

## Quick Check: Foundation Board Self-Assessment Tool

### What is Quick Check?

- *Quick Check* is an evaluation questionnaire which, when completed, will provide the Board and Executive Director with an impression of the effectiveness of the Board.
- *Quick Check* was developed by the *Institute on Governance*, a Canadian non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote effective governance. This questionnaire correlates with the Center for Effective Philanthropy's five keys to foundation board effectiveness.
  - Appropriate mix of trustee capabilities and utilization of those skills
  - Engagement in strategy development and impact assessment
  - Focus of discussions on important topics
  - Positive relationship with the CEO / Executive Director
  - Opportunity for influence and respectful dissent in board members

### Why Board Self-Assessment?

- The objective of the *Quick Check* exercise is to generate an interest in Board self-improvement – an objective that fits well with Lawson's principles and values.
- This *Quick Check* exercise provides an opportunity for the Board to step back and to reflect on how well the Board is functioning and meeting its responsibilities. Importantly, it will encourage dialogue – refresh the Board's understanding of its role and responsibilities, stimulate questions that need to be asked, identify areas of practice that may need attention or improvement, and draw out suggestions for improvement.
- *Quick Check* is designed to be a self assessment at a "group performance" level to generate discussions.

### Instructions for Completion

To encourage candor, the questionnaire does not ask for your name, but you do have the option of signing it if you wish. The results will be aggregated for discussion and shared without attribution.

Please complete the Quick Check on-line questionnaire and submit in confidence to .....

## Governance Effectiveness Quick Check

### Instructions

Please use the rating scale to indicate your perception of how well the Lawson Board attends to each of the factors identified in the questions below. Please feel free to provide remarks in the comment box. **We are seeking an “off the top of your head” or spontaneous response.**

### Governance Effectiveness ‘Quick Check’

RATING SCALE					YOUR RATING
4	3	2	1	0	
Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not sure	
1. Foundation’s orientation for Directors prepares them to fulfill their governance responsibilities adequately.  <i>Comments:</i>					
2. This Board is actively involved in planning the direction and priorities of the Foundation.  <i>Comments:</i>					
3. Acting for the Board, the Executive Committee does a good job of evaluating the performance of the Executive Director.  <i>Comments:</i>					
4. The Foundation stewards the investments prudently.  <i>Comments:</i>					
5. Board members demonstrate clear understanding of the respective roles of the Board and Executive Director.  <i>Comments:</i>					
6. The Foundation’s resources - staff and operations - are used efficiently.  <i>Comments:</i>					
7. The Foundation Board has high credibility with key stakeholders, e.g. Members, grantees, other funders, volunteer advisors, experts in the grant program areas.  <i>Comments:</i>					
8. Board members demonstrate commitment to the organization’s mission and values and are able to distinguish and set aside personal interest when different from the mission, goals and					

RATING SCALE					YOUR RATING
4	3	2	1	0	
Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Not sure	
interests of the Foundation.					
<i>Comments:</i>					
9. Board members conduct themselves in accordance with key elements of the governance structure (bylaws, policies, code of conduct, conflict of interest, etc.).					
<i>Comments:</i>					
10. The Board's capacity to govern effectively is not impaired by conflicts between Directors.					
<i>Comments:</i>					
12. I am confident that this Board would effectively manage any organizational crisis that could be reasonably anticipated.					
<i>Comments:</i>					
13. Board meetings are well managed.					
<i>Comments:</i>					
14. Board members show a clear understanding of the Foundation's strategic focus when making decisions and use sound processes in such decision-making.					
<i>Comments:</i>					
15. The Board respects the Foundation's history and tradition but is forward thinking in its approach.					
<i>Comments:</i>					
Total of the 15 items					
Overall Score (Total divided by 15)					

**16.** In the 2011 Board Self-Assessment, the Board noted the following issues and challenges for focus over the next three years. In your opinion, how well has the board dealt with them?

- |  |                        |                        |                 |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Completed</b>   | <b>Making Progress</b> | <b>Needs attention</b> | <b>Not sure</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Succession Planning:</b> for Staff and Advisors; recruitment of new Directors</li> <li>• <b>Investment Strategies:</b> in a volatile global economy</li> <li>• <b>Strategic Thinking:</b> "outside the box"</li> <li>• etc.....</li> </ul> |                        |                        |                 |

*Comments:*

**17. Personal reflections:**

- a) Reflecting on your time as a Director, identify **one or two** Board achievements, decisions, and/or successes for which you feel special satisfaction and/or pride.
- b) Thinking back over the past year or two, identify **one or two** Board achievements, decisions, and/or successes where you feel you've made a particular contribution.
- c) Describe **one or two** areas for improvement in the Board's performance that you feel need immediate attention.
- d) In your opinion, what are the most important issues and/or challenges facing the Foundation over the **next** three years (2014-17) on which the Board should focus?
- e) Do you think there are gaps in our current Board composition with regard to skills and expertise? If yes, please describe the gaps.

**Additional Comments:**

Thank you for completing and submitting the confidential survey.