

Duties, Responsibilities, and Expectations of Board Members

I. **Applicability and Purpose.** This policy sets forth the duties, responsibilities, expectations, and standards of conduct for members of the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina, the boards of trustees of the constituent institutions, and the boards of University-affiliated organizations where membership includes individuals appointed by the Board of Governors.

II. **Definitions.** For purposes of this policy:

A. “Board” means the Board of Governors, a board of trustees of a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, or a board of a University-affiliated organization with members appointed by the Board of Governors.

B. “Board member” means any member of the Board of Governors, a board of trustees of a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina, or the board of a University-affiliated organization.

C. “Institution” means the University of North Carolina or a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina.

D. “University-affiliated organization” means an institution or organization that the Board of Governors is authorized to establish or to which it is authorized to appoint board members pursuant to statute, but does not include Associated Entities covered by Section 600.2.5.2[R] of the UNC Policy Manual or Centers or Institutes covered by Section 400.5[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.

III. **Duties and Responsibilities.** Board members are responsible for performing essential functions that are central to the governance of the University, as described in Chapter 116 of the North Carolina General Statutes, *The Code* of the University of North Carolina, the Policy Manual of the University, and the policies and by-laws of the constituent institutions. Board members shall adhere to the standards of conduct and fulfill duties and expectations set forth in this policy.

A. **Attendance.** Board members shall attend board meetings. If a member of the Board of Governors is, for any reason other than ill health or service in the interest of the State or nation, absent for four (4) successive regular meetings of the Board, his or her place as a board member shall be deemed vacant.¹ If a member of a board of trustees of a constituent institution is, for any reason other than ill health or service in the interest of the State or nation, absent for three (3) successive regular meetings of a board of trustees, his or her place as a board member shall be deemed vacant.²

B. **Participation in Policy and Oversight Functions.** Board members are expected to prepare for meetings; actively contribute to the work of the board; and act in accordance with the governance, oversight, and advisory functions allocated to the board by:

1. Reviewing and inquiring about materials that involve the institution or University-affiliated organization, such as board minutes and annual reports;

2. Understanding and participating appropriately in the oversight function allocated to the board with respect to the finances and effectiveness of the institution or University-affiliated organization;

¹ N.C.G.S. § 116-7(c).

² N.C.G.S. § 116-31(j).

3. Seeking information from and consulting appropriately with the chief executive officer of the institution or University-affiliated organization to gain additional context, make well-informed policy decisions, and carry out responsibilities for board-level oversight and monitoring of the affairs of the institution or University-affiliated organization;
4. Participating as requested in the preparation and revision of long-range plans for the institution or University-affiliated organization;
5. Serving on and contributing to the work of assigned committees;
6. Listening to and considering differing opinions, and otherwise making reasonable efforts to conduct oneself in accordance with the practices and customs of formality and decorum articulated in Robert's Rules of Order;³
7. Referring matters of administration and management to the chief executive officer of the institution or University-affiliated organization for handling;
8. Respecting and following executive leadership, management, and reporting lines when communicating with the University and the constituent institutions, and refraining from directing matters of administration or executive action except through the chief executive officer of the institution or University-affiliated organization; and
9. Recognizing that board members' authority is collective, not individual, and only arises from their participation with other members of the board when it is officially convened.

C. Ethical Conduct. Board members shall adhere to high standards of ethical conduct by complying with laws, regulations, and University policies applicable to their service as board members and public officials, which include the obligations to:

1. Exercise authority honestly and fairly, free from impropriety, threats, favoritism, and undue influence, as required by the State Ethics Act.⁴
2. Keep confidential all information and records that are required by law to be kept confidential, including, but not limited to, personnel records and information, student records and information, attorney-client communications, and closed session deliberations and information;
3. Comply with North Carolina open meetings and public records laws;
4. Bring matters of concern, potential or real conflicts of interest, and reports of unlawful and/or noncompliant activity to the attention of the appropriate institutional or organizational officer, such as the president, chancellor, board chair, or committee chair;
5. Avoid any personal or business interest that may conflict with the member's responsibilities to the institution or University-affiliated organization;
6. Avoid even the appearance of impropriety when conducting the institution's or University-affiliated organization's business; and
7. Recuse oneself from consideration of matters during meetings when required.

³ Section 202C(4) of *The Code* of the University of North Carolina.

⁴ N.C.G.S. § 138A-2.

D. Support for the Institution. Board members shall discharge their duties to the institution with care, skill, prudence, and diligence by:

1. Exercising the degree of diligence, care, and skill that a prudent individual familiar with such matters would use under similar circumstances in a like position;
2. Acting in good faith with the best interest of the institution or University-affiliated organization in mind;
3. Conducting oneself, at all times, in furtherance of the institution's or University-affiliated organization's goals and not the member's personal or business interests;
4. Providing oversight to ensure that the institution's or University-affiliated organization's resources are dedicated to the fulfillment of its mission; and
5. Becoming knowledgeable about issues that affect the University and seeking to understand the educational needs and desires of all the State's citizens, and their economic, geographic, political, racial, gender, and ethnic diversity.⁵

IV. Removal. A board member may be removed, or recommended for removal, for specified cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting membership of the Board of Governors then in office.

A. Removal of a Member of a Board of Trustees or University-affiliated Organization. The Board of Governors may remove from the board of trustees of a constituent institution or from the board of a University-affiliated organization a board member who was elected by the Board of Governors. With respect to a member of a board of trustees who was appointed by the Governor, the Board of Governors may vote to recommend to the Governor that the member be removed.

B. Removal of a Member of the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors may recommend to the State House of Representatives or State Senate, whichever chamber elected the member, that a member of the Board of Governors be removed.

C. Procedure for Removal; Specification of Cause; Notice and Opportunity to Respond

1. The chair of the Committee on University Governance shall send the board member a written specification of reasons to consider the board member's removal. In the event that the chair of the Committee on University Governance is the subject of the board's consideration of a recommendation of removal, the vice chair of the Committee on University Governance will temporarily serve in the chair's role. The notice shall state that the board member may submit a written response to the chair of the Committee on University Governance within five (5) business days of receipt of the written notice.

2. The Committee on University Governance shall consider the written response of the board member and recommend to the Board of Governors action that the committee deems appropriate. If the board member submits no written response to the chair of the Committee on University Governance within the specified timeframe, the Committee on University Governance may continue with its consideration of removal of the board member, or a recommendation that the appropriate appointing or electing authority remove the board member.

⁵ N.C.G.S. § 116-7.

3. In its consideration of each matter, the Committee on University Governance may review any documents or establish any procedures it considers necessary based on the particular circumstances involved.

V. Other Matters

A. **Effective Date.** The requirements of this policy shall be effective on the date of adoption by the Board of Governors.

B. **Relation to State Laws.** The foregoing policies as adopted by the Board of Governors are meant to supplement, and do not purport to supplant or modify, those statutory enactments which may govern the activities of public officials.

C. **Regulations and Guidelines.** These policies shall be implemented and applied in accordance with such regulations and guidelines as may be adopted from time to time by the president.