

Governance v. Management: What's the Difference?

Boards should govern, not manage. The difference is often misunderstood and the impact of such confusion can adversely impact the institution. Frequently, one can tell whether a Board is governing by the questions that are asked by trustees. Boards who are managing will focus on small details, departmental processes, and/or individual outcomes. Boards who govern are concerned with organizational health, enterprise structure, strategic relevance and direction, and institutional results. The distinctions could be described as a matter of scale. Below are sample questions asked by trustees which can indicate whether the Board's focus is appropriately scaled.

Management	Governance
<p>What do we pay our teachers?</p> <p>Who got a raise this year?</p> <p>Will you hire my brother-in-law?</p>	<p>Do we have a compensation philosophy and how is its effectiveness measured?</p> <p>How does our employee turnover rate compare to other colleges? ...to previous years?</p> <p>Are we considered a good place to work? How do we know?</p>
<p>How many gallons of gas do we use in our police cars?</p> <p>What is our kilowatt/hour rate?</p> <p>Do we have low-flush toilets?</p>	<p>Tell me about our energy management policies? How do we know that they result in a prudent use of energy?</p> <p>What challenges should we address that prevent us from employing useful conservation methods?</p> <p>When is the next time we refresh our campus master plan and should we consider "green" standards?</p>
<p>What is enrollment in "Program X" this semester?</p> <p>How many recruiters do we have?</p> <p>How many dual-credit classes did we teach?</p>	<p>What are our growth markets in the future and how will we sell into those segments?</p> <p>Are you happy with our product mix? Why?</p> <p>How do we assess the viability of our programs? What role does dual credit play in program growth and marketing?</p> <p>How does our multiyear growth rate compare to the statewide rates and to the growth in our local high school graduation classes?</p>

<p>Why is the grass so tall?</p> <p>Can we please paint the boardroom?</p> <p>How much will we raise our tuition rates?</p>	<p>How do we prioritize our capital?</p> <p>Are there functions we should consider outsourcing? Why?</p> <p>How does our revenue mix compare to our peer institutions?</p> <p>What is our long-term dependence on tuition and what are the alternatives we could consider?</p> <p>What is the students' sensitivity to tuition increases? To debt levels? How do we know?</p>
<p>Why didn't we name Smith as our starting pitcher last night?</p> <p>What's the theme of the Awards Banquet this year?</p> <p>What's the gross margin of the bookstore?</p>	<p>How do graduation and placement rates of our student-athletes compare with the rest of the student body? Why?</p> <p>What could the Board do to improve the level of donations made to the college?</p> <p>Why do we operate these various auxiliary functions? What are the fiscal and non-fiscal benefits and costs? Are there alternatives?</p>
<p>When can we start an Analyzer program?</p> <p>My wife is into Yoga, could you please start a CE course in that?</p> <p>What good is a course in basket weaving?</p>	<p>What are the major strategies contained in our academic plan and how is our progress to plan?</p> <p>How is our academic plan enabled or constrained by our facilities? By our staffing levels? By our campus size?</p> <p>How do we assess whether our programs are relevant to the career aspirations of our students? How often do we measure that?</p>

**Boards govern, managers manage,
and the CEO is the bridge between the two.**

For more information on the difference between governance and management, web-search "**Govern, not manage**" to find a broad collection of material on the topic.