



# BOARD LEADERSHIP

POLICY GOVERNANCE® IN ACTION

*John & Miriam Carver*  
EXECUTIVE COEDITORS

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## The Origins and Development of Policy Governance

by John Carver

*International Policy Governance Association (IPGA) board members, John Bohley and Caroline Oliver are surely not alone in their curiosity about the evolution of Policy Governance and its relationship to other streams of thought. Here John Carver, the creator of Policy Governance, responds to their questions.*

1. *We understand that you were the executive director of the Harris County Behavioral Health Authority in Texas when you started working on the development of Policy Governance and had the opportunity to develop it further when you became executive director of a mental health clinic in Indiana. Can you tell us a bit more about the circumstances that motivated you to start work on your own approach to board governance?*

The Harris County Commissioners, a five-member elected group, acted as the board of directors of the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County. Political considerations outweighed most other matters and taught me a lot about

how boards should *not* function. (Since then, an appointed board governs the new organization.) I discovered, however, that finding out how boards *should* function was far more difficult. The literature was quite sparse, conceptually fragmented, and not intellectually compelling. What I could find was more a collection of tips specific to one or another type of organization rather than a conceptual consideration of governance as a whole.

The word *governance* was hardly known. This may have been due to the widespread belief that board work was simply an arm's-length version of management and, in the case of many nonprofits, that it was also about fundraising. The process of governance was seen to be unlike management only in that a group carried it out, but of course management also frequently worked in teams. So the need for

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### ON A PERSONAL NOTE

#### POLICY ISN'T REALITY

by John Carver

**"P**OLICY" AS CONSTRUED in Policy Governance gets a lot of attention when boards are trained. This attention is necessary in order to demonstrate thoroughly the categories and structure of how board decisions are to be framed. Even when supported by underlying theory, the Policy Governance method for expressing board decisions is by no means intuitive to those as yet unaccustomed to theory-based board practices.

Moreover, policy that actually means what it says isn't intuitive either. Despite the importance that has long been formally given to policy, traditionally it is as likely to be window dressing as not. Many boards have learned, of course, that policy as defined in Policy Governance not only means what it says but is integral to the organization's working. But that understanding doesn't completely erase years of discounting the reality of policy. In other words,

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## Policy Governance

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governance to have its own dedicated technology was not so apparent; maybe it is not surprising that it also didn't merit its own name.

A few years later, when I'd made a governance book proposal to a publisher, the response was that a book dealing specifically with boards was not needed. After all, I was told, there were already books on management and more on the way. Since boards just performed management at their level, a book on governance would be as

### CONSIDER THIS . . .

"The reality is that corporate governance in hedge funds . . . leaves much to be desired. According to a survey of 2,315 Cayman domiciled funds carried out by Sound Fund Advisors in February, 31 percent of funds have no external directors. The most popular 'professional' directors sit on hundreds of boards, with the top 40 sitting on more than 100 each and the top three sitting on more than 500 apiece. How can they fulfill their fiduciary obligations on that basis?"

John Plender, "The Last Word: A Call to Fix Hedge Fund Governance," *Financial Times*, May 6, 2012.

unnecessary as one on, say, managing as the head of accounting or as the director of human resources.

At any rate, the beginnings of Policy Governance occurred as the Houston job ended, and during the interim, without employment to distract me for a few months, I was able to lay the foundations of Policy Governance. At that time I was hired as executive director of a mental health center in Indiana (then Quinco Consulting Center, now a division of Centerstone), where the board agreed to be a living laboratory of my emerging ideas. I owe quite a debt to that board.

What motivated me was discomfort with what I saw as a critically important function muddling along with no assistance from theory to guide it in developing judicious practices. Board work was conceptually ragged, a collection of bits and pieces that suffered from lack of system. Many of the bits and pieces were individually pretty wise, but to me, the situation cried out for conceptual organizing as much as a sink of dirty dishes demands our attention.

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Board work was conceptually ragged, a collection of bits and pieces that suffered from lack of system.

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2. *Did you set out to develop a comprehensive model of board governance, or did that goal arise later in your creative process?*

I set out to develop as thorough and instructive a design for governance as I could. Although my direct work concerned governance of a public mental health organization, it seemed early on that any really meaningful concepts might have wider application. The challenge at first, though, was not as ambitious as universality but of achieving airtight logic for this one

### JUST SAYING ...

*A series of small explanations of phrases the Carvers often use in teaching Policy Governance.*

"Ends are not about us."

THE WORD *Ends* in Policy Governance denotes an organization's intended effect on persons in roles other than governing or running the organization. That effect includes not only the external results, but designation of the recipients in or for whom those results occur and the amount of results compared with resources used or forgone to create them. The stark focus on effectiveness and efficiency that the Ends concept provides is easily diluted by confounding it with attention to how the organization goes about fulfilling the board-chosen Ends. That is why Ends never refer to anything the organization does, what it looks like, or what its characteristics are. Ends address the worth and targeting of specified benefits, not the organizational specifics of achieving them. In a Policy Governance-governed organization, Ends are never about us, but about them.

board. That was sufficient motivation at the time. I repeatedly tested the emerging ideas and naturally had to discard a number of them. The main test for principles was whether each principle under consideration (for example, one board voice, proscription of delegated means) would not only be applicable and useful, but would be necessary in every governance circumstance I could imagine. The main test for concepts, such as ownership and Ends, was whether they uniquely filled gaps among components that would constitute an integrated, internally consistent system.

I was not sure it would be as comprehensive or universal in its applicability as it turned out. But I did

## THE POLICY GOVERNANCE MODEL

**B**OARD LEADERSHIP requires, above all, that the board provide vision. To do so, the board must first have an adequate vision of its own job. That role is best conceived neither as volunteer-helper nor as watchdog but as trustee-owner. Policy Governance is an approach to the job of governing that emphasizes values, vision, empowerment of both board and staff, and the strategic ability to lead leaders.

Observing the principles of the Policy Governance model, a board crafts its values into policies of the four types below. Policies written this way enable the board to focus its wisdom into one central, brief document.

### ENDS

The board defines which human needs are to be met, for whom, and at what worth. Written with a long-term perspective, these policies embody most of the board's part of long-range planning.

### EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

The board establishes the boundaries of acceptability within which staff methods and activities can responsibly be left to staff. These limiting policies, therefore, apply to staff means rather than to Ends.

### BOARD-MANAGEMENT DELEGATION

The board clarifies the manner in which it delegates authority to staff as well as how it evaluates staff performance on provisions of the Ends and Executive Limitations policies.

### GOVERNANCE PROCESS

The board determines its philosophy, its accountability, and specifics of its own job.

intentionally use thought experiment methods in order to chase what I then hoped would not prove to be an elusive dream. I gathered others' views mostly through reading, but with regard to the actual conceptual development, I worked best alone.

3. *What do you see as having been your main influences in having the courage and vision to develop a new model of governance?*

I recall three major influences. One was a conviction that any important function can be improved by breaking it down into its components, then analyzing them in terms of the total system and, in the process, looking for improvements in the system itself. I see this as being similar to the history of figuring out the submicroscopic world in order to understand macroscopic matter and energy better.

Second, a lot of what I'd been studying about management methods seemed not to have been applied to governance at all or, if applied, seemed to end up duplicating what was already there, adding no unique value. I found, of course, that some management methods could be profitably applied and some could not. Finding out what caused the difference engaged me in figuring out what differentiated management from governance.

Third, I observed that boards either allowed their executives to control the board job or allowed themselves to get into executive jobs. This tendency for falling into the opposite dysfunctions of inversion or invasion was even more peculiar because boards could do both in the same meeting, suggesting a randomness enabled by a common flaw rather than two distinct defects.

All three of those factors pointed me toward the missing element: an encompassing theory or conceptual framework for the board job of linking governance to some larger legitimacy base. What flows along that channel?

How can direct responsibility be distinguished from accountability for authority passed on to others?  
How can proper behavior as well as

proper outcomes be ensured without hands-on board involvement that risks cluttering the management process and burdening creativity?

The problems were so compelling that I don't remember courage coming into it. I suppose there was a measure of audacity, for it seemed to me then that my impudence would lead to either a breakthrough or a career-damaging reputation for being misguided, if not harebrained.

4. *What do you see as having been your main influences from the preexisting governance field in developing the theory and practice of the model?*

Many wise beliefs about board behavior and mechanisms predated Policy Governance and, for that matter, continue to come out now. It has long been said that boards should deal with policy and big issues, think long term, mind their fiduciary responsibilities, and avoid micromanagement and rubber stamping. Policy Governance absorbed these wisdoms, though in most cases giving them more rigorous definitions and weaving them into a previously nonexistent whole. The greatest benefit of pursuing that wholeness is that it reveals further weaknesses not obvious without it. That is somewhat similar to the way new elements could be predicted once Mendeleev invented the periodic table of known elements. Like a scientific theory, then, a holistic conceptual model throws light on questions that may not have ever arisen before.

5. *What do you see as having been your main influences from other fields in developing the theory and practice of the model?*

Management, scientific theory development, and to a lesser extent political science significantly affected the beginnings of my inquiry.

In particular, I was greatly influenced by management insights about job description and delegation; these caused much exploration about

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# Policy Governance

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what a “job” really is and how, both vertically and horizontally, different jobs should be linked together.

Also, my doctoral training in psychology and behavioral research was influential, though not in the way you would think. Its main effect was in engendering what became my obsession with assembling ideas into a conceptual whole rather than pieces.

That’s what is needed in producing theory, and that is what I frequently refer to as conceptual coherence.

The third influence was political science—not so much with respect to governmental types or economic systems, but more as it deals with the transmission of the authority of a mass of people to a small group. The political science influence was what drew me into agency theory/social contract theory, and servant-leadership.

Curiously, though, I was not sufficiently knowledgeable then to recognize the rich literature on these topics, and I did not know even to call these concepts by their rightful names.

## 6. How did Policy Governance get its name?

One option I considered was Values Governance. I was convinced early on that governance should be built on the recognition that governing by explicit values is more efficient and capable of being more exhaustive than governing by the multitude of decisions based on those values. (That’s not unlike parents instilling values rather than dictating their children’s individual choices.) However, figuring out which categories of values are governance relevant presented a hurdle because even choosing which font to use is based on values. So an early hurdle was to construct relevant value categories and search for the principles that might apply differently to each. The focus on organizational values was pertinent enough to justify Values Governance as a descriptor.

But Values Governance as an appellation didn’t last, largely because it would have saddled the newborn model with political baggage. During those years, public education in the United States was going through very public conflict about values education. I could foresee eventual consulting work with school boards, so entangling the model (and myself!) in so spirited a debate was a handicap I was loathe to assume. While the values education controversy was certainly an issue *for* boards, it was not an issue *about* boards.

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The use of the word *governance* is rarely questioned now, but it was not in common use when Policy Governance began in the mid-1970s.

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One option I did *not* consider was *Carver Model*. Although I am flattered that the eponymous moniker became as widespread as it did, I neither used it myself nor encouraged others to. As to the use of the word *model*, it won out against *system*, *design*, and other candidates long forgotten, as well as just Policy Governance without the added noun. So “model” stuck. My attraction to the word was due to my having a strong personal connection to the scientific method, theory building, and the conceptual precision the word model implies in research. However, since the word doesn’t have that extreme level of coherence to everyone, in retrospect I’m not sure I made a good choice.

The use of the word *governance* is rarely questioned now, but it was not in common use when Policy Governance began in the mid-1970s. I appropriated

the word to refer specifically to the board’s job rather than use a term like Policy Board Leadership or lengthier designations. I would like to think I helped governing technology in boards acquire a generic term of its own, *governance*, but frankly that development would likely have occurred anyway.

Needing a consistent name for the model I’d produced was obvious, but relying on others to safeguard its meaning also became obvious. Professional courtesy for name identification and proper attribution proved too weak a protection, plus users would drift into sacrificing the model’s systemic integrity. It was evident that Policy Governance would soon mean whatever anyone wanted it to mean. So I sought further protection by registering the term as a service mark (comparable to trademark) in the United States. During the last decade, registered service mark protection was acquired in Canada and the European Union, as well as continuing in the United States.

Just to clear up a misconception about the service mark: seeking legal protection of the term Policy Governance (with capital P and G) was not done for pecuniary reasons; there has never been any charge, royalty, or licensing for using Policy Governance. The reason is to enable my control over just what is meant by Policy Governance. That effort is by no means 100 percent effective, but it has undoubtedly been helpful in preserving the model as a name-identified design for precision in board leadership.

## 7. What do you see as being the core contributions of the Policy Governance model to the history of board governance theory and practice?

Unique contributions of Policy Governance include the differentiation of what I decided to call Ends and means along with their dissimilar treatment, cascading of decisions by breadth, a rigid one-voice rule for expression of board authority, performance measurement exclusively

against prestated criteria, and the ownership concept.

The core contribution, however, might be that governance is a distinct function in the transfer between owners and operators that is sufficiently unique and critical to be capable and deserving of being conceived in universally applicable theory.

#### 8. What are your expectations and hopes for the future of Policy Governance?

Although Policy Governance enables a massive improvement in a rather disorderly and inadequately theorized function, it requires far more precision and discipline than has been familiar. Its paradigmatic shift from time-honored practices appears complicated only because it brings counterintuitive new rules that must be followed meticulously. Moreover, fulfilling group accountability and exercising group authority do not come naturally; excellence in governance allows no escape from that hurdle. Yet many, if not most, board members already work in fields that require mastery of far more complexity and scrupulous attention than does Policy Governance.

Governance in its present state does not exist in isolation. It is surrounded by and immersed in power relationships and interests that have grown up under the old methods, ones that naturally resist even the most compelling of transformational ideas. CEOs who control boards—and we know there are many ways of doing that—and board members who

dominate the process are likely to see changes in terms of their current roles. Funders, accreditors, and other authorities have moved little from governance ideas of decades ago. Laws and regulations were not devised by those on the leading edge of the past, much less the future. Political figures and the press speak of governance with little attention to the care it deserves, thereby spreading poor ideas even further.

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Fulfilling group accountability and exercising group authority do not come naturally.

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I don't recite these realities in order to make Policy Governance or any equally coherent models that succeed it seem impossible. I say these things in recognition of how challenging a task it is to spread an enormous conceptual shift under obdurate conditions. After all, keep in mind how long it took surgeons to start washing their hands even though washing required neither new skills nor money. Furthermore, there is no reason to expect advances of Policy Governance to be a straight line with no setbacks along the way. Even physicians' hand washing has come and gone (and, in fact, it is a problem

in hospitals even today). The future, as Alvin Toffler suggested in his book *Future Shock*, invades the present at a staggered pace.<sup>1</sup>

The success of Policy Governance so far should be for us a source of encouragement and excitement. The fact that Policy Governance has advanced in the world as far as it has in only three decades is far more remarkable than that it's not yet ubiquitous worldwide.

My hopes for Policy Governance are long run, and since they are long run, they deal more with effective governance generally than with Policy Governance specifically. My intent before developing Policy Governance was that groups holding the trust of others optimally govern the achievement and behavior of organizations that belong to those others, whether in business, nongovernmental organizations, government, or any other of the somewhat artificial categories into which we divide life. That aspiration led to Policy Governance, but was not replaced by Policy Governance. This is not to say that Policy Governance isn't the best existing resolution of that desire today; I believe that it is. But no matter how well a tool is designed, the tool should never outrank the vision it was meant to address. □

#### Note

1. Toffler, A. *Future Shock*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 1984.

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## Personal Note

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it is easy for the new knowledge to slip a bit. It is easy to forget that at the governance level, policy is not just as important as budget; it is more important. And policymaking is not just as important as management; it is more important.

Board members struggle to learn why and how they must attend as

obsessively to policymaking as they expect their accountants, nurses, and other technical staff to attend to their respective jobs. Then, after they have thoroughly learned the importance and practice of policymaking in Policy Governance, a continued focus on reviewing and updating policy keeps their attention riveted on its policies.

That is good, of course, and I don't wish to detract from the importance of the policy rules of Policy Governance

or the policy content specific to each board. But I do wish to warn boards that so much attention to policymaking can tempt a board to think that a policy—especially one that is well conceived—is the same as having the reality to which the policy is addressed.

For example, to have a policy against certain kinds of risk is not the same as having banished the risk. For the board to have said all the right things in the

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*In this regular feature of Board Leadership, which appears approximately three times a year, we bring you the voices of a variety of people whose lives and work have been affected by Policy Governance theory and practice.*

# What Policy Governance Means to Me

## An Interview with Steve Winninger

by Caroline Oliver

*Managing editor Caroline Oliver talks to Steve Winninger, board consultant and retired CEO of Lake Trust Credit Union, Michigan.*

**Caroline:** In her book on organizational leadership styles, Patricia Pitcher described three types of leaders: the artist, the craftsman, and the technocrat.<sup>1</sup> Which type do you think you are?

**Steve:** I am not the technocrat. When I got together with another CEO in order to effect a merger, we knew that there could be only one CEO and one equivalent of a chief operating officer. We were both very open about which we would be. In the end, it was clear that he was more of the technocrat and therefore more suited to the chief operating officer role. I see myself as more of an artist, as well as a craftsman, who likes to focus on outcomes.

**Caroline:** What has been your experience of board governance in general?

**Steve:** I have been a credit union CEO for twenty-three years and have sat on the boards of subsidiaries as well as community service boards. I have also served on the board of the Filene Research Institute, which explores issues related to the future of credit unions and consumer finance, and the Mortgage Center LLC, which was owned by five credit unions and served another eighty Michigan credit unions in mortgage origination and servicing. Currently I am on the board of Lansing Community College Foundation and teach a course at the college on becoming a better board member. Overall I

probably have more cumulative Chair experience than CEO experience.

**Caroline:** How did you come across Policy Governance, and why did it interest you?

**Steve:** I came across *Boards That Make a Difference* by John Carver about eighteen years ago.<sup>2</sup> I had worked for a number of dysfunctional boards and knew that there had to be a better way. It took me seven years to get Policy Governance implemented. At one point, we got very close to it, but then one board member put us off for a couple of years. It is always easier to say no than yes, and the Chair was casting a pall of doubt over everything without ever being clear as to whether he was speaking for himself or the whole board. I just kept putting the best information I could in front of my board so they could make a decision.

**Caroline:** How have you used it?

**Steve:** Fully. My credit union board has tried very hard to be consistent with the Policy Governance model, and for most part, since they adopted it in 2001, they have succeeded. I have also taken Policy Governance to a couple of subsidiary boards.

**Caroline:** What impact do you think Policy Governance has?

**Steve:** When the board adopted Policy Governance, the most noticeable thing from the start was role clar-

ity. Suddenly I knew what my job was: I knew what was and was not delegated to me. Until then, if I had asked if I should make a particular decision or whether it was reserved to the board, the answer I got was that because I had been around a long time, I should "know that by now." I also got, "Don't worry. We will tell you if you get it wrong."

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When the board adopted Policy Governance, the most noticeable thing from the start was role clarity.

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My most compelling example of how things have changed with Policy Governance starts with the fact that when I joined there was no sign on our building. I asked the management team why this was, and they said they did not want a sign because they did not want to advertise the credit union's presence for fear of "the bad guys knowing how to find us." I asked, "What about the members?" and the answer was,

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*All offerings are conducted by Miriam and John Carver in Atlanta, GA, USA.*

"They already know how to find us." I was CEO of a \$200 million organization, but because the board had been used to making so many management decisions, I was not sure that I had the authority to buy a sign costing twelve hundred dollars, so I took the decision to the board. The board decided to have a building and equipment committee meeting to look at it. The committee had dinner together and then took a field trip to look at the possible sign. Then they said, "The Finance Committee hasn't looked at it yet." It took two committee and three board meetings to get that sign. At this stage, the board was also picking colors of calendars and furniture for the branches.

Fast-forward fifteen years, and my Chair asked, "Why is this \$5 million data processing company contract on the board's agenda? This decision is delegated to you within board policy." I said, "The regulator requires the board to approve it," and she said, "Put it on the consent agenda." As a result of Policy Governance, the board became Ends focused, and I believe that this has been crucially important in propelling us from an organization with \$200 million of assets to one with over \$1.6 billion of assets.

## Personal Note

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right format may affect the relevant reality, but it is no guarantee that the desired reality then follows.

Let me step back for a moment with examples from boards not using Policy Governance. We've encountered many examples of words substituting for reality. In one we've seen repeatedly, a state or provincial public school authority demands that a local school board have a policy about this or that. Even the specific wording of the policy is frequently dictated from on high. School boards then adopt that policy, heedless of whether the policy as written should be expressed at a lower organizational level rather than by the board (since

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When you have good role clarity, you can really get things done. Otherwise you are in a position analogous to playing a game of cards in which no one will tell you the rules.

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Policy Governance was also pivotal in the success of our merger in 2010. We had ten years of Policy Governance experience at that point, but our partner did not use it. Luckily, however, they saw it as better articulated and more streamlined and integrated than their previous approach, and so it became instrumental in enabling us to carry out the integration needed to effect the merger. In order to be stronger together than apart, we had to find efficiencies for which we needed clear authority, delegation, role clarity, and the ability to move swiftly.

there's no Policy Governance in place to clarify differentiation of levels). Subsequently, with the policy in place, neither the state/province nor the school board knows whether the condition demanded by the policy is true. Although no one intends such a Potemkin relationship between words and reality, the behavior is as if the words matter more than the reality.

Perhaps the customary gap between policy and reality is why in some respects policy is viewed as a paper matter unlinked from the real world. It may be why some boards feel that they are being distracted from real board work by wasting time on words, especially words subjected to painstaking analysis and argument. When policy is so often seen as little more than a fantasy world unto itself,

**Caroline:** What lessons have you learned from using Policy Governance?

**Steve:** The main lesson I have learned is that when you have good role clarity, you can really get things done. Otherwise you are in a position analogous to playing a game of cards in which no one will tell you the rules.

**Caroline:** How do you see the future of Policy Governance?

**Steve:** I believe that Policy Governance, like the credit union option, is one of the world's best-kept secrets. With its emphasis on providing the link to owners and practical approach to accountability, I am convinced it can improve the quality of business everywhere. □

## Notes

1. For this characterization, we thank Patricia Pitcher, *Artists, Craftsmen, and Technocrats: The Dreams, Realities, and Illusions of Leadership* (Toronto: Stoddard, 1996).

2. Carver, J. *Boards That Make a Difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

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it makes sense to resist obsessing about it.

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To have a policy against certain kinds of risk is not the same as having banished the risk.

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Of course, Policy Governance brings a very different kind of policy to the table, one important enough to have its own mini-technology, one that is rigorous enough to support the critical linkage between governance and management. But old habits die  
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## Personal Note

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hard. "Policy-equals-nonreality" is so ubiquitous that without constant attention, there can easily be a tug in that direction even among those fully committed to Policy Governance. That is why I believe it is important for boards to be concerned about the possibility that words—as important as they are and as much as we harp on the matter—can come to substitute for reality.

Over the years, we've learned that just because a board says it uses Policy Governance doesn't mean that it does; similarly, a board must understand that just because it has crafted exemplary policies doesn't mean the organization is better off. Having a staff treatment policy that perfectly reflects board values does not ensure that staff treatment reflects those values.

Of course, Policy Governance is constructed with an antidote to the all-too-human tendency to use vaunted policy language to substitute for reality. Intended practice of Policy Governance is not Policy Governance unless rigorous reporting of performance is built into each board's way of life. By *rigorous*, I mean performance reporting that is directly aimed at demonstrating whether board policies—albeit with the grace of reasonable interpretation—are actually true in the real world. By *rigorous*, I also mean performance reporting that is frequent enough to supply a judicious degree of assurance that the desired reality is maintained. Except for the additional precision and criterion specificity demanded by Policy Governance, there is nothing revolutionary about the desirability of such rigor.

Yet, we have found many instances wherein a board has dutifully developed good policies about Ends and limitations on managerial means but failed to install the Policy Governance kind of monitoring that would close the loop. Some continue to accept verbal assurances by the CEO, staff busyness reports, or anecdotal human interest stories in the place of

data that satisfy policy criteria. These boards mean well, just as most boards do, but they are, in effect, simply using good policy as a cover that obscures rather than exposes reality.

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In the absence of rigorous monitoring, perfectly crafted Ends and Executive Limitations policies will fail to fulfill the promise that Policy Governance offers.

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We have also found that boards that begin their Policy Governance life by running a two-track monitoring system may be more likely never to develop the kind of rigor Policy Governance demands. Some boards are reluctant to make the leap to the precisely targeted reporting of Policy Governance, unwilling to discard the reporting style that has so long offered them false comfort and passed for appropriate monitoring. To be sure, learning to fly on precision instruments does require a measure of confidence in those instruments. Nevertheless, without a complete shift away from approving budgets, passing financial statements, and other criterion-obscuring methods, a well-intended board may well doom the honing and perfection of focused, policy-specific Policy Governance monitoring.

In short, in the absence of rigorous monitoring, perfectly crafted Ends and Executive Limitations policies will fail to fulfill the promise that Policy Governance offers.

In this issue of *Board Leadership*, I answer some searching questions from John Bohley and Caroline Oliver on the origins of Policy Governance, and Steve Winninger tells us what Policy Governance means to him. □

## BOARD LEADERSHIP

POLICY GOVERNANCE IN ACTION

JOHN CARVER AND MIRIAM CARVER

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JOHN CARVER, PH.D., is widely regarded as the world's most provocative authority on the governing board role. His Policy Governance® model has been called the only existing theory of governance. Dr. Carver is author of *Boards That Make a Difference* (1990, 1997, 2006), *John Carver on Board Leadership* (2002), and coauthor with Caroline Oliver of *Corporate Boards That Create Value* (2002), and numerous articles.

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Dr. and Mrs. Carver together coauthored *A New Vision of Board Leadership* (1994), *Reinventing Your Board* (1997, 2006), and the *Carver Policy Governance® Guide Series* (1999, 2009).

Both Carvers have consulted widely with nonprofit, governmental, and equity corporate organizations in Asia, the European Union, South America, and North America. In the Policy Governance Academy™, they teach advanced Policy Governance theory and practice to consultants and other leaders.

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