AGB ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Utah State University Leadership Retreat

Board of Trustees • Foundation Board • University Leadership

Price, Utah

June 6, 2026

Facilitator:

Mike Goodwin, AGB Senior Consultant

Pre-read:

"The Tandem Tightrope Act: The Balancing Act of Institution-Foundation Partnerships" by Thomas K. Hyatt

Retreat Objectives:

- Review and discuss results of self-assessment and translate into priority action items.
- Strengthen alignment of the boards and university leadership, especially regarding university development efforts.
- Continue to strengthen the culture based on AGB's concept of the "essential partnership."
- Continue to build and strengthen personal relationships.

Agenda:

8:00-8:10am: **Welcome and framing the day**

Presenters: President Brad Mortensen, Board Chair Tessa White, Foundation Chair Sylvia Jones

8:10-8:25am: **The Speed of Trust exercise**

Facilitator: Mike Goodwin

Based on "trust is not a soft value" (Stephen M.R. Covey)

Table pair exercise: "What behaviors in this meeting will reinforce trust and help make today a success for you?"

8:25-8:40am: **The "essential partnership" aka "the tandem tightrope walk"**

Facilitator: Mike Goodwin

8:40-9:25am: **Self-assessment findings report and discussion**

Boards break out into two groups to review and discuss findings:

- What resonated?
- What concerns or opportunities stand out to improve performance, build trust, and strengthen the relationship?
- Boards reconvene to briefly share findings.

9:25-9:40am: ***Break***

9:40-10:00am: **Presentation: the evolving role of foundations, and the respective roles of the boards in fundraising**

10:00-10:45am: **Generative Discussion—determining "what needs deciding"**

Facilitator: Mike Goodwin

The Governance as Leadership model for structuring board work

Interactive breakout groups: "Generative conversation—thinking that frames the problems we solve—determines what needs deciding before we make decisions, suggests what's worth strategy before we make a strategic plan."

Assignment: Brainstorm generative questions the Utah State boards should explore together over the next year, then prioritize your list.

Report out and synthesize themes.

10:45-11:00am: **Closing reflections and next steps**