

THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT

Thoughts on Fund Raising for Campus Ministry

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DEVELOPING A BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION

John Carver has had a major influence on board development in the last decade. In his keystone work, *Boards That Make a Difference*¹ he urges clarity of function, accountability and vision as hallmarks of effective boards. He wants boards to understand that they exist primarily to benefit people. It should be the board's obsession, he writes. Beyond the routine of meetings, budgets and goal-setting is the welfare of people. He advocates that board members be recruited primarily because of their vital interest in and concern for the lives those whom they seek to serve. In our case, that would mean young adults on campus and in the life of the church. A major question to keep in front of your board, therefore, is this: "Are we as a campus ministry board obsessed with the welfare of students and others in the university community?"

Carver is more concerned about commitment than he is about expertise. A "qualified" board member may possess a certain set of skills, which are important and will serve the organization well. Skills are important to consider in recruitment. What is most significant beyond that, however, is the qualification of "grasp, mentality, connectedness and compassion. As an assessment of past selection, consider this test: if fewer than half of the board's members would make good chairpersons, the selection needs improvement."² Do board members "get it?" Do they fully understand the mission of your organization and are they able to live into it with passion, energy and commitment?

I painfully remember a coffee conversation with a retiring board member a few years ago. She was not particularly active in her home congregation, but her pastor thought that it would "be good for her" to serve on our board. She was a likeable person and had some skills in finance. She served on the board for two terms and attended the meetings faithfully. She was a member of the executive committee and treasurer for a time. As we drained our coffee cups and got ready to leave, she paused and said, "You know, I never really figured it out," When I asked her what that meant, she said that she had figured out how the budget worked and how the board functioned, but she never understood why campus ministry was all that important.

Obviously the recruitment process is crucial to good board development. Likewise, orientation of new board members plays a large role in helping new members become familiar with current members, mission and goals, and expectations. Some boards invite potential new members to attend a meeting before they sign up, like test-driving a new car. After the meeting they are asked for feedback and have an opportunity to ask more questions. They are then asked to fill

¹ *Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organizations* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco) 1997.

² Page 205.

out an application form and are given a board job description that they sign, indicating that they fully understand the responsibilities and expectations they are about to assume.

Think about boards on which you have participated as a member. What was rewarding about that experience? What was frustrating? What were the surprises? How many times have potential board members been told something like this:

We really don't do a lot at our meetings.

Oh, just show up and you 'll figure out how it works.

We have a lot of fun; you 'll enjoy the other members.

Our staff person is so good, it really doesn 't leave much for us to do.

We let the treasurer -worry about the budget.

We 're so glad you decided to join us. We were having trouble finding people.

The Job Description

It is both a courtesy and a matter of good management that everyone who signs on to be a board member receives a job description. This allows them to know in advance what will be expected of them and will serve as an evaluative tool throughout their time of membership. However, it is not so much a listing of tasks to be performed, as it is an outline of overarching responsibilities. It focuses on "performance outcomes" rather than on activities.

So, for example, the board is responsible for providing adequate financial resources for conducting the mission. Fundraising may be an activity that leads to the outcome of resources and there may be other activities that would lead to the same end. The focus of the board should be on the necessary outcome of all these activities, not just on the activities per se. The board is effective if the needed dollars are raised to carry on the ministry. They are much less effective if they had a huge telethon, but only raised half of the money.

Carver urges us to think of "board products" or end results. "Some might say that fundraising is the chief responsibility, even the *raison d'etre*, of a board. I disagree. Fundraising by the board may be critical to a given organization, but it is more important that the organization be *worth raising funds for*."³

Carver summarizes the board's job products in three basic areas:

Linkage to the ownership

The board serves as a bridge between the constituencies it represents and those it seeks to serve. For campus ministry that means relating to the families congregations and synods from which students come and who provide funding for our ministries. It means relating to the churchwide organization as well. Our constituents in campus ministry are varied and widespread. Communication, interpretation and advocacy bridging with this audience is a significant responsibility. The board acts as a trustee for the ownership and, as such, owes them accountable reports and personal interaction.

Explicit governing policies

The board sets policy. It determines such things as how staff shall be hired and supervised, how monies are to be secured and spent, how decisions are to be made, and how the work of the board is to be carried out, including committee structure, if any.

³ Page 134.

Assurance of executive performance

The board is not responsible for micro-managing the day-to-day activities of the staff it hires. It is responsible for the outcomes of staff activities in terms of fulfilling the ministry mission, however. To guide the work of staff, the board develops a staff job description and performs an annual evaluation. The board must ensure that staff meets the criteria it has set forth.⁴

Each of these board functions is to be considered a "job output," not a job activity, although activities are certainly involved. The board's work is neither built on activities nor evaluated on the basis of these activities. The board's work is based on end products, not simply the activities it takes to get there.

Another example: if the work of the board is to serve as a bridge to congregations, it will evaluate its effectiveness on the results of its contacts with congregations, not on the number of meetings or on the amount of paper sent to inform about the ministry. What is important are results, so the board will evaluate whether or not congregations are more informed, more involved and more supportive as a result of their bridging connections.

One more example: a board may decide that its work is to provide sufficient funds for the ministry to operate and for staff to be paid adequately. Although activities are involved in fund raising, the "job product" is actually the dollars raised. There can be a lot of activity that generates few results. The board needs help to see that what is important is the end result, not just going through the motions. An assembly line should produce an automobile. A series of courses should eventuate in a degree. While activities are part of a strategic plan, and are often interesting and fulfilling to do, the board must look at the results to evaluate its work.

With all of this as background information and grist for discussion, let's look as a possible job description for board members.

⁴ In some cases, where staff services are minimal, board members are often expected to roll up their sleeves and participate in some of the day-to-day functions of the ministry. They are often called a "workgroup board." In other situations, where staff services are more plentiful, there is a clearer distinction between "staff work" and "board work." If the board wants a staff person to carry out a task, it ceases to be the function of the board.

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY

Board of Directors

Job Description

Campus Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America invites people in academic settings more deeply into Jesus Christ and the community that bears his name, so that they can discover and fulfill their vocation as disciples.

(Local mission statement may be used in addition to or in place of the above ELCA statement)

As a representative of the church, you have been called to serve on the Board of Directors of Lutheran Campus Ministry at (location). As such, you will be primarily responsible for the work of:

- Linking the campus ministry to its constituencies,
- Developing and implementing policies and procedures, and
- Assuring the performance of staff.

In order for this work to happen in a timely and faithful fashion that carries out the mission of Lutheran Campus Ministry, it is expected that board members will:

- Understand the mission and goals of Lutheran Campus Ministry,
- Become knowledgeable with the life and culture of the university and the needs of young adults on campus,
- Provide vision and direction for the future of the ministry,
- Contribute financially to the ministry on an annual basis, as generously as possible,
- Secure, manage and allocate funds provided to the ministry by all sources,
- Maintain liaison with congregations, supporting synods, and the ELCA churchwide organization to interpret the ministry and seek feedback,
- Be knowledgeable of important deadlines and issue accurate reports,
- Attend regularly scheduled meetings of the board,
- Serve on special committees or task groups as assigned,
- Hire, direct and evaluate the work of professional staff,
- Attend programs of the ministry as appropriate or when invited,
- Oversee property management, including upkeep, insurance and expansion,
- Participate in a regular evaluation of the board, and
- Ensure that the ministry complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws.

I understand the expectations and implications described above and pledge to fulfill my obligations as a board member to the best of my ability, with God's help and guidance.

Board Member Signature

Date

Board President

Date