



# University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

## Critical Principles on Being Effective as a Governor at the University of Toronto

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### *First and Foremost*

With the privilege of being a Governor comes an absolute obligation! We are collectively and individually stewards of this great university. Our stewardship must leave this university a better place and every decision we make has to be guided by that first principle.

- We have the obligation to ensure our actions and our choices always consider the long-term impact for the university as a whole.
- While we may be informed by concerns of our individual constituencies, it is our absolute duty to do what we can to ensure that all the constituencies in the future will also be well-served by the decisions we take today.

The governance accountability in every forum is expected to begin and end with this first principle.

In this context, of the role of governors being responsible for oversight and highly accountable stewardship, several principles follow which are critical to being effective:

- While Governors' central focus is Oversight, it should also include insight and foresight.
  - a “value-added” approach, not just “compliant” approach
- Interactions between Governors and with the administration should be guided by trust, constructive verification, and effective communication.
- Governors should have clear knowledge of and respect for the Roles of each Board and Committee, of the administration and of themselves – Governors exist to govern not manage nor dictate.
- Governors should expect the **right** information, in the **right** format, and the **right** timing – to avoid surprises and enable sound decisions in the best interests of all stakeholders and the university as a whole.
- **Inclusion** (ie. consultation) and **transparency** become the mantra for how we operate and behave.

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