

Presidential Onboarding/Contracting

Colleges often struggle to compete for high quality senior administrative leaders, especially presidents. Tight budgets and increased public accountability compound the challenge; since recruiting, selecting, and relocating candidates requires a significant investment. Many boards and new presidents are so enamored with one another on the 1st day that they fail to realize that this is really an expensive and complicated business transaction.



Onboarding the new president with a series of activities can make all the difference between a failed presidency and a successful long-term Board/CEO relationship. Institutions work long and tedious hours during the recruitment and selection process to get the best talent, then too often boards assume these highly qualified and accomplished individuals require little support to be successful.

You can avoid this conundrum by adopting a systematic onboarding process to welcome and integrate the newly appointed president. Effective onboarding provides a systemic introduction to the campus culture, unwritten norms, shared governance roles, and the importance of establishing trust based relationships. The return on the investment in onboarding is that it contributes to a clearer vision, often reducing misunderstandings that can become so severe that they end in another costly rehiring process, or worse.

Our system will provide the following services to the Board and new President:

- **Three onboarding focused retreat sessions** (3-months, 6-months & 1-year)
 1. In depth consensus review and collective interpretation of the contract (3-months)
 2. Review of interpersonal dynamics to date (3-months)
 3. “Dr. Austin’s Rules” review – 65+ ways presidents go wrong in the 1st year (3-months)
 4. Review of internal governance practices (6-months)
 5. Review of presidential expectations and how well they are being met (6-months)
 6. Honoring traditions and legacies while influencing organizational change (6-months)
 7. Presidential Appraisal – Year One in review (1-year)
 8. Presidential goal setting (annual, short-term, long-term) (1-year)
 9. Board/CEO Relations 101 & specific policy implementation review (1-year)

Systemic presidential onboarding proactively addresses important details and information up front versus dealing with time-consuming problems and course corrections in the future. Onboarding provides a positive and strategic experience for the new president, the Board and ultimately, the institution.