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2021

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## From the Chair

# Changes from Within, Continuity from Within



OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, WE HAVE been confronted by so many external pressures that it's been easy to overlook events that have nothing to do with a pandemic, societal unrest, or a sudden conversion to online learning. Two years ago, ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown announced his plans to retire after 25 years of service to the association and 16 years as our chief executive. Since then, throughout all the changes, the board conducted an exhaustive national search for his successor — and we found the perfect candidate had been sitting down the hall all the while. In November, ACCT Senior Vice President Jee Hang Lee will become the fifth president and CEO of the

Association of Community College Trustees.

To say that Noah will be missed is an understatement. For many ACCT board members and community college leaders and for most of ACCT's staff, he is the only ACCT chief executive they have known. His unique vision has cultivated remarkable growth that never veered from the association's mission, and his one-of-a-kind convivial good humor cannot be replaced. But as a trustee who has served Mohawk Valley Community College for over four decades, and as an ACCT Board of Directors member who once left and later came back, I know that serving our institutions is a difficult habit to break, and I suspect Noah will remain a guiding light in the community college sector. He will always be an honored ACCT family member.

The decision of the ACCT Board to appoint Jee Hang Lee as Noah's successor was carefully considered. Ultimately, in addition to serving as a linchpin to the association's programs, services, and operations, Jee Hang is also universally understood to be visionary in his own right, particularly with respect to federal community college advocacy and research into unmet student needs. These are not only valuable facets to the association, but vital ones that reside at the very core of who and what we are as an organization.

Just as Noah's term as president and CEO will end this fall, so will my term as ACCT board chair. I will remain on the board for one more year as immediate past chair and look forward to working with this association as a living, breathing organism that exists to help others. While ACCT may change in some ways under new executive leadership, I know that we've selected a leader who, like Noah, embraces our mission, our vision, and our values and will work tirelessly to empower community college leaders to do the best they can for their students.

DAVID MATHIS

TRUSTEE, MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE