

AGB BOARD OF DIRECTORS' STATEMENT ON

Governing Board Accountability for

**CAMPUS CLIMATE,  
INCLUSION,  
AND CIVILITY**

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This statement was approved on August 19, 2016, by the Board of Directors of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). AGB Board Statements are formal assertions of the critical importance of a particular issue or topic to higher education governance. They are intended to guide boards in the governance of colleges, universities, and systems; inform them of their roles and responsibilities; and clarify their relationship with chief executives, administration, faculty, and others involved in the governance process.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and its Board of Directors are grateful to the many people who contributed to the development of this statement. We are especially grateful to Thomas K. Hyatt, AGB's general counsel, who served as principal author of the statement and who contributes regularly to knowledge development for AGB's membership; and to Artis Hampshire-Cowan, AGB Senior Fellow and former senior vice president and secretary at Howard University, for her thought leadership and facilitation of a task force that helped to identify the complexity of issues, fundamental values, and foundational principles to anchor the statement.

We also extend our gratitude to members and friends of AGB who added value to the statement through their responses to the association's invitation for public comment, which proved invaluable in strengthening the piece.

## ABOUT AGB

Since 1921, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) has had one mission: to strengthen and protect this country's unique form of institutional governance through its research, services, and advocacy. Serving more than 1,300 member boards, 1,900 institutions, and 36,000 individuals, AGB is the only national organization providing university and college presidents, board chairs, trustees, and board professionals of both public and private institutions and institutionally related foundations with resources that enhance their effectiveness.

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AGB Board of Directors' Statement on

# Governing Board Accountability for Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility

## Introduction

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### CONSIDER THESE ACTUAL EVENTS:

- A group of more than 1,000 demonstrators marches through a campus in support of racial equity and social justice, catalyzed by a police shooting of a young African American off campus, less than a mile away.
- Students and other stakeholders on campus urge changes in institutional policies through protests and teach-ins.
- Students request “trigger warnings” for the teaching of potentially offensive or upsetting material and “safe spaces” in which those with differing identities and viewpoints are not permitted to be present.
- A student group presents a long list of non-negotiable demands to a college president and governing board for: changes in admissions and personnel policies and academic offerings; an immediate increase in the diversity of the faculty and the administration; direct involvement in the hiring of the president; and remedies to asserted inequities both on and off campus.
- A student gains national attention while carrying a mattress with her on campus every day to protest a university’s failure to expel another student she accused of sexually assaulting her.
- A university offers gender-free housing and provides a resource center for LGBT students, while another denies housing to a transgender student on religious grounds.
- Students in some states may now carry loaded, concealed weapons in college and university buildings.

**I**n ways large and small, students and other stakeholders on college and university campuses across the United States are making themselves heard, by speech and by action, and are challenging higher education leaders and faculty to create campus climates that are diverse and inclusive; that promote academic freedom, freedom of expression, and civility; and that enable all members of the community to feel welcome and safe from harm. At the same time, a lingering intolerance and impatience by some, both within and outside the campus community, can put at risk the ability of colleges and universities to provide an environment in which a full range of opinions and ideas are welcome and can be aired and debated in a respectful manner.

At the center of these tensions lie governing boards and institution and system chief executive officers, who bear ultimate accountability and responsibility for risk management, institutional reputation, educational quality, and the creation of an open and safe campus environment, and who are just as often taken to task for their failure to act as they are for the actions they take.

Governing boards are stewards for the institution or system that they serve, and more broadly are stewards for higher education writ large across the nation. Board members have a fiduciary duty of care—the duty to act in good faith and with diligence, care, and skill in protecting the various assets for which they are responsible. They also have a fiduciary duty of obedience—the duty to ensure that the institution acts in compliance with its mission and with applicable law.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, higher education governing bodies must ensure institutional compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, including those that prohibit discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and other characteristics,<sup>2</sup> and those that protect freedom of speech and academic freedom.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion of board fiduciary duties, see the 2015 “AGB Board of Directors’ Statement on the Fiduciary Duties of Governing Board Members” and the 2014 final report of the National Commission on College and University Board Governance, “Consequential Boards: Adding Value Where It Matters Most.”

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, under federal law, Titles IV, VI, VII, and IX of the Civil Rights Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended in 2008; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the free speech and press provisions in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and similar provisions in state constitutions and statutes, as well as faculty contractual protections, particularly in private institutions.

A successful resolution of these complex and high-profile issues, and the building of a campus climate and culture that can generate sustained buy-in and support, mandate that institutional and system governing boards meet their fiduciary responsibilities in a manner that demonstrates leadership based on shared values and institutional mission, as well as an appropriate partnership with the institution's stakeholders.

In order to effectively undertake these duties, governing boards should ensure that they understand the history and culture of their institutions, as well as the historical context for past institutional actions, and the impact they have on current events and constituencies. Similarly, boards and chief executives should share a common understanding of the institution's mission and values (and revisit and refresh them as warranted) and integrate them into everything the institution does to address matters of diversity, inclusion, freedom of expression, academic freedom, safety, and campus climate and culture.

However, the mission, history, culture, symbols, traditions, and even the founders of an institution must also be viewed through a lens of current campus and community values and principles. We do this so as to be aware of, and address as necessary, their impact on today's students, faculty, alumni, and communities. For example, one university community has considered how to make amends for a time when the institution was sustained financially through the sale of slaves. Another institution's board of trustees has re-examined the naming of campus buildings and programs after a United States president who demonstrated racist views in his administration. Institutional history is likely to receive much closer student and faculty scrutiny now as values evolve and the effectuation of mission is re-evaluated.

Boards, by their nature, are usually steeped in their college or university's traditions and symbols and often see themselves as the protectors of those things, particularly when board members are alumni of the institution. It should come as no surprise, then, that some boards might be resistant to change when constituencies and events cry out for a different approach. A governing board should demonstrate courage in recognizing the need for change and supporting or even requiring it, for the betterment of the institution's students and the community. Institutions may need to come to terms with new realities, and while these situations are rarely easy, strong leadership is essential.

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This AGB statement presents values, principles, recommendations, and discussion questions for governing bodies and chief executives to consider in addressing the issues of campus climate, diversity, inclusion, and civility. The purpose of this statement is not to suggest specific resolutions for these critical issues; the remedies, like the issues, are specific to each institution. Rather, the statement provides guidance to governing boards and chief executives to help ensure that a collaborative governance process and effective policies are in place that can successfully achieve those remedies.

The AGB Board of Directors, in approving this important statement, realizes that some of the recommended practices presented herein will raise concerns. Some will prompt difficult conversations and will challenge boards to address the questions that result. However, governing bodies bear ultimate responsibility to ensure that effective policies are in place and followed in order to uphold institutional mission, values, and educational quality for all who are part of their institutional community. As stated in the 2007 “AGB Board of Directors’ Statement on Board Accountability,” governing board members are accountable to institutional mission, the public interest, and the “legitimate and relevant interests of the institution’s various constituencies.” It is what fiduciary bodies are required to do and are expected to do.

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## Respecting the Values and Principles of Higher Education

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**A**merican higher education is steeped in values that have developed over nearly four centuries. Two of the most fundamental and influential values across the sector are institutional independence and academic freedom. Institutional independence protects colleges and universities from undue external influence and enables each institution to set a mission and goals that are distinct and that achieve the institution's unique purposes. Public and private colleges and universities operate within a collaborative leadership model while assigning ultimate responsibility to a duly constituted governing board<sup>4</sup> that is expected to honor and guard that independence in its decision making.

Academic freedom recognizes the right of faculty members to conduct research and publish results without interference, instruct students in subject matter according to their own professional judgment, and to express themselves freely as citizens and not as representatives of the institution.<sup>5</sup> This value also urges institutions to ensure an academic environment that welcomes diverse opinions and a healthy openness to candid exchanges of ideas and perspectives among all stakeholders.

It is from these inherent higher education values that institutional policy related to campus climate, diversity, inclusion, and civility should be developed, viewed, affirmed, and welcomed. Each college and university community is unique. In the ideal, each should approach ongoing discussions of the values and principles described herein inclusively, respectfully, honestly, with open hearts and minds, and without undue concern for uncomfortable or awkward exchanges, to determine what is the right path, now and for future generations.

The principles of a vital campus climate are undergoing extensive examination across the higher education sector, although the very definition of campus climate is broad and varies among institutions. For the purposes of this statement, we rely upon the following, which is referenced often in this larger conversation: "The atmosphere or ambience of an organization as perceived by its members. An organization's climate is reflected in its structures, policies, and practices; the demographics of its membership; the attitudes and values of its members and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See the 2015 "AGB Board of Directors' Statement on the Fiduciary Responsibilities of Governing Board Members"; and the 2010 "AGB Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance."

<sup>5</sup> This is a paraphrasing of the discussion of academic freedom offered in the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*. Importantly, the policies of some religiously affiliated institutions delimit academic freedom in keeping with their missions. Still others define academic freedom for themselves. Despite some differences in interpretation, the value of academic freedom undergirds the governance of virtually all colleges and universities in the United States.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Provost's Office, *Definition of Campus Climate* (2004).

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The following principles amplify higher education’s central values of independence and core freedoms and should be reflected throughout institutional and system policies:

**Diversity.** Diversity is a part of the value proposition for the institution and for higher education because of its demonstrated educational benefits for all students. Diversity comes in many forms, including: race, gender, gender identity and expression, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic background, physical ability and disability, neurodiversity, and student and faculty intellectual and political beliefs. Diversity also includes beliefs and practices that are strongly held by some religiously affiliated colleges and universities but that may differ from those of other higher education institutions. Diversity is not merely about demographics but also about campus climate, culture, and norms. Institutions cannot merely claim to be diverse. Rather, diversity is a dynamic institutional choice whose scope and characteristics will vary over time and place and circumstance.

**Inclusion.** Diversity without inclusion is only a metric. Inclusion recognizes and embraces the need for all members of the institutional community to have a sense of ownership in the institution and a place of belonging. It requires sustained and intentional institutional commitment and action. Tolerance is passive and may be a starting point. Inclusion is active and reflects the continuing character of a campus.

An inclusive campus climate is manifested by the ideas, policies, actions, and shared culture of its governing body, chief executive, administration, faculty, students, alumni, and local community. Respect and civility, even in a clash of passionately expressed beliefs and values, are essential to the ability of a college or university to thrive and sustain over generations.

Campus safety is fundamental to protecting and implementing these ideals. In this context, being “safe” does not mean being shielded from potentially challenging ideas and beliefs, which may be uncomfortable for some. Rather, individuals should have the right to be safe from physical or emotional harm or harassment in their expression of ideas, beliefs, values, lifestyles, diversity, and personal characteristics.

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**Freedom of Expression.** Freedom of expression is both an American constitutional right and a principle that is central to an open and engaged institution of learning. It must be established by meaningful and consistent policies and remedies for its infringement, or there is no freedom. Tolerance—the willingness to permit the free expression of ideas, beliefs, and values that may be at odds with your own, rooted in a climate of mutual respect—is an essential characteristic of a campus climate that promotes this principle. With respect to engagement, civility is an essential response, but it is also an element of campus culture. Civility is not the opposite of passion. Conversations, discussions, debates, protests, and demonstrations do not need to be passive or unduly constrained in the name of civility, although they must respect the rights and safety of those who participate and those who do not. Tolerance and civility are at the heart of true freedom of expression.

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## Recommendations for Leadership

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**T**he following recommendations apply higher education's core values and principles and embrace the obligations of a shared educational, legal, and business imperative for effective governance on the issues of campus climate, inclusion, and civility.

Developing a campus culture that enables students, faculty, and the community to feel safe, included, and valued and that can endure challenges, missteps, and times of unrest is an ongoing process. While certain actions can make a meaningful difference in the near term, fundamental policy and operational change requires a longer time horizon and sustained attention and support. In many instances, leaders seeking to respond to a situation or crisis lack complete or perfect information. Situations often evolve over time, and thoughtful reflection and restraint may be called for by boards and chief executives alike to respond appropriately and with the needs and interests of all constituencies in mind.

The statement encourages boards and institutional leaders to consider the recommendations below in order to be confident that policies are in place to ensure a healthy, vibrant, and safe campus community.

1. *An institutional or system governing board should support the chief executive officer with trust, confidence, and the delegation of authority necessary to make critical and timely decisions consistent with institutional and system policy.*

While not delegating away their fiduciary decision-making authority, governing boards should avoid micromanaging the chief executive in responding to campus climate matters, particularly in moments of crisis. The responsibility and attention of the governing board must focus on the assurance of policy adequacy, while recognizing and supporting strong and effective administrative leadership. These are often time-sensitive matters; chief executives need to be confident in the support of their governing board.

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Chief executives, too, can benefit from the opportunity, such as at a board retreat or dedicated committee meeting, to examine and address campus climate issues with the board.

2. *Chief executives should be fully transparent and collaborative with the governing board on campus climate issues.*

Chief executives should support the governing board's fiduciary authority to consider and establish policies related to campus climate, diversity, and inclusion issues by regularly updating the board on current challenges and instances of stakeholder protest and engagement, potential risk areas, and a periodic review of related policies. In addition, chief executives should advise the board on those instances when efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and free and open discourse have been successful and when they have been unsuccessful. Chief executives can support the board in developing meaningful metrics for assessing achievement of campus climate goals.

3. *Boards should periodically review campus climate policies and ensure that those policies are up-to-date and consistent with institutional mission and relevant laws and regulations.*

In order to be prepared for the implementation of sound and effective decisions, under sometimes intense scrutiny and duress, governing boards should be proactive to ensure that institutional or system policies that clearly articulate principles of diversity and inclusion, free and open discourse, academic freedom, and personal safety are developed, updated, and followed. The board should periodically review the timeliness of these policies and be aware of their content and scope. Chief executive officers should also include in board or board committee meetings, as needed, those institutional administrators who bear responsibility for policy implementation so as to discuss campus climate policies, related risk factors, and compliance with mission and applicable law.

Institutional policies should also protect the rights of students who are not involved in campus protests, unrest, and interventions by uniformly enforcing reasonable "time, place, and manner" guidelines for such events. This enforcement should be consistent irrespective of the point of view being expressed.

Mission and values should be the touchstone of everything a college or university board and chief executive do in developing policies to effectuate an inclusive and welcoming campus climate. In addition, governing board members, as fiduciaries, must always consider their overall responsibility to protect and promote the business operations of the institution through their practices and policies. Without a comprehensive strategy to address matters of diversity and inclusion as discussed in this statement, institutions

risk being unsuccessful in achieving their human capital goals (regarding students, faculty, staff, and administration). In addition, individuals and organizations that are key sources of institutional funding—via tuition dollars, sponsored and funded research, philanthropy, and government support—will rightly view diversity and inclusion as key drivers of quality and excellence. Institutions that commit to creating environments that foster diversity and inclusion and a welcoming campus climate are most likely to attain both the human and financial capital needed to thrive in the long term.

4. *Boards should exercise their fiduciary duty of care by ensuring that the institution has allocated appropriate resources to address campus climate needs.*

Consistent with their fiduciary duties, boards should ensure that necessary budget resources and staff assistance are available to properly address campus climate, diversity, inclusion, and safety needs. Chief executives should work with appropriate board committees to ensure that they are current on the identification and timing of these needs. The governance practice of evaluating resource deployment should not be simply reactive, but rather should be timely and proactive while considering both short-term and long-term needs.

5. *Governing boards should ensure the implementation of an effective communication plan and receive regular updates from the chief executive and other administrators who are responsible for the implementation of campus and system policies regarding campus climate.*

The governing board should approve an institution-wide communications plan that provides consistent support for the policies that are developed and for the chief executive, staff, and faculty members who carry them out. Boards and institutional leadership must be transparent, clear, and consistent in their response to campus climate matters for the institution and the community. Board decisions made only behind closed doors without appropriate input and communicated without explanation or sensitivity put the board at an immediate leadership disadvantage. Transparency and consistency, through explanation and example, breed trust.

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Boards should receive regular reports from appropriate sources, both among institutional staff and within the campus and local communities, that provide current information and context about instances of campus and community social unrest. Boards should also receive reports on institutional efforts and metrics that can guide their responses, including campus climate surveys, student engagement surveys, academic achievement results, and retention rates of various student groups and subgroups.

The communications plan provisions on crisis response must be adequate to address a campus protest or other campus climate concern. In responding to these issues, and in demonstrating and supporting leadership, boards should speak with one voice. Most often, this will be through the chief executive and the board chair. The chair of the governing board should be prepared to publicly support institutional leadership during a campus protest or act of hate or violence that threatens the safety or personal freedoms of the college or university community.

And, while the chair is the voice of the board's actions and deliberations, all board members are fiduciaries and ambassadors for their institution and all should be prepared to communicate with a uniform message developed through board deliberation and agreement and careful consideration of impact and consequences. When urgent circumstances preclude a timely board discussion on messaging, the chief executive, board chair, and institutional communications professionals should provide support for an immediate board communication.

Boards should ensure that they are attuned to risks to reputation and culture by meeting on these matters with the chief executive and others as appropriate, including faculty leaders, the general counsel, the diversity and inclusion officer, the communications officer, student leaders, outside experts, and officers charged with ensuring institutional compliance under Title IV, Title VI, Title VII, and Title IX.

6. *Governing boards should actively lead in addressing campus climate issues through effective governance practices that are proactive, responsive, and adaptive.*

It is difficult to be credible in providing stewardship and leadership on campus climate issues of diversity and inclusion if the governing board itself is not diverse and inclusive. Governing boards of private institutions should work on diversity objectives through their governance committees, while boards of public colleges and universities should work with the authorities who hold board appointment responsibilities for

those institutions. In that effort, board selection, the choice of board officers and committee chairs, and board education must effectuate the diversity that should be present in today's higher education environment. The campus community pays close attention to the make-up and values of the governing body. If diverse pools of available trustees are limited, training and sensitization with such boards around diversity, equity, and inclusion can help to bridge the gap.

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*to bridge the gap.*

The chief executive should also ensure that the appropriate balance is found between efforts to acknowledge when instruction and speech may be distressing or offensive to some and the unbridled freedom to inquire, teach, learn, experiment, and debate ideas and values.

Governing boards should work with their chief executives to ensure that the governance and administrative structure of the institution are aligned with needs in this area. Effective governance practices include these actions:

- Designate one or more board committees or task forces, as appropriate, to review campus climate issues and progress towards resolution of any problems or concerns.
- Include a review of campus climate issues in the board's enterprise risk management efforts; risks related to crisis response, reputation, and community relations are appropriate for full board review, but may also be delegated to an executive or dedicated committee.
- Define and measure attainment of campus climate goals.
- Ensure that committees and task forces report to the board regularly on their findings.
- Include feedback on progress in this area in board self-assessments.

Boards need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances, beliefs, and laws surrounding diversity, inclusion, and free speech on campus and in the community. Reliance on bylaws, charters, and policies that have not been specifically updated for this purpose may result in an inadequate response.

Education and training on campus climate, diversity, and inclusion for boards and for the chief executive and senior administrators are also essential. Seek out resources and make time for these efforts on the board and staff agendas.

7. *Governing boards, as a collective body, should seek direct engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, local communities, and other stakeholders to be certain that they have an understanding of their concerns and current priorities.*

Boards should seek to understand the current priorities, issues, sensitivities, and needs of the institution's students, faculty, and campus community. Forums for listening can

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occur on the spur of the moment in a seemingly instantaneous student demonstration; in planned events that are designed to reach students where they live and socialize; in response to a crisis that can become a teachable moment; in conversations with alumni; in a physical environment that supports real dialogue; and with a single trustee or the whole board, as appropriate. It is important to be authentic in conversations and in actions. Boards should strive to overcome their tendency, in reality and in appearance, to be insular and detached. Boards should also look beyond the snapshot and not shy away from what may be an uncomfortable exchange. For example, one board demonstrated its commitment to listen by adjourning its meeting and joining protestors on campus.

Partnership is key. In many instances, students may be doing the heavy lifting in addressing campus climate and inclusion matters and by expressing their passion and commitment. Be partners with students in their education and in their efforts to understand and resolve these issues. Be partners with chief executives in their leadership on these matters, as well. As was said at a Lumina Foundation event on race gaps in higher education, the focus must be not only on “college-ready students,” but also on “student-ready colleges.”

Engagement with the community around the campus—serving as “stewards of place”<sup>7</sup>—is also essential. When the correct response is unclear, mission and values (along with legal obligation) provide the way forward.

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8. *Chief executives should demonstrate compliance with governing board policy and governance expectations on diversity and inclusion and show leadership in staff development.*

In partnership with the board, chief executives should champion diversity and equal opportunity throughout the staff and faculty hiring and development process. Progress on these goals should be included in the chief executive’s annual assessment or key performance indicators. CEOs should ensure that the institution’s staff structure and assignments correlate with campus climate needs and with the board governance structure in these areas.

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the 2002 report of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, “Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place.”

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## Conclusion

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**E**ffectively addressing campus climate, inclusion, and civility issues can be a daunting task for volunteer governing board members and institutional chief executives alike. Providing board and institutional leadership on these matters is not easy, and working through them can be messy. These issues are often fraught with conflict and emotionally charged. There is no one-size-fits-all answer, and campus communities may address the same issues from very different religious and socio-political perspectives.

These issues must also be viewed against the backdrop of rapid social change, substantial polarization in the political arena, political challenges to the freedoms of expression and religion, and high-profile instances of violence and terrorism.

Catalytic events—even those that take place far from a campus—unrecognized needs, and pent-up demand for social change can alter the climate and reputation of a campus in the blink of an eye.

It is here that board members' fidelity to the fiduciary duties of care, loyalty, and obedience is most critical. The core values and principles set forth in this AGB statement, along with recommendations for action, provide boards and chief executives with effective tools to carry out these duties.

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## Discussion Questions for Boards

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- Does the board understand its fiduciary responsibilities related to campus climate, inclusion, and civility matters?
- Is the board up-to-date on federal, state, and local laws and rules in these areas?
- In a crisis, who speaks for the board? For the institution or system?
- Are the lines and methods of crisis communication between the chief executive and the board well understood and documented?
- How diverse is the board itself? Does the board (or appropriate state authorities for public institutions) have a plan for recruiting members with varied gender, racial, ethnic, and other diverse characteristics, and for identifying capable new members with diverse experiences, skills, and backgrounds?
- Does the chief executive have adequate authority, resources, and board support to champion diversity and equal opportunity throughout the staff and faculty hiring and development process?
- Does the institution support a nurturing campus environment where every member can express him or herself openly and civilly and learn from others who may have a different point of view, without fear of sanction or harm? Or, conversely, does the institution restrict expressions of free speech in the interest of maintaining order and keeping conflict at a minimum?
- Does the campus have current and educationally effective policies that protect the essential values of freedom of speech and academic freedom and that encourage civil discourse?
- Are diversity and inclusion initiatives directly tied to the mission and strategic goals of the institution?

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- What process is in place for the board to respond to student petitions and demonstrations?
- How has the board impacted the culture of the institution in establishing institutional policy?
- How well does the board model civility in its discussions and decisions?
- Does the institution provide a platform for individuals to confront those who engage in intolerance, disrespect, and hostility? Should it?
- Has the institution recently reviewed and updated its practices and policies to protect students' safety? Does the board understand and support the role of the campus police in these areas?
- From a risk management perspective, what considerations should the board address to help protect institutional reputation and ensure student safety? Those considerations might include:
  - ⌘ campus climate and the environment on campus
  - ⌘ statements and affirmations of institutional mission and values
  - ⌘ the structure of the board to be responsive to these issues
  - ⌘ allocation of resources
  - ⌘ policies regarding campus protest and speech
  - ⌘ the responsibilities and jurisdiction of campus and local police
  - ⌘ crisis management planning
- How well-equipped do board members feel to navigate issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as a board member?

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and inclusion  
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“  
*At the outset, we simply talked  
and listened to one another.  
We worked to find areas of  
understanding and agreement—  
and not dwell on our differences.  
Throughout those discussions, we  
in positions of leadership strove  
to speak using the poetry of  
compassion, respect, and dignity,  
rather than the prose of fear,  
power, and threats.*”

*Fred P. Pestello  
President, Saint Louis University*

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