

EMAIL FROM CLAIRE POMEROY TO SHERRY LANSING

Dear Sherry,

Happy new year!

As pointed out in the recent Science article, the ICOC has important work ahead to identify the process and potential candidates for Board Chair. And of course, the Governance Committee has an important role in guiding this.

I write to you in your role as chair of the Governance Committee. In the spirit of a clean start and an open process, I would suggest that the Governance Committee consider proactively attaining input from all the Board members in two areas:

1. Self-assessment of Board performance/function to date
2. Desired attributes of Board Chair

Self-assessment of Board performance/function: To start off our thinking, I would urge us to do some self-reflection about how well we have performed as a Board. One way to do this would be to adapt an annual assessment tool used by another board on which I serve. A survey was sent to all Board members:

First section was Yes/Sometimes/No answers about how well the Board functions as a whole, as well as a section for free-form comments-

- Organization (CIRM) lives up to its mission
- Board focuses on the appropriate strategic, fiduciary, and generative issues that guide the work of the organization
- Board attends to policy related activities that guide the work of management staff
- Board is composed of a diverse group of individuals with a variety of skills to consider the interests of the organization's broad constituencies
- Board avoids getting into administrative/management details
- Board members offer a diversity of opinions and addresses issues in a respectful manner
- Board is too influenced by the views of the President and/or other management staff
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Second section was Yes/Sometimes/No answers about the individual Board member him- or herself, again with a section for free-form comments-

- I understand and support the mission of the organization
- I understand my responsibilities as a board member
- I come to the Board meetings fully prepared to participate
- I receive adequate information, presented in a concise and focused manner, on matters that come to the Board in a timely manner
- At Board meetings, I feel comfortable raising and discussing dissenting or contrary opinions

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- I think about the work of the organization (CIRM) between Board calls and meetings
- I understand the issue of conflict of interest and have no conflicts other than those disclosed in writing
- I receive personal satisfaction from my role as Board member.
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I think the staff to the Board could slightly "tweak" this and send out to all members- the Governance Committee would probably learn some important things about ourselves.

Desired attributes of Board Chair: It seems to me that we don't always hear from all the Board members about their thoughts on this issue and as a committee we should know the ideas of all the ICOC members. I would thus suggest that we do an additional survey that asks things such as:

- Desired attributes of a chair (e.g. collaborative, etc)- list top 3
- Desired skill sets of a chair (e.g. advocacy, financial, etc)- list top 3
- Desired background/experience of a chair (e.g. academics, patient advocate, industry experience, etc)- list top 3
- Recommended time commitment of chair (e.g. full time, 1 day a week, attendance at meetings and availability by phone in between, etc)
- Recommended financial compensation for chair (e.g. salary range)

I recommend these approaches because I think it is important to have all ideas, to be transparent and to ensure an open process free of conflict of interest and personal agendas. This is our chance to emphasize the mission over in-fighting- and can define what kind of organization CIRM and the Board will be.

Thanks for listening.

Claire

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Claire Pomeroy, M.D., M.B.A.
Chief Executive Officer, UC Davis Health System
Vice Chancellor, Human Health Sciences
Dean, School of Medicine
University of California, Davis