

# ***Statement on Board Education and Development***

### ***Authority and responsibilities:***

The *University of Saskatchewan Act 1995* assigns to the Board of Governors the responsibility for “overseeing and directing all matters respecting the management, administration and control of the university’s property, revenues and financial affairs.”

The board’s bylaws require the following of board members:

- “to understand the University, its mission, its strategic plan, and its culture” in order “to advocate on behalf of the university.”
- “to exercise diligence, critical powers and independent judgement in the oversight of the university as an active, energetic, and probing member of the Board of Governors.”
- “to understand the ethical responsibilities incumbent upon a member of the Board.”
- “to seek to be fully informed about the University and its role in the province and in higher education and to help the university to be responsive to the changing environments which affect it.”

In order to fulfil these responsibilities, it is essential that every board member

- acquires an understanding of the mission of higher education, and of the landscape of post-secondary education in Canada, including emerging trends and significant strategic and reputational issues;
- becomes generally knowledgeable about the University of Saskatchewan, its history, governance and management structure, financial, human and capital resources, and strategic planning initiatives.
- has sufficient financial literacy to understand the information presented in the institution’s financial statements, and
- possesses an understanding of the principles of good governance and of developments in the field of governance, and the duties and responsibilities associated with being a member of a governing board.

## ***Policy:***

The Board of Governors, through the Governance and Executive Committee, will oversee the provision of training, education, and other resources that will help board members to meet the obligations outlined above.

In addition, each member of the Board of Governors will be proactive in taking advantage of the board training and development opportunities made available to board members, and to seek additional training and information if necessary.

Members of the senior administration will take an active role in the development and delivery of relevant materials

Board members are encouraged to raise issues and/or suggestions relating to board member education and development with the Chair of the Governance and Executive Committee.

## ***Education and development opportunities:***

The following education and development opportunities are in place for members of the Board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan.

### **Board member orientation**

All new board members will receive an orientation to the University of Saskatchewan and to their responsibilities as a member of the board of governors, normally at the first fall meeting following their appointment to the board. Materials developed in support of this orientation will include a comprehensive overview of the history, mission, resources, planning, budget, governance and management structure of the university, and will be updated annually. Orientation materials will also include written information about the operations of the board itself including its bylaws, committee structure and terms of reference, work plan, and director responsibilities.

### **Board development at regular board meetings**

In addition, opportunities will be provided at each meeting of the board of governors for board development on topics specific to the mission of and/or challenges facing the university. Examples of this kind of board development include

- An hour set aside at each board meeting for an in-depth presentation on a relevant topic, such as a risk facing the institution.
- Presentations from deans or directors of schools at board dinners the evening prior to the board meeting.

### **Annual board retreat**

An annual full-day retreat of the Board will take place each year and address an aspect of one of the following themes (where possible, these three themes will be offered in rotation so that in a three-year period a board member will have had exposure to all three):

- A topic related to governance
- A topic related to the post-secondary education landscape in Canada
- A topic related to the University of Saskatchewan (e.g. planning, institutional positioning, areas of preeminence)

### **Workshops and seminars**

Board members may be invited to participate in relevant workshops, seminars, conferences, webcasts and other opportunities as they arise, at the discretion of the Governance and Executive Committee. In approving reasonable expenses associated with such events, the committee will take an equitable and prudent approach, balancing the costs and benefits of such opportunities.

### **Conferences**

The board chair and/or vice chair and secretary will, whenever practical, attend the annual meeting of the National Association of University Board Chairs and Secretaries.

In addition, the Governance and Executive Committee will encourage one board member (normally the chair, vice chair, or chair of a committee) to attend the annual conference of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB).

### **Lending library**

A lending library of resource materials on governance and higher education and other topics of relevance to board members will be maintained by the university secretary, who will also (subject to copyright considerations) post articles and other materials on the board's intranet site.

### **Clipping service**

Board members are encouraged to subscribe to "Academic's Top Ten," a daily web-based news service containing items of relevance to higher education in Canada.

*Approved December 2009*