# Sierra College Board Member Guide

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I. About the Board of Trustees

A. Purpose and Role of the Board of Trustees

Reference: BP 2200 – Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to do the following:

- Select, support, evaluate, and work closely with the Superintendent/President.
- Establish and focus on the mission, goals and long-range plans of the District.
- Create strong community linkages in order to best represent broad community interests.
- Make policies that establish the general direction for and expected results of the College’s programs and services, and that establish legal, ethical, and prudent governing parameters for College operations.
- Monitor the performance of the District to ensure that it is meeting current community needs, and anticipate future trends.
- Regularly evaluate institutional strategic planning and performance including educational programs, services, public service, resource management, and administrative effectiveness.
- Receive and administer gifts, grants, and scholarships in its discretion.
- Relate campus to community and community to campus.
- Annually evaluate board performance.

B. Norms for Board Conduct

1. Respect differing view points.
2. Give full attention to the meeting. Minimize the use of cell phones and electronic devices by turning them off or putting them on vibrate; and minimize side conversations.
3. Speak after being recognized – only one person speaks at a time.
4. Make sure every Board member has the opportunity to be heard, as well as staff and the public.
5. Be assertive in following the agenda, keep presentations precise, and limit meetings to a reasonable timeframe.
I. About the Board of Trustees (Continued)

B. Norms for Board Conduct (Continued)

6. Identify routine items and put them on the consent agenda.
   (a) Take responsibility for seeking information sufficiently in advance necessary to deal with Board business.
   (b) Postpone issues when the Board feels it lacks sufficient information, unless an immediate decision is critical.

8. Direct requests for information regarding Board business through the College President or to the vice presidents with a notification to the President.

9. Endeavor to have no surprises.
   (a) Endeavor to have no surprises that put other members of the Board at a disadvantage.
   (b) If a Board member votes against a decision, the member may state the basis for his or her vote, but should not undermine the Board decision.

10. Be transparent;
    - No hidden agendas;
    - Be candid about thinking and motives on issues.

11. Our role as the Board of Trustees is to set policy and the president and staff are empowered to be decisive, innovative and creative.

12. Give clear parameters to staff when adopting policy or making requests of staff.

13. Support the chain of command and the shared governance structure.
   (a) Do not let staff use relationships with individual Board members to interfere with the chain of command.
   (b) Do not discuss complaints or pending Board Policies or decisions with staff – refer them to the College President. OK to explain; OK to simply listen to views.

14. Do not reference conversations with specific staff (other than executive staff) in public meetings.

15. Do not disparage other Board members. Do not say publically what you would not say in a meeting.

16. Do not make disagreements on substantive issues personal.

17. If any Board member feels as a matter of conscience that he or she cannot comply with a norm, he or she will notify other members in advance of taking action.

C. Board Membership, Election, and Term Limits

Reference: BP 2010 – Board of Trustees Membership, BP 2100 – Board of Trustees Election, and BP 2130 – Term Limits of the Board of Trustees
C. Board Membership, Election, and Term Limits (Continued)

The Board of Trustees shall consist of seven members elected by the qualified voters of the District. Members shall be elected with voting at large, by trustee area as defined in Board Policy 2100, for overlapping terms of four years.

Elections shall be held every two years, in even-numbered years. Terms of trustees are staggered so that, as nearly as practical, one half of the trustees shall be elected at each trustee election. Terms of office officially begin the first Friday of December following the regular election, and the oath of office is typically administered during the regular December Board meeting.

The trustee areas and current terms are as follows (specific details are found in Board Policy 2100):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Term Expires</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2020</td>
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</tbody>
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The Board has determined to have no term limits for trustees.

D. Student Trustee

Reference: BP 2015 – Student Member and BP 2105 – Election of Student Member of the Board of Trustees

The Board shall include one student member with the privilege to cast an advisory vote, although the vote shall not be included in determining the vote required to carry any measure before the board. The privileges afforded the Student Trustee are found in Board Policy 2015 and are reaffirmed annually by the Board. The Student member of the Board of Trustees shall be elected by a plurality vote of those voting in a regular election of the student body and shall serve a term of one year commencing May 15 and ending May 15 of the following year.
I. About the Board of Trustees (Continued)

E. Board Officers

Reference: BP 2210 – Officers of the Board of Trustees and BP 2305 – Annual Organizational Meeting of the Board

At the annual organizational meeting (generally the regular meeting held in the first two weeks of December), the Board of Trustees shall elect from among its members a President, a Vice President/Clerk, and a Secretary of the Board, who each serve a term of one year. The Secretary may be, and generally is, the Superintendent/President. The Board does not have an official system of rotation of officers.

The officers of the Board serve at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed by the Board at any time during their terms at a properly noticed public Board meeting. In the event an officer is removed, the Board shall elect a replacement to serve for the remainder of the term. A vote to remove an officer must be approved by five affirmative votes.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the Board President, Vice President/Clerk, and Secretary are found in Board Policy 2210.

F. Committees

Reference: BP 2220 – Committees of the Board of Trustees

The Board may by action establish committees that it determines are necessary to assist the Board in its responsibilities. Any committee established by Board action shall comply with the requirements of the Brown Act and with these policies regarding open meetings.

Board committees have no authority or power to act on behalf of the Board. Findings or recommendations shall be reported to the Board for consideration.

Service on Board committees does not preclude members of the Board participating on District-wide committees, as long as there is less than a quorum of trustees represented.

Committees are generally formed or reaffirmed annually at the January meeting. The following committees have been established for 2018:
I. About the Board of Trustees (Continued)

F. Committees (Continued)

- Audit Committee (Sinclair-Chair, Bancroft, Romness)
- Budget Committee (Romness-Chair, Bancroft, Sinclair)
- Facilities Committee (Palmer-Chair, Dawson Bartley, Leslie, Student Trustee)
- Ad Hoc Board Scholarship (Garcia)
- Trustee Representatives to the Foundation Board (Dawson Bartley, Garcia)

G. Use of College Resources

Reference: BP 2717 – Board Members Personal Use of Public Resources

No trustee shall use or permit others to use public resources, except that which is incidental and minimal, for personal purposes or any other purpose not authorized by law.

H. Communications

Reference: BP 2720 – Communications Among Members of the Board of Trustees

A majority of the members of the Governing Board shall not, outside a regularly scheduled meeting, use a series of communications of any kind, directly or through intermediaries, to discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item of business that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board.

I. Compensation

Reference: BP 2725 – Board Member Compensation

Members of the Board may elect to receive compensation in the amount of $441 per month, payable on a monthly basis. A member of the Board who does not attend all meetings held by the Board in any month shall receive, as compensation, an amount not greater than the pro rata share of the number of meetings actually attended. The Board may increase its compensation by 5% annually.
I. About the Board of Trustees (Continued)

J. Health Benefits

*Reference: BP 2730 – Board Member Health Benefits*

Members of the Board may elect to receive such health, life and welfare benefits as are extended to District management employees. Additional information may be obtained from the District’s Human Resources office.

K. Travel

*Reference: BP 2735 – Board Member Travel*

Members of the Board shall have travel expenses paid by the District whenever they travel as representatives of and perform services approved by the Board.

Board members are entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses to and from regular and special Board meetings and meetings of duly constituted subcommittees of the Board (see Board Policy 2220), to perform District business relating to assignments delegated by the Board, and to conferences and professional meetings. Under no circumstances will Board members be reimbursed for spouses’ or others’ costs. Authorization to attend meetings and conduct District business shall be with approval of the Board. Reimbursement shall be at current District rates and subject to review by the Board.

L. Education

*Reference: BP 2740 – Board of Trustees Education*

The Board is committed to its ongoing development as a board and to a trustee education program that includes new trustee orientation. To that end, the Board will engage in study sessions, provide access to reading materials, and support conference attendance and other activities that foster trustee education.

M. Political Activity

*Reference BP 2716 – Board of Trustees Political Activity*
I. About the Board of Trustees (Continued)

M. Political Activity (Continued)

Members of the Board shall not use District funds, services, supplies or equipment to urge the passage or defeat of any ballot measure or candidate, including, but not limited to, any candidate for election to the governing board.

Initiative or referendum measures may be drafted on an area of legitimate interest to the District. The Board may by resolution express the Board’s position on ballot measures. Upon Board approval and in accordance with the provisions of the above referenced sections of California Education Code and California Government Code, public funds may be used for informational efforts regarding the possible effects of District bond issues or other ballot measures.

N. Conflict of Interest

Reference: BP 2710 – Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest

Board members shall observe the requirements of the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy. Some of those requirements are spelled out below.

Board members shall not be financially interested in any contract made by them in their official capacity, or in any body or board of which they are members. A Board member shall not be deemed to be financially interested in a contract if he or she has only a remote interest in the contract and if the remote interest is disclosed during a Board meeting and noted in the official Board minutes. The affected Board member shall not vote or debate on the matter or attempt to influence any other member of the Board to enter into the contract. Remote interests are specified in Government Code Sections 1091(b); they include, but are not limited to, the interest of a parent in the earnings of his or her minor child.

A Board member shall not engage in any employment or activity that is inconsistent with, incompatible with, in conflict with, or inimical to his or her duties as an officer of the District. A board member shall not simultaneously hold two public offices that are incompatible.

Upon leaving the board, former members shall not, for a period of one year act as an attorney, agent or otherwise represent for compensation others appearing before the board.
I. About the Board of Trustees (Continued)

N. Conflict of Interest (Continued)

Board members shall file statements of economic interest with the filing officer upon assuming office, annually thereafter, and upon leaving office. The filing officer is Jené Hallam in the President’s Office.

O. Code of Ethics

Reference: BP 2715 – Board of Trustees Code of Ethics

The Board’s Code of Ethics is detailed in Board Policy 2715. Procedures for addressing Code of Ethics violations are also included in that policy.

II. Meetings of the Board

All regular and special meetings of the Board shall be open to the public, be accessible to persons with disabilities, shall be held within District boundaries, and otherwise comply with Brown Act provisions, except as required or permitted by law. The Board shall conduct all meetings in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order, unless suspended in any meeting by a majority of the Board.

A majority vote of the Board of Trustees may terminate any meeting at any place in the agenda, providing arrangements have been made to complete the items of business on the agenda of the “adjourned meeting.”

A. Regular Meetings

Reference: BP 2310 – Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees

1. Schedule

Regular meetings of the Board are held according to the annual calendar adopted at the December organizational meeting, typically the second Tuesday of each month at 4:00 p.m., unless changed by the Board in a subsequent regular meeting. The annual calendar is posted on the College website and outside the Board room at the Rocklin campus.
II. Meetings of the Board (Continued)
   A. Regular Meetings (Continued)
      2. Location

      Board meetings are frequently held in the Board room at the Rocklin campus. The Board does, however, attempt to meet annually at its campuses in Nevada County and Tahoe-Truckee and occasionally in other communities throughout the District.

   B. Special and Emergency Meetings

      Reference: BP 2320 – Special and Emergency Meetings of the Board of Trustees

      Special meetings may from time to time be called by the President of the Board or by a majority of the members of the Board. Notice of such meetings shall be posted at least 24 hours before the time of the meeting, and shall be noticed in accordance with Brown Act requirements. No business other than that included in the notice may be transacted or discussed.

      Emergency meetings may be called by the President of the Board when prompt action is needed because of actual or threatened disruption of public facilities under such circumstances as are permitted by the Brown Act, including work stoppage, crippling disasters, and other activity that severely impairs public health or safety.

   C. Brown Act

      Reference: California Government Code Sections 54950-54962

      The Ralph M. Brown Act states that public boards “exist to aid in the conduct of the people’s business,” and is intended to ensure that the actions and deliberations of legislative bodies be conducted openly. With few exceptions, all business must be discussed and transacted in public. A majority of the Board may not privately discuss Board business. This includes discussions by electronic means and in person. A series of individual discussions can inadvertently create a “serial” meeting, so caution should always be used when discussing College business.
II. Meetings of the Board (Continued)

D. Closed Sessions

Reference: BP 2315 – Closed Sessions of the Board of Trustees

Under certain limited and specific conditions (see Board Policy 2315), all or part of a meeting of the Board of Trustees may be closed to the public. The meeting agenda must disclose the intent to hold the closed session and identify the topics to be discussed as required by law.

After any closed session, the Board shall reconvene in open session before adjourning and shall announce any actions taken in closed session and the vote or abstention of every member present.

All matters discussed or disclosed during a lawfully held closed session and all notes, minutes, records or recordings made of such a closed session are confidential and shall remain confidential unless and until required to be disclosed by action of the Board or by law.

No closed session shall be conducted during an emergency meeting, except as provided for in the Brown Act to discuss a dire emergency.

E. Decorum

Reference: BP 2355 – Decorum at Board of Trustees Meetings

Undue interruptions or other interference with the orderly conduct of the business of the Board will not be permitted. Disruptive behavior is always out of order and the Board President may terminate the speaker’s privilege of address, if, after being called to order, the speaker persists in improper conduct or if remarks are addressing matters outside the Board’s jurisdiction. Additional information regarding interruptions and/or disruptive behavior and the process for removal is found in Board Policy 2355, Decorum at Board of Trustees Meetings.

F. Comments from the Community

Reference: BP 2350 – Speakers Before the Board of Trustees and BP 2345, Public Participation at Board of Trustees Meetings

The following statement is read by the Board President at the beginning of each Board meeting:
II. Meetings of the Board (Continued)

F. Comments from the Community (Continued)

“The public may address the Board on any agenda item during the discussion of the item, generally following the staff’s presentation on the item and before a vote. Individuals must be recognized by the Board President before speaking. Individuals who wish to address the Board on subjects not appearing on the agenda may do so during the Comments from the Community portion of the meeting. If you wish to comment, please complete a yellow card and submit it to Jeannette Bischoff. Comments may be limited by subject and duration at my discretion.”

It should be noted that there are specific procedures for addressing complaints about College employees, which are found in Board Policy 2345.

Disruptive behavior, defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order and the Board President may terminate the speaker’s privilege of address, if, after being called to order, he or she persists in improper conduct or if remarks are addressing matters outside the Board’s jurisdiction.

G. Board Meeting Agendas

Reference: BP 2340 – Board of Trustees Agendas

An agenda is posted at each campus and on the College website at least 72 hours prior to the meeting time for regular meetings. The agenda shall include a brief description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting. No business may be acted on or discussed which is not on the agenda, except in limited circumstances as described in Board Policy 2340.

Responsibility for establishment of the agenda lies with the Superintendent/President with the concurrence of the Board President.

Members of the public may request that items be placed on the Board agenda in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Board Policy 2340.

All Board members shall have the right to request inclusion of agenda items at their individual discretion under the same conditions as those defined for members of the public. The Superintendent/President may decline such requests only with the concurrence of the requesting member or members.
II. Meetings of the Board (Continued)

H. Quorum and Voting of the Board

Reference: BP 2330 – Quorum and Voting of the Board of Trustees

A quorum of the Board shall consist of four or more elected members.

The Board shall act by majority vote of all of the membership of the Board, except where more than a majority vote is otherwise required by law as noted in Board Policy 2330. The Student Trustee shall have the privilege to cast an advisory vote, although the vote shall not be included in determining the vote required to carry any measure before the Board.

No action shall be taken by secret ballot. All members present, including the Board President, shall vote on all motions. The Board will publicly report any action taken in open session and the vote or abstention of each individual member present.

I. Consent Agenda

Regular business items, including personnel items, that are not expected to require discussion may be placed on the Consent Agenda portion of the agenda and acted upon by a single motion without discussion. Any item may be considered separately, or “pulled” for separate discussion and/or action at the request of a trustee.

J. Board Meeting Minutes

Reference: BP 2360 – Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Trustees

Minutes are taken at each meeting that record all actions taken by the Board. The minutes shall indicate the names of those Board members present and the time of arrival of Board members who arrive late at meetings. The minutes shall also indicate who made motions, seconded motions, and detail the vote. A member voting against a recommendation may state his/her reason(s) and may have them recorded in the minutes if requested at the time of voting.

Minutes are not typically kept of closed sessions. See Board Policy 2360 for further information regarding records of closed sessions.
III. Board Planning and Evaluation

A. Annual All-Day Planning Meeting

The Board meets at least once annually, often a Saturday in July, for an all-day meeting to focus its attention on planning issues and setting priorities and goals. The Board calls for additional extended or extra meetings when the Board deems necessary.

B. Board Self-Evaluation

Reference: BP 2745 – Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation

The Board completes a self-evaluation annually using the Trustee Evaluation Instrument. Each trustee is asked to complete the evaluation form and the results are compiled into a single document, which is reviewed at a public Board meeting.

IV. Superintendent/President

A. Delegation of Authority

Reference: BP 2430 – Board of Trustees Delegation of Authority to the Superintendent/President

The Board delegates to the Superintendent/President the executive responsibility for administering the policies adopted by the Board and executing all decisions of the Board requiring administrative action.

The Superintendent/President may delegate any powers and duties entrusted to him or her by the Board, including the administration of colleges and centers, but will be specifically responsible to the Board for the execution of such delegated powers and duties.

The Superintendent/President is empowered to reasonably interpret board policy. In situations where there is no board policy direction, the CEO shall have the power to act, but such decisions shall be subject to review by the Board. It is the duty of the Superintendent/President to inform the Board of such action and to recommend written board policy if one is required.
IV. Superintendent/President (Continued)

A. Delegation of Authority (Continued)

Further information regarding the authority and responsibilities delegated to the President may be found in Board Policy 2430.

B. Selection

*Reference: BP 2431 – Superintendent/President Selection by the Board of Trustees*

In the case of a Superintendent/President vacancy, the Board shall establish a search process to fill the vacancy. The process shall be fair and open and comply with relevant regulations.

C. Succession

*Reference: BP 2432 – Superintendent/President Succession*

The Board has authorized the President to appoint an acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for short periods of absence not to exceed 90 calendar days. In the case of absence when an acting CEO has not been appointed, administrative responsibility is delegated to one of the vice presidents (the order is specified in Board Policy 2432). For absences extending beyond 90 calendar days, the Board shall appoint an acting Superintendent/President.

D. President’s Goals and Evaluations

*Reference: BP 2435 – Board of Trustees Evaluation of the Superintendent/President*

The Board evaluates the President on a regular basis, conducting a formal evaluation and setting performance goals at least annually.

V. Accreditation

Sierra College is fully accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. The Board is kept informed of accreditation related matters including timelines, reports, recommendations and actions. The Accreditation Standards specific to the Board are found in Standard IVB, Board and Administrative Organization.
VI. Sierra College Foundation

Reference: BP 3601 – Sierra College Foundation

The Sierra College Foundation is a tax exempt, nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California. The Foundation came into existence in 1972 and is administered by a Board of Directors with at least one member from the Sierra Joint Community College District Board of Trustees.

The mission of the Sierra College Foundation, as stated in its bylaws, is “to give the members of our community the opportunity to assist and invest in the development of quality educational opportunities for all. In concert with the Sierra College District (the College) and the community serves, the Foundation commits itself to work toward education excellence, and to assist in the implementation of the Mission of Sierra College.”

It shall be the policy of the Sierra Joint Community College District Board of Trustees to support and encourage the Sierra College Foundation in its attempts to benefit the educational program.

VII. Participatory Governance

References: BP 2510 – Participation in Local Decision Making of the Board of Trustees and AP 2510 – Participatory Governance

As stated in Administrative Procedure 2510, Participatory Governance at the College “should be seen as one of three complementary processes which function within the College: (1) the administrative process, which deals with the operations of the College within established policies and procedures; (2) the collective bargaining process, which deals with contractual matters and working conditions as defined by the collective bargaining law; and (3) the participatory governance process described below [in AP 2510], which reviews and recommends to the Superintendent/President policies and regulations of the College that affect all aspects of the college community.”

The constituent groups that participate in participatory governance at the College are the Academic Senate, Student Senate, Classified Senate, and Management Senate. Each of those groups has representatives to the College’s Strategic Council.
Sierra College Board Member Guide

VII. Participatory Governance (Continued)

The purpose of the College’s Strategic Council is: “To provide a forum for members of Strategic Council to present and discuss the concerns and interests of their constituent groups; to collaborate with the college President by conveying the interests of the constituent groups on the strategic direction of the college; to share in decision-making by advising the college President in the development of policies and procedures; and to assist in the dissemination of information to the college community.” In accordance with Title V, the Academic Senate has certain rights to make recommendations directly to the Board of Trustees.

VIII. Events

The trustees are invited and encouraged to attend College sponsored events. A few of the events that take place annually are described below:

A. Commencement

Commencement ceremonies are held annually in May. The ceremonies are typically held the final week of the spring semester on Thursday evening in Grass Valley and Friday evening in Rocklin. A smaller ceremony is also held at the Tahoe-Truckee campus on the last Thursday morning of the spring semester.

B. Convocation

Convocation meetings are typically held twice a year on the Thursday before classes begin in the fall and spring semesters (August and January). This is an opportunity for all of the College’s staff, faculty, management, and trustees to come together in preparation for the start of the semester.

C. President’s Breakfast

The President’s Breakfast is an annual gathering of influentials. This is an opportunity for the President to address these individuals in the College setting in addition to the many opportunities he takes throughout the year to participate in events and forums held in the areas surrounding the College.

D. A Taste of Excellence

Sierra College Foundation annual fundraising event held in the spring.