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Trustee perceptions of effective board functioning: a survey of elected community college trustees in the Midwest

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**Trustee perceptions of effective board functioning: A survey
of elected community college trustees in the Midwest**

by

Michelle Robinson

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Leadership)

Program of Study Committee:
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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2014

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DEDICATION

I would like
to dedicate this dissertation
to the community college trustees
of Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, and Nebraska.

Your willingness
to serve as trustees enables
hundreds of thousands of individuals
the access to high quality, affordable education
in their communities.

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—Yoruba proverb—

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ABSTRACT

Community college governance boards in the United States are comprised of public officials who are appointed or publicly elected from the community in which their college resides. The purpose of these governance boards is to oversee the community college with respect to mission, strategic direction of the College, hiring the CEO/President and accepting fiduciary responsibility. The fiduciary role of board members, also known as trustees, has become more critical as funding sources have been on the decline. The reality of diminishing budgets has also sparked an increase in outcomes-based accountability, with stakeholders expecting their community college to act as good fiscal stewards.

The American Association of Community College Trustees (AACT) purports, board self-assessment is a tenet of effective board governance, providing an effective means for board members to understand their role and responsibilities (Smith, 2000). While community college governance boards have the opportunity to seek assistance in the self-assessment process from trustee associations such as AACT, the shifting priorities and fees associated with these services can often impede them.

The *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-assessment Survey* was administered to elected community college trustees in six Midwest states: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, and Nebraska. Since very little research has been conducted in the area of community college trustees, this research could provide valuable information as to the skill sets, which may facilitate effective board functioning and reveal areas of deficit, which may present barriers to effective board functioning.

The goals of the survey were to acquire demographic information, background information, and trustee perceptions of effective board functioning. The survey findings were analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and qualitative analysis. There were 226 survey respondents; almost three fourths were male, 98% were white and nearly half were 65 years of age or older. The survey respondents reported high levels of agreement with most items on effective board governance.

Board self-assessment is viewed as a best practice for effective boards. However fiscal barriers can often impede boards from this process. National and state policy can be directed at making self-assessment tools available for little or no cost.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“Community colleges are profoundly American institutions. They reflect the democratic ideal that America is a land of equal opportunity for all people. They are community-based—they serve the citizens of their region and lead their communities” (Smith, 2000, p. 1).

Background and Significance of the Study

Community colleges are an integral part of the higher education landscape in the United States. Community colleges serve 7.7 million credit students, constituting nearly one half of the total undergraduate student population in the United States.

(<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>, 2014). The Community College mission is one of access, with its open-door admissions policy and design to serve local community needs. Vaughan (2006, p. 3) highlighted the tenets of the community college mission as follows:

1. serve all segments of society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students;
2. a comprehensive educational program;
3. serve its community as a community-based institution of higher education;
4. teaching; and
5. lifelong learning.

Sustaining the mission of these open-access, community-based institutions, however, comes at a price. Historically, community colleges have relied heavily on public funding. When community colleges were small, the funding sources were not under as much fiscal scrutiny. (Cohen & Brawer, 2008) However, as community college populations began to

increase their budgets, the competition with other public agencies changed the landscape of scarce financial allocations (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Local, state, and federal appropriations for all institutions of public higher education have been steadily declining. Historically, community colleges have been underfunded and are adversely affected by this trend of declining resources. (Finkel, 2006; Tollefson, 2009). Further, local fiscal contributions to community colleges have declined, causing them to raise tuition among the students most in need of financial assistance (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Driven by this fiscal urgency, community colleges have increasingly been forced to accomplish more with fewer resources (Finkel, 2006; Tollefson, 2009). Community colleges are tasked with providing more services to their students and the community in which they reside while functioning with less fiscal support from tax revenue.

Today's reality of shrinking budgets has also sparked an increase in performance based funding and outcomes-based accountability, with stakeholders expecting their community college to act as good stewards of their dollars (Hendrick, Hightower; Gregory, 2006). There is an expectation that community colleges will be entrepreneurial, developing partnerships with business and industry, seeking grant funding, and creating self-sustaining programs in order to survive in the current economic climate (Finkel, 2006). Community colleges are continuously seeking ways to function more efficiently. As a natural consequence, community college board governance has come under scrutiny (Potter & Phelan, 2008).

The genesis of board governance in American higher education can be traced back to the foundation of public colleges and universities (Smith, 2000). Board governance is an essential mechanism used to run corporate organizations, in both the profit and non-profit

sectors. Bowen (2008, p. 20) asserted that one of the primary strengths of board governance is found in the collective responsibility of its members. Further, Bowen (2008, pp. 21-26) stated that the responsibilities of a board as follows: (1) Select, encourage, advise, evaluate, compensate, and if need be replace the CEO; (2) Discuss, review and approve strategic directions; (3) Monitor performance; (4) Ensure that the organization operates responsibly as well as effectively; (5) Act on specific policy recommendations and mobilize support for decisions taken; (6) Provide a buffer for the president or CEO; and (7) Ensure that the necessary resources, both human and financial, will be available to pursue the organization's strategies and achieve its objectives.

Community college boards have similarities to other public and non-profit boards, however, there are some important distinctions. Community college board members are challenged to understand the following distinctions in order to serve as an effective board member: (1) the unique community based mission of the community college, and (2) the unique institutional culture of the community college (Smith, 2000). The effectiveness of a community college board depends on their ability to understand and connect to the community in which they serve.

Nationally, more than 7,000 lay citizens serve on local, state and university governing boards, providing leadership and stewardship (Polonio & Miller, 2012). Trustee boards are composed through governor-appointment, public election or a combination of governor-appointment and public election. Governance structures vary widely from state to state. Community colleges in 31 states have governor-appointed trustees, 14 states have publicly elected trustees, and five states have combination of appointed trustees and publicly elected trustees (Polonio & Miller, p. 6).

Historically, social forces, as well as state and local political culture, heavily influenced the manner in which states formed individual governance systems at colleges and universities (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Community colleges, by design, are mission-based institutions. Further, community college boards, by design, are rooted within their communities. Local control allows community colleges to adapt based on the changes and specific needs of their particular community. Community college board governance plays a critical role in the success or demise of an institution (Bowen, 2008). Effective board governance has become a logical vehicle for efficiency.

Statement of the Problem

Community College board self-assessment is viewed as a valuable tool, which facilitates effective board governance (Smith, 2009). Self-assessment of board members, relative to understanding of their role, would provide an opportunity to better utilize board members based on their strengths and to provide mentorship and training in areas that require improvement. In addition, board self-assessment can illuminate whether the board as a whole is functioning efficiently and provide a platform to improve the relationship between the board and the CEO.

While there is an abundance of resources, literature and how-to manuals regarding board governance for profit and non-profit institutions, there is a paucity of research regarding the self-assessment of community college boards. Further, there is an overall lack of research on community college trustees in general. The analysis of elected Midwest community college trustees and their perspectives on effective board functioning will provide valuable data in an under-researched area as well as provide demographic and background data on this population.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees. In addition, this study illuminated the voices of elected Midwest community college trustees' decisions and choice to serve on community college boards as well as their perceptions of skills necessary to be effective board members. Finally, this study sought to determine elected Midwest community college trustee experiences in board service.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees?
2. What are elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning in the following areas: Mission, Policy and Planning; Board-CEO Relations; Community Relations and Advocacy; Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations; Board Leadership; Board Meetings and Board Education?
3. Are there significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics?
4. What are the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve as board members?
5. What are the elected Midwest community college trustees perceptions of the most important factors necessary to be an effective trustee?

Research Design

This study utilized the survey research design to systematically collect data from community college trustees in the Midwest. Specifically, data were collected from active, elected community college board members in the following Midwest states: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, and Nebraska.

This study sought to describe demographic characteristics and experiences in board service of elected Midwest community college trustees. The purpose of using a survey research design was to systematically collect data from people in order to “describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behavior” (Fink, 2003, p. 2). The advantages of employing the online survey research design (as opposed to telephone, mail or face-to-face methods) include the ability to efficiently and directly reach a large group of participants, across a large geographic area, at low cost (Fink).

A questionnaire, the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey*, was developed and delivered online. The data were collected utilizing the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey*, an online questionnaire developed for this study (Robinson, 2013). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and qualitative analysis.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for this research:

Advisory: Represents the community and provides a narrowly defined level of governance oversight to a community college (Polonio & Miller, 2012).

Appointed: A trustee, regent, or governing board member who is selected and authorized by the governor, state and local legislature, publicly elected local officials, or school board districts (Polonio & Miller, 2012)..

Board of Trustees: The name of the governing body varies from state to state to include: board of trustees, board of regents, board of directors, board of governors, governing board, coordinating board, and advisory board (Polonio & Miller, 2012).

CEO (Chief Executive Officer): The CEO reports directly to the Board of Trustees. The CEO may be known by different titles, such as president, provost or chancellor. CEO will be used to distinguish this role.

Coordinating: Establishes statewide policies, guidelines and plans for community colleges and/or post-secondary institutions across the state (Polonio & Miller, 2012)..

Elected: A trustee or governing board member who is publically elected by the voters of service area or state (Polonio & Miller, 2012).

Ex-officio: A governing board member who serves by virtue of holding another official position and who may or may not have voting rights depending on the statute (Polonio & Miller, 2012).

Governing: Directly governs a community college(s) through the creation of policies and appointment of a president or chancellor (Polonio & Miller, 2012).

Selected by Constituency: A trustee or governing board member who is selected or elected by local school district boards or constituencies such as students (Polonio & Miller, 2012).

Dissertation Organization

The goals of this study were to conduct on online a survey of elected Midwest community college trustees in order to describe demographic and background characteristics

about the population. In addition, this study sought to examine the perceptions of effective board governance among elected Midwest community college trustees. Finally, this study sought to find out the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve on community college boards and what skills they perceive as most important to the effective functioning of the board.

Chapter 2 provides a review of literature regarding boards of trustees. The chapter begins with a brief history of community colleges and their importance in the higher education landscape of America. Next, board governance in academia will be discussed; followed by the qualities and best practices of effective boards. Self-assessment of boards is an essential best practice of effective boards.

National and state associations for community college trustee associations will be outlined. In addition, a summary of the national community governance models is presented. Two national surveys of community college boards of trustees conducted by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) are discussed. Next, survey data from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges are presented. Chapter 2 concludes with noting the lack of research regarding community college trustees.

Chapter 3 provides a description and outline of the study including: methodological approaches utilized, research questions, hypothesis, research design, setting population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, variables and plan for data analysis. In addition, this chapter addresses the ethical issues, limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 4 provides results for the data collected from elected Midwest community college trustees in four sections. The chapter begins with an overall descriptive analysis of the sample. The next section provides a descriptive analysis of the survey questions on

General Board Effectiveness. The third section provided a summary of the inferential analysis of variables found to be statistically significant. The chapter concludes with the qualitative analysis of open-ended questions from the questionnaire.

Chapter 5 provides an overall discussion and analysis of the research findings of this study through quantitative and qualitative methods. This chapter is divided into the following sections: demographic/background characteristics, general board effectiveness, *t*-tests, and open-ended questions. The results of the quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed. The chapter concludes with Implications for Policy and Practice, Applications for the Study, Recommendations for future research, and final thoughts.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the literature and is divided into six sections. The chapter begins with a brief history and the importance of community colleges in America. In the next section, the role of board governance in academia is outlined. The third section details best practices of effective boards of trustees. Section four outlines the community college trustee associations on both the national and state levels. Section five details the national and state level community college governing board structures. The final section presents the surveys conducted on boards of trustees from community colleges and four-year institutions.

History of Community Colleges in the United States of America

Community colleges have been in existence for more than 100 years in America. Early on, community colleges began their existence as Junior Colleges. The idea of the first public Junior College is attributed to William Rainey Harper, who served as the first president of the University of Chicago (Cohen, Brawer, & Kisker, 2013). Joliet Junior College, founded in Illinois in 1901, is credited with being America's first public Junior College (Cohen et al.). Rainey designed a system that would separate the first two years from the last two years of a four-year baccalaureate degree. Hence, the student would complete the first two years (freshman and sophomore) at the Junior College and would complete the upper class levels (junior and senior) at the University. Harper's philosophy of separating the Junior college from the university permitted the university to focus on higher levels of scholarship (Cohen et al.).

Among the perceived benefits, Junior College offered the ability for students to stay close to home while advancing their education or vocational training (Cohen et al., 2013). In addition, providing an institution of higher education within the community was viewed as a cultural enhancement, which would potentially fuel the growth and development of a community (Cohen et al., p. 10). Over time, the idea of the Junior College was adopted across the nation. Socio-economic forces were at the root of the development and expansion of the Junior College (Smith, 2000, p. 2). Cohen et al. (p. 19) attributed the following socio economic forces to the rise of the Junior College: (1) the need for trained workers to operate the nation's expanding industry; (2) the lengthened period of adolescence which extended the length of mandated custodial care; and (3) the drive for social equality and grater access to higher education. Further, the belief that education is the key to societal mobility is thought of as an American value (Cohen et al.). The turn of the 20th century brought about the rise and expansion of secondary school enrollments. Consequently, there was a rise in the number of high school graduates. The 1924 high school graduation rate of 30% rose to 70% by 1960 (Cohen et al.). Further, by 1960, 60% of the high school graduates entered college (Cohen et al.). This expansion of secondary education had a direct impact on the rise of the Junior college (Cohen et al.).

The national transformation from the era of the Junior College to the Community College is attributed, in large part, to President Harry Truman (Gilbert & Heller, 2010; Hutcheson, 2007). The 1947 President's Commission on Higher Education, known more commonly as The Truman Commission, called for the growth and expansion of post-secondary education (Gilbert & Heller, 2010; Hutcheson, 2007). The commission was formed in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. President Truman wanted to strengthen

democratic ideals in this post-war era, reinforcing the belief that education is an important part of a democratic society (Hutcheson, 2007). An overarching thread of democracy addressed the right for citizens to have access to education regardless of economic status, race, creed, color, sex, national origin or ancestry (Hutcheson). One of the precipitating factors, the need to provide educational access to all citizens, was sparked by the adverse treatment of African-American veterans upon their return from war (Hutcheson). The Truman commission called for the establishment of the community college system throughout the nation and doubling of the number of people in higher education (Smith, 2000).

The Truman Commission re-conceptualized the Junior colleges and introduced the term and concept of the community college (Gilbert & Heller, 2010). The name community college was more reflective of the integration of the two-year college into the community than Junior college, which implied transfer to a four-year institution (Gilbert & Heller). The Commission also intended for the community college to offer expanded functions, which would meet the post-secondary educational needs (Gilbert & Heller). The largest period of growth and expansion of the community college was in the 1960s and 1970s. Baby Boomers in the 1960s marked greatest growth in community colleges (Smith, 2000). In addition, the 1970s marked a period of enrollment growth on the heels of the feminist movement; women sought education and decent-paying jobs (Hutcheson, 2007).

According to the Association of American Community Colleges (AACC), 7.7 million credit students are enrolled in community colleges, constituting nearly one half of the total undergraduate student population in the United States. (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>, 2014). In addition, community colleges serve 5 million noncredit students annually. The

community college student body is comprised of 57% females and the average age is 28 years. In terms of ethnicity the community college students are diverse: 51% White, 19% Hispanic, 14% Black, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, 2% two or more races, 5% Other/unknown and 1% Nonresident Alien. (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>).

There are other noteworthy demographics, which demonstrate the inclusive, comprehensive mission of the community college. Thirty-six percent of community college students are first generation to attend college, 17% are a single parent, 7% are Non-US citizens, 4% are Veterans and 12% are students with disabilities. (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>). In terms of representation among all undergraduates, community college students represent: 42% first-time freshman, 59% Native American, 56% Hispanic, 48% Black and 44% Asian/Pacific Islander. (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>).

Nationwide, there are 1,132 community colleges. (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>, 2014). Across the country, public community colleges appoint and/or elect 7074 members who serve on local, state, community college and university governing boards (Polonio & Miller, 2012, p. 47).

Board Governance in Academia

According to Ehrenberg (2004), “Boards of trustees, comprised principally of lay representatives, are a distinctly American Institution, quite different from the ministries of education and faculty guilds that have often controlled higher education in Europe” (p. 9). American universities and colleges formed boards of trustees from their inception. (Ehrenberg, p. 28). These boards of trustees were created in the same tradition as boards of corporations. In fact, boards of trustees and boards of directors (corporate boards) were formed from the same legal tradition. Among the earliest institutions of higher education,

Harvard and Yale had “corporations” with boards (Ehrenberg, p. 28). Today, the corporate model continues to dominate the American higher education landscape as public institutions (state colleges and universities) have replicated this model even though there is no legal mandate to do so. Ehrenberg (p. 29) suggested there were early alternative models in Europe that could have been utilized. For example, France utilizes ministries of education who control universities. Prior to 19th century reforms, Oxford and Cambridge utilized faculty guilds. Ehrenberg noted further, “...the historical durability of the corporate model and its apparent success relative to alternative models...” (p. 29) demonstrates the utility and endurance of the corporate governance model in higher education.

Trustees bring a wide range of education and experience to boards. The variations among board members include: “...intellect, personality, preparation for the position, professional working style, educational vision and personal ambition” (Ehrenberg, 2004, p. 9). There are more than 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States. “Most boards of trustees consist primarily of *lay* trustees, that is, trustees who are not academics and whose primary employment is not in higher education” (Ehrenberg, p. 40). The fact that so many boards and presidents work well together speaks to the flexibility and endurance of this form of governance in higher education (Ehrenberg, p. 40).

Board governance in Junior Colleges can be traced back to the early 1900s (Smith, 2000). While community college boards have similarities to other public and non-profit boards, there are some important distinctions. Community college board members are challenged to understand the following distinctions in order to serve as an effective board member: (1) the unique community based mission of the community college and (2) the unique institutional culture of the community college (Smith).

The effectiveness of a community college board depends on their ability to understand and connect to the community in which they serve. Community college board governance researcher Smith (2000) summarized the role governance boards in the community college as follows: “Governing boards are key to the colleges’ role in their communities. Whether boards are local or statewide, they ensure that the colleges do not stray from their missions. They also ensure local interest are represented and maintain close connections with their communities” (p. 1).

Effective Boards

Board governance is an essential mechanism used to run corporate organizations, in both the profit and non-profit sectors. One of the primary strengths of board governance is found in the collective responsibility of its members (Bowen, p. 20). Bowen (pp. 21-26) stated the responsibilities of a board as follows:

- Select, encourage, advise, evaluate, compensate, and if need be replace the CEO;
- Discuss, review and approve strategic directions;
- Monitor performance;
- Ensure that the organization operates responsibly as well as effectively;
- Act on specific policy recommendations and mobilize support for decisions taken;
- Provide a buffer for the president or CEO; and
- Ensure that the necessary resources, both human and financial, will be available to pursue the organization’s strategies and achieve its objectives.

According to Bowen (2008), “The full effects of “good” versus “bad” governance can be hard to calibrate and are the subject of active debate, but no one doubts that they are real” (p. 3). Bowen further highlighted the role of providing balance: “A properly functioning

board provides checks and balances by adding layers of judgment and protection against abuse of power, self-dealing, favoritism, and just plain foolishness” (p. 20).

In *The Elements of Effective Board Governance*, Doyle (2009) purported, “Governance is an elusive concept that is often misunderstood” (p. 3). Governance is collective; that is, it is comprised of a group of people working together towards a common goal. The success or failure of the board hinges on the degree to which they can work well together. The confusion surrounding good governance may be found in the very collective nature of boards itself. Doyle explained, “This collective feature of boards often leads to a false sense of security that can arise from being part of a group” (p. 3). The group dynamic may promote passivity, with members deferring to *leaders* in lieu of expressing their own point of view. Adding to the elusive dilemma, when governance is good, it is rarely visible. However, when there is an organizational failure, the examination of governance is justifiably magnified. According to Doyle (p. 5), good governance is akin to actively steering the organization. Further, the elusive aspect of governance may be found in the difficulty between the balance of actively steering the organization while not micro-managing daily operations.

Doyle (2009, p. 7) theorized there are five elements of good governance, which should be sought from the board:

1. Leadership. The collective nature of leadership makes it more demanding than if it were left to a single individual.
2. Skills. The nature of the responsibilities demands that individual members must also be highly skilled if they are to work together effectively.

3. Group culture. It is essential that the culture of the group is conducive to sound decision-making and successful outcomes.
4. Relationships. The very nature of the governance function depends on relationships. Individual members of the group must be capable of working constructively together, and the group as a whole must be capable of forging a positive and constructive relationship with the CEO.
5. Integrity. The entire exercise of governance demands the highest level of integrity both from individual members and the group and from the group as a whole.

One of the primary elements of effective board governance is the evaluation of the board. Doyle (2009, p. 47) noted there are three component of board evaluation: evaluating performance at the (1) organizational level, (2) the performance of the collective board level, and (3) the performance of individual board members.

American Association of Community College Trustees

The American Association of Community College Trustees is a national organization, which represents community college trustees. The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is a non-profit educational organization of governing boards, representing more than 6,500 elected and appointed trustees who govern over 1,200 community, technical, and junior colleges in the United States and beyond (<http://www.acct.org/about/>). The Association of Community College Trustees Exists to:

- Enhance the image and foster greater public appreciation of community colleges and their governing boards.
- Support community college boards in their efforts to govern and develop policies that focus on meeting community needs.
- Help build community college board leadership and advocacy capacity through education and training programs.

- Assist community college boards in the recruitment, selection and retention of chief executive officers of the highest caliber.
(<http://www.acct.org/about/info/>)

Author of *Trusteeship in Community Colleges: A Guide for Effective Governance*, Smith (2000) reported, the American Community College Association of Trustees adopted a statement in 1999 *On Effective Board Governance of Community Colleges*. This standard setting statement outlines 10 qualities of effective boards:

1. Effective governance of community colleges is a community-based.
2. Effective governance requires a clear, articulated definition of the board's role.
3. Effective governance relies on a mutually supportive relationship between the board and the CEO.
4. Effective governance requires boards of trustees to act on behalf of the whole community.
5. Effective governance differentiates external from internal processes.
6. Effective governance can be achieved by the appointment *or* election process.
7. Effective boards are involved in a continuous process of in-service training.
8. Effective boards consist of trustees whose ethical behavior is above reproach.
9. Effective boards are accountable.
10. Effective governance relies on statewide coordination. (p. 168)

Conversely, Smith (2000) also identified characteristics of an ineffective board. According to Smith, the top failures of board governance are:

1. There is often confusion over who is in charge, resulting in conflict between the board and CEO and local and state governments.
2. There is insufficient trustee education, resulting in boards not performing optimally.
3. Boards become out of touch with their communities.
4. Boards are controlled by special interests.
5. Boards fail to monitor the college's performance.
6. There are ethical lapses on the board that reduce the public's trust in the board.
7. There are flaws in the design of the governance systems. (172)

Smith suggested the aforementioned failures of board governance may be mitigated by “assuring that governance systems in a state are structured to enhance board performance, that trustees are educated about their roles, and that boards take seriously their responsibility to be accountable to the general public” (p. 172).

ACCT Guide to Trustee Roles and Responsibilities

The American Community College Association of Trustees (ACCT) defines the role and responsibility of its trustee members (www.acct.org). ACCT emphasizes, effective boards do not get involved in doing the day-to-day work. Instead, effective boards set policy, which establishes standards and provides the vehicle for work to be accomplished. In addition, the board should always act as a unit. Individual board members do not have individual power where the voice of the board is concerned. Effective boards act as one unit with one voice. The following is a summary of *ACCT's Guide to Roles and Responsibilities*:

Community college boards of trustees are responsible for ensuring that their colleges are integral parts of their communities and serve their ever-changing needs. Boards are accountable to the community for the performance and welfare of the institutions they govern. Effective boards consist of people who come together to form a cohesive group to articulate and represent the public interest, establish a climate for learning and monitor the effectiveness of the institution. Boards of trustees do not do the work of their institutions; they establish standards for the work through the policies they set. Their specific responsibilities are to:

- Act as a Unit
- Represent the Common Good
- Set the Policy Direction
- Employ, Evaluate and Support the Chief Executive Officer
- Define Policy Standards for College Operations
- Create a Positive Climate
- Monitor Performance
- Support and Be Advocates for the College
- Lead as a Thoughtful Educated Team

(<http://www.acct.org/resources/newtrustees/new-trustee.php>)

ACCT emphasizes the promotion of effective governance through *trustee education*. Community college governing boards have an inherent and ongoing responsibility to their institutions, communities and students to actively build their competencies and practice effective governance. ACCT offers a range of services in support of trustee education, ranging from new trustee orientation and board retreats to board self- assessment. According to ACCT, board self-assessment allows the board to review its status, receive feedback and improve the board/president relationship. ACCT touts the benefits of board self-assessment:

Evaluation of the board provides an opportunity for the board to take stock of its contributions, establish a learning agenda around emerging issues and needs, and strengthen the board/president relationship. A mutually agreeable evaluation process creates a proactive forum where the leadership needs of the institution, and the new and emerging leadership role for the board, can be considered. (<http://www.acct.org/services/assessment/>)

ACCT clearly supports board self-assessment as a vehicle to effective governance. Although comprehensive services are offered, there are fees associated with them. Finding the revenue to engage in these services might present a barrier to community colleges as they struggle with lean fiscal allocations for such services.

State Level Community College Trustee Associations

Twenty-four states have dedicated state level community college associations. There are six Midwestern states which locally elect board of trustee members: *Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, and Nebraska*. Three of the six states—Illinois, Iowa and Kansas—have dedicated state associations for community college trustees. Michigan does not have a dedicated state level trustee association. However, it has a state community college association, which maintains a joint association between community college presidents and trustees. Missouri and Nebraska do not have dedicated community college

trustee associations but they both have state level community college associations. There is no mention of trustee association within these two organizations.

The following section summarizes each state level agency for the six Midwestern states with elected board members. The information is a representation of vision, mission and purpose of the association as presented on its website. In addition, their orientation towards trustee members will be reviewed. Three of the above mentioned states have dedicated state associations to community college trustees: Illinois, Iowa, and Kansas.

The first state association reviewed is the *Illinois Community College Trustee Association (ICCTA)*. Founded in 1970, this association touts a twofold mission: to provide community college advocacy and trustee development opportunities to the board members of the state's public community colleges. ICCTA has a clear message regarding trustee development offering such services as: seminars and roundtables, an annual convention, trustee opinion surveys, quick Survey research, a board self-evaluation manual, trained retreat facilitators and a Trustees Academy, information packets, a training video, and a Welcome to the Board book for new trustees.

Iowa also has an association dedicated to community college trustees, the *Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT)*. Founded in 1971, IACCT began as the *Iowa Council of Area School Boards* and was created as a nonprofit corporation for the purpose of promoting social welfare by strengthening, developing and correlating the work of the school boards of the Iowa Community Colleges. The name was changed to IAACCT in 1981. IACCT emphasizes advocacy and partnership on a legislative and business level. IACCT vision: *The Community Colleges of Iowa are proactive leaders, advocates and partners building sustainable communities through workforce and economic development*

and the maximization of human potential through high quality educational opportunities.

There is no direct information on the website regarding the development of trustees.

The third state with a dedicated state association to community college trustees is Kansas. The *Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT)* has as its mission: To build better futures through cooperation, collaboration and communication in advocating on behalf of community colleges; to position community colleges to better serve Kansas constituencies. KACCT's web page contained only the information about its mission and vision and did not include information regarding the relationship with trustees or philosophy of the organization or trustee development.

Michigan does not have a dedicated trustee association. However, the state association, *Michigan Community College Association (MCCA)*, is a joint affiliation between the community college presidents and the community college trustees. MCCA views its mission as being the primary advocate for Michigan's twenty-eight public community colleges as well as providing leadership on issues affecting its member colleges. MCCA lists political advocacy among its purpose in addition to providing meaningful in-service training for Trustees, Presidents and stakeholders.

Missouri and Nebraska do not have state level associations dedicated to trustees. However, they both have state level associations for their community colleges. Additionally Missouri and Nebraska, like 47 other states, are members of the national trustee association, the Association for Community College Trustees (ACCT). When visiting the ACCT website, there is a link to the state association for both states.

Missouri's state association for community colleges is *the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA)*. MCCA is comprised of presidents and chancellors. However,

MCCA does mention the development and advocacy of trustees as part of its mission. Nebraska's state association, the Nebraska Community College Association (NCCA), does not mention trustee development or philosophy. However, the MCCA touts legislative advocacy, strategic planning and partnerships. Five of the six state associations placed legislative advocacy as an important tenet of their associations.

2012 Public Community and Technical College Governing Boards:

Structure & Composition

The American Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) compiled a report summarizing the national structure and composition of community college boards in 2012 (Polonio & Miller, 2012). Governance is provided to every public community college by a lay board. The report provides an overview of the following areas: structure, composition, method of selection and governance authority. Just as community college structures vary widely depending on their origins, whether an extension of a high school or the junior level of a four-year university, the level of centralization or decentralization of boards varies state by state (Polonio & Miller, p. 3). As shown in Table 2.1, the authors identified four major governance models in an attempt to systemize the wide range of variability between state systems.

National Community College Trustee Selection

The vehicles for populating community college governing boards are via appointment, election, or a combination of appointment and election. The majority of states utilize the governor appointment. Of the fifty states, 64% have appointed boards, 26% have

Table 2.1. National community college governance models

<i>Governance Models</i>	<i>Number of States</i>
<i>Local Community College Governing or Advisory Board</i> Scope of Authority: College or multi-college district.	36
<i>Community College Governing or Coordinating Board at State Level</i> Scope of Authority: Community and technical colleges for the state with some states including primary and secondary education.	25
<i>Higher Education State Governing or Coordinating Board</i> Scope of Authority: All post-secondary education for the state, including community and/or technical colleges, with some states also including primary and secondary education.	24
<i>University Governing Board</i> Scope of Authority: Represents a university governing board that directly governs some or all community and/or technical colleges within a state as well as the university system.	6

Note: The name of the governing body varies from state to state to include: board of trustees, board of regents, board of directors, board of governors, governing board, coordinating board, and advisory board. The specific names used throughout this report reflect the type of authority as well as the terminology preferred by the state and the institution.

elected boards and 10% have mixture of appointed and elected boards (Polonio & Miller, 2012, p. 47).

Nationwide public community colleges appoint and/or elect 7074 members who serve on local, state, community college and university governing boards (Polonio & Miller, 2012, p. 47). There is also a varying range for the governing boards. The range of trustees can be as high as 27 and as low as five. Some boards have mandated a specific number of positions while others may fill the positions within a designated range. In keeping with the variable range of membership, the governing or coordinating boards also vary by state with a range as high as 19 and as low as 7 members. Six states have university boards that govern their public community colleges: Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico and Texas.

(Polonio & Miller, p. 47). Each state has one board with the exception of New Mexico, which has two. The total number of trustees serving on these university boards is 83.

**Community College Board Appointment and Elections in the Midwest
(Board Selection Process)**

Nationwide, community college boards are predominantly governed at the local level (Smith, 2000). The Midwest region of the United States of America is comprised of the following twelve states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. All twelve states have community college systems. However, Minnesota and South Dakota do not have local governing boards. Each of the remaining ten states utilizes two systems to compose their local community college governing boards: appointment or election. The Midwest states utilize both the appointment and election process. One explanation for the variance in board composition for the Midwest region is the local nature of community college boards. The manner in which boards formed was influenced by their genesis (as an extension of a high school or an extension of a four-year college/university) and the political culture of their state and/or district (Smith, 2000).

Appointed community college governing boards are in the following Midwestern states: Indiana, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The Governor and/or Local Officials appoint board systems that utilize the appointment process. The remaining Midwestern states utilize the public election process: *Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska*. States utilizing the election process for community college board governance will be the target population for this survey.

National Surveys on Community College Boards of Trustees

There is a paucity of research on community college boards of trustees. The ACCT conducted two large-scale surveys of trustees within the last 13 years. The first survey on the national demographic makeup of the community college governing boards was conducted in 2001 and the most recent survey was conducted in 2008. Although ACCT was contacted, the full report of the survey was not available; instead, two articles summarized some of the findings.

In the article, “Not Your Average Volunteers,” Finkel (2006) noted that, at the national level, in 2001, among the 60% of trustees who were appointed, only 40% were elected. Among the appointed trustees, slightly more than two thirds were male, nearly two thirds were 55 years and older, and three fourths had served on the board 10 years or less. The elected board members were slightly less than two thirds male, two thirds were 65 years of age or older, and nearly two thirds served on the board for 10 years or less (Finkel). In terms of the reasons board members became trustees, the most frequent responses were to: serve the community, serve the college, and improve programs (Finkel). Table 2.2 and 2.3

Table 2.2. Factors helping trustees achieve position

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Elected</i>
Community Leadership	80	78
Business Experience	52	40
Education Experience	47	49
Recommendations from people connected to appointing authority	51	NA
Relationship with authority	35	NA
More exposure than other candidates	31	NA
Weak/no opposition	N/A	32
Extensive campaign	NA	30
Active in political party	NA	17
Contributed to party or campaign of authority	5	10
Financial support from organized groups	NA	NA

Table 2.3. Why be a trustee?

<i>Reason for becoming a trustee</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
	<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Elected</i>
To serve the community	89%	85%
To serve the college	83%	80%
To improve programs	72%	73%

reveal the factors that help trustees achieve a board position and reasons for seeking to be a trustee.

In 2008, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) conducted a national survey of more than 1,600 community college trustees from 750 local boards across 39 states (Moltz, 2009). A summary of the report outlines the following demographic/background information about community college trustees: gender, ethnicity, age, occupation, and salary range. In addition, the following categories of board structure and composition were reported: number of board members on the board, term limits, student trustee participation, and the selection process (appointment or election).

The findings on demographic characteristics revealed the majority of the respondents (66%) were male and the remaining 34% were female. Regarding ethnicity, 82% were white, 9% black, 4% Latino, and 2% Asian. The remaining 3% of were comprised of American Indian, mixed race or those who choose not to respond. Among the population, more than half were between the age of 60 and 80, and 30% reported they had retired. The occupation of trustees revealed that approximately one third (32%) were from the business sector and 29% were from the education field. The remaining 39% represented various fields including government and legal services, health care, and manufacturing. More than half of the trustees reported earning more than \$100,000.00 annually, with 18% among those earning over \$200,000.00 annually (Moltz, 2009).

Among the findings related to the board structure, one third (33%) of the trustees reported having 10 or more board members on their board. The majority of boards were smaller, with as few as 5 members. Slightly more than a tenth (13%) of boards reported having term limits, with 42% have a four-year standard term. More than half, 53%, of trustees are appointed and less than half are elected. Forty percent of board reported having student trustees; however, the student trustees had truncated voting rights (Moltz, 2009).

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) is a national association that serves the interests and needs of academic governing boards. According to AGB, its mission is to strengthen, protect, and advocate on behalf of citizen trusteeship that supports and advances higher education (<http://agb.org/>).

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) reports, among all public institutions represented, the trustee composition is 72% male and 28% female. Further, AGB reports, among national public boards, 72% are white and 23 % are racial and ethnic minority (16% African American and 4% Hispanic) (<http://agb.org/about/fast-facts>).

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to: (1) investigate demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees from Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska; (2) illuminate reasons why elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve on boards as well as their perceptions of skills and characteristics necessary to be effective board members; and (3) to provide a description of elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board service.

This chapter provides a description and outline for the following elements of the study: methodological approaches utilized, research questions, hypothesis, research design, setting, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, variables and data analysis. In addition, this chapter addresses ethical issues, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What are the demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees?
2. What are elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning in the following areas: Mission, Policy and Planning; Board-CEO Relations; Community Relations and Advocacy; Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations; Board Leadership; Board Meetings and Board Education?
3. Are there significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics?

4. What are the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve as board members?
5. What are the elected Midwest community college trustees perceptions of the most important factors necessary to be an effective trustee?

Research Questions 1 and 2 were analyzed utilizing quantitative methodology, specifically descriptive statistics. Research Question 3 was analyzed utilizing quantitative analysis, inferential statistics. Research Questions 4 and 5 were analyzed utilizing qualitative methodology.

Survey and Sample Design

Survey Method

A survey is defined as “a system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes, and behavior” (Fink, 2003, p. 1).

According to Fink (2003, p. 2), the survey system requires the following elements:

- setting objectives for information collection
- designing the study
- preparing a reliable and valid survey instrument
- administering the survey
- managing and analyzing survey data
- reporting the results

There are multiple types of survey methods, each with advantages and disadvantages. The survey types include postal mail, telephone interview, face-to-face interview and online (Sue & Ritter, 2012).

The online survey was deemed most efficacious when considering the various questionnaire delivery methods. Sue and Ritter (2012) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of utilizing an online survey. Advantages include: low cost, fast, efficient, contingency questions effective, direct data entry, and wide geographic reach. Some of the disadvantages include: coverage bias, reliance on software, and too many digital surveys (for the participants), causing overload.

Postal mail surveys offer low cost, wide geographic reach and anonymity to sensitive questions as some of its benefits. However, among its disadvantages are low response rates, lengthy response periods and difficulty in knowing if the intended participants are responding. Among the advantages of Telephone surveys are fast responses, the interviewer can ask complex questions and there can be a wide geographic reach. Conversely, the disadvantages of telephone interviews include: difficulty in reaching participants because of fewer land lines, confusion with sales calls, being thought of as intrusive and call screening.

Face-to-face interviews were also considered for the current study because they can have a good response rate, complex questions can be asked and longer interviews may be tolerated. However, face-to-face interviews can be time consuming, expensive and it may be difficult for the participant to respond to sensitive topics (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 5).

After weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each survey method, it was determined that the online survey method offered the most promise in terms of advantages and had fewer disadvantages than the other survey methods. The online survey would permit the following: low cost, access to the target population among a wide geographic region, anonymity for the participants and fast and effective delivery of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire Development

The research questions guided the development of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey* questionnaire. The objective was to design a questionnaire, to be delivered online for the purpose of collecting information about the demographic and background characteristics, and the thoughts and opinions of elected Midwest community college trustees regarding effective board governance. A board governance researcher and practitioner from the Community College League of California (CCLC), Smith (2000) authored a resource guide for board self-assessment, *Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation*. According to Smith (2000), Board Governance Self-Assessment surveys can be used as a vital tool in trustee education and as a vehicle to effective board functioning. The questionnaire developed for the current research instrument, the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey* (Robinson, 2013), was adapted from the Community College League of California's *Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources For Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation*. Permission to utilize the survey instrument for research purposes was granted to the primary investigator by Cindra Smith (Appendix A), with credit also given to the Community College League of California.

Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation was designed for CCLC member districts to utilize in the self-assessment of their boards. Consequently, modifications were necessary in order to utilize the instrument for the target population, elected Midwestern community college trustees. A combination of questions from *Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation*, the short form and the long form sample evaluation instruments were utilized, with permission from Smith. Smith pointed out; the long form has typically been modified because boards

found it to be too long. However, the short form may not be sufficiently comprehensive. A combination of questions from the long form and the short form were viewed as an optimal combination for the creation of the new questionnaire.

The *Midwest Community College Self-Assessment Survey* questionnaire is comprised of three sections, totaling 50 questions (Appendix B). The first section of the questionnaire, developed by the primary investigator of this study, consists of 14 questions regarding the participant's background and demographics. The sub-sections include: demographic background, educational background and board service. The question formats in section one include both open-ended questions and close-ended questions. The questionnaire items in section one, along with their codes and rating scales, are detailed in Table 3.1.

The second section of the *Midwest Community College Self-Assessment Survey* questionnaire consists of 32 questions pertaining to board performance standards from *Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources For Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation* (Table 3.2). Section two is comprised of Likert-scale questions (4=Strongly Agree (SD), 3=Agree (A), 2=Disagree (D), 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 0=Unable to Evaluate). The sub-sections include the following factors of effective board governance: (1) Mission, policy and planning, (2) Board-CEO Relations, (3) Community relations and advocacy, (4) Fiduciary Role, (5) Human resources and staff relations, (6) Board Leadership and (7) Board Meetings.

The third section of the *Midwest Community College Self-Assessment Survey* questionnaire, developed by the primary investigator, consists of four open-ended questions pertaining to trustee perceptions and understanding of board roles (Table 3.3). The purpose of including open-ended questions was to provide opportunities for respondents to describe

Table 3.1. Questionnaire items 1-5

Item	Response format/scale
1. Please select one of the following: (Gender)	Dichotomous 1=Female 2=Male
2. What is your ethnicity?	6-point scale 1=African American 2=American Indian/Native American 3=Asian/Pacific Islander 4=Hispanic/Latino 5=White (non-Hispanic) 6=Other
3. Select the state in which you serve as Trustee/Board member.	6-point scale 1=Illinois 2=Indiana 3=Iowa 4=Kansas 5=Michigan 6=Minnesota
4. What is your age?	6-point scale 1=18-21 years 2=22-34 years 3=35-44 years 4=45-54 years 5=55-64 years 6=65> years
5. What is your current occupation?	Open-ended
6. Highest Level of Education	8-point scale 1=High School 2=Some College 3=Associates Degree 4=Bachelors Degree 5=Masters Degree 6=Juris Doctorate Degree 7=Doctorate Degree 8=Other
7. What was your major field of study in the highest degree earned?	Open-ended
8. Have you ever been a student at a community college or a junior college?	Dichotomous 1=Yes 2=No
9. How many total years have you served on this board?	9-point scale 1=2-3 years 2=4-6 years 3=7-9 years 4=10-12 years 5=13-15 years 6=16-18 years 7=19-22 years 8=22-25 years 9=26> years

Table 3.1. (Continued).

Item	Response format/scale
10. Have you served on any other boards?	Dichotomous 1=yes 2=no
11. What type of board have you served on?	4-point scale 1=Profit 2=Non-Profit 3=Educational Board 4=Other
12. Are you the chair of this board?	Dichotomous 1=yes 2=no
13. Have you ever served as chair of this board?	Dichotomous 1=yes 2=no
14. How many hours per week, on average, do you spend on board work?	9-point scale 1=1-5 hours 2=6-10 hours 3=11-15 hours 4=16-20 hours 5=21-25 hours 6=26-30 hours 7=31-35 hours 8=36-40 hours 9=40+ hours

in narrative form their experiences, attitudes, perceptions, etc. The open-ended questions in this section were constructed to further illuminate the trustee board experiences.

Midwest Community College Self-Assessment Survey Questionnaire

Section one of the Midwest Community College *Self-Assessment Survey* questionnaire consists of 14 questions. This section of the survey was constructed the PI. When writing survey questions, it is important align them with research objectives (Sue & Ritter, 2012). In addition, the questions should “be self-explanatory, easy to understand and answer, free of jargon and visually appealing” (Sue & Ritter, p. 52). The questions in section one were aligned with the objectives of Research Question 1 and 3: *What are the*

Table 3.2. Assessing Board Effectiveness questionnaire items

Likert-scale Questions (1-32)

Mission, Planning and Policy

- The board assures effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process.
- The board regularly reviews the college's mission and goals and monitors progress toward goals.
- The board fulfills its policy role.
- The board relies on board policy in making decisions and in guiding the work of the college.
- The board's policies are up to date and regularly reviewed.

Board-CEO Relations

- The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.
- The board sets clear expectations and effectively evaluates the CEO.
- The board delegates authority to and supports the CEO.
- The board periodically reviews the CEO contract to assure appropriate support and compensation.

Community Relations and Advocacy

- Board members represent the interest of the citizens in their area.
- The board advocates on behalf of the college to local, state, and federal governments.
- The board effectively monitors the quality and effectiveness of the educational program and service.
- Members are knowledgeable about the districts educational programs and services.

Fiduciary Role

- The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college.
- Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls.
- The board reviews the annual audit and monitors responses to recommendations.
- The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan.

Human Resources and Staff Relations

- Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work.
- The board respects faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making.
- The board's human resources policies provide for a fair and equitable treatment of staff.

Board Leadership

- The board understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities.
- The board expresses its authority only as a unit.
- The board regularly reviews and adheres to its code of ethics or standards of practice.
- Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts.
- Once a decision is made, board members uphold the decision of the board.

Board Meetings

- Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues.
- Board meetings are conducted in an orderly efficient manner.
- Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.

Board Education

- New members receive orientation to board roles and the institution.
- Board members participate in trustee development activities.
- The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance.
- The board measures its accomplishments against board goals.

Note: Scale/code: 4=Strongly Agree (SD), 3=Agree (A), 2=Disagree (D), 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 0=Unable to Evaluate

Table 3.3. Open-ended questionnaire items

Questionnaire Items 47-50	Format
How did you become interested in serving on this board?	Open-ended
What are the most important skills needed to be an effective Trustee/Board Member?	Open-ended
If you could give any advice to a future Trustee/Board Member, what would it be?	Open-ended
Do you have any additional thoughts about your experiences as a Trustee/Board Member?	Open-ended

demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees? Are there differences among characteristics such as: age, gender, ethnicity and Are there differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning in the following: Gender; Race/Ethnicity; Age; Current Occupation; Education; Length of Board Service; Hours Spent on Board Service; Service on Other Boards; Service as Board Chair?

When writing questions for a survey questionnaire, selecting the appropriate question format is essential. Frequently used question formats include: open-ended, closed-ended, multiple-choice and rankings (Sue & Ritter, 2012). An open-ended question may be defined, as a question that does not provide a response. Instead, the respondent is provided a text box to write (or type) their response, Sue and Ritter (p. 57) recommended using open-ended questions under the following conditions: (1) when exploring new or unfamiliar topics, (2) when the list of response options is lengthy, or (3) when the question elicits short answers. Questions that provide respondents with a list of response options are considered closed-ended (Sue & Ritter). Questions that provide a response for the respondent are considered closed-ended questions. Types of closed-ended questions include both dichotomous (a

choice between two responses) and multiple-choice questions (a choice of more than two responses).

The level of measurement is also a key component to consider when constructing survey questions. Level of measurement includes the following categories: nominal data (values fall into unordered categories), ordinal data (values can be rank ordered), interval data (values provide a relative position) and ratio data (same features of interval data plus a zero) (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 68). Rating scales also require consideration when writing survey questions. Rating scales provide and the respondents with response selections (Sue & Ritter). The question rating scales for section one are included in Table 3.1.

Questions asked in Section two were: *What are the elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of board service in the following: Mission, Policy and Planning; Board-CEO Relations; Community Relations and Advocacy; Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations; Board Leadership; Board Meetings and Board Education?* The questions in section two required the selection of a response scale. A standard 4 –point Likert-type scale (*Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*) was utilized. In addition, *Unable to Evaluate* was utilized as a question response.

Section three of the Midwest Community College *Self-Assessment Survey* questionnaire consists of 4 open-ended questions (Table 3.3). This section of the survey was constructed the PI of this study. The questions in section two were aligned with the objectives of research questions four and five: *What are the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve as board members?* and *What are the elected Midwest community college trustees perceptions of the most important factors necessary to be an effective trustee?*

Online Questionnaire Design

Conducting an online survey requires the development of an electronic questionnaire. *Qualtrics*, a web-based, research survey software, was utilized to development the electronic questionnaire. The *Qualtrics* software is licensed by the Office of Community College Research and Policy (OCCRP) at Iowa State University. The OCCRP office granted permission for the PI to utilize *Qualtrics* for this study because it will further the body of knowledge on community college research.

The overall design of an online questionnaire is important. Sue and Ritter (2012) emphasized, “The best survey questionnaires look professional and motivating, are easy to comprehend, are inviting and not intimidating, make answering the questions a clear and simple process, and are accessible to everyone in the target population” (p. 76). A template containing the Iowa State University nameplate and the OCCRP logo were utilized. The ISU and OCCRP identifiers were on each page of the survey so that the respondent would be reminded of the research affiliations. The survey ended with a message, letting respondents know the survey was complete and received by the PI. In addition, the respondent was thanked for their participation in the study.

Each questionnaire item was appropriately formatted in Qualtrics, utilizing appropriate response formats. Familiar response formats help the respondent feel comfortable with the questionnaire (Sue & Ritter). Response formats include radio buttons, drop-down menus, check boxes, matrixes and text boxes. Instructions for completing the questionnaire were provided for each item or section. The length of the survey dictated a page design, as opposed to scrolling. Scrolling can be used when a questionnaire is relatively short in length (Sue & Ritter). Pages were designed to include navigation guides, arrows to

allow the respondent to move back and forth between pages. A progress bar was also utilized. Progress bars enable the respondent to see a visual of their progress as they complete the questionnaire.

Pretesting, Reliability and Validity

Pretesting a survey instrument is necessary step in demonstrating that the questions constructed are valid and reliable (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 73). Validity “refers to whether the measurement tool (i.e., the survey question) accurately and appropriately measure the concept under consideration” (p. 228). Reliability refers to “the extent to which a measure provides consistent results across repeated testing” (p. 227).

Sue and Ritter (2012, p. 55) reported that there are three ways in which the validity of a questionnaire response may be compromised: (1) if respondents feel pressure to respond in socially desirable ways, (2) if respondents do not know or cannot accurately estimate the information requested, and (3) if respondents do not have opinions on topics about which they are asked. When constructing the questionnaire, the threat to reliability must also be considered. Threats to reliability (consistency of measurement) may occur when “the wording of survey questions is faulty or when questions contain inadequate or inappropriate response options” (p. 56).

The pretest group was comprised of targeted individuals with prior board experience. In order to avoid sending the pretest to a potential future respondent, active board members were not selected to participate in the pretest. Instead, an “analogous” population was selected in order to avoid exposing a potential respondent to the survey questions (Sue & Ritter, 2012, p. 73). The pilot survey was sent to the pretest group. Thirty-seven pretest surveys were completed. The pretest group received an email with instructions and a link to

the survey. The questionnaire was delivered online, via *Qualtrics*, to the pretest group. The respondents completed the online questionnaire and emailed additional comments to the PI. The PI checked the pretest responses and feedback from the respondent for: overall flow of the instrument, time to complete, clarity of form, and clarity of questions.

The average response time was less than 15 minutes. Suggestions to change questionnaire were limited to minor stylistic changes (which would affect the look and feel of the questionnaire) but no changes were suggested for the content/questions. Based on pretest suggestions, text was added the “next” and “back” guide arrows. This made the ability to move back or forward through the pages more clear. In addition, a percentage was added to the progress bar, marking the percentage of the questionnaire completed as the respondent moved through the survey.

Population and Setting

The target population was selected from active community college trustees from the Midwestern United States. Further, the population was limited to the following Midwestern states, which publicly elect local community college trustees: *Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska*. The settings vary by state (Table 3.4).

The target population was comprised of 967 locally elected Midwest community college trustees. The board composition varies widely by state in both size and quantity of members. These variations are reflective of the local, community based nature of the college. Table 3.4 details the distribution and quantity of local trustees by state. Illinois has the most local boards, 39, serving the largest population of the states comprising the study. Michigan, with the next largest population, has 28 local boards. Kansas has 25 and Iowa has 15 local boards. Missouri has 13 local boards and Nebraska has 6.

Table 3.4. Elected local Midwest Community College trustees

State	LB	T	LB	T	LB	T	LB	T	LB	T	Total
Illinois	39	8									312
Iowa	10	9	3	7	1	5	1	8			124
Kansas	14	6	7	7	2	9	1	11	1	25	187
Michigan	26	7	2	9							200
Missouri	13	6									78
Nebraska	6	11									66
Total											967

Note: LB=Local Board, T=Number of Trustees (Polonio & Miller, 2012, p. 45)

Informed Consent

Conducting research on human participants at Iowa State University requires the researcher to follow rules and guidelines in accordance with the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The investigator was required to take and successfully pass a course on the protection of human subjects prior to beginning research project with human participants. Approval to conduct the study was requested and granted by the IRB (see Appendix C).

The survey participants were to be informed of their rights as participants in this study. Upon opening the online survey, the first page contains an informed consent explanation (Appendix B). The participant was required to accept the terms of the informed consent by clicking “yes” if they accepted and “no” if they did not accept. If the participant clicked “yes”, they were permitted to access the survey. If the participant clicked “no”, they were not permitted to access the survey. In addition, the informed consent let the participants

know that their survey would be kept confidential and anonymous. In keeping with IRB guidelines, if any group type composed of five or less participants, then the group would need to be suppressed in order to keep identifiable characteristics or responses from being reported.

Data Collection

The data collection process began with identifying potential respondents who fit the criteria of being active community college board of trustee members from Midwestern states who publicly elect board members. MJ Dolan, executive director of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT) served as a liaison, accessing equivalent Community College Trustees state directors. The state level directors agreed to send the prepared email directly to the trustees in their respective states (Appendix D). After Ms. Dolan identified the state directors, they were asked to participate in the study and each consented. An email was sent to each of the state level directors to be utilized in requesting trustee participation (Appendix D). The email contained instructions, contact information for the PI and a direct link to the survey. The surveys were delivered in three cycles, as states directors became available: September 26-October 17, 2013; November 6-27, 2013; December 13, 2013-January 14, 2014. Reminder emails were sent the first and second week of each cycle (Appendix D).

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were utilized to evaluate Research Question 1: *What are the demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees,* and Research Question 2: *What are elected Midwest community college trustee experiences*

of effective board functioning in the following areas: Mission, Policy and Planning; Board-CEO Relations; Community Relations and Advocacy; Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations; Board Leadership; Board Meetings and Board Education, were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Descriptive statistics are numbers used to describe and analyze data (Knoke, Bohrnstedt; Mee, 2002). A univariate analysis was conducted on the data in questions one and two. A univariate analysis involves the examination across cases of one variable at a time. Major characteristics of a univariate analysis commonly include the: distribution, central tendency and dispersion of data.

Inferential Statistics

Research Question 3, *Are there significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics*, was analyzed using inferential statistics. The independent samples *t*-test is used to evaluate the difference between the means of two independent or unrelated groups (<http://oak.ucc.nau.edu>). The independent samples *t*-test evaluates whether the mean value of the test variable for one group differs significantly from the mean value of the test variable for the second group (<http://oak.ucc.nau.edu>). The independent samples *t*-test was appropriately utilized to analyze research question number three. Since the direction of the relationship is unknown, a non-directional 2-tailed T-test was utilized. “Quantitative hypothesis are predictions the research makes about the expended outcomes of relationship among variables” (Cresswell, 2014, p. 143). The goal of the statistical test is to reject or accept the hypothesis.

Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There are no significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics.

Alternative Hypothesis

H₁: There are significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics.

Effective Board Functioning (dependent variables): Mission, Policy and Planning; Board-CEO Relations; Community Relations and Advocacy; Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations; Board Leadership; Board Meetings and Board Education. Background and Demographic Characteristics (Independent variables): Gender; Race/Ethnicity; Age; Education; Length of Board Service; Hours Spent on Board Service; Service on Other Boards; Service as Board Chair.

Qualitative Analysis

Research Question 4, *What are the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve as board members* and Research Question 5, *What are the elected Midwest community college trustees perceptions of the most important factors necessary to be an effective trustee*, were assessed utilizing a qualitative analysis.

Narrative was provided for Research Questions 4 and 5 from the open-ended survey items: *How did you become interested in serving on this board? What are the most important skills needed to be an effective trustee/board member?* and *If you could give any*

advice to future trustee/board members, what would it be? The narratives for each question were read several times to become familiarized with the content. The next step in the process of analysis was open coding. According to Esterberg (2002), “The first step in making sense of your data is coding” (p. 157). Utilizing open coding, the data were reviewed line-by-line to identify broad themes and categories (Esterberg, p. 158). The goal of open coding was to determine what is occurring within the data as opposed to utilizing predetermined codes. (Esterberg). By using open coding, broad codes emerged from the data which could be assigned through the review process.

The next step entailed reviewing the open codes to determine the categories that reoccurred. Esterberg (2002, p. 159) suggested that, as codes reoccur, themes should begin to emerge. The final step in this process was comprised of focused coding. “Like open coding, focused coding entails going through your data line by line, but this time you focus on those key themes you identified during the open coding process” (Esterberg, p. 161). Themes that emerged during the open coding process are further analyzed during focused coding by peer review and examination to ensure reliability and validity (Merriam, 2002). Peer review and examination entail “Discussions with colleagues regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations” (Merriam, 2002, p. 31).

Ethical Considerations

Trustees are stewards of their institutions and work in environments that require confidentiality; consequently, the work of community college trustees is highly sensitive. The survey design takes into account the highly sensitive nature of disclosing potentially adverse information both on an individual and institutional level. Special consideration was

taken to insure both the anonymity of participants and institutions. The participants were informed of their rights and assured that their information would be maintained and utilized with anonymously, via informed consent at prior to participating in the survey. Trustee data of groups constituting five or less were suppressed in accordance with IRB guidelines. In addition, reported trustee data were aggregated in order to maintain individual anonymity.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to elected Midwest community college trustees who chose to respond to the survey. The data in this study were self-reported. Board member training programs are not standardized and vary state by state. The study was also limited in terms of lacking ethnic diversity. This study was delimited to elected Midwest community college trustee boards in the following states: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, and Nebraska.

This chapter outlined the purpose of this study and provided the research questions that guided the study. In addition, this chapter provided an outline for the elements of the study: methodological approaches utilized, research questions, hypothesis, research design, setting, population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, variables and data analysis. Finally, this chapter addressed the ethical issues, limitations and delimitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Data were collected from elected Midwest Community College Trustees via electronic survey for the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska. The data from the questionnaire was analyzed and the following analysis is provided: Descriptive analysis of overall sample, analysis of board effectiveness, and analysis of open-ended questions.

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

Survey respondents were instructed they were free to leave the survey at any point if they did not wish to complete, in keeping with Internal Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Additionally, participants were instructed to skip any question(s) they did not wish to answer. Further, IRB guidelines required the suppression of any group of trustees totaling five or less in order to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

Demographic Characteristics of Midwest Community College Trustees

Table 4.1 details the elected Midwest community college trustee responses by state, number of responses and percentage of respondents. The largest percentages of respondents are from Iowa, which comprised 30% of the total responses.

Table 4.1. Elected Midwest Community College trustee survey response by state

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Iowa	65	30
Michigan	63	28
Illinois	35	16
Nebraska	22	10
Kansas	17	8
Missouri	18	8
Total	220	100

Demographic data were collected and utilized in the descriptive analysis of Midwest community college trustees. Survey participants were asked to provide the following demographic/background information: Sex, Ethnicity, Age, Current Occupation, Highest Education Level, and Community College Attendance. The following table summarizes the respondents by state. In accordance with IRB guidelines, respondents were given the option not to answer any item they did not wish to. Consequently, the total number of respondents varies by item.

Sex, Ethnicity, and Age

The majority of the respondents, nearly three fourths, were male. Female respondents totaled 27%. In terms of ethnicity, the respondents were homogenous, with 98% White and 2% *other*. The ethnic categories for the 2% (African American, American Indian/Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino) were suppressed in keeping with the IRB guidelines to protect anonymity because their numbers were fewer than five in a category.

The age of the respondents primarily spanned over three ranges, 45-54, 55-64, and more than 64 years of age. The 45-54 years of age category comprised 15% of the respondents. The 55-64 years of age category comprised slightly more one third of the respondents or 35%. The largest category, 65 and over, comprised nearly half or 47% of all respondents. The respondents under 45 years of age were suppressed in keeping with the IRB guidelines to protect anonymity because their numbers were fewer than 5 in a category. Table 4.2 summarizes the aforementioned demographic characteristics.

Table 4.2. Demographic characteristics of Midwestern Community College trustees

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	216		
Female		58	27
Male		158	73
Ethnicity	217		
African American		a	a
American Indian/Native American		a	a
Asian/Pacific Islander		a	a
Hispanic/Latino		a	a
White (non-Hispanic)		212	98
Other		a	a
Age	220		
18-21		a	a
22-34		a	a
35-44		a	a
45-54		32	15
55-64		78	35
65 and over		103	47

^a Fewer than 5 respondents; values not reported.

Current Occupation

Respondents were asked, *What is your current occupation?* The question is open-ended and a text box was provided for the respondents. There were 211 write-in responses to this question. Open coding was utilized and seven categories emerged: Business/Finance, Education, Farming/Agriculture, Health/Medical, Law, Retired and Other. Table 4.3 details the occupation categories along with the numbers of respondents in each category and the percentage. The retired category was comprised the largest group with 77 responses or 37% of the total. The next category, business/finance comprised the second largest group, 59

Table 4.3. Current occupation of Midwestern Community College trustees

Occupation (<i>N</i> =211)	<i>n</i>	%
Business/Finance	59	28
Education	13	6
Farming/Agriculture	8	4
Health/Medical	15	7
Law	11	5
Retired	77	37
Other	28	13

responses, or 28% of the total. The next three categories were similar in size. Health/medical had 15 responses and accounted for 7% of the total. There were 13 responses for the Education category, accounting for 6% of the total. The Farming/agriculture category had 8 responses accounting for 4% of the total. There were 28 responses in the Other category, accounting for 13% of the total.

Education Level

The educational level of the respondent revealed the vast majority of the respondents, 85%, have a baccalaureate degree. More than half (53 %) have an advanced degree. Fourteen percent of respondents reported having a doctorate degree. Five percent reported having a Juris Doctorate degree. Responses were suppressed from the High School education category in keeping with the IRB guidelines to protect anonymity because their numbers were fewer than five in a category. Table 4.4 summarizes the highest level of education attained by the respondents.

Table 4.4. Highest level of education

Education Level (<i>N</i> =215)	<i>n</i>	%
Education Level		
High School	a	a
Some College	18	8
Associate Degree	10	5
Bachelor's Degree	70	33
Masters Degree	75	35
Juris Doctorate	11	5
Doctorate Degree	31	14

^a Fewer than 5 respondents; values not reported.

Community College/Junior College Attendance

Respondents were asked if they attended a junior or community college (Table 4.5).

Three fifths (60%) reported they did whereas two fifths (40%) did not attend one.

Table 4.5. Attended a community college or junior college

Attendance (<i>N</i> =217)	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	131	60
No	86	40

Board Service

The board service section of the questionnaire asked respondents to report on the following categories: years of board service, experience on other boards, experience as board chair, and hours per week spent on board work. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the findings in this section.

Slightly more than one quarter of respondents (26%) served 1-3 years on their current board. Sixteen percent of respondents reported serving 4-6 years and 10% of respondents served 7-9 years. Respondents serving between 1-9 years comprised a little more than half or

Table 4.6. Board service

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Years served on current board? (N=217)</i>		
Years		
1-3	56	26
4-6	35	16
7-9	22	10
10-12	33	15
13-15	15	7
16-18	14	6
19-22	7	3
22-25	14	6
26 and over	21	10
<i>Served on other boards? (N=216)</i>		
Yes	195	90
No	21	10
<i>Have you ever served as chair of this board?(N=217)</i>		
Yes	96	44
No	120	56
<i>Hours per week, on average, of board work (N=215)</i>		
1-5	150	70
6-10	49	23
11>	16	7

52% of the total respondents. Respondents serving 10 years and over accounted for 48% of the responses. Ten percent of the respondents served their board for more than 25 years.

Respondents reported serving as board members on additional boards. The types of boards served on were selected from the following categories: profit, non-profit, educational and other. Respondents were instructed to check all that applied. The vast majority of respondents (90%) served on at least one additional board boards, with 89% of respondents having served on a non-profit board. Thirty-nine percent of respondents served on an educational board, and 29% of respondents served on a for-profit board. Fifteen percent of respondents selected the *other* board category. Types of boards in the other category include:

church, community, health and governmental. When asked *have you ever served as chair of the current board*, 44% of the respondent answered *yes*.

Respondents were asked how many hours, on average, they spent on board work. The majority (70%) spent between 1 and 5 hours on board work. Twenty-three percent spent between 6 and 10 hours on board work. Only 7% spent more than 11 hours on board work.

General Board Effectiveness

The next section of the questionnaire is composed of General Board Effectiveness questions. The question sub-sections include the final categories: Mission, Planning and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. Each section contains multiple Likert-scale questions with the following response categories: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Unable to Evaluate (UE). The following codes were utilized in the analysis: Strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1. The Unable to Evaluate category was counted in the item response number. However, it was not utilized in calculating the mean or standard deviation. Each question was analyzed for frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Mission, Planning and Policy

The *Mission, Planning and Policy* section of the questionnaire is comprised of five questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Mission, planning, and policy

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
The board assures effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process.	104	49	85	40	16	8	7	3	0	0	212	3.35	.76
The board regularly reviews the college's mission and goals and monitors progress toward goals.	102	48	88	41	16	8	6	3	0	0	212	3.35	.75
The board fulfills its policy role.	119	57	78	37	9	4	3	2	0	0	209	3.50	.65
The board relies on board policy in making decisions and in guiding the work of the college.	112	53	84	40.5	11	5	4	2	1	.5	212	3.44	.69
The board's policies are up to date and regularly reviewed.	102	48	84	40	18	8	6	3	2	1	212	3.34	.75

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

1. The item, *The board assures effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process*, was answered by 212 respondents. One hundred four respondents strongly agreed and 84 agreed with this item. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. Sixteen respondents disagreed and seven strongly disagreed with this item. Only 11% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The item mean was 3.35 and the standard deviation was .76.

2. The item, *The board regularly reviews the college's mission and goals and monitors progress toward goals*, was answered by 212 respondents. The majority of respondents were in agreement with this item, with 102 respondents who strongly agreed with this item and 88 agreed. Eighty-nine percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. Sixteen respondents disagreed with this item and 6 respondents strongly disagreed. Only 11% of

respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The item mean is 3.35 and the standard deviation is .75.

3. The item, *The board fulfills its policy role*, was answered by 209 respondents. Most of the respondents (119) strongly agreed and 78 agreed with this item. The vast majority (94%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Nine respondents disagreed and only three strongly disagreed on this item. A mere 6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean of this item was 3.50 and the standard deviation was .69.

4. The item, *The board relies on board policy in making decisions and in guiding the work of the college*, was answered by 212 respondents. Most of the respondents (112) strongly agreed and 84 agreed with this item. The majority, 94.5 % strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Five respondents disagreed and two strongly disagreed with this item. Only 15% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item. One respondent was unable to evaluate this item. The mean of this item was 3.50 and the standard deviation was .69.

5. The item, *The board's policies are up to date and regularly reviewed*, was answered by 212 respondents. Most of the respondents (102) strongly agreed and 84 agreed with this item. A total of 88% strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Eighteen respondents disagreed and six strongly disagreed. A total of 11% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Two respondents were unable to evaluate this item. The mean of this item was 3.31 and the standard deviation was .75.

Board-CEO Relations

The *Board-CEO Relations* section of the questionnaire consists of four questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8. Board-CEO relations

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.	139	65	56	26	13	6	3	2	2	1	213	3.54	.68
The board sets clear expectations and effectively evaluates the CEO.	105	49	74	35	25	12	5	2	4	2	213	3.27	.77
The board delegates authority to and supports the CEO.	137	65	66	31	6	3	2	1	0	0	211	3.60	.60
The board periodically reviews the CEO contract to assure appropriate support and compensation.	112	53	82	39	12	5	1	1	4	2	212	3.40	.65

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

1. The item, *The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO*, was answered by 213 respondents. The majority of respondents (139) strongly agreed and 56 agreed with this item. A total of 91% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. Thirteen respondents disagreed and three strongly disagreed with this item. A total of 8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item. Two respondents were unable to evaluate this item, totaling 1% of the item responses. The item mean was 3.34 and the standard deviation was .68.

2. The item, *The board sets clear expectations and effectively evaluates the CEO item* was completed by 213 respondents. Most of the respondents (105) strongly agreed and 49 agreed with this item. A total of 84% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Twenty-five respondents disagreed and only five respondents strongly disagreed comprising 14%. Two percent (four respondents) were unable to evaluate this item. The item mean was 3.27 and the standard deviation was .77.

3. The item, *The board delegates authority to and supports the CEO* was answered by 211 respondents. The majority of respondents (137) strongly agreed and 66 agreed with this item. A total of 96% strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Only six respondents disagreed and two strongly disagreed with this item, comprising 4% of responses on this item. The mean of this item was 3.60 and the standard deviation was .60.

4. The item, *The board periodically reviews the CEO contract to assure appropriate support and compensation*, was answered by 211 respondents. Most of the respondents (112) strongly agreed and 53 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed and agreed comprised 92% of the responses on this item. A total of 12 respondents disagreed and only one respondent strongly disagreed with this item, comprising 6% of this category. Two percent (four respondents) were unable to evaluate this item. The mean of this item was 3.40 and the standard deviation was .65.

Community Relations and Advocacy

The *Community Relations and Advocacy* section of the questionnaire consists of four questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.9).

1. The item, *Board members represent the interest of the citizens in their area*, was answered by 208 respondents. The majority of respondents (103) strongly agreed and 94 agreed with this item. A total of 94.5% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed. Eight respondents disagreed and two strongly disagreed with this item. A total of 5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item. One respondent was unable to evaluate this item, totaling .5% of the items response. The item mean was 3.42 and the standard deviation was .62.

Table 4.9. Community relations and advocacy

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
Board members represent the interest of the citizens in their area.	103	49.5	94	45	8	4	2	1	1	.5	208	3.42	.62
The board advocates on behalf of the college to local, state, and federal governments.	94	45	99	48	12	6	1	.5	1	.5	207	3.37	.62
The board effectively monitors the quality and effectiveness of the educational program and service.	65	31	109	53	25	12	5	2	3	2	207	3.10	.73
Members are knowledgeable about the districts educational programs and services.	56	27	125	60	17	8	5	3	4	2	207	3.08	.67

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

2. The item, *The board advocates on behalf of the college to local, state, and federal governments*, was answered by 207 respondents. Ninety-four respondents strongly agreed and 99 agreed with this item. A total of 93% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Twelve respondents disagreed and only one strongly disagreed with this item. The total of disagree and strongly disagreed comprised 6.5%. Only one respondent was unable to evaluate this item, or .5%. The item mean was 3.37 and the standard deviation was .62.

3. The item, *The board effectively monitors the quality and effectiveness of the educational program and service* was answered by 207 respondents. Sixty-five respondents strongly agreed and 209 agreed with this item. The strongly agree and agree totaled 84%. Twenty-five respondents disagree and five strongly disagree, comprising 14% of this category. Three respondents (2%) were unable to evaluate this item. The mean of this item was 3.10 and the standard deviation was .73.

4. The item, *Members are knowledgeable about the districts educational programs and services*, was answered by 207 respondents. Fifty-six respondents strongly agreed and 125 agreed with this item. A total of 87% strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Seventeen respondents disagreed and five strongly disagreed, comprising 11% of this item. Three respondents were unable to evaluate this item, totaling 2%. The mean of this item was 3.08 and the standard deviation was .67.

Fiduciary Role

The *Fiduciary Role* section of the questionnaire consists of four questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.10).

1. The item, *The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college*, was answered by 210 respondents. A majority of the respondents (129) strongly agreed and 74 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed or agreed totaled 96.5%. Only six respondents (3%) disagreed with this item, and one was unable to evaluate, comprising .5%. The mean of this item was 3.57 and the standard deviation was .55.

2. The item, *Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls*, was answered by 210 respondents. Most of the respondents (124) strongly agreed, and 76 agreed with this item. A total of 95% strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Only seven respondents disagreed and two strongly disagreed with this item, comprising 4.5%. One respondent was unable to evaluate this question, totaling .5%. The mean of this item was 3.52 and the standard deviation was .61.

3. The item, *The board reviews the annual audit and monitors responses to recommendations*, was answered by 210 respondents. The majority of respondents (137) strongly agreed and 68 agreed with this item. A total of 97.5% strongly agreed or agreed

Table 4.10. Fiduciary role

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college.	129	61.5	74	35	6	3	0	0	1	.5	210	3.57	.55
Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls.	124	59	76	36	7	3.5	2	1	1	.5	210	3.52	.61
The board reviews the annual audit and monitors responses to recommendations.	137	65	68	32.5	2	1	1	.5	2	1	210	3.60	.53
The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan.	104	50	93	44	11	5	1	.5	1	.5	210	3.42	.62

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

with this item. Only two respondents disagreed and one strongly disagreed, totaling a scant 1.5%. Two respondents were unable to evaluate this item, comprising 1%. The mean of this item was 3.60 and the standard deviation was .53.

4. The item, *The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan*, was answered by 210 respondents. The majority of respondents (104) strongly agreed and 93 agreed with this item. The strongly agree and agree comprised 94% of responses for this item. Eleven respondents disagreed and only one strongly disagreed, comprising 6%. One respondent (.5%) was unable to evaluate this item. The mean of this item was 3.42 and the standard deviation was .62.

Human Resources and Staff Relations

The *Human Resources and Staff Relations* section of the questionnaire consists of three questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11. Human resources and staff relations

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work.	113	54	80	38	15	7	2	1	0	0	210	3.45	.67
The board respects faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making.	111	53	82	39	12	6	3	1	2	1	210	3.41	.67
The board's human resources policies provide for a fair and equitable treatment of staff.	114	54	86	41	4	2	2	1	4	2	210	3.45	.59

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

1. The item, *Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work*, was answered by 210 respondents. A majority of the respondents (113) strongly agreed and 80 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed or agreed totaled 92%. Fifteen respondents disagreed and only two strongly disagreed with this item. Eight percent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this item. The mean of this item was 3.45 and the standard deviation was .67.

2. The item, *The board respects faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making*, was answered by 210 respondents. The majority of respondents (111) strongly agreed and 82 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed category totaled 92%. Twelve respondents strongly disagreed and three strongly disagreed with this item, totaling 7%. Two respondents were unable to evaluate this item, comprising 1%. The mean of this item was 3.41 and the standard deviation was .67.

3. The item, *The board's human resources policies provide for a fair and equitable treatment of staff*, was answered by 210 respondents. Most respondents (114) strongly agreed and 86 agreed with this item. A total of 95% strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

Only four respondents disagreed and two strongly disagreed with this item, comprising 3%. Four respondents, 2%, were unable to evaluate this item. The mean of this item was 3.45 and the standard deviation was .59.

Board Leadership

The *Board Leadership* section of the questionnaire consists of five questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.12).

1. The item, *The board understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities*, was answered by 211 respondents. A majority of the respondents (91) strongly agreed and 99 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed or agreed totaled 90%. Seventeen respondents disagreed and only four strongly disagreed with this item. Ten percent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this item. The mean of this item was 3.31 and the standard deviation was .70.

2. The item, *The board expresses its authority only as a unit*, was answered by 211 respondents. Most of the respondents (97) strongly agreed and 95 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed and agreed comprised 91%. Fourteen respondents disagreed and five respondents strongly disagreed, totaling 9%. The mean of this item was 3.35 and the standard deviation was .71.

3. The item, *The board regularly reviews and adheres to its code of ethics or standards of practice*, was answered by 211 respondents. Eighty-one respondents strongly agreed and 98 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed totaled 85%. Twenty-three respondents disagreed and five strongly disagreed, comprising 13%. Four respondents were unable to evaluate this item, totaling 2%. The mean of this item was 3.17 and the standard deviation was .74.

Table 4.12. Board leadership

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
The board understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities.	91	43	99	47	17	8	4	2	0	0	211	3.31	.70
The board expresses its authority only as a unit.	97	46	95	45	14	7	5	2	0	0	211	3.35	.71
The board regularly reviews and adheres to its code of ethics or standards of practice.	81	38	98	47	23	11	5	2	4	2	211	3.17	.74
Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts.	109	51.5	91	43	6	3	4	2	1	.5	211	3.44	.64
Once a decision is made, board members uphold the decision of the board.	115	54	84	40	8	4	4	2	0	0	211	3.47	.67

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

4. The item, *Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts*, was answered by 211 respondents. The majority of respondents (109) strongly agreed and 91 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed comprised 94.5% of the item responses. Only six respondents disagreed and four strongly disagreed, totaling 5% of this items responses. One respondent was unable to evaluate this item, totaling .5%. The mean of this item was 3.44 and the standard deviation was .67.

5. The item, *Once a decision is made, board members uphold the decision of the board*, was answered by 211 respondents. The majority of respondents (115) strongly agreed and 84 agreed. Ninety-four percent of respondent strongly agreed or agreed with this item. Eight respondents disagreed and four strongly disagreed, totaling 6% of the item responses. The mean of this item was 3.47 and the standard deviation was .67.

Board Meetings

The *Board Meetings* section of the questionnaire consists of three questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.13).

1. The item, *Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues*, was answered by 209 respondents. The majority of the respondents (99) strongly agreed and 87 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed or agreed totaled 89%. Nineteen respondents disagreed and only four strongly disagreed with this item, comprising 11% of this item response. The mean of this item was 3.34 and the standard deviation was .73.

Table 4.13. Board meetings

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues.	99	47	87	42	19	9	4	2	0	0	209	3.34	.73
Board meetings are conducted in an orderly efficient manner.	134	64	72	35	2	1	0	0	0	0	209	3.63	.51
Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.	87	42	91	44	24	11	6	3	0	0	208	3.25	.77

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

2. The item, *Board meetings are conducted in an orderly efficient manner*, was answered by 209 respondents. Most of the respondents (134) strongly agreed and 72 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed comprised 99% of the item responses. A scant 1% of respondents (2) disagreed with this item. The mean of this item was 3.63 and the standard deviation was .51.

3. The item, *Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues*, was answered by 208 respondents. Most of the respondents (87) strongly agreed and 91 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed totaled 86% of the item responses. Twenty-four respondents disagreed and six respondents strongly disagreed, totaling 14% of this items responses. The mean of this item was 3.25 and the standard deviation was .77.

Board Education

The *Board Education* section of the questionnaire consists of four questions. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with these items (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14. Board education

Item	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	UE	%	N	M	SD
New members receive orientation to board roles and the institution.	74	35	110	53	18	9	4	2	3	1	209	3.19	.69
Board members participate in trustee development activities.	54	26	119	57	25	12	8	4	3	1	209	3.02	.73
The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance.	36	17	99	47	40	19	10	5	24	12	209	2.54	.78
The board measures its accomplishments against board goals.	32	16	100	48	45	22	7	3	23	11	207	2.54	.75

Note: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate

1. The item, *New members receive orientation to board roles and the institution*, was answered by 209 respondents. Seventy-four respondents strongly agreed and 110 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed or agreed totaled 88%. Eighteen respondents disagreed and only 4 strongly disagreed with this item. Eleven percent of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with this item. Three respondents were unable to evaluate

this item, accounting for 1% of the item response. The mean of this item was 3.19 and the standard deviation was .69.

2. The item, *Board members participate in trustee development activities*, was answered by 209 respondents. Fifty-four respondents strongly agreed and 119 agreed with this item. Those who strongly agreed and agreed comprised 83% of the item responses. Twenty-five respondents disagreed and eight strongly disagreed with this item. A total of 16% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Three respondents were unable to evaluate this item, comprising 1%. The mean of this item was 3.02 and the standard deviation was .73.

3. The item, *The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance*, was answered by 209 respondents. Thirty-six respondents strongly agreed and 99 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed totaled 64% of the item responses. Forty respondents disagreed and 10 respondents strongly disagreed, totaling 24% of this items responses. Twenty-four respondents were unable to evaluate this item, comprising 12% of the item responses. The mean of this item was 2.54 and the standard deviation was .78.

4. The item, *The board measures its accomplishments against board goals*, was answered by 207 respondents. Thirty-two respondents strongly agreed and 100 agreed with this item. The strongly agreed and agreed totaled 64% of the item responses. Forty-five respondents disagreed and seven respondents strongly disagreed, totaling 25% of this items responses. Twenty-three respondents were unable to evaluate this item, comprising 11% of the item responses. The mean of this item was 2.54 and the standard deviation was .75.

Statistical Analysis of Effective Board Characteristics by Demographic and Background Characteristics

Research Question 3, *Are there significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics?* was analyzed using inferential statistics. The independent-samples *t*-test was used to evaluate the difference between the means of the two groups: the dependent variables (effective board functioning) and the independent variables (demographic and background characteristics). The hypothesis for the independent-samples *t*-test follows:

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There are no significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics.

Alternative Hypothesis

H₁: There are significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics.

With a significance level of $p \leq .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. There were statistically significant differences found among the following independent variables: Gender, Served as Board Chair, and Years of Board Service.

Demographic

Gender

The independent variable, Gender, was compared to the dependent variables: effective board functioning (Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education). Statistically significant differences among the means were found in two areas: Board CEO Relations and Board Leadership (Table 4.15).

Board-CEO Relations

Q1: *The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO* has a significance level of .042.

Table 4.15. Means, standard deviation, and *t*-test results for Gender

	Female			Male			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Conf. Interval	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				Lower	Upper
Board CEO Relations											
The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.	53	3.42	.692	151	3.64	.668	2.050	202	.042*	.008	.433
Fiduciary Role											
The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan.	54	3.30	.690	149	3.49	.588	1.976	201	.050*	.000	.387

*Level of significance: $p \leq .05$.

Fiduciary Role

Q2: *The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan* has a significance level of .050.

Ethnicity

The independent variable *Ethnicity* was unable to be analyzed. The variable was homogenous with 98% of respondents being White and the remaining 2% of respondents were in other ethnic categories. Further, the 2% were suppressed in keeping with IRB guidelines to protect anonymity.

Age

The independent variable *Age* was compared to the dependent variables in the following areas of board effectiveness: Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. There were no statistically significant differences found between means.

Background**Community/Junior College Student**

The independent variable, *Have you ever been a Community or Junior College Student* was compared to following dependent variables, areas of board effectiveness: Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. No statistically significant differences were found between means.

Years of Board Service

The independent variable *Years of Board Service* was compared to the dependent variables, areas of effective board functioning (Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education). Statistically significant differences among the means were found in five areas: Mission, Planning and Policy, Board CEO Relations, Board Leadership, Fiduciary Role, and Board Meetings (Table 4.16)

Table 4.16. Means, standard deviation, and *t*-test results for Years of Board Service

	<10 years of service			>10 years of service			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Conf. Interval		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				Lower	Upper	
Mission, Planning, Policy												
The board reassures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process.	108	3.20	.829	101	3.51	.657	-2.993	207	.003 ²	-516	-.106	
The board's policies are up-to-date and regularly reviewed.	106	3.22	.793	101	3.49	.687	-2.595	205	.010 ²	-4.72	-.064	
Board-CEO Relations												
The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.	106	3.48	.733	102	3.68	.600	-2.028	206	.036 ^{1,2}	-.378	-.012	

Table 4.16. (Continued).

	<10 years of service			>10 years of service			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Confidence Interval	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				Lower	Upper
Board Leadership											
Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts.	108	3.77	.678	100	3.55	.592	-2.028	206	.044 ²	-.354	-.005
Fiduciary Role											
The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college.	106	3.52	.573	101	3.67	.512	-2.046	204	.042 ^{1,2}	-.303	-.006
Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls.	106	3.45	.664	101	3.63	.543	-2.150	200	.033 ¹	-.347	-.015
Board Meetings											
Board meetings agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues.	108	3.21	.809	100	3.48	.594	-2.694	206	.007 ^{1,2}	-.460	-.074
Board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner.	108	3.54	.554	100	3.72	.451	-2.599	205	.009 ^{1,2}	-.321	-.045
Board meeting and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.	108	3.14	.848	99	3.36	.662	-2.113	205	.036 ²	-.434	-.015

¹Equal variances not assumed. ²Level of significance: $p \leq .05$.

Served on other Boards

The independent variable, *Served on Other Boards* was compared to the following dependent variables, areas of board effectiveness: Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. There were statistically significant differences found between means.

Mission, Planning, and Policy

Q1: *The board reassures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process* has a significance level of .003.

Q2: *The board's policies are up-to-date and regularly reviewed* has a significance level of .010.

Board-CEO Relations

Q3: *The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO* has a significance level of .036, equal variances not assumed.

Board Leadership

Q4: *Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts* has a significance level of .044.

Fiduciary Role

Q5: *The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college* has a significance level of .042, unequal variances assumed.

Q6: *Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls* has a significance level of .033, equal variances not assumed.

Board Meetings

Q7: *Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues* has a significance level of .007, equal variances not assumed.

Q8: *Board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner* has a significance level of .009, equal variances not assumed.

Q9: *Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues* has a significance level of .036.

Served as Chair of this Board

The independent variable, *Served as Chair of This Board* was compared to the following dependent variables, areas of board effectiveness: Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. There were statistically significant differences found in the *Board Meetings* category (Table 4.17).

Q1: *Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues* has a significance level of .005.

Table 4.17. Means, standard deviation, and *t*-test results for Served as Board Chair

	Female			Male			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Conf. Interval	
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				Lower	Upper
Board Meetings											
Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.	95	3.11	.835	111	3.41	.660	-2.849	204	.005*	-.512	-.093

*Level of significance: $p \leq .05$.

Current Chair of this Board

The independent variable, *Current Chair of This Board* was compared to the following dependent variables, areas of board effectiveness: Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. There were no statistically significant differences found.

Hours Per Week Spent on Board Work

The independent variable, *Hours Per Week Spent on Board Work* was compared to the following dependent variables, areas of board effectiveness: Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education. There were no statistically significant differences found between means.

Open-ended Questions

The first open-ended question, *How did you become interested in serving on this board?* was analyzed. The objective of this question was to answer Research Question 4: *What are the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve as board members?* Two hundred respondents answered this item. Each respondent gave a single reason or explanation to the question. Five themes emerged as the open-ended questions were analyzed for content. The factors are: (1) Asked/Invited, (2) Community College Advocate, (3) Affiliated with College, (4) Desire to Improve College and (5) Civic Duty/Community Service (see Table 4.18).

Table 4.18. How did you become interested in serving on this board?

Theme (N=200)	<i>n</i>	%
Asked/Invited	91	46
Community College Advocate	36	18
Affiliated with College	35	17
Desire to Improve College	22	11
Civic Duty/Community Service	16	8

1. The first theme, *Asked/Invited*, comprised the largest group with 45% of the responses. Respondents described being asked to fill a partial term vacancy by a current board member. In addition, respondents described being asked to run for a position by board members, staff members, community members and local businesses. The following responses are examples representative of this factor.

“Was asked to fulfill term of preceding member and then sought seat in succeeding election.”

“Board chair suggested that I serve.”

“I was asked by community members to seek the position.”

“I was invited by an out-going trustee to, perhaps, take his place.”

“Area business leaders contacted me about running for the board.”

2. The second theme, *Community College Advocate*, comprised 18% of the responses. The respondents in this category were categorized based on their expressed belief of community college and or higher education as a perceived benefit to the community and society as a whole. The following responses summarize this factor.

“Interested in our local community college as an asset for our entire Business Community.”

“I am a firm believer in having availability of community college in the area.”

“Education is a key element for advancing quality of life values.”

“Interest in higher education availability for all.”

3. The third theme, *Affiliated with College*, accounted for 17% of the responses. The respondents in this category described their affiliation with the College in the following ways: alumni, former faculty/staff member, volunteer and/or a family member or friend was affiliated with the College. The following responses are examples of this factor.

“After ... years on staff wanted to stay connected and thought I had much to offer.”

“Community colleges are an asset to their communities. My husband and I and ...children all attended, so we are long time supporters and it was natural to add this level of support...”

“Became interested in serving on community college board through audits of community colleges.”

“Had been involved for several years with a scholarship fund raiser activity and knew several staff members...”

“Was employed at the college and worked closely with the board many years ago and always thought it would be a worthwhile thing to do.”

4. The fourth theme, *Desire to Improve College*, comprised 11% of the responses.

“Previous boards were failing to meet the needs of and represent the community as a whole”

“Interested in the establishment of college branches outside of the main campus.”

“Due to the significant importance of the college to the community and given the failing trajectory I felt I could be of service.”

5 The final theme, *Civic Duty/Community Service*, comprised the smallest group with eight percent of the total responses. The following quotes are examples of this factor.

“This community had been very good to me over the years and this was one opportunity for me to give back and serve the people who had helped me.”

“Desire to serve the community.”

“I enjoy community service. When an opening came up I ran for the office and was elected.”

The second open-ended question, *What are the most important skills needed to be an effective Trustee/Board Member*, was analyzed. The objective of this question was to answer Research question 5, *What are the most important skills needed to be an effective Trustee/Board Member?* The total number of respondents to this question is one hundred and ninety eight. However, each respondent gave one or more responses to the question. The responses were analyzed and 15 themes emerged. Each factor was counted independently for the number of responses. Table 4.19 shows the frequency of each theme regarding the *Most Important Skills Needed to be a Trustee/Board Member*. The factors were divided into two categories, soft skills and hard skills. Soft skill factors are: good listener, team player/collaborator, effective communicator, open-minded, and positive character traits (such as integrity, honesty and respect). The hard skills factors include: strategic/critical thinker, know roll as board member, effective finance/business management, study/prepare for meetings, community college advocate, knowledge of community college (including higher education in general), student advocate, community involvement and adequate time commitment. The softs skills group contained five themes and comprised 235 responses. The hard skills group contained 9 factors and comprised 244 responses (validity).

The third open-ended question, *If you could give any advice to future Trustee/Board Member, what would it be?* was analyzed. The objective of this question was to answer Research question 5, *What are the elected Midwest community college trustees perceptions*

Table 4.19. Most important skills needed to be a trustee/board member

Theme	Frequency
<i>Soft Skills</i>	
Good Listener	88
Team Player/Collaborator	61
Effective Communicator	31
Positive Character Traits	31
Open-minded	<u>24</u>
	235
<i>Hard Skills</i>	
Strategic/Critical Thinker	50
Know Role as Board Member	39
Effective Finance/Business Management	33
Study/Prepare for Meetings	33
Community College Advocate	32
Knowledge of Community College	18
Student Advocate	16
Community Involvement	13
Adequate Time Commitment	<u>10</u>
	244
Other	15
Total responses	494

of the most important factors necessary to be an effective trustee? The number of respondents totaled 198. The responses fell into the following categories of advice: *board role, board responsibility, necessary skill set*. The following quotes illuminate the response categories.

“Support your President, but no mindlessly. Always keep in mind why you are there and how you are representing. Make sure your administration keeps you informed about what I going on at the college on a regular basis.”

“Be prepared to work hard. Be prepared to keep your hands off. Be prepared to compromise.”

“Take every opportunity to participate in board development activities. Allow the staff to do what they are hired to do.

“Spend time listening and learning. Don’t bring an agenda to your service.”

“Be willing to always learn. Listen to all sides of an issue before taking action. Keep personal issues out of any decision-making. Oversee but don’t micro-manage; that’s why you have administration.

“Be prepared to accept that you will not be best friends with everyone but be able to move forward and support the decisions made by the majority vote of the board. Be prepared to spend a whole lot more than just the time of the board meeting. Research issues and make sound decisions and support your State Association.”

“If you do not have an effective President, hire one. Then help him establish an extensive plan to develop the institution. Monitor his progress on this plan and let him implement it without Board interference unless he is not succeeding within this plan.”

“Understand that board’s role is policy making. Do not try to do the job of the president and administrators.”

“Involve yourself with the state and national organizations to get a perspective. Think about the long-term effects without worrying about your personal image. Listen and know your constituents and your students so you don’t just hear the viewpoints of the loudest group. Be trustworthy.”

“Make sure you understand the mission of the community college and that you always keep the student in every decision you make.”

“Remember you are a trustee, not an administrator. Learn your role and govern. Look to the future.”

Summary

This chapter provided the results from the data collected in the online survey, *Midwest Community College Self-Assessment Survey*. The chapter began by providing with a descriptive analysis of the overall sample. The second section provided a detailed analysis of the Likert-scale questions from the *General Board Effectiveness* section of the survey. The third section provided an inferential analysis of Effective Board Characteristics and Demographic/Background Characteristics from the survey. The final section provided a qualitative analysis and summary of the open-ended survey questions.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides a discussion of the quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis, and overall findings of this study. The first section provides an overall summary of the study. The next section provides an analysis and discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study. This chapter concludes with the Implications for Policy and Practice, Recommendations for Future Research, and Final Thoughts.

Summary of the Study

Chapter 1 provided the overview, background, significance, statement of the research problem, and research methodology. The summary begins with a short reintroduction of the boards of trustees that govern community colleges. Boards play a critical role in the success or demise of an institution. Board effectiveness can be facilitated through the self-assessment process. However, while there is an abundance of resources, literature and how-to manuals, there has been a paucity of research regarding the assessment of community college boards.

Chapter 2 provided a comprehensive literature review of boards of trustees. The chapter provided a brief history of community colleges, establishing their importance in the higher education landscape of America. Next, board governance in academia was discussed; followed by the qualities and best practices of effective boards. Self-assessment of boards has been an essential best practice of effective boards.

Next, an outline of national and state associations for community college trustee associations was presented, followed by a summary of the national community governance models. The national survey of community college boards of trustees was also discussed. In addition, survey data from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

were discussed. The chapter concluded noting the lack of research on community college trustees.

Chapter 3 provided a description and outline of this study, including: methodological approaches utilized, research questions, hypothesis testing, research design, setting population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, variables, and plan for data analysis. The chapter also addressed ethical issues, and limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 4 provided results of the data collection and analysis from elected Midwest community college trustees. The chapter was divided into four sections. First, an overall descriptive analysis of the sample was provided, followed by a descriptive analysis of the survey questions on *General Board Effectiveness*. The third section provided a summary of the inferential analysis of variables that were statistically significant followed by a qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions from the questionnaire.

This chapter provides an overall discussion and analysis of the research findings of this study through quantitative and qualitative methods. The chapter is divided into the following sections: demographic/background characteristics, general board effectiveness, *t*-tests, and open-ended questions. The results of the quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed next. The chapter concludes with implications for policy and practice, applications for the study, recommendations for future research, and final thoughts.

Research Findings and Discussion

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

Research Question 1: What are the demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees?

The goal of Research Question 1 was to provide a descriptive analysis of elected Midwest community college trustees. There has been a paucity of research on community college trustees and board composition.

Demographics/Background Characteristics

1. Gender: Respondents were 73% male and 27% female.
2. Ethnicity: Respondents were 98% white.
3. Age: The majority of respondents (47%) were over 65; 35% are 55-64; and 15% are 45-54.
4. Education level: 85% of respondents had a baccalaureate degree and 53% have advanced degrees.
5. Community/Junior college attendance: 60% of respondents attended a Community College or Junior College.
6. Years of Board Service: More than half (52%) of respondents served less than ten years on the board. The largest category (1-3 years) accounted for 26% of respondents.
7. Served on other boards—90% of respondents served on other boards.
8. Ever served as chair of current board—44% of respondents reported having served as chair of the board.
9. Hours per week spent on board work—70% of respondents spent between 1-5 hours per week; 23% spent 6-10 hours; and 7% spent more than 11 hours per week on board work.

Gender: The majority of the respondents of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment*, nearly three fourths, were male. Female respondents totaled 27%. There

was a paucity of data available to compare board composition of community colleges. However, two surveys were conducted by the American Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT): the first was conducted in 2001 and later published by Finkel (2006), and second conducted in 2008 and published by Moltz (2009). The 2001 survey revealed similar rates by gender, whereas the 2008 survey denoted an increase in female trustees who represented 34% of community college board members. In addition, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) reported that, among all public institutions represented, the trustee composition was 72% male and 28% female, which is consistent with the findings of this study (<http://agb.org/about/fast-facts>). In comparison, the American Association of Community Colleges has reported that, nationally, community college students are 57% female and 42% male (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>, 2014). If community college boards represent the community in which they serve, then the percentage of female board members serving needs to increase significantly.

Ethnicity: The respondents of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* were ethnically homogenous; 98% white, and 2% other. The ethnic categories for the 2% were suppressed in keeping with the IRB guidelines to protect anonymity because their numbers were fewer than 5 in a category. The AACT survey from 2008 (Moltz, 2009) revealed that 82% of the respondents were white, 9% were black, 4% were Latino, and 2% were Asian. The remaining 3% were American Indian, mixed race or choose not to respond (Moltz, 2009). In comparison, AGB revealed that, among national public boards, 72% are white and 23% are of racial/ethnic minority (16% African American and 4% Hispanic). (<http://agb.org/about/fast-facts>).

The AACC reported that, nationally, white students account for 51% of all community college students, with ethnic minorities accounting for more than 40% of community college students (<http://aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC>, 2014). The ethnic composition of community college boards should reflect the community it serves. Further, community college is more ethnically diverse than most institutions of higher education.

Age: The age of the respondents of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* primarily spanned over three ranges: 45-54, 55-64, and 65 and over. The 45-54 years of age category comprised 15% of the respondents. The 55-64 years of age category comprised slightly more one third of the respondents, or 35%. The largest category, 65 and over, comprised nearly half (47%) of all respondents. Consistent with the findings on age, the 2008 ACCT survey reported more than half of the respondents were between the age of 60 and 80 (Moltz, 2009).

Education Level: The respondents of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* reported that 85% have a baccalaureate degree and 53% have advanced degrees. In comparison, the national ACCT surveys did not report education levels. However, the survey shows that the Midwest community college trustees have a high level of educational attainment.

Community College or Junior College Attendance: Sixty percent of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* respondents attended a Junior or community college. This finding is supported in the literature in two areas. First, it highlights the importance of the trustees understanding of the community college culture. Second, it supports major findings in this study—why trustees choose to serve as board member.

Eighteen percent of respondents are *community college advocates* and 17% of respondents are *affiliated with the College*.

Years of Board Service: More than half, or 52% of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* survey respondents, served less than 10 years on the board. The largest category, 1-3 years, accounted for 26% of respondents. These findings are consistent with the need for training/orientation of new trustees. According to Smith (2000), effective boards are involved in a continuous process of in-service training. In addition, new board member training and orientation is essential.

Board Service: The overwhelming majority, 90% of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* respondents served on other boards. In addition, slightly over two-fifths (44%) of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* respondents reported having served as chair of the board. This finding speaks to experience and investment needed in the support of community colleges.

Hours Spent on Board Work: Seventy percent of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* respondents spent between 1-5 hours a week on board work. The findings are supported in the literature regarding the amount of time spent on board work is vital to the effective functioning of the board. Boards that practice the policy governance model use time more efficiently by staying on task and not being relegated to a board that micro manages the college.

General Board Effectiveness

Research Question 2: What are elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning in the following areas: Mission, Policy and Planning, Board/CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meetings, and Board Education?

This section provides a description of the findings related to General Board Effectiveness. The Board Effectiveness on the Midwest Community College Trustee Self-assessment survey is divided into eight sections: (1) Mission, (2) Planning and Policy, (3) Board-CEO Relations, (4) Community Relations and Advocacy, (5) Fiduciary Role, (6) Human Resources and Staff Relations, (7) Board Leadership, (8) Board Meetings and Education. A five point Likert-scale was used to assess each question (4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree, 0=Unable to Evaluate).

Mission, Planning and Policy. Most respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items:

1. Board assures effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process: 91% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. The board regularly reviews the college's mission and goals and monitors progress toward goals: 84% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
3. The board fulfills its policy role: 94% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed.
4. The board relies on board policy in making decisions and in guiding the work of the college: 94.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
5. The board's policies are up to date and regularly reviewed: 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The high percentage of agreement in this category supports the literature on effective boards. According to Smith (2000), effective boards set the policy direction, monitors performance, and keep the institution in line with its mission.

Board-CEO Relations. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items:

1. The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO: 91% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. The board sets clear expectations and effectively evaluate the CEO: 84% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
3. The board delegates authority to and supports the CEO: 96% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
4. The board periodically reviews the CEO contract to assure appropriate support and compensation: 92% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The high level of agreement in the Board-CEO Relations category supports the literature on effective boards. According to Smith (2000), effective boards select and retain the best CEO possible, define clear parameters and expectations for performance, conduct periodic evaluations; provide honest and constructive feedback and support the CEO.

Community Relations and Advocacy. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items.

1. Board members represent the interest of the citizens in their area: 94.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. The board advocates on behalf of the college to local, state, and federal governments: 93% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
3. The board effectively monitors the quality and effectiveness of the educational program and service: 84% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
4. Members are knowledgeable about the districts educational programs and services: 87% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The strong level of agreement in community relations and advocacy supports effective board functioning. According to Smith (2000), effective boards know their community needs and trend, link with the community, seek out and integrate multiple perspectives when making policy decisions, and serve the public good.

Fiduciary Role. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items:

1. The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college: 96.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls.
3. The board reviews the annual audit and monitors responses to recommendations: 97.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
4. The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan: 94% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The strong level of agreement in the Fiduciary Role supports effective board functioning. According to Smith (2000), effective boards are responsible for the fiscal health and stability of their institutions.

Human Resources and Staff Relations. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items:

1. Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work; 92% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. The board respects faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making; 92% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

3. The board's human resources policies provide for a fair and equitable treatment of staff; 95% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The strong level of agreement in Human Resources and Staff Relations supports effective board functioning. According to Smith (2000), effective governance requires a clear, articulated definition of the board's role.

Board Leadership. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items.

1. The board understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities: 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. The board expresses its authority only as a unit: 91% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
3. The board regularly reviews and adheres to its code of ethics or standards of practice: 85% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
4. Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts: 94.5% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
5. Once a decision is made, board members uphold the decision of the board: 94% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The strong level of agreement in board leadership supports effective board functioning.

According to Smith (2000), effective boards integrate multiple perspectives into board decision-making, act as a unit speaking with one voice, and recognize that power rests with the board and not individuals.

Board Meetings. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items:

1. Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues: 89% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. Board meetings are conducted in an orderly efficient manner: 99% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
3. Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues: 86% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The strong level of agreement on Board Meetings supports effective board functioning. According to Smith (2000), effective boards state and follow agendas, provide sufficient background analysis, provide materials and background information to board members, and conduct meetings in an orderly efficient manner.

Board Education. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the following questionnaire items.

1. New members receive orientation to board roles and the institution: 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
2. Board members participate in trustee development activities: 83% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
3. The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance: 64% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.
4. The board measures its accomplishments against board goals: 64% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this item.

The strong level of agreement on New Member Orientation and Trustee Development supports effective board functioning. According to Smith (2000), effective boards are

involved in a continuous process of in-service training. Conversely, in the area of Board Evaluation Process and Measuring Board Accomplishments Against Board Goals, more than one third (36%) of respondents disagreed with these items. According to Smith (2000), ineffective boards fail to monitor the college's performance.

Statistical Analysis of Characteristics of Effective Boards

The following section provides a summary and discussion of the statistical analysis of effective board characteristics. The analysis was conducted to address *Research Question 3: Are there significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics?* Two-tailed *t*-tests were conducted to determine whether the null hypothesis would be accepted or rejected.

Null Hypothesis

H₀: There are no significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics.

Alternative Hypothesis

H₁: There are significant differences among elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board functioning based on demographic and background characteristics.

Demographic Characteristics

The independent variables (ethnicity, gender and age) were compared to the dependent variables effective board functioning (Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meeting, and Board Education). The ethnicity variable was unable to be analyzed because the responses were homogenous, 98% White. The analysis of gender generated two areas in which statistically significant differences were found: Board-CEO Relations and Fiduciary Role. The analysis of the variable Age did not produce statistically significant findings.

Gender and Board Leadership:

Questionnaire Item: The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

n female=53, *n* male=151

The mean score for females was 3.42 and the mean score for males was 3.64. The significance level was .042. Male trustees more strongly agreed that the board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO than female trustees. In 2011, only 26% of college presidents were female (<http://www.acenet.edu>). The relative lack of female presidents might be one reason why males and females have a different level of agreement on this item.

Gender and Fiduciary Role

Questionnaire Item: The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

n female=54, n male=149

The mean score for females was 3.30 and the mean score for males was 3.49. The significance level was .050. Male trustees more strongly agreed that the board monitors implementation of the facilities plan than female trustees.

Background Characteristics

The independent variables (highest level of education, attended junior/community college, years of board service, service on other boards, currently chair of the board, ever chair of the board, and hours spent on board work) were compared to the dependent variables effective board functioning (Mission Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Community Relations and Advocacy, Fiduciary Role, Human Resources and Staff Relations, Board Leadership, Board Meeting, and Board Education).

The analysis of the *variable highest level of education* did not produce statistically significant findings. The majority of respondents, 87% have a baccalaureate degree. In addition, 54% have an advance degree. The variable *ever attended a community college or a junior college* was analyzed and 60% of respondents attended a community college or junior college. However, there were no statistically significant findings for this variable.

The variable *years of board service* was analyzed. There were five areas in which statistically significant differences were found: Mission, Planning, and Policy, Board-CEO Relations, Board Leadership, Fiduciary Role, and Board Meetings. The variable service on other boards could not be analyzed because there was not enough dispersion; 90% of respondents served on other boards. The variable *currently chair of the board* was analyzed and there was one statistically significant finding. The variable *ever chair of this board* was analyzed and there were no statistically significant findings.

Years of Board Service and Mission, Planning and Policy

Questionnaire Item: The board reassures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=108, $n > 10$ years of board service=101

The mean score for < 10 years of board service was 3.20 and the mean score for trustees with > 10 years of board service was 3.51. The significance level was .003. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *the board reassures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

Questionnaire Item: The boards policies are up-to-date and regularly reviewed.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=106, $n > 10$ years of board service=101

The mean score for < 10 years of board service was 3.22 and the mean score for trustees with > 10 years of board service was 3.49. The significance level was .010. Trustees with more than 10 years of board service more strongly agreed that *the boards policies are up-to-date and regularly reviewed* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

Years of Board Service and Board-CEO Relations

Questionnaire Item: The board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=106, $n > 10$ years of board service=102

The mean score for <10 years of board service was 3.48 and the mean score for trustees with >10 years of board service was 3.68. The significance level was .036. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *the board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

Years of Board Service and Board Leadership

Questionnaire Item: Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

n <10 years of board service=108, n >10 years of board service=100

The mean score for <10 years of board service was 3.77 and the mean score for trustees with >10 years of board service was 3.55. The significance level was .044. Trustees with less than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts* than trustees with more than ten years of board service.

Years of Board Service and Fiduciary Role

Questionnaire Item: Board members assure the fiscal stability and health of the college.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

n <10 years of board service=106, n >10 years of board service=101

The mean score for <10 years of board service was 3.52 and the mean score for trustees with >10 years of board service was 3.67. The significance level was .042. Trustees with less than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board members avoid conflicts of*

interest and the perception of such conflicts than trustees with more than ten years of board service.

Questionnaire Item: Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=106, $n > 10$ years of board service=101

The mean score for < 10 years of board service was 3.45 and the mean score for trustees with > 10 years of board service was 3.63. The significance level was .033. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

Years of Board Service and Board Meetings

Questionnaire Item: Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=108, $n > 10$ years of board service=100

The mean score for < 10 years of board service was 3.21 and the mean score for trustees with > 10 years of board service was 3.48. The significance level was .007. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

Questionnaire Item: Board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=108, $n > 10$ years of board service=100

The mean score for < 10 years of board service was 3.54 and the mean score for trustees with > 10 years of board service was 3.14. The significance level was .009. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

Questionnaire Item: Board meeting and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

$n < 10$ years of board service=108, $n > 10$ years of board service=100

The mean score for < 10 years of board service was 3.14 and the mean score for trustees with > 10 years of board service was 3.36. The significance level was .036. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board meeting and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

When reviewing the years of board service, board members with more than ten years of service agreed more than board members with less than ten years of service with the exception of one category, board leadership. Board members with less than 10 years of service agreed more strongly that members avoid conflicts of interest. One possible explanation for the higher level of agreement among more experienced board members is caused by the experience itself. The more experienced board members may have had the opportunity for more training and deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities as trustees.

Served as Chair of This Board and Board Meetings

Questionnaire Item: Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues.

Scale: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

n Served as chair =95, *n* Never served as chair=111

The mean score for <10 years of board service was 3.11 and the mean score for trustees with >10 years of board service was 3.41. The significance level was .005. Trustees with more than ten years of board service more strongly agreed that *board meeting and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues* than trustees with less than ten years of board service.

A possible explanation for the difference in agreement is that board chair has a more extensive knowledge of all aspects of board functioning. They may believe the materials are sufficient preparation, but they are not accounting for the board members who have less historical knowledge and need more information to feel prepared.

Open-ended Responses

The survey questionnaire had four open-ended questions. Qualitative methods were used to analyze the open-ended items. The following section provides a review and discussion of the themes, which emerged from the open-ended responses.

Summary of findings: How did you become interested in serving on this board?

1. Asked or Invited: 46% of respondents were asked by a board member, community member, or business interest to think about running for a position on the board or were invited to fill a vacancy of a trustee who only partially served her or his term.

2. Community College Advocate: 18% of the respondents were community college advocates, which is they believed in the mission and/or philosophy of the community college and wanted to serve as trustee.
3. Affiliated with College: 17% of respondents of this item were affiliated with the College. Among the affiliations, the respondents reported that is they had a past relationship with the College as a student, employee, or a volunteer.
4. Desire to Improve College: 11% of respondents became a trustee because they wanted to improve the College.
5. Civic Duty/Community Service: 8% of respondents became trustee because they believed it fulfilled their civic duty or community service.

The responses to the open-ended questions contained noteworthy findings regarding elected Midwestern community college trustees. The survey question: *How did you become interested in serving on this board?* corresponded to research question 4, *What are the reasons elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve as board members?* Five themes emerged from the data. The trustees were (1) asked or invited, (2) a community college advocate, (3) they were affiliated with the college, (4) they had a desire to improve the college or (5) it was considered a civic duty or community service. The most frequent response to how trustees became interested in becoming board members was, asked or invited, which constituted 46% of the responses. Although trustees are publicly elected, this shows that they are most frequently invited to fill an open term in mid-cycle or they are recruited by active board members, community members or business constituents. The responses, (2) they are a community college advocate or they are (3) affiliated with the

College comprise 35% of the category. The responses support the literature, demonstrating that the Colleges are rooted in the communities.

What are the most important skills needed to be an effective Trustee/Board member? Respondents may have listed multiple items in response to this question. Each response was counted independently, totaling 494 responses. In addition, the responses fell into two categories: soft skills and hard skills.

Soft Skills (235 responses):

1. Good Listener – 88 responses
2. Team Player/Collaborator – 61 responses
3. Effective Communicator – 31 responses
4. Positive Character Traits – 31 responses
5. Open-minded – 24 responses

Hard Skills (244 responses):

6. Strategic/Critical Thinker – 50 responses
7. Know Role as Board Member – 39 responses
8. Effective Finance/Business Management – 33 responses
9. Study/Prepare for Meetings – 33 responses
10. Community College Advocate – 32 responses
11. Knowledge of Community College – 18 responses
12. Student Advocate – 16 responses
13. Community Involvement – 13 responses
14. Adequate Time Commitment – 10 responses

These findings support the literature in two areas. They emphasize the importance of soft and hard skills. The respondents reported, in order to be an effective board member you should be: a good listener, a team player, an effective communicator, have positive character traits, and be open minded. Next, the findings also support several tenets of effective board governance (Smith, 2000). Following are survey findings related to effective board governance items aligned with the *Most Important Skills Necessary to be an Effective Trustee/Board Member*:

Effective governance of community colleges is a community-based.

- Community College Advocate
- Knowledge of Community College
- Community Involvement

Effective governance requires a clear, articulated definition of the board's role.

- Know Role as Board Member

Effective governance requires boards of trustees to act on behalf of the whole community.

- Community College Advocate
- Knowledge of Community College
- Community Involvement

Effective boards are involved in a continuous process of in-service training.

- Study/Prepare for Meetings
- Adequate Time Commitment

Effective boards consist of trustees whose ethical behavior is above reproach.

- Positive Character Traits

Board Role, Effective boards act as a unit.

- Team Player/Collaborator
- Effective governance differentiates external from internal processes.

It is noteworthy that the ability to be a good listener, team player/collaborator (act as a unit), and effective communicator were mentioned most frequently. The findings emphasize the need for communication soft skills and other skills necessary to work as a unit in a group.

The third open-ended question was analyzed next: *If you could give any advice to future Trustee/Board Member, what would it be?* The number of respondents totaled 198. The responses fell into the following categories of advice—*board role, board responsibility, and necessary skill set*. These findings support the literature on effective boards. Effective governance requires a clear, articulated definition of the board's role (Smith, 2000).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to: (1) investigate demographic and background characteristics of elected Midwest community college trustees from Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri and Nebraska; (2) illuminate reasons why elected Midwest community college trustees choose to serve on boards as well as their perceptions of skills and characteristics necessary to be effective board members; and (3) to provide a description of elected Midwest community college trustee experiences of effective board service. The findings of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey* revealed Midwest trustees' demographic and background information as well as their perceptions of effective board functioning. The demographic and background findings revealed the trustees are predominately white (98%), male (73%) and older. Slightly more than half (53%) are 45-64 and 47% are over 64 years of age. In addition, they are highly educated, with 85% having obtained a bachelors degree and more than one half (60%) having attended a community college. In terms of board service, slightly more than half (52%) served less than 10 years on

the board, with most (90%) also having served on other boards. Almost three quarters (70%) of board members spend between 1-5 hours per week on board work.

The background and demographic findings divulged there is a need for more diversity (ethnicity, gender, age) among trustees who serve on community college boards in order for the boards to better resemble the communities and/or regions in which they reside. In addition, board members are connected to their community colleges, with 60% having attended a community or junior college. Board members also tend to work efficiently, with the majority (70%) spending 1-5 hours on board work per week.

The General Board Effectiveness findings revealed there is generally a high amount of agreement in the majority of areas regarding board effectiveness. The general board effectiveness categories are: Mission, Policy and Planning; Board-CEO Relations; Community Relations and Advocacy; Fiduciary Role; Human Resources and Staff Relations; Board Leadership; Board Meetings; and Board Education. It is noteworthy that there were significantly lower levels of agreement on two items: (1) *The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance*; and (2) *The board measures its accomplishments against board goals*. These findings are of interest because they signal the need to be aware of ineffective board practices. According to Smith (2000), ineffective boards fail to monitor the college's performance.

The statistical analysis of Characteristics of Effective Boards revealed there were statistically significant differences among: (a) Gender and Board Leadership; (b) Gender and Fiduciary Role; (c) Years of Board Service and Mission Policy and Planning; (d) Years of Board Service and Board-CEO Relations; (e) Years of Board Service and Fiduciary Role; (f)

Years of Board Service and Board Meetings; and (g) Served as Chair of this Board and Board Meetings.

The open-ended responses revealed findings of interest regarding: (a) How board members become interested in serving; (b) What are the most important skills needed to be an effective Trustee/Board member; and (c) What advice would you give to future trustees? When board members were asked how they became interested in serving, the most frequent response (46%) they gave was *Asked or Invited*. Although trustees are publicly elected, this reveals that they are most frequently invited to fill an open term in mid-cycle or they are recruited by active board members, community members, or business constituents.

In regard to the most important skill needed to be an effective trustee/board member, the findings supported the literature regarding effective trustees. It was of interest that the ability to be a good listener; team player/collaborator (act as a unit) and effective communicator were mentioned most frequently. These findings emphasize the need for development of communication and other skills necessary to work cohesively as a board.

The third open-ended question regarding advice to future trustee/board members revealed three general categories of advice: *board role, board responsibility, and necessary skill set*. This is a vital part of board training and education—for board members to know their roles and responsibilities to work effectively as a unit. These findings support the literature on effective boards. Effective governance requires a clear, articulated definition of the board's role (Smith, 2000).

Implications for Policy and Practice

Board self-assessment is viewed as a best practice for effective boards. Competition for dwindling resources can often impede boards from this process. In this case, board self-

assessment may not be seen as a high priority. Board policy can be directed at making self-assessment a part of the board bylaws. Board self-assessment tools and resources can be made available for little or no cost, on the state level.

Recommendations for Community College Boards

1. Provide board orientation and education for new trustees.
2. Provide on-going board education for all trustees. Consider utilizing technology to enhance the training. MJ Dolan, Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees (IACCT) provides a web-based leadership seminar monthly. Providing web-based training can be a cost effective way to augment other forms of trustee training, allowing trustees to receive training without the expense and time traveling requires.
3. Provide access to tools and resources for boards to conduct self-assessment surveys on an annual basis. This should be considered an essential part of a larger evaluation process for boards.

Recommendations for Future Research

The lack of research on Community College Trustees compromises our ability to inform evidence-based policy and decision making for community colleges. When ACCT was asked about conducting a national survey, the researcher was informed that their emphasis is currently on the Completion Agenda (i.e., raising the rate of graduation). As the community college systems shift from a message of access to one of access and completion, the energy and resources will also shift. However, it is important that we keep our fair share of resources and attention on community college trustees, as they are stewards of our institutions.

There should be an annual survey of community college trustees. This would allow policy makers and stake holders to make informed decisions. For example, almost half of the respondents of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* are 65 and over. And, on a national level, more than half of trustees are between 60 and 80. What does this mean for trustee leadership? How long will these trustees serve and what will happen if they leave simultaneously in large numbers? Are there succession plans? The senior trustees may hold institutional knowledge as well as an understanding of how effective boards function. A national survey could ask questions to determine how long board members intend to serve. In addition, as younger board members begin to serve, effective training and board orientation become even more vital to effective boards.

Conducting annual surveys could also help address issues of diversity. The respondents of the *Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment* are not ethnically diverse. When board composition is made available, we can begin to ask the question, is the board reflective of the community, region or state? What does diversity look like on a national level?

Final Thoughts

Community colleges are an American, democratic invention, intentionally designed to open the doors of higher education to those who have been traditionally excluded. True to their mission, community colleges have become an integral part of the higher-education landscape. In keeping with their mandate, community colleges serve the community in which they reside while educating the most diverse student bodies in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and non-traditional students, in general.

Community college boards serve at the helm of the community colleges and are stewards of, too often, precarious financial resources. In a time of shrinking budgets and increased accountability, it is vital to utilize resources efficiently. Sharing the results of research on community college boards and the board self-assessment process can be a valuable tool for boards to understand their role and function. There is a need to increase effectiveness of board functioning by: providing education and orientation to new board members, providing on-going education to board members, supporting the diversification of boards in terms of gender and ethnicity and age, etc., to better represent the community in which they serve.

My motivation for studying community colleges came from my own experience as a community college student. As a first generation college student, this route provided me with an economical, high quality education. During my community college years, I was encouraged and given opportunities to become a student leader. I also started to become aware of the decision-making process at local, state, and national levels that impacted my ability to study and become a future leader.

Conducting research on community college boards has made me acutely aware of the importance of both the policy implications and the decision-making process at local, state, and national levels. Community colleges are a national treasure and should be supported as such. Research regarding community college boards will expand and facilitate the quality of decisions and policy development made as the result of an evidence-based, informed process.

APPENDIX A. SURVEY PERMISSION**A-1. Request for Permission to Adapt Survey Instrument from Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation, 2009**

Dear Dr. Smith:

I am a doctoral student at Iowa State University in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. My major professor is Dr. Larry Ebbers and I also work for Dr. Frankie Laanan as a Research Assistant in the Office of Community College Research and Policy. I have also consulted Dr. Katherine Boswell regarding your work.

I am developing an evaluation instrument regarding the assessment of board effectiveness in Midwestern community colleges as part of my dissertation research. I would like to use your General Effectiveness Criteria Comprehensive Long Form from Appendix B Sample Evaluation Instrument and Approaches as a foundation for my work (from Assessing Board Effectiveness: Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation, 2009). Would you allow me to use your Sample Evaluation Instrument with appropriate attribution?

In addition there is an appendix in your book, *Trusteeship in Community Colleges* (2000), which charts Community College Governing Systems. Is there a more recent version of this table available?

I really appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached by phone (515) 294-9631 or via email mrobins@iastate.edu should you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michelle Robinson

**A-2. Permission to Adapt Survey Instrument from Assessing Board Effectiveness:
Resources for Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation, 2009**

Hi Michelle:

You are welcome to use or adapt any of the documents from the resource guide. They were adapted from others used over the years, so the work continues. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on the instrument after you have used it (*I've found that a number of boards find it "too long" and we end up customizing it to the board.*)

I relied on Katherine's work at ECS as well as ACCT to develop the community college governing system chart for the book. I didn't keep it up after that. ACCT may have more recent information, but I'm not sure.

Best wishes in your work. Cindra

Cindra Smith, Ed. D.

APPENDIX B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT**Midwest Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey_2013****Q1 INFORMED CONSENT**

Dear Community College Trustee,

We are conducting a study that focuses on the experiences of Community College Trustees in the Midwestern United States. You have been selected to participate in this study because you currently serve as a community college trustee in the Midwest. You will be asked to complete a brief web survey (approximately 15-20 minutes) that asks questions about your experiences as a community college trustee. The main objective of the survey is to collect data regarding the roles and responsibilities of trustees and boards of directors at community colleges. The survey results will help us to gain a better understanding of board composition, training, and experiences.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data obtained from this survey will be kept confidential. Response results will be reported only in terms of groups, protecting anonymity. In addition, no individual identifiers (such as names or numbers) will be collected. Once the survey results have been collected, your email address will be removed from your responses. Your institutions and your colleagues (i.e., other trustees/members on your board) will not be given access to your individual responses. The data collected will be stored in a secure database on a password-protected and encrypted computer. Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks, at this time, from participating in this study. In addition, there are no direct benefits for the participants. However, your participation in this study will help researchers learn valuable information about community college trustees and boards of directors in the Midwest. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time or to refuse to participate entirely. If you wish to withdraw, you may do so by closing your Internet browser.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study contact, Michelle Robinson (the principal investigator), at 515-294-9631 or via email at mrobins@iastate.edu or Dr. Larry H. Ebberts (project supervisor) at 515-294-8067 or via email at lebberts@iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Your participation will help us gain valuable insight on community college trustees and board composition.

Sincerely,

Michelle Robinson

Iowa State University mrobins@iastate.edu

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q2 Background Information

Please select one of the following:

- Female (1)
- Male (2)

Q3 What is your ethnicity?

Please select all that apply.

- African American (1)
- American Indian/Native American (2)
- Asian/Pacific Islander (3)
- Hispanic/Latino (4)
- White (non-Hispanic) (5)
- Other (6) _____

Q4 Select the state in which you serve as Trustee/Board Member.

- Illinois (1)
- Indiana (2)
- Iowa (3)
- Kansas (4)
- Michigan (5)
- Minnesota (6)
- Missouri (7)
- Nebraska (8)
- North Dakota (9)
- Ohio (10)
- South Dakota (11)
- Wisconsin (12)

Q5 What is your age? Select one category.

- 18-21 (1)
- 22-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)
- 45-54 (4)
- 55-64 (5)
- 65 and Over (6)

Q6 What is your current occupation?

--

Q7 Educational Background

Please check the highest level of education you obtained.

- High School (1)
- Some College (2)
- Associates Degree (3)
- Bachelors Degree (4)
- Masters Degree (5)
- Juris Doctorate Degree (6)
- Doctorate Degree (7)
- Other (8) _____

Q8 What was your major field of study in the highest degree earned?

--

Q9 Have you ever been a student at a community college or a junior college?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q10 Board Service

How many total years have you served on this board?

- 1-3 (1)
- 4-6 (2)
- 7-9 (3)
- 10-12 (4)
- 13-15 (5)
- 16-18 (6)
- 19-22 (7)
- 22-25 (8)
- 26 and Over (9)

Q11 Have you served on any other boards?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To: *Are you the chair of this board?* (skip logic)

Q12 What type of board have you served on? Please check all that apply

- Profit (1)
- Non-Profit (2)
- Educational Board (3)
- Other (4) _____

Q13 Are you the chair of this board?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q14 Have you ever served as chair of this board?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q15 How many hours per week, on average, do you spend on work for this board?

- 1-5 (1)
- 6-10 (2)
- 11-15 (3)
- 16-20 (4)
- 21-25 (5)
- 26-30 (6)
- 31-35 (7)
- 36-40 (8)
- 40 and Over (9)

Q16 Mission, Planning and Policy

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
The board assures that there is an effective planning process and is appropriately involved in the process. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board regularly reviews the college's mission and goals and monitors progress toward the goals. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board fulfills its policy role. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board relies on board policy in making decisions and in guiding the work of the college. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board's policies are up-to-date and regularly reviewed. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q17 Board-CEO Relations (CEO=President, Chancellor or highest office reporting directly to the board.)

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
The Board maintains an excellent working relationship with the CEO. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board sets clear expectations and effectively evaluates the CEO. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board delegates authority to and supports the CEO. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board periodically reviews the CEO contract to assure appropriate support and compensation. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 Community Relations and Advocacy

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
Board Members represent the interest of the citizens in their area. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board advocates on behalf of the college to local, state, and federal governments. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board effectively monitors the quality and effectiveness of the educational program and services. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board Members are knowledgeable about the districts educational programs and services. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19 Fiduciary Role

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
The board assures the fiscal stability and health of the college. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board policies assure effective fiscal management and internal controls. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board reviews the annual audit and monitors responses to recommendations. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board monitors implementation of the facilities plan. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 Human Resources and Staff Relations

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
Board members refrain from attempting to manage employee work. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board respects faculty, staff, and student participation in college decision-making. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board's human resources policies provide for a fair and equitable treatment of staff. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q21 Board Leadership

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
The board understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board expresses its authority only as a unit. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board regularly reviews and adheres to its code of ethics or standards of practice. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board members avoid conflicts of interest and the perception of such conflicts. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Once a decision is made, board members uphold the decision of the board. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q22 Board Meetings

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
Board meeting agendas and conduct provide sufficient information and time to explore and resolve key issues. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board meetings are conducted in an orderly, efficient manner. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board meetings and study sessions provide sufficient opportunity to explore key issues. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q23 Board Education

	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)	Unable to Evaluate ()
New Members receive orientation to board roles and the institution. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Board members participate in trustee development activities. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The board evaluation process helps the board enhance its performance. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Board measures its accomplishments against board goals. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q24 How did you become interested in serving on this Board?

Q25 What are the most important skills needed to be an effective Trustee/ Board Member?

Q26 If you could give any advice to a future Trustee/Board Member, what would it be?

Q27 Do you have any additional thoughts about your experiences as a Trustee/Board Member?

APPENDIX C. INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office of Responsible Research
Vice Provost for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4267
FAX 515 294-4566

Date: 6/18/2013

To: Michelle Robinson
1428 Walton Dr Unit 205
Ames, IA 50014

CC: Dr. Larry Ebbers
N256 Lagomarcino Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Community College Trustee Self-Assessment Survey

IRB ID: 13-150

Approval Date: 6/17/2013

Date for Continuing Review: 6/3/2015

Submission Type: New

Review Type: Full Committee

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56, please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials in your research, including the recruitment material and Informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.**
- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study**, when documented consent is required.
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.
- **Immediately inform IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and **(2) any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses**, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPS, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies require permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

APPENDIX D. PARTICIPANT CORRESPONDENCE

D-1. Email Letter

Dear Community College Trustee,

We are conducting a study that focuses on the experiences of Community College Trustees in the Midwestern United States. You have been selected to participate in this study because you currently serve as a community college trustee in the Midwest. You will be asked to complete a brief web survey (approximately 15-20 minutes) that asks questions about your experiences as a community college trustee. The main objective of the survey is to collect data regarding the roles and responsibilities of trustees and boards of directors at community colleges in the Midwest. The survey results will help us to have a better understanding of board composition, training, and experiences.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data obtained from this survey will be kept confidential. Response results will be reported only in terms of groups, protecting anonymity. In addition, no individual identifiers (such as names or numbers) will be collected. Once the survey results have been collected, your email address will be removed from your responses. The data collected will be stored in a secure database on a password-protected computer.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH

You are encouraged to ask questions at anytime during this study.

- For further information about the study contact, Michelle Robinson (the principal investigator), at 515-294-9631 or via email at mrobins@iastate.edu.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Your participation will help us gain valuable insight on community college trustees and board composition.

Sincerely,

Michelle Robinson
Iowa State University

To access the survey, you must follow the instructions below: ([link here](#))

D-2. Follow-up Email Letter

Dear Community College Trustee:

Please do not forget to complete your on-line survey regarding your experiences as a community college trustee.

We are conducting a study that focuses on the experiences of Community College Trustees in the Midwestern United States. You have been selected to participate in this study because you currently serve as a community college trustee in the Midwest. You will be asked to complete a brief web survey (approximately 15-20 minutes) that asks questions about your experiences as a community college trustee. The main objective of the survey is to collect data regarding the roles and responsibilities of trustees and boards of directors at community colleges in the Midwest. The survey results will help us to have a better understanding of board composition, training, and experiences.

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- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office of Research Assurances, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. Your participation will help us gain valuable insight on community college trustees and board composition.

Sincerely,
Michelle Robinson
Iowa State University

To access the survey, you must follow the instructions below: ([Link here](#))

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