

International Association of University Governing Bodies

WORKING SESSION:

MEASURING INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Secretary of the Committee of University Chairs and
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THE CUC APPROACH

BACKGROUND

CUC Code of Governance (2006) lists among responsibilities of governing bodies “to ensure processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the institution against the plans and approved KPIs which should be, where possible and appropriate, benchmarked against other comparable institutions”

BACKGROUND

CUC member survey (2006) showed some governing bodies using KPIs but many requested guidance.

CUC published a report on the Monitoring of Institutional Performance and the Use of Key Performance Indicators in November 2006.

APPROACH IN THE GUIDE

- 1 Governors have responsibility at a strategic level for all activities
- 2 They cannot and should not
 - Monitor large volumes of paper
 - Engage in operational details
 - Usurp the role of senior management
- 3 Governors need high-level KPIs that cover all strategic areas and can be assimilated and reviewed with minimal volumes of papers.
- 4 They also need a monitoring framework that permits them to:
 - Quickly gain an overview of performance
 - Interrogate and drill down where appropriate
 - Highlight areas that need more attention

THE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

1. 10 high-level KPIs cover all areas of institutional performance
2. Each is represented by a traffic-light assessment and this is shown on one page
3. Each of the ten is built up using a range of supporting assessment materials:
 - Self-assessment questions
 - Supporting KPIs
 - Other sources as appropriate
4. Governors only need to see one page, but can have back-up schedules covering some or all of the ten areas as appropriate

THE HIGH LEVEL KPIs

Top-level summary indicators (“super KPIs”)

- 1 Institutional sustainability
- 2 Academic profile and market position

Top-level indicators of institutional health

- 3 The student experience and teaching and learning
- 4 Research
- 5 Knowledge Transfer and relationships
- 6 Financial health
- 7 Estates and infrastructure
- 8 Staff and Human Resource Development
- 9 Governance, leadership and management
- 10 Institutional projects

HOW CAN KPIs HELP?

1. Focus attention onto a small number of key strategic issues
2. Give governors confidence to ask questions about these
3. Prompt a more sophisticated debate about:
 - What are we really trying to achieve in this area?
 - How do we measure progress?
 - How are we doing compared with our own aims and our peers?
4. Indicate areas of concern
5. Avoid large volumes of paper, and governors becoming involved with operational detail

WORK PROGRAMME – PHASE 2

Governance context

- Size and role of GB
- Relationship to executive

Process for using KPIs

- How many? (Can the CUC list be streamlined?)
- Relationship to strategic plan, risk register etc
- Who owns them – who makes the judgements?

Operational aspects

- Data
- Benchmarking
- Burden

KPIs for regional/community engagement

SOME EARLY FINDINGS

1. The context is important (role of GB, engagement of governors, TRUST etc)
2. KPIs little use if not clear about strategic aims
3. Engage governors in the issues (be honest) – but not in operational detail
4. Keep the KPIs simple (streamlined)
5. Integrate them with other processes (strategic planning, risk assessment etc)
6. It's not a quick-fix (will take a few cycles, and will evolve)

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What are the principal key performance indicators for a governing body?
- How should these be presented and interpreted?
- How do they affect the relationship between the governing body and the executive?
- How do they relate to other processes such as strategic planning and risk management?