Principles of an Effective Governance Structure

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A key element of an effective leadership model is an honest assessment of the resiliency of an institution's governance structure. The complexity of the higher education business model is rivaled only by the shared governance structure that has evolved to oversee it. In considering the questions regarding the leadership's role in seeking ways to update and/or transform an institutional business model, an essential query must be the capacity of the institution's governance structure to support such an endeavor.

These eight questions look at everything from mission alignment to flexibility and adaptability in addressing campus needs to alignment with institutional ethos and culture.

Questions for Board Consideration

Excerpted from *Higher Education Business Model Under Stress: Achieving Graceful Transition in the Academy,* by Melody Rose and Larry D. Large (AGB, 2021).

Mission

☐ Is the institution's governance structure aligned with the institutional mission?

Decision-Making

☐ Is the institution's governance structure designed to meet the decision-making requirements of the institution?

Stakeholder Needs

☐ Is the institution's governance structure informed by the needs of institutional stakeholders—such as faculty, staff, and students?

Business Model

☐ Is the institution's governance structure sufficiently comprehensive to address all aspects of the institutional business model—that is, curriculum, finances, academics, policies, discipline, etc.?

Flexibility

☐ Is the institution's governance structure flexible enough to be updated as campus needs and circumstances change?

Authority

☐ Is the institution's governance structure understood and perceived to have the authority/legitimacy to lead?

Inclusivity

☐ Is the institution's governance structure aware of all constituencies' points of view?

Cultural Alignment

☐ Is the institution's governance structure aligned with the ethos and cultural patterns of the institution?