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SELECTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE: CASE STUDIES OF
THE SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION OF TRUSTEES
SERVING TWO PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

by

Jack Bernard Fistler

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

SELECTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE: CASE STUDIES OF THE SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION OF TRUSTEES SERVING TWO PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

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This study explored and described the practices and procedures for selecting new trustees at two private liberal arts colleges and considered the nature of the participation and involvement of board members at those institutions. These points were described for each college:

1. Trustee selection policies and practices.
2. Criteria for trustee selection.
3. Relationship of board composition and diversity to board and institutional needs.
4. Relationship of board composition and diversity to trustee participation.
5. New trustee orientation practices.
6. Relationship of board structure and organization to trustee participation.
7. Nature of board member participation.

A descriptive, case study method was utilized. No evaluative comparisons between institutions were made. The principal methods of data collection for each college were (1) personal interview with the

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president, (2) telephone interviews with trustees, and (3) published and written materials and bylaws. Questions used in the interviews were developed after a thorough review of the literature on trusteeship. The interview responses were analyzed for content rather than in relation to quantifiable hypotheses. Complete confidentiality and anonymity were accorded each college and its president and trustees.

The study provided some general perspectives on trustee selection and participation at the two colleges.

1. Co-optation in trustee selection was in effect at both colleges.
2. The selection process was less formal than the bylaws implied and appeared less systematic than writers recommend.
3. The president was a pivotal influence in the selection process.
4. Each college determined the "right" people for trusteeship.
5. The adjustment to trusteeship was the result of various individual factors and institutional practices.
6. The nature of trustee participation was multi-faceted and synergistic.

The findings of the study placed in perspective various statements in the literature on trusteeship. Fifteen general observations were posed in relation to trustee selection and participation at other private liberal arts colleges. The observations and other specific suggestions were presented as topics for additional research.

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for Amy and Holly

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE STUDY

The Research Problem

Regarding effective trusteeship, J. L. Zwingle states that the "magic ingredient is people. Procedures are no substitute for people."¹ Yet in 1969, W. H. Cowley recognized that the problems of selecting and educating trustees had not yet been fully met.² Frantzreb emphatically states: "Perhaps the greatest limiting factor to effective trusteeship is the very process of selection of members of the board."³ Recognizing the need for additional focus on the selection and participation of "citizens responsible for the totality of higher education,"⁴ numerous books, articles, conferences, and a national commission have addressed the topics in recent years. If boards of trustees in colleges and universities are to realize a "renaissance of their influence,"⁵ it is

¹J. L. Zwingle, Effective Trusteeship: Guidelines for Board Members, Fourth Printing (Washington, D.C.: Association for Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1975), p. 13.

²W. H. Cowley, "Myths and Half-Truths Distort View of Trustees," Colleges and University Business 47, No. 2 (August, 1969):48.

³Arthur C. Frantzreb, Operational Imperatives for a College Board of Trustees in the 1970s (New York: Frantzreb and Pray Associates, 1970), p. 6.

⁴Zwingle, Effective Trusteeship, p. 14.

⁵Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Governance on Higher Education: Six Priority Problems (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 34.

certain that the matters of trustee selection and participation deserve careful attention.

Purpose of the Study

The researcher's purpose in this study is to describe the practices and procedures for selecting trustees at two private liberal arts colleges and the nature of the participation of those trustees in serving on their respective governing boards. More specifically, the researcher describes those practices in relation to specific reasons for enlisting individual trustees, new member orientation, trustee perceptions about board composition and organization, and the participation of each trustee in board responsibilities and activities. The comments and perceptions of the trustees regarding their selection and the nature of their service, as well as the comments of the two college presidents, are of paramount importance in this study.

Need for the Study

The literature on governing boards indicates that trustees serving private colleges generally are selected for membership by the method of co-optation. Given the self-perpetuating membership process of private college boards and the generally few restrictions on the selection of the trustees, the responsibility and initiative for trustee selection and trustee participation lies with the governing boards and the presidents.

Research studies on boards of trustees have focused frequently on demographic analyses, with moderate attention to trustee involvement and board effectiveness, and on the roles and functions of governing boards, in theory and in practice, as viewed by trustees and presidents.

Generally based on the results of national, state, or association surveys, these reports provide valuable data regarding trends in the composition and diversity of governing boards, as well as perspectives on the nature of board involvement in collegiate governance. Few studies of this type have described practices directly linked to the selection and participation of trustees or have provided data based on individual boards. And the literature concerning trustee selection and participation is largely prescriptive. Therefore, this study of the governing boards of two liberal arts colleges provides descriptive evidence of trustee selection and involvement. The case studies may serve as a pilot approach for determining suitable hypotheses, questions, and methodologies for larger scale investigations.

Focus of the Study

Given the complex interrelationships of factors regarding the selection of trustees and the nature of their participation, the focus for this study is to describe or consider the nature of, the following points for each of the two private colleges.

1. Trustee selection policies and practices.
2. General criteria, actual and/or perceived, for trustee selection, and specific reasons for the selection of particular board members.
3. Relationship of board composition and diversity to board and institutional needs.
4. Relationship of board composition and diversity to trustee participation.
5. New trustee orientation practices.

6. Relationship of board structure and organization for trustee participation.

7. Nature of board member participation, as characterized by the president and individual trustees.

8. Nature of the relationships between the board and president, and between the board chair and the board, as characterized by the president and trustees.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is to describe trustee selection and the nature of trustee participation in board functions at two private liberal arts colleges. The two institutions were selected according to the following criteria:

1. Private liberal arts college granting at least a baccalaureate degree.
2. Enrollment of 1,000 to 2,500 students.
3. In terms of student enrollment, denominational affiliation, and/or board membership, one college with a regional/state orientation; and one college with a national representation as well.
4. At least one college with current denominational affiliation.
5. Current presidents at their respective institutions for a minimum of four to five years.

The rationale for the criteria for the study of the two private institutions may be highlighted. This researcher graduated from a private liberal arts college and is particularly interested in that segment of higher education. The composition and diversity of private board membership may be affected by the typically large number of

trustees serving private boards than public boards, and by the general method of co-opting new board members. Since the majority of private colleges enroll between 1,000 to 2,500 students and grant the Bachelors degree, the two institutions are typical private liberal arts colleges.

The regional/state, or national/regional/state base of the institution may influence the selection criteria for new board members. A denominational affiliation may affect board composition and diversity as well as trustee selection procedures.

Presidential tenure of at least four to five years generally ensures that the presidents have participated in the process of enlisting new trustees and have developed operational relationships with their board's memberships. As an example, it is acknowledged that it generally takes a president approximately five years to change the composition and diversity of a board.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in the study and are defined to assist the reader.

Governing Board

The corporate body, of varying size, which is charged by the institutional charter or enabling legislation with full, legal responsibility for the institution. Board members often are referred to as trustees. (In this study, the terms "lay governing board," "board of trustees," and "the board" are used interchangeably with "governing board.")

Co-optation

The process by which new trustees are approved by the current board membership. Co-optation implies a mutual benefit in which new trustees provide service to the institution and receive altruistic and personal satisfaction from such service.

Selection of Trustees

The policies and practices employed by colleges for enlisting particular individuals for service on their governing boards.

Participation of Trustees

The variety of ways by which trustees fulfill their roles and the nature of their involvement in various board functions and activities.

Methodology of the Study

In explaining and describing the nature of trustee selection and participation at two private liberal arts colleges, the researcher utilized a descriptive, case study method. Questions for exploration, rather than for measurement against quantifiable hypotheses, were used. A detailed description of trustee selection and participation at each institution is presented. No evaluative comparisons between the two colleges are made. The subject populations consist of the presidents and the 1980-81 trustees of the two participating liberal arts colleges. The principal methods of data collection for each college were:

- (1) personal interview with the president, (2) telephone interviews with the trustees, and (3) published and written materials from each institution. The materials included college catalogs, annual reports, and

governing board bylaws. The president of each college served as the contact for obtaining necessary materials and documents.

The researcher selected the interview approach as the appropriate method for obtaining the trustees' and the presidents' opinions, perceptions, and attitudes concerning trustee selection and participation. The interview process enabled the researcher to probe for explanations regarding responses to questions. The imprecise and subjective nature of the methodology is acknowledged. The interview process, however, was selected "for the sake of the richness of information that only the interview can give."¹

A total of fifty-one interviews were conducted, one with each of the two presidents and forty-nine with the trustees of the two colleges. Twenty-two of the thirty-six trustees at one college were contacted, while twenty-seven of the twenty-eight trustees serving the other were interviewed. The total trustees interviewed represented sixty-one percent and ninety-six percent of the board memberships, respectively. With the wide range of membership at each institution, the researcher anticipated that not every trustee would be contacted in the one and one-half month period allotted for conducting the telephone interviews.

The questions used in the interviews primarily were open-ended and were developed after an extensive examination of the literature on boards of trustees. The questions were arranged in four categories: the selection process, board balance and orientation, participation and involvement, and evaluation. A section for collecting demographic data

¹A. A. Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1966), p. 32.

also was included. The questions for the trustees are listed in Appendix A. The content of the responses from the interviews was reviewed for each question, and each category, in relation to the points listed as the focus of the study. The personal interviews with the presidents covered questions similar to those for the trustees. In addition, the presidents provided information about actual trustee selection practices and board organization and procedures, as well as their general perceptions regarding the trustees. A specific set of questions for the presidents is not outlined, due to the wide-ranging nature of those interviews. In reporting the case studies, the presidents' comments were included wherever the researcher deemed appropriate. The board chairpersons generally were included as regular trustees in the case descriptions but were treated separately as officers of the board in certain instances. For the reader's convenience, a similar format was used for each case description. In describing the interview responses, the attempt was made to provide a "sense" of the trustees' answers, and to illustrate the variety and richness of the responses, without compromising readability. The researcher tried to avoid using modifiers that might distort the responses or data and might bias the reader's perspective.

The general sequence of events occurred as follows:

1. In March, 1981, the researcher selected two colleges according to the specified criteria and contacted the president of each college to explain the study and to request the board's participation.
2. After a careful review of the proposal, the presidents, board chairs, and executive committees of the two liberal arts colleges agreed to participate in the study and accepted certain confidentiality

safeguards. Throughout the study, the colleges were identified only as "Alpha" and "Beta" college.

3. The trustees at the May, 1981, board meeting of each institution reviewed the proposed study, with no trustee demurring. The researcher presented the study at Alpha College's board meeting. All the trustees of each college were reminded through regular institutional correspondence of the review and approval of the study.

4. Personal interviews with the two college presidents were conducted in May, 1981. At that time the complete listings of current board members, and trustees who had recently vacated unfilled posts, were obtained.

5. In May, 1981, the trustees of Alpha College received the set of questions at their board meeting. Trustees not in attendance received the questions through the mail. (See Appendix B.)

6. In mid-May, 1981, the Beta College trustees were alerted by mail of the impending telephone interviews. Each trustee received a packet containing a brief review of the study, a copy of a letter from the college's president, and a set of questions for consideration. (See Appendix B.)

7. Telephone interviews with the trustees were conducted in May and June 1981. Each telephone interview required approximately twenty minutes. The notes of the interviews were hand-recorded. At the completion of the study, each governing board will receive a report of the findings, including the college's case study.

Confidentiality of the Study

There are potential risks, especially regarding social and working relationships, involved with the collection of data concerning institutional policies and practices, and particularly with the treatment of comments and viewpoints gathered in personal and telephone interviews. Any inappropriate use and/or description of the subjective responses of the presidents and trustees of the two colleges might affect the essential working relationships between the president and the board, as well as between the trustees. The doctoral guidance committee, the presidents and executive committees, and the researcher concur that the likelihood of such risks is minimal. The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, at Michigan State University, also approved the project. (See Appendix C.)

Complete confidentiality and anonymity was accorded the two colleges and their officials. The institutions, referred to as "Alpha" College and "Beta" College, were not identified by name, affiliation, or location. The trustees and presidents are not identified by name. In reporting the data, the researcher did not organize or pattern the data in any format that would permit identification of an individual by linking data elements. The pronouns "he" and "she" were not used, for such usage might jeopardize confidentiality and anonymity. Without affecting the validity of the study, in the researcher's opinion, a few readily-identifiable comments by the trustees or the presidents were not used. Footnote citations for a college's published or written materials, which are quoted or referred to, list only the general nature

of the source. Quotations from the personal and telephone interviews are enclosed in quote marks in the text but are not cited in footnotes.

Prior to each personal and telephone interview, the researcher reaffirmed the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. The trustees were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary. The presidents and trustees were free to decline to answer any particular question. None of the fifty-one individuals interviewed declined to participate completely.

Limitations of the Study

The interview technique was used, with the inherent limitations of that format acknowledged. The colleges were selected, not randomly chosen. The very nature of the study lessened the possibility of making meaningful generalizations beyond the subject populations. While the interview approach enabled the researcher to obtain individual comments and perceptions, the interview situation was "fraught with the possibilities of bias." The researcher acknowledged the possibility that he might "unwittingly influence the respondent" or bias the study by "selective understanding and recording of the answers."¹

The reliability of information and the value of the study depends almost entirely on the cooperation, and particularly the candor, of the presidents and trustees. In that regard it must be noted that a respondent's recall "will be a complex function of elapsed time since

¹Oppenheim, Questionnaire, p. 31.

the event, current cues or relevance for his present affairs and the significance of the event in his life."¹

Organization of the Study

The study is presented in four chapters. Chapter II reviews the pertinent literature related to the selection and participation of trustees.

Chapters III and IV present the case descriptions of Alpha College and Beta College, respectively. A similar format is used in each study.

Chapter V includes a summary of the study, a consideration of the issues raised in the case studies, the researcher's observations and recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

¹Charles F. Cannell, and Robert L. Kahn, "Interviewing," in The Handbook of Social Psychology, ed. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, vol. 2 (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1968), p. 560.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON TRUSTEE

SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION

Background

An institution of European and colonial origin,¹ lay trusteeship was entrenched firmly in the American college governance structure by 1829 when Francis Wayland retired from the presidency of Brown. A leader of exceptional wisdom and zeal, Wayland pondered: "How can colleges prosper directed by mean . . . very good men to be sure . . . but who know about every other thing except education."² A century and a half later, boards of trustees remain the topic of continuing discussion, with various writers echoing Wayland's remarks or advocating reforms to rectify the peripheral nature of trusteeship.³ Trustees confront a wide range of educational and managerial issues, which are made more complex by such matters as pressures for governing board

¹Gerald P. Burns, "College Trustees and History," College and University Journal 8, No. 1 (Winter, 1969): 33-37; and W. H. Cowley, Presidents, Professors and Trustees, ed. Donald T. Williams, Jr. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980), pp. 29-48.

²Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), p. 172.

³Thorstein Veblen, The Higher Learning in America (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1918; reprint ed., New York: Hill and Wang, 1957), p. 50; J. L. Zwingle and William V. Mayville, College Trustees: A Question of Legitimacy, ERIC Higher Education Research Report No. 10 (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1974).

reform, demands for institutional accountability, and fiscal stringencies.¹ Yet the 1973 report on governance issued by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education² and numerous other commentators depict the governing board as an essential structure for coping with the challenges and "the changed conditions anticipated for the 1980's and 1990's."³ As Zwingle notes: "Good institutional health should begin with a good board."⁴ Good boards, in part, result from "selecting good people and educating them early and well."⁵

Since about 1965 the volume of literature on trusteeship has multiplied significantly. A variety of research studies, monographs on trusteeship, and articles examine governing board topics. The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) sponsors research and publications promoting effective trusteeship. The literature, however, has not answered numerous questions entirely or satisfactorily, for there is no model of governance which is "clearly superior for all settings."⁶ Much of the literature on trusteeship is

¹Richard T. Ingram, "Trustees--Power and Sanity in the 1980's," Educational Record 61, No. 1 (Winter, 1980).

²Carnegie Commission, Governance, p. 32.

³Lewis B. Mayhew, Surviving the Eighties (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979), p. 296.

⁴Zwingle, Effective Trusteeship, p. 11.

⁵Richard T. Ingram, and Associates, Handbook of College and University Trusteeship (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980), p. 47.

⁶Harold L. Hodgkinson, College Governance--The Amazing Thing is that it Works at All, Research Report No. 11, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, July, 1971), p. 8.

prescriptive rather than descriptive. As one writer notes: " . . . there is a vast literature about how they [boards] should operate."¹ The following essay briefly reviews the variety of literature regarding trustee selection and participation. Single references often cover a wide range of trusteeship topics. Various writers often are concerned with similar issues and present similar views and suggestions. The references cited, therefore, are representative of the large volume of literature on the selection and participation of trustees.

Board Functions and Responsibilities

Much of the literature on trusteeship is concerned with board duties and obligations. In order to emphasize the importance of trustee selection and participation, it is important to note briefly the broad authority and responsibility of governing boards. Regardless of the variance in governance structures serving public and private institutions of higher education, the provisions for authority are remarkably uniform. According to the characteristic concept of governing boards, the ultimate authority and responsibility for an institution are lodged in the board as a corporate body which represents continuity and accountability under law. Boards are endowed with broad, full powers, by the charter or enabling legislation, to manage the institution.²

¹Donald E. Walker, The Effective Administrator (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979), p. 130.

²J. L. Zwingle, "Governing Boards," in Handbook of College and University Administration, Vol. 1, ed. Asa S. Knowles (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970), pp. 2-8 - 2-15; and John E. Corbally, Jr., "Boards of Trustees in the Governance of Higher Education," Theory Into Practice IX, No. 4 (October, 1970): 240.

Numerous scholars of college governance provide descriptions of the roles and functions of governing boards.¹ Other writers place special emphasis on particular functions within the broadly-defined responsibilities of governing boards.² Nason provides a comprehensive review of the variety of board functions and responsibilities.³

The concept of lay governance appears deceptively simple. The trustees hold "in trust" the educational enterprise, exercising management and legal responsibility for the trust. Yet the responsible exercise of that authority in maintaining "the vitality and integrity of the institution,"⁴ and in relation to specific duties, elicits considerable comment. Critics and advocates for improvement often focus on the lack of clarity about board roles and functions,⁵ the nature of

¹As examples, see Robert K. Greenleaf, Servant Leadership (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 91-133; Orley R. Herron, Jr., The Role of the Trustee (Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Company, 1969), pp. 21-41; Arthur C. Frantzreb, "The Management of Volunteers," in Handbook of Institutional Advancement, ed. A. Westley Rowland (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977), pp. 129-141.

²Two examples are John D. Miller, The Academic Community (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), p. 184; Robert Menke, "Frisky Horses and Frisky Trustees," in In Search of Leaders, Current Issues in Higher Education, 1967, ed. G. Kerry Smith (Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education, 1967), p. 154.

³John W. Nason, The Future of Trusteeship: The Role and Responsibilities of College and University Boards (Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1975), pp. 8-23.

⁴Zwingle, "Governing Boards," p. 2-14.

⁵John F. Budd, Jr., "Are College Trustees Obsolete?" Saturday Review/World, March 9, 1974: 48-49; Greenleaf, Servant Leadership, pp. 91-133; Corbally, "Boards . . .," pp. 241-243.

trustee attention to academic affairs,¹ and the general effectiveness of board efforts.² Of particular importance in performing a range of functions, the governing board should operate at the policy level. Numerous writers emphasize policy direction as the appropriate approach for trustees in fulfilling the responsibilities, without meddling in administrative detail.³ Zwingle recommends that a board apply the functions of planning, authorization, and review to each aspect of the trustees' deliberations and actions on behalf of the institution.⁴ For trustees to govern wisely, "the art of trusteeship consists largely of discerning and holding the middle ground of policy making . . ." combined with a cooperative effort with other members of the institution.⁵

¹Beardsley Rum1, and Donald H. Morrison, Memo to a College Trustee (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959); John K. Galbraith, "How the University Can Protect Itself," College Management 2, No. 9 (September, 1967); Zwingle and Mayville, College Trustees, p. 29.

²Ernest L. Boyer, "A Fresh Look at the College Trustee," Educational Record 49, No. 3 (Summer, 1968); James G. Partridge, J. Hurst, and A. Morgan, Boards of Trustees: Their Decision Patterns (Berkeley: Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1973); John W. Pocok, "Where Are the Managers in Higher Education?" AGB Reports 13, No. 9 (July/August, 1971): 13-17.

³John J. Corson, "The Board of Trustees--Necessity or Anachronism?" AGB Reports 15, No. 9 (July/August, 1973): 7-8; Frantzreb, Operational Imperatives, p. 2; Raymond M. Hughes, A Manual for Trustees of Colleges and Universities (Ames: The Iowa State College Press, 1951), p. 13.

⁴Zingle, Effective Trusteeship, p. 12.

⁵Charles A. Nelson, "The Lay Trustee--Up or Out?" AGB Reports 14, No. 7 (April, 1972): 12.

Trustee Selection and Participation

Perlman asserts that the issues of what a board should do, or what are its "proper prerogatives, is exceeded in importance only by the issue of who should or should not serve on the board."¹ The Carnegie Commission emphasizes that "the quality of governance depends, in the end, and above all else, on the people who participate in it."² In addition, boards of trustees need to be organized appropriately to promote effective trustee activities. Yet Pray notes that: "all too few boards of trustees have met the standards of composition, organization, and performance that are necessary prerequisites to the solution of basic institutional problems. . . ."³

The issues of trustee selection and participation are particularly important for private colleges, which generally select board members, with relatively few restrictions, through the method of co-optation.⁴ In addition, the large majority of trustees of colleges and universities serve in the private sector, but private boards tend to meet less frequently than public boards, averaging two to four meetings

¹David H. Perlman, "College and University Governing Boards in the United States" (Chicago: Roosevelt University, 1972): 14.

²Carnegie Commission, Governance, p. 79.

³Francis C. Pray, "Trustees: Accountable or Discountable?" (Frantzreb, Pray, Fenner and Thompson, Inc., December, 1972): 2.

⁴Nason, Future of Trusteeship, 28-29.

annually for the majority of private colleges.¹ Zwingle states, regarding private colleges, that there is:

. . . great variation in board size--and quality. Here the possibilities are open for improvement both in organization and role, . . . But . . . board meetings tend to be fewer, the agendas too stereotyped, and the role of the trustee too passive.²

Many of the proposals for reform in collegiate trusteeship generally relate to issues of trustee selection and participation. Nason's discussion of factors affecting the "future of trusteeship" includes several of such issues. It is acknowledged, however, the "there is no single pattern of effectiveness. Board operations will vary. . . . What will work in one situation may not in another. . . ."³ The recommendations, suggestions, and guidelines regarding trustee selection and participation are indeed numerous. Only a few will be highlighted to convey a sense of the literature. The reader is encouraged to explore the references for more specific details.

Research on Governing Boards

Cunninggim describes problems relating to the role of the governing board and of the president as "derivative problems" which are dependent upon the "people that trustees and presidents are:."⁴ Numerous

¹J. A. Davis, and S. A. Batchelor, The Effective College and University Board (Research Triangle Park, N. C.: Research Triangle Institute, Center for Educational Research and Evaluation, 1974), pp. 17-18; Irene L. Gomberg, and Frank Atelsek, Composition of College and University Governing Boards Higher Education Panel Reports, No. 35 (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1977), p. v.

²Zwingle, Effective Trusteeship, p. 15.

³Nason, Future of Trusteeship, pp. 24-38, quotation on p. 24.

⁴Merrimon Cuninggim, "The Governance of Higher Education: Selected Problems," AGB Reports 16, No. 2 (October, 1973): 11.

research studies, based on national, regional, or association samples, have compiled data on the composition and diversity of governing boards. McGrath notes the increase between 1860 and 1930 in the number of trustees from business and law.¹ A 1947 survey report by H. P. Beck indicated that trusteeship has gone to individuals possessing wealth, time, and prestige.² Hartnett's comprehensive study reports data similar to Beck's. That report indicates that "In general, trustees are males, in their fifties, white, well-educated, and financially well off," and are business-oriented, Protestant, and politically conservative.³ Subsequent reports reveal some changes in the composition and diversity of boards, notably the addition of younger men and women, minorities, and faculty and students, as well as the changing dynamics and interactions resulting from more diverse memberships.⁴ A more recent survey conducted by Gomberg and Atelsek provides comprehensive data on aggregate board memberships, for public and private colleges, and illustrates changes in the diversity of the aggregate composition of boards.⁵ It is

¹Earl J. McGrath, "The Control of Higher Education in America," Educational Record 18, No. 2 (April, 1936): 260-267.

²H. P. Beck, Men Who Control Our Universities (Morningside Heights, N. Y.: King's Crown Press, 1947).

³Rodney T. Hartnett, College and University Trustees: Their Backgrounds, Roles, and Educational Attitudes (Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1969), pp. 19-20.

⁴Robert Birnbaum, and Jean-Louis D'Seilly, "Portrait of the Trustee as a Young Man," Journal of Higher Education 42, No. 7 (October, 1971); Rodney T. Hartnett, The New College Trustee: Some Predictions for the 1970's (Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1970).

⁵Gomberg and Atelsek, Composition of . . . Boards.

interesting to note, that while private college boards tend to be larger than the boards of public institutions, private board membership is generally less diverse, in terms of demographic factors, than public boards.¹

Various studies attempt to "accumulate practical wisdom about the way boards actually operate. . . ."² The study conducted by Hartnett, utilized in Rauh's volume on trusteeship, explores topics concerning the nature of trustee activities and involvement.³ Davis and Batchelor present a large volume of data on trustee activities as well as attitudes and perceptions of college presidents and trustees concerning numerous board functions and activities. The study by Davis and Batchelor provided much of the background for Nason's treatise.⁴ Other surveys report on a number of similar topics regarding board composition and diversity and trustee activities.⁵ Blackburn provides a succinct summary of the research on governing boards.⁶ The various studies on

¹Ingram, Handbook of . . . Trusteeship, p. 49; Gomberg and Atelsek, Composition of . . . Boards, pp. v, 3.

²D. Walker, The Effective Administrator, p. 130.

³Hartnett, College and University Trustees; Morton A. Rauh, The Trusteeship of Colleges and Universities (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969).

⁴Davis and Batchelor, The Effective College and University Boards; Nason, The Future of Trusteeship.

⁵Richard T. Ingram, "Report of a Survey of Policy Boards," AGB Reports 12, No. 4 (January, 1970); Charles A. Nelson and Frederick J. Turk, "Some Facts about Trustees," AGB Reports 16, No. 7 (April, 1974); New York State Regents Advisory Committee on Educational Leadership, College and University Trustees and Trusteeship (New York: [n.p.], 1966).

⁶Robert T. Blackburn, Research on Governing Boards and Some Problem Solving Tactics and Strategies Involving a Professor as a Trustee (Ann Arbor: Center for the Study of Higher Education, University of Michigan, September, 1977), pp. 1-27.

trusteeship provide the background data for the comments and suggestions regarding trustee selection and participation.

The Selection Process

The nature of trustee selection depends largely on the type of institution, with private college trustees generally selected by co-optation. Martorana presents a typical discussion of the methods of trustee selection, citing the findings of numerous research studies.¹ With few stipulations other than possible provisions for denominational or alumni representation, the responsibility and initiative for trustee selection at private colleges lies with the president and the board. The literature generally acknowledges that much of the actual selection of new trustees is done on "a casual and even impromptu basis."² The reports of the New York State Committee on Educational Leadership and the AGB National Commission on Trustee Selection provide evidence that issues concerning trustee selection are not resolved totally.³

To assure the selection of active trustees, various writers recommend that "the first requisite is an orderly and intelligent method of selection," with trustees selected "on grounds other than sheer

¹S. V. Martorana, College Boards of Trustees (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1963), pp. 40-47.

²Robert L. Gale, Building a More Effective Board (Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1978), p. 1.

³New York State Regents, College and University Trustees . . .; Malcolm G. Scully, "Bar Professors, Students as Trustees of their Own Colleges, Panel Urges," The Chronicle of Higher Education 22, No. 2 (July 28, 1980); 4.

expediency."¹ Emphasizing that the selection process must be a continuous activity, Frantzreb recommends the creation of a standing "committee on trustees," second in importance to the Executive Committee, which is responsible for the selection as well as the orientation, activation, and evaluation of board members.² Created to fill the "urgent need for guidelines to assist authorities in . . . placing the most able people on boards of trustees," the AGB Commission on Trustee Selection lists eighteen recommendations for improving the quality of trustees serving on public boards and fourteen recommendations concerning private colleges.³

The task of selecting new members of the board should be a deliberate process, to "be taken with the utmost seriousness," with the needs concerning new members stated "in concrete terms."⁴ Houle and Kauffman reflect the general views that the determination of membership needs should be directly related to institution mission and direction as well as to the skills determined appropriate for service on the board. Perlman contends that the reverse is often the case, with board

¹Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Commission on Higher Education, "Functions of Boards of Trustees in Higher Education" (Newark, N. J.: Middle States Association, April, 1971): 5; Algo Henderson, The Innovative Spirit: Change in Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1970), p. 265. See also Hugh Calkins, "A Plan for Survival," AGB Reports 17, No. 4 (January/February, 1975).

²Frantzreb, Operational Imperatives, pp. 6-9.

³Malcolm G. Scully, "Bar Professors . . .," p. 4; Robert W. Scott, "Trustee Selection: Private Colleges and Universities," AGB Reports 22, No. 6 (November, December, 1980).

⁴Cyril Houle, The Effective Board (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 28.

membership dictating board activities.¹ Gale suggests a four-step procedure for enlisting new board members:

1. Determine membership diversity and skills needed.
2. Establish a search and recruitment procedure.
3. Establish an orientation procedure.
4. Establish procedures for terminating member services.²

Techniques such as a "board profile" or a rating analysis are suggested to assist in matching trustees to institutional and board needs.

The literature includes numerous suggestions that candidates for trusteeship are to be researched carefully "to ascertain the nature of personal nuances" in relation to the talents and skills needed.³ As Tolley states: "Election to the board is fully as important as the appointment of a full professor."⁴ The process of identifying and selecting new trustees is to be an open, continuous activity, with opportunities for faculty, students, and other interested individuals to make recommendations.⁵

¹Houle, The Effective Board, pp. 23-26; Joseph F. Kauffman, At the Pleasure of the Board (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1980); Perlman, "College and University Governing Boards . . .," p. 14.

²Gale, Building a More Effective Board, p. 2.

³Arthur C. Frantzreb, ed., Trustee's Role in Advancement New Directions for Institutional Advancement, No. 14 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, December, 1981), p. 30.

⁴William P. Tolley, "Organizing and Energizing the Board for Effective Action," in Selected Issues in College Administration, ed. Earl J. McGrath (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), p. 28.

⁵Scott, "Trustee, Selection," p. 15.

The actual invitation to board service is regarded as a vital part of the selection process, which is "all too frequently . . . offered in a casual, haphazard way. . . ." Houle and other writers place special attention on the necessity of a personalized and formal invitation.¹ Each prospective trustee should receive a comprehensive description of the institution's purposes and needs, together with a variety of written materials about the board and the college. In addition, the authorities on trusteeship concur that it is imperative that a new trustee receive a concise indication of the reason or purpose for which the individual was selected as well as the expectations for effective performance.² Lahti and Pray provide examples of performance standards for college trustees.³ As several writers note, the failure to explain the trustee's task is "an inexcusable oversight," and is generally self-defeating, while the selection of a new member merely to fill "a rotation spot" or "representative requirement" is "an insult. . . ."⁴

¹As an example, see Houle, The Effective Board, pp. 27-35; quotation on p. 32.

²Frantzreb, Trustee's Role in Advancement, pp. 8, 23-25, 31-32; Atherton Bean, "Fund-Raising and the Trustee," An Address . . . San Francisco, January 29, 1972, p. 10; Rev. Joseph A. Sellinger, S. J., "Trustees: What One President Wants," Educational Record 56, No. 2 (Spring, 1975): 76-77.

³Robert E. Lahti, Innovative College Management (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1973), pp. 21-32, 152-155; Francis C. Pray, "Contract with a College Trustee," Arlington, Va.: Frantzreb and Pray Associates, Inc., 1975.

⁴Gerald P. Burns, Trustees in Higher Education ([n.p.]: Independent College Funds of America, Inc., 1966), p. 67; Frantzreb, ed., Trustee's Role in Advancement, p. 31.

It is important to note that, in private colleges particularly, the president is a key participant in the process of selecting new trustees, in conjunction with board officers and other administrators. Voskuyl regards an active interest in board member selection as "one of his [the president's] most important concerns."¹

Characteristics/Qualities of Trustees

Much has been written about the desirable qualifications of new trustees, yet the commentators generally agree that each institution will need to determine those attributes which are most applicable for its purposes.² The lists of desirable qualities range from broad conceptual attributes to specific skills and talents. Houle lists possible "basic traits which all board members should possess," while Corson asserts that only "three qualities--intelligence, time, and curiosity"--are needed.³ Martorana surveys the literature on the characteristics noting that one qualification appears frequently: "the expectation that persons selected for membership . . . will have and will take the time to devote to their duties."⁴ It is interesting to note that the comments by Chambers (in 1938) and more recent writers do not differ to any considerable extent. Chambers lists such attributes

¹The Trustee: A Key to Progress in the Small College (Washington, D.C.: The Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, August, 1969), p. 148; also see Burns, Trustees in Higher Education, pp. 63-64; and Tolley, "Organizing and Energizing . . .," p. 28.

²Nason, Future of Trusteeship, p. 24.

³Houle, The Effective Board, p. 23; John J. Corson, The Governance of Colleges and Universities, Rev. ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), p. 272.

⁴Martorana, College Boards of Trustees, p. 39.

as capacity for detachment, tolerance, and flexibility, which appear in similar phrasing in the lists of Burns and Lahti.¹ Scholars generally agree with Hughes that the quality of trusteeship "depends largely on the character of the members of the board. . . ." ²

Board Balance

It is generally acknowledged in the literature that a diversity of board membership, with a "broader base in occupation, in age, and in ideas," adds strength to the board and enhances its legitimacy.³ The report of the AGB Commission on Trustee Selection recommends a "greater diversity in the makeup of boards of trustees at both public and private colleges."⁴ A number of commentators comment on the skewed composition of board membership, as noted in several research studies, and suggest improving the composition and diversity of boards.⁵ As an example, the Carnegie Commission recommends that "board membership reflect the different age, sex, and racial groups of the institutions constituencies. . . ." ⁶

¹M. M. Chambers, "The Good Trustee," Journal of Higher Education 9, No. 3 (March, 1938): 127-129; Burns, Trustees, pp. 65-66; Lahti, Effective College Management, p. 24.

²Raymond M. Hughes, A Manual for Trustees of Colleges and Universities (Ames: The Iowa State College Press, 1951), p. 4.

³Cunningham, "Governance . . .," p. 12; Nason, Future of Trusteeship, p. 2.

⁴Scully, "Ban Professors . . .," p. 4.

⁵As examples, see Clark Kerr, "Conversations with Clark Kerr," AGB Reports 15, No. 9 (July/August, 1973); David A. Fedo, "College Trustees Don't Have to be Nitwits," The Chronicle of Higher Education 22, No. 5 (March 9, 1981).

⁶Carnegie Commission, Governance, p. 35.

The issue of board balance is related directly to the selection process. The development of a well-balanced board necessitates a careful consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of current trustees in relation to current and future institutional and board needs. Attention to board balance is particularly important for private colleges, where the generally self-perpetuating selection process may be both a strength and a weakness in relation to board diversification. As Gale notes, "every board needs to recruit outside the family" especially to avoid heavy denominational or alumni representation.¹ Gale recommends that board composition be considered in two separate elements: diversity (personal and demographic factors) and individual talents and backgrounds.² Frantzreb asserts that there must be "a set of criteria" for board membership composition "stated objectively, honestly, openly, and adhered to . . . to provide leadership, not just friendship."³ In an ideal sense, trustees should represent broadly the institution's constituencies, but no member should "represent" any particular group.⁴ Burns adequately reflects the opinions in the literature: "A well-balanced board will have members from various professional and occupational fields, not alone to provide different perspectives, but to provide specialized advice and assistance. . . ."⁵ Mere tokenism to

¹Gale, "Building a More Effective Board," p. 6.

²Ibid., pp. 2-5.

³Frantzreb, Operational Imperatives, p. 7.

⁴See Louis H. Heilbron, The College and University Trustee (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1973); and Hughes, A Manual for Trustees . . ., p. 7; Cunnigim, "Governance," p. 11.

⁵Burns, Trustees in Higher Education, p. 65.

make boards more representative is to be replaced by efforts to recruit trustees. To perform effectively, "the board needs to be independent, free of conflict of interest, competent, devoted, and sensitive to the . . . groups involved in . . . the campus."¹ Techniques such as a board profile or a rating analysis are suggested to assist in matching trustees to institutional and board needs.²

Regarding the issue of faculty trustees, Blackburn and Perlman review the literature, noting the consensus that faculty should not serve as trustees of their own institutions.³ Various commentators recommend the appointment of faculty and students to appropriate governing board committees, thus permitting representation of the two groups and avoiding conflict of interest entanglements.

The question regarding the appropriate length of service needs careful deliberation by each governing board, for "no fool-proof mathematical formula is available for determining the proper term."⁴ Research studies indicate that private college boards use shorter terms of appointment but have more members with lengthy service than do public boards.⁵ To improve board balance and effectiveness, and to keep the "dead wood" on a board to a minimum, it is generally recommended that

¹Carnegie Commission, Governance, p. 33.

²Ingram, Handbook of . . . Trusteeship, pp. 53-55; Francis C. Pray, "Match Your Trustees to Your Needs," College and University Business 54, No. 2 (February, 1973).

³Blackburn, Research on Governing Boards . . ., pp. 43-50; Daniel Perlman, "Faculty Trusteeship," Educational Record 54, No. 2 (Spring, 1973).

⁴Heilbron, The College and University Trustee, p. 7.

⁵See Nelson and Turk, "Some Facts About Trustees."

boards specifically limit the terms of trustees and provide for a rotation of membership. As Heilbron notes: "a board with obsolete equipment will not fare very well."¹

Orientation

As various authorities affirm, a well-organized orientation to the responsibilities of trusteeship is essential. Indeed, Lewis suggests, the assumption that newly "elected, appointed, or proclaimed" individuals are instant trustees is "so frivolous as to be amusing."² Axelrod, in a guidebook for new trustees, describes the variety of orientation activities in public and private institutions, which range from "a hearty welcome accompanied by a free copy of the by-laws to a two-day simulation training workshop."³ Several writers emphasize the value of orientation procedures, for colleges cannot afford to wait several years for trustees to adjust to their roles. A comprehensive orientation should acquaint the new trustee with the basic facts of the institution, the "organization, mechanics, and procedures" of the board, trends and issues in higher education, as well as an "intimate feel" of

¹Charles A. Nelson, "Trustees: Serve or Resign," AGB Reports 15, No. 9 (July/August, 1973): 20; Louis H. Heilbron, "The Uses and Abuses of Trustees," Paper presented . . . April 21, 1970, San Francisco, Ca.

²Robert L. Lewis, "Building Effective Trustee Leadership, or How to Exploit Your Trustees," Educational Record 61, No. 4 (Fall, 1980): 18.

³Nancy R. Axelrod, A Guide for New Trustees (Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1977), p. 2.

the college.¹ Emphasizing that an institution deserves informed trustees, Frantzreb contends that new trustees should not be permitted to serve without participating in an orientation program.² Among the numerous suggestions for effective trustee orientation are specialized training sessions, trustee-in-residence programs, "buddy" systems, manuals on trusteeship, and conferences on trustee duties.³ The recent Handbook on College and University Trusteeship contains a chapter on organizing orientation programs.⁴ In essence, the orientation prepares trustees for more effective service. As Ashmore comments, colleges must recognize that "most trustees are grown, not born--and most colleges have to grow their own."⁵

Participation and Involvement

Regarding trustee service, Henry Wriston offers an often-quoted opinion that trustees ought to contribute "work, wealth, and wisdom,

¹Rauh, Trusteeship, pp. 106, 108; Burns, Trustees in Higher Education, p. 72; Harry J. Carman, "Boards of Trustees and Regents," in Administrations in Higher Education: Their Functions and Coordination, ed. Gerald P. Burns (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 87.

²Frantzreb, Trustee's Role in Advancement, p. 33.

³Houle, The Effective Board, pp. 36-40; Arthur C. Frantzreb, and Melvin M. Marcus, "Trustee-In-Residence: A Proposal for Improved Governance," [n.p.]; 1972; Arthur C. Frantzreb, "Trustee Chairmanship: Position and Function," Arlington, Va.: Frantzreb, Pray, Ferner and Thompson, Inc., 1974: 6; Milton W. Durham, and Michael DeBusk, Handbook for College and University Regents (Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1964).

⁴Ingram, Handbook of . . . Trusteeship, pp. 87-100.

⁵Frank L. Ashmore, "Trustees Are Grown, Not Born," Pride, December, 1960: 20.

preferably all three, but at least two of the three."¹ Davis comments regarding involved trustees, "more to be desired are they than gold."² The various writers in trusteeship generally acknowledge that board members possess significant potential for institutional leadership, if colleges are ready "to utilize fully their talents, skills, and wisdom."³ Board effectiveness, however, involves a complex, synergism of institutional and personal factors, for "the board is an organism, not a collection."⁴

The literature on trusteeship contains numerous suggestions for activating board members for effective service. Active trustee participation and involvement is a function of both motivational and organizational factors. Houle, Sellinger, and other commentators note the motivational considerations necessary to prompt trustee activity. Houle indicates that the motivation and encouragement of trustees should be continuous, stemming from the initial invitation to service. A board member's individual efforts should link directly to the reasons for that individual's selection. As Smith suggests: "the board will fulfill its corporate role only as well as each member finds fulfillment in being a trustee."⁵

¹Henry M. Wriston, Academic Procession: Reflections of a College President (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 44.

²Paul H. Davis, "More to be Desired Are They Than Gold . . .," Association of American Colleges Bulletin 44, No. 3 (October, 1958): 398.

³Frantzreb, "The Management of Volunteers," p. 133.

⁴Nason, Future of Trusteeship, p. 24.

⁵Houle, The Effective Board, pp. 18-36; Sellinger, "Trustees . . .," p. 73; G. T. Smith, in Trustee's Role in Advancement, ed. Arthur C. Frantzreb, p. 2; also see Voskuyl, in The Trustee.

Numerous writers, such as Herron and Martorana, provide general descriptions of board organization.¹ To insure that governing board operations are not a "random affair," Pocock calls for an overhauling of board procedures and structures to develop better the "organized capability and capacity" of board management.² Various strategies recommended for improving board operations include: improve the functioning of board committees, with only the minimal number of committees necessary;³ restructuring meeting formats;⁴ subjecting the agenda to a "harsh test of relevance"; and organizing board sessions as "educational experiences" for trustees.⁵ The authorities on governing boards note the special importance of committees in performing the detailed work of the board and in focusing on critical policy issues for board attention. As a result, assignments of trustees to particular committees need to be considered carefully.⁶ Ingram provides a concise discussion of the role of board committees, noting the delicate position of the executive committee.⁷ It is important as well that the agenda and meetings be structured to permit effective deliberation of issues, trends, and

¹Herron, Role of the Trustee, pp. 65-87; Martorana, College Boards of Trustees, 66-75; Ingram, Handbook of . . . Trusteeship, pp. 63-86.

²Pocock, "Where Are the Managers. . .," p. 13.

³Ibid., p. 14.

⁴Paltridge, et al., Boards of Trustees; Zwingle, Effective Trusteeship, p. 19.

⁵Nelson, "The Lay Trustee--Up or Out?" pp. 9-11.

⁶Zwingle, Effective Trusteeship, pp. 15-16; Ashmore, "Trustees Are Grown, Not Born," p. 24.

⁷Ingram, Handbook of . . . Trusteeship, pp. 69-76.

policies, avoiding lengthy attention to the minutiae of pro-forma decisions.¹ Perlman states that the functions assumed by boards often are influenced by the size of the board and the length of the term of service. On large boards the executive committee actually may do much of the board's work.² Since private boards tend to be larger, the issue of board organization for effective performance is critical. Sellinger states: "members of the larger board should be chosen for different purposes and exercise fairly distinct roles."³

Numerous commentators concur that trustees, to function effectively, need to be well-informed: "the exceptional member . . . is not only a dedicated person, but an informed one."⁴ Hesburgh represents the general view that "trustees need to be informed clearly and forcefully, on a continuing basis, about the institution's basic needs."⁵ The president is acknowledged generally to have the major responsibility for keeping trustees informed, as the official channel of communication between the board and the college constituencies.⁶ Opportunities for discussions and communications with faculty,

¹Tolley, "Organizing and Energizing . . .," pp. 27-31.

²Perlman, "College and University Boards," p. 15.

³Sellinger, "Trustees . . .," p. 74; also see Hugh Calkins, "A Plan for Survival," AGB Reports 17, No. 4 (January/February, 1975).

⁴Nelson, "The Lay Trustee," p. 7; Carman, "Boards of Trustees and Regents," p. 97.

⁵Theodore Hesburgh, "The College Presidency: Life Between a Rock and a Hard Place," Change 11, No. 4 (May/June, 1979): 45.

⁶Ruml and Morrison, Memo to a College Trustee, p. 77; Mayhew, Surviving the Eighties, p. 42.

administrators, and students must be provided as well.¹ Holderman notes that contacts between trustees and college officials, especially the president, are both formal and informal: "Ideally, the flow of information--oral and written--should be timely and continuous."² Since private college boards tend to meet only two to four times per year, efforts to keep in touch with trustees are particularly important.

Various writers regard the evaluation of general board effectiveness and self-assessment by trustees as integral parts of a board's operations. As Miller states: "the board's quality is related to the extent the board evaluates itself."³ Miller, Stuhr, Pray, and the Association of Governing Boards present various methods for conducting board evaluation and trustee self-assessment.⁴ The literature generally advocates opportunities for trustee renewal or continuing education. Herron provides descriptions of several in-service programs at various colleges.⁵

¹Corson, *Governance*, p. 273; Pocock, "Where are the Managers . . .?", p. 16.

²James B. Holderman, "Trustees: Moving to Center Stage," *Educational Record* 62, No. 1 (Winter, 1981): 34-35.

³See Myron Wicke, in *The Trustee*, p. 13; Richard I. Miller, *The Assessment of College Performance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1979), p. 235.

⁴Miller, *Assessment*, pp. 221-235; Robert L. Stuhr, "How Do Your Trustees See Themselves? Here's a Way to Find Out," *College and University Business* 54, No. 2 (February, 1973); Francis C. Pray, "Report Card for College Trustees," *Educational Record* 45, No. 3 (Summer, 1964); Ingram, *Handbook of . . . Trusteeship*, pp. 423-429.

⁵Pray, in *Trustee's Role*, ed. Frantzreb, p. 17; Orley A. Herron, Jr., "A Study of Inservice Education Programs for Boards of Trustees in Selected Colleges and Universities in the United States," Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1965; Herron, *Role of the Trustee*.

The President and the Board Chairperson

The role of the president and the board chairperson in trustee selection and participation is discussed prominently in the literature. The two officers are described variously as an "inseparable partnership," "jointly responsible" for the leadership and management of the institution.¹ Frantzreb and Gies and Anderson describe the characteristics of the effective board chairperson.² As the most important trustee, the chairperson is responsible for the interpersonal and operational dynamics of the board. The chair often participates to a considerable extent in the selection process of new trustees and works closely with the president in such matters as the basic direction of board efforts and the preparation of meeting agenda. Hughes comments: "Just as the college never rises above the level of the president, so the board rarely rises above the level of its [chairperson]."³

The governing board and the president serve the college through an interesting reciprocal relationship. Several writers describe the interaction between the trustees and the president.⁴ While the board

¹Gerald P. Burns, "The Board of Governors Revisited," College and University Journal 11, No. 2; Joseph C. Gies, and Wayne W. Anderson, The Board Chairperson and the President (Washington, D.C.: Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 1977), pp. 2-3.

²Frantzreb, "Trustee Chairmanship"; and Gies and Anderson, The Board Chairperson and the President.

³Hughes, A Manual for Trustees, p. 7.

⁴Charles A. Coolidge, "Training for Trustees?" Association of American Colleges Bulletin 42, No. 4 (December, 1956): 512; Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., "The Stewardship of Trustees and the President," AGB Reports 16, No. 1 (September, 1973); Lewis, "Building a More Effective Board," p. 20.

initially selects and appoints the president to serve "at the pleasure of the board," and receives counsel and support from the board. The president is often a vital factor in trustee selection and must work vigorously to develop and maintain knowledgeable and active trustees. As an example, Wriston asserts that the informing of the trustees and the strengthening of the board's personnel are a president's first and second duties, respectively.¹ The working relationships between the trustees and the president need to be compatible and mutually supportive, without losing the objectivity necessary for decision-making. The literature generally concurs that a college needs both a strong board and a strong president.² While trustees at times may be "frisky horses," Tolley contends that "No one can survive as a college president if he is not skilled in the direction and management of trustees."³ The general view of the relationship between the board and the president is reflected in "Burns' Law":

The most effective administration and governance occurs in direct proportion to the amount of mutual influence, cooperative effort and shared initiative between president and board.⁴

¹Wriston, Academic Procession, pp. 70-72.

²Tolley, "Organizing and Energizing," and Kauffman, At the Pleasure of the Board, pp. 52-62.

³Wriston, Academic Procession, p. 84; Tolley, "Organizing and Energizing," p. 24.

⁴Burns, Trustees in Higher Education, p. 82.

Summary

This brief review of the literature and some issues concerning trustee selection and participation perhaps raises more questions than it answers. Each of the several topics highlighted could be the subject of a lengthy, detailed review. Each reference on particular topics was not cited, since writers often treat several issues within a single article, position paper, or monograph. Rather, the review provides a general sense of the literature.

The roles and functions of governing boards and the responsible exercise of the board's broad authority are discussed repeatedly by critics, reform advocates, and supporters of trusteeship. Comments often focus on issues related to the clarification of board authority, trustee efforts to manage or monitor the institution's financial and intellectual assets, and general board organization and performance.

Numerous research studies, based on national or other sample populations, provide a general profile of board composition and diversity. While variations occur within institutional types and between colleges, the data generally depict board membership as skewed toward the upper socio-economic levels of society. Several recent surveys provide evidence that, due in part to pressures for governance reform, trustees are becoming somewhat more diverse in terms of demographic and personal factors. Other studies are providing, at least on a composite level, insights into the actual functions of boards and the attitudes and perceptions of trustees, board chairpersons, and presidents.

Much of the literature on trustee selection and participation is prescriptive, based in part on the results of research studies and the

writers' experiences with boards of trustees. The consideration of effective methods for selection and activation is important from private colleges, which tend to meet less frequently, to be larger, to have less diversity in membership than public boards. The authorities devote considerable attention to the process of selecting new trustees. The selection and formal invitation of prospects for board service should be a carefully organized and personalized procedure, which recruits the most capable individuals. Particular reasons for selecting an individual should be conveyed during the invitation, along with a concise explanation of the role of a trustee and expectations for service. An assessment of institutional and board needs in relation to the trustee prospects and thorough research of candidates are integral parts of the process. The president, board officers, and the nominating committee, or Committee on Trustees, are important participants in strengthening the board through new appointments.

The qualifications desired in new trustees may vary according to each board's needs, although the writers suggest basic traits appropriate for all board members. The attributes and talents of new trustees need to be considered in relation to the appropriate balance in the composition and diversity of the board. A pluralism of backgrounds, occupations, and viewpoints generally strengthens the board and enhances its efforts and deliberations. Through careful consideration of trustee qualifications in relation to board needs and directions, and guidelines for the length of service, the board increases its potential for effective efforts and provides for continuity as well as new perspectives.

New trustees need to be prepared for fulfilling their responsibilities through comprehensive orientation programs. A variety of formats may be used to ensure that new members gain a working knowledge of the institution, an understanding of trustee obligations, and a general perception of trends and issues in higher education.

The active participation of trustees is perhaps a function of motivation as well as board organization. To serve effectively, trustees need to be informed and encouraged continuously. The involvement of board members in particular activities may relate directly to the purposes or reasons for which the individuals were selected and their attributes and talents. Generally, boards which are better organized tend to function more actively and effectively. Attention to the committee structure and process and board meetings and agenda likely will improve board performance. Periodic evaluation and self-assessment by trustees are needed to identify strengths and weaknesses in trustee performance and general board efforts. The results of such evaluation and self-assessment may assist in re-activating lethargic members and in identifying criteria for new membership. In-service education sessions provide opportunities, without the press of routine matters, to discuss issues in higher education as well as to learn better ways to fulfill trustee roles.

The president and the board chairperson are vitally important to the board's functioning. Both officers often are intimately involved in the selection of new trustees and jointly are responsible for the direction of trustee efforts and the operation of board procedures. The working relationships between the president and the board chairperson,

and between each of the officers and the trustees need to be supportive and reciprocal, without lessening objectivity.

The review of literature provides a general framework for the consideration of trustee selection and participation. Chapters III and IV present the attitudes and perceptions of the trustees and presidents of Alpha College and Beta College in response to questions concerning trustee selection and involvement at their respective institutions.

CHAPTER III

ALPHA COLLEGE: CASE STUDY OF TRUSTEE SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION

The College

Founded less than seventy-five years ago by a religious order as a liberal arts college, Alpha College engaged in a "process of change and re-evaluation" in the 1960's.¹ As a result, the college became coeducational and diversified the academic program. Within the framework of a fully-accredited, private, four-year, residential liberal arts college, a faculty of 101 members serves a diverse student body. The recent enrollment included full-time and part-time undergraduates, graduate students, and students in an off-campus external degree program. While undergraduates accounted for two-thirds of the total enrollment, only two-thirds of that segment were enrolled full-time.² Through programs in several divisions, Alpha awards one Masters, four Bachelors, and four different Associates degrees. The current President has been at Alpha for five years, with seven years additional experience as president at other colleges. The President stated that part of the college's mission is:

¹Alpha College Catalog, 1978-1980, pp. 6-7.

²Alpha College, The President's Report, 1979-80, p. 8.

. . . to gather many individuals of all ages, creeds, and backgrounds into a vibrant, cohesive community that challenges each member to life and growth.¹

Alpha College is located in a city of 24,000, and is near several larger urban areas and a major metropolitan area. Recent enrollment at Alpha included approximately 1500 men and women students, enrolled full-time and part-time, from twenty-five states and twenty-four foreign countries. Given the college's geographical location and the number of part-time students, there are "especially high concentrations" of students from the immediate county and one of the nearby urban areas.²

Board Structure and Organization

In the process of the changes in the 1960's, the board "was expanded and began to take a more active role in governance."³ The board was transformed from a small group of trustees, all members of the religious order, and advised by a large "lay advisory board," into a large lay governing board with a specified number of trustees who were members of the order. The Bylaws of Alpha College are brief and provide the framework for the legal and operational relationships between the religious order and the Board of Trustees. As owner of the college, the order delegates to the trustees, with certain specific limitations, the control of "The property, business, secular and educational affairs and policies. . . ."⁴ In actual practice, the order judges the board's

¹Alpha College, Admissions literature, no date, p. 1.

²Alpha College, The President's Report, 1979-80, p. 7.

³Alpha College Catalog, 1978-1980, pp. 6-7.

⁴Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, p. 2.

selection for college president, reviews and "elects" new trustees, and approves financial contracts over a specified amount. The current board size of thirty-six trustees corresponds with the President's preference of a large board, which "reviews and approves" the work of board committees. The following paragraphs describe the way in which the board is organized to carry out its responsibilities.

Board Meetings and Agenda

The board regularly holds Fall, Winter, and Spring sessions, although only the "annual meeting" held in October is required.¹ Each meeting is held on one day for three to four hours. Often, some committee meetings precede the full-board session. Reports of the committees are part of the meeting agenda.

The President, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board, prepares the agenda. Reports and minutes from the previous board meeting and interim committee meetings, and the agenda and related items, are sent to the trustees prior to the next board meeting. Additional reports and materials are distributed during the meetings. As many as six faculty and six students, on a rotating basis, are guests at each board meeting. The researcher observed at one meeting that these guests are invited to, and do, participate in the discussions and deliberations.

Board Leadership

Four officers, reviewed and elected from the membership annually, are stipulated in the Bylaws. The Chairman presides at all

¹Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, pp. 3-4.

board meetings and provides the general direction for board activities. The Vice-Chairman presides in the Chairman's absence and assists in guiding the trustees' efforts. The Secretary performs a variety of record-keeping and official notification functions, while the Treasurer monitors the college's financial affairs.¹ The leadership of the board works closely with, and often relies on, the President and other college officials in performing the varied duties.

While the officers are reviewed each year, they often hold their respective positions for more than one year. In practice, the Chairman, the President, and the chairman of the Nominating Committee present the officer candidates, or nominations for re-election, to the board for approval. The President indicated that their judgments regarding officer candidates are "subjective" and are based generally on "who might be good for succession to the chairmanship."

Committees of the Board

The Bylaws stipulate that the Board appoint a Nominating Committee and "establish such other committees, including an Executive Committee, as they deem in the best interests" of the college. The "duties, responsibilities, and powers" of the committees are determined by the board members.² Currently, the Alpha board is organized into ten committees and an Executive Committee, with its eight members. With the number of 1980-81 members listed in parentheses, the ten committees are: academic affairs (8), athletics (5), college relations (6), finance (8),

¹Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, pp. 5-6.

²Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, pp. 4-5.

investment (6), legal (3), nominating (5), physical facilities (3), planning (4), and student life (5). The committees meet at varying times, as the members deem necessary or as issues dictate. As examples, one committee met when its members attended the dedication of the new college library, while the academic affairs group generally meets before each board meeting. The finance and Executive committees meet the most frequently, five to eight times per year, and often meet together.

The chairman of the Nominating Committee, the President, and the Chairman recommend committee assignments for board approval, with the leadership and membership of the committees reviewed annually. New trustees serve on the board for one year before receiving a committee assignment. New members may designate their preference of committees. The President stated that, generally but "not always consistently," committee assignments correspond to the members' areas of expertise. There are no faculty or student liaisons at the committee level.

The trustees' committee assignments vary considerably in terms of the number, and the combination, of committees. As examples, of the twenty-two trustees, nine are members of one committee, seven serve on two, and four are on three committees. Two trustees are awaiting assignments. The assignment decisions are a combination of the trustees' preferences and the judgments of the President and the board leaders. In general, the committee memberships are diverse, with the exceptions of four committees: finance, investment, physical facilities, and legal. Those committees especially are composed of trustees with specific expertise. In addition, four of the six members of the investment group are also on the finance committee, and four of the six on investment and five of the eight on finance are from the same urban

area. In some instances, these trustees also serve on committees not directly related to their occupational expertise. For some trustees, their sole committee assignment relates to their specialized skills.

The Executive Committee is composed of eight trustees, including the five board officers. The Chairman of the Board does not chair the Executive Committee. As required, one member of the religious order sits on this committee.¹

The committees are important in the functions of the Alpha board. As two trustees noted, "the board as a whole looks to the committees," and "the board is only as successful as the committees." The review and approval of committee reports and activities are major parts of board meetings. The President is an ex officio member of all committees but meets most often with the Executive and finance committees.

Trustee Selection and Eligibility

Ever since the lay governing board replaced the "lay advisory board" in the 1960's, the board has consisted of thirty or more trustees.² The provisions in the Bylaws regarding trustee selection are brief. Thus, the selection process is basically the discretion of the Board and the President.

Eligibility

The Board of trustees is to "consist of not less than fifteen (15) nor more than fifty (50) Trustees," as determined by the Board. At

¹Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, p. 5.

²Alpha College Catalog, 1968-1970, 1973-1975, 1978-1980.

least six members of the religious order, including three of the local unit's officers or their designated representatives, must serve on the board.¹ The 1980-81 trustee roster included thirty-six members, not including the President as an additional ex officio member. The current president of the Alpha alumni association also is included in the membership. Three "Trustees Emeriti" are listed but are not included in this study.

Upon election as a trustee, each new member is assigned to a "class" according to the date of expiration of the term. The trustees are elected to three-year terms. Provisions concerning re-election and cumulative service are not included in the Bylaws. Re-election to additional terms is common. The President indicated an interest in more formal provisions regarding consecutive terms or cumulative service rather than an implication of "life service." Trustees elected to fill board vacancies officially serve until the next Fall meeting, but re-election to a full three-year term is then possible.² Given the re-election process and the "class system," there are generally one to three new trustees elected each year.

Nomination and Selection

As in the case of eligibility criteria, the Bylaws state the minimal procedures for trustee selection. The Nominating Committee is

¹Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, p. 3.

²Bylaws of Alpha College, 1980, p. 3.

responsible for submitting nominees for trustee positions for the approval of the religious order at its annual meeting, or by mail ballot.¹

In reality, the nomination and selection process is less formal than the Bylaws imply. The President, board officers, and the chairman of the Nominating Committee actively participate in identifying and cultivating prospective trustees. Through their various contacts, the President and the board officers identify nominees, whose credentials are checked with the leadership of the religious order. Trustee candidates who are members of the order are identified "through their roles, offices, or past involvement." Often, mail ballots are used for the election, and re-election, of members, with the trustees-elect confirmed by voice vote at the next board meeting. One trustee succinctly stated the process: "The administration really elected me; the board passed on it."

At Alpha the trustee nomination/selection process is a continuous function involving referrals and personal contacts. The President is involved considerably in enlisting prospective trustees. As one member noted, the board is "the President's baby--not to control it, but to build it." Through follow-up on referrals from trustees and college personnel and personal contacts, the President and the chairman of the Nominating Committee seek nominees "willing to give of themselves and to avoid personal gain." Among the criteria listed by the President as important qualities of prospective trustees are: (1) interest in private, church-related colleges, (2) intelligence and prudent judgment,

¹Bylaws of Alpha College, pp. 1-2.

(3) distinction in background or occupation, (4) demonstrated reliability and commitment, and (5) above conflict of interest.

In the process of cultivating new trustees, "if chosen, would you serve" discussions ensue between the prospect and the President and/or board official. The members of the Nominating Committee, who review the candidates, are assigned by virtue of their demonstrated commitment, interest in involvement, and contacts. Much of the work of that committee is conducted by telephone or mail. At the time of this study, the Nominating Committee, at the impetus of the President, was being transformed from its "pro forma role" into a "Committee on Trustees." In addition to establishing more formal procedures and criteria for the nomination/selection process, the committee's expanded responsibilities would include trustee orientation and the review and evaluation of trustee performance.

Orientation and Communications

While basically responsible at present for trustee orientation, the President referred to the process as "almost non-existent, left to chance." The individual's familiarity with the institution prior to election as a trustee and the contacts with college and board officials during the selection process generally constitute the orientation. As a result, the President feels that one-fourth to one-third of the trustees are "fuzzy" on operational matters of the college.

New trustees are provided with the Bylaws, catalog, and other written materials. All members regularly receive a variety of publications and reports through the mail or at meetings. The materials include catalogs, admissions literature, student newspaper, and literary

magazine, and reports which address issues such as placement, development, and investment. The President considers that the trustees are "well-equipped" with information. The more active trustees also are in frequent contact with the President and other college officials and trustees by telephone or occasional visits to the campus.

The Trustees

Twenty-two of the thirty-six Alpha College trustees were interviewed in the period of time allotted for the study. That number represents sixty-one percent of the total membership. With two trustees having resigned during the 1980-81 academic year, the twenty-two trustees represent sixty-five percent of the thirty-four members serving in May, 1981. It was not possible to interview the Chairman of the Board. The three emeritus trustees were not included in the study. The following demographic data, collected during the interviews, presents a general profile of twenty-two Alpha trustees.

Geographical Distribution

The geographical distribution of both the total membership and the trustees interviewed corresponds closely to the concentration of the student enrollment. Of the total membership, eighty-six percent, or thirty-one members, reside within one hundred miles of the campus. Table 1 compares the geographical distribution of the total membership and the trustees interviewed.

Table 1
Geographical Distribution of Alpha Trustees

Residence	Total Members		Trustees Interviewed	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Same Community (as Alpha)	10	28	8	22
Same locale	3	8	3	8
Same state	9	25	5	14
Contiguous states	11	31	5	14
Other states	3	8	1	3
Total	36	100	22	61

The number of trustees interviewed is fairly representative for each of the areas, with one exception. Of the trustees who reside in contiguous states, nine are located in a nearby urban area which contributes heavily to student enrollment at Alpha. That group represents twenty-five percent of the total membership, but the researcher was able to interview only three of the nine. Five of those nine trustees serve on the finance or investment committees, or on both.

Sex and Age

Of the total board membership of thirty-six, roughly two-thirds of the trustees are men, with twenty-three men and thirteen women. Of the trustees interviewed, thirteen are men and nine are women. Two of the trustees interviewed did not reveal their ages. The average age of the other twenty trustees is fifty-seven years. The youngest trustee is thirty-three, and the oldest is eighty-two. It is interesting to note that the average age of the female trustees is slightly lower than the overall average. Table 2 presents the sex and age data.

Table 2
Sex and Age of Alpha Trustees Interviewed

	Sex			Age		
	Number	Percent	Percent of Total	Years	Number	Percent
Male	13	59	36	31-40	2	9
Female	9	41	25	41-50	2	9
				51-60	8	36
				61-70	6	27
				71-80	1	5
				over 80	1	5
				NA	2	9
Total	22	100	61		22	100

Mean Age = 57.35
Median Age = 57.00

Formal Education

In terms of their highest levels of education, the Alpha trustees are well-educated. Nineteen of the twenty-two trustees earned at least the Bachelors degree. Four of the trustees are Alpha graduates. Table 3 lists the educational backgrounds.

Table 3
Formal Education of Alpha Trustees
(by highest level of achievement)

Level	Number	Percent (approx.)
High school graduate	1	5
Some college	2	9
Bachelors degree	7	32
Some graduate study	1	5
Masters degree	5	23
Professional degree (law, medicine)	3	13
Doctorate	3	13
Total	22	100

Religious Affiliation

Sixteen of the trustees, or seventy-three percent, are members of the religious denomination with which the religious order is affiliated. Three of the trustees interviewed are members of that order. The

other six trustees are affiliated respectively with three different types of religious organizations.

Other Relationships

The trustees indicated the nature of their relationships with Alpha prior to election to the board, with some listing multiple factors. Four members listed alumni status, while three were members of the religious order. Other prior ties with the college included various occupational or personal contacts with college officials, financial donors, and parents of Alpha students. Three trustees had served on the "lay advisory board." Eight members had no particular previous relationships, with one commenting "I didn't even know of the school."

Occupation

The current occupations of the twenty-two trustees are listed in Table 4. Of the total membership, business vocations are the most numerous, but the researcher was able to interview only four trustees with "business" occupations. The three members of the religious order serve in education and are included in that category. It should be noted that the number of trustees from the religious order is the minimal number specified in the Bylaws. The "other" category includes one trustee each with occupations in architecture, medicine, banking, and social service.

Table 4
Occupations of Alpha Trustees

Occupation	Number	Percent
Education	6	27
Business	4	18
Law	3	14
Housewife	3	14
Retired	2	9
Other	4	18
Total	22	100

Income Level

The approximate income levels, current or at retirement, for almost all the trustees who reported specific levels are higher than the national average. The median income for thirteen members is \$70,000 to \$80,000. The responses of five other trustees suggests high levels, with incomes described as "ample," "pretty high up," or "very comfortable." For the three members of the religious order, the question is not applicable.

Table 5
Approximate Income Level of Alpha Trustees

Income Level	Number	Percent
Less than \$30,000	1	5
\$30,000 - \$49,000	1	5
\$50,000 - \$69,000	3	13
\$70,000 - \$99,000	4	18
More than \$100,000	4	18
Other	5	23
Not applicable	3	13
Not obtained	1	5
Total	22	100

Length of Service

There is an almost equal division between those members serving three or fewer years and those who have served more than one term of three years. Table 6 lists the length of service on the Alpha board.

Table 6
Length of Service on the Alpha Board

Years	Number
1 year or less	4
2 years	3
3 years	3
4 years	1
5 years	1
6 years	1
7 years	1
8 years	2
10 years	3
More than 12 years	3
Total	22

Mean = 5.9 years

Median = 4-5 years

Ten trustees, or forty-five percent, have served three years or less. Eight members, or thirty-six percent, have completed eight or more years of service. The average length of service is almost two full terms. The lower median length of service, between four and five years, suggests perhaps that the researcher interviewed more of the "newer" members of the board. The longest period of service was fifteen years.

The three members with more than twelve years of service had served on the "lay advisory board" and continued on the lay governing board.

There is no observed pattern regarding the length of service and the trustees' age upon election to the board. While one member is forty-four and has served seven years, another trustee who is seventy-eight just completed the first year of service. Most of the trustees were elected to the board between ages forty and sixty, with an almost equal number elected in each ten-year span.

In addition to being a trustee of Alpha College, four members are on the boards of other colleges. Eight trustees are on the governing boards of community educational or service organizations. Three of the trustees interviewed have experience on corporate boards.

Trustee Responses

The comments of the twenty-two trustees reveal some of their attitudes and perceptions regarding trusteeship at Alpha College. The trustees' remarks on each question are reviewed and summarized in this section. The President's viewpoints and comments are included where appropriate.

The Selection Process (Questions 1-7)

1. Why did you accept the responsibility as a trustee?

Among the various responses, the most frequent reasons for accepting were related to an interest in the college, or higher education (8), and the desire, or obligation, to serve (9). Other comments included:

- new and challenging experience (5)
- asked to serve (3)
- provide direction for the college (3)
- accepted due to profession or occupation (3)
- long-standing family ties to the college (2)

Contacts with college officials and some familiarity with the college, due to close residence, were important factors. One local trustee was "more than glad to be of help." Another member accepted with the provision that the college "would utilize instead of use me." Trusteeship enabled one member to "give to others as has been given to me." One trustee would add a "new dimension" to the board as "one who is not a typical trustee with wealth or board experience." For one member, the invitation to serve came at a time when a new experience was welcomed.

2. Were you seeking such a position? Why?

The unanimous response was "No." One trustee responded, "Hell, no." Three members had declined to participate on their first invitation. For several trustees, the invitation to serve was "flattering" and a "great honor." While not seeking trusteeship, one member accepted because, "I knew I wanted to serve the college, but did not know exactly how."

3. Was the nomination/selection process personalized? Who was involved?

All twenty-two trustees commented that the process was "personalized" in some manner. Twenty referred to a variety of personal contacts with current, or former, trustees as well as with college

administrators. The President, leaders of the religious order, the Chairman, and several trustees were cited as the officials involved in referring candidates, or in exploring trusteeship with prospective members. Often, the invitation for a particular member to serve, if nominated and elected, involved more than one official. Letters, telephone contacts, personal introductions, community relations, and the official outreach of the President and the religious order were part of the process.

Two trustees considered their circumstances to be somewhat different. One was on the board by virtue of a position in the leadership of the religious order. The other member was invited to serve primarily through a corporate superior who previously served as an Alpha trustee.

4. Did you receive an adequate introduction to the needs of the institution and the role of a trustee?

While the trustees considered the selection process to have been "personalized," they were less in agreement about the adequacy of an introduction to needs/role. Table 7 lists the responses.

Twelve trustees felt that the information received "covered it pretty well" and provided "a fair idea" of the needs of the college and a trustee's responsibilities. Two members, respectively, recalled that the college official gave "a great deal of explanation" and was "very honest" about institutional matters. Four of these trustees stated that they already were somewhat familiar with the college's goals and needs through general community relations. One of the four, however, admitted

Table 7
Adequacy of the Introduction

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	12	55
Qualified yes	2	9
No	7	32
Not applicable	1	4
Total	22	100

that without the local relationship, "perhaps as a stranger" more information would have been needed.

Two trustees gave a "qualified yes." One commented in terms of the introduction that "there could have been more, but it was forthright." The other member felt that the discussion of needs/role was "not practical enough about the campus and the people to know."

Almost one-third of the trustees regarded the introduction as "very general" or "not really enough." One member received "some overview," but, along with another trustee, perceived a "trust us" situation in the selection process. Without an adequate introduction, each of two trustees were "feeling my way" or "working on it now." One trustee stated "no, but it didn't take long to find out the needs."

It should be noted that four of the seven trustees responding "no" have served on the board for less than three years. Regarding the

adequacy of the introduction, the researcher discerned no other patterns in the comments of the trustees in relation to their occupations, residences, or length of service, or differences between trustees selected under other presidents. The responses must be interpreted carefully. Actual board experience might temper the trustees' recall. In addition, "familiarity" with the college at the time of selection might have affected a trustee's perception of the adequacy of the introduction to the college's needs and the trustee role.

5. Was a specific reason(s) given for inviting you to become a trustee?

Almost three-fourths of the trustees interviewed indicated that a specific reason was stated. Table 8 lists their answers. The researcher divided the positive responses into specific and general categories: "A" for specific reasons referring to the trustees' expertise or particular background, and "B" for more general reasons such as residence.

Table 8
Specific Reasons for the Invitation to Trusteeship

Response	Number	Percent (approx.)
Yes - 5A	12	55
Yes - 5B	5	22.5
No	4	18.
"Occupation"	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

Over half of the trustees recalled specific reasons, such as legal expertise, higher education experience, finance background, and architecture and construction knowledge. One trustee was told that the board needed members with an "awareness of human feelings and sensitivities." A member from the local community was to assist in "improving the liaison of the college and the community." One trustee's background would be of help in student recruiting. For one member, the specific reason was conveyed with the "usual flattery," while another trustee stated "very simple--money."

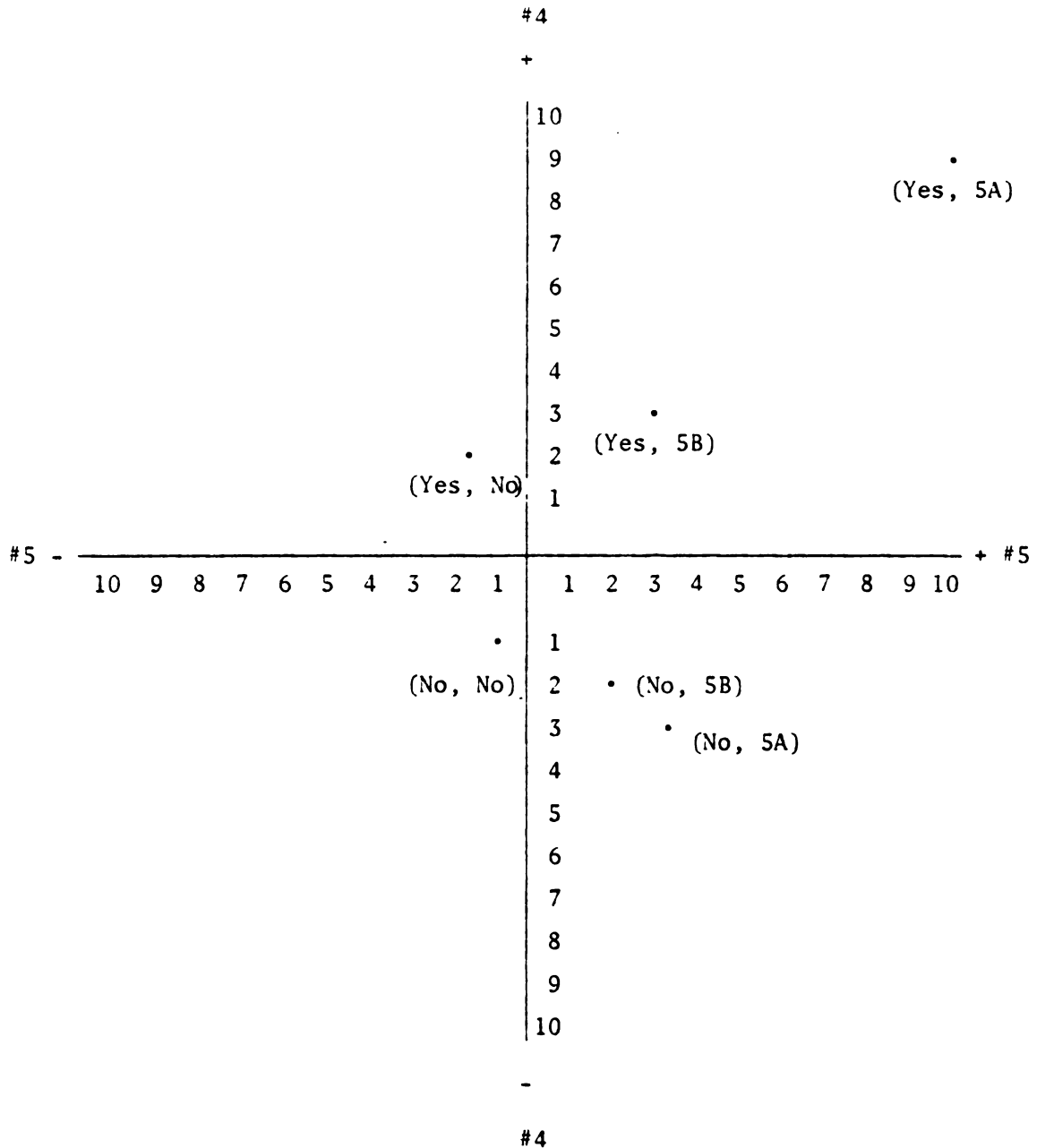
The five "general" (5-B) reasons related to residence in a particular area, sex, or general diversity of board membership. The comments to these trustees were "very flattering" and conveyed the "usual nice things," but were not linked to specific individual expertise. One member was needed to "help get the damn place into the twentieth century." One trustee was on the board by virtue of a position in the religious order. The four negative responses were not explained.

The responses to Question 5, as in the case of Question 4, must be interpreted cautiously. While a specific reason might have been communicated, the trustees might not recall the exact comments. The "reason" cited might be based on actual board experience and the recall of the initial contacts. There were no observed relationships in the responses between such variables as the college official involved, or the trustees' lengths of service, occupations, or residences.

The researcher explored the possible relationships between the responses on Questions 4 and 5. Table 9 is a cross-reference of the Alpha trustees' comments. While a variety of combinations resulted, the

Table 9

Cross-Reference on Alpha Trustees' Responses
to Questions 4 and 5



Note: The parenthetical keys indicate the responses as "(Question 4, Question 5)." The "Not Applicable" and "Occupation" responses on Questions 4 and 5, respectively, are not included.

combinations reflected the high percentage of positive responses on Question 5. Over eighty percent of the trustees who responded "yes" or "qualified yes" on Question 4 considered that a specific reason was given (5A or B). Thus, three out of four members who considered their introduction to needs/role as adequate received, or at least perceived, a particular reason for the invitation to trusteeship. In addition, five who regarded their introduction as less than adequate considered that specific reasons were given. An extensive comparison of the trustees' personal data items, such as age, occupation, or length of service, with the paired responses did not uncover any particular patterns. Due to the researcher's categorization of the responses and the reliance on the trustees' recall, this comparison lacks precision. On the other hand, it does provide some insights into the nomination/selection process.

6. What characteristics, qualities, or attributes do you feel are important in prospective trustees?

While the Alpha trustees listed a variety of desirable characteristics, "willingness to work and to be involved" (10) was mentioned most frequently. A trustee was not to be merely a name, or to "just attend meetings," but one "who would work in between." The trustees' list was similar to the President's criteria cited earlier in the case study. With the exception of fund-raising and business expertise, the qualities suggested primarily were broad concepts rather than particular skills. Other attributes mentioned often were:

- interest in the college, or higher education (7)
- independent judgment and practicality (6)
- some specific area of expertise (5)
- fund-raising, or actual gift support (5)
- broad experience/background (4)
- business abilities (4)

One trustee noted that candidates should have some sense that governing boards "do policy, not administration." In a similar vein, the trustee must be a "decision-maker" who observed the college from a "wholistic view, not as tiny boxes." For one trustee, candidates should regard board service as an opportunity for "returning to society that which they have obtained." Another member stated "common sense, mainly," but the trustee should "not be afraid to be controversial and innovative."

7. What particular abilities or expertise do you bring to the board?

With more than one item occasionally included, the trustees listed a variety of specific talents or backgrounds and more general abilities. The following responses were examples of "particular abilities" in terms of occupational talents or special backgrounds:

- business/finance knowledge (4)
- higher education experience (4)
- perspectives of the local community (4)
- knowledge of the religious order (4)
- legal expertise (3)
- buildings and physical plant (2)

Included in the contributions of a more general nature were:

- objectivity and practical judgment (4)
- commitment to, and interest in, students (4)
- "people" skills (4)

One trustee cited a "down-to-earth" business sense which balanced the tendency of "academic people" to "go on a tangent, off the deep end." Another was not afraid to make waves." One provided a "common approach," due to a self-perception of having the "least amount of credentials" among the members.

Board Balance and Orientation (Questions "A", 8-13)

"A". Will the new "Committee on Trustees" provide for an effective nomination/selection process?

Since the President indicated that the functions of the Nominating Committee were being expanded, this question was added to survey the Alpha trustees' opinions about the "Committee on Trustees." It was somewhat apparent that the term has received limited use beyond the President's discussions. For about one-half of the trustees, it was necessary for the researcher to rephrase the question in reference to the added duties of the Nominating Committee. Table 10 lists the responses.

Over seventy-five percent of the trustees supported, at least in theory, the new roles of the Nominating Committee. For one trustee, it "made a lot of sense" to "institutionalize the process" by establishing "more formal procedures." One trustee, who supported the new direction, acknowledged that nomination/selection was a "difficult process--it depends on who knows whom." Another member felt that the new

Table 10
Perceived Effectiveness of the
"Committee on Trustees"

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	10	45
"Hope so"	7	32
No	1	5
"Not know"	4	18
Total	22	100

dimensions of the committee would "help the administration clarify what it's looking for." One trustee commented that prospective trustees "need to be researched." Five trustees referred to the potential elimination of "deadwood" on the board through a more systematic process. One was concerned that "some members did not contribute much," and stated that some current trustees "would have been eliminated quickly" with more careful selection procedures. Another trustee perceived that "too many were on the board because their service would look good in the obituary column."

One trustee considered that any additional efforts to formalize the selection criteria would "tend to restrict the range of selection." Only broad criteria, seeking "honest, community-minded, progressive individuals" would be helpful.

8. Is there a good diversity and balance on the board?

The President regarded the board as "balanced" and cited the addition of several trustees in recent years which helped to broaden the diversity. Educators, members with varied religious backgrounds, one minority member, women, and younger trustees had been enlisted. Generally, in the President's view, "the more diverse the membership, the better the discussions and decisions." Other categories for consideration included the communications/media professions and educators from private institutions. One trustee remarked that the President had built "a board of expertise." The trustees' responses corresponded with the President's views, as indicated in Table 11.

Table 11

Alpha Trustees' Perceptions of Board Balance

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	17	77
Partially	5	23
Total	22	100

In general, the trustees considered that the board was balanced with "a wide spectrum of individuals. Several of the seventeen members who answered "yes" were "fairly," or "quite," "impressed" with the board's membership. Two regarded the members as "a group of activists who get things done," and "challenge the President." One

trustee stated that the board "always astonishes me on its composition and loyalty." One member felt that the board was "better balanced than I've seen or read about," while another said the balance was "better than I had hoped for."

Five trustees considered the balance "pretty good," but expressed concern about particular segments of the membership. Two cited the board as "fairly well diverse" but not balanced, due to "perhaps a preponderance" of businessmen. One trustee pointed to the need for more representation from a particular urban area. Another trustee considered the religious order to be over-represented, while another perceived that "conservative views" predominated. One trustee suggested that the board always needed trustees with, or who could help get, additional money and resources.

9. Are any changes needed in the size of the board, composition of the board, or the terms of service of board members?

The Alpha trustees did not comment on each segment of the question but did provide a mixture of suggestions. The responses of individual members did not relate necessarily to their comments on Question 8.

Five trustees were content that all three issues in Question 9 were satisfactory. Another five members, however, offered suggestions for improving board composition. Three advocated the selection of younger members. The board needed continuity, but "maybe it was too elderly; we need to keep looking for replacements." Two trustees commented that the board needed additional "representatives from

academe." One member also advised that more trustees should be chosen from a particular urban area.

Twelve trustees commented about board size. According to five, the current size of thirty-six trustees was not "cumbersome," for "the committees do the work." For one trustee, the size was "large enough for active work," while another stated that size itself was not important, rather "who was getting the job done." One trustee called the board "large, but the need was great for publicity and outreach." The five trustees generally agreed that the board would get "unwieldy" if it became any larger.

Seven, or almost one-third of those interviewed, viewed the board as "too big perhaps" and "unwieldy." One suggested a size of eleven to thirteen members, and another felt that "no one would speak up" if board size increased. One trustee suggested: "make it smaller and intensify each trustees' responsibilities."

The term of service elicited mixed opinions. One trustee viewed the three-year term, with re-election, as "enough for challenge and stability." Four trustees felt that the length of service depended on an individual's contributions, with "no limits" on service for those "workers" who provided "long, dedicated service." One of the four wanted "the President and the Executive Committee, not the board" to judge each trustee's effectiveness for continued service. Two other members regarded re-election as "a little too automatic," and wanted the board "to allow for more turnover." One trustee recommended a systematic procedure for evaluating trustee performance. One member did not know the actual term of service.

10. How long did it take for you to become an "effective," participatory trustee?

The President stated that the time-frame for the trustees "varied greatly," with "some active after one meeting, some after two years, and others not yet." Fourteen trustees regarded themselves as active in one year or less. The average for the eighteen trustees who stated a specific period of time was slightly more than one year, or three meetings. Table 12 lists the minimum time-frame for active involvement.

Table 12
Time-Frame for Participation: Alpha Trustees

Response	Number	Percent
Less than 1 year	4	18
1 year	10	45
2 years	3	14
5 years	1	5
Other	4	18
Total	22	100

Four trustees "got busy right away" and regarded board service as a "quick learning process." One member commented: "I'd like to think I was effective from the beginning." Another required only "a couple of meetings to become familiar with the actual procedures."

Ten trustees, virtually one-half of the trustees interviewed, took approximately one year "to be aware of the college and its problems, and the significance of service." One was "rather quiet" in the first year and "evaluated what was happening," but was "not bashful to make a point." Generally, it took a year for the ten trustees in "getting respect and giving input." One trustee with one year's experience admitted to be "learning still," while another member took a year "just to learn the names of the buildings."

For three trustees, it took two or more years "to find out what the score was" and "to feel comfortable." One was "not sure how effective I am yet," and felt that the board's size made the adjustment "tough in two years."

One trustee served almost two full terms "before I got the grasp and knew what was going on." Of the remaining members, two stated "not yet" after one year's service. One long-time member commented: "I'm no more effective now than then."

The researcher compared the responses on Question 4 regarding the introduction to needs/role to the comments on Question 10. The comparison reflects the tendency for the trustees who perceived their introduction as adequate to have felt actively involved in one year or less. Ten of the fourteen members who responded positively on Question 4 were active in one year or less. Yet four of the seven trustees who answered "no" on Question 4 also required one year or less. Since the trustees' average was one year for involvement, the comparative evidence was not dramatic. This suggests that the time-frame for each trustee's adjustment was a combination of numerous factors. In

addition, there were no patterns discerned between the combined responses on Questions 4 and 10 and the trustees' personal data variables.

11. How best did you gain an understanding of the roles and duties of a trustee?

Two factors were cited as particularly important: contacts with fellow trustees and college officials, and the experience gained through meetings. Ten trustees noted the value of informal conversations, and working relationships, with "faculty, board members, and students," as well as the President and other administrators. Generally, an understanding of trusteeship came by "attending meetings, listening and learning, watching the process, and talking to people." Three trustees cited as helpful such activities as committee work on fund-raising. One member listed previous board experience at another college. In addition, there was "a wealth of material, if you bother to read it." Two trustees felt that "feeling your own way" helped to clarify duties and roles.

12. Does Alpha College need to develop more systematic orientation procedures?

Almost two out of three trustees concerned with the President's opinion that better orientation was "a definite need." While there was "generally care and concern" for the college, "some do and some don't" have a clear awareness of the trustee role. The trustees' responses are provided in Table 13.

Table 13
Perceptions of Orientation Procedures

Response	Number	Percent (approx.)
Yes	14	64
No	5	22
"Depends"	3	14
Total	22	100

Fourteen trustees favored better orientation, because "it was not one of their strong points." One trustee wanted some guidelines "in black and white" instead of the general attitude of "contribute what you can." Another wanted defined expectations of board service, so one would not "come on with no idea of what to do." Several trustees suggested that new members needed "to know more about the college and its history," as well as to become better acquainted at the outset with other trustees and college officials. While one regarded orientation especially important for new members without business or education backgrounds, another suggested that those trustees particularly needed better orientation. One trustee thought that more orientation would help activate new members at more nearly equal rates.

For three trustees, the time commitment necessary as well as individual factors prompted their indecision about more orientation. One trustee commented that the difficulty with trusteeship was that you "do not internalize it until you live it." Five trustees considered the

orientation adequate. One commented that if trustees were selected well, orientation was "a simple thing; most people were smarter than they looked." For another, "attendance at even half the meetings" was sufficient for orientation. There were no relationships observed between the trustees' lengths of service, or other demographic variables, and the responses on Question 12.

The researcher explored for possible relationships between the responses to Questions 4, 10, and 12. As noted, there was a tendency for those trustees who were active in one year or less (Question 10) to have perceived the introduction to needs/role as adequate. There was no observed relationship between Questions 4 and 12. As an example, of the fourteen trustees who supported better orientation (Question 12), as many answered "yes" as responded "no" on the issue of the introduction to needs/role (Question 4).

Similarly, Questions 10 (time) and 12 (orientation) were compared with no patterns discerned in the responses to those questions. As an example, nine trustees who felt active in one year or less also favored a more systematic orientation. The paired positive and negative responses to Questions 4 and 12 were mapped on the time-frame in Question 10. Some slight patterns emerged. Five trustees in each of these different combinations were active in two years or less. Of the five who received an adequate introduction and considered orientation adequate, all five were "active" in one year or less. Of the five members who regarded the introduction as adequate but who supported more orientation, one required two years to become involved. And two of the five trustees, who did not receive an adequate introduction and favored

more orientation, require two or more years to adjust. On the whole, a variety of individual combinations predominated in the comparison of the three questions.

In all the combinations of answers between Questions 4, 10, and 12, the researcher did not note any patterns between the trustees' personal data variables and the responses.

Participation and Involvement
(Questions 13-19)

13. Do you have a special role, or interest, as a trustee?

The Alpha trustees listed a variety of interests which they monitored or which corresponded to their activities. Several of the members listed interests which directly related to their occupations.

The interests frequently mentioned were:

- academic program development and quality (6)
- general public relations (6)
- fund-raising (6)
- business/finance issues (5)
- faculty recruitment, and liaison with faculty (4)

Other interests included athletics (2), and buildings and properties (2), as well as student recruitment (1), trustee selection (1), and student life (1). One trustee especially was alert to the relationships between the administration and the religious order. The President cited special roles for seven of the twenty-two trustees. The interests of the seven were similar to their activities or roles which the President recognized.

14. Does your committee assignment reflect your interest and expertise?

The trustees generally were satisfied with their committee assignments but offered little explanation. Only one member did not regard the committee assignment as a good match but was "willing to go where they want me." Two trustees were awaiting their first committee work. Another trustee commented that new members should not have to "sit and wait" for committee work. One trustee would feel "hurt if displaced" from a particular committee. One member hoped to serve eventually on other committees, while another felt that the current assignment "best fits my time schedule." Another trustee liked a particular committee, but noted "if it really met, then I could contribute something." One other trustee had commented that some committees did not meet regularly. One trustee stated the finance and Executive committees were "the real ones, where the tough decisions were made."

15. Do the board meetings, and committee meetings, provide ample opportunities for open participation? Do any groups or individuals tend to dominate?

Generally, the members concurred that "if one used the opportunity . . ." to participate, " . . . no one was stifled." The trustees regarded themselves as "strong-willed people," and "everybody opens their mouths, nothing is cut and dried." The participation was especially good at the committee level, where "most of the real decisions were made." One trustee noted that the board and the religious order had disagreements at times, but the relationship was

"cordial and open." Having served on another college board, one member regarded the discussions as more open at Alpha. For another trustee, there was "occasionally too much discussion."

Two trustees did not agree completely with their colleagues. One perceived that participation was "not as good as it could be; there could be more interaction. . . ." The other felt "there was not much time for open discussion."

While some trustees were "more verbose than others," no group or individual dominated. One stated that the more verbal members were "those with the greatest interests." Another trustee "appreciated the input" of those with special expertise. Two trustees did note that some members tended to "stick together" in relation to their residences and/or occupations. One member observed that the Chairman did not let any group or individual dominate the meetings. .

16. How do you stay well-informed on issues related to Alpha College, and higher education in general?

Eighteen of the twenty-two trustees listed reading as the principal method. The reading material included minutes and reports, college publications, and mailings from the President. One trustee indicated: "I read all they send--they throw it at us." Another member admitted to "not reading as conscientiously as I should." The President felt that about fifty percent, "the leaders," were well-read.

In addition to reading, eight trustees discussed issues with the President, faculty and staff, or other trustees. The board members were "free to call" and seek additional information. One trustee was "clued in" through discussions with the President three or four times per

month. Due to close proximity, a few members would "stop by" the campus on occasion. Eight trustees also cited the committee sessions and the board meetings as sources of information.

17. Do you attend campus activities and events as a means of being well-acquainted with campus life?

The President stated that "only a handful come often," and hoped that other trustees could "get to campus activities more regularly."

Six trustees attended several campus events each year, while four members did not attend any campus activities outside of board meetings. Distance was a definite, limiting factor for three trustees. In general, a trustee's other commitments and initiative, rather than distance, determined the frequency of attendance at campus events. One trustee regularly attended "athletic contests, theatrical productions, and art exhibits." Eight trustees attended "some but perhaps not enough." Often the events attended were those occurring at times close to board meetings. Three trustees indicated that they took visitors to various campus activities, and at least one member was a guest lecturer for a campus program.

18. Do you attend board meetings regularly?

The President estimated average attendance at sixty-five to eighty-five percent, with committee meetings attended with similar frequency. The trustees generally regarded their attendance as "pretty good." One trustee "rarely missed," perhaps only "two times in eight to ten years," while others had "made most of them." Some usually attended two of the three meetings per year. One trustee noted that "some who

are listed do not attend." Another member offered a view that attendance was not an end in itself: "It's better if you're there, but doing was more important."

19. How do you prepare for board meetings?

The Alpha trustees typically prepared by reading and/or discussing issues with other trustees or college officials. The reading material consisted of the agenda, minutes, and reports from previous meetings, and various other articles. One trustee would "read, question, and wonder" in advance. Another member "read the minutes and reflected on what had transpired at the last meeting [and] what had transpired in the interim." Other than reading, one trustee went "open-minded." One indicated preparation as "shower, shave, and go empty-handed."

Six trustees had discussed agenda topics and other issues with college officials and other trustees. One member, who prepared with "lots of reading, and phone calls," stated that trusteeship was a "very time consuming responsibility, more than I ever expected." The President regarded the trustees as generally well-prepared for board meetings.

Five trustees expressed concern about the information distributed prior to the meetings. One viewed the material as "sketchy but adequate." Two wanted the financial report distributed in advance. One stated that "too much was passed out at meetings" and labeled that practice "a rubber-stamp approach." Another felt that only the members of the finance and Executive committees really were well-informed.

Evaluation (Questions 20-23)

20. What combination of "work, wealth, and wisdom" do you contribute?

Henry Wriston's quotation served as a guide for this interesting albeit imprecise exercise. Table 14 lists the trustees' self-evaluation responses and the President's ratings of the board members. The researcher defined "wealth" as "giving, or helping procure, resources." A parentheses used with a number indicates a trustee's "qualified" response.

While the question is somewhat artificial, the results provide some evidence of the nature of the working relationships between the President and the trustees. The ratings were the same in five instances. Six trustees included fewer items than the President, while eight trustees included more items. In one instance, the single item was different on each rating. Two cases with "undetermined" responses by the President are not counted. Thus, for fifty percent of the trustees, their ratings were the same, or understated, in comparison with the President's views. It also should be noted, since Wriston asked for "at least two of the three," that eighteen trustees listed at least two factors. The President rated fifteen members with at least two items.

Table 14

"Work, Wealth, and Wisdom"
 (1=Work, 2=Wealth, 3=Wisdom)

Trustee	Code	President
# 1	1, (2), (3)	3
# 2	(1), 2	2
# 3	A11	1, 3
# 4	1, (2), 3	1, 3
# 5	A11	1, 2
# 6	2, 3	2, 3
# 7	(2), 3	A11
# 8	1	Undetermined
# 9	1, (2), (3)	A11
#10	2, 3	2, 3
#11	1, 2	1, 2
#12	1, 2, (3)	A11
#13	1, 2, (3)	A11
#14	1, 2, (3)	A11
#15	A11	1, 2
#16	1, 2	2
#17	1, 3	Undetermined
#18	2, 3	2, 3
#19	2	3
#20	1, 3	3
#21	A11	A11
#22	1, (2), 3	A11

21. Does service on the Alpha College board provide an opportunity for personal growth and development?

In general, the trustees viewed board service as a "very enriching experience." The contacts with a variety of people and the view of a college's operation were "extraordinary opportunities." Several trustees referred to the enjoyment of meeting and interacting with a cross-section of people. Other trustees gained a "new sense of college operations," and thus, dealt with issues one "would ordinarily ignore." For one trustee, serving on the Alpha board brought a greater awareness of church-related, private colleges. Trusteeship put another "in touch with the real world."

Serving as a trustee was like "going back to college" for one member, while another was "proud of being part of a college in a small way." As for opportunities for personal growth, one trustee stated: "if it didn't, I wouldn't be there."

22. What are the most rewarding features of your trusteeship? Least satisfying features?

The trustees listed an array of "rewarding" features. Several members derived satisfaction from assisting the college and its students. As one trustee noted: "To have helped somebody else is all I ask." Other trustees enjoyed the feeling of accomplishment in "seeing work and commitment resolved in positive programs. One member appreciated the way in which the college addressed "the changing needs of the community and area. For one trustee, board service "was more satisfactory than I expected it to be."

The twenty-two trustees cited few dissatisfactory features. One mentioned travel for meetings, while one found "budget talk" necessary but boring. One trustee thought that "no group wastes more time than academe," and regarded relations with the religious order as frustrating at times. Another member expressed frustration that "early on I felt helpless and did not know what was going on," and now "I don't feel I contribute enough."

23. Are improvements needed in the relationships between the Board and the President, between the Board and the Chairman, or are you satisfied with these relationships?

The trustees generally were satisfied with the board's relationships with the President and the Chairman. One-half of the trustees cited the working relationship as effective and made no further comments.

One trustee regarded the President and the Chairman as a "tough act to follow." Another member commented that the two leaders "had not tried to set themselves off" in their relations with the board. One member felt that there "was not a finer chairman." One trustee stated that the President "makes a real effort to keep the trustees informed and to use them." According to one trustee, the college always had a strong President and Chairman. That member viewed the President as "high-powered," and stated a philosophy for leadership: "get the very best President and hand [him/her] the ball." One trustee referred to the charisma of the President, while another described the relations of the board with the President and Chairman as a "love feast."

Four trustees, who generally were pleased with the President and Chairman, offered some observations about communications. One perceived a "distance" between the Chairman and the members, which "in general needs some improvement." Another sensed that "distance" on the President's part. One trustee stated that "more communication" was needed from both officials. Another trustee sensed that at times the President "told select members things" and later forgot that the whole board had not been notified.

The President was "very pleased" with the board, regarding it as "the best board I have worked with." The board was commended for its efforts in fund-raising, providing financial advice and direction, opening the meetings to faculty and student guests, and supporting the President's ideas for the advancement of the college.

Summary

For the purposes of this study, the researcher interviewed twenty-two of the thirty-six members of the 1980-81 Board of Trustees of Alpha College. That number represented sixty-one percent of the total membership. The trustees varied considerably in their responsiveness to the questions. While several seemed quite interested in the topics and willing to give their time to respond, others were reticent and provided curt answers. Two trustees commented on the study. One referred to the "long questionnaire" but cited the "good format," with "not ponderous items to fill out." The other termed the questions "pretty incisive." A brief summary of the Alpha trustees' comments is presented in the following paragraphs.

The personal data provides a general description of a "typical" Alpha trustee, for at least sixty-one percent of the membership. With roughly two of three members being men, the average trustee is male, middle-aged, well-educated, with an income level higher than the national average. Of those interviewed, the average member is affiliated with the college's sponsoring denomination and has served on the board for almost two full terms.

The Alpha trustees offered a variety of opinions and perceptions. Given the interesting array of individual responses to each question and the few patterns noted between particular questions, generalizations are necessarily broad. In addition, virtually no relationships were noted between individual responses and the demographic variables.

Selection

The trustees accepted their responsibilities for numerous reasons. The "desire to serve" and "an interest in the college, or higher education" were mentioned frequently. None of the twenty-two trustees was seeking the position.

All the trustees interviewed regarded the selection process as "personalized." Two-thirds of the members received an adequate introduction to the needs of the college and the role of a trustee, while most of the members recalled "specific" reasons for their invitation to serve. Three-fourths of the trustees who regarded the introduction as adequate also recalled that a specific reason was given.

The characteristics regarded as desirable in prospective trustees were a combination of broad experience and particular skills.

The talents which the trustees contributed to board service were a mixture of occupational skills, special backgrounds, and general attributes.

Board Balance and Orientation

The trustees generally supported the expansion of the duties of the Nominating Committee to a "Committee on Trustees." All the members regarded the board, at least partially or as a whole, as "balanced." Some suggestions were offered for increasing the diversity of the members. One-half of the trustees commented on the size of the board, with one-third of the members interviewed considering the board "too large." The length of term generated few comments.

On the average, the trustees took slightly more than one year to become fully involved. There was a tendency noted for the trustees who perceived their introduction to needs/role as adequate to be "active" in one year or less. With an average time-frame of one year, a variety of factors likely contributed to the involvement time period. Personal contacts with other trustees and college officials, and attending meetings, were particularly helpful in the adjustment to trusteeship.

The trustees generally advocated more orientation procedures. There were no relationships, however, noted between the responses concerning the time-frame for involvement and the issue of orientation. The comparison of the paired responses in Questions 4, 10, and 12 demonstrated a slight tendency for those who did not receive an adequate introduction to needs/role and who favored better orientation, to take longer than one year to become active participants.

Participation and Involvement

The trustees listed several special interests and roles relating to their board activities. Generally, the committee assignments matched the trustees' interests and expertise. There were ample opportunities for participation in board and committee meetings, with perhaps more distribution possible at the committee level.

Alpha trustees kept informed primarily by reading, with some members occasionally discussing issues with other trustees and/or college officials. Only a small number of trustees regularly attended campus events, but distance was not a particular factor determining attendance. Board meeting attendance averaged sixty-five to eighty-five percent. The trustees primarily prepared for board meetings by reading various materials and often by discussing agenda topics and issues with other trustees or with college staff and faculty. Several members suggested the availability of more information prior to board sessions.

Evaluation

The self-ratings by the trustees and the President's views, using the "work, wealth, and wisdom" format, provided evidence of the working relationships between the board members and the President. The ratings basically corresponded for fifty percent of the trustees.

The trustees generally regarded trusteeship as an enriching experience, with the opportunity to assist the college as especially rewarding. Few "least satisfying" features were cited.

The relationships between the Board and the President, and the Chairman and the Board, generally were acknowledged to be satisfactory and effective. Both the President and the Chairman were considered

strong leaders. A few suggestions were offered concerning "communications" from the President and the Chairman with the trustees.

The comments of individual Alpha College board members varied considerably on specific items and between related questions. While the researcher sensed the trustees' sincere interest in, and commitment to, the college, the twenty-two members seemed to be particularly independent individuals. One member stated that the trustees "were not that close, but worked well together." Another trustee termed it a "volatile and vibrant board." Additional consideration of trustee selection and participation at Alpha College will be presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

BETA COLLEGE: CASE STUDY OF TRUSTEE SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION

The College

Nestled in the middle of a community of 30,000, and near a larger urban area, Beta College is a four-year, residential, undergraduate liberal arts college, with a denominational affiliation. Served by nearly 150 faculty members, students may select courses of study in thirty-five major fields, leading to three different Bachelors degrees. In addition, the fully-accredited college offers several pre-professional options.¹ The current President has served Beta in that capacity for nine years. The college's mission, outlined by the President, is to:

. . . offer with recognized excellence, academic programs in the liberal arts, in the setting of a residential, undergraduate, coeducational college, and in the context of . . . [our] . . . faith.²

Recent enrollment at Beta numbered over 2,300 men and women students from forty states and twenty foreign countries. Table 15 presents the geographical distribution of the student body.³

¹Beta College Catalog, 1980-81, pp. 3, 5-6, 27.

²Beta College President's Report and Honor Roll of Donors, 1978-80, p. 1.

³Beta College Catalog, 1980-81, pp. 13, 327.

Table 15
Geographical Distribution of Beta Students

Residence	Number	Percent
Same state (as Beta)	1672	71.0
Contiguous states	241	10.2
Other states	396	16.8
Foreign countries	46	2.0
Total	2355	100.0

Board Structure and Organization

With the authority to direct the college "vested exclusively in," and the business and the property of the college "managed exclusively by," the board,¹ the Beta Board of Trustees represents the "incorporated body under which the college operates."² The current board membership of twenty-eight regular trustees is smaller than in other periods of Beta's past sixty years. There were fifty-three members in 1967 and thirty-six in 1926. The President regards the current membership of twenty-eight as a "nearly optimal" size, which allows for board diversity yet permits effective work and deliberation at the committee and full-board levels. The following paragraphs

¹Bylaws of Beta College, 1976, p. 1.

²Beta College Catalog, 1966, p. 7.

briefly outline the manner in which the board is organized to fulfill its responsibilities.

Board Meetings and Agenda

The board regularly meets three times per year, in October and May as required, and in January.¹ A typical two-day meeting begins in the afternoon of the first day, with the bulk of the afternoon session devoted to committee meetings. The evening provides an opportunity for special in-depth presentations on particular topics, or dinners with department chairpersons or graduating seniors. The full meeting of the board convenes the following morning, and includes the reports of the committee sessions. The board generally adjourns at noon.

The President is responsible for the meeting agenda and prepares them in consultation with the chairman and Secretary of the Board. Various written materials, as well as minutes and reports of meetings, are sent with the agenda to the trustees for their review and preparation prior to the next meeting. Other materials are distributed during the meetings.

Board Leadership

Three officers, elected annually from the membership at the May meeting, serve the Board. The Chairman, the "senior officer of the College," is the presiding officer and is responsible for providing direction for the trustees' efforts. The Vice Chairman, currently also the chairman of the Business and Finance Committee, will preside in the

¹Bylaws, 1976 p. 5.

Chairman's absence. The Secretary performs a variety of record-keeping and trustee selection functions.¹

Re-election to these positions is indeed common, with tenure granted "almost indefinitely." As an example, the current Chairman has held the position for two years, and the previous chairman served as chair for twelve years.

Committees of the Board

There are four standing committees and an executive committee. The standing committees are "to act in an advisory capacity . . . by investigating and evaluating matters within the scope of the committee function" and to report their recommendations to the full board. The four standing committees are: academic affairs and admissions, business and finance, church/college relations and development, and student life. The Chairman appoints the chairpersons of these four committees, after consulting with senior administrative staff of the college for their recommendations of those trustees best suited to provide strong committee leadership. The standing committees meet at each board meeting.

Each trustee is a member of one standing committee. With some "rotation and movement each year," a member may serve on more than one committee during the term of service. With board approval, the Chairman assigns committee positions. The recommendations of college officials are helpful in this process as well. New trustees are asked to indicate their preferences of committee assignments, but not all the preferences are honored. While the committees need a "diversity of strength," some

¹Bylaws, 1976, pp. 8-10.

special skills may be important on a particular committee. As a result, the business and finance committee is the least diverse in the backgrounds and interests of the members. According to the President, generally the trustees are placed "where their strength lies," and the specific committees have relatively little turnover. In addition to the trustees, each of the standing committees has "liaison" members, a student and a faculty member appointed by their peers to observe and to participate. The liaison members may participate in committee discussions but may not vote.

The role of the committees is important in the functioning of the board. From the President's perspective, the "review and approval" of committee work and recommendations is a major part of board meetings. The Chairman considers committee chairpersons to be a key element in effective board leadership. As an ex officio member, the President attempts to visit each committee but admits to spending more time with the business and finance, and development committees.

The executive committee has the "power and authority to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees" (with certain specified exceptions), and generally assembles once between each of the regular board meetings. It does not meet during the regular sessions. The executive committee is composed of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary of the Board, the President, and the chairpersons of the standing committees.¹

¹Bylaws, 1976, pp. 6-8.

Trustee Eligibility and Selection

Since 1926 the board of Beta College has been restructured three times, each time with variations in the requirements for selecting members from the denomination's regions. The procedures stipulated in the 1976 Bylaws permit a broad diversity and composition of trustees.

Eligibility

The Board of Trustees is to be "composed of not less than twenty-four nor more than thirty natural persons. . . ." ¹ In 1980-81, twenty-eight trustees served on the board, with the President as an additional, ex officio member. Ten "Honorary Trustees" also are listed on the membership roster, but are not included in the study.

Board membership is divided into four "categories of eligibility": denomination, at-large, faculty, and the President as ex officio. The provisions for the first three categories may be outlined briefly.

Denomination. Twelve trustees must be elected by the denomination's national authority. All twelve must be members of that church, with at least six being ordained ministers. The denomination is to "endeavor" to elect at least one trustee from each of its regions. The term of service is six years, with two trustees elected each year.

At-large. The Board is to elect between twelve and eighteen such members. At-large trustees serve six-year terms, with two elected each year.

¹Bylaws, 1976, p. 1.

Faculty. Two Beta faculty members serve on the board. The faculty trustees serve two-year terms, with one member elected each year by the Board.

The maximum length of service for denomination and at-large trustees, theoretically, is two consecutive terms, or twelve years. The limitation may be waived by board action, provided that no more than five trustees at any given time may be granted the waiver. Currently, four Beta trustees have served more than twelve years each. In practice, the board officers and other key committee leaders often receive the waiver. Faculty service is generally limited to four years, or two terms. The Bylaws do not specify the faculty service limitation, leaving that decision to Faculty and Board discretion. According to the President, the board has a "tendency to re-elect" its members to second terms without much deliberation. Board vacancies are filled for the unexpired portion of the previous member's term.¹ Those trustees then are eligible for re-election. It should be noted that the "staggering" of the number of trustees elected each year, in combination with the re-election process, contributes to a "fairly small turnover" annually.

Nomination and Selection

The Bylaws state formal procedures for trustee nomination and selection. The "Nominating Committee" of the board submits a slate of nominees for board approval at the May meeting. The Faculty submits two nominations for the one faculty trustee position. The denomination's

¹Bylaws, 1976, pp. 1-2.

national office forwards to the Secretary a list of the trustees which it has elected.¹

In actual practice the nomination and selection process is much less formal than the Bylaws imply. While designated as a standing committee, the Nominating Committee is not listed on the committee roster and functions more on an ad hoc basis. There is a "tradition" that the President, Chairman, and the Secretary actually constitute the "nominating committee," and recommend new trustees for board approval. In 1980-81, the Chairman-appointed Nominating Committee composed of several trustees and board officers, only reviewed the nominations for board office positions, with a tacit understanding that the current officers would be re-elected. The committee met once between the January and May meetings to review the board officer nominations and the recommendations for new trustees for the May board sessions.

The "professional interest" committee of the faculty presents nominations for the faculty members to consider. A two-step ballot process narrows to two the candidates for the faculty trustee position. The board elects one faculty trustee from the slate of two nominees. The denominational elections are essentially a pro forma review and approval of nominees submitted by the Nominating Committee. The Secretary monitors the nominations for compliance with the eligibility criteria. The President acknowledged not knowing, except for the ministers, which trustees filled denominational or at-large slots.

Acknowledging a "significant input" in the nomination/selection process, the President stated a "perhaps selfish" interest in wanting

¹Bylaws, 1976, pp. 2-4.

trustees who would be "supportive," and would provide "counsel, leadership, ideas, and financial support." In essence, "I like to pick my own boss." The President referred to the constant search for prospective trustees. A file of prospects is maintained, with several criteria important in identifying candidates: (1) interest in a denominational, liberal arts college, (2) potential of the prospect for effective service, (3) geographical distribution, (4) board diversity and needs, and (5) alumni and denominational background of the individual.

The trustee nomination/selection process is an open, referral and personal contact process. Referrals and recommendations of prospective trustees are submitted by current trustees, clergy, alumni, college administrators and faculty, and other friends of the college. The nominations to the Nominating Committee from the alumni association¹ often result from referrals submitted by college administrators. Few referrals are received, though encouraged, from the faculty. The contacts of the President, and the Chairman and the Secretary, are of paramount importance. The President stated that the process in a sense is "not as democratic as it sounds." Through personal contacts, especially with those three officials, the enlistment of new trustees is "pretty well set up." Often, the results of follow-up on referrals and other contacts are "if nominated, would you serve" conversations with the President, Chairman, and/or Secretary. It is a highly "personal" process which "varies so much" according to the nature of the contact between the individuals and college officials involved.

¹Bylaws, 1976, p. 3.

Orientation and Communications

Newly-elected trustees receive a set of written and published materials, including the college catalog, the Bylaws, and a brief outline of the President's expectations of trustee service. Since most trustees are elected in May and attend their first meeting in October, an orientation for new trustees is conducted at the October meeting. Essentially a briefing session, the orientation is conducted early on the first day of the board meeting by the President, Chairman, and several of the senior administrative officers at the college.

The trustees receive periodic communications which include the minutes and reports of board and committee meetings. In addition, the President regularly sends a "newsletter" regarding board and college activities, as well as items regarding issues and trends in higher education. Board members also receive the student newspaper, alumni mailings, and the Chronicle of Higher Education. The trustees are encouraged to contact the President and college staff for information and/or discussion.

The President recently developed the statement of "my expectations" of a new trustee to assist those members in the orientation to board service. Before reviewing the members' demographic data and the trustees' perceptions and attitudes concerning their selection and participation, it is important to outline the President's "reflections." The "most important overall responsibility" of the Board is to

insure that the purposes of the College are clearly stated, understood and accepted, and then to evaluate the degree to which these are being achieved.

As a guide for the new trustees, there are five general expectations:

1. Keep well-informed, so the trustee "can effectively participate. . . ."
2. Be sensitive to "issues and input" and communicate these to the President.
3. Serve as "representatives and ambassadors" of the college.
4. Procure resources, "by giving personally," and perhaps more importantly, by "identifying other resources."
5. Support and encourage the staff, faculty, and study body.¹

The Trustees

Twenty-seven of the twenty-eight trustees of Beta College were interviewed for the purposes of this study. The number represents ninety-six percent of the board's membership. The honorary trustees are not included in this study. The following data regarding the trustees, collected during the interviews, provides some perspectives about type of individuals serving on the Beta board.

Geographical Distribution

As a result of the trustee eligibility criteria and the general selection process, the Beta board has a national base. Table 16 lists the geographical distribution of the trustees interviewed.

¹President of Beta College, "Some Reflections on the Role of a Member of the Board of Trustees . . ." Mimeograph, 1979.

Table 16
Geographical Distribution of Beta Trustees

Residence	Number	Percent
Same community (as Beta)	4	15
Same locale	6	22
Same state	1	4
Contiguous states	6	22
Other states	10	37
Total	27	100

This distribution corresponds well with the national denominational base and the geographic distribution of the student body. Eleven trustees (40%) reside in the same state as Beta, as do 71% of the students. Eleven other board members (40%) reside in states which contribute 16.8% of the student enrollment. Thus, 80%, or twenty-two, of the trustees are from states which contribute 87.8%, or 2,068, of the Beta students.

Sex and Age

The predominate number of Beta trustees are men, with twenty-two men comprising 81% of the members interviewed. The average age of the trustees is fifty-six years. The youngest board member is forty-three; and the oldest is seventy-three. Table 17 presents the sex and age data.

Table 17
Sex and Age of Beta Trustees

Sex	Number	Percent	Age (yrs)	Number	Percent
Male	22	81	40-49	11	41
Female	5	19	50-59	6	22
			60-69	7	26
			70 or over	3	11
Total	27	100		27	100

Mean age = 56

Median age = 57

It is interesting to note that, while women comprise only 18% of the board's membership, the ages of all five are lower than the trustee average. The average age of the women is 47.4 years.

Formal Education

The Beta College trustees are well-educated, as represented by their highest levels of achievement in formal education settings. Twenty-five of the twenty-seven trustees interviewed received at least the Bachelors degree. Table 18 describes their educational backgrounds.

Table 18

Formal Education of Beta Trustees
(by highest level of achievement)

Level	Number	Percent (approx.)
High school graduate	1	4
Junior/community college	1	4
Bachelors degree	9	33
Some graduate study	1	4
Masters degree	2	7
Professional degree (law, medicine, seminary)	7	26
Doctorate	6	22
Total	27	100

The number of Beta alumni serving on the board is large. Of the twenty-five trustees who earned at least a Bachelors degree, twenty-one are Beta graduates, or attended for two or three years. That alumni contingent represents eighty-four percent of the Bachelors degree recipients and seventy-eight percent of the total trustees interviewed.

Religious Affiliation

The religious affiliation of the trustees demonstrates a pattern similar to the alumni representation. Twenty-one of the trustees interviewed, or seventy-five percent, are affiliated with the college's

denominational sponsor. Sixteen of the twenty-one Beta alumni on the board are members of the denomination.

Other Relationships

In addition to alumni status and denominational affiliation, the trustees identified other areas of relationship with the college. Several trustees listed multiple factors. Thirteen board members are, or were, parents of Beta students, or were related to Beta graduates. Eight were donors prior to joining the board. Three trustees were acquainted with the college through working in the leadership structure of the denomination.

Occupation

Table 19 lists the trustees' current occupations. The clergy and business/finance vocations are most numerous. The category "housewife" is somewhat misleading, since some of the five women are "partners" in their spouse's work, or are involved in other part-time vocations or service activities. The "retired" group includes former business (3) public relations (1), or higher education (1) occupations. It should be pointed out that the number of clergy on the board is the minimal number stipulated in the Bylaws.

Table 19
Occupation of Beta Trustees

Occupation	Number	Percent (approx.)
Clergy	6	22.0
Housewife	5	18.5
Retired	5	18.5
Business/banking	4	15.0
Higher education	3	11.0
Insurance/sales	2	7.0
Architecture	1	4.0
Law	1	4.0
Total	27	100.0

Income Level

The approximate income level (current or approximate level at retirement age) of the trustees is higher than the national average, with the median income in the \$50,000 to \$75,000 range. In a few instances, the family income was reported. Two incomes were reported as "high" and "pastor's salary."

Table 20

Approximate Income Level of Beta Trustees

Income	Number	Percent
\$25,000 - \$35,000	8	30
\$36,000 - \$50,000	4	15
\$51,000 - \$75,000	2	7
Over \$100,000	11	2
Other	2	7
Total	27	100

Length of Service

With a six-year term of service, except for the faculty term of two years, there is virtually an equal division between the trustees serving fewer than, and more than six years. Table 21 outlines the length of service on the board for the twenty-seven trustees interviewed.

Fifty-two percent, or fourteen, of the trustees have served fewer than six years. Nine trustees, or thirty-three percent, have served between six and twelve years, and four members (fifteen percent) have completed more than two six-year terms. The four members with more than two consecutive terms of service is one fewer than the maximum of five, at any given time, permitted by the Bylaws, to receive Board approval for continued service. The median length of service is between five and six years. The average length is 6.8 years, slightly more than

Table 21

Length of Service on Beta Board

Year	Number
1 year or less	3
2 years	4
3 years	2
4 years	2
5 years	3
6 years	3
7 years	1
8 years	2
10 years	1
12 years	2
More than 12	4
Median = 5-6 years Mean = 6.8 years N = 27	

one full term. The longest period of service of a current trustee is twenty-five years.

There is no particular relationship between the trustees' age upon election to the board and the length of service. As an example, the youngest current trustee is age forty-three and already has served six years. Most of the board members interviewed, however, were elected between ages forty-five and fifty-five years.

In addition to being trustees at Beta College, many of the trustees are serving, or have served, on the boards of civic, health, or church organizations, as well as on corporate boards. All but one of the twenty-seven Beta trustees interviewed, however, are serving for the first time on a college board.

Trustee Responses

The responses of the twenty-seven trustees interviewed reflect their perceptions and attitudes concerning selection and participation as a trustee of Beta College. This section reviews their remarks on each question and includes the comments of the President, and/or the Chairman, where appropriate.

The Selection Process (Questions 1-7)

1. Why did you accept the responsibility as a trustee?

The members often included a variety of multiple reasons and motives. The most frequent comments related to the "positive experiences as a student and an opportunity to return the favor" (10). Other frequent responses included:

- opportunity to serve the college and church (6)
- an "honor and privilege" to serve (5)
- willing to serve worthwhile causes, if asked (4)
- an interesting challenge (4)
- familiarity with the college (3)
- interest in higher education (3)
- opportunity to promote liberal arts in a denominational setting (3)

The strength of friendships and family and community ties was a definite factor. One member recalled sweeping classrooms as a student, while another considered the college as "part of my catalog of loyalties." Other trustees looked forward to working with trustees whom they admired and respected. For two trustees, the invitation to serve came "at about the right time" in relation to other activities.

2. Were you seeking such a position? Why?

The overwhelming response was "No." Only one of the twenty-seven trustees answered "yes." That member had "particular views about the college" and "used politics" to gain election. Many of the other twenty-six trustees indicated that the invitation to serve came "out of the clear blue sky." One trustee was "honored and flabbergasted--delighted to do it." Another stated: "I was not even a 'model' graduate." One trustee as "overwhelmed" at the President's call and "thought the call was for my spouse."

3. Was the nomination/selection process personalized? Who was involved?

Twenty-four trustees, or eight-nine percent, considered the process "personalized." One member responded negatively, and the two faculty trustees regarded the question as not applicable. The twenty-four trustees were contacted personally, in a variety of ways, to explore their interest in serving, or to extend an invitation to be nominated. The President, the Chairman, and/or the Secretary were listed as the officials who contacted the prospective trustees. The formats for discussions included telephone calls, letters, campus visits, or an appointment in the candidate's locale. In several

instances, telephone conversations continued after the trustees' elections, prior to their first board meeting.

4. Did you receive an adequate introduction to the needs of the institution and the role of a trustee?

While the process generally was regarded as personalized, the trustees responded with less certainty that they received an adequate introduction. Table 22 indicates the responses.

Table 22
Adequacy of the Introduction

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	11	41
No	9	33
Partially	5	18
"Occupation"	1	4
"Familiarity"	1	4
Total	27	100

Eleven trustees felt that the college official(s) and/or materials provided a "pretty accurate picture." One trustee recalled thoroughly reviewing the educational program and the financial status of the college. "No question about it; I would not want to go with a loser." Two trustees recalled discussions about their "best area of service." Four others stated that contacts with trustees whom they knew supplemented the introduction.

Those who responded negatively considered the introduction to the college and a trustee's role to be "not very good at the time" and "quite lacking." One trustee regarded this issue as "the weakest aspect of my board experience, not knowing what to expect." Another "did not know what I was getting into," but wondered "maybe you cannot prepare for that."

For five trustees, the process only provided partial answers, even though they cited familiarity with the college, some of the staff, and general governing board functions. Two trustees stated that the introduction was not needed, due to a familiarity with the college community and by virtue of occupation, respectively.

Regarding Question 4, on the adequacy of the introduction, the researcher noted no patterns or differences in the responses of those trustees selected under another president, or differences between the occupational backgrounds, residences, or lengths of service of the trustees, in relation to the responses. The answers, however, must be evaluated cautiously. Regardless of the nature of the response, the trustees' recall might be tempered by board experience. Perhaps those who were "surprised" with the suggestion of trusteeship may have asked fewer questions in the process of selection.

5. Was a specific reason(s) given for inviting you to become a trustee?

The Beta board members did not state with unanimity that a specific reason was given for inviting them to be trustees. Table 23 lists the various responses. The researcher divided the positive answers into two groups: "A" for specific reasons related to the

individual's talents or special background, and "B" for general reasons such as geographical distribution.

Table 23
Specific Reasons for the Invitation to Trusteeship

Response	Number	Percent
Yes - 5A	11	41
Yes - 5B	8	26
Partially	4	19
No	2	7
Not applicable	2	7
Total	27	100

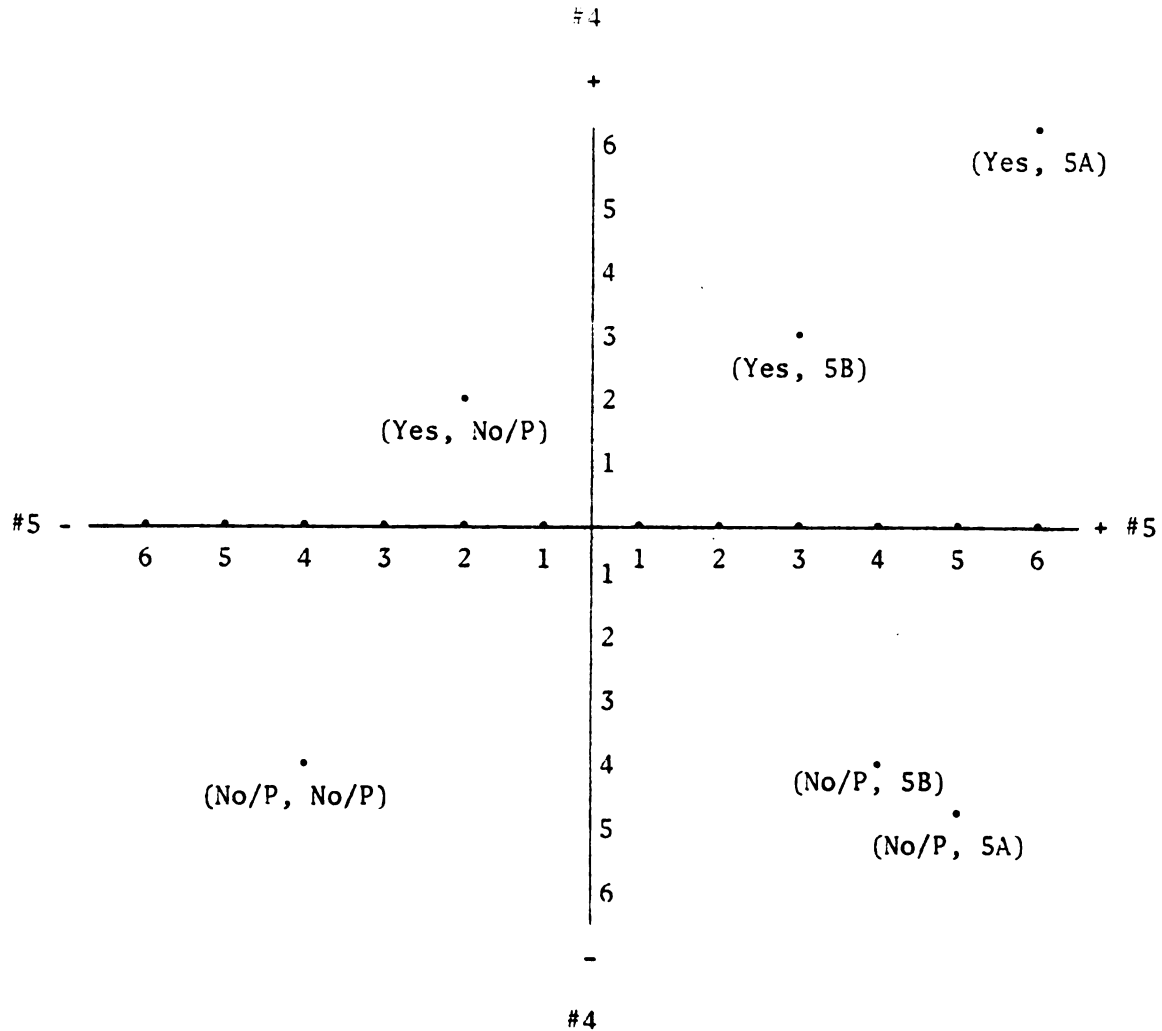
Eleven trustees were cited for skills and talents ranging from knowledge of higher education, to business acumen, legal expertise, and church leadership. The eight "general" (5-B) reasons were related to geographical distribution, sex, denominational representation requirements. As an example, one trustee indicated that the board "needed local trustees," while another hoped that the invitation had been for "pragmatic rather than sentimental reasons." The trustees who responded "partially" did not list specific reasons but rather offered conjectures based on their recall of process. The negative responses were not explained.

As in the case of Question 4, the responses on Question 5 must be interpreted cautiously. While the college official involved indeed might have had a specific reason, that reason might not have been communicated adequately. And the trustees simply might not remember the precise conversation. There were no observed patterns of response related to such factors as the trustees' length of service, residence, occupation, or age.

Since the issues in Questions 4 and 5 are particularly important in the selection process, the researcher explored the possible relationships between the responses to those questions. Table 24 provides a cross-reference of the Beta trustees' responses. No marked relationships were discerned for the combination of responses. A "yes" response to either question, as an example, did not relate with regularity to a positive or negative response to the other question. A thorough mapping of the demographic data with the responses did not reveal any particular relationships between such variables as age, occupation, length of service of the trustees, and the combination of responses on Questions 4 and 5. The researcher acknowledged the imprecise nature of this comparison, for it is based on the trustees' recall and the researcher's categorization of responses. Yet the exercise provides evidence of the wide variety of contacts and discussions in the actual selection process.

Table 24

Cross-Reference on Beta Trustee's Responses to
Questions 4 and 5



Note: The parenthetical keys indicate the responses as "(Question 4, Question 5)." "Not Applicable" answers on Question 5, and the "Occupation" response from Question 4 are not included. "No/P" indicates "No" and "Partial" responses combined.

6. What characteristics, qualities, or attributes do you feel are important in prospective trustees?

Acknowledging that not all qualities are found in any one individual, the trustees suggested a wide array of desirable characteristics. The attributes most frequently mentioned primarily were broad concepts rather than specific areas of expertise:

- commitment to the college and its goals (11)
- objectivity and open-mindedness (10)
- commitment to religious values (8)
- business and finance expertise (8)
- supportiveness, or supportive critic (6)
- willingness to give time and effort (5)
- interest in, or knowledge of, higher education (5)
- broad, general experience (5)
- willingness to contribute, and/or seek friends (3)

The President especially emphasized "commitment" to the college and religious values. Both the President and the Chairman highlighted "a real interest to do the work."

7. What particular abilities or expertise do you bring to the board?

As the researcher anticipated, the trustees' responses were varied and often included more than one item. Several trustees listed various occupational expertise, or special backgrounds. The following responses were examples:

- denomination contacts (5)
- higher education experience (4)
- management/personnel skills (4)
- business/finance talent (3)

Other "particular" abilities were more general in nature, and included:

- knowledge of the college, or interest in higher education (8)
- "people" skills (5)
- objectivity and pragmatism (4)
- "perceptive" questioner (3)

Those trustees who cited "objectivity and pragmatism" provided the most explanation with their responses. Applying "common sense" enabled one trustee to "cut through to the heart of the issue." Another member was "reasonable objective, perhaps a little bit cynical." One trustee brought a "little people" approach to budget considerations.

Board Balance and Orientation (Questions 8-12)

8. Is there a good diversity and balance on the board?

Both the President and the Chairman generally considered the board to be balanced with a diverse membership. The President did indicate the need for such additional representation as women from business/finance and the professions, higher education specialists, and one or two trustees with, or who could help find, substantial wealth. Seventy percent of the Beta trustees regarded the board as "balanced." Table 25 lists their responses.

Table 25

Beta Trustees' Perceptions of Board Balance

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	19	70
Partially	4	15
No	4	15
Total	27	100

For the many of the trustees interviewed, the board, in one member's words, was "a healthy combination of practical, hard-headed businessmen, faculty and academicians, and church representatives." Several trustees noted that the composition of the membership was no longer "hamstrung by the charter." Two trustees emphasized that there was a good balance of the sexes, occupations, and professions.

Four members, who responded "partially," were concerned somewhat that the composition was skewed. They cited a heavy concentration of alumni businessmen, and church representatives. Two members felt, with individual exceptions, that the "church representatives contributed less than the others." Another of the four trustees, however, noted that the "real movers and shakers" were some of those with business expertise and two of the clergy.

The four trustees who answered "no" cited the over-representation of clergy, alumni, and "local" residents, and the lack of women, and members of the professions. These four trustees tended to view the

board as "tipped to conservatism" or "too homogeneous--too many similar thinkers." One trustee commented that too many "non-independent thinkers" thus "did too much seconding" of recommendations "milk-fed" to the board by the administration. As one remarked, the composition of the board might represent the mark of good leadership, but homogeneity also could be a weakness.

9. Are any changes needed in the size of the board, composition of the board, or the terms of the service of the board members?

In responding to Question 9, the trustees did not comment on each item. The result was a mixture of responses, which in individual cases did not directly link to their comments on Question 8. There were two suggestions to increase the number of women, particularly women associated with business/finance and the professions. Two trustees suggested higher education, and one suggested minority groups, as categories for improving board composition and diversity. One trustee recommended a decrease in the clergy group, while another recommended elimination of the faculty trustee positions. Perhaps as a sign of the times, one trustee noted that the board was "weak in really wealthy people."

One-third of the trustees remarked about board size. Only one of the nine recommended a slightly larger board. While several had "qualms about the size," they recognized that the current size permitted a diverse membership and effective committee size. Four trustees specifically noted that the board seemed "awfully large and unwieldy," and made deliberations more difficult in the full-board sessions. Because of the size, one trustee regarded the executive committee as a "guiding light" in the operations of the board. Two other trustees,

however, were concerned that the executive committee had too much influence as a result.

The trustees generally regarded the six-year term, with the possibility for re-election, as appropriate for effective service and continuity. Three trustees did express concern that the list of honorary trustees was growing too long.

10. How long did it take for you to become an "effective," participating trustee?

Both the President and the Chairman regarded the general time-frame as one year, which corresponded to the trustee average. Fifty-five percent of the trustees regarded themselves as active participants in one year or less. Table 26 lists the "time-frame" for participation.

Table 26

Time-Frame for Participation: Beta Trustees

Response	Number	Percent
Less than 1 year	6	22
1 year	9	33
2 years	7	26
3 years	1	4
4 years	1	4
Other	3	11
Total	27	100

The six trustees who "hit the boards immediately," and required less than one year, listed particular committee assignments and activities, as well as business or academic experience, as important for their rapid adjustment to board service. Fifty-nine percent of the members listed one or two years, and generally regarded "experience as the best training." Several of these sixteen trustees considered the committee work helpful in getting accustomed to board functions. There was initially "some reticence," especially in full board meetings.

The responses listed under "other" included: "In some areas immediately, in other areas I'm still working at it," and, "I don't know if I really feel effective after six years."

There were no particular relationships observed between the trustees' demographic data and the answers to Question 10. In addition, the researcher compared these responses to Question 4, regarding the introduction to needs/role. There was no relationship noted between the adequacy of the introduction and the length of time indicated for participation. As an example, of the twenty-two members listing two years or less on Question 10, as many trustees responded "yes" or answered "no" on Question 4. The time needed for each trustee's adjustment likely was a result of a combination of individual factors.

11. How best did you gain an understanding of the roles and duties of a trustee?

Three factors particularly were listed: peer relationships, experience, and communications. Almost half (thirteen) of the trustees interviewed listed the formal working relationships and informal discussions with their more experienced peers as the primary method. The

dynamics of the board were clarified by "observing and working with other capable trustees."

Nine trustees indicated that written communications, including minutes and reports of board and committee meetings, provided additional insights. "Just plain experience" was cited by eight members. "Observing and absorbing," and "attending meetings, talking and listening" helped in "feeling and plowing your way."

12. Does Beta College need to develop more systematic orientation procedures?

As indicated in Table 27 , the opinions regarding orientation were divided almost equally.

Table 27
Perceptions of Orientation Procedures

Responses	Number	Percent
Yes	12	44
Maybe	5	19
No	10	37
Total	27	100

Almost half (12) of the trustees felt the need for better orientation procedures. Some of the twelve related from their own experiences that more orientation "would have been helpful." One trustee felt that "some don't get clued in--some not until their second term." Another stated that a "college freshman approach" was needed, with a "thorough

introduction to the campus, bylaws, and trustees' duties." One trustee suggested a "frank" orientation was needed on the "structure and dynamics" of higher education.

Those members responding "maybe" recognized the importance of orientation but were concerned that a "more systematic" process might require additional time of both the staff and the trustees. Ten trustees regarded the orientation as "adequate" or "fine." In one trustee's opinion, the membership was a "highly sophisticated group," with many members already having had other types of governing board experience. Another trustee commented that there was "nothing complicated or profound" about board service, and the "less experienced caught on quickly." The Chairman did not perceive a need for more orientation procedures.

In considering possible relationships, the researcher examined Questions 4, 10, and 12. As previously noted, there were no observed relationships between the responses to Question 4 (adequate instruction) and Question 10 (time). There was no relationship noted between answers on Questions 10 and 12. As an example, of the fifteen trustees who considered themselves active in one year or less, seven responded "yes," and seven answered "no" to the need for better orientation. There was a moderate relationship observed in the responses to Questions 4 and 12. Eight of the twelve trustees who favored more orientation also indicated a "partial" or "no" answer regarding an adequate introduction to needs/role. Likewise, of the ten members who regarded orientation as adequate, eight felt that the needs of the institution and trustee role were discussed adequately. The paired positive and negative responses to Questions 4 and 12 were mapped on the responses to Question 10, but

no pattern was discerned. In all the comparisons between Questions 4, 10, and 12, the demographic data of the trustees were not related to the responses in any observed pattern.

Participation and Involvement (Questions 13-19)

13. Do you have a special role, or interests, as a trustee?

The diversity of the board might be reflected not only in its demographic composition but also in the trustees' special interests. Many of the trustees listed interests which corresponded to their occupations and backgrounds. The interests most frequently mentioned were:

- fund raising (10)
- academic program (7)
- business/finance (6)
- management/personnel (6)
- student life (5)
- church relations and values (5)

Other interests included student recruitment (3), faculty recruitment (2), and alumni activities (1). In enumerating the trustees who performed "special roles," the President listed sixteen trustees. The interests indicated by those sixteen corresponded with the roles or activities for which the President gave recognition.

14. Does your committee assignment reflect your interest and expertise?

The members generally considered that their committee assignments matched their interests and expertise. Twenty-four trustees felt they were "properly placed" and assigned "where I can serve best."

Several members expressed a "curiosity" about the details reviewed by the business and finance committee but were pleased not to serve on it. Those trustees who had served on other committees generally regarded each assignment as a beneficial learning experience. Only three trustees were not pleased with their committee assignments.

One trustee, who was satisfied with the committee assignment, did suggest that committee assignments should be rotated more frequently. The present system "trained too narrowly--instead of broadly."

15. Do the board meetings, and committee meetings, provide ample opportunities for open participation? Do any groups or individuals tend to dominate?

The Beta trustees interviewed generally agreed that there were ample opportunities for a "good exchange of ideas." The members were a "good vocal bunch" who had "heated discussions" at times. Several members commented, however, that the Chairman was adept at tactfully presiding over discussions. For some of those who commented on the second part of the question, any "domination" occurred "only in respect to individual expertise," and the "few outspoken members were actually catalysts." One trustee indicated that, while the meetings were "open," there seemed to be a "fair amount of confusion on the real role of the trustees" in fulfilling their responsibilities. It was acknowledged by several trustees, however, that discussion and participation "worked better" in the committees. In the President's opinion there was "good participation" at the committee and board level. The Chairman's remarks supported the President's view.

Ten trustees expressed concern that the meetings of the full board were "often far too rushed . . . [with] . . . too much in too little time." One member stated: "Sometimes there is not enough time to question or probe." Another member felt that the Chairman often was "pushing on the agenda." Three trustees suggested a careful review of the agenda to allow appropriate time for discussing key issues. The agenda was criticized by those members as "pretty tight" and "set in concrete." Two trustees voiced concern that the executive committee "wielded too much influence" partially as a result of the limitations on discussion which a tight agenda produced.

16. How do you stay well-informed on issues related to Beta College, and higher education in general?

For the most part, the trustees stay informed primarily by reading. The members received a "very extensive set" of written materials. In addition, the trustees talked with college staff, faculty, and, on occasion, students. There was a tendency by those more distant from the campus to rely particularly on reading. Conversations with staff occurred primarily when the trustees were on campus, with some telephone contact when necessary. Trustees with children attending Beta acknowledged them as a source of information as well.

17. Do you attend campus activities and events as a means of being well-acquainted with campus life?

The frequency of attendance depended on the individual trustee's initiative as well as the distance from campus, although distance was a real problem for twelve trustees. Only six trustees indicated frequent attendance. A few members from more distant locations, however, attended events more frequently than some trustees from the community or

locale in which Beta is located. Some trustees, particularly those with children at Beta, or with friends in the area, allotted extra time around board meetings in an effort to spend additional time on campus. Several of the trustees, however, often attended events "only as scheduled or available at board meeting times."

18. Do you attend board meetings regularly?

The trustees' responses confirmed the President's comment that attendance was good, averaging over eighty percent. Distance from campus was a minimal factor in attendance. Four trustees indicated missing only one or two meetings in five or more years.

19. How do you prepare for board meetings?

"Reading" was the response of all but one trustee. The items which they reviewed were board minutes, financial reports, minutes of the executive committee, and the agenda materials for the next meeting. One trustee admitted reading "even the mind-boggling financial reports." According to another trustee, the "majority of members did not read the material well." Some members consulted with the President, other trustees, or the administrative staff on various issues prior to the meeting.

In general, the materials for review were deemed "adequate" or "substantial enough." One trustee suggested that the agenda for committee meetings be distributed in advance. Another trustee suggested "a little more lead-up time on weighty issues," while another felt that the "information deals periphally with agenda issues."

Evaluation (Questions 20-23)

20. What combination of "work, wealth, and wisdom" do you contribute?

Using Henry Wriston's notable quotation as a guide, the trustees provided a self-evaluation. The President rated the trustees' contributions on the same format. Table 28 lists the results. "Wealth" was defined by the researcher as "giving, or keeping procured resources." A parentheses is used with any item "qualified" by the trustee.

It is interesting to note the similarities between the trustees' self-evaluation and the President's ratings. The researcher acknowledges the artificial and imprecise nature of the exercise, but the results suggest a close working relationship between the President and the trustees. The ratings were the same in ten instances, while the President included more items than the trustees in nine cases. Eight trustees included more items than the President. Thus, the trustees' ratings were the same, or were understated, in comparison with the President for seventy percent of the membership. Interestingly, the President listed all twenty-seven trustees, and the trustees themselves totaled twenty-five as contributing "at least two of the three."

Table 28

"Work, Wealth, and Wisdom"
 (1=Work, 2=Wealth, 3=Wisdom)

Trustee	Code	President
# 1	1, (2), 3	1, 3
# 2	1, 2, (3)	A11
# 3	(1), 3	1, 3
# 4	1, 3	1, 3
# 5	(1), 3	1, 3
# 6	1, 2, (3)	A11
# 7	1, (2), 3	2, 3
# 8	A11	1, 3
# 9	A11	1, 3
#10	1, 3	1, 3
#11	A11	1, 3
#12	1, (2), 3	A11
#13	1, (2), 3	A11
#14	1, 2, (3)	A11
#15	1, (2), (3)	A11
#16	1, 3	1, 3
#17	A11	A11
#18	3	1, 3
#19	1, 3	A11
#20	3	3
#21	2, 3	2, 3
#22	A11	A11
#23	(1), 2, 3	2, 3
#24	2, 3	2, 3
#25	A11	A11
#26	1, 2, (3)	A11
#27	1, 2, (3)	1, 3

21. Does service on the Beta College board provide an opportunity for personal growth and development?

For a variety of reasons, the trustees' service was a "marvelous learning experience." Personal contacts and the insights into the college operation were particularly important. Board membership provided personal contact with individuals with diverse backgrounds. Being a trustee enabled one to "meet top caliber people." As one trustee commented: "Definitely, how can you miss?"

In addition to the personal contacts, several trustees appreciated the opportunity to gain a "whole new understanding" of the "dynamics" of a college. One member noted that trusteeship "forced me into a wholistic approach to educational issues and the running of an educational institution." Another trustee observed "a variety of leadership styles" and the process of "compromise on knotty issues."

22. What are the most rewarding features of your trusteeship? Least satisfying features?

There were a wide variety of general perceptions and personal comments listed as "rewarding" features. Numerous responses cited the opportunity to assist the college in its "growth and progress." The association, in "common cause," with other trustees and the college personnel, also was listed often. The opportunity to assist somehow in providing for students' educations was mentioned by several trustees. On a more personal note, one trustee expressed "surprise and happiness that the college was ready to make use of me. . . ."

The list of least satisfying features was shorter, but as diverse. Among the comments, the "time commitment" and "travel for

meetings" were cited by three and two trustees, respectively. Three other comments concerned the "difficulty in reaching closure on decisions."

23. Are improvements needed in the relationships between the Board and the President, between the Board and the Chairman, or are you satisfied with these relationships?

In general, the trustees were quite satisfied with the board's relationships with the President and the Chairman. Several trustees expressed a "high regard" for, and confidence in, the President as a "top-flight" leader and administrator. One member considered the President to be "astute, open, and honest." Three trustees specifically complimented the President's communication skills. One member, however, felt that those skills were not complemented with good listening. Another trustee noted that the President "needs to be less defensive about [his/her] judgment and opinions."

Several trustees observed a "good rapport" and a close working relationship between the President and the Chairman. One member had "watched them grow beautifully in their roles." Some of the comments regarding the Chairman's rapport with the board and management skills were as complimentary. The Chairman was viewed as "open and fair," and adept at managing meetings. In addition, the Chairman demonstrated "good administrative expertise." One trustee, however, did not regard the Chairman as "adept at reading the board." Another felt that the Chairman did not have "the total confidence of the board."

It is interesting to note that the issues of the Chairman's residence and non-alumni status were mentioned in several comments. Three trustees noted that the Chairman resided a considerable distance

from the Beta community, and four trustees mentioned that the Chairman was not a Beta graduate. As a result, the Chairman had "no background of the college and community" and "others [trustees] were much more involved." While not wanting to detract from the Chairman's abilities, one trustee thought it was "unusual to step over others who have served the college community" in the process of selecting the current Chairman. On the other hand, three trustees considered the Chairman's different educational background and locale to be "an asset" for "bringing in outside perspectives." While both the President and the Chairman referred to the distance factor, neither regarded it as a particular problem.

Four trustees commented on the President's leadership of the college. Two referred to the President's task of directing the institution. Of the two, one indicated that "99% of what happens depends on the President" while the other regarded the President as "a very forceful figure." One trustee, who felt that there was good rapport between the board and the President, commented: "The President pretty well runs the board." Another member commented that the Chairman "was appointed at the whim of the President."

In his comments, the President regarded the relationships with the board as "effective." The trustees were commended for "being supportive" and for their efforts in providing the impetus in a fund-raising campaign. The President, however, challenged the trustees to "work harder" and to "take a higher stake" in the guiding of the college. As a means of fulfilling its responsibilities, the President suggested that the board needed regularly to review its role and effectiveness.

Summary

In conducting this study with the 1980-81 members of the Board of Beta College, the researcher interviewed twenty-seven of the twenty-eight members, or ninety-six percent of the membership. The trustees were especially receptive to the interviews and seemed quite interested in the concept of the study and its findings. Of the two comments offered about the study, one trustee referred to the "fairly exhaustive set of questions," while the other termed the questions "interesting, not at all what I expected." The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of their comments.

The demographic data provide a description of the "typical" Beta trustee: male, middle-aged, well-educated, with a moderately high income level. The average trustee also is a Beta graduate, is a member of the sponsoring denomination, and is a veteran of approximately six years of service on the board.

The responses of the Beta trustees to the interview questions were an interesting variety of perceptions and attitudes. The variety of comments makes the formulation of meaningful generalizations quite difficult. As an example, the responses of the large number of trustees with alumni status and/or denominational ties were as varied within that group as in comparison to the few members without such links with the college. In fact, the researcher noted few particular relationships between the various demographic variables and the trustees' responses.

Selection

The trustees accepted their responsibility to serve for a variety of reasons, but they especially stated a loyalty to, and

interest in, the college, as well as the opportunity to serve the college and the denomination. With one exception, none of the trustees interviewed was seeking the position.

Most of the members considered the selection process to have been "personalized." While the process generally was regarded as personal, the trustees were not as united in their views that they received an adequate introduction to the needs of the institution and the role of a trustee. Likewise, the trustees were divided in their perceptions that specific reasons were given for inviting them to be trustees. There were, however, no relationships noted between the various responses to these two issues.

Regarding desirable characteristics of prospective trustees, the members tended to mention broad precepts rather than specific skills or talents. Yet the talents which they brought to board service were listed as a mixture of occupational expertise and more general attributes.

Board Balance and Orientation

Generally, the trustees viewed the board as "balanced." Some concern was expressed regarding the relative numbers of trustees in certain categories on the general outlook of the members. Several suggestions were offered for improving the diversity of the membership. While the length of term was perceived as an appropriate period of service, the size of the board was mentioned, with varying degrees of concern.

The trustees required one year, on the average, to adjust to board service. Working with other more experienced and/or astute

trustees was regarded as particularly helpful in the adjustment process. The members were divided almost equally in their perceptions of the adequacy of the orientation process. The pattern of responses suggested that a trustee's perception of the introduction to needs/role as adequate or inadequate tended to be linked with a similar view of the orientation process.

Participation and Involvement

The trustees listed a variety of special roles and interests which related to their activities on behalf of the college or to their monitoring of college issues and operations. The committee assignments generally matched their interests and expertise. There were ample opportunities for participation in board deliberations, but perhaps more generally at the committee level. There were some concerns of varying types regarding the agenda and discussions at the full board sessions.

The trustees kept informed primarily by reading, especially for those more distant from the campus. While sometimes more a matter of individual initiative, attendance at campus activities and events often was combined with board meetings. Distance was not a factor regarding regular attendance at board meetings. Board meeting attendance was regularly over eighty percent. The trustees generally prepared for board sessions by reading and reviewing the various minutes, reports, and other materials which were received.

Evaluation

The trustees' self-evaluations, using the "work, wealth, and wisdom" format, generally corresponded with the President's views. The researcher regards the ratings as an indication of a close working

relationship between the trustees and President. The members felt that trusteeship was a broadening, educational experience. The opportunity to serve the college and its students was particularly satisfying. The list of the least satisfying features of board service was diverse and relatively short in relation to the more positive features.

In general, the trustees were pleased with the President's leadership of the college. There was good rapport perceived between the board members as a group and the President, as well as a close working relationship observed between the Chairman and the President. The trustees generally were complimentary toward the Chairman but some concerns were raised about the Chairman's residence, and background, relative to the college community.

While the trustee's responses often were varied in relation to their peers on specific questions, or between related questions, the researcher perceived a strong loyalty and commitment to the college on the part of the trustees. As one Beta trustee stated: "The college has a close-knit family/community feeling." Additional consideration of the issues regarding trustee selection and participation at Beta College is presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Statement of the Problem

Observers of higher education generally acknowledge that the trustees' role, "never one for the faint of heart," must imply "more than a seat on the 50-yard line."¹ Therefore, numerous publications and conferences, and the recent AGB National Commission on Trustee Selection, have focused on the importance of selecting the right people to serve on collegiate governing boards. To enhance trustee participation and to promote board effectiveness, the selection of new trustees "should be made in terms of those who are 'right' for a particular board, who can strengthen it, and give it what it needs."² Since the responsibility for trustee selection and involvement at private colleges lies with the presidents and the governing boards, the issues concerning trustee selection and participation require careful consideration at those institutions.

The researcher's intention in this study was to explore and to describe the process for selecting new trustees at two private liberal arts college and to consider the nature of the participation and

¹Ingram, "Trustees--Power and Sanity," p. 29; and Bob Keeshan, "Trusteeship: More Than a Seat on the 50-Yard Line," The Chronicle of Higher Education 19, No. 15 (December 10, 1979).

²Houle, The Effective Board, p. 49.

involvement of the board members at those institutions. Specific practices and procedures for trustee selection and orientation, board structure and organization, and the nature of trustee activities at the two colleges were described. The comments and perceptions of the trustees regarding their selection and the nature of their activities, and the remarks of the two college presidents, provided important perspectives on trustee selection and participation at each college. In addition, the study provided profiles of the composition and diversity of the two governing boards.

Methodology of the Study

A descriptive, case study format was utilized in investigating and describing trustee selection and participation at Alpha and Beta colleges. The subject populations consisted of the presidents and the trustees of the two participating liberal arts colleges in 1981. Questions for exploration were used in collecting data. The principal methods of data collection for each college were: (1) personal interview with the president, (2) telephone interviews with the trustees, and (3) published and written materials from each college. The interview format was selected as the appropriate method for collecting not only information about selection practices and trustee activities but also the perceptions and opinions of the board members and the two presidents about trustee selection and participation at their respective colleges. The subjective and imprecise nature of the interview method was acknowledged as an inherent limitation of the study.

For the purposes of the study, fifty-one interviews were conducted, one with each president and forty-nine with the trustees of

the two colleges. Twenty-two Alpha trustees, or sixty-one percent, were contacted. Twenty-seven, or ninety-six percent, of the Beta trustees were interviewed. The researcher had anticipated, given the diversity of board members at the two institutions, that not every trustee would be interviewed in the time allotted.

Questions used in the trustee interviews were developed after a thorough review of the literature on trusteeship. The twenty-three questions were analyzed in four categories: the selection process, board balance and orientation, participation and involvement, and evaluation. Demographic data also were collected from each trustee. Each trustee of Alpha and Beta college received the question set packet for review and consideration prior to the telephone interview. The personal interviews with the presidents covered questions similar to those posed to the trustees, as well as questions regarding actual trustee selection practices, board organization, and the president's perceptions of the trustees' participation. In reporting the trustee's comments, the researcher attempted to provide a "sense" of similar remarks but also to note the variety of opinions.

Complete confidentiality and anonymity were accorded each institution and its president and trustees. Prior to each interview, the researcher re-affirmed the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. In presenting the case studies, the researcher attempted to organize and report the data in a format that would not permit specific identification of the institutions or the trustees.

The results of each case study should be interpreted cautiously. Using the interview format, there were potential limitations in a respondent's understanding of questions and the researcher's

interpretation of the responses. The validity of the findings depended to a great extent on the candor and/or recall of the presidents and the trustees.

Case Studies: Findings and Conclusions

The interviews with the presidents and the trustees provided a wealth and a variety of information and comments regarding trustee selection and participation at their respective institutions. The following paragraphs present brief general summaries of the findings of each case study and the researcher's conclusions. To avoid evaluative comparisons, each case is treated separately. Generally, in quantitative research studies, the findings and conclusions are presented in separate sections. Given the subjective nature of the data and the detailed descriptions in the case studies, the findings and conclusions are combined.

In each case study, the researcher explored for possible patterns of trustee responses on and between particular questions. It is important to note that only a few patterns were discerned in the trustees' responses between particular questions. In addition, the board members' responses and stated perceptions generally were unrelated to the personal and demographic data for the trustees.¹ These results suggest that a variety of individual judgments, board experiences, and recollections affected an individual's comments.

¹Farmerie's study also reported little relationship between responses and personal and demographic data. Samuel A. Farmerie, "College Governing Boards" A Study of Characteristics and Functions of Trustees Serving Pennsylvania Liberal Arts Colleges," Ed.D. dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1964.

Alpha College

In conducting this study, the researcher interviewed twenty-two of the 1980-81 Alpha trustees, or sixty-one percent of the membership. With the exceptions of the members with business vocations and the members from a particular urban area, the trustees interviewed were generally representative of the total board membership.

1. Trustee Profile. The "typical" trustee interviewed was male, middle-aged, and well-educated, with a moderately high income level. The average member was also affiliated with the college's sponsoring denomination and had served on the board for almost six years.

In terms of the personal data, the profile of the average Alpha trustee generally corresponds to the composite results of national studies.¹ The total percentage of women on the Alpha board, roughly thirty-six percent, is higher than the national average reported in a recent survey.²

2. Selection Process. The provisions in the Bylaws of Alpha College regarding the selection of new members are minimal. Basically, the selection of new trustees was at the discretion of the President and the board, with an informal review of the candidates by the leaders of the religious order. The nomination/selection process was continuous and involved personal contacts and referrals, primarily from college

¹As an example, see Hartnett, College and University Trustees, 1969.

²Gomberg and Atelsek, Composition of College and University Governing Boards, August, 1977.

officials and trustees. The President was involved considerably in the cultivation and enlistment of prospective trustees. The board officers, the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, and some of the officials of the religious order also were active participants in the process. Board approval of nominees generally was a pro forma action.

None of the trustees interviewed was seeking a position on the board. They accepted the responsibility of trusteeship particularly because of a desire to serve and an interest in the college, or higher education in general. While all the members regarded the process as "personalized," only two-thirds of the trustees felt that their introduction to the college and trusteeship was adequate. Three-fourths of the members, however, recalled a specific or general reason for their invitations to board service. Only nine trustees considered the introduction as adequate and also recalled a reason given for their selection.

From the researcher's perspective, the cultivation and selection of new trustees at Alpha is a highly-personal, loosely-structured process. The President plays a central role in identifying and enlisting those individuals who become trustees. While the trustees may have joined the board for a wide variety of reasons or motives, their comments suggest a high degree of altruism. The selection process does not appear to be as formal as various writers recommend, particularly in relation to the introduction to trusteeship, reasons for the invitation, and expectations for performance. In addition, the extent of the introduction to trusteeship and the information provided largely depends on the nature of the contacts and discussions between the prospective trustees and the President and other board officials.

It should be noted that, at the time of this study, the focus of the Nominating Committee was being expanded to include responsibilities, as a "Committee on Trustees," for trustee selection, orientation, and performance evaluation. The trustees were generally in favor of more formal procedures, although it was evident that the President was the motivating force behind the change.

3. Characteristics of Trustees. The Alpha trustees frequently cited "willingness to work and be involved" as a desirable characteristic in prospective trustees. Other attributes listed by the President and the trustees were a mixture of general experience and special talents. Such qualities as an interest in higher education, sound judgment, and distinction in background or expertise were listed. The trustees' own stated contributions were various combinations of specific expertise or background and broad experience.

The literature on trusteeship also mentions such qualities. The attributes cited by the President and the trustees are quite similar. The similarity suggests a general consensus between the President and the trustees concerning several basic attributes as well as a recognition that a variety of characteristics are applicable to board service of Alpha College.

4. Board Balance. A requirement for the representation of the religious order was the only specific provision in the Bylaws regarding eligibility for trusteeship. Thus, the President and the board officers were responsible for determining the composition and diversity of board and committee memberships. The President and the trustees generally regarded the board as "balanced" and cited examples of the variety of

expertise and backgrounds represented. There were several suggestions from the trustees and the President for the addition of members with particular expertise.

There were no provisions included in the Bylaws regarding cumulative service and consecutive terms of service. Trustees were elected to three-year terms, and re-election was common. The President and a few trustees indicated an interest in more formal provisions governing length of service on the board.

Various personal and demographic data, such as age, residence, occupation, and length of board service, were presented in the case description and provided evidence of the composition and diversity of the Alpha trustees. In four instances--sex, religious affiliation, residence from one urban area, and business occupations (for the total membership)--the representations were skewed.

The researcher perceives a general commitment to board balance and diversity. The comments of the President and the trustees suggest, however, that board "balance" is interpreted especially as a measure of the diversity of skills, backgrounds, and viewpoints which contribute to board effectiveness. When selecting new trustees, the President and board officials consider the skills and personal backgrounds which would add appropriate strength to the board. Particular personal and demographic factors are important in each instance. The specific representation of personal or demographic factors may be intentional or incidental. The comments concerning the length of service suggest that membership continuity and change is a subject of discussion.

5. Orientation. In terms of the time-frame for each trustee's involvement, the President stated that the time varied greatly. The average trustee required approximately one year to become adjusted to trusteeship. Orientation procedures were minimal. Sixty-four percent of the trustees interviewed favored more systematic orientation procedures. The contacts of new trustees with college officials during the selection process, possible prior familiarity with the college, and various written materials, generally constituted the orientation. The President considered new trustees to be well-equipped with information but noted that perhaps one-fourth to one-third of the trustees lacked adequate knowledge of college operations. There was a slight tendency for those who did not regard the introduction to trusteeship as adequate and who favored better orientation to take longer than one year to become involved. The trustees generally regarded their contacts with other board members and college officials, and the experience gained in board meetings and activities, as most helpful in adjusting to trusteeship.

In the researcher's view, the time-frame for active involvement was likely the result of a variety of individual factors and experiences as well as the trustees' interactions. The general comments of the President and the trustee regarding the need for more orientation procedures are supported by the large volume of literature on trusteeship.

6. Participation and Involvement. Alpha board members monitored and/or directly participated in a variety of areas and activities, often related to their special interests. Some of the trustees'

interests were directly related to occupational expertise. It was acknowledged that much of the work of the Alpha board was done at the committee level. Committee assignments to the ten board committees were determined jointly by the board officials and the President, in relation to each trustee's background and expertise and the needs of particular committees. As a result, the diversity of committee membership was not uniform. The committees met with varying frequency, with the Finance and Executive Committees meeting most frequently, and often jointly. Opportunities for discussion and deliberation were regarded as ample but were considered better at the committee level. The full board sessions generally were for the review and approval of committee recommendations. Several trustees expressed concern about the committee system and the size of the board.

The Alpha trustees primarily kept informed and prepared for meetings by reading materials received from the President, although several members were in frequent contact with the President and other trustees or college officials. Only a few trustees regularly attended campus events and activities. Board meeting attendance averaged sixty-five to eighty-five percent.

The nature of trustee participation at Alpha College is multifaceted. Some trustees, by their own admission and in the President's opinion, are involved more actively than others. The committee system and the size of the board affect the activities and perceptions of some trustees. As examples, the committees meet with varying frequency, and some committees may be perceived by the trustees as more influential than others. Several trustees prefer the deliberations at the committee level rather than the full board sessions. The President is the primary

channel of information to the trustees, although communication with college officials and faculty is possible. While assistance may be a definite factor in some instances, the trustees' involvement with the campus, in a broad sense, is more likely a matter of initiative and choice. Distance is more of a factor regarding attendance at campus events than board meetings. The nature of a trustee's participation appears to be determined by such factors as time and other commitments, individual initiative, distance, general interests, and motivation and encouragement.

7. Evaluation. The Alpha trustees generally felt that trusteeship provided opportunities for personal growth and development, through contacts with other trustees, activities and meetings, and general consideration of issues. The opportunity to serve the college and students was cited as particularly satisfying. The President expressed pleasure with several of the board's accomplishments. The "work, wealth, and wisdom" scale provided evidence of the working relationship between the board and the President. The President's ratings and the trustees' self-evaluations were the same for fifty percent of the board members. Eighteen trustees listed two of three contributions, while the President rated fifteen members with at least two. Both the President and the chairman were perceived as strong, effective leaders. In general, the trustees were satisfied with the relationships between the board and the President and Chairman.

It is apparent that the trustees enjoy their roles as trustees, for the opportunity to serve and for other social and personal satisfactions. While the "work, wealth, and wisdom" scale is an imprecise

measure, the results suggest a close working relationship between the President and the trustees. The trustees' satisfaction with the President and the Chairman is a general indication that the board is in agreement with the direction and leadership provided by the President and the Chairman.

Beta College

Virtually all the 1980-81 trustees of Beta College were interviewed for the purposes of this study. Twenty-seven of twenty-eight members or ninety-six percent, were contacted. With only one exception, therefore, the comments and perspectives of the trustees reflect the tenor of the board.

1. Trustee Profile. The "typical" Beta trustee resembled the average trustee depicted in national studies: male, middle-aged, well-educated, and with a moderately high income level.¹ The average Beta trustee also was a graduate of the College, was a member of the sponsoring religious denomination, and had served on the board for almost seven years. The percentage of women on the board was similar to the national level cited in a recent survey.²

2. The Selection Process. The Bylaws included several provisions on the selection process and membership representation. Those stipulations in actual practice were less rigid than the Bylaws implied.

¹As an example, see Hartnett, College and University Trustees, 1969.

²Gomberg and Atelsek, Composition . . . Governing Boards, August, 1977.

The "selection" of new trustees by the denominational authorities was essentially a review and approval of specific candidates presented by the board leadership and the President. Three categories of membership eligibility--denomination, at-large, and faculty--provided board representation guidelines. The most specific provision was the "denomination" section, which stipulated denominational membership and required that six of that group were ordained ministers of the denomination. Essentially, the President and the board officers were responsible for identifying and enlisting prospective trustees for board service. The Faculty of Beta presented their nominees for the board's election. The selection process was continuous and open, with some referrals, and involved personal contacts by the President and board officials. The President was involved on a regular basis in the selection process. Board approval of new trustees was basically a pro forma review.

The board members generally accepted their trustee role because of an interest in, or loyalty to, the College and an obligation to serve. Only one trustee was seeking such a position. For most of the others, the invitation to the board was a surprise and an honor. The Beta members generally felt that their selection was "personalized." Less than one-half of the group, however, felt that they received an adequate introduction to trusteeship. Over two-thirds of the trustees recalled that specific or general reasons were stated regarding their selection as trustees.

In the researcher's judgment, the selection process at Beta is "personalized," with generally few restrictions on the enlistment of new members. The President is a dominant participant in the process. The nature of the contacts with prospective trustees varies considerably

and tends to be a matter of the individual's involvement. Given the trustees' comments, the adequacy of the introduction to trusteeship and the statement of reasons for selection appears to be less thorough than the various writers on trustee selection recommend.

3. Characteristics of Trustees. In general, the trustees and the President mentioned broad precepts rather than specific talents or expertise as desirable attributes of new trustees. Such qualities as commitment to the college, objectivity, commitment to religious values, and general supportiveness were listed. The President and the Chairman, as well as several trustees, emphasized willingness to work. The talents which board members contributed individually were a mixture of occupational expertise and general qualities.

The characteristics cited by the President and the trustees frequently are included in the literature on trusteeship. The similarity of the attributes listed by the Beta trustees and the President suggest an acknowledgement of the various general qualities and more specific talents or backgrounds which contribute to the board's efforts.

4. Board Balance. The provisions in the Bylaws for denomination, at-large, and faculty representation were the only specific statements governing the composition and diversity of the board. Basically, the President and the board leadership determined the mixture of trustee backgrounds and talents which were represented. The President and the trustees generally perceived the board as "balanced" and diverse. There were suggestions from the trustees and the President to improve board diversity by adding trustees with particular talents or backgrounds. Several trustees made positive and negative observations concerning the

representation of certain personal or demographic categories on the outlooks of some board members.

The Bylaws included specific provisions for the length of service. Trustees were elected to six-year terms, with a limit of two consecutive terms unless waived by board action. Faculty trustee service was limited generally to two terms of two years each. There was a tendency to re-elect trustees without much deliberation.

The composition and diversity of the membership, as reflected in various personal and demographic data, was described in the Beta case study. The national base of membership was governed somewhat by the provision for "denomination" representation. In three categories--sex, religious affiliation, and alumni status--the representation was skewed.

The comments of the President and the trustees suggest that membership diversity is regarded as important for the board's effectiveness. From the researcher's perspective, board "balance" for the Beta trustees and the President is viewed as the appropriate mixture of the members' skills, backgrounds, and outlooks for accomplishing board and institutional goals. New trustees are selected for a variety of reasons, or combinations of different factors. The relative representation of particular personal or demographic variables may be merely coincidental to the more important factors for selecting new trustees.

5. Orientation. Both the President and the Chairman regarded the usual time-frame for trustee involvement as one year. The trustees' stated adjustment period averaged one year or less. Fifty-five percent of the trustees were active in one year or less, while fifty-nine percent regarded their time-frame as one to two years. Interactions

with other trustees, written communications and publications provided through the President, and general board experience were listed as most helpful in the adjustment of the trustees to their roles. An orientation session for new trustees preceded the Fall board meeting. The Beta trustees were divided almost equally in their opinions on the need for more systematic orientation procedures. In several instances, the trustees' views of the introduction to trusteeship as adequate or inadequate were linked to similar opinions concerning orientation procedures.

The comments from the trustees suggests that the adjustment to trusteeship is the result of various combinations of an individual's experiences and other personal factors. The benefits gained from orientation, interactions with other trustees, and the various published and written materials vary according to each board member.

6. Participation and Involvement. The trustees listed a variety of special interests and activities by which they contributed to the board's efforts. A number of their special roles corresponded to the President's views of particular trustees' contributions. Many of the interests corresponded to trustees' occupations or special backgrounds. The committee structure was regarded as central to the work of the board, while the full board served primarily a review and approval function. The assignments of trustees to one of four committees were determined by the Chairman, board officers, and the President, in consultation with other college officials. The assignments generally were based on an evaluation of individual expertise as well as committee needs. Each committee regularly met at each board meeting. The trustees generally felt that their committee assignments were an

appropriate match with their interests and skills. The trustees felt that opportunities for discussion and participation generally were satisfactory but were perhaps more available at the committee level. Any "domination" of meetings was attributed to expertise, which was regarded positively. The President and the Chairman concurred that there was generally good participation in board and committee deliberations. Some of the trustees expressed some concern about the crowded agenda of board meetings and the size of the board.

For the most part, the trustees stayed informed about the college and higher education and prepared for board meetings by reading various materials. Most of the communications, in the form of minutes, reports, agenda, and other items, were received from the President. Reading was emphasized particularly by trustees residing farther away from the campus. In addition, some trustees at times talked with college officials, faculty, and students to keep well-informed. A few trustees regularly attended campus events, while others attended events scheduled close to board meetings. Distance was sometimes a definite factor regarding trustee involvement in campus life. Board meeting attendance regularly averaged over eighty percent, with distance as a minimal factor.

Trustee participation at Beta College varies considerably. A combination of individual factors and situations appears to determine the nature of each board member's involvement. The President is the principal channel of information for the board members, even though trustees occasionally seek information from other members of the campus community. Since committee meetings are held at each full board session, participation at the "working level" of the board is readily possible.

The activities and efforts of the members between meetings, however, appears to depend on the nature of the tasks as well as such factors as distance, time, other commitments, initiative, and motivation.

7. Evaluation. The Beta trustees generally regarded trusteeship as a positive learning experience which provided numerous opportunities for personal growth. The association with other trustees and the consideration of challenging issues were cited. The opportunity to serve the college and the students was particularly rewarding. The President commended the trustees for their general support and for fundraising efforts, but challenged the members to become more actively involved and to regularly assess their efforts.

The ratings on the "work, wealth, and wisdom" scale provided a comparison of the trustees' self-evaluations and the President's ratings of the trustees' contributions. The ratings were the same for the trustees. For seventy percent of the members, the trustees' ratings were the same, or were underrated, in comparison with the President's views. Virtually all the trustees were considered to contribute in at least two out of three categories.

The trustees generally felt that the board's relationships with the President and the Chairman were satisfactory. Both were regarded as effective leaders. There was some concern expressed, however, concerning the chairman's lack of background in relation to the college.

In the researcher's opinion, the Beta trustees are sincerely loyal to the College and find trusteeship to be satisfying, both in terms of personal satisfactions and social interactions. The similarity of the ratings on the "work, wealth, and wisdom" scale,

however imprecise a measure, does suggest a relatively close relationship between the President and the trustees. On the whole, the trustees appear to be satisfied that the two leaders are guiding the institution and the board effectively.

Case Studies: General Perspectives

The two case studies provide specific views of the trustee selection process and the nature of trustee participation at two private liberal arts colleges. The detailed findings and conclusions, therefore, may be especially pertinent for each institution. While two distinct colleges were studied, the researcher noted several general similarities in the findings of the two cases. As a result, some general perspectives highlight trustee selection and participation at Alpha and Beta Colleges and provide directions for additional research.

1. Co-optation. With one exception (at Beta), none of the trustees interviewed was seeking such a position. Those trustees generally regarded service on the governing boards as an honor. As a result of their service, the board members stated that they received various altruistic and personal/social satisfactions. The researcher concludes, therefore, that co-optation, as a mutually-beneficial process for the colleges and the trustees, is in effect at both Alpha and Beta. This conclusion supports the statements in the literature regarding co-optation as the typical method for the selection of trustees at private colleges.

2. Trustee Selection. The identification and selection of new trustees at both colleges is a continuous, personal, and

loosely-structured process. Each President is involved to a considerable extent in the selection process. The selection of new trustees is basically at the discretion of the President and the board officers of each college. Board approval of new trustees is essentially a pro forma action.

This study suggests that each board member's introduction to trusteeship depends considerably on the nature of the interaction between the President and board/college officials and the prospective trustees for Alpha and Beta. Selection of trustees according to stated eligibility criteria is less restricted, and denominational approval is less formal, than the Bylaws for each college imply. As the trustees' comments suggest, the board members' introductions to trusteeship, in relation to the needs of the college, role of the trustee, and specific reasons for the invitation, in general appear less systematic than various writers recommend.

3. The President's Role. Each of the two Presidents performs a major role in the identification and enlistment of new trustees. In addition, each President is primarily responsible for the orientation of new members and for the communications to keep the board informed on a regular basis. The President works jointly with the Chairman of the Board to prepare the agenda for board sessions and to provide direction for board efforts.

The results of the two case studies clearly indicate that each of the Presidents is a pivotal influence in determining the board's membership and in providing the direction and focus of the trustees' efforts. The nature of the symbiotic relationship between each

President and the board, however, is defined more specifically by their interactions in serving the two respective institutions.

4. The "Right" People. The comments of the trustees and the Presidents of Alpha and Beta suggest that a variety of talents and backgrounds are applicable to trusteeship. With few specific restrictions on membership eligibility, the Presidents and the board officers of each college determine the "right" people for obtaining the appropriate balance and diversity of the board membership.

Various writers on trusteeship suggest that a diversity of trustee talents and backgrounds enhances the deliberations and decisions of governing boards. The results of this study suggest that, at each of the two colleges, board balance is perceived from a functional as well as a demographic perspective. Therefore, relative numbers of personal and demographic factors represented by the trustees may be intentional or incidental in relation to the combination of trustee skills and backgrounds deemed appropriate for accomplishing board goals. Each of the two colleges determine which prospective trustees are "right" for its purposes.

5. Adjustment to Trusteeship. While the time-frame for the adjustment to the role of a trustee varied for individual board members, the trustees of both colleges generally considered themselves to be active participants after approximately one year. The orientation procedures differed between the two colleges. The trustees of both institutions regarded contacts with other board members and college officials, as well as various written materials, as helpful in adjusting to trusteeship.

The literature on trusteeship generally recommends organized orientation procedures. The importance of the orientation procedures at each college, however, was not perceived equally by the trustees. Since the average time-frame for active participation was similar for the trustees of both colleges, the adjustment for each trustee is likely the result of a combination of individual factors and institutional practices.

6. Trustee Participation. The participation of the trustees serving Alpha and Beta varies between the board members of each college. Each board, however, exhibits a similar format. Much of the work of the Alpha and Beta boards is done at the committee level. Distance from the campus does not affect attendance at board sessions to any great extent, but it does affect somewhat the actual activities of some trustees in serving their respective college. The board members of both institutions participated in a variety of activities often related to their special interests and/or occupational expertise.

This study provides some glimpses of the multi-faceted nature of trustee participation, but did not explore in depth the activities, discussions, and decisions of the trustees. The results of the case studies suggest that trustee service at Alpha and Beta is influenced by varying combinations of factors such as individual interest and experiences, distance, other commitments, interactions in group situations, initiative and motivation, board organization and procedures, and the board members' evaluations of the leadership of the President and the Chairman of the Board. Yet a synergism unites the variety of trustee efforts and opinions in promoting the general effectiveness of the board.

General Observations

While the scope of study and the interview sample may be too narrow for meaningful generalization, the researcher's findings and conclusions for the two case studies place in perspective various statements and comments in the literature on trusteeship. As a result, the researcher poses several general observations in relation to trustee selection and participation at other private liberal arts colleges.

1. Governing boards of colleges are idiosyncratic. While, in theory, there is a commonality of role and function, each board determines its own specific direction, organization, and composition according to various intrinsic factors. As Nason and other writers concur: "There is no single pattern of effectiveness."¹

2. The President of the college is a principal force in the selection of new trustees as well as the overall functioning of the board. With co-optation as the primary method for trustee selection, the President is involved considerably in the determination of membership needs and the procedures of selecting individuals for board service.

3. The guidelines and recommendations in the literature regarding trustee selection procedures are utilized in varying degree at different institutions. To a great extent, the process for selecting each trustee and the introduction to trusteeship is determined by the nature of the interaction between the prospective trustee and the President and/or board officials.

¹Nason, Future of Trusteeship, p. 24.

4. The bylaws of the board generally place few actual restrictions on the selection process and the composition and diversity of the board's membership. The President and other board officials, therefore, largely determine the board's makeup and character.

5. Board "balance" is the mixture of skills, backgrounds, attributes, and outlooks of the trustees determined by the President and board officials to be most appropriate for board effectiveness.

6. Trustees are selected for a wide range of reasons in relation to that mixture. The relative numbers of personal and demographic factors reflected in the board's diversity may be intentional or incidental. Each board determines whether an over-representation of particular skills, backgrounds, or outlooks is beneficial or detrimental.

7. There are no "arcane skills"¹ needed for trusteeship. A variety of general attributes and specific skills contribute to a board's activities.

8. Although formal orientation procedures are recommended consistently in the literature, actual orientation practices vary.

9. A trustee's time-frame for active participation is the result of various combinations of individual backgrounds, interactions with trustees and college officials, and orientation procedures.

10. Each board will determine its own organizational structure, according to a variety of factors, such as institutional customs, the composition and diversity of the membership, and the perceptions of the President and board officials.

¹Axelrod, Guide for New Trustees, p. 10.

11. The nature of trustee participation is varied and complex. The activities of each trustee may vary according to such individual and institutional factors as time and other commitments, distance, board structure and organization, reasons for selection, personal initiative, and motivation.

12. Trustees rely to a considerable extent on information from the President, and primarily read, as a means of keeping informed.

13. Governing boards are synergistic. As noted in the case studies, the trustees have differing opinions on the nature of their activities and roles, the structure and functioning of the board, the outlooks of fellow trustees, and the leadership of the President and the Chairman. Yet, "a board of trustees is more than the sum of its individual parts."¹ In accomplishing board goals, it is apparent that the general goodwill and sincerity of the trustees overrides various members' opinions of board leadership and efficiency.

14. For most trustees, membership on the board is a distinct honor. While the members accept their role for altruistic reasons, it is apparent the trustees enjoy board service and derive personal satisfaction from social interaction as well as individual and board accomplishments. As King notes: "Trustees really enjoy and grow in association with . . . other trustees . . . [board service] . . . provides in-service education and growth opportunities that enrich the lives of trustees."²

¹Ingram, Handbook of . . . Trusteeship, p. 64.

²John E. King, "A Toast to the Unknown Trustee," AGB Reports 22, No. 4:46-47.

15. The President is a major influence in the selection of, and works in close association with, the chairman of the Board. Their joint leadership in large part determines the direction of board activities and actions.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study suggests that trustee selection and participation are important topics for further investigation and provide directions for more research. The two case studies shed some light on the process of trustee selection and the nature of trustee activities at two private liberal arts colleges. In addition, the results suggest that research involving individual boards, as well as interview techniques, may provide perspectives on trusteeship not found in large survey research or in the prescriptive literature.

The results of additional research, utilizing interview or survey methodologies, would provide further descriptive evidence of actual selection procedures and trustee activities. Such additional information might (1) place in better perspective the relation of actual practices to the prescriptive literature, and (2) determine the validity of this researcher's general perspectives and observations.

Several topics might be explored regarding trustee selection:

- the extent to which co-optation is in effect at other independent or sectarian liberal arts colleges
- actual selection criteria and procedures at other private colleges
- similarities and/or differences in selection procedures at large versus small private colleges, and for large versus small boards

- actual orientation procedures at other private liberal arts colleges
- the adjustment process for new trustess, and the relative importance of formal orientation procedures, at private colleges

Various aspects regarding the nature of trustee participation also might be investigated for private colleges:

- trustee activities in relation to board size and group dynamics
- the relationship of trustee participation to the selection adjustment process, particularly the introduction to trusteeship and reasons for the invitation to serve
- the affect of board organization and decision-making on trustee participation
- trustee activities in relation to the leadership of the Chairman of the Board and the President, and in relation to the trustees' perceived effectiveness of the institution's leaders
- the interactions between the board and a new President

The case studies perhaps raise more questions than they answer. Additional research, such as that indicated, may provide useful information on trustee selection practices and the nature of trustee participation, and the importance of those procedures and efforts for effective trusteeship.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR TRUSTEES OF
ALPHA COLLEGE AND
BETA COLLEGE

Questions for Trustees of _____ College

Personal Data

- Relationship to college: alumna(-us), parent, donor?
- Educational background?
- Occupation?
- Religious affiliation?
- Length of service on _____ College Board?
- Other governing board memberships?
- Financial status?
- Age?

Nomination/Selection Process

1. Why did you accept the responsibility as a trustee?
2. Were you seeking such a position? Why?
3. Was the nomination/selection process personalized? Who was involved?
4. Did you receive an adequate introduction to the needs of the institution and the role of a trustee?
5. Was a specific reason(s) given for inviting you to become a trustee?
6. What characteristics, qualities, or attributes do you feel are important in prospective trustees?
7. What particular abilities or expertise do you bring to the _____ College Board?

Board Balance and Orientation

8. Is there a good diversity and balance on the board?
9. Are any changes needed in the size of the board, composition of the board, or the terms of service of the board members?

10. How long did it take for you to be an "effective," participating trustee?
11. How best did you gain an understanding of the roles and duties of a trustee?
12. Does _____ College need to develop more systematic orientation procedures?

Participation and Involvement

13. Do you have a special role, or interest, as a trustee?
14. Does your committee assignment reflect your interest and expertise?
15. Do the board meetings, and committee meetings, provide ample opportunities for open participation? Do any groups or individuals tend to dominate?
16. How do you stay well-informed on issues related to _____ College, and higher education in general?
17. Do you attend campus activities and events as a means of being well-acquainted with campus life?
18. Do you attend board meetings regularly?
19. How do you prepare for board meetings?

Evaluation

20. It has been stated that trustees should contribute "work, wealth, and wisdom, preferably all three, but at least two of the three." What combination of work, wealth, and wisdom do you contribute?
21. Does service on the _____ College Board provide an opportunity for personal growth and development?
22. What are the most rewarding features of your trusteeship? Least satisfying features?
23. Are improvements needed in the relationships between the Board and the President, between the Board and the chairman, or are you satisfied with these relationships?

APPENDIX B

ALPHA COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE

BETA COLLEGE CORRESPONDENCE

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Alpha College

April 6, 1981

Dr. (name)
President
"Alpha" College
(city, state, zip)

Dear President (name):

It was a pleasure to discuss with you recently my dissertation project at Michigan State concerning governing boards. I sincerely appreciate your interest in this undertaking and your willingness to assist me by being available for a personal interview and by encouraging your trustees' cooperation.

As I indicated, much of the recent literature concerning governing boards reviews demographic studies or presents prescriptions for effective trusteeship. The purpose of my study is to describe trustee selection and participation in board functions for a particular board. Little research concerning trusteeship has focused on individual boards of trustees. You may be assured of total institutional and personal anonymity and confidentiality.

As suggested by the other participating institution, I intend to submit to your trustees in writing the questions I will ask in the telephone interviews. This procedure will enable the board members to reflect on the question and prepare for the call. I plan to distribute a small packet of information regarding the study, including the question set, at your May board meeting. The telephone interviews will be conducted during May 11-22, 1981.

Enclosed please find a brief statement of the research project and a biographical summary for your information. I will be calling in the near future to discuss further procedures for the study and your May board meeting. It is likely that my advisor, Dr. Walter Johnson, will accompany me to the May meeting.

Again, I deeply appreciate your, and the Alpha College trustees', cooperation on this study.

Sincerely,

Jack Fistler
825 Touraine
East Lansing, MI 48823

Alpha College
(letterhead deleted)

April 7, 1981

Mr. Jack Fistler
825 Touraine
East Lansing, MI 48823

Dear Jack:

Thank you for your good letter of April 6th in which you outline the procedures for our cooperating with you in acquiring data for your dissertation project at Michigan State University.

By carbon copy of this letter and a Xerox of your letter to me, I am informing Mr. (name), Chairman of our Board, of this proposal with which I wholeheartedly agree.

You should plan on being present for the May 9th Board meeting. We usually begin with coffee and rolls at 9:00 a.m. and the meeting commences at 9:30 a.m. The meeting's location and further details will be sent to you when our agenda is completed. Should you have any questions, please call (name), my assistant, at (phone number).

If Dr. Walter Johnson wishes to accompany you, we would be delighted to have him as our guest.

Sometime within the next three weeks you will be receiving a copy of our agenda. Enclosed with this letter is a listing of our current Trustees.

We look forward to cooperating with you in this project. With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

(name)
President

al

Enclosure

P.S. If it does not violate your pledge of confidentiality, if it does, don't worry about it.

Alpha College

May 9, 1981

To: Trustees of "Alpha" College

Thank you for your assistance in this Trustee survey/interview concerning the selection and participation of governing board members. This study constitutes my dissertation project at Michigan State University.

Much of the recent literature concerning governing boards reviews demographic studies or presents prescriptions for effective trusteeship. Little research has focused on individual boards of trustees. The purpose of my study is to describe Trustee selection and participation in board functions for a particular board.

Enclosed are a brief description of the study and a set of questions for your review. Your consideration of appropriate responses to the questions will facilitate the telephone interview. I will be conducting the telephone interviews during May 13-22.

Again, I deeply appreciate your candor and cooperation on this study.

Sincerely,

Jack Fistler
825 Touraine
East Lansing, MI 48823

JF/gc
enclosures

Beta College

March 17, 1981

Dr. (name)
President
"Beta" College
(city, state, zip)

Dear President (name):

I sincerely appreciated the opportunity to discuss with you my dissertation project at Michigan State concerning governing boards. I trust that this letter and basic proposal arrived in time for your Executive Committee meeting.

As I indicated, much of the recent literature concerning governing boards reviews demographic studies or presents descriptions for effective trusteeship. The purpose of my study is to describe trustee selection and participation in board functions for a particular board. Little research concerning trusteeship has focused on individual boards of trustees. You may be assured of total institutional and personal anonymity and confidentiality.

My interest in working with private colleges on this project stems from a sincere respect for, and commitment to, private liberal arts colleges. I have enclosed a brief biographical summary for your information.

I deeply appreciate your, and the Executive Committee's, consideration of this project. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jack Fistler
825 Touraine
East Lansing, MI 48823

JF/gc

enclosures

Beta College
(letterhead deleted)

Office of the President

March 23, 1981

Mr. Jack Fistler
825 Touraine
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Dear Mr. Fistler:

I discussed your letter of March 17, and the research you propose to undertake, with the Executive Committee of our Board of Trustees on March 20. The Committee agreed to ask the members of the Board of Trustees to cooperate with you in your study. They also had two specific suggestions.

The first would be that you submit to the Trustees in writing the questions you would like to ask them. This would give them some opportunity to think about these beforehand. They also thought that this could be a convenient way to prepare the Trustees for your phone call. Further, I will mention this matter in the next memorandum that I will send to them, which will be in two or three weeks.

The second suggestion was that you stress when you call them that if this is not a convenient time to talk with them, that you will be glad to call at another time. Also, they thought that it might be well if you sent the questions you would like to ask them to me first, as I might be able to help you phrase them so that this would lead to the answers that would be most accurate and helpful to you.

I trust this is an adequate response to your request.

Sincerely yours,

(name)

jb

"Beta" College Trustee Survey

Jack Fistler
Researcher

May 15, 1981

To: Trustees of "Beta" College

Thank you for your assistance in this Trustee survey/interview concerning the selection and participation of governing board members serving liberal arts colleges. It is my understanding that Dr. (name) has advised you of my study and has encouraged your participation. This study constitutes my dissertation project at Michigan State University.

Much of the recent literature concerning governing boards reviews demographic studies or presents prescriptions for effective trusteeship. Little research has focused on individual boards of trustees. The purpose of my study is to describe Trustee selection and participation for a particular board, and especially your personal impressions and perceptions regarding your service on the "Beta" College Board.

Enclosed are a brief description of the study, a copy of a letter from Dr. (name) regarding the project, and a set of questions for your review. I interviewed Dr. (name) at "Beta" on May 12. Your questions are similar to those which I directed to him. Please review the questions at your convenience. Your consideration of appropriate responses prior to my call will facilitate the telephone interview. I will be contacting you between May 20-31.

You may be assured of the total confidentiality of your responses. The name of the College and the names of "Beta" trustees will not be revealed.

Again, I deeply appreciate your candor and cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

Jack Fistler
825 Touraine
East Lansing, MI 48823

enclosures

JF/gc

SELECTING THE "RIGHT PEOPLE": CASE STUDIES OF
THE SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION OF TRUSTEES
SERVING TWO PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

Project Abstract

Jack B. Fistler

March, 1981

Purpose of the Study

The researcher's purpose in this study is to describe the practices and procedures for selecting trustees at two private liberal arts colleges and the participation of those trustees in serving on their respective governing boards. More specifically, the researcher intends to describe those practices in relation to trustee selection, new member orientation, board structure and organization, and the participation of each trustee in board responsibilities and activities. A descriptive case study format will be used. Questions for analysis, rather than quantifiable hypotheses, will be used.

Focus of the Study

Given the complex interrelationships of factors regarding the selection of trustees and the nature of their participation, the focus for the study is to describe the following points for each of the two institutions:

1. Trustee selection policies and practices.
2. General criteria for trustee selection.
3. Relationship of board composition and diversity to board and institutional needs.
4. Relationship of board composition and diversity to trustee participation.
5. New trustee orientation practices.
6. Relationship of board structure and organization to trustee participation.
7. Nature of board member participation.

Methodology of the Study

A descriptive, case study method will be utilized. No comparisons between institutions will be made. The principal methods of data collection for each will be (1) personal interview with the president, (2) telephone interview with each trustee, and (3) published and written materials from each institution. The materials to be reviewed will include college catalogs, annual reports, bylaws of the board.

Questions to be explored with the presidents and trustees will be developed through an extensive examination of the literature. The questions will be explored for information rather than for responses to be measured in relation to specific hypotheses.

APPENDIX C

ENDORSEMENT: UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS, MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY, JULY 6, 1981

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)
238 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(517) 355-2196

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

July 7, 1981

Mr. Jack B. Fistler
The University of Minnesota Foundation
120 Morrill Hall
100 Church St., S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Mr. Fistler:

Subject: Proposal Entitled, "Selecting the 'Right People:' Case
Studies of the Selection and Participation of Trustees
Serving Two Liberal Arts Colleges"

The above referenced project was recently submitted for review to the UCRIHS.

We are pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and the Committee, therefore, approved this project at its meeting on July 6, 1981.

Projects involving the use of human subjects must be reviewed at least annually. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval prior to the anniversary date noted above.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Henry E. Bredeck
Chairman, UCRIHS

HEB/jms

cc: Dr. Walter F. Johnson

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