



# Board of Trustees' Self-evaluation (2024-25)

A descriptive report of the results for the  
2024-25 Board of Trustees' Self-evaluation

Report prepared by:



# Overview

## Report Timeline, Response Rate, and Assessment Development

The link to the Board of Trustees Self-evaluation was sent via email to all trustees on July 7, 2025 and closed on July 23, 2025. At the time of closing, there were 17 responses from trustees five blank responses and two partial responses. The partially completed surveys compromised responses to section 1 (Board Organization, Governance and Leadership). Responses with data for less than 50% of the items were categorized as partial responses; those with data for more than 50% of the items were categorized as complete responses. The twelve (12) complete and partially complete responses indicate a 92% response rate for the Board of Trustees.

The survey is comprised of six (6) Factors, each containing multiple statements (number of questions for each Factor is indicated in parentheses) on which each trustee rates the Board's performance on a 5-point Likert-type scale (Superior, Above Average, Average, Below Average, Poor). Each Factor includes an open-ended question to gather detailed feedback.

The six (6) Factors are:

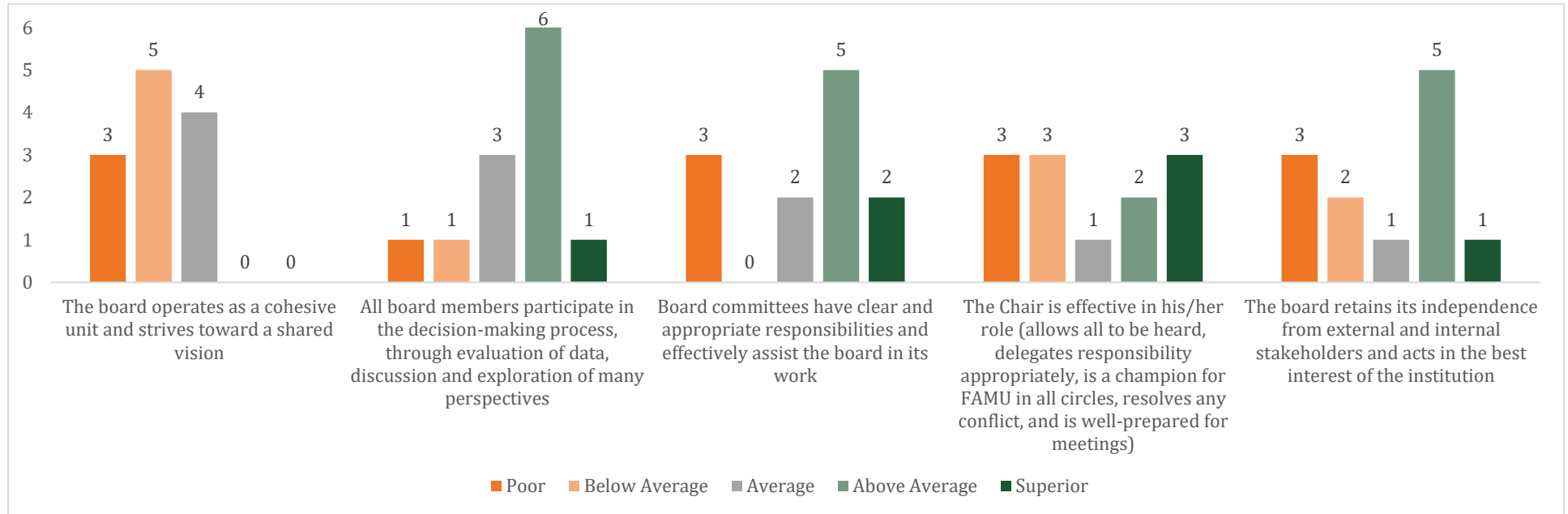
1. Board Organization, Governance and Leadership (5)
2. Board Relations (3)
3. Policy (3)
4. University Operations and Performance (5)
5. Institutional Sustainability (4)
6. Board Education (4)

The final section of the instrument includes four (4) open-ended questions to elicit qualitative feedback on the Board's performance.

This report contains an overview of all of the questions and documentation of the responses received for each question.

## Board Organization, Governance, and Leadership

### Responses



2023-24 Average	2024-25 Average	Board Organization, Governance and Leadership	Number of Responses by Level				
			Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior
2.8	2.1	The board operates as a cohesive unit and strives toward a shared vision	3	5	4	0	0
3.2	3.4	All board members participate in the decision-making process, through evaluation of data, discussion and exploration of many perspectives	1	1	3	6	1
3.6	3.3	Board committees have clear and appropriate responsibilities and effectively assist the board in its work	3	0	2	5	2
3.2	2.9	The Chair is effective in his/her role (allows all to be heard, delegates responsibility appropriately, is a champion for FAMU in all circles, resolves any conflict, and is well-prepared for meetings)	3	3	1	2	3
3.0	2.9	The board retains its independence from external and internal stakeholders and acts in the best interest of the institution	3	2	1	5	1

## Comments

- Faculty have been systematically excluded from meaningful participation in key decisions that shape the direction of our University. This exclusion has created a concerning environment in which transparency, shared governance, and adherence to policy have eroded under the current leadership of the Board of Trustees Chair.

Under the Chair's watch, unchecked systems of retaliation have negatively impacted University employees, stifling dissent and weakening morale. Critical decisions such as the development of a compensation study and the cancellation of online course offerings across the SUS have been made without consultation with faculty or regard for shared governance principles.

Most concerning is the facilitation of a compensation study that lacks alignment with the SUS criteria approved by the Board majority. This has allowed the administration to offer across-the-board 3% raises in a manner that sidesteps the collective bargaining agreement. Such actions circumvent established negotiation processes and violate the spirit and possibly the letter of bargaining requirements followed at other SUS institutions.

Moreover, the Chair has permitted undue influence from external alumni and individuals who have not demonstrated consistent support for faculty priorities. This was particularly evident during the University's December 2024 presentation, which appeared designed to publicly dismiss or overshadow legitimate faculty concerns.

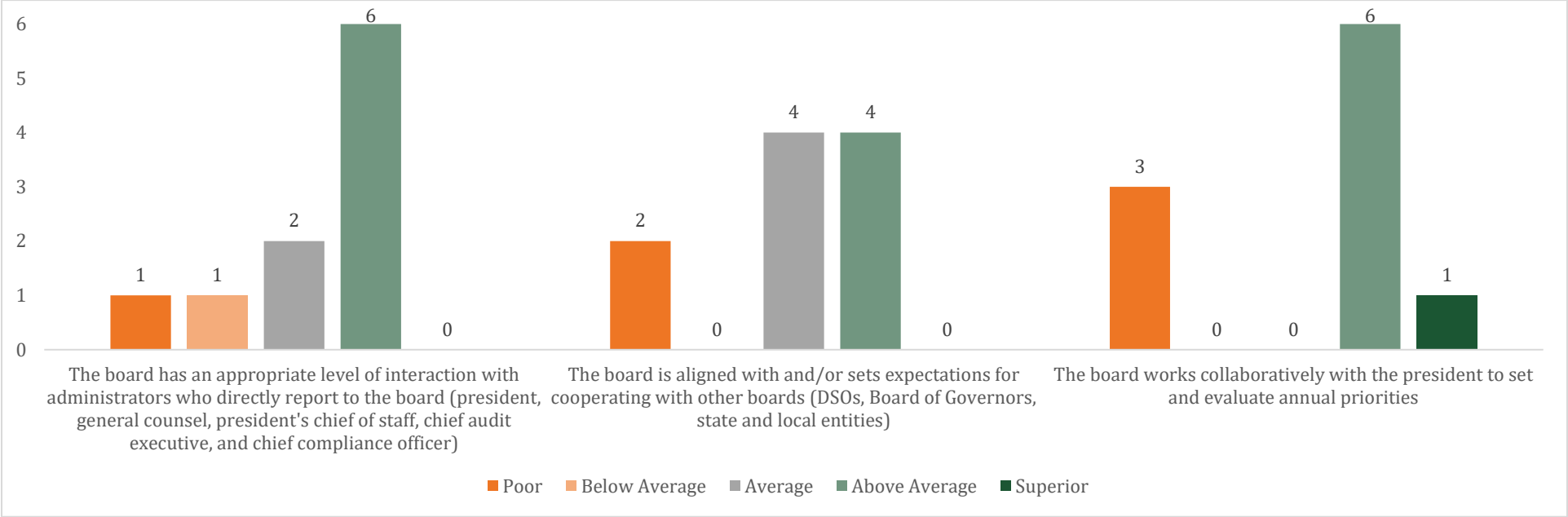
In multiple instances, the Chair has directly discouraged the Faculty Trustee from raising the issue of faculty salaries and has removed related agenda items such as compensation from meeting agendas without justification. These deliberate obstructions have delayed progress on faculty matters and further undermined the credibility of the Board's commitment to accountability and equity.

The leadership model currently in place is not reflective of the inclusive, transparent, and principled governance that our University deserves. Faculty remain committed to advocating for fairness, shared governance, and the betterment of our institution, and we call upon the Board to do the same.

- Due to lack of proper leadership the board functions at a low level and cannot move the university forward in a positive manner.

Board Relations

Responses



2023-24 Average	2024-25 Average	Board Relations	Number of Responses by Level				
			Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior
3.3	3.3	The board has an appropriate level of interaction with administrators who directly report to the board (president, general counsel, president's chief of staff, chief audit executive, and chief compliance officer)	1	1	2	6	0
3.2	3.0	The board is aligned with and/or sets expectations for cooperating with other boards (DSOs, Board of Governors, state and local entities)	2	0	4	4	0
3.5	3.2	The board works collaboratively with the president to set and evaluate annual priorities	3	0	0	6	1

## Comments

- The Board Chair has consistently failed to engage the full Board in meaningful discussion about the University's most pressing issues. Critical concerns such as the revelation during the most recent Board meeting that members of the Marching 100 are lacking scholarship support and other essential resources were unknown to the Board until brought up publicly. This lack of transparency raises serious concerns about communication and oversight.

The relationship between the Board Chair and the President appears to operate within its own silo, driven by a separate set of priorities that exclude faculty concerns altogether. Despite being copied on numerous faculty correspondences regarding unresolved matters, the Chair has taken little to no action to ensure they are addressed.

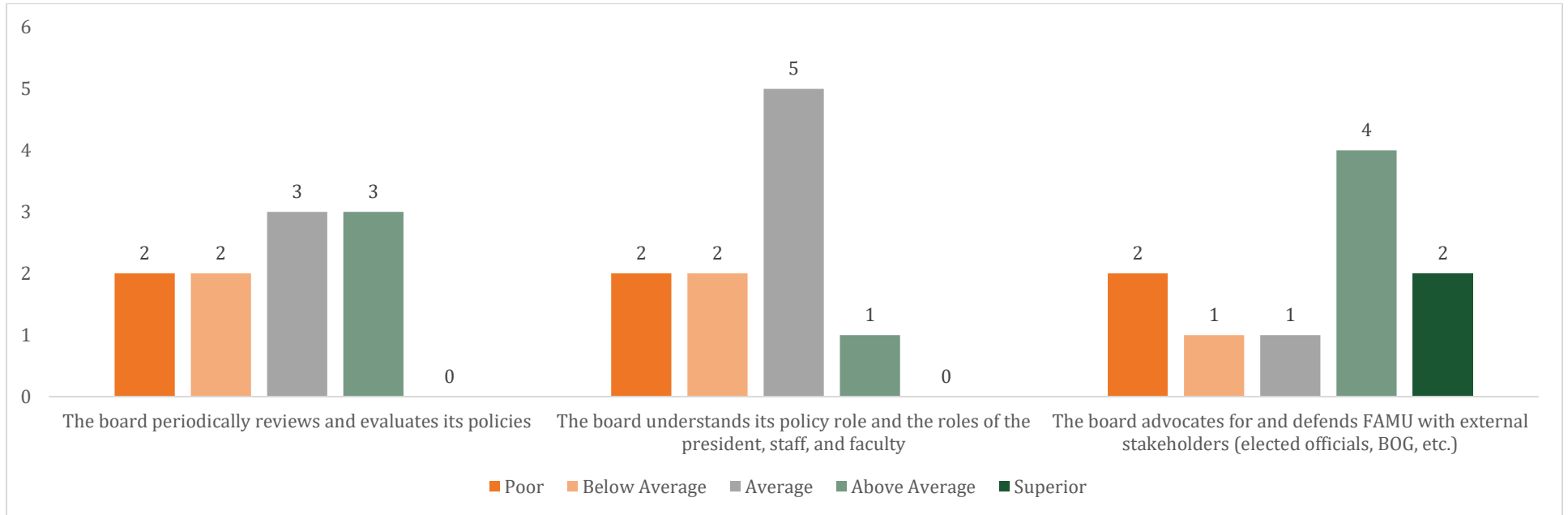
Faculty priorities continue to be ignored, correspondence goes unanswered, and retaliation against those who speak out is allowed to persist unchecked. The absence of appropriate Board engagement on these issues enabled by the Chair's inaction has eroded trust and further alienated faculty from institutional decision-making.

It is essential that the Board function with integrity, transparency, and shared responsibility. Faculty deserve a voice at the table, and until these patterns of neglect and silence are reversed, the University will continue to suffer from a leadership vacuum at the highest levels.

- Due to lack of proper leadership the board functions at a low level and cannot move the university forward in a positive manner.

## Policy

### Responses



2023-24 Average	2024-25 Average	Policy	Number of Responses by Level				
			Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior
3.4	2.7	The board periodically reviews and evaluates its policies	2	2	3	3	0
3.7	2.5	The board understands its policy role and the roles of the president, staff, and faculty	2	2	5	1	0
3.7	3.3	The board advocates for and defends FAMU with external stakeholders (elected officials, BOG, etc.)	2	1	1	4	2

## Comments

- Systemic Governance Failures and Faculty Neglect by the Board

The Board of Trustees has failed to uphold its stated priorities and responsibilities particularly with respect to FAMU DRS and faculty governance. Despite the Board's articulated goal for FAMU DRS to become an A-rated school, there has been no formal review, reporting, or accountability presented to the Board to track progress toward this goal. The lack of engagement reflects a serious breakdown in governance.

More broadly, the Board has allowed multiple violations of the collective bargaining agreement, particularly regarding faculty compensation and the requirement to engage with the Union. Unlike other SUS institutions, FAMU has been permitted under the Chair's leadership to circumvent bargaining procedures and delay negotiations without consequence.

The Board Chair has not advocated for faculty salaries and has instead collaborated with University leadership in ways that have undermined the integrity and timing of the compensation study. That study has now taken more than twice the expected timeframe, with no performance measures or accountability standards enforced on University officials.

Furthermore, the Board has failed to act with urgency in matters involving retaliation against students and employees. Investigations into such complaints have taken as long as 900 days to complete, while faculty and staff grievances often involving serious allegations such as workplace bullying, harassment, and hostile environments have languished for 16 months or more without resolution.

When faculty and leadership have raised concerns about employees operating under harmful conditions, there has been no meaningful response from the Board Chair. Faculty leaders have not been granted formal meetings to discuss urgent needs. Instead, there have been repeated inappropriate attempts both directly and indirectly through University influence to silence the Faculty Senate President, including suggestions to remain quiet on critical matters.

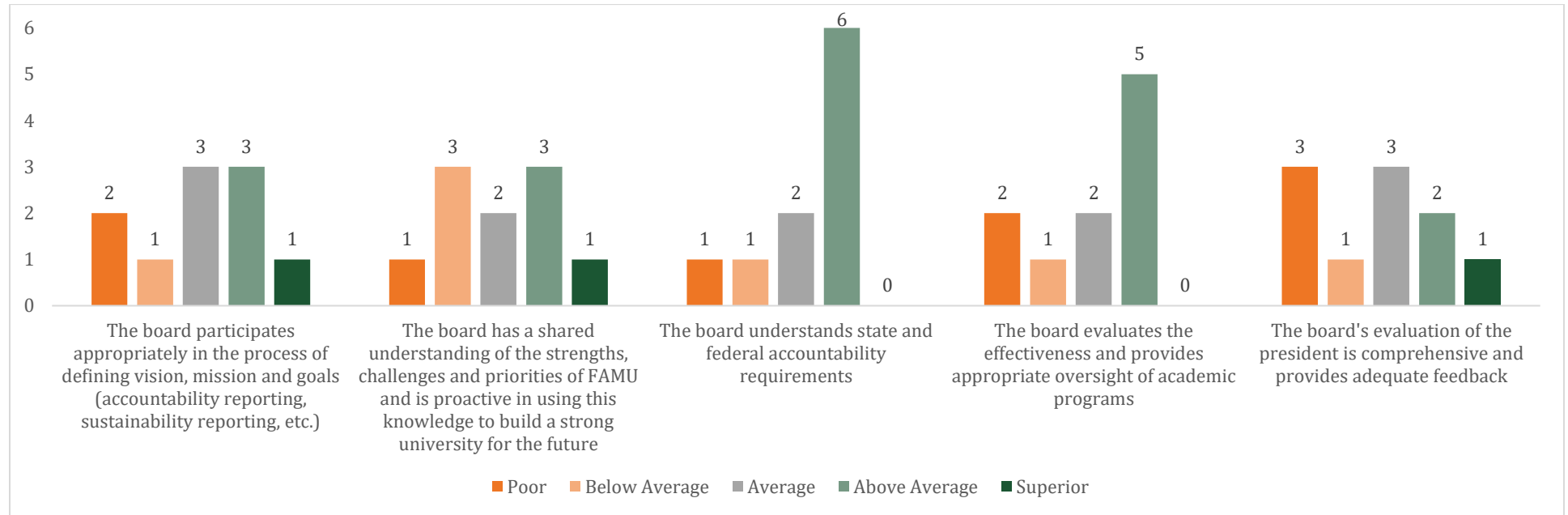
The Board has neglected its policy responsibilities, particularly in upholding fair processes for faculty engagement and protections. Without a serious course correction, the institution risks further erosion of morale, trust, and academic excellence.

The University President refusing to meet with faculty concerning negotiation of bargaining per the collective bargaining agreement is a violation of SACS, BOT Policy, and BOG policy and leaves employees far from their SUS peers.



# University Operations and Performance

## Responses



2023-24 Average	2024-25 Average	University Operations and Performance	Number of Responses by Level				
			Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior
3.8	3.0	The board participates appropriately in the process of defining vision, mission and goals (accountability reporting, sustainability reporting, etc.)	2	1	3	3	1
3.9	3.0	The board has a shared understanding of the strengths, challenges and priorities of FAMU and is proactive in using this knowledge to build a strong university for the future	1	3	2	3	1
3.9	3.3	The board understands state and federal accountability requirements	1	1	2	6	0
3.8	3.0	The board evaluates the effectiveness and provides appropriate oversight of academic programs	2	1	2	5	0
3.7	2.7	The board's evaluation of the president is comprehensive and provides adequate feedback	3	1	3	2	1

## Comments

- Breakdown in Accountability and Board Oversight at FAMU

There is a troubling absence of accountability at Florida A&M University for its senior administration. While employees are held to strict standards, missed deadlines and substandard work such as the deeply flawed compensation study are routinely tolerated for administrators without consequence.

Administrators are also allowed to make misleading or selectively crafted statements that negatively affect faculty and staff, with no repercussions. This pattern reflects a culture in which manipulation is tolerated and truth is negotiable at the direct expense of trust and institutional integrity.

The Board Chair has not demonstrated a proactive or collaborative approach with respect to faculty and staff concerns. Rather than engaging with shared governance, the posture has been one of control and suppression rather than support and partnership.

Academic underperformance has also gone unaddressed across key areas, including FAMU DRS, the professional schools, and other critical programs. Despite well-known challenges, the Board has failed to monitor or enforce its own standards regarding facility needs, funding flows, and resource allocation for DRS.

In several cases, vital academic and accreditation concerns have been deliberately hidden from the Board. For example, a formal summons letter issued by ACPE citing serious performance concerns within the College of Pharmacy was withheld from Board review, representing a severe breach of transparency by the Provost and Dean's offices.

Furthermore, the Board Chair has shown little interest in seeking feedback on the effectiveness of the Board itself. Governance is being shaped unilaterally, with the Chair effectively acting as the entire Board in practice, stifling collective deliberation and weakening oversight.

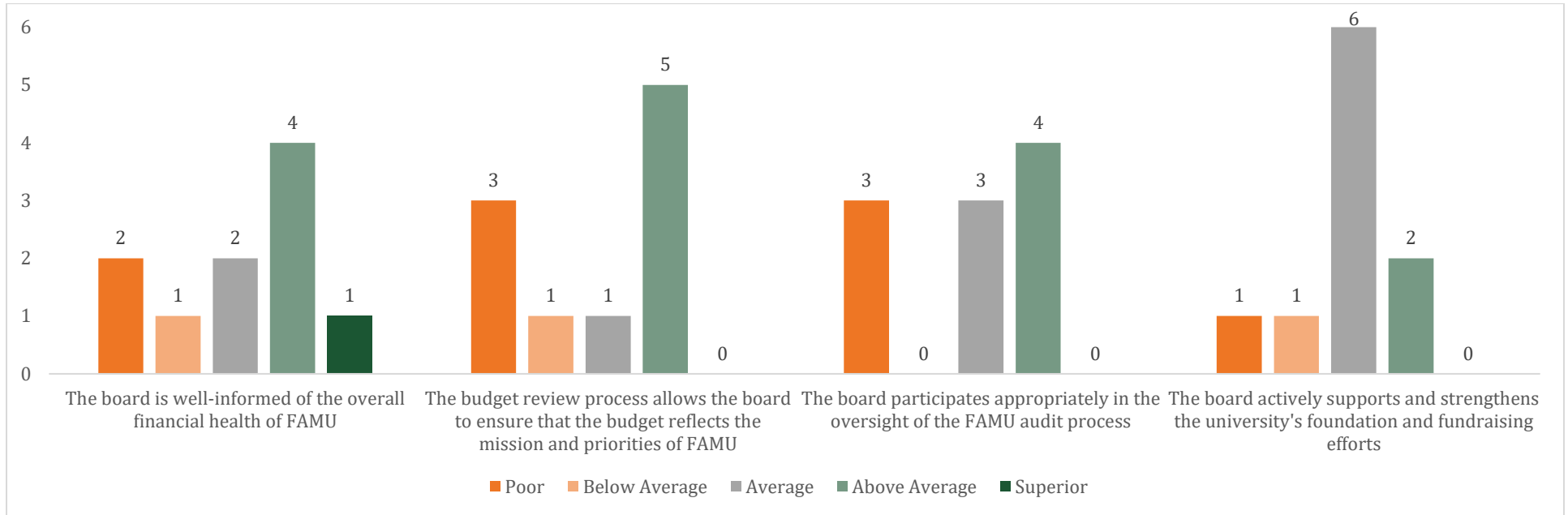
This pattern of concealment, inaction, and concentration of authority threatens the long-term health and reputation of the institution. Immediate reforms are necessary to restore transparency, accountability, and shared governance at every level of the University.

Faculty and staff continue to complain of failed systems that don't allow employees to perform their work from acceptable standards.

- The board has a very comprehensive process in University strategic planning process that has been well received and is setting the pace and context for all activity at the University. This includes areas of emphasis and key programs of importance that requires more board oversight and due diligence. President's evaluation is comprehensive and transparent.

## Institutional Sustainability

### Responses



2023-24 Average	2024-25 Average	Institutional Sustainability	Number of Responses by Level				
			Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior
3.8	3.1	The board is well-informed of the overall financial health of FAMU	2	1	2	4	1
3.3	2.8	The budget review process allows the board to ensure that the budget reflects the mission and priorities of FAMU	3	1	1	5	0
3.6	2.8	The board participates appropriately in the oversight of the FAMU audit process	3	0	3	4	0
3.4	2.9	The board actively supports and strengthens the university's foundation and fundraising efforts	1	1	6	2	0

## Comments

- No
- **\*\*Lack of Financial Transparency and Dismissive Treatment of Faculty Concerns\*\***  
The University has not been forthcoming with the Board regarding its financial realities particularly those affecting faculty, staff, and students. Key financial information is often concealed or selectively presented, seemingly in an effort to avoid addressing the systemic underpayment of employees relative to peer SUS institutions.

For students, critical concerns such as mold in housing, scholarship shortfalls, and logistical issues with essential programs like the Marching 100 are often only shared privately with the Board Chair leaving the broader Board uninformed and unable to act responsibly.

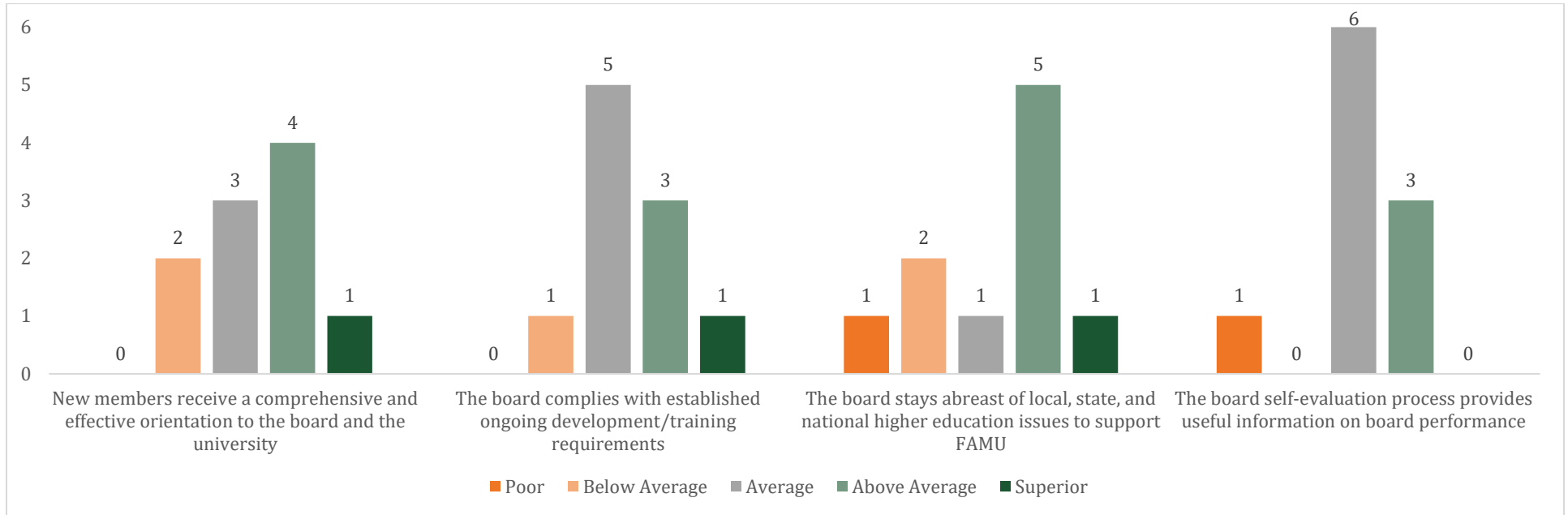
When the Faculty Trustee raises legitimate concerns related to audit, compliance, or fiscal oversight, the tone used in response is often dismissive, minimizing both the issues and the Trustee's role. This approach reflects a broader culture of resistance to transparency and shared governance.

The University has not acknowledged or addressed its ongoing struggle to pay employees competitive wages or to meet even the basic needs of students. These gaps, when left unresolved or hidden, further weaken morale and threaten the institution's integrity.

Without honest communication and full disclosure, the Board cannot fulfill its fiduciary and ethical responsibilities. A course correction is urgently needed to restore transparency, trust, and shared responsibility in institutional governance.

## Board Education

### Responses



2023-24 Average	2024-25 Average	Board Education	Number of Responses by Level				
			Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Superior
2.9	3.4	New members receive a comprehensive and effective orientation to the board and the university	0	2	3	4	1
3.3	3.4	The board complies with established ongoing development/training requirements	0	1	5	3	1
3.6	3.3	The board stays abreast of local, state, and national higher education issues to support FAMU	1	2	1	5	1
3.3	3.1	The board self-evaluation process provides useful information on board performance	1	0	6	3	0

**Comments**

\*\*\* No comments were provided for this item \*\*\*

## Open-ended Questions

### What are the major accomplishments of the Board of Trustees in the last year?

New president

Oversight of licensure programs of university that show great improvement. Selection of a new President of the University.

The selection of a new permanent president. Assisting in the legislative processes to have a wonderfully successful 2028-2026 budgetary process

The Board successfully appointed and supported Interim President Beard, led a comprehensive presidential search that resulted in the selection of our new President, Mrs. Johnson, and approved the operating budgets for the upcoming academic year. Additionally, the Board oversaw productive ad-hoc committees, including one chaired by Trustee Perry, which conducted an evaluation of the FAMU College of Law.

Silencing the faculty trustee and employee issues.

Navigating through the corrective action plan from the major donor gift; Creation and measurement of aligned goals with DSOs; Transitioning to interim president, completing the presidential search process, and supporting the several administrative changes; Establishing clear LBR goals; Implementing first-ever BOT Lobbying Day, and securing \$65.5M in legislative funds; Prioritization of compensation study and securing the necessary information from administration to course-correct faculty salaries

Bringing in a new president, while facing some challenges, is a major accomplishment and puts us in position to take the university to another level.

Selecting a new president.

None

**Please provide your suggestions regarding how the Board of Trustees can improve performance in alignment with its roles and responsibilities.**

**Better leadership**

The Board needs to better understand its role as a policy maker and how to insure that policy is being carried out, without getting involved in the day to day operations. The Board also needs to better understand the sunshine laws.

Better professional communications and respect between members when priorities and opinions differ.

I believe the Board does a commendable job of addressing concerns as they are brought forward. However, when it comes to decisions, particularly those impacting student life and culture, I think it would be beneficial to seek deeper context and broader perspectives before moving to a vote. In my observation, there has also been a noticeable sense of division among the Board. This dynamic can limit our ability to make unified decisions, especially on matters that may not affect us directly, but are critically important to the students and broader university community we serve.

Include faculty and stop asking for silencing/suppression of issues. Do a fair compensation study and prioritize DRS.

Hone the focus to governance, strategy and accountability; Let the president and administration do their jobs including personnel matters; Take advantage of briefing meetings with the president and SLT to drive efficiency in board meetings and protect the FAMU brand; Fully engage during board meetings, in person; Contribute independent thoughts for the good of the university, and free from external influence

At times, some issues do not get resolved. We need to monitor outstanding issues and ensure they are fully addressed.

Leveraging technology to look at data and emerging trends rather than past behaviors to drive success.

**New leadership**



**As a trustee, I would like to see the following changes in how the board operates.**

We need to have real strategy as a board.

I would like to see that the board act as unit rather than different factions.

Better professional communications and respect between members when priorities and opinions differ.

As a trustee, I would like to emphasize the importance of fostering mutual respect during our Board meetings. Creating a space where every voice is valued and discussions are conducted with professionalism not only strengthens our collaboration but also enhances our ability to serve the university community effectively.

New chair, priorities for faculty and staff

Healthy, respectful dialogue and engagement

I would like to see us get more time together. Perhaps budget for more open discussion time.

Using more data and having conversations about strategy rather than administration.

New leadership

**Please provide any other general feedback that you feel will help to improve the performance of the board.**

N

N/A

There has been ongoing concern and hearsay regarding the influence of external political pressures on how certain Board members cast their votes. If these claims are unfounded, it's important that we remain transparent and unified to dispel any misconceptions. However, if there is truth to them, we must address it directly and take steps to ensure that our decision-making remains rooted solely in what is best for the university and those we are here to serve.

We need to address the issue of trust, with each other, and with key stakeholders. Perhaps bring in a facilitator to assist with this.

New leadership

Report prepared by:

Office of University Assessment  
Division of Strategic Planning, Analysis and Institutional Effectiveness  
1700 S Adams Street, Suite 101  
Tallahassee, FL 32307  
(850) 412-5265  
[assessment@famu.edu](mailto:assessment@famu.edu)

