

## **Standards and expectations for the preparation, submission and advance review of agenda items for meetings of the Board of Regents of the Texas Tech University System**

Included in this document are guidelines to be followed for the preparation, submission and advance review of agenda items proposed for inclusion on an agenda for a meeting of the Board of Regents ("Board") of the Texas Tech University System ("TTUS").

In brief, it is expected that every agenda item brought forward for consideration by the Board:

- will be submitted in a timely manner so that the appropriate level of review may be done;
- will be a work product of professional quality that is written from the perspective of what a Board member needs to know about the matter;
- will provide a clear and concise explanation of what the Board is being asked to consider;
- will provide full disclosure of all relevant factors needed for the Board to make an informed decision, including a history of any previous actions taken by the Board on the matter; and
- will undergo review, analysis and approval by all necessary members of administration, with each in the chain-of-command for that particular item taking ownership of and signing-off on the proposed agenda item as being complete and well written.

The following pages provide additional detail on the expectations for agenda items, including:

- timelines for submission of agenda items (see p. 2-3)
- content of agenda items (see p. 3-4)
- ownership of agenda items (see p. 4-5)
- advance review of agenda items (see p. 5-6)

## **TIMELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF AGENDA ITEMS**

The timelines and due dates referenced below are set to allow sufficient time for review and preparation of materials and timely distribution to members of the Board. Missed deadlines:

- increase the potential for agenda items that are not properly prepared and analyzed ...
- are not fair to the Board; and ...
- may result in the deferral of the item to the next Board meeting.

It is the responsibility of executive management and supervisors at all levels to make sure that:

- potential agenda items originating from their departments/divisions meet these deadlines; and ...
- all staff in their areas who may be involved in preparing, submitting, or reviewing/approving agenda items are aware of and observe the deadlines.

The schedule of upcoming meetings of the Board is posted under "MEETING CALENDAR & PREPARATION GUIDELINES" located at: <https://www.texastech.edu/board-of-regents/calendar-meetings.php>

**Eight weeks prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting** ... The Office of the Board of Regents ("Board Office") sends a notice to a set of administrative staff who have been identified to the Board Office as involved in the preparation and submission of potential agenda items. This notice includes the timeline for the preparation and submission of agenda items for the upcoming Board meeting. Soon after this notice and timeline are sent, a document regarding timelines and deadlines for agenda and meeting preparations also is posted on the Board meeting website referenced above.

**Four weeks prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting** ... The Secretary of the Board conducts an Agenda Book meeting at which key members of the System Administration and all component institutions review and discuss agenda items proposed for the upcoming Board meeting. It is critical that all who want items included on the Board meeting agenda submit drafts of the proposed items *prior to* the Agenda Book meeting so that the appropriate amount of review may be done. At this point, draft agenda items should be as complete and "scrubbed" as possible. (see also: *Content of Agenda Items* on p. 3-4; and *Advance Review by Administration* on p. 5-6)

**Pre-meeting vetting of agenda items by committee chair and vice chair** ... as "working committees", the chair and vice chair of each standing committee of the Board are expected to have planned meetings with their respective committee liaison (i.e. the assigned Vice Chancellor) no less than three weeks before a regular scheduled Board meeting. These discussions may involve up to four members of the Board and as many staff as needed and are intended to provide a forum to refine and examine agenda items. The deadline for these meetings will be included in the Board meeting timeline for the preparation and submission of agenda items. Once completed, the committee chair will sign off on the agenda items with the committee liaison to confirm inclusion of the item in the Agenda Book.

**During the time that is 2 to 3 weeks prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting** ... The week following the submission of revised agenda items:

[Timelines for Submission ... continued]

- The Board Secretary meets with the Chancellor to secure the Chancellor's approval for the proposed agenda items. The Chancellor is the final approval authority for all agenda items that the administration will propose for inclusion on the Board meeting agenda.
- The Board Secretary then reviews the proposed agenda with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board. Per the *Regents' Rules*, the Board Chairman is the final approval authority for the contents of a Board meeting agenda.

**Two weeks prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting** ... The Agenda Book is distributed to the members of the Board. At this point, the regular and consent agendas for the Board meeting are finalized. For any additions after this date, the requestor must directly obtain the approval of the Chancellor, and then the Board Chairman also must approve the addition. In both cases, a good and justifiable reason must be provided as to why the proposed matter is being brought forward so late in the process.

**One week prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting** ... Handout materials and PowerPoint presentations to be used during the Board meeting must be submitted to the Board Office for distribution to Board members. (see also: "*Handout/PowerPoint Guidelines*" under "MEETING CALENDAR & PREPARATION GUIDELINES" located at: <https://www.texastech.edu/board-of-regents/handouts-powerpoints-guidelines.pdf>)

**72 hours prior to the start of any Board meeting** ... At this point, the state opening meetings statute does not allow any new items to be added to the agenda. Any matter not already on the agenda that was included in the posting notice filed with the Secretary of State is not eligible for consideration at the Board meeting.

**NOTE – online/public posting of Board meeting materials** ... State law requires that the Agenda Book plus any briefing materials to be used during the meeting that are sent to the regents in advance must be posted on the Board's website prior to the Board meeting. This online/public posting will occur when the meeting notice is posted with the Secretary of State.

## CONTENT OF AGENDA ITEMS

An agenda item must be so well written that it is clear what the Board is being asked to consider. It is not enough to prepare an agenda item so that the *preparer* understands it. An agenda item must be understandable from the perspective of a Board member. Always remember, the target audience for an agenda item is the Board.

It is the responsibility of the preparer/submitter of an agenda item and their supervisors at all levels to make sure the content of an agenda item is properly prepared.

The preparer and each successive level of supervision have an affirmative duty to make sure that an agenda item:

- is complete, concise and accurate;
- clearly states what is being recommended for action by the Board; and

[Content of Agenda Items ... continued]

- provides a summary of the pertinent facts, the need for action, and sufficient background information that includes the context and relevant history of previous Board actions on the matter.

To assist Board members in carrying out their decision-making responsibilities, an agenda item must so clearly communicate the recommendation and background information that a person who is not an expert in the matter at hand can understand what is being proposed, why action is needed, what are the expected results of implementation of the action and, if appropriate, what the implications may be if action is not taken.

In keeping with a professional work product, the drafters/reviewers/editors of agenda items also should observe the following guidelines:

- Any explanations, justifications and/or reasons must be well defined.
- Any attachments that supplement the agenda item must be referenced appropriately in the item and be informative without being simply a "data dump."
- Jargon and technical terms not common in everyday use should be avoided.
- Abbreviations and acronyms are to be spelled out in full the first time they appear.
- The correct, full, formal names for people and facilities should be used.
- Language should be grammatically correct; sentences should be properly structured; and paragraphs of excessive length should be avoided.
- Agenda items are to be carefully proofread and spell-checked.

Agenda items for special called meetings should include an explanation of the urgency for the Board's consideration of and action on the matter.

## **OWNERSHIP OF AGENDA ITEMS**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON ACTION ITEMS:**

Each agenda item for which the Board is being asked to take an action must include statements regarding what action is being recommended and who is making the recommendation.

For agenda items of a component institution, the recommendation is made by the President of the institution, and the Chancellor must concur with the President's recommendation to the Board.

For agenda items of the System Administration, the recommendation to the Board is made by the Chancellor.

[Ownership of Agenda Items ... continued]

#### WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE OWNERSHIP OF AN AGENDA ITEM:

In order for the Presidents and Chancellor to affirmatively certify to the Board that their recommendation/concurrence is based on thoroughly analyzed and carefully considered strategies that are explained in a well written and complete agenda item, it is the duty of each and every person involved in the development and preparation of the agenda item to produce a quality work product.

★★★ Whether the person involved is the original preparer of an agenda item or is in a role in which review, analysis and editing of a draft agenda item is provided, each involved should be aware that they are putting their professional reputation and credibility on the line when they pass forward an agenda item to the next level of review and/or consideration.

The approach needs to be: "This is **my** work product. **I take responsibility** for it being complete and well-written. **I will be judged** on the quality of the work I do in preparing/reviewing/analyzing/editing the proposed agenda item, and **I will give it my best effort**. **I will not** 'leave it to the next person' to turn the agenda item into the quality work product it needs to be."

The Board Office cannot be the primary "fixer" of agenda items. Agenda items submitted to the Board Office should be complete and ready for sign-off by the Presidents and/or Chancellor and submission to the Board.

### **ADVANCE REVIEW OF AGENDA ITEMS**

So that the Presidents and Chancellor are able to certify to the Board that their recommendations on agenda items are well justified and the Board may fulfill its fiduciary duty in making decisions on actions proposed, a thorough analysis of all factors impacting a proposed agenda item must be done at every step in the preparation-and-review process.

The extent of the advance review necessary may depend upon the complexity of the matter involved and/or the magnitude of the impact of the proposed action.

#### ADVANCE REVIEW BY ADMINISTRATION:

The President must approve of all agenda items for that institution before the Chancellor is asked to approve those agenda items.

The Chancellor must approve of all agenda items for the component institutions and the System Administration before the Board Chairman is asked to approve the placement of agenda items on the Board agenda.

If an agenda item will propose action be taken by the Board on a matter that has a high degree of complexity or would have a significant impact if approved, the President of

the institution, if it is an institutional matter, and the Chancellor will need to be fully briefed by the leadership of the originating institution/division/department so the President, if appropriate, and the Chancellor may fulfill their approval responsibilities.

At all levels of drafting and review during the agenda item preparation process, those involved must:

- fully analyze all aspects of the proposed action ...
- anticipate any and all questions the President, the Chancellor and the Board may have about the proposal; and ...
- make sure the agenda item adequately addresses those questions or concerns.

#### ADVANCE REVIEW WITH THE BOARD:

For proposed action items that have a high degree of complexity or would have a significant impact if approved, the Board Chairman and Vice Chairman as well as the chairman of the Board committee that first will consider the agenda item should be briefed before the point at which the Board Chairman must determine whether the item will be placed on the Board agenda. The President, if the matter involves an institutional item, and the Chancellor (or their designated representatives) may need to discuss the matter in advance with the aforementioned leadership of the Board. The President and/or Chancellor will determine which of their staff will assist in these advance briefings.

For all proposed agenda items (i.e., all action items and reports), the process outlined below for advance review with the Board shall be followed.

- The chairman of the Board committee that will first consider the matter will be consulted about the proposed agendas for that committee. Before the Board Chairman makes a final determination of which items will be placed on a Board meeting agenda, the committee chairmen must have approved the agendas for their respective committees. The designated liaisons with the Board committee chairmen are as follows:

Finance & Investments: Vice Chancellor & Chief Financial Officer.

Facilities: Vice Chancellor for Facilities Planning & Construction.

Academic, Clinical & Student Affairs: Deputy Chancellor

Audit: Chief Audit Executive.

- Per the *Regents' Rules*, the Board Chairman will make the final determination of which items will be included on a Board meeting agenda. The Board Chairman will instruct the Board Secretary accordingly.
- Based on direction from the Board Chairman, the Board Office will produce and distribute the Agenda Book for each Board meeting.
- After the Agenda Book has been distributed to the members of the Board, any changes to the agenda or agenda items must be approved in advance by the Board Chairman and, where appropriate, by the chairman of the Board committee on which an agenda item is placed.