

CEO Wellbeing

New Funding Models

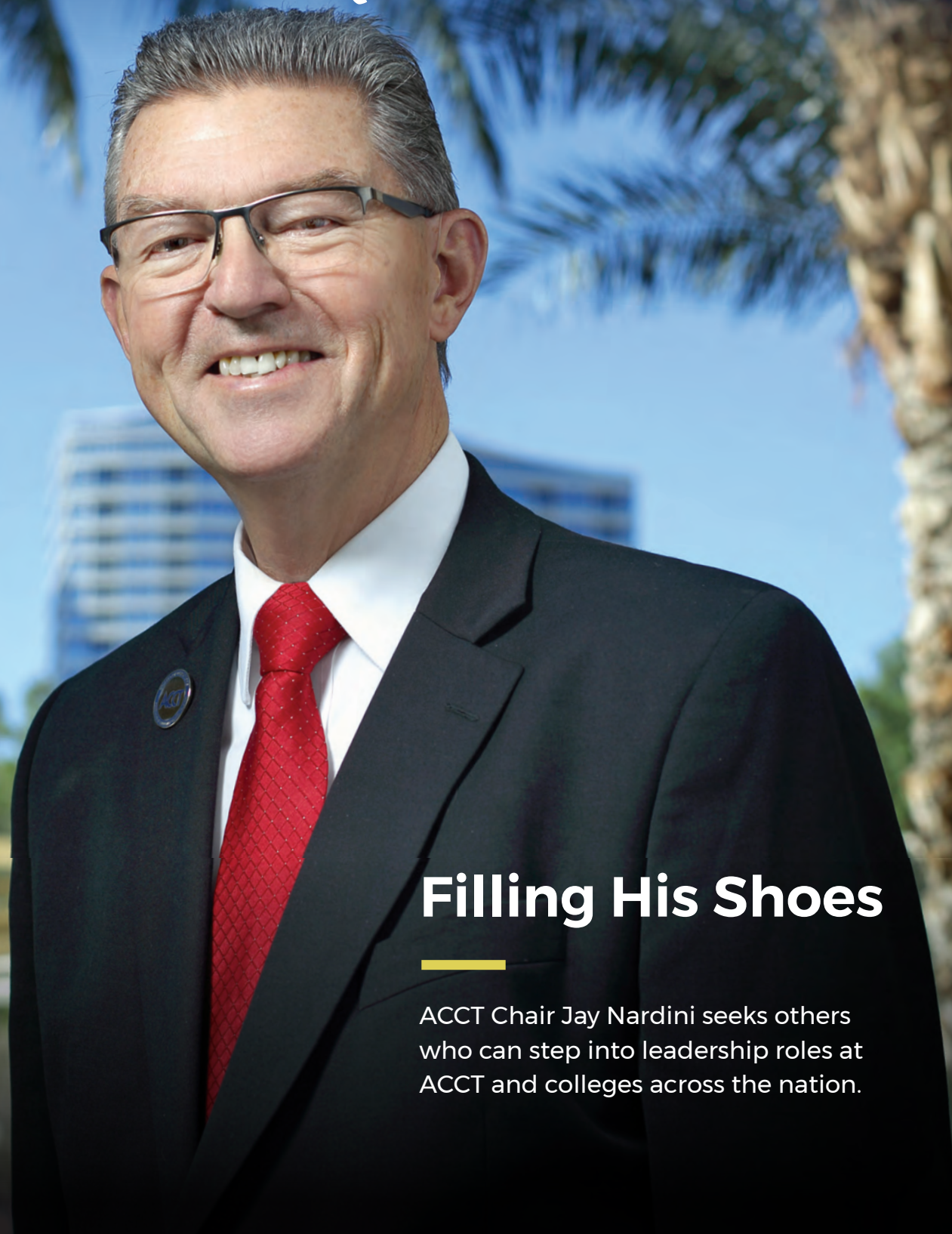
Celebrating #CCMonth

Trustee

WINTER 2024

THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS

QUARTERLY



Filling His Shoes

ACCT Chair Jay Nardini seeks others who can step into leadership roles at ACCT and colleges across the nation.

2024

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

REGIONAL AWARDS

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

ASSOCIATION AWARDS

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

WWW.ACCT.ORG

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

The Awards committees will select and notify the Awards recipients prior to the ACCT Leadership Congress. ACCT's Awards recipients will be honored at the 2024 ACCT Leadership Congress this October in Seattle, Washington.

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

Call 202.775.4667 with any questions.

All nominations must be received by **June 3, 2024**.

NOMINATIONS DUE
JUNE 3 2024



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Responding to the Skilled Worker Shortage

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENTS are recovering from declines during the pandemic, but still lag far behind what is needed to meet the demands of the workforce, CNN Business's Bryan Mena wrote in January. He cited data from the National Student Clearinghouse that show "community colleges grew 4.4% this fall, accounting for nearly 60% of the increase in undergraduates this semester."

Nicole Smith, chief economist at the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, told Mena "if the number of people who are enrolled in community colleges declines again, that's worrisome because we might have less and less people who are available for sub-baccalaureate, post-high school types of jobs in healthcare, food, personal services, truck driving, and production" — jobs that "account for a third of all employment in the United States."

The glass-half-full view is that our enrollment numbers are recovering and that there's strong demand for the types of education and training that community and technical colleges uniquely offer.

The rest of the story is that enrollments are still down significantly overall from before the pandemic, and far too many would-be students are not coming to our institutions for the education they need. Whether you are a trustee, a college CEO, or in another leadership position, it is our responsibility to figure out how to bridge this gap.

This is why ACCT has prioritized workforce development in our national advocacy work and as part of our comprehensive trustee education programs. As the 2024 Community College National Legislative Summit (NLS) brings a near-record number of leaders and advocates to Washington in February, our top legislative priorities are to bolster the role of community colleges in workforce development and to fund key education and workforce programs.

The NLS is the absolute best time to advocate for federal support of our institutions, but we're not stopping there. Workforce development will also be a primary focus of the 2024 ACCT Leadership Congress, to be convened this October in Seattle, Washington. This event will be an opportunity to share your most successful workforce development programs and to learn from others' successes. Keep an eye out for the call for presentations this winter.

I look forward to seeing you in Washington, D.C., and in Seattle.

Jay Nardini

Hawkeye Community College, IA

Trustee

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

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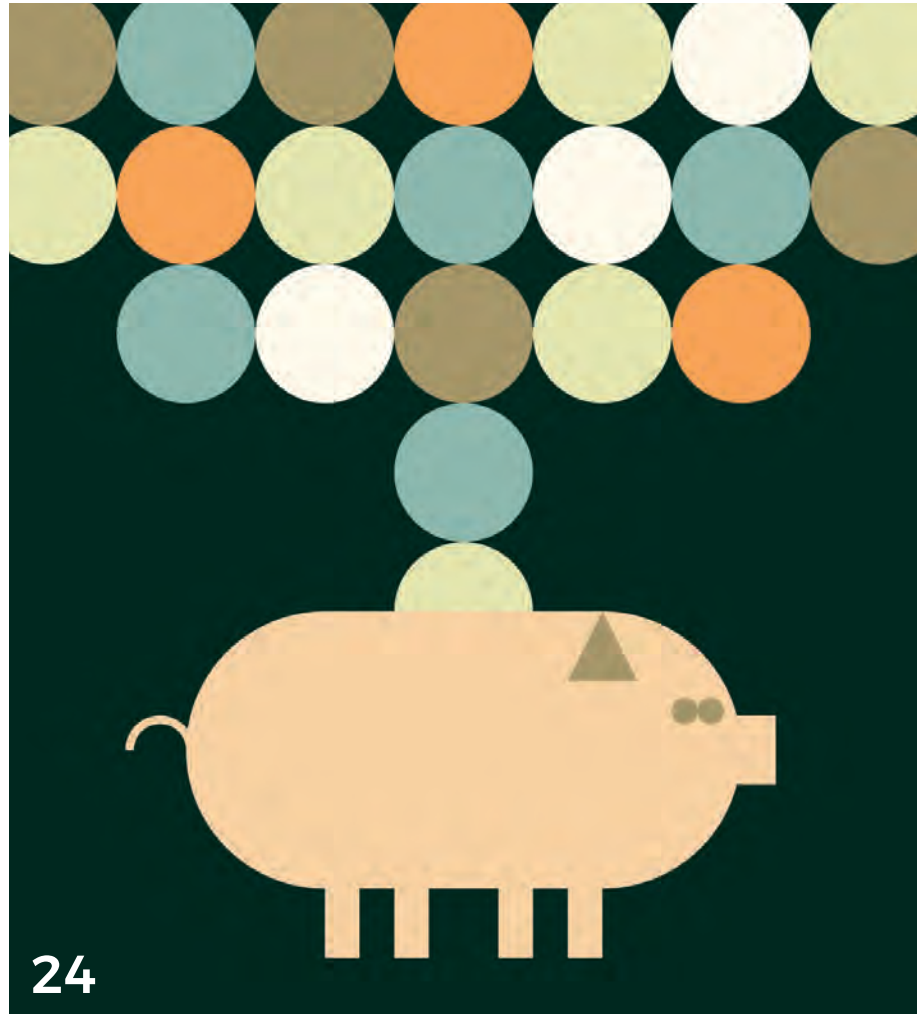


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contents

12 Book Review: America's Hidden Economic Engines: How Community Colleges Can Drive Shared Prosperity

REVIEWED BY KENNETH ADAMS

14 Filling His Shoes

BY MARK TONER

ACCT Chair Jay Nardini seeks others who can step into leadership roles at ACCT and colleges across the nation.

18 'Unapologetic Leadership'

BY MARK TONER

The Realizing Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges Symposium provided a call to action — and a roadmap.

20 Building a Legacy

BY MARK TONER

The 2023 Leadership Congress focused on how community college leaders can change lives for the better.

24 Does Community College Funding Fit Today's Students?

BY TAMAR JACOBY

Traditional one-size-fits-all models often shortchange nontraditional learners. New models can meet changing needs.

28 Protecting the Wellbeing of Your CEO

BY GEORGE R. BOGGS, PH.D., AND MARIA SHEEHAN, ED.D.

Hiring a president is the most significant investment a board can make for its college. Trustees need to ensure they are supported.

32 April is Community College Month

#CCMONTH is your opportunity to demonstrate the vital importance of your college, and to make an undeniable case for why your college deserves greater public support.

DEPARTMENTS

8 CONNECT

ACCT Membership Survey Results and "The Great Content Build of 2024"

By Robin Matross Helms

10 ADVOCACY

New Bills Mean New Community College Priorities in 2024

By Carrie Warick-Smith

36 LEGAL

Courts rule faculty may sue college board on First Amendment basis, plus recent decisions on age and sex, hiring undocumented workers, and more.

Ira Michael Shepard

IN EVERY ISSUE

1 FROM THE CHAIR

4 FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

5 NEWS

30 AROUND THE REGIONS

38 EXECUTIVE SEARCH

41 INTERFACE

44 ADVISOR



In keeping with my commitment to prioritize understanding and meeting our members' needs, we conducted a survey this fall to check our assumptions against the realities of what you need and want from ACCT.

Ready to Work

DEAR ACCT MEMBERS,

EVERY NEW YEAR STARTS OFF WITH hopeful anticipation and lofty goals. Our hopes and goals as community college leaders are especially elevated in election years. So much is at stake, and we know our members are feeling it because this year's Community College National Legislative Summit has reached a record-high number of attendees ready to get to work making the case for our institutions. As ACCT's former longtime head of advocacy, I am thrilled by the level of dedication to our institutions and communities.

In the interest of getting an early start to our advocacy this year, I'll ask you to turn first to Vice President for Public Policy Carrie Warick-Smith's column outlining our top legislative asks, which prioritize two bipartisan bills to advance workforce education (p. 10). You can also find our legislative priorities and other resources to help organize your advocacy efforts on the ACCT website at www.acct.org/events/nls/resources.

In keeping with my commitment to prioritize understanding and meeting our members' needs, we conducted a survey this fall to check our assumptions against the realities of what you need and want from ACCT. I'm delighted to report that your feedback was overwhelmingly positive! This is satisfying and encouraging to all of us who dedicate our lives to ACCT's mission. At the same time, we garnered new insights into what matters most to you, and the critical feedback that we did receive is especially useful in recalibrating what we do to provide the greatest value for your membership. Vice President for Membership and Educational Services Robin Matross Helms discusses the survey findings in her Connect column on p. 8, along with what we'll be doing in the coming year to give you more of what you need.

One of the survey's revelations is how valuable *Trustee Quarterly* is to members. This magazine is the primary ACCT touchpoint for many of you, and you find its contents valuable to your roles as college leaders. I think this issue fulfills that expectation, and I would like to highlight Tamar Jacoby's thoughtful and challenging discussion of community college funding (p. 22), as well as an essay by George Boggs and Maria Sheehan on the importance of boards taking active measures to protect the wellbeing of their CEOs (p. 26). As the authors point out, "the most significant investment that a board makes is to hire a CEO," and protecting and preserving your CEO's health is just as important as maintaining your institution's financial stability.

To that point, I'd like to thank ACCT Chair Jay Nardini, who you can get to know in this issue (p. 14), and the rest of the ACCT Board of Directors, for supporting my growth into the role of president and CEO over the past two years. In this new era of the association, our departments are expanding and morphing to meet the needs of our boards and the sector, and it takes thoughtful guidance, investments of trust, and steadfast support to do this work effectively. The care I receive from my board has illuminated how I can better care for our staff and consultants, following the model of strong and faithful leadership. Good boards support their CEOs, and I am privileged to partner in my work with the best — both on ACCT's board and among the community college boards we serve.

JEE HANG LEE

ACCT President and CEO

NEWS & NOTES



New Statewide ACCT Governance Leadership Institutes

GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES (GLIs) are the primary way for community college trustees and CEOs to learn how to govern colleges effectively, from the basics to advanced topics. Over the past decade, thousands of trustees and hundreds of CEOs have benefited from the educational and team-building provided by ACCT GLIs.

Since the fall of 2022, ACCT has designed and delivered state-based GLIs in Nebraska, New Jersey, Illinois, Wyoming, and Michigan. A Pacific Islands GLI is scheduled for the end of February, and planning is underway for a number of additional programs.

As with all GLIs, these institutes offered in-depth overviews of the roles and responsibilities of members of a public governing board and the college administration, the board-CEO relationship, parliamentary procedures, and other governance fundamentals. The statewide GLIs also offer the advantage of gathering college leaders to learn about and explore state laws or

statutes and other specific considerations that affect how they govern their colleges.

“Gathering college leaders from throughout the country to learn about and discuss the roles, responsibilities, and limitations of board governance offers many unique learning opportunities,” says ACCT Vice President for Membership and Educational Services Robin Matross Helms. “State-based governance institutes also offer their own unique opportunities. Both models can be an ideal way to advance any college board’s practical knowledge and all-important peer-to-peer networking. We’re excited to continue to evolve ACCT’s GLIs to best meet the needs of all of our members.”



To inquire about state-based Governance Leadership Institutes, contact rhelms@acct.org.

New LGBTQ+ Caucus Formed

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAUCUS’S CO-FOUNDER, SAMANTHA VAIVE, A TRUSTEE from Lansing Community College in Michigan:

When Manny Santiago from Tacoma Community College approached me about forming an LGBTQ+ caucus at ACCT, I was elated. It reminded me of how I felt about establishing the Under 45 Caucus in 2019. Fortunately, we now have a point of connection at ACCT Connect thanks to the work of ACCT Director of Member Engagement Kielo Savilaakso.

Since the group’s inception, the outpouring of support has been truly humbling. We are excited to be creating a space for a community that, until now, hasn’t had a dedicated presence within the organization. The group is open to everyone at ACCT who wishes to support the LGBTQ+ community, both within ACCT and on college campuses.

Our initial goal is to have pronouns included on the name badges at events. This small step contributes to a more inclusive environment for all. We will be meeting in person at NLS and Congress. Until then, find us under ‘groups’ in the ACCT Connect App.

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.*

LET THE LAW WORK FOR YOU

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

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

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

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

For more information about ACCT's advocacy services, visit www.acct.org/advocacy.

ACCT Association Awards Winners

ACCT announced the recipients of its annual Association Awards for community college trustees, equity programs, chief executive officers, faculty members, and professional board staff members during the ACCT Awards Gala at the ACCT Leadership Congress convened in October in Las Vegas, Nevada. Awardees were announced live during the gala on ACCT's X, formerly known as Twitter (@CCTrustees). For photos and videos of the Association and Regional Awards, visit www.acct.org/awards.



2023 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award
Bakari G. Lee, Esq.

Hudson County Community College, N.J.



2023 Marie Y. Martin Chief Executive Award
Jo Alice Blondin

Clark State College, Ohio



2023 Charles Kennedy Equity Award
Kern Community College District, Calif.
(Award presented to college board and CEO.)



2023 William H. Meardy Faculty Member Award
Christine Pegoraro-Schull

Northern Virginia Community College, Va.



2023 ACCT Professional Board Staff Member Award
Pamela Payne

El Paso Community College District, Texas



For more information about the ACCT Awards program, contact awards@acct.org.

2024 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award Winner



Bakari G. Lee, Esq.

Hudson County Community College, N.J.

What does the award mean to you?

For me, the M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award serves as a capstone of 17 years of community college service, and a lifetime of community service lessons instilled in me by my parents who each have built a life of service to their community. My service to Hudson County Community College, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, and ACCT has been extremely rewarding emotionally and professionally. I have learned so much from each organization, gained so many wonderful friends who over the years became like family, and enjoyed so

many experiences that would not have occurred but for this journey, all through service to the community college concept. I am truly grateful to ACCT and my colleagues for this award.

What advice would you offer to other community college trustees?

At all times, remain focused on the mission of providing an institution to students that will enable them to uplift and enhance their lives and the lives of their families. If we as trustees keep students front of mind and remain true to our service to them, we will never go wrong.

YOU could be the next M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award winner! Visit **[ACCT.org/awards](https://www.acct.org/awards)** to learn more about the 2024 awards program or to nominate outstanding board members.



Learn more about the 2023 awards program
at [ACCT.org/awards](https://www.acct.org/awards).



Survey Says...

ACCT Membership Survey Results and “The Great Content Build of 2024”

BY ROBIN MATROSS HELMS

HAPPY NEW YEAR! LIKE MUCH OF THE WORLD, AT ACCT we slowed our pace over the holidays. Most of us took time away to rest and rejuvenate, visit with friends and family, and reflect on all we accomplished together in 2023. As I write this column in the very early days of January, back in my office and tucked under a blanket in my comfy chair with my laptop in front of me, it feels like an interesting transitional moment. The gratitude, good cheer, and relaxed pace linger, but a new energy is building as we look ahead to 2024. It’s the perfect space from which to make some final observations on 2023 and share our plans for the coming months.



First, a look back. My overall reflection that bubbled to the surface and into conversations over the holidays: I love my job. I would like to say a heartfelt thanks to all our members, my ACCT staff colleagues and consultants, and our entire community for your collaboration and engagement, and for making this such a special organization to be part of.

I am particularly appreciative of those of you who completed our membership survey before the holidays. Under the leadership of David Conner, our director for strategic communications, we received over 400 responses. Your thoughtful answers to questions about our educational programs, services, conferences, publications, ACCT Connect, and our communications venues provided critical insights into how well we're serving you and your institutions, and how we can improve. Notable findings include:

- **More trustee education!** Our members are dedicated to fulfilling their board responsibilities, and to professional development to help them do so effectively. They would like to see more content on the nuts and bolts of good governance — i.e., how to be a trustee — delivered in venues and formats beyond our big conferences.

- **Curiosity about ACCT Connect.** We saw a big uptick in ACCT Connect logins and posts during Congress, and the platform continues to steadily gain members. However, many of our members are not yet on the platform — and a little unsure of what it's for and how to use it. There is interest and enthusiasm for its potential, and readiness to learn more.

- **Power of publications.** *Trustee Quarterly* is well-read and valued among our members. Thoughtful written content, addressing a variety of governance topics and broader community college issues, continues to resonate, whether members are reading it in hard copy or online.

- **Overall enthusiasm — and feedback on offer.** We were happy to see a strongly

positive tone among most survey responses about ACCT's work and the impact we're having. The data also suggested that we could do more in terms of listening and responding to our members' needs, and we appreciate members' willingness to engage with us to provide such feedback. That was the intention behind surveying members, and we take all input from all members to heart.

Next, looking forward. Catalyzed and informed by the membership survey results, we have mapped a robust plan to expand programs and content in the directions suggested by your feedback, with a specific focus on "how to be a trustee" topics. At our Michigan Governance Leadership Institute in December, I offhandedly referred to this plan as "The Great Content Build of 2024." The nickname has stuck! Here's a preview of what you can expect:

- **Updated and expanded publications.**

To complement and expand upon *Trustee Quarterly* and our cornerstone *Trusteeship in Community Colleges* handbook, we plan to release updated versions of past publications that address critical governance topics such as how to be a board chair, fundraising and college foundations, and student trusteeship.

- **ACCT Connect online courses and resources.** Building on the foundational content in our Governance 101 online course, we are developing an Advocacy 101 course, as well as learning modules based on the updated publications we'll release in the coming months. Also expect to see a greatly expanded resource library, which will include board policy templates and examples.

- **Governance-focused webinars.** To take a deeper dive into topics and issues addressed in *Trusteeship* and our ACCT Connect resources, we will offer a series of live webinars facilitated by our expert consultants. Topics on deck include board/CEO roles and responsibilities, good practices for orienting new board members, and promoting collegiality in the boardroom.

- **More state-based Governance Leadership Institutes.** We're coming to you! We are grateful to state associations in Michigan, Illinois, New Jersey, and Nebraska for partnering with us to develop and refine our state-based GLI model to provide participants with both an overview of good governance practices and a deep dive into state and local variations and issues. In March we will be in the Pacific Islands, and additional state GLIs are in the initial planning phases.

- **Trustee education track at Congress.**

While a number of our new resources are intended to make content accessible to members who are unable to attend our two annual conferences and other in-person events, we are also adding a "how to be a trustee" track at Congress for those seeking additional governance education good practices, examples, and discussion with peers.

As all of this rolls out, we will definitely take you up on the offer to provide feedback to help us refine our offerings and stay on track to meet your needs. We'll do our best not to overwhelm your inboxes with surveys, but please keep an eye out for program evaluations and other touchpoints. Beyond these, always feel free to drop us a line, pick up the phone, message us on ACCT Connect, catch us in the corridor at a conference, or pop by our office if you're in DC — my office door is always open, and you're welcome to settle into the comfy chair to chat and connect on all things ACCT.



Robin Matross Helms
is ACCT's vice president
for membership and
educational services.
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Community college leaders should stress the importance of creating the short-term Pell program, including by sharing specific programs at your colleges that would benefit.

New Bills Mean New Community College Priorities in 2024

Short-term Pell and workforce grant programs are top legislative asks.

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH

DESPITE HISTORICALLY LOW PRODUCTION DURING 2023, one part of Congress, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, has been working hard and introduced two bipartisan bills in December. The chair and ranking member, Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) and Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), respectively, have co-sponsored two bills that focus on top priorities for community colleges:

- The Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act (H.R. 6585) will create a short-term Pell program.
- A Stronger Workforce for America Act (H.R. 6655) will reauthorize the nation's main workforce law and includes the authorization of the Strengthening Community Colleges Workforce (formerly Training) Grant program.

Representatives Foxx and Scott have been negotiating on short-term Pell as well as on the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) for several years. WIOA was due for reauthorization after five years, and short-term Pell, now referred to as Workforce Pell, has been under consideration since at least 2016. During the 117th Congress, it appeared that a bipartisan WIOA bill would be imminent, but in the end, then-Chair Scott introduced a Democrat-only bill.

In the fall, it looked likely that there would not be much substantive legislation to discuss come February, given the only major accomplishment of 2023 was the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which increased the debt ceiling and set a path for federal spending for fiscal year 2024. However, this compromise led to the eventual ouster of Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), which allowed for the elevation of Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.) to the speakership. He was able to negotiate a continuing resolution until Feb. 2, 2024, to give Congress more time

When discussing A Stronger Workforce for America Act with Congress, community college leaders should stress the value of the Strengthening Community College Workforce Development grant program, modeled on the Strengthening Community College Training grant program which has been operating successfully for four years.

to determine FY2024 funding levels. This extension into the new year gave Congress breathing room to work on legislation.

Both of these bills include top “asks” of leaders of Congress from community colleges. Their introduction in December makes the February 2024 Community College National Legislative Summit well timed for colleges to visit their members of Congress in Washington.

Preparing for Workforce Pell Discussions with Congress

There are now two main bipartisan bills that would create a short-term Pell program, which would allow these federal grants to be used for programs lasting 150 to 600 clock hours, or as short as eight weeks. One is the JOBS Act, which ACCT has supported since 2016. Its longtime champion is Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.). He worked for several years with Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), who retired at the end of last Congress. Now Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.) is the co-lead. The bill has also been introduced in the House with bipartisan support, but has not picked up its previous momentum in this Congress. This is likely due to the Education and Workforce leads, Reps. Foxx and Scott, first introducing their own partisan bills earlier in 2023, and now joining together to introduce the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act. Their bill, however, does not yet have a Senate companion bill.

Is there a preference between these two bills? In the end, neither is perfect, but both would accomplish our goals and are workable. There is more than one way to do this well — though, of course, there are many ways to do it poorly, too. **Community college leaders should stress the importance of creating the short-term Pell program, including by sharing specific programs at your colleges that would benefit.** We support quality measures, often called guardrails, but ask that they come from either easily attainable or federally provided data. Further, presidents and trustees can share the joint letters from ACCT and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), available on the advocacy section of www.acct.org.

In the end, the final law will not be either of the current bills, but a negotiated compromise. And it's time for us to push Congress to complete these negotiations and send President Biden a final bill to sign into law.

Top Priorities for the Workforce Act Reauthorization

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, is again up for

consideration. Community colleges' top priorities in this bill are the authorization and funding levels for the Strengthening Community College Workforce Development Grant program, the inclusion of community college leaders on workforce development boards, and supporting the streamlining of the process for adding programs to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). ACCT and AACC call on Congress to fully integrate community colleges into the nation's workforce development plans and shared this sentiment in a letter responding to the bill's introduction (available on the advocacy section of acct.org).

When discussing A Stronger Workforce for America Act with Congress, community college leaders should stress the value of the Strengthening Community College Workforce Development grant program, modeled on the Strengthening Community College Training grant program which has been operating successfully for four years. Additionally, colleges should share their experiences with the ETPL list and working with their local workforce boards.

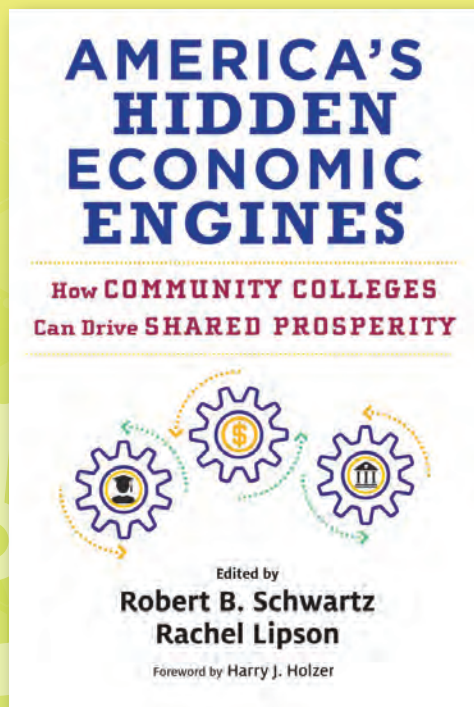
Not Coming to Washington?

If you're not scheduled to join us in Washington, D.C., for the National Legislative Summit, you can still participate in these important conversations. Congressional offices know early February is when they'll hear from their community colleges, and if they can't hear from you in person, please call or email the office (submitting web forms is fine, but sending an email to a specific staffer is far more effective) so you can alert your Senators and all Members of Congress who have your campuses and/or students in their constituencies to the importance of these bills.

Need more information? Check out nls.acct.org for issue backgrounder briefs and the advocacy page on acct.org for copies of letters from ACCT and the legislative action center.



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



Schwartz, Lipson, and their researchers set out to prove that our best community colleges are essential to their local economies. They give us excellent examples of colleges connected to local employers in deep, sustainable partnerships.

America's Hidden Economic Engines: How Community Colleges Can Drive Shared Prosperity

Edited by Robert B. Schwartz and Rachel Lipson

Foreword by Harry J. Holzer

Harvard Education Press, 2023

Reviewed by Kenneth Adams

LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ARE STRUGGLING with Americans' declining confidence in their institutions. The big question — is college worth it? — no doubt put many trustees, chancellors, and administrators in an awkward spot in 2023, as they confronted the concerns of a cynical public.

Fortunately, a new book profiling five outstanding community colleges offers a timely response. Each of the colleges in *America's Hidden Economic Engines (How Community Colleges Can Drive Shared Prosperity)*, by Robert B. Schwartz and Rachel Lipson, has valuable insights to share. Taken together, their stories remind us that if we want to restore the value proposition of an American college education, we should let community colleges do most of the talking.

Schwartz, Lipson, and their researchers set out to prove that our best community colleges are essential to their local economies. They give us excellent examples of colleges connected to local employers in deep, sustainable partnerships. If Step One to rebuilding the public's confidence in your college is to become newly relevant to your community, this engaging set of case studies tells you how to do it: Provide skilled workers for local industries, solve the challenges of tight labor markets, and ensure that your institution is a valued contributor to your region's prosperity.

With apologies to readers in the northeast, *America's Hidden Economic Engines* take us from Ohio to Mississippi, Virginia, Arizona, and Texas. Schwartz and Lipson's graduate student case writers reveal structures, strategies, and college-employer collaborations unique to each institution, while at the same time identifying the best practices they share.

Taken together, the stories of the community colleges cited in this book remind us that if we want to restore the value proposition of an American college education, we should let community colleges do most of the talking.

Our tour starts at Lorain County Community College, thirty miles west of Cleveland in Northeast Ohio. With Rust Belt doom and gloom a distant memory, today Lorain County is home to some 400 manufacturers, many of them facing acute worker shortages. Local healthcare employers are also hungry for talent. Add to this Intel's announcement in 2022 of a new \$20 billion semiconductor factory outside of Columbus. LCCC President Marcia Ballinger and her colleagues are keenly focused on addressing the needs of these and other employers. They have reorganized the college around a guided pathways framework. They launched "Career by Design" to move career planning to the beginning of all students' journeys and to enable "all adults on campus to be able to serve as effective career resources for students." Undeterred by limited government funding for non-degree workforce training, LCCC has developed braided funding strategies and secured an impressive haul of federal grants.

Not surprisingly, we see different student demographics in South Mississippi, where we also meet new industries, including shipbuilding, energy, and aerospace. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College traces its roots to 1911. Evolving ever since to stay competitive — like its industry partners — MGCCC reorganized itself into a "schools model" uniting associate degree programs and non-degree workforce programs in eight topic-focused "schools," an approach similar to what some call "meta-majors." This integration led to greater college-wide appreciation for MGCCC's workforce programs. It also brought students together by field of interest, regardless of the type of credential they were seeking, and ensured that the college's support services were available to all of them.

Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) has a distinct set of challenges and opportunities. As case writer Furman Haynes points out, the region boasts two of the four wealthiest counties in the nation. Located near Washington, DC, and surrounded by growing IT and healthcare sectors, NOVA is committed to building student-friendly on-ramps into a local economy that is thriving but not always easy for its students to navigate.

With more than 50,000 students on six campuses, NOVA, led by Dr. Anne Kress, is the second-largest community college in the nation. One of Kress's biggest tasks: forging a new vision for workforce education in a college with a strong academic focus and commitment to associate degrees and transfers to bachelor's programs. Key to helping her make the case is the college's Labor Market Insights team, led by Steve Partridge. The group is the go-to

expert for real-time information on the region's rapidly changing labor market dynamics and how to link NOVA degrees to well-paying jobs. In addition, Kress has joined the leading economic development, workforce training, and business organizations in the region. By committing a significant amount of her time and energy to these groups, she has positioned NOVA at the center of the regional economy.

A large Hispanic-Serving Institution in Southern Arizona, Pima Community College has a student body of mostly working adults. The college has focused on blurring the lines between credit and noncredit programs and meeting the unique needs of adult learners. By creating "Centers of Excellence" to align itself with the five industry pillars of Southern Arizona, Pima has become a leader of the region's economic development. And by ensuring that every Pima student has at least one work-based learning experience, career prospects for graduates improve significantly.

Schwartz and Lipson's last stop is in East Harris County, Texas. Every bit an anchor institution of Greater Houston, San Jacinto Community College ("San Jac") is deeply involved in workforce and economic development. Like other colleges in *America's Hidden Economic Engines*, San Jac builds career planning and advising into a student's first semester, employs a guided pathways approach, and encourages faculty and staff to develop employer partnerships. The college emphasizes the awarding of credit for prior learning, meta-majors, seamless transfer pathways, and financial literacy education.

In his introduction, Schwartz describes the process he and Lipson used for selecting these five exemplary institutions. Surely it was no easy task to pull them from some 1,100 community colleges across the country. But readers will be glad they did. The five case studies in *America's Hidden Economic Engines* are informative and inspiring, full of practical examples of how community colleges are poised to restore American's faith in higher education.



Kenneth Adams is president of LaGuardia Community College/City University of New York.



FILLING HIS SHOES

ACCT Chair Jay Nardini is focused on finding others who can step into leadership roles at ACCT and community colleges across the nation.



BY MARK TONER

FROM GRADE SCHOOL ON, HAWKEYE COMMUNITY College trustee Jay Nardini always knew one thing. “If I was involved in something, from school council to being the first person picked for sports, I wanted to be in leadership or on the path of leadership,” says the Hawkeye Community College trustee. “It’s ingrained in my personality.”

Now, after becoming the third ACCT chair from Iowa in the past 13 years, Nardini wants to ensure that others follow in his footsteps.

“Years ago, I sat where you are and pondered whether I had what it takes to be part of leadership for ACCT,” he told attendees of the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas last October. “Now I wonder who is going to step up to fill the shoes of the great leaders ACCT has had over the years, not just on the board of directors, but on our various committees, and our other volunteers who are so vitally important to the life of this organization.”

Nardini grew up with his three siblings in Bloomfield, Iowa, in an apartment over the family grocery store, called Nardini’s Model

Market. “It was great as a kid growing up,” he says. “If you saw an ad for a cereal, you’d just go downstairs and get it.”

The descendant of Italian immigrants, Nardini’s father had an eighth-grade education, and his mother was valedictorian of her high school class of 16 students. His family moved from Missouri to Bloomfield when Nardini was three years old, purchasing the grocery store on the town square, across from the county courthouse.

“All of us kids grew up working in the store,” he says. “We all learned to work hard, to be polite and helpful to our customers, to stock shelves, sack groceries, run a register, and make change in our heads.”

Nardini’s parents also stressed the value of education, and he and his siblings would all go on to college, earning advanced degrees. He graduated from high school in 1966, the same year community colleges were created by the legislature in Iowa. He majored in business in college and then went on to law school, serving for six years in the Iowa National Guard and United States Army Reserve.



Jay Nardini speaks at the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress after receiving the gavel from Outgoing Chair Rose Benavidez.

After Nardini's father died at 68 from a heart attack, his mother became one of the state's first female mayors, a role she held for 20 years. "When she spoke, people listened," Nardini says. "She really set the example for all of our family — not only the importance of education, but in being involved with our community."

As an attorney, Nardini initially shied away from becoming involved in community organizations because of concerns about conflicts of interest. But more than a decade ago, he says he "started thinking about what my obituary would look like." Consequently, he joined his community-minded wife of more than 42 years, Candy, and became involved in a wide range of service organizations, including the American Cancer Society, Habitat for Humanity, the local food bank, and their church, among others.

"That's just the way we've led our lives," Nardini says.

But it was cycling that got the wheels turning for what would become more than a decade of service on the Hawkeye Community College board of trustees. Nardini and his wife volunteered to help during RAGBRAI, an annual event during which thousands of cyclists ride across Iowa. Hawkeye Community College was one of the overnight camping sites for the event that year, and one of the college's officials asked Candy if she knew someone who might want to consider running for a seat on the board of trustees that was coming open with a trustee's retirement. "She said she would talk to me," Nardini recalls. He ran for the open board seat in 2011.

Over his 13-year tenure as a trustee, Nardini says that he is most proud of his role helping to maintain the Hawkeye board's norms around policy governance. "We try to fly at a higher level and not get involved in the day-to-day operations," he says.

Nardini's leadership journey moved beyond Iowa before he was

even sworn in as a Hawkeye trustee. Shortly after being elected, the college sent him to the 2011 ACCT Leadership Congress conference in Dallas, an experience that helped him get up to speed on community colleges and governance. "My background is in the law, not education," he says. "Everything I learned about community colleges at that Congress was interesting to me. I was hooked." In fact, it was at that Congress where he discovered one of his law school classmates was a trustee at another Iowa community college.

After being sworn in, Nardini volunteered to represent Hawkeye on the state board, serving with two of Iowa's former ACCT chairs, Jean Torgeson and Connie Hornbeck. Once again, he decided to pursue a leadership path, working his way up to state chair. Another colleague on the state board, Moudy Nabulsi, encouraged him to get involved with ACCT, and Nardini was appointed to the member communications and education committee. Nabulsi later suggested he run for ACCT's diversity committee, which he did, ultimately elected twice to the committee. He then ran for the ACCT board as an at-large director. He lost by one vote.

"With encouragement, I came back and got elected," he recalls. During the pandemic year, Nardini was elected virtually as secretary-treasurer of a board he calls "the most diverse and knowledgeable one I have ever served on." From there, he progressed through each executive committee role until he was named chair this fall in Las Vegas — fittingly following in the footsteps of yet another Iowa ACCT chair, Wayne Newton (no relation to the singer).

Nardini points to the appointment of Jee Hang Lee as ACCT President and CEO, the strength of the association's membership, and the launch of ACCT Connect — which he calls "a game changer" — as the most significant events during his tenure on the ACCT executive committee. "I'm especially proud of the people who have



Nardini with former ACCT Chair and fellow Iowan Connie Hornbeck; at right, sharing a list of community college priorities.

been elected to the executive committee, the chairs who have been around since I was there and I've learned a lot from, and the support I've received," he says.

He stresses the importance of ACCT's two-pronged mission: to educate and advocate. "Our advocacy work proved its worth during COVID because of the work done to get relief funds out to community colleges, and we're starting to do more state-based Governance Leadership Institutes where we're actually taking our message out to various states and organizations instead of them having to come to us," he says. "You have to have a national organization if you want to have an impact nationally."

As ACCT chair, Nardini is focused on how community colleges can help address the nation's skills gap. He points to his home state, with an aging workforce and growing demands for a trained workforce, as an example of the challenges and opportunities. "We have 3 percent unemployment," he says. "If everyone on the unemployment rolls in Iowa filled a skilled position, we'd still be 25,000 skilled positions short. The question is, where are we going to get those people?"

As open-access institutions, community colleges provide an answer that no other sector can, Nardini says. "We're going to find those workers in our immigrant population, in our Second Chance Pell — which will also cut down on recidivism — and our senior citizens who are aging out of their careers but still willing to work." And even if these populations don't fill all of these open jobs, the growth of AI as a way to augment the workforce means that "community colleges will train the people who maintain it," he adds.

Iowa also presents an example of the power of a community college education, Nardini says. "You can make \$100,000 a year as a

plumber in Iowa, where the cost of living is really low," Nardini says. "You can grow wealth in a position like that."

Nardini sees ACCT's role as disseminating best practices in finding and training skilled workers across the nation, and helping promote the role community colleges play in their regional economy and the health of the nation as a whole.

"We are the economic engines that are driving our national economy and our local communities," Nardini says. "We are the ones that train and retrain our workforce, and as things change, we are the ones employers look to."

Having retired from practicing law after 50 years, Nardini is grateful for the opportunity to serve as ACCT chair — and for the chance to convince others to someday fill his own shoes.

"It's given me the opportunity to encourage others to step up," he says. "There's nothing special about me — a little drive and wanting to better an organization, that's all it takes. It takes time, but it's fulfilling, and it makes a difference."



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.

‘UNAPOLOGETIC LEADERSHIP’

The Realizing Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges Symposium provided a call to action — and a roadmap.

By Mark Toner



MORE THAN 100 COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS and advocates gathered for the Leveling Up: Realizing Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges Symposium during the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas. Despite the sobering realities that drove the creation of the Level Up and Get Real initiative — including the disappearance of nearly 300,000 Black learners from the community college sector over the past two decades — speakers found cause for optimism.

“I love that we’re in a packed room talking about Black students,” said Dr. DeRionne Pollard, president of Nevada State University. “Unfortunately, we don’t do enough of that in higher education... Black learners need you to lead the way for all of us.”

The symposium focused on assessing the conditions leading to disproportionate outcomes for Black learners and urging attendees to put new frameworks into place to “fix systems, not people,” as Pollard put it. But above all, it called on community college trustees and presidents to display what Dr. Keith Curry, the initiative’s national chair, called “unapologetic leadership.”

“It’s about being intentional with the work and understanding its importance to the students you are about to serve,” he said.

Meeting the Needs

The share of Black students on community college campuses has declined by more than 44 percent since 2010 — a trend that can’t be explained away by demographic shifts, the pandemic, or other external factors, symposium speakers stressed.

“The sharp decline represents a stark reality for Black learners, and Black college students are not being served,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee, calling the findings “an alarm for all of higher education.”

Dr. Frank Harris, co-director of the Community College Equity Assessment Lab at San Diego State University (CCEAL), noted that community colleges enroll disproportionate numbers of Black students, making the need to address inequities in enrollment and outcomes all the more important.

“The community college context is an incredibly important space,” he said. “If we don’t get it right in our community colleges, we have no chance to address the disproportionate impacts on Black learners.”

Harris stressed the importance of an equity-minded approach to addressing issues facing Black learners. “We cannot see students’ racial identities as liabilities. What we really need to do is see their lived



experiences as assets that can be leveraged to facilitate success,” he said. “Ask what’s wrong with our institutions, not Black learners.”

Strategies for Success

Curry and other speakers pointed to the Level Up and Get REAL framework, released earlier in 2023, as a roadmap for community college leaders built around the principles of transparency and affordability, shared ownership, academic and social supports, and learner-centered teaching practices.

Harris also stressed the importance of holding institutional leaders accountable and ensuring every educator has the capacity to teach Black learners, as well as investments in dual enrollment, data systems to disaggregate and track outcomes, supports that address financial barriers and meet basic needs, and short-term career training and industry partnerships, among other strategies. But beginning this work requires shifting the lens, symposium participants said.

“Equity work, and especially racial equity work, requires us to see Black learners as human beings who are capable and deserving of excellence,” said Francesa I. Carpenter, director of equity initiatives for Achieving the Dream.

A panel of community college leaders agreed, describing efforts to create appropriate support systems and policies at their institutions. “I cannot address success at my institution without addressing the success of students of color and Black students,” said Dr. Felicia Williams, president of Prince George’s Community College in Maryland. In similar fashion, trustees at Anne Arundel Community College last year participated in diversity training and examined institutional policies through an anti-racism lens, said trustee A. Joyce Price-Jones. “We try to walk the walk,” she said.

It’s also important to recognize that when done intentionally, academic and financial supports can elevate all students, speakers said. “It’s not a zero-sum game,” said Dr. Sunny Cooke, president of MiraCosta Community College. “We can elevate all our students of color and those who come to us in financial distress.”

Building a Coalition

Symposium speakers announced the launch of the Alliance for Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges, a voluntary cohort that will focus on building institutional capacity to better serve Black learners. With a planning grant in place, the Alliance will develop tools and resources for participating institutions, help bring together their leaders for collective action, and work with the CCEAL to develop baseline metrics by which institutions can measure progress, according to Carpenter.

But moving forward will require commitment from institutions and their leaders. “Community colleges have stood in the gap for multiple communities time and time again,” Pollard said. “You can’t stop now. This is essential work... [and] the community college space has to lead the movement.”

2022-23 ACCT Chair Rose Benavidez, a trustee at South Texas College, issued a public call to action, asking trustees to take this work back to their institutions. “I stand before you asking who’s in?” she said. “We are.”

Dr. Monica Parrish Trent, ATD’s chief program and network officer, echoed James Baldwin’s famous statement from the 1960s. “We are indeed living in very dangerous times,” she said. “What’s at stake for Black learners if we don’t take action is... that they will know we have failed them. We must do better, and we will.”

“This is just the beginning,” Curry added. “We’re very intentional, and we’re very unapologetic, and we’re going to continue what we’re going to do. But we have to do it together.”

Learn more about the Level Up and GET Real Initiative at <https://blacklearnersuccess.com>.



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.

BUILDING A LEGACY

The 2023 Leadership Congress focused on how community college leaders can change lives for the better.

By Mark Toner





Clockwise: Outgoing ACCT Chair Benavidez passes the gavel to incoming Chair Jay Nardini; Lawrence Weekly; Keynote panel on business and industry; Phi Theta Kappa President Lynn Tincher-Ladner

WITH THE THEME “BUILDING A LEGACY: UPLIFTING Students and Transforming Communities,” the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress prompted community college leaders to consider the role of their institutions during changing — and challenging — times.

“The legacy of community and technical colleges... is the legacy of the American Dream,” ACCT Chair Rose Benavidez, a trustee at South Texas College, said during the event’s opening session. “Everyone in this room understands the importance of our institutions to bridging the ever-expanding gap between those of means and those who can barely make ends meet.”

Reaching the ‘Missing Millions’

The glitz and glitter of Las Vegas served as the backdrop as the 1,900 Congress attendees were urged to focus on something far less visible — those absent from the workforce and their own institutions. Speakers stressed the need to reach out to hard-to-reach populations as a moral, economic, and national security imperative.

“It’s the fierce urgency of now,” said Michael Bond, director of community relations for Snap-on Incorporated. “We can’t wait any longer.”

It was a call echoed throughout the event. Dr. James L. Moore III, assistant director for the NSF’s Directorate for STEM Education, stressed the importance of reaching the “missing millions” in STEM education and careers. Dr. Roger Ramsammy, president of Hudson Valley Community College, outlined his institution’s work to find what he calls “the invisible workforce,” including disabled workers, dropouts, and refugees. “They are willing and able, but often overlooked,” he said.

More than 100 community college leaders and advocates gathered to address another overlooked population: the 300,000 Black learners who have disappeared from community college over the past two decades. The Leveling Up: Realizing Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges Symposium (see p. 18) announced the launch of the Alliance for Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges, a voluntary cohort

of institutions that will focus on building institutional capacity to better serve Black learners.

“We’re very intentional, and we’re very unapologetic, and we’re going to continue what we’re going to do,” said Dr. Keith Curry, president and CEO of Compton College and the initiative’s national chair. “But we have to do it together.”

Building a New Legacy

Changing economic conditions have given community colleges a chance to build an entirely new legacy: that of rebuilding the “middle of the country, the middle of the labor market, and people from all walks of life,” said Dr. Ben Armstrong, executive director and research scientist of MIT’s Industrial Performance Center.

Steady growth in manufacturing and recent wage increases for bottom and middle-income jobs are promising signs, Armstrong said, noting that many of the places seeing growth in middle-income jobs and upward mobility have strong community colleges and high proportions of workers with two-year degrees. But Armstrong cautioned that institutions must “expand the aperture of skills they provide” and play an even greater role as conveners and anchors of workforce partnerships.

Bond urged trustees to use their roles to engage with industry. “Look at your boards as a conduit to the community,” he said. “Connect with businesses and ask them exactly what they need.” And Karolyn Ellingson, head of industrial workforce development for Festo Didactic, stressed the importance of staying abreast of how those needs are evolving. “Think about what your programs need to offer now and how they can expand to meet the needs of the future workforce, because it’s changing — and changing fast.”

Throughout Congress, community college leaders shared their experiences developing partnerships. Anne Kress, president of Northern Virginia Community College, stressed the moral imperative for building partnerships that address labor market mismatches in sectors including IT, healthcare, and business management to create what NOVA calls “pathways that pay.”



Left to Right: James L. Moore; student trustees and PTK awardees

“We’re definitely a community of haves and have nots, and part of our mission is to help the have nots find a better economic future,” she said.

The needs are growing. A panel of employers and community college leaders shared statistics about the nation’s staggering workforce needs: a 2.4 million gap between open positions and those available to take them, the 75 percent of corporate leaders who say the skills gap is among their top priorities, the \$15 trillion industry that the energy sector is growing into, and downstream supply chain issues with finding skilled workers that are imperiling even the world’s largest manufacturers.

“Community colleges are a fundamental part of [this] economic landscape,” said Roger Tadajewski, executive director of the National Coalition of Certification Centers (NC3).

New Opportunities

Despite an uncertain election year and the prospect of a potential government shutdown, public policy leaders from ACCT and the American Association of Community Colleges stressed that community colleges remain a key part of the federal policy landscape. Short-Term Pell, in particular, continues to enjoy bipartisan support, despite ongoing debates over criteria and how programs would demonstrate their value.

Demand from employers continues to grow. Ellingson summed up their asks: “We need it shorter, we need it faster, we don’t necessarily need the degree to go with it, but we need the competencies and skills.”

To address short-term training needs, Midlands Technical College has created a wide range of apprenticeship opportunities and short-term “QuickJobs” programs in a range of technical and skilled trades. More than half of the programs’ students come from employer referrals, and training is tailored to their needs, according to Commission Chair Sandra Jackson. “We’re here to help the individuals who slid off the road get back on the path,” she said.

The Biden Administration also continues to prioritize community colleges in workforce development, as evinced by Vice President Kamala Harris’ visit to Southern Nevada College during the final day of the Congress.

Moore likened the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act to the “Sputnik moment” that followed the creation of the NSF seven decades earlier, one which will require new investments in community colleges in rural and economically underserved regions to expand access to high-growth careers. While community colleges are not directly eligible for CHIPS Act funding, they can — and should — be involved in the workforce development funding included in the law, Carrie Warick-Smith, ACCT Vice President of Public Policy, said. “We want to make sure [manufacturers] are looking at community colleges to be partners,” she said, urging colleges to “be proactive with your partners and business communities.”

Speakers also pointed to opportunities sparked by the Inflation Reduction Act’s investments in modernizing infrastructure, climate, and sustainability. The incoming generation of workers “get excited that industry and business are striving to be more efficient and sustainable, and if they go into that world, they can make a difference,” said Michael Hines, Trane Technologies North American director of education initiatives and workforce.

To support these fast-growing fields, ACCT and the Education Strategy Group announced a partnership to launch the Non-Credit and Credit Alignment Lab, which will develop new and improved pathways between non-credit and credit programs and strengthen workforce partnerships like the ones highlighted throughout this year’s Congress.

“We have all the right stakeholders in the room to create a disruptive transformation across America,” Moore said.

Transformation Through Innovation

Presenters highlighted transformational strategies to address ever-present resource challenges, particularly in rural regions.

Finger Lakes Community College shared its work with augmented



Clockwise: Richard Fukutaki; ACCT Founding Trustee M. Dale Ensign; Jee Hang Lee; Central Region Caucus; Members display voting cards at Senate meeting; Dr. Mark Wherry

reality as a way to address training needs in courses ranging from healthcare and welding to advanced manufacturing across its large service area. “There are a lot of ways you can take this and make a huge difference, especially if you are a rural community college where distances make a big difference,” said President Robert K. Nye.

Presenters from Central Wyoming College discussed how the state’s eight community colleges are taking the lead on diversifying an economy primarily focused on exporting raw materials — and the state’s talent. The Wyoming Innovation Partnership is a pivotal part of the state’s economic development plan and focused on “place-based opportunities” such as incubating agriculture, equine, and food businesses, said President Brad Tyndall.

Other institutions are focused on approaching changing needs in new ways. At Hawkeye Community College, President Todd Holcomb recalled asking his board “not to build a building” shortly after becoming president. “It was not going to meet the needs of the college going forward,” Holcomb said, stressing the need to create data-informed systems to rethink facilities and programming. “The challenge we face is how to train students for the workforce of the future,” he said.

Colleges are also taking similar data-informed, institution-wide approaches to improve equitable outcomes. “The bottom line is what do your students need, and how can we focus the efforts of our boards to serve the students we have?” Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg, trustee for the Kern Community College District, said during a workshop featuring leaders from several California community college districts. “Organizations and cultures do not create themselves — individuals create cultures and institutions,” added Dr. Sharoni Little, a trustee at Compton College. “Each decision we make, each policy we create, each fiscal allocation has impacts and creates the outcomes.”

‘Step Up’ for Leadership

Those outcomes rely on active and engaged trustees, and speakers urged attendees to take what they had learned back to their institutions. “The reality is all the things you hear today don’t

mean much unless you advance them and bring them home to your community,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee.

Dr. Lawrence Weekly, chief of staff and director of diversity for the College of Southern Nevada, called on community college leaders to “step up,” drawing from his own experience as a student at the same college and community he now serves as a leader. “My challenge to you is to not be afraid to give someone a chance,” Weekly said.

One way for trustees to do so is by working nationally as well as locally, ACCT’s 2023-24 Chair told trustees. After accepting the gavel during the Congress closing session, Jay Nardini urged his fellow trustees to continue ACCT’s legacy through involvement with the association (see p. 14).

“Years ago, I sat where you are and pondered whether I had what it takes to [participate in] the leadership of ACCT,” said Nardini, trustee at Hawkeye Community College in Iowa. “Now I’m wondering who is going to step up and fill my shoes. Volunteers are so vital to the life of this organization... Everyone can contribute to the betterment of this organization. It takes time, but we make time for what matters most.”



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.

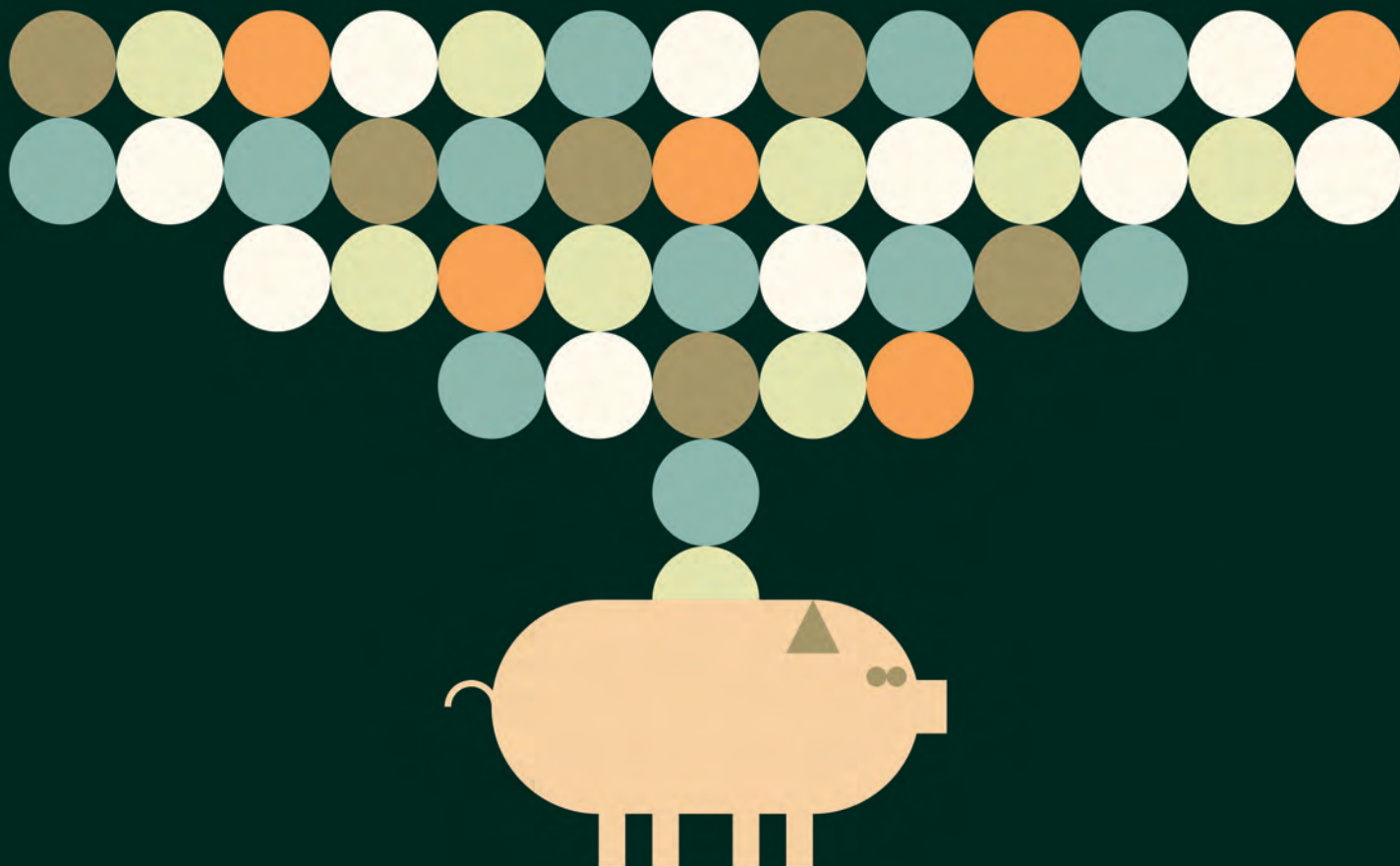
DOES COMMUNITY COLLEGE FUNDING FIT TODAY'S STUDENTS?

Traditional one-size-fits-all models often shortchange nontraditional learners. New models can meet changing needs.

By Tamar Jacoby

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS WERE NEVER JUST A MIRROR OF THOSE AT FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS — even at the dawn of the community college movement, learners were more varied and attracted to college for a broader range of educational outcomes. But demographic shifts and the technological change upending U.S. workplaces today have sharpened the differences between the two student bodies, and community college funding isn't keeping up.

Federal student aid still favors credit-seeking students over noncredit learners. Funding prioritizes instruction without enough thought for related services. And most state community college spending still mirrors funding for four-year institutions: per-student subsidies based on time spent in the classroom — a one-size-fits-all model that often shortchanges nontraditional learners.



Today's community college students are at once older and younger than traditional college-age learners: either dual enrollment high school students seeking a leg up on college or mid-career adults returning to school to improve their position in the labor market. A growing number study part-time. Many seek alternative credentials — sub-baccalaureate, nondegree, and industry credentials, among others — instead of or alongside traditional academic degrees. And learners often need different services than traditional college-age students: enhanced student supports and more robust career services.

Some states are adjusting their funding formulas to respond to changing two-year enrollments. Some use performance-based formulas to augment funding for programs that prepare learners for the workplace. A small but growing number subsidize instruction for dual-enrollment students. More than half — 28 states — responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with infusions of new aid for job-focused students seeking short-term credentials. Texas recently passed legislation to dramatically overhaul its community college funding formula, rewarding credentials earned rather than the number of hours spent in a classroom. And a handful of other states are rethinking their approaches.

But most colleges in most states still struggle to meet the diverse needs of their increasingly varied student bodies with the traditional one-size-fits-all funding that makes up the bulk of their support.

Changing Demographics

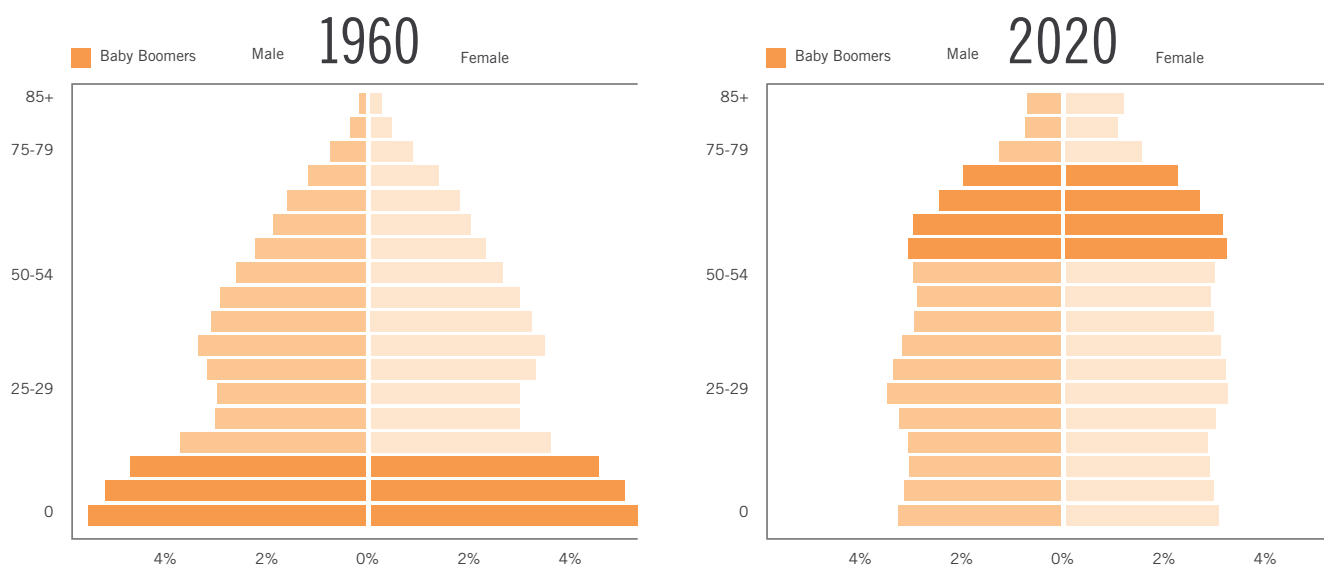
Economic growth usually depends on a growing labor force. More workers plus rising productivity drive increased output and higher standards of living — or did in the U.S. through the second half of the 20th century. But that formula works only if the population is growing — if the number of young workers entering the labor force exceeds the number that entered in previous years.

That's no longer true in the U.S. Instead of the traditional pyramid shape, the profile of the population looks like a beehive (see chart, below). Many fewer younger workers are entering the labor force, driving tighter labor markets and putting new burdens on mid-career workers, requiring them to learn new skills to keep up with new technology in the workplace. These demographic and economic shifts pose growing challenges for community colleges.

A Changing Student Body

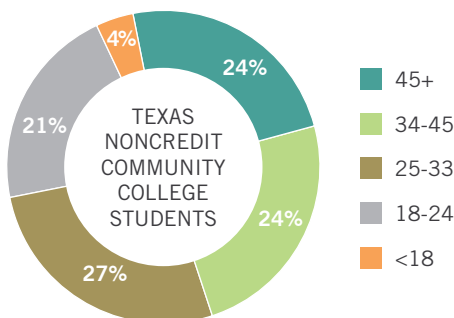
Community colleges vary widely from state to state — each state sees the mission differently and holds colleges accountable for different outcomes. But two trends are surging nationwide: dual-credit enrollments and mid-career adult students.

Texas community colleges, in the national spotlight in 2023 as the state moved to overhaul its funding formula, exemplify both trends.



Community college students are increasingly younger and older than traditional college students

25%
Dual enrollment share of Texas credit students



High school students sampling college classes accounted for all the growth of Texas two-year schools over the past decade, and they now make up a full 25 percent of the credit-eligible student body. Meanwhile, mid-career adults returning to school to learn new skills and keep up with the changing labor market make up 75 percent of Texas noncredit enrollments.

No wonder educators sometimes feel as if they are running three separate colleges: one for traditional college-age learners, one for high school students, and a workforce-training arm for returning adults.

Many Reasons to Attend College

Most of the general public — voters, employers, policymakers — are baffled by the distinction between credit and noncredit education. But it isn't hard to grasp that community college students' motives vary widely. Some see community college as a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree. Others want to learn a new hobby. Some, in a hurry to land a job, want just enough instruction to pass a third-party certification exam. Still others attend on the clock, with skills training paid for by their employers. One-size-fits-all per-student subsidies take no account of this variety and often leave administrators scrambling to cover the costs of instruction and supports.







Not Either-Or

Debates about the mission of community colleges are often framed in the language of either-or — either academic instruction or job training, credit or noncredit, college-age learners or returning adults. In reality, few educators can afford to make these choices — to serve their communities, they must do it all.

But most institutions struggle to find the money to meet these varied needs, and all must supplement state formula funding with other sources of revenue: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) dollars, Perkins Act CTE funding, local bond issues, local employers, private foundations, corporate philanthropy, public assistance programs, and more.

What Does Reform Look Like?

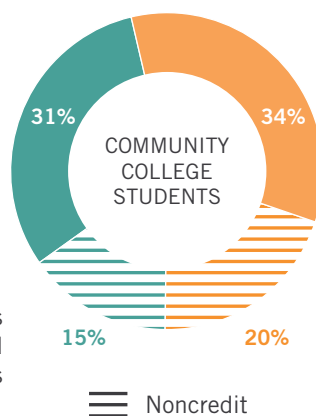
Together, these trends — changing demographics and evolving educational needs — cry out for reform of community college funding. The most impactful potential changes: expanding Pell Grants to cover short noncredit job-focused programs and revamping state formula funding. A number of states are experimenting — sometimes with wholesale reform at the state level, in other cases with smaller funding streams designed to complement the state formula. In still other places, individual campuses are showing the way.

NOT JOB-FOCUSED	JOB-FOCUSED
 Zach, 19, assumes he'll have a career as a white-collar professional but hasn't given much thought to which profession. He enrolled on the degree-granting side of the college, majoring in political science, and expects to transfer next year to a four-year university.	 Jenny, 18, is studying to be a nurse. She's enrolled in the degree-granting side of the college because nursing requires a degree.
 Marisol, 25, wants to learn English. She's enrolled in a nondegree-granting program that teaches basic skills.	 Yvette, 29, is studying to be a certified nursing assistant—no degree needed. She's enrolled in a nondegree-granting program that will prepare her for a state certification exam.
 Barbaram 45, wants to learn French cooking. She's enrolled in a nondegree granting program that teaches recreational skills.	 George, 38, is learning advanced welding techniques in a nondegree-granting customized contract program sponsored by his employer.

NOT JOB-FOCUSED

Degree-seeking students in academic programs

Noncredit students in remedial and recreational programs



NOT JOB-FOCUSED

Degree-seeking students in job-focused programs

Noncredit students in job-focused programs

Among the stratagems in play: tiered FTE funding that rewards market-driven workforce education, outcomes-based funding pegged to workforce metrics, dedicated funding for attainment of industry credentials, and recruiting employers to carry a greater share of the burden.

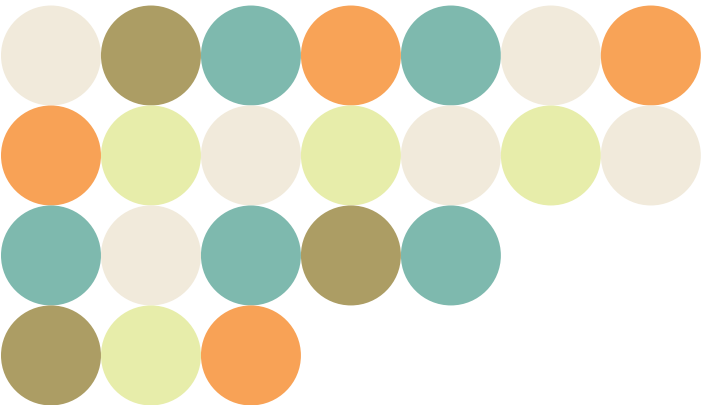
The question ahead for advocates and policymakers in other states: is your state ready for wholesale change, or does it make more sense to move incrementally, starting small and gradually expanding an innovative approach as it proves its worth on the ground?

How to Approach Reform in Your State

Every community college is different; every state’s policy climate is unique. But similar challenges arise on every campus — and existing state and campus-level experiments offer a range of options to explore. The first question for educators and advocates: what are the primary pinch points in your state? Designing a remedy for those challenges will likely be a step-by-step, collaborative process. But states across the country are already proving the old adage — there are no better “laboratories of democracy.” What is — or could be — the next step for your state?

WHERE	LEVEL	WHAT
Texas	state formula	outcomes-based formula rewards attainment of credentials with value in the labor market
North Carolina	state formula	tiered-FTE formula puts noncredit programs in in-demand fields on par with credit programs
Iowa	state student aid	means-tested financial aid for noncredit students preparing for high-demand jobs
VA Fast Forward eligible programs	complements state formula	grants tied to industry credentials cover the cost of short job-focused programs in in-demand fields
TX State Technical College	alternative state formula	institutional funding pegged to postgraduation earnings
LaGuardia CC	campus-level	college foundation, local employers provide scholarships for noncredit students

DIAGNOSIS Do you have adequate funding for these students & programs?	REMEDY Potential reform ingredients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midcareer adults? • Dual enrollment students? • Dual enrollment workforce students? • Noncredit students? • Part-time students? • Students seeking industry credentials? • Student supports? • Employer outreach? • Career services? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewarding employment outcomes • Paying for credentials of value • Funding for midcareer adults • A financial model for dual enrollment • Dedicated funding for noncredit workforce education • Blurring the line between credit and noncredit • Noncredit student assistance • Employer skin in the game



Tamar Jacoby is president of Opportunity America, a Washington-based nonprofit working to promote economic mobility — work, skills, careers, ownership, and entrepreneurship — for poor and working Americans. She also has served as a senior writer and justice editor for Newsweek and as deputy editor of the New York Times op-ed page. Her articles have appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Weekly Standard, Foreign Affairs, and other publications.

PROTECTING THE WELLBEING OF YOUR CEO

Hiring a president is the most significant investment a board can make for its college. Trustees need to ensure they are supported.

By George R. Boggs, Ph.D., and Maria Sheehan, Ed.D.

THE SHOCK OF THE RECENT UNEXPECTED DEATH of the president of Volunteer State Community College in Tennessee has focused attention on the increasing levels of stress faced by college leaders. Dr. Orintha Montague, who had previously served as president of Tompkins Cortland Community College in New York, passed away unexpectedly in September at age 56. *Choice*, a publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries, reported that “while the cause of death for” Montague and Temple University President Joanne A. Epps “have yet to be revealed...many people speculate that stress led to their untimely passings.”

Trustees see their CEOs project an image of strength and confidence as they guide institutions through challenging times, but CEOs are human beings, and they are affected by the

difficulties they face and the criticisms and microaggressions that are aimed at them. Visibly supporting the CEO and taking the time to personally acknowledge the leader’s work during a difficult time is an important role for trustees.

To be sure, these are challenging times for college leaders who may be dealing with enrollment declines, budget shortfalls, reopening campuses after the pandemic, improving student success rates, closing student achievement gaps, political issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and critical race theory legislation, employee bargaining, and academic freedom, free speech, and safety and security issues brought about by reactions to divisive issues such as abortion, gun control, civil rights for transgender people and other populations, or more recently, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Women leaders and leaders of color often face additional stress from microaggressions, sometimes involving doubts others have about their leadership abilities. The recent deaths of two female Black leaders, Montague and Epps, have raised concerns about the difficulties faced by leaders who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC), especially when they lead predominantly white institutions.

Trustees should be alert to today's leadership challenges and check to see how they are affecting their CEOs. Board retreats in which CEO evaluations or board self-evaluations are scheduled should include a discussion of how the board and CEO can support each other.

Chronic stress can negatively affect a person's health. Stress-related hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline initiate a "fight-or-flight" response that can help people to deal with a crisis. However, if the level of stress is sustained, it can lead to a range of health problems. Chronic stress can lead to cardiovascular issues, including hypertension, heart disease, and stroke. Stress can disrupt the natural balance of the digestive system, causing gastrointestinal disorders such as stomach or duodenal ulcers. It can also impact the immune system, increasing susceptibility to illnesses and prolonging the body's efforts to recover from them.

Prolonged stress is also related to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression. Sleep deprivation is another frequent symptom of high chronic stress levels. The release of cortisol, the primary stress hormone, plays a major role in fat storage, particularly around the abdominal wall. Excess cortisol, especially accompanied by "comfort eating," leads to weight gain and obesity, which can result in other serious health problems.

Trustees have made a significant investment in their college or district CEO. Losing a leader to a health-related problem or relying on a leader who is struggling with health issues can be very disruptive to a college. But there are things boards can do proactively to protect the wellbeing of its college CEO. Trustees need to remember that CEOs may not ask for any of these benefits. Leaders are often focused on the needs of everyone else at the college and may not want to be seen as getting special treatment. So trustees will likely have to initiate discussions about well-being.

The first document to review is the CEO employment contract. Is there a provision for a health and wellness benefit? Does the agreement cover the cost of an annual executive health physical? Is there a provision for sufficient annual vacation leave, and is there an administrator who can act as the leader so the CEO can really get away from responsibilities during vacation leave? The college could also cover the cost of a gym membership and trainer or a health coach. For new CEOs, covering the cost of a mentor or an executive coach can provide valuable support.

It is also helpful for college CEOs to know they are not alone, and that other leaders are struggling with many of the same issues. Attending leadership meetings and retreats at the state and national levels can be very helpful for leaders to share experiences and strategies. The Presidents Academy of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) hosts a summer institute each year, providing CEOs with a forum for support. Organizations such as the National Council on Black American Affairs, the President's Round Table, the American Association for Women in Community Colleges, the National Asian/

Pacific Islander Council, the National Community College Hispanic Council, and LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education are examples of organizations that can provide support to college leaders. Boards can support their college CEOs by paying membership dues and the costs of meeting and conference attendance, and by encouraging their CEOs to participate in these and other support networks.

Chronic stress can take a toll on the health of all college employees. Including sessions on health, wellness, and wholesome nutrition as part of employee professional development programs can be a wise investment for any college. Programs to assist employees with weight loss or smoking cessation should also be considered. Hosting health and wellness speakers on campus can be an important benefit for the entire college community. Colleges are people places and are only effective because of a dedicated, caring, and healthy faculty, staff, and administration. Many of the benefits listed above for CEOs could be considered for other members of a college executive team.

Boards of trustees have significant responsibilities to ensure that colleges effectively serve their communities by providing students with access to quality education opportunities and student supports to help them to be successful in their learning. Their effective oversight is essential for the success of any college. Today's trustees are data-informed and make decisions based upon evidence and expected outcomes. They work to ensure a positive learning environment for students and a comfortable work environment for faculty and staff. They advocate for their colleges and their students. They establish fiscal policies to ensure that limited funds are wisely spent and invested.

But the most significant investment that a board makes is to hire a CEO. Equally important as monitoring the college budget and the physical infrastructure of the institution, trustees need to pay attention to their investment in the well-being of their CEO. Sometimes the pressures experienced by the CEO may not be visible. Navigating sensitive political issues, having to make unpopular decisions, dealing with student protests, worrying about enrollment trends, and absorbing criticism and microaggressions can take an invisible toll on a CEO's health. It makes good sense for a board to protect its investment by providing needed support and sensible health and wellness benefits. Doing so is also a way to develop an open and trusting relationship with the CEO, which is a primary characteristic of any excellent board of trustees.

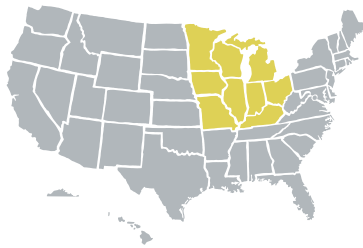


Dr. George R. Boggs is president & CEO emeritus of the American Association of Community Colleges, superintendent and president emeritus of Palomar College in California, and chair of the Phi Theta



Kappa Board of Directors. Dr. Maria Sheehan is a health and fitness consultant, president emerita of Truckee Meadows Community College in Nevada, and superintendent/president emerita of College of the Desert in California.

AROUND THE REGIONS



CENTRAL REGION

The **Illinois** Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) are partnering with four Illinois community colleges across the state to help small-to-medium sized manufacturers (SMMs) find ways to reduce waste and pollution and create pathways to green jobs by engaging students as one of 17 new Industrial Assessment Centers selected by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Community colleges in Illinois have adopted a unified brand to better promote the benefits the schools bring to the state. A digital campaign in support of the "For Every Student, For Every Community" campaign will be directed through the Illinois Community College Marketing Collaborative.

Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley (R) announced Iowa community colleges will receive federal funds for their motor vehicle operations programs, which provide pathways for veterans and other individuals to secure commercial drivers' licenses (CDLs).

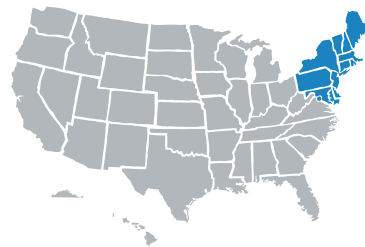
The **Michigan** Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's (LEO) Office of Sixty by 30, Global Detroit and Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) awarded \$1.5 million in Student and Immigrant Success Grants to support 12 Michigan community and tribal colleges in their efforts to increase college completion for adult learners, international, immigrant, refugee, or first-generation students.

Washtenaw Community College in Michigan has received approval for its first U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship program, serving as an intermediary in partnership with Toyota & Subaru of Ann Arbor.

Minnesota State Community and Technical College marked the 20th anniversary of its consolidation of four community and technical college campuses into one institution.

About half of **Ohio** colleges and universities that offered dual enrollment lost money on the courses once student support costs were taken into account, a survey by the state's auditor found. The survey of the state's College Credit Plus program also revealed that the costs of the programs depended on the mode of instruction.

Two more University of **Wisconsin** two-year branch campuses will close by June — UW-Milwaukee's Washington County campus and UW-Oshkosh's Fond du Lac campus.



NORTHEAST REGION

The Board of Regents for the newly consolidated **Connecticut** State Colleges and Universities System approved a 5 percent hike for state schools and community colleges to address a \$140 million shortfall for state schools and community colleges in the state budget.

Making community college free for every **Massachusetts** resident could cost the state about \$170 million annually, according to a new report by Boston Consulting Group on behalf of the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges. The fiscal year 2024 state budget already deployed \$20 million to cover any unmet community college costs for students 25 and older without a college degree, and enrollment rose for the first time in a decade.

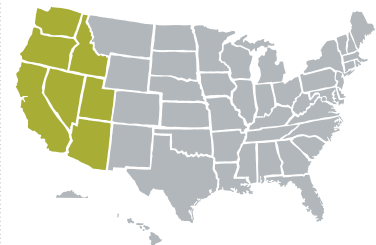
New Jersey and Morris County officials will invest \$30 million into a new facility at

County College of Morris to train and certify students in healthcare fields.

An offer of guaranteed admission to City University of **New York** community colleges will be placed in the hands of every New York City public school senior who is on track to graduate by the end of the school year as part of Gov. Kathy Hochul's efforts to remove barriers in higher education.

Clinton Community College in New York plans to move its operations to SUNY Plattsburgh's campus by the 2025-26 academic year in response to enrollment and financial challenges.

Pennsylvania lawmakers agreed to release almost \$262 million for the state's 15 community colleges that had been held up for almost six months because the House and Senate could not agree on a fiscal code, the vehicle that governs the annual disbursement of funds to certain state agencies.



PACIFIC REGION

Pima Community College in **Arizona** received a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to help Hispanic and other low-income students obtain college degrees online.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom would protect schools and community colleges from the brunt of an \$11.3 billion projected drop in state revenue for education under a proposed 2024-25 state budget released in January.

Newsom signed a bill into law that will allow low-income Mexicans living near the border to enroll at certain community

colleges in Southern California at in-state tuition rates. The pilot program starts this year and will extend through 2029.

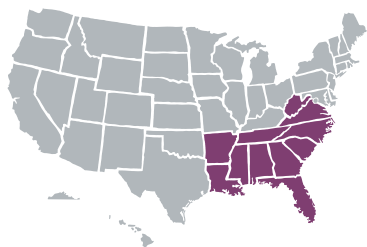
California approved two new bachelor's programs at community colleges, bringing the total number of bachelor's degrees offered at California community colleges to 33.

The **Idaho** State Board of Education approved plans for the College of Western Idaho and the College of Eastern Idaho to implement their first four-year degrees, despite opposition from the state's four-year institutions.

Oregon is sending a total of \$35 million in grant funding on 30 projects across the state designed to support workforce training in high-demand industries. It's the largest round of funding awarded so far under the \$200 million Future Ready Oregon plan approved by state lawmakers in 2022.

Salt Lake Community College in **Utah** will waive tuition for all Native students enrolled at the institution, regardless of part- or full-time status.

Washington's Path to UW, a city of Seattle-funded program that supports Seattle Colleges' students in transferring to University of Washington, is one of the newest examples of targeted efforts to support community college students who want to complete a bachelor's degree.



SOUTHERN REGION

The **Alabama** Community College System held a ribbon cutting for its new Innovation Center, which will provide training to meet the state's growing workforce demands.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp announced

changes to the state College & Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), an accountability program measuring how many students complete a designated Career Pathway during high school.

Kentucky colleges and universities led the nation in overall enrollment growth between fall 2022 and fall 2023. Public two-year colleges had the second-largest enrollment growth for the period at 4.4%.

The **North Carolina** Community College System (NCCCS) started work last fall to develop a modernized funding model with the goal of creating a more flexible, workforce-friendly system. The board is set to vote on the modernization plan in February.

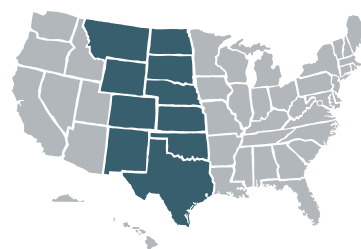
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded a \$3 million grant to the College System of **Tennessee** to support the launch of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Program, which provides tuition, fees, and expenses at the state's technical and community colleges for residents interested in careers as frontline supervisors, community health workers and caregivers in assisted care facilities, nursing homes, other institutions, and home-health settings.

Driven by a growing number of apprenticeship programs, Tennessee's public community and technical colleges delivered 1.628 million hours of direct workforce training in 2022-23.

The **Virginia** Community College System is partnering with private and public stakeholders across the state to address a healthcare workforce shortage. It held the first VCCS Healthcare Summit, during which solutions to help students succeed

in pursuing healthcare careers and close the skills gap were explored.

BridgeValley Community and Technical College in **West Virginia** will receive \$3 million through the U.S. Department of Energy to develop a center with Blue Ridge Community and Technical College and a four year state institution that will focus on smart manufacturing and electric vehicle manufacturing.



WESTERN REGION

Community colleges in **New Mexico** will be host sites for equipment that will connect all public schools to the Statewide Educational Network, extending access to high-speed Internet to smaller districts.

South Dakota's Board of Technical Education adopted new strategic priorities to raise the number of certificate completers, keep courses affordable, and increase in-state placement of graduates.

Alamo Colleges in **Texas** is allowing students to register for up to three semesters' worth of classes at once, to reduce uncertainty and better accommodate students' complex schedules. About 20 percent of students have done so thus far.

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.

APRIL IS COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH START PLANNING NOW!

COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH, ALSO KNOWN AS #CCMONTH, is your opportunity to demonstrate the vital importance of your college, and to make an undeniable case for why your college deserves greater public support. The earlier you start planning, the more you'll accomplish.

The #CCMonth campaign has expanded to include a broad partnership of allied advocates from within the community college and higher education sectors and far beyond.

Last year, **Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker** visited community colleges throughout the state and then issued a proclamation declaring April to be Illinois Community College Month. **Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs**, **Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer**, and **Maryland Governor Wes Moore** then issued formal Community College Month proclamations on behalf of their states.

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

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



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

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

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

Our goal this year? To get even more messaging out throughout the month so that more people will see, hear, and feel the positive impacts of community colleges on students and our communities.

Your challenge this year? To accomplish even more than we accomplished last year.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT THIS APRIL

- **Talk to your elected officials** about the importance of community colleges. Work with colleges throughout your state to petition your governor to declare April Community College Month within your state—and alongside that proclamation, to make commitments to prioritize support for your institutions.
- **Write an Op Ed** for your local newspaper. Reach out to local, state, and national media outlets with stories of successful alumni, vital college programs that fill local employment needs, important partnerships with local businesses, and calls for statewide and federal support for your college.
- Create images, podcasts, and videos to **share across social media**. Social media influences popular culture, politics, and traditional media. Mobilize influencers in your community to present community colleges as important, valuable, and affordable.
- **Pass a resolution** at your March or April board meeting.
- Send out a **press release** letting the world know about your commitment.
- Spread the word to your community!

#CCMONTH ACTION STEPS TO TAKE RIGHT NOW

1. Download the #CCMonth toolkit and logo.
2. Share the toolkit with your college’s CEO, board, communications department and any others who will play a role during #CCMonth outreach.
3. Determine how your college will participate in April.
4. Make sure you are following @CCTrustees on X — This is the hub of our #CCMonth activity. Also be sure you’re following us on Facebook (facebook.com/CCTrustees) and LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/association-of-community-college-trustees>).
5. Schedule your #CCMonth communications throughout April. (Important: Make sure to coordinate your individual outreach with that of the college to make sure everyone is on the same page and sending consistent messages out into the world!)
6. Plan to send a summary of your campaign and results to ACCT Director of Strategic Communications David Conner at dconner@acct.org. We want to see the fruits of your labor and showcase the most successful outreach efforts!

Collaborate with your college's communications department to get started on your campaigns. Download the Community College Month toolkit for more ideas and inspiration.



Strengthening the Leadership Team of the Board

**MARCH 20-22, 2024
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA**

Hosted by Long Beach City College

The Fundamentals of Governance

**AUGUST 7-9, 2024
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI**

Hosted by Hinds Community College



To register and make hotel reservations, go to: acct.org/events

For more information, contact:
Maggie Owens | mowens@acct.org

TWO STATE-BASED GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES CONVENED THIS FALL

STATE-BASED GOVERNANCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTES (GLIS) ARE ONE- OR TWO-DAY PROGRAMS, FACILITATED BY ACCT expert consultants, that provide information and training on key issues and principles of governance practice. Through interactive panels, small group discussions, case-study exercises, and informal networking, participants build expertise and work through real-world issues and challenges. This fall, we partnered with state associations in Illinois and Michigan to customize content to the needs of leaders from each respective state.



Illinois

The ACCT team collaborated with the Illinois Community College Trustees Association to bring a second installment of our popular statewide institutes directly to our members in their home state. Twenty trustees and presidents from 10 different colleges gathered at Heartland Community College in Normal, Illinois, on November 30 and December 1, where the programming was customized to the interests of Illinois boards. Topics included:

- What Governance Looks Like
- Best Practices of Highly Effective Boards
- Parliamentary Procedure
- New Trustee Onboarding
- Presidential Searches
- Engaging Your Community

Michigan

Forty-one trustees and presidents attended the first Governance Leadership Institute conducted in partnership with the Michigan Community College Association. Trustees and presidents from 18 colleges across the state gathered at the Kellogg Conference Center in Lansing on December 4 and 5. Topics covered included the following, along with Michigan-specific issues.

- Board Operating Procedures
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Fundamentals
- The Board-CEO Relationship
- Presidential Evaluations
- Board Ethics
- Best Practices of Highly Effective Boards

Do you need state-based governance education?

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



BY IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD, ACCT GENERAL COUNSEL

36 www.acct.org | WINTER 2024

Labor union files petition to represent Dartmouth College men's basketball team as a bargaining unit. SEIU Local 560 has brought a petition to the National Labor Relations Board asking to represent the college's men's basketball team in a collective bargaining negotiation, nearly a decade after the NLRB denied jurisdiction over student athletes in a case involving Northwestern University. The filing follows the 2021 Supreme Court *NCAA v. Alston* decision striking down the NCAA's ban on the compensation of student athletes for name image and likeness (NIL). While the Supreme Court did not address the labor organizing question under the National Labor Relations Act for student athletes, it certainly took the first step in recognizing the group as employees.

The Dartmouth case brings an added mechanism for the NLRB to decide whether student athletes are protected under the NLRA and able to organize into labor unions. The NLRB General Counsel raised the issue in May 2023 in a case brought against the University of Southern California, the Pac-12, and the NCAA in which they are alleged to have violated the NLRA in failing to recognize student athletes as employees under the NLRA.

As of publication, Dartmouth took the position on the first day of the NLRB hearing that the athletes involved are students who do not meet any of the common law attributes of employees and therefore not union eligible employees under the NLRA. If the SEIU is successful, it would be the first case involving potential unionization of college athletes.

Preeminent law professor, 78, sues Northwestern University for age-based salary discrimination. The tenured professor, who taught at the university for 42 years, claims he has been consistently paid substantially less than "significantly younger, less-experienced, and less-tenured" peers.

The professor claims to be a "preeminent scholar" in the field of tax law. He founded his law school's lucrative LLM Tax specialty program, which he claims has been the law school's "highest-ranked specialty department" for 17 of the last 19 years. He alleges that he has been awarded lower base salary increases than his younger counterparts. He further alleges that for the 2022-23 academic year, his salary was \$7,000 less than the 50th percentile and \$55,000 less than the 75th percentile of his peers, even though those percentiles equated to 20 and 32 years of total legal academia teaching, respectively, while he has completed 49 years of total legal academia teaching. The lawsuit was filed in federal court alleging the violation of the Federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) and the Illinois Human Rights Act (*Postlewaite v. Northwestern University*, N.D. Ill. No 1:23-cv-15729, Comp filed 11/7/23).

The University of California may be the first to test whether the federal ban on hiring undocumented workers is enforceable against state entities, including public colleges and universities. On November 20, 2023, the university postponed its plans to go forward with a self-imposed deadline of November 30 to initiate a plan to hire undocumented workers. The university has decided to study the issue further before deciding on a specific course of action.

The 1986 federal Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) prohibits U.S. employers from hiring undocumented workers. The U.S. Supreme Court has addressed the constitutionality of federal regulation of state employers on multiple past occasions, having come down on both sides of the issue. We will follow developments in this area as they unfold.

Private class-action lawsuits have begun to proliferate under state-based job-advertisement pay transparency and salary-range laws. A series of 40 or so class actions filed against major employers in Washington state, including Adidas, Home Depot, and Marriott, will test the reach of a new Washington state pay transparency law. The law, along with similar statutes in California, Colorado, and New York, require employers to provide pay ranges and benefits information in job listings. The laws are aimed at providing greater pay equity to women and employees of color by being transparent about the range of salary options and benefits that come with each job. The Washington and California laws provide plaintiff applicants with a private right to sue. The Washington statute also provides incentives for plaintiffs to sue, granting plaintiffs an award of actual damages proven or \$5,000, whichever is greater, upon proving a pay transparency violation, plus attorney fees.

Former basketball coach loses sex-discrimination lawsuit on basis of "same-actor" doctrine. The former head women's basketball coach at the University of Montana has lost the sex-discrimination lawsuit she filed following her termination. She was terminated with a decision not to renew her contract as a result of a poor win-loss record, serious cultural complaints made by parents and players, as well as several players threatening to leave the university if the coach remained employed.

The previous coach had a compiled 38-year performance of winning 75% of her games, while the plaintiff had only one winning season in the four years she served as head coach. The court rejected the plaintiff's attempt to compare herself to a men's basketball coach who had lost team players to transfer, citing multiple federal cases that have rejected arguments that disparate treatment between men's and women's sports teams creates an inference of discriminatory animus under Title VII.

The court granted a positive inference to the university's stated rationale for termination under the "same-actor" doctrine, given that the same athletic director who hired the plaintiff was the person who decided to fire the plaintiff (*Schweyey v. Univ of Montana – Missoula*, 2023 BL 390525, D. Mont. 9.21-CV-00138, 10/31/23).



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.



MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, ARIZONA

DR. LISA ARMOUR

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

"Dr. Armour's extensive knowledge of academic and student affairs will serve as a valuable addition to our system. The selection committee was impressed by her expertise in strategic planning and baccalaureate degree programs. I look forward to her future contributions to our students, faculty, staff, and community at large."

— **DR. STEVEN R. GONZALES**

CHANCELLOR, MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NORTH CAROLINA

CATHERINE ENGLISH

Executive Director, Piedmont Community College Foundation

"Catherine English comes to us at a time where we are working to revamp our foundation. Her experience and expertise in fundraising and donor relations will be especially valuable to this process. We are excited to have found such a talent to join our institution."

— **PAMELA SENEGAL**

PRESIDENT, PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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.



ALAMANCE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NORTH CAROLINA

DR. KENNETH INGLE

President

"I am happy to announce that Alamance Community College has selected a new president after a months-long international search. ACCT Search Consultant Kennon Briggs guided our Search Committee and the Board of Trustees through a review of 60+ candidates, and the ACC Board chose Dr. Ken Ingle as the person who will lead the college. His proven track record in fostering innovation and student-centered approaches aligns perfectly with our commitment to providing exceptional education and opportunities for our students."

—BG (R) BLAKE WILLIAMS

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, ALAMANCE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MARICOPA COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, ARIZONA

DR. KRISTINA SCOTT

Vice President of Student Affairs



"In a career that has spanned more than two decades within the Maricopa Community Colleges, Dr. Scott has served in multiple roles focused on Student Services and Enrollment. Now, at SMCC, she will lead our Student Affairs team and bring to the division her expertise in directing student support services for diverse populations; developing and implementing retention initiatives; handling student conduct and compliance matters, budget development, and assessment; and providing cross-college leadership and supervision. I am excited to have her on the leadership team."

—DR. RICHARD DANIEL

PRESIDENT, SOUTH MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

RETREATS AND WORKSHOPS

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

Aims Community College, Colorado	Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University, Wisconsin
Alamo Colleges, Texas	Lake Tahoe Community College, California
Atlantic Cape Community College, New Jersey	Monroe County Community College, Michigan
Bellevue College, Washington	Mt. San Jacinto College, California
Chaffey College, California	North Idaho College
Coconino Community College, Arizona	Ocean County College, New Jersey
College of Lake County, Illinois	Palomar College, California
College of Southern Maryland	Piedmont Community College, North Carolina
Dallas College, Texas	Rockland Community College, New York
Dutchess Community College, New York	Roxbury Community College, Massachusetts
Eastern Wyoming College	St. Petersburg College, Florida
Florence Darlington Technical College, South Carolina	Tarrant County College, Texas
Foothill-De Anza Community College District, California	Yosemite Community College District, California
Gavilan College, California	
Gillette College, Wyoming	



Find out more about board retreats and workshops at <https://www.acct.org/governance-services> or email boardservices@acct.org



interface

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Cynthia Gruskos
Senior Assistant to the President and
the Board of Trustees
Brookdale Community College, N.J.
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VICE PRESIDENT

Shelby Foster
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SECRETARY

Reatha Bell
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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

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Chief of Staff, College of Southern Maryland
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COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

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NORTHEAST REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Dr. Michelle Scott
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Montgomery College, Md.
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SOUTHERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE (AND MEMBER-AT-LARGE DESIGNEE)

Dr. Sara Singleton
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CENTRAL REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Benita Duncan
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WESTERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Caitlin Murphy
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PACIFIC REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Yvonne Sandoval
Executive Assistant to the President and
District Governing Board
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Yvonne.sandoval@yc.edu

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

ACCT Professional Board Staff Network

PBSN WEBSITE

www.acct.org/membership/PBSN



A Journey Through the Peaks and Valleys of Presidential Transitions

BY CYNTHIA B. GRUSKOS

PBSN PRESIDENT

I REMEMBER THE DAY I RECEIVED THE OFFER TO BE THE CONFIDENTIAL assistant to the president and the board of trustees at Brookdale Community College. I felt elated and privileged to be selected to serve in this role. I quickly developed a professional relationship with my president, Dr. Maureen Murphy, and depended on her for her leadership, guidance, and mentorship. I was caught off guard when after working closely together for two and a half years, she announced she was a finalist in a presidential search at a different college. I was flooded with a tsunami of negative emotions. I was freaking out. This is a real professional experience that can occur when you are unexpectedly met with challenges you are totally unprepared for. I had heard of the concept of presidential transition, but experiencing it yourself is a whole different ball game. I was not experiencing it alone, but with my board members, our students, and the college community. Together, we prepared to reluctantly say farewell to our president and put out the welcome mat for her successor.

My experience is not unique. Recent results of The American Council on Education's (ACE) 2022 American College President Survey indicate that 55 percent of presidents plan to step down from their current positions within the next five years.

As the Professional Board Staff Network (PBSN) was planning for our professional development session at the 2023 ACCT Leadership Congress, our executive board was unanimously supportive of dedicating our entire session to this very important topic. We wanted all members of PBSN to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to effectively lead their colleges through a presidential transition and position their new CEO with the best opportunity for success. The timing was opportune for the discussion, as a couple



of board members were at the time going through a presidential transition and others had a wealth of experience to share.

Past PBSN President Dr. Larisa Pfeiffer didn't have to look far to assemble a panel, as we had three members of the executive board who were seasoned professionals that had experienced many presidential transitions. Each had unique experiences based on their college sizes, roles and responsibilities, reporting structures, and relationships with their presidents and their boards. Together, they had collectively navigated 13 presidential transitions. We welcomed Benita Duncan, executive assistant and liaison to the board of trustees at Lansing Community College in Michigan, Yvonne Sandoval, executive assistant to the president/district governing board at Yavapai College in Arizona, and Dr. Michelle Scott, special assistant to the president for board operations at Montgomery College in Maryland, to share their insights with the 52 PBSN members who attended the session.

Shelby Foster and I facilitated the discussion with our panelists on the following topics: initial concerns before the transition, developing presidential transition plans, building a sense of trust with your new CEO, and lessons learned. It was clear that our panelists took the time to reflect on their past experiences prior to the session. During the session, they shared their authentic stories and provided concrete advice to their very attentive audience.

After the applause for our three amazing panelists, we split into

breakout groups to share best practices and lessons learned from our own experiences in managing presidential transitions. Each breakout group reported on their collective experiences to the full group. The importance of building trust and communication with your new president was emphasized as a crucial element of building a successful new professional relationship. Trust flourishes when there is mutual respect, support, and a collaborative spirit. Trust continues to build when there is adaptability and flexibility in the face of changing priorities. Trust deepens as you understand the president's preferences, priorities, and anticipated needs.

It was acknowledged that the process of managing presidential transitions can be stressful. PBSN members were encouraged to connect with other members, as they can offer emotional support and provide guidance based on their personal experiences. Professional counseling was also suggested if the level of anxiety is causing health problems.

In hindsight, I wish that I could have told myself to not worry during our presidential transition, as our Board of Trustees selected Dr. David M. Stout as our seventh President of Brookdale Community College. We are all fortunate for his outstanding leadership, which is interlaced with humor and humbleness.

I am grateful that Dr. Murphy, Dr. Stout, and my board encourage me to grow professionally, to attend the ACCT Leadership Congress, and to serve on the PBSN Board.



Seated, from left: Reatha Bell, Cynthia Gruskos, and Shelby Foster; standing, from left: Dr. Larisa Pfeiffer, Benita Duncan, Yvonne Sandoval, Caitlin Murphy, Lori Hazel. Not pictured: Dr. Michelle Scott and Dr. Sara Singleton.



‘Future Proofing’ Professional Board Staff Roles

BY SHELBY FOSTER
OHLONE COLLEGE



I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A VACATION WITH MY MOM AND DAUGHTER; IT was our first multi-generational trip. We were so excited to travel together. There was only one problem — my district board meeting was right in the middle of the trip dates.

In my 17 years in the president’s office, I had missed a board meeting only once, seven years prior. For 17 years in my district, through retirements, temporary employees, and personnel changes — bridging the span of four presidents — the constant...was me.

I had no concrete plan for my absence. The idea of being out of the office proved stressful for my colleagues and for me. I typed a hasty document about our board meeting. My colleagues had no time to digest it. It was not my best work.

I had a fantastic time on my trip. Museums were visited, Broadway shows were seen. New York is amazing!

But I realized that I needed to *future proof* my board meeting responsibilities. Keeping everything stored in my head was not helping anyone. Much like my plane ticket and the hotel, a well-prepared, confident office team will become one of the costs of my future vacations.

A decade ago, our college was experimenting with an idea called “New Ways to Work” that involved cross training many people to do the same job duties. The idea was difficult to implement on a macro-scale and disappeared, but its core concept remains useful.

I encourage each of you to take some time in 2024 to *future proof* your job. We can always say “I’m too busy” or “it’s not a good time,” but our time on this earth is precious and we don’t know when we may be called away from work.

Typing up a manual of your responsibilities is a great place to start. Here are some things to consider:

- What is your district’s process for putting together a board meeting packet? Be detailed.
- How do you handle setting up a board meeting?
- How do you handle the logistics of the board meeting itself?
- How do you prepare your board meeting minutes?

These processes may seem like second nature to you, but writing them down ensures that others can assist when necessary. Start by setting aside time to list out the concepts you’d like to cover in your manual, and then work on typing up one of these concepts a week. Take screen shots of the process.

If you are the only person in your office, work with your supervisor to cross-train someone in another department. Being “the only one” is not a good plan... and it certainly isn’t freedom.

We’re strongest when we work together. If you have a manual of responsibilities that you’d like to share, please consider posting it on ACCT Connect or sharing it with your PBSN Regional group.

Perhaps in 2024, your new way to work will include giving yourself peace of mind. You are amazing at what you do. You also deserve time off. Here’s to a successful, productive, and connective new year!



Learn more at www.acct.org/membership/PBSN.

2023 ELECTION RESULTS

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Sheila Ireland

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(Three-year terms except where noted)

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Northeast Region

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Pacific Region

Deborah Ikeda

State Center Community College District, CA

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Anay Abraham

Miami Dade College, FL

1-year Partial Term

H. Allen Langley

Cleveland Community College, NC

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Carol Scott

Del Mar College, TX

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

(Three-year terms except where noted)

Amanda Howland

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Susan Moore-Fontenot

Lee College, TX

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Rio Hondo College, CA

APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Committee Chair

Keyatta Priester

Aiken Technical College, SC

ACCT DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

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Sheetal Ranjan

Bergen Community College, NJ

Gilbert Wong

Foothill-De Anza Community College District, CA



ACCT DEADLINES

- **ACCT Awards Nominations**
June 3, 2024
- **Director-at-Large Candidate Nominations**
July 1, 2024
- **Amendments to ACCT Bylaws**
July 1, 2024
- **Submitting Resolutions**
July 1, 2024

2024-25 TO-DO LIST

Mark Your Calendar!

-  **FEBRUARY 2024**
ACCT Leadership Congress Registration, Call for Presentations, and Awards Nominations Open
-  **MARCH 20 – 22, 2024**
Governance Leadership Institute: Strengthening the Leadership Team of the Board, Long Beach, California
-  **APRIL 2024 – ALL MONTH!**
Community College Month
-  **MAY 2024**
ACCT Leadership Congress Call for Presentations Deadline
-  **JUNE 3, 2024**
ACCT Awards Nominations Deadline
-  **JULY 1, 2024**
Membership Renewals Due
-  **AUGUST 7 – 9, 2024**
Governance Leadership Institute: The Fundamentals of Governance, Jackson, Mississippi
-  **OCTOBER 23 – 26, 2024**
2024 ACCT Leadership Congress, Seattle, Washington
-  **NOVEMBER 1, 2024**
Applications to serve on an ACCT committee due
-  **JANUARY 4, 2025**
Nominations to serve on the ACCT Board of Directors and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee due
-  **FEBRUARY 9 – 12, 2025**
2025 Community College National Legislative Summit, Washington, D.C.
-  **ALL YEAR**
Share your success stories by pitching articles to Trustee Quarterly magazine & engaging with your peers on ACCT Connect.
-  **ALL YEAR**
Keep in touch with ACCT's member services and communications departments – let us know what's happening at your institution



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OCTOBER 23-26, 2024



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