THE **UNIVERSITY** OF
NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

The University of North Carolina

Board of Governors

Self-Evaluation Report

February 2023

University of North Carolina System Office
Raleigh, North Carolina

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The University of North Carolina Board of Governors
2022-2023

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Executive Summary

In compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation Standard 4.2.g and Section 200.4 of the UNC Policy Manual, *Assessment Process for the Chief Executive and Governing Boards of the University of North Carolina*, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors [the Board] conducted a self-evaluation of its functions as a Board. The self-evaluation was conducted through an online survey comprised of 15 questions approved by the Board and administered from January 19 through February 3, 2023. Of the 25 members of the Board, 16 (64 percent) responded. The survey results were reported to the Board during its meeting on February 22-23, 2023.

The 15 survey questions were broken out into three broad categories: Board Roles and Responsibilities, Board Engagement in Setting Strategic Priorities, and Board Operations. Overall, the responses from members of the Board of Governors were very positive. Across all 15 questions, the mean response score was 4.6, which indicates that on average Board members had largely positive reflections on the various survey items (strongly agree = 5, strongly disagree = 1). Average scores across the individual questions ranged from 3.9 to 4.9.

Four individuals provided voluntary open-ended comments, which are included in full as Appendix I. Overall, the comments indicated that members have a positive assessment of Board functions.

Background

The University of North Carolina Mission and Governance

The University of North Carolina [the University or the System] is a diverse multicampus system of higher education comprised of North Carolina's 16 public institutions of higher education [constituent institutions] and the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. The University also encompasses PBS North Carolina (North Carolina's statewide public media network), UNC Health, the North Carolina Arboretum, and other associated entities that collectively contribute to the University's mission and serve the State of North Carolina.

The University's mission is to "discover, create, transmit, and apply knowledge to address the needs of individuals and society. This mission is accomplished through instruction, which communicates the knowledge and values and imparts the skills necessary for individuals to lead responsible, productive, and personally satisfying lives; through research, scholarship, and creative activities, which advance knowledge and enhance the educational process; and through public service, which contributes to the solution of societal problems and enriches the quality of life in the State. In the fulfillment of this mission, the university shall seek an efficient use of available resources to ensure the highest quality in its service to the citizens of the State. Teaching and learning constitute the primary service that the university renders to society. Teaching, or instruction, is the primary responsibility of each of the constituent institutions. The relative importance of research and public service, which enhance teaching and learning, varies among the constituent institutions, depending on their overall missions."[1]

The University is governed by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors [the Board]. Comprised of 24 voting members and the president of the University of North Carolina Association of Student Governments serving *ex officio*, the Board is the University's policy-making body charged by state law with responsibility for the "general determination, control, supervision, management and governance of all affairs" of the University including those of its constituent institutions.[2] The Board is authorized to and indeed has delegated a number of authorities to the president (and through the president, to the chancellors of the constituent institutions) and constituent institution boards of trustees.[3]

The University's chief executive and administrative officer is the president. Subject to the direction of the Board and consistent with university policy and applicable state and federal law,

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[1] G.S. 116-1(b).

[2] G.S. 116-11(2).

[3] G.S. 116-11(13). For authorities delegated by the Board to constituent institution boards of trustees, see Section 100.1 of the UNC Policy Manual, *The Code,* Appendix 1. For authorities delegated by the Board to the President, see UNC Policy Section 200.6. In addition to authorities delegated to chancellors of constituent institutions by the Board and the President, chancellors serve as the executive and administrative head of constituent institutions and exercise complete executive authority over their respective institutions subject to the direction of the President. G.S. 116-34.

the president is the "leader of the University" and has complete authority to manage the University's affairs and execute its policies.[4]

UNC Board of Governors Operations

The Board of Governors maintains *The Code* and the UNC Policy Manual. *The Code* incorporates the requirements of the Constitution and General Statutes, as well as Board bylaws and other Systemwide policies. The UNC Policy Manual provides more specific direction and policies on university matters

Chapter 100 of the UNC Policy Manual, *The Code*, provides for the operations of the Board. Section 202 of *The Code* outlines the deliberative process of the Board in conducting business. Section 202 C.(5) requires the Board of Governors to operate through a committee structure in which "...all matters...shall be submitted by the Board to the appropriate standing committee for investigation or report." Chapter III of *The Code* establishes the Board's six standing committees, defines their jurisdictions, membership, and meeting procedures, and authorizes creating special committees.[5]

The Board reviews its work on annual basis through a yearly committee report process. As required by Section 302 E of *The Code*, each committee produces a written report reviewing its prior year's work and submits the report to the full Board.[6] Committee approvals of their annual reports and Board review are included in the Board's publicly available meeting materials.[7]

In addition to its annual review of committee work, the Board also establishes the System's long-range strategic plan. In 2021, the Board approved an updated five-year strategic plan, *Higher Expectations, University of North Carolina Strategic Plan for 2022-2027*, and established goals and performance metrics to assess institutional and Systemwide progress toward the System's key strategic goals. These performance metrics are reviewed by the Board annually and updated as needed.

UNC Board of Governors Self-Evaluation Process

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges [SACSCOC] promulgates standards for accreditation of higher education institutions. Compliance with these standards is evaluated on a decennial basis in the institution's reaffirmation of accreditation review. Among these Principles of Accreditation standards is Standard 4.2.g which requires

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[4] G.S. 116-14(a); *The Code,* Chapter X, Section 501.

[5] *The Code,* Chapter III. The standing committees of the Board are: the Committee on Budget and Finance, the Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs, the Committee on University Personnel, the Committee on University Governance, the Committee on Military and Public Affairs, and the Committee on Audit, Risk Management, and Compliance. The special committees of the Board are: the Committee on Strategic Initiatives, the Committee on Historically Minority-Serving Institutions, and the Subcommittee on Laboratory Schools.

[6] *The Code,* Chapter III, Section 302 E.

[7] Committee annual reports are available in the Board's archived meeting materials.

institutional governing boards to demonstrate that they engage in a self-evaluation on a periodic basis ("The governing board defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations").[8] In 2018, SACSCOC clarified that this requirement includes multiple boards where the institution has a multi-level governing structure (e.g., the UNC Board of Governors and constituent institution Boards of Trustees). According to the SACSCOC *Resource Manual for the 2018 Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement*, how a governing board determines to conduct its self-evaluation is "best determined by a governing board itself."

To initiate the Board's current self-evaluation process, the Board Chair, in consultation with the president, directed UNC System Office staff to develop a proposed self-evaluation process to recommend to the Board at the Board's January 2023 meeting. Staff proposed the Board conduct its self-evaluation through an online survey of Board members. The survey would be anonymous to encourage thoughtful and honest responses by Board members. Board members would be sent the survey link following the January 2023 Board meeting and asked to complete the survey by February 3, 2023. Staff would then compile the survey results and report to the Board's Committee on University Governance with a report from the committee to the full Board at the Board's February 2023 meeting. Survey responses and the self-evaluation report are a public record under North Carolina law.

Staff prepared an online survey instrument consisting of 15 questions to provide Board members the opportunity evaluate Board functions and operations in three categories: (1) board roles and responsibilities, (2) board engagement in setting strategic priorities, and (3) board operations. In developing the survey questions, staff reviewed the survey utilized during the Board's previous self-evaluation and the "Questions to Consider" offered for Standard 4.2.g in the SACSCOC *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation*. Each survey question included five response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. An open-ended comment option at the end of the survey provided an opportunity for Board members to offer additional comments.

The proposed self-evaluation process and draft survey questions were presented the Board's Committee on University Governance on January 18, 2023. The committee voted unanimously to recommend to the full Board approval of the self-evaluation process and survey questions. The full Board gave unanimous approval during its meeting on January 19, 2023. The survey link and instructions were emailed to all Board members on January 19, 2023. The survey closed on February 3, 2023. Staff then compiled the survey results, prepared the self-evaluation report, and presented the report to the Board's Committee on University Governance on February 22, 2023. The committee chair presented the report to the full Board at the Board's meeting on February 23, 2023. Copies of the self-evaluation report were provided to all Board members a week prior to this meeting and were made available to the public. The report will remain publicly posted in the Board's archived meeting materials available on the UNC System Office website.

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[8] See also, UNC Policy Section 200.4.

Self-Evaluation Survey Results

Summary

The results of the Board of Governors self-evaluation are detailed on the following pages organized by each of the three categories of survey questions. The response rate was 64 percent, with 16 of the 25 Board of Governors members completing the survey. For each category of questions, a brief summary of the results is followed by a bar graph of the responses for each survey question. The bar graphs show the number of individual responses to each of the five-point Likert Scale options (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree). A mean response score indicating the average response is provided for each question. The higher the average score, the more positive the response – for instance, if all respondents selected "strongly agree", the average score would be 5.0. If all respondents selected "strongly disagree", the average score would be 1.0.

Overall, responses were very positive, with 12 of the 15 questions yielding an average score of 4.5 or higher (halfway between "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree"). Question 15/15 received the highest average score of 4.9, followed by Questions 8/15 and 14/15 which each received an average score of 4.8. Three questions scored lower than the 4.5 average: Question 4/15, with an average score of 4.4; Question 6/15, with an average score of 4.1; and Question 11/15, with an average score of 3.9.

The survey included a voluntary open-ended comment option for board members to include additional observations regarding board functions. Four members provided voluntary open-ended comments, which are included in full as Appendix I. Overall, the comments indicated that members have a positive assessment of Board functions.

## Category 1: Board Roles and Responsibilities

The first category of five questions provided board members with the opportunity to reflect on their understanding of the Board's roles and responsibilities. Responses to all five questions were very positive, with the average scores ranging from a 4.4 to 4.7. This indicates that Board members believe they have a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Questions 2/15 and 5/15 received the highest average score of 4.7. Question 4/15 was the lowest scoring question with an average of 4.4. Full responses and average scores are provided below for the five questions in this category.

Question 1/15: The Board maintains an appropriate balance between its role to set policy and provide oversight, and the role of the President to manage the University and speak on its behalf as the chief executive and administrative officer.
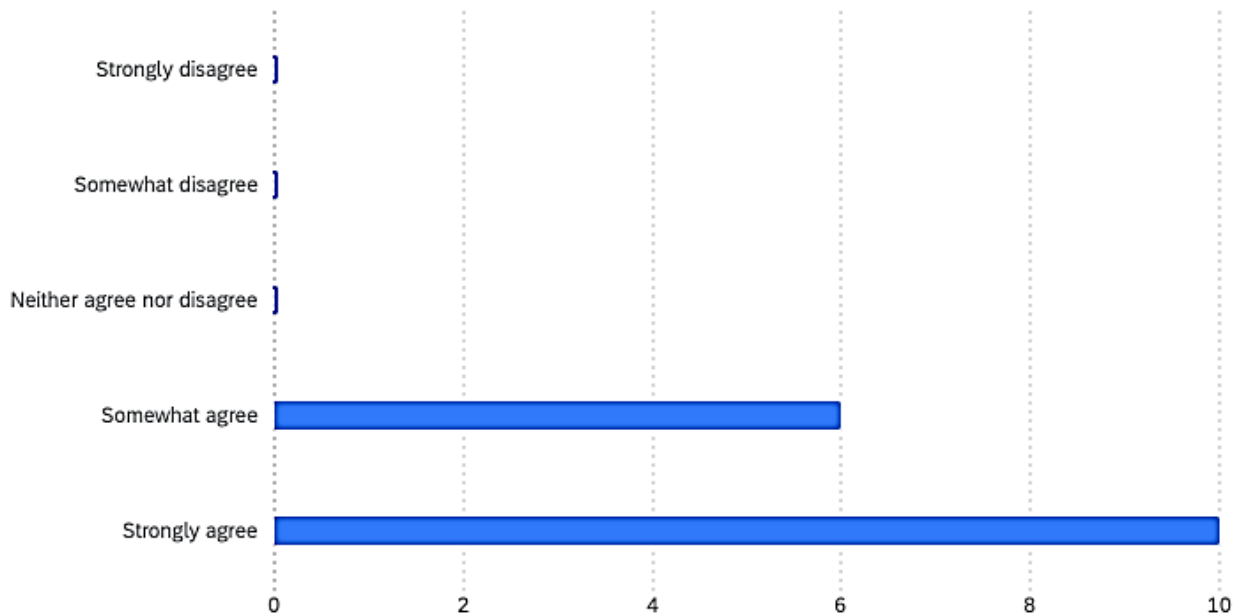
Average Score: 4.6

Question 2/15: The Board maintains an appropriate balance between exercising its legal and policy obligations at the system level and delegating responsibility for certain campus operations to the Boards of Trustees.
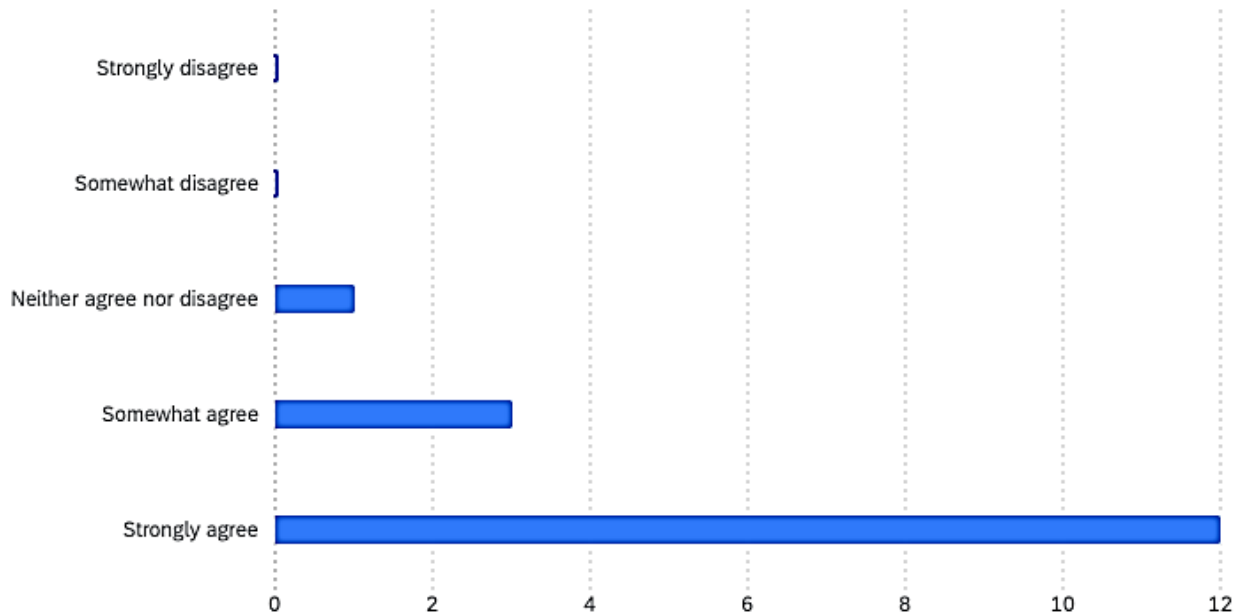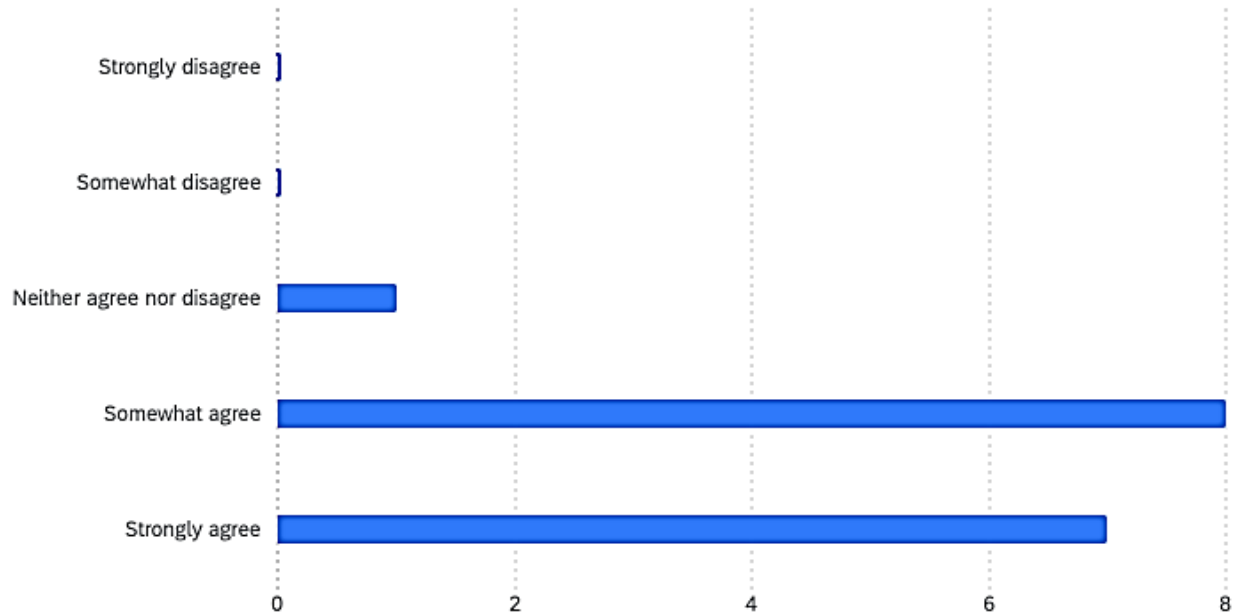

Average Score: 4.7

Question 3/15: The Board maintains an appropriate balance between advocating for the support needed to further the University's mission, and accountability to all of North Carolina's citizens.
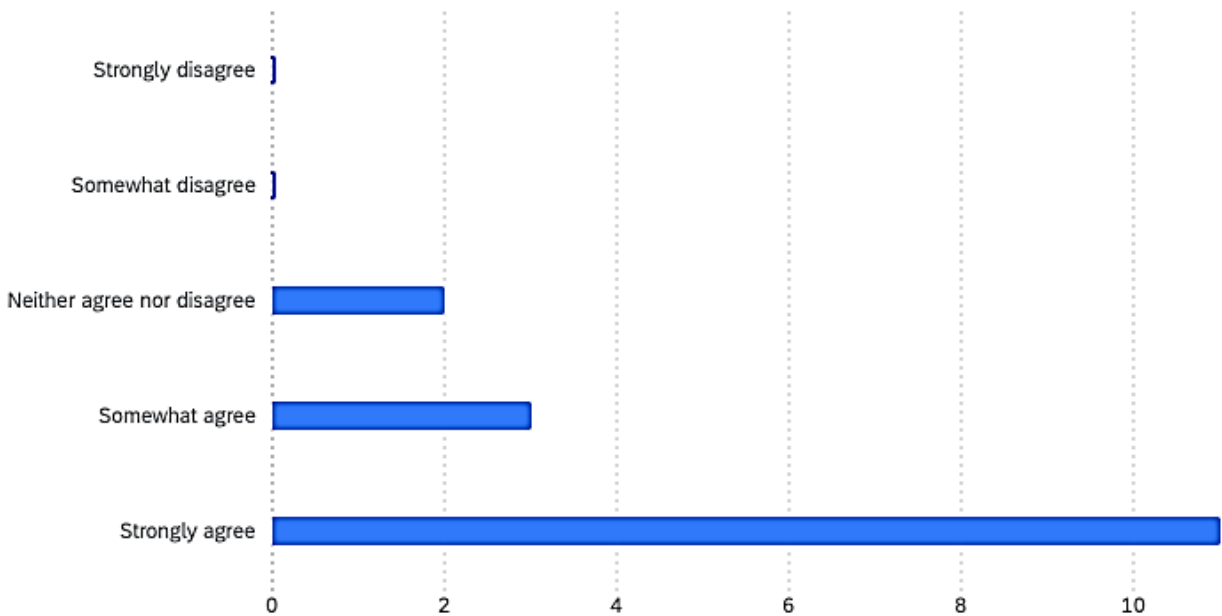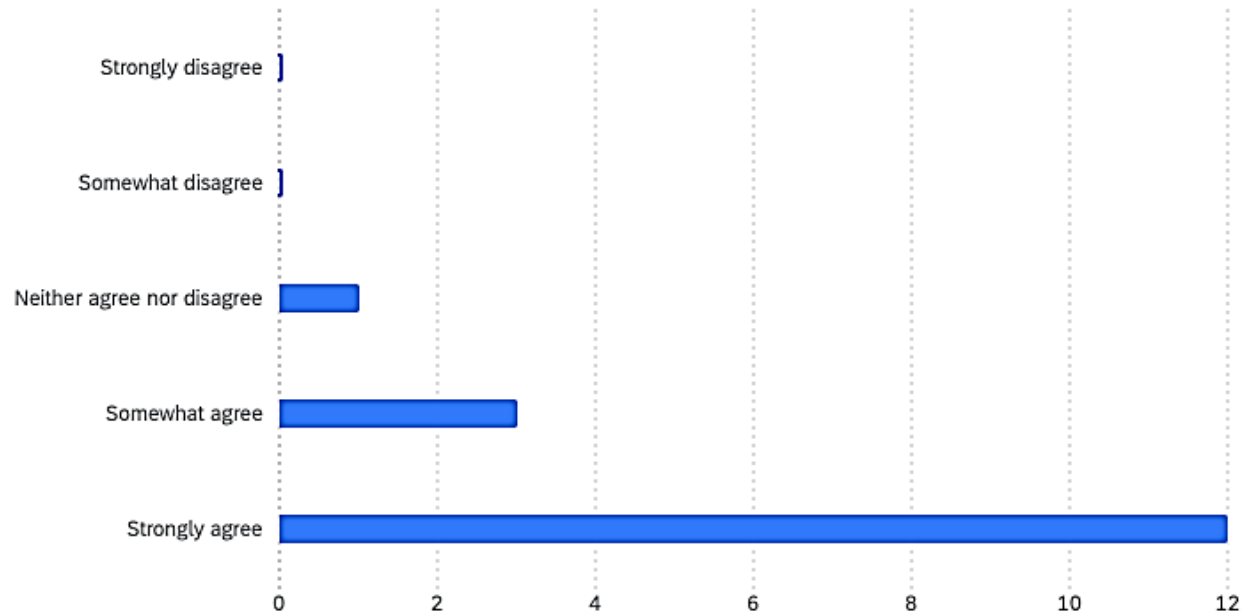

Average Score: 4.6

Question 4/15: The Board maintains an appropriate balance between governing at the system level and addressing the needs of individual campuses.

Average Score: 4.4

Question 5/15: The Board has adequate policies for addressing ethics concerns and conflicts of interest.

Average Score: 4.7

## Category 2: Board Engagement in Setting Strategic Priorities

The second category of five questions provided Board members with the opportunity to reflect on the extent to which they feel the Board is engaged in setting strategic priorities for the UNC System. Responses to all five questions were very positive, with the average scores ranging from 4.1 to 4.8. This indicates that members believe the Board is positively engaged in setting strategic priorities for the UNC System. Question 8/15 received the highest average score of 4.8. Question 6/15 was the lowest scoring question with an average of 4.1. Full responses and average scores are provided below for the five questions in this category.

Question 6/15: The Board is informed about trends in higher education and has adequate opportunity to discuss matters of key strategic importance to the University.
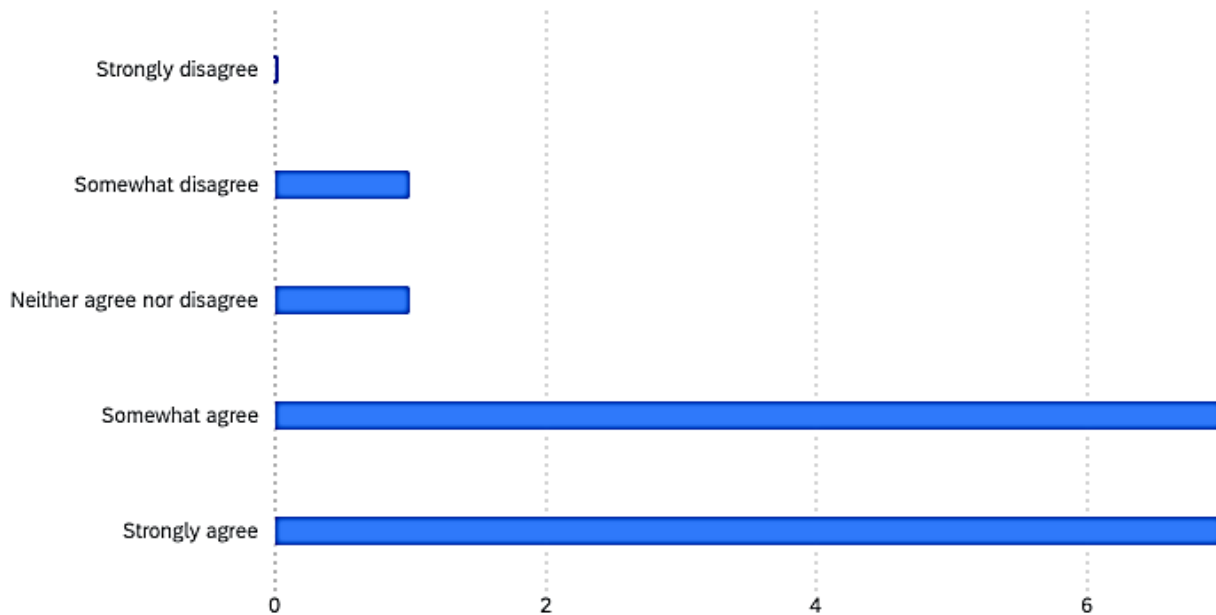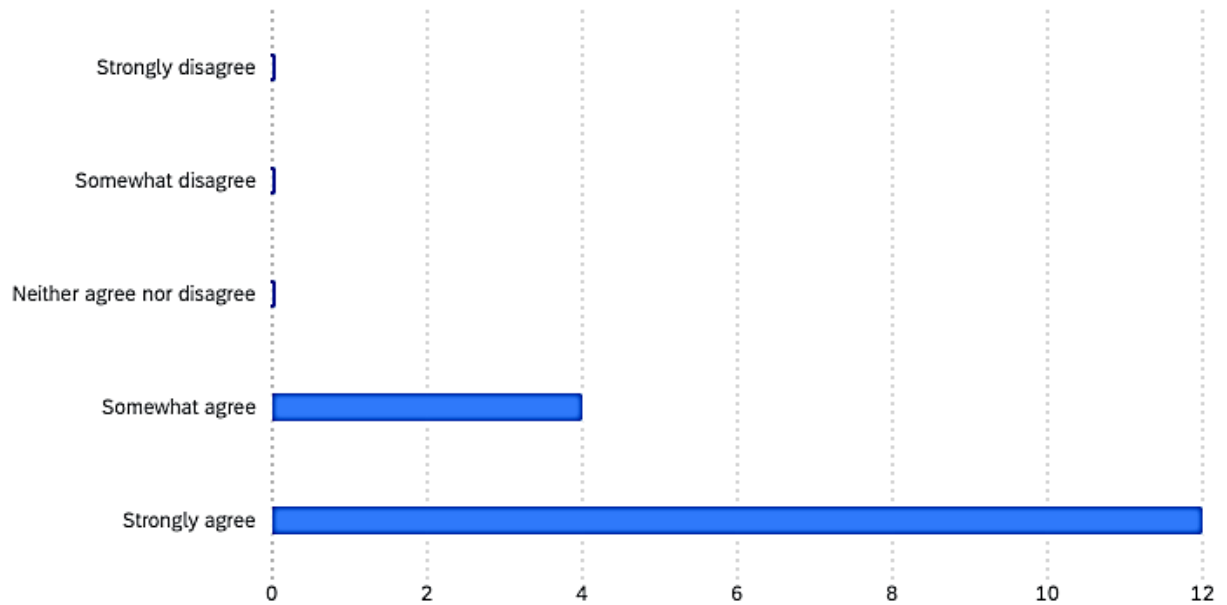

Average Score: 4.1

Question 7/15: The Board reviews, updates, and approves the University's strategic plan, including goals and performance metrics.
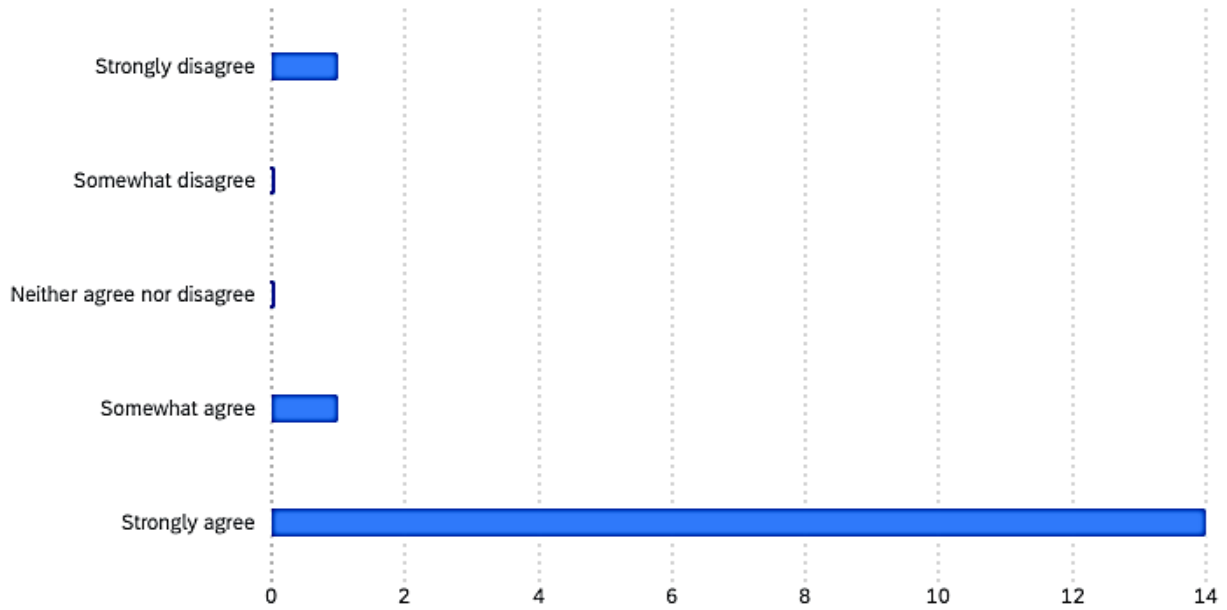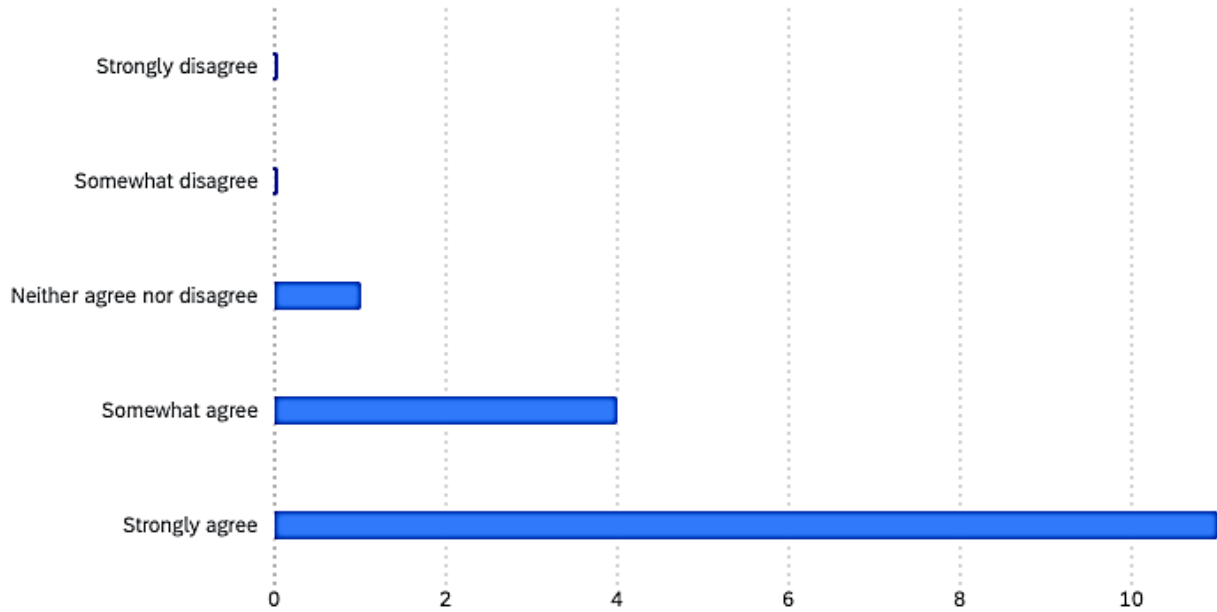

Average Score: 4.7

Question 8/15: The University's strategic plan, including goals and performance metrics, align with the Board's priorities in fulfilling the University's core mission.
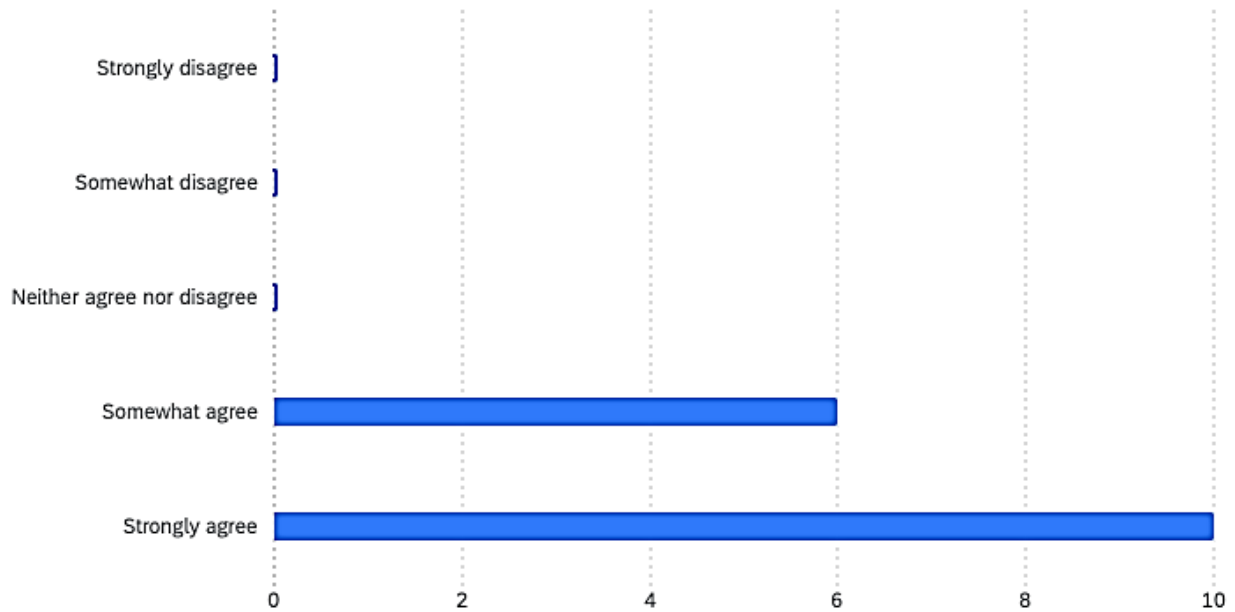

Average Score: 4.8

Question 9/15: The University's strategic plan, including goals and performance metrics, are communicated to the Board, System Office, campus leadership, other stakeholders, and the public.

Average Score: 4.6

Question 10/15: The University's strategic plan, including goals and performance metrics, guide the Board, System Office, campus leadership, and others in their respective work.
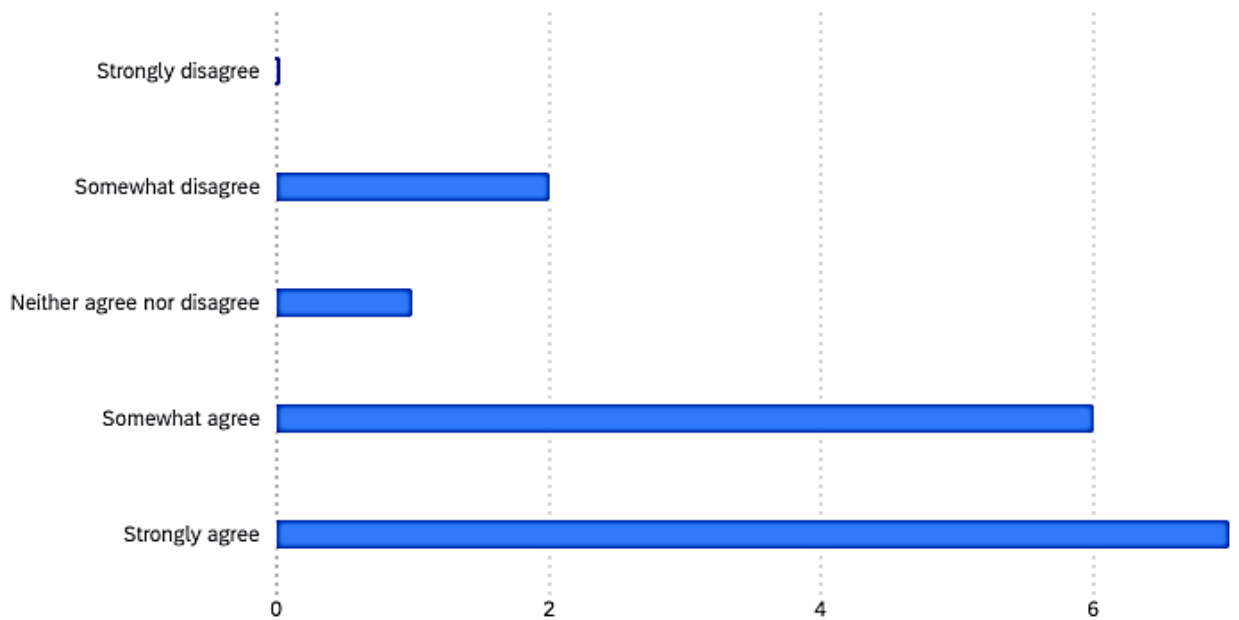

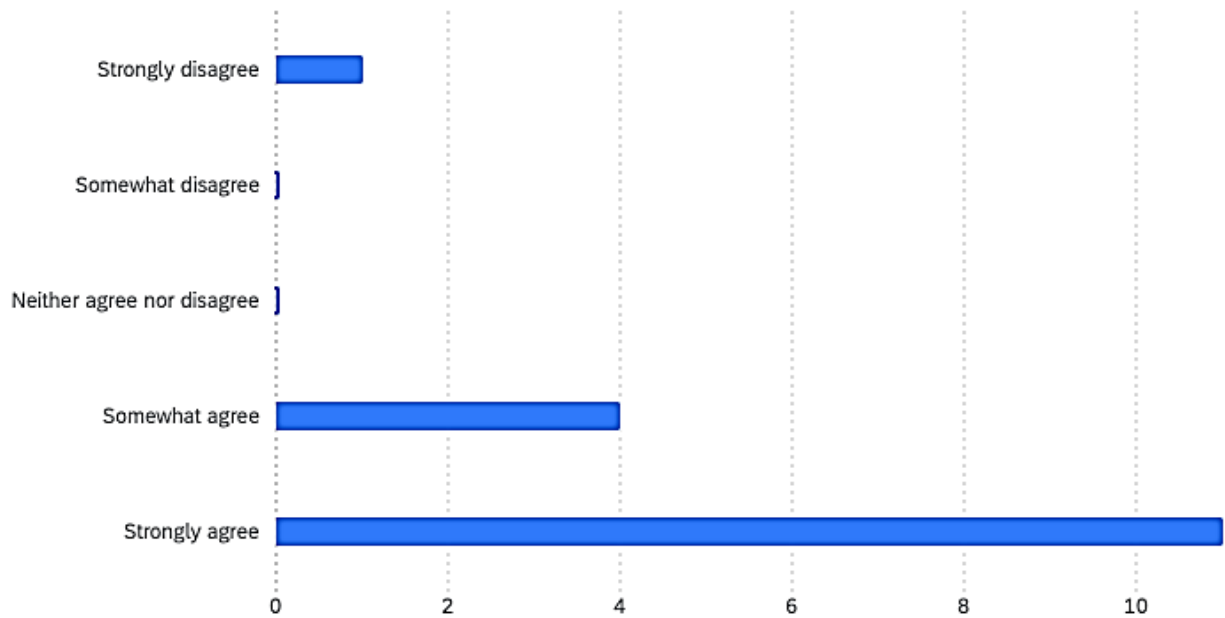**Average Score: 4.6**

Category 3: Board Operations

The third category of five questions provided individuals with the opportunity to reflect on their assessment of Board operations. Responses on all five questions were largely positive, with average scores ranging from 3.9 to 4.9. This indicates that members largely believe that the Board is operating in a positive manner. Question 15/15 received the highest average score of 4.9. Question 11/15 was the lowest scoring question with an average of 3.9. Full responses and average scores are provided below for the five questions in this category.

Question 11/15: The Board has adequate procedures for orienting its new members to their duties and responsibilities.
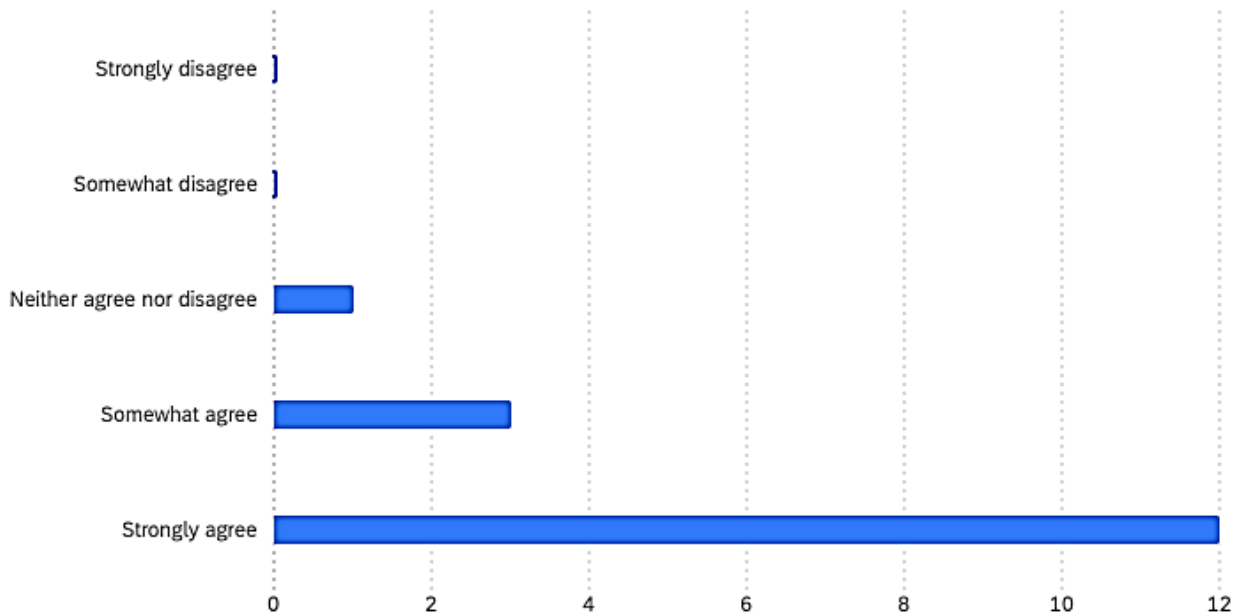

Average Score: 3.9

Question 12/15: The Board's current committee structure reflects the Board's major areas of responsibility.
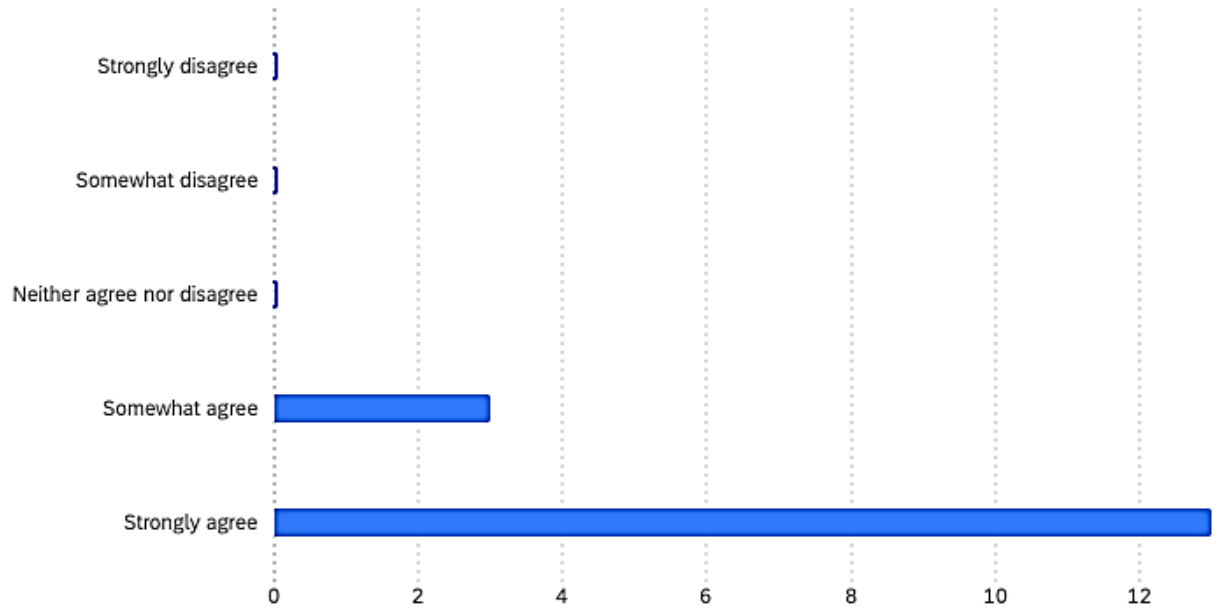

Average Score: 4.5

Question 13/15: Individual Board members have the opportunity to attend and participate in committee and task force meetings and the full Board meeting.
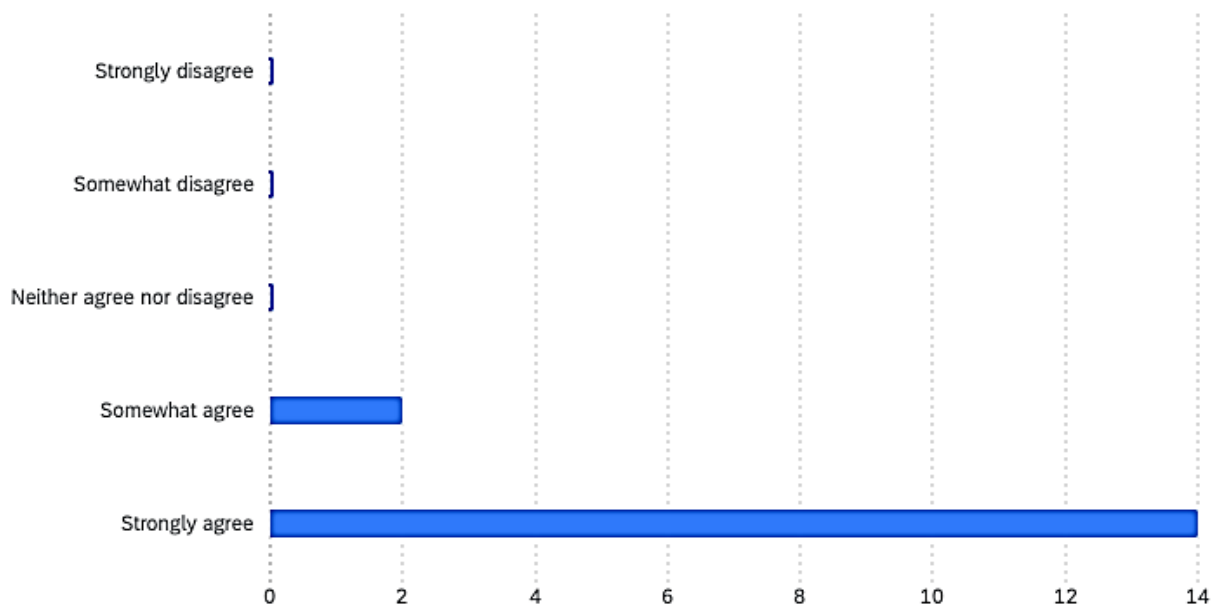

Average Score: 4.7

Question 14/15: Board and committee meeting agendas and supporting materials are communicated to Board members and the public in advance of the meetings.

Average Score: 4.8

Question 15/15: Board members have access to University policies, regulations, and guidelines.

Average Score: 4.9

Appendix I. Self-Evaluation Comments

"The Board of Governors went through a few unstable years due to bad hires and a few less-than-motivated BOG members. Today, the direction and operation have improved by 100 percent. It is a pleasure to work with such a professional group. Leadership is tremendous."

"As a Governor, I feel that the President, System staff and Board leadership provide me with all the information, access, and engagement to allow me to execute the fiduciary duties of my position."

"Decisions are made by the Board leadership in advance, with the Committees, and then the full Board, expected to ratify those decision. There is little effort to develop consensus or solicit ideas from the at large members, from the "bottom up." At times, the at large board members have no knowledge of major proposals until the board material is released less than a week before the board meetings, and at times major proposals are released during a committee meeting, the day before voting by the full board."

"The board has done an exceptional job of focusing on policy and delegating appropriate authorities to Boards of Trustees and helping to educate those trustees as to their responsibilities."