

Trust in Governance

ACCT Connect

The Importance of Community

SPRING 2023

Trustee

THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS

QUARTERLY



‘An Extraordinary Time for Transformation’

The 2023 National Legislative Summit showcased the growth of the community college mission.

2023

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

REGIONAL AWARDS

Trustee Leadership
Equity
Chief Executive Officer
Faculty Member
Professional Board Staff Member

ASSOCIATION AWARDS

M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership
Charles Kennedy Equity
Marie Y. Martin CEO
William H. Meardy Faculty Member
Professional Board Staff Member

WWW.ACCT.ORG

ACCT's awards program is designed to recognize and honor outstanding community college trustees, equity programs, presidents, faculty members, and professional board staff members at regional and national levels. In order to be considered for an Association Award, you must first submit a nomination at the regional level.

The Awards committees will select and notify the Awards recipients prior to the ACCT Leadership Congress. ACCT's Awards recipients will be honored at the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress this October in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Visit www.acct.org for specific nomination criteria and to submit nominations online.

Call 202.775.4667 with any questions.

All nominations must be received by **June 5, 2023**.

NOMINATIONS DUE **5**
JUNE **5** 2023



2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR

Rose Benavidez
South Texas College, TX

CHAIR-ELECT

Jay Nardini
Hawkeye Community College, IA

VICE CHAIR

Tim Hardy
Louisiana Community & Technical College System, LA

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Richard Fukutaki
Bellevue College, WA

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

James Cooksey
Moberly Area Community College, MO

CENTRAL REGIONAL CHAIR

John Lukas
Lakeshore Technical College, WI

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CHAIR

Sheetal Ranjan
Bergen Community College, NJ

PACIFIC REGIONAL CHAIR

Gilbert Wong
Foothill-De Anza Community College District, CA

SOUTHERN REGIONAL CHAIR

Yvonne Barnes
Trident Technical College, SC

WESTERN REGIONAL CHAIR

Dan Mims
San Jacinto College, TX

Steven Anderson

Northeast Community College, NE

Anthony Colón

Mohawk Valley Community College, NY

Ed Dalrymple

Central Piedmont Community College, NC

Carol Del Carlo

Nevada System of Higher Education, NV

Maureen Dunne

College of DuPage, IL

Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg

Kern Community College District, CA

Zaida Hernandez-Irison

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee Chair
Gateway Technical College, WI

Amanda Howland

College of Lake County, IL

Sheila Ireland

Community College of Philadelphia, PA

Vivian Malauulu

Long Beach City College, CA

Bonnie Soria Najera

El Paso Community College, TX

Diane Noriega

Mt. Hood Community College, OR

Jermaine Reed

Metropolitan Community College, MO

Arturo Reyes

Mott Community College, MI

Pretta VanDible Stallworth

Houston Community College System, TX

Oscar Valladares

Rio Hondo College, CA



Advocacy and Governance

ACCT EXISTS FOR TWO PRIMARY reasons: to advocate on behalf of all community colleges and their students, and to teach the principles of good governance to member boards and support their service in every way possible.

April was Community College Month, and while we normally focus on federal legislation when we speak of advocacy, I'd like to congratulate you and thank you for your grassroots efforts throughout the month. When ACCT breathed new life into the long-forgotten Community College Month a few years ago, the idea was that the association would create resources to encourage and facilitate local outreach by community colleges throughout your service area. The campaign has taken on a life of its own because of your efforts and I am certain it will only continue to expand and excel.

You can read in greater detail about the successes of this year's campaign, but I would be remiss if I didn't highlight a few campaign messages of note:

- Former First Lady Michelle Obama distributed a video message in support of Community College Month that was "liked" by over 200,000 individuals on Instagram alone within a couple of days.
- The U.S. State Department created a monthlong online campaign to feature foreign affairs professionals who have studied at community colleges and to recruit community college students and graduates to work at the Department.
- The governors of Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, and Maryland (and possibly other states) officially proclaimed April to be Community College Month within their states, and Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker traveled throughout the state to visit community colleges and pledge increased support for them in his FY2024 budget.

All of this happened organically over several years of consistent effort — through leaders like us, and quite a few students — dedicating a month to communicating the value and importance of community colleges. The success serves as a reminder that this work continues daily and that as respected leaders, we trustees are ideal ambassadors of this message.

President Jee Hang Lee and I were asked by Sonny Ramaswamy, president of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, to write an overview of why governance is critically important to student success. The article was well received, and so we have reproduced it in this issue of *Trustee Quarterly* to make it available to the full ACCT membership. I encourage you to distribute the article among your entire board and to use it as an opportunity to reflect on how effectively your board is upholding its fiduciary responsibilities, the oath of service, and ethical obligations. I also urge you to approach this reflective process in the spirit of introspection and growth, with grace and appreciation for your fellow board members, and in the interest of aligning and recalibrating where necessary.

I want to thank you for your dedication to supporting a healthy and thriving community college system. Let us continue to foster a message of hope and opportunity, because together we will inspire change and build legacies that will uplift our students and transform our communities.

Rose Benavidez
South Texas College

Trustee

QUARTERLY

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

JEE HANG LEE
President & CEO

MANAGING EDITOR

DAVID CONNER
Director of Strategic Communications

EDITOR

MARK TONER

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

COLLEEN ALLEN
Director of Retreats and Evaluation Services

ROBIN MATROSS HELMS
Vice President for Membership & Educational Services

LARISA PFEIFFER
Professional Board Staff Network President

IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD
ACCT General Counsel

CARRIE WARICK-SMITH
Vice President of Public Policy

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

www.moiremarketing.com

Your Opinion Matters - contact:

DAVID CONNER
(866) 895-ACCT (2228)
dconner@acct.org

TRUSTEE QUARTERLY (ISSN 0271-9746) is published three or four times per year as a membership service of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). ACCT is a not-for-profit educational organization of governing boards of public and private community, technical, and junior colleges. Membership is also open to state coordinating boards, advisory boards, and state associations. The mission of ACCT is to foster greater understanding of and appreciation for community college boards; support boards in their efforts to develop public policies focusing on meeting community needs; help build board governance leadership and advocacy capacity through in-service education and training programs; and support boards through specialized services and programs.

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and values of the Association of Community College Trustees.

Non-members may subscribe to TRUSTEE QUARTERLY for \$60.00 per year (plus postage for international subscriptions). Third-class postage paid at Washington, D.C.



1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington DC 20036
(202) 775-4667 FAX: (202) 775-4455

acctinfo@acct.org

1-866-895-ACCT (2228)
FAX: 1-866-904-ACCT (2228)

www.acct.org



contents

14 'An Extraordinary Time for Transformation'

BY MARK TONER

The 2023 National Legislative Summit showcased the growth of the community college mission.

18 Sharing the Story

BY MARK TONER

At the Community College Congressional Forum on Capitol Hill, lawmakers shared personal connections – and urged community college leaders to do the same.

20 Trust in Community College Boards

BY JEE HANG LEE AND ROSE BENAVIDEZ

Effective trusteeship ensures that boards fully represent the interests of their communities and serve the community college mission.

24 Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Black Learner, Unapologetically

BY MARK TONER

A call to action to reverse the staggering decline of Black learners in higher education.

26 Inside Out: Community Colleges Far & Wide

BY SHAUNA DAVIS AND MARY LAPHEN POPE

Lumina Foundation's Million Dollar Community College Challenge highlights the importance of telling every college's story.

32 A Sense of Community in Community Colleges

BY JEFF SEAMAN AND JULIA SEAMAN

Students who feel like they belong are much more likely to think their education is meeting their needs and worth the money, according to the Digital Learning Pulse Survey.

36 Checking in and Brushing Up

BY DAVID CONNER

Being a dedicated board member means being dedicated to ongoing education and self-development.

40 Leadership Development, Compliments of ACCT

BY COLLEEN ALLEN

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

DEPARTMENTS

5 A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

By Miguel Cardona

10 ADVOCACY

Focused on Financial Aid

By Carrie Warick-Smith

12 CONNECT

Spring Forward with ACCT Connect!

By Robin Matross Helms

30 LEGAL

Recent rulings and guidance involve social media, school bathrooms, and student athletics.

By Ira Michael Shepard

IN EVERY ISSUE

1 FROM THE CHAIR

4 FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

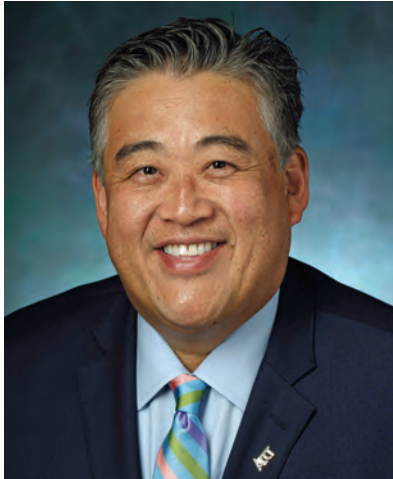
6 NEWS

28 AROUND THE REGIONS

38 EXECUTIVE SEARCH

41 INTERFACE

44 ADVISOR



The association exists for a couple of primary reasons: First, to advocate for your institutions and your students. Second, to empower and equip community college board members to be the most effective and ethical trustees they can be.

Lessons From the Road

DEAR ACCT MEMBERS,

IF CONTRAILS DRAWN BY AIRPLANES remained in the sky for a year, then the flights I've taken from college to college over the past 12 months would create a vast and dense web that would cover most of the United States. It's been a thrilling experience to meet so many of you on your own campuses, to tour your campuses, to meet students and others who make up your communities. It's what the CEO of a national association should do, and it is my privilege to do it.

I have worked for ACCT since 2006 — not a short amount of time — and over those years, I grew intimately familiar with our membership and our members' needs, particularly advocacy-related needs, and as the head of the association's federal advocacy services, I've always done my best to represent you.

I am happy to be able to say that in visiting so many campuses in such a short amount of time, I am convinced that ACCT's leadership and staff truly do understand our members' needs and wants, and every one of our always-expanding services are tailor made to meet them. Organizations don't get a lot more niche than one that represents community college boards, and that focus always has been and always will be one of our greatest strengths.

The association exists for a couple of primary reasons: First, to advocate for your institutions and your students. Second, to empower and equip community college board members to be the most effective and ethical trustees they can be.

In this issue of *Trustee Quarterly*, you'll find highlights of our current and recent advocacy efforts, including an overview of February's National Legislative Summit. The 2023 NLS had the highest participation we've hosted since 2009, and in addition to speakers from the

White House and Department of Education, we hosted the Secretaries of Agriculture and Labor for the first time, demonstrating the reach of ACCT's student success, rural-focused and other initiatives. You'll also read about this year's extraordinary Community College Month campaign, this year recognized by former First Lady Michelle Obama, the U.S. Department of State and others. Our advocacy reach — yours and ours, in tandem — continues to expand appreciation and support for community colleges.

Also in this issue, ACCT Chair Rose Benavidez and I discuss the "trust" in community college trusteeship — that is, we talk about the true meaning of the term *fiduciary* (hint: it's doesn't just mean "financial"), along with the great responsibility of board members to fulfill their duties of care, loyalty, and obedience ethically and faithfully. We also detail standards of good practice for trustee boards and talk through some common challenges experienced by boards or individual board members when carrying out these responsibilities. I encourage you not only to read this article, but to share and discuss it with your fellow board members. ACCT is here to help you understand how to be the best board member possible, and fiduciary responsibilities are the foundation of board service.

If I haven't seen you on your campus yet, then I hope to see you this October at the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas and on our new ACCT Connect social learning platform. Wherever we run into one another, make sure to say hi and let me know what we can do for you.

JEE HANG LEE
ACCT President and CEO



Whether students are planning to pursue a four-year degree or completing a credential that leads directly to the workforce, community colleges are inclusive, accessible institutions that meet students where they are and get them where they need to go.

A Special Message from the Secretary of Education

IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, A HIGH SCHOOL diploma alone is no longer a guaranteed ticket to a well-paying job and a middle-class life. Within the next four years, it's estimated 70 percent of jobs will require some form of postsecondary credential, whether it's an industry certification or two-year or four-degree. That's why increasing support for our community colleges is central to President Biden's effort to Invest in America and meet the needs of the moment — for our country and for students.

Thanks to President Biden's leadership, we have the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act, and historic investments to fight climate change. From manufacturing semiconductors to building electric vehicle infrastructure to upgrading broadband, there's a tsunami of great, well-paying jobs in America coming — and we need to make sure this generation of students is prepared to ride the wave.

Community colleges will be instrumental in this work. They are situated in virtually every community across the country, rural to urban, and provide high-quality pathways to great jobs and higher wages. They do this work while serving students from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life, from high school students in dual enrollment programs to working adults seeking to upskill.

I know that I'm preaching to the choir about this, but I've seen the life-changing impact our community colleges have on students' lives while visiting campuses across the country. Whether students are planning to pursue a four-year degree or completing a credential that leads directly to the workforce, community colleges are inclusive, accessible institutions that meet students where they are and get them where they need to go.

Earlier this year, I visited Mesa Community College in Arizona, where I met a student named Lily. Lily is pursuing an associate degree in construction management — a field close to her heart because her family works in the trade.

In fact, her father Agustin was so inspired by his daughter's determination that he chose to enroll in the very same program. Father and daughter are now both on a pathway to higher earning potential thanks to their community college.

I've also met students who've benefited from the more than \$10 billion provided to community colleges by the American Rescue Plan. In 2021, 94 percent of community college leaders reported using these investments to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out, through emergency financial relief, improving access to food, housing, and other basic needs, covering textbook costs, and more. At Reading Area Community College in Pennsylvania, I met a working mom named Melissa who never imagined returning to school but is now pursuing her dream of becoming an arts teacher thanks to financial assistance and wraparound supports.

President Biden's new budget asks Congress for dramatic new investments to make free community college a reality across America, by building on state-level efforts like College Promise. We're also requesting another \$820 increase to the Pell Grant — on top of the \$900 increases we've won already — to bring the maximum Pell award to \$8,215 for the 2024-2025 academic year.

As we close out Community College Month, I want to recognize the incredible work you're doing to support students and serve your communities. The Biden-Harris Administration believes in you and will continue to champion you. Let's continue working together to raise the bar for educational attainment and create pathways for students of all backgrounds to build rewarding careers and prosperous communities.

With gratitude,

MIGUEL CARDONA
U.S. Secretary of Education

Community College Month Participation Continues to Grow

Oakland Community College Student Wins Logo Design Competition



APRIL IS COMMUNITY COLLEGE Month, and the campaign that ACCT revitalized several years ago as a social media experiment has grown to become a coordinated nationwide movement to draw attention to the value and importance of community colleges. “Our movement has grown every year and now engages more partners and generated more activity than we ever envisioned,” said ACCT Director of Strategic Communications David Conner, who created the campaign’s grassroots

communications toolkit. “The ACCT Member Communications and Education Committee has been invaluable in refining the toolkit materials, and the committee brought us the brilliant idea of branding the campaign with a new logo designed by a community college student.”

The campaign kicked off in March with the announcement of the student logo-design competition winner and two runners-up. The grand-prize winner is **Quantanik Norton**, a student from Oakland Community College (see next page).

“We are thrilled to be able to recognize our contest winner Quantanik Norton and competition finalists **Paraskeva Stanoevska** and **Ryan Tran** for their creative efforts,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. “We know that talented and dedicated students attend community colleges, and it is exciting to all of us at ACCT to be able to bring attention some of them while introducing a valuable new asset to our Community College Month campaign toolkit.”

“I’m excited about this and honored to have this recognition,” said Norton, who received a \$1,250 cash award for her design. “I had so much fun coming up with a logo design to represent #CCMonth!” Norton’s design is meant to represent a “badge of honor” to be worn proudly by community college students, an echo of her own pride.

Paraskeva Stanoevska, a student at Cape Cod Community College, won second place and received a \$500 cash prize, and Ryan Tran from Valencia College won third place, with a \$250 award. Over 225 entries were received and judged blind in two rounds, first by the ACCT staff to determine the five top finalists, and then by the ACCT Member Communications and Education Committee.

The competition’s prizes were supported by ACCT and ACCT Corporate Council members Anthology, CLARUS Corporation, Edamerica, Ellucian, and Ferrilli.

Partners and Advocates Expand Reach of Community College Month

Community College Month has expanded to include a broad partnership of allied advocates from within the community college and higher-education sectors and far beyond. At the top of the month, **Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker** visited community colleges throughout the state and then issued a proclamation declaring April to be Illinois Community College Month. Later in the month, Arizona Governor **Katie Hobbs**, Michigan Governor **Gretchen Whitmer**, and Maryland Governor **Wes Moore** issued formal Community College Month proclamations on behalf of their states.

The **U.S. Department of Education** and **Education Secretary Miguel Cardona** have lent their voices to #CCMonth on Twitter in past years. This year, **former First Lady Michelle Obama** added to their voices with a video supporting Community College Month, garnering hundreds of thousands of “likes” on Instagram within 24 hours, and the **U.S. Department of State** kicked off the campaign on April 1 in spectacular fashion, posting to LinkedIn and Instagram:

The Department of State is committed to recruiting qualified, dedicated candidates from all backgrounds. When you think about Foreign Service professionals, have you ever thought that many started their successful careers with a community college education?

#Equity is achieved by lowering systemic barriers, and community colleges provide equitable access to higher education to many talented, driven Americans with the skills, cultural competencies, and experience that make a successful #diplomat.

Throughout April, we will highlight some of our #foreignaffairs professionals who started at #communitycollege and now have a rewarding and exciting #globalcareer representing the very #community their community college supports to the world.

The State Department linked to its job listings, encouraging community college students to apply. On April 26, it hosted a careers-focused webinar called Global Careers, Community College Beginnings. “Community colleges are one of the backbones of the U.S. higher education system, bringing access to affordable, quality post-secondary education to millions of Americans each year. Whether you’re a current community college student, alumnus/a, or a transfer student, your community college education has opened the doors to an exciting career with the U.S. Department of State.”

The unprecedented and extensive participation of the State Department is just one of this year’s vital engagements. On April 19, ACCT hosted a live Twitter #CCMonthChat to draw attention to the good work done by community colleges, in partnership with **New America**, a nonpartisan

national think tank. The following week, New America released a report for community colleges offering institutional policy and practice recommendations to boost enrollments.

Among the many other leading organizations that participated in #CCMonth are **Ascend at the Aspen Institute, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, Cengage Education, Century Foundation, Community College Bacalaureate Association, the Community College Research Center at Columbia University Teachers College, Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, ECMC Foundation, EnGen, Equity Avengers, Generation Hope, Higher Learning**

Advocates, the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice, InsideTrack, Institute for Higher Education Policy, League for Innovation in the Community College, Lumina Foundation for Education, National Head Start, Office of Community College Research & Leadership, Phi Theta Kappa, Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation, SkillPointe, Strada Education Foundation, Vera Institute, Third Way Education, and others.

Most importantly, nearly all of our member colleges as well as state-based community college associations leveraged the occasion to bring attention to the work being done locally — and that’s what the #CCMonth Campaign is all about.

Portrait of a [Typically] Exceptional Community College Student



Quantanik Norton’s jubilant Community College Month logo was selected to win ACCT’s #CCMonth student-designed logo competition. While the contest was judged blindly, based on logo designs alone and with no information about who designed them, we at ACCT knew that this

year’s #CCMonth theme — “Smart Students Go To Community Colleges” — would be a fitting one.

As it turns out, Quantanik Norton is an exception to many of the assumed norms of the so-called traditional university student, and she’s absolutely typical of the typically exceptional community college student. Circumstances of real life delayed her college career, but boy, did she flourish when she was able to get involved with her college. Norton is a Phi Theta Kappa honors student with a near-perfect grade-point average, a recipient of the Michigan Reconnect Scholarship Program that made it possible for her to go back to school, and as of the writing of this article, one of two semifinalists at Oakland Community College for a Jack Kent Cooke transfer scholarship.

Norton posted the message below on LinkedIn on April 1, the first day of Community College Month. Her exuberance is palpable through her words, and her future is bright.

I graduate from Oakland Community College next month! Two years [went] that fast. First-generation student and about to be the first in my family to graduate with a secondary degree. It took me 13

years to return to school, something I wanted so badly after I graduated high school in 2010.

But I’m beyond happy and blessed about everything that is happening right now. The Michigan Reconnect Scholarship Program launched February 2021 and I applied once it was announced. It completely changed my life! I was finally able to attend OCC tuition-free for graphic design, a skill I picked up during an early career program I took at Oakland Technical Campus in Pontiac, during my junior year in high school.

Fast forward now, I’m sitting at a pretty nice GPA of 3.93. I received one B and that was during my first semester when I caught COVID while taking my last class of the semester. My mom and I battled that disease together for two weeks and won!

Now here I am, one of the top designers in our department, one of the two Jack Kent Cooke Foundation semifinalists from my school, a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society International, and now a national winner with Association of Community College Trustees! Wow.

My path to school wasn’t traditional, I didn’t have it easy or the privilege, I decided to work first before going to college. My mom raised three daughters on her own, this path I’m on is for US. I’m still in shock about everything but I think I deserve it! This is my #CCMonth story!

Thanks to my professors, my peers, my family, friends, and even the strangers who have been so kind. I appreciate it all so much. I’m hoping to start at the College for Creative Studies this Fall with this momentum tuition-free!

Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence Winner Announced

The winners of the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence were announced on April 20! Amarillo College (Texas) and Imperial Valley College (Calif.) represent the amazing potential of America's community colleges as engines of talent development and economic mobility. The \$1 million Aspen Prize aims to elevate the community college sector and draw attention to what exemplary colleges can do for students, communities, and our nation at large. Read more about the selection process and the winner here: [as.pn/prize](https://www.acct.org/page/prize).

New Partnership Launches to Plan Free, High-Quality Early Learning on Community College Campuses

ACCT AND THE NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION (NHSA) ANNOUNCED IN March a new partnership to increase free on-campus Head Start and Early Head Start slots on U.S. community college campuses. This partnership is funded through a planning grant supported by **ECMC Foundation** and the **Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation**.

Nearly 1 in 10 U.S. undergraduate students are single mothers, almost all of whom have incomes at or near the poverty line. Though their children may be eligible for Head Start services, fewer than 100 of the more than 3,700 community and technical college campuses have Head Start providers on-site. At the same time, Head Start programs are struggling with enrollment and workforce issues, leaving up to 180,000 federally funded childcare and early learning slots unfilled.

Together, ACCT and NHSA will develop resources for partnerships to match existing Head Start providers with community college campuses that can offer free facilities. The community colleges will not charge rent, allowing Head Start operators to meet the required 20% philanthropic match for their federal grant dollars. Resulting partnerships will allow students on-campus access to free, high-quality early learning while also enabling Head Start centers to recruit eligible families and access the talent pool of Early Childhood Education students who may be interested in working at the center.

"Adding free Head Start slots at community college campuses sustainably addresses funding gaps in both early childhood and higher education," said **Abigail Seldin**, CEO of the **Seldin / Haring-Smith Foundation**. "Connecting two best-in-class industry associations to match — and support — their members through the relocation process aligns with SHSF's mission to expand access to public services."

"Almost half of postsecondary students with children attend community colleges," said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. "Abundant evidence shows that childcare is a primary barrier that keeps too many community college students from persisting and completing their education. ACCT is excited to partner with the National Head Start Association, ECMC Foundation, and Seldin / Haring-Smith Foundation to address this need through an innovative and cost-effective approach that will bring Head Start to community college campuses and, in turn, offer a solution to students' childcare needs."

"Since our inception as the country's flagship early learning program, Head Start and Early Head Start staff have helped families to identify and reach their goals and dreams, including those related to finances and economic mobility, housing, employment, and education," said NHSA Executive Director **Yasmina Vinci**. "While nearly 1 million children and their families are served each year, too many parents and caregivers who could benefit from Head Start's two-generation model of support lack equitable access. This partnership has the potential to expand access to high-quality early childhood learning and, in turn, expand access to adult education and job training."

"ECMC Foundation is pleased to provide the funding needed to lay the groundwork for this project and catalyze systemic change for an important segment of our nation's college students," said ECMC Foundation President **Jacob Fraire**. "We know 22% of all undergraduate students are raising dependent children and nearly 10% of all undergraduate students are single mothers. This unique partnership can address the resource and time demands experienced by student parents and ensure they have the support needed to persist and graduate."



Learn more about the Kids on Campus initiative at www.acct.org/page/kids-on-campus.

ACCT Leadership Congress

Building a Legacy: Uplifting Students and Transforming Communities



FOR HALF A DECADE, THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY College Trustees (ACCT) has convened educational leaders from throughout the world to share expertise, network, expand knowledge, and build relationships.

The 2023 Annual ACCT Leadership Congress will honor the transformative accomplishments of our institutions as we build a bridge between our remarkable history and a future marked by many unknown challenges and just as many untapped opportunities. Join us at the ARIA Resort & Casino in Las Vegas this October 9 – 12. To learn more, go to Congress.ACCT.org.

Session Tracks

- Uplifting Students
- Transforming Communities
- Enrollment Strategies
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Technology-Supported Innovation


To register, and for more information, go to Congress.ACCT.org or contact Director of Educational Programs and Events Christina Simons at csimons@acct.org.

A graphic of a calendar page with yellow binder rings at the top. The text 'MARK YOUR CALENDAR' is in large white letters on a teal background. Below, two dates are highlighted: 'AUGUST 4, 2023' with 'Early Registration Discount Ends' and 'SEPTEMBER 14, 2023' with 'Early Hotel Room Rate Discount Ends'.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

AUGUST 4, 2023
Early Registration
Discount Ends

SEPTEMBER 14, 2023
Early Hotel Room Rate
Discount Ends

 To register, and for more information, go to Congress.ACCT.org.



Increasingly referred to as “Workforce Pell,” the concept has bipartisan support. However, there are now three proposals in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate on the best way to implement these changes in the Pell Grant program.

Focused on Financial Aid

FAFSA improvements, funding increases, and ‘Workforce Pell’ top legislative priorities.

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH

AS THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS BLOOMED HERE IN Washington, D.C. this spring, Congress and the administration focused on financial aid. Read on for three major updates affecting how students access federal financial aid.

A Better FAFSA is Coming this December

In March, the Office of Federal Student Aid announced that “Better FAFSA” will open in December 2023. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which usually opens on October 1 of a given year, is undergoing radical changes in response to the passage of the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act of 2019 and The FAFSA Simplification Act of 2020. The Better FAFSA will transform how data are collected from students and families and the mechanism used to determine Pell Grant eligibility.

First developed during the 1992 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress created the FAFSA to ensure that prospective college students would not need to fill out multiple forms or pay multiple fees to apply for federal, state, and institutional financial aid.

These are the first major changes to the FAFSA since the form went online in 1997. The changes are substantial and require a new technology infrastructure to support the user-friendly design of the law, which includes more widespread and automatic data sharing with the Internal Revenue Service. In addition to near-mandatory transfer of IRS data to complete financial and family questions, the new FAFSA will eliminate the use of “number of students” in college as part of the federal financial aid calculus and decrease the proportion of filers who need to report their assets on the form.

The biggest change, however, will be an additional pathway through which students can qualify for the Pell Grant. In addition to qualifying based on the federal financial aid formula, students can also qualify for

Pell Grant increases and free community college are two sides of the college affordability coin to decrease out-of-pocket costs to students while providing support to institutions.

Pell Grants based on their adjusted gross income as related to the federal poverty level for their family size and composition (for example, single parent family earnings thresholds are measured more generously). This new approach will allow families to know if they qualify for a maximum Pell Grant, or at least a minimum Pell Grant, based on a user-friendly calculator tool or look-up table.

Colleges looking to learn more should visit the FSA Partners Knowledge Center page dedicated to Better FAFSA (fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center) and contact their state financial aid association or state higher education executive for state-specific information about how these FAFSA changes, and the delay in FAFSA opening, will affect financial aid in their state.

Budget Proposes Another Historic Pell Increase

In March, President Biden released his budget proposal for the federal fiscal year 2024 (FY24) that will begin on October 1, 2023. The budget included two key priorities from the community college joint legislative agenda: investment in the Pell Grant and free community college.

President Biden has pledged to double the maximum Pell Grant from \$6,495 in FY21 to \$13,000 by FY29. Currently, the maximum Pell Grant is \$6,895 (FY22) and will increase to \$7,395 this fall (FY23). The President is proposing an additional \$820 increase for FY24 (for Pell Grants beginning July 1, 2024). For much of the past two decades prior to the Biden Administration, the annual increase for the Pell Grant has been closer to the inflation rate, or an increase of \$100-\$150. While an increase is anticipated, it is unlikely that the full \$820 will be funded by a divided Congress.

After removing free community college from last year's budget proposal, President Biden renewed his call for a federal-state partnership to support free tuition and fees at the nation's community colleges. Additionally, he proposed a new \$500 million competitive grant funding free tuition and fees and specific community college programs that are fully articulated to four-year programs or lead to high-demand, high-pay jobs. In this program, colleges would apply to the federal government directly for funding. While the full federal-state partnership faces a steeper uphill battle in this Congress,

the smaller, program-based free college proposal could receive more attention.

Pell Grant increases and free community college are two sides of the college affordability coin to decrease out-of-pocket costs to students while providing support to institutions.

Short-Term Pell Gets a Rebrand and Much Attention

The top community college priority of extending Pell Grant eligibility to short-term programs remains a hot topic in Congress. Increasingly referred to as "Workforce Pell," or sometimes still as "Short-term Pell," the concept has bipartisan support. However, there are now three proposals in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate on the best way to implement these changes in the Pell Grant program.

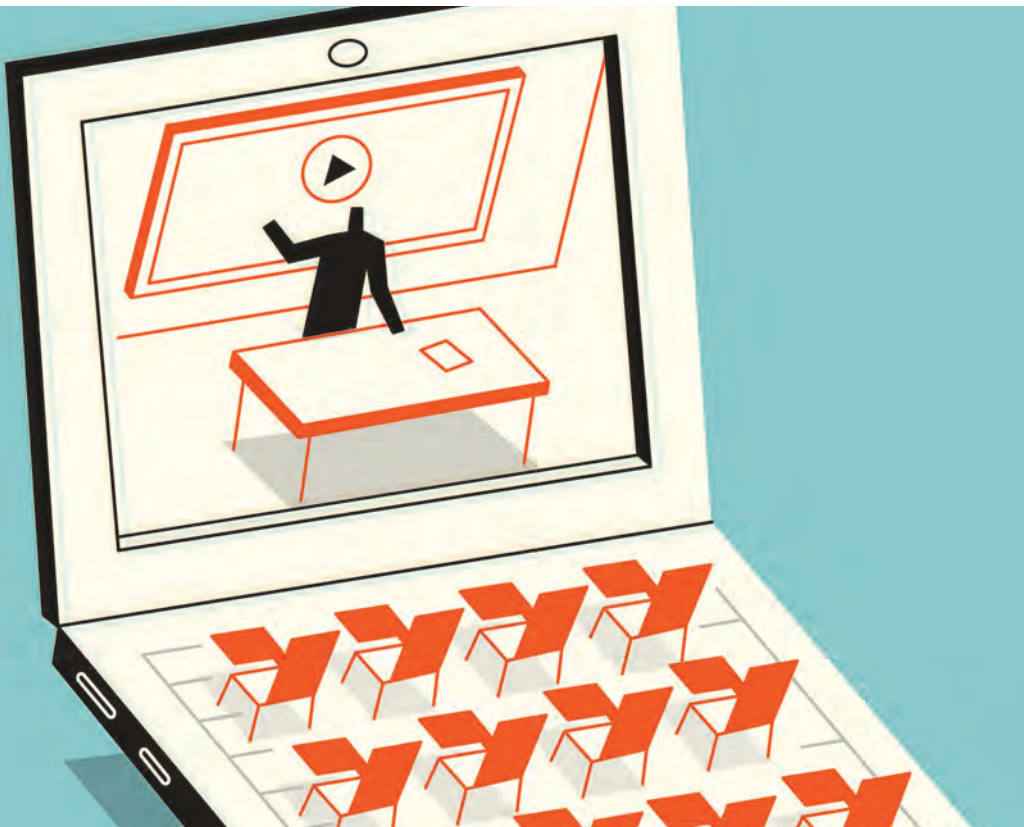
The Jumpstart Our Businesses by Supporting Students (JOBS) Act of 2023 was reintroduced with bipartisan sponsors in both the House and the Senate. Additionally, the leaders of the House Education and Workforce Committee each support an additional, partisan proposal for designing the Workforce Pell program. Committee chair Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) is a co-sponsor of Rep. Elise Stefanik's (R-N.Y.) Promoting Employment and Lifelong Learning (PELL) Act. Ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-Va.) introduced his own bill called A Job to Compete Act.

ACCT will continue to monitor these three bills and work with Congress to provide technical assistance on the best possible design. Given the consensus on the topic area, Congress must come to an agreement on the details so that students can access this crucial aid to support their career development.

To remain engaged on these and all policy topics, including federal grant opportunities, sign-up for our Latest Action in Washington alerts by visiting now.acct.org or emailing publicpolicy@acct.org.



Carrie Warick-Smith is vice president for public policy at ACCT. She can be reached at cwsmith@acct.org.



Every time you contribute a story, experience, or idea, you're building a knowledge base that every community member can tap into to inform their practice. We are looking forward to engaging in this important work together, and we can't wait to see your contributions.

Spring Forward with ACCT Connect!

Made by and for ACCT members, the new online learning and networking platform will build connections and empower community college leaders.

BY ROBIN MATROSS HELMS

SPRING HAS OFFICIALLY SPRUNG HERE IN WASHINGTON — the sun is strong, the cherry trees blossomed gloriously, and everything is getting greener by the minute. There's a new energy in the air, and it feels like a time for leaning into growth, connection, and forward momentum.

On this note, ACCT Connect, our new online learning and networking platform, has launched! We are grateful to those of you who have participated in demos and discussions of the platform at the ACCT



Leadership Congress, the Community College National Legislative Summit, and in other venues over the last few months. Your feedback has been great, and all the ideas about for how to maximize the effectiveness of the platform illustrate the power of collective thinking and creativity, which is at the very heart of ACCT Connect itself.

Also in the vein of energy and growth, in February we were thrilled to welcome Kielo Savilaakso, our new Director for Member Engagement, to the ACCT team. Kielo brings deep expertise with member engagement and building online communities, and she will lead the growth and development of ACCT Connect going forward. You'll have a chance to meet her online soon and in person at upcoming ACCT events. Most immediately, she'll be available to answer any questions and help you get oriented on ACCT Connect once it's launched.

As a reminder, all ACCT members have access to the full ACCT Connect platform as part of your membership — including our cornerstone online Governance 101 course, a resource library, and networking spaces. We are proud to offer these resources to you with no additional fee as part of our mission to promote effective trusteeship and elevate our community and institutions.

Why ACCT Connect?

ACCT members are passionate about their work. We see your dedication and enthusiasm throughout the year at ACCT conferences, Governance Leadership Institutes, board retreats, and other events.

ACCT Connect is a way for our members to access resources and tap each other's expertise in a virtual environment year-round. Our goal is to build connections and empower our members to effectively fulfill

their roles, serve their institutions, support the community college sector, and advance student success.

As you explore the space, you'll see there are a few things that make ACCT Connect different from other online learning platforms and social media networks:

- **It's ours, and it's made for you.** ACCT Connect is built for and by ACCT members. As we grow this community together, we will tap your expertise to create exclusive content, deeper conversations, richer polls, and online events.
- **There are many ways to add more voices to the conversation.** Whether posting a question or discussion topic, commenting on an existing thread, sharing articles and resources, or creating a poll, you'll be able to find other ACCT members with similar interests, shared challenges, and additional expertise.
- **We can bring together content and community.** We are continually adding and updating resources to our space, including online courses. Your comments, reflections, and additions to content will amplify their value and help others gather fresh ideas and new practices to inform their work.

What to expect when you join

We want your engagement on the platform to be time well spent. ACCT Connect is designed to help you:

- Access exclusive resources, content, and conversations you can't find anywhere else.
- Meet people who share your interests and challenges, and who care about the same topics.
- Make better, more well-informed decisions about the things that are most important in your role.

- Trade stories, experiences, and ideas around our shared mission.
- Find a little inspiration, thought-provoking conversations, and expert perspective each and every day.

To make this a reality, we're going to need your help. Every time you contribute a story, experience, or idea, you're building a knowledge base that every community member can tap into to inform their practice. We are looking forward to engaging in this important work together, and we can't wait to see your contributions.

Let's go!

Invitations to join ACCT Connect were sent to our full membership in early May. If you didn't receive one, please let us know at acctinfo@acct.org and we'll send one right away.

In the expansive spirit of springtime, we hope you'll dive right in and give it a go. We'll do everything to make it as easy as possible, including a welcome checklist that will take you through the process of creating your profile and getting oriented. And there's an app! Our goal is to keep you connected in whatever ways are most convenient for you.

Enjoy the spring sunshine and growth, and we look forward to seeing you on ACCT Connect very soon.



Robin Matross Helms is ACCT's vice president for membership and educational services. She can be reached at rhelms@acct.org.

‘AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME FOR TRANSFORMATION’

The 2023 National Legislative Summit showcased the growth of the community college mission.



BY MARK TONER

AS A NEAR-RECORD NUMBER OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE leaders and advocates came to Washington, D.C., for the 2023 Community College National Legislative Summit in February, the growing importance of the sector was hard to miss.

It was on television during the State of the Union Address, where at least two community college leaders sat in the gallery as the guests of lawmakers who spoke at the Congressional Forum on Capitol Hill (see p. 16). And it was evident in the ever-expanding range of federal leaders who spoke at the NLS, a testimony to how expansive the community college mission has become.

“The pipeline from high school to affordable community colleges to great jobs is the future of our workforce and our economy,” First Lady Dr. Jill Biden told attendees. President Biden, she added, “is bringing together his entire administration — not just the Department of Education, but Commerce, Energy, and Transportation as well — to build more programs across the country.”

With this in mind, nearly 1,100 community college trustees, presidents, and advocates came to Washington to help their institutions do just that. “It is crucial we continue to advocate to ensure that community colleges continue to receive the support we need and deserve,” said ACCT Chair Rose Benavidez, chair of South Texas College.



ACCT Chair Rose Benavidez and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg



From left: Dean Designate of the Clinton School of Public Service at the University of Arkansas Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto; American Action Forum President Douglas Holtz-Eaken; Agriculture Secretary Thomas Vilsack



A Growing Mission

Biden and other Administration leaders — including Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, and representatives from the Department of Commerce and the White House — highlighted the importance of community colleges to a growing array of federal initiatives.

Pointing to the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act as the beginning of an “infrastructure decade,” Buttigieg stressed the vital role community colleges are playing in “an extraordinary time for transformation in America.”

“The nature of the infrastructure law and the upgrades we’re doing are testing the productive capacity of the United States — the human capacity you are producing,” Buttigieg told attendees.

Community colleges, he added, can play a key role in improving transportation infrastructure by improving transit access to campuses and supporting careers in emerging fields. “You are leading one of the most important sectors in our country,” Buttigieg added. “In short, you are helping to pave the way toward the America we need.”

In similar fashion, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack stressed multiple roles community colleges can play as part of partnerships to transform rural America and the 90 million people who live there. Along with improving student access to nutrition programs like SNAP and WIC, Vilsack pointed to the more than \$3 billion allocated to the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities and the need for workforce development in food processing, agricultural inputs, and decarbonizing energy supplies.

“The opportunities are unlimited to transform, change, and revitalize the rural economy,” Vilsack said. “I think community colleges play a critical role in... supporting folks who work not just with their heads but their hands.”

Zoe Baird, senior counselor for technology and economic growth to Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, pointed to another landmark bill passed into law — the CHIPS and Science Act — as an example of opportunities for community colleges to serve as partners in wide-ranging projects to reshape the American economy.

“We are really at a moment of transformation in our economy,” Baird said. “The rapid change we saw during COVID is not going to slow down... that means you have an entirely new business model.”

Even so, that new model has precedent, she added. “One hundred years ago, we invented the high school when we moved from an agricultural to industrialized economy. Now we’re at a very similar inflection point,” Baird said. “We need to invent the system that’s going to train workers and enable the growth of the economy. I’d encourage you to think of community colleges as the foundations for this kind of system.”

‘Career-Connected Learning’

Pointing to the need for “career-connected learning,” the First Lady urged community college leaders to “think about more ways you can partner with high schools, local businesses, and unions” — approaches including apprenticeships, new relationships with business, and dual enrollment that “bridge the gap between what students learn and the careers they will eventually find.”

“[These are] the kinds of hands-on learning that community colleges have been leaders on for so many years,” Biden said. New partnerships, she added, will “help us expand those tried and true approaches to more communities. It’s one of the best ways to make community college programs and workforce training free or affordable to everyone.”

Workforce partnerships enjoy bipartisan support, NLS speakers said. Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.) stressed the importance of community colleges addressing both present-day workforce needs and long-term concerns about the direction of the country. “We need to do a better job of connecting our educational system to the jobs that are available,” he told NLS attendees. “That’s the heart of what community colleges are able to do.”

The federal government is poised to support partnerships in new ways, speakers said. Baird told attendees that the Commerce Department’s \$500 million Good Jobs Challenge grant program, which provides grants to local workforce systems, may serve as a model for greater investment.

“The heavy role of community colleges [in local workforce systems] is really changing what we think about what sectoral partnerships really mean,” Baird said. “We will apply what we’re learning to investments in other areas.”

White House officials also stressed the role community colleges can play in advancing historically disadvantaged Americans. “There are staff all



Clockwise from left: Phi Theta Kappa President Lynn Tincher-Ladner; Commerce Department's Zoe Baird; Student trustees; ACCT's Carrie Warwick-Smith and José Miranda with AACC's David Baime and James Hermes; ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee

across all of our agencies are trying to think about how they might be able to work with you [to] open the doors to their agencies to their programs to make sure they're truly reaching and serving the community," said Melody Gonzales, executive director for the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics.

Challenges and Opportunities

This vision of a more expansive role was balanced by ever-present political realities. A divided Congress "will cause a shift in the conversation" over the next two years, Carrie Warwick-Smith, ACCT's vice president of public policy, said during a briefing on legislative priorities.

Following the 2022 elections and the change in control of the House, "there are a lot of retirements and a lot of new faces at the subcommittee level and generally in Congress," José Miranda, ACCT director of government relationships, told attendees. "We have our work cut out in building new relationships. Your conversations will be critical."

ACCT and American Association of Community College policy experts expressed optimism that workforce development remains an opportunity for bipartisan progress. "As ever, your institutions are ready to play a major role in the workforce needs of our country, but they need high-level federal support to expand those programs," said Jim Hermes, AACC associate vice president of government relations.

Short-Term Pell also continues to gain support from both sides of the aisle. Smucker, for one, told attendees that it remains a "priority" for the current Congress, adding that efforts to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will continue.

"The environment is very ripe for getting this done," said David Baime, AACC senior vice president of government relations. "Keep pushing."

Reflecting the growing reach of the community college sector, the Farm Bill — which includes funding to support rural economic development and student access to food benefits — was added to the sector's legislative priorities for the first time. "It is a really good opportunity to make an impact on our campuses within a piece of legislation we do expect to pass," Warwick-Smith said.

Victoria DeFrancesco Soto, dean of the Clinton School of Public Services at the University of Arkansas, also identified opportunities for progress. The unsettled state of the economy, she said, is "something Democratic and Republican lawmakers can agree on and know their constituents hold them accountable for. There's no silver bullet, but community colleges provide a couple of very direct ways of addressing economic woes."

The DREAM Act also may finally come to fruition, DeFrancesco Soto added, noting that a recent poll found 80 percent of Americans support the legislation. "How many times do you get 80 percent of people to agree on anything?" she asked. "Americans want solutions, and they want folks to act responsibly."

DeFrancesco Soto also said that a result of COVID relief funding, "states are flush with cash ... Do not lose sight of your state and local lawmakers... You need to factor all three levels of government into your advocacy and lobbying."

Douglas Holtz-Eaken, president of the American Action Forum, stressed the importance of investment at all levels, even amid growing fiscal headwinds.

"We're underinvesting in the future because of large legacy programs," Holtz-Eaken told NLS attendees. "You sit at the crossroads of that... I think the country needs to get more serious about education... Sometimes we need to spend more money on things that are valuable."



Clockwise from left: Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.); NLS attendees promoted their visits with elected officials on social media; Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

‘Leading with a Human Face’

With health and security restrictions lifted for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic, community college leaders roamed the halls of Congressional office buildings freely during the NLS.

“It is great to see everyone back here in person,” said Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.).

One large delegation of community college trustees and presidents visited the office of Rep. Rose DeLauro (D-Conn.), the recipient of the 2023 Community College National Education Service Award. Others visited a wide range of veteran legislators and newcomers. A group of South Carolina trustees and presidents visited the office of longtime senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), while a delegation representing the majority of Missouri’s community colleges spoke with that state’s newest senator, Eric Schmitt (R-Mo.).

More than 100 student trustees, including several international student trustees, helped represent community colleges during the NLS. One was Wilfried Tapsoba, student senate president of Madison Area Technical College, who discussed workforce apprenticeship programs during a meeting between Wisconsin trustees and Sen. Tami Baldwin (D-Wis.).

Lynn Tincher-Ladner, president and CEO of Phi Theta Kappa, urged student trustees to think of advocacy beyond legislative matters. Pointing to PTK’s CCsmart campaign, she stressed the importance of social media

in helping elevate perceptions of community colleges. “Students are a lot more visible now,” Tincher-Ladner told student trustees. “It’s up to all of us to let people know that community colleges aren’t just about accessibility and affordability. They’re all about quality.”

The importance of advocacy was repeated throughout the NLS. “The best advocates at their core are teachers. Lead with a human face... the human face of the workers who would otherwise be left behind,” DeFrancesco Soto urged attendees. “The answer is at your institutions.”

And speakers reminded NLS attendees that the work continues long after the conference ended. “The work we do in our community college sector is about our students, changing lives, and making lasting change for our communities,” said ACCT President & CEO Jee Hang Lee. “It’s about making the stories and building the advocacy we do every day.”



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.

SHARING THE STORY

At the Community College Congressional Forum on Capitol Hill, lawmakers shared personal connections – and urged community college leaders to do the same.

BY MARK TONER

A BIPARTISAN GROUP OF THREE U.S. SENATORS AND three members of the House of Representatives offered remarks during February’s Community College National Legislative Summit Congressional Forum on Capitol Hill – and two returned the favor during the State of the Union Address later the same day.

Both Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.) and Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.) chose community college leaders from their districts – Portland Community College (PCC) President Dr. Adrien Bennings and Pima Community College Chancellor Lee Lambert – to be their guests at the State of the Union Address. And all six lawmakers spoke of their own personal experiences as community college students or the impact that the colleges have had in their communities.

“I wouldn’t trade my community college days for anything,” Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.) told Forum attendees.

‘We Need to Share that Story’

Marshall pointed to the workforce development efforts of the state’s community colleges across a variety of fields, including renewable energy, oil and gas, cybersecurity, and the construction of a community center in downtown Kansas City. “In Kansas, the number one problem is a lack of people for the jobs we have,” he said. “No one can respond more quickly to those job needs than a community college. We need to share that story.”

To that end, Marshall stressed building relationships with Congressional staff members—and getting to know them on a first-name basis. “I get what a community college does, but most of my staff doesn’t,” he said. “Go back to basics. Work on building those relationships.”

Marshall also stressed the importance of sharing student stories. “Be as

specific as possible,” he said. “Tell a story a member of Congress is going to remember.”

‘The Right Thing to Do’

Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) credited the innovation of the community college sector – “taking the best of what we have developed worldwide and bringing it to small towns,” he said.

Lujan pointed to his state’s new tuition-free college plan, signed into law last year, as a model for federal policy. “There’s no reason we shouldn’t be able to do that at the federal level,” he said. “It’s the smart thing to do. It’s the right thing to do.”

He also urged community college leaders to continue their advocacy efforts. “If you don’t ask, the answer’s no. So ask,” Lujan said. “Even if someone tells you no, or they’re not with you right now, it matters. They’ll remember your stories.”

‘The Moment Has Come’

Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) echoed a common refrain among lawmakers. “Everywhere I go, people tell me they can’t hire enough people,” he said. “There are a number of things we need to do to solve this issue, but community colleges are really at the nexus or hub of the things that need to be done.”

Pointing to Virginia Community Colleges’ Fast Forward short-term training program that has put 35,000 industry credentials into the workforce since its inception, Kaine called the lack of federal Pell Grant funding for similar short-term programs “a huge educational issue [and] a fundamental equity issue.”

With the JOBS Act reintroduced in the Senate and multiple bills



Clockwise from left: Rep. John James (R-Mich.); Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.); Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.); Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.); Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.); Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.)

involving short term Pell introduced in the House, “I think the moment for this bill has come,” Kaine said, calling the community college leaders in the room “my key advocates as we have tried to make this bill a reality.”

Addressing concerns about the quality of career and technical education, Kaine offered a simple solution: “If you put community colleges at the center, you don’t have to worry about the quality of the programs.”

Community Colleges: ‘Aptly Named’

Rep. Bonamici credited community colleges for “serving people of different backgrounds and lived experiences and providing a pathway to a degree or credential or rewarding career.”

“Community colleges are aptly named,” she said. “There’s a true community there for students.”

Bonamici stressed the importance of advocating for policies that address food insecurity, work-study programs, increasing Pell Grants and making them more flexible, and passing the DREAM Act.

“The bottom line is clear: we have challenges, but we also have lots of opportunities to meet the workforce needs and challenges of today and tomorrow... and for community colleges to model what a safe, inclusive, diverse, and enriching learning environment can be,” Bonamici said.

‘Keeping the American Dream Alive’

The first Mexican immigrant to win a Congressional seat in Arizona, Rep. Ciscomani pointed to his own time at Pima Community College as a key to his success. “It wouldn’t have happened if I didn’t have the experience of running for student government at the community college,” he said. “These are the opportunities you’re building every day — you’re giving those opportunities and a shot for the American Dream.”

Ciscomani stressed the importance of community colleges in “keeping that American Dream alive for so many people.”

“You have in me a committed resource, a person who wants to make sure we listen, look for the opportunities, and light the torch of community colleges in our country,” Ciscomani said.

‘We Have Your Backs’

Rep. John James (R-Mich.) praised the community college sector’s ability to “unlock the talent in this nation” and support students who, like him, struggled in school. “I think we have failed so many generations of young people who are lost when they leave their K-12 experience and don’t know what they want to do with the rest of their lives,” he said. “We need to unlock the talent in this nation.”

James stressed the importance of increasing access to certification programs. “We talk a lot about supply chains. I am focused on... the link that ties our students to the right skills and how they’re going to be successful in the real world,” James said. “The community college is the link in that chain, the answer to that question.”

James also reiterated the potential for consensus. “I believe growing our way to prosperity is an idea we can get behind, and that you all are in the best position to do it,” he said. “We have your backs.”



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.

TRUST IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARDS

Effective trusteeship ensures that boards fully represent the interests of their communities and serve the community college mission.

By Jee Hang Lee and Rose Benavidez



The following article was originally published by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities on March 29, 2023.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES ALWAYS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIVE to their communities' needs and to changes in workforce demands. Today's community college leaders have proven to be even more nimble and adaptable than could have been predicted, navigating the COVID-19 pandemic with extraordinary grace and responsiveness. They swiftly moved classes online with little existing infrastructure, deploying their acute understanding of the challenges students face in their lives by providing services to take care of them and keep them engaged with higher education.

As COVID-19 has abated, rapid change has become a matter of course. Community college leaders now need to not only plan to adapt to unanticipated crises, but also address an endless parade of major changes. For years, a looming community college CEO exodus has created a need for new pipelines to the presidency — and we are addressing that. More recently, declining enrollments, due in part to the aftermath of the pandemic and to declining birthrates, have created an urgent need both to be creative and more proactive about recruiting and retaining students, as well as adjusting business models to remain financially solvent in a future with potentially fewer students. Another contributor to lower enrollments is an incredible shift in generational perceptions of the value of higher education. More younger people than ever are questioning whether college will serve them well.

It is up to us to restore the faith in higher education through demonstrable outcomes — no easy task in a world as complex, variable, and ever-changing as ours is today. Beyond this, other societal, political, and other evolutions are demanding attention and resources, forcing community college leaders to balance countless competing forces while always prioritizing serving their students well.

It's a lot to contend with. The only way to maintain sustainable stability while powering through tempest after tempest is for well-functioning visionary boards, action-oriented chief executives, and thorough accreditors to work in concert to keep systems running smoothly while making forward progress.

Effective Community College Trusteeship

Effective trusteeship empowers colleges to operate relatively autonomously and to focus on the college community's immediate needs. An effective community college board serves the role of a wise counselor who guides the college's CEO with the benefit of many minds speaking with a single voice, supporting the CEO, asking incisive questions, keeping the institution

accountable to its policies and accreditors' requirements, and serving as a consistent, reliable, and trustworthy advisor.

A functional board ideally can accomplish at least two things at once. The first is to support and guide the college CEO's leadership without disrupting any of the good work being done by the college. The second is to advance the college's work by examining outcomes and policies, asking good questions, and encouraging the CEO to develop and evolve the college in ways that improve student success and close equity gaps.

To do this, community college board members must understand the unique identity and role that community colleges serve. Community colleges are engines of socioeconomic opportunity, mobility, advancement, and evolution. They are also the means responsible for offering endless encouragement and educational opportunities to *any individual who chooses to pursue higher education*.

Community colleges are inclusive and encouraging at their very foundations — the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity have been rooted in our business model from the beginning. In order for community college trustees to meet their responsibilities as board members, they must understand that community colleges are markedly different than selective four-year institutions in significant ways. Considerations and decisions must be made with this in mind. Our colleges exist to serve so-called traditional students who enroll immediately following high-school graduation — and they also exist to serve those who take different paths, sometimes years or decades after any formal schooling. Community colleges welcome every student, and most offer support such as childcare or food pantries to students who would not be able to participate without them.

Because the principles and values that undergird community college boards approach what some may consider to be idealistic, ostensibly offering nearly all possibilities to nearly all people, these values often can be challenged by human nature. Sometimes, these challenges are created by so-called "rogue trustees" who are not faithful to their sworn governance duties, and who do not honor the promise to represent the interests and objectives of the board as a single unit rather than a collection of individual opinions and agendas. Other times, one or more trustees simply have irreconcilable differences in their respective points of view that are out of sync with the objectives of the board as a governing body. These and other disruptions can and do occur among boards of trustees, so it is necessary to consider not only what boards *should do*, but what to do when boards get off track.

It is up to us to restore the faith in higher education through demonstrable outcomes — no easy task in a world as complex, variable, and ever-changing as ours is today. Beyond this, other societal, political, and other evolutions are demanding attention and resources, forcing community college leaders to balance countless competing forces while always prioritizing serving their students well.

Before we discuss some qualities of ineffective trusteeship and how it can affect the college, it's imperative to understand how the *trust* got into *trustees* and what an effective board sounds like and does.

Foundational Values

When NWCCU President Sonny Ramaswamy offered us an opportunity to write an article about why governance is critically important to student success, the first thought that came to mind was a term ubiquitous to governance that is often overlooked: trust.

Trust is the foundation upon which governing boards are built — and it's not as vague a value as it might sound. The trust-based expectations placed upon board members are explicitly elucidated in their **duties of care, loyalty, and obedience**, which together describe board members' **fiduciary responsibilities**.

At ACCT, we often encounter people who are familiar with the term fiduciary, and who take the term quite seriously, believing that *fiduciary* is synonymous with *financial responsibility*. It's understandable. The words fiduciary and financial often are used together, and they appear and sound as if they may have a common root.

However, every board member should understand that they *function as fiduciaries* to their institutions — obviously not as “financial experts,” but as *trusted* individuals who are obligated to act on behalf of others. The term “fiduciary” is both a noun and an adjective, derived from the Latin word *fiducia*, which means “trust.” It is the basis of the term “trustee,” and all good trustees are individuals of impeccable character exemplified by care for and loyalty to the communities and institutions they serve. Responsibility for financial oversight is certainly part of fiduciary responsibility, but there's much more to it, and it is essential that board members understand that their commitments go farther and deeper than just financial oversight.

Standards of Good Practice for Trustee Boards

ACCT's board of directors in 2000 adopted *Standards of Good Practice for Trustee Boards*, a set of principles that all community college boards members (and their CEOs) must understand and to which they must adhere. According to these standards, every community college board must:

- Derive its authority from the community and always act as an advocate on behalf of the entire community.
- Clearly define and articulate its role.

- Create and maintain a spirit of true cooperation and a mutually supportive relationship with its CEO.
- Always strive to differentiate between external and internal processes in the exercise of its authority.
- Engage in a regular and ongoing process of in-service training and continuous improvement, as a board and as individual board members.
- Come to each meeting prepared and ready to debate issues fully and openly.
- Encourage all members to vote their consciences and to then support the decision or policy made by the board as a whole.
- Exemplify ethical behavior and conduct that is above reproach.
- Remain always accountable to the community.
- Honestly debate the issues affecting its community and speak with one voice once a decision or policy is made.

Disagreements among board members are inevitable, but such disagreements should never approach a level that puts the objectives of the board in question or prevents the board or the college from performing their duties.

Common Challenges

When a community college board member takes the oath of service to their institution as a trustee, they must surrender personal interests and agendas — something that can be agonizingly challenging at times for many — and instead act solely in the interest of their college and its students, and never in their own personal interest.

Even more challenging is the obligation of every individual trustee to support every board action once approved by the board. Although a board is a collective body made of individual trustees who hold their own individual views, values, and interests, a *board* must operate with a focused vision, clearly articulated values, and common interests. While board members as individual human beings speak with their own voices, the collective board must speak with only one voice, and that voice must speak on behalf of the board's explicitly articulated mission, vision, and values regardless of any individual differences of opinion among trustees.

Operating in this way may feel contrary to human nature for some, most especially those who care deeply enough about anything to volunteer their time and energies to serving its interests. The fact is harmonious action is the only way to govern well, given that differences of opinion always will exist among different board members. Trustees

Although a board is a collective body made of individual trustees who hold their own individual views, values, and interests, a board must operate with a focused vision, clearly articulated values, and common interests.

should only become board members if they can truly commit to selflessly serve their college community's interests — that's it, no other reason. Board members will otherwise run the risk of becoming a disruption to the college's work in service to its students, and subsequently failing at the board's commitment to its college and community.

Means of Resolution

ACCT is often contacted by individuals — sometimes board members, sometimes journalists — who ask what can be done to remove a “rogue trustee” from a board. Those who are appointed by their governors can only be removed by the governor who appointed them; in the case of elected board members, generally, the only way to remove them would be a recall and re-election. Both scenarios for removal are extremely rare.

Instead, most boards are able to find common ground through board retreats and developmental workshops facilitated by a neutral third party such as ACCT. Resolution almost always can be reached through ensuring that all board members have a deep understanding of their oath of office, including their roles, responsibilities, and limitations as board members, and by keeping the board focused on the college's mission, vision, and values, along with the board's strategic plan and policies. Regular board development efforts are a way to stay on track, but even just regularly charging all board members to assess whether the board is adhering to the standards of good practice above can help to resolve conflicts and concerns and to focus the board's work.

Serving on any board is a real commitment to show up and participate, and one with unanticipated challenges that will inevitably occur, but it's also a rewarding commitment. ACCT is proud to represent so many members who have served their boards for decades, becoming ever more deeply engaged with their communities and ever more deeply committed to supporting their institutions' CEOs, keeping the board on track, and operating as an asset to the college while keeping an eye out for liabilities.

Speaking with One Voice — For Entire Communities

Perhaps what is most important about elected and appointed community college boards is that they represent their communities' interests. The term “community college” is so ubiquitous that most people have a fully formed idea of what a community college is and does, and that idea usually sets aside our colleges' *raison d'être*: **community**. When we talk about social equity, the best way to make advancements is from within communities, and who better to identify and meet the needs of the most disadvantaged students in

their communities than people who live among them? And who has more at stake to see these individuals succeed within their shared communities? We don't have to tell you the answer, but we will: No one. This is the ‘lay person's expertise’ of every board member, regardless of their professional backgrounds or any credential.

While we all know that sausage making is a messy business, the idea of board members being elected or appointed from within their communities and given the highest roles of oversight at a college that serves their communities is an elegant and beautiful design. Accreditors play a vital role in keeping colleges accountable about implementing sound and sustainable academic and training programs, adhering to regulations, and working in the interests of their students. In essence, accreditation is the brain that collaborates with the heart of the community-based governance system and the hands of the college's administration and faculty.

There are many ways to gauge the success of any given college board, but the ones most specific to community college boards are to assess how well they represent the interests of their communities, how well they serve the community college mission, and how well their individual members set aside their egos and their personal and political agendas to serve their communities' interests and their colleges' missions.

College leadership can and should operate like complex symphonies, but on occasion the various players may fall out of harmony. Like all great conductors, we at ACCT can provide boards the perfect notes by simply reaching out to us for guidance or checking in with the *Standards of Good Practice for Trustee Boards* to maintain balance, position themselves as one of their college's strongest assets, and avoid becoming liabilities to their communities.



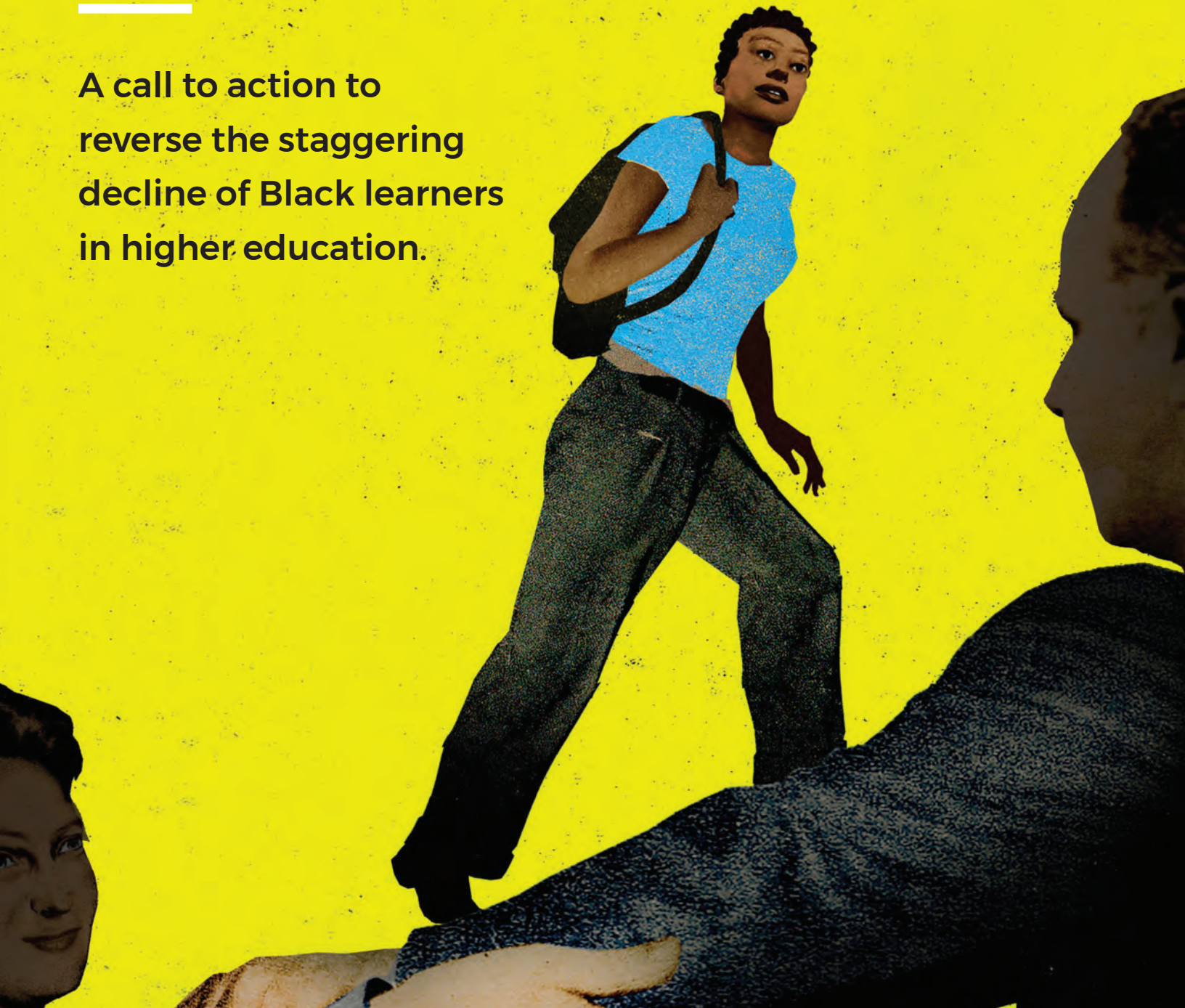
Jee Hang Lee is president and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees.



Rose Benavidez is the chair of the Association of Community College Trustees board of directors and chair of the South Texas College board of trustees.

Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Black Learner, Unapologetically

A call to action to
reverse the staggering
decline of Black learners
in higher education.





IN MARCH, A PARTNERSHIP OF leading higher education organizations including Achieving the Dream, Lumina Foundation, Education Counsel and HCM Strategists, released *Level Up: Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Black Learning, Unapologetically*, a policy report and call to action for higher education leaders. ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee

served on a national panel of advisers for the project, alongside National Panel Chair Keith Curry, Ph.D., president of Compton College.

The partners emphasize the importance of the use of “unapologetically” in the report’s title: “To be clear, the onus is not on Black learners. State and federal institutions and policymakers at all levels have a responsibility to ensure that places of higher education are accessible and welcoming to all, regardless of a student’s race or background. Delivering on this overdue right requires mobilizing core commitments with shared ownership among federal and state policymakers; local communities and their community colleges and other institutions of higher education; and philanthropic champions.”

Sobering Statistics

Black student college enrollments have been declining steadily since 2011, particularly at community colleges, which have historically represented a critical access point for Black learners as relatively affordable, open-access institutions. The 26 percent drop in Black community college enrollments between 2011 and 2019 represents a pre-pandemic loss of almost 300,000 students. The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students’ health, safety, and economic security has only accelerated these declines, with Black community college enrollment dropping by another 100,000 students in 2020 alone, returning enrollment to 2000-01 levels, according to the report.

The cumulative impact has been staggering: “Taking into account available public data since 2020, declines today are closer to a 44 percent drop nationally in Black community college enrollments,” the report states. “Decades of progress in educational opportunity and economic mobility have been erased.”

The report highlights other, equally sobering statistics, including:

- About 600,000 Black learners have disappeared from all American higher education institutions over the same period.
- These declines are not related to a reduced population of Black Americans; “in fact,” the report states, “the Black young adult population (18-34 years old) has steadily grown since 2000.”

“These data are not new,” the report states, “but our national response must be.”

Leveling Up by Getting REAL

The project’s primary recommendations assert that “in order to level up,” state and federal policymakers, institutions, and other educational organizations must address four “core commitment areas” to “truly improve the postsecondary value proposition for Black learners.” Dubbed “Get REAL,” the four areas are:

- **Real transparency and true affordability.** The vast majority — 80 percent — of Black Americans believe that college is unaffordable,

and too often Black learners leave postsecondary experiences with considerable debt. Among students earning an associate degree, only a third of Black learners graduated with no debt compared to 49% of white graduates, a trend not explained by parent income or education levels.

Along with ensuring transparency in tuition and fees, institutions must also ensure that Black learners see “the value of committing resources to higher education.” Only 50 percent of Black students in a 2022 poll believed their college loans were probably worthwhile, the report said.

- **Ensured success through shared ownership.** Institutions and policymakers must focus on “rebuilding confidence in a failed system and offering pathways leading to increased economic prosperity for Black families,” the report states.

Building shared ownership involves transparency in labor market outcomes, intentional partnerships that create postsecondary pathways and programs that meet national and local demand, better data practices, and investments in instruction and student services that meet the needs of Black learners. “States, institutions, and other entities committed to serving Black learners well must make value statements with their budgets by making direct investments in Black learners’ needs,” the report states.

- **Academic and social supports that create a sense of belonging.**

Colleges must commit to creating a sense of belonging for the varied experiences of Black learners, including academic and social supports, as well as services that address non-academic needs, including mental health, childcare, housing, transportation, and food — all challenges disproportionately faced by Black learners.

“To create this sense of belonging, a collaborative, coordinated effort is needed across academic departments, student affairs, and community organizations so Black learners are seen and holistically supported,” the report states.

- **Learner-centered teaching practices for Black learners.**

Too little attention is paid to the teaching and learning experiences of Black students and how these experiences contribute to their success, the report states. Faculty must be trained, retrained, and supported in culturally responsive pedagogy and creating inclusive environments.

“Centuries of lowered expectations and lack of cultural appreciation of Black students’ experiences must all be acknowledged and addressed,” the report states. “Black students deserve to be seen for the brilliant, unique individuals they are without having to constantly battle overt anti-Black bias, microaggressions, or non-inclusive practices which can all inhibit the learning process.”

Changing the Reality, not the Narrative

The report’s authors stress that these commitments must not just be about increasing “Black learners’ understanding of the inherent value of postsecondary education.” The work, they say, “is rooted in acknowledging that postsecondary education in its current and originally designed structures does not provide Black learners the access and opportunities that have led to economic and life success for others.”

“This reality must be changed — not just the narrative — through intentional investment and joint action delivering on these core commitments to ensure Black learner thrive,” the report states.

The report and call to action, as well as other information, are available at www.community4blacklearnerexcellence.com.

INSIDE OUT:

COMMUNITY COLLEGES FAR & WIDE

Lumina Foundation's Million Dollar Community College Challenge highlights the importance of telling every college's story.

BY SHAUNA DAVIS AND MARY LAPHEN POPE

LUMINA FOUNDATION SET OUT TO HELP COMMUNITY colleges think about making memorable connections with their communities through brand-building and marketing as key components of their enrollment efforts. We launched The Million Dollar Community College Challenge last year and invited colleges to tell us how they would transform their brand-building and marketing efforts to be more inclusive of today's students. Thousands of professionals engaged, hundreds of colleges applied, and we learned so much about the brand visions that community college leaders have for their colleges.

Brand perception isn't a slogan; it's a sensory experience. From the website to the parking lot to the classroom, every touchpoint is an opportunity to connect with potential students and build your brand. Now more than ever, community colleges need new ways to connect with millions of Americans who can enhance their career path with a college degree or short-term credential. The official Million Dollar Community College Challenge may be over, but the goal remains. While human connection will always be a powerful outreach tool, engaging the community through multimedia to help improve brand visibility and spread your college's brand story is a vital part of a robust and proactive marketing plan.

Whether connecting with potential students, raising awareness with donors and partner organizations, or showcasing all that your college offers potential employers, every college has a creative, powerful, and interesting story to tell.

While we couldn't provide every college with a million dollars, we launched a series of website workshops and a five-part marketing academy to help more colleges do this very important work. Now, we are telling the stories of four dynamic community colleges through documentary video to inspire community college leaders to communicate what's truly special about their college and to share their stories.

We traveled far and wide, covering the mainland United States and

Micronesia to visit a United States Territory, capturing the community college experience which we feature in this four-part series: **Inside Out: Community Colleges Far and Wide**. The colleges include Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (Minn.), Yavapai College (Ariz.), Guam Community College, and Cape Fear Community College (N.C.). At every stop, we met engaging faculty and talented students, toured impressive facilities, and walked away excited about what each college is doing. We never intended these to be recruitment videos. Instead, we set out to capture the community college experience and educate the public on the diverse range of two-year institutions. Our tagline sums it up this way: *We bet you never thought about community colleges like this*. Check out the first spotlight on Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet, Minnesota, and stay tuned for more on the series as we roll out the rest of the videos in the coming months. To see the video, go to www.luminafoundation.org/challenge.

There's something special about every community college, and it's essential to bring that unique quality to light to help more people understand the education and memorable experience community colleges can offer.

There's never been a more critical time to tell a better story about community colleges.



Shauna Davis is strategy director for community college participation at Lumina Foundation.

Mary Laphen Pope is strategy officer for community college participation at Lumina Foundation.



ACCT State-Based Governance Leadership Institutes

The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) is pleased to partner with state community college associations, systems, and related organizations to design and deliver customized governance leadership training for community college trustees and presidents in their respective states.

State-based Governance Leadership Institutes (GLIs) are one- or two-day programs, facilitated by ACCT expert consultants, that provide information and training on key issues and principles of governance practice. Through interactive panels, small group discussions, case-study exercises, and informal networking, participants build expertise and work through real-world issues and challenges.

State-based GLIs are designed to complement ACCT's national programs and events, such as national GLIs, the annual ACCT Leadership Congress, and the Community College National Legislative Summit. Content is developed collaboratively by ACCT and the partner organization, and may target new and/or experienced trustees and institutional leaders. State-specific issues, such as legislative statutes and requirements, are typically addressed, as well as broader governance topics such as:

- Roles and responsibilities of a public governing board
- Ethical governance and conflicts of interest
- The policy role of the board
- The Board's fiduciary responsibilities (financial, organizational, legal, ethical, and regulatory issues)
- Robert's Rules/parliamentary procedures
- Review standards of good practice (Board processes, officer roles, trustee effectiveness)
- Board processes (committees, officers, role of the chair)
- The Board/CEO relationship

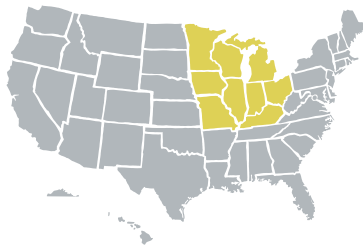
It was local! It was in person! The panelists represented the topics and their community college well. I was surprised to learn a lot about Robert's Rules.

— Illinois GLI participant,
Fall 2022

Getting started

State associations or other organizations interested in developing a GLI should contact Christina Simons, Director of Educational Programs and Events, at csimons@acct.org to arrange a phone call to discuss program needs and scheduling.

AROUND THE REGIONS



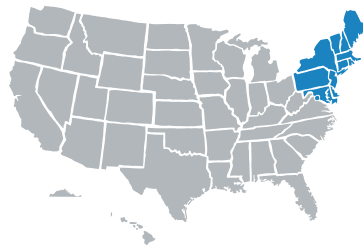
CENTRAL REGION

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker proposed more than \$1.2 billion in new education spending as part of his \$49.6 billion spending plan for the budget year that begins July 1. The proposal, which includes a \$19.4 million increase for community colleges, would also increase funding for the Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) by \$100 million which, coupled with federal Pell grants, would make community college free to nearly all Illinois residents at or below median income level. He also formally proclaimed April to be Illinois Community College Month.

For the first time in four years, nearly 100 community college officials and students gathered at the **Michigan** state capitol to support higher education investments and policy changes as part of Community College Month. Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued a proclamation declaring April Community College Month in Michigan.

Michigan corrections officers are now eligible to attend one of the state's 31 community colleges tuition-free under a new grant program from the Michigan Community College Association. State law requires corrections officers to complete 15 college credits as a requirement for employment.

Missouri community colleges across the St. Louis region are gearing up to expand educational programs for advanced manufacturing with the help of a \$25 million federal Build Back Better challenge grant that St. Louis won last year.



NORTHEAST REGION

The head of **Connecticut** State Colleges and Universities wants to expand the free college program to all community college students. Under an expanded program called PACT+, all community college students across CSCU's 12 locations would be eligible for free college.

An increase in enrollment at **Maine's** community colleges has motivated lawmakers to consider the possibility of expanding on-campus housing at the schools. Enrollment in Maine's community colleges is up 12% since the state created a free tuition program.

Maryland governor Wes Moore, a community college graduate, issued a proclamation declaring April Community College Month in the state of Maryland.

In **Massachusetts**, Boston has expanded its tuition-free community college program, opening it up to all residents regardless of age, income, or immigration status as part of a \$4 million federal investment to grow the Tuition-Free Community College (TFCC) Plan announced by Mayor Michelle Wu.

New Jersey Pathways, formed by New Jersey's community colleges and the New Jersey Business & Industry Association, is entering its second year. The career-focused initiative now has more than 1,200 industry and education partners statewide.

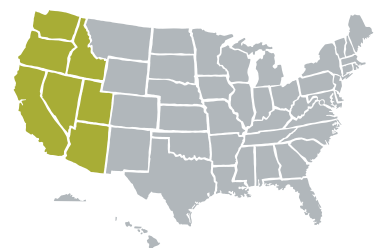
New Jersey's Hudson County Community College has teamed with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation to start a phlebotomy technician certification program specifically for court-involved individuals. The three-month program is funded by NJ HealthWorks, which is sponsored by the U.S.

Department of Labor and administered by the New Jersey Community College Health Profession Consortium Partners.

A proposal by **New York** Gov. Kathy Hochul that would automatically admit all high school students to their local community college is receiving high marks from education leaders, who say the plan would tear down barriers keeping many from obtaining a higher education. Hochul laid out the proposal as part of her State of the State address, along with a series of plans aimed at bolstering the State University of New York system.

New York City's public community colleges assigned no new students this year to remedial classes, marking a major milestone in how the system supports students with academic gaps. Instead of non-credit-bearing prerequisite courses, CUNY's community colleges are using a corequisite model.

Pennsylvania's 10 state universities and 15 community colleges have pledged to strengthen their relationship to make it easier for students to transfer between them. An update to a transfer policy of the State System of Higher Education ensures admission for community college students who earn an associate degree to any of the system universities.



PACIFIC REGION

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs proclaimed April 2023 as Arizona Community College Month, recognizing the impact of the state's 10 community college districts.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom proposed delaying by a year nearly \$1.2 billion in loans and grants that would build housing for

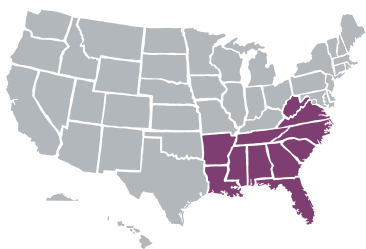
thousands of students at affordable rates — money the state promised campuses in last year’s state budget. Newsom seeks the delay to help balance the state’s projected \$22.5 billion budget deficit in 2023-24.

The California Community College Chancellor’s Office has \$115 million to spend to reduce the burden of textbook costs across its 115-campus system. Every community college will receive \$20,000 to design zero-textbook-cost programs and an additional \$180,000 to implement them. Some colleges will also get larger, competitive grants.

A new program led by the University of **Hawai’i** Community Colleges will provide free courses to eligible students who anticipate entering high-demand jobs in healthcare, tech, clean energy and more. Good Jobs Hawai’i is a \$35 million initiative to provide up to 3,000 residents with the skills they need to fill gaps in some of the state’s more highly desired positions.

Several years of data from Central **Oregon** Community College show that Oregon Promise students who took part in the school’s mandatory first year experience were more likely to stay in school and had better first-term grades than their peers who didn’t receive the grant.

Teachers and students from several **Washington** community colleges held walkouts and rallies calling for higher pay for teachers and more funding from the state. Some of the biggest rallies included a teach-in at the Washington State Capitol and walkouts at Seattle Central College, Yakima Valley College, and Lynnwood Convention Center.



SOUTHERN REGION

Alabama’s community colleges have experienced an increase in enrollment by

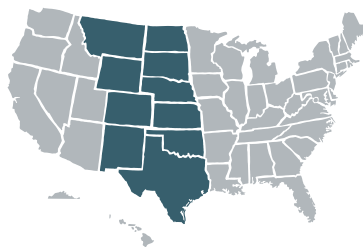
at least 5 percent each year since 2020. Students and alumni of colleges within the Alabama Community College System add \$6.6 billion to Alabama’s economy, supporting one out of every 27 jobs in the state.

An **Arkansas** bill sponsored by a Northwest Arkansas Community College official and signed into law makes it easier for a board of trustees to expand if a community college pursues new territory for its taxing district.

An initial cohort of 10 **North Carolina** community colleges are focused on advancing attainment for Latino students across the state as part of a partnership between the Hunt Institute, LatinxED, and the Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research.

The 16 colleges of the **Kentucky** Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) are participating in the #KCTCSPROUD campaign to improve awareness of the professional, personal, and economic advantages of attending a community college.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee proposed a \$1 billion investment in technical colleges, promoted the expansion of CTE opportunities in K-12 schools, and highlighted a 90% job attainment rate by technical college graduates.



WESTERN REGION

Community colleges in **Colorado** may soon be able to issue high school diplomas if a bill passed by the state Senate

becomes law. Senate Bill 7 seeks to allow community colleges, area technical colleges, and local district colleges to issue high school diplomas to students who complete the minimum high school graduation requirements of their local school districts. The bill would also add \$2 million in annual funding to the state’s Adult Education Grant Program to help education institutions pay for the high school diploma programs.

Nebraska’s Metropolitan Community College is seeking to take over the Marine Corps Reserve Training Center adjacent to its Fort Omaha campus for future expansion, a move that would effectively end a 155-year military presence at the historic site.

A **Texas** bill would dramatically change how the state funds its community colleges. Along with calling for a performance-based funding model, a commission of lawmakers and community college presidents recommended providing more support for high school students who want to earn college credit, more state grants for low-income students, and a stronger commitment to workforce development programs that show they can help students get a job and good wages.

A \$3 million federal grant to Western **Wyoming** Community College will help boost southwest Wyoming’s healthcare workforce. The grant comes from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration and is funded under the Assistance to Coal Communities initiative.

Around the Regions provides an opportunity to share what’s happening in the states and around the regions. This section focuses on state legislative and budgetary issues, economic development, and finance. Please e-mail items from press releases or newsletters to ACCT at acctinfo@acct.org.



Legal Issues Impacting Community Colleges

Recent rulings and guidance involve social media, school bathrooms, and student athletics.

BY IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD, ACCT GENERAL COUNSEL

The majority decision pointed out that a school setting “is not the workplace” and that *Bostock* expressly decided not to tackle the issue of segregated lockers or bathrooms. The majority concluded that the U.S. has a long history of separating sexes when it comes to the use of public bathrooms, and such sex-based classifications have never necessarily violated the equal protection clause.

THE FOLLOWING RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE day-to-day administration of community colleges.

Tenured public school teacher’s termination for unprofessional social media posts reversed. A tenured public school history teacher who was terminated after publicly posting “unprofessional” and “disrespectful” social media posts had her termination reversed by an Illinois appellate court.

The teacher claimed not to realize that her posts were public as opposed to being just distributed to “friends” on Facebook. Among other posts, the teacher shared a Facebook post from a group called Bored Teachers which stated, “I can think of no better form of birth control than to have people observe my class for a day.” In another post, she described a student’s parents as “clearly crazy” and “nuts.” The teacher was terminated for making unprofessional remarks about students on Facebook, and the termination had previously been affirmed by a trial court. The head of HR testified that the plaintiff was not remorseful and thought the posts were therapeutic.

The Illinois Appellate Court concluded that the plaintiff’s posts were “clearly foolish” and “unprofessional.” Nevertheless, the appellate court concluded that the Illinois state statute afforded tenured teachers the right to warning and a chance to remedy their transgressions. (*Kelleher v. Illinois State Board of Education*, Ill App. Ct. 1st Dist. No. 1–22–0058, Order 2/14/23).

A divided appeals court rules that separating bathrooms by biological sex does not violate the Constitution or Title IX. The full 11th Circuit Court of Appeals (covering Florida, Alabama, and Georgia) recently held in a sharply divided 7-4 decision that separating school bathrooms by biological sex is constitutional and does not violate Title IX. (*Adams v. School Board of St. Johns County, Florida*, 11th Cir. No. 18–13592, 12/30/22).

The case involved a Florida school board which restricted bathroom use by biological sex, barring students who identified as a sex different from their biological sex to use the bathroom of their choice. The majority decision, which was subject to multiple dissents, rejected the transgender plaintiff’s reliance on the Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County*, which held that under federal job discrimination law sex discrimination includes bias based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

The majority decision pointed out that a school setting “is not the workplace” and that *Bostock* expressly decided not to tackle the issue of segregated lockers or bathrooms. The majority concluded that the U.S. has a long history of separating sexes when it comes to the use of public bathrooms, and such sex-based classifications have never necessarily violated the equal protection clause. It is likely that other circuits may decide this issue differently, setting up the ultimate decision on this issue by the Supreme Court.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) general counsel concludes that the NCAA violated the National Labor Relations Act by failing to treat student athlete basketball

and football players as employees. The decision by the NLRB's general counsel could eventually lead to the ability of these student athletes to form labor unions. The final decision rests with the full NLRB, which will eventually address this matter.

Barring settlement of the case, the NLRB's Los Angeles regional office will issue a complaint against the NCAA, and likely the Pac-12 Conference and the University of Southern California, for failure to treat these student athletes as employees. The case was brought to the NLRB by the National College Players Association, an advocacy group seeking to organize student athletes.

Department of Labor office rescinds Trump Administration religious carveout that allowed federal contractors to ignore anti-discrimination obligations based on their faith. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) announced new regulations on February 28, 2023, rescinding Trump Administration regulations allowing government contractors to ignore certain anti-discrimination obligations based on their faith. The soon-to-be-revoked Trump Administration rule faced continued opposition by civil rights groups and LGBTQ advocates.

The new regulations will bring back the prior standard, which had been in place for nearly two decades. The new regulations will be published shortly and effective 30 days after publication. This rule applies to the OFCCP enforcement of anti-discrimination rules under Executive Order 11246 and is applicable to all federal government contractors.

Attempts to increase a unionized employee's production are permissible "coaching" on job performance improvement. An NLRB administrative law judge recently dismissed a union's claim that an employer committed an unfair labor practice by unilaterally changing working conditions when it suggested that a unionized staff reporter increase his output of written articles. The judge concluded that when the newspaper's editors suggested that the reporter "strive" to write 15 articles every 30 days, this action was a permissible attempt to "coach," develop, and improve the quality and production of the reporter's work (*The News Guild v. The Morning Call LLP*, NLRB ALJ No. 04-CA-292410, 3/9/23).

The newspaper's editors began meeting with the reporter every two weeks when they noticed he was lagging behind the standard article production goal of five articles per week. The judge noted that the editors did not threaten the reporter with penalties if he did not meet the goals. More importantly, the judge concluded that the goals were not a change in working conditions because they were actually less than the goals given to the rest of the newsroom. The case clearly reinforces an employer's prerogative to meet with a unionized employee and suggest ways to improve job performance consistent with applicable workplace standards.

While overall union membership reaches historic low, U.S. labor unions engaged in the most strikes in 2022 since 2007, led by education service employees including teachers. More than 225,000 employees engaged in 314 strikes last year, more than any year since 2007. Education service employees accounted for three out of every five of those workers, according to an analysis by Bloomberg News.

The largest strike of the year was at the University of California, where approximately 48,000 graduate student workers struck for six weeks,

demanding increased wages and changes to working conditions. This strike was the largest strike occurring at any college or university since at least 1990, according to the Bloomberg database. The graduate student workers were represented by the United Auto Workers union.

Separately, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA) collectively engaged in the second highest number of work stoppages during 2022, only surpassed by the Service Employees Union (SEIU). Collectively these two unions had the largest share of union members involved in strike activity in 2022. Analysts conclude that dual economic factors — a tight labor market and rising inflation — led to the increase in strike activity. Union leaders also claim that in addition to the rise in strike activity, many other contract negotiations narrowly avoided strike situations as a result of diligent negotiation activity on both sides of the table.

Nonetheless, overall union membership dropped to a historic low percentage of the U.S. workforce in 2023, falling to 10.1%, lower than the previous low of 10.3% recorded in 2019. In 1983, the first year the government began collecting these numbers, union membership was over 20% of the total American workforce.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reports a 20% increase in discrimination charges and a substantial increase in monetary benefits for victims of discrimination in FY 2022. The EEOC reported that charges filed against employers rose from 61,331 in FY 2021 to 73,485 in FY 2022, "as the nation emerged from the pandemic." The announcement came as the Biden Administration proposed an increase in EEOC funding for the new fiscal year.

The EEOC also announced that it increased the amount of monetary benefits it obtained for victims of discrimination in FY 2022. The agency reported that it obtained \$513 million in benefits for victims of discrimination in FY 2022, up from \$484 million in benefits obtained for discrimination victims in FY 2021.

OSHA reports a 20% increase in inspectors under the Biden Administration. The number of federal workplace safety inspectors has increased by 20% during the Biden Administration, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The federal safety agency hired 227 inspectors during 2022, bringing its total inspectors to 900. Across all OSHA staff positions, the agency has grown by 17% from 1,800 to 2,100 employees.

This growth enhances OSHA's ability to perform more workplace safety inspections and investigate more pending employee workplace safety complaints. Another result of this significant growth of inspectors is that one in five inspectors now have less than one year of experience on the job. OSHA had faced criticism that it had not adequately responded to worker complaints.



Ira Michael Shepard is Of Counsel with the law firm of Saul Ewing, LLP, in Washington, D.C., and ACCT's General Counsel.



A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Students who feel like they belong are much more likely to think their education is meeting their needs and worth the money, according to the Digital Learning Pulse Survey.

By Jeff Seaman and Julia Seaman

"I have had a great experience so far, and I felt fully supported and encouraged by my school!"

"My school does not support students during times of trouble and trauma."

"The community is very uplifting and positive, and it's a good environment to study in."

"I would love more of a relationship with my school in terms of meeting people and feeling a part of a community."

AS THE STUDENT QUOTES ABOVE DEMONSTRATE, feeling supported and part of a community can be essential to achieving academic success. But do community college students feel they are part of a larger community? And, more importantly, does this impact their views about other aspects of their relationships with their colleges?

Good news, bad news

The Digital Learning Pulse Survey polled more than 1,100 community college students during the fall of 2022 about the nature of students' relationships with the institutions they were attending. The good news is that nearly one-half (49%) of all students agree that they are part of their school's community, a number far greater than the 17% who do not agree. The bad news, however, is that half of all students are either neutral or negative about feeling they are part of a community at their school.

Students who identified as female were somewhat more likely to feel a part of their school's community (51% compared to 47% for males), and those receiving financial aid were more likely (52%) to feel part of a

community compared to 42% who were not receiving financial assistance). Hispanic students reported the highest level of being part of the school community (56%), with Black students next at 51% and 48% identifying as white agreeing.

The impact of community

Being part of a community can lead to better outcomes for students — the relationship between feeling that you are part of a supportive community and how you judge the education and services of your institution are strongly linked. If, for example, you feel that your institution has gone above and beyond in supporting you, you are more likely to feel supported and part of the community. Likewise, if you already think you are part of a school community, you may be more generous in grading the services and support you receive.

To explore the potential impact of community on students' views of their institutions, we split the students based on their response to whether they feel part of the community. These groups are 1) those who agreed that they felt part of the school community ("community" group), 2) those

who disagreed (“not community” group), and 3) those who were neutral (“neutral” group). We then compared the results for these groups across several key questions.

Meeting student educational needs

“Overall, my time is well spent being around my community while also making sure I have time for myself to prepare for jobs.”

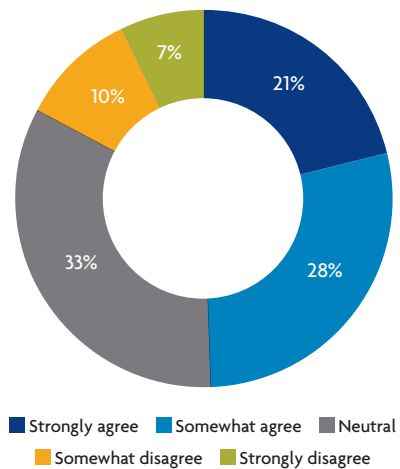
We found a direct relationship between whether students believe they are in a community and how well they thought their courses met their educational needs.

Students provided a letter grade of “A” through “F” on how well they thought their fall 2022 courses met their education needs. Most students gave good grades for this question, with 82% of all community college students reporting a “B” or an “A.” However, the results were significantly

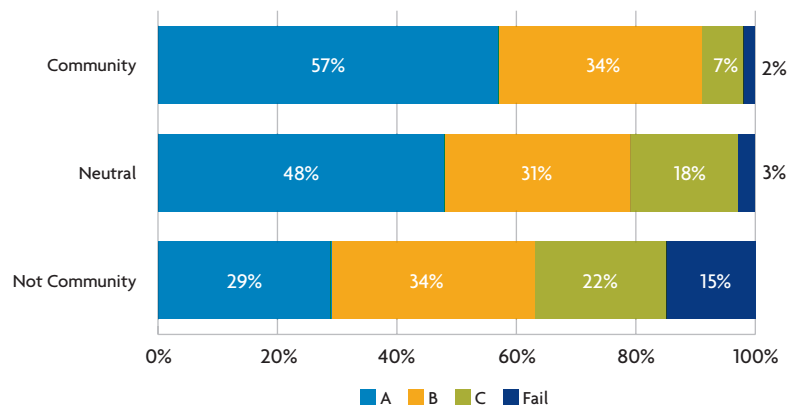
different between those who felt part of a community and those who did not.

Students who agreed that they were part of their school's community gave far higher grades to their courses, with 57% reporting an “A” and another 34% a “B.” In contrast, only 29% of students who disagreed that they were part of the school community gave an “A” grade, with a similar 34% providing a grade of “B.” Only 2% of the “community” students gave a failing grade, while 15% of the “not community” group reported a failing grade. Most students who believe that their institution is failing them come from the small group who also do not feel that they are part of a community. The neutral student group grading fell between the community and not community groups, though closer to the better community grades.

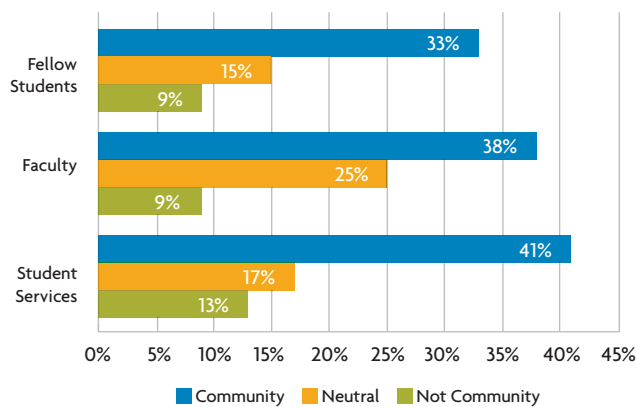
I feel like part of the community at my school



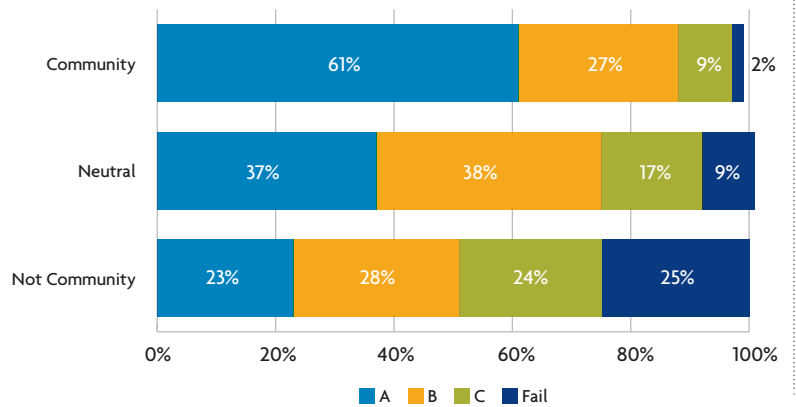
How well your Fall 2022 courses met your educational needs



I have an excellent relationship with:



How well your education is worth what you're paying



Students who feel part of a community at their school have a much more positive view of a wide range of issues. In addition to thinking their education is better at meeting their needs and getting their money's worth, they are also much more optimistic about various other factors, including using digital course materials and taking online and hybrid courses.

Worth the money

"So far, classes are academically much more difficult than in my prior education, but I feel well-supported by school resources to succeed."

"This college does not set you up for anything. I feel like I wasted my tuition and money."

A feeling of community for students is also linked to the feeling that they are getting their money's worth at school.

The project asked students to grade if they received their money's worth from their institution. The results are even more striking than the question about meeting educational needs. Of students who considered themselves part of a school community, 61% gave a grade of "A," and only 2% reported a failing grade. Conversely, only 23% of students who did not consider themselves part of the school community gave an "A" grade, with even more (25%) giving a failing grade. Again, the neutral group gave grades between the two other groups.

Community = people

"I feel teachers value the success of students."

"Everyone from the staff to the students and even visitors are all so friendly and helpful!"

A sense of community is related to the nature and quality of interpersonal interactions. Community college students were asked about the quality of their interactions with other groups at their institution. The proportion of students who reported being part of the school's community were much more likely to say they had "excellent" relationships with others. In contrast, those who did not feel part of the community had the lowest proportion of reporting excellent relationships.

Does feeling that you are part of a community lead to better-quality interactions with others, or is it the other way around? Most likely, both are true. The results show a solid relationship between interpersonal interactions and a sense of community, but not if one causes the other.

Summary

"This institution is clearly built for 18- and 19-year-olds who do not work and are not parents. Non-traditional students are not supported or accommodated."

"My experience has been great other than when I try to find help with student services. They are often no help at all and just send me to a different department."

What conclusions can we draw from these results?

Students who feel part of a community at their school have a much more positive view of a wide range of issues. In addition to thinking their education is better at meeting their needs and getting their money's

worth, they are also much more optimistic about various other factors. For example, they are much more positive about using digital course materials and taking future online and hybrid courses from their institution.

Feeling part of the community is strongly related to the quality of interactions with fellow students, student services, and faculty. However, many additional elements can build a community for students.

Open-ended comments from students cite multiple factors supporting their view that they feel part of the institution's community. Likewise, those who do not think they are part of a community cite various factors. Both groups note how flexible and caring the faculty are as critical. The presence or lack of clear institutional communications is also often mentioned. The quality of services has a significant role as well. Services that are ineffective, hard to access, or just missing are commonly mentioned as a problem. In contrast, others cite responsive and caring services as an essential reason for feeling like a valued community member.

"I tried to attend a different school, but I chose to go back here as I feel valued, and the school provides excellent study materials and prepares students to be ready for the real world."

No single factor makes students feel they are part of their institution's community. The truth is much more nuanced. However, students who feel part of a community have better opinions about their education and institution. Therefore, building communities for students is a vital support step that can lead to improved academic outcomes and better overall well-being.

About the Digital Learning Pulse Survey

The Digital Learning Pulse Survey is an ongoing research project to understand how the pandemic is changing higher education. Bay View Analytics conducted the project in partnership with Cengage, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), and College Pulse. The project surveyed 1,177 community college students during the Fall of 2022.



Jeff Seaman, Ph.D., is director of Bay View Analytics.



Julia E. Seaman, Ph.D., is research director for Bay View Analytics. Visit bayviewanalytics.com to learn more.

Checking in *and* Brushing Up

Being a dedicated board member means being dedicated to ongoing education and self-development.

BY DAVID CONNER



SERVICE TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF directors is a great responsibility. It is a commitment that requires an ongoing dedication to developing one's governance knowledge and regular self-assessments, both individually and as a full board, to fulfill the charge of being an effective and ethical board member. New trustees often are directed toward governance education to build a foundation upon which to serve on their boards. Longer-serving trustees and their board as a whole also can benefit from refreshers and ongoing upskilling. Whether you've been on a board for two years or 10 years, every board benefits from trustees who periodically review their governance knowledge.

Here are some steps that a board member who has been on their board for several years can take to brush up on their governance knowledge and evaluate their performance as a trustee and the full board's performance.

1. Attend governance training and professional development programs.

ACCT's Governance Leadership Institutes and the annual ACCT Leadership Congress are training programs designed to help board members develop their governance knowledge and skills. We're also excited to launch ACCT Connect, a new online social-learning platform with a Facebook-like interface that includes governance-education courses as well as a variety of ways to connect with your fellow trustees for peer-to-peer education (see p. 12). Foundational topics include governance principles, board roles and responsibilities, ethical and legal obligations, financial management, and board communication. Attending these programs can help board members stay up to date on the latest governance practices and trends in a supportive environment designed to reinforce learning and add nuance through interactive discussions with instructors and peers.

2. Review governance resources.

ACCT offers a number of governance resources, including *Trustee Quarterly* magazine, *Trusteeship in Community Colleges* and other books, and ACCT Connect instructional videos and guides that cover different aspects of governance. Most boards also follow Robert's Rules of Order for meeting procedures, and trustees should be familiar with parliamentary procedures so that they can conduct themselves appropriately during formal board meetings.

3. Conduct self-assessments.

A self-assessment of governance knowledge and performance is a great way to objectively gauge what knowledge and skills could stand to be improved upon. Self-assessment involves reviewing one's strengths and weaknesses, identifying areas for improvement, and setting goals for improvement. ACCT can help member boards to perform objective self-assessments upon request.

4. Regularly evaluate board performance.

Board members can also assess the full board's performance through a board performance evaluation. This involves evaluating the board's effectiveness in carrying out its governance responsibilities and board goals, identifying areas for improvement, and developing action plans to address those areas. Board members can use a board evaluation tool to help them evaluate the board's performance, such as a questionnaire that asks about the board's performance in different areas of governance.

For more information about ACCT's governance education offerings, contact Kielo Savilaakso at ksavilaakso@acct.org. For information about facilitated self-assessments, board performance evaluations, presidential assessments or any other evaluation service, contact Colleen Allen at callen@acct.org.

Engage Your Board. Advance Your College.

ACCT Board Services provide opportunities to strengthen the unique role of board members and to develop an effective board.

Services Include

- Retreats
- Board self-assessment
- Presidential evaluations
- Succession planning
- Institutional leadership analysis
- Board policy review
- Mediation and conflict resolution

Call to learn more about ways to engage your board and make use of each trustee's skills and expertise.

Contact:

Colleen Allen
Director of Retreats and Evaluation Services
callen@acct.org

202-775-6490 | www.acct.org/services

EXECUTIVE SEARCH

The staff and consultants of the Association of Community College Trustees are pleased to have assisted in the search for the following community college executive officers.



COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF SPOKANE, WASH.

DR. KEVIN BROCKBANK

Chancellor

“Dr. Kevin Brockbank has demonstrated his leadership and optimistic vision, grounded in a commitment to ensuring our community college district continues to be a leader across the nation.”

— MIKE WILSON

CHAIR, COMMUNITY COLLEGES OF SPOKANE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

LOS ANGELES TRADE-TECHNICAL COLLEGE,
LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIF.

DR. ALFRED MCQUARTERS

President



“Dr. Alfred McQuarters is a proven leader who is committed to equitable student success and academic excellence. His broad experience includes both college administrative and faculty roles with several institutions. He is a passionate and committed educational leader who has dedicated his career to ensuring access to higher education in historically marginalized communities and advocating for educational equity. We are pleased to have him serve as the next Los Angeles Trade-Technical College president.”

— DR. FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ

CHANCELLOR, LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



OHLONE COLLEGE, CALIF.

CHARLES SASAKI

President/Superintendent

“On behalf of the board of trustees, we congratulate and welcome Charles Sasaki. His extensive experience and work with community colleges coupled with his strong leadership and work ethic make him the right choice to lead Ohlone. We look forward to working together to provide our students with the highest quality education possible.”

—SUZANNE LEE CHAN

CHAIR, OHLONE COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RETREATS AND WORKSHOPS

Thank you to the following colleges who have used ACCT to facilitate a board retreat, board self-assessment or CEO evaluation, training institute or other board education service in recent months. We appreciate your trusting ACCT to assist you with your board development needs.

Aims Community College, Colo.	Iowa Central Community College
Bellingham Technical College, Wash.	Kirtland Community College, Mich.
Bermuda College	Laredo College, Texas
Bunker Hill Community College, Mass.	Lee College, Texas
Chesapeake College, Mass.	Middlesex College, N.J.
Crowder College, Mo.	Montgomery College, Md.
Dawson Community College, Mont.	New Mexico Junior College
Del Mar College, Texas	North Idaho College
Eastern Iowa Community College	Northland Pioneer College, Ariz.
Eastern Wyoming College	Rio Hondo College, Calif.
El Camino College, Calif.	Salish Kootenai Community College, Mont.
Elgin Community College, Ill.	Southeast New Mexico College, N.M.
Flathead Valley Community College, Mont.	Erie Community College, State University of New York
Florence Darlington Technical College, S.C.	Tarrant County College, Texas
Glen Oaks Community College, Mich.	Western Piedmont Community College, N.C.
Gogebic Community College, Mich.	Yavapai College, Ariz.
Halifax Community College, N.C.	Yosemite Community College District, Calif.
Harper College, Ill.	
Houston Community College, Texas	



Find out more about board retreats and workshops at www.acct.org/page/board-retreats-workshops
boardservices@acct.org

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.



ACCT Director of Retreats and Evaluation Services
Colleen Allen can be reached at callen@acct.org.



interface

A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Dear PBSN Members,

On behalf of ACCT's board, staff and membership, please accept our sincere appreciation for the work you do as liaisons to your college boards.

We understand that your positions require you to wear many hats and not just to be able to do but be the best at carrying out a broad variety of responsibilities.

We know that you are committed to your institutions' missions of offering access to high-quality higher education to all students, and to empowering your students to advance in this world. Your commitment and your work are central to our collaborative work to change lives for the better.

All of us at ACCT are grateful for everything you do.

ACCT will be launching some exciting new services in the coming year, including new ways to connect our entire membership, and we hope to expand and deepen our relationship with professional board staff members as we move forward together. You are vital to the work this association does, and we hope we are valuable assets in your work as well. ACCT Director of Member Engagement Kielo Savilaakso is available to help with any needs you may have. Reach out to her at ksavilaakso@acct.org.



A Gentle But Firm Call to Order

BY LARISA PFEIFFER
PBSN PRESIDENT

“AS WE GOVERN OUR INSTITUTIONS, I'D ASK ALL TRUSTEES TO REMEMBER that the work we do is not for recognition but for realization. It is a reminder that our responsibility in public service is simply to effect progress, to work to make people's lives better, to work to make our communities better, and to work to make this world better,” Rose Benavidez, 2023 chair of the ACCT Board of Directors, recently wrote. Every now and then I read a sentence that is so powerful that I choose to stop and just hold onto that space for a few minutes. I remember thinking that if I read nothing else in the 2023 winter edition of *Trustee Quarterly*, I still would have read the most powerful line.

It is in Chair Benevidez's quote that a charge can be heard — a gentle but firm call to order. One can learn by attending just one ACCT conference that those that respond to the call of trusteeship do so, typically, from an honorable position — the desire to serve in a system that opens doors, creates opportunities, and builds communities. This is the common denominator between trustees, CEOs, faculty, staff, and students. We all want to be a part of this space in higher education and we want to focus our energy on obtaining the information that enables us to advocate and govern well.

ACCT creates a national neighborhood — we have big, beautiful streets filled with over a thousand amazing institutions with over half a million employees, according to *IBISWorld*, serving nearly 9 million students who earned an astonishing 877,240 associate degrees in 2020-21, according to the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's

continued on page 42



Learn more at www.acct.org/page/professional-board-staff-network.



continued from page 41

Teachers College. Leading in and out of this neighborhood are overpasses and highways filled with trustees coming from many different sectors who understand that it takes every level of the institutions they serve, along with the resources provided by ACCT, to support the people that make the headlines and get the opportunities to advocate in front of legislatures and build collaborations with industry partners. And like any model of urban planning, there are those who work tirelessly and often go unrecognized to ensure everyone is successful — the support staff.

The Professional Board Staff Network (PBSN) is an ACCT affinity group of professionals that work behind the scenes to help CEOs and trustees succeed in their roles. We are very fortunate to have organizations like ACCT and members of PBSN dedicated to ensuring the good people that find themselves in the role of trustee have a way to learn about their role and are able to engage in ways that leverage their power and connections to ensure we are making people’s lives, our communities, and even our world better — just as Chair Benavidez has asked us to do.

The chair shared in her article that her grandfather would remind the family that he “rode in the back of a pickup truck so that [we] could ride in the front of an airplane.” Her words are a powerful way to acknowledge that each of us contributes through the ways we are empowered — by the access provided, and the mentorship available — to be “agents of transformational and generational change.”

We are working together to answer the call to make the world a little

bit better, one student, one faculty member, one staff person at a time.

It is through a united front that we hold each other accountable and lift each other up, so that the leaders behind us will be positioned even better to take their followers to the next level, because we did our work well.

In the midst of all the learning and activity, take the time to look around you and recognize that no matter the stature or role of the person that is there, they have enormous influence and ability to shape not only your day, but also the next generation of leaders. The first charge in that gentle but firm call to order is that you work to make people’s lives better. Be kind, be generous, and be humble — your work matters.

Larisa Pfeiffer recently received her doctorate in Community College Leadership from Ferris State University. Her background in higher education includes 14 years at the College of Southern Maryland serving across the organization in a variety roles and currently as the Chief of Staff. Her doctorate work focused on the onboarding of trustees to ensure successful understanding and demonstration of their fiduciary responsibilities. She has been actively involved with ACCT and PBSN for the last four years.



2023 Professional Board Staff Network

2023-24 TO-DO LIST

Important Dates & Deadlines

- JUNE 5**
ACCT Awards Nominations Deadline
- JULY 1**
 - Bylaws Amendments & Resolutions Deadline
 - Declarations to run for ACCT Board of Directors At-Large, Regional Director, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Seats Deadline
- AUGUST 2-4**
Governance Leadership Institute for New Trustees, Washington, D.C.
- AUGUST 4**
Early registration discount deadline for the ACCT Leadership Congress
- OCTOBER 9-12**
2023 ACCT Leadership Congress, Las Vegas, NV
- NOVEMBER 1**
ACCT DEI, Governance and Bylaws, Finance and Audit, Member Communications and Education, and Public Policy and Advocacy Committees application deadline
- FEBRUARY 5-8**
2024 Community College National Legislative Summit, Washington, D.C.
- ALL YEAR**
Share your success stories by pitching articles to *Trustee Quarterly* magazine & engaging with your peers on ACCT Connect.
- ALL YEAR**
Keep in touch with ACCT's member services and communications departments – let us know what's happening at your institution.

2024 Candidates for the ACCT Board of Directors

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

(1) Three-Year Term in Each Region

The following is the slate of nominees:

Central Region

Carla Hedtke*

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, WI

Northeast Region

No Nominees

Pacific Region

Deborah Ikeda*

State Center Community College District, CA

Southern Region

Tim Hardy*

Louisiana Community & Technical College System, LA

Western Region

Carol Scott*

Del Mar College, TX

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

(3) Three-Year Terms

The following is the slate of nominees:

Anay Abraham*

Miami Dade College, FL

Amanda Howland*

College of Lake County, IL

Oscar Valladares*

Rio Hondo College, CA

**Candidates with an asterisk received the support of their respective Regional Nominating Committees.*

NOTE: Nominations will be accepted from the floor on all elections.

Deadline for Receipt is July 1, 2023

You are encouraged to submit your nomination via e-mail to nominations@acct.org.

Director-at-Large Nomination Process

Each member of the Board of Directors at the time of election must be a member of a Voting Member. Voting Members are defined as governing and advisory boards of accredited not-for-profit community-based postsecondary educational institutions that primarily offer programs other than baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees, including boards of state systems that include such institutions. According to the ACCT Bylaws, no more than one (1) member from any member board may serve as an elected member on the ACCT Board of Directors at the same time.

If you wish to run for a Director-at-Large seat during the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress and appear in the *Advisor*, you are required to notify the ACCT President at the Washington, D.C., office in writing of your intent to run. Your notification must be received with a postmark date of July 1, 2023, or by electronic mail (preferred method) by close of business on July 1, 2023. The President will send candidate information received within the prescribed postmarked deadline to the ACCT membership in September.

Official notification from candidates shall consist of:

- A letter of declaration to run for office;
- A letter of support from the individual's board;
- A one-page résumé that should focus on community college-related service and other civic activities and may include brief information on education and occupation;
- A narrative statement, not to exceed 150 words, on qualifications (electronically preferred), for inclusion in voting materials to be printed;
- A 5" x 7" head-and-shoulders photo, preferably color (photos will not be returned), or a color electronic version (preferred) — 300 dpi or higher; and
- An optional single letter of support from an ACCT member board. This letter of support must be limited to one page.

You are encouraged to submit your nomination online. Please e-mail your nomination to nominations@acct.org. ACCT will respond to your submission via e-mail within three working days. Please contact ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee at jhlee@acct.org if you do NOT receive a response within three working days. Nominations will also be accepted via standard mail (return receipt requested). Mail nominations to: ACCT President, 1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

2024 Candidates for the ACCT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

(1) Two-Year Term in Each Region

The following is the slate of nominees:

CENTRAL REGION

Torrie Mark Newsome*

College of Lake County, IL

NORTHEAST REGION

No Nominees

PACIFIC REGION

No Nominees

SOUTHERN REGION

No Nominees

WESTERN REGION

Belen Robles*

El Paso Community College, TX

**Candidates with an asterisk received the support of their respective Regional Nominating Committees.*

NOTE: Nominations will be accepted from the floor on all elections.

A Lifetime of Appreciation

ACCT LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

Community college trustees give a lot of themselves — time, energy, wisdom — and ask for little or nothing in return. The gift of an ACCT Lifetime Membership is a way to thank trustees for everything they do, and to empower them to keep doing it for as long as they choose.

A lifetime membership is a perfect way to...

- Recognize outstanding trustees whose dedication to your college has made a difference and set an example.
- Thank outgoing members for their service.
- Remain involved with your peers and make a tax-deductible donation to your national association by purchasing a Lifetime Membership for yourself.



7 REASONS TO BESTOW A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

- 1 Giving outstanding and retiring board members a Lifetime Membership to ACCT is a way to thank them for their service, recognize them among their peers, and ensure their ongoing interest in your college.
- 2 Lifetime Members receive complimentary registration to all ACCT meetings, including the Annual Leadership Congress and the National Legislative Summit, after retiring from their local boards.
- 3 Lifetime Members receive all of ACCT's award-winning publications, including *Trustee Quarterly* magazine and *Advisor*.
- 4 Lifetime Members are recognized publicly in *Trustee Quarterly*, on the ACCT Web site, and elsewhere.
- 5 The Lifetime Membership program supports and promotes ACCT's continuing trustee education and professional development.
- 6 Colleges that purchase Lifetime Memberships can deduct the expense from taxes to the fullest extent allowed by law.
- 7 It's just a nice thing to do — and haven't your most exceptional trustees earned it?

For more information and to submit an application, go to www.acct.org/membership/lifetime or contact ACCT's Member Services at 202.775.4667 or acctinfo@acct.org.





Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #339
WINCHESTER, VA

www.acct.org 110117th Street NW
 Suite 300
 Washington, D.C. 20036
 202.775.4667
 866.895.2228

ACCT LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

OCTOBER 9-12, 2023



**LAS VEGAS
 NEVADA**

Aria Resort and Casino

Register at Congress.ACCT.org