

Board of Trustees: Charge

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Board of Trustees

The Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to oversee the present and future well being of the Institution. We need to understand Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's role as an independent oceanographic institution and support its scientific and educational endeavors. Trustees must be mindful of the Institution's mission statement when formulating policies and making decisions. It is incumbent upon us that governance be consistent with the Institution's goals that we, in fact, have designed.

Trustees need to shepherd the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's name and standing in the scientific oceanographic community. We are responsible for selecting senior management along with monitoring and helping performance. A critical ingredient in making the process successful is for Trustees to be open and available to management. Then the administration can draw on the wide range of experience and knowledge embedded in the Trustee group. We should consider ourselves as a willing and valuable resource to the Institution.

The Institution's greatest assets are its scientists, engineers, and support staff. There is a stimulating culture at WHOI that attracts first-rate personnel dedicated to expanding mankind's knowledge of the oceans. These professionals are collectively on the line every day seeking grants to carry out their quests. Trustee fund raising and personal financial support has helped provide bridge money, launch research projects, endow scientific chairs, and create and maintain the infrastructure to conduct research. Trustee outreach and giving fosters the financial stability the Institution must have to maintain its excellence.

Since its founding in 1930, WHOI has been wisely guided and today enjoys a worldwide reputation for superior oceanographic research. Commitment by its Trustees has been a key building block in achieving that recognition. Those who give their time and effort today to lift the Institution even higher will feel great pride and be richly rewarded in the future.

Members of the Corporation

As Members of the Corporation, we share the trust of the seven individuals who proudly secured the Corporation's charter on January 6, 1930. Ralph G. Boyd, Elizabeth D. Peabody, Charles F. Dunbar, William E. Hays, E. Curtiss Mower, Jr., Bertha A. Patten, and E. Louise Malloch were the first to commit themselves to the good of this remarkable organization, and we honor them by making a like commitment. Although they could not have foreseen how the pursuit of oceanography would change over the years, they surely held the same aspiration for WHOI that we do today, that it be a private, independent world leader in research and education about the oceans.

Members of the Corporation are essential to the process of good governance. We elect the Board of Trustees, and are formally assigned responsibility in the bylaws to "assure that the Corporation accomplishes its mission in the public interest." To do so, we must know and understand the mission of the Institution, described on the first page of this Handbook. We must act in all our dealings as ambassadors for the Institution, to promote recognition of it in order to help forge new connections to sustain and increase both public and private support. We must attend annual meetings and official events, and participate in Corporation activities in order to be knowledgeable about the workings of the Institution and to offer effective counsel. We must recruit and mentor new Members of the Corporation best suited to help the Institution maintain leadership in oceanography. And we must share our time, talent, and personal resources according to means, as a tangible expression of our commitment.

Today, we perhaps have a clearer understanding than our 1930 forebears of just how closely tied is the "public interest" to the well-being of the oceans. Indeed, the well-being of our entire planet is directly tied to the health of the oceans. Service on the WHOI Corporation is certainly a privilege, but it is also an effective means of fulfilling a larger social responsibility.

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