



Winter Retreat Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: March 10th 2017

Item:	Winter Retreat Report
Author:	Nick Soave, Manager, Advocacy and Government Services Karla Pacheco, Senior Manager Human Resources
Purpose of Report:	Information

Overview of Report: Below are areas of focus and recommendations for change that received a broad consensus during the Winter Retreat from group discussions and outgoing Board member exit interviews.

Recommendation: The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this report to the Human Resources, Governance and Evaluation Sub-Committees. With a report back on actions presented at the 2017 Summer Board Meeting.

Below are a list of recommendations for improvement that received support during the winter retreat.

- Start using a digital tool like slack for communications. The board does not like Owl as a communication platform.
- Develop a formal mentorship program between senior and junior board members similar to the Chair-Vice Chair relationship to provide support for junior board members and opportunity for senior board members.
- Develop SWOTS in each area of the USC.
- Create Issue Briefs on topics to help transition knowledge.
- Continue to develop policies that outline the rules of the board.
- Roles and Responsibilities document needs to be formalized and communicated to the board.
- Develop training for the Committee Chairs including a focus on how to effectively report back to the board
- Ensure the COO's activity report is shared with the board each month, confirm what exactly the board wants to see in these reports.
- Create an organizational culture that establishes the board as the head of the organization
- Foster and support a board culture that encourages all Board members to ask questions and learn without fear of judgement or criticism in order to work towards a more informed and effective board
- Once strategic plan is completed ensure each board item can clearly be linked to that plan.

- More social events for Board members so they feel like a team and get to know each other.
-

Additionally, this is a list of the positive initiatives that the attendees at the Winter Retreat indicated they wanted to see continued.

- Board felt supported by staff and organization.
- The nomination process continually generates high quality candidates.
- The board has made extensive progress over the last 2 years; it is a journey and will take time to evolve but consensus around steady progress.
- Board members feel they make an impact.

TL;DR: Overall winter retreat was a success and provided many learnings for the new board and staff. At times the day took on a negative tone, but directors were quick to remind everyone that over the 3 years we have been using this new separated Director model, significant positive progress has been made.

Indepth Comments

Below is a more in depth list of the comments made at the Winter Retreat.

New Directors Training: Generally speaking, the New Director information was very helpful, but a few areas of improvement have been noted:

- The USC 101 session should of been shared previous to the day for review to reduce the time spent absorbing information. The Directors wanted to discuss the units rather than just learn.
- A stronger focus on the difference between the executive, council and board would be helpful to further clarify a Director's role. Issue of role clarity was also noted many times by the senior directors.

Senior Director Feedback: The feedback focuses on specific training enhancements and ways to improve the board culture.

- The board has started to ask more pointed questions of staff to ensure the best information is being provided to the board.
- There needs to be a continued focus on ensuring that proper, and factual information is being sent to the board for review in a timely manner. Staff are the ones that need to improve, but the board does have a responsibility to ensure they clearly request what information they need and by when.
- How to incentivise a director to be effective. The general feeling was directors were not always adequately prepared for meetings and finding a way to promote this would be helpful.
- Action items resulting from meetings need to be clearly communicated to board members, and staff alike. Then these action items need to be reviewed at the beginning of each meeting to ensure completion.
- Improved clarity of role of a director.
- Continue to develop the subcommittee structure, including improved training and role descriptions for committee chairperson and ensuring the work of the committees is not duplicated at the board meetings.
- Ensure that Directors understand that there is no previous experience required to join a committee to avoid barriers.
- Directors, especially senior directors, need to act in a more professional manner.
- Improve communication opportunities between directors
- More context on issues would be helpful when making decisions.
- Improved policy book for the board.
- Gazette and in-camera session can make it intimidating for new directors to speak up.
- Improved understanding of the units at the USC in manageable chunks.
- USC Tour was incredibly helpful in learning about the USC.
- More opportunities for directors to interact with staff so they feel comfortable approaching them with questions or concerns.

- More interaction between the Executive and the Board so that the Board is respected and positioned properly. Directors in year 2 should be retrained as a lot changes over the course of a year and a refresher is helpful after a long summer away from Board interaction.
- It is vital that the Board be familiar with the Strategic Plan and how it relates to their role as a director.
- Outgoing Board members could benefit from development sessions that assist them in translating their board experience on a resume and getting more involved in outreach for new Board members.
- More information about board committees and the benefits of being involved.

Sign-Offs:

Board Chairperson :		
USC Chief Operating Officer:		
President or Secretary- Treasurer:		
Author of report:		