

Neurodiversity

'Unapologetic' Success

Strategic Enrollment Plans

FALL 2023

# Trustee

THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS

## QUARTERLY

### Making Connections

Our multifaceted students, communities, and leaders bring us together.

# 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.”

## FROM THE CHAIR



### 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### CHAIR

**Rose Benavidez**  
*South Texas College, TX*

#### CHAIR-ELECT

**Jay Nardini**  
*Hawkeye Community College, IA*

#### VICE CHAIR

**Richard Fukutaki**  
*Bellevue College, WA*

#### SECRETARY-TREASURER

**Carol Del Carlo**  
*Nevada System of Higher Education, NV*

#### IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

**James Cooksey**  
*Moberly Area Community College, MO*

#### CENTRAL REGIONAL CHAIR

**John Lukas**  
*Lakeshore Technical College, WI*

#### NORTHEAST REGIONAL CHAIR

**Sheetal Ranjan**  
*Bergen Community College, NJ*

#### PACIFIC REGIONAL CHAIR

**Gilbert Wong**  
*Foothill-De Anza Community College District, CA*

#### SOUTHERN REGIONAL CHAIR

**Yvonne Barnes**  
*Trident Technical College, SC*

#### WESTERN REGIONAL CHAIR

**Dan Mims**  
*San Jacinto College, TX*

#### Anay Abraham

*Miami Dade College, FL*

#### Steven Anderson

*Northeast Community College, NE*

#### Anthony Colón

*Mohawk Valley Community College, NY*

#### Maureen Dunne

*College of DuPage, IL*

#### Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg

*Kern Community College District, CA*

#### Zaida Lange-Irisson

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

#### Amanda Howland

*College of Lake County, IL*

#### Sheila Ireland

*Community College of Philadelphia, PA*

#### Vivian Malauulu

*Long Beach City College, CA*

#### Bonnie Soria Najera

*El Paso Community College, TX*

#### Diane Noriega

*Mt. Hood Community College, OR*

#### Jermaine Reed

*Metropolitan Community College, MO*

#### Arturo Reyes

*Mott Community College, MI*

#### Pretta VanDible Stallworth

*Houston Community College System, TX*

#### Oscar Valladares

*Rio Hondo College, CA*



## Let's Connect

A FOREST IS MORE THAN AN ARMY of trees standing side by side. It is a living, diverse community made of many thousands of plants that all fill their respective niches. From a distance, we tend to marvel at the tallest of the trees because they stand so proudly and invite us to celebrate our own potential. These trees are beacons that draw us nearer, where we then discover smaller trees, vines that creep upward and along the floor, and countless other beings that are all parts of a living tapestry. What we don't see is the vast network of roots intertwined with one another to support all those lives with a solid, incomprehensibly complex foundation.

Those of us who serve on college boards do so because we are aware of our deep connections to and throughout our communities, and we know that our actions create effects that affect all of us. As representatives of colleges deeply rooted within our own local communities, it is easy to lose sight of our broader community of college trustees.

In recent years, scientists have found evidence that trees communicate through chemical signals and trade resources with one another underground through symbiotic fungal fibers attached to their roots. Trees that appear to us to be distant from one another may well be conversing and even engaging in commerce, which can serve them well during times of thriving and times of dire need.

ACCT was founded in 1972 to connect community college governing board

members. ACCT was created so that trustees can share resources with one another across this vast country in ways that benefit each of us back at home. For decades, this was done in person through events and via mailed publications and then eventually websites. Today, the association has created ACCT Connect, an online platform designed to connect you with me and fellow trustees across the globe. By going to Connect.ACCT.org, you can engage with other trustees, college presidents, board staff, state association executives, and ACCT staff through one-on-one direct messaging. You can show off what your college and your board have accomplished, and access educational resources on governance and advocacy topics.

Like the ACCT Leadership Congress and the Community College National Legislative Summit, ACCT Connect was created as a rich forest of ever-evolving knowledge and intertwined connectivity. As you read this issue of *Trustee Quarterly*, please join me at Connect.ACCT.org, post your thoughts about the articles in this issue, and share the great work being done by your college. It is my hope that this new means of connecting will bring us closer together, nurture our growth, and strengthen our resolve — even if we are thousands of miles away from one another.

**Rose Benavidez**  
*South Texas College*



# Trustee

QUARTERLY

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Jee Hang Lee  
*President & CEO*

### MANAGING EDITOR

DAVID CONNER  
*Director of Strategic Communications*

### EDITOR

MARK TONER

### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

ROSARIO DURÁN  
*Senior Government Relations Associate*

ROBIN MATROSS HELMS  
*Vice President for Membership & Educational Services*

JOSÉ MIRANDA  
*Director of Government Relations*

IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD  
*ACCT General Counsel*

CARRIE WARICK-SMITH  
*Vice President of Public Policy*

### DESIGN & PRODUCTION

[www.moiremarketing.com](http://www.moiremarketing.com)

### Your Opinion Matters - contact:

DAVID CONNER  
(866) 895-ACCT (2228)  
[dconner@acct.org](mailto:dconner@acct.org)

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

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

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

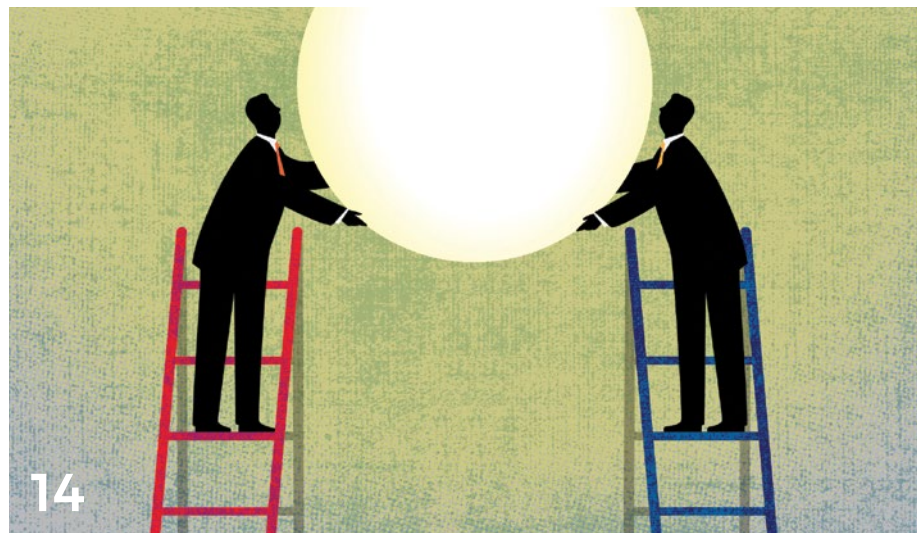


1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington DC 20036  
(202) 775-4667 FAX: (202) 775-4455

[acctinfo@acct.org](mailto:acctinfo@acct.org)

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

[www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)



# contents

## 14 As the Election Year Approaches, It's Time to Prepare for the National Legislative Summit

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH AND JOSÉ MIRANDA

It's not too early to start planning for 2024 — and ensure continued bipartisan support for our institutions.

## 17 Strategic Enrollment Management

BY EVON WALTERS

Addressing immediate challenges with an eye toward the future.

## 20 Q&A: Dr. Keith Curry 'Unapologetic Success' for Black Learners

BY MARK TONER

The chair of the Level Up and Get Real initiative discusses the role trustees must play in ensuring Black student success.

## 22 Neurodiversity, Entrepreneurial Thinking, and Community Colleges

BY MAUREEN DUNNE

About 80 percent of neurodivergent college students begin their higher education at community colleges. These students are undervalued assets to our institutions and our nation.

## 25 Varying Degrees

BY MARK TONER

Amid concerns about affordability and access, New America's seventh annual survey on higher education shows public support for community colleges — and funding them.

## 30 Your College May Be Eligible for \$1 Million From the IRS

BY MARK EIDELMAN

Many small colleges are eligible for Employee Retention Credits that will expire soon if you don't apply. Here's how to know if your college is eligible.

## 32 The K-12 Teacher Shortage Tsunami — an Important Challenge for Community Colleges

BY GREG ROCKHOLD AND HANS ANDREWS

A shortage of teachers in all 50 states is a dire problem. Community colleges can help fill the void.

## DEPARTMENTS

### 8 ACCT NOW

Higher Ed Programs in Peril

*By Rosario Durán and José Miranda*

### 10 ADVOCACY

Strengthening Community College Training Grants (SCCTG): A Program of Growing Importance

*By Carrie Warick-Smith with guest author Rosario Durán*

### 12 CONNECT

Rhythms, Routines — and a Little Yoga

*By Robin Matross Helms*

### 36 LEGAL

Supreme Court rules on affirmative action, plus recent decisions involving harassment and religious discrimination.

*Ira Michael Shepard*

## IN EVERY ISSUE

1 FROM THE CHAIR

4 FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

5 NEWS

28 AROUND THE REGIONS

38 EXECUTIVE SEARCH

45 INTERFACE

48 ADVISOR



---

Through ACCT Connect, you can broadcast successes from your college, and you can communicate one on one with your peers or our staff at any time from anywhere. We're here, there, and everywhere you need us. Just let us know what you need, and we'll be there for you.

---

## Here, There, and Everywhere

DEAR ACCT MEMBERS,

*ACCT IS THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY college leaders* — here in Washington, on the ground in your state and local community, and virtually everywhere these days. We've worked hard to make the association so far reaching, and we're working hard to let you know that we are there for you wherever you need us.

As ACCT's public policy lead for 15 years, I traveled a fair amount, but I spent most of my time here in the nation's capital to advance the interests of our members. Since taking the reins as president and CEO last year, I've spent more time traveling to community college campuses than I have in the ACCT offices. I've always felt that the greatest way for the association to maintain a deep understanding of our members' needs is to be on the ground where our members are. Doing so has been illuminating, and it has informed the association's work over the past couple of years and what we plan to do going forward.

Here's a bit of trivia: ACCT was technically founded in 1972, which makes the association 51 years old — but we had our 50th ACCT Leadership Congress back in 2019. How is that possible? Community college trustees from throughout the country began convening back in 1969, and the association grew from the success of those gatherings. ACCT's events are older than the association itself, and for many members, the ACCT Leadership Congress and Community College National Legislative Summit are primary benefits of membership. For those who have not attended, it's difficult to convey exactly how valuable participation in these events can be as opportunities to

exchange knowledge and forge relationships. We're grateful to our members who attend these events, whether you do it every year or every few years. This year's ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas has among the highest participation rates on record — so we know face-to-face relationship building is a top need. We are committed to always meeting this need.

At the same time, both needs and opportunities are different today than they were in 1972. No longer are we separated by geography as we once were, and no longer do we have to fly or drive somewhere to meet face to face. As we moved through the historic COVID-19 lockdown, we asked ourselves a key question: How can we bring members together virtually for the same kinds of relationships they forge in person at our events? This year, we've launched the answer to that question: ACCT Connect.

If you belong to an ACCT-member institution, then you have access to ACCT Connect. This platform includes valuable resources about governance and advocacy for community college leaders, but it is also designed to bridge connections among member trustees, college CEOs, professional board staff, and others. Through ACCT Connect, you can broadcast successes from your college, and you can communicate one on one with your peers or our staff at any time from anywhere. We're here, there, and everywhere you need us. Just let us know what you need, and we'll be there for you.

**JEE HANG LEE**  
*ACCT President and CEO*

# NEWS & NOTES



## Community Colleges Foster Low-Income Student Success and Rural Economic Development Through SNAP E&T Programs

ON JULY 26, ACCT ANNOUNCED OUR first cohort of partners to advance the role of community colleges through implementation of SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) programs. Community colleges which become third-party SNAP E&T providers offer job and skills training for individuals enrolled in their respective states' SNAP E&T programs. As open access educational institutions predominantly serving low-income individuals, community colleges are well suited to serve in this critical SNAP E&T role.

ACCT is excited to announce the participating institutions in cohort one: Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, N.Y.; Ulster County Community College, Stone Ridge, N.Y.; Guam Community College, Mangilao, Guam; BridgeValley Community and Technical College, South Charleston, W.Va.; and the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, Brockton, Mass. The West Virginia Community and Technical College System will also serve in a leadership and support capacity to advance the work in West Virginia.

"Community colleges are a natural fit as SNAP E&T third-party providers given the goal for SNAP recipients to receive education and support that will allow them to obtain employment and build their careers moving forward," said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee.

ACCT will select two cohorts each from state systems and rural community colleges to participate. By focusing on state systems, this project will leverage a train-the-trainer model to bring multiple community college E&T

program sites into operation at once. And by focusing on rural community colleges, more SNAP E&T programs will become available in high-needs communities. States and colleges interested in being selected for the second cohort may contact Linda Rhoads at ACCT's Center for Policy and Practice at [lrhoads@acct.org](mailto:lrhoads@acct.org) for further information.

Throughout the three-year project, ACCT and its partners will focus on disseminating lessons learned through web resources, toolkits, and a white paper brief. Additionally, ACCT will host an annual convening each year to provide an overview and guide for community colleges so that any interested institution will have an avenue to do so.

In addition to stipends for their work, the first cohort of the project will benefit from a new compilation of tools and resources specifically designed to support community colleges in the development of their SNAP E&T programs. Funded by a grant awarded to ACCT by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service, the project specifically supports rural-serving community colleges and state community college systems.



Visit the Center for Policy and Practice at [www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)

## 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 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.*



# 2023 ACCT Regional Awards Recipients Announced

Regional awardees to compete for national-level recognition in October.



THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY College Trustees (ACCT) is pleased to announce the recipients of its annual Regional Awards for community college trustees, equity programs, chief executive officers, faculty members, and professional board staff members. The 2023 ACCT Awards program is sponsored by Edamerica.

ACCT's Regional Awards recognize the tremendous contributions made by community colleges and their leaders to meet the needs of their communities.

"The roles and responsibilities of community colleges have increased considerably in recent years," said ACCT Chair and South Texas College Trustee Rose Benavidez. "The individuals who have been selected to receive this important recognition are truly vital to their communities and regions."

"ACCT's member colleges and the individuals who serve them work tirelessly, often with little recognition," said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. "We are proud to shine a spotlight on some of the nation's best public servants and professionals through our regional awards program." The full list of awardees follows.

## 2023 ACCT Regional Awardees

### 2023 Trustee Leadership Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Vernon Jung, Jr.  
*Moraine Park Technical College, Wisc.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Bakari G. Lee, Esq.  
*Hudson County Community College, N.J.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Deborah McCasland  
*Yavapai College, Ariz.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Eugene Lamb, Jr.  
*Tallahassee Community College, Fla.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Brian Haggerty  
*El Paso Community College, Texas*

### 2023 Equity Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Cuyahoga Community College, Ohio

#### PACIFIC REGION

Kern Community College District, Calif.

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Tri-County Technical College, S.C.

#### WESTERN REGION

San Jacinto College District, Texas

### 2023 Chief Executive Officer Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Jo Alice Blondin  
*Clark State College, Ohio*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Belinda S. Miles  
*SUNY Westchester Community College, N.Y.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Frank Chong  
*Santa Rosa Junior College, Calif.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Forest E. Mahan  
*Aiken Technical College, S.C.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Jesús Roberto Rodríguez  
*Texas Southmost College*

### 2023 Faculty Member Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Diane Roose  
*Lansing Community College, Mich.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Sherry Heidary  
*Union College of Union County, N.J.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Jerald Monahan  
*Yavapai College, Ariz.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Christine Pegoraro Schull  
*Northern Virginia Community College*

#### WESTERN REGION

Lauren Gillespie  
*Central Community College, Neb.*

### 2023 Professional Board Staff Member Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Kathy Dimitriou  
*Henry Ford College, Mich.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Kurt B. Doan  
*Harford Community College, Md.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Rafeeka Kloke  
*Whatcom Community College, Wash.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Pamela Payne  
*El Paso Community College, Texas*

Regional ACCT Awards were announced via ACCT's Twitter/X, LinkedIn and ACCT Connect accounts.

Individuals and colleges recognized at the regional level will contend for the national-level recognition of the following ACCT Association Awards:

- 2023 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award;
- 2023 Charles Kennedy Equity Award;
- 2023 Marie Y. Martin Chief Executive Award;
- 2023 William H. Meardy Faculty Member Award; and
- 2023 ACCT Professional Board Staff Member Award.

One outstanding award recipient in each category will be announced during the Annual ACCT Awards Gala on Wednesday, October 11, at the ARIA Hotel in Las Vegas, in conjunction with the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress.



STAY UPDATED ON EVENTS  
[www.acct.org/events](http://www.acct.org/events)



## 2023-24 TO-DO LIST

### Important Dates & Deadlines

- OCTOBER 9 - 11, 2023**  
2023 ACCT Leadership Congress, Las Vegas, NV
- NOVEMBER 1, 2023**  
Applications to serve on an ACCT committee due
- DECEMBER 13, 2023**  
2024 Community College National Legislative Summit Early Registration Discount Deadline
- JANUARY 4, 2024**  
Nominations to serve on the ACCT Board of Directors and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee due
- JANUARY 17, 2024**  
2024 Community College National Legislative Summit Hotel Registration Deadline
- FEBRUARY 4 - 7, 2024**  
2024 Community College National Legislative Summit, Washington, D.C.
- FEBRUARY 2024**  
ACCT Leadership Congress Registration, Call for Presentations and Awards Nominations Open
- MARCH 2024**  
Governance Leadership Institute (specific dates & location TBA)
- APRIL 2024 – ALL MONTH!**  
Community College Month
- MID-MAY 2024**  
ACCT Leadership Congress Call for Presentations Deadline
- EARLY JUNE 2024**  
ACCT Awards Nominations Deadline
- JULY 1, 2024**  
Membership Renewals Due
- AUGUST 2024**  
Governance Leadership Institute for New Trustees (specific dates & location TBA)
- ALL YEAR**  
Share your success stories by pitching articles to *Trustee Quarterly* magazine & engaging with your peers on ACCT Connect.
- ALL YEAR**  
Keep in touch with ACCT's member services and communications departments – let us know what's happening at your institution.



# ACCT NOW

## Higher Ed Programs in Peril

A closer look at FY 2024 appropriations.

BY ROSARIO DURÁN AND JOSÉ MIRANDA

**A**FTER MONTHS OF DEBT CEILING NEGOTIATIONS, President Biden signed the Fiscal Responsibility Act into law on June 3, 2023. The bill suspended the debt ceiling until January 2025 and included other provisions such as the restart of student loan payments at the end of August. While the bill did set spending caps for FY24 and FY25, it did not include a spending floor, and as appropriators resumed their FY24 work in earnest, many lawmakers hoped to capitalize on this.

### House FY 2024 LHHS Appropriations Bill

In late June, the House of Representatives, which is typically the first chamber to move its appropriations proposal, unveiled the allocations for all 12 government funding bills — known inside the Beltway as 302(b) allocations. These allocations came after weeks of internal debate within the House Republican majority on whether the bills should be capped at FY22 spending levels or FY23 levels. Ultimately, Chair Kay Granger (R-Texas) unveiled allocations at the FY22 level, conceding victory to the small but vocal segment of the Republican conference that called for such cuts. The House allocations contain a \$60.292 billion cut, or 29% from FY23 levels.

On Friday July 14, 2023, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee (LHHS) approved its FY 2024 funding bill, which marks the lowest LHHS allocation since 2008. While the bill text outlines general funding levels for accounts and certain programs, we will not know the level of funding for every program until the committee report is released just before the full committee markup, which at the time this issue went to press had not yet been scheduled. Below is an overview of the cuts that have been released which are of the greatest interest to community colleges.

**Department of Education (ED)** – The bill includes a total of \$57.1 billion in discretionary appropriations for ED, a **28% cut** of \$22.5 billion from the FY 2023 enacted level. Of this amount:



While we do not know what the funding numbers in the Senate will be, we are hoping the proposal will be less drastic than the House. We also believe that the House proposal could be improved upon before it goes to the full Appropriations Committee for approval in order to blunt the negative impacts of their proposed cuts.

- The bill eliminates funding for **Federal Work Study**, a cut of \$1.2 billion that would eliminate work-based assistance to 660,000 students nationwide.
- The bill eliminates funding for **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants**, a cut of \$910 million that would eliminate need-based financial aid for 1.7 million students nationwide.
- The bill eliminates funding for **Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS)**, a cut of \$75 million below the enacted level.
- The bill eliminates funding for **HBCU, TCU, and MSI Research and Development Infrastructure Grants**, a cut of \$50 million below the enacted level.
- The bill fails to provide an increase for the maximum **Pell Grant** award for the first time since 2012, which if enacted would lead to a loss of purchasing power for the students that need the most help with college affordability.
- The bill level funds **Career & Technical Education (CTE) and Adult Basic Education state grants**, providing \$1.43 billion and \$32 million respectively.

While it's not yet clear how other programs such as Title III & V programs or competitive grants that support student success fared, based on the significant cuts to the overall bill we can expect at best level funding, and potentially more programs on the chopping block.

**Department of Labor (DOL)** — The bill includes a total of \$9.1 billion in discretionary appropriations for DOL, a **34% cut** of \$4.7 billion from FY23 enacted levels. Of this amount:

- The bill eliminates funding for **WIOA Adult Job Training state grants**, a cut of \$886 million that would result in 300,000 adults who face barriers to employment no longer being able to receive job training and employment services.

- The bill eliminates funding for **WIOA Youth Job Training state grants**, a cut of \$948 million that would result in 128,000 youth who face barriers to employment no longer being able to receive job training and employment services.
- The bill eliminates the **Women's Bureau**, a cut of \$23 million below the enacted level, including the elimination of the Women in Apprenticeships and Nontraditional Occupations program.
- The bill level funds the **Strengthening Community College Training Grants**, providing \$65 million for FY24.

The bill would typically go before the full Appropriations Committee for a markup, which will likely be planned sometime before the August recess. ACCT is extremely concerned about the devastating impact the proposed slashes could have on our institutions' most vulnerable students.

## Senate FY 2023 LHHS Appropriations Bill

The Senate unveiled its 302(b) allocations before the 4th of July break, keeping funding levels in line with the Fiscal Responsibility Act caps. The Senate allocation contains a **\$12.157 billion cut**, 6% below FY23 levels.

While it's been nearly a month since it approved its 302(b) allocations, the Senate Appropriations Committee has been moving at a much slower pace, yet the prospects there are significantly better. Not only did appropriators agree to follow the spending levels agreed during the debt ceiling negotiations and enacted into law, but they also plan to utilize emergency spending protocols to plus up accounts on both the defense and nondefense discretionary accounts.

## What's Next?

The Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) bills received cuts in both chambers, but at markedly different levels. This means House and Senate appropriators will have to reconcile a \$48.135 billion difference in their proposals before we can get final FY24 legislation enacted into law, and the larger the gap, the more unpredictable the conferencing process becomes.

While we do not know what the funding numbers in the Senate will be, we are hoping the proposal will be less drastic than the House. We also believe that the House proposal could be improved upon before it goes to the full Appropriations Committee for approval in order to blunt the negative impacts of their proposed cuts. We encourage our members to contact your federal representatives and share how funding slashes would negatively impact their constituents as soon as possible.

ACCT Now is the go-to resource for issues affecting community colleges. In addition to reporting and research, you'll have access to of-the-moment legislative updates. We've also included articles, reports, and research from outside sources that benefit the ACCT community. Visit [NOW.ACCT.org](http://NOW.ACCT.org).



ACCT Senior Government Relations Associate  
*Rosario Durán can be reached at [rduran@acct.org](mailto:rduran@acct.org).*



ACCT Director of Government Relations  
*José N. Miranda can be reached at [jmiranda@acct.org](mailto:jmiranda@acct.org).*





Though significantly smaller in scale compared to its predecessors – by comparison, TAACCCT received \$2 billion over four years and reached all 50 states through formula grants – we are optimistic about SCCTG's potential for growth and expansion.

## Strengthening Community College Training Grants (SCCTG): A Program of Growing Importance

The federal grant program has awarded \$135 million to expand community college workforce development programs.

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH WITH GUEST AUTHOR ROSARIO DURÁN

CONGRESS ESTABLISHED THE STRENGTHENING Community College Training Grants (SCCTG) in the fiscal year (FY) 2020 appropriations bill to enhance the capacity of community colleges to address workforce development needs within in-demand industries and career pathways.

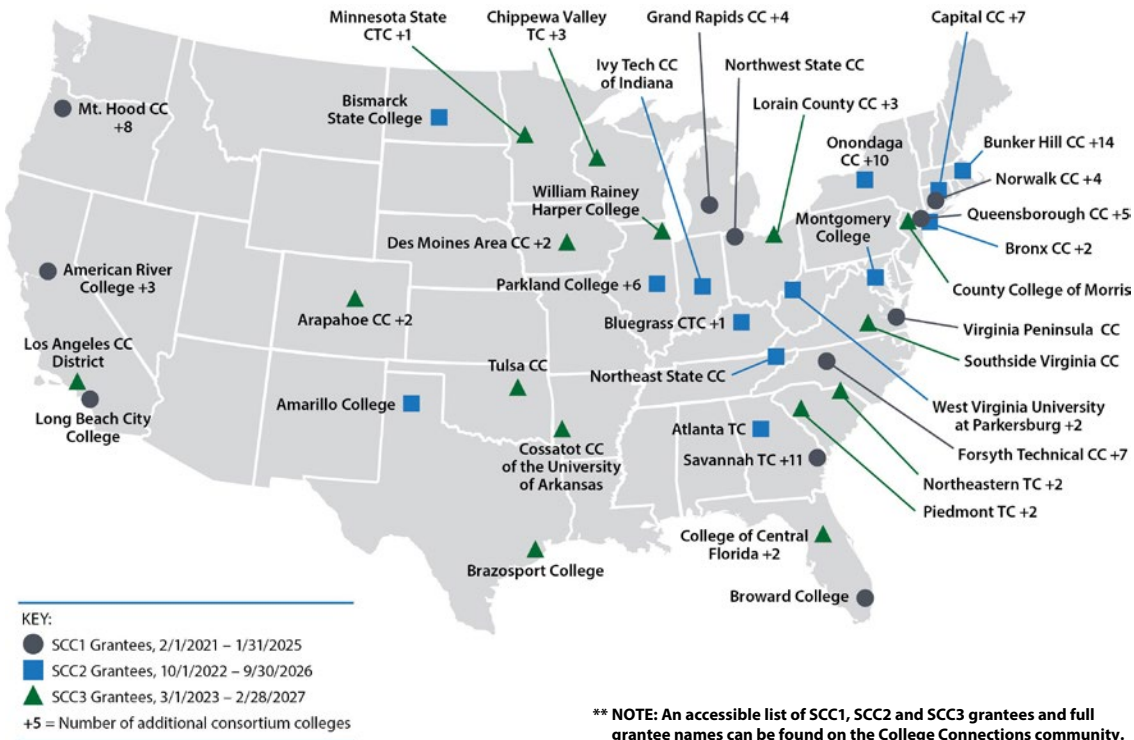
SCCTG follows in the footsteps of previous programs, including the Community-Based Job Training Grants and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants, which helped colleges expand their workforce development capacity on a much larger scale. This competitive program enables individual colleges to apply for an individual grant or to join forces with other institutions for a consortia award.

Since its initial funding of \$40 million, SCCTG remains a top federal funding priority for community colleges, offering vital resources for community college-led job training programs. Over the course of three funding rounds – SCC1, SCC2, and SCC3 – \$135 million has been jointly awarded to 39 colleges and consortia across 27 states. These awards have played a pivotal role in elevating the skills of students in areas such as allied health occupations, information technology, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, cybersecurity, construction, clean energy, and more. The award amounts range from \$1.6 million to \$6.4 million, with an average award of \$3.47 million.

### Current Funding Opportunity

The Department of Labor announced the fourth round of the Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant (SCC4) on August 17, 2023. This round of funding will be the largest to date, with approximately \$65 million available. To qualify, applicants must be a public community college, as defined in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act. They may apply as a single institution or as part of a

# SCC1, SCC2 & SCC3 GRANTEES ACROSS THE NATION



CREDIT: MAP BY EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

consortium of two or more colleges in a common labor market area. Individual institutions are eligible for grants up to \$1.75 million, whereas consortium grants can be as large as \$5.75 million.

According to the grant posting, this round of funding will focus on “the capacity of community colleges to address identified equity gaps to increase access to educational and economic opportunities for dislocated workers and new entrants to the workforce, as well as employed workers seeking to advance in their careers, particularly for individuals from historically underserved communities.”

Additionally, this round of SCCTG funding will include a national impact evaluation. Those colleges selected to participate from the subset of colleges awarded funding will receive additional financial support for their participation in the evaluation. The goal for the national impact work will be to assess employment outcomes.

The map of current grantees, an overview of grantees from the first three rounds of funding, the grant application, and other general information can all be found at [www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/skills-training-grants/scc](http://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/skills-training-grants/scc).

## Long-Term Viability and Importance

Though significantly smaller in scale compared to its predecessors — by comparison, TAACCCT received \$2 billion over four years and reached all 50 states through formula grants — we are optimistic about SCCTG’s potential for growth and expansion. This program has bipartisan support and has already made impressive strides, with funding increased by over 50% in just three award cycles. The FY 2023

appropriations bill allocated \$65 million for SCC4, marking the largest allocation to date.

Nevertheless, the fiscal landscape of FY 2024 may not be as promising, with potential spending cuts looming as outlined in the ACCT NOW article on p. 8 of this issue. We anticipate the program will either maintain its current funding level or experience a slight reduction during this appropriation cycle.

In the long term, ACCT maintains the policy position that SCCTG should become an authorized program, better protecting it from the perils of being a program funded solely through the appropriations process and not written into law. Representative Bobby Scott (D-Va.), ranking member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, included it in his Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization bill during the last Congress. We remain committed to advocating for the program, urging Congress to authorize the program and sustain investment in this critical initiative that facilitates much-needed workforce pipelines nationwide.



Carrie Warick-Smith is vice president for public policy at ACCT. She can be reached at [cwsmith@acct.org](mailto:cwsmith@acct.org). Rosario Durán is senior government relations associate. She can be reached at [rduran@acct.org](mailto:rduran@acct.org).



---

Building an online community takes time, and much like yoga, it requires community members to develop habits and a practice of consistent and regular engagement – which may not feel intuitive right off the bat. We are looking forward to engaging in this important work together, and we can't wait to see your contributions.

---

## Rhythms, Routines – and a Little Yoga

BY ROBIN MATROSS HELMS

ONE OF THE THINGS I ADMIRE MOST ABOUT community college trustees is the multiple hats they wear. While at ACCT we know them best in their role as board members, it's wonderful to learn about what our members do in their "day jobs" and other service engagements. I love hearing details about their professional and personal roles and interests, and how they intersect with and inform their community college leadership work.

Outside of my own "day job" at ACCT, a primary interest and extracurricular occupation for me is yoga: I have been practicing yoga for over two decades, and teaching since 2008. I currently teach two classes per week at a community-based yoga studio in Arlington, Virginia.

As is the case for community college trustees, I too find that my





Our next frontier for creating routines and finding a rhythm is with ACCT Connect. We are thrilled with the enthusiastic response our new online learning and networking platform has received so far — our members are creating logins, completing their “welcome checklists,” accessing resources such as the Governance 101 course, and interacting with each other.

various roles and responsibilities intersect in sometimes unexpected but always fulfilling and interesting ways. During the height of the pandemic and all the stress that came with it, I was tapped with some frequency to teach brief yoga sessions as part of remote work meetings — 10 minutes of breathing and stretching to let everyone take a pause and regroup in the midst of many hours spent online and on camera.

At the July ACCT Board of Directors meeting in San Antonio, I had the opportunity to lead a brief in-person yoga session for our hard-working — and as it turns out, very flexible! — board members. It was at the end of a productive day of deep and impactful conversations — just a few minutes of simple yoga postures and slow, steady breaths. It was great to feel the calm energy that settled over the room, and it set the tone for continued good work the following day.

Every time I teach a yoga class, I relearn the power of simple movements and breathing. In yoga, we often practice the same sets of postures over and over. Part of their power is the routine and the sense of rhythm and flow in moving through familiar poses with breath. Finding that flow, familiarity, and “mojo” is certainly not unique to yoga. The ACCT board had a chance to see it in a stellar performance by student dancers from Chair Rose Benavidez’s home campus of South Texas College, who traveled five hours to San Antonio to join us. Artists, writers, athletes, and practitioners of all sorts of crafts and hobbies can relate to the sense of being “in the groove” when things are zipping along and feeling on track.

A year into my time at ACCT, I feel like the membership and educational services team is coming into that groove. Building on the deep expertise and experience of our seasoned

veteran team members and incorporating the perspectives and insights of our newer members, we’ve figured out how to work together, support each other, and amplify everyone’s talents and contributions. This summer, we’ve rounded out our team with the addition of two excellent new staff members. Ronald Barnes is our new membership services associate, and Maggie Owens joined us as educational programs and events associate. With our full team in place, there’s a sense of rhythm to our work — we’re building and improving processes and routines that work, and ensuring we’re consistently serving our members.

Our next frontier for creating routines and finding a rhythm is with ACCT Connect. We are thrilled with the enthusiastic response our new online learning and networking platform has received so far — our members are creating logins, completing their “welcome checklists,” accessing resources such as the Governance 101 course, and interacting with each other. However, building an online community takes time, and much like yoga, it requires community members to develop habits and a practice of consistent and regular engagement — which may not feel intuitive right off the bat.

There are a few concrete steps that I’ve found helpful in developing my ACCT Connect “practice”:

1) I adjusted my notification settings. There are lots of options, including in-the-moment notifications and daily digests, and you can set what sorts of notifications you want to receive via your profile page. In order to build my ACCT Connect routine and remind me to check in regularly, I’ve maxed out my notifications so that I get one any time there’s new activity on any posts I’ve made or am

following. For now, it’s not overwhelming, but as more of our members join and there’s more activity, I can always make adjustments to my notification frequency once my ACCT Connect routine is well established.

2) I downloaded the mobile app from my profile page. Like many of us, I’m on the go, so it’s helpful to have access to the app on my phone. It has also allowed me to add quick ACCT Connect checks to my routine — like when I’m on the bus to and from work.

3) Because I’m a list maker, I’ve made ACCT Connect a recurring item on my daily to-do list. I also keep an eye out for articles and information I’d like to share with our members, and keep a list of them for creating posts. It’s nice to have a relatively easy item I can check off from my list every day!

Our staff is standing by to help if you need assistance with any of these items, or anything else as you develop your ACCT Connect practice — email [connect@acct.org](mailto:connect@acct.org) any time, or send us a direct message through the platform.

We’re continuing to add new content and resources, and we welcome your suggestions and contributions! It’s great to be finding our rhythm and routine together, and we appreciate your engagement as we find our groove. And who knows? Maybe I’ll even teach an ACCT Connect yoga class one of these days. Stay tuned!



*Robin Matross Helms is ACCT’s vice president for membership and educational services. She can be reached at [rhelms@acct.org](mailto:rhelms@acct.org).*







# As the Election Year Approaches, It's Time to Prepare for the National Legislative Summit

IT'S NOT TOO EARLY TO START PLANNING FOR 2024 —  
AND ENSURE CONTINUED BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR OUR INSTITUTIONS.

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH AND JOSÉ MIRANDA

**E**ACH YEAR, COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS AND students gather in Washington, D.C., to learn the latest in federal higher education policy, share the goals and challenges of their campuses, and meet with elected officials at the Community College National Legislative Summit, often referred to as “the NLS.” The next NLS, taking place February 4 – 7, 2024, will occur at a critical time for community colleges’ advocacy. Going into a presidential election year, in a divided Congress with small-margin majorities in both chambers, 2024 is sure to be a high stakes year in federal politics.

We know thanks to this year’s Fiscal Responsibility Act that the Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations bills will have spending caps that will keep funding levels at just above the current year. Beyond that, it’s unclear how much legislating will happen in a year where neither party will want to give the other a “win” going into elections. The 2024 election cycle could end in many ways: with either party taking full control of Congress, a second Biden term, the end of the Biden presidency, the return to a unified government, or the continuation of a divided government with party controls reversed. It could also mean more of what we have seen this year. But each of these scenarios means very different things for community colleges, our priorities, and our advocacy work.

Visiting Washington during a presidential election year allows you to strengthen the bipartisan support for our institutions in anticipation of any of the potential outcomes from November 2024. It will give you a head start in forming relationships with

elected officials from both parties. With possible changes in party control in each chamber, it’s also crucial to continue or renew relationships with elected officials who may move into leadership roles. Bringing together your institution’s leadership — trustees, president, and students — to visit Washington is the best way to share about your campus, discuss the federal role in community colleges, and encourage support for the sector and the learners it supports.

The benefit of the National Legislative Summit for your college increases greatly if your team works together in advance to prepare. Below is a guide to help you get ready.

## **November: Pick Your Team**

Decide who will represent your college in Washington. This group should include a combination of trustees, the president, senior government relations staff, and students (such as student trustee, student government leader, or students who participate in federally funded programs such as Pell Grants).

## **December: Learn About Your College and Your Community**

Meeting with your elected officials is an opportunity to share about your college and to ask how the federal government can support it. Learn about your institution’s mission, key programs offered, and facts about the student population. Information to share also includes the communities served and their demographics,



It's important to decide which materials to take to each of your meetings. ACCT provides a helpful template called the Federal Funds Worksheet that provides an organized format to share all dollars received, such as Pell Grant dollars and federal grant funding. Sharing the impact of these programs on your colleges demonstrates to lawmakers and their staff the importance of the federal investment in education and training programs.

the number and size of your campuses and student populations, businesses served by your institution, and economic impact.

December is also an important time to reach out to your community and ask questions such as:

- What are the needs of the community?
- How is your community changing?
- How is the college responding to these changes?

### **Early January: Schedule Your Meetings**

To schedule meetings, use the letter template from the ACCT toolkit at [nls.acct.org](https://nls.acct.org) and customize it for each of your requests. Review your entire delegation, including which committee assignments they have and if they are chair or ranking member. Those colleges in states with active associations should also reach out to the associations for meeting coordination.

### **Mid-January: Meeting Preparation**

For meeting preparation, it's important to decide not only what information to share about your institution, as gathered in December, but also which issue areas or requests your college would like to make. ACCT will provide in-depth backgrounders on key issues as well as the one-sheet guide on timely topics known as the "Green Sheet."

Your college team should also consider what your "ask" of your elected official will be. These can include introducing legislation on a key priority, support or opposition on a specific bill, advocacy for federally funded programs that support your school and students, a campus speaking engagement or visit/tour, or funding through Congressionally Directed Spending (Senate) or Community Project Funding (House).

### **Late January: Know Your Legislators and Federal Funds**

It's important to decide which materials to take to each of your meetings. ACCT provides a helpful template called the Federal Funds Worksheet that provides an organized format to share all dollars received, such as Pell Grant dollars and federal grant funding.

Sharing the impact of these programs on your colleges demonstrates to lawmakers and their staff the importance of the federal investment in education and training programs.

Additionally, you should get to know your legislators. Do some research into their backgrounds; doing so helps you make a connection and communicate in a way that gets your point across most effectively.

### **Early February: Plan Your Meeting Agenda**

Before the meeting, choose one person to be the spokesperson. Use the meeting worksheet to determine who speaks on each topic and who will take notes.

### **Mid-February: Follow Up**

The follow-up email is an important opportunity to continue building your relationship with your representatives and their staffs. It allows you not only to say thank you for their time, but also to share materials electronically, put any specific questions in writing, and provide any information asked for in the meeting that you didn't have immediately on hand. Also be sure to follow up with ACCT by emailing [publicpolicy@acct.org](mailto:publicpolicy@acct.org) with a summary of your meeting and expected outcomes or next steps.

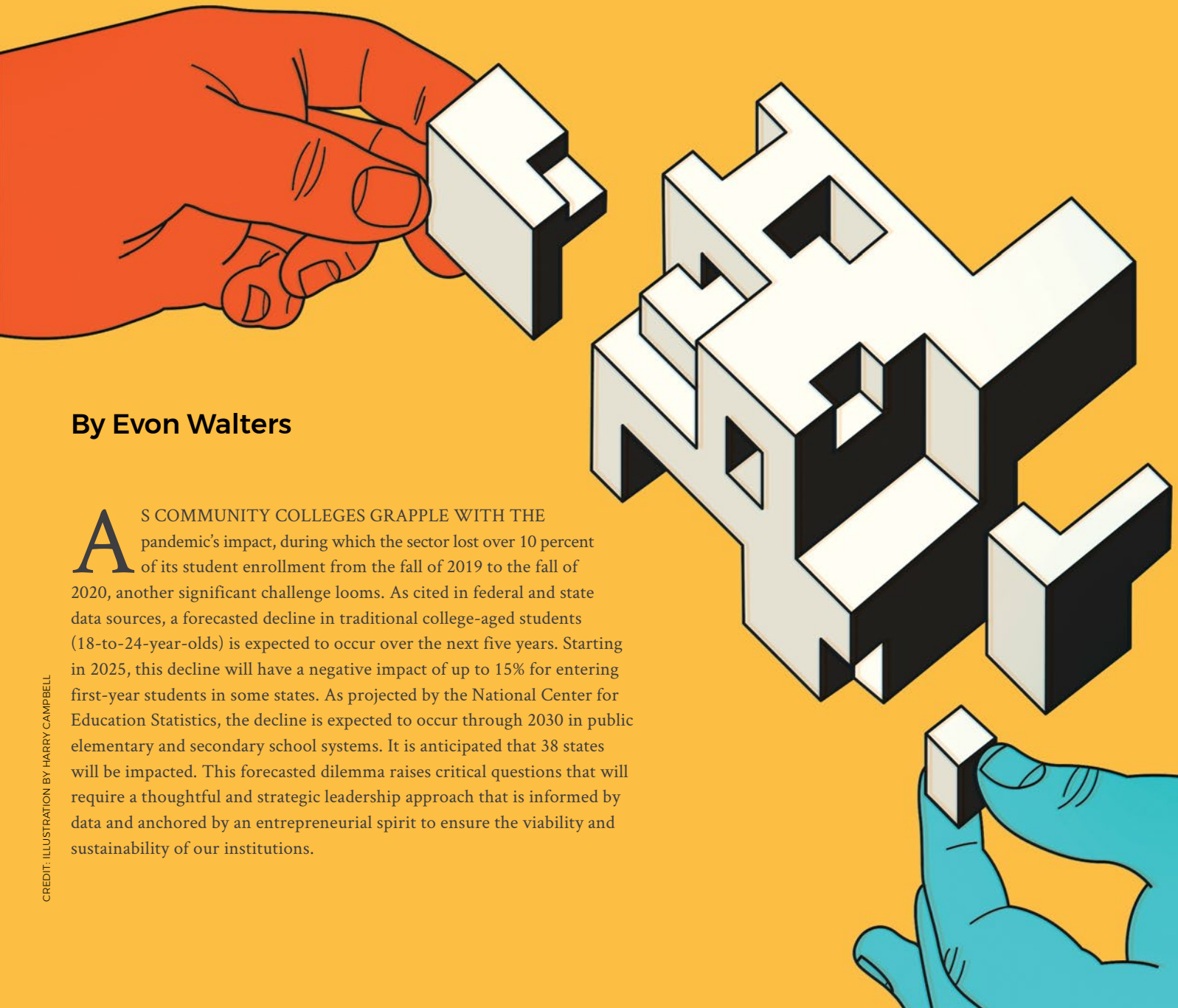
Contact us at if you need any further guidance on planning your visit. A little planning will go a long way in forging new relationships, nurturing established ones, and yielding the most effective possible outcomes. We look forward to seeing you in February.



ACCT Vice President for Public Policy  
Carrie Warick-Smith can be reached  
at [cwsmith@acct.org](mailto:cwsmith@acct.org). ACCT Director of  
Government Relations José Miranda can be  
reached at [jmiranda@acct.org](mailto:jmiranda@acct.org).

# Strategic Enrollment Management

Addressing immediate challenges with an eye toward the future.



By Evon Walters

**A**S COMMUNITY COLLEGES GRAPPLE WITH THE pandemic's impact, during which the sector lost over 10 percent of its student enrollment from the fall of 2019 to the fall of 2020, another significant challenge looms. As cited in federal and state data sources, a forecasted decline in traditional college-aged students (18-to-24-year-olds) is expected to occur over the next five years. Starting in 2025, this decline will have a negative impact of up to 15% for entering first-year students in some states. As projected by the National Center for Education Statistics, the decline is expected to occur through 2030 in public elementary and secondary school systems. It is anticipated that 38 states will be impacted. This forecasted dilemma raises critical questions that will require a thoughtful and strategic leadership approach that is informed by data and anchored by an entrepreneurial spirit to ensure the viability and sustainability of our institutions.



Community College of Allegheny County leaders developed and presented the strategic enrollment plan to stakeholders. At left: Dr. Vladimir St. Surin, Dan Duffy, Dr. Charlene Newkirk, Dr. Evon W. Walters, Dr. Tiffany Evans, and Dr. Mary Lou Kennedy.

As opposed to the 2008 Great Recession when enrollment grew, community colleges experienced the reverse during the pandemic. Enrollment declines were accompanied by an increase in competition for students, as well as a post-pandemic shift in student expectations of greater flexibility and accessibility to 24/7 digital enrollment transactions. Despite these challenges, our sector is uniquely positioned to boldly demonstrate its value and evolve its offerings in ways that meet the needs of our students. Institutionally, we will need to adapt by reimagining new and thoughtful measures aimed at broadening, diversifying, and modernizing recruitment and enrollment strategies and tactics. Such measures should be born from a strategic enrollment management (SEM) plan.

### What is a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan?

A strategic enrollment management plan is an institution’s organized planning and execution effort that engages and solicits the input of multiple constituency groups, such as the governance structure, faculty/administrators/staff, cabinet leadership, and students. It includes such departments/divisions as admissions, financial aid, registration, academic affairs, marketing, and institutional research. Aligned with the institution’s strategic priorities, the plan is a blueprint that is informed by internal and external data. The core elements include measurable enrollment goals and targets, with accompanying tactics that are continually assessed. Ultimately, a SEM plan aims to optimize recruitment and retention efforts, with an eye toward developing a more targeted approach to increasing enrollment. Given the realities of the ongoing and forecasted demographic shifts, an effective SEM plan must be an integrated one, considering the college’s strategic plan, academic master plan, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan.

Faced with the challenge of dealing with a three-year enrollment decline among new students and a need to prepare for the pending 2025 demographic cliff, the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, embarked upon a two-pronged

approach. Its strategy dealt with immediate needs while preparing for forecasted long-term enrollment challenges. For the immediate, in fall 2022 the college launched a multifaceted re-engagement and recruitment campaign that targeted prospective, continuing, and “stop-out” students. Embedded within this campaign was a well thought out and chronologically deployed set of engagement tactics that included a diverse mix of social media, text messaging, phone, email, and in-person engagement activities that were continuously monitored and assessed. Simultaneously, in preparation for the forecasted enrollment cliff, the college canvassed a diverse body of college stakeholders in conceptualizing, developing, and launching a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan. As a result, CCAC realized two significant outcomes:

1. For the immediate term, CCAC reversed a three-year 22% decline in new student enrollment with an increase in new and overall enrollment for the spring and summer semesters of 2023. Most significantly, within five days of the start of the fall 2023 semester, new student headcount enrollment was up 18%, returning students up 3%, and the overall student enrollment up 6.45%.
2. Completion of a SEM plan that provides a blueprint and focuses on four identified areas.

### Guiding Principles

The guiding principles represent key elements that aided CCAC in the development of its SEM plan, as well as the launch of its re-engagement/recruitment campaign. These principles acknowledge upfront the importance of developing a plan that is shaped by an institution’s culture, its surrounding environment, and the identified challenges/opportunities. The principles are:

#### Principle I - Make Data Your Anchor:

In a *Chronicle of Higher Education* research brief on becoming a data-driven institution, the recommendation “Using Data, Not Anecdotes to Drive Decisions” accentuates the critical role of data as an integral



part of enrollment planning, execution, and assessment. Data shapes and drives institutional performance towards meeting goals, while enhancing individual/departmental accountability via establishing targets, monitoring, and assessing performance.

Internal to the institution, this may be reflected in the use of current, past, and trend data in the institutional areas of new student enrollment, persistence, and retention rates. Externally, this includes integrating current and forecasted high school graduation rates, census, and labor-market data.

One example of how CCAC leveraged data in preparation for the forecasted enrollment challenges was in its dynamic capital campaign, coined "Pioneering Pittsburgh's New Workforce." Anchored by a comprehensive labor market study, informed by the state's high-demand occupation data, and supplemented by benchmarking research, the college exceeded its initial \$65 million fundraising goal that was inspired by individual, private, corporate, and government financial support. The most visible outcome was the construction of a state-of-the-art workforce development center that will open for classes in spring 2024. This facility will expand access to several of the region's high-demand and emerging occupational programs. Connected to the facility has been an advisory council comprised of K-12, workforce, and business/industry sector partners. This council works directly with our faculty in ensuring program awareness and relevance, as well as exploring and identifying partnership opportunities.

### **Principle II – Diversification Mindset:**

In introducing this principle, three categories highlight how to best integrate diversification as a core institutional mindset in every aspect of enrollment planning and execution. The categories are:

**1. Student targets:** A shrinking K-12 population and increased competition for students will require a more strategic, broadened, and modernized approach to engaging different population segments — including but not limited to adult and historically underrepresented populations. To accomplish this, conducting an assessment and possible reprioritization of past and existing student feeder systems will be necessary. This assessment should lead to a deeper exploration of pursuing new alliances that may not be viewed as traditional in expanding student enrollment pipelines. Independent of its recently completed SEM plan, CCAC over the past three years has intentionally grown its partnerships with local community-based organizations, the business/industry sector, workforce/economic agencies, and the philanthropic sector. Most significantly, these partnerships have led to alternative funding opportunities in creating new enrollment pipelines.

**2. Communication:** Central to effective communication is the awareness of the demographic realities of the students you seek to engage, recruit, and support. As you know, community colleges represent the most diverse mix of postsecondary students in age, race, ethnicity, and economic status. Thus, success in engaging these students will rest upon the diversity in thought, approach, and, most

notably, the development and deployment of a diverse array of communication tactics.

In the fall of 2022, CCAC launched such a campaign with a comprehensive mix of text messaging, social media, and phone call campaigns in its attempt to connect and service prospective, new, stop-out, and current students for the spring, summer, and fall semesters of 2023. Strategically and chronologically deployed over a nine-month period, this campaign created an aggressive and personalized approach to guiding students through the admissions and registration process. As a result, the college realized increases in its new and continuing student enrollment for the spring and summer semesters, with a significant increase expected for the upcoming fall 2023 semester.

### **Principle III: Commitment to Continuous Improvement:**

Enrollment challenges reflect not only the external demographic and labor-market realities, but also the internal issues associated with assessing one's capacity, systems, and quality of services. Anchored by a "student-centered" lens, a commitment to continuous improvement centers on improving processes and overall service levels via the consistent reevaluation of business operations, program offerings, and course scheduling.

Success can become tricky and potentially contentious, given the aspiration of wanting to improve service levels with the same or fewer resources. From a leadership perspective, it requires close attention to managing and assessing institutional culture and its readiness for change, while acknowledging the important roles of ongoing training and technology as tools to support any change initiative. As with our experience at CCAC, whether it's departmental or individual accountability, proactive, ongoing, and transparent communication will be central to any success that is to be realized in this critical principle.

Preparing for the future and its accompanying enrollment declines has never been more important for community colleges. This comes at a time of increased competition and the need to demonstrate a compelling value proposition for why your institution is the best postsecondary option. What is clear is the critical role that a SEM plan can play in ensuring that the strategy, systems, and programs are in place to attract, enroll, and help students persist and succeed in meeting their academic and career goals. The development of such a plan cannot be static, but must be continuously fluid, innovative, and diverse in its evolution in responding to its surrounding market.



*Dr. Evon W. Walters is Northwest Region president of the Community College of Allegheny County in Pennsylvania.*



## DR. KEITH CURRY: 'UNAPOLOGETIC SUCCESS' FOR BLACK LEARNERS

---

The chair of the Level Up and Get Real initiative discusses the role trustees must play in ensuring Black student success.

By Mark Toner

**T**HIS SPRING, A PARTNERSHIP OF LEADING HIGHER EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING Achieving the Dream, Lumina Foundation, Education Counsel and HCM Strategists, released *Level Up: Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Black Learner, Unapologetically*, a call to action charging higher education leaders with ensuring that their institutions “are accessible and welcoming to all, regardless of a student’s race or background.”

Ahead of a 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress symposium on the initiative, Compton College President and National Panel Chair Keith Curry, Ed.D., spoke with *Trustee Quarterly* about the report and its findings, the role of community colleges and their trustees, and what unapologetic leadership looks like.

**Q. How did you get involved in the Level Up initiative?**

My call for Black student success started when I was 19 years old at UC Santa Cruz, where I created a program for admitted African American students called Destination Higher Education. At California's community colleges, we started Black Student Success Week, which takes place at the end of April every year. And at Compton College, we've worked to support Black students and student success in general. We support students' basic needs and created guided pathways. These serve all students, but they're serving Black students because they serve everybody. Every student on campus — and employees — can eat for free. We provide emergency aid and a guaranteed income program, where students receive \$500 per month. And we hired a Director of Black and Males of Color Success whose work is connected to our guided pathways and supporting students into majors.

We disaggregated all our data by race, and it's publicly available. When we talk about student success, we're talking about it at a program level and a course level. We're not apologetic about it or hiding it — we're putting our data out front.

The Level Up initiative is a continuation of what I've been doing my entire career and taking it to a broader audience. Now I'm able to be involved in this work on a national scale. I've come full circle.

**Q: The *Level Up* report highlighted sobering statistics about the decline of Black learners at community colleges — 300,000 have disappeared over the past 20 years, and enrollments are down by as much as 44 percent since 2011. Were you surprised by these findings?**

The numbers don't surprise me, because I saw the decline in Los Angeles County and at my own institution. I didn't know the national statistics, but I also knew it wasn't siloed in my community.

When COVID hit, it put [the decline] right in the forefront again. The report reminded me that the numbers were declining as early as 2011, and while most people say we're losing Black learners to the pandemic, COVID isn't the reason. The barriers to college access and opportunity are systemic, and their solutions must be as well.

**Q: The report outlines four commitment areas called Get REAL — Real transparency and true affordability, Ensured success through shared ownership, Academic and social supports, and Learner-centered teaching practices. What do they mean for colleges and their leaders?**

They provide a framework for colleges to be able to organize themselves around serving Black learners. They also provide political cover, because this is not a siloed problem, but a national one.

The commitment areas are a blueprint for what colleges and institutions should be able to do, and they give them cover to have unapologetic conversations about Black success and opportunities to learn from each other. The goal is to create a national conversation among institutions and leaders towards the same goal, which is to Level Up, Unapologetically.

**Q: What is the role of community colleges and their leaders in this work?**

Community colleges are in the call to action. They need to get behind and support the movement, and at the same time get unapologetic about implementing.

Boards should adopt the Level Up recommendations and then work with their CEO on developing action plans to implement them. Start by looking at what you're doing on your campus — places where you have gaps and where you can step up and create services to support Black learners.

Ask for your data around student success and disaggregate it. Talk about lagging indicators. Be unapologetic in your conversations. And let your CEOs be unapologetic. Allow them to do the work and hold them accountable. That's a clear action for board members.

Boards can also do more advocacy work with local, state, and federal officials to get more resources. Budgets are statements of values. In the report, we share data on the economic impact of Black learners. Share it with the community. If you want to transform communities, you need to have the resources, and the resources are supported through education.

**Q. Why is the Congress symposium important to this work?**

It's important to have a conversation about Level Up and talk about what trustees can do around the initiative. The goal is to start with trustees, because they are the policymakers. We want to get them in the conversation.

We need to give leaders time and space to talk about it, and to be unapologetic — to say that their data doesn't [currently] support it, but here's what we're trying to do.

**Q. You — and the Level Up report — use the term “unapologetic” to describe leadership. What does that mean to you?**

Talk is cheap in this business. Unapologetic leaders are ones who are able to be intentional and not have remorse about introducing this work. People will tell you that you can't do this for certain reasons, but you can — it's okay to have conversations about Black learner success and to push initiatives about Black learner success.

You're going to be a leader in helping students, or you're going to sit on the sidelines. We need people to do this work.

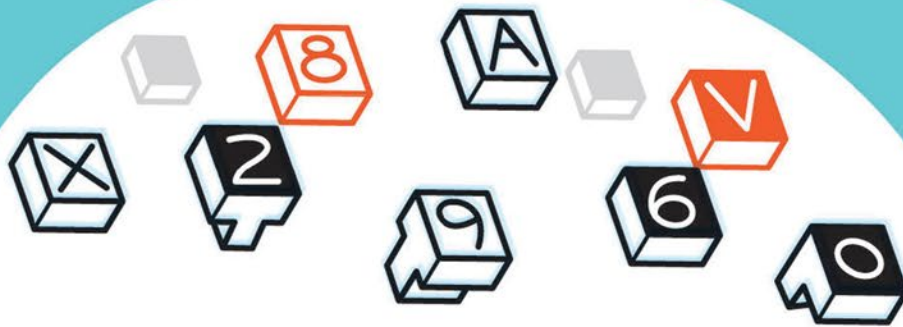
**Learn more at [www.community4blacklearnerexcellence.com](http://www.community4blacklearnerexcellence.com).**



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly magazine



# NEURODIVERSITY, ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING, AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES



About 80 percent of neurodivergent college students begin their higher education at community colleges. These students are undervalued assets to our institutions and our nation.

By Maureen Dunne

**N**EURODIVERSITY IS AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT topic for community college leaders. For those unfamiliar with the term, “neurodiversity” refers to the range of human neurological profiles that we typically find in most communities around the world. This includes neurotypical people and neurodivergent people — those with different ways of learning and thinking, such as those with autism, ADHD, dyslexia (difficulty with reading and spelling), dyspraxia (developmental coordination disorder), hyperlexia (precocious ability to read along with reading comprehension challenges), synesthesia (atypically linked sensory perceptions), dyscalculia (mathematical learning disability), and other atypical cognitive typologies.

In other words, it comes down to understanding, supporting, and valuing the rich tapestry of human cognition as it actually exists, rather than starting with a box built around our assumptions for what sort of cognitive profiles best fit into the linear world we have constructed in our current post-industrial framework. This is a profound change in teaching and learning from traditional one-size-fits-all models and, as with every approach to improving inclusivity, it necessitates fundamentally resetting perceptions of what is valuable and, in some ways, our own values systems.

Inherent in the neurodiversity perspective is the importance of valuing all people — neurotypical and neurodivergent — through a strength-based lens. Current research suggests that about one in five people identify as neurodivergent.

### Why should community college leaders care?

There is strong evidence that most neurodivergent students begin their higher education journeys at community colleges. A 2015 study published in *Autism Research and Treatment*, for example, estimated the percentage of autistic students who begin postsecondary training at community colleges to be as high as 80%.

Community colleges, with their open-admissions policy and high-quality offerings close to home, are attractive to many students with learning differences as they navigate the new frontier of college. Community colleges offer optionality and flexibility that many traditional four-year college campuses do not, including smaller classes, affordable tuition, and proximity to family and friends.

What most community college leaders don’t realize is how fast this segment of their student body is growing and will likely continue to expand in the future.

A recent study by ZenBusiness reported that about half of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) students acknowledged some identification with the neurodivergent brand: “definitely” (22 percent) or “somewhat” (31 percent) neurodivergent. About three quarters of this same group reported they were interested in entrepreneurship as a career pathway. This was based on a survey connected with 1,000 respondents aged 18-25, one key demographic of college students.

In another study, about one in five Gen Z participants reported to

Tallo that they did not follow through in applying for a particular job because the company lacked supportive resources for neurodivergent people. A whopping 80% of respondents claimed they would like to apply for employment at a company that was supportive of those identifying as neurodivergent.

However you look at these results in combination with other data, analysis, and emerging trends, it is clear that both neurodiversity and entrepreneurship should be top of mind for community college stakeholders.

### A Culture of Psychological Safety

When I was elected president of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) — a body that represents legislative advocacy and trustee education for the third largest consortium of community colleges in the United States — I made it a priority to address unnecessary obstacles facing our students.

Last fall, ICCTA adopted our own neurodiversity inclusion statement to help guide policy at our member colleges. We then began to lobby the state government, and in May of this year, the Illinois General Assembly passed new legislation in the form of HR219 (“Neurodiversity in Higher Ed”).

HR219 encourages all institutions of higher education to adopt a similar values statement to create welcoming environments that value, support, and empower all students, neurodivergent and neurotypical alike. As formal legislation at the state level, HR219 is the first of its kind that we are aware of. It is my hope it inspires other states to follow suit and colleges to take further practical steps in fostering a culture of inclusivity. For instance, the availability of a quiet room on campus would benefit not only those neurodivergent students who may be prone to auditory sensitivity, but anyone looking to take a break from studying or socializing. Peer mentors and allies also can make a meaningful impact on one’s community college experience. This is a clear path to a better world, built of actionable policies and programs that help all students, including those with learning differences, thrive.

Another important emphasis in this effort was to include more than just the students. Our ICCTA Neurodiversity Inclusion values statement sought to acknowledge neurodivergent faculty, staff, trustees, and administrators as well. By encouraging a psychologically safe work environment, all members of the campus community will feel more comfortable with disclosure of their own neurodivergence, providing our neurodivergent students with powerful role models as they prepare to join the workplace of tomorrow.

In addition, I helped spearhead a new program called the Neurodiverse Entrepreneur Program — a partnership between Innovation DuPage (an entrepreneurship accelerator affiliated with College of DuPage) and the Autism Angels Group (the first social impact investment association focused on neurodiversity).

The program is currently headed toward its second-year cohort

and provides an equity-free grant, supportive resources, mentorship, and an entrepreneurial bootcamp workshop for inclusive early-stage companies with at least one neurodivergent teammate in a leadership role. The program is making waves in the venture capital world as a model for entrepreneurial thinking arising out of a community college substrate.

Moreover, there is a strong correlation between entrepreneurship and neurodiversity. In fact, many highly successful entrepreneurs have publicly discussed how their neurodivergence has led to their success. Richard Branson, for example, reported in *The Independent* that his “dyslexia became [his] massive advantage: It helped [him] to think creatively and laterally, and see solutions where others saw problems.”

Other successful neurodivergent entrepreneurs include David Neelan, the founder of JetBlue, an ADHDer, Charles Schwab, who is dyslexic, and Elon Musk, who was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome (now part of the autism spectrum).

## Neurodiversity and the Future

Lateral thinking, complex visual-spatial skills, intuitive pattern recognition, nonlinear thinking, and creative insights will all become increasingly important skills in the future as artificial intelligence (AI) continues to embed itself within every facet of our everyday lives. Numerous studies suggest that neurodivergent cognition is positively associated with enhanced innovative thinking and creativity.

One such study published in 2016 in the *Creativity Research Journal* demonstrated how ADHD students scored significantly higher than their neurotypical peers on measures of originality, novelty, and flexibility for an invention task, as well as demonstrating increased cognitive flexibility in word association tests.

Another research study found those with strong autistic traits were far more likely to generate original ideas. This research was published in 2015 in the *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. Yet another report published in *Cogent Psychology* documented similar findings when comparing dyslexic students and their neurotypical peers. Just as important as it is to understand differences between neurotypical and neurodivergent students, it’s vital to understand that neurodivergence is not monolithic. In other words, no two neurodivergent students are alike.

At the same time, in recent policy discussions the chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, has remarked that the American labor market is suffering from a structural labor shortage. The reasons are varied, including an aging population, the tragic loss of many workers to COVID-19, a flux of early retirements, and a historic drop in immigration caused, in part, by Trump-era policy changes. By the end of 2022, there were approximately two job vacancies for every available worker, making for a total shortfall of around 10 million workers. As political economist

Nicholas Eberstadt put it, “The United States has a Depression-scale work problem.”

Higher education is also at an inflection point. High school graduates are increasingly questioning the value of higher education, along with the specter of unbearable student debt. They look to us, as community college leaders, to articulate the relevance of higher education to their future prospects.

This reality exists against the backdrop of an economic and technological landscape that is shifting under our feet. A recent PwC report estimated that by 2023, AI will add \$15 trillion to the global economy. By the mid-2030s, it is also set to potentially automate away around 30% of today’s jobs.

Community college and industry partnerships could be a game-changer in spearheading opportunities that lead to the jobs of the future, including neurodiversity-friendly opportunity pathways. This is a win-win as unemployment and underemployment rates sit at about 40% for neurodivergent people across typologies, and as high as 85% for autistic people historically. Employers are looking for uniquely talented, motivated, and loyal employees, and neurodivergent jobseekers are often unfairly overlooked despite their myriad abilities, skills, and talents.

One of my favorite analogies is to point out how steel, an alloy, is superior to iron, a pure metal, in just about every respect precisely because it is a combination of different elements with different properties complementing each other at a fundamental level. The same logic holds true with thriving organizational cultures, including higher education and industry. Diverse groups that foster collaboration among different types of minds are far more resilient and powerful than homogenous ones.

HR219 conveys the importance of valuing all kinds of minds as we help prepare our students for the future. While this legislation is a great starting point, we all can play a vital role as allies in welcoming neurodivergent thinkers on campus and in our communities.



Maureen Dunne, PhD is a community college alum and trustee at the College of DuPage. She is the first community college graduate to be named a Rhodes Scholar and currently serves on the ACCT Board of Directors. She is the author of the upcoming book, *The Neurodiversity Edge*, being released by Wiley in March 2024.

# VARYING DEGREES

Amid concerns about affordability and access, New America's seventh annual survey on higher education shows public support for community colleges – and funding them.

BY MARK TONER

**W**HILE AMERICANS STILL RECOGNIZE THE VALUE of education after high school, affordability and equity are concerns that weaken their confidence in higher education, according to New America's annual survey.

"We have learned that a majority of Americans believe in the value that an education after high school can bring to their lives and their communities," the *Varying Degrees 2023* survey states. "At the same time, they would like to see colleges and universities lower the cost of education, improve the quality of educational programs, [and] increase the transparency of student outcome data, among other changes."

Large majorities, however, do believe community colleges are worth the cost and spend their money wisely — and think they should be supported with tax dollars. And three-quarters of Americans agree "that federal and state government and colleges and universities should work to ensure that students from historically underrepresented backgrounds have access to higher education opportunities," the survey states.

However, *Varying Degrees* confirms a continuing challenge that has been repeated in other public opinion surveys in recent years: even as Americans continue to believe that higher education is a requirement for financial stability, their confidence in the system is weakening — falling 10 percent since before the pandemic.

"A majority of Americans still do not think higher education is fine how it is, which has been one of our key findings since we conducted

the survey for the first time in 2017," the survey report states. "For opinions of higher education to trend better, Americans likely need to see consistent and effective changes to the system, including dramatically lower costs and better outcomes."

## Education Remains Essential

Now in its seventh year, *Varying Degrees* asks "Americans for their opinions on critical questions related to the value of educational opportunities after high school, how higher education is funded, and how we hold colleges and universities accountable for that funding," according to its authors. With a sample size of 1,497 adults, this year's survey also explored "Americans' perspectives on the benefits that education after high school can bring to individuals and society at large, and whether they think students can equitably access college and succeed in obtaining their degrees."

Seven in 10 Americans believe that the minimum level of education their close family members need to complete to ensure financial stability is a postsecondary certificate — a belief that is consistent across party lines and racial backgrounds, according to the survey. About 40 percent believe a bachelor's degree is required for financial stability.

Nearly 90 percent believe that individuals with postsecondary credentials "contribute to a skilled workforce," while smaller but significant majorities believe that they increase tax revenues, support



for local businesses, civic engagement, unemployment rates, and public health. “The individual and societal benefits of higher education show bipartisan alignment,” the survey states.

However, less than half (48 percent) of Americans believe that “higher education is affordable for anyone who wishes to pursue it,” the survey states.

### Community College Confidence

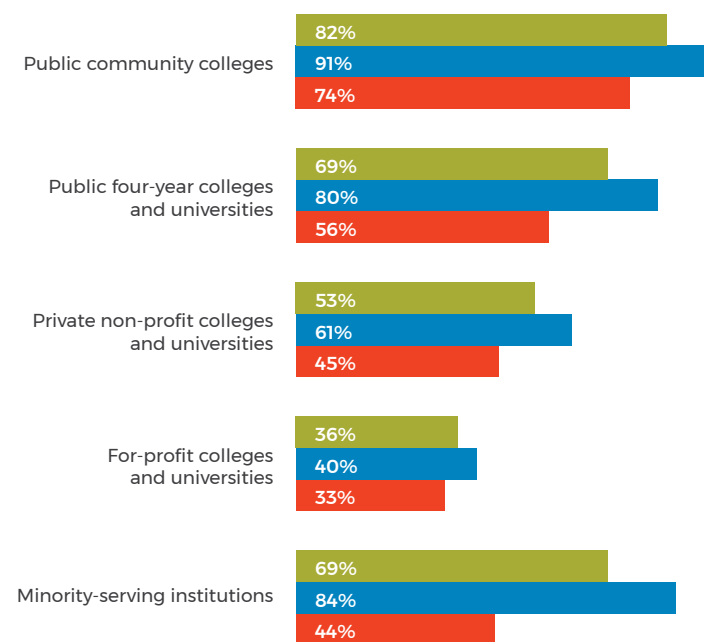
Eighty-five percent of Americans think community colleges are worth the cost, compared to 66 percent who believe the same about public four-year colleges. More than 82 percent said they were “comfortable” supporting community colleges with tax dollars, compared to 69 percent for their four-year counterparts, according to the survey. By contrast, only 36 percent support tax dollars funding for-profit colleges and universities (see chart below). And while there are partisan differences in whether government or individual students should be more responsible for funding higher education, “Democrats and Republicans both support more federal and state government spending on higher education,” the survey states.

#### How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(% agree)

■ All adults (n=1,497) ■ Democrats (n=518) ■ Republicans (n=400)

**You are comfortable supporting the following institutions with your taxpayer dollars.**



More than half of Americans also believe that community colleges spend their money wisely (51 percent) and run efficiently (55 percent). No other sector received majority support (see chart below).

Nearly six in 10 (58 percent) respondents also believe community colleges are underfunded by state and federal governments. “Half or less than half of Americans think other sectors of higher education are,” the survey states.

### Outcomes – and Transparency – Matter

The topic that saw the greatest agreement among respondents was transparency. Since 2019, about 90 percent of Americans — across all party lines, generations, and racial backgrounds — say that it is important that colleges and universities provide publicly available data about graduation rates, employment rates, and earnings. “In the history of the *Varying Degrees* survey, no question comes this close to universal agreement year over year,” the survey states.

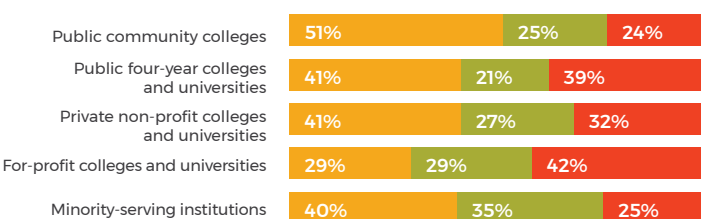
*Varying Degrees* also surveyed Americans’ opinions about two regulatory approaches embraced by the Biden Administration: borrower defense to repayment and gainful employment. “Our survey

#### Americans’ thoughts on how institutions of different sectors spend money and operate:

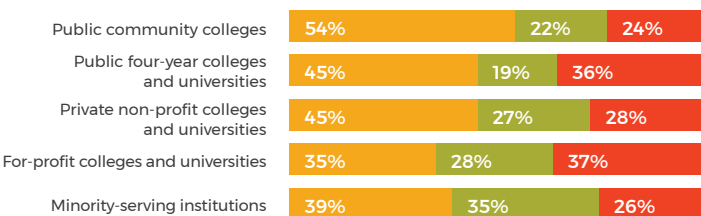
(n=1,497)

■ Agree ■ Don’t know/skipped ■ Disagree

**How much do you agree or disagree that the following institutions of higher education spend money wisely?**



**How much do you agree or disagree that the following institutions of higher education run efficiently?**



Note: The numbers in this figure and the narrative may not match due to rounding. In case of mismatch, please refer to the narrative.

Source: *Varying Degrees*  
NEW AMERICA

In the midst of growing emphasis on racial equity and justice, as well as this summer’s Supreme Court decision overturning race-conscious admissions, *Varying Degrees* found that about three-quarters of Americans “believe that the federal and state [governments] and colleges and universities should work to ensure that students from historically underrepresented backgrounds have access to higher education opportunities.”

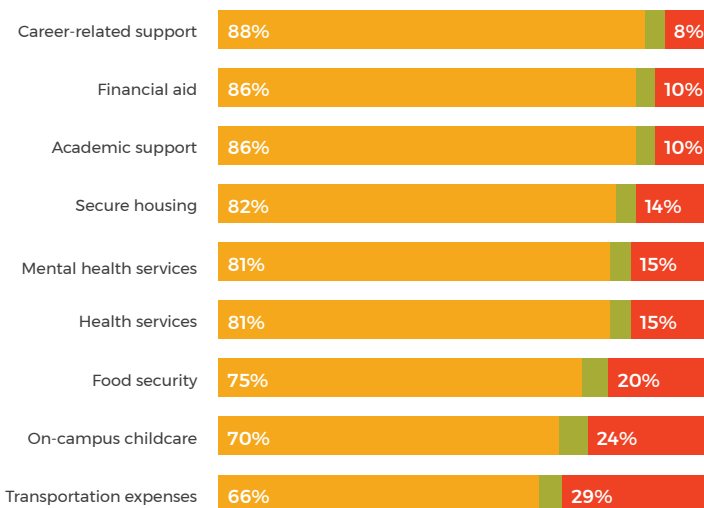
shows that these new regulations have strong support nationwide, across all demographics,” the survey states.

Some 82 percent of respondents supported borrower defense, agreeing that colleges and universities should be required to repay the federal government for outstanding student loans that were canceled because “colleges misrepresented information about their programs of study and student outcomes,” the survey states. Nearly as many (79 percent) agree with gainful employment requirements, saying that programs should lose eligibility for federal financial aid if they “consistently failed to help graduates earn more than those who completed only high school” or “left students deeply in debt relative to their earnings.”

### How much, if at all, do students attending colleges and universities need support or services from their schools in the following areas?

(n=1,497)

Very much/somewhat    Very little/not at all (%)  
Don't know/skipped (%)



Note: The numbers in this figure and the narrative may not match due to rounding. In case of mismatch, please refer to the narrative.

Source: *Varying Degrees*  
NEW AMERICA

### Supports for Students

*Varying Degrees* found that large majorities agree that institutions need to provide a wide range of supports to students. Nine in 10 Americans believe that “colleges and universities should provide adequate support services to students who need them,” including 96 percent of Democrats and 85 percent of Republicans. However, the partisan divide is greater when it comes to federal and state support for these services, with 94 percent of Democrats and 69 percent of Republicans agreeing that government should provide adequate funding.

Large majorities also support the growing array of supports institutions are providing students. “A majority believe that students need career-related support (88 percent), financial aid (87 percent), and academic support (85 percent). They also strongly believe that colleges and universities must provide more, and favor the provision of housing (82 percent) and food (76 percent) support and on-campus child care (70 percent),” the survey states (see chart to the left).

### Equal Opportunities for All

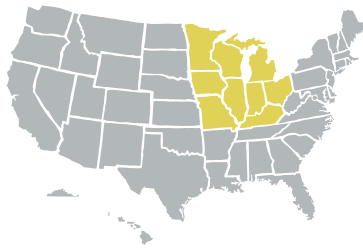
In the midst of growing emphasis on racial equity and justice, as well as this summer’s Supreme Court decision overturning race-conscious admissions, *Varying Degrees* found that about three-quarters of Americans “believe that the federal and state [governments] and colleges and universities should work to ensure that students from historically underrepresented backgrounds have access to higher education opportunities.” And despite partisan differences,” three-fourths of Americans agree that all students benefit when colleges and universities reflect the racial diversity of the U.S. (78 percent). A majority also believe that higher education institutions should admit more students (69 percent) and hire more faculty and staff members (68 percent) from racially diverse backgrounds,” the survey states.

To read more, visit [www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/varying-degrees-2023/](http://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/varying-degrees-2023/).



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly magazine.

# AROUND THE REGIONS



## CENTRAL REGION

The **Illinois** General Assembly passed a bill that would help community college students transfer to public universities by ensuring that certain classes taken at community colleges would be accepted for credit. Another bill codifies an agreement that allows community colleges to share career and technical education programs across institutions.

**Indiana's** Commission for Higher Education (CHE) approved specific outcomes-based performance goals, including a separate funding plan that allows Ivy Tech Community College's goals to continue to center around employer needs, as well as increased wage outcomes and stackable credentials for students.

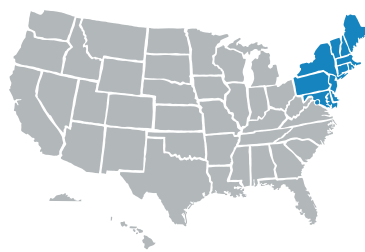
**Iowa** Gov. Kim Reynolds announced that \$5 million in infrastructure grants are being made available to community colleges for commercial driver's license training programs. Reynolds also signed into law the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Act, which establishes an Iowa Office of Apprenticeship within the Department of Workforce Development.

**Michigan** is expanding its Michigan Reconnect program, which offers tuition-free community college to adults with no postsecondary education. Michigan Reconnect has helped more than 123,000 students attend college since its inception in 2021. Following an initial \$140 million investment, the state has invested another \$70 million and dropped the age to qualify from 25 to 21, which could help another 350,000 people.

The Michigan Community College Association (MCAA) announced that the state's 31 community and tribal colleges are accepting certain industry-recognized credentials and certifications for college credit. The Michigan Transfer Network program is funded by the Ascendium Education Group.

Intel tasked the **Ohio** Association of Community Colleges Semiconductor Collaboration Network with adding semiconductor-specific courses and equipment to engineering technology and advanced manufacturing programs. The work is part of the \$17.7 million that Intel will give over three years to Ohio colleges and universities to create semiconductor education and workforce programs to support its \$20 billion investment in microchip factories in the state.

Three community colleges in Ohio increased their graduation rates by 50% over the past six years with the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs. The ASAP program, originally developed in New York, also boosted the earnings of participants by 11%.



## NORTHEAST REGION

As part of the consolidation of **Connecticut's** community colleges and launch of the new Connecticut State Community College on July 1, CT State secured its initial accreditation from the New England Commission of Higher Education as a 17-campus statewide community college.

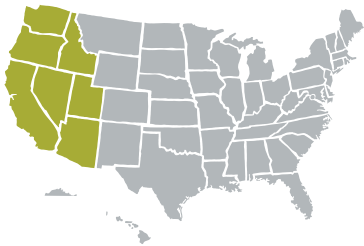
Tuition-free community college in

**Maine** was extended to two more graduating high school classes under the budget signed into law by Gov. Janet Mills. The Maine Department of Education and the Maine Community College System also announced that current and prospective community college students across the state have access to College and Career Success Coordinators to provide them with supports to assist with the transition to college.

**Massachusetts** Gov. Maura Healey signed into law a budget which allocates \$50 million toward free community college by next fall, including the governor's Mass Reconnect proposal for all residents over 25 who have yet to earn a degree and programs for students pursuing a nursing degree. The budget also includes a provision expanding eligibility for in-state tuition and state financial aid for Dreamers.

Four **New Jersey** community colleges — Atlantic Cape Community College, Mercer County Community College, Middlesex College, and Sussex County Community College — received \$40,000 from The New Jersey Council for the Humanities and Journalism + Design at The New School to fund tuition-free, noncredit certificates in community journalism at their institutions.

About 125,000 **New York** high school students received letters notifying them that they have been automatically accepted to the State University of New York's community college programs. The move is part of an effort to eliminate barriers toward higher education, Gov. Kathy Hochul's office said. The City University of New York recently announced its own plans to partner with the city's public school system and send letters to 65,000 graduating seniors, welcoming them to CUNY and inviting them to apply.



## PACIFIC REGION

**Arizona's** state budget, passed in May, allocated \$15 million toward funding dual enrollment college credits for high schoolers and \$500,000 to help train high school teachers for the programs.

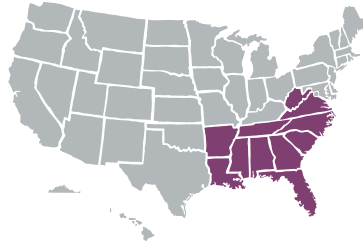
**California's** chancellor of community colleges, Dr. Sonya Christian, unveiled the system's Vision 2030 plan, which includes the implementation of in-state tuition rates for any student living up to 45 miles south of the U.S.-Mexican border and dual enrollment for every ninth-grade high school student.

Community college leaders across California are asking lawmakers to reconsider changes made in this year's state budget to how student housing projects are funded. As part of the 2023-24 budget agreement, the state is requiring community colleges to use local revenue bonds to pay for construction costs, which college leaders say jeopardizes their ability to build new affordable housing.

The **Oregon** Higher Education Coordinating Commission approved a change to community college funding which will reward colleges that enroll students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education and help students progress toward certificates and degrees.

Oregon's 17 community colleges generated more than \$9 billion in annual economic impact for the state in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, according to a new report from the Oregon Community College Association. The analysis found

that one out of every 22 jobs in the state is supported by the activities of the community colleges and their students.



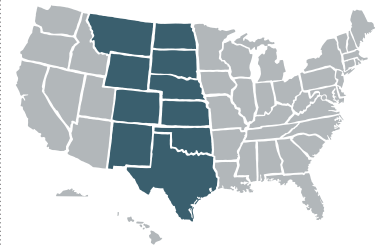
## SOUTHERN REGION

A record number of **Alabama** high school students are participating in dual enrollment classes with the Alabama Community College System. More than 27,000 Alabama high school students take dual enrollment, up 65% since 2015. The legislature approved a \$4.5 million increase in dual enrollment funding in the legislative session that ended in June, bringing the program to nearly \$30.7 million in total funding.

The **Kentucky** Community and Technical College System's Education First Initiative was called by Gov. Andy Beshear "a sea change in how we go about workforce development." Under the program, students join participating companies and work while also attending classes. Forty-five companies are participating in the Education First Initiative.

Four community colleges in eastern **North Carolina** are taking part in a new initiative to bridge educational opportunities for the growing Latino population. The "Train the East" partnership with Lenior, James Sprunt, Sampson, and Wayne Community colleges will provide full-time outreach to recruiters and success coaches and scholarships.

The **Tennessee** college-going rate rose 1.5 percent to 54.3 percent for the Class of 2022, according to a new report from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. It's the largest statewide increase since the launch of Tennessee Promise, a free community college program, in 2015.



## WESTERN REGION

**Colorado** Gov. Jared Polis and the Colorado Community College System launched Career Advance Colorado, which will prepare around 20,000 Coloradans for high skilled careers. It is building off the success of a similar program, Care Forward Colorado, which helped more than 3,000 Coloradans complete programs in health fields facing shortages.

**Texas** Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law a new funding model for community colleges that will tie the majority of their state allocations to performance-based measures. The new funding system, which comes with a \$683 million allocation in the state budget, takes effect Sept. 1.

The Kickstart **Wyoming's** Tomorrow Scholarship was created and funded by the Wyoming Legislature to help working adults obtain the skills and education necessary to reenter the workforce, move up in their current careers, or pursue new career paths. It offers up to \$1,800 per semester toward tuition at Wyoming's eight community colleges and the University of Wyoming.

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



# YOUR COLLEGE MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR \$1 MILLION FROM THE IRS

Many small colleges are eligible for Employee Retention Credits that will expire soon if you don't apply. Here's how to know if your college is eligible.

By Mark Eidelman

**I**N JULY, *BUSINESS INSIDER* PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE TO raise awareness that “small businesses still have time to claim the Employee Retention Credit before it expires.” Small colleges are small businesses — and many have unclaimed Employee Retention Credit (ERC) benefits due to expire soon if they don't act quickly.

Many leaders of organizations such as colleges, hospitals, nonprofits, professional firms, and other companies have not applied for the substantial ERC funding to which they are entitled. Primarily, this is because they haven't found advisors they trust, or because they don't have the information to know if they qualify. Unless your advisors have in-depth, specific ERC expertise, they may think you don't qualify.

Brenda Allen, president of Lincoln University — the first degree-granting historically black college in the nation — said she received many messages from various individuals about the ERC, and after speaking with a member of our team, she chose Sheridan Wealth Advisors to provide ERC filing services for Lincoln.

“The ERC is very useful for small colleges,” she said. “Being able to have access to cash that can help to make our schools whole, especially after all the sacrifices that we've had to make in order to stay healthy

through COVID. So I think it's really important that small colleges understand how important this credit can be to help colleges get back on their financial feet.”

I've been working with small colleges and universities to investigate what ERC benefits they are due, and the results have been more than modest. One community college in the Pacific Northwest recently secured over \$1 million in ERC funding — money it never would have seen had its leaders not secured help in filing. If your college hasn't filed for ERC benefits, you may be missing out. And if your college has filed already, it's quite possible that you didn't receive all the funds you were due.

College leaders should take a few minutes to learn about the ERC and, if your institution qualifies, to file a claim on behalf of your institution. Following is some information that can help you determine your eligibility.

## What is the ERC?

The ERC is a federal government program designed to help businesses recover from the impacts of COVID-19. ERC is not a loan, it's income. This money comes to you directly as a check(s) from the Internal

Revenue Service, which administers the program, and you can spend it any way you want.

### What are the eligibility criteria for receiving ERC benefits?

If you had fewer than 500 full-time employees in 2019, then your college could qualify for ERC benefits in either of two ways:

1. Revenue test: Did you experience a 20% decrease in revenue in the first, second and/or third quarter(s) of 2021 compared to the same period in 2019 and/or a 50% decrease in any quarter in 2020 revenue compared to 2019 revenue?
2. Government order test: Did a ruling or order from the federal, state, or local government have more than a nominal impact on how you operate your business?

If someone says your organization doesn't qualify, it would be worth your while to conduct your due diligence by asking a reputable source such as Sheridan Wealth Advisors. The criteria are technical, but we work with them daily. Probably 50% of clients that have come to us that had been told that they didn't qualify, actually do qualify when we apply the second eligibility test.

### How much effort is required from my staff?

Based on our experience, it should take a college's accounting department no more than one to two hours to upload the documents needed to qualify your institution.

### How long will this take?

The process of analyzing and calculating credits generally takes two to three weeks. The IRS is taking four to six months to process claims for credits up to \$500,000; larger amounts take longer.

### Does receiving HEERF funding or a PPP loan mean my college can't get ERC benefits?

No. Receiving HEERF and/or a PPP loan is not a disqualification.

### How much money could my college receive? And how can we use it?

The amount of the unrestricted check you'll receive from the IRS depends on how many eligible employees you have. You can use it any way you like. Most colleges' payouts are at least six figures, and some have received seven-figure benefits.

### What if we've already filed?

Few ERC companies know the law and how to maximize credits like Sheridan Wealth Advisors. We review organizations' filings regularly and will almost always increase the ERC credits that they qualify for. The increases are usually 10% to 100% more than the original credit.

### How can Sheridan Wealth Advisors help my college?

Sheridan Wealth Advisors, an ACCT member company, has developed deep technical expertise in this area. To date, our team has successfully filed for 3,200 organizations with ERC benefits totaling more than \$300 million.

We gained our ERC expertise by being the trusted legal and tax advisors who other professionals call for ERC help. We routinely solve complex cases, and we provide services other firms don't offer. For instance, though the IRS has not yet challenged one of our filings, we provide audit defense to our clients.

Any ERC filing must qualify with at least one of two IRS tests and be prepared to survive IRS scrutiny. We stay updated on every regulatory wrinkle. We are conservative about compliance and dedicated to giving the IRS precise, accurate information to secure the greatest amount of available ERC for your institution while simultaneously protecting it. It is possible to file for ERC using different methods, but a less-expert means of filing may result in unwitting mistakes and subsequent IRS scrutiny.

Sheridan has been particularly successful securing ERC for educational institutions, especially small community colleges. One reason that these institutions have chosen to work with us is that there are no up-front out-of-pocket costs; we don't charge a fee if an institution doesn't qualify for benefits. We charge a reasonable, below-market fee after you are paid by the IRS — and, as noted above, all of our clients are provided with audit defense as an additional security measure, because we understand that every dollar and security are vitally important to small community colleges.

If you think that ERC may be right for you, please reach out with any questions you may have as soon as possible, as the ERC opportunity will sunset soon. Within 15 minutes, a member of our team can tell you if your institution is eligible. If it is, we will do the heavy lifting to make sure your college benefits.



Mark Eidelman is a director of Sheridan Wealth Advisors. He can be reached at [markdeidelman@gmail.com](mailto:markdeidelman@gmail.com) or by phone at (c) 240.460.1242 or (o) 301.279.8780

The background is a solid olive green color. It is filled with various mathematical symbols and diagrams in a light yellow/gold color. These include: the area formula  $\frac{1}{2}bh$ , the quadratic formula  $x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$ , a triangle with sides labeled  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$ , the expression  $x, 1+x^2, 1$ , the fraction  $\frac{a+\beta+\gamma}{\beta^2}$ , a square root  $\sqrt{\frac{1}{12}}$ , a Venn diagram with two overlapping circles, the expression  $(y^2 + y^2)$ , a coordinate plane with a circle and axes labeled  $x$  and  $y$ , a sine wave labeled  $\sin x$ , a cosine wave labeled  $\cos x$ , a right-angled triangle with a dashed line, and several other algebraic expressions like  $b+a$ ,  $(a+\beta+\gamma)$ ,  $\sqrt{x^2}$ ,  $(\frac{1}{2\sqrt{3}})$ ,  $(y-x)$ ,  $\sqrt{\frac{1}{12} + \frac{1}{48}}$ , and  $(2xbxy)$ .

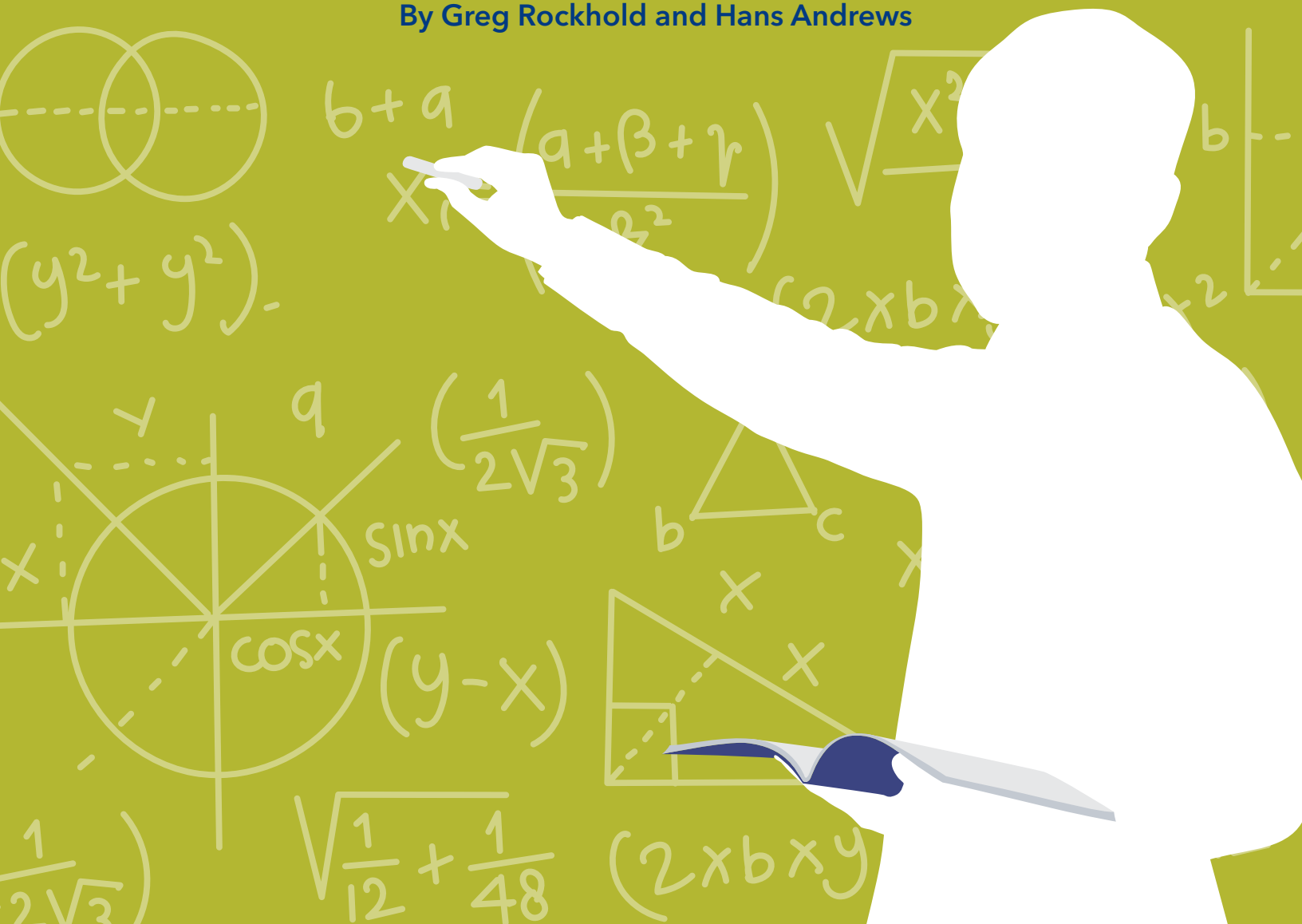
# The K-12 Teacher Shortage Tsunami -

*an Important Challenge for Community Colleges*

A shortage of teachers in all 50 states is a dire problem.  
Community colleges can help fill the void.

---

By Greg Rockhold and Hans Andrews





## Tsunamis and the field of teaching today

A shortage of teachers in K-12 schools has been a mainstay of American schools for the past century — but the shortfall continues to grow over time, and certain characteristics can be likened to those of a tsunami: Tsunami waves can move inland as quickly as jet planes, at over 500 miles per hour, and yet from a distance, they can be perceived by onlookers as slow moving and unthreatening.

Many who are reading this may not even be aware of the significance of the current teacher shortage — and yet 62 percent of parents have discouraged their children from becoming teachers, according to PDK International's 2022 Public Attitudes Toward Public Schools poll.

In the U.S. alone, nearly 300,000 teaching jobs went unfilled going into the 2022-23 school year, according to the National Education Association. The states with the most significant number of unfilled positions were:

- Alaska: Over 1,100 openings out of 7,400 positions
- Arizona: Some 9,600 openings
- California: Over 100,000 positions were not filled by fully qualified teachers
- Florida: Vacancies doubled in the past two years, with 5,300 openings as of January 2023.
- Minnesota: A reported 84 percent of its schools had openings
- New Mexico: A report stated 1,344 vacancies
- Nevada: The need was 1,400 teachers

The shortages appear in every state to greater or lesser degrees.

And the reality may be even more dire than the above figures suggest, as reported shortages may underestimate the true dearth of qualified teachers. Many teachers have volunteered or have been assigned additional classes to teach one or two hours daily, more than their full load, which may have the effect of artificially inflating the actual numbers.

## The existing teacher pipeline is shrinking

As CBS News reported this July, “five decades ago, the U.S. was training an army of college students to become teachers, with one in every five bachelor's degrees earned in the field of education. That guaranteed a steady pipeline of educators entering the profession, a vital resource for schools around the country, and for the economy as a whole.” But newly released data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) show that “as the population of college students has increased by 150% since 1970, the number of bachelor's degrees in education has plummeted by almost 50% — a steeper drop than that for English, literature, and foreign language majors... Meanwhile, schools in all 50 states report teacher shortages in at least one subject area last year, according to the Brookings Institution.”

The decade from 2010 through 2019 saw 340,000 fewer students preparing themselves to enter the teaching field, even as the U.S. population rose from 309.3 million to 328.3 million over the same

period. At least 50 percent declines in such students were recorded in the nine states of Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and California. Similar shortages have been recorded in most other states during this same period.

The university and four-year college pipelines for teachers relied on for earlier decades have dramatically declined, contributing to a sizeable share of these shortages. While there are still nearly 1,300 teacher-education programs that create qualified educators for our schools, over 60 programs have been dropped in recent years, and the demand for such education continues to dwindle. Enrollments in many are now down to questionable numbers for continuing.

## Diversity in teacher preparation has also been shrinking

NCES data show that Black student enrollment in teacher-education programs has dropped by over 15,000 since 2010. Latino enrollments have also shrunk. The 2018 registrations stood at 7 percent for Black students and 9 percent for Latino students. The NCES also reports that “in schools where the majority of students were not white, the majority of teachers were white.”

## A way out of the teacher shortage tsunami

The United States has a pipeline waiting to assist in overcoming this education tsunami. It is the nearly 1,200 community and technical colleges strategically located in all areas of the country.

As readers of this magazine know, community colleges are geographically close to nearly every community nationwide. As a result, they have been able to fill many educational gaps that present themselves. For example, a significant shortage of baccalaureate degree nurses (BSNs) over the past decade created a staffing crisis at hospitals throughout the country. Community colleges primarily award associate degrees and often are prohibited from operating bachelor's degree programs. However, when asked and when allowed by state legislation, several states started to see these shortages decrease with the advent of community and technical colleges being approved to offer this degree.

The Community College Baccalaureate Association (CCBA) serves “as a leading resource for institutions seeking to redefine their higher education practices and offerings...to promote affordable access to community college baccalaureate degrees as a means of closing the nation's racial, ethnic, and economic gaps.” As discussed above, there is a longstanding and growing gap between available teaching jobs and qualified teachers. Community colleges can bridge this gap.

## Community and technical colleges have begun to form a new 'pipeline'

Several states have supported their school districts by approving new teacher preparation pipelines. The first, and in our opinion the best, overall program that has been developed to date is in the state of Florida. Most of its community colleges are now involved with one to several

Community and technical colleges have shown their readiness and ability to quickly approve, promote, and enroll students in their service areas. More states will find the same readiness as they move to approve bachelor's in education programs in their state community college systems.

areas of teacher preparation. Several offer four to seven programs. Several of the smaller colleges offer one each. The number and type of teacher programs offered reflect the need within the service areas of each of the colleges.

Washington is another state that has approved having some of its community colleges offer bachelor's in education programs. The programs and the number of colleges approved to date for each of the programs are:

- Early Childhood Education (4)
- Elementary Education (1)
- Professional Technical Teacher Preparation (1)
- Teacher Education (7)

Virginia introduced legislation to allow its community college system support preparing bachelor's degree teachers. However, it was temporarily put aside as a funding source was not assigned to the proposal.

The Rural Education Association in Colorado also has discussions underway on how it can get the state's community colleges involved.

## Community and technical colleges are ready and need approval now

The teacher shortage crisis is widespread in every one of the 50 states. However, community and technical colleges have shown their readiness and ability to quickly approve, promote, and enroll students in their service areas. More states will find the same readiness as they move to approve bachelor's in education programs in their state community college systems.

While teacher pay gaps and an overall decline in the perceived value of education contribute to diminishing enrollments into education degree programs — and these issues need to be addressed as well — another reason is that some potentially excellent teachers may feel the return on investment for an expensive university degree program is too low to warrant pursuit of a teaching degree.

The students enrolling through community and technical colleges will find they will much better be able to afford to attend. In many cases, they will also need financial support to cover tuition, fees, travel, and expenses in running a home and supporting a family. Finding more affordable teacher preparation programs near their

homes can further improve affordability and accessibility for those who may be on the fence about whether to pursue teaching. Many adult students who would be available if the programs were available in their community college district would enroll.

Community colleges also can appeal to those who are most active within their communities to pursue teaching in the spirit of community service in a way that most four-year colleges and universities cannot. This, too, would have the effect of drawing more diverse individuals from within communities, from inner city, rural, and suburban community college service areas alike, improving representation and giving more students local role models.

The time has come for community and technical colleges to be empowered to prepare teachers for the K-12 school systems within their communities. This would have a transformative effect throughout the country.

The hundreds of thousands of young students in classes without fully qualified and trained teachers should not continue to have to wait.



*Dr. Greg Rockhold has served on the National Association of Secondary School Principals board, as president of the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators, and as executive director of the New Mexico Association of Secondary School Principals.*



*Dr. Hans Andrews is the Distinguished Fellow in Community College Leadership through Olney Central College in Illinois. He is a former president of the college. He started the first dual-credit program in the country between community colleges and secondary schools. He authored the book, The Dual-Credit Phenomenon! Challenging Secondary School Students Across 50 States.*

# BOOK SALE

Go to [www.ACCT.org](http://www.ACCT.org) and choose "Member Portal & Store Login" from the upper right menu.



SAVE  
15%

Enter Code ACCTPUBS15  
when you order online.

Discount applied before shipping. Discount code is good for one order.

**ACCT**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES





# Legal Issues Impacting Community Colleges

Supreme Court rules on affirmative action, plus recent decisions involving harassment and religious discrimination.

BY IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD, ACCT GENERAL COUNSEL

The immediate impact on employment-based affirmative action plans and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives is unclear and will unfold as new cases arise, testing the breadth of this decision. We will continue to monitor developments in this area as they occur.

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

**Supreme Court holds that the use of race as a factor in college admissions is unconstitutional — impact on workplace affirmative action plans not immediate.**

Rejecting the arguments of Harvard University, the University of North Carolina, and the Biden Administration that affirmative action programs were necessary to ensure campus diversity, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the universities' use of race in their specific admission programs violates the Equal Protection clause of the Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision is 237 pages long, with majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions. The majority decision is 47 pages (*SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC*, 6/29/23).



"I made you a mixtape."

Chief Justice Roberts, who wrote the majority opinion, concluded that these affirmative action programs “...lacked sufficiently focused and measurable objectives warranting the use of race... involve racial stereotyping, and lack meaningful end points.” He concluded, “We have never permitted admission programs to work that way, and we do not do so today.”

The immediate impact on employment-based affirmative action plans and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives is unclear and will unfold as new cases arise, testing the breadth of this decision. We will continue to monitor developments in this area as they occur.

**Supreme Court eases workers’ ability to prove religious discrimination when an employer denies a request for an employment-based religious accommodation.** In a case involving the U.S. Postal Service’s denial of a Christian employee’s request to be exempt from Sunday work, the U.S. Supreme Court modified the test applicable to an employer’s denial of a religious accommodation, increasing the employer’s burden to prove that such an accommodation would be costly.

In 1977, the Supreme Court had ruled that under Title VII an employer could deny an employee’s request for a religious accommodation if the employer could demonstrate that the accommodation would create a “undue burden” (*TWA v. Hardison*). The current Supreme Court interpreted the longstanding *Hardison* rule to mean that in order for an employer to deny an employee’s request for a religious accommodation, it must show the burden of granting the accommodation “would result in substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of its particular business.” (*Groff v. DeJoy*, U.S. No. 22-174, 6/29/23).

The plaintiff had asked the Supreme Court to modify the standard for denial of a religious accommodation to be consistent with the standard for denial of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation. The Supreme Court did not grant that request, but has clearly raised the employer’s burden in being able to reject a religious-based accommodation from how the prior standard applied since 1977.

**Federal court of appeals rules that offensive music in the workplace is actionable sexual harassment, rejecting defense that it is offensive to both sexes.** The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (covering California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Arizona) reversed a federal trial court dismissal of a sexual harassment hostile environment complaint brought by warehouse workers who complained about offensive, sexually graphic, and misogynistic music played by coworkers and supervisors. The trial

court dismissed the case on “equal opportunity harassment” grounds, concluding that the music was offensive to both sexes. The court of appeals disagreed, holding that sex-based discrimination violates Title VII even if it is directed at more than one sex and can create a hostile work environment which is actionable (*Sharp v. S&S Activewear LLC*, 9th Cir. Blom. DLR, 6/9/23). The ruling effectively put an end to the defense which has been come to be known as the “equal opportunity harasser” defense.

**College prevails against tenured professor in hostile environment sexual harassment case after appeals court rejects defenses that Education Department and university enforcement of Title IX is anti-male.** The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals (covering Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina) affirmed the lower court decision dismissing a case brought by a tenured psychology professor at George Mason University who contested as “anti-male” the sanctions the university applied following its decision that the professor created a sexually hostile environment for graduate students.

Four students complained that the professor shared explicit talk regarding his sexual exploits, asked questions about their sex lives, and forced them to participate in the conversations in order to curry favor and receive favorable treatment for research and education opportunities. The university continued to employ the professor as a tenured psychology professor, but banned him from teaching graduate level courses and mentoring graduate students for approximately two years. It also disaffiliated him with its clinical psychology program for five to six years.

The appeals court rejected the professor’s due process allegations, concluding that the sanctions did not amount to a “significant demotion” because he is still employed as a tenured professor. The court also pointed out that the sanctions are not permanent (*Kashdan v. George Mason University*, 4th Cir. No. 20-01509, 6/13/23). The court rejected the male bias accusations levelled against the university, its Title IX coordinator, its compliance coordinator, and the Education Department, concluding that the general allegations the professor raised did not amount to evidence of anti-male bias.



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

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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



COLUMBIA GORGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, OREGON

## DR. KENNETH LAWSON

President

"We engaged in a very thorough process to select the college's next president. Out of several rounds of evaluation engaging key stakeholders in the college and broader community, Dr. Lawson rose to the top as the leader best poised to help guide CGCC into the future."

- NATHANAEL STICE

MEMBER, BOARD OF EDUCATION, AND PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR, COLUMBIA GORGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER, COLORADO

## PETER LINDSTROM

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

"Peter Lindstrom has an impressive track record of leading collaborative initiatives that have transformed CCD for our students and helped the college meet the ever-changing demands of our labor market. He is truly committed to the success of our college. We are thrilled to see him step into this role as we work to end the nonconsumption of education in the Denver metro area."

- DR. MARIELENA P. DESANCTIS

PRESIDENT, COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER



CONNECTICUT STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CONNECTICUT

## DR. LEVY BROWN

Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

"Dr. Brown is a prominent educator, administrator, and innovative community college academic leader with decades of experience building programs, teams, and student-centered environments across multiple disciplines, campuses, and municipalities."

- DR. JOHN MADUKO

PRESIDENT, CONNECTICUT STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.



[www.ACCTSearches.org](http://www.ACCTSearches.org)

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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

EVERETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WASHINGTON

**DR. CHEMENE CRAWFORD**

President



"On behalf of the board of trustees at Everett Community College, we are pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Charmene Crawford as our new president. Dr. Crawford brings extensive experience and knowledge of the community college system. She successfully served in higher educational positions across the American Southwest, with her most recent position as president at North Seattle College. Dr. Crawford's passion, enthusiasm, and advocacy for education at all levels will support the diverse student population and community we serve. Together, we recognize that Dr. Crawford understands the needs, mission, and vision of EvCC, and she is the best choice to lead our college forward."

— **DR. BETTY COBBS**

EVERETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## MINNESOTA STATE



FOND DU LAC TRIBAL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MINNESOTA

**ANITA HANSON**

President

"Anita navigated the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College community through an immensely difficult time with empathy and grace. Anita's engagement with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and her ability to continue the work being produced as part of the Achieving the Dream initiative have been very impactful for the college."

— **DEVINDER MALHOTRA**

FORMER CHANCELLOR, MINNESOTA STATE



RIVERLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MINNESOTA

**DR. KATHLEEN LINAKE**

President

"Dr. Linaker is a strong leader who brings a wealth of experience and expertise to build on the solid foundation of Riverland and position it well for the future. She is student-centered and cognizant of the immense challenges many of our students must overcome to accomplish success and prepare for productive careers."

— **DEVINDER MALHOTRA**

FORMER CHANCELLOR, MINNESOTA STATE



# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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



HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, TEXAS

**DR. MARGARET FORD FISHER**

Interim President

"The Board of Trustees and I believe Dr. Ford Fisher's accomplishments, qualifications, and willingness to serve will be critical to advancing the Board's expectations."

- DR. CYNTHIA LENTON-GARY

CHAIR, HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

## MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, ARIZONA



GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**DR. AMY DIAZ**

President

"Dr. Diaz's impressive dedication and ethical stewardship are inspiring. For over two years, she has led GateWay Community College with integrity, focus, and compassion, driving success and reinforcing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I am excited to continue working alongside Dr. Diaz as we expand GWCC's crucial workforce programs in both credit and clock hour offerings."

- DR. STEVEN GONZALES

CHANCELLOR, MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**DR. TIFFANY HERNANDEZ**

President

"Dr. Hernandez's collaborative leadership style will positively impact students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding GCC community as we work together to expand our in-demand workforce programs and training opportunities."

- DR. STEVEN GONZALES

CHANCELLOR, MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



[www.ACCTSearches.org](http://www.ACCTSearches.org)

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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

MIDLAND COLLEGE, TEXAS

**DR. DAMON KENNEDY**

President



“Dr. Kennedy is well regarded in the community – he’s smart, he’s got vision. There’s not just one thing that tipped the scale, he’s the complete package. And he’s the future of this college.”

– **STEVEN KISER**

*CHAIR, MIDLAND COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES*

## LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA



**DR. NICOLE ALBO-LOPEZ**

Vice Chancellor, Educational Programs and Institutional Effectiveness (EPIE)

“Dr. Albo-Lopez’s extensive higher education career is one marked by strategic thinking and centered on solutions that improve educational opportunities and access for our students. As our chief academic officer, LACCD will tremendously benefit from her thoughtful engagement with multiple internal and external stakeholders, as she leads our educational division to the next level.”

– **FRANCISCO C. RODRIGUEZ**

*CHANCELLOR, LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT*



**DR. JIM LANCASTER,**

Vice Chancellor, Workforce and Economic Development

“Dr. Lancaster has a proven track record as well as passionate energy to forge key industry relationships and partnerships so our students have the educational opportunities to succeed. His stellar leadership will solidify LACCD’s Workforce Development program as we continue to better understand and serve the job market and build stronger connections with local employers. LACCD will be better positioned to meet regional workforce needs with his intentional engagement with multiple internal and external stakeholders.”

– **FRANCISCO C. RODRIGUEZ**

*CHANCELLOR, LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT*

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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



RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

## DR. CLAIRE OLIVEROS

President

“Dr. Oliveros is a highly qualified leader in a number of important education areas. When selecting the new president of Riverside City College, which has such a venerated and distinguished history, it was important to focus on the need of the communities the college serves. Dr. Oliveros’ experience in such a vast number of student-centered service areas and her professional experience, commitment to student equity, and community engagement highlighted her passion for students to succeed. Her leadership qualities and characteristics further stood out when I envisioned a leader for Riverside City College.”

- DR. WOLDE-AB ISAAC

CHANCELLOR, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

SANDHILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NORTH CAROLINA

## DR. ALEXANDER STEWART

President



“I am happy to announce that Sandhills Community College has selected a new president after a months-long international search. ACCT Search Consultant Kennon Briggs guided the Sandhills Presidential Search Committee and the Board of Trustees through a review of 84 candidates, and the SCC Board chose Dr. Alexander “Sandy” Stewart as the person who will lead the college as its third president in almost 60 years.”

- GEORGE LITTLE

CHAIRMAN, SANDHILLS COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



[www.ACCTSearches.org](http://www.ACCTSearches.org)

# RETREATS & WORKSHOPS

Thank you to the following colleges that have recently used ACCT Board Services:

Arizona Community College  
Coordinating Council

Atlantic Cape Community College,  
New Jersey

Brazosport College, Texas

College of Lake County, Illinois

College of Southern Maryland

SUNY Dutchess Community  
College, New York

Gillette College, Wyoming

Gogebic Community College,  
Michigan

Houston Community College, Texas

Joliet Junior College, Illinois

Klamath Community College,  
Oregon

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe  
University, Wisconsin

Midlands Technical College,  
South Carolina

Montgomery County Community  
College, Pennsylvania

Montgomery College, Maryland

Mt. San Jacinto College, California

North Idaho College

Ohlone College, California

Quinsigamond Community College,  
Massachusetts

Skagit Valley College, Washington

Wor-Wic Community College,  
Maryland



Find out more about board retreats and workshops  
at [www.acct.org/governance-services](http://www.acct.org/governance-services)



# ACCT GOVERNANCE SERVICES

ACCT Governance Services support boards of trustees and campus leaders in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities, advancing institutional mission, and facilitating student success. [ACCT experts](#) deliver customized training, consulting, evaluations, and other support on key governance issues and processes, including:

- Policy development
- Board and executive roles and responsibilities
- President/CEO onboarding and performance measurement
- Effective board/CEO relationships
- Conflict management

## AVAILABLE SERVICES

**Board Self-Assessment** — ACCT's role is to give encouragement, constructive challenges, and impartial advice to boards as they strive to best serve their institutions, grow professionally, and communicate effectively.

**Board Retreats & Workshops** — Customized retreats and workshops help boards effectively carry out their responsibilities in an increasingly complex and litigious world.

**Executive Evaluations** — ACCT provides customized executive evaluations for community college presidents/CEOs and institutional leaders who directly support the CEO.

**Governance Consulting** — ACCT experts provide targeted consulting and advisory services to help boards of trustees develop effective policies and procedures, and troubleshoot difficult challenges.

**Search Services** — Selecting a president or chancellor is one of the most important decisions made by a governing board. Our commitment goes well beyond providing CEO search assistance. Our mission, values, and goals focus entirely on providing exceptional service to our membership.



To inquire, contact [boardservices@acct.org](mailto:boardservices@acct.org) or call (202) 775-4667.



# interface

## A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Dear PBSN Members,

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

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

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

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

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



## Navigating New Spaces

BY LARISA PFEIFFER  
PBSN PRESIDENT

**H**IGHER EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ARE CURRENTLY LIVING and working in three spaces that compete for our attention, focus, and capabilities: the post-COVID impacts on our tolerance and energy, the reality of a 2023 that entered like a lamb but is quickly shaping into a lion, and FY24 budgets.

Many presidents and trustees are finding their ambitions are tempered with the reality of unmet basic needs and mental health concerns, for both students and employees, that has a dotted line to the shrinking talent market which has been especially difficult for community and enrollment changes. Each of us must decide: Am I going to take this knowledge and face these challenges as an optimist, as a pessimist, or as a realist? Those of us who found opportunities through the open doors of a community college and then returned as professionals to serve these incredible institutions are the optimists!

Our post-COVID selves reflect longingly to the days when we were forced to rest, read, listen to music, and had time to think because the world was closed. At the same time, our 2023 reality includes the return of commuting, people, activities, dynamic meetings, and face-to-face collaborations that benefit students and our careers, and we hear our inner lion roar. Then there are our budgets —



Learn more at [www.acct.org/membership/PBSN](http://www.acct.org/membership/PBSN).



our funding models vary across the nation, but most of us require some combination of enrollment and elected officials to enable us to meet our missions. Without a doubt, we need funding. The conversation around federal money to support students in workforce development programs indicates that our new federal leadership understands equity in new and meaningful ways.

For every challenge and pressure before us, community colleges will find solutions and innovative ways to help. We are reentering a cycle through which community colleges are being recognized as assets to meet workforce development needs because of the incredible global advances in manufacturing and technology — the results of those arenas appear in our everyday lives, creating the ability to communicate, connect, build, and enter spaces never seen before. Community colleges will also strive to honor the learner who chooses to study philosophy, music, art, literature, and history. We understand that each community has unique needs, and our goal is to create the experiences that advance our people and our socio-economic realities. Your community college is what it is because of who your community is. There is a symbiotic relationship between communities and their community colleges that is organic and beautiful.

We are successful because of the experts we surround ourselves

with, and for that I thank ACCT. The commitment that ACCT brings to the community college space to advocate, inform, celebrate, and support all of us is a gift. Their focus is primarily trustees and presidents, but they do understand that there are professional staff members that sit alongside these leaders who support, contribute, and encourage their leadership every single day.

I have been honored to collaborate this year with the amazing professionals of the Professional Board Staff Network. Our team spent a year connecting and planning agenda items for our annual conference, to be held as part of the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress. I have been humbled by the strength, humility, kindness, and positivity of the PBSN elected board and regional leaders in this group.

Until we meet again,  
– Larisa Pfeiffer, Ed.D.

Chief of Staff, College of Southern Maryland

 Learn more at [www.acct.org/membership/PBSN](http://www.acct.org/membership/PBSN).



2023 Professional Board Staff Network

# 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-membership-0](http://www.acct.org/membership/lifetime-membership-0) or contact ACCT's Member Services at 202.775.4667 or [acctinfo@acct.org](mailto:acctinfo@acct.org).





## Election of Board and Diversity Committee Members

2024 Candidates for the ACCT Board of Directors as of July 1, 2023

### REGIONAL DIRECTOR

(1) Three-Year Term in Each Region

(1) One-Year Partial Term in the Southern Region

*Following is the slate of nominees as of July 1, 2023.*

#### CENTRAL REGION

**Carla Hedtke\***

*Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Wisc.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

**Blake Eisenhart**

*Bucks County Community College, Pa.*

**Reza Jafari**

*Chesapeake College, Md.*

**Allen Williams**

*Monroe Community College, N.Y.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

**Deborah Ikeda\***

*State Center Community College District, Calif.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

No Nominees†

(1) Three-Year Term

(1) One-Year Partial Term

†Tim Hardy's and Ed Dalrymple's service on their local boards ended before their terms on the ACCT Board of Directors were completed.

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

(1) Two-Year Term in Each Region

*Following is the slate of nominees:*

#### CENTRAL REGION

**Torrie Mark Newsome\***

*College of Lake County, Ill.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

**Sandra Moore**

*Anne Arundel Community College, Md.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

**Jose Alcalá**

*Riverside Community College District, Calif.*

#### WESTERN REGION

**Carol Scott\***

*Del Mar College, Texas*

### DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

(3) Three-Year Terms

*Following is the slate of nominees as of July 1, 2023.*

**Anay Abraham\***

*Miami Dade College, Fla.*

**Barbara Calhoun**

*Compton Community College District, Calif.*

**Amanda Howland\***

*College of Lake County, Ill.*

**Samantha Vaive**

*Lansing Community College, Mich.*

**Oscar Valladares\***

*Rio Hondo College, Calif.*

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

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

#### SOUTHERN REGION

**Tina Royal**

*Davidson-Davie Community College, N.C.*

#### WESTERN REGION

**Belen Robles\***

*El Paso Community College, Texas*

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

## Elections of Regional Nominating Committee Members

Regional nominating committee elections will take place during the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress Regional Caucuses and Meetings on Tuesday, October 10, from 2-3:30 p.m. Based on the ACCT Regional Nominating Committee structure, each committee consists of five members elected for two-year staggered term. No more than one member shall be from the same state. The following seats need to be filled for the 2024 - 2025 term:

#### CENTRAL REGION

Three (3) seats are available to members from the following states/territories: *Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio.*

Betty Bruski Mallek (Wisconsin) and Doris Graham (Missouri) will continue to serve in 2024.

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Three (3) seats are available to members from the following states/territories: *District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania.*

Joseph Barreto (New Jersey) and John Williamson (Md.) will continue to serve in 2024.

#### PACIFIC REGION

Two (2) seats will be available to members from the following states/territories: *Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Guam, and Republic of Palau.*

Lois Bernstein (Washington), Charles Cepeda (Northern Mariana Islands), and Marie Sullivan (Arizona) will continue to serve in 2024.

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Three (3) seats will be available to members from the following states/territories: *Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Bermuda, and British Virgin Islands.*

Linda Lockman-Brooks (North Carolina) and Nicole Washington (Florida) will continue to serve in 2024.

#### WESTERN REGION

One (1) seat will be available to members from the following states: *Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming.*

Annette Chavez y De La Cruz (New Mexico), Mark Hamill (Kansas), Clint Kingsbery (Texas), and Fred Uhe (Nebraska) will continue to serve in 2024.

# Engage Your Board. Advance Your College.

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

## Services Include

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

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

## Contact:

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

202-775-6490 | [www.acct.org/governance-services](http://www.acct.org/governance-services)



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
<b>PAID</b>
PERMIT NO.
8841

[www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org) 110117th Street NW  
 Suite 300  
 Washington, D.C. 20036  
 202.775.4667  
 866.895.2228

# Community College

DATE  
**FEBRUARY**  
**4-7** 2024

LOCATION  
**Marriott Marquis**  
 WASHINGTON, DC

**EARLY BIRD  
 REGISTRATION  
 DEADLINE**  
**12.13.23**  
 REGISTRATION OPENS  
 IN NOVEMBER

**2024**

# NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

SPONSORED BY

IN COLLABORATION WITH

REGISTER AT [NLS.ACCT.ORG](http://NLS.ACCT.ORG)  
 QUESTIONS? 866.895.2228