

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

*Increasing College Access,
Retention, and Completion*

BIG IDEAS

AGB CONSULTING

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

Increasing College Access, Retention, and Completion

Improving college completion is one of the foremost issues facing higher education today. It is also one of the most daunting. As the public and politicians alike call for increased enrollment and graduation rates, boards have a responsibility to ensure their institutions are equipped to meet the needs of students. Integrated access, retention, and completion efforts ensure that universities and colleges are not only attracting the right students but also promoting their ultimate success.

In 2015, AGB surveyed higher education board members about college completion efforts on their campuses. Here we've teased out some of the comparative findings about the current state of completion efforts in public and independent boardrooms.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1

Does the board have the right metrics to monitor institutional efforts to increase completion?

2

Does your board's composition allow for effective and integrated oversight of student retention and attainment?

3

Is the board functioning at the policy level in its efforts to improve completion rates?

4

Does your board have policies in place that support coordinated completion efforts with other institutions in your state?

EXPERT VOICES



James E. Lyons, Sr.
Senior Consultant, AGB Consulting

“When I began my presidency, the focus was on a single metric: did we bring in more students this year than last? The board evaluated me on that factor, and I evaluated the admissions staff similarly. It was all about inputs, with little said about outcomes. In the future, the focus must be on outcomes.”



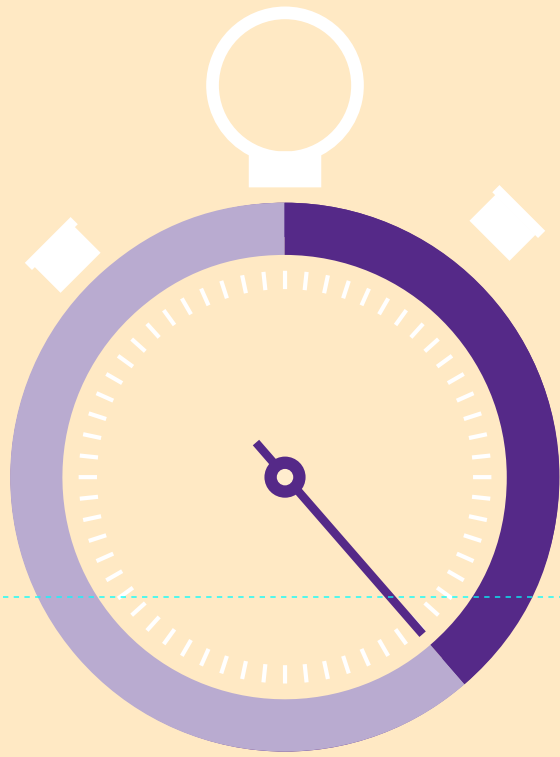
Sally K. Mason
Senior Fellow, AGB

“The real measure of success in higher education rests in outcomes. Enrolling more students is not enough—and may even be counterproductive. Doing everything possible to retain and graduate students has become the gold standard for performance metrics. Doing so in an affordable, timely fashion will distinguish the most successful institutions.”

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

If the United States is going to meet national attainment goals and remain competitive in a global economy, we need more students to complete their degrees or credentials. How is your board measuring up on this work?

DOES THE BOARD SPEND SUFFICIENT TIME IN MEETINGS ON STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES?



Yes, sufficient	39%
Too much	0%
No, not enough	62%

WHAT ARE THE IMPEDIMENTS TO UNDERSTANDING STUDENT-LEARNING OUTCOMES?

OTHER PRIORITIES REQUIRE BOARD ATTENTION



NOT ENOUGH TIME AT MEETINGS



INADEQUATE MEASURES



NOT APPROPRIATE TO THE BOARD'S ROLE



LACK OF INTEREST AMONG BOARD MEMBERS



PUBLIC INSTITUTION OR SYSTEM

INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION

IS COLLEGE COMPLETION THE MOST IMPORTANT OR A MAJORITY PRIORITY FOR YOUR BOARD?



73%

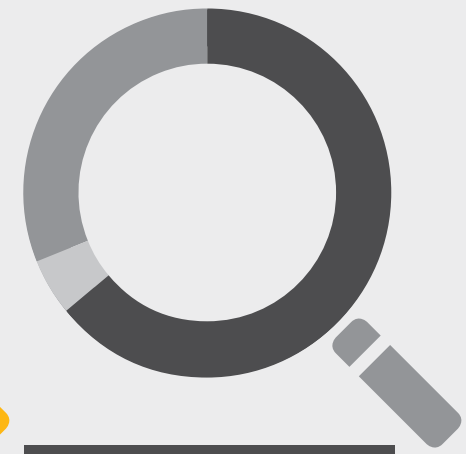


51%

DO YOU FEEL YOUR BOARD SHOULD GIVE MORE TIME AND ATTENTION TO OVERSIGHT OF COLLEGE COMPLETION?

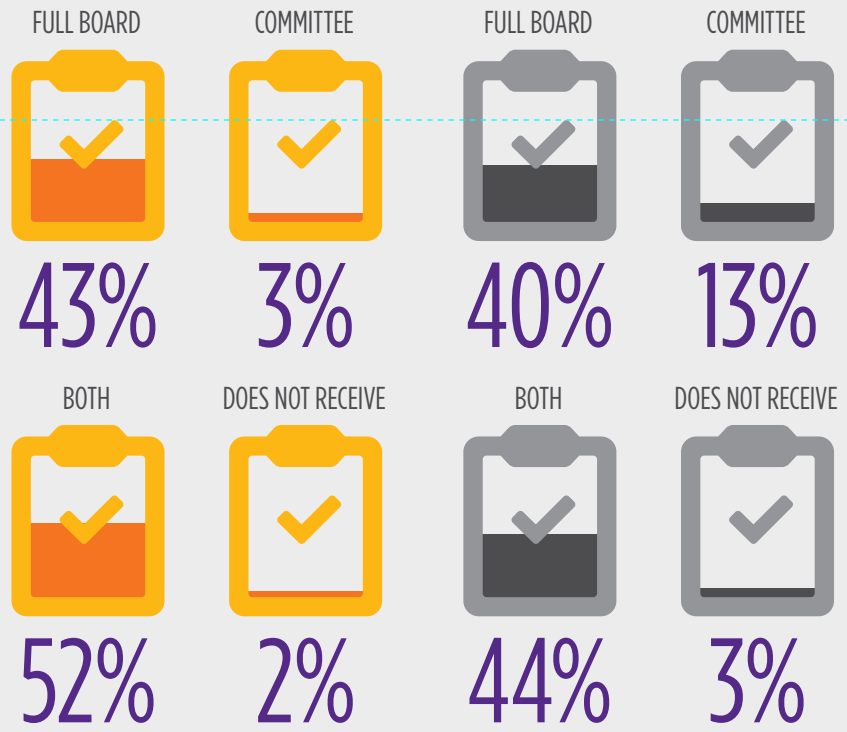


Agree or Strongly Agree	72%
Do Not Know or Not Sure	3%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	25%

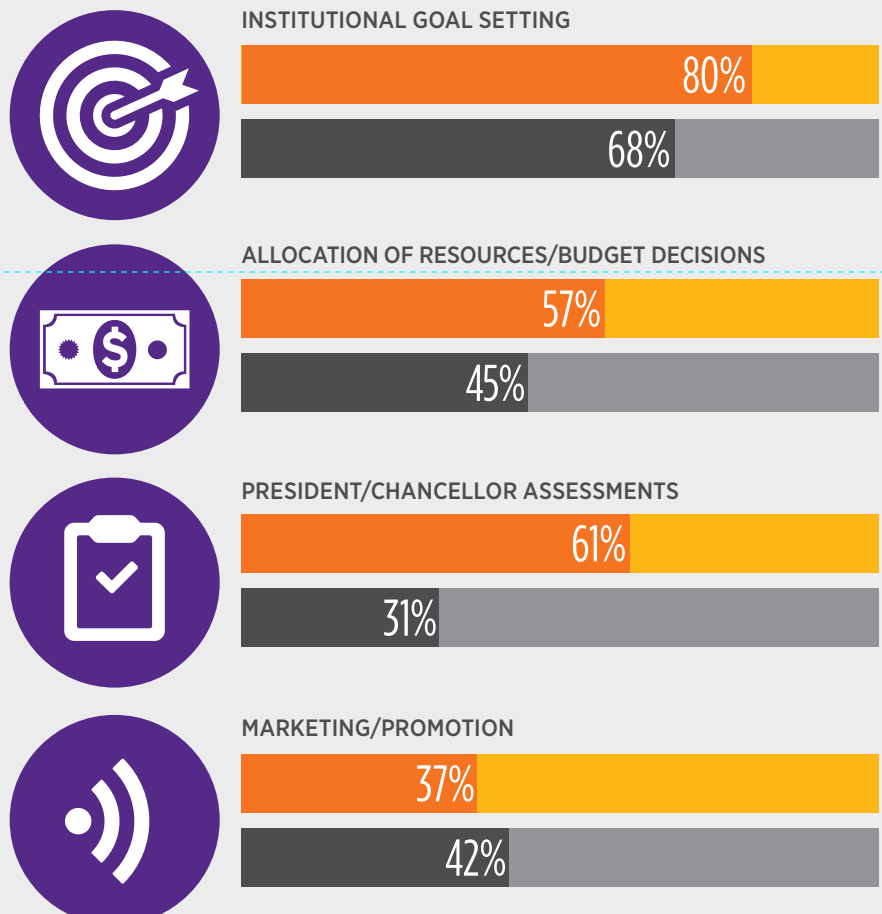


Agree or Strongly Agree	64%
Do Not Know or Not Sure	5%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	31%

WHO RECEIVES DATA ON COLLEGE COMPLETION?



HOW DOES THE BOARD USE THE INFORMATION IT RECEIVES ABOUT COLLEGE COMPLETION?



AGB Consulting understands that good governance doesn't look the same at all institutions—and it can't be achieved in an hour-long workshop. It must be cultivated through an individual process that results in collaboration and partnerships for solutions. Our consultants include current and former presidents, chancellors, board chairs, provosts, system leaders, and foundation executives. They know higher education from the inside out and offer insights only first-hand experience can bring. Our services can help your institution harness the expertise of AGB's 90+ years of thought leadership in all areas of governance to address the specific challenges and questions you face.

Big Ideas can often spark engaged discussion and purposeful action. If you're ready to build a better board, AGB Consulting is pleased to offer the following areas of service as well as many others:

- Statewide policy dialogues on retention and attainment
- Statewide trustee education workshops for new and continuing board members
- Workshops on academic affairs committee charges and responsibilities
- Longer-term consultations on the board's role in academic oversight and degree completion

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges
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