



Reflections and Recommendations on Board Governance

Aly Kassam-Remtulla '94

Agenda

1. Board cohesion and alignment
2. Board membership and onboarding
3. Board leadership and succession planning
4. Additional thoughts
5. Areas of trustee interest

Cohesion and alignment: themes

- Baseline structural challenges to alignment
- Board cohesion and trust have fragmented during pandemic
- Action on key issues sometime stalls between meetings, “inertia”
- Insufficient time for engagement within board, between board and staff
- Lack of awareness about what happens at the school and in other board committees

Cohesion and alignment: reccs

Invest in activities that build knowledge and trust

- Chair and President to connect individually with each trustee at least once a year
- Invest in social and trust-building activities
- Support a culture of candor and healthy debate

Improve communication/engagement with trustees

- Provide brief monthly updates to trustees
- Integrate new SLT in board conversations
- Educate trustees through committee assignments
- Distribute board minutes in a timely fashion

Develop and clarify board goals

- Identify metrics of success
- Monitor progress against goals

Cohesion and alignment: solutions

Restructure Executive Committee

Standing Members	Roles
Board Chair	Respond to emergent issues
Chairs of operational committees (GOV, FIN, EDU, FAC)	Support and advise Chair and President
Up to two other trustees	Sustain accountability for board and Presidential goals
President	Filter topics from IO and Int'l Board/Council
	Share information from/to committees
	Share in leadership duties (e.g. set board meeting agendas)

- Six virtual meetings each year
- Other trustees may be invited, based on the topic
- Two-year trial period, adjust along the way

Cohesion and alignment: reccs

Develop a semi-annual meeting of Committee Chairs to align around committee goals

Re-iterate expectations about board meetings

- Attend at least 2/3 annual meetings in-person (hybrid option available but meetings optimized for in-person attendees)
- Location – October and February in NM, June in NYC (or SF)
- Set dates at least one year in advance
- Committee meetings remain virtual only
- Once every 3-5 years – board site visit
- Reconsider meeting times, agenda, and materials

Membership and onboarding: themes

- Demographic diversity strong, gaps in gender, age; skills gap in media and marketing and philanthropic capacity
- Recruitment pool is insular
- Confusion about transition from committee member → trustee
- Many new to *non-profit* governance, unsure about the role of the board and their role as trustees

Membership and onboarding: reccs

Cast a wider net in identifying and recruiting trustees

- Continue a long-term “scouting” approach
- Engage in strategic identification and cultivation
- Invite self-nominations of alumni and others
- Focus on candidates related to demographic/skills gaps
- Review and alter process by which committee members become trustees
- Conduct background checks on new trustees

Membership and onboarding: reccs

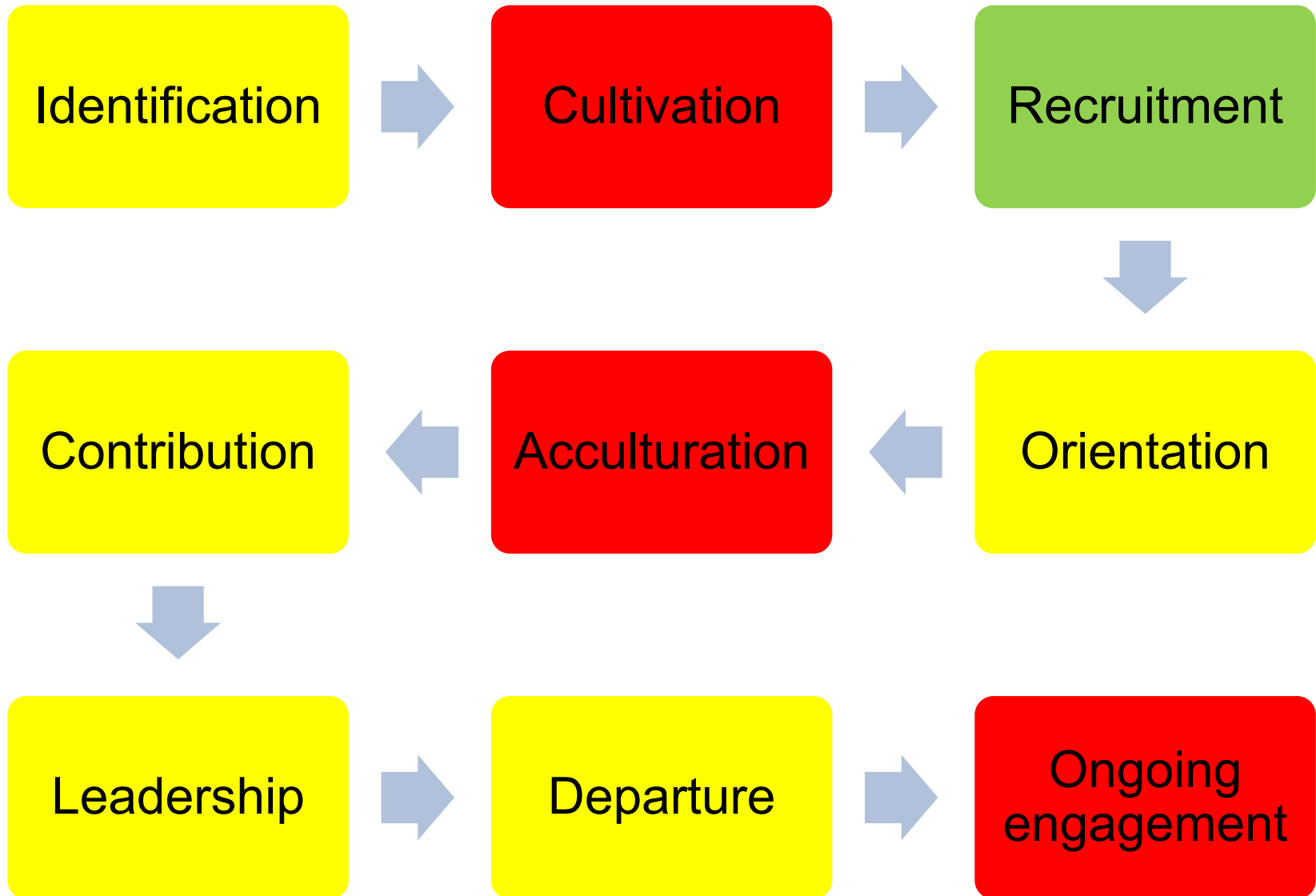
Continue intentional, cohort-style onboarding

- Clarify and codify role of trustees; role of staff
- Extend, enhance, and move orientation online
- Engage in ongoing process of education, acculturation, and norm development
- Pair new trustees with seasoned mentors
- Promote trustee website as primary information source

Leadership and succession: themes

- Many trustees have limited time
- Some feel they are not being well-utilized
- Some potential board leaders “run out of runway” to serve
- Committee chairs do not always understand their role

Effective trustee lifecycle



Leadership and succession: reccs

- Distribute leadership responsibilities for sustainability and engagement
- Structure leadership roles so they are fulfilling and fun; outsource admin work
- Revisit role, goals, and succession plan for each committee
- Groom future leaders; provide early opportunities to contribute
- Engage in board self-assessment

Leadership and succession: reccs

- Clarify roles of committee chairs
 - *Goals* - Develop annual goals and maintain accountability for achieving them
 - *Leadership* – Motivate members to learn and engage with the committee and its work
 - *Membership* - Recruit new members and develop a leadership succession plan
 - *Communication* - Escalate key issues to the EC and board; keep members informed
 - *Logistics* – Schedule meetings and post minutes to trustee website

Additional thoughts

- Consider how the board can best support Victoria and the staff
- Encourage more substantial philanthropic support from trustees
- Rethink process of trustee off-boarding
 - Conduct exit interviews
 - Honor and thank for service
 - Keep engaged

Areas of trustee interest

- Visibility of UWC in USA
 - Given impacts on student recruitment, fundraising, board recruitment
- Student academic lifecycle
 - Admissions (for US applicants)
 - Academic experience/IB scores
 - College counselling
- Financial model of the school
- Staff and faculty recruitment and retention
- Role of UWC-USA in international movement