

The Ten Commandments of Successful Trusteeship

from "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished ~ Personal Liability of Trustees
and Administrators of Private Colleges and Universities"
by Eileen M. Evans and William D. Evans, Jr.
Tort & Insurance Law Journal, Volume 33, Number 4, Summer 1998, pp 1107-1121.

1. Attend meetings with homework complete.
2. Know the bylaws, policies, and rules.
3. Focus on policy, not administration.
4. Advocate more than criticize (praise in public, criticize in private).
5. Build consensus on important issues.
6. Encourage risk taking by administrators.
7. Attend to the budget as the basic policy document.
8. Ensure that reward and evaluation systems are keyed to achieving institutional goals and not to personal predilections.
9. Stimulate co-trustees to reflect and plan beyond the present.
10. Promote open communication.

Other that have been suggested:

11. Insist on proper notice requirements being complied with for any meeting, especially when major topics are to be discussed. Without adequate notice, the board may lack authority to undertake proposed actions.
12. Review materials in advance of board meetings and question inconsistencies that appear.
13. Seek expert advice on complex issues.
14. Investigate rumors.
15. Support leadership.