \$10,500). Four coordinating boards (16 percent) reported that they do not directly budget for education activities, but that they do occasionally fund them. As a result of agency budget cuts, two boards reported significant reductions to these line-item allocations.

It is also noteworthy that three coordinating boards (12 percent) require ongoing board education and training for their institutional governing boards. These three boards include the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* Nearly 74 percent of public governing boards reported budgeting for board education activities; these allocations also vary greatly, with \$10,000 being the median.

### ***Board Retreats***

Twenty coordinating boards (83.3 percent) held a retreat or an in-depth meeting to plan or reassess state higher education goals within the past five years. Four coordinating boards (16.7 percent) did not hold retreats. *Note: One board did not respond to this question.*

*Comparison to public governing boards.* On average, 81.5 percent of public governing boards held such retreats.

In addition, coordinating boards report that they conduct board performance reviews for various reasons. Over the past three years, nine coordinating boards (36 percent) held retreats to review their own performance. Some components of these reviews and self-assessments include: president (CEO)/board member relationships; effectiveness of board committees; and board responses to higher education trends, issues, and policy developments.

*Comparison to public governing boards.* By comparison, 43.8 percent of public governing boards held retreats to review their own performance.

**Chart 8: Why was a board performance review conducted?**

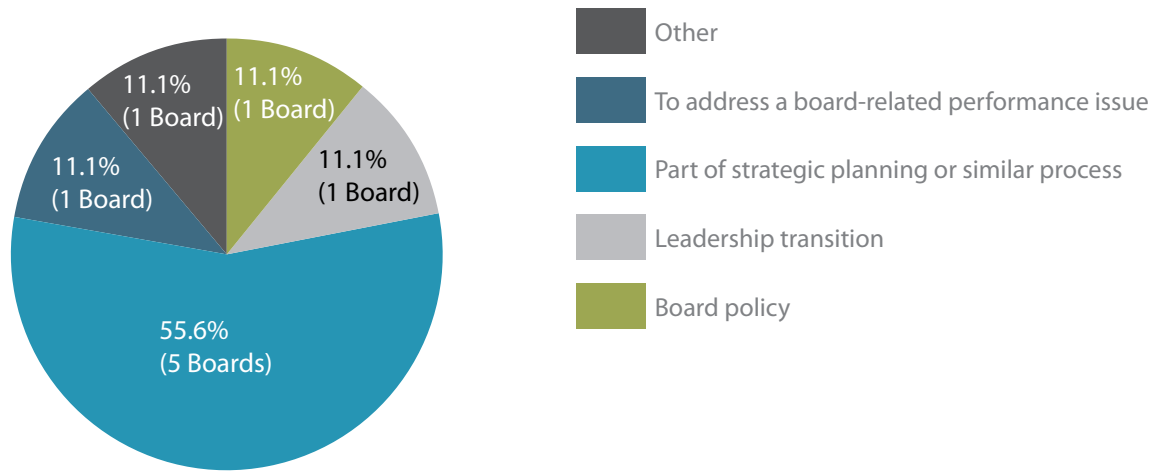


Chart 8 demonstrates that for five coordinating boards, the most common reason for board performance reviews relates to strategic planning efforts. Other reasons include: addressing board-related performance issues, board policies, and leadership transitions.

## CONCLUSION

Knowledge of state coordination is important to understanding higher education governance. As board policies, practices, and compositions remain central to the structure and ability of boards to effect and implement change, AGB will continue to research and report many of the variables represented in this report—with the addition of other data points as appropriate.

The information provided indicates that through board policies and practices, coordinating boards continue to develop strategies and recommendations that address statewide goals for higher education. It is significant that 20 boards held retreats or in-depth meetings to plan or reassess state higher education goals within the past five years.

Overall, coordinating boards did not prove to be significantly different from governing boards in terms of board policies, practices, and composition. Exceptions relate to appointment methods of board chairs and chief executives.

*If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Cristin Toutsis, assistant for policy analysis, by phone at 202-776-0845 or by e-mail at [cristint@agb.org](mailto:cristint@agb.org). AGB encourages readers to follow up if there are additional data points that should be considered in future reports.*

### ***Special Notes of Thanks***

Dr. Merrill Schwartz, director of research at the Association of Governing Boards, provided meaningful guidance during the development of this report. The 2004 report she authored, *Policies, Practices, and Composition of Governing Boards of Public Colleges and Universities*, served as a template for this report. This resource is noted in the reference section on the following page. This fall 2010, AGB will publish a separate report that summarizes the results of AGB's *2010 Survey of Policies, Practices, and Composition of Governing Boards of Public Colleges and Universities*.

The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) provided special insight into the types of questions that are most relevant to today's coordinating boards and commissions. AGB appreciates their review of the survey instrument and their continued collaboration in several areas of mutual interest.

Individual state higher-education executives and their staff members provided the survey data and information to develop this report. AGB is truly grateful for their time and continued assistance in projects relating to statewide coordination of public higher education.

## REFERENCES

Ogle, Greg; Cristin Toutsis; and Richard Novak. *Ingram Center Public Boards Database*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2008. The database can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.agb1.org/s1698.html>.<sup>3</sup>

Ogle, Greg; Cristin Toutsis; and Richard Novak. *Report: Public Higher Education Governing and Coordinating Boards: Composition, Characteristics, and Structure*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2008. This report can be accessed using the following link: <http://www.agb1.org/AGBDatabaseReport122008.pdf>.<sup>4</sup>

Schwartz, Merrill and Louis Akins. *Policies, Practices, and Composition of Governing Boards of Public Colleges and Universities*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2004.

Coordinating Board Webpages: The Web sites of the participating coordinating boards and commissions were referenced as needed.

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3. The Public Higher Education Boards Database currently contains information on state coordinating boards, four-year institution and system governing boards, statewide two-year boards, and a limited number of two-year governing boards in the 50 states. The database aims to be the most comprehensive and up-to-date source on the composition, structure, and appointment methods of public governing boards.

4. This report analyzes several data points from the Public Higher Education Boards Database and presents them in understandable and readable formats. It explores the diversity of citizen trusteeship in American public higher education.

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges is the only national association that serves the interests and needs of academic governing boards, chief executives, and other senior-level campus administrators on issues related to higher education governance. Composed of more than 1,250 member boards, 1,900 campuses, and 37,000 individuals, AGB advances the practice of citizen trusteeship and helps ensure the quality and success of our nation's colleges and universities.

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