

# The Governor's Commission on the Governance of Public Universities in North Carolina

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## Public University System Boards Selection and Composition

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The information in this presentation was prepared for the California State University (CSU) System Board of Trustees in November 2022. It is based on a survey of 25 university system governing boards conducted by the National Association of System Heads (NASH) earlier in Fall, 2022. The analysis of the survey responses and the report of them on which this presentation is based are the work of Jane Wellman, a consultant to the CSU System Board. I am grateful to CSU, to NASH and its Executive Director, Rebecca Martin, and to Jane Wellman for permission to use this information.

## Board Composition

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- Range in size between 6 and 25 members, with an average of 12
- **3 Major Categories:** Public, Designated, and Ex Officio
- **Public** Trustees have no pecuniary or other material interest in the system
  - The majority of members in all systems

## Board Composition Cont'd

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- **Designated** Trustees average 13% of members across the systems
  - Appointed or elected from specific stakeholder groups: students, faculty, and alumni
  
- **Ex Officio** Trustees hold seats on the board by virtue of the office they hold
  - Smallest category of trustees

## Public Trustees

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- All voting members
- Appointed by Governor and confirmed by state senate in 22 of 25 systems
- 3 systems have elected board – Colorado, Nebraska, North Carolina
  - 2 by statewide popular election, 1 (YOU!) by the state legislature

## Public Trustees

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- In 17 of the 25 systems, drawn from a statewide pool
  - Serve statewide interests?
- In 8 other systems, based on geography, typically by congressional district
- Terms range between 4 and 12 years, with an average of 8
- Governor's discretion

## Public Trustees

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- In a few states, law or board by-laws provide for boards to suggest desirable attributes
- Governor retains discretion
- Informal suggestions

## Designated Trustees

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- Appointed or elected from stakeholder groups
- Some selected by Governor from lists prepared by constituent groups
- Many student trustees elected or appointed by student government
- Some can vote, others are advisory



## Designated Student Trustees

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- 11 of 25 systems have voting student trustees
- 10 have non-voting student trustees
- 4 have no student trustees – Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Mississippi

## Designated Student Trustees

- 14 of the boards with student trustees have 1 student, in 8 cases voting and 6 cases non-voting
- 3 boards have 2 student trustees – 2 boards where both students have a vote, 1 where only 1 student votes (Maryland)
- 2 boards have 3 student trustees, and 1 has 4! – Nebraska, with all 4 non-voting and elected by students
- Typically serve 1-or-2-year terms

## Designated Faculty Trustees

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- Relatively rare
- Of 25 boards, 18 have none, while 5 have non-voting faculty trustees
- Only two boards have voting slots for them
- Most systems have faculty advisors who “sit” with the board, while not being members

## Designated Alumni Trustees

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- Only the CSU System has a statutorily designated slot for an alumni trustee (1 voting, 2-year term)
- 1 other system has 2 voting alumni in ex officio slots
- But of course, many trustees are alumni

## Ex Officio Trustees

- 11 of 25 boards have them, mostly elected officials
- 4 systems hold seats for the Governor, all voting
- 2 others for the Superintendent of Public Instruction and additional office holders
- 2 California systems have the most ex officio members
  - Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the System Head, all voting
- No language limiting their role

## The Big Question

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Do you dance with the one who “*brung ya*” or should you have a lot of dance partners?

## The Statutes' Answer

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“...All members shall be deemed members-at-large, charged with the responsibility of serving the best interests of the whole state.”

“Members shall be selected based upon their ability to further the educational mission of the university through their knowledge and understanding of the educational needs and desires of all the state’s citizens, and their economic, geographic, political, racial, gender, and ethnic diversity.”