

Board and CEO Relationships

How to Develop Collaborative and Effective Relationships in Complex Organizations

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Tough Job if You Can Keep It

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We need more stability at the top:

- Average tenure of Fortune 500 CEO: 9.7 years
- Median tenure of UC/CSU president: 7 years
- Median tenure of US CC president: 7 years
- Median tenure of CA CC president: 3.5 years
- Median tenure of K-12 sup. 3.2 years

(Sources: The Conference Board, AACCC, CCLC, Council of Great City Schools)

“Board-CEO relationships are
the ‘secret sauce’
for organization success
and for the length of tenure for CEOs.”

Frank Gornick
Chancellor Emeritus, West Hills CCD

1. Tough Job if You Can Keep It *and*

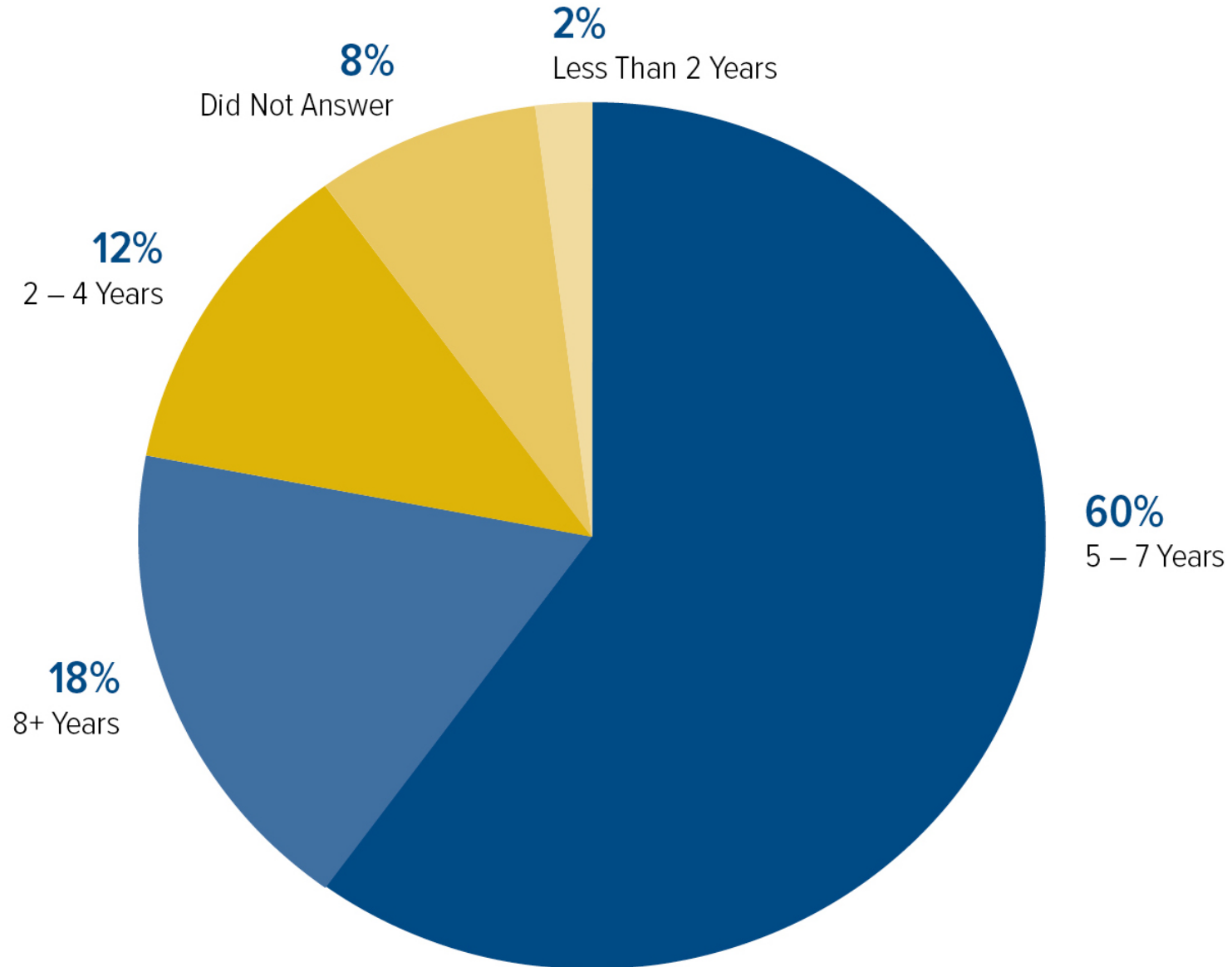
2. Talk to Me: What CCC Trustees Want From Their CEOs

Susanna Cooper

Managing Director

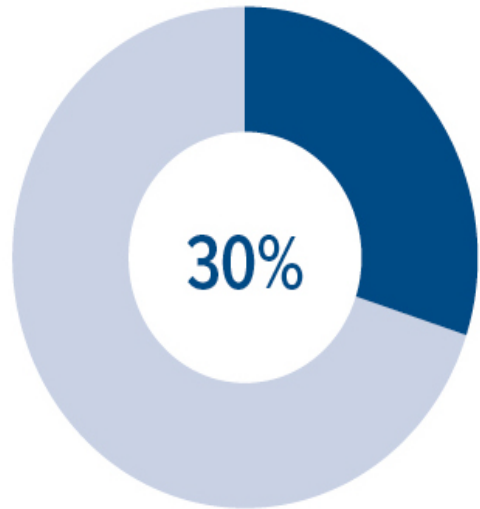
**Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College
Leadership and Research**

Trustees: Minimum Desired Tenure for Effective CEO?

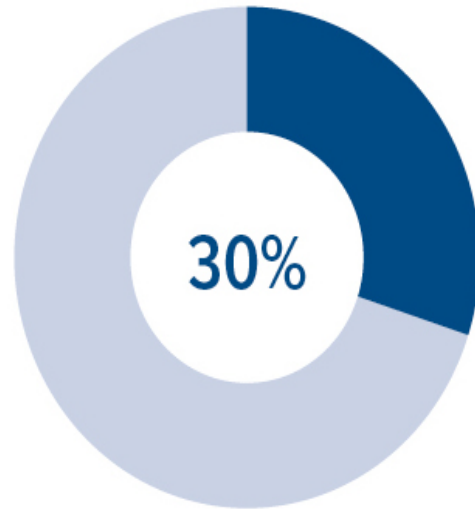


CEOs: How Long Do You Plan to Stay?

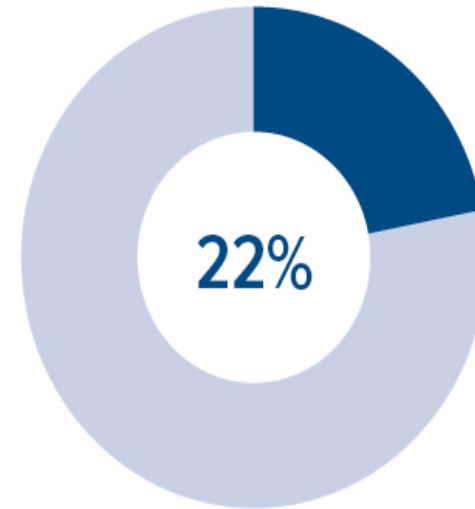
How long do you anticipate continuing in your current position? (n=63)



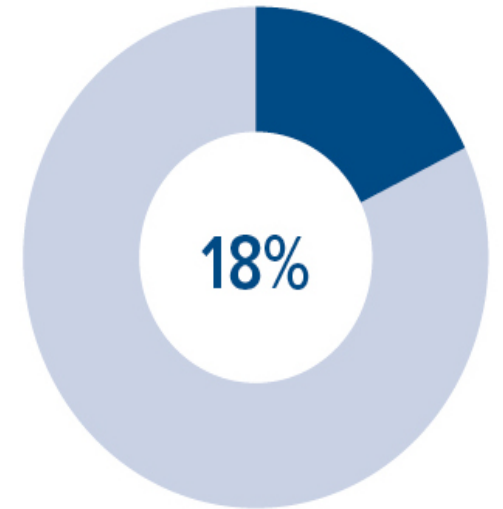
Less than 1 year



1 – 3 years



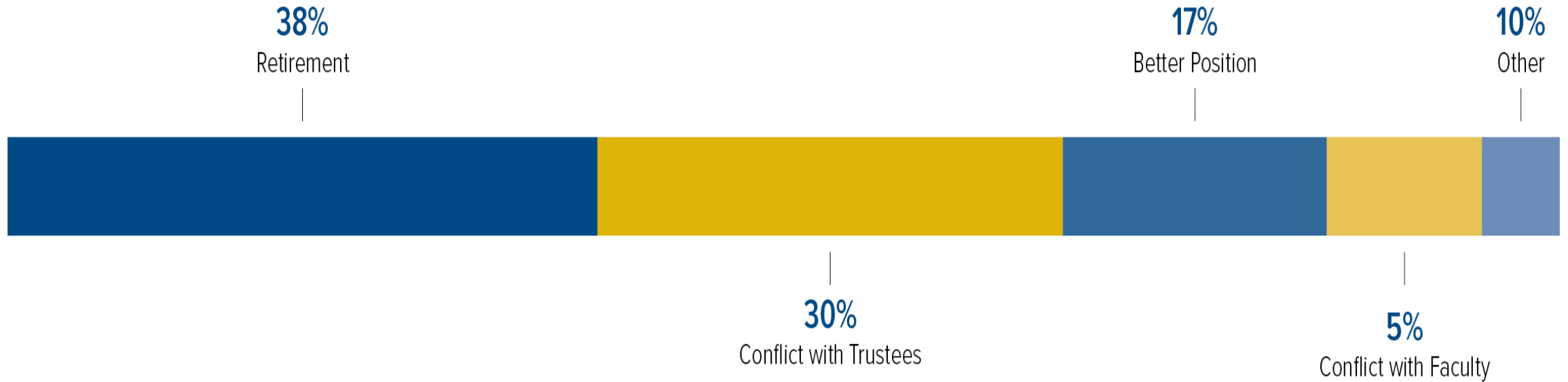
4 – 6 years



7 or more years

Trustees: Why Do CEOs Leave Their Jobs?

In Your Opinion, Why Did Departing CEO(s) Leave? (N=75)



Percentages do not add up to 100 because 5% of respondents did not answer this question

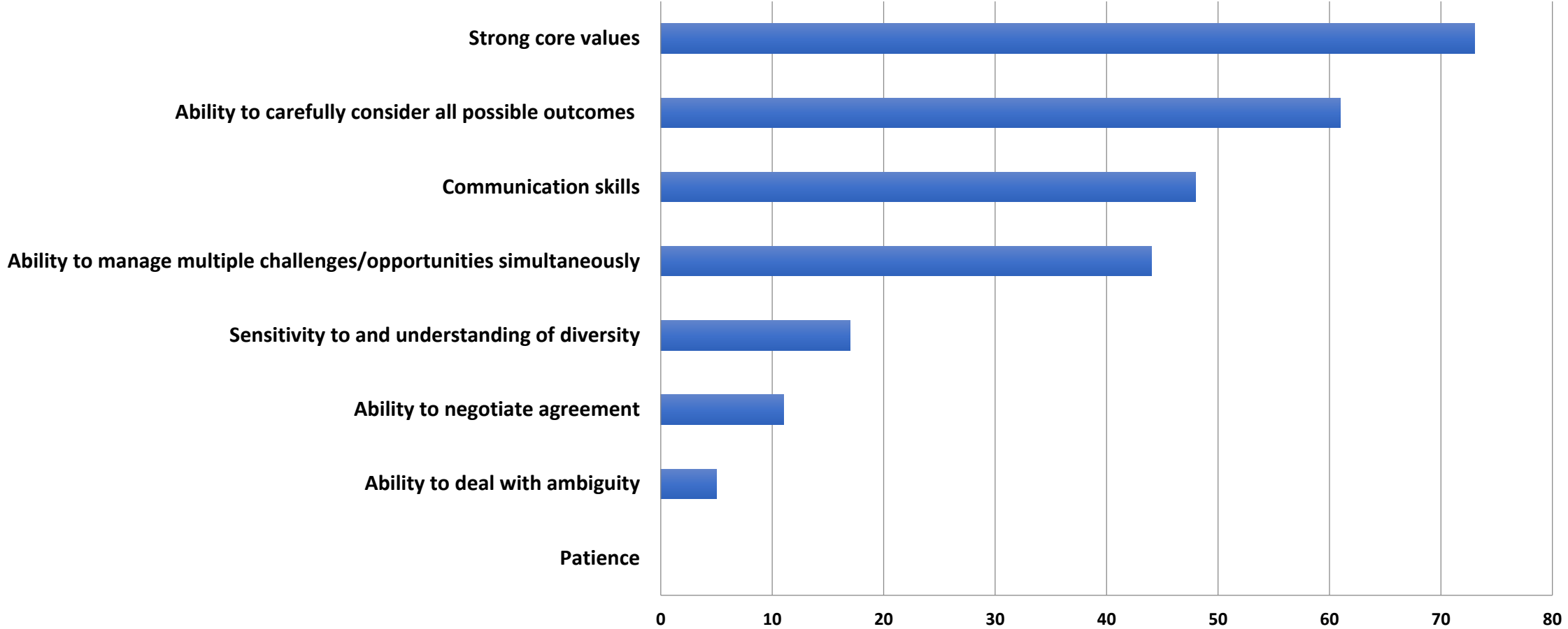
CEOs: Why Do CEOs Leave Their Jobs?

Select the three most common reasons CEOs leave their posts, in your opinion.



Trustees: What CEO Attributes Do They Want?

Top 3 Leadership Attributes



Trustees: What Skills Are They Looking For?



Trustees: CEOs Top Responsibilities

Top 3 CEO Responsibilities (N=95)



Trustees: What's the Hardest Part of Serving?

What Is the Most Challenging Part of Serving as a Trustee? (N=94)



CEOs: Their Biggest Challenges

- Mastering complex, demanding and political nature of the job.
- Understanding “boundaries of decision-making authority”
- Responding to multiple directives (BOG, Legislature, Governor)
- Developing fiscal acumen
- Managing time
- Communicating with multiple audiences
- Clarity about most salient priorities

Challenges especially for *New* CEOs

- Board/Trustee relations
- Collective bargaining relationship *
- Participatory Decision-making *
- Foundations & Fund-raising
- Accreditation*
- GO Bond elections and building programs
- Media relations

* *particularly for CEOs who are new to California CCs*

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**These skills
typically aren't acquired
in prior positions**

* particularly for CEOs who are new to California CCs

So how do you develop collaborative and effective relationships?

The “secret sauce” ingredients:

- *Communicate*
- *Clear Expectations*
- *Candor*
- *Courage*

What kind of “Boss” are you?

- **Trustworthy** – don’t use information to divide or hurt
- **Frank / candid** – direct, yet compassionate
- **Appreciate** – quick to offer sincere praise
- **Gives clear direction** – set goals and expectations, then get out of the way
- **Uses evaluations effectively** – to reflect, grow and improve; never a “surprise”
- **Accepts mistakes and missteps with grace** – innovations / change may fail
- **Eager to learn** – learn from successes, failures and from others
- **Great listener** – patient and active; may not say “yes” but at least listen
- **Leads with questions rather than directives**
 - “How might we do this?” “Is the goal clear?” “Is the reason for the goal clear?”
 - “Do you have what you need to achieve this goal?” “What do you need from me?”

Advice for Trustees

- Stay Student Focused
- Be patient with your CEO
- Ask tough questions while supporting your CEO
- Keep your CEO informed; don't bypass; "no surprises"
- Stay out of the day-to-day but don't be afraid to ask about the day-to-day
- Expect your CEO to listen, but not always act
- Ensure you have the support of the Board before you push for action
- Remember how important you are when you speak
- Invest in your CEO's professional development; invest in you own
- Enjoy your Board service

Advice for CEOs

- Stay Student Focused
- Be patient with your Board
- Spend at least 30% of your time in Board-related activity
- Keep you Board informed; “no surprises”
- Ask tough questions and support your Board
- Develop a thick skin and don’t take all Board comments personally
- Expect your Board to listen, but not always agree
- Make sure you have the support of your Board before you take action
- Invest in your Board’s professional development; invest in you own
- Enjoy your tenure



Trustees and CEOs You are NOT Alone

“This is an extremely lonely job and I depend on my Trustees to provide me direction, support and advice” A Community College CEO

“Our CEO is our only employee and we depend on that employee to run this organization, provide us solid information, advice and direction” A Community College Trustee



Questions / Discussion

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