

4.2.g Board self-evaluation

The governing board defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

Defined duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the Board. The Board of Trustees of the University of South Carolina was created on December 19, 1801 by virtue of [Sections 59-117-10 et seq.](#)^[1], Code of Laws of South Carolina to have authority over all institutions in the University of South Carolina system. Based on the powers prescribed by law, the govern board has defined and published its responsibilities in [Article IV, Section 1 of the Board of Trustees Bylaws.](#)^[2] The enumerated functions of the Board's responsibilities as presented in the Bylaws fall into the general categories of defining the mission, role and scope of the University System and each of its component institutions; establishing the general policies of the University System; laying out the University System's broad program of educational activity; approving the budget; and providing accountability to the public.

The Board has also established protocols and expectations regarding how it will conduct its business and how individual members of the Board will act. [Article X of the Board of Trustees Bylaws](#)^[3] stipulates the board and committees procedures and [Article III](#)^[4] specifies the expectations of responsible conduct for individual trustees. Members are to be above reproach and to act with integrity befitting the trust endowed upon them by virtue of their appointments. As detailed in the narrative responses to [Standard 4.1 – Board Characteristics](#)^[5] and [Standard 4.2.d – Conflict of Interest](#),^[6] individual trustees are to honor their fiduciary responsibilities to the university, to avoid conflicts of interest and self-dealings with the University, and to refrain from engaging in personal agendas that conflict with actions of the Board or the advancement of the institution.

Self-evaluation process of the Board. In 2018, the Board of Trustees adopted an annual self-evaluation process wherein all board members complete a [25-item questionnaire](#) ^[7] covering the areas of board meeting effectiveness, board performance, and strategic planning. One of three options are selected for each item being evaluated: 1 – Agree, 2 – Need Improvement, or 3 – Disagree. The results are compiled and those most in need of improvement in each of the three areas are identified and discussed at an annual retreat in an effort to effect improvements.

Further, as shared in the [narrative to Standard 4.2.f External Influence](#),^[8] the board started a process in 2019 to reexamine its existing governance practices following publicly expressed concerns surrounding the presidential search. Working in consultation with the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), the board adopted a critical self-evaluation process in an effort to establish best practices and appropriate policies that clarify roles and responsibilities of the board and individual board members, improve institutional and system governance, build board leadership, and advance orientation and education for board members.

Evidence of implementation. Board self-evaluation was initially launched via an [email invitation](#) ^[9] sent on behalf of the Board of Trustees Chairman in early June of 2018. Board members were provided the [results of the annual self-assessment](#) ^[10] by the end of the month. The 2019 [annual self-evaluation](#) ^[11] was conducted in May with the results being shared and discussed with board members in [June of 2019](#).^[12] The [most recent self-evaluation](#) ^[13] was conducted in [late May and early June of 2020](#).^[14] [Results of the 2020 evaluation](#) ^[15] were shared and discussed in August of 2020.

A [final report from AGB's study of board governance](#) ^[16] conducted in 2019 was shared with board members in January of 2020. The report formed the basis for a 2-day retreat held January 24-25, 2020. The [first day of the retreat](#) ^[17] focused on good governance practices and specific recommendations arising from the self-study. The [second day of the retreat](#) ^[18] focused on the development of short and long-term action plans to improve governance. In accordance with the action plans, the board crafted a new policy, [BTRU Policy 1.19 – Protecting the Institution from External Influences](#) ^[19]

and an [Oath of Office, Code of Conduct, and Statement of Commitment](#) ^[20] for Board of Trustee members in February of 2020.

Supporting Documentation

1. [South Carolina Code of Laws Sections 59-117-10 et seq](#)
2. [Board of Trustees Bylaws, Article IV, Section 1](#)
3. [Board of Trustees Bylaws, Article X](#)
4. [Board of Trustees Bylaws, Article III](#)
5. [Narrative to Standard 4.1 – Board Characteristics](#)
6. [Narrative to Standard 4.2.d – Conflict of Interest](#)
7. [Board Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#)
8. [Narrative to Standard 4.2.f - External Influence](#)
9. [2018 Email of Evaluation Invitation from Board of Trustees Chairman](#)
10. [2018 Board Self-Assessment Results](#)
11. [2019 Evaluation Survey](#)
12. [2019 Board Self-Assessment Results](#)
13. [2020 Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#)
14. [2020 Email Invitation to Complete the Self-Assessment](#)
15. [2020 Board Self-Assessment Results](#)
16. [AGB's Study of Board Governance for the University of South Carolina](#)
17. [Day 1 of Retreat, January 24, 2020](#)
18. [Day 2 of Retreat, January 25, 2020](#)
19. [BTRU Policy 1.19 Protecting the Institution from External Influences](#)
20. [Oath of Office, Code of Conduct, and Statement of Commitment](#)