

BC3 trustees' scores unmatched on ACCT survey

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(Pittsburgh, PA) Butler County Community College trustees' scores on a national survey were the highest she has seen, presenter Norma Goldstein told BC3 President Dr. Nick Neupauer during a Governance Institute for Student Success conference of western Pennsylvania community college leaders titled "The board's role in student success, completion, equity and workforce."

Results of the Association of Community College Trustees board self-assessment "validated something that I felt all along," Neupauer said. "I am blessed, and the college is blessed, to have such great leaders like those who on our board of trustees."

Goldstein, director of the ACCT's Governance Institute for Student Success and of special projects, recognized BC3 before more than 40 administrators and trustees from BC3, the Community College of Beaver County, the Community College of Allegheny County and Westmoreland County Community College in the conference at CCAC's Byers Hall.

The half-hour survey – said Nancy Staible, who in September 2012 became one of BC3's 16 trustees – was completed prior to the conference and included questions such as how the board works as a body; whether committees exist and how they work; and about attendance, interactions with administrative staff and relationships with executives.

"That is all what is part of governance as defined by ACCT and also by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education," Staible said. "I didn't need a survey to tell me that we work well together."

Butler County commissioners appoint BC3 trustees to six-year terms. The board is a policymaking body that provides direction and guidance to BC3's president and administration. The primary functions of the board include establishing basic policy, appointing the president and financial control of the institution.

"Trustees are always on the same page"

BC3's trustees worked "especially hard" during a process that resulted in the college receiving re-accreditation from Middle States in June of 2017, Staible said, and when Neupauer and board Chairman Ray D. Steffler established a quality assessment committee among trustees.

"Our job," Staible said, "was to really focus on governance for the board."

Goals were developed and adopted, as were processes by which the quality assessment committee would continually inform the board about Middle States, Staible said.

“That was the focus when we first started as a committee,” she said. “And a lot of that was what was in this survey. It is obvious in what we had done in educating the board about our responsibility for governance, and good governance showed up in the survey. The questions that specifically dealt with that were scored high by our board.”

BC3’s trustees, Neupauer said, “are always on the same page. I rely constantly on their expertise.”

The survey was developed by ACCT, which, according to its website, is a “nonprofit 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.”

The Governance Institute for Student Success, according to its website, governance-institute.org, “is a national initiative that provides education for community and technical college trustees and presidents to assist them in data-informed governance to promote student success, equity, completion and career readiness.”

It emphasizes effective governance and data-informed decision through three core components: data collection and review, institutes and ongoing engagement, according to its website. Its goals are to raise board and executive team effectiveness, promote student success agenda in district planning processes; review data and key indicators of student success, equity and completion, and identify gaps to improve student outcomes; share high-impact policies and practices; and moving success forward by engaging all stakeholders.

“Thrilled” to be part of BC3’s board

Neupauer, Staible, Dr. Belinda Richardson, Sharla Anke and Lisa Campbell attended the Governance Institute for Student Success conference. Neupauer is in his 12th year as BC3’s president; Richardson is BC3’s vice president for academic affairs; Anke is assistant dean of institutional research; and Campbell is BC3’s interim director of Workforce Development.

Neupauer spoke to administrators and trustees about BC3’s town and gown initiative with the city of Butler in “What is moving the needle in Pennsylvania? Sharing lessons learned,” one of six presentations in the conference.

BC3 in July announced it would establish its first presence in the city of Butler by relocating its coordinator of community leadership initiatives from BC3’s main campus in Butler Township to a South Main Street building.

The move represented a small step in what Neupauer called the fulfillment of an objective in BC3's 2017-2022 strategic plan, and evidence of the college's gradual process of serving as educator and convener for community partners seeking to revitalize the downtown district.

Joining Neupauer as a speaker was J. Noah Brown, CEO of ACCT.

Other presentations included "Setting the stage: moving success agenda forward," "Are we a high-performing board?" "Who are our students? How do boards use data to make policy decisions? Diving deeper into the success data: progress and opportunity," "The world of changing work and learning and Pennsylvania's changing workforce" and "Committing to action: how do we put this all together?"

In addition to Steffler and Staible, members of BC3's board of trustees are Joseph E. Kubit, vice chairman; Glenn T. Miller, secretary; Scott A. McDowell, treasurer; Kenneth DeFurio; Dr. William A. DiCuccio; Kimberly D. Geyer; Jennifer R. Pullar; Gordon L. Marburger; Bruce Mazzone; Brian K. McCafferty; Gail A. Paserba; Dr. Bruce Russell; Carmine A. Scotece; and Joseph Taylor.

Staible said she is not only "thrilled" to be a part of BC3's board of trustees, but also "thrilled to be associated with the No. 1 community college in Pennsylvania two surveys in a row."

That the trustees' scores in the national survey were the highest Goldstein had seen "just makes it that much sweeter," Staible said, "and that much more satisfying and gratifying."