

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, COMPLIMENTS OF ACCT

ACCT will award up to 75 complementary board retreats and workshops through 2025.

BY COLLEEN ALLEN

“It was a positive educational experience for everyone who attended — the board of trustees, the board chair, the president, our assistant attorney general, and the executive secretary. Everyone came away with new perspectives on their work and positive directions to move in. This should be required for ALL boards. It was just that good! No matter how well you imagine your board is working, this [retreat] showed that there are always new things to learn and new and better ways to do your job.”

– Rick Kaiser, Chair, Board of Trustees, Bellingham Technical College

LAST JUNE, ACCT ANNOUNCED IT WOULD BE PROVIDING up to 75 complimentary retreats or workshops to member community college boards (25 each year) between July 2022 and June 2025. At the request of ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee, the ACCT Board of Directors offered to provide the financial support for this special initiative. “I have wanted to find a meaningful way to give back to our loyal membership, and we are committed to providing educational opportunities to our member boards so they can perform their duties effectively and at the highest level possible,” Lee said of the initiative.

We have received positive feedback from those who were randomly selected to receive complimentary retreats this year. “Every board needs a session like this,” said Lynette Harrington, a trustee from H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. Dr. Paula Troutman-Hastings told us that “the retreat surpassed by expectations.”

Rick Kaiser, chair of the Bellingham Technical College Board of Trustees, added, “[We send] our thanks and gratitude to the ACCT board of directors for giving us this incredible opportunity to learn and improve.”

ACCT encourages boards to hold board retreats or training events regularly. These programs are considered a hallmark of highly effective boards and most accrediting bodies recommend boards participate in periodic board development. Board retreats and trainings provide opportunities for board members to learn and grow together. Board retreats may cover a range of topics including clarifying roles and responsibilities, reviewing fiduciary responsibilities, understanding the policy role of the board, preparing for leadership transition, succession planning and onboarding, and strategic planning and goal setting, among others.

Board retreats can be convened at any time for general team building, assessment, planning, and other purposes. However, retreats are strongly encouraged during certain crucial times, such as when the college leadership transitions. When new board members are seated, it is important to

establish or review roles and responsibilities and the basics of serving on a public governing board. When a CEO is preparing to leave or has been newly selected, it is important for the board to establish goals and priorities, and a presidential evaluation process, among other aspects of developing a positive working relationship. Boards can show their commitments to supporting the new leadership by planning an onboarding retreat. In addition to performing its vital function, such a convening can also give members of the college community a sense of stability during a period of transition by demonstrating the college leadership’s dedication to operating intentionally and at peak performance.

ACCT retreats and other developmental services are led by an esteemed group of consultants who consist of community college CEOs and former trustees. ACCT consultants are experienced skilled facilitators with a deep understanding of working with public governing boards. ACCT matches consultants with colleges based on expressed needs and preferences; these consultants work with the board chair and the college CEO to plan and develop an agenda for the retreat. If the chair agrees, then the consultant will reach out to each member of the board to get their input on what they hope to accomplish from the board retreat.

In early June, ACCT will once again invite colleges to nominate themselves for a complimentary one-day board retreat/training for the 2023-2024 academic year. Watch your email for the announcement. Applications will be due by July 15 and winners will be selected via a live event on August 1.



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