

# New Legislative Initiative Will Strengthen Higher Education Board Governance

*AGB announced a governance framework designed to strengthen the effectiveness, accountability, & public trust of higher education governing boards nationwide.*



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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges ([AGB](#)) today announced a national governance framework designed to strengthen the effectiveness, accountability, and public trust of higher education governing boards nationwide. The policy recommendations, which are designed to reinforce sound, nonpartisan governance practices and promote stability in public higher education leadership, form the foundation of AGB's [Higher Education Governance Integrity Initiative](#). AGB is sharing the recommendations with executive and legislative leaders nationwide.

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*Ross A. Mugler, AGB president and CEO*

“Across the country, governing boards are facing heightened pressure and expectations,” said Ross A. Mugler, AGB president and CEO. “The national framework is grounded in a simple principle: governance integrity is not partisan; it is structural. When trustees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, institutions are stronger, leadership is more stable, and public trust is reinforced. We will be working with governors, legislators, and higher education leaders across the country to adopt and implement the framework as a proactive step toward strengthening governance and preserving institutional independence.”

AGB's Higher Education Governance Integrity Initiative responds to growing evidence that governance challenges are becoming more widespread:

- Public boards are experiencing increased politicization and external pressure.
- Reporting highlights that many trustees lack clarity about the scope and limits of their authority.
- AGB research indicates that 43 percent of trustees do not feel fully confident in their own or

their board's understanding of fiduciary duties and governance boundaries.

When governance roles are unclear:

- Governance and management lines blur.
- Presidential instability increases.
- Institutional autonomy weakens.
- Mission stewardship is disrupted.
- Public trust erodes.

### A Five-Part Framework for Governance Integrity

AGB's national legislative framework outlines five priority recommendations for strengthening board governance:

1. Strengthen Trustee Selection—Prioritize the appointment of individuals with proven expertise in fiduciary oversight, governance, and civic leadership.
2. Modernize Trustee Training—Implement comprehensive onboarding and ongoing education that emphasize fiduciary responsibilities, governance boundaries, institutional autonomy, and ethical leadership.
3. Establish Fiduciary Certification—Require trustees to formally affirm their commitment to the institution's mission, fiduciary duties, and the core principles of trusteeship.
4. Reform Nomination Processes—Increase transparency, continuity, and balance in governance through more structured and consistent appointment and review practices.
5. Strengthen Board Chair Preparation—Provide role-specific training for board chairs, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping governance effectiveness and institutional stability.

### From State Engagement to National Framework

The framework builds on AGB's direct engagement with state leaders, including recent work in Virginia with Governor Abigail Spanberger. In [formal recommendations to the governor](#), AGB outlined a set of targeted governance reforms focused on strengthening trustee selection, modernizing training, implementing fiduciary certification, reforming nomination processes, and requiring role-specific preparation for board chairs. These recommendations were informed by lessons drawn from governance challenges in the commonwealth, where breakdowns in board leadership, particularly at the chair level, have underscored the consequences of unclear authority, politicization, and insufficient preparation.

AGB's recommendations for Virginia helped shape the core elements of this national framework, demonstrating how states can take proactive, structural steps to reinforce institutional stability and restore public confidence in higher education governance.

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About AGB

At the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), we believe in the power of higher education to transform lives, strengthen inclusive democracy, and support a thriving society. We believe that strong higher education starts with great governing boards. AGB provides advocacy, leading practices, educational resources, expert support, and renowned programs that advance board excellence for 40,000 AGB members from more than 2,000 institutions and foundations. For more than 100 years, AGB has been the trusted authority for board members, chief executives, board professionals, and key administrators on higher education governance and leadership. Learn more at [AGB.org](https://www.agb.org).

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