

Governance v. Management: What's the Difference?

Boards should govern, not manage. The difference is often misunderstood and the impact of such confusion can adversely impact the institution. Frequently, one can tell whether a Board is governing by the questions that are asked by trustees. Boards who are managing will focus on small details, departmental processes, and/or individual outcomes. Boards who govern are concerned with organizational health, enterprise structure, strategic relevance and direction, and institutional results. The distinctions could be described as a matter of scale. Below are sample questions asked by trustees which can indicate whether the Board's focus is appropriately scaled.

Management	Governance
<p>What do we pay our teachers?</p> <p>Who got a raise this year?</p> <p>Will you hire my brother-in-law?</p>	<p>Do we have a compensation philosophy and how is its effectiveness measured?</p> <p>How does our employee turnover rate compare to other colleges? ...to previous years?</p> <p>Are we considered a good place to work? How do we know?</p>
<p>How many gallons of gas do we use in our police cars?</p> <p>What is our kilowatt/hour rate?</p> <p>Do we have low-flush toilets?</p>	<p>Tell me about our energy management policies? How do we know that they result in a prudent use of energy?</p> <p>What challenges should we address that prevent us from employing useful conservation methods?</p> <p>When is the next time we refresh our campus master plan and should we consider "green" standards?</p>
<p>What is enrollment in "Program X" this semester?</p> <p>How many recruiters do we have?</p> <p>How many dual-credit classes did we teach?</p>	<p>What are our growth markets in the future and how will we sell into those segments?</p> <p>Are you happy with our product mix? Why?</p> <p>How do we assess the viability of our programs? What role does dual credit play in program growth and marketing?</p> <p>How does our multiyear growth rate compare to the statewide rates and to the growth in our local high school graduation classes?</p>

Why is the grass so tall?	How do we prioritize our capital?
Can we please paint the boardroom?	Are there functions we should consider outsourcing? Why?
How much will we raise our tuition rates?	How does our revenue mix compare to our peer institutions? What is our long-term dependence on tuition and what are the alternatives we could consider? What is the students' sensitivity to tuition increases? To debt levels? How do we know?
Why didn't we name Smith as our starting pitcher last night?	How do graduation and placement rates of our student-athletes compare with the rest of the student body? Why?
What's the theme of the Awards Banquet this year?	What could the Board do to improve the level of donations made to the college?
What's the gross margin of the bookstore?	Why do we operate these various auxiliary functions? What are the fiscal and non-fiscal benefits and costs? Are there alternatives?
When can we start an Analyzer program?	What are the major strategies contained in our academic plan and how is our progress to plan?
My wife is into Yoga, could you please start a CE course in that?	How is our academic plan enabled or constrained by our facilities? By our staffing levels? By our campus size?
What good is a course in basket weaving?	How do we assess whether our programs are relevant to the career aspirations of our students? How often do we measure that?

**Boards govern, managers manage,
and the CEO is the bridge between the two.**

For more information on the difference between governance and management, web-search “**Govern, not manage**” to find a broad collection of material on the topic.