

General Guidelines for Following Up on Public Comment

BACKGROUND

The public is invited to comment during the public comment section of each Board meeting. This gives trustees an opportunity to listen to concerns expressed by members of the public and to take them under further consideration following the Board meeting. If trustees would like specific follow-up on a public comment, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Board Chair or Secretary.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

At the close of the October 2015 Board meeting, there was discussion about how the Board might be more responsive to individuals providing comments during the public comment section. As follow-up to that discussion, the Board Secretary worked with the Chair, Vice Chair, and President to develop guidelines for responding to comments and shared them with the Board. Members of the Executive & Audit Committee requested further discussion of the guidelines.

The guidelines are largely based on how the Board Office manages written correspondence to the Board. Following each Board meeting, the Board Secretary will consult with University leadership to develop a recommended response to each public comment. Based on this input, the Secretary will present a recommendation to the Board Officers and President. It will typically be a written response with a copy sent to the full Board. Depending on the comment, the response could provide background information, describe intended follow-up or other efforts underway, and/or connect the member of the public to appropriate staff and resources on campus.

Responding to communications on behalf of the Board and its trustees is one of the administrative duties identified for the Board Secretary and a role typical of a board professional (*The Role of the Board Professional*, Cieslak and Mersereau, Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges). However, depending on the comment, the Chair may elect to respond on behalf of the Board. In other instances, the Chair may direct the Secretary to work on a response for a Committee Chair, another trustee, or the President or his delegate.

The Secretary will be responsible for tracking and ensuring follow-up is completed with the member of the public who made the comment. Where feasible, the goal will be to provide a response within 30 days of the Board meeting.

NEXT STEPS

These guidelines will be adjusted based on Committee discussion and can be revisited as the Board gains more experience in responding to public comment.