GB’s “Board of Directors’ Statement on Governing Board Accountability for Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility” provides a set of recommendations for campus leadership on these issues. In response to requests for assistance in implementing the statement’s recommendations, AGB offers the following options to consider.

1. **Establish a campus-climate evaluation task force.**

A task force can be charged with evaluating institutional efforts related to campus climate, inclusion, and civility. Its primary role should be to review existing policies and statements and to develop any needed updates or to draft policy documents to fill in places where gaps exist. Furthermore, the task force can help ensure a healthy campus climate by recommending specific resources, initiatives, and support for the college or university community at large. The efforts and actions of the board and task force should be fully transparent.

Members of the task force should include board members, administrators, faculty members, students, and, as appropriate, community leaders. Specific policy recommendations from the task force should ultimately be considered by the board.

2. **Conduct a diversity and inclusion policy review.**

The board should request a thorough review of all institutional policies related to campus climate, diversity, and inclusion to ensure they are current and relevant. The review should include information that demonstrates how institutional policies are implemented, updated, and adapted as appropriate.
It is essential that the institution adhere to state and federal laws and regulations concerning non-discrimination, including but not limited to Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, and related state law and compliance requirements. The review of policies and practices should include those that relate to:

a. Faculty and staff, especially those sections of handbooks pertaining to academic freedom
b. Freedom of speech
c. Student affairs, including student organizations, athletics, housing, etc.
d. Human resources, including hiring
e. Admissions
f. Student codes of conduct
g. Communications and media
h. Public safety

The board should be certain that these policies clarify and affirm the institution’s proactive position on diversity and inclusion as well as how it will respond when these values are tested.

Related policies should be reviewed periodically for content and scope, as well as their effectiveness. Leaders should be aware of and confident in the implementation and currency of institutional policies, as appropriate.

**Examples:**

- University of Maine Board of Trustees executive committee policy review
- University of California, Merced draft policies and procedures for comment

3. **Develop an institutional statement on campus climate.**

The board should charge the chief executive and other relevant administrators and stakeholders with the development of a campus climate statement that supports the mission of the institution and clarifies the institution’s values related to campus climate.

A formal statement, reinforced by current policies, issued in the name of the institution’s governing body, demonstrates commitment to core institutional values. Such a statement should clearly recognize and commit the institution or system to freedom of speech, academic freedom, diversity, inclusion, and campus civility.
Examples:
- Stanford University Statement on Campus Climate and Immigration
- University of San Francisco Campus Climate and Inclusion Statement
- Rutgers University Statement on Free Speech and Academic Freedom

4. **Develop a campus statement or board policy on freedom of expression and civil debate.**

A statement or board policy on academic freedom, civil discourse, and freedom of speech can help set the tone and process for classroom discussion, open debates on campus, and the treatment of outside speakers. While the faculty may take the lead in developing the statement, it should also be shaped by input from the board, students, staff, and other constituents. When such a statement or policy is already established, ensure that it is current and suitable for addressing present-day campus issues.

Examples:
- Drake University Statement of Principles
- Columbia University Statement on Freedom of Speech
- Chapman University Statement on Free Speech

5. **Conduct a board self-assessment.**

As the fiduciary body of the institution or system, the board should commit to a periodic formal assessment of its own performance and clarification of its responsibilities. A self-assessment can help the board improve its overall performance and encourage a focus on those issues directly related to specific challenges. During an assessment, the board may ask questions such as:

- Does the board’s composition reflect institutional values related to diversity and inclusion? Board diversity requires intentionality. When developing a more diverse board, consider race, ethnicity, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disabilities, among other characteristics. Inclusion of a variety of viewpoints, knowledge, and skills will enhance the board’s ability to carry out its responsibilities.

- What dynamics exist in the boardroom related to issues of campus climate, inclusion, and civility?

- What is lacking in the board’s own comfort, competencies, and composition, and how should it be addressed?
An assessment of board engagement and effectiveness will, among other benefits, facilitate a candid review of how matters of inclusion, campus climate, and civility are addressed by the board. It should also look at how the board organizes itself to accomplish this work, including those committees that should assume lead responsibility for setting policies and strategies related to these issues.

**Additional Resource:**

- AGB’s Policies, Practices, and Composition of Governing and Foundation Boards 2016

6. **Create an ongoing plan for campus climate concerns.**
   
a. *Provide training opportunities for the board, faculty members, staff, and students.* Encourage members of the campus community to better understand diversity and inclusion objectives and their distinct roles in fostering an inclusive campus culture and climate. Consider developing cultural-competency training appropriate for each stakeholder group within the campus community. For board members, include opportunities to understand the language of diversity and inclusion as well as the various student populations on campus, their cultural identities, and changes in these populations throughout the institution’s history.

b. *Conduct an environmental scan.* Commission a climate survey of the institution to determine current issues, needs, and successes. Well-managed institutions routinely administer climate surveys to establish baseline information, assess progress on goals, and make appropriate adjustments.

**Examples:**

- Ithaca College Campus Climate Survey
- The University of Chicago Campus Climate Survey
- University of South Carolina Campus Climate Surveys

c. *Develop a formal communication mechanism for the board to seek direct engagement with stakeholders.* With the administration, establish forums for listening to students, faculty members, administrators, and community members in a variety of settings. Don’t shy away from what may be an uncomfortable exchange—be partners to other stakeholders.