

# TRUSTEE

SPRING 2021

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## QUARTERLY

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*The Voice of Community Colleges*



# ‘THE SECRET’S OUT’

First Lady Dr. Jill Biden returns to the White House – and the Community College National Legislative Summit – with a new message about community colleges.

# ACCT AWARDS PROGRAM

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.

## REGIONAL AWARDS

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

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 2021 ACCT Leadership Congress this October in San Diego, California.

## ASSOCIATION AWARDS

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

Visit [www.acct.org](http://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 14, 2021.

[WWW.ACCT.ORG](http://WWW.ACCT.ORG)

NOMINATIONS DUE

**JUNE 14, 2021**



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## From the Chair

### Writing the Next Chapter



IN OUR SOCIETY'S EFFORTS TO MAKE DIVERSITY, equity, and inclusion watchwords of our future, our nation's community colleges are the greatest gateway of opportunity this nation has to offer.

As I write this, in April, it is Community College Month — a time to celebrate the unique role of community colleges in shaping the leaders of tomorrow and the workforce that will power our economy.

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, the opportunities offered by community colleges can provide the spark that helps our communities revive and also gives the many people who lost jobs a year ago a focused, short-term roadmap to a

better-paying future.

As board chair of ACCT and a long-time trustee of Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC), I deeply appreciate the profound efforts of faculty and staff to keep learning alive during the pandemic, when even the simplest things we took for granted became complex problems requiring innovative solutions. The creativity and energy that has been displayed in this past year has only deepened my respect for the dedicated professionals on our campuses.

Although making diversity, equity, and inclusion integral parts of our society will be a work in progress for years to come, community colleges are leaders in this vital work because by their very nature they are attuned to our ever-changing economy and society.

For example, MVCC is now using a federal grant that was received to enroll high-risk youth in short-term training as a model. It has already replicated the program to provide training for youth across the region as a stepping-stone to a good job. The ripples from the innovation that the Mohawk Valley Tech Corps project, based at MVCC's Rome campus, has developed will change the region in positive ways for years to come, while ensuring that all parts of our community benefit. Nobody was forced to open the doorway of opportunity any more widely. It is simply in the blood of community colleges to do so.

This is one example of many that show the ways in which community colleges serve as a vast gateway of opportunity for everyone who wants to take a step forward, so that those with the greatest needs and who face the greatest burdens have the help of experts who understand the needs of at-risk students because they climbed that ladder themselves.

We all have sights and sounds that, during this time of COVID, we miss greatly. One of mine is walking the campus of MVCC, where I have been a trustee since 1977, and seeing the wonderful diversity of the future unfold around me. Minority students from housing projects adjacent to the campus, refugees who were born half a world away, and rural students who drive 45 minutes a day to attend classes all blend into a population that celebrates differences as they work together for a world where the future is better than the past.

When the gateway is open, opportunity flourishes. I am proud of the work all of our trustees and all of our colleges have done to keep opportunity alive, so that as we write a new chapter in the future, that chapter can become the time of opportunity and promise for all people.

DAVID MATHIS  
TRUSTEE, MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SPRING 2021

### Editorial Team

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**J. Noah Brown**  
President & CEO

MANAGING EDITOR

**David Conner**  
Director of Strategic Communications

EDITOR

**Mark Toner**

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

**Jacob Bray**  
Associate Writer

**Norma Goldstein**

Director of Trustee Education

**Jee Hang Lee**

Senior Vice President

**Ira Michael Shepard**

ACCT General Counsel

EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES

**Karen Lomax**

Executive Coordinator to the President and Board of Directors

**Indya Rogers**

Information Services Specialist

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

[www.moiremarketing.com](http://www.moiremarketing.com) – Washington, D.C.

### YOUR OPINION MATTERS

CONTACT:

David Conner  
(866) 895-ACCT (2228)  
dconner@acct.org

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

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1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington DC 20036  
(202) 775-4667 FAX: (202) 775-4455  
E-mail: [acctinfo@acct.org](mailto:acctinfo@acct.org)  
[www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)

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

## From the President & CEO

### Hope After Hard Times



LAST SPRING, WE WERE ONLY BEGINNING TO realize what tumultuous times were ahead of us. In March 2020, we were all faced with withdrawing from our places of work and education — for many of us, homes away from home — for what most of us expected could be a few weeks or perhaps even a month. By April, it had become clear that the timeline for returning to normal life was going to keep being pushed back. By late spring, many businesses had shuttered, others like ACCT had figured out how to cope, and community colleges across the country were being tested as never before to innovate their ways out of tough circumstances. And then in the summer, pandemic worries took a

backseat to renewed worries about racial justice and social stability.

What a journey. And how far we have come.

The new year greeted us with so much hope. In early February, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden opened one of the most power-packed Community College National Legislative Summits we've ever had the pleasure of hosting. She told us that "it's time to pick up the bullhorn and take the lead... As we rebuild our economy, we need community colleges more than ever." You faithfully obliged with your Community College Month participation, bringing the messages that community colleges get America to work and deserve support to *millions* of eyes via social media, videos, news stories, and other community outreach throughout the country. New Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona joined the #CCMonth campaign, tweeting "From their commitment to accessibility to their unwavering support of building student achievement, community colleges are the backbone of higher education. To all our community college administrators, professors, and students across the country, keep up the great work."

All of us have had an unprecedented year-long opportunity to reflect on our lives with limited distractions. I have had perhaps a bit more reason to do this than many, as later this year, I will wrap up 25 years of fulfilling service to the Association of Community College Trustees, with 16 years as your association's president and CEO. I have taken a few pages of this issue of *Trustee Quarterly* to reflect on my time at ACCT. I ask you to read that reflection not to indulge me, but because it details the extraordinary transformation of both the Association and the community college sector as a whole over the past quarter century. We have done so much together, and for that I thank you.

As you read through this issue, I hope you will bear in mind how far we have come over the past century-plus of existing as a higher education sector, and over the past tumultuous year. I hope you'll be inspired to celebrate the continual blossoming of the nation's community colleges as we earn greater recognition by leaders, by the public, and most importantly, by students, that community colleges are economic engines, engines of equity, and one of the greatest centers of hope that this country has.

I look forward to our time together this October in San Diego for the 2021 ACCT Leadership Congress.

J. NOAH BROWN  
ACCT PRESIDENT AND CEO

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## James Kvaal Appointed Under Secretary of Education



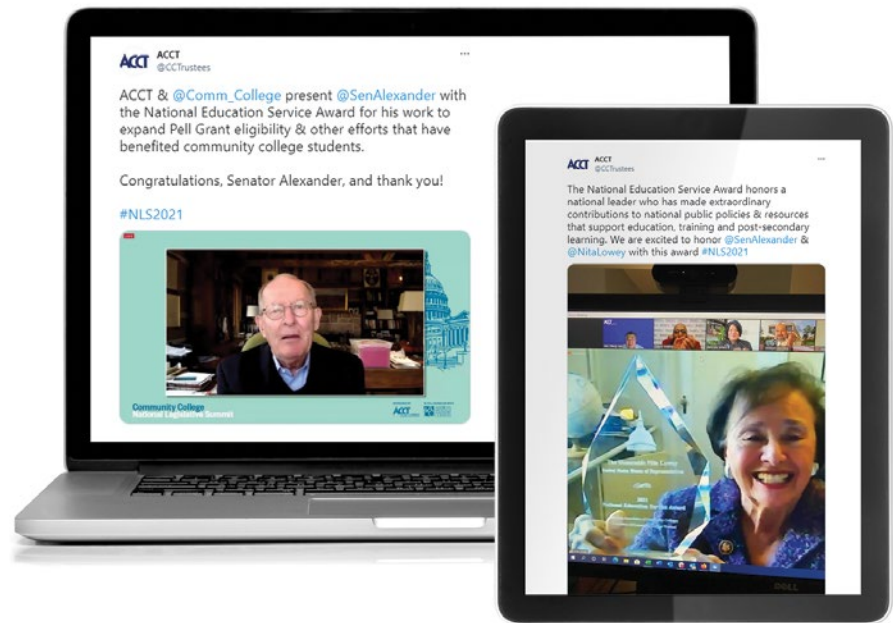
In February, James Kvaal, president of The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS), was nominated by President Joseph Biden to serve as U.S. Under Secretary of Education, where he will lead higher education policy. Kvaal previously served as deputy domestic policy adviser for the Obama Administration, where he addressed economic opportunity and education, including college affordability. He also has served as the Towsley Foundation Policymaker in Residence at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan.

Under Secretary Kvaal holds a doctor of law degree from Harvard Law School and a bachelor's degree in public policy analysis from Stanford University.

# NEWS



## Sen. Lamar Alexander, Rep. Nita Lowey Honored for Bipartisan Service to Education



In conjunction with the 2021 Community College National Legislative Summit, ACCT and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) recognized former Senate Health, Employment, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee Chair Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and former House Appropriations Committee Chair Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.-17) with the 2021 National Education Service Award. The award is presented annually to a national leader or leadership team who have made extraordinary contributions to national public policies and resources that support education, training, and postsecondary learning (see p. 16 for more).

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- June 14 – ACCT Awards Nominations Deadline (See inside front cover for more information.)
- July 2 – 2021 ACCT Leadership Congress Presentation Proposals Due (See page 22 for more information.)

## College of the Canyons, Oxnard College, and Southwest Tennessee Community College Receive 2021 Bellwether Awards



Three community colleges were honored with 2021 Bellwether Awards, nationally recognized awards which highlight cutting-edge, trendsetting programs worthy of replication. The Bellwether College Consortium is comprised of award-winning colleges charged with addressing critical issues facing community colleges through applicable research and the promotion and replication of best practices addressing workforce development, instructional programs and services, and planning, governance, and finance. Each year, 30 community colleges are deemed finalists from a large group of applicants in the United States and its territories. The selected colleges compete for one of three Bellwether Awards, which were presented in January 2021.

College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, California, was presented the 2021 Instructional Programs & Services Bellwether Award for programs or activities that have been designed and successfully implemented to foster or support teaching and learning in the community college. The college received the award for “Dismantling Barriers to Support Students: Placement Exams & Developmental Courses.”

Oxnard College in Oxnard, California, was presented the 2021 Workforce Development Category Bellwether Award for public and/or private strategic alliances and partnerships that promote community and economic development by producing workforce. The college received the award for “Project RECOVER — Revisions Encompassing COVID Operations, Valuing Emergency Responders.”

Southwest Tennessee Community College in Memphis, Tennessee, was presented the 2021 Planning, Governance & Finance Bellwether Award for programs or activities that have been designed and successfully implemented to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the community college. The college received the award for “Redesign, Reinvent, and Reset: Organizing for Large-Scale Systemic Change.”

To learn more about the Bellwether College Consortium and the Bellwether Awards, visit [bellwethercollegeconsortium.com](http://bellwethercollegeconsortium.com).

## Jordan Matsudaira Appointed Deputy Under Secretary of Education



In February, Columbia University Teachers College Associate Professor of Economics & Education Jordan Matsudaira was appointed to serve as Deputy Under Secretary of Education. Matsudaira previously served as senior economist and later as chief economist for the White House Council on Economic Advisers for the Obama Administration. In these roles, he worked on labor, education, and safety net policies and regulations, including raising the minimum wage for federal contractors, according to Columbia University.

Deputy Under Secretary Matsudaira holds a Ph.D. in economics and public policy from the University of Michigan, a master’s degree in public policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and a bachelor’s degree from Union College.

## Model Standards of Good Practice for Trustee Boards

In Support of Effective Community College Governance, the Board Believes:

- That it derives its authority from the community and that it must always act as an advocate on behalf of the entire community;
- That it must clearly define and articulate its role;
- That it is responsible for creating and maintaining a spirit of true cooperation and a mutually supportive relationship with its CEO;
- That it always strives to differentiate between external and internal processes in the exercise of its authority;
- That its trustee members should engage in a regular and ongoing process of in-service training and continuous improvement;
- That its trustee members come to each meeting prepared and ready to debate issues fully and openly;
- That its trustee members vote their conscience and support the decision or policy made;
- That its behavior, and that of its members, exemplify ethical behavior and conduct that is above reproach;
- That it endeavors to remain always accountable to the community;
- That it honestly debates the issues affecting its community and speaks with one voice once a decision or policy is made.

*\*The term "board" refers to a community college board of trustees or appropriate governing authority.*

## New Podcast Episodes on Governance Fundamentals, More

"As a new trustee, I love your podcast and have learned so much from listening," reads a message we recently received about the In the Know with ACCT podcast series. That's why we continue to create new episodes, building our library to more than 100 episodes.

This season, we're excited to be featuring episodes about the fundamentals of good governance, in addition to other topical themes. Recent episodes include:

- Trusteeship Fundamentals: Trusteeship and Student Success with Dr. Jacqueline King
- Trusteeship Fundamentals: The Board's Role in Planning and Monitoring with Eduardo Marti
- Trusteeship Fundamentals: The Board-CEO Relationship with Dr. Mary Spilde and Ken Burke
- Trusteeship Fundamentals: Student Success and Equity Mindedness with Dr. Charlene Dukes
- Trusteeship Fundamentals: The Board's Governing Functions with David Rutledge
- Trusteeship Fundamentals: Best Practices for Governing Boards with Dr. Pamila Fisher
- Trusteeship Fundamentals: Board Advocacy and Accountability with Dr. Karen Rafinski
- Strengthening Rural Community Colleges: Innovations and Opportunities with Jee Hang Lee and Rachel Rush-Marlowe
- The 40-Year Evolution of Community College Trusteeship with David Mathis
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Workshops: Why Boards Need Them
- Noncredit Workforce Programs with Opportunity America's Tamar Jacoby
- Keys to a Successful College CEO Transition Year with Julie Golder and Jill Wakefield
- Understanding College Default Rates with the Institute of College Access and Success (TICAS) and Guilford Technical College
- "Hire Purpose" with J. Noah Brown and Deanna Mulligan
- Reskilling for Pandemic Recession and Recovery with Veena Jayadeva and Russ Kavalhuna

For listening options on your mobile device or computer, go to [www.acct.org/podcast](http://www.acct.org/podcast).





# New ACCT Paper Assesses Rural Community College Needs, Showcases Innovative Solutions to Making Do with Limited Resources

In March, ACCT released *Strengthening Rural Community Colleges: Innovations and Opportunities*, a paper that details the needs of rural colleges throughout the United States. The paper is part of ACCT's Strengthening Rural Community College initiative, which is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

"For more than a year, ACCT's staff has interviewed over 500 rural college trustees, CEOs, and rural leaders to assess their needs," said ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown. "The paper identified three primary needs, all existing before but exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as some extraordinary solutions to student needs."

The top three challenges facing rural community colleges are:

- Local, state, and federal funding disparities;
- Access to broadband Internet; and
- Student basic needs & mental health resources.

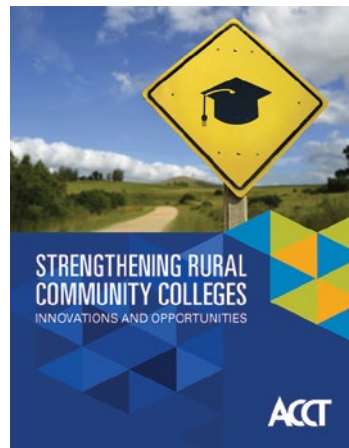
These challenges impair these students' and institutions' well-being. Another challenge faced by rural colleges is what it means to be rural: Federal agencies apply at least a dozen different measures to determine what a rural community college is, resulting in official counts that range from 260 to 800 rural institutions. This disagreement of definitions makes it difficult for many small, poorly resourced institutions to seek out, apply for, and report on grants intended to support them.

Among examples of innovative solutions detailed in the paper:

- Hazard Community and Technical College in Perry County, Kentucky, created a "Tuesday Night Live" student success program that offers flexible hybrid courses, activities for children including free meals, tutoring, and expanded hours for student services. Seventy-two percent of full-time students who enrolled in at least one Tuesday Night Live class passed all their courses.
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College, a tribal college in Fort Totten, North Dakota, reconciled outstanding student debt for all students who earned a "C" or higher grade in their courses and put a licensed clinical psychologist on retainer to be available to students, faculty, and staff.
- Like many other tribal and community colleges, Navajo Technical College in Crownpoint, New Mexico, and Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College in New Town, North Dakota, are serving as resource centers to their greater communities, including providing facilities for vaccine storage in their below-zero freezer facilities.
- And during the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions in rural areas that have poor Internet access found creative ways to help students maintain their progress. For example, North Carolina placed Wi-Fi hotspots in 280 school buses and parked them in underserved areas.

"Community and technical colleges are central to their communities, and perhaps especially so in rural parts of the country," Brown said. "ACCT appreciates the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in our efforts to build onto a growing body of knowledge that helps us understand rural colleges' needs in this time of unprecedented transformation. We look forward to continuing to investigate the needs of students at small, isolated colleges."

To learn more about the Strengthening Rural Community Colleges initiative, visit [rural.acct.org](http://rural.acct.org).



## LET THE LAW WORK FOR YOU

Timing is everything when it comes to advocacy, but not everyone has time to pay attention to pending legislation day in and day out.

ACCT's Latest Action in Washington (LAW) Alerts do the work for you.

Since 2008, nearly 1,900 people have signed up to receive ACCT's LAW Alert emails — brief summaries of legislative actions emailed to subscribers as legislation happens, giving community college trustees, presidents, and other leaders and advocates time to contact their representatives and exert influence before it's too late.

Please encourage your fellow trustees, presidents, and colleagues to stay up to date about legislation that affects their community colleges by joining the LAW E-Alert network. To join, simply email [publicpolicy@acct.org](mailto:publicpolicy@acct.org) with "LAW Alert" in the subject of the email.

For more information about ACCT's advocacy services, visit [www.acct.org/advocacy](http://www.acct.org/advocacy).



# Infrastructure Finally Hits Prime Time

The Biden Administration's \$2 trillion proposal includes provisions that address longstanding community college needs.

By Jee Hang Lee

THE PASSAGE OF THE THIRD STIMULUS plan earlier this year allows Congress and the Biden Administration to shift towards addressing the post-pandemic economy and creating new jobs through infrastructure funding. Infrastructure can take on different meanings, from building roadways and bridges to telecommunications, but the priorities for community colleges focus around three key areas: capital construction funds for community colleges, a dedicated job-training program for community colleges, and broadband expansion, especially for rural communities. As with all forms of advocacy, community colleges will need to explain why these funds are critical and how these funds will be utilized. With the pandemic hopefully ending, there is much to be done to ensure that we have the infrastructure in place to support our students and communities.

## Capital Construction Funds

President Joe Biden recently announced a sizable infrastructure package totaling \$2 trillion for major infrastructure projects, including \$12 billion dedicated to community college infrastructure. The funding solely for community colleges is notable, representing a nod to the sector's enormous needs for deferred maintenance and new construction. ACCT and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) have asked Congress and the administration to support a community college infrastructure package at \$50 billion. The expansion of community colleges took place over 50 years ago, and there is a major need to retrofit and modernize buildings. Colleges should



start refining project lists to include all infrastructure funding needs.

Infrastructure funds for community colleges to support capital construction, deferred maintenance, and equipment has been one of the longstanding legislative priority items for ACCT. As far back as 2008, Congress and the administration have come close to passing funds to support higher education infrastructure, but final passage has been elusive. One of the major problems that has hampered passage has been the desire to include all sectors of higher education within a package, including colleges with outsized endowments. The inclusion of highly selective and well-funded institutions has resulted in political talking points which ultimately doomed previous proposals. It is currently unclear whether other sectors of higher education will be included in a final package.

### **Dedicated Job-Training Programs**

Over the last decade, one of the most popular federal programs was the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant (TAACCCT) program, which provided \$2 billion in critically needed funding to support job-training programs during the height of the recession. Countless community colleges received these critical funds, which allowed for partnerships between industry, colleges, and other stakeholders. As constructed, TAACCCT also ensured that all states received funds each year under this program.

While Congress has recently funded a much smaller program, Strengthening Community Colleges, the demand for critical job-training programs has outpaced the funding available. With the changing economy and increased unemployment rate, community colleges could serve as important partners with industry and business if there were dedicated funds to

*Infrastructure can take on different meanings, from building roadways and bridges to telecommunications, but the priorities for community colleges focus around three key areas: capital construction funds for community colleges, a dedicated job-training program for community colleges, and broadband expansion, especially for rural communities.*

support this initiative. In its infrastructure proposal, the Biden Administration outlined \$100 billion to support job training and workforce development, but it did not outline how these funds would be targeted. ACCT strongly supports targeting some of these resources for creation of a significant job-training program at community colleges.

### **Broadband Expansion**

With most courses and colleges going virtual during the pandemic, there was significant pressure on broadband networks in all communities, but especially in rural ones. The need for

improvements to access to high-speed broadband has reached a critical moment, and additional resources are needed to build out high-speed broadband to all communities. In our *Strengthening Rural Community Colleges* report, ACCT outlines some proposals for broadband expansion. The report can be downloaded at [rural.acct.org](http://rural.acct.org).

Ultimately, however, it is not just rural communities that have lacked broadband access. Across multiple surveys of community college students, most students have indicated that they have access to the “Internet” through their smartphone but not necessarily through a computer (if they owned one). Lacking Internet access on a computer workstation greatly disadvantages students. During the pandemic, colleges provided countless students with wireless hotspots and computers, but more work needs to be done.

ACCT has a wealth of resources available around these and other legislative priorities. Visit ACCT’s Advocacy web page, [www.acct.org/advocacy](http://www.acct.org/advocacy), for additional information.

Make your voice heard by visiting your member of Congress and talking about these key issues. Request a meeting virtually or in person with your legislator and talk about the pressing issues important to your institution. To stay up to date on key legislative items, sign up for ACCT’s Latest Action in Washington alerts by emailing [publicpolicy@acct.org](mailto:publicpolicy@acct.org).

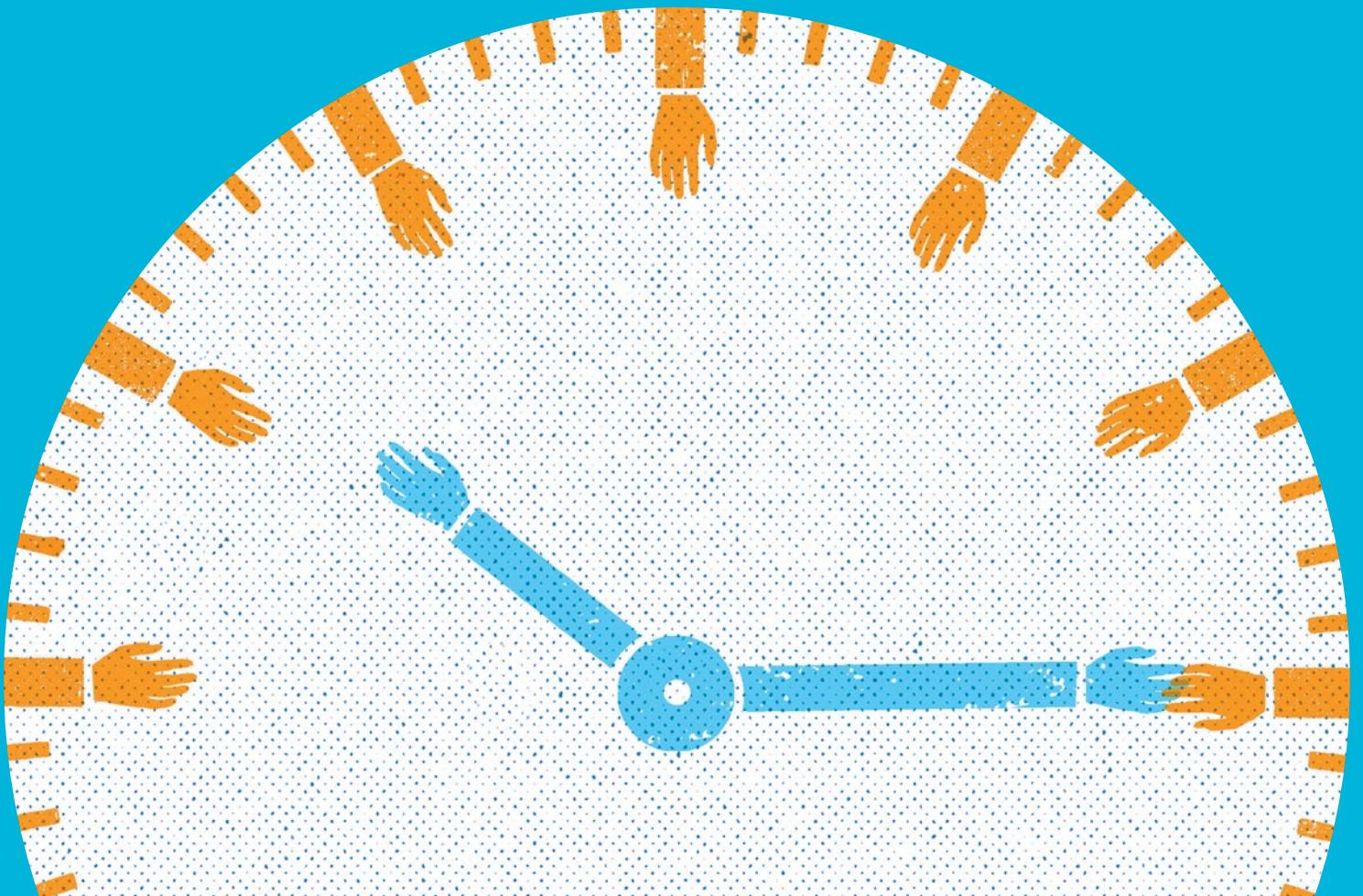


*ACCT Senior Vice President Jee Hang Lee can be reached at [jblee@acct.org](mailto:jblee@acct.org).*

# TIME WELL SPENT

ACCT PRESIDENT AND CEO J. NOAH BROWN REFLECTS ON 25 YEARS AT THE ASSOCIATION.

BY J. NOAH BROWN



NEARLY 16 YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE I ASSUMED THE presidency of ACCT, and 25 years since I joined the staff in October 1996. When I voluntarily turn over the reins to the next president and CEO later this year, I will do so as the longest-serving president since ACCT was incorporated in 1972 — an achievement farthest from my mind when the ACCT Board elected me president and CEO in July 2005. Over these many years, I have been blessed to serve you and the more than 100 servant leaders and 16 chairs on our board. As I reflect on my presidential tenure, I wanted to share some of the important changes and the evolution of the Association over the years I have been privileged to lead.

### New Leadership, New Priorities

I was asked by the selection committee about my vision for the organization during my interview for the ACCT presidency in the spring of 2005. What I said then, and what I have focused on every day since, was raising the profile of community colleges as change agents, while emphasizing the potential of trustees to effect policymaking so profoundly that the sector would no longer be marginalized nor neglected. To do this, the Association needed financial stability and greater outreach to and engagement with its member boards. I believe we have made significant progress together and continue to elevate ACCT not just in the nation's capital, but also throughout the country and world.

Thinking back on those heady days after I assumed the presidency in October 2005, the ACCT Board gave me a clear and unambiguous set of priorities — chief among them was to solidify staffing, address the budget, and most important, reengage the membership. Unlike most new presidents, I was fortunate to know and have working relationships with the team as the inside candidate. I was confident that we had the talent and experience to move the Association forward. The most important staff decision at the time was replacing myself as the policy and advocacy director, a position I had held for nine years. In the end, Jee Hang Lee, now senior vice president, joined ACCT as director of public policy, and together, we began to move our advocacy methodically to another level.

During my first two years, I made good on my promise to bring ACCT out to our membership. I visited every state association meeting, where I spoke about seven critical issues affecting the sector where ACCT and its members could leverage change and enhance advocacy.

The most important challenge was accountability and the need to address student outcomes. Community colleges needed to address and put a stop to the recurrent complaints lodged by lawmakers that the sector failed to graduate or

transfer enough of their students. Many policymakers had limited understanding of the role, mission, and student population that make up our colleges.

My big goal was to create an accountability system that I often described at the time as “built by the sector with a vocabulary that was robust enough to fully capture the nature of our colleges.” Several years later, and with much deliberate effort and financial support from Lumina Foundation and partners The College Board and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC), the Voluntary Framework of Accountability, or VFA, was born, with metrics that more accurately captured the real nature of our programs and our students.

The VFA is still being used today by member colleges and has provided ample opportunities to shift the conversation to data that matter, and that reflect who and what we truly are. As years have gone by, even as some longstanding criticisms of our colleges persist, lawmakers and the public have a greater understanding than ever before of the unique and vital role that community colleges play in educational access and equity, including identifying and meeting students' personal needs that always have been barriers to student success. I am proud of the progress we have made together.

### Addressing Finances

To be both effective and sustainable, the Association needed a more solid financial footing. ACCT Chair Ken Burke, then a trustee at St. Petersburg College, and I analyzed our budget in early 2006 and quickly discovered that membership dues fell significantly short of covering direct member services. At that time, the ACCT Board was adamant that members who chose to attend our meetings or purchase our search and retreat services not wind up subsidizing our overall direct member costs. In effect, rank-and-file members were paying less than the true costs of advocacy, publications, trustee education, and other non-fee-for-service benefits. The horrific events of 9/11 were still very much front and center in our minds at that time, and we were mindful that a single catastrophic event could severely harm the Association's finances and threaten our ability to provide basic member services. Not raising dues meant that we could find ourselves in a deficit due to events beyond our control, with cuts affecting our programs and services, and worse, failing to serve our members.

I knew that raising dues would be difficult but necessary. As a long-term staff member, I understood the threat of not being able to balance our budget and live within our means. Unable to close the gap between revenues and expenses, I and the senior team agreed to a salary freeze and curtailed some of our plans to expand services and staffing.

I was concerned that we could not bring our budget in line

## THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE WAS ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE NEED TO ADDRESS STUDENT OUTCOMES. COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEEDED TO ADDRESS AND PUT A STOP TO THE RECURRENT COMPLAINTS LODGED BY LAWMAKERS THAT THE SECTOR FAILED TO GRADUATE OR TRANSFER ENOUGH OF THEIR STUDENTS.

and as an employer lose competitive advantage as a well-financed organization. With much work and analysis, we launched an ambitious campaign to raise dues over a five-year period, culminating in dues income equaling direct member services. Between July 1, 2006, and ending June 30, 2011, membership dues were increased annually by 13.24 percent plus inflation, resulting in a doubling of dues income by the end of the fifth year. Communications and a carefully developed rationale were created and disseminated to the membership in advance of the increases, including a commitment to freeze registration fees for both the annual ACCT Leadership Congress and National Legislative Summit, both to soften the increase and to realign the budget. Over these five years, not a single board withdrew its membership because of the dues increase — an incredible vote of confidence by the membership to move ACCT forward.

I learned an invaluable lesson as an association CEO — that transparency and commitment to secure the future of an organization were values that could transcend and win the day.

With ACCT on a more solid financial footing, I committed to the board that over the years we would build the Association's financial reserves to desired non-profit standards (six months of operational budget). Not only did we succeed, but we ultimately created long-term operational ("rainy day"), opportunity (venture capital), and long-term reserves to allow the Association to weather economic cycles, and to incorporate risk management into the annual budgeting and forecasting models. This feat is one I am most proud to have delivered to the membership.

### Reexamining Trustee Education

With the financial situation improving, it was time to take a hard and critical look at our trustee education and event structure and programming. Specifically, I reviewed everything through the lens of whether we were doing the best we could at helping boards understand their roles and responsibilities, engage in effective advocacy, and use their "political" clout and legitimacy to move policy in favor of our students and communities.

In 2006, we held our very first Governance Leadership Institute, or GLI, designed to engage boards in two and a half days of intensive exploration of topics such as board roles, board/CEO relations, governing through policy, ethics, codes of conduct, and the role of the board in advocacy. Over the years,

the GLI has continued to evolve, allowing more of our members to participate and to access high-quality trustee development. More importantly, it filled a void in peer-to-peer networking after the elimination of ACCT Regional Seminars the year before I was selected for the presidency.

Beginning in 2010, we launched our signature series, the Governance Institute for Student Success, or GISS, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. During its 10-year run, GISS assisted states and countless boards in understanding and using student outcome data to understand the dynamics of their institutions and how to make informed and strategic decisions to improve student persistence and success. Much of what we learned through GISS continues to inform how we talk to and work with boards to achieve greater institutional success and growth.

We also re-engineered the ACCT Leadership Congress — the premier national gathering of boards from across the nation and overseas. First, we made the decision to focus keynote sessions on critical topics for boards and to bring potential partner organizations both to showcase ACCT and expose those organizations to community college trustees. We have been able to bring a wide array of thought leaders and influencers to the Congress without paying speaker fees or honorariums, helping keep member costs down. We organized concurrent sessions around critical themes and integrated spotlight sessions and other formats to highlight special topical and cutting-edge issues. We engaged our corporate partners through sessions and roundtables, bringing key industry knowledge to trustees. And we revamped our pre-Congress academies to buttress our renewed focus around effective governance and programs for aspiring presidents. The resulting event remains an intensive educational experience with no "filler" programming and expenses as lean as we can make them so as many members as possible can participate every year.

### Expanding Advocacy and Research

One of the intriguing aspects of ACCT that led me to request an interview for the director of federal relations position during the summer of 1996 was the grassroots potential of trustee advocacy. Among the many enhanced roles of the association, none is closer and nearer to my heart than the progress we have made in policy analysis, research, and advocacy.

## I LEARNED AN INVALUABLE LESSON AS AN ASSOCIATION CEO – THAT TRANSPARENCY AND COMMITMENT TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF AN ORGANIZATION WERE VALUES THAT COULD TRANSCEND AND WIN THE DAY.

I came to ACCT convinced that with the right tools and armed with fact-based research and policy recommendations, community college trustees could significantly increase not only their impacts on their own communities and colleges, but also their national impact on all community colleges through ACCT. Over the past several years, we have been fortunate to have received financial support from over a half-dozen foundations and policy organizations to focus trustees' attention on critical policy issues around student financial assistance, food insecurity, homelessness, mental health, K-12 connections, workforce issues, and most recently, the unique challenges and needs of our rural community colleges, including broadband Internet access.

ACCT has become an organization of record on behalf of the sector, a recognized authority and trusted source of information and policy analysis. As a result, we have been successful forging real relationships with Republican and Democratic administrations alike, and have commanded the attention of cabinet officials, governors, state legislatures, mayors, and other elected and appointed officials. We benefited from White House Summits on Community Colleges and opportunities to shape and lead federal policy initiatives like the Early Childhood Cognitive Development Summit, the American Graduation Initiative, and the College Promise, to name just a few. Our efforts have served to empower boards with the information and expertise they need to discharge their advocacy responsibilities more effectively, and to influence policymakers at all levels.

The crown jewel in our national advocacy efforts remains the National Legislative Summit, which we have convened every single year in Washington, D.C. since 1978 — and twice in 2010, when we refused to let a historic “Snowmageddon” force us to cancel our Washington advocacy event. The opportunity to bring thousands of community college leaders to the nation's capital to expose them to federal officials, journalists, pundits, analysts, and others has been invaluable to helping focus advocacy on specific and critically important topics and the pressing needs of our students and campuses.

I am unabashedly proud to say that we have grown into a respected leading authority on our membership and the community college movement during my tenure. We are the voice of community college leaders. And I will always remain proud of

that. This was my fundamental promise to the board that hired me to lead ACCT in 2005 — a promise I managed to keep.

### Looking to the Future

As with all things, change is coming, and organizations need to replenish themselves with new talent and new vision. When I accepted the presidency of ACCT, I did so with a clear focus on keeping the mission and membership always in my sights — to be myself and to serve unselfishly, openly, and transparently. But no one succeeds on their own. I have been blessed to have the consistent support of my wife Andra, my two daughters, and just as importantly, the team at ACCT. They say that behind every great leader, a team stands behind making it possible. This has been certainly true for me. The ACCT team has been both the catalyst and energy that inspired and kept me focused on my role and my job. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to my team, and I know they will rally behind my successor as they did me from day one. As someone from a prominent national research organization observed recently, ACCT “punches above its weight,” which is certainly true and really defines our culture as an organization.

I see tremendous opportunities for ACCT in the future. It has been my honor and my greatest professional joy to have served our trustees, our volunteer leaders, and most importantly, the incredibly talented team at ACCT. I have made countless friends along the way and have learned much from every person I have come into contact with over my journey. As I prepare for my new set of adventures later this year, I promise not to stray too far and to continue to champion our students and colleges. As the great American philosopher and storyteller Mark Twain observed, “find a job you enjoy doing, and you will never have to work a day in your life.” Thank you to ACCT for giving me my Mark Twain opportunity and then some.



*J. Noah Brown is president and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees.*

# ‘THE SECRET’S OUT’

THE 2021 COMMUNITY COLLEGE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTED THE SECTOR’S UNPRECEDENTED SUPPORT – AND ITS ROLE IN THE NATION’S RECOVERY.

BY MARK TONER



RETURNING TO THE 2021 COMMUNITY COLLEGE NATIONAL Legislative Summit almost a dozen years to the day after her first appearance, First Lady Dr. Jill Biden recalled how she had previously called community colleges America’s “best-kept secret.”

“The secret’s out now,” said Biden, who continues to teach at Northern Virginia Community College as she amplifies her role as a community college advocate during a second presidential administration. “It’s time to pick up the bullhorn and take the lead.”

Held virtually for the first time, the 2021 NLS convened community college leaders during the first few weeks of the new administration, as a third COVID-19 relief bill was making its way through Congress. More than 800 community college leaders and advocates participated, a number comparable to previous in-person events despite the considerable challenges the sector has faced during the pandemic.

“Even though we’re not physically present in Washington, D.C., this year, our voices still make a tremendous difference,”

Top: First Lady Dr. Jill Biden  
Bottom: Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)





Domestic Policy Council for Economic Mobility  
Deputy Director Carmel Martin



Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.)



U.S. Department of Education Office of  
Postsecondary Education Deputy Assistant  
Secretary Michelle Asha Cooper

ACCT Chair David Mathis, a trustee at Mohawk Valley Community College in New York, told attendees.

### Unprecedented Victories

ACCT President & CEO J. Noah Brown credited ongoing advocacy efforts over the past year for “legislative victories on behalf of students and communities that prior to the pandemic have not been seen since the GI Bill, the response to Sputnik, and the founding of the Great Society that led to the creation of our \$120 billion national student aid system.”

Together, the two coronavirus relief packages approved by Congress in 2020 — the CARES Act in March and CRRSSA in December — include more than \$10.2 billion to support community colleges and their students. The third \$1.9 trillion relief package that was being negotiated in Congress during the NLS, the American Rescue Plan, was ultimately signed into law in March and includes nearly \$40 billion in additional funding to extend the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) through September 2023.

“Our advocacy has been heard,” ACCT Senior Vice President Jee Hang Lee said during an NLS briefing on legislative priorities. The unprecedented support of community colleges to date, he added, “is testament to all your advocacy this year, last year, and in years past.”

However, NLS speakers made it clear that the unprecedented support colleges have received is a recognition of the role they must play going forward.

“This is a moment of profound crisis for our nation,” said Carmel Martin, deputy director of the Domestic Policy Council for Economic Mobility. “Our response to the nation’s economic health and challenges requires immediate action.”

“As we rebuild our economy, we need community colleges more than ever. This is personal to the president and me,” Biden told NLS attendees. “We understand the power of

your schools. We know supporting your students and your institutions is urgent.”

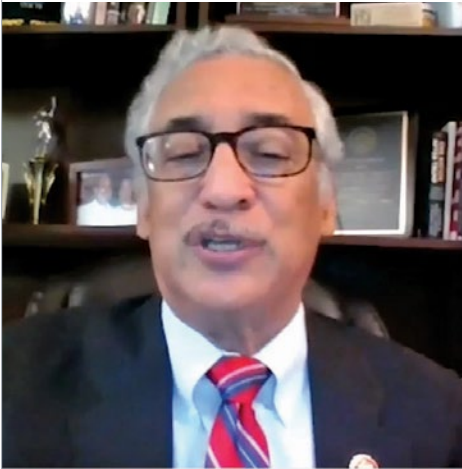
ACCT’s Brown urged community college leaders to meet the moment. “We now have the prospect of moving community colleges to the forefront of restoring our economy and addressing equity and opportunity that have been lost to the pandemic,” he said. “So let us build upon what we have started and focus our sights on the restorative power of our colleges and the collective impact of our voices. Together we will get through this crisis and come out stronger.”

“Our collective resilience has never been so tested, the status quo has never been so interrupted, and the possibilities for meaningful systemic change have never been so within our reach,” added American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) President & CEO Dr. Walter Bumphus. “We don’t know yet what your new normal will be. I have no doubt we will meet those challenges because our community colleges have never been more resilient.”

### A New Agenda

Martin outlined the Biden Administration’s goals for education, including support for free tuition for community colleges, providing grants to institutions to help completion efforts, investments in workforce partnership grants based on the Obama-era Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program, the expansion of the Pell Grant program, funding to improve technology and improve facilities, changes to the federal student loan program, and renewed efforts to protect students from predatory institutions.

Dr. Michelle Asha Cooper, deputy assistant secretary for the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education, told attendees that the details of these proposals would emerge in the coming months. “This is a moment



Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.)



Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.)



Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.)

that requires we make meaningful and lasting change and a lasting difference for millions of today's students and for future generations," she said. "The pandemic has not undermined this reality. It has clarified it."

For the first time in recent memory, ACCT's "green sheet" of legislative priorities wasn't printed on green paper this year — it was distributed electronically — but ongoing advocacy remains essential. "It's so important that we're all here to help advocate on behalf of community colleges while Congress is looking at the funding numbers," said Katie Brown, ACCT director of government relations.

At the top of legislative priorities was securing funding to help meet the \$120 billion ACCT, AACC, and other higher education leaders requested in the fall to address the challenges faced by the sector and the students it serves. Federal funding also must be supported by maintenance of effort provisions to prevent it from being offset by cuts in state support, said ACCT and AACC government relations staff.

NLS attendees also were updated on ongoing efforts to better serve community college students, including a new initiative launched in September 2020 to build capacity for community colleges to offer Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (commonly known as SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) programs. Leaders of three rural community colleges also discussed strategies to strengthen rural and tribal community colleges, part of an 18-month ACCT initiative to identify needs and create avenues for institutions to share best practices.

Dr. Twyla Baker, president of Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College in North Dakota, highlighted the unique challenges tribal colleges faced during the online pivot during the

pandemic. "If [federal relief] dollars got my mainstream colleagues to the 50-yard line, they got tribal colleges to the starting line," Baker said.

Dr. Jennifer Lindon, president of Hazard Community College in Kentucky, discussed efforts to keep students engaged virtually, while Dr. Matt Thompson, president of Indian Hills Community College in Iowa, stressed the ongoing challenge of meeting employer needs.

"Our need for a middle- and high-skill workforce is growing, and we have a lot of folks who are not going to college," he said.

Those needs are only intensifying. "Almost all of the jobs created in the last recession required some kind of postsecondary education," said Katie Spiker, director of government affairs for the National Skills Coalition. "Our response to the current crisis has to create opportunities for workers to get that education."

### 'Engines of Opportunity'

Speaking to NLS attendees, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) called community colleges "engines of opportunity," stressing the need for ongoing support to support institutions and their students. "You are invaluable partners in this vital mission," she told NLS attendees.

One opportunity stressed by keynote speaker Amy Walter involves countering the "poisonous" political climate and the broader decline in public trust for institutions of all kinds. "You have put the greater good of any institution ahead of your own interests," said Walter, national editor of Cook Political Report. "At this tipping point we're sitting in, we have a chance to be a part of that solution, regardless of where you sit or who you are."

As in previous years, the NLS served as a reminder of the



Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.)



U.S. House of Representatives Majority Whip  
James Clyburn (D-S.C.)



Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-Pa.)

bipartisan support community colleges continue to enjoy, with speakers from both parties participating in virtual conversations — some after participating in a marathon overnight markup session of the American Rescue Plan.

House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-S.C.) called community colleges “equalizers,” particularly in rural and low-income communities. “The work you do at the community college level is very important not just to those students... but to the communities from which they come and many will go back to,” he said.

Referring to NLS attendees “my community college experts,” Sen. Tim Scott (R-S.C.) stressed the importance of workforce development programs that meet employer needs and legislative priorities “that will make us far better as a country and keep more of our students maximizing their potential.”

“As we begin to recover and look to strengthening and rebuilding our workforce, community colleges will play a critical role in training the next generation of workers,” said Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) She credited community college leaders for “giving us an understanding of what so many of your students and their families are going through and how hard you are working to make sure they can continue their progress forward.”

Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, pointed to ongoing Congressional efforts to address “unsustainable out-of-pocket costs for students and workers” exacerbated by state disinvestment in higher education. “It’s absolutely important to look at ways we can continue to ensure that your programs remain affordable and accessible,” added Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R- Pa.).

Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) called preserving and enhancing the Pell Grant program “one of my top goals for many years.”

Pointing to bipartisan support for COVID relief legislation to date, he added, “hopefully we can find a way to work together and get a strong bipartisan package out the door.”

Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.) urged community college leaders to focus on equity as the nation moves beyond the pandemic. “COVID-19 has only made these disparities starker, and the need to address them more urgent,” she said. “Each of you has a role to play in rectifying this disparity and ensuring that students receive the justice they deserve.”

“The pandemic opened up a door. It showed us disparity,” said Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D- Ariz.), adding that community colleges “became central to the response... to the economic recovery and the human recovery.”

### Lawmakers’ Priorities

Lawmakers also outlined their own priorities for the sector. “It is more important than ever before that we support community college students and make sure you can weather this pandemic,” said Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.)

Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (R-Ohio) pointed to the pandemic’s long-lasting impact in stressing the importance of retraining displaced workers. “There’s nothing more helpful than tangible skills you can apply into a growing economy,” he said.

Rep. Andy Levin (D-Mich.) pledged to reintroduce two key pieces of legislation in Congress this year — the America’s College Promise Act, which would create a federal-state partnership to provide tuition-free community college, along with support for minority-serving institutions, as well as the JOBS Act, which would expand Pell Grant eligibility for short-term training programs.

These and other initiatives proposed by the Biden Administration could increase community college enrollment



Rep. Andy Levin (D-Mich.)



Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.)



Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (R-Ohio)

by 1.25 million and provide an additional \$61 billion in disposable income for their students and families, according to Levin. The new administration “makes me hopeful we’ll get a lot done in this Congress,” he said.

Along with examining accreditation to allow for more dual-credit programs between high schools and technical colleges, Rep. Bryan Steil (R-Wis.) discussed proposed legislation to promote competency-based education. “It’s a critical component to allowing individuals to get through the education system to earn that higher wage, that next job,” he said. “We can accelerate them through the system.”

Calling reauthorization of the Higher Education Act “long overdue,” Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.) outlined a wide range of largely bipartisan proposals which were included in last year’s House version of HEA reauthorization, including financial counseling for student borrowers, modernizing the federal work-study program, loan debt repayment and forgiveness programs, streamlining support for students with disabilities, supporting school-based childcare centers, addressing persistent issues with food insecurity, providing an emergency grant program and expanding Pell Grant to include access to short-term training programs.

“If we are serious about making sure that people of all backgrounds have quality affordable education, we have to be equally serious about making sure that higher ed institutions serving underrepresented populations have the resources they need to continue to grow and support their students,” she said.

### Looking Back, and Ahead

The 2021 NLS concluded with the presentation of the National Education Service Award to two retiring lawmakers whose contributions helped shape the direction of the higher ed

sector — and also were instrumental in providing support during the pandemic.

Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), former chair of the Senate Health, Employment, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee, played a key role in including provisions to simplify the FASFA and expand Pell Grant eligibility to an additional 500,000 students each year in the December coronavirus relief bill. His efforts will ensure that an additional 1.7 million students qualify for the maximum award under the program, which also reinstated access to incarcerated individuals for the first time since 1994.

In accepting the award, Alexander pointed to the political divisiveness of recent months. “On the other side, there are people... who are working together to do things like make it easier for 20 million families to go to college,” he said. “Thanks to all of you for what you’ve done and continue to do to make it easier for Americans to get into the workforce and have a better life.”

The first woman to chair the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) was instrumental in efforts to include more than \$36 billion in emergency funding for higher education in last year’s coronavirus aid legislation, including a change to the funding formula that better recognized community colleges’ student populations. She expressed optimism that the new administration would continue support for the sector. “You know better than anyone else that this relief is not enough to stave off a fiscal crisis in community colleges. President Biden knows that too,” she said.

Lawmakers also urged NLS attendees to continue advocacy efforts. “Whether you’re joining us on Zoom or dialing in by phone, you are certainly at the table,” Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-Pa.) told attendees. “We need to have you at the table as we go forward and address the issues facing the nation.”

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH

YOUR MESSAGES HAVE REACHED MILLIONS.



APRIL IS COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH, AND THAT PRESENTED A GREAT OPPORTUNITY to get the word out about why community colleges matter, how your college is serving your community's needs today, and why public support for our colleges is more important than ever.

This year, the ACCT Member Communications and Education Committee led an effort to develop a toolkit for community college leaders to get the word out about why community colleges matter. The toolkit included everything needed for colleges to advocate in their communities, including a #CCMonth logo, a Zoom background, talking points for community college advocates, suggested social media posts and tips, a sample press release and sample op-eds, and sample board resolutions.

We've never seen so much online activity among our members, as well as by leaders including Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and a number of governors and higher education officials. By the end of April, an estimated 5,000 individual posts on Twitter, Instagram, and blogs had been posted that were seen by an estimated 4 million sets of eyes throughout the month, according to Keyhole social

media analytics. A Google social media search engine showed more than 10,000 Facebook posts and another 700 LinkedIn posts that carry the #CCMonth campaign hashtag.

Messages varied throughout the month, but a couple of primary messages were delivered consistently: Community colleges are exceptional, valuable institutions of higher education that contribute to their communities' economies and wellness, and community colleges deserve more public support. We also saw many community college trustees, presidents, faculty, and students post video testimonials to Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as well as many op-ed articles in support of community colleges published in local newspapers throughout the country. To see all the messages, search your favorite social media platforms for #CCMonth.

ACCT is grateful to the member colleges and individual advocates who participated in the #CCMonth campaign. This event raised the bar for the visibility we can accomplish through our collective voices.



# TRUSTEE Advocacy in Action

WRITING AN OPINION ARTICLE FOR LOCAL MEDIA IS AN IMPORTANT WAY TO SHARE OUR INSTITUTIONS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

BY BERNIE RHINERSON

IN APRIL OF EACH YEAR, WE CELEBRATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Month as a time when all of us who are passionate about the amazing work being done in our colleges can share it broadly with our community. As community college trustees, we have a responsibility not only to represent the interests of our community on our boards, but also to be spokespeople for the contributions that our colleges are making to serve students from our community.

Community college trustees are seen as “experts” who are well qualified to share and explain the many accomplishments of our colleges to guide our students toward successful careers. That means your local media outlets are always interested in having you share information about interesting community college programs in your community. Yes, that is what your college public information officers do, but there is added credibility to the story and the message when it comes from an elected or appointed trustee on a community college board.

Writing an opinion article about a unique or interesting college program is easier than you may think. And getting that story published in local community media outlets is also easier than it sounds. During my nine years as a trustee, I have had several articles published in San Diego media highlighting everything from the success of our high school dual-enrollment programs to our many entrepreneurial education programs. And once published, the exposure value of these articles gets multiplied over and over through social media posts and reposts.

Here are four easy steps to follow to write and publish your first community college opinion article.

## **Step #1: Use a Recent Board Meeting Report as Your Source Material.**

One of the most rewarding things about being a community college trustee is hearing monthly board reports about successful educational programs in our colleges. At every board meeting, our board hears about unique programs that are positively impacting our students and helping them move forward to degrees and certificates that will get them started in successful careers. As a college trustee, I love being able to share these stories with people I meet in my community.

You can take those stories to the next level by using a board report to create a short 500-to-800-word article that you can send to the local media. Our board reports are usually in the form of easy-to-understand PowerPoint slides. Each slide typically is filled with key points about the program and data on student success. You can easily use those key points and data to craft an article, adding your own insights and thoughts.

At our April 2021 meeting, our board heard a report about open educational resources (OER) and lowering textbook costs for students. That report was filled with positive data that would make a great article for any trustee to write and share with the community, like how we achieved more than \$3 million dollars of districtwide textbook savings for our students!

## Step #2: Don't Think You Are A Writer? Lean on Your PIO or College President for Help.

OK, so maybe you don't see yourself as a writer, or you may have never done any writing like this before. Don't be intimidated! Your college's public information officer (PIO) or your college president are probably more than willing to help if you express an interest in doing this kind of positive advocacy for your college.

Whenever I get inspired to write an article, I start with Step #1 for my inspiration and just sit down at my computer and translate an interesting board report into sentences to tell the same story that I heard at the board meeting. But my next step is always to email my draft to our chancellor, my board president, and our PIO for comment and input. They have always been happy to read it over and suggest edits and additions. Our PIO also always has suggestions on how to get it published. Remember, as board members we are part of a team, and we should never surprise our board colleagues or college president by submitting an article without sharing it with them first.

Still feeling challenged? You may want to ask your college president if your PIO has time to put a first draft together for you, and then you can edit and add your thoughts to that draft.

## Step #3: Getting Published. Yes, the Media is Interested in What Trustees Have to Say.

Over the last two decades, a digital revolution has changed media as we used to know it. Today, news lives online, not just on paper delivered to our driveways. This digital revolution has created more opportunities to get opinion articles published because of the unlimited space available on community news websites. Think beyond the big Sunday opinion pages in your local legacy "newspaper" and explore publication opportunities in other online news sites.

I always try to place my articles in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, which has the largest regional audience, but it often has space limits or sometimes is not interested in the topic. I usually place a call to the opinion page editor or just email it in. But if you get rejected by your local "big" newspaper, don't give up. Ask your PIO for help on how to submit your article to a local online news source.

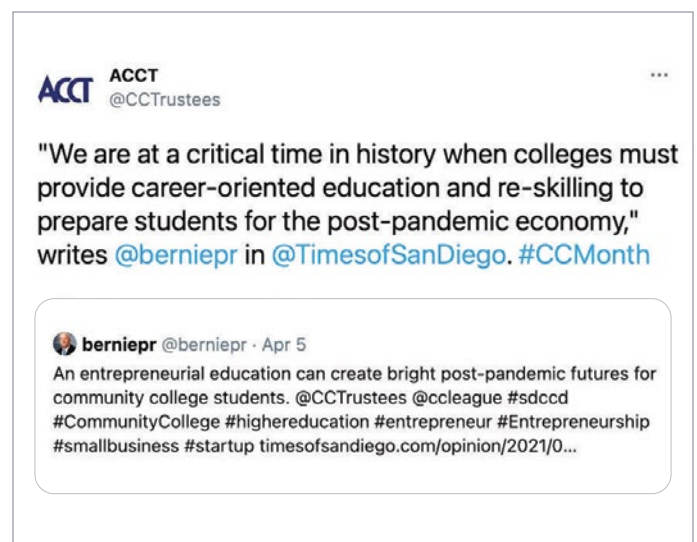
In San Diego, I have had excellent results with our local online news site, *Times of San Diego*, which recently published my article on entrepreneurial education programs at our community colleges. Getting the article published was simple: I emailed it to the editor, who loves getting content for his site. He quickly accepted it and posted my article.

## Step #4: Expand Your Exposure with Social Media.

Once you get your article published, the fun part begins — circulating it to gain positive exposure for your college programs. With social media, you can dramatically increase the

number of people who see your article and read it to learn more about your colleges. And with social media, even having people just see the positive headline will have an impact.

Once I get the link to my published article, I immediately share it via my personal Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. I make sure to tag my district's social media feeds, #sdccd and @sdccd, so that it will be seen by their large audience of followers. I also tag ACCT social media (@CCTrustees) and our state association (@cleague). By tagging your social media post, you can expand the exposure, like this retweet by ACCT:



I encourage all of my fellow community college trustees to become writers as a way to be an active advocate for our students and our colleges. Follow these four steps to write your first article to get your college success stories told in your local media, from your perspective as a board member. If you are interested in trying to write an article, just ask your president or PIO for some help. They know that with your credibility as a trustee, you can be a powerful messenger to share the many positive stories about your college's programs and students.

Don't be shy. The media will be happy to hear from you, and your community will appreciate learning about how your community college is building bright futures for students in your community.



*Bernie Rhinerson serves on the San Diego Community College District board of trustees and is a member of the ACCT Board of Directors.*

# 2021

## ACCT LEADERSHIP CONGRESS CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

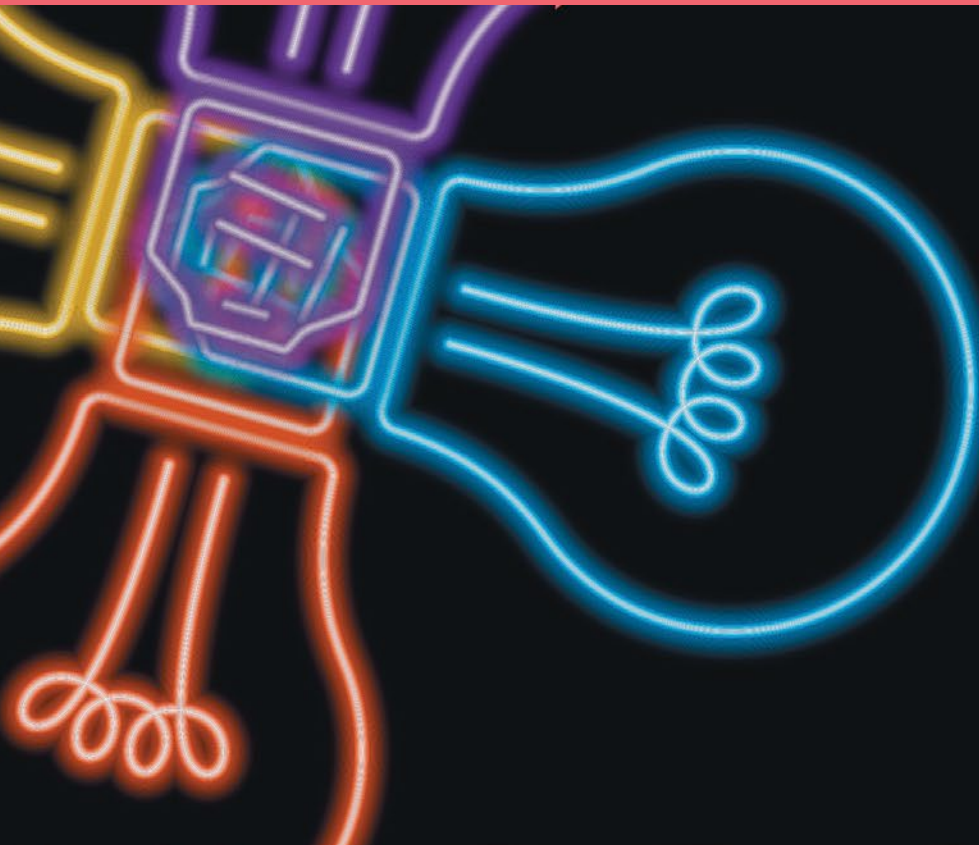
Community Colleges: Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**OCTOBER 13 – 16, 2021**

San Diego, California

**ACCT** **2021**  
**LEADERSHIP**  
**CONGRESS**

[Congress.ACCT.org](https://Congress.ACCT.org)





The ACCT Leadership Congress is the premier annual conference for community college leaders and the only national conference dedicated to community college trustees.

Each year, approximately 2,000 community and technical college trustees, CEOs and other executives, and federal higher education policy influencers gather to share information about governance best practices, community college advocacy, advancing student success, and more.

Diversity makes our country, our communities, and our colleges stronger.

Community colleges are engines of educational and social equity.

Everyone is welcome at community colleges. No one is shut out.

The 2021 ACCT Leadership Congress will embrace and showcase these values, along with longstanding governance education and other topics that matter to community college leaders.

**April 3, 2021 – Opening Registration**

**July 2, 2021 – Submission deadline**

## TRACKS

### 1. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Initiatives

- Submit presentation proposals relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that demonstrate innovation or which have proved to advance these interests at your college.

### 2. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Partnerships and collaborations are vital to community and technical colleges' abilities to adapt, innovate, and fulfill communities' needs. Submit presentation proposals that showcase effective partnerships, including those that have advanced your college's institutional resource development or created new business opportunities.

### 3. Board Basics: How to be an Effective Trustee

- Governance best practices are fundamental to effective trusteeship. Submit proposals that will help new trustees to understand their roles, responsibilities, and limitations from peer trustees' perspectives, or propose sessions about more advanced governance topics that will benefit new and experienced trustees alike.

### 4. New Pathways to Student Success

- The success of students is paramount to community colleges' missions. We are seeking presentation proposals from colleges that have identified challenges and effective solutions to barriers to student success. Sessions that demonstrate improved outcomes and explain how they were accomplished as well as special-interest topics will be considered.

### 5. Proven Solutions to Boost Enrollment

- Economic downturns typically result in increased enrollments at community and technical colleges; however, over the past year, enrollments at community colleges throughout the country have suffered. We are seeking presentation proposals that showcase proven solutions to boosting enrollment, including new lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 6. Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic

- From broad lessons to specific ones, challenging times like the pandemic era can serve as a goldmine for innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, as well as for profound lessons about the value of community and technical colleges to their communities. We are seeking sessions that detail how colleges navigated the COVID-19 pandemic and what they learned from the experiences that can be applied into the future.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- The presentation must include at least one trustee among the presenters.
- All presenters MUST register for the ACCT Leadership Congress.
- Proposals must include a letter of support from the college.
- All concurrent session presenters must pay \$225 for AV equipment (LCD Projector/Screen) if requested.
- Submissions are due July 2.

Submit your presentation proposal at [Congress.ACCT.org](https://Congress.ACCT.org).

Contact ACCT Director of Educational Events Christina Simons at [csimons@acct.org](mailto:csimons@acct.org) with any questions.

A large red virus particle with spikes and a silhouette of a person climbing a mountain peak. The virus particle is the central focus, with the text 'Tested by Crisis' overlaid on it. The background is a dark teal color with a silhouette of a mountain range and a person climbing a peak.

# Tested by Crisis

THE BOARD-PRESIDENT  
RELATIONSHIP WAS CHALLENGED  
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,  
BUT ULTIMATELY HELPED  
INSTITUTIONS PREVAIL.

BY BRADLEY J. EBERSOLE

THE BOARD-PRESIDENT RELATIONSHIP IN A COMMUNITY college is said to be the most critical in the organization. In the best of times, this relationship can be tested by varying interpretations of roles, divergent personalities, and personal relationships. So what can happen in the worst of times when a real crisis emerges? How are these roles actualized, and what are the tendencies and drivers for leaders on both sides of the table, people who are accustomed to being in charge and taking control?

The COVID-19 pandemic is defined in crisis management terms as a low-likelihood, high-impact circumstance which has caused a shock to every community college in the country. The resulting scrutiny and pressure can be overwhelming: Clear focus and swift fixes are demanded, effective communication is critical, and decisions continue to be made which significantly impact the future of the college.

Board and president roles are largely defined as having a line drawn between the policy governance and oversight responsibilities of the board and the president's administration of the institution. But differentiating this balance of powers can be an inexact science. With this in mind, I asked the presidents and board chairs of four relatively small rural community colleges to reflect on their experiences related to responding to the pandemic and to share how that has impacted their board and president roles and relationships.

When the pandemic erupted a year ago, the presidents at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College (Pa.), Atlantic Cape Community College (N.J.), Hawkeye Community College (Iowa), and Southern State Community College (Ohio) had been in their positions for tenures ranging from eight weeks to 12 years. Their respective board chairs had been serving for a significant time.

### Initial Reaction

The initial reactions of board chairs in the first days of the pandemic when closures were imminent ranged from "Oh, crap" to "Now what?" and "So what's the plan?" One chair felt the college had made good progress in recent years in the face of varying challenges and had a sinking feeling it would all be lost. Another acknowledged immediately that "we just had to get out of the way and let the president run the show." Another chair expressed some comfort that their Carver Policy Governance model would, if followed, provide the road map to getting them through the crisis.

Questions by the board directed to the president naturally did arise as board members felt responsibility for the well-being of the college. Primarily, the boards inquired about the safety of students, faculty, and staff. This seemed to be foremost in their minds as the boards' concerns prompted each president to make safety the highest priority in their action and planning.

The second-most-pressing thought expressed by most board chairs was related to finances. Concerns about the financial impact on their colleges was shared by both boards and presidents.

(Interestingly, a national survey of nearly 250 college and university presidents published by the American Council on Education in March determined similar results: the primary concerns of college CEOs in November 2020 and February 2021 were the mental health of students and faculty and staff, followed by long-term financial viability.)

### 'We Just Have to do This'

After collecting himself from the initial shocking pressure, one president recalled thinking "we just have to do this." Each leader described daily crisis management meetings, some seven days each week, and an increase in communication with the entire college.

The presidents and board chairs also mentioned an increase in communication with one another. As presidents took charge of the situation, they seemed to understand what the board needed to know and when they needed to know it. One president heavily relied on the 'no surprises' principle in determining communication practices.

Generally, each of these presidents had already established good relationships and communication patterns with their boards, and although these communications may have increased in tempo, they built upon an existing structure. The board chairs shared that they had confidence in their presidents, and it was the regular communication which cemented that trust and defined their role. Support of emergency expenditures and significant policy decisions related to personnel and instruction may have involved some leaps of faith, but that support was expressed as being crucial.

### Impact of Board Culture

Community college boards are for the most part characteristically similar. They have common responsibilities as they provide direction and oversight. However, each board has its own culture which impacts its respective level of engagement.

In the case of these four community colleges, reactions ranged from standing aside and watching carefully the actions of the president and administration to more active involvement. One board, for example, saw its role as fundraising for students and proudly shared the success it had in raising money for enhancing student success. This board also provided suggestions for the president on potential ways to control access to the campus and into buildings. The relationship between this president and board was such that this more engaged role was welcomed and served to benefit the institution and the students.

It is true that the culture of each college may be different, but the core of managing the crisis was the understanding of the importance of a trusting relationship between the president and the board. Having a sense of trust was emphasized repeatedly.

One president reflected, "Remember, these people [the board] were also very busy with their work and personal lives" as they dealt with larger pandemic issues. Although they were involved



Southern State Community College President Kevin Boys sets the example on campus.



A Southern State Community College student observes safety protocols during the pandemic.

in monitoring the response and reactions of the president and college, they had many other concerns to deal with. They expected the president to take control.

### Lessons Learned by Presidents and Boards

The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has tested the continuity of the board-president relationship. It provided presidents an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership abilities and tested boards' understanding of their role in governance. It was the already established relationship between the two that made it possible for some colleges to weather the challenges, but the newly appointed president had to prove himself very quickly. That board chair was pleased with the result.

Simpler things like Zoom meetings were noted as cultural changes that will impact the board in the future. However, despite recognizing the impending financial challenges and trends of declining enrollment, the interviewed presidents publicly expressed a sense of hope for the future, which is parlayed into the language expressed by the boards. Said one president, "People are psychologically frozen. They have lost their jobs and children are out of school. We want to be here when they start to thaw." The board chair of that college followed with "We are here for the community." This sense of hope for the future was further demonstrated as several of the presidents spoke of continuing with significant capital projects. "The community college is very relevant, flexible, and can pivot with change," said a board chair.

The roles of community college boards and presidents are universally similar, but not entirely the same. Those roles may be tested in crisis. Trust, regular communication, and unwavering belief in the mission of the community college allow the board

and president to continue to function within their roles for the benefit of students and the community.

Participating individuals included President Todd Holcomb and Board Chair Jay Nardini, Hawkeye Community College, Iowa; President Barbara Gaba and Board Chair Maria Mento, Atlantic Cape Community College, New Jersey; President Steve Nunez and Board Chair Greg Winger, Pennsylvania Highlands Community College; and President Kevin Boys and Board Chair Brian Prickett, Southern State Community College, Ohio.



*Bradley J. Ebersole, Ph.D., served as the former president of Washington State Community College, Ohio, and is currently a retreat and search consultant for ACCT.*

### References:

Taylor, M., Sanchez, C., Turk, J., et al. (2021, March 4). College and University Presidents Respond to COVID-19: 2021 Spring Term Survey. *American Council on Education*. Retrieved from <https://www.acenet.edu/Research-Insights/Pages/Senior-Leaders/College-and-University-Presidents-Respond-to-COVID-19-2021-Spring-Term.aspx>

Deloitte, Global Center for Corporate Governance. (September 2019). *Stepping in: The Board's Role in Crisis Management*. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/risk/deloitte-uk-risk-global-on-the-boards-agenda-crisis-management.pdf>.

# A VIRTUAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

## 2021 ACCT GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The 2021 ACCT Governance Leadership Institute took place virtually at the end of March and included three days of engaging and interactive presentations. With over 60 trustees, presidents, and administrators gathered in the ACCT Zoom Room, we covered a range of topics, including:

### DAY ONE

**Roles and Responsibilities; Best Practices of High Functioning Boards** presented by David Rutledge, former ACCT Chair and trustee from Washtenaw Community College in Michigan

**Importance of the Board/CEO Relationship** presented by Colleen Allen, ACCT director of retreats and evaluations, Mary Figueroa, board president from Riverside Community College District in California, and Dr. Wolde-Ab Isaac, chancellor of Riverside Community College District

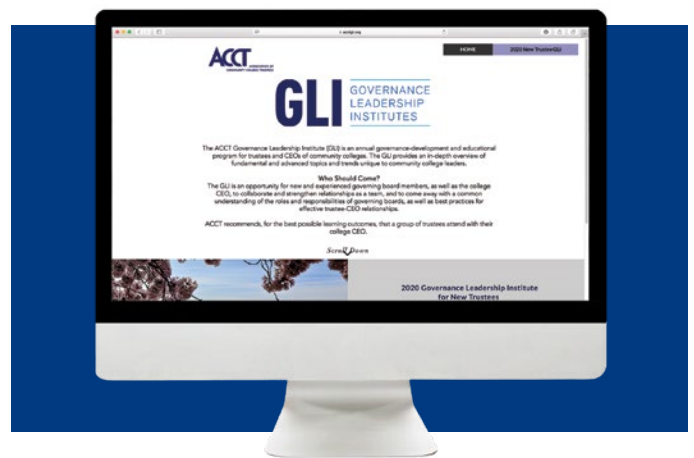
### DAY TWO

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** presented by Dr. Charlene Dukes, ACCT consultant and president emerita from Prince George's Community College in Maryland, and Dr. Helen Benjamin, ACCT consultant and former chancellor from Contra Costa Community College District in California

**Speaking with One Voice** presented by Rosaelena O'Neil, member, ACCT Board of Directors and board chair from Northern Virginia Community College, and Kenneth A. Brown, trustee from El Camino College in California

### DAY THREE

**Board Ethics and Code of Conduct** presented by Dr. Bill Pink, president of Grand Rapids Community College in Michigan



**Current Trends and Issues Facing Our Colleges** presented by Jee Hang Lee, ACCT senior vice president

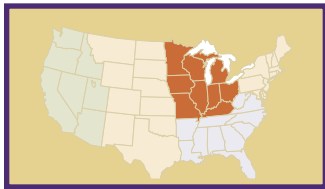
Overall, the quality of the content exceeded the expectations of the attendees, and the shorter days made for a more effective and engaging format.

One participant told us that while virtual platforms are “not easy” for them, “terrific speakers and presenters...kept me engaged.”

We are excited to announce that our next Virtual Governance Leadership Institute for New Trustees is scheduled to take place this summer, August 3 – 5, 2021. This is a great opportunity for newly elected or appointed trustees to learn the basics of good and effective governance.

**Registration will open late this spring at [ACCTGLI.org](https://www.acctgli.org).**

# Around the Regions



## CENTRAL REGION

**Minnesota** Gov. Tim Waltz's COVID-19 recovery budget includes direct emergency funding for state and tribal colleges and a \$35 million workforce stabilization program to provide free tuition for students into high-demand programs.

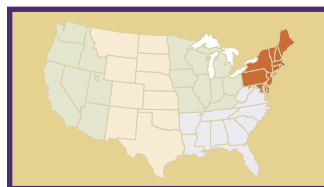
Five community colleges in Minnesota's Northeast Higher Education District — Hibbing Community College, Mesabi Range College, Rainy River Community College, Itasca Community College, and Vermillion Community College—will combine their six campuses into one umbrella institution. The new institution, which has not been named, will be operational by fall 2022.

The **Kentucky** Community and Technical College System launched its first flight training program at Madisonville Community College.

**Michigan** will expand eligibility for food assistance benefits to college students struggling financially during the pandemic. "College students should not have to choose between furthering their education and putting food

on the table—especially during a pandemic," Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said.

Grand Rapids Community College in Michigan was awarded a \$450,000 federal grant to build a designated veterans center on campus and expand services for students who served in the military. Its Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success will serve as a hub to connect veterans to campus resources.



## NORTHEAST REGION

**Massachusetts** lawmakers introduced legislation that would create an agency within the state's department of higher education and a \$1 million program to help public colleges and universities address student food insecurity. More than one-third of the state's public higher ed students reported recent experiences with food insecurity in a June 2020 report.

Citing equity and access, Massachusetts' 15 community colleges announced that they will encourage but not require students to receive COVID-19 vaccinations before attending classes this fall.

**New Jersey** Gov. Phil Murphy signed legislation permanently establishing the Community College Opportunity Grant Program, which will allow qualified students to attend any of the state's community colleges without tuition or fees. "Today's bill signing underscores our continued commitment to college affordability, ensuring that our young people and working adults have the opportunity to earn post-secondary degrees and advance their promising careers," Murphy said.

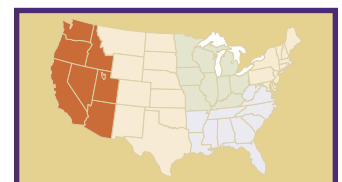
Six **Maryland** community colleges created the Maryland Education Alliance (MEA) to share resources and expertise, meet community needs, and generate cost savings for the colleges that can be passed on to students. Comprised of Anne Arundel Community College, Cecil College, Chesapeake College, College of Southern Maryland, Harford Community College, and Prince George's Community College, the alliance also plans to create seamless pathways for students to move from one community college to another, decreasing the need to run highly specialized, costly, and sometimes low-enrolled programs at several locations.

Hagerstown Community College in Maryland is offering two tuition-free summer classes to all 2021 high school graduates as "our way of helping to honor them and celebrate their achievements," said HCC President Jim Klauber.

**Rhode Island** Gov. Dan McKee's budget proposal includes funding to make the Rhode Island Promise program permanent. The current law ends eligibility with the current high school graduation class.

The State University of **New York** (SUNY) has launched auto-enrollment for benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Community College System of **New Hampshire** has partnered with the NH Lodging and Restaurant Association to create free online training programs for COVID-related safety precautions for the hospitality industry.



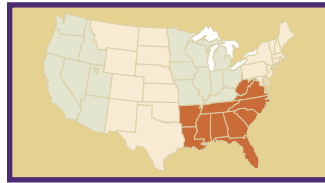
## PACIFIC REGION

**California** Gov. Gavin Newsom's budget proposal includes a recommendation to create a standalone dual admission program guaranteeing first-time community college freshmen a seamless transfer to the California State University or University of California campus of their choice.

A bill introduced in the California legislature would eliminate the 2026 sunset date on existing baccalaureate pilot programs at the state's community colleges and allow the number of programs to grow. Similar legislation introduced last year was backed by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.

A bill introduced in the **Nevada** legislature would create a separate governing body for the state's community colleges. The concept was supported by Gov. Steve Sisolak in his state of the state address as part of a focus on making "Nevadans job ready," he said. If the bill becomes law, community colleges would be removed from the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) in 2022. NSHE opposes the bill, arguing it would make it more difficult for students to transfer from two- to four-year schools.

More than half of the Seattle Public Schools class of 2021 has applied to the Seattle Promise program, far above pre-pandemic levels. The **Washington** city's tuition-free community college program is funded by a special \$600 million education levy approved by voters in 2018.



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**SOUTHERN  
 REGION**  
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**Virginia** Gov. Ralph Northam signed into law the "Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back" (G3) initiative, which provides tuition-free community college for low- and middle-income students who pursue jobs in high-demand fields, including healthcare, information technology, computer science, manufacturing and skilled trades, public safety, and early childhood education. The G3 initiative includes \$36 million for tuition, fees, books, and wraparound supports, including direct support incentive grants to qualifying full-time students. "The Governor's G3 initiative will make earning the necessary skills to fully participate in our 21st century economy affordable for more Virginians," said Glenn Dubois, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System.

The **South Carolina** Law Enforcement Training Council approved a plan allowing law enforcement recruits to complete the first part of their training at state technical colleges through a new 14-week certificate course they would complete before attending training at the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy.

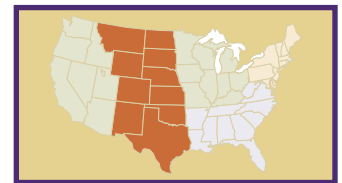
Hinds Community College in **Mississippi** will use federal coronavirus relief funds to cover tuition, fees, and books for up to 12 credit hours of classes this summer.

**West Virginia's** legislature unanimously approved a bill that would let students open a tax-free savings account for trade or vocational career paths, supplementing existing 529 plans for accredited vocational and technical colleges.

**Tennessee's** tnAchieves initiative launched a "Find Your Why" campaign to encourage high school students from the class of 2021 to earn college credentials.

Wake Technical College in **North Carolina** will offer a new robotics apprenticeship program with Amazon.

The college will launch a mechatronics and robotics apprenticeship program to train students to perform maintenance on robotics in the ecommerce giant's fulfillment centers.



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**WESTERN  
 REGION**  
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The **Colorado** Trustee Network is advocating for state leaders to use some of the anticipated \$4 billion in American Rescue Plan relief funding to support low-income and first-generation college students pursuing postsecondary education.

Pueblo Community College in Colorado launched a program to connect students with employers to earn money and college credit. The Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) program will allow students to work at more than a half-dozen local employers while earning credit in advanced manufacturing technician programs.

*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 [jbray@acct.org](mailto:jbray@acct.org).*

# BUSINESS CONTINUITY DEPENDS ON STUDENT EXPERIENCE

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MEANS REMAINING PRODUCTIVE DURING DISRUPTIONS. FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES, IT ALSO SHOULD MEAN DELIVERING AN OUTSTANDING STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

BY JIM ANDERSON

POTENTIALLY ANXIETY-PROVOKING TERMS LIKE BUSINESS CONTINUITY, RISK management, business disruption, and many others are grabbing headlines today for clear reasons. Responses to the novel coronavirus, severe weather, and the effects of shifting higher education demographics all vary from state to state, region to region, and institution to institution. Combined, all these concerns may feel overwhelming, but what if they didn't have to? What if business continuity was reframed as ensuring an outstanding student experience?





Business continuity should be incorporated into building a top-tier student experience. No matter what is currently happening, institutions must be able to offer continuous service to students — especially during key enrollment periods. When the student experience is enhanced, good things will follow, and when students have a poor experience, the fallout can be great. A year ago, most institutions had a week's notice before moving all operations online. Fewer than two months ago, the colleges across the south were impacted by a severe winter storm which left staff and students without essentials. The consistent theme: disruptions will occur, though when they will happen and what form they will take cannot be known.

In traditional risk-management planning, neither of the events noted above would rise to the top of a risk-management matrix because they are rare, and because the chance of widespread events such as a global pandemic happening is fairly low. Most plans account for more acute events affecting the campus itself or a region for a limited period of time. Just a few years ago, few could imagine planning for these types of rare events, let alone allocating resources to avert them. Now we know that doing so was a worthwhile exercise for the institutions that planned ahead.

## Changing Perspective Makes the Investment Clear

If we were to consider combining our need to build an outstanding student experience with our business continuity plan, the investment would look much different. It would no longer seem isolated to a rare occurrence or an initiative which never makes it out of the planning stages of various strategic planning sessions. It would be viewed by the institution as an investment which all can see as valuable, if not a direct benefit.

What does it take to build an outstanding student experience, and where do we focus efforts first? The experience is built through highly functioning components students interact with daily and that are required to run an institution. This translates into admission, registration, financial aid, bursar, and new student orientation. Hallmarks of these operations are quick processing, accurate answers to questions, access to personalized and customized information, easy-to-process transactions, and the ability to have one-to-one interaction with staff. Vulnerability exists when student services departments are inaccessible to students. By modifying frontline service delivery, colleges can quickly and positively impact the student experience.

## Begin with Partnerships

Creating effective and efficient external partnerships is an excellent way to accomplish building the student experience while simultaneously investing in your business continuity. Higher education is not efficient at quickly scaling up or down or decoupling itself from constraints put upon it through infrastructure limitations. Cultivating external student-service partnerships provide all these elements and a personalized and customized student experience.

Our experience of operating in the pandemic proved the need to be flexible in delivery of instruction and support services. Students need even more support from their college during times of disruption. It makes sense to explore service configurations that ensure frontline services remain open and fully accessible. External partnerships that do not depend on college personnel or technical infrastructure may be a better use of campus resources.

Historically, higher education has been slow to recognize that students have choices and do make choices based on their interactions with institutions. Fewer students in the coming years means greater competition and less tolerance for a lack of personalized and customized service to students. Investment in the student experience or creating more continuity is a worthwhile investment and one with a significant return.

College of the Mainland is a comprehensive community college located in Texas City near the Texas Gulf Coast, with a fall 2020 enrollment of 4,335. Prior to the pandemic, the college began to reimagine student-service operations. Out of a need to provide better service to students, redeploy existing staff resources, and to speed up processing, it partnered with Edamerica. In turn, Edamerica offered better technology, enhanced scalability, and a continuous service model, lifting student service past in-house alternatives.

The partnership between College of the Mainland and Edamerica is helping speed up and improve service, setting the institution apart from its competitors. Transcript request response times went from 3 days to 24 hours. Application processing time dropped from one week to 24 hours and, when combined, increased the application conversion rate by 9 percent.

Student access to direct personalized service also increased because of the partnership. College of the Mainland saw an increase of 7 percent in face-to-face contact with students, and students experienced a 60 percent reduction in wait times to see an advisor. In the six-week periods leading up to fall and spring semesters, the college staff conducted a total of 3,480 virtual advising sessions. Simply stated, staff were able to focus on the quality of the student experience.

The example of the College of the Mainland-Edamerica partnership can be replicated many times and illustrates the point that building an outstanding student experience through service and stabilizing the institution during difficult times are not mutually exclusive — in fact, they are mutually beneficial. Combining large-scale initiatives can and will prove to be a worthwhile daily investment over the long term.



*Jim Anderson is higher education administrator and senior consultant for Edamerica.*

# FINANCIAL AID HELP FOR STUDENTS – AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES TOO

In its first year, SwiftStudent helped simplify financial aid appeals for more than 70,000 students.

BY ABIGAIL SELDIN



SwiftStudent offers community college leaders a (free) way to comply with new regulations – and ensure that students can ask for the help they need to succeed in school. Through SwiftStudent, students are learning about the financial aid appeal process, reviewing eligibility requirements, and customizing free template appeal letters to submit to their college financial aid office.

IN THE PAST THREE RELIEF BILLS, CONGRESS APPROPRIATED dollars for direct disbursement to college students, many of whom are struggling with food and housing insecurity. Yet the vast majority of our students do not know that they can ask for additional financial aid. Recognizing this information gap, Congress now requires institutions in receipt of these funds to notify students that they can appeal their financial aid award or eligibility.

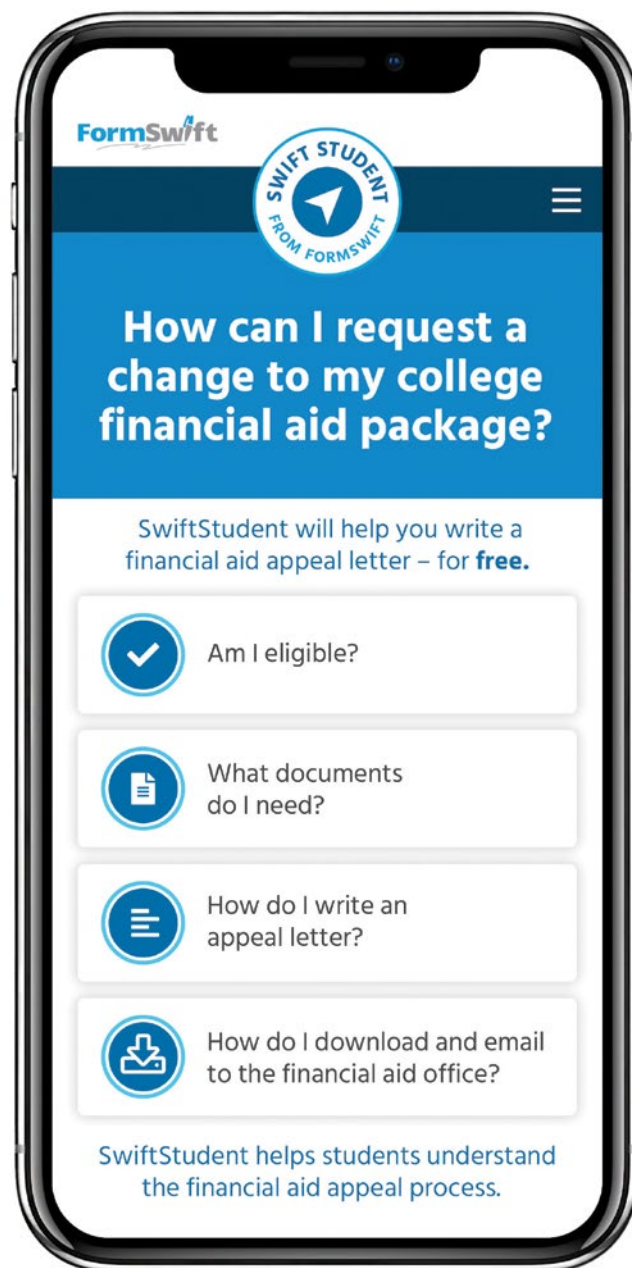
SwiftStudent offers community college leaders a (free) way to comply with new regulations — and ensure that students can ask for the help they need to succeed in school. Through SwiftStudent, students are learning about the financial aid appeal process, reviewing eligibility requirements, and customizing free template appeal letters to submit to their college financial aid office. During the COVID-19 emergency, SwiftStudent has helped more than 70,000 students with financial aid appeals, providing both factual information about eligibility and industry-approved template letters for submission.

The Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation (SHSF) developed SwiftStudent's content and design in partnership with 17 leading higher education organizations from around the country, including the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), College Promise, Achieving the Dream, Montgomery College, and Everett Community College. These partners provided extensive and exhaustive input on the tool, reviewing numerous iterations through the development process. As a free website, SwiftStudent does not share or sell user information, which has enabled easy partnerships with institutions and access organizations. Numerous community colleges have posted SwiftStudent links to their financial aid pages to provide students with a primer about the financial aid appeals process.

Now one year old, the SwiftStudent is addressing the barriers community college students face — and saving time for financial aid officers as they manage new compliance requirements and assist students.



*Abigail Seldin is the producer of SwiftStudent and CEO of the Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation.*



# NOW AVAILABLE

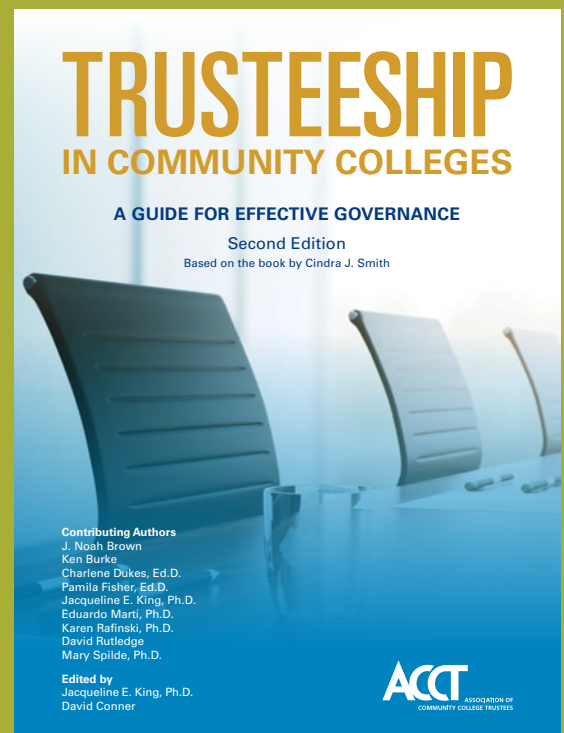
## TRUSTEESHIP IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Revised & Expanded Second Edition

ACCT's cornerstone governance handbook has been thoroughly revised, updated, and expanded. The new second edition gives a comprehensive overview of foundational concepts of community college governance, more advanced considerations for navigating challenging situations, and information to help community college trustees understand the higher education landscape and, in particular, the community college sector, including the values of educational access and student success.

Chapters include:

- The Evolution of Community Colleges and Governance
- The Board and Its Governing Functions
- The Board's Role in Setting and Using Policy
- Board Accountability and Advocacy
- The Board and the Chief Executive
- Best Practices for Governing Boards
- The Board's Role in Planning and Monitoring
- The Board's Role in Student Success



To order: Go to the ACCT Bookstore at [www.acct.org/publications](http://www.acct.org/publications) or email [acctinfo@acct.org](mailto:acctinfo@acct.org) for more information.

# TRUSTEE TALK WITH ACCT

## How can boards support student trustees and maximize their effectiveness?

BY NORMA W. GOLDSTEIN

ROSAELENA (ROSIE) O'NEIL HAS WORKED TIRELESSLY WITH ACCT's student trustees for the past two years. She believes student trustees give boards "a unique opportunity to truly understand who their students are to make decisions to benefit students and allow trustees to deliver the mission of the college."

"The students' contributions frame everything that boards are doing in their work," says O'Neil, a member of the ACCT Board of Directors, board chair at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and board liaison to the ACCT Student Trustee Advisory Committee (STAC). "After all, our students' success ultimately defines our success as a sector and as a critical contributor to our local and national economies."

O'Neil has been coaching student trustees at NOVA for years. She believes that every community college board could benefit from having a student trustee. "The student is the most important person at the board table," she says. "What's the point of the job if board members are not listening to students? We are there for the students and we really need to understand who they are, what they need to succeed, and lean into their perspective."

### The Student Trustee Perspective

Niki Nguyen, 23, a student trustee at Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) and a STAC member, says "I wish I had more conversations with other board members and felt more comfortable. It's hard to have a genuine conversation in an open meeting."

An orientation or a one-on-one meeting with the chair or another trustee can go a long way to make student trustees comfortable, she says. "I used to be terrified, but now I'm in

my second term and am much more empowered and capable of fulfilling my trustee duties and responsibilities."

Nguyen emphasizes that student trustees want to feel valued and appreciated. "I would say to boards around the country to include students in highlighting the work they are doing for change at the campus and for the community," she says. "There are so many great events that students have championed to make our community more equitable and inclusive. We, as a community, should highlight all the hard work and accomplishments our students have done."

### Advocating for Students at All Levels

Nguyen spends about 20 hours a week on student trustee responsibilities, including listening to students, collaborating with local, state, and national officials, and advocating for students at every level. "There is so much advocacy to do," she adds. "A lot of students have unique challenges. The reality is that students are really struggling with affordability, financial constraints in general, and are having trouble getting access to proper technology, course content materials, and online platforms."

According to Nguyen, nontraditional students are suffering the most. "Some don't have basic needs [met], and without them cannot reach their potential," she says. "Some students are homeless and lack parental support. Some are the main caretakers of their families and have no external support mechanisms." Nguyen notes that students come to her with their struggles. As a student trustee, she explains, it can be hard to represent her peers while having access to information to which other students are not privy. Along with mentors to help her and other student trustees navigate such challenges, Nguyen

**STUDENT TRUSTEES FEEL DEEPLY HOW VITAL THEIR ROLE IS IN REPRESENTING STUDENTS' VOICES TO OTHER BOARD MEMBERS. "AS A STUDENT TRUSTEE, I HAVE A VOICE TO BRING WHAT MATTERS TO THE TABLE FROM THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE," NGUYEN SAYS. "MY ROLE AS TRUSTEE IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE I AM ENTRUSTED WITH THE WELLBEING OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL."**

believes that boards can support student trustees in a variety of ways, including providing a warm welcome, conversations, and answering any questions they may have.

### **Making Important Decisions at the Board Level**

Student trustees feel deeply how vital their role is in representing students' voices to other board members. As a full voting member of the BHCC board, Nguyen has been instrumental in changing the Massachusetts General Law to allow part-time students to become student trustees for the first time. She also has voted on tuition and fee increases. "As a student trustee, I have a voice to bring what matters to the table from the student's perspective," she says. "My role as trustee is significant because I am entrusted with the wellbeing of students in general."

### **Developing Leadership Skills**

In addition to being on ACCT's STAC, Nguyen is a full-time student, a double major (biology and government), as well as a BHCC student mentor for student activities and vice chair of the Student Advisory Council for the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. As a first-generation Vietnamese American, Nguyen feels that her profile as a student leader is important, pointing to BHCC President Dr. Pam Eddinger as "a role model."

"It's rare to see an Asian female in such a leadership role. She's really invested," Nguyen says.

Dr. Eddinger also speaks highly of her student trustee: "Niki exemplifies the leadership skills that student trusteeship is meant to develop," she says. "She understands the mission of community colleges, the diversity and potential of our students, and the academic and social support necessary for success. I am proud of her work locally in Massachusetts, and at the national level. Niki is self-motivated and a fine leader."

### **Support for Student Trustees**

One of the pressing challenges for community college student trustees is that they are on the board for a "hot minute" and then leave, says J. Noah Brown, ACCT president and CEO. "They often do not get an orientation or much preparation or guidance of what it means to be on a board," he says. "It is the reason ACCT developed the STAC."

ACCT has been hosting STAC since 2015, and the committee has been advocating for improving student trustees' capacity and encouraging all colleges to bring a student to the trustee table as a trustee or liaison and to ACCT's National Legislative Summit (NLS) to speak to their state's legislators.

### **Speaking for Those Without a Voice**

Having ACCT work with student trustees was the idea of former ACCT Chair Bakari G. Lee, vice chairman of the Hudson County Community College (HCCC) Board, where Warren Rigby, 38, has been a student trustee for the past six months. Like Nguyen, Rigby has several roles and serves on various committees, including HCCC's President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the college's return-to-campus taskforce, as well as ACCT's STAC.

At HCCC, "an alumnus or alumna is selected by students at graduation to serve a one-year term as the alumni representative to the board of trustees," says HCCC President Dr. Chris Reber. "Without exception, every alumnus serving in this role has brought valued insights into board and board committee discussions, while also growing from the experience. Students and their success are the focus of our mission. We value their full participation in college governance."

Rigby is currently pursuing his RN degree at HCCC after completing his liberal arts degree at the college and will be able to spend a second year as a student trustee. Unlike Nguyen, Rigby is not a voting member of the board, but like her he also spends an inordinate amount of time in his advocacy role to represent students. "Every waking moment and opportunity I get, I eat, sleep, and breathe HCCC. Every opportunity to tell the students' story and bring forth issues is important," he says. "I do it consistently, and somehow, I fit my studies in. I speak for people who feel they don't have a voice."

### **Honoring Student Voice**

Rigby feels fortunate to have access to HCCC's president. "I do have [his] ear," he says. "From the moment Dr. Reber joined the HCCC community, he initiated a series of walking tours that

created transparency and a willingness to get to know the college community. He understands the impact of the student's voice. That is something very crucial for the college to grow."

"Listen to your students," Rigby advises boards. "They are affected the most by the decisions made by the college."

"Students don't understand that their voices are powerful," Rigby adds. "The biggest thing is having the ability to get the information to the right people. COVID taught us how to cope, how to work, how to meet the student halfway in the middle. It's important for the college and the board to connect with students. Utilizing our student stories to talk about our initiatives is what is really going to help the board move the needle forward."

### Students Inspire Boards

Rigby ponders fun and inventive ways for the college and board to connect with students. "By utilizing social media, we are meeting students halfway," he says. "We needed to take a look at the ways we communicated, and frankly, the old ways are not working."

Rigby also played a significant role in the development of the college's food pantry and a collegewide recycling program. Additionally, HCCC developed a single landing page on its portal called Hudson Helps, which connects students to support services, programs, and resources that address many basic needs.

HCCC Board Chair William J. Netchert, Esq. appreciates the efforts of Rigby and other students. "Our board of trustees is enriched by the perspectives of each year's alumni representative to the board; the student government association president, who offers a report at each board meeting; and other students who attend and speak at meetings of the full board and board committees from time to time," he says. "Our students inspire us!"

### Ways Boards Can Improve the Student Experience

As STAC advisor, O'Neil admits that one of her greatest concerns is how board members are equipped to work with student trustees. With some exceptions, student trustees typically serve on their boards between nine months to one year, and she urges boards to identify mentors and coaches to guide new student trustees in order to maximize the benefit of having a student voice at the table. "In many cases, we have learned that they have been invited to join the board but have not been fully onboarded or truly included in the conversation at the board table," she says. "Student trustees need an orientation and ideally a trustee mentor."

### Mentors and Coaches

O'Neil says that "boards should provide mentors and coaches who help them understand the landmines, how to speak authentically on the public record, and how to challenge the board with a difficult message in a clear yet respectful manner." The mentor or coach could be the board chair, another trustee, the college CEO, the vice president of student affairs, or another party designated to assist the student trustee.

### Scholarship Support

At times, STAC advisors get emotional when talking about student trustees. "I get goosebumps thinking about seeing how students grow when they are in this role," O'Neil says. "Being a trustee is a lot of work and takes lots of their time away from studies, family, and paid work. If they do the job well and provide important service to their community, I hope that colleges will think about giving them compensation or a scholarship for their work."

Karen Lomax, executive coordinator to the ACCT president and CEO and the ACCT Board of Directors and primary administrator, co-advisor, and staff support to the STAC, is also inspired by the student trustees. "Their dedication is exemplary. I am in awe of them," she says. "They have enormous amounts of drive and commitment for improving colleges and boards on a local and national level. It is important for boards to make sure that the experience is valuable to them."

Before transferring from Pasadena Community College to Yale University, former student trustee Nune Garapian wrote in the fall 2018 issue of *Trustee Quarterly*, "Student trustees are among the most critical, yet underused, resources on a community college campus." She advises students to be sure they are well prepared: "As a student trustee, your voice is valued throughout this process, and you have the ability to make a change," she said. "This can be done by attending shared governance meetings and understanding the issues before they're brought to the board." An orientation plus a trustee mentor and ongoing engagement and support can help boards maximize the student trustee's effectiveness.

### Resources

A variety of online resources can be found on the ACCT website. Of particular note are the following:

- *The Value of Student Trustees to a Board*, Nune Garapian, November 29, 2018.
- *Don't Bring Your Student's Message to Capitol Hill — Bring Your Student*, Alicia Moreno, *Trustee Quarterly*, Summer 2018.
- *Advocacy and the Role of Students Part I and Part 2*, *In the Know with ACCT* Podcast Episodes 37 and 38 (<https://intheknowwithacct.podbean.com/>)
- ACCT's Student Trustee Advisory Committee FAQ site ([www.acct.org/page/student-trustee-advisory-committee-faq](http://www.acct.org/page/student-trustee-advisory-committee-faq))



ACCT Director of Trustee Education  
Norma Goldstein, Ph.D. can be reached at  
[ngoldstein@acct.org](mailto:ngoldstein@acct.org).



# COVID-19 Rulings and Our Colleges

Legal challenges involving the pandemic remain top of mind for higher ed.

By Ira M. Shepard, ACCT General Counsel

COVID-19-RELATED LEGAL ISSUES continue to dominate the news, and they remain among the most important pending concerns relating to the administration of community colleges. In this column, we review select COVID-19 related legal issues that may impact higher ed.

**Court dismisses lawsuit against employer after spouse and employee allegedly contracted the novel coronavirus from workplace.**

A California federal district court judge recently dismissed a wife's lawsuit against her husband's employer claiming that she contracted COVID-19 from her husband after he contracted the disease at work. (*Kuciemba et al. v. Victory Woodworks Inc.*, case N. 3:20-cv-09355, US Dist. Ct N.D. Ca.)

The federal judge ruled that California workers compensation law was the wife's exclusive remedy under state law for the claim. However, the judge further ruled that infectious diseases transmitted from the workplace to home and then to other family members or others are not actionable under the California workers compensation statute. The judge reasoned that the wife was not employed by the defendant employer and therefore does not have a claim that can be processed under workers compensation law.

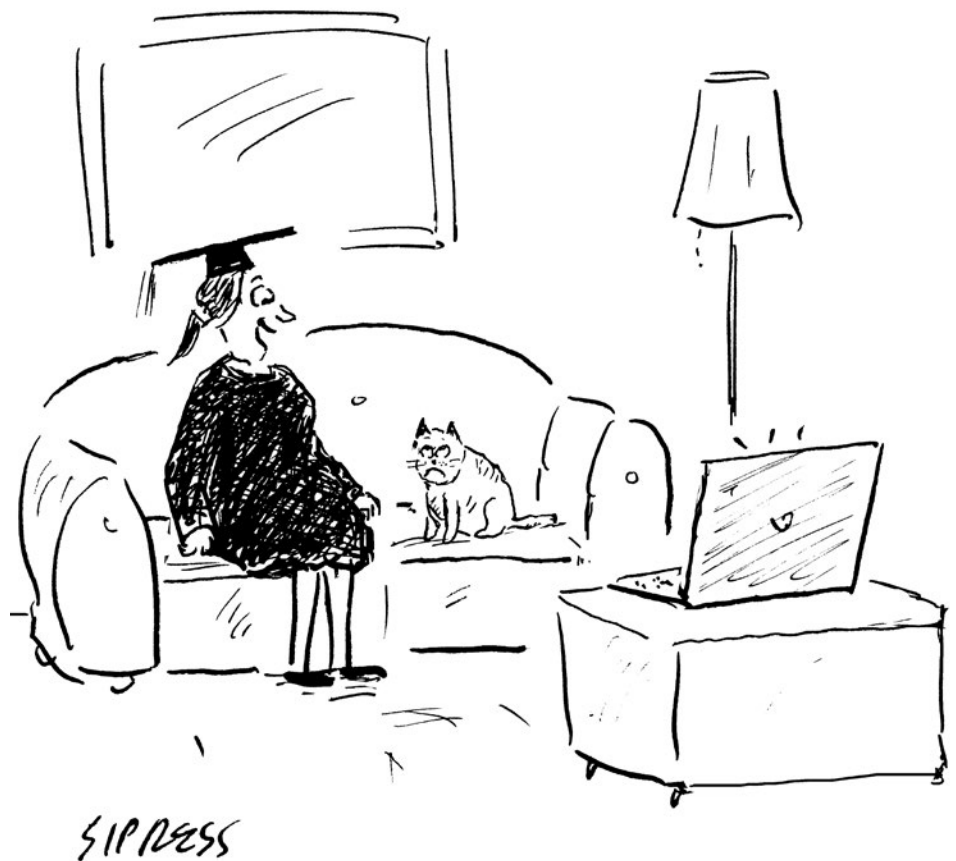
**U.S. Department of Labor determines laid off workers who refuse to return to work due to pandemic safety concerns should be eligible for state unemployment.**

The U.S. Department of Labor issued a letter to state agencies that underscores President Biden's recent statement that unemployment benefits should be

ensured to workers who decline work that would jeopardize their health.

It is up to the states to determine how to implement the department's letter, as many have taken the position that "general fear" of COVID-19 would not be sufficient for refusing work and maintaining a claim for unemployment compensation benefits. The department pointed out that

people claiming benefits under these circumstances will have to attest to "unsafe conditions" under penalty of perjury. Moreover, benefit eligibility applies to refusal to work at a site that "is not in compliance with local, state, or national health and safety standards directly related to COVID-19," according to the letter. "This includes but is not limited to, facial



"Thank you so much for coming."



mask wearing, physical distancing measures, or provision of personal protective equipment consistent with public safety guidelines.”

The expanded eligibility is specific to pandemic unemployment assistance provided by federally funded benefits created by last year's CARES Act. It applies to workers who were receiving but then lost traditional unemployment benefits because they refused to return to an unsafe job, those who were laid off or had their hours reduced because of the pandemic, and school teachers who were not guaranteed continuing pay or employment if their schools closed because of the pandemic.

**Biden Administration issues order calling on OSHA to determine whether there is a need to issue emergency temporary standards protecting workers from on-the-job COVID-19 infections.**

Calling for “the enforcement of more stringent worker safety standards,” President Biden issued an order calling on the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) to decide whether there is a need to issue temporary emergency standards to protect employees from on-the-job COVID-19 infections. If OSHA decides that such a standard is needed, the president’s executive order says it should be issued by March 15. No date or deadline was given for an MSHA rule.

To justify an emergency rule, OSHA must conclude that “employees are exposed to grave danger” by a new hazard. Declaring such an emergency allows OSHA to avoid the lengthy public comment period attached to

federal rulemaking. Under the OSHA Act, an emergency rule can stay in effect for six months, after which it expires unless it is replaced by a permanent rule. OSHA does not have jurisdiction over state and local workers. The executive order also calls for OSHA to review its COVID-19 enforcement efforts and identify areas to improve.

**Virginia’s COVID-19 safety rules seen as possible national model for OSHA adoption.** Several of the provisions contained in the state of Virginia’s safety rules for workplace COVID-19 exposure are seen as a possible model for national use and OSHA consideration. Virginia’s standard is the first permanent occupational safety regulation in the U.S. to address virus-related hazards. Rather than taking a rigid one-size-fits-all employer approach to COVID-19 exposure and risks, the Virginia model set up employer compliance requirements based on a job’s exposure risk. The Virginia rules generally require employers to assess COVID-19 risks and follow guidance issued from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health regulator mandates.

Virginia’s standards categorize workplaces according to high, medium, and low hazard levels and impose different requirements based on the assessment of risk. The Virginia rules deem high-risk workplaces to include healthcare providers that treat COVID-19 patients and prisons, while medium-risk workplaces include meat processing, transportation, retail outlets, and schools. Low-risk workplaces are office buildings where

social distancing practices are observed and where the jobs have minimal contact with other employees and the general public. The Virginia mandate requires all employers to notify their local health department if two or more workers are discovered to be infected over a two-week span, but leaves the state health department to decide what manner of testing is needed.

**U.S. district courts to test live audio streaming of select cases on YouTube due to pandemic.**

Thirteen U.S. district courts will test live streaming audio of certain civil proceedings on YouTube as part of a two-year pilot program in the federal judiciary. The streaming will be in civil cases of public interest where the parties consent, excluding trials and proceedings that involve jurors, witnesses, and classified materials. The pilot program will also exclude criminal proceedings. Two of the participating courts have already started livestreaming audio during the pandemic, and the rest were expected to start early this year. The U.S. Supreme Court has livestreamed its oral arguments during the pandemic, and so have 13 of the federal circuit courts of appeal.



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

# Executive Searches

*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.*



**Saint Paul College, Minn.**  
**Dr. Deidra Peaslee**  
President

“Dr. Peaslee’s commitment and leadership of the college while serving as interim president has been exemplary. She consistently demonstrates strong leadership,

empathy, decisiveness, and tenacity. No matter where she has been, she has wholly embraced and immersed herself in transforming the institution, facing challenges head on with grace and grit. As interim president, she has navigated the college community through the dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and that of systemic racism. Dr. Peaslee is the right leader at this juncture of the college’s trajectory.”

— *Devinder Malhotra, Chancellor of Minnesota State*



**Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, W.Va.**  
**Dr. Thomas Striplin**  
President

“We welcome Dr. Striplin’s leadership as we enter the next chapter of Eastern West Virginia

Community and Technical College’s history. Dr. Striplin is a community college graduate and well-versed in academics. He brings strong leadership skills and years of experience that will help Eastern position itself for the future.”

— *Greg Greenwalt, Chair, Board of Governors, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College*



**San Diego Community College District, Calif.**  
**Dr. Carlos O. Turner Cortez**  
Chancellor

“Dr. Cortez is the Board of Trustees’ choice to lead the SDCCD into the future. We are pleased with the outcome of this search process,

which included robust input and participation from district stakeholders and the community. He is exactly the type of leader that is needed at this moment in the district’s history.”

— *Dr. Maria Nieto Senour, President, Board of Trustees, The San Diego Community College District*



**Roanoke-Chowan Community College, N.C.**  
**Dr. Murray Jean Williams**  
President

“We welcome Dr. Williams’ leadership as we enter the next chapter of Roanoke-Chowan Community College’s history. It is her experience,

dedication to the mission of the community college, commitment to student success, and interpersonal demeanor that has convinced the Board she is the right person for R-CCC today.”

— *Jeri Pierce, Chair, Board of Trustees, Roanoke-Chowan Community College, NC*

# Executive Searches

*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.*



## **Northland Pioneer College, Arizona**

### **Dr. Chato Hazelbaker**

President

“We warmly welcome Dr. Hazelbaker to Northland Pioneer College. Dr. Hazelbaker brings strong leadership skills and

is focused on meeting the needs of our students and community. Under Dr. Hazelbaker’s leadership, we will collectively work hard to build a student-focused future together.”

— *Frank Lucero, Chair, District Governing Board, Northland Pioneer College*

## RETREATS & WORKSHOPS

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

Atlantic Cape Community College, N.J.

Butler Community College, Kan.

Central New Mexico Community College, N.M.

Garden City Community College, Kan.

Hinds Community College, Miss.

Howard Community College, Md.

Illinois Central College, Ill.

Lee College, Texas

Middlesex County College, N.J.

Mount San Jacinto College, Calif.

Pima Community College, Ariz.

Western Nebraska Community College, Neb.

Yavapai College, Ariz.

# 5 KEYS

## TO A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION YEAR

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### AN ACCT GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARDS AND CEOS

With over 50 percent of current college CEOs expected to retire within the next few years, boards are seeking new ways to connect the hiring and onboarding processes to ensure the new CEO's effectiveness and longevity. The first year often sets the stage for the CEO's success, and this new publication from ACCT outlines key first-year strategies for the board and new president.

Download the report at [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org).



# BOARD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

Periodic board retreats, board self-assessments, CEO evaluations, and policy reviews are among the practices of a highly effective board. ACCT can create a customized retreat or specialized workshop to help your board understand and effectively carry out its responsibilities.

ACCT has an esteemed group of consultants that are matched to the board's needs. Our consultants engage the board in learning opportunities that may include case studies, exercises, and facilitated discussions. Visit [acctsearches.org/consultants/](http://acctsearches.org/consultants/) to find a facilitator who will best serve your needs.

Topics include:

- Accreditation
- Advocacy
- Board ethics
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Conflict resolution
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Establishing goals
- Onboarding new trustees
- Preparing the college for a leadership transition
- Policy governance
- Policy review
- Strategic planning — board roles and responsibilities
- Succession planning
- And more!

If you are interested in learning more about ACCT services contact Colleen Allen, Director, Retreat and Evaluation Services, at [callen@acct.org](mailto:callen@acct.org) or 202-558-8682.

“Open communication without judgement.”

“Allowed us time to problem solve.”

“We should do this at least once a year.”

“Skilled facilitator.”

# 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](http://www.acct.org/membership/lifetime) or contact ACCT's Member Services at 202.775.4667 or [acctinfo@acct.org](mailto:acctinfo@acct.org).



# INTERFACE

A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF NETWORK IN COOPERATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

## PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF NETWORK 2021 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### OFFICERS

Jeannie Moton, President  
Executive Coordinator  
Portland Community College, OR  
jeannie.moton@pcc.edu

Benita Duncan, Vice President  
Executive Assistant & Liaison to the Board  
Lansing Community College, MI  
bduncan@lcc.edu

Pamela Payne, Immediate Past President  
Executive Assistant to the President and Board of Trustees  
El Paso Community College, TX  
ppayne1@epcc.edu

Bridget Abraham, Secretary  
Board Operations and Services Specialist  
Montgomery College, MD  
bridget.abraham@montgomerycollege.edu

Kristen Grimes, Communications Coordinator  
Executive Assistant  
Mt. San Jacinto Community College District, CA  
kgrimes@msjc.edu

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Terri Grimes, Central Region Member-at-Large  
Executive Assistant to the President/Board Secretary  
Highland Community College, IL  
terri.grimes@highland.edu

Larisa Pfeiffer, Northeast Region Member-at-Large  
Board Operations and Services Specialist  
College of Southern Maryland, MD  
ljpfeiffer@csm.edu

Debra Nascimento, Pacific Region Member-at-Large  
Executive Assistant/Coordinator of Board Operations  
Chabot-Las Positas Community College District, CA  
dnascimento@clpccd.org

Sherri Bowen, Southern Region Member-at-Large  
Director, Office of the President  
Forsyth Technical Community College, NC  
sbowen@forsythtech.edu

Mandi Reiland, Western Region Member-at-Large  
Manager, Executive Operations for the Chancellor and  
Board of Trustees  
San Jacinto College District, TX  
mandi.reiland@sjcd.edu

Find us on Facebook:  
ACCT Professional Board Staff Network

PBSN Website:  
www.acct.org/professional-board-staff-network



## A Message from the President

By Jeannie Moton  
Portland Community College

THE LAST FEW DAYS IN PORTLAND HAVE BEEN TYPICAL START of spring days. A little rain here, a little sun there, and a surprising dousing of hail followed by a wonderfully bright rainbow parting the sky — typical Pacific Northwest weather. The past year has felt like a dystopian novel that doesn't end. It has taught us all that we are a community. A community of caring, dedicated, hardworking professionals — from the custodians to the president — doing our best to make sure our students, faculty, staff, and administration are safe. Safe from COVID, safe from social injustice, and safe from housing and food insecurity.

Sometimes community colleges are referred to as that “slow-moving ship,” meaning it takes time for change to happen. If you were to look at the last year, you would see that the ship isn't so slow. Community colleges had to react swiftly and quickly to the crises at hand. Former PBSN President Pam Payne wrote about “change” in the Winter 2019 issue of *Trustee Quarterly* — I wonder how different that article would be today.

Portland Community College (PCC) has been in remote operations since March 2020. The year prior, PCC had embarked on an organizational study. We wanted to find out what was working and what wasn't at the college. This study garnered feedback from the college community and stakeholders on our multi-campus district operations. We also engaged with Achieving the Dream a few years ago, and that is where the Yes to Equitable Student Success (YESS) initiative was born. The YESS work has in a lot of ways informed the work we are doing with PCC's reorganization. As the largest higher education institution in Oregon, we didn't like what we were seeing in our completion rates for students. A recent cohort of students showed that of 1,854 students, only 405 (22%) graduated, while 368 (20%) transferred to a four-year institution. We know we can do better. We have to do better for our students. They deserve it.

The pandemic, no doubt, will make these gaps wider for years to come. For students already struggling with houselessness and food insecurity, the shift from in-person to remote classes was another barrier. As I am sure, most of you are seeing decreases in enrollment due to the pandemic. We are working to close these gaps with Pathways to Opportunity (PTO). PTO started out as small cohort of colleges that helps students and has now developed into a statewide initiative with Oregon House Bill 2835 as community colleges in Oregon are coming together to provide services and support for our most vulnerable populations. The bill would require each community college and public university to hire benefits navigators to assist students in determining eligibility and applying for federal, state, and local benefits programs. Pathways to Opportunity closes opportunity gaps and increases economic mobility by expanding the federal, state, and local resources available to low-income students so more people can attend and complete college. It is an innovative approach that brings together a dynamic coalition of stakeholders. We are all excited to be engaged in this work and see the future it holds for Oregon.

With a year-long national health emergency and the major weather events of the winter, the last year feels like a blur — while “blur” doesn't quite feel right, it is what I see as I look back. A better word for this feeling might be grief. Grief is different for everyone. Some have lost loved

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# INTERFACE

A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF NETWORK IN COOPERATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

*continued from page 45*

ones, homes, and jobs, which makes it “easier” to recognize the grief you may be feeling. Some of us didn’t lose any of these things but are still feeling grief. We are all grieving. We may not be grieving the same things, but most of us are feeling many of the attributes of the grieving process. I have been lucky enough to work from home through the pandemic. I haven’t lost a loved one, my home, or my ability to care for my family, but others have. The grief I feel is different, and while it may not look like your grief, it is deeply felt.

We have not been able to grieve in community because of social or physical distancing guidelines. This could be what is making the grief feel like a blur to me. Instead, we have had to, in our own ways, “accumulate” or stockpile our grief, perhaps saving it for when we are together again. I grieve for the absence of family and friends. I grieve the isolation so many of us feel, the uncertainty of the “not knowing.” As the social creatures most of us are, the burden of the isolation alone is tremendous.

In the wake of all this grief, I have seen so many acts of kindness. The administration, faculty, and staff at PCC mobilized

quickly at the start of the pandemic to help move into remote operations for employees and students. Processes were developed overnight. Procedures were created that have increased efficiencies and will likely stay in place once we are able to return to our campuses. I have seen so many caring individuals responding to our students’ needs. I have seen faculty bend over backwards to make sure their students are succeeding. I have seen donors making the largest gifts ever to support students in need.

Knowing our students are at the center of everything we do at PCC, I am proud to be an employee at PCC and a parent of a PCC student.

As your PBSN Board begins planning the sessions for the fall ACCT Leadership Congress in San Diego, we have so many questions. We would like to ask you all to take a short survey to help! You can access this survey at <https://forms.gle/iNtKsFtmFHCihTEJ8>. Being inclusive is our priority for the conference this fall, and we need your feedback to assist. I hope we are able to connect in a safe way this fall and look forward to our time together.





# INTERFACE

A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF NETWORK IN COOPERATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

## A Virtual CEO Search

By Benita Ann Duncan, Lansing Community College

LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE (LCC) WAS CONDUCTING a presidential search when on March 18, 2020, the college began to operate in a virtual environment due to COVID-19. Despite our disappointment of not having an in-person process, the board moved forward into a new, unknown territory of conducting its search for a new president entirely virtually. As the board's main support for the presidential search, I helped to ensure that the search was authentic and interactive. With a 14-member Presidential Search Screening Committee that represented stakeholders within the college's geographic boundaries and our presidential search consultant, all parties were able to review applications and recommend four excellent candidates for the board of trustees' consideration dutifully, thoroughly, and fairly.

A key item to consider before reviewing applicants is to have the college's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) person conduct training on unconscious biases. Screening applicants and their credentials is critical to the search process, and the best way to prevent your screening process from succumbing to unconscious biases is to learn about them and take action to prevent them during the recruiting, screening, and hiring of the new CEO.

After the applicant pool has been narrowed to finalists, here are a few key tips to ensure you have a successful virtual search.

- **Conduct virtual forums with each finalist.** To achieve an inclusive forum, put out college-wide and community-wide notices announcing your community forums and allow individuals to submit questions to ask the candidates. Set a deadline to accept questions on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Determine the length of time you want to commit to each forum and the number of the submitted questions you will ask.** Don't choose the questions you want to ask, but accept them on a first-submitted basis. Remember, this is the public's opportunity to ask questions, not the board's. Don't rephrase questions in such a way as you would ask the question. Ask the question as originally written to ensure that it is authentic and that it represents the intent of the party who submitted it.

- **Have a different candidate forum on a different day/night.** Have faculty and staff moderate and ask the questions. This helps to make everyone feel a part of the process. Let the candidate know how many forum questions they will need to answer so that they will manage their time wisely. Have a break or brief recess. Stream your forums on social media platforms so they are available to everyone.
- **Issue an electronic survey after each forum** to allow the community to provide feedback on each candidate. Compile that feedback from each candidate and give it to the board.
- **Conduct the candidate interviews by the board in the same manner.** Do an interview each day/night, and stream on social media platforms. Again, allow for public feedback.

Despite the challenging times, LCC was successful in hiring its seventh president, Dr. Steve Robinson. He's been with us for 10 months and is doing an outstanding job. LCC is excited to have him at the helm to lead our college! When asking Dr. Robinson about our process, he stated:

*"LCC made me feel very connected to the college and the search process during the virtual sessions. The board liaison, trustees, and technical staff made the entire process feel personal yet professional."*

*"I think the virtual CEO search also helped the college build capacity to undertake other large-scale projects in a virtual environment. As a new president, I quickly got to work on strategic planning with our team. We used many of the same techniques and strategies developed during the presidential search to run our strategic planning sessions."*

These are just a few tips I hope are helpful if you are contemplating or in the middle of a virtual CEO search. It does not have to be a stressful process if you plan accordingly, and you can succeed and find the perfect CEO for your institution. Happy searching!

*Editor's note: For best practices relating to the transition from one college CEO to the next, consult 5 Keys to a Successful Transition Year: An ACCT Guide for Community College Boards and CEOs (2020), available at [www.acct.org/product/5-keys-successful-transition-year-2020](http://www.acct.org/product/5-keys-successful-transition-year-2020).*

## 2022 Candidates for the ACCT Board Of Directors

### REGIONAL DIRECTOR

(1) Three-Year Term in Each Region  
(1) One-Year Partial Term and (1) Two-Year Partial Term in the Pacific Region  
*The following is the slate of nominees:*

Central Region

**Maureen Dunne\***

*College of DuPage, IL*

Northeast Region

**Marsha Suggs Smith\***

*Montgomery College, MD*

Pacific Region

**Richard Fukutaki\***

*Bellevue College, WA*

Pacific Region One-Year Partial Term

**Diane Noriega\***

*Mt. Hood Community College, OR*

Pacific Region Two-Year Partial Term

**Linda Wah\***

*Pasadena Area Community College District, CA*

Southern Region

**Ed Dalrymple\***

*Central Piedmont Community College, NC*

Western Region

**Dan Mims\***

*San Jacinto College District, TX*

### DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

(3) Three-Year Terms

*The following is the slate of nominees:*

**Carol Del Carlo\***

*Nevada System of Higher Education, NV*

**Fritz Larsen\***

*Black Hawk College, IL*

**Kenneth Sadler\***

*Forsyth Technical Community College, NC*

**Pretta VanDible Stallworth\***

*Houston Community College System, TX*

*Nominations must be received by*

*July 1, 2021 in order to appear in the fall 2021 issue of Advisor.*

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

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

## 2022 Candidates for the ACCT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

(1) Two-Year Term in Each Region  
(1) One-Year Partial Term in the Southern Region  
*The following is the slate of nominees:*

Central Region

**Marc Wiley\***

*Prairie State College, IL*

Northeast Region

**Anthony Colon\***

*Mohawk Valley Community College, NY*

Pacific Region

**Deborah Ikeda\***

*State Center Community College District, CA*

Southern Region

**Tina Royal\***

*Davidson County Community College, NC*

(1) One-Year Partial Term

**No Nominees**

Western Region

**Belen Robles\***

*El Paso Community College, TX*

*Nominations must be received by July 1, 2021 in order to appear in the fall 2021 issue of Advisor.*

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

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

## NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

### Deadline for Receipt is July 1, 2021

You are encouraged to submit your nomination via e-mail to [nominations@acct.org](mailto: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 2021 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, 2021**, or by electronic mail (preferred method) by close of business on **July 1, 2021**. 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](mailto:nominations@acct.org). ACCT will respond to your submission via e-mail within three working days. Please contact ACCT Senior Vice President Jee Hang Lee at [jhlee@acct.org](mailto: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.

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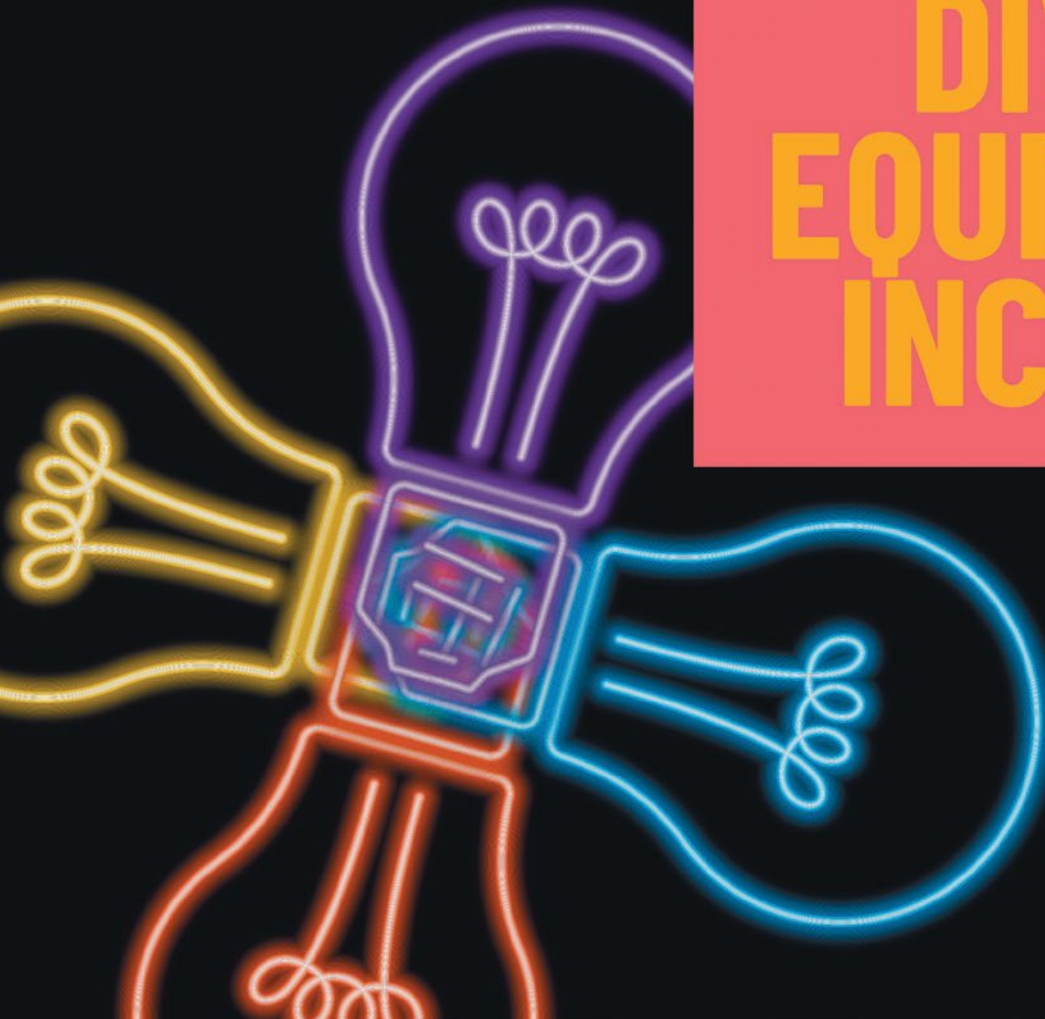


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COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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