



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.



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