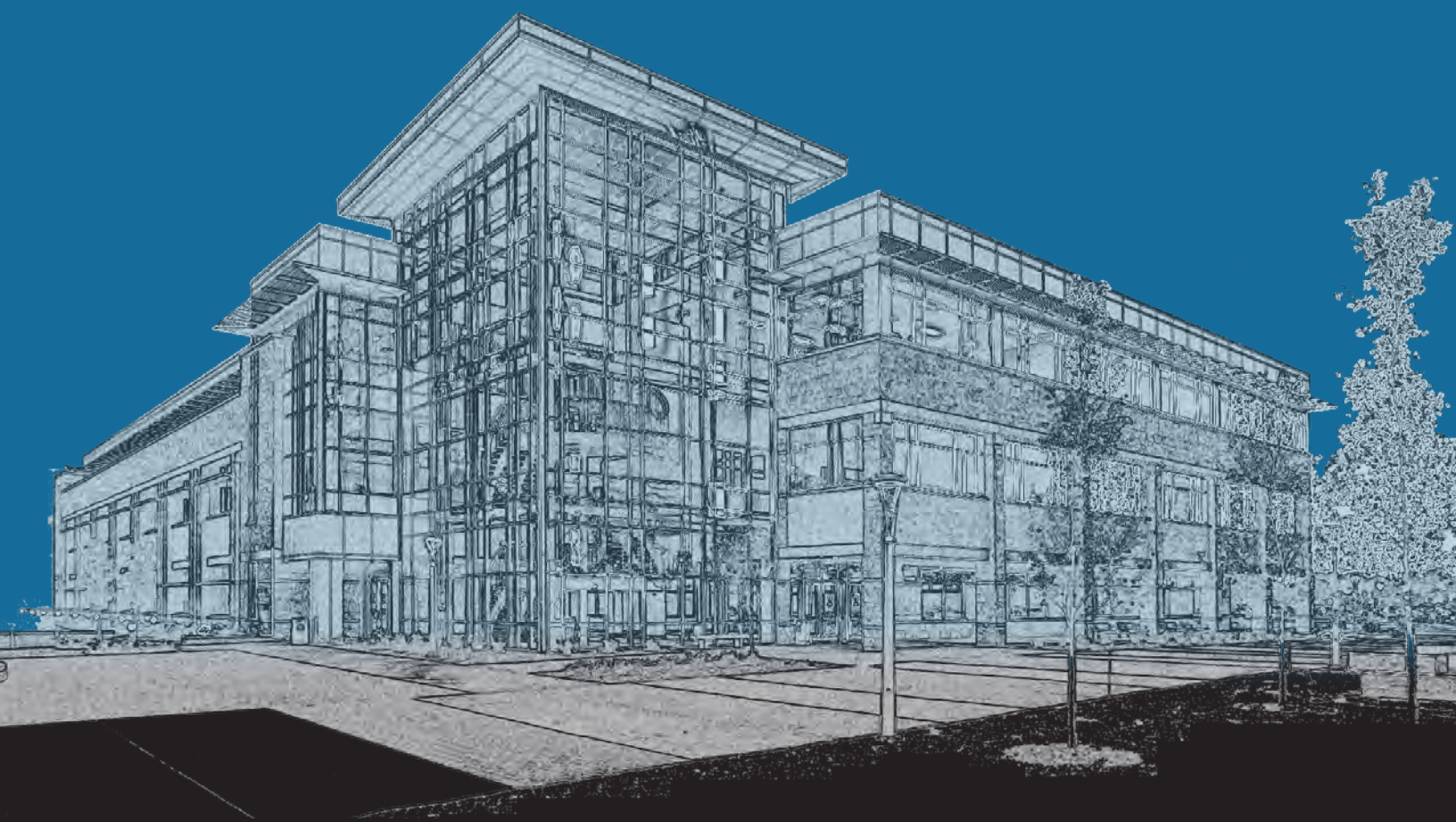


2020 AGB SURVEY OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS





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About AGB

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) is the premier membership organization that strengthens higher education governing boards and the strategic roles they serve within their organizations. Through our vast library of resources, educational events, and consulting services, and with 100 years of experience, we empower 40,000 AGB members from more than 2,000 institutions and foundations to navigate complex issues, implement leading practices, streamline operations, and govern with confidence. AGB is the trusted resource for board members,

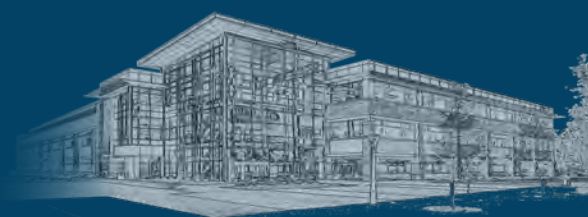
chief executives, and key administrators on higher education governance and leadership. For more information, visit www.AGB.org.

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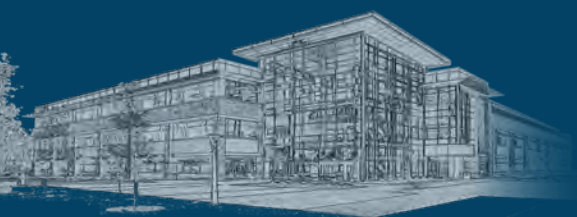
Acknowledgments

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges is grateful to the 228 board professionals who completed the survey. AGB also thanks the author of this report, Lesley McBain, Ph.D., director of research.



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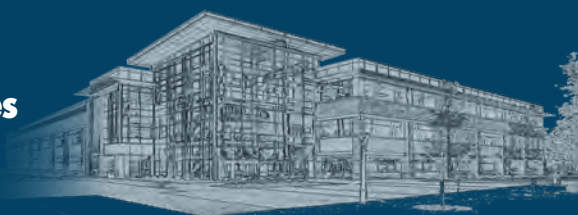


Executive Summary

As in the most recent previous (2015) iteration of this longitudinal survey of board professionals, the 2020 results document the ever-expanding role of the board professional while indicating that some demographic and other characteristics of those working as board professionals remain similar to those of previous years. Some key points:

- The majority of respondents were women (84.3 percent), White (84.1 percent), and older (32.4 percent between 50 and 59 years of age and 27.1 percent over 59 years old). This is consistent with previous surveys.
- 56.6 percent of respondents reported earning salaries under \$100,000 per year.
- 76.7 percent of respondents were the highest-ranking board professional at their institution, but almost 44 percent reported they did not supervise any staff (“office of one”). A majority (71 percent) indicated that there had been no change in their office staffing within the past five years.
- 65.2 percent of respondents were recruited to their position from within their institution/system/foundation; 37.1 percent had been in their current position between 4 and 9 years.
- 84.7 percent of respondents indicated they had other responsibilities within the institution, and 64.9 percent reported spending between less than half and half their time solely devoted to board work (presumably due to other responsibilities); 57.7 percent indicated they were a member of the chief executive’s cabinet.
- Only 7.9 percent of respondents thought the level of complexity for the role of the board professional had remained the same over the past five years.
- Respondents were most interested in professional development topics about board governance, benchmarking and dashboards for boards, trustee orientation, managing the board and/or president’s office, and board recruitment, retention, and development.

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Introduction

Higher education governing boards run the gamut in terms of higher education size and sector served, ranging from two-year public institutions to for-profit institutions to small private liberal arts colleges to large research universities, as well as institutionally related foundations. However, they all have one common denominator: one or more staff members who perform the myriad tasks necessary for said boards to function.

Generally known as “board professionals” (sometimes abbreviated as BPs), these people usually serve as direct points of contact for board members in addition to handling responsibilities that range from planning and managing board meetings, managing board records and board briefing materials, budgeting, working with other institutional staff on projects that involve multiple offices, and other duties as required. Their titles are as varied as their institutional sectors. However, it is clear board professionals’ work is vital to the shared governance of colleges, universities, and related foundations.

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) supports board professionals in their vital work by providing programs, content resources (including but not limited to books on governance topics, *Trusteeship*, and podcasts), and professional development opportunities that enable them to further their ongoing education in the complex art of board governance. As part of this support, AGB has conducted the AGB Survey of Board Professionals from 1991 to the present in order to better understand their changing roles over time. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred AGB to conduct a separate 2020 survey of board professionals about how the pandemic has affected their work and life. Therefore, this iteration of the AGB Survey of Board Professionals did not ask multiple COVID-19-related questions. Those results can be found at https://agb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/agb-covid-19_board-prof_survey-final-.pdf.

The 2020 version of the survey was conducted in late fall 2020 and sent electronically to roughly 1,200 board professionals across the public, private, and foundation sectors. The number of respondents was 228 for a 19 percent response rate. As in 2015, the majority of respondents were either from the independent nonprofit institutional sector (48.3 percent) or public institutional and system sector (33.6 percent). (See tables 1 and 2.)¹

¹ Note that all figures may not add to 100% throughout due to rounding.

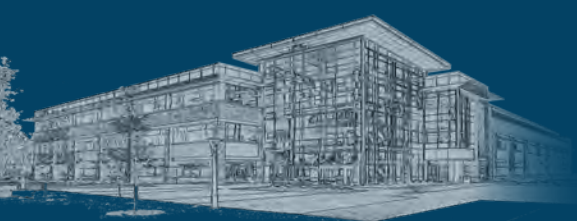


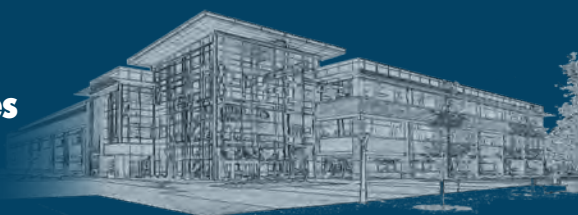
Table 1: Board Professionals
by Sector 2020

Sector	
Public institutions (including systems)	33.6%
Independent nonprofit institutions	48.3%
Private for-profit institutions	8.5%
Institutionally related foundations	9.5%
Total	100.0%

Table 2: Board Professionals
by Sector, 2015 and 2020

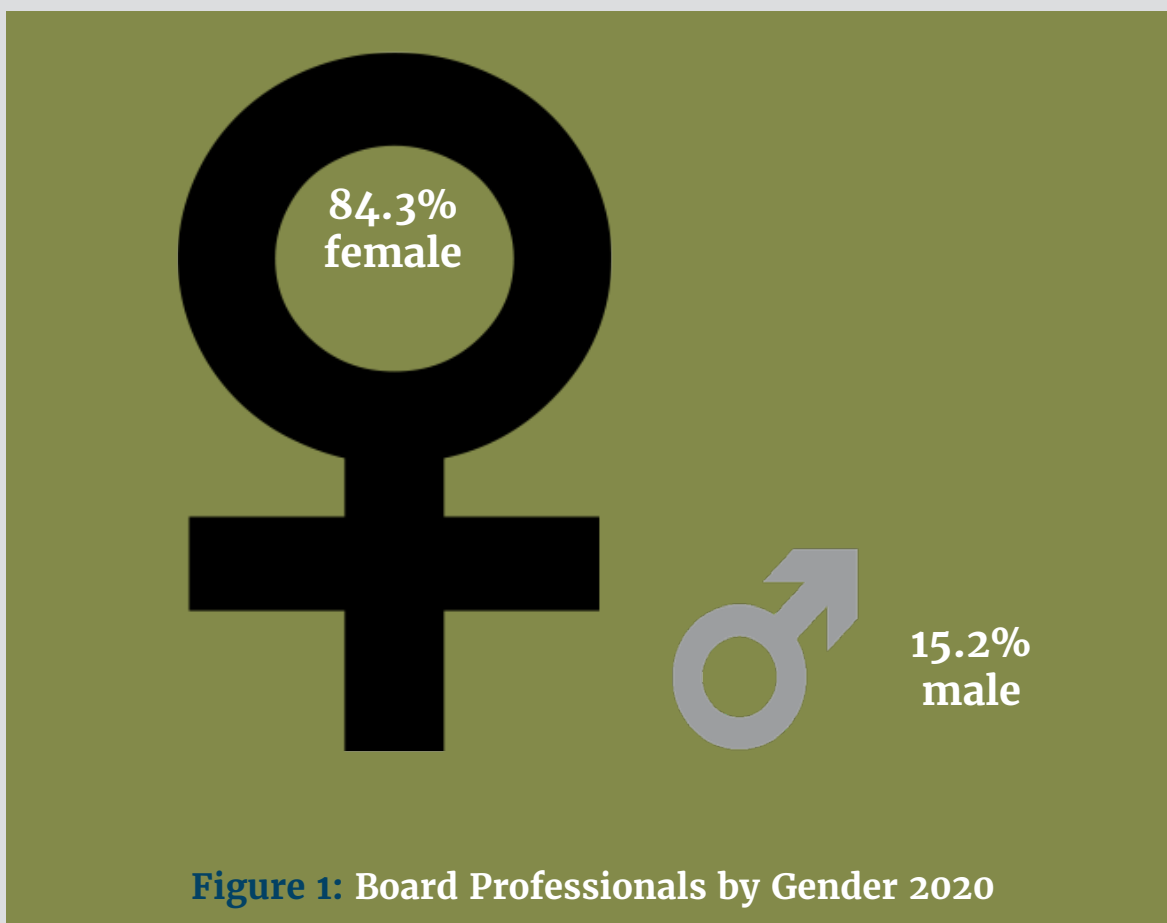
Sector	2020	2015
Public institutions (including systems)	33.6%	34.2%
Independent nonprofit institutions	48.3%	52.0%
Private for-profit institutions	8.5%	8.7%
Institutionally related foundations	9.5%	5.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

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Board Professional Demographics

As in 2015, and in 2010 before that, the majority of responding board professionals were female. (See figure 1.) The number of male board professionals increased by 2.5 percentage points between 2015 and 2020, from 12.7 percent to 15.2 percent.



The majority of board professionals who responded (84.1 percent) identified as White (non-Hispanic); this is consistent with 2015 and 2010 survey results. When broken down by gender, 85.3 percent of women and 71.9 percent of men identified as White (non-Hispanic). Notably, although the result should be interpreted with caution due to small numbers, 6.3 percent of male board professionals responding to the survey identified as Hispanic in 2020 compared to 0.0 percent in both 2015 and 2010. (See table 3 for more details.)

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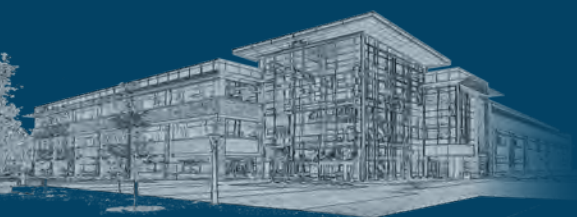


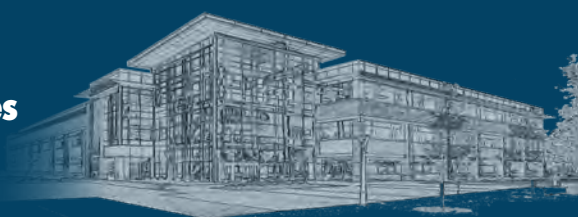
Table 3: Board Professionals by Gender and Race/Ethnicity, 2010–2020

Race/ Ethnicity	2020		2015		2010	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Asian*	3.1%	1.1%	2.4%	1.0%	3.2%	1.2%
Black or African American	3.1%	6.8%	2.4%	3.8%	7.9%	5.1%
Hispanic	6.3%	2.3%	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	3.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
White (non-Hispanic)	71.9%	85.3%	92.9%	87.4%	85.7%	88.5%
Two or more races	3.1%	1.1%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.6%
Prefer not to respond	9.4%	2.8%	2.4%	2.7%	3.2%	1.5%

* In 2010 and 2015 Asian/Pacific Islander

While the demographic profile of board professionals who responded may be consistent with previous years, their workloads and responsibilities have grown in both scope and complexity over time.

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Board professionals also tend to be older. Only 2.9 percent of responding board professionals were under 30 years of age, which is almost identical to the 2015 results (see table 4). On the opposite end of the age spectrum, 27.1 percent indicated they were more than 59 years of age. The largest percentage of respondents were in the 50–59 age bracket (32.4 percent).

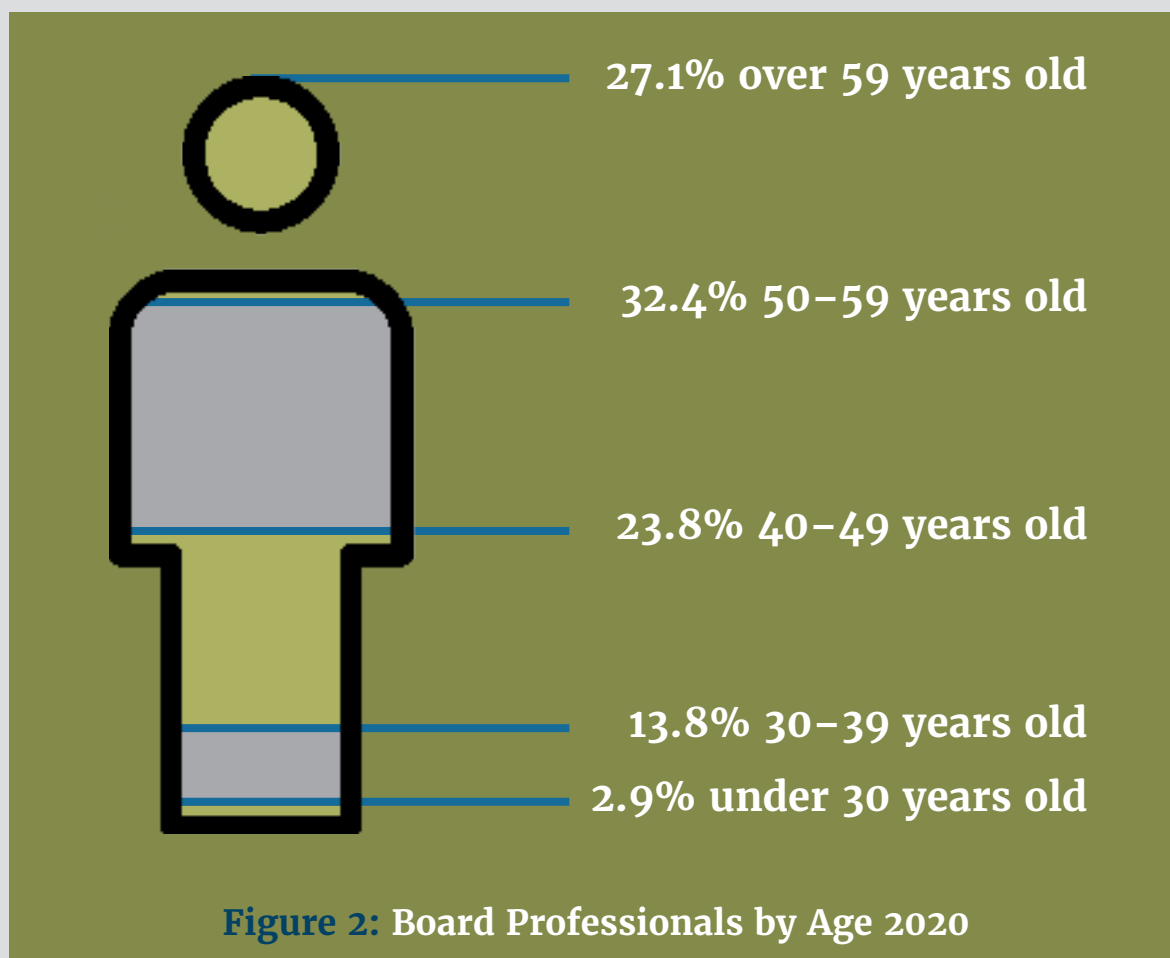
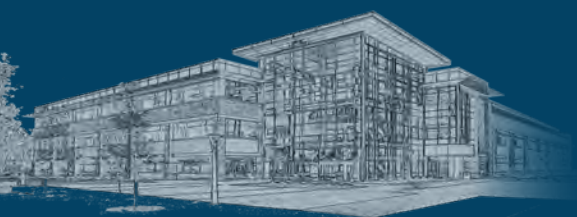


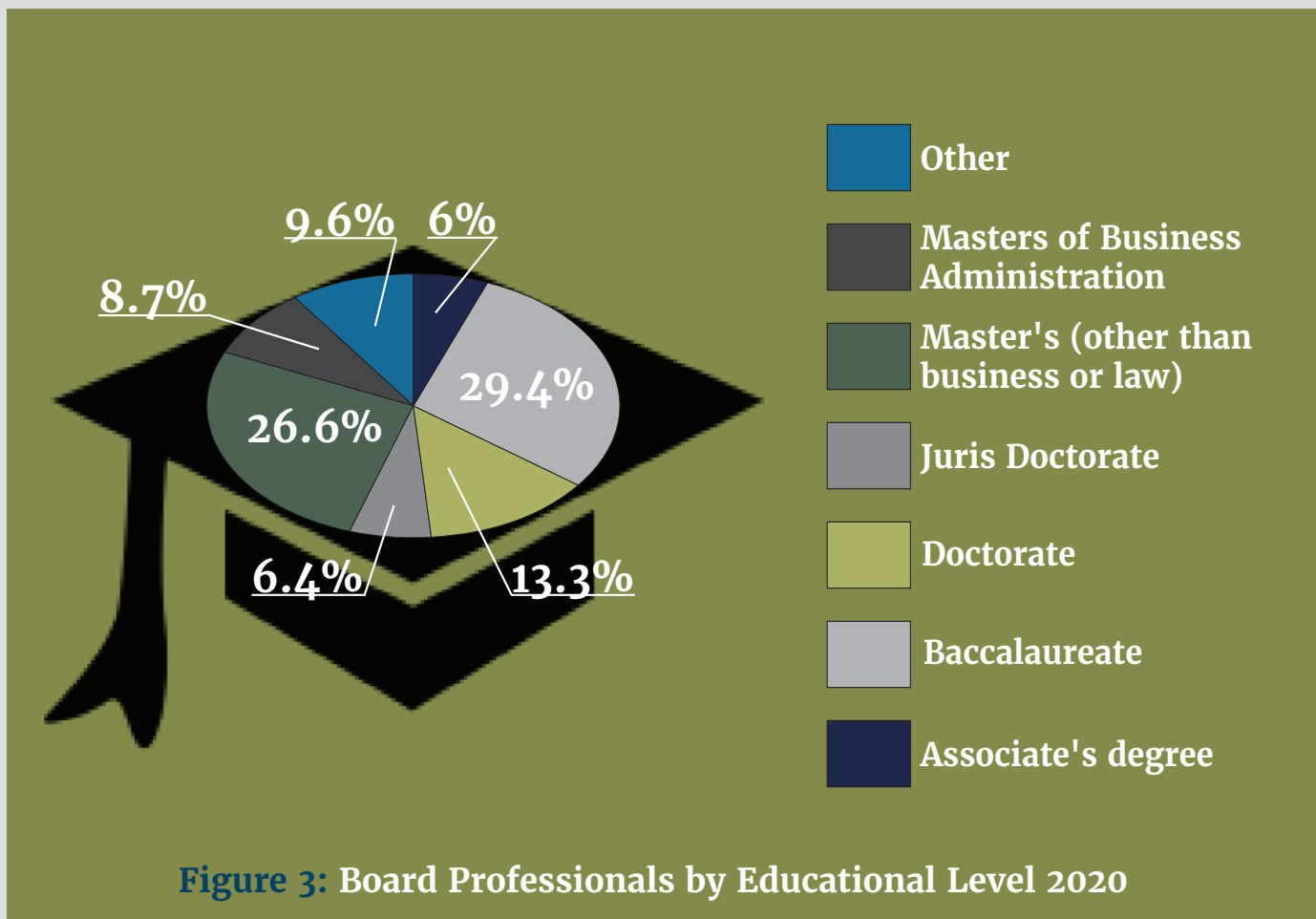
Table 4: Board Professionals by Age, 2015 and 2020

	2015	2020
Under 30	3.0%	2.9%
30–39	8.9%	13.8%
40–49	19.6%	23.8%
50+	68.5%	59.5%

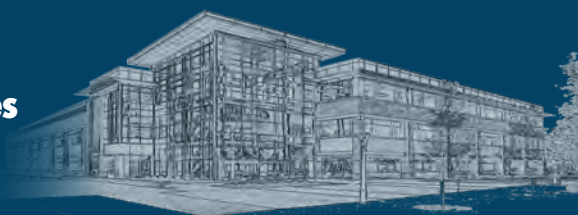
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As in 2015, board professionals' highest formal education level continues to be less homogenous than their gender, race/ethnicity, and age range. Responses ranged from high school to "some college" but no degree all the way to multiple graduate degrees. One respondent noted that while their highest education level was a high school diploma, they had worked with boards for decades—a salutary reminder that learning comes in many forms. (See figure 3.)



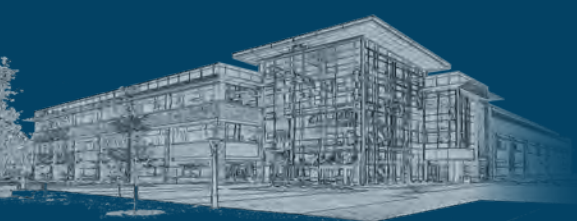
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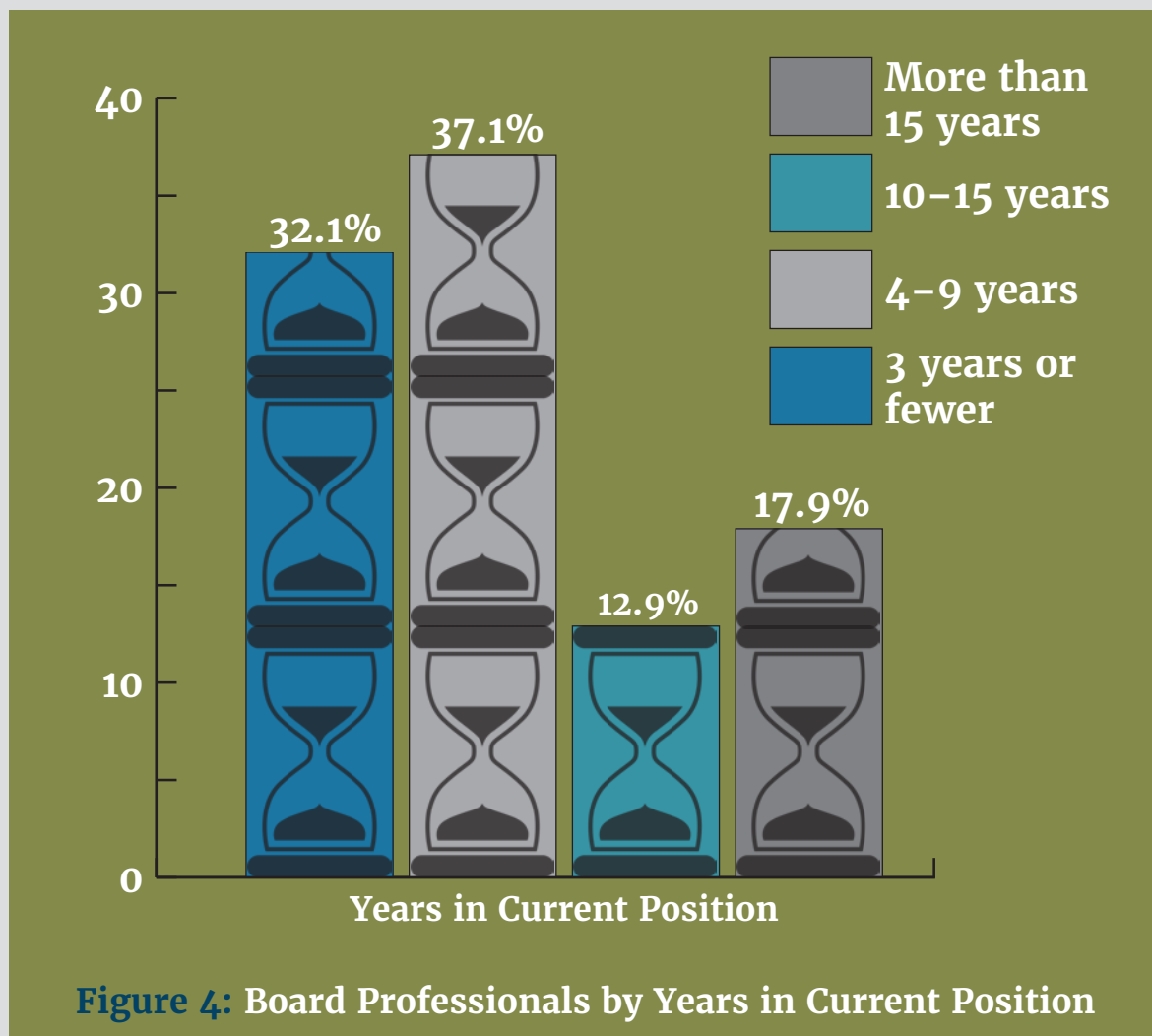
Since 2015, however, there have been some shifts within the data. In 2020, 6.0 percent of respondents reported that their highest level of education was an associate degree; in 2015, this figure was 13.8 percent, a decrease of 7.8 percentage points. However, in 2020, 13.3 percent of respondents indicated they held a doctorate versus 7.1 percent in 2015, an increase of 6.2 percentage points. Another 1.5 percent noted they were in the process of completing doctorates at the time the survey was administered. The percent of board professionals with juris doctorates held steady at 6.4 percent in both 2015 and 2020. (See table 5.)

Table 5: Board Professionals' Education Levels, 2015 and 2020

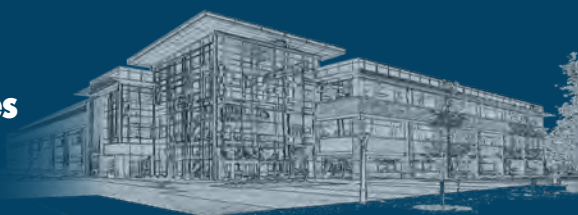
Educational Level	2015	2020
Associate's degree	13.8%	6.0%
Baccalaureate	35.3%	29.4%
Master's (other than business or law)	22.7%	26.6%
Masters of Business Administration	6.4%	8.7%
Juris Doctorate	6.4%	6.4%
Doctorate	7.1%	13.3%
Other	8.3%	9.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%



In terms of length of time in current position, 32.1 percent of respondents reported they had been in their job for three years or fewer, a slight increase from 2015's 28.5 percent. Another 37.1 percent had been in their jobs for between 4 and 9 years and almost 18 percent had been in their jobs for more than 15 years. (See figure 4.)



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Board Professionals' Role Taxonomy and Supervisory Responsibilities

The board professional role can be called by various titles and encompass different responsibilities depending on the institution, system, or foundation. However, a few standard characteristics generally define the most common roles and board-secretariat² functions board professionals are asked to perform. Five categories of board professional roles were defined for the 2020 survey (see Board Professional Roles):

Board Professional Roles

Secretary to the Board *and* Secretary to the President

One who serves in the dual role as secretary to the board and administrative or executive secretary to the chief executive officer of the institution. Duties generally encompass management of the clerical component of the president's office, distribution of documentation, and preparation of board minutes and other material. Major responsibilities may be described as **executive secretarial** in nature.

Secretary to the Board *and* Presidential Assistant

One who is assigned the responsibility for the board secretariat function, but who also carries the title and responsibility of a special assistant or executive assistant to the chief executive officer of the institution. This person may best be described as holding a **staff position** within the institution.

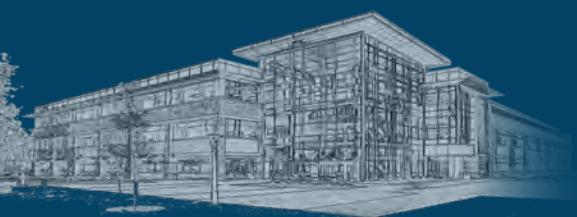
Secretary of the Board—Administrative Officer

One who is assigned the board secretariat function, but with additional responsibilities to the institution: e.g., secretary of the university, chief of staff, development officer, legal counsel, vice president in a functional area with line responsibilities, or legislative advocate for the institution. A majority of this board professional's responsibilities could be described as **administrative** in nature.

Secretary of the Board *or* Corporate Secretary

One whose primary responsibility is for the board-secretariat function, including exercising broadly delegated authority as an officer of the corporation such as the execution of legal documents, either acting alone or

² Board-secretariat can broadly be defined as the oversight of a governing board's procedural and administrative functions.

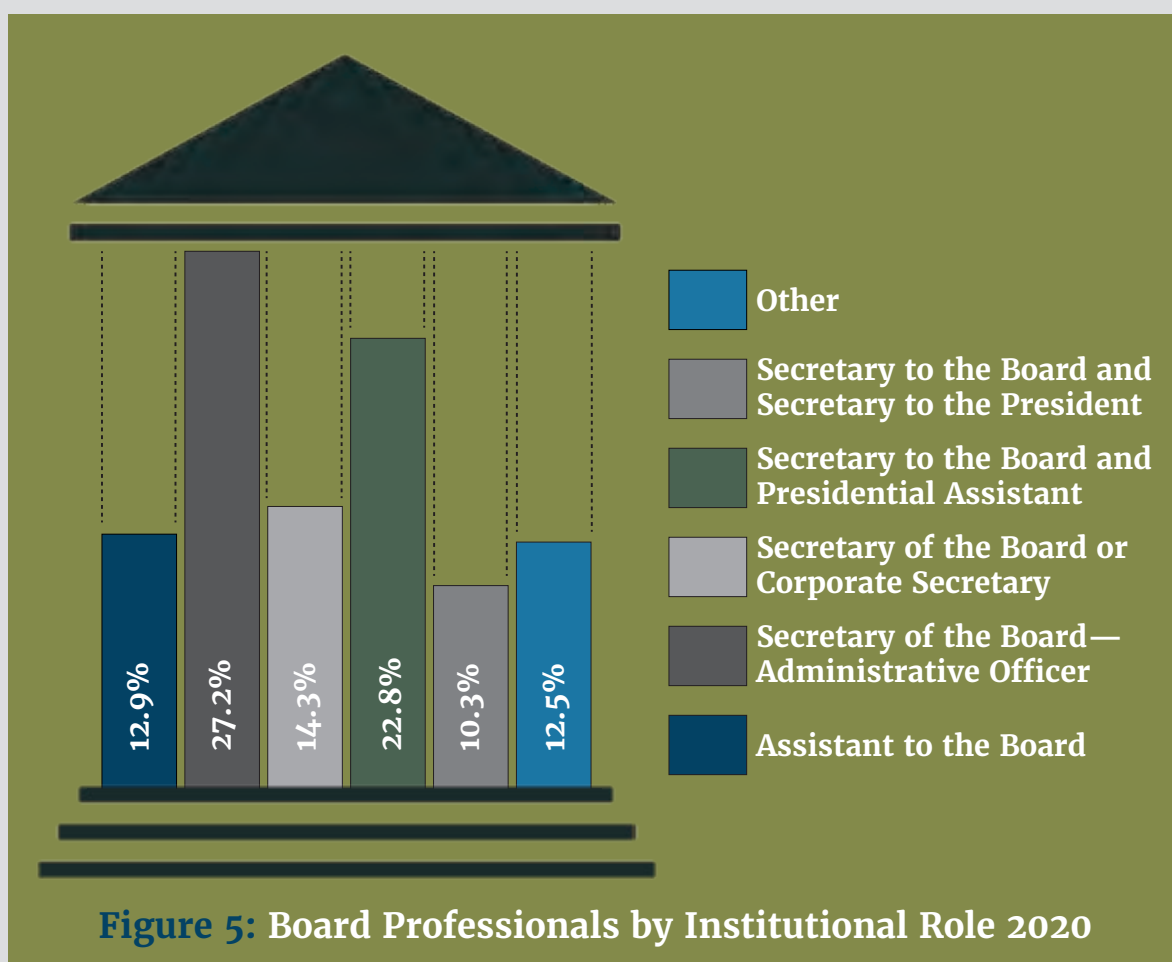


in concert with the chair of the board. In some institutions, this officer is appointed by and reports solely to the board; in other institutions, he or she may report to or be a member of the chief executive officer's cabinet. Duties and responsibilities as an officer of the corporation are typically prescribed in the board/institution's bylaws and standing orders, with other duties generally prescribed by the chief executive officer. This position would be described as **executive** in nature.

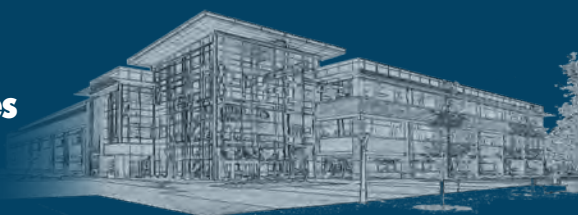
Assistant to the Board

One who is assigned the responsibility for assisting the board secretariat function, but who also carries the title of assistant or associate to the primary administrative liaison to the board.

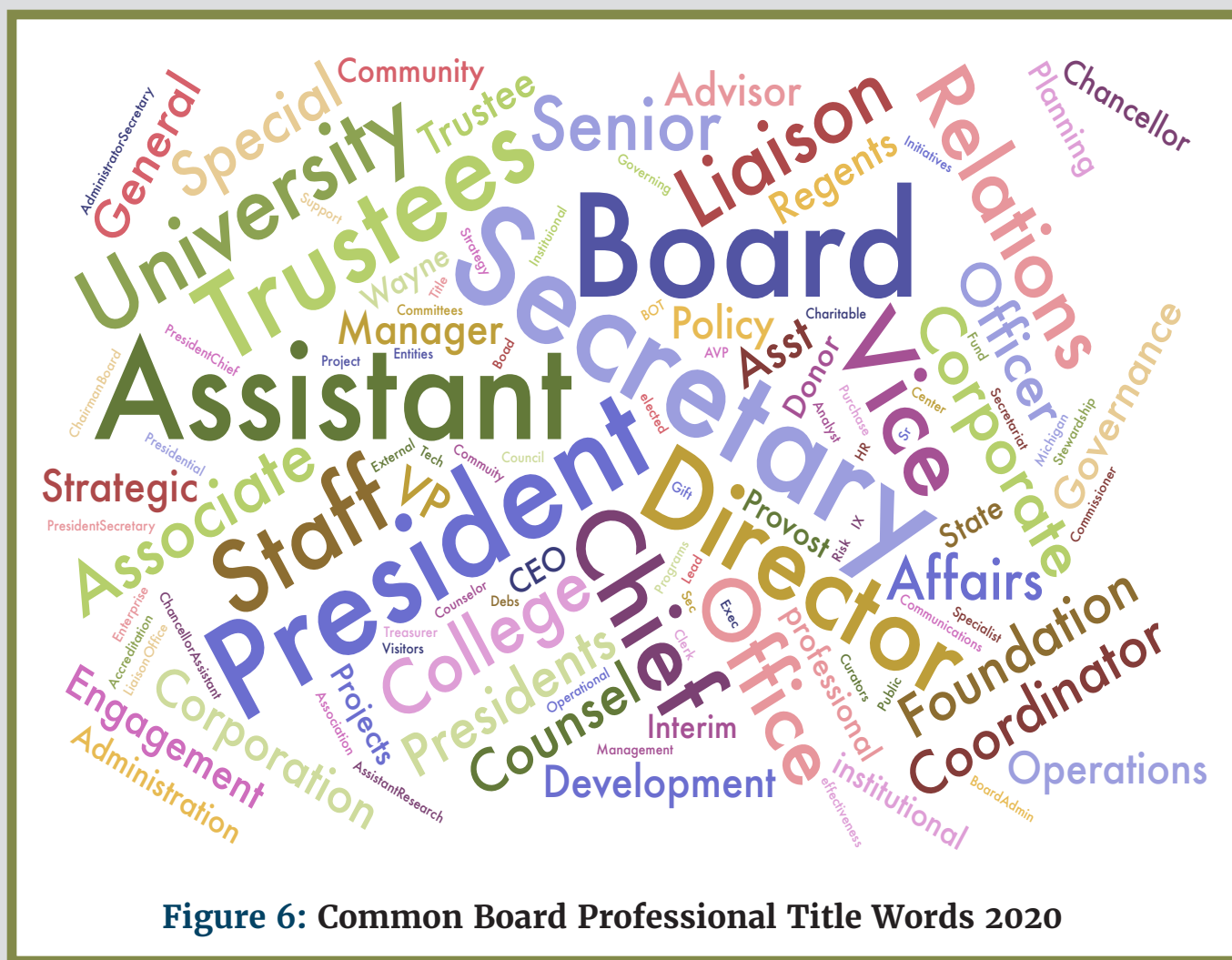
In 2020, more than a quarter of respondents (27.2 percent) indicated their position most closely matched the secretary of the board—administrative officer description above. In second place, almost 23 percent indicated their position most closely matched the secretary to the board and presidential assistant description. (See figure 5.)



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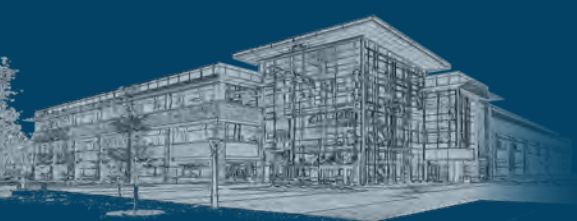


In free response comments a number of respondents explained their jobs combined aspects of the classifications set up in the survey (e.g., a mixture of board–secretariat duties with additional institutional responsibilities). When they were asked to provide their actual titles rather than classifying themselves according to the survey taxonomy, some of the most common were executive assistant to the president either alone or combined with additional titles (28.6 percent), chief of staff either alone or with additional titles attached (21.4 percent), and vice president (14.3 percent).



When analyzing the survey role categories by respondents' years in their current position, however, some interesting patterns emerged. The secretary of the board–administrative officer title was chosen by 26.4 percent of those who reported having been in their present position for 3 years or fewer, 29.3 percent of those who reported having been in their present position between 4 and 9 years, 17.2 percent of those

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who reported having been in their position between 10 and 15 years, and 32.5 percent of those who reported having been in their present position for more than 15 years. (See figure 7.)

The only time secretary of the board—administrative officer was *not* the highest choice in each category of years in current position was for those who reported having been in their present position between 10 and 15 years. In that category, secretary to the board and presidential assistant was chosen by 37.9 percent of respondents—20.7 percentage points higher than the 17.2 percent who chose secretary of the board—administrative officer.

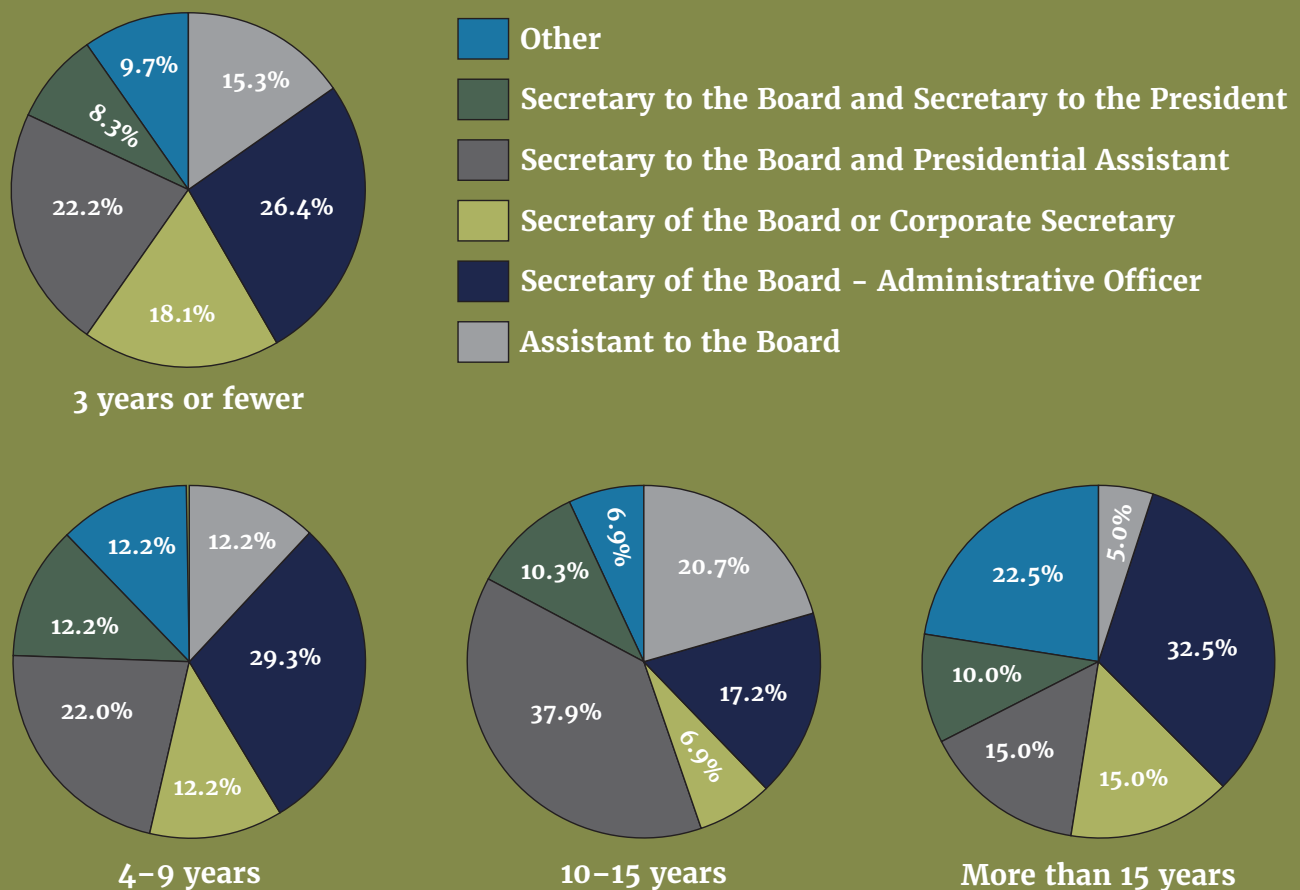
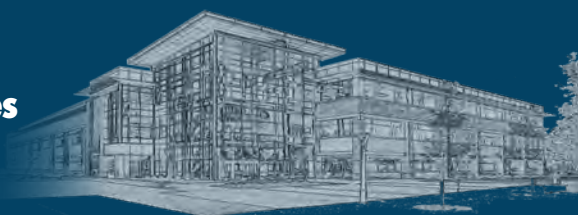


Figure 7: Board Professional Role Taxonomy by Years in Current Position 2020

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The “other” role title was either the lowest choice or tied for the lowest choice in all categories of year in current position except for those who reported having been in their present position for more than 15 years. A total of 22.5 percent in that category chose this response, second only to secretary of the board—administrative officer.

As in previous surveys, the majority of respondents (76.7 percent) were the highest-ranking board professional at their institution. (See figure 8.) Those who were not were asked to provide the title of the highest-ranking board professional at their institution; 30.3 percent of these titles were secretary (varying between board, university, or corporation secretary). The totals for general counsel (whether standing alone or with other titles added) and vice president (whether standing alone or with additional titles) tied at 18.2 percent and executive director (whether standing alone or with additional titles) was last at 12.1 percent.

Are you the highest-ranking board professional at your institution?

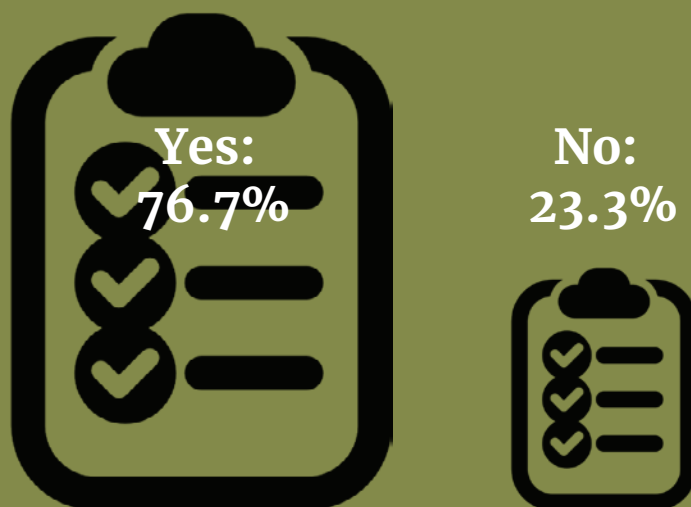
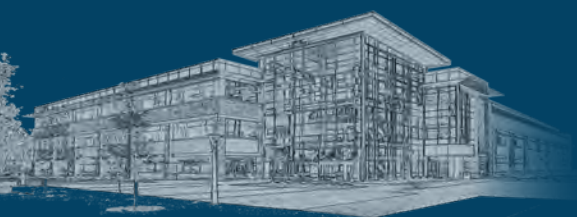


Figure 8: Board Professionals by Board-Role Ranking, 2020



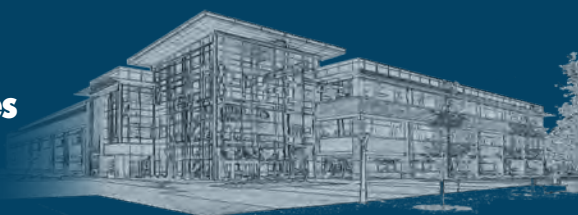
Of those who indicated they were the highest-ranking board professional at their institution, almost 44 percent reported that they did not supervise any staff—or, as one respondent put it, they were “an office of one.” Another 30.3 percent said they supervised one staff member, and almost 8 percent reported supervising two staff members. Other responses ranged from only supervising student assistants/work-study students to sharing supervision of full-time staff with other departments to a few responses from those who supervised between 20 and 40 staff.

In addition to asking board professionals whether they supervised staff, the survey delved into the number of people in their office in assistant/support staff roles, technical support roles, professional or administrative roles, or other roles whose *principal* job it was to work on board matters. Respondents were requested to include themselves. The most popular answer across categories was one person (48.2 percent for assistant/support staff roles; 40.5 percent for technical support roles; 29.1 percent for professional or administrative roles; 40 percent of other staff roles). The second-most popular answer was two people (25.2 percent for assistant/support staff roles; 32.9 percent for technical support roles; 22.4 percent for professional or administrative roles; 20 percent of other staff roles).

Of those who indicated they were the highest-ranking board professional at their institution, almost 44 percent reported that they did not supervise any staff—or, as one respondent put it, they were “an office of one.”

Only 4.5 percent of respondents indicated there were 10 or more people in their office in assistant/support staff roles whose principal job it was to work on board matters. Interestingly, 19 percent of respondents indicated there were 10 or more people in their office in technical support roles and 10.2 percent of respondents indicated 10 or more people in their office in professional or administrative staff roles whose principal job it was to work on board matters. These responses were largely in the doctoral institution or foundation categories, though the associate sector was also represented.

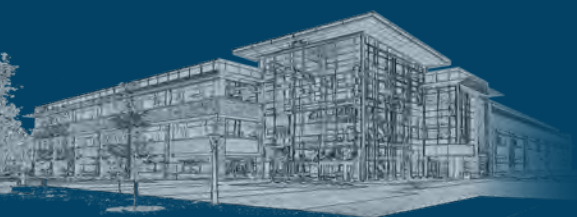
When asked how the number of board staff had changed in the past five years (increased, decreased, or no change), the majority (71 percent) said there had been no change. Almost 15 percent (14.9 percent) indicated



that the number of board staff had decreased and almost 11 percent (10.9 percent) answered that the number of board staff had increased; another 3.2 percent did not know.

These particular results will most likely be different in the next scheduled survey (2025) that will allow respondents to look back to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only has the U.S. Department of Labor recently estimated that American colleges and universities lost a net total of at least 650,000 jobs in 2020,³ but in the separate AGB COVID-19-related survey of board professionals conducted in fall 2020, 16 percent reported that their institutions had had furloughs within their office/department and an additional 5 percent reported that layoffs had already taken place within their office/department.

³ Bauman, D., “A brutal tally: Higher ed lost 650,000 jobs last year,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 5, 2021, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-brutal-tally-higher-ed-lost-650-000-jobs-last-year>.



Board Professionals' Professional Backgrounds, Responsibilities, and Related Professional Development Interests

As in previous surveys, it is clear from the 2020 results that there is no prescribed background to become a higher education governing board professional. When asked about the title of the position they held immediately prior to assuming their role, respondents' answers ranged from academic-related positions (e.g., assistant or associate deans for academic affairs or faculty) to administrative, special, or executive assistant positions (both in and out of higher education) to legal staffing positions to chief of staff positions—to name only a few categories. This makes sense given the range of duties a board professional may be asked to perform at any given time.

Still, how these professionals are recruited to their positions is still largely homogenous and consistent with 2015 results. A majority (65.2 percent, an increase from 58.3 percent in 2015) said they were recruited from within the institution; only 8.1 percent said they were identified and recruited as the result of a national search. (See table 6.)

When broken down by sector, the results remain largely consistent with 2015. However, all sectors (public institutions and systems, independent nonprofit institutions, private for-profit institutions, and institutionally related foundations) showed an increased percentage of respondents who reported they were recruited from within the institution/foundation. While the for-profit sector showed the greatest shifts in recruitment from 2015—as can be seen in table 7—these results should be interpreted cautiously due to low respondent numbers. (See table 7.)

It is clear from the 2020 results that there is no prescribed background to become a higher education governing board professional.

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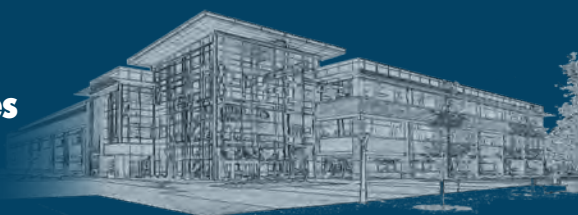


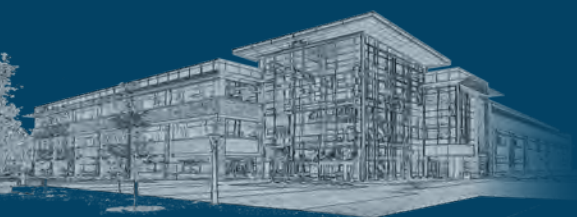
Table 6: Board Professionals'
Recruitment Type 2020

Recruitment to Present Role	
Identified and recruited as the result of a national search	8.1%
Identified and recruited as the result of a regional search	7.6%
Recruited from within the institution	65.2%
Other	19.0%
Total	100.0%

Table 7: Board Professionals by Recruitment
and Institution Type 2020

	Public institutions and systems %	Independent nonprofit institutions %	Private for-profit institutions %	Institutionally related foundations %	Overall %
Recruited from within the institution	69.0%	64.0%	66.7%	55.0%	65.2%
Identified and recruited as the result of a national search	9.9%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.1%
Identified and recruited as the result of a regional search	5.6%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	7.6%
Other	15.5%	16.0%	33.3%	35.0%	19.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

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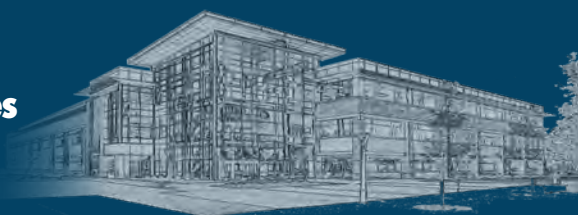


Regardless of whether they are recruited internally or externally, board professionals are responsible for a wide variety of board-related and non-board-related duties in their day-to-day work. Table 8 reflects this; the survey asked respondents to choose all the board-related duties that applied to their position as shown in the table. The top three results were planning and managing board meetings (93.9 percent), managing a storage and retrieval system for board documents, and coordinating board retreats and other events (tied at 86.8 percent), and drafting, editing, and/or approving committee meeting minutes (84.6 percent). (See table 8.)

Table 8: Responsibilities Assumed as a Board Professional 2020 (%)

Plan and manage board meetings (e.g., develop agenda, provide staff support, etc.)	93.9%
Manage storage and retrieval system for board documents	86.8%
Coordinate board retreats and other events	86.8%
Draft, edit, and/or approve committee meeting minutes	84.6%
Plan orientation or orient new board members	82.5%
Plan and manage committee meetings (e.g., develop agenda, provide staff support, etc.)	81.6%
Draft, edit, or revise items for board action (resolutions, etc.)	81.6%
Plan and staff off-site board member retreats	76.8%
Manage the board Website and Web-based communication	71.9%
Oversee budgets in support of the board's function	70.2%
Coordinate board self-assessment process	70.2%
Coordinate ongoing education for board members	69.3%
Manage correspondence on behalf of board members	68.4%
Serve as liaison between the board and faculty, students, and/or alumni	66.2%
Train individuals to provide support for board meetings	62.7%
Fulfill conflict-of-interest responsibilities	61.4%
Serve as liaison between institution and former trustees	61.4%

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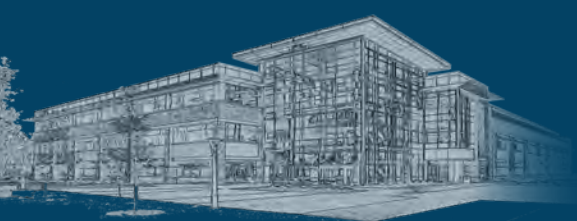
Provide other services to trustees (e.g., arrange travel, book hotels, etc.)	59.2%
Authorize use of corporate seal	51.3%
Staff/support presidential/CEO search committee	49.6%
Serve on university-wide committees	49.1%
Propose board or institutional initiatives	47.4%
Draft speeches and other remarks for board members	43.0%
Staff/support senior administrative officer search efforts	42.5%
Coordinate the presidential/CEO assessment process	39.0%
Identify or recruit new board members	31.6%
Coordinate the presidential/CEO compensation review	24.1%
Oversee/supervise university/college compliance efforts	11.0%
Serve as legal counsel	2.6%

When invited to name other significant board-related responsibilities *not* contained in the answer choices for the question, respondents' answers ranged from serving as a sounding board/thought partner to the president and/or board chair to ensuring that Freedom of Information Act requirements were fulfilled to researching controversial matters that required board response as well as many other tasks not limited to planning and organizing board meetings and documents.

Even with the myriad duties listed in table 8, in 2020 almost 26 percent (25.8 percent) noted that less than half of their working time is devoted specifically to board work; 64.9 percent indicated that either half or less than half of their working time is spent only on board-related duties. (See figure 9.) Both categories have decreased slightly from 2015's results (respectively 27 percent and 66.5 percent).

In addition to these results, almost 85 percent of respondents (an increase of 5.9 percentage points from 2015's 78.8 percent) reported that they had other responsibilities within the institution. These included executive assistant to the president/chancellor/foundation head, chief of staff for the institution, special events work (e.g., commencement and convocation), compliance responsibilities, faculty status, risk management duties, budget duties, accreditation-related duties, and oversight of other campus offices (e.g., academic affairs or institutional research). A total of 57.7 percent of respondents indicated they were members of the chief executive's cabinet.

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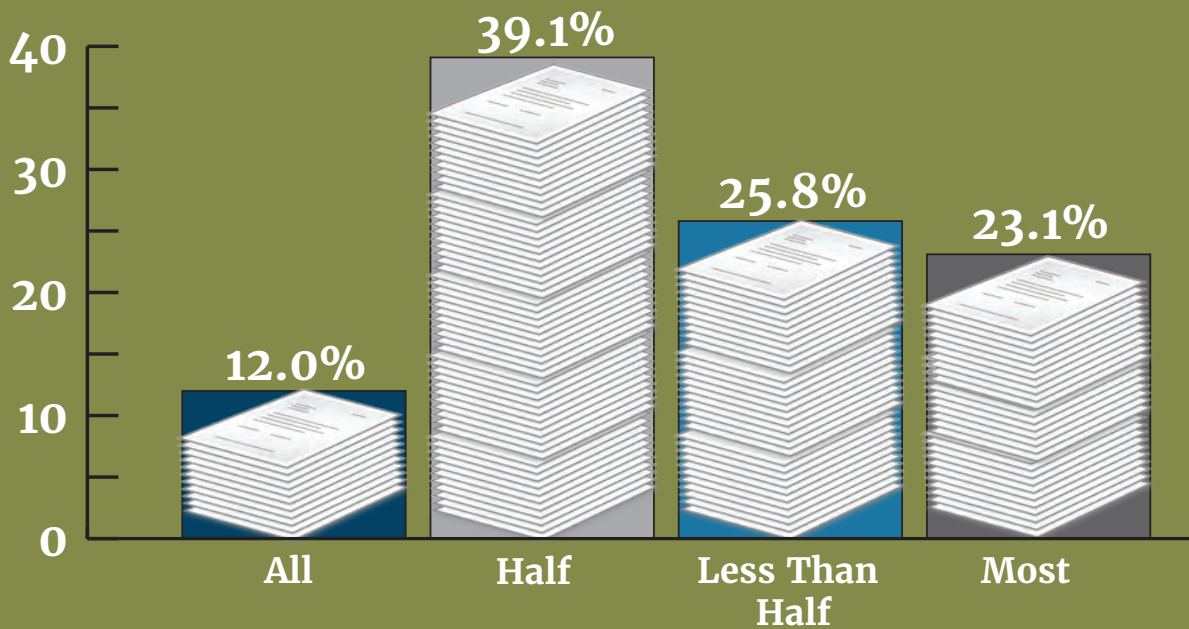
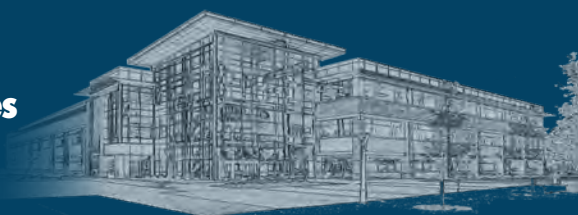


Figure 9: Percentage of Time Devoted to Board Work 2020

Some noted that the pandemic had added to their other responsibilities. This corresponds with the AGB COVID-19 Survey of Board Professionals in which 68 percent of respondents indicated the pandemic had had some effect on their duties and responsibilities and another 26 percent indicated it had considerably changed them. Many of the changes were, logically, related to working with board members, chairs, and institutional/foundation leaders on responses to an ever-evolving array of pandemic-related needs.

In keeping with the above, survey results over time reflect a history of change in board professionals' responsibilities. An examination of board professionals' self-reported top 10 responsibilities from 2010 through 2020 appears in table 9. This question has changed somewhat over the years so perfect comparability is impossible. But a shift can be seen from primarily staff support in 2010 to a combination of staff support and managerial functions in 2020. In particular, "plan and manage board meetings" has moved from 66.3 percent (or fourth place) of 2010 responsibilities to 94.7 percent (or second place) in 2015 to 93.9 percent (or first place) in 2020. (See table 9.)

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The complexity of board professionals' work has also increased over time as measured both in the 2015 survey and in the 2020 survey. In 2020, the most common response, when asked whether or how the complexity of their role had changed over the past five years, was that their boards had requested an increased level of information (58.8 percent). This was only four percentage points higher than the answer choice of "Increased number of responsibilities for the role" (54.8 percent). The percentage of those who felt the level of complexity of the board professional role at their campus/system/foundation had remained the same was 7.9 percent in 2020 as opposed to 12.9 percent in 2015—a decrease of five percentage points. (See table 10.)

There were multiple free response comments outlining the pandemic-generated workload of adapting existing procedures to virtual meeting formats and providing training on various forms of virtual meeting technology—themes that were also commented upon in the COVID-19 Survey of Board Professionals. Other comments included more emphasis on shared governance, increased expectations from board members for the board professional to provide guidance on complex governance matters, and increased overall work volume.

Increased work volume and complexity often leads to worker interest in professional development to help manage said work and complexity; board professionals are no exception. However, given the timing of the COVID-19 pandemic's start in February/March 2020, the results from the mid-October 2020 survey about what forms of professional development respondents had engaged in over the past year should be viewed with circumspection. Only a little more than 62 percent of respondents had participated in professional development over the past year, a decrease of almost 9 percent from 2015. Of those who had not participated, 38.2 percent cited the COVID-19 pandemic and 23.7 percent indicated their schedules had limited availability to participate in professional development.

57.7 percent of respondents indicated they were members of the chief executive's cabinet.

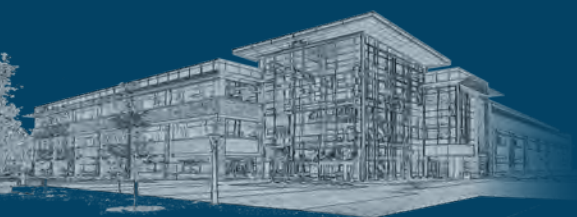
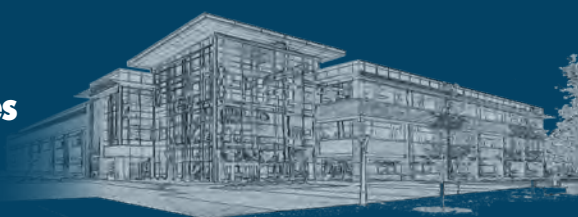


Table 9: Board Professionals' Top 10 Responsibilities, 2010–2020

Top 10 Responsibilities 2020		Top 10 Responsibilities 2015		Top 10 Responsibilities 2010	
Responsibility	%	Responsibility	%	Responsibility	%
Plan and manage board meetings	93.9%	Draft, edit, and/or approve board meeting minutes	96.5%	Provide staff support for board meetings	81.8%
Manage storage and retrieval system for board documents	86.8%	Plan and manage board meetings	94.7%	Manage storage and retrieval system for board	77.4%
Coordinate board retreats and other events	86.8%	Coordinate board retreats and other events	90.6%	Draft board meeting minutes	76.1%
Draft, edit, and/or approve committee minutes	84.6%	Manage storage and retrieval system for board documents	90.1%	Plan and manage board meetings	66.3%
Plan orientation or orient new board members	82.5%	Draft, review, or revise items for board action	89.2%	Review, edit, approve draft minutes for publication	60.3%
Plan and manage committee meetings	81.6%	Plan orientation or orient new board members	82.5%	Coordinate board retreats and other events	59.6%
Draft, edit, or revise items for board action	81.6%	Plan and manage committee meetings	81.9%	Oversee the coordination of board retreats and other events	59.1%
Plan and staff off-site board member retreats	76.8%	Plan and staff off-site board member retreats	79.5%	Manage the planning and staffing of offsite retreats and events	53.8%

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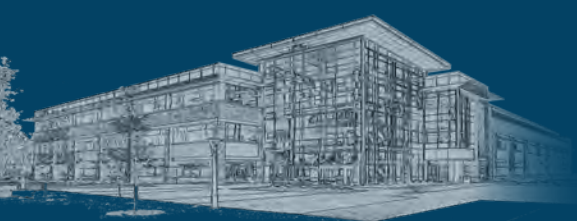
Manage the board Website and web-based comms	71.9%	Draft, edit, and/or approve committee meeting minutes	78.9%	Plan and staff offsite trustee retreats	53.8%
Coordinate budgets in support of the board's function	70.2%	Manage review and revision of bylaws and other governance documents	77.2%	Train individuals to provide support for board meetings	50.7%
Coordinate board's self-assessment process	70.2%				

Note: **Bold font** indicates tied response

Table 10: Increased Complexity of Board Professional Position Over Past Five Years 2020

Area of Increased Complexity	%
Increased levels of information requested by board	58.8%
Increased number of responsibilities for the role	54.8%
Increased competencies in board governance needed	50.4%
Increased levels of transparency	46.9%
Increased number of policies and review process	43.4%
Increased scrutiny by campus community, media, and/or public	38.6%
Increased number of committees of the board as well as demands/needs of the committee	35.5%
Increased demands to report to state and federal agencies requiring compliance on issues	17.5%
Increased requests from public for information	17.1%
N/A The level of complexity for the role of the board professional has remained the same	7.9%
Other	4.4%

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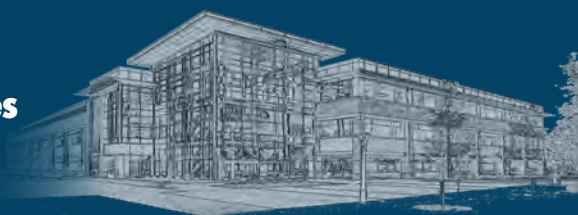


That being said, the pandemic seems to have increased one particular form of professional development participation. In 2015, 27.9 percent of respondents engaged in webinars on issues of importance in higher education and 22 percent engaged in webinars on college and university governance. In 2020, 59.6 percent of respondents engaged in webinars on issues of importance in higher education (a 31.7–percentage–point increase) and 47.8 percent engaged in webinars on college and university governance (a 25.8–percentage–point increase).

It is unclear whether results from the question “What types of professional development would you like to receive in your capacity as a board professional?” were as affected by the pandemic. As can be seen in table 11, a little more than half of respondents were interested in webinars on college and university governance, followed closely by specialized trainings to enhance their job functions or responsibilities (49.1 percent).

Table 11: Types of Desired Professional Development 2020

Types of Desired Professional Development	%
Webinars on college and university governance	50.9%
Specialized trainings to enhance my job functions or responsibilities	49.1%
Webinars of issues of importance in higher education	42.1%
Conferences or meetings about college and university governance	38.6%
Conferences or meetings about issues of importance in higher education	26.8%
Career mentorship	26.3%
All of the above	21.9%
Other	3.1%



Respondents were also asked about the top five professional development topics of greatest interest to them now or in the near future. Of the top five, the top two choices were board governance (46.1 percent) and benchmarking and dashboards for boards (45.6 percent), separated by only half a percentage point. The following three choices were also closely grouped (see table 12). The most popular free response answers were Robert's Rules of Order/parliamentary procedures, diversity, equity and inclusion for boards, and board assessment; others mentioned advanced technology and best practices for boards in a "post-pandemic world."

Table 12: Top Five Professional Development Topic Interests 2020

Professional Development Topic	%	Rank
Board governance	46.1%	1
Benchmarking and dashboards for boards	45.6%	2
Trustee orientation	39.9%	3
Managing the board and/or president's office	37.7%	4
Board recruitment, retention, and development	33.8%	5

Respondents were also asked a new but related question, that of "Thinking back to when you began working as a board professional, what would have been the top five most useful professional development topics for you as someone new to the role?" As shown in table 13, board governance (52.6 percent) took second place behind basic responsibilities of new board professionals (67.5 percent). (See table 13.) A free response comment of "I would have liked a mentor" is a good reminder that while technical topics such as governance and writing board minutes (ranked fourth with 43.9 percent of responses) are undeniably important, interpersonal relationships are also helpful.

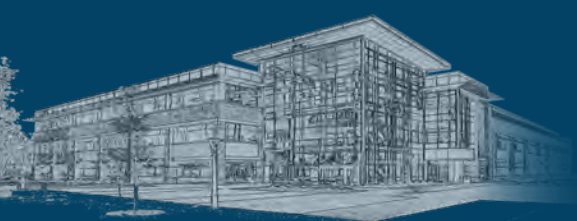
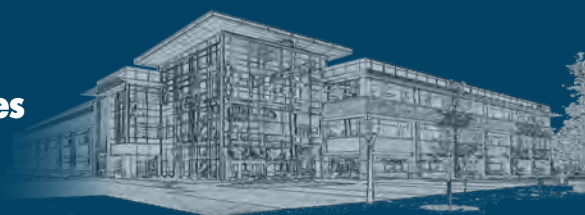


Table 13: Top Five Most Useful Professional Development Topics for New Board Professionals

Professional Development Topic	%	Rank
Basic responsibilities of new board professionals	67.5%	1
Board governance	52.6%	2
Managing the board and/or President's office	46.1%	3
Writing board minutes	43.9%	4
Trustee orientation	38.2%	5



Board Professionals' Salaries and Perquisites

Board professionals' salaries are as varied as their duties and titles. For example, at the time the survey was administered in 2020, almost 36 percent of respondents reported earning salaries ranging between \$40,000 and \$79,999 (see table 14). Looking at it with a broader scope, 56.6 percent of respondents reported earning salaries under \$100,000. However, almost 68 percent of respondents whose institutional role could be characterized as secretary of the board or corporate secretary earned \$100,000 or more (see table 15).

Table 14: Board Professional Salary Ranges 2020

Salary Range	%
Below \$40,000	1.4%
\$40,000–\$59,999	14.2%
\$60,000–\$79,999	21.7%
\$80,000–\$99,999	19.3%
\$100,000–\$124,999	12.3%
\$125,000–\$149,999	8.0%
\$150,000–\$174,999	7.1%
\$175,000–\$200,000	6.6%
Over \$200,000	9.4%
Total	100.0%

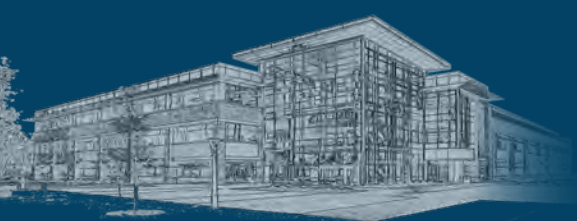
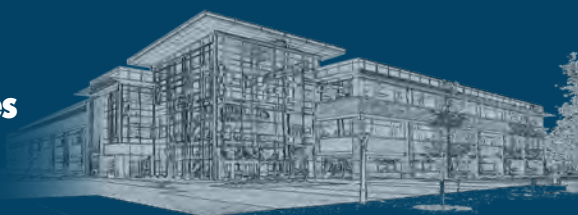


Table 15: Board Professionals by Salary and Institutional Role

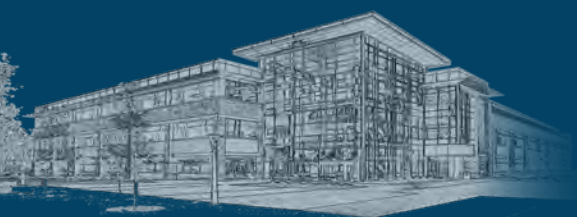
	Assistant to the Board %	Secretary of the Board or Corporate Secretary %	Secretary of the Board—Administrative Officer %	Secretary to the Board and Presidential Assistant %	Secretary to the Board and Secretary to the President %	Other %	Overall %
Below \$40,000	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	1.4%
\$40,000–\$59,999	15.4%	0.0%	5.2%	33.3%	14.3%	14.8%	14.2%
\$60,000–\$79,999	38.5%	16.1%	3.4%	25.0%	38.1%	33.3%	21.7%
\$80,000–\$99,999	19.2%	16.1%	8.6%	27.1%	23.8%	25.9%	19.3%
\$100,000–\$124,999	7.7%	16.1%	20.7%	4.2%	14.3%	7.4%	12.3%
\$125,000–\$149,999	11.5%	6.5%	15.5%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	8.0%
\$150,000–\$174,999	0.0%	6.5%	13.8%	2.1%	4.8%	11.1%	7.1%
\$175,000–\$200,000	0.0%	9.7%	15.5%	2.1%	0.0%	3.7%	6.6%
Over \$200,000	0.0%	29.0%	17.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	9.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



In terms of board professionals' compensation above and beyond standard benefits packages at institutions/foundations (perquisites), some respondents took the opportunity to note that pandemic-related budget strictures had led to the elimination of previously offered perquisites. This comment was echoed by participants in the COVID-19 Survey of Board Professionals. The pandemic-related financial crises affecting higher education may change these results considerably in the near term, much less by 2025 when the next survey is administered.

The two most commonly reported perquisites of support for professional development and related travel (55.7 percent) and free/reduced tuition for board professionals and/or their family members (54.8 percent) are examples of perquisites that may well be cut due to financial retrenchment. A tablet device supplied by the institution/foundation (33.8 percent) and a mobile phone supplied by the institution/foundation (33.3 percent) were the two next-most popular responses. Again, it remains to be seen whether these technology benefits provided for work purposes will remain available to board professionals in the future, or whether they will have to assume the costs themselves. It also remains to be seen how the pandemic and its aftereffects will affect salaries across higher education in the coming years.

More professional development and resources—including on topics that have grown out of the pandemic—can help board professionals navigate the turbulent waters facing them.



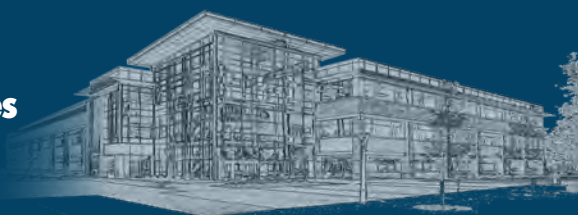
Conclusion

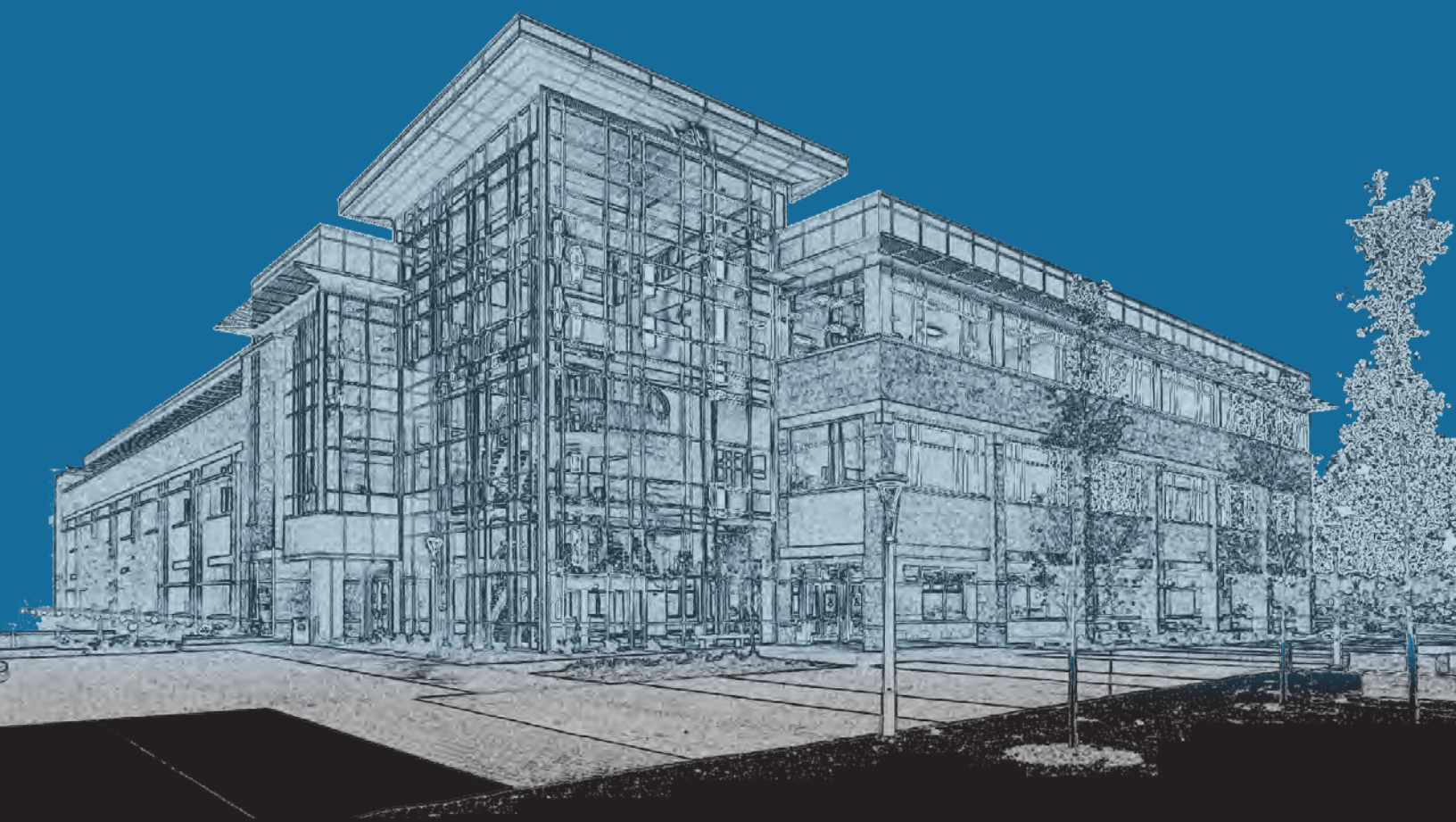
The population of board professionals who responded to the AGB Survey of Board Professionals was still largely consistent in demographics with respondent populations from the previous decade of AGB data (older, White, and female). Most were recruited from within their institutions. Some slight shifts in racial/ethnic diversity occurred between 2015 and 2020 as younger board professionals entered the profession. However—especially since 27.1 percent of respondents were over the age of 59 and only 2.9 percent were under 30 years of age—board professionals and their executives should look for opportunities to broaden the pool from which they recruit so that more upper echelons of institutions and foundations can reflect the ever-changing, more diverse society.

While the demographic profile of board professionals who responded to this survey may be consistent with previous years, their workloads and responsibilities have grown in both scope and complexity over time. Almost 58 percent reported that they serve as a member of the president's cabinet; 58.8 percent indicated that over the past five years, their role's complexity increased due to increased levels of information requested by the board, and another 54.8 percent indicated more complexity due to an increased number of responsibilities for their role. Only a small minority (7.9 percent) thought that their role's level of complexity had stayed the same over the past five years.

It is clearly apparent that the ongoing (as of this writing) COVID-19 pandemic has affected not only board professionals' workloads and responsibilities, but their opportunities for professional development. Despite this, board professionals still indicate their interest in attending webinars on college and university governance, specialized trainings to enhance their job functions or responsibilities, and webinars on issues of importance to higher education. Their lesser interest in conferences versus webinars can reasonably be supposed to be due to the pandemic.

No one knows what the future will hold for higher education overall or for board professionals in particular. Current events have made it extraordinarily difficult to predict how campuses and foundations will fare in the next year ahead, let alone in the next five years. However, the survey results suggest that providing more professional development and resources—including on topics that have grown out of the pandemic—can help board professionals navigate the turbulent waters facing them.

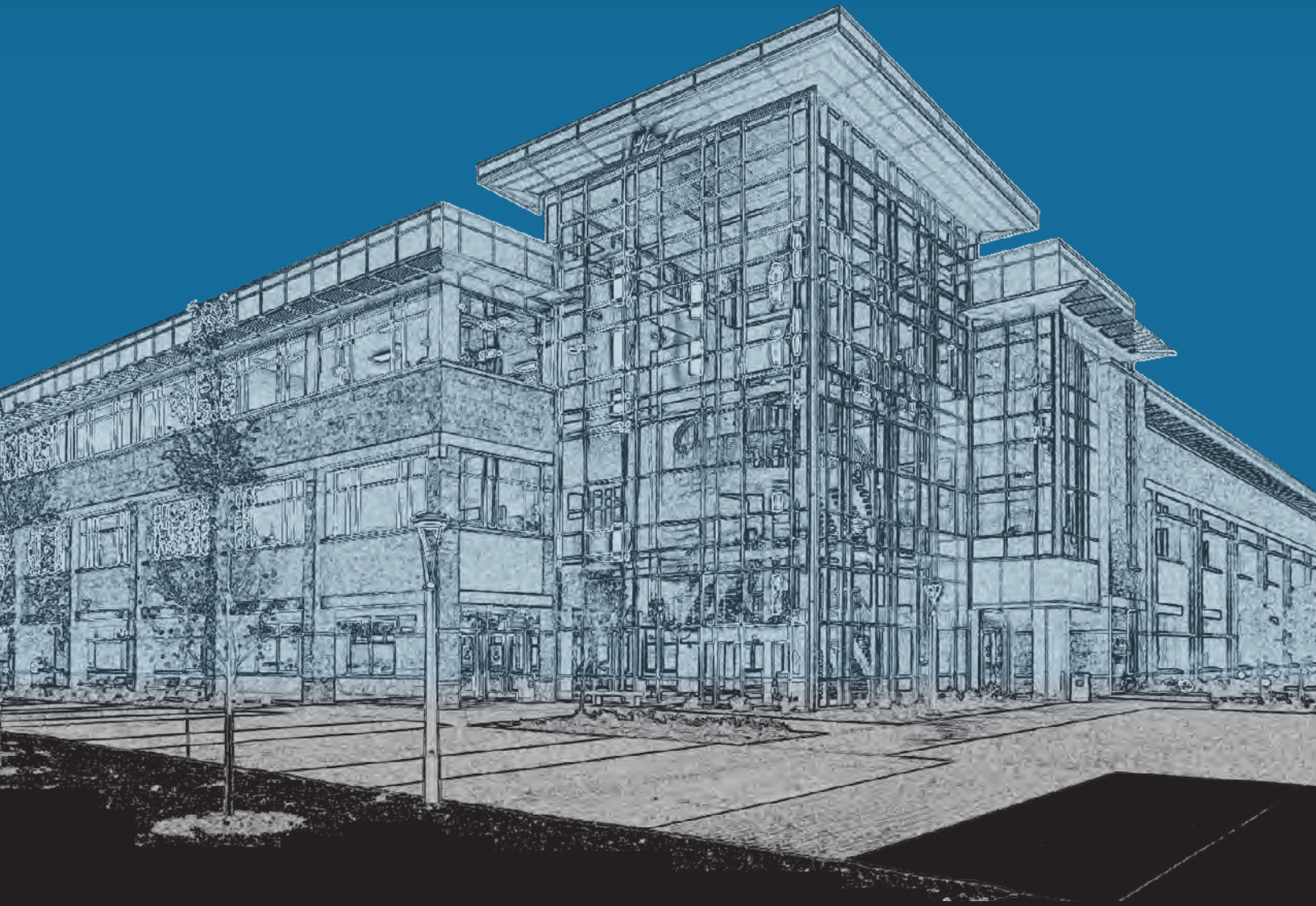




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2020 AGB SURVEY OF BOARD PROFESSIONALS



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