

FROM THE CHAIR



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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