

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY

Policy Title: BOARD OF VISITORS POLICY

Effective Date: Approved by the Board of Trustees on June 1998; BOV Procedures Updated on February 28, 2000; BOV Policy Revision Approved on November 5, 2021

Next Review Date: November 5, 2022, or as Determined by the Governance Committee

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Trustees (“the Board”) encourages the exchange of information and ideas in support of Howard University (“the University”) fulfilling its mission. Toward that end, the Board introduced a Boards of Visitors (BOVs) structure in 1998 to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources with external experts at the school and college level, to serve as advisory to the President, Provost and Deans, and to foster relationships between and among the Board of Trustees with Schools and Colleges.

This iteration of the Policy sets forth general parameters guiding all BOVs, with the understanding that Deans, in consultation with the Provost, have discretion to develop BOVs to meet the needs of their School or College. The overall goal of BOVs is to strengthen Schools and Colleges in their execution of the University’s mission by enabling Deans to access external expertise, resources, and advisement. BOVs are distinct from the Board of Trustees and do not have a governance role in the conduct of University business.

II. RATIONALE

Howard University has 14 Schools and Colleges, each with a distinctive history and profile and each facing challenges in a complex and competitive higher education context. Therefore, it is important they have opportunities for establishing linkages with the wider community to cultivate external resources and knowledge exchange. Schools and Colleges benefit from such linkages as do their students, faculty, and alumni, as well as the entire University community.

BOV members are distinguished persons, with backgrounds similar to members of the Board of Trustees, who are willing to volunteer their time and make personally meaningful philanthropic contributions to advance the mission of Howard University. BOVs are focused on the strategic areas of fundraising and development; teaching and scholarship; employment and career development; and advisement.

III. BOARD OF VISITORS GUIDELINES

The following guidelines apply to all Boards of Visitors (BOVs).

Structure

- BOVs are established only upon approval of the Board of Trustees.
- The Board of Trustees appoints all BOV members.
- Only Trustees may serve as BOV chairs with appointments not to exceed three years, renewable each year. This provision may be waived by the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Board's Governance Committee.
- The BOV chair or vice chair must be an alumnus/a of Howard University. If the chair is not an alumnus/a, the vice chair must be an alumnus/a. Both chair and vice chair may be alumni.
- The recommended BOV size is 10 to 16 members.
- BOV members are appointed to serve renewable three-year terms, not to exceed nine consecutive years. This provision may be waived by the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Dean to the Provost and President.
- The recommended BOV membership composition includes 30% to 50% Howard University alumni. Schools and Colleges have a transition period of three years from the effective date of this Policy to achieve 30%-50% alumni membership.
- The School/College Student Council President, or another student leader chosen at the discretion of the Dean, serves as an ex officio member of the BOV. Ex officio members serve a term commencing with the start of an academic year and ending at the close of that academic year.

Meetings

- BOV meetings may be held at least twice annually and are scheduled by the Deans in collaboration with the BOV chair.
- BOV meeting agendas are to include reports from students and faculty on topics of BOV interest in a format determined by the Deans.
- BOV meetings should include engagement with the wider School/College community, such as research presentations, lectures, symposia, meet and greets, or other activities, as determined by the Dean.
- The Provost may choose to convene a Congress of Boards of Visitors, comprising the membership of all BOVs, biennially.

Assessment and Reporting

- Each year, BOV members provide feedback on the implementation of this Policy via an annual assessment developed by the Office of the Secretary, with guidance from the Board's Governance Committee and input from the Deans and BOV Liaisons. The results

of these annual assessments are presented to the Governance Committee for review and are shared with all parties.

- BOV chairs provide a written summary report to the Board of Trustees on BOV matters, annually.

Other

- Exemplary BOV service is a factor for consideration in identifying nominees for Board of Trustees membership.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Boards of Visitors (BOVs) provide informed, interested, and distinguished advice and appraisal from outside the University and connect Schools and Colleges with external resources and expertise. BOV members demonstrate support of the School or College through personally meaningful philanthropic contributions. BOVs are focused on the strategic areas of fundraising and development; teaching and scholarship; employment and career development; and advising the Deans. BOVs do not have a governance role in the conduct of University business.

This Policy provides Deans with the flexibility to develop a BOV to meet the needs of their School or College within the parameters established in Section III, and as guided by the University's academic leadership team.

Role of the Board of Trustees

- BOVs are established only upon approval of the Board of Trustees.
- Through its Governance Committee, the Board identifies and recommends Trustees to serve on BOVs as chairs and members.
- Through its Executive Committee, the Board approves nominees for BOV leadership and membership.
- The Board receives reports from BOVs on an annual basis.

Role of the BOV Member

- BOV members are distinguished persons, with backgrounds similar to members of the Board of Trustees, who are willing to volunteer their time to advance the mission of Howard University.
- BOV members are expected to make personally meaningful contributions in support of the School or College as part of the University's culture of philanthropy.
- BOV members have substantial knowledge of or expertise in the strategic areas of fundraising and development; teaching and scholarship; employment and career development; or a field related to the School or College.
- BOV members serve as advisors to the Deans.

Role of the President

- The President receives BOV prospects lists from the Provost and provides feedback.
- The President recommends BOV membership to the Executive Committee of the Board for approval.
- The President and leadership team receive and review BOV reports.

Role of the Provost

- The Provost, in collaboration with the Deans, develops membership recommendations to submit to the President for Board approval.
- The Provost, in collaboration with the Deans, makes recommendations for membership waivers.
- The Provost as a part of the leadership team, receives and reviews BOV reports.

Role of the Deans

Deans have a pivotal role in the establishment and operation of their School or College's BOV:

- Deans develop a mission statement to provide focus and purpose to the ongoing work of the Board of Visitors. BOVs may focus on the strategic areas of fundraising and development; teaching and scholarship; employment and career development; and/or an area of specific interest for the School or College.
- Deans develop a list of BOV prospects, with the support of Development and Alumni Relations and the Board of Visitors Liaison, to achieve a membership composition aligned with the articulated focus and purpose of the BOV.
- Deans vet the prospects list with the Provost and President and develop a final roster for submission to the Board of Trustees by the President.
- Deans invite approved prospects to serve on the BOV.
- Deans ensure the provision of hosting and administrative support for BOV meetings.
- Deans ensure compliance with guidelines in Section III of this Policy.
- Deans work with BOV leadership to develop annual reports on BOV activities for presentation to the Board, President and Provost.
- In consultation with the BOV Chair and BOV Liaison, Deans assess BOV performance and develop term waiver recommendations and other membership adjustments, as needed.

Role of the BOV Liaisons

BOV Liaisons have a pivotal role in the administration and management of BOVs for the Deans:

- BOV Liaisons assist Deans in the development of BOV prospects/membership cultivation.
- BOV Liaisons assist Deans in the development of meeting agendas.

- BOV Liaisons serve as BOV points of contact and maintain current membership rosters and contact information.
- BOV Liaisons maintain a record of BOV meetings, including agendas, attendance, minutes, and philanthropic participation of BOV members.
- BOV Liaisons work with other offices, i.e., the Office of the Secretary, the Provost's Office, in fulfilling vetting, approval, and reporting requirements.

Role of the Office of the Secretary

- Assists the Board of Trustees in carrying out its BOV responsibilities and ensuring BOV matters are placed on the Board's agenda for consideration.
- Serves as a point of contact on BOV matters.
- Posts BOV rosters and other BOV information on the Office of the Secretary's website.
- Directs BOV member nominations received via the website to the appropriate Dean for consideration.

Role of Development and Alumni Relations

- Appoints Liaisons as staff to Boards of Visitors (BOV Liaisons).
- Assists Deans in developing lists of prospective BOV members, i.e., the "BOV Prospects List."
- Maintains up-to-date alumni information aggregated by Schools and Colleges as a resource to Deans.
- Maintains close communication with Deans on BOV matters.

V. RESOURCES

For more information on Boards of Visitors at Howard University, please visit the Office of the Secretary's website: [Homepage | Howard University Office of the Secretary](#)