PSU Board of Trustees Committee on Governance and Long-Range Planning Skill Set Inventory Report

August 2022

A comprehensive inventory of the skill sets, experience, and expertise of board members is completed annually to inform the trustee electoral and appointment processes. The data is collected through an online survey administered by the Office of Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Research (OPAIR) on behalf of the Board of Trustees. In 2022, the survey was completed by the six new incoming Board members, appended to data gathered from existing Board members in 2021, and analyzed by OPAIR staff. Analysis of existing strengths identifies opportunities for future electoral or appointment considerations. The benefit of such an undertaking is to ensure a diverse range of knowledge and professional expertise among Board members.

In addition to identifying skill set opportunities, the Board embraces the University’s statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive excellence and strives to ensure Board representation that is diverse and inclusive in all forms.

As in previous years, the data showed Board members consistently rate three areas of expertise as important to board function: business operations, finance, and governance/ethics/integrity. These areas currently appear to be well represented on the Board with 50% or more of its members rating themselves as a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale where 1 = No experience and 5 = Expert.

Areas of expertise that were considered important where the current representation on the Board is not as robust included agriculture, higher education, and legal. When asked to add up to six additional skills and/or experience(s) that are important to have on the Board of Trustees, the most frequent additional categories provided included the following broad themes: (a) personal characteristics such as curiosity, integrity, and open-mindedness; b) interpersonal skills such as teamwork, leadership experiences, communication skills, ability and willingness to collaborate; c) crisis and risk management; d) knowledge and experience in issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and e) problem-solving.

Therefore, in addition to efforts to strive for Board diversity in all forms, professional skill sets in the areas of agriculture, higher education, law, crisis and risk management, and diversity, equity, and inclusion may be of particular interest at this time. The Committee on Governance and Long-Range Planning will continue this process on a regular basis to allow real-time assessment that reflects the usual and customary turnover of Board membership.

While this exercise is important in identification of focus areas, it should not be construed or interpreted to be exclusionary or prescriptive.