



Selkirk College

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION MANUAL

Overarching Governance Process

The Board of Governors of Selkirk College serves on behalf of the citizens of the Province of British Columbia and has the task of ensuring the college remains true to its mission, vision, and values, meets its commitments and achieves strategic directions. The Board also is accountable to its educational, fiduciary, legislative, financial, and ethical responsibilities and requirements in exercising 'best practice' post-secondary governance.

The Board is responsible for setting Selkirk College's strategic priorities and institutional performance criteria. The Board is committed to governing through policies, enabling it to speak with one voice on critical issues and core values. The Board will carry out its governance responsibilities based on the following three groups of policies: 1. Governing Process policies describing the way the Board carries out its governing role 2. Board-President Relationship policies that define its relationship with the President/Chief Executive Officer and 3. Executive Limitations policies which describe the clear constraints or limits on the choice of operational means available to the President/Chief Executive Officer for the achievement of strategic directions, priorities, outcomes or results.

Overview of the Provincial Environment

- a. *College and Institute Act*: The Act is the primary document that provides the Board with its authority to exist. The Act is described as "permissive legislation" in that many parts of the legislation enable boards to take action rather than being required to do certain things. The following are some of the key features of the Act:
 - The objectives of the college are to provide comprehensive courses in the first and second year of degree programs, applied degrees, certificate, diploma, advanced diplomas in career oriented post-secondary education and training, trades training, and continuing education.
 - The composition of a board includes at least eight appointees of the government, an elected representative of the faculty, an elected representative of the support staff, two elected representatives of the student body, the chair of the Education Council and the President (the latter two being Ex Officio).
 - The creation of an Education Council with a minimum of 20 members: 10 elected faculty, four elected students, four appointed administrators and two elected support staff (In addition, Selkirk has opted to add one elected exempt staff member). The Council has a dual role of providing advice to the Board on policies dealing with the educational activities of the college and providing academic governance at the college by setting policies on examinations and evaluations of student performance, student withdrawals, academic standards, criteria for recognizing academic performance, student appeals and setting the curriculum content for courses.
 - Provisions are included to ensure Boards collect fees on behalf of student associations.
 - The Act provides a limitation on expenditures in that a Board may not enter into a deficit. The typical interpretation of this part of the Act is that a board should not plan for a deficit without the approval of the Minister of Advanced Education.
 - The Act requires boards to seek the approval of the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, and the Minister of Finance to acquire land and buildings.
 - The Act requires the board to appoint a president to execute the strategic vision of the college.
 - A quorum is defined as a majority of the members holding office on the board.

- Resolutions are passed if the majority of the people present at a meeting with a quorum vote in favour of the resolution. Thus, abstentions are considered negative votes.
- b. *Post Secondary Employers Association (PSEA)*. Selkirk College is a member of PSEA. The PSEA is established under the Public Sector Employers Act. The purpose of PSEA is to coordinate human resources in the public PSE sector. Much of the effort of the PSEA focuses on compensation issues for unionized and non-unionized employees.

Governing in the Public Interest

As a board member, you have an important role in advancing and protecting the public interest. In carrying out your governance role, consider how your decisions can maintain, protect and enhance the safety, economic, social and environmental well-being of all British Columbians. When put into action, this is called citizen-centred governance.

Principles of Citizen-Centred Governance

Because it is so important for public sector organizations to govern in the public interest, there are some important principles for you to uphold:

1. Put the interests of citizens at the centre of decision-making.
2. Behave with integrity, demonstrate strong commitment to ethical values and respect the rule of law.
3. Ensure openness and respectful engagement with all citizens.
4. Strive for outcomes that support healthy communities in British Columbia, including social, economic and environmental well-being.
5. Implement actions to achieve the organization's mandate.

Governing in the public interest means providing responsible fiduciary oversight in consideration of the five principles listed above. It entails active consideration and review of the most important issues facing the public in B.C., as well as your organization's scope of services outlined in your mandate. Governance involves asking insightful questions based on your skills, experiences and competencies, and from considering different perspectives.¹

Selkirk College Board Policies Document

The Selkirk College Board has developed policies to conduct the Board's activities. These policies address the Board's activities and responsibilities and not those of the staff. The following sections provide a brief summary of the Board policies categories:

a. **Mission, Vision, Values and Outcomes Statements**

A primary role of the Board is the determination of the foundation or purpose statements for Selkirk College. It is the Board's responsibility to produce and review these statements on a regular basis to ensure their currency and relevancy to the wider community. This process is carried out in a consultative manner with the community and internal stakeholders.

¹ Governing in the Public Interest - Foundational Training For BC Public Sector Appointees May 2019

b. **Board-President Relationship (BPR)**

Under the governance model adopted by Selkirk College, the President is the sole employee of the Board. All delegation of the Board's authority is through the President and the President is responsible for the performance of the institution.

c. **Executive Limitations (EL)**

Executive Limitations are boundaries or limitations placed on the President and the staff. They indicate actions, behaviours and methods, which are not acceptable to the Board. They are expressed in the negative, thus providing empowerment to undertake that which has not been restricted by the limitation. The President may exercise any reasonable interpretation of the limitations.

d. **Board's Governance Process (GP)**

The Selkirk College Board adopted the Policy Governance model in the fall of 1994. Since then the Board has continued to review and revise the model to suit the college's and the Board's needs. Under the Policy Governance Model, the Board focuses on issues and activities that the Board considers its responsibilities and depends on the President and staff to deal with all operational matters.

Since the President is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the institution, the Board's governance focus is on the long-term vision and purpose of the college. The Board conducts its meetings in an open and consultative manner and gives due consideration to the views and concerns of all members of the community. The Board ensures accountability for its own activities and evaluates its performance on a regular basis.