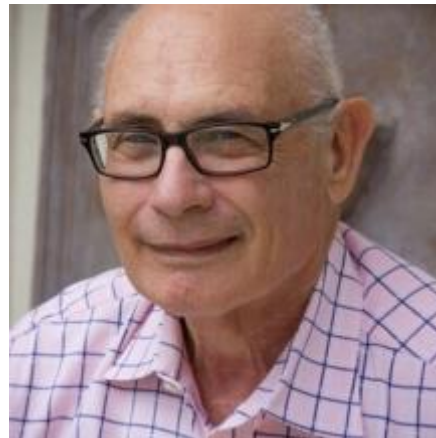


For Immediate Release

At Woodbury University, Board Stresses Importance of Governance – And Takes Steps to Redouble Focus on Trustee Engagement

During Recent Conference of Association for Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, University Outlines ‘Creative Change Leadership’



LOS ANGELES (June 22, 2016) – With recent changes in the administration of [Woodbury University](#), the venerable Southern California professional and liberal arts institution – which focuses on business, architecture, design and a host of other creative disciplines – has emerged as a virtual case study on the value of vigorous governance at a private university.

During a recent conference of the Association for Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Lawrence N. Hurwitz, Chair of the Woodbury Board of Trustees, and Dr. David Steele-Figueroa, President of the university, were on hand to chart the future course of the institution. The conference’s major themes -- optimizing Trustee engagement, creating a healthy Board culture, and a solid Board-President relationship – provided a fitting backdrop for that process.

“Small, private non-profit liberal arts and professional colleges are under enormous pressure,” Hurwitz noted. “Falling enrollment. High tuition. Small endowments. Questionable return on investment. Cybersecurity. Job readiness of graduates. These

concerns have fostered a closer working relationship between Presidents and their Boards of Trustees.”

Woodbury is a salient example, he noted. With its geographic location at the heart of the Southern California creative economy – amid such companies as Disney, Warner Brothers, NBC and Cartoon Network – the university’s enrollment peaked in 2012 and is now roughly 1,400 students. “It is time for ‘creative change leadership,’ including a collective effort among faculty, staff and the Board on increasing enrollment, and a greater focus on engaged and informed Board governance,” Hurwitz said.

Hurwitz, CEO of the Lawrence Financial Group in Los Angeles, has changed the dynamic between the Board of Trustees and the Administration, in a host of areas: heightened focus on revenues and expenditures; increased involvement in selecting the Administration leadership team; greater emphasis on brand and reputation; more meaningful metrics to track institutional performance; and tapping the expertise of Board members to help with special projects, such as facilities planning and bond funding.

The essence of Woodbury’s improved Board governance is open discourse and assistance with solving both internal and external problems -- internal issues, such as understanding shared governance and curriculum innovation, and external matters, including Title V and Title IX compliance.

Woodbury maintains what Hurwitz described as “a healthy Board check-and-balance system,” with the Chair of the Board having a tenure of two years, stepping down from the Board for one year before being eligible for reelection, and being replaced by the Vice-Chair, which is also an elected term of two years. According to Hurwitz, “this rotation of Board leadership is essential during a changing and uncertain higher education landscape.”

“The lesson is plain,” he said. “A 132-year-old institution like Woodbury must adapt to changing conditions, with a clear eye on the student experience and the return on investment of a private education.”

About Woodbury University

Founded in 1884, Woodbury University is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Southern California. The university ranks 15th among the nation’s “25 Colleges That Add the Most Value,” according to *Money Magazine*, and is a 2014-2015 College of Distinction.. With campuses in Burbank/Los Angeles and San Diego, the university offers bachelor's degrees from the School of Architecture, School of Business, School of Media, Culture & Design, and College of Liberal Arts, along with a Master of Business Administration, Master of Architecture (MArch), Master of Interior Architecture (MIA), Master of Science in Architecture (MSArch), and Master of Leadership. The San Diego campus offers Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture, Master of Interior Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture degrees, as well as an MSArch degree with a concentration in Real Estate Development. Visit woodbury.edu for more information.

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