



# TIAA-CREF Policy Statement on Corporate Governance

6TH EDITION



Financial Services

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## **I. Introduction**

### **Purpose and Applicability of Policy Statement**

The purpose of this document, including the proxy voting guidelines in Appendix A (the “Policy Statement”), is for Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association–College Retirement Equities Fund (TIAA-CREF) to inform our clients, participants and shareholders, portfolio companies, stakeholders and other institutional investors about the corporate governance and social responsibility practices we expect of our portfolio companies. The principles and guidelines herein disclose how we generally vote proxies of portfolio companies. Additionally, this Policy Statement is intended to serve as a basis for dialogue with boards of directors and senior managers.

The policies and principles herein apply to publicly-traded operating companies and may not be directly applicable to open-end investment companies or privately-held entities. Although many of the specific policies relate primarily to companies incorporated in the United States, the underlying principles apply to all public companies in which TIAA-CREF invests throughout the world. Although TIAA is not a publicly-traded company, to the extent practicable, TIAA’s internal governance practices are guided by the policies and principles articulated herein.

### **Why We Focus on Corporate Governance**

TIAA-CREF is an institutional investor whose mission is to help those in the academic, medical, cultural, research and government fields plan to and through retirement. We do this with a full array of financial products and services to help our participants and shareholders achieve lifetime financial security. Our clients expect us to be stewards of their savings and to help provide for their financial security.

We believe that good governance practices and responsible corporate behavior contribute to the long-term performance of public companies and are critical to well-functioning securities markets. We also believe that strong corporate governance helps reduce investment risk and ensures that shareholder capital is used effectively.

Institutional investors are the constituency whose interests are best aligned with stable and growing markets because of their long-term orientation. Furthermore, long-term investors have among the most to lose if markets deteriorate and asset prices fall.

Accordingly, we believe it is in our participants’ and shareholders’ economic interest to promote good corporate governance and to monitor and

engage with portfolio companies on issues that may affect their long-term, sustainable profits.

For over forty years TIAA-CREF has advocated the merits of involved owners working to improve corporate governance. In the 1970s and 1980s, TIAA-CREF took a leadership role in opposing abusive antitakeover provisions and management entrenchment devices such as dead-hand poison pills. We were also one of the first institutional investors to engage in dialogue with portfolio companies on social responsibility issues such as automotive safety in the United States and apartheid policies in South Africa.

In the 1990s and 2000s, TIAA-CREF continued to strengthen its commitment to responsible investing and good corporate citizenship, including the establishment of the CREF Social Choice Account and other socially screened investment products that give special consideration to social concerns. Additionally, TIAA-CREF focused on influencing companies to adopt best-in-class governance practices and disclosures related to director elections, board structure and compensation.

The repeated corporate crises of the last decade (such as options-back dating and other accounting-related fraud, instances of egregious compensation practices connected with poor performance, and most recently, the meltdown of the global financial sector) have highlighted the need for market participants and shareholders to re-commit to practices and behaviors that promote the long-term, sustainable health of our economy. We believe it is important that issuers and shareholders act responsibly to restore and maintain public trust and confidence in the governance of our public corporations.

In this light, we have revised this sixth edition of the Policy Statement to reflect current developments in corporate governance, social and environmental policies, the convergence of best practices across global markets, and enhanced shareholder rights and responsibilities recently granted by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Congress, and other foreign governments and regulators. Our policies continue to respect the province of boards and management to run the company while safeguarding our rights as shareholders.

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The Policy Statement is reviewed periodically and is subject to amendment. The latest edition of the Policy Statement incorporating any amendments is posted on our website ([www.tiaa-cref.org](http://www.tiaa-cref.org))

## **II. TIAA-CREF'S CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PROGRAM**

### **A. Introduction**

The TIAA and TIAA-CREF Funds Boards have delegated oversight of TIAA-CREF's corporate governance program, including oversight of management's development and establishment of portfolio company governance policies, to the TIAA and TIAA-CREF Funds Committees on Corporate Governance and Social Responsibility (separate committees of the TIAA board and the boards of TIAA-CREF affiliated investment companies that meet jointly and are composed entirely of independent trustees, but that vote separately on matters presented to them for approval).

TIAA-CREF's corporate governance program is administered by a staff of professionals within the Corporate Governance Group who work collaboratively with the Asset Management Group and other internal stakeholders.

### **B. Governance Activities**

#### **1. Proxy Voting**

Proxy voting is a key component of TIAA-CREF's oversight and engagement program. It is one of our primary methods for exercising our shareholder rights and influencing the behavior of portfolio companies. TIAA-CREF commits substantial resources to making informed voting decisions in furtherance of our mission. All of our voting decisions are made in the best interest of our participants and shareholders.

TIAA-CREF's voting policies, as described in this Policy Statement, are implemented on a case-by-case basis by the staff of our Corporate Governance Group. The staff relies on its professional judgment informed by proprietary research, reports provided by a variety of third-party research providers, consultation with our Asset Management Group and our trustees or a committee thereof. Annual disclosure of our proxy votes is available on our website and on the website of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

#### **2. Engagement**

Our preference is to engage privately with portfolio companies when we perceive shortcomings in their governance or environmental and social policies and practices that we believe impacts their performance. This strategy of "quiet diplomacy" reflects our belief and past experience that informed dialogue with board members and senior executives, rather than public confrontation, will most likely lead to a mutually productive outcome.

We target portfolio companies for engagement based on research and evaluation of their governance and performance. Governance reviews are supplemented by an analysis of each company's financial condition and risk profile conducted in conjunction with our Asset Management Group.

In prioritizing issues for engagement, we take into account their materiality, their potential impact on TIAA-CREF's investment performance, their relevance to the marketplace, the level of public interest, the applicability of our policies and the views of TIAA-CREF's participants and shareholders and institutional clients.

As noted, our preference is for constructive engagement strategies that can utilize private communication, minimize confrontation and attain a negotiated settlement. While quiet diplomacy remains our core strategy, particularly for domestic companies, TIAA-CREF's engagement program involves many different activities and initiatives. Engagement may include the following activities:

- submitting shareholder resolutions
- withholding or voting against one or more directors
- requesting other investors to support our initiatives
- engaging in collaborative action with other investors
- engaging in public dialogue and commentary
- supporting an election contest or change of control transaction
- conducting a proxy solicitation
- seeking regulatory or legislative relief
- commencing or supporting litigation
- pursuing other enforcement or compliance remedies

TIAA-CREF is committed to engagement with companies and will only consider divesting from a security in the rarest of circumstances. As a matter of general investment policy, we may consider divesting or underweighting a company's stock from our accounts in cases where we conclude that the financial or reputational risks from a company's policies or activities are so great that continued ownership of its stock is no longer prudent.

Our policy of engagement over divestment is a matter of principle that is based on several considerations: (i) divestment would eliminate our standing and rights as a shareholder and foreclose further engagement; (ii) divestment would be likely to have negligible impact on portfolio companies or the market; (iii) divestment could result in increased costs and short-term losses; and (iv) divestment could compromise our investment strategies and negatively affect our performance. For these reasons, we believe that divestment does not offer TIAA-CREF an optimal strategy for changing the policies and practices of portfolio companies, nor is it the best means to produce long-term value for our participants and shareholders.

### **3. Thought Leadership**

In addition to proxy voting and engagement, which are actions targeted at specific companies, TIAA-CREF believes that it is important to participate in the creation, development and implementation of ideas and practices surrounding corporate governance and social responsibility in order to influence the broadest constituency possible. While the following list of activities is not necessarily exhaustive, it provides an overview of the variety of ways we participate in the corporate governance and social responsibility community.

1. TIAA-CREF periodically publishes its policies on corporate governance, shareholder rights, social responsibility and related issues. These policies inform portfolio companies and provide the basis for our engagement activities.
2. TIAA-CREF participates in the public debate over issues of corporate governance and responsible corporate behavior in domestic and international markets.
3. TIAA-CREF participates in membership organizations and professional associations that seek to promote good corporate governance, protect shareholder rights and advance social responsibility. We also participate in related conferences and symposia in order to actively contribute to the development of the emerging corporate governance and social responsibility best practices.
4. TIAA-CREF sponsors research, hosts conferences and works with regulators, legislators, self-regulatory organizations, and other institutional investors to educate the business community and the investing public about governance, shareholder rights and social responsibility.
5. TIAA-CREF submits written comments on regulatory proposals and testifies before various governmental bodies, administrative agencies and self-regulatory organizations.
6. TIAA-CREF routinely engages with professional service providers (*e.g.*, law, executive recruiting, executive compensation and accounting firms) in order to share knowledge and influence the professionals who advise our portfolio companies on important issues.

### **4. International Corporate Governance**

With a substantial share of our assets invested in equities of companies listed on foreign markets and with international holdings in over 50 countries, TIAA-CREF is recognized as one of the most influential investors in the world. We

have a long history of acting on behalf of our participants and shareholders to improve corporate governance standards globally. Our international governance activities, like our domestic program, are designed to protect our investments, reduce risk and increase shareholder value. We focus our governance efforts in those foreign markets where we currently have, or expect to have in the future, significant levels of capital at risk.

Our international corporate governance program consists of: (i) selective direct engagement with foreign portfolio companies; (ii) selective collaborative engagement with other institutional investors based in foreign markets; (iii) engagement and dialogue with foreign regulators, legislators and industry groups, and (iv) active participation in global corporate governance organizations.

In addition to maintaining a leadership role as an advocate for shareholder rights and good governance globally, TIAA-CREF is committed to using our best efforts to vote our shares in international companies. Our staff is familiar with voting procedures in every country where we invest and we stay abreast of new developments occurring in those markets. Additionally, we promote reforms needed to eliminate cross-border voting inefficiencies and to improve the mechanics of proxy voting globally.

TIAA-CREF has endorsed many of the governance standards of international associations and shareholder organizations. We agree with the widely-held view that the harmonization of international governance principles and standards of best practice is essential to achieve efficiency in the global capital markets. Accordingly, our governance initiatives in many non-U.S. markets with less developed corporate governance practices seek to deal with the following problems:

- Robust shareholder rights, basic governance standards of board accountability and independence, full and timely disclosure and financial transparency are in many cases still only aspirational.
- Legal and regulatory systems are still underdeveloped and means of enforcement can often be lacking.
- Listed companies dominated by controlling shareholders often blend characteristics of private and public companies; giving management and insiders too much power and minority shareholders too little.
- Foreign governments retain ownership in many local listed companies and exercise special powers that interfere with capital market efficiency.
- Foreign banks often hold large blocks of shares within the companies they do business that can create conflicts of interest.

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- Ambivalence about shareholder engagement, control contests and takeover bids undermines management accountability and market vitality.
- Policies and internal systems designed to avoid bribery and corruption are underdeveloped or non-existent.

### III. SHAREHOLDERS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### A. Introduction

TIAA-CREF recognizes that the laws, practices and customs governing company and shareholder interactions continue to vary across the globe despite recent harmonization efforts. However, we believe there are certain shareholder rights that should be respected by all publicly-traded operating companies regardless of their domicile. Similarly, shareholders also have a duty to exercise their rights responsibly.

Below we outline TIAA-CREF's basic expectations for both companies and shareholders. While in some cases the full adoption of these rights and responsibilities may still be aspirational, we believe these principles should be pursued in the interest of maintaining well-functioning markets

#### B. Generally Applicable Shareholder Rights

As owners of equity securities, shareholders rely primarily on a corporation's board of directors to protect their interests. Unlike other groups that do business with the corporation (*e.g.*, customers, suppliers and lenders), holders of common stock have no clear contractual protection of their interests. Instead, they place their trust in the directors, whom they elect, and use their right to vote at shareholder meetings to ensure the accountability of the board. We believe that the basic rights and principles set forth below should be guaranteed and should govern the conduct of every publicly-traded company.

1. *Each Director Should Represent All Shareholders.* Shareholders should have the right to expect that each director (including directors who are affiliated with either the company or a particular shareholder) is acting in the interest of all shareholders and not that of a particular constituent, special interest group or dominant shareholder.
2. *One Share, One Vote.* Generally, shareholders should have the right to vote in proportion to their economic stake in the company. Each share of common stock should have one vote. The board should not create multiple classes of common stock with disparate or "super" voting rights, nor should it give itself the discretion to cap voting rights that reduce the proportional representation of larger shareholdings. Companies that do not have a one-share-one-vote structure should periodically assess the efficacy of such a structure and provide shareholders with a rationale for maintaining such a structure.
3. *Financial Equality.* All shareholders should receive fair and equal financial treatment. We support measures designed to avoid preferential treatment of any shareholder.

4. *Confidential Voting.* Shareholders should be able to cast proxy votes in a confidential manner. Tabulation should be conducted by an Inspector of Election who is independent of management. In a contest for control, it may be appropriate to modify confidentiality provisions in order to ensure the accuracy and fairness of the voting results.
5. *Vote Requirements.* The board should not impose super-majority vote requirements, except in unusual cases where necessary to protect the interests of minority shareholders.

Abstentions should not be included in the vote tabulation, except for purposes of determining whether a quorum is present. Shareholder votes cast “for” or “against” a proposal should be the only votes counted.

The board should not combine or “bundle” disparate issues and present them for a single vote. Shareholders should have the right to vote on each separate and distinct issue.

6. *Authorization and Issuance of Stock.* Shareholders should have the right to approve the authorization of shares of common stock and the issuance of shares for corporate purposes in order to ensure that such actions serve a valid purpose and are consistent with shareholder interests.
7. *Antitakeover Provisions.* Shareholders should have the right to approve any provisions that alter fundamental shareholder rights and powers. This includes poison pills and other antitakeover devices. We strongly oppose antitakeover plans that contain “continuing director” or “deferred redemption” provisions limiting the discretion of a future board to redeem the plan. We believe that antitakeover measures should be limited by reasonable expiration periods.
8. *Board Communication.* Shareholders should have the ability to communicate with the board of directors. Companies should adopt and disclose procedures for shareholders to communicate their views and concerns directly to board members. Applicable regulations aimed at preventing selective disclosure of material non-public information should not be used by boards and management as a shield to meaningful dialogue with shareholders.
9. *Common Language.* Annual meeting agendas and disclosure documents should be published in English, the generally accepted language of international business, whenever a company has accessed global capital. Shareholders should not be disenfranchised as a result of language barriers.
10. *Impediments to Voting.* Shareholders should be able to vote all their shares without impediments such as share blocking, beneficial owner registration,

voting by show of hands, late notification of agenda items or other unreasonable requests. This particularly problematic in many foreign markets.

11. *Vote Confirmation.* Shareholders should have the ability to confirm that their votes have been received and tabulated. The proxy voting process involves an extensive network of participants creating a risk that votes submitted by shareholders do not ultimately reach the corporation. Shareholders are devoting an increasing amount of resources to making their voting decisions and should be able to know that they are not being lost in the system.
12. *Robust Disclosure.* Shareholders should expect robust disclosure on any item on which they are voting. In order to make informed decisions, shareholders should not be reliant on a third party to gather information from multiple sources. Companies should provide information on director qualifications, independence, affiliations, related party transactions, executive compensation, conflicts of interest and other relevant governance information. Additionally, companies should provide audited financial statements that are acceptable under international governance and accounting standards.

### **C. Shareholder Responsibilities**

As providers of capital, long-term shareholders have among the most to lose if markets deteriorate and asset prices fall. This is especially true for those institutions who invest on behalf of individuals, such as TIAA-CREF, whose losses can have a broad impact on the general public's long-term financial security. Therefore, it is critical for such investors to participate as active owners of the companies in which they invest. By acting as responsible investors, long-term shareholders help to protect not only their clients but the capital markets as a whole. We believe that the following principles provide a framework for being a responsible investor.

1. *Exercise Rights Responsibly.* Investors should exercise their rights responsibly to ensure companies are well-managed and positioned to drive long-term value. They should vote their shares diligently, recognizing that they are a valuable asset, and an important means to communicate with the company and other shareholders. Investors should not blindly support management, and should dedicate appropriate resources, including senior management, to proxy decisions. Further, investors should carefully and thoughtfully use the shareholder rights granted to them through regulation or the company's bylaws. Boards and management should not have to continuously expend corporate resources responding to shareholder demands that the average prudent and responsible shareholder would deem frivolous, unreasonable or immaterial to the long-term health of the company.
2. *Hold Boards Accountable.* Investors should be willing to take action when they believe the board has not adequately represented their interests. Shareholders

should be willing and able to remove directors when they have performed badly or have been unresponsive to less aggressive overtures.

3. *Monitor Performance.* Once they have made an investment decision, investors should be prepared to monitor companies and they should develop skills to do so. Monitoring includes discussions with both the board and management in differing ways, and engagement with companies on issues of concern. Shareholders should consider many factors in monitoring companies, including long-term performance, board performance, governance and other policies, strategic direction and leadership. Shareholders also should consider factors of risk, both from a perspective of whether appropriate risks are encouraged, but also monitoring performance in the context of the risk taken to achieve desired returns.
4. *Promote Aligned Compensation.* Shareholders should ensure that compensation policies are performance-based, appropriately tailored to meet the company's circumstances, integrated into and consistent with the business strategy and have a long-term orientation. There are a variety of ways to achieve these objectives. Nevertheless, these strategies should be based on realistic accounting of profits as well as encompass a measurement of risk. Compensation decisions provide one of the better windows into the boardroom, and clearly reflect on the quality of the board, its priorities, its ability to balance competing interests and its independence from management. Shareholders should strive to provide thoughtful feedback to companies through engagement, proxy votes, investor policy statements and advisory votes on compensation.
5. *Defend Integrity of Accounting Standards.* Shareholders should take a more active position in defending the integrity of accounting standards. Accounting standards play an important role in our governance system, as the quality of reported information is effectively the life blood of financial markets. The purpose of financial statements should be to transparently represent the true condition of the reporting entity. If a company or industry is volatile or risky, the financial statements should represent this. Investors are otherwise unable to effectively judge risk and allocate capital appropriately.
6. *Increase Communication.* Shareholders and boards should work together to develop constructive solutions to the risks posed by governance problems. Communication can be structured or unstructured or formal or informal, but whatever method is used, it should take place as necessary to ensure alignment and understanding of goals.
7. *Encourage Long-Term Orientation.* The adoption of a long-term perspective should encourage boards and management to generate policies for sustainable growth and earnings, and discourage excessive short-term risk taking. Investors should have discipline in ensuring that they themselves are acting in the long-term interests of their beneficiaries, ranging from dedicating the proper

resources to governance and monitoring to ensuring their own reward system is consistent with a long-term strategy.

8. *Strengthen Investors' Own Governance.* Large mutual funds and pension funds hold significant stakes in corporate America and, therefore, have the greatest potential ability to influence corporate policies. However, in order to be credible advocates, they should hold themselves to high standards of governance appropriate for their own operations. Fund governance practices, which understandably differ from governance practices for publicly-traded operating companies in certain respects, still should be examined to ensure that any potential conflicts of interests are properly managed and that fiduciary obligations are met.
  
9. *Ensure Responsible Securities Lending.* Institutional investors must balance their responsibility to be active owners with their duty to generate optimal financial returns for their beneficiaries. Securities lending practices can create a conflict with respect to whether to recall loaned securities in order to vote, or not to recall in order to preserve lending fee revenue. In the U.S., the lack of advance notice of agenda items prior to the record date can further complicate an investor's securities recall decision. To address these issues, institutional investors should develop new policies or enhance existing ones governing their securities lending and proxy voting practices. The policies should require the investor to conduct an analysis of the relative value of lending fees versus voting rights in any given situation and require a recall of securities when the investor believes the exercise of voting rights may be necessary to maximize the long-term value of its investments despite the loss of lending fee revenue. Further, to the extent practicable and consistent with applicable regulations and existing contractual obligations, the policy should require the investor to monitor its securities lending program.

## **IV. Corporate Governance Principles**

### **A. Introduction**

TIAA-CREF believes that no matter where a company is located, once it elects to access capital from the public it becomes subject to basic principles of corporate governance. Corporate governance standards must balance two goals — protecting the interests of shareholders while respecting the duty of boards and managers to direct and manage the affairs of the corporation. The corporate governance policies set forth in this Policy Statement seek to ensure board and management accountability, sustain a culture of integrity, contribute to the strength and continuity of corporate leadership and promote the long-term growth and profitability of the business enterprise. At the same time, these policies are designed to safeguard our rights as shareholders and provide an active and vigilant line of defense against fraud, breaches of integrity and abuses of authority.

Below we present our basic expectations of portfolio companies. While we recognize that companies outside the United States are subject to different laws, standards and customs and are mindful that cultural differences need to be respected, we do not believe this should result in companies failing to comply with the principles presented. Furthermore, we are also mindful that companies face unique situations and that a “one size fits all” approach to corporate governance is not practical. However, when a company chooses to not to adopt a generally accepted governance practice, we expect disclosure explaining why such a decision was appropriate.

### **B. Expectations of Portfolio Companies**

#### **1. The Board of Directors**

The board of directors in their representation of the long-term interest of shareholders is responsible for, among other things: (i) overseeing the development of the corporation’s long-term business strategy and monitoring its implementation; (ii) assuring the corporation’s financial integrity; (iii) developing compensation and succession planning policies; (iv) setting the ethical tone for the company; and (v) ensuring management accountability.

To fulfill these responsibilities, the board must establish good governance policies and practices. Good governance is essential to the board’s fulfillment of its duties of care and loyalty. Shareholders in turn are obligated to monitor the board’s activities and hold directors accountable for the fulfillment of their duties.

TIAA-CREF has adopted the following principles for board structure and process:

### Board Membership

1. *Director Independence.* The board should be composed of a substantial majority of independent directors. A periodic examination of all relevant information should be conducted to ensure compliance with this policy. TIAA-CREF has long advocated for director independence, which is now widely accepted as the keystone of good corporate governance.

The definition of independence should not be limited to stock exchange listing standards. At a minimum, we believe that to be independent a director and his or her immediate family members should have neither present or recent employment with the company, nor any substantial connection of a personal or financial nature other than ownership of equity in the company. Boards should be mindful that personal or business relationships, even without a financial component, can compromise independence. Any director who a disinterested observer would reasonably consider to have a “substantial” relationship with the company should not be considered independent. Independence requirements should be interpreted broadly to ensure there is no conflict of interest, in fact or in appearance, that might compromise a director’s objectivity and loyalty to shareholders.

2. *Director Election.* As discussed in more detail below, TIAA-CREF believes that a company’s charter or bylaws should dictate that directors be elected annually by a majority of votes cast.
3. *Director Compensation.* Directors should have a direct, personal and meaningful investment in the common stock of the company. We believe that stock ownership helps align board members’ interests with those of shareholders. Director compensation programs should include a balanced mix of cash and equity and be structured to encourage a long-term perspective.
4. *Disclosure of Monetary Arrangements.* Any monetary arrangements between the company and directors outside normal board activities should be approved by the board and disclosed to shareholders. Such monetary arrangements are generally discouraged, as they may compromise a director’s independence.
5. *Other Commitments.* Prior to nominating directors, the nominating and governance committee should ensure that directors are able to devote the necessary time and energy to fulfill their board responsibilities. Considerations should include, current employment responsibilities, other board and committee commitments and the travel required to attend board meetings in person.
6. *Director Education.* Companies should encourage directors to attend education programs offered by the company as well as those offered externally. After an orientation program to acclimate new directors to the company’s operations and culture, directors should also receive continued training to increase their

knowledge and understanding of the company’s businesses and operations. They should enroll in education programs to improve their industry-specific knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities.

### Director Elections

TIAA-CREF has adopted the following policy on director elections:

1. Directors should be elected annually by a majority rather than a plurality of votes cast.\*
2. In the election of directors, shareholders should have the right to vote “for,” “against,” or “abstain.”
3. In any election where there are more candidates on the proxy than seats to be filled, directors should be elected by a plurality of votes cast.\*
4. Any incumbent candidate in an uncontested election who fails to receive a majority of votes cast should be required to tender an irrevocable letter of resignation to the board. The board should decide promptly whether to accept the resignation or to seat the incumbent candidate and should disclose the reasons for its decision.
5. Amendments to a company’s director election standards should be subject to a majority vote of shareholders.

\* Votes cast should include “withholds.” Votes cast should not include “abstains,” except that “abstains” should be counted as present for quorum.

### Director Nomination

1. *Director Retirement Policy.* Although TIAA-CREF does not support arbitrary limits on the length of director service, we believe boards should establish a formal director retirement policy. A director retirement policy can contribute to board stability, vitality and renewal.
2. *Director Qualifications.* The board should be composed of individuals who can contribute expertise and judgment, based on their professional qualifications and business experience. The board should reflect a diversity of background and experience. All directors serving on the audit committee should be financially literate and at least one director should qualify as a financial expert. All directors should be prepared to devote substantial time and effort to board duties, taking into account their other professional responsibilities and board memberships.

3. *Shareholder Nominations.* Boards should establish and disclose the process by which shareholders can submit nominations to be considered by the board. If the nomination is not accepted, the board should communicate to that shareholder a reason for not accepting the nomination.
4. *Proxy Access.* TIAA-CREF believes that shareholders should have the right to place their director nominees on the company's proxy and ballot in accordance with applicable law, or absent such law if reasonable conditions are met. The board should not take actions designed to prevent the full execution of this right.

#### Board Responsibilities

1. *Monitoring and Oversight.* In fulfilling its duty to monitor the management of the corporate enterprise, the board should: (i) be a model of integrity and inspire a culture of responsible behavior and high ethical standards; (ii) ensure that corporate resources are used only for appropriate business purposes; (iii) mandate strong internal controls, avoid conflicts of interest, promote fiscal accountability and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations; (iv) implement procedures to ensure that the board is promptly informed of any violations of corporate standards; (v) through the Audit Committee, engage directly in the selection and oversight of the corporation's external audit firm; and (vi) develop, disclose and enforce a clear and meaningful set of corporate governance principles.
2. *Strategic Business Planning.* The board should participate with management in the development of the company's strategic business plan and should engage in a comprehensive review of strategy with management at least annually. The board should monitor the company's performance and strategic direction, while holding management responsible for implementing the strategic plan.
3. *CEO Selection, Evaluation and Succession Planning.* One of the board's most important responsibilities is the selection, development and evaluation of executive leadership. Strong, stable leadership with proper values is critical to the success of the corporate enterprise. The board should continuously monitor and evaluate the performance of the CEO and senior executives, and should oversee a succession plan for executive management. The board should disclose the succession planning process generally.
4. *Equity Policy.* The board should develop an equity policy that determines the proportion of the company's stock to be made available for compensation and other purposes. The policy should establish clear limits on the number of shares to be used for options and other forms of equity grants. The policy should set forth the goals of equity compensation and their links to performance.

#### Board Operation

1. *Board Size.* The board should be large enough to provide expertise and diversity and allow key committees to be staffed with independent directors, but small enough to encourage collegial deliberation with the active participation of all members.
2. *Executive Sessions.* The full board and each board committee should hold regular executive sessions at which only independent directors are present. Executive sessions foster a culture of independence and provide opportunities for directors to engage in open discussion of issues that might be inhibited by the presence of management. Executive sessions can be used to evaluate CEO performance, discuss executive compensation and deal with internal board matters.
3. *Board Evaluation.* The board should conduct an annual evaluation of its performance and that of its key committees. Evaluation criteria linked to board and committee responsibilities and goals should be set forth in the charter and governance policies. In addition to providing director orientation and education, the board should consider other ways to strengthen director performance, including individual director evaluations.
4. *Indemnification and Liability.* It is appropriate for companies to indemnify directors for liability and legal expenses that arise in connection with their board service to the extent provided by law. However, when a court, regulator or other authoritative body has made a final determination that serious misconduct (e.g., fraud, gross negligence and breach of duty of loyalty) has occurred, then directors should not be indemnified.
5. *Role of the Chairman.* In recent years public confidence in board independence has been undermined by an array of scandals, fraud, accounting restatements, options backdating, abuses in CEO compensation, perquisites and special privileges. These issues have highlighted the need for boards to be (and to be perceived as) fully independent, cost conscious, free of conflicts, protective of shareholder interests and capable of objectivity, toughness and independence in their oversight of executive management.

In order to ensure independent oversight, TIAA-CREF believes that the separation of CEO and chair or appointment of a lead independent director is appropriate. In addition to disclosing why a specific structure has been selected, when the CEO and chair roles are combined, a company should disclose how the lead independent director's role is structured to ensure they provide an appropriate counter balance to the CEO/chair.

### Board Organization

Boards should establish at least three standing committees — an audit committee, a compensation committee and a nominating and governance committee

— all composed exclusively of independent directors. The credibility of the board will depend in large part on the vigorous demonstration of independence by these standing committees.

While the responsibilities of the three primary standing committees are generally established through laws and listing standards, TIAA-CREF believes that specific attention should be given to the following:

#### Compensation Committee

The Compensation Committee is responsible for oversight of the company's compensation and benefit programs, including performance-based plans and policies that attract, motivate, retain and incentivize executive leadership to create long-term shareholder value. Committee members should have an understanding of competitive compensation and be able to critically compare the company's plans and practices to those offered by the company's peers. Committee members should be independent-minded, well informed, capable of dealing with sensitive decisions and scrupulous about avoiding conflicts of interest. Committee members should understand the relationship of individual components of compensation to total compensation. The committee, in conjunction with the full board, should confirm that the Compensation Discussion and Analysis (CD&A) accurately reflects the compensation decisions made. Since compensation practices receive such great scrutiny, below we provide principles that we believe should guide the committee's compensation decisions.

#### Audit Committee

The Audit Committee oversees the company's accounting, compliance and in most cases risk management practices. It is responsible for ensuring the full and fair disclosure of the company's financial condition. The Audit Committee operates at the intersection of the board, management, independent auditors and internal auditors. It has sole authority to hire and fire the corporation's independent auditors and to set and approve their compensation. The Audit Committee is also responsible for overseeing the adequacy and effectiveness of the company's internal controls. The internal audit team should report directly to the Audit Committee.

#### Nominating and Governance Committee

The Nominating and Governance Committee oversees the company's corporate governance practices and the selection and evaluation of directors. The committee is responsible for establishing board structure and governance policies that conform to regulatory and exchange listing requirements and ensuring the appropriate and effective board oversight of the company's business. When the company's board structure and/or

governance policies are not consistent with generally accepted best practices, the committee should ensure that shareholders are provided with a reasonable explanation why the selected structure and policies are appropriate.

In addition to the three primary standing committees established through laws and listing standards, boards should also establish additional committees as needed to fulfill their duties. These may include executive, corporate governance, finance, technology, investment, customers and product, operations, human resources, public affairs, sustainability and risk committees.

TIAA-CREF has adopted the following principles for committees of the board:

1. Each committee charter should specifically identify the role the committee plays in the overall risk management structure of the board. When a company faces numerous or acute risks, financially or operationally, the board should disclose why the current risk management structure is appropriate.
2. Each committee should have the power to hire independent experts and advisors.
3. Each committee should report to the full board on the issues and decisions for which it is responsible.
4. Whenever a company is the subject of a shareholder engagement initiative or resolution, the appropriate committee should review the matter and the proposed management response.

## **2. Executive Compensation**

Recently, there has been an intensive focus on executive compensation by shareholders, legislators, regulators and other observers. TIAA-CREF does not believe in prescribing specific compensation programs or practices for our portfolio companies. We are mindful that each company's situation is unique and encourage the board to craft a compensation program that is appropriately customized. As long-term investors, we support compensation policies that promote and reward the creation of long-term sustainable shareholder value.

We appreciate that boards of directors, not shareholders, are in the best position to take all of the relevant factors into consideration in establishing an executive compensation program that will attract, retain and appropriately incentivize executive management to strengthen performance and create long-term sustainable value for shareholders.

However, shareholders do have an important role in assessing the board's stewardship of executive compensation and should engage in discussions when they believe compensation programs are not aligned in the best interests of shareholders. To that end, the board, through its Compensation Committee, along with executive management, is responsible for providing shareholders with a detailed explanation of the company's compensation philosophy, including explanations of all components of the program, through disclosure in the CD&A and the board Compensation Committee Report.

Although we do not prescribe specifics, below we outline the general principles that should guide the establishment of compensation plans and CD&A disclosures.

### General Principles

Executive compensation should be based on the following principles:

1. Compensation should be objectively linked to appropriate company-specific metrics that drive long-term sustainable value and reflect operational parameters that are affected by the decisions of the executives being compensated.
2. Compensation plans should be based on a performance measurement cycle that is consistent with the business cycle of the corporation.
3. Compensation should include a mixture of cash and equity that is appropriate based on the company's compensation philosophy without incentivising excessive risk.
4. Compensation should consider the overall performance of the company as well as be based on each executive's responsibilities and criteria that are actually within each executive's control or influence.
5. Compensation should be reasonable by prevailing industry standards, appropriate to the company's size and complexity, and fair relative to pay practices throughout the company.
6. The board should not unduly rely on comparative industry data and other outside surveys to make compensations determinations; especially if such information is inconsistent with the company's compensation philosophy.
7. Compensation Committees should work only with consultants who are independent of management.
8. Companies should use peer groups that are consistent with their industry, size, scope and market for executive talent.

9. Executive performance evaluations should include a balance between formulaic and subjective analysis without being overly reliant on either.
10. If employment contracts are in place for named executive officers, such contracts should balance the need to attract and retain the services of the executive with the obligation to avoid exposing the company to liability, unintended costs and excessive transfers of corporate treasury; especially in the event of terminations for misconduct, gross mismanagement or other reasons constituting a “for cause” termination.

#### Principles Specific to Equity-Based Compensation Plans

While equity-based compensation can offer great incentives to management, it can also have great impact on shareholder value. The need for directors to monitor and control the use of equity in executive compensation has increased in recent years. It is the board of directors that is responsible for oversight of the company’s equity compensation programs and for the adequacy of their disclosure.

In general, equity-based compensation should be based upon the following principles:

1. The use of equity in compensation programs should be determined by the board’s equity policy. Dilution of shareholder equity should be carefully considered and managed, not simply an unintended consequence.
2. All plans that provide for the distribution of stock or stock options should be submitted to shareholders for approval.
3. Equity-based plans should take a balanced approach to the types of equity used. Equity that is not linked to performance metrics runs the risk of rewarding or punishing executives for market movements beyond their control.
4. Equity-based plans should be judicious in the use of stock options. When used inappropriately, option grants can provide incentives for management to focus on the company’s short-term stock price rather than long-term performance.
5. Equity-based plans should specifically prohibit “mega grants,” defined as grants to executives of stock options whose value at the time of the grant exceeds a reasonable multiple of the recipient’s total cash compensation.
6. Equity-based plans should establish minimum vesting requirements and avoid accelerated vesting.
7. Equity-based plans should specifically prohibit any direct or indirect change to the strike price or value of options without the approval of shareholders.

8. Companies should support requirements for stock obtained through exercise of options to be held by executives for substantial periods of time, apart from partial sales permitted to meet tax liabilities caused by such exercise. Companies should establish holding periods commensurate with pay level and seniority.
9. Companies should require and specify minimum stock ownership requirements for directors and company executives to ensure their interests are aligned with shareholders.
10. Backdating of option grants should be prohibited. Issuance of stock or stock options timed to take advantage of nonpublic information with short-term implications for the stock price should also be prohibited.
11. Equity plans should prohibit recipients from hedging or otherwise reducing their exposure to changes in the company's stock price as this can result in their interests no longer being aligned with shareholders.
12. Generally, dividends (or equivalents) associated with unvested shares should be accrued, payable after the shares have vested and such amounts should be disclosed. However, if dividends are paid on unvested shares then such payment amounts should be disclosed along with a reasonable rationale.

#### Compensation Discussion and Analysis

A company's compensation disclosure should be based on the following principles:

1. The disclosure should be clear, concise and generally able to be understood by any reasonably informed shareholder.
2. The disclosure should explain how the program seeks to identify and reward the value added by management.
3. The disclosure should identify how compensation is linked to long-term sustainable value creation.
4. Performance metrics, weights and targets should be disclosed, including why they are appropriate given the company's business objectives and how they drive long-term sustainable value.
5. When possible, charts should be used in conjunction with narratives to enhance comprehension.
6. When compensation decisions are inconsistent with generally accepted practices, care should be given to provide shareholders with a reasonable explanation as to why such actions were deemed appropriate.

7. Significant changes to the compensation program from year to year and accompanying rationale should be prominently identified.
8. Companies should explain their rationale for the peer group selected, including reasons for (a) changes to the group from year to year and (b) any differences in the peer group of companies used for strategic and business purposes and the peer group used for compensation decisions.
9. Non-GAAP financial performance measures should be presented alongside their GAAP counterparts with an explanation of why each adjustment was made.
10. Tax gross-ups, if not generally available to all employees, should be accompanied by disclosure explaining why they are reasonable and necessary.
11. If employment contracts are in place for named executive officers, such contracts should be disclosed in detail with an explanation of how such contracts are in the best interest of the company and its shareholders.

## **V. Environmental and Social Issues**

### **A. Introduction**

As a matter of good corporate governance, boards should carefully consider the strategic impact of environmental and social responsibility on long-term shareholder value. Over the last several years, numerous innovative best practices have emerged within corporations that promote risk management (including reputational risk) and sustainable competitiveness. TIAA-CREF believes that companies and boards should exercise diligence in their consideration of environmental and social issues, analyze the strategic and economic questions they raise and disclose their environmental and social policies and practices. To ensure companies have the best possible information about their relationship with their stakeholders, directors should encourage dialogue between the company and its investors, employees, customers, suppliers and the larger community.

We believe that investors should encourage a long-term perspective regarding sustainability and social responsibility, which may impact the long-term performance of both individual companies and the market as a whole. We communicate directly with companies to encourage careful consideration of sustainable practices and disclosure. TIAA-CREF may support reasonable shareholder resolutions on social and environmental topics that raise relevant economic issues for companies. In casting our votes, we consider whether the resolution respects the proper role of shareholders and boards in overseeing company policy, as well as any steps that the company may have taken to address concerns.

### **B. Issues of Concern**

While our policies are not intended to be prescriptive, we believe that the following issues merit board and investor attention:

#### **1. Environment and Health**

We believe that changes in the natural environment, associated human health concerns, and growing national and international efforts to mitigate these concerns will pose risks and opportunities for companies. In particular:

- A company's greenhouse gas emissions and its vulnerability to climate change may represent both short-term and long-term potential risks;
- Hazards related to safety or toxic emissions at business facilities may expose companies to such risks as regulatory penalties, legal liability, diminished reputation, increased cost and loss of market share;

- Expectations of growing resource scarcity, especially with regard to energy, biodiversity, water and forest resources present long-term challenges and uncertainties for businesses; and
- Significant public health impacts may result from company operations and products, and global health pandemics may disrupt company operations and long-term growth.

Conversely, strategic management of health and environmental challenges may provide opportunities for enhanced efficiency, reputation, product innovation and competitive advantage. We believe that boards and managers should integrate health and environmental considerations into strategic deliberations. Consistent with long-term business strategic goals, companies should develop and implement policies designed both to mitigate and adapt to these challenges, and to make reasonable disclosures about efforts to manage these concerns.

## **2. Human Rights**

Adoption and enforcement of human rights codes and fair labor standards, including supply and distribution chains where appropriate, can help a company protect its reputation, increase worker productivity, reduce liability, improve customer loyalty and gain competitive advantage.

Companies may face legal or reputational risks relating to perceived violations, or complicity in violations, of internationally recognized human rights. While it is the duty of states to protect labor and human rights through the enforcement of national and local laws, companies should strive to respect these rights by developing policies and practices to avoid infringing on the rights of workers, communities and other stakeholders throughout their global operations.

The international community has established numerous conventions, covenants and declarations which together form a generally accepted framework for universal human rights. Though most of these instruments are intended to define state duties, the principles underlying these standards form the basis for public judgments about corporate human rights performance. Companies should determine which of these rights may be impacted by company operations and relationships and adopt labor and human rights policies that are consistent with the fundamental attributes of these norms. Examples include freedom of expression, personal security, indigenous rights and labor standards related to child and forced labor, discrimination, and freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Companies should be transparent about their policies and develop monitoring systems to ensure compliance by employees, and, where appropriate, business partners. Companies should pay heightened attention to human rights in regions characterized by conflict or weak governance, while it may be more

appropriate to emphasize legal compliance in stable countries with well-functioning governments and regulatory systems in place.

In the experience of TIAA-CREF, long-term shareholder engagement with companies is the most effective and appropriate means of promoting corporate respect for human rights. However, in the rarest of circumstances and consistent with Section II of this document, we may, as a last resort, consider divesting from companies we judge to be complicit in genocide and crimes against humanity, the most serious human rights violations, after sustained efforts at dialogue have failed and divestment can be undertaken in a manner consistent with our fiduciary duties.

### **3. Diversity and Non-Discrimination**

Promoting diversity and maintaining inclusive workplace standards can help companies improve decision making, attract and retain a talented and diverse workforce and compete more effectively. Boards and management should strive to create a culture of inclusiveness and acceptance of differences at all levels of the corporation. Companies should be aware of any potential failures to provide equal opportunities and develop policies and initiatives to address any concerns.

Boards of directors can also benefit from a diversity of perspective and demographics. Though we do not believe in quotas, we believe that nominating committees should develop appropriate diversity criteria for director searches to ensure that candidates are drawn from the broadest possible pool of talent. Companies should disclose how diversity policies support corporate efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of their boards.

Given changing cultural norms, companies should reference sexual orientation and gender identity in corporate non-discrimination policies, even when not specifically required by law.

### **4. Philanthropy and Corporate Political Influence**

Without effective oversight, excessive or poorly managed corporate political spending may pose risks to shareholders, including the risk that corporate political spending may benefit political insiders at the expense shareholder interests. Given increased public scrutiny of corporate political activities, we believe it is the responsibility of company boards to review and disclose the use of corporate assets to influence the outcomes of elections. Companies involved in political activities should disclose information about contributions as well as the board and management oversight procedures designed to ensure that political expenditures are made in compliance with all laws and in the best interests of shareholders.

Boards should also oversee charitable contributions to ensure that these are consistent with the values and strategy of the corporation. Companies should disclose their corporate charitable contributions, and boards should adopt policies

that prohibit corporate contributions that would pose any actual or perceived risk to director independence.

## **5. Product Responsibility**

Failure to manage the potential hazards created by their products and services can create long-term risks for companies and undermine public faith in the market. Companies that demonstrate ethical behavior and diligence with regard to product safety and suitability can avoid reputational and liability risks and strengthen their competitive position.

Companies should carefully analyze the potential risks related to the use of their products, develop policies to manage any potential concerns, and disclose results to shareholders.

## **Appendix A: Proxy Voting Guidelines**

### **A. Introduction**

TIAA-CREF's voting practices are guided by our mission and obligations to our participants and shareholders. As indicated in this Policy Statement, we monitor portfolio companies' governance, social and environmental practices to ensure that boards consider these factors in the context of their strategic deliberations.

The following guidelines are intended to assist portfolio companies, participants and shareholders and other interested parties in understanding how TIAA-CREF is likely to vote on governance, compensation, social and environmental issues. The list is not exhaustive and does not necessarily represent how TIAA-CREF will vote on any particular proposal. We vote proxies in accordance to what we believe is in the best interest of our participants and shareholders. In making those decisions the Corporate Governance staff takes into account many factors, including input from our Asset Management Group and third-party research. We consider specific company context, including governance practices and financial performance. It is our belief that a one-size-fits-all approach to proxy voting is not appropriate.

We establish voting policies with respect to both management proposals and shareholder resolutions. Our proxy voting decisions with respect to shareholder resolutions may be influenced by several additional factors: (i) whether the shareholder resolution process is the appropriate means of addressing the issue; (ii) whether the resolution promotes good corporate governance and is related to economic performance and shareholder value; and (iii) whether the information and actions recommended by the resolution are reasonable and practical. In instances where we agree with the concerns raised by proponents but do not believe that the policies or actions requested are appropriate, TIAA-CREF will generally abstain on the resolution.

Where appropriate, we will accompany our vote with a letter of explanation.

### **B. Guidelines for Board-Related Issues**

#### Policy Governing Votes on Directors:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally vote in favor of the board's nominees. However, we will consider withholding or voting against some or all directors in the following circumstances:

- When we conclude that the actions of directors are unlawful, unethical, negligent, or do not meet fiduciary standards of care and loyalty, or are otherwise not in the best interest of shareholders. Such actions would include:

issuance of backdated or spring loaded options, excessively dilutive equity grants, egregious compensation practices, unequal treatment of shareholders, adoption of inappropriate antitakeover devices, and unjustified dismissal of auditors.

- When directors have failed to disclose, resolve or eliminate conflicts of interest that affect their decisions.
- When less than a majority of the company’s directors are independent, by TIAA-CREF standards of independence.
- When a director has consistently failed to attend board and committee meetings without an appropriate rationale being provided.

In cases where TIAA-CREF decides to withhold or vote against the entire board of directors, we will also abstain or vote against a provision on the proxy granting discretionary power to vote on “other business” arising at the shareholders meeting.

#### Contested Elections

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally vote for the candidates we believe will best represent the interests of long-term shareholders.

#### Majority Vote for the Election of Directors:

*General Policy:* As indicated in Section IV of this Policy Statement, TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions asking that companies amend their governance documents to provide for director election by majority vote.

#### Reimbursement of Expenses for Dissident Shareholder Nominees:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will consider on a case-by-case basis shareholder resolutions asking that the company reimburse certain expenses related to the cost of dissident short-slate director campaigns or election contests.

#### Establish Specific Board Committees:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally vote against shareholder resolutions asking the company to establish specific board committees unless we believe specific circumstances dictate otherwise.

#### Annual Election of Directors:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions asking that each member of the board stand for re-election annually.

Cumulative Voting:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally not support proposals asking that shareholders be allowed to cumulate votes in director elections, as this practice may encourage the election of “special interest” directors.

**C. Guidelines for Other Governance Issues**

Separation of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally not support shareholder resolutions asking that the roles of Chairman and CEO be separated. However we may support such resolutions where we believe that there is not a bona-fide lead independent director and the company’s corporate governance practices or business performance are materially deficient.

Ratification of Auditor:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support the board’s choice of auditor and believe we should be able to do so annually. However, TIAA-CREF will consider voting against the ratification of an audit firm where non-audit fees are excessive, where the firm has been involved in conflict of interest or fraudulent activities in connection with the company’s audit, or where the auditors’ independence is questionable.

Supermajority Vote Requirements:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions asking for the elimination of supermajority vote requirements.

Dual-Class Common Stock and Unequal Voting Rights:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions asking for the elimination of dual classes of common stock with unequal voting rights or special privileges.

Right to call a Special Meeting:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions asking for the right to call a special meeting. However, we believe a 25% ownership level is reasonable and generally would not be supportive of proposals to lower the threshold if it is already at that level.

Right to Act by Written Consent:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will consider on a case-by-case basis shareholder resolutions asking that they be granted the ability to act by written consent.

#### Antitakeover Devices (Poison Pills):

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will consider on a case-by-case basis proposals relating to the adoption or rescission of antitakeover devices with attention to the following criteria:

- Whether the company has demonstrated a need for antitakeover protection;
- Whether the provisions of the device are in line with generally accepted governance principles;
- Whether the company has submitted the device for shareholder approval; and
- Whether the proposal arises in the context of a takeover bid or contest for control.

TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions asking to rescind or put to a shareholder vote antitakeover devices that were adopted without shareholder approval.

#### Reincorporation:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will evaluate on a case-by-case basis proposals for reincorporation taking into account the intention of the proposal, established laws of the new domicile and jurisprudence of the target domicile. We will not support the proposal if we believe the intention is to take advantage of laws or judicial interpretations that provide antitakeover protection or otherwise reduce shareholder rights.

## **D. Guidelines for Compensation Issues**

#### Equity-Based Compensation Plans:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will review equity-based compensation plans on a case-by-case basis, giving closer scrutiny to companies where plans include features that are not performance-based or where total potential dilution from equity compensation exceeds 10%. As a practical matter, we recognize that more dilutive broad-based plans may be appropriate for human-capital intensive industries and for small- or mid-capitalization firms and start-up companies.

We generally note the following red flags when evaluating executive compensation:

- Excessive Equity Grants: TIAA-CREF will examine a company's past grants to determine the rate at which shares are being issued. We will also seek to ensure that equity is being offered to more than just the top executives at the company. A pattern of excessive grants can indicate

failure by the board to properly monitor executive compensation and its costs.

- Lack of Minimum Vesting Requirements: TIAA-CREF believes that companies should establish minimum vesting guidelines for senior executives who receive stock grants. Vesting requirements help influence executives to focus on maximizing the company's long-term performance rather than managing for short-term gain.
- Undisclosed or Inadequate Performance Metrics: TIAA-CREF believes that performance goals for equity grants should be disclosed meaningfully. Performance hurdles should not be too easily attainable. Disclosure of these metrics should enable shareholders to assess whether the equity plan will drive long-term value creation.
- Misalignment of Interests: TIAA-CREF supports equity ownership requirements for senior executives and directors to align their interests with those of shareholders.
- Reload Options: TIAA-CREF will generally not support "reload" options that are automatically replaced at market price following exercise of initial grants. Reload options can lead to excessive dilution and overgenerous benefits and allow recipients to lock in increases in stock price that occur over the duration of the option plan with no attendant risk.
- Mega Grants: TIAA-CREF will generally not support mega grants. A company's history of such excessive grant practices may prompt TIAA-CREF to vote against the stock plans and the directors who approve them. Mega grants include equity grants that are excessive in relation to other forms of compensation or to the compensation of other employees and grants that transfer disproportionate value to senior executives without relation to their performance.
- Undisclosed or Inappropriate Option Pricing: TIAA-CREF will generally not support plans that fail to specify exercise prices or that establish exercise prices below fair market value on the date of grant.
- Repricing Options: TIAA-CREF will generally not support plans that authorize repricing. However, we will consider on a case-by-case basis management proposals seeking shareholder approval to reprice options. We are more likely to vote in favor of repricing in cases where the company excludes named executive officers and board members and ties the repricing to a significant reduction in the number of options.
- Excess Discretion: TIAA-CREF will generally not support plans where significant terms of awards — such as coverage, option price, or type of

awards —are unspecified, or where the board has too much discretion to override minimum vesting and/or performance requirements.

- Evergreen Features: TIAA-CREF will generally not support option plans that contain evergreen features which reserve a specified percentage of outstanding shares for award each year and lack a termination date. Evergreen features can undermine control of stock issuance and lead to excessive dilution.

#### Shareholder Resolutions on Executive Compensation:

*General Policy*: TIAA-CREF will consider on a case-by-case basis shareholder resolutions related to specific compensation practices. Generally, we believe specific practices are the purview of the board.

#### Advisory Vote on Compensation Disclosure:

*General Policy*: TIAA-CREF prefers that companies offer an annual non-binding vote on executive compensation ("say on pay"). In absence of an annual vote, companies should clearly articulate the rationale behind offering the vote less frequently. We will consider on a case-by-case basis advisory vote on executive compensation proposals with reference to our compensation disclosure principles noted in Section IV of this Policy Statement.

#### Golden Parachutes:

*General Policy*: TIAA-CREF will vote on a case-by-case basis on golden parachutes proposals taking into account the structure of the agreement and the circumstances of the situation. However, we would prefer to see a double trigger on all change of control agreements.

## **E. Guidelines for Environmental and Social Issues**

As indicated in Section V, TIAA-CREF will generally support shareholder resolutions seeking reasonable disclosure of the environmental or social impact of a company's policies, operations or products. We believe that a company's management and directors have the responsibility to determine the strategic impact of environmental and social issues and that they should disclose to shareholders how they are dealing with these issues.

#### Global Climate Change:

*General Policy*: TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure of greenhouse gas emissions, the impact

of climate change on a company's business activities and products and strategies designed to reduce the company's long-term impact on the global climate.

Use of Natural Resources:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to a company's use of natural resources, the impact on its business of declining resources and its plans to improve the efficiency of its use of natural resources.

Impact on Ecosystems:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to a company's initiatives to reduce any harmful impacts or other hazards that result from its operations or activities to local, regional or global ecosystems.

Global Labor Standards:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking a review of a company's labor standards and enforcement practices, as well as the establishment of global labor policies based upon internationally recognized standards.

Diversity and Non-Discrimination:

*General Policies:*

- TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to a company's nondiscrimination policies and practices, or seeking to implement such policies, including equal employment opportunity standards.
- TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to a company's workforce and board diversity policies and practices.

Global Human Rights Codes of Conduct:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking a review of a company's human rights standards and the establishment of global human rights policies, especially regarding company operations in conflict zones or weak governance.

Corporate Response to Global Health Risks:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to significant public health impacts

resulting from company operations and products, as well as the impact of global health pandemics on the company's operations and long-term growth.

#### Corporate Political Influence:

##### *General Policies:*

- TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to a company's political expenditures, including board oversight procedures, direct political expenditures, and contributions to third parties for the purpose of influencing election results.
- TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to a company's charitable contributions and other philanthropic activities.
- TIAA-CREF may consider not supporting shareholder resolutions that appear to promote a political agenda that is contrary to the mission or values of TIAA-CREF or the long-term health of the corporation.

#### Animal Welfare

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions asking for reports on the company's impact on animal welfare.

#### Product Responsibility

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure relating to the safety and impact of a company's products on the customers and communities it serves.

#### Predatory Lending:

*General Policy:* TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions asking companies for disclosure about the impact of lending activities on borrowers and policies designed to prevent predatory lending practices.

#### Tobacco:

##### *General Policies:*

- TIAA-CREF will generally support reasonable shareholder resolutions seeking disclosure or reports relating to risks associated with tobacco use and efforts by a company to reduce exposure to tobacco products among the young or other vulnerable populations.

- TIAA-CREF will generally not support shareholder resolutions seeking to alter the investment policies of financial institutions or to require divestment of tobacco company stocks.