

Title: Engaging the Governing Board to Advance Student Success through Internationalization

Facilitators: Anthony Pinder (Emerson College); Tiki Ayiku (NASPA)

Chair: Dafina Blacksher Diabate (AIEA)

Roundtable Discussion Summary

THEMES FROM DISCUSSION

- ❖ Know the institutional culture
- ❖ Provide data, utilizing research that can be used, whether or not you get credit
- ❖ Cultivating networks and allies can grow opportunities
- ❖ Transition of leadership presents opportunities to build connections
- ❖ Know the politics so you can be most effective
- ❖ Articulating your own professional development goals; calculate the risk of being aggressive
- ❖ Personality in context will influence your tactics
- ❖ Make your boss look good
- ❖ Aspirational peer institutions can stimulate productive competition
- ❖ Adjust your message to the context; use the popular themes of the cool kids to advance the issues you are working on

CONTEXT AND INFORMATION

- Do your homework: Study the people who you will be making the case to; understand where they are coming from. You may realize that where they are coming from is not where you need them to be.
- Make the information bite-sized so people can digest it easily. Research and money make things happen. Come armed with research, explaining the value and return on investment of international education activities and strategies.
- Figure out how to put your agenda into a context that is also important for other people. You want to be seen as the source of information they can't get anywhere else. But regardless of credit, provide the information.
- Three useful tactics: 1) produce an annual report that provides data and evidence; invite the provost to write the cover letter so their name is on the document affirming their endorsement. 2) send talking points to the president as they are getting ready for fall convocation, even if uninvited. Add a note that you can scale back if this is too much information. 3) Ask people/units that report to you to present information that you can submit as part of the trustee booklet they receive at every board meeting.
- Pay attention to the activities of aspirational peers, institutions that have been identified as similar enough to your institution. Collecting hard data on aspirational peers and compare against your institution. The spirit of competition often works to inspire your institution to do better in a given area.

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- When presenting to full board or any committee, the agenda is likely packed so find out who else is on the agenda, where you fall in the pecking order. Make the presentation succinct, even start with the main point you want them to take away, rather than extended introduction or build-up.
- Use language and terminology that will be received. Ex. persistence as the context, study abroad as a tool for achieving that. Don't get restricted by using language that frighten or alienate people. Find ways to talk about internationalization in ways that make people comfortable.

POLITICS, PERSONALITY AND ACCESS

- Creating opportunities: find allies on the board, determine who you have access to; engage them independently. Sometimes people are waiting to be engaged, invited to do something different, wanting to be closer and connected to the success stories.
- Transition of leadership presents challenges and opportunities for raising the attention to international education. Anticipating where the power shifts will happen will influence how you cultivate allies.
- Politics 101: Never put yourself between a board member and the president or provost.
- Self-awareness: Understand your power and position. Will you ever be invited to a board meeting? Your personality and the personalities of the leadership will factor into the way that you ask for permission at the table.
- Articulating professional development goals that include having access to the board or engaging with trustees. It will be important to calculate the risk of being aggressive in this context, and anticipate how the request will be received.
- Be aware that other units may resent the access to the board granted to the international office.
- Usually the board meetings are scheduled and coordinated by a staff person in the president's office. Maintaining a good relationship with this person, can provide useful insight into the schedule, agenda, and competing issues in any given board meeting.
- Know who the "cool kids" are; find natural pathways so they are interested in what you do and seek to achieve.
- Map a strategy for how to get access to the board. One way is to invite yourself to attend a relevant subcommittee of the board.
- Identify students who would be good to place strategically in front of the board. Ex. international students or study abroad students can be groomed as ambassadors and advocates to share their authentic stories with the board.

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RESOURCES

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