
Culture 101:

How does your board conduct itself?



“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.”

Peter Drucker



Board Culture Defined

- › The underlying beliefs, assumptions, values, and the ways of interacting that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization or group.



COLLABORATIVE

Respect
Trust
Hospitable

DIVERSE

Backgrounds
Opinions
Ways of thinking

ACCOUNTABLE

To organization
To chair
To others

DECISIVE

Focused Agenda
Measurable Results
Outcomes-Oriented

MISSION & VALUES

DATA DRIVEN

Assessing Org.
Assessing Board
Assessing Self

INQUISITIVE

Engaged
Curious
Questioning

AMBASSADOR

Reputation
Goodwill
Public Relations

DISCIPLINED

Focused
Prepared
Consistent



**Note: for ongoing metrics, current year data is "to date" unless otherwise noted

Highest Value (past 4 years)	Current Year
Lowest value (past 4 years)	Last Year

Change from previous year
 ↓ Higher ↑ No Change
 Lower Higher No Change
 *blank or N/A if last year or current year are unavailable

KEY METRICS

Undergraduate Applications (14-15 Addtl Application Requirements)	6-year Graduation Rate	Traditional Full-Time Students (Matriculated)	First-time, Full-time Freshman Retention (fall to fall)
4,577 4,577 ↑	61.4% 52.9% ↓	563 473 ↓	68.4% N/A
3,033 3,033 ↑	50.9% 61.4% ↓	453 488 ↓	60.0% 64.0%

Full-time based traditional overall student retention (spring to fall)	Total fall non-duplicating head count (full-time, part-time, transfer, semester in the city, online, etc.)	Development Goal (in millions)	Overall Net Tuition Per Student
85.0% 85.0% ↑	593 488 ↓	\$11.1 \$9.0 ↑	\$13,615 \$13,615 ↑
75.0% 82.8% ↑	488 530 ↓	\$8.6 \$8.6 ↑	\$10,487 \$12,771 ↑

First-Year Full Time Net Tuition Per Student
\$13,850 \$13,850 ↑
\$10,000 \$13,514 ↑



Board Culture as a Key to Effectiveness

› Intentionality



Board Leadership
& Development
A MURDOCK TRUST PROGRAM

Healthy Board Culture vs. Toxic Board Culture

- › Cliques within the board
- › Failure to include all board members in meaningful conversations
 - › Lack of participation by board members who represent constituencies in decision-making
- › Overuse of the executive committee
- › Dismissive behavior among board members and with key staff



Boards Improve and Maintain a Healthy Board Culture by Having

- › A chair who is an effective facilitator
- › Strong relationships among board members, with CEO and senior leadership
- › Cultures that take the *long view*



Board Culture Check Up

- › Should be done annually
- › Can help “depersonalize” and “get on the table” difficult issues
- › Feedback and results cannot stay on the shelf



Questions for Discussion and Work with Your Coach

1. What adjectives currently define your board culture?
2. What is working right now? Are there any toxic elements?
3. How do you describe board culture to a prospective board member?
4. What might you want the board culture to look like in two years?
5. What steps could you take to make shifts in board culture?
6. Should we add board culture to your Five Strategic Next Steps?

