



**QUESTIONS FOR EXCELLENCE:
A BOARD GUIDE TO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PLANS
Epilogue**

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Handing Down Standards and Values

When I was a young chief financial officer at a very small college (as my subconscious whispers, “a long, long time ago”), I was asked to dinner by a trustee. She was intensely interested in education and a member of the regional accrediting commission. Her husband was a revered local pediatrician. Knowing that I liked writing, they asked during a conversation on the college’s progress toward improved academic quality, “You wouldn’t, for example, put your name on a piece that you did not consider to be of high quality?” I, of course, answered no, I wouldn’t, but the fact is, I had never considered the question.

The question hit a nerve. In the past, I wrote to get published. While quality was important, I did not have a standard. Production had become my standard. Suddenly I knew I needed a real standard. The values of an experienced generation were passed to a younger generation.

This book conveys my respect for the way timely questions can transmit values and standards across generations. Dr. and Mrs. Trustee played Socrates to me. They asked a question that I had to think about. A problem that I hadn’t anticipated had to be solved. A new world of standards, ways of acting, and self-respect was opened to me. It started with a question.

The questions from the preceding chapters can frame the discourse between trustees and college and university leaders. College and university leaders are prepared to answer most of the questions in this book. Nevertheless, each question is an invitation to these leaders to comprehend new ways of viewing their world and meet the high expectations that trustees bring. The answers will also help trustees understand the complexity of colleges and universities, allowing them to give further assistance to their institutions.—Nathan Dickmeyer