

BCCNM STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE

Board Meeting Guidelines

Approved by BCCNM Board on November 25, 2021



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Introduction

The BCCNM Board recognizes it is uniquely privileged to govern a regulatory college that supports and upholds the safe practice of nursing and midwifery professionals registered in BC. With an ever-shifting regulatory, legislative, economic, and social landscape – all of which have a persistent and significant impact on the public and the health services they access and receive – the Board knows that it must be intentional about the governance tools, knowledge, and resources it chooses to employ if it is to meet its mandate.

Board meetings are the primary forum for board discussions and decision-making. An effective meeting is defined as “*the assembly of people gathering to discuss ideas and make decisions that produce an outcome of value*” and the Board builds on this through its drive to cultivate meeting space that is safe, unoppressive, and inclusive. This includes inviting and empowering board members to contribute freely to discussions, participate in positive and robust interactions with each other, and engage in learning that will expand their awareness and knowledge of subjects to support their individual contribution to discussions and decision-making.

The Board also recognizes that to successfully understand the nature of nursing and midwifery regulation and make strong decisions that support those professionals and the communities they serve, diverse perspectives must be actively sought and included as a part of its deliberations. Only when fully informed can the Board ensure its decisions contribute to the college’s promise to foster unshakeable confidence in nursing and midwifery care.

These meeting guidelines are a resource for board members, to help them understand how:

- meetings are structured and planned;
- board discussions can be optimized;
- a culture of trust and respect can flourish when space is made for questions, humility, and learning;
- relevant, unbiased, and balanced decisions can be made that meet and support
 - BCCNM’s legislated authority as set out in the *Health Professions Act* (the “Act”),
 - the college’s commitment to be anti-racist leaders who foster a speak-up culture and eliminate stereotypes, discrimination, and racism¹, and
 - the Board’s commitment to learn about and respect the specific rights of BC First Nations and Indigenous peoples, and employ distinct Indigenous approaches, protocols, and perspectives where applicable².

¹ Source: BCCNM/CPBC/CDSBC/CPSBC Joint Apology to Indigenous People and a Pledge to Be Anti-Racist (May 11, 2021)

² Source: BCCNM Board Composition Matrix (April 28, 2021)

These guidelines reflect regulatory and governance best practices. They work in conjunction with the duties and responsibilities of board members as established in the Oath of Office, BCCNM Bylaws, and the Code of Conduct, and are grounded by a clear mandate, strong values, and coherent strategic priorities.

The guidelines are also informed by ongoing leadership discussions and board education about: the provincial healthcare system; the impacts of colonialism and structural colonization; the social, legislative, and political history of BC First Nations and Indigenous peoples; the nature of bias; and imperative of allyship in the creation of an anti-racist culture.

These guidelines do not apply to general college meetings such as the annual general meeting or special general meetings (as defined in the bylaws). Separate procedural rules govern those types of meeting.

Types of Meeting

There are several types of meeting that board members can expect to attend during their terms of office. The agenda will indicate the type of meeting and, depending on the nature of the discussion, items can be moved between open and closed agendas (subject to the conditions of section 19(2) of the bylaws).

1. Open Session

This type of meeting is open to all staff, registrants, and the public. Meeting dates, and guidelines for those who wish to attend an open session, are posted on the BCCNM website and interested parties can register in advance (space is usually limited). Minutes are recorded for these meetings and published on the college's website.

When an open board meeting takes place by videoconference only, observers are not permitted to attend in real time. These virtual open sessions are, however, recorded, and observers may request access to the recording upon written request to governance staff.

2. Closed Session

This type of meeting is open to staff involved in discussion items but closed to registrants and the public. Minutes are recorded for these meetings but are not published on the college's website. When a closed meeting takes place by videoconference only, minutes are taken but the virtual session is not recorded due to the confidential nature of these discussions.

Section 19(2) of the bylaws establishes the conditions under which a meeting can be closed, as follows:

“19(2) The board may exclude any person who is not a board member from any board meeting or part of a board meeting if the person's attendance at the board meeting is disruptive or if the board is satisfied that one or more of the following matters will be discussed:

- (a) financial or personal or other matters of such a nature that the interest of any affected person, or the public interest in avoiding disclosure of those matters, outweighs the public interest in board meetings being open to the public;*
- (b) information concerning an application by any individual for registration under section 20 of the Act or a certified practice designation under section 151 [Certified practice designations], or reinstatement or renewal thereof, the disclosure of which would be an unreasonable invasion of the applicant's personal privacy;*

- (c) information concerning a complaint against, or investigation of, any individual under Part 3 of the Act, the disclosure of which would be an unreasonable invasion of the individual's personal privacy;*
- (d) information concerning an assessment of the professional performance of a registrant under section 26.1 of the Act or the registrant's compliance with competency or quality assurance requirements established under Part 6 [Quality Assurance and Professional Responsibilities], the disclosure of which would be an unreasonable invasion of the individual's personal privacy;*
- (e) information the disclosure of which may prejudice the interests of any person involved in (i) a proceeding under the Act, including a disciplinary proceeding under Part 3 of the Act or a review under Part 4.2 of the Act, or (ii) any other criminal, civil or administrative proceeding;*
- (f) information described in section 75 [Disclosure of education program review information];*
- (g) personnel matters;*
- (h) property acquisitions;*
- (i) the contents of examinations;*
- (j) information concerning the scoring or results of examinations, a report of the registrar under section 87(6) [Examinations] or a request for approval to take an examination again under section 87(11) or (12) [Examinations], the disclosure of which would be an unreasonable invasion of any individual's personal privacy;*
- (k) communications with the Office of the Ombudsperson;*
- (l) instructions given to or opinions received from legal counsel, or any other matter which is subject to solicitor-client privilege;*
- (m) information that the college would be required or authorized to refuse to disclose to an applicant making a request for records under Part 2 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;*
- (n) information that the college is otherwise required by law to keep confidential."*

3. In-Camera Session

This type of meeting is a subset of a closed meeting and therefore must meet the criteria set out in section 19(2) of the bylaws. It may be open to certain staff at the invitation of the Board depending on the matter under discussion but is closed to registrants and the public.

An example of an in-camera meeting would be an update from the Chief Officer or HR consultant who support the registrar evaluation process, or a discussion where the Board wishes to speak to the Registrar in private.

Minutes are recorded for these meetings by the staff member in the meeting but are secured with limited access. These minutes are not published on the college's website but are available on request to those who attended the in-camera meeting.

When an in-camera meeting takes place by videoconference only, minutes are taken but the virtual session is not recorded due to the confidential nature of these discussions.

4. Board-Only Session

This type of meeting is closed to all but board members. It too is a subset of a closed meeting and must meet the criteria of section 19(2) of the bylaws. No college business is conducted during this session, no formal action can be taken, no recordings are made, and no minutes are taken; because of this, the Board needs to be rigorous with respect to what is discussed in this forum.

The purpose of a board-only session is for the Board to:

- evaluate its own effectiveness or the effectiveness of its meetings;
- foster board culture by having open and non-judgmental discussions about its performance, journey, intentions, or behaviour;
- examine its relationship with management; or
- reinforce good practices.

If the Board finds itself having conversations that are broader than self-reflection, it must determine if minutes are required and, if so, which members of staff should be included to support and record the discussion.

5. Strategy Session

This type of meeting might be embedded within another scheduled meeting or at a separate time. Its purpose is for the Board to work with Senior Leadership to set the mandate, vision, and strategic direction for the college, and proactively review and assess future-facing issues that may affect or guide college business. Notes are usually kept for this type of meeting to assist Senior Leadership in developing strategy or plans, but no formal minutes are kept.

6. Education Session

The purpose of an education session is to ensure that board members have the knowledge, information, and tools to be most effective in their roles. No minutes are taken for this type of meeting, but educational support materials and recorded presentations are kept for future reference.

Board members may also engage in self-directed learning individually, in smaller groups, or in a community of practice setting. Such learning is informal and valuable in aiding board members' understanding of the complex matters on which they are asked to make decisions.

Ways to Meet

How and where a meeting takes place are important considerations. Technology provides greater flexibility than ever, so multiple channels are available to board members wherever possible to help manage time, availability, cost, and quorum.

1. In-Person

In-person meetings are the preferred type of meeting for board members, predominantly because board meetings involve significant discussion, planning, problem solving, and decision-making. This is the best type of meeting to hold when it is important to reduce distractions and fully engage board members; being face-to-face with colleagues helps build shared understanding, co-operation, and empathy.

2. Teleconference/Videoconference

The option to attend a meeting remotely (i.e. by teleconference or videoconference) is available to any board member unable to participate in person. Remote meetings tend to work best for straightforward discussions where no group work is taking place or rigorous decisions are being made.

Videoconferencing has become the standard board meeting format because of the global pandemic and hybrid meetings may become more common moving forward, with some board members attending meetings in person and others choosing to attend remotely.

3. By Email

Email meetings are convened for one specific purpose only, either when information needs to be disseminated quickly, or an urgent decision is required that cannot wait until the next scheduled board meeting.

4. Other

The Board meets only a limited number of times in the year, during which it is focused on board business or education. While some social events are scheduled, board members are encouraged to interact whenever they can to build relationships, trust, and learn to be with each other as a Board. This effort is important, especially when the Board can only meet in a virtual setting (as has been the case during the pandemic).

Board members are reminded, however, to adhere to the *Code of Conduct for Board Members and Committee Members* when interacting outside of board meetings, particularly with respect to being “aware of their personal power, privilege, and spheres of influence so as to not exercise, or seek to

exercise, individual authority or influence over other board...members, especially outside of meetings, which might have the effect of limiting open discussion, creating factions, or oppressing those from marginalized or racialized populations.³

³ Source: Section 4(c) – Code of Conduct for Board Members and Committee Members [*Communicating with each other*]

Meeting Material

1. Agenda

Agendas are prepared by staff in consultation with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair, based upon emerging issues and the annual work plan for the Board. Any board member may propose an agenda item ahead of the meeting and the Board Chair and Registrar will decide whether to include that item on the meeting agenda for the Board's consideration.

Agendas follow a standard template, which includes the time, date, location and type of meeting, the names of board members who have confirmed their attendance or forwarded their regrets, the name of the college's Knowledge Carrier, the names of staff and guests attending the meeting, and a formal acknowledgment of the traditional and unceded BC First Nations territory on which the meeting is taking place.

The agenda will list each matter being brought forward to the Board, the time estimated for each discussion, whether the Board is receiving the item for information, discussion, or decision, and the material that will be provided to the Board to support its consideration of a matter.

When developing agendas, staff and board leadership need to be confident that:

- the Board is spending the most amount of time on the most important issues;
- the Board will have the information and time to properly discuss each agenda item;
- the agenda is not too ambitious for the time allocated;
- the right people will be in the room for each discussion and, specifically, when discussions or decisions involve or impact BC First Nations, Indigenous, marginalized, or racialized individuals, groups, or communities, that either:
 - appropriate consultation has occurred prior to the meeting and a process is in place to report out following the meeting; or
 - representation from the specific group or community is present for the discussion;
- staff are making the best use of the time they have with the Board when face-to-face;
- staff are sure the topics under discussion during a closed or in-camera meeting are flagged as confidential and properly fall under section 19(2) of the bylaws;
- staff ensure the design of the meeting aligns with the board members' level of engagement and capacity (e.g. deep discussion is not happening at a time when board members might be tired or distracted).

2. Consent Agenda

On occasion, a consent agenda may be used. This is a technique for addressing multiple decision requests as a single agenda item so the Board can manage its meeting time. Only items that are

routine or non-controversial in nature will appear on a consent agenda, or an item that requires perfunctory approval because the Board has already reached consensus in previous discussions.

Board members are expected to have carefully reviewed the items on a consent agenda prior to the meeting. The Chair will ask at the outset of the meeting if any items from the consent agenda need to be moved to the regular agenda for discussion. Any reason provided by a board member is sufficient to have the item moved. The Chair may then decide to discuss the matter immediately or move the discussion to an appropriate time on the regular agenda.

If an item is moved but other matters remain on the consent agenda, the Chair will ask for a motion for the consent agenda to be approved as amended. The Chair will subsequently ask for a motion for the regular agenda to also be approved as amended as it will include the new matter for discussion. If no items are moved from the consent agenda, the Chair will ask for a motion for the consent agenda as a whole to be approved. Whenever the consent agenda is approved, each item appearing on it will have its resolution recorded separately in the minutes.

3. Meeting Package

Briefing notes, with supplemental documents, form the basis of the meeting package. Along with the agenda, the meeting package provides board members with the information they need to understand the goal of each discussion, as well as background information, context, and analysis. Senior Leadership will also be present during the meeting or on call to address any questions that arise.

The meeting package is posted on the college's secure document management system (Collaborations) at least one week prior to the meeting in order to give board members time to read and consider the material. This allows greater time for discussion at the meeting itself. Any changes made to the agenda or meeting package will be communicated to board members either by email in advance of the meeting, or in person by the Chair at the beginning of the meeting.

4. Pre-recorded Presentations

On occasion, pre-recorded presentations will be available to board members as part of the meeting material. These presentations are a tool for optimizing timing at meetings so that agenda time is allocated exclusively for board discussion. It is important that board members watch the presentations and read any accompanying briefing notes prior to attending the meeting.

Pre-recorded presentations are useful for education or new process orientation as board members can pause, rewind, or even re-watch presentations as needed.

5. Reading Package

Reading packages are sometimes provided to board members as a separate resource, posted with the meeting package on Collaborations. The reading package contains information that may help to provide history or broader context to the Board but is neither compulsory nor essential to any discussion or decision being made at the meeting. As such, board members can choose to omit this reading from their preparation if short on time.

6. Annual Board Workplan

The tasks that must be addressed by the Board during the year are set out in a high-level workplan, prepared and reviewed by staff in consultation with the Chair and Senior Leadership. The annual workplan aligns with the Board's responsibilities established in the bylaws, ensuring that no mandated work is overlooked and key reporting and compliance dates are met. The workplan is primarily used by staff as a guide for agenda preparation.

7. Board Resource Site

Legislation, documents, or presentations that board members may wish to reference either when preparing for or between meetings are housed on an online resource site in Collaborations, confidential to board members and governance staff.

The site also contains government reports (such as those relating to the health profession modernization agenda and the investigation into Indigenous-specific racism within the provincial healthcare system), material from board education sessions, monthly governance scans, the board calendar and annual workplan, and contact information should board members wish to contact each other between meetings.

Meeting Preparation

Board members will need to set aside an appropriate amount of time to prepare for meetings. While the actual amount of time may vary for each board member and the type of meeting, a conservative estimate for preparation time is between 2-6 hours per board meeting. The Chair and Vice-Chair will also meet with Senior Leadership ahead of time to review the draft agenda and plan the meeting.

Sometimes technical support may be required ahead of the board meeting. Common issues include expiry of passwords (as board members may not access the system between meetings), difficulties accessing board material, or being unable to log in to the meeting itself. Contact information for the college's technical support team is set out in every email notifying the Board when meeting material is available. Additionally, board members may seek assistance from governance staff.

1. In-person meetings, videoconferences and teleconferences

Upon receipt of the email advising the Board that meeting packages have been electronically posted to Collaborations, board members are asked to check if they can access the meeting package and inform governance staff immediately if not.

Board members should read the meeting material carefully, paying particular attention to the agenda. Prior to the meeting, board members can notify the Chair, Registrar, or Chief Officer (Strategy and Governance), in confidence, if they:

- identify a conflict of interest;
- identify content in the meeting material that may trigger unpleasant feelings, thoughts of past abuse, or memories of culturally unsafe experiences, such that emotional support may be required or board members wish to sit quietly in or be excused from the discussion;
- wish to remove an item from the consent agenda and add it to the regular meeting for discussion;
- require additional information or resources to assist them in preparing for the meeting; or
- have significant concerns or questions so a response can be formulated in time for the meeting.

The Chair will also ask board members these questions at the outset of each board meeting as a matter of process.

2. Email meetings

Board members will receive an email stating that a formal meeting of the Board has been convened and are given a deadline by which to respond (typically 48 hours from the date of the email). The email will contain a high-level summary of the issue, a description of the decision the Board is being asked to consider, and a proposed resolution. Board members will also be directed to a detailed

briefing note and, if applicable, supporting documents. Each board member is asked to read the material provided and respond to all addressees, clearly stating their approval or rejection of the proposed resolution.

Should a board member have a simple question, they may submit it via the email chain. The answer will be shared for all to see, ensuring everyone on the Board has the same information. However, if more questions arise or it becomes clear that board discussion is necessary, the Chair may decide to adjourn the email meeting and convene a teleconference/videoconference instead. Similarly, if quorum or consensus cannot be reached, the Chair will determine if another process is required in place of the email meeting.

A record of each board member's response is maintained with a copy of the minutes for email meetings. If the email meeting is an open session, only the minutes are published on the BCCNM website. Closed minutes are not published.

Meeting Attendees

Aside from board members, the Board can expect to see the following people at meetings:

Knowledge Carrier A respected representative of one of the host First Nations upon whose ancestral and unceded territory the BCCNM offices are located, the Knowledge Carrier is valued and recognized by their community, has extensive Indigenous cultural, historical, and spiritual wisdom, and lives and models traditional BC First Nations teachings and knowledge.

The board meetings attended by the Knowledge Carrier, the scope of their role in those meetings, and the supports they might need, is determined through discussions between the Knowledge Carrier, the Board Chair, and Senior Leadership from time to time. The Board Chair may also invite Indigenous board members to be part of these discussions.

Generally, the Knowledge Carrier will bear witness to the Board’s work and process, keep board members accountable to BC First Nations and Indigenous protocols, and provide advice and guidance to the Board as required through their teachings and lived experience.

Senior Leadership The Registrar and Chief Officers of the college attend all board meetings. They advise the Board on process, provide strategic and operational reports, and are responsible for implementing the Board’s decisions and initiatives.

Staff Presenters Members of college staff may attend meetings to present or advise on specific agenda items to the Board.

Guests External consultants or guests may be invited to attend meetings to assist in discussions or promote understanding of the college’s partnerships with other groups in the healthcare system.

Observers Members of the public may attend open sessions of in-person board meetings. Seating is made available in the boardroom for this purpose. Board members can refer to the guidelines, “*Observing Board Meetings*”, for further information.

Support Staff Members of the governance and technical support teams are present to take minutes and support the smooth operation of each board meeting.

Meeting Attendance

Board members will receive an email invitation from governance staff for each of their board meetings, setting out the date, time, location and, if applicable, log-in details for remote access. Board members are advised to notify staff in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting or plan to attend remotely (if the meeting is being held in-person). Board members are also asked to inform the Chair in advance if they plan to join the meeting late or leave early.

Board members are expected to arrive on time, with materials and notes ready to participate in the meeting. Devices not in use must be put away with notifications turned off. Where a board member needs to attend to personal or non board-related matters, they should, if possible, inform the Board at the outset that an interruption might occur during the meeting.

Board members attending by videoconference or teleconference are advised to:

- consider how they might appear on camera, for example, avoiding stripes or bold patterns which can be visually distracting, adjusting lighting to minimize shadows, and reducing background noise;
- test equipment ahead of time to make sure internet access is available and working and, if possible, to have a contingency in place in the event of system glitches;
- have the dial-in number, access codes, or log-in details ready and join the meeting at least 10 minutes early to resolve technical issues;
- if the meeting is late to begin, email the meeting organizer to say they are ready to join the call;
- give full attention to the meeting as they would if in the same room;
- identify themselves if they wish to speak;
- wait to be acknowledged by the Chair before speaking;
- speak clearly and address board members by name if asking specific questions;
- ask for clarity if any part of the discussion is unclear;
- be patient if there is a slight delay in transmission;
- mute the line when not speaking and not place the call on hold to avoid silence fillers being broadcast to the room (i.e. news or music); and
- when the meeting concludes, remember to end the call or connection.

Technical teams are on standby if connection or system issues occur. If problems arise during the meeting, board members may contact or approach any member of staff to ask for assistance.

At the end of the meeting, board members must ensure that all hard copies of meeting material are left in the room for secure disposal.

Board members can claim salary replacement, compensation, locum coverage, and expense reimbursement for preparation time and attendance at meetings (see *“Board and Committee Compensation and Expense Reimbursement Policy”*). Forms can be obtained from and submitted to governance staff.

Board Discussions

1. Opening Protocol

All board meetings begin with a land/territorial acknowledgment. This is:

- a mark of respect and recognition of the deep, historical, and constitutionally protected connection BC First Nations have with the land occupied by the college;
- a statement to demonstrate understanding that the land on which the Board meets is unceded by BC First Nations peoples; and
- recognition and humble gratitude to those indigenous to the land from those who are settled here.

Where possible, the Knowledge Carrier is present to bestow a blessing at the outset of each meeting.

When a meeting takes place by teleconference or videoconference, attendees are invited to acknowledge the territory from which they are each joining the meeting. Resources are available to board members who wish to learn more about territories and the correct pronunciation of the territory names.

Board members making a land/territorial acknowledgment are encouraged to speak sincerely, drawing on their personal learning and knowledge (at whatever stage that might be) so their words are neither tokenistic nor performative.

2. Meeting Conduct

Board members are referred to section 4 of the *Code of Conduct for Board Members and Committee Members* which sets out the specific standards of conduct and expectations to which board members must adhere. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in corrective action up to and including removal from the Board.

3. Discussion Process

The Chair is responsible for the meeting and makes sure that it runs on time. The standard process for moving through discussion to decision includes the following:

- Each item on the agenda will be introduced by a member of staff, a committee chair or anyone else invited by the Chair to introduce the topic.
- The Chair will open the floor for any questions and discussion arising from the briefing note and background materials.

- The Chair will ensure that every member of the Board has an opportunity to share their perspective without being interrupted or silenced.
- For the sake of efficiency and effectiveness, the Chair will ensure that discussion is confined to issues that fall within the Board’s authority and are relevant to the issue being discussed.
- Throughout the discussion, the Chair will, where needed, highlight important points, clarify misunderstandings, and keep the discussion focused on the matters at hand.
- When board members believe they have received the information necessary to consider the issue fully and are ready to move to a decision on the matter, the Chair will request a motion for resolution on which the Board will vote (see “*Board Decisions*” below).
- Prior to moving to decision, the Chair will check in with each board member to ensure they have had an opportunity to share their opinion and ask questions.

4. Timeliness

Timeliness is always a key consideration for the Board. As set out in its annual work plan, the Board must make specific decisions at its meetings throughout the year (for example, approval of the budget, registrant fees, or financial statements). When possible, staff will bring items to the Board incrementally, with information, education sessions, and smaller decisions leading up to the final request for a decision. This ensures the Board is fully informed and comfortable with the subject matter before a decision is required.

There may be occasions where board members may find that a discussion requires more time than was provided on the agenda. The Chair will consult with the Board to determine whether to continue or adjourn the discussion or decision to another meeting.

When the Board decides to defer a discussion or decision, it is best practice for board members to think about what the unintended consequences of that deferral might be (e.g. a delay in information reaching registrants or education programs, halting the progress of external processes or successive decisions by other health system players, or delays in filing bylaw amendments with government, etc.).

5. Self-Reflection

One of the key values expected from board members is self-awareness: the ability to identify the elements and nature of their own reasoning and the influences upon it, knowledge of which can empower board members in their roles, enhance the integrity of board discussions, and foster deep trust and respect between colleagues.

While board members need never openly communicate or share, for example, their personal spheres of power, privilege, or bias during a board discussion, they may find some utility in privately reflecting on these questions:

- Am I comfortable sharing what I know in the context of this discussion?
- Am I comfortable saying, “*I don’t know*”?
- Am I providing my authentic point of view or am I acquiescing to a majority voice?
- Am I currently anxious, rushed, or otherwise feeling disengaged from this discussion?
- Am I open to listening to what others are saying even though I am uncomfortable or disagree with the perspective being shared?
- How might I be an ally to or support those who have said they are feeling unsafe or marginalized within the scope of this discussion?
- Am I holding myself and others accountable for creating space in this moment for an honest conversation about racism, power, and privilege to occur?
- Am I using my privilege to help those with less privilege at this table, in a way that does not lessen or undermine their power or voice?
- Am I limiting myself from considering perspectives that are different from my own? If yes, why might that be (i.e. is there bias at play)?
- Am I using language that will neither dismiss nor exclude others’ skill or lived experience?
- Can I accept that I can offer my perspective but not control anyone’s ability to receive it?
- Do I need to seek support outside of the board space (e.g. an ally, a mentor, or through a community of practice)?

6. Creating Space and Safety for Equitable Discussions

The most powerful board discussions take place when all board members deeply engage with a subject, not because they know everything about it, but because they have a strong sense of wellbeing and safety when contributing their unique views, knowledge, and ideas.

With heavy agendas and limited meeting time, board members may often only be able to focus on what is immediately before them which, over time, may unintentionally erode trust. It is important that the Board holds itself accountable for creating space, both in and between meetings, to have the deep, challenging, provocative, or difficult conversations essential to reaching a state of equity.

This “space” relies on basic respect being present within board relationships. Depending on the context or outcomes being sought, board members can move discussions between:

- A **safe** space, where board members can share thoughts, concerns, or lived experiences without fear of reprisal, mockery, or the pressure to educate. While learning or greater understanding may well be an outcome, the ultimate goal in this space is support.
- A **culturally safe** space, where board members actively progress discussions through the application and practice of cultural awareness, sensitivity, and cultural humility.
- A **brave** space, which builds on safe and culturally safe spaces, where board members can share their vulnerabilities, opinions, and concerns about injustice and inequity, with the

specific intent to call for action, educate, or disrupt unfair or unjust systems, policies, or practices.

Note that safety must not be conflated with comfort. The latter is passive and not conducive to equitable or meaningful discussions.

Ideally, board members will always feel equally valued, trusted, respected, motivated, and free to contribute to board discussions, whether they are present in person or joining a meeting remotely. However, discussions may derail if, for example, board members:

- show disrespect for individuals sharing their views;
- interrupt or cut-off conversations;
- express disdain or judgment of those showing emotion or vulnerability;
- dismiss or disparage new information because it is not within their own personal knowledge or experience;
- push for decisions when others may still be processing information;
- provide unsolicited advice; or
- breach others' confidence or privacy.

The Board must act when a board member expresses a lack of safety, and not seek to rationalize or ignore the circumstances before it. Remaining silent, avoiding conflict, or suppressing knowledge are recognized forms of oppressive violence that may cause significant harm.

It is always open to board members to ask the Chair for a break from the agenda, redirect attention to holding a trusted space, and agree to ground rules. Inviting the Knowledge Carrier or an experienced or independent facilitator to join the Board for discussions may also help to progress any difficult conversations.

Board Decisions

1. Types of Decision

Board members can expect to see four types of decision being brought forward, each triggering a different decision-making process. These are:

- **Standard Decisions**
Where information is static, the context is well understood, less background information is required, and minimal discussion is necessary.
- **New Decisions**
Where an issue has never been addressed, more information may be necessary, and greater discussion and context is required in order for the Board to understand why it is being asked to make a decision at all.
- **Significant Decisions**
Where issues involve major transactions or commitment to a long-term plan or an action with far-reaching effects that may require longer timeframes for deliberation.
- **Crisis Decisions**
Where an emergency or significant issue arises, which has a very short timeframe in which to act or respond, and often requires concise information to support efficient decision-making.

2. Staff and Committee Recommendations

Staff or committees may include a recommendation or a draft resolution in the briefing note for the Board to review and consider. At other times, staff may lay out the various options without a recommendation or draft resolution if they believe these may limit or impede board discussion.

Recommendations are never brought forward in isolation: previous discussions, analysis of strategic priorities, consideration of external factors, consultation with government, system, and community partners, and previous board discussions, for example, will have been captured when preparing the briefing note. Additionally, a full review of the issues may have already been completed by the committees delegated with such authority by the Board, in which case the Board will get a summary of the process the committee engaged in and a recommendation.

3. Decision-making Process

Board decisions are made predominantly by consensus with a confirmation vote (see further below). Depending on the nature of the discussion and the timelines involved, the Chair may consider other

processes that support informed decision-making, such as bringing in an external facilitator to support the discussion.

For a regulatory board, the primary test for any decision will always be whether the outcome serves and protects the public. It is expected that board members will keep the college's duty and objects⁴ uppermost in mind throughout their discussion. Some sample questions are set out below to help board members approach decisions and they are encouraged to evolve these questions as their own learning progresses:

- Why are we making this decision?
 - Is it in our mandate?
 - Is it tied to our strategic priorities?
 - What are the risk and budget implications?
- Do we trust the process given the importance of the decision that needs to be made? If not, what needs to change?
- Are the right people with the right experience and knowledge in the room to support a good decision?
- Have we understood all the necessary facts and information?
- Is there additional information we need to make a good decision?
- Is there a perspective or opinion we have overlooked?
- Have we considered honestly the complexities of the situation and thought about what the unintended consequences might be?
- Have we received a clear analysis of where racism, power imbalances, harm, or oppression might be in play and is there a plan of engagement/mitigation?
- Will our decision support culturally safe care and aid in the eradication of Indigenous-specific racism?
- Are the assumptions made reasonable?
- Is there more than one possible course of action?
- Would it be better to defer making a decision now until we have further information or additional time to continue the discussion?
- Do we have agreement on the outcome and are we comfortable with the decision reached?

4. Consensus Decision-Making

The Board has agreed that its decisions will be achieved through consensus whenever possible. Under circumstances where consensus is not achieved, a vote will take place. Even where consensus has been reached, all decisions of the Board are confirmed with a vote in accordance with section 22 of the bylaws.

⁴ Section 16 of the Act

What is consensus?

Consensus means finding a decision, solution or proposal acceptable enough that all members can support it, no member opposes it, and all can see that the decision meets their fiduciary duty to make decisions in the best interest of the college and therefore the public.

When does it work best?

This type of decision-making works best when a group has a common goal, a clear process, and a strong commitment to finding the most balanced solution possible. It works best in an environment that is open and trusting, where board members are actively engaged, clear information is available to the decision-makers, and a skilled Chair is facilitating the discussion.

When doesn't it work?

Consensus is not easy. It takes time, patience, concentration and the co-operation of each participant, and the absence of any of these elements may derail the process. It is for the Chair to assess the wisdom in employing a consensus model, based on the significance of the decision before the group and the dynamics of the board members. There will be times when the Chair realizes that consensus is not appropriate, and a vote will proceed.

Process

A consensus process needs to incorporate the following elements:

- Step 1:* Clarity of the issue that needs to be resolved
- Step 2:* Open, but coordinated, discussion where everyone is able to voice their initial perspectives
- Step 3:* Formation of a proposal based on perspectives and information
- Step 4:* Test for agreement and amend proposal if required
- Step 5:* Clarity of the decision for the minutes and actions required

The bylaws do require that some board decisions must have a specific number of votes in order for a resolution to pass. Ordinary resolutions must pass with a majority of votes as cast by board members. Special resolutions require no fewer than two-thirds of board members to agree before a resolution is passed.

5. Resolutions

A resolution is a written statement of an action approved by the Board. It deals only with single or directly related issues, and has two main components:

- the preamble, which begins with the word “WHEREAS”, being a brief, concise sentence about the nature of, or the reason for, the request for a resolution; and
- the proposed action or remedy, which begins with the words “BE IT RESOLVED”.

Once a decision has been reached, the Chair will call for a motion for resolution. If a draft resolution has been set out in the briefing note, the Chair or member of staff will read it to the Board, making any adjustments as necessary. Following any further discussion, the Chair will ask the Board to indicate, usually by a show of hands, or verbal acknowledgment for board members attending remotely, acceptance of the resolution. For the sake of clarity, the Chair will then restate the decision that has been approved, so it can be captured correctly for the minutes.

As per section 22(1) of the bylaws, no resolution proposed at a board meeting needs to be seconded (i.e. a demonstration that there is at least more than one board member interested in seeing the decision before the Board). However, the Board has agreed that any resolution proposed by a board member that (i) has not been considered by staff, (ii) is not supported with a briefing note, and (iii) is not placed on the written agenda, must be supported by a seconder. Under such circumstances, the Chair will determine how best to deal with the proposed resolution, by:

- allocating time at the meeting for the discussion;
- deferring the discussion to a future meeting and directing staff to prepare a briefing note with respect to the issue; or
- deferring the discussion to a committee, with a recommendation for decision to come to the Board as appropriate.

6. Recording decisions

Once finalized, resolutions should be explicitly stated and recorded in writing so there is no room for misinterpretation or misunderstanding, and to ensure that anyone reviewing the resolution in the future can understand its meaning and intent.

Individual votes are not recorded unless the Board has agreed to record the vote, or unless an individual board member requests that their vote be noted.

The minutes are the official record of the meeting. Much like agendas, they follow a standard template to record the time, date, location and type of meeting, the names of board members who attended the meeting or forwarded their regrets, the name of the Knowledge Carrier in attendance, the names of staff and guests in attendance, and a formal acknowledgment of the traditional and unceded BC First Nations territory on which the meeting is taking place. The minutes state the nature of the matter before the Board, the reason the Board was asked to consider it, a note of the questions asked, and what action was taken by the Board, if any.

The draft minutes are added to the next meeting agenda for review and approval by the Board. The minutes do not need to be signed once approved.

A log of all resolutions is kept by staff and is a resource to the Board if required.

7. Implementing decisions

Staff will ensure that any action items or communications are attended to following the board meeting, consulting with the Chair and Vice-Chair where necessary. The Chair will also follow up with board members separately after the meeting if a commitment to discuss matters offline was made.

Progress and status updates may be added to future board agendas. Where a decision needs to be revised, this will be addressed by an additional teleconference, email meeting, or at the next scheduled board meeting.

The Board Chair

As meeting facilitator, the Chair is responsible for setting the tone of the board meeting and ensuring good governance practices are adhered to. It is an active role to keep board members engaged while building a safe, cohesive, and collaborative forum in which discussions can take place.

1. Agenda Review Meetings

Prior to the meeting package being finalized, the Chair and Vice-Chair will meet with the Registrar and Chief Officer (Strategy and Governance) to review the draft board agenda. The format of this meeting will generally cover:

- a high-level review of the matters coming forward to the Board;
- the intention or desired outcome for each matter, including whether there are multiple potential outcomes the Board will need to consider;
- which of the issues coming forward are the most important and how much time is needed for proper discussion;
- a conversation about how to facilitate board discussions for each matter; and
- consideration of potentially contentious matters and how best to approach such discussions.

The Chair may also wish to consider:

- Are any of the agenda items risky, ambiguous, or polarizing? If yes, would the discussion benefit from a different type of facilitation, an independent facilitator, or a subject matter expert?
- Do any matters require a greater level of emotional labour from board members? If yes, what tools can be employed to aid discussion?
- Does the reading material contain sensitive, harmful, or traumatic content that might affect the tone of discussion or board members' ability to engage with the subject? If yes, should the Chair check in with board members ahead of time to gauge/protect their emotional safety?
- In which discussions might the Board benefit seeking guidance from the Knowledge Carrier or a BC First Nations or Indigenous representative(s) and, if the latter, do they need to be invited to attend the board meeting?
- Are there other BC First Nations or Indigenous protocols that may help to purposefully promote learning, cultivate humility, or enhance culturally safe and respectful practices during the meeting (beyond that which is already expected from board members under the Code of Conduct)?

Once the meeting material has been finalized, the Chair will receive a "Chair Agenda" from governance staff. This is an expanded version of the normal board agenda, available either electronically or as a hard copy (depending on the Chair's preference), and includes space for the Chair to add detailed process and facilitation notes.

2. Chair as Facilitator

A successful chair will:

- have a strong understanding of the college, its strategy, commitments and partnerships, recognizing this knowledge will help them to guide the Board through its discussions;
- cultivate a strong relationship with the Registrar, recognizing the interdependence of their respective roles and how their relationship affects the success of the college and its purpose;
- spend time with board members, staying in touch between meetings wherever possible to help the Board remain connected to its work;
- open each meeting with a land/territorial acknowledgment, seeking assistance to learn the proper identification and pronunciation of the name(s) of the territory(ies) if uncertain;
- set a clear direction for each meeting and regularly monitor progress throughout;
- remember that every agenda item has a purpose but not hurry board conversations or overlook important perspectives;
- allow space for differences, trusting that board members will rely on their shared values and shared understanding to drive discussions forward;
- recognize that conflict will occur and learn when and which rules to enforce in an equitable way, or from whom to seek assistance;
- keep a list of issues throughout each meeting that are better discussed at another time or in a different forum;
- be self-aware and know their own sphere of influence and power as Chair;
- work to create a culturally safe space at board meetings through the consistent practice of cultural humility;
- model behaviour that encourages board members to speak out, identify, and address unsafe or racist practices, policies, or processes;
- know when to remove themselves from facilitating a board discussion when a conflict of interest arises;
- ensure that board members who identify as being part of a minority group are not tokenized, are asked what support they might need, and are provided with those supports to succeed in their role;
- ensure that any decision reached by the Board is based on and supported by facts;
- close each discussion by ensuring that its purpose has been achieved or another process has been triggered;
- inject warmth, humour, and fun into the meeting whenever needed, recognizing that while board members may strongly identify their work as an act of service, it need not be dull; and
- formally close the proceedings by thanking all board members and acknowledging all who supported the meeting.

3. Debrief with the Board

The Chair may wish to ask the following questions when debriefing the Board, either with or without staff as appropriate:

- Did our decisions align with our mandate, strategy, and values?
- Did our decisions align with our commitment to be anti-racist leaders?
- Did our decisions align with the principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion?
- Are we asking good questions and providing good insight?
- Was the meeting purpose and agenda clear?
- Did we have the right people in the room?
- Was it easy for each member to contribute to discussions?
- Was there sufficient information available to the Board to make good, informed decisions?
- Do we trust the decision-making process?
- Did we adequately talk through and acknowledge any tension or dissent?
- Are there any outstanding concerns which still need to be addressed?

4. Debrief with Board Members

If board members have feedback or concerns following a board meeting or have other board-related issues which they may not wish to share with the whole Board, they are encouraged to communicate directly and confidentially with the Chair or Vice-Chair.

5. Debrief with the Registrar and Senior Leadership

It is always good practice for the Chair to debrief with Senior Leadership as soon as possible after the board meeting to maintain strong and trusting relationships and ensure that meetings continue to be managed effectively, especially if the Board has a board-only session without Senior Leadership present.

Navigating board discussions

This section deals with some common scenarios that may occur during board meetings, together with suggested actions or questions that may be employed to support safety, equity, and inclusion.

While the following scenarios are written primarily to assist the Board Chair in facilitating or progressing discussions, all board members may wish to reflect upon and familiarize themselves with this section, both as part of their own work and learning, and to recognize when and how they might support each other.

Scenario:

Some or all board members are attending the meeting by videoconference or teleconference.

- Before calling the meeting to order, check all board members have and can access the relevant material and are ready to begin the meeting.
- Verify that board members can see and hear the meeting properly.
- Review the technical meeting rules with them (e.g. muting the line when not speaking, who to inform if there are connectivity issues, etc.)
- Ask a specific board member a specific question rather than asking open-ended questions to the group (to avoid multiple board members speaking at once).
- Ask each board member on the telephone/video if they have anything further to say on the matter under discussion to ensure no voices are forgotten.
- Make sure there are sufficient pauses after asking a question to give board members an opportunity to unmute themselves and reply.

Scenario:

A board member has a conflict of interest.

- At the outset of the meeting (or, if need be, at any time during), ask board members directly if they have any conflicts of interest with agenda items under discussion.
- During the meeting, if a conflict of interest is identified by a board member, allow time for them to:
 - outline the nature of the conflict of interest;
 - provide rationale for why they believe their interests are conflicted;
 - ask questions to ascertain if a conflict of interest does in fact exist;
 - ask for advice on how to manage the conflict of interest;
 - ask the Board if it agrees a concern exists and if the approach proposed to manage the conflict of interest is appropriate.
- Allow time, if required, for the conflicted member to leave the room, log off or disconnect their call and, later, rejoin the meeting.

Scenario:

The Board has received its presentation and is ready to begin its discussion.

- Invite board members at random to ask their questions, or go around the table asking each board member by name for their questions or comments. No matter which process is adopted, ensure time is taken to seek the views of every board member.
- Alternatively, give board members a few moments to quietly consider what they believe are the most important questions to progress discussion.
- Actively promote good debate by asking for alternative or dissenting views when discussions/decisions are not straightforward.
- If these normal procedures do not feel appropriate or engaging enough, ask the Registrar or Chief Officer (Strategy and Governance) for other facilitation options.

Scenario:

The Board has been presented with a number of options from which to make a decision.

- Ask if board members are clear about the options presented.
- Ask board members if one option rises clearly above the others and why.
- Ask board members to articulate the pros and cons of each option as part of a deeper analysis.
- Ask all meeting attendees if there are any other options that have not been considered.
- Ask if further information is required before a decision can be made and, if so, what that might be.

Scenario:

The Board's discussion has stalled.

- Allow for a moment's silence; board members may be thinking about the matter.
- Read the room: if energy is low or there are signs of boredom, irritation, or discontent, call a break.
- Be watchful for silence or agreeability and consider if this is masking a larger issue where board members are feeling oppressed.
- Be transparent; ask questions to unearth why the discussion might have stalled to ensure there are no gaps in understanding that need to be addressed.
- If a question is asked, allow board members time to think of their response, perhaps giving them the opportunity to spend time formulating questions on their own or in small groups.
- Ask board members who often answer quickly to allow others to answer first to shift the dynamic in the room.
- Possible ways to acknowledge and progress the conversation:
 - *"Take your time. Let's give each other a moment to think."*
 - *"I've noticed that people aren't speaking up. Can we slow down to go around the table and get everyone's views?"*
 - *"Is there anything left to discuss or is the Board ready to reach a decision?"*
 - *"Let's take a quick break. When we get back, I am going to ask if there are any additional things we need to consider before moving to decision?"*

Scenario:

The Board has received too little, too much, or unclear information.

- Ask the presenter(s) or Senior Leadership if there is any additional context, background, or information available.
- Draw attention back to the desired outcome and college mandate to ensure board members stay on track and help ground the discussion.
- Give space to board members to ask and address uncomfortable questions.
- Give space to board members to continue asking questions because they are not satisfied or comfortable with the response they have received.
- If the Board does not have what it needs to make a decision, ensure the gaps are clearly articulated and ask staff when they can bring this information back to the Board to continue the decision-making process.

Scenario:

A board member will not participate in discussions.

- Speak to the board member outside of the meeting to enquire if anything is wrong or if there are other concerns affecting their participation.
- Ask the board member ahead of time how they wish to participate in the meeting and if any additional supports are needed.
- Solicit the board member's views on agenda items pre-meeting and ask if the board member is comfortable with the Chair sharing their views with the Board and identifying them as the source (in case this helps prompt them to elaborate on their views in the meeting).
- Possible way to acknowledge and progress the discussion:
 - *"I've noticed that you haven't been speaking up in meetings. Is there anything I can do to help with that/support you?"*

Scenario:

The board discussion has become tense.

- Remember that vigorous debate is a signal of strong governance so encourage board members to speak freely and from their conscience and lived experience.
- If board members are interrupting or speaking over each other, provide each board member two minutes to speak, uninterrupted, followed by time for others to ask questions.
- Ask if board members wish to take a break and agree ground rules before continuing their discussion.
- Ensure that scepticism and minority views are given equal time and an equal voice.
- Repeat or summarize the statements made to ensure all positions are clearly understood.
- Adjourn the discussion if the meeting has derailed or you believe there to be no value in continuing the discussion at this particular meeting, and engage an external facilitator for support when bringing the matter back to the Board.
- Possible ways to acknowledge and progress the conversation:
 - *"So, what I am hearing is..."*
 - *"I am curious why the conversation has become tense. Can we please stop and investigate this?"*
 - *"Give me some background on that statement. I sense you have some experience with this."*
 - *"I want to hear from everyone before we move forward."*
 - *"I can see you feel strongly about this. Tell us more about..."*

- *“I want to ensure that x has the space to respond. Can we please give x the floor to speak to that last statement.”*

Scenario:

A board member has said something that may be construed as insensitive.

- Expect emotions to rise to the surface.
- Address the issue immediately so not to normalize or reinforce the statement.
- Draw focus on what was said, not the person who said it.
- Assume positive intent.
- Assess the situation, calling a break if needed:
 - give board members reacting to the statement an opportunity to explain their objection to what was said and their level of safety in addressing the issue;
 - separately, speak to the board member who made the statement to: determine their understanding of what was said and their level of safety in addressing the issue; provide time for the board member to process the concerns raised; and, if applicable, formulate a response;
 - decide whether further discussion is necessary and, if so, whether it will be a private discussion or a “community” discussion with the Board (either option creating a learning opportunity).
- Do not minimize anyone’s interpretation or allow the experience of privileged voices to dominate the conversation or become the focus of it.
- On resuming the board meeting, be transparent about what has occurred and explain next steps, inviting individuals to speak further with you after the meeting.
- Follow up with all parties to ensure there are no concerns left unacknowledged or unaddressed.
- Follow up with the board member as applicable and, if a full board discussion is agreed, speak to Senior Leadership to ensure time is made on a future board agenda.
- Possible ways to acknowledge and progress the conversation:
 - *“When you said...I didn’t understand what you meant. Do you have time for us to talk about this more (either now or at another time)?”*
 - *“I want to revisit something that felt like disrespect to me. I’m sure you didn’t mean that. May we talk some more?”*
 - *“When you used that word or phrase, I’m not sure what you meant. Can you tell me more?”*
 - *“Tell me how you reached that opinion?”*

Scenario:

A board member has shared that they feel unsafe during board discussions.

- Offer the board member the opportunity to speak further or not, during or after the meeting, as they choose.
- Pay close attention to what the board member is saying without placing any personal interpretation or meaning upon their words.
- State your commitment to help develop sustainable solutions but do not immediately focus on finding solutions or “fixing things”.
- Follow up after your conversation to see how the board member is doing.
- Follow up with the Board to agree or improve ground rules for discussions, referring to the specific issue only with the consent of the board member who had expressed their lack of safety.

- If you are involved, do not push for details but suggest a process that will separate you from the situation and then be open to addressing matters through that process.
- Possible ways to acknowledge and progress the conversation:
 - *"I hear you/I believe you. What do you need from me in this moment?"*
 - *"I am sorry. I can see this has really affected you. How can I help?"*
 - *"Have I got this right? You feel..."*
 - *"What I'm hearing is...is that correct?"*
 - *"This is really important. I need time to reflect on this and seek counsel. May I follow up with you [at a specific time]?"*

Scenario:

A racist comment or statement has been made, or racist action has occurred, or been witnessed, or called out during the board meeting.

- Expect emotions to rise to the surface.
- Address the issue immediately so not to normalize or reinforce the racism.
- Recognize it is your role to address the conduct, not enforce reflection.
- Lead with empathy.
- Speak only from your perspective.
- If appropriate, repeat back what was said or done to help board members understand its impact.
- Assess the situation, calling a break if needed:
 - focus on what was said, not the person who said it;
 - identify how racism was present;
 - identify and give voice to all parties concerned;
 - speak to the parties separately to ascertain their understanding of what occurred, their level of safety in addressing the issue, and how they wish to proceed; and
 - follow up as agreed, with the support of Senior Leadership, and document fully the nature of the issue and steps taken to address it.
- Acknowledge action may not happen immediately as other processes may be triggered, such as a further review or investigation as provided for in the Code of Conduct.
- On resuming the board meeting, be transparent about what has occurred and explain next steps.
- Remind the Board of its commitment to anti-racism and the standards of conduct all board members are required to observe in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- If you are the target of racism, you must assess your own safety first. If necessary, ask the Vice-Chair to take over the meeting so you can personally reflect on the situation and seek support as needed.
- If you are responsible for the racist comment or act, try not to become defensive if called out, keeping in mind the risk others are taking in sharing their observations with you. Suggest a process that will separate you from the situation and then be open to addressing matters through that process.
- Possible ways to acknowledge and progress the conversation:
 - *"I would like to repeat back what I have just heard/witnessed..."*
 - *"I'd be grateful if you could clarify what you meant by..."*
 - *"May we pause for a moment. I feel uncomfortable with what was just said and wish to stop and examine what happened."*
 - *"I am not certain if that comment/statement/action was racist but my sense is that it was. Can we please stop and discuss/address this?"*

Scenario:

The board discussion continues but no longer seems relevant to the matter at hand.

- Be transparent and acknowledge that you feel the conversation has veered off topic.
- Ask how the current discussion relates to the agenda item to give board members the opportunity to explain why it may be relevant or important.
- Reframe the agenda item and ask a question that fits squarely into the purpose of the topic.
- Summarize the key points that have been articulated and, if necessary, propose a way for the discussion to continue at another time.
- Propose the Board moves to decision.

Scenario:

The board discussion continues but you question whether there is any value in it.

- Be transparent and state that you believe the Board has the information it needs to move on.
- Ask if board members agree with your observation and be open to continuing the discussion if others feel more time is required.
- If board members agree no further discussion is needed, move the process along by asking another question or asking for a decision.

Scenario:

The board discussion has come to an end.

- Summarize the conclusions reached by the Board and the underlying tone of its discussion.
- When a resolution has been proposed, make sure that board members understand what is being asked of them.
- After the decision has been made, ask the Board if it has understood the decision reached in the meeting and if board members share the same expectations as to next steps.

Glossary

In these guidelines:

“**anti-racism**” means the practice of actively identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviours that perpetuate racism. It is more than being non-racist – it is acting to create conditions of greater inclusion, equality, and justice;

“**bias**” means a favourable or unfavourable predetermined inclination, preference, tendency, or perspective;

“**colonialism**” is where groups or countries partially or fully steal land and resources from Indigenous peoples, occupy the land, and exploit the land and resources for economic purposes. Following the acquisition of land and resources, colonizers establish laws and processes that continuously violate the human rights of the Indigenous peoples and force them to conform to the newly established laws and processes of the colonial state; (“**decolonization**” is the undoing of colonialism through a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power);

“**cultural humility**” is a process of self-reflection and introspection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another’s experience;

“**cultural safety**” is an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care;

“**discrimination**” means targeting an individual or group of people for negative treatment because of specific characteristics such as race, religion, gender, disability, or other protected characteristics as defined by the *BC Human Rights Code*. Discrimination can occur at an individual, organizational, or societal level. It occurs when a particular social group is denied access to goods, resources, and services, either through action or inaction;

“**diversity**” refers to individual and unique human differences, dimensions, qualities, and characteristics such as age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities, race, etc.;

“**equity**” is a term that describes fairness and justice in outcomes, recognizing diversity and disadvantages, and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all;

“**healthcare system**” means the organizations, institutions (including governments), resources, and people whose primary purpose is to improve health;

“Indigenous-specific racism” means the ongoing, systemic, and race-based discrimination experienced by the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and communities that maintains unequal treatment rooted in colonial practices and policies;

“oppression” means the unjust abuse of power that prevents individuals from having access to opportunities, freedoms, or justice;

“power” refers to social mechanisms such as wealth, citizenship, language, patriarchy, ableism, heterosexism, whiteness, or education that permit some individuals greater access to and control over resources than others;

“privilege” is the unearned (and often unconsidered) cultural, legal, social, and institutional rights, advantages, favours, or benefits afforded to an individual based on their social group membership;

“racism” is the belief that a group of people are inferior based on the colour of their skin, their culture, or spirituality;

“safe” or “safety” refers to a sense of being empowered to be authentically oneself because there is protection from reprisal, harm, or danger, even in spaces that are uncomfortable due to the nature of the environment, the subject matter under discussion, or where beliefs, knowledge, or practices are being exposed or challenged; and

“unceded” refers to land that was not yielded by Indigenous peoples nor turned over to the Crown (government) by treaty, agreement, or other arrangement; (“traditional territories” recognize the geographic areas identified by Indigenous communities as the land they and/or their ancestors traditionally occupied); (“ancestral land” refers to land handed down from generation to generation within Indigenous communities).

Supplemental Resource

We include below supplemental information about the concepts of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. This guidance is deemed best practice for organizations wishing to apply an equity lens to their work.

1. Understanding Equity

Equity is not to be confused with equality. Equity is a term that describes fairness and justice in outcomes. It is not about the equal delivery of services or distribution of resources, it is about recognizing diversity and disadvantage, and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all.

For board members to think more equitably towards minoritized groups, they will need to understand that equity is not achieved by providing identical treatment to everyone regardless of individual circumstance, but that equity is achieved when differences are acknowledged, and the stories, ideas and experiences within our community are recognized and valued.

2. Understanding Diversity

There are many different definitions of diversity, but they all tend to focus on the variations that occur within populations that enhance the survivability of the population. In human populations, many distinct variations reflect dimensions of diversity which are hard to change. They relate to inborn or other human differences that exert an important influence on our socialization and have an ongoing impact throughout the lives of individuals. These are primary dimensions of diversity and include: age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities/qualities and race. Secondary dimensions of diversity are ones that may change or be changed over time.

For board members to fully appreciate diversity, they will need to recognize that secondary dimensions of diversity may impact our lives differently at different times, and also include our educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, lived experience, and religious beliefs.

3. Understanding Inclusion

Inclusion is an approach. It is a way of doing business that appreciates and responds to the dimensions of diversity. It is part of the standard operating procedures that are incorporated into the DNA of any community or city.

“Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel welcomed, valued, respected, supported, and can fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.”⁵

Many diverse groups have been silenced because they feel excluded and have not seen themselves as full participants within the system. What is most significant in creating an inclusive society is the engagement of the individual in the process by which society is managed, ordered and represented.

For board members to include minoritized groups, they will need to:

- hear voices that have been quiet around the board table;
- listen to viewpoints that have been excluded in discussions and decision-making;
- incorporate knowledge and perspectives from minoritized groups into board dialogue;
- make a conscious effort to validate, honour, and respect diverse views, experiences and realities; and
- actively reach out, recruit, orient, and promote minoritized groups into the board.

4. Understanding Justice

Justice is another word that is often brought up in conversations about equity. Justice is about equal rights and equitable opportunities for all. When justice is implemented in an organization, there is no need for accommodation because the cause(s) of inequity are addressed. The systemic barriers of exclusion and non-representation are removed.

SOURCES:

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)
Canadian Human Rights Committee
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Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (2020). *In Plain Sight – Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*
E. Casali (2018). *The Asymmetry of Safe Spaces*
First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)
World Health Organization

⁵ City of Hamilton (2019). *Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Handbook: A guide to equitable, diverse and inclusive practices in the city of Hamilton.*
<https://www.hamilton.ca/sites/default/files/media/browser/2019-02-28/equity-diversity-inclusion-handbook-draft.pdf>