

# Trustee

## QUARTERLY



## ‘An Inflection Point’

The 2024 National Legislative Summit looked ahead to the future of work — and the workforce.

# 2024

## ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

### REGIONAL AWARDS

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**Professional Board Staff Member**

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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](http://www.acct.org) for specific nomination criteria and to submit nominations online.

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

**NOMINATIONS DUE**  
**JUNE 3 2024**



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Something Everyone Can Agree On

NO MATTER WHAT COMMUNITY college they walk into within the United States, every prospective student has an equal opportunity to access high-quality higher education. Our colleges are an equalizing force throughout the country, from the smallest rural towns to the most bustling metropolitan cities.

This April, ACCT’s member colleges once again made our voices heard and our presences in our communities known as part of our annual Community College Month campaign. At its heart, the campaign facilitates grassroots college promotions. It also serves as the fulcrum upon which member colleges are empowered to raise their voices so that ACCT can amplify them. This year, the governors of Arizona, Illinois, Michigan, and North Carolina issued proclamations declaring April to be Community College Month in their respective states.

Also this year, the Department of Education and other agencies — even the Internal Revenue Service — joined the public campaign at the federal level to bring attention to the value and importance of community colleges. In Congress, Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) introduced a House resolution to recognize Community College Month, and Rep. Ayana Pressley (D-Mass.) rose on the House floor to celebrate her local Roxbury Community College and Bunker Hill Community College “for the exemplary work that they do for learners from every walk of life and circumstance,” telling Congress that “...they disrupt generational poverty and strengthen our workforce,” and that “Congress must invest

in them like the public good that they are...this month and every month, community colleges are worth the investment.”

To close out the month, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed the bipartisan resolution introduced by Senators Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) to formally make April Community College Month.

One of the greatest features of community colleges is that no matter your political and social leanings, everyone can agree to recognize their value and their importance to our communities — because the greatest feature of community colleges is that they level the uneven playing field of life by welcoming and working with every person who wants to pursue higher education and go on to a better life.

For these reasons, we must protect our colleges. We must cherish them, honor them, support them, and promote them all year. April is a great jumpstart to charge up our advocacy. The other 11 months of the year are the best time to capitalize on all the campaign has achieved.

Thank you for your dedication to our nation’s community colleges.

**Jay Nardini**

Hawkeye Community College, IA

# Trustee

QUARTERLY

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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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ACCT exists to advocate on behalf of the nation's community colleges, to educate board members, and to advance community college student success through research and practice.

## Something Everyone Can Learn From

DEAR ACCT MEMBERS,

EVERY COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE is a volunteer leader who dedicates their time and talents to meeting the educational needs of their community. Beyond this, there is no “typical community college trustee.” Board members represent the full diversity of their communities, from demographics to professional backgrounds, and all have different strengths and different interests.

ACCT exists to advocate on behalf of the nation's community colleges, to educate board members, and to advance community college student success through research and practice.

This issue of *Trustee Quarterly* represents the full array of ACCT's service to our members — something everyone can learn from. On the cover are leaders from three federal agencies, the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Energy, and Labor, who all took time to speak with the record number of 2024 Community College National Legislative Summit participants. The NLS is our cornerstone advocacy event, a high-profile gathering of leaders from inside the Beltway and across this great nation. Read more about this year's Summit on page 14.

In response to requests from members, we've asked our longtime board retreat consultant Dr. Pamila Fisher to discuss one of the most complex aspects of boardmanship — when a thoughtful and well-intended board member inadvertently encumbers the board's ability to operate effectively (page 22). On page 30, Dr. Debra Volzer discusses a new partnership designed to revitalize the U.S. manufacturing industry through community colleges.

And because the heart of our colleges is our students, this issue includes articles about our initiative to support student parents through on-campus childcare (page 7), nationwide

efforts to improve Black learner excellence (page 26) and access to mental healthcare (page 37), and an interview with Georgetown University student and Oakland Community College alumna Tala Alahmar (page 34), who credits her community college education for her success — and misses the community she found at OCC.

This is only a preview of some of the information in this packed issue of *Trustee Quarterly*. For even more learnings, plus opportunities to speak directly to your peers, I hope you'll join us in Seattle this October for the ACCT Leadership Congress, where we'll talk about how community colleges can serve as catalysts for innovation, and you'll have the opportunity to choose from over 100 sessions presented by nationally renowned experts and your peer community college leaders. I hope you'll take this opportunity to keep learning, and I look forward to seeing you there.

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

# NEWS & NOTES



## Blumenauer, Granger Recognized with National Education Service Award



IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 2024 COMMUNITY COLLEGE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE Summit, ACCT and the **American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)** recognized **Congressman Earl Blumenauer** (Ore.—3) and **Congresswoman Kay Granger** (Texas—12) with the 2024 National Education Service Awards. One or more National Education Service Awards are presented annually to national leaders or leadership teams who have made extraordinary contributions to national public policies and resources that support education, training, and postsecondary learning.

Elected to the House of Representatives in 1996, Blumenauer has become a leading advocate for rebuilding and renewing America. A former member of the Portland Community College Board of Trustees, Blumenauer was a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee until 2007, where he was a strong advocate for federal policies that provide transportation options and housing choices, support sustainable economies, and improve the environment. He currently serves on the Ways and Means Committee and is a senior member on the Budget Committee. In his current role, he has supported community colleges by fighting for student-friendly tax policies such as Tax-Free Pell.

Congresswoman Kay Granger serves and fights for the 12th congressional district of Texas. The first woman elected to Congress from Texas, she led Republicans as the Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee in the 117th Congress. She helped deliver a bipartisan bill that provided investments to community colleges, such as an increased Pell Grants maximum award and increased funding for Title III-A and Strengthening Community College Training Grants. Granger has been working across the aisle to finalize a bipartisan compromise to fully fund fiscal year 2024 and 2025.

On behalf of our member institutions and their students, ACCT and AACC thank Representatives Blumenauer and Granger for their outstanding service to community colleges.

## 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](mailto: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](http://www.acct.org/advocacy).

## ACCT Leadership Congress

### Building a Legacy: Uplifting Students and Transforming Communities

FOR HALF A DECADE, THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES (ACCT) has convened educational leaders from throughout the world to share expertise, network, expand knowledge, and build relationships.

The 2024 Annual ACCT Leadership Congress will honor the transformative accomplishments of our institutions as we build a bridge between our remarkable history and a future marked by many unknown challenges and just as many untapped opportunities. Join us at the Seattle Convention Center this October 23 – 26. To learn more, go to [Congress.ACCT.org](http://Congress.ACCT.org).

#### Submit Presentations by May 24

ACCT invites you to submit a session or roundtable presentation proposal that falls within the following tracks:

- Collaborative Solutions for Workforce Trends
- Technology-Supported Innovation
- Enrollment Strategies
- Creating Inclusive, Student-Centered Pathways for Student Success
- Effective Board Governance: How to Be a Trustee

To register, submit presentations, and for more information, go to [Congress.ACCT.org](http://Congress.ACCT.org) or contact Educational Events Director Christina Simons at [csimons@acct.org](mailto:csimons@acct.org).

#### Mark your calendar

- May 24 – Presentation Proposals Due
- June 3 – ACCT Awards Nominations Due
- July 1 – ACCT Board of Directors Director-at-Large Candidate Nominations Due
- July 1 – Amendments to the ACCT Bylaws Due
- July 16 – Governance Leadership Institute for New Trustees Early Registration Discount Ends
- August 16 – ACCT Leadership Congress Early Registration Discount Ends
- November 1 – Application to Serve as ACCT Committee Member in 2025 Due





# BOARD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

Periodic board retreats, board self-assessments, CEO evaluations, and policy reviews are among the practices of a highly effective board. ACCT can create a customized retreat or specialized workshop to help your board understand and effectively carry out its responsibilities.

ACCT has an esteemed group of consultants that are matched to the board's needs. Our consultants engage the board in learning opportunities that may include case studies, exercises, and facilitated discussions. Visit [acctsearches.org/consultants/](http://acctsearches.org/consultants/) to find a facilitator who will best serve your needs.

Topics include:

- Accreditation
- Advocacy
- Board ethics
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Conflict resolution
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Establishing goals
- Onboarding new trustees
- Preparing the college for a leadership transition
- Policy governance
- Policy review
- Strategic planning — board roles and responsibilities
- Succession planning
- And more!

If you are interested in learning more about ACCT services contact Colleen Allen, Director, Retreat and Evaluation Services, at [callen@acct.org](mailto:callen@acct.org) or 202-558-8682.

“Open communication without judgement.”

“Allowed us time to problem solve.”

“We should do this at least once a year.”

“Skilled facilitator.”



# As Better FAFSA Rollout Falters, Community Colleges Have Messaging Opportunity

How our institutions can show up for students in the face of uncertainty.

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH

Showing up for students in this case means outreach and support to help them complete the FAFSA at all phases, and publicizing that support well into the summer. It also means sharing the message that community colleges are open enrollment, do not have deadlines, and are transfer paths to four-year institutions.

“MESS,” “DISASTER,” “FIASCO,” “BUNGLED,” “TUMULTUOUS,” and “botched” are just some of the adjectives that have been used to describe the U.S. Department of Education’s rollout for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the 2024-25 academic year. Depending on the academic year, well over 20 million, and sometimes nearly 30 million, FAFSAs are completed so that students can access federal, and in some cases, state and institutional financial aid. However, the Department’s rocky rollout of changes that Congress intended to improve the process has caused higher education to face a tumultuous enrollment cycle for the second time this decade.

Following legislation passed in December 2020, the Department has been working to implement the “Better FAFSA,” with its promises to make the tedious form easier to complete, knowledge of Pell eligibility available years in advance, and expanded access to the need-based grant. In the long run, I believe (and greatly hope) it is still possible for it to meet and exceed those goals. But first, the decline in FAFSAs filed due to the three-month delayed start date (Dec. 31 instead of Oct. 1) and the repeated processing errors delaying delivery of financial aid information to institutions must be addressed.

Community colleges, and higher education in general, must face this far less than ideal situation — many students are completely up in the air about where to go to college, and even more alarmingly, potential students from low-income backgrounds may be debating not where to go to college, but if to go to college at all.

As of April 5, 38% fewer high school seniors have completed the FAFSA this year, compared to the same point of time in past years. (Check out [www.NCANFAFSATracker.org](http://www.NCANFAFSATracker.org) for the latest data.) Over the winter, I’ve heard from community college leaders who are very concerned that this could predict a tremendous drop in enrollment. Some are experiencing an anecdotal drop in adult learners filing the

How this plays out will depend on community colleges' abilities to help reach students – whether they are graduating seniors debating their next steps, students who stopped out and are considering a return, or adults looking to change career paths – and share the message that community colleges are here for them.

FAFSA, in addition to the decrease of high school students submitting the form whose numbers are tracked by the National College Attainment Network. Yet other college leaders say this could be a boon for our sector because students hoping to attend a four-year institution may decide to attend a community college instead.

How this plays out will depend on community colleges' abilities to help reach students – whether they are graduating seniors debating their next steps, students who stopped out and are considering a return, or adults looking to change career paths – and share the message that community colleges are here for them.

Showing up for students in this case means outreach and support to help them complete the FAFSA at all phases, and publicizing that support well into the summer. It also means sharing the message that community colleges are open enrollment, do not have deadlines, and are transfer paths to four-year institutions. Our institutions offer programs throughout the year and, as open-enrollment admissions, provide far more access points on the calendar. Sub-associate programs can offer upskilling that is supported through other sources such as Individual Training Accounts funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) or the SNAP Employment and Training funds available to SNAP recipients.

Given the likely delays in financial aid packages, there will be many students in every community wondering whether they can afford college and what their options are. Community colleges need to be vocal about the choices.

This message of affordability and flexibility is one that campuses must bring to their communities. How can trustees help contribute? One encouraged activity is for trustees, as well as presidents, alumni, and other community college leaders and supporters to write opinion pieces in local media sharing the benefits of their college with the region. Another is to have open dialogue with your campus president/ leadership about the local realities and opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a dam that delayed admissions; when the dam broke after the pandemic passed, college leaders have been put into the position of having to swim upstream against the rushing waters.

The federal government has had bumpy rollouts of federal programs

before — Healthcare.gov certainly comes to mind. But now, 14 years later, it has become part of our national expectation that everyone should have an avenue to access healthcare. The headaches caused by the FAFSA delay will also be overcome. It is most likely that in a few years, when the FAFSA is back to opening on time (October 1), the form is shorter and easier to complete, and 8th graders and returning adults are able to predict if they will be eligible, the rollout will be a hazy, unfortunate memory in the higher education landscape.

But for the students who thought 2024 would be their year to begin or return to their postsecondary education but who ultimately do not engage because this was one barrier too many, their lives could be forever altered.

Community colleges have always worn many hats within their respective communities: educational institutions for transfer students, workforce development for the local economy, a source of dual enrollment with high schools, fulfillment for the community at large and, increasingly, as provider of or connector to safety net services.

This moment is yet another in which community colleges can capitalize on our strengths and tell our local students “We are here for you” for a semester, for a degree, through completion, or for transfer — and that *you do not need to opt out of higher education due to uncertainty.*



Carrie Warick-Smith is vice president for public policy at ACCT. She can be reached at [cwsmith@acct.org](mailto:cwsmith@acct.org).



What I have come to appreciate most about our sector is the firm commitment and attention to both the big rocks (economic development) and small rocks (empowering individual students and families) that comprise our colleges' missions.

## Reflections on Rocks

The diverse elements of our shared mission come together to advance economic vitality and uplift our communities.

BY ROBIN MATROSS HELMS

AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH, I HAD THE GREAT privilege to attend ACCT's first Pacific Islands Governance Leadership Institute (GLI), which took place on Saipan, the capital and largest island of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. On our last day together, Charles Cepeda, chair of the board of regents at Northern Marianas College, graciously invited me, along with Cindy Lopez and Bruce Leslie, our talented ACCT consultants who facilitated the GLI, to visit Mount Tapochau, which if measured from its base at the bottom of the ocean to its peak, is the tallest mountain on Earth.

As we ascended to the peak, the terrain became rockier and rockier. I soon understood why Charles's pickup truck was the vehicle of choice for our excursion. Near the top, we parked and continued on foot up a gravel path, flanked by large boulders and other stones. The view from the





peak was breathtaking — the photo doesn't do it justice — certainly the ocean in the distance, but also the hills and valleys, composed primarily of rocks of all shapes and sizes, which came together to form a beautiful, strong, and enduring landscape.

Inspired by my visit to Mount Tapochau, big rocks and small rocks have been on my mind lately as I think about the fundamentals of good governance, the composition of ACCT's work and how we support our members, and the impact of our sector on individuals and our communities.

## The Rocks of Good Governance

About a month after the Pacific Islands GLI, I moderated a session at the annual American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC) conference in Louisville, Kentucky, called "New Trustee Orientation: Building Knowledge, Establishing Trust." The panel, comprised of ACCT Board Chair Jay Nardini, Harper Community College President Avis Proctor, and ACCT expert consultant Debbie DiThomas, spoke about strategies to build trust and rapport among board members, as well as robust governance practices to support the institution.

Clarity of the roles and responsibilities of trustees, along with an in-depth knowledge of institutional policies, the panelists emphasized, are the major foundations for effective governance — the "big rocks" of effective board functioning. Equally important, however, and complementary to these cornerstones, are practices that establish and maintain trust among board members and with the CEO. Jay Nardini cited the example of board dinners prior to meetings, where trustees can spend time together and interact informally. For the session, he wore a bright blue button down with the Hawkeye Community College logo on it, which each trustee receives when they join the Hawkeye board as a way to feel connected to the college and demonstrate their affiliation and pride. These "small rocks" meaningfully add to and amplify the impact of governance "big rocks" and together serve as a foundation for effective boards, and ultimately, effective institutions.

## The ACCT Landscape: Big, Medium, and Small Rocks

My "rock thinking" also extends to ACCT's approach to programs and services to support our members. Led by Christina Simons and Maggie Owens, our outstanding events team, our two annual conferences are the cornerstone "big rocks" of our programs and services, providing opportunities for us to tackle weighty issues of governance together, share good practices, and build our connections and networks on a large scale.

In the last year, as part of our efforts to meet our members where they are, we've also been focusing on the small- and medium-scale programs that complement the conferences. Our state-based GLIs and the regional Pacific Islands program are key examples, providing opportunities to focus more intently on state/region-specific issues and challenges, and to deepen ties among neighboring boards and institutions. And at the college level, our board services team — led by Colleen Allen and Maureen Ndoto — is continuing to build out tailored offerings, including board retreats and workshops, CEO evaluations, policy reviews, and customized consulting.

And of course, there's ACCT Connect! In my last *Trustee Quarterly* column, I referenced the "Great Content Build of 2024," which focuses on building out the platform's resource library and online course content piece by piece — or rock by rock, if you will — to provide articles, how-to guides, checklists, policy examples, and other resources with actionable information on key governance topics and broader issues impacting community colleges. Ultimately, these "small rocks" will serve as the basis for a microcredential or badging opportunity for our member trustees to engage in structured professional development — an additional "big rock" to be added to the ACCT landscape in the future.

Our hope is that this evolving combination of big, medium, and small program and services "rocks" will come together to form a solid structure to support our members and good governance across the sector — much as rocks of all sizes form the landscape at Mount Tapochau.

## Big Picture Rocks

Following Saipan and Louisville, my most recent excursion this spring was to Wor-Wic College in Salisbury, Maryland, where I accompanied a delegation from the Indian Embassy in Washington to see one our community colleges in action and discuss potential global collaborations. With Wor-Wic President Deb Casey, we had the opportunity to attend a graduation ceremony for a cohort of eight students who had recently completed a 13-week powerline worker pre-apprenticeship program.

We heard from local industry leaders about the importance of the program for their operations and the state's economy — a striking example of a "big rock" impact of the college on its community. Equally impactful, however, was when graduates' family members in the audience were invited to make comments. A pre-teen boy raised his hand, and when called on, stated, "I just want to say how proud I am of my dad. He worked really hard, and I know he's going to do great in his job."

What I have come to appreciate most about our sector as I have gotten to know our members and our colleges in my almost two years at ACCT is the firm commitment and attention to both the big rocks (e.g., economic development) and small rocks (e.g., empowering individual students and families) that comprise our colleges' missions. These rocks of different shapes and sizes come together to advance economic vitality and uplift our communities. I'm proud of the role ACCT and our programs and services play in supporting our members to develop both the big and small rocks of good governance as a means to achieve these goals.

So let's keep rocking! We look forward to seeing you at ACCT programs, on your campus, and on ACCT Connect as we continue our work together.



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

# ‘An Inflection Point’

The 2024 National Legislative Summit looked ahead to the future of work — and the workforce.



BY MARK TONER



AS BEFITS AN ELECTION YEAR, ADMINISTRATION officials, analysts, and lawmakers speaking at the 2024 Community College National Legislative Summit discussed a nation — and an education system — at a crossroads. But the focus was far beyond November.

“We’re at this inflection point because we have an opportunity to not only make significant inroads in addressing the climate crisis, but in doing so to really rebuild the economy and... give students entry into the middle class and above,” U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm told NLS attendees. “You all have got the keys to this future.”

A record 1,300 attendees, including more than 120 student trustees, helped amplify this message across Washington, D.C. “When community college advocates show up on Capitol Hill in numbers like today, it really says something about our collective vision and mission,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. “It also says something to the members of Congress and their staffs.”

## ‘Stake Your Claim, Shoot Your Shot’

NLS speakers representing the Biden Administration were a combination of familiar and less familiar faces, as Labor and Education Department leaders were joined by their counterparts in the Departments of Commerce and Energy. The more expansive approach illustrates how these departments are “linking arms and holding hands to determine how we can position community colleges to take leads in workforce

ACCT Board Chair Jay Nardini; the 2024 Community College National Legislative Summit had record attendance.



Clockwise from left: *Cook Political Report* Editor Amy Walter; ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee; ACCT's and AACC's public policy teams present the 2024 federal legislative priorities; U.S. Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm.



development,” said Luke Rhine, U.S. Department of Education deputy assistant secretary of the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

“I think of our workforce system as our infrastructure,” said Acting Secretary of Labor Julie A. Su. “Like our roads and bridges, the workforce system needs some work... Too many people have been left out of the promise of a good job. We say to that, not this time.”

Alejandra Y. Castillo, the U.S. Department of Commerce’s assistant secretary of commerce for economic development, stressed the importance of “consistent and long-term funding” for community colleges.

“Economic development is not episodic. It’s not a one-off,” Castillo said. “Our country cannot just start and stop and think we have the strength to compete with countries around the world.”

Granholm focused on the workforce needed to support the \$23 trillion clean energy sector. The former Michigan governor urged community college leaders to work with industry on creating workforce-training programs for the more than 400 factories that are opening or expanding throughout the country as a result of the clean energy provisions in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. She also urged the more than 120 student trustees and advocates attending the NLS to consider careers in the fast-growing sector: “Stake your claim, shoot your shot, and join the hundreds of thousands of Americans working in clean energy today,” she said.

### A Bipartisan Push for Short-Term Pell

Despite election-year dynamics and a Congress with a historically low number of bills passed into law, the role of community colleges in workforce development has been “the hot topic both at home and inside the Beltway,” Carrie Warick-Smith, ACCT vice president of public policy, told attendees during the annual legislative priorities briefing by ACCT and American Association of Community College (AACC) public policy leaders. Short-term Pell Grants for workforce programs remains the sector’s top priority: “We want to make sure it gets across the finish line this year,” Warick-Smith said.

Both workforce Pell and reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) won bipartisan support in the House Committee on Education and Workforce, whose two top members, Chairwoman Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) and ranking committee member Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.), spoke during the NLS and the Congressional Forum (see p. 19).

Short-term Pell Grants “will be your path to upskilling and reskilling students quickly for in-demand jobs,” Foxx said, adding that without them, “you’ll be left tackling the skills gap with one hand tied behind your back.”

Foxx also urged attendees to support two other bills approved by the committee, the A Stronger Workforce for America Act, which would reauthorize the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WOIA) for the first time since 2014 and “improve and codify” the Strengthening



Clockwise from left: U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo; National Governors Association Executive Director Bill McBride; U.S. Acting Secretary of Labor Julie A. Su; and Congresswoman Virginia Foxx



Community Colleges Training Grants program to better support workforce education, and the College Cost Reduction Act, which has “created misplaced hesitancy” for its risk-sharing provisions, according to Foxx, who likened these measures to similar ones in Workforce Pell. “Both are aimed at maximizing student success, which is what you should be all about — ensuring that graduates receive positive value from their credential,” she said. “I urge you to be confident... because it’s high time your institutions are rewarded for their unique value.”

And while much of the focus of the NLS involved federal advocacy, National Governors Association Executive Director Bill McBride stressed the importance of state-level collaboration, particularly given governors’ bipartisan role in implementing the federal CHIPS and Science Act and infrastructure laws. He also pointed to governors’ efforts to eliminate the “paper ceiling” of four-year degree requirements in state jobs, as well as initiatives to address workforce needs through registered apprenticeship programs, digital literacy training, and business-education collaborations in high-demand fields such as electric vehicle manufacturing and healthcare.

“Governors have long understood that education is the key to opportunity and economic advancement,” McBride told attendees. “What’s become more clear is how essential it is that community colleges offer skill-based education that can transform communities and states.”

*Cook Political Report* Editor Amy Walter reminded NLS attendees that community colleges have a message that cuts across party

lines — and the record number of attendees provided another cause for optimism.

“When we have the numbers like we have this year, it makes all the difference in the world,” David Baime, AACC senior vice president for government relations, told attendees. “There are some headwinds for higher education, but in terms of community colleges, we’re still in a really good place.”

### New and Growing Partnerships

The NLS also provided opportunities to showcase collaborative efforts involving the community college sector. ACCT and the National Head Start Association (NHSA) launched Kids on Campus, a new initiative designed to bring more Head Start centers to more community college campuses throughout the country. The initiative is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Crimsonbridge Foundation, ECMC Foundation, Imaginable Futures, Lumina Foundation, Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation, and Trellis Foundation (see p. 7).

Community college graduate Amber Angel, who spoke about her experience as a student parent during the 2021 NLS, stressed the importance of developing stronger campus-based childcare programs in her new role with ECMC. “Thirty percent of students on my campus were student parents, but I felt alone,” she said. After studying and working at Los Angeles Valley College, she went on to California State Northridge to study family and consumer sciences and now serves as a career-readiness program officer at ECMC Foundation.





A record number of student trustees and community college students participated in the 2024 Community College National Legislative Summit.



More than 100 college campuses already partner with Head Start centers, and their work can provide a model for new partnerships with the 17,000 Head Start sites nationwide, according to ACCT's Lee. "This demonstrates we can bring them together and reduce the burdens on college campuses while providing these benefits," he said.

Also during the NLS, community college leaders also were briefed on the results of the 2023-24 Digital Learning Pulse Survey, an ACCT-Cengage partnership that revealed growing concerns about the use of artificial intelligence that were echoed in many Hill visits (see p. 18).

Representatives from the Labor and Education departments also met with attendees to discuss transforming the traditional apprenticeship model to meet emerging career fields and changing demographics.

"Helping diversify the basis of what apprenticeships will be will change the future of work," said Bunker Hill Community College President Dr. Pam Eddinger, who chaired a Labor Department national advisory committee on apprenticeship programs. "The future of work is people, and it's about accommodating the diversity and talent of this new pool."

And the record number of student trustees in attendance attended a session on advocacy led by Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society (PTK) President and CEO Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner. "Community colleges serve a great purpose," she said. "All of us understand underfunded organizations cannot fulfill their purpose. You're here to fight."

"I applaud you all coming here in force, and being involved," Lee added. "Everything at this conference is about you. Full stop."

### A 'Historic Role'

The NLS concluded with a reminder that advocacy remains a year-round effort. "It is crucial we continue to advocate and work with our legislators to make sure community colleges receive the support we need to serve our students well," said ACCT Chair Jay Nardini, trustee of Hawkeye Community College.

And Foxx concluded what she said would be her last time addressing the NLS in her role as House Education and Workforce Committee chair by crediting the "historic and uniquely American role that community colleges play in society."

"The thousand-strong network of community colleges represented here today might be the single most American institution," she said.



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.



Clockwise from left: Community college delegations visit Oregon Representatives Susan Bonamici and Lori Chavez-DeRemer; Illinois Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth; and Georgia Representative Lucy McBath

# ON THE HILL

## AI, Workforce Needs Drive Member Visits

BY MARK TONER

AS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES, STUDENTS, AND presidents fanned out across Capitol Hill to meet with lawmakers, they often found the conversation turning to a topic not on the famed “green sheet” of legislative priorities: artificial intelligence.

Lawmakers and community college leaders alike expressed concern over the lack of clear policy for the fast-changing technology and greater retraining needs as AI impacts entire sectors of the workforce.

Meeting with Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Ore.), representatives of several Oregon community colleges discussed the disruption to livelihoods that could occur “unless we can be proactive in training people to be relevant in the world of AI,” as Mt. Hood Community College trustee Dana Stroud put it. In similar fashion, representatives from Augusta Technical College and the Technical College System of Georgia discussed the need to revamp curriculum with Rep. Lucy McBath (D-Ga.), who praised community and technical colleges for their flexibility in the face of fast-changing conditions.

Workforce issues dominated conversations across the Capitol. Meeting with Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-Ore.), Portland Community College President Adrien Bennings discussed the benefits of short-term Pell and

pointed to PCC’s new mobile welding unit as a way to both demonstrate careers to high school students and bring short-term training to rural areas. “We usually do a ribbon cutting. We did a chain cutting — with flames,” Bennings said.

PCC student trustee Nathaniel Kung discussed the importance of workforce-focused programs with Chavez-DeRemer, pointing to working students and those with families. “Short-term Pell helps support their education and impacts them,” he said. And student Rachel Biscone of Linn-Benton Community College told Rep. Val Hoyle (D-Ore.) about the importance of SNAP and other wraparound supports — and how getting a campus job dramatically reduced her benefits. “There are a lot of barriers to food access,” she said.

Members of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (ICCTA) also discussed affordability and workforce programs with the state’s two senators, Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D) and Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D). “We cannot stay on the sidelines as higher education keeps slipping further and further out of reach for so many people,” Duckworth said.

# A Seat at the Table

The Congressional Forum on Capitol Hill highlighted the continuing bipartisan consensus supporting community colleges.

By Mark Toner





Virginia Representative Bobby Scott



Florida Representative Gus Bilirakis

**W**HEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS COME TO Washington, they're often told their institutions are the nation's best kept secret. Speaking during the annual Congressional Forum on Capitol Hill, Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) used even stronger language, calling his state's two-year colleges "a secret weapon."

"We must support our colleges," Bilirakis said during the February event, which brought community college trustees, presidents, and advocates to a packed conference room on Capitol Hill during the Community College National Legislative Summit (see p. 14).

### A 'Roadmap for Success'

Noting that 2021 and 2022 were the years with the greatest job growth in U.S. history, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.) stressed the importance of ensuring that Americans have the skills needed to fill them.

"Job growth will be meaningless unless we can train people to take those good jobs," Scott told Forum attendees. "And that's where community colleges come in."

Scott pointed to "chronic disinvestment in higher education generally, and workforce systems specifically" as barriers to workers accessing needed training.

As ranking member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Scott noted that the committee has made bipartisan efforts to address workforce needs, including the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act and efforts to expand the Pell Grant program to short-term workforce programs.

Noting that studies show that many families can't come up with \$400 for emergency expenses, Scott said that short-term programs costing \$1,000 or more "that can transform the student's life" remain out of reach for too many.

Scott also touted the House Democrats' Roadmap for College Student Success, which he called "a comprehensive vision for updating our higher education system," including addressing affordability, student success, and incentives for states to invest in tuition-free community college.

### 'A Win-Win for All of Us'

Rep. Bilirakis stressed his longstanding connections to higher education, including teaching weekly at a Florida college and sponsoring legislation that created high school career academies and allowed the state's two-year institutions to award bachelor's degrees in selected majors while serving in Florida's legislature.

Attending two-year institutions "just makes so much sense," he said. "It gives so many people an opportunity, particularly if you have children [or] have to work a few jobs to make it through... You can be extremely successful and stay at home and get a four-year degree."

Bilirakis emphasized that short-term Pell grants represent a practical approach to workforce development. "It's a win-win for all of us," he said.

### 'The Sweet Spot'

Pointing to the nearly 9 million job openings in the U.S. economy, Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Conn.) stressed the challenges involved in "connecting people to these opportunities."

"When you look at what's the best strategy, community colleges fall exactly in the sweet spot in terms of how the country deals with this issue," he said.

Focusing on Connecticut's efforts to find and train thousands of workers to build submarines for the U.S. Navy, Courtney described a short-term manufacturing pipeline program co-designed by Three Rivers Community College, a shipyard, and trade unions with the



Connecticut Representative Joe Courtney



Illinois Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi

support of the U.S. Department of Labor. The program has graduated 4,000 students, all of whom are “hired immediately,” he said.

Courtney also described efforts to revitalize the bipartisan community college caucus, which he called “a really helpful mechanism” to communicate the needs of the sector. Courtney urged Forum attendees to encourage their state’s lawmakers to join the caucus, stressing its importance in amplifying advocacy efforts like the NLS.

“The size of this crowd speaks volumes about the passion you bring to this incredibly important issue for our country,” he said.

### ‘A Seat at the Table’

Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.) described bipartisan support for the 2018 reauthorization of the Perkins career and technical education program, which he co-authored with Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.) and was signed into law in 2017 by President Trump. “It made sure that resources were employed in a manner that would bring employers and community colleges and educators together to make sure that whatever curricula were developed and whatever those resources were invested in would end up training your students to get what I call access to the greatest social welfare program devised by human beings — a job,” he said.

Krishnamoorthi urged community college advocates to support two current bills. The first, the College Transparency Act, would publish student outcomes data for institutions, which he called “a no brainer.” The law would allow “parents and students to shop to be able to shop for their education,” he said. “And when they shop for their education, they find good values at your community colleges.”

The second bill, the Opportunity to Compete Act, would require employers to not screen out job candidates without four-year degrees, reflecting a growing trend in both the private and public sector. “Too many people without a four-year college degree get filtered out of

consideration by large employers... At the end of the day, it’s about acquiring skills and capabilities, not about degrees,” Krishnamoorthi said. “That’s the type of economy we’re moving towards, and that’s the one I believe you are training your students for as well.”

Krishnamoorthi also stressed the importance of continuing advocacy. “I’m so glad you are all here to advocate on behalf of your students and your communities,” he said. “There’s this old saying in Washington, D.C.: If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re on the menu — and none of us or our students can afford to be on the menu.”

In the months following the forum, the Congressional Community College Caucus, Third Way, and ACCT held an event to celebrate Community College Month and learn about successful collaborations between community colleges and workforce partners. The April event was sponsored by Representatives Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) and Joe Courtney (D-Conn.), co-chairs of the Congressional Community College Caucus. Speakers from two community colleges in Florida and Maryland, and one from the Appalachian Regional Commission shared how they leverage partnerships with local industry and community colleges to create a skilled pipeline for workers in their communities.



Mark Toner is an editor for Trustee Quarterly.



# Supporting Student Parents Through Access to On-Campus Childcare: A Partnership that Makes Sense

The Kids on Campus initiative opens the doors for new partnerships between colleges and Head Start centers.

BY STEVE JURCH

COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE ESSENTIAL PILLARS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, OFFERING diverse student populations accessible pathways to academic and career advancement. Within these institutions, a significant demographic often overlooked in discussions on higher education policy and practice is student parents. Juggling the roles of both student and parent, these individuals face unique challenges and barriers to academic success.

Financial constraints, inadequate childcare options, limited support services, and the constant struggle to balance competing responsibilities are among the myriad challenges encountered by student parents. Financial barriers such as tuition costs, textbooks, and childcare expenses pose significant obstacles, especially for those from low-income backgrounds. Moreover, the lack of affordable and reliable childcare options further impedes their ability to attend classes and dedicate time to their studies. Tailored support services like academic advising, counseling, and childcare assistance are often lacking. Balancing academic coursework with parenting responsibilities demands exceptional time management skills and frequently leads to feelings of stress, overwhelm, and burnout.



ACCT Vice President for Public Policy Carrie Warick-Smith, Howard Community College President Dr. Daria J. Willis, and ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee speak at the Kids on Campus project launch event in February.

So what does the community college student parent look like? The demographic profile of student parents in community colleges varies by location, socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity, and family structure. However, common trends emerge. Student parents tend to be older than traditional college students, with many in their late 20s, 30s, or even older, reflecting delays in pursuing higher education due to parenting responsibilities. While predominantly female, there is a growing recognition of male student parents. Student parents come from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, with Black and Hispanic/Latino student parents disproportionately represented compared to their White counterparts, likely due to systemic inequalities. Often from low-income or working-class backgrounds, many rely on financial aid and scholarships to afford college expenses. Balancing employment alongside their studies is common, further complicating their academic engagement.

### Supporting Student Parent Success

Understanding the demographics of student parents is critical for designing effective support services, policies, and programs tailored to their unique needs and circumstances. By recognizing their diversity and addressing the challenges they face, community colleges can better serve and empower student parents to achieve their educational goals.

Various strategies can support the academic success of student parents in community colleges, including offering comprehensive support services such as childcare assistance, academic advising, counseling, and financial aid resources. Flexible learning options like online courses, evening classes, and accelerated programs accommodate their schedules. Targeted financial aid and scholarships alleviate the financial burden, while establishing peer support networks and mentorship programs fosters a sense of community on campus.

Providing affordable and accessible childcare options is one of the most impactful supports institutions can offer student parents, removing a significant barrier to academic participation. While childcare options include subsidies and partnerships with local providers, affordable on-campus childcare enhances academic outcomes by making education more accessible, reducing stress, improving concentration, and ultimately increasing retention and graduation rates.

Securing funding for childcare services is essential, with potential sources including federal grants like Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS), state funding programs, and private foundations. Various models exist for providing childcare on campus, including operating childcare centers, partnering with external providers, or establishing family resource centers.

### Kids on Campus: Partnering for Student Parents

A unique strategy involves forming co-location partnerships between community colleges and Head Start centers. In February, ACCT partnered with the National Head Start Association (NHSA) to embark on a five-year initiative to increase the number of Head Start centers located on community college campuses. The Kids on Campus initiative builds on a previous planning grant that confirmed both the need for and feasibility of the co-location of Head Start programs on community college campuses as a solution for on-campus childcare needs. While there are already approximately 130 Head Start programs on community college campuses nationwide, with over 1,200 colleges and 17,000 Head Start locations, the opportunity is ripe for large-scale, systemic expansion. Participants in the first stage of work highlighted that there is no “roadmap” to follow for establishing these partnerships, making it a difficult process, despite the vast potential benefits.



Attendees brought their children to the Kids on Campus launch; Howard Community College Student Abigail Bediako with ECMC Foundation Career-Readiness Program Officer Amber Angel

Initially, we will screen potential organizations for interest and preparedness to partner, then work to match aligned community colleges and Head Start centers through the partnership process. To help facilitate the progression from matchmaking to marriage, technical assistance will be provided throughout. One significant tool that will be leveraged is a user guide developed during the planning project. The guide covers a range of processes, from helping the partners understand each other's structures, where and how to start conversations, and the negotiation process to marketing and launching this new venture. In addition to some of the framing and basics of partnerships, there are examples and guides for MOUs and contracts, along with considerations for retrofitting space for these programs.

In addition to this resource, technical assistance webinars, peer learning opportunities, facilitated conversations, workplan review, and partnership coaching will be carried out by staff from both ACCT and NHSA. Various subject matter experts will be engaged along with convenings, site visits as needed, and a variety of dissemination activities. One critical component of the project is the engagement of Head Start and student parents. The inclusion of lived experience is critical to program sustainability and success. Each college/organization that meets certain benchmark criteria will receive a stipend to support an advisory panel of student parents from both the Head Start center and the community college to share suggestions and provide insight to the partnership from their perspective.

We expect each pairing and eventual partnership to move on its own timeline, with start to completion date ranges varying greatly due to factors such as existing partner infrastructure, construction timelines, institutional planning schedules, and other variables.

The resources created during the planning project will be living documents that will be updated regularly based on feedback and lived

experience building new partnerships. Additional resources will be developed, such as one-page guides on topics like MOU structure, transportation solutions, academic program partnerships, food service and play area solutions, and leveraging local funding sources. By making a concerted effort to hone the resources and technical assistance, scalability becomes more efficient as challenges to the partnership process are addressed.

The proactive and strategic use of data to track project progress from the start will be central to helping institutions gain insight into the student parents on their campuses and the success of creating on-campus childcare centers and assessing their outcomes.

At the end of the project, we plan to increase the number of operational partnerships by 50 to 75 and have a publicly available, advanced user guide that has been refined to support the creation of additional partnerships after the grant concludes. We will also have demonstrated the viability of this sustainable model of providing affordable, on-campus childcare for student parents.

To stay updated on our progress or for information on how to participate in the project, please visit [www.acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/kids-on-campus](http://www.acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/kids-on-campus).

To get your college involved with the Kids on Campus initiative, contact Miya T. Simpson, Ph.D., at [msimpson@acct.org](mailto:msimpson@acct.org).



Steve Jurch is ACCT's Associate Vice President for the Center for Policy and Practice. He can be reached at [sjurch@acct.org](mailto:sjurch@acct.org).



# 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, Colo.  
Allen Community College, Kan.  
Brookdale Community College, N.J.  
Coconino Community College, Ariz.  
College of North Central Michigan, Mich.  
College of Southern Maryland, Md.  
College of the Marshall Islands  
Crowder College, Mo.  
Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C), Ohio  
Danville Area Community College, Ill.  
Del Mar College, Texas  
Diné College, Ariz.  
(SUNY) Dutchess Community College, N.Y.  
Eastern Wyoming College, Wyo.  
(SUNY) Erie Community College, N.Y.  
Erie County Community College (EC3), Pa.  
Florence-Darlington Technical College, S.C.  
Foothill-DeAnza Community College District, Calif.  
Gavilan College, Calif.  
Gillette College, Wyo.  
Harford Community College, Md.  
Harper College, Ill.  
Hawkeye Community College, Iowa  
Houston Community College, Texas  
Iowa Valley Community College District, Iowa  
Johnson County Community College, Kan.  
Joliet Junior College, Ill.  
Lee College, Texas  
Linn-Benton Community College, Ore.  
McLennan Community College, Texas  
Mid Michigan College, Mich.  
Middlesex County Community College, N.J.  
Ministry of Education Marshall Islands  
Montgomery College, Md.  
Moraine Valley Community College, Ill.  
Mt. San Jacinto College, Calif.  
Neosho County Community College, Kan.  
New Mexico Junior College, N.M.  
North Idaho College, Idaho  
North Iowa Area Community College, Iowa  
Oakton College, Ill.  
Ohlone College, Calif.  
Portland Community College, Ore.  
Pratt Community College, Kan.  
Rock Valley College, Ill.  
Southeastern Illinois College, Ill.  
South Puget Sound Community College, Wash.  
Tarrant County College, Texas  
West Virginia Community College Association, W.Va.  
Yavapai College, Ariz.



Find out more about board retreats and workshops  
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# WHEN THE DISSENTER BECOMES THE DISRUPTOR

A longtime board retreat facilitator discusses how to know when the behavior of a board member has gone too far and what to do about it.

By Pamila Fisher, Ed.D.



## Challenging board members who disrupt a board rarely change their behavior without other board members taking corrective action. Therefore, it is in everyone's best interest to prevent this type of disruption from occurring at all.

**I**N 2024, THE ROLE OF A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC COMMUNITY college board member is both more important and more challenging than ever in our more than 120-year history. Unfortunately, some individuals who serve on boards do not respect the foundational principles upon which public community colleges were developed and guide how a trustee is expected to fulfill their responsibilities. A few even question the comprehensive community college mission. These differences are exacerbated by a recent cultural shift through which disrespectful and uncivil behavior are more common and tolerated. When individuals who hold any of these views are appointed or elected to a community college board, their behavior can disrupt an otherwise successful board and college.

Fortunately, those who feel this way are in the minority and have not caused widespread disruption to our colleges' abilities to fulfill their missions as public, open-access providers of high-quality higher education. Unfortunately, there are signs that the number is increasing. In a recent ACCT survey of member board members, some of the highest-priority concerns cited by respondents included these three areas:

- Colleagues on boards do not understand or accept their respective roles, responsibilities, and limitations as trustees.
- Trustees (new and long-term) attempt to impose their religious views on college-wide decisions.
- Political divisiveness throughout the country has reached the college boardroom, making it more challenging to focus on the college mission and operate as a cohesive team.

Far more common are the many instances of individual trustees, or occasionally small groups of two or three trustees, who simply behave in ways that disrupt a governing board's operation. These behaviors range from minor annoyances to seriously destructive conflict. Whether intentional or not, these behaviors have a negative impact on the college. When board members do not follow legal guidelines, college policies, and accepted best practices, the following can occur:

- Other board members and their president or chancellor are distracted from the critical issues of the day.
- The board's dysfunctional behavior becomes a role model for some college staff.
- The board's reputation in the community suffers, harming the community's faith in the quality and value of the college itself.

- The board's actions jeopardize the college's accreditation status, bringing harm to the institution's reputation and stability, and jeopardizing the perceived value of credentials earned at the college by students.

Challenging board members who disrupt a board rarely change their behavior without other board members taking corrective action. Therefore, it is in everyone's best interest to prevent this type of disruption from occurring at all.

### Prevention

As always, prevention of a problem is the preferable approach. There are many ACCT resources available to help boards understand and adopt best practices that encourage effective trusteeship.

A quick checklist to assess how well your board has prepared follows:

Does your board...

1. Engage in regular professional development for all members?
2. Provide extensive orientation for new members?
3. Develop and regularly review key board policies related to conduct?
4. Conduct annual board self-assessments?
5. Participate in annual retreats where serious open discussion occurs?
6. Focus all decisions on the college mission and what is best for students?

### Warning Signs

There are signs of inappropriate behavior that should not be ignored. The following is a sampling, not an exhaustive list, of such behaviors:

- Violating legal guidelines related to open meeting laws and confidentiality
- Ignoring formal college policies
- Engaging in daily operations or micromanaging
- Not honoring a decision once it is made by the board
- Improper communication with employees
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Speaking "for the board"
- Yielding to undue outside influences and special interest groups
- Undermining the president or chancellor
- Being hostile and disrespectful to colleagues and staff
- Using their role to promote their political career

Ideally, a board should already have a policy on recourse that spells out when and how it will act if the board finds a serious breach of legal or policy guidelines has been alleged or has occurred. Such a policy need not be long and is often included in, or follows, a college board's code of ethics or conduct.

- Advocating for an ideological position contrary to the college mission
- Behaving unethically and dishonestly
- Tolerating board meetings that are obviously dysfunctional

### Intervention

Every board member is responsible for the effectiveness of his or her board. At some point, one or more trustees will go from being disappointed to being appalled to being genuinely concerned for the college's future if a colleague's behavior fails to live up to the standard expected of a trustee. Since most trustees are genuinely nice people who love their college and are honored to serve on the board, they rarely are the kind of person who finds confrontation an easy thing to do. And yet confrontation must be the first step toward intervention and conflict management.

In general, a good place to begin is a private conversation with a colleague about how their behavior affects others. That can be done by the board chair, or the chair may ask another colleague to do that if their personal relationship with the disruptor is better. Confrontation in private is always best if possible. An exception is if something destructive has been said in public. In that case, the chair must clarify immediately, in public, that what was just said is not the view of the board. This is essential because it is understood that every board speaks as a collective with "one voice," and if an inappropriate or damaging comment goes uncorrected in public, then that comment is likely to be perceived as the view of the board as a whole. Correcting the comment publicly communicates that the individual spoke only on his or her own behalf, and this can prevent public perception that a board is working against the interests of the community and the mission of the college. It can also be helpful to ask the person who misspoke if they would like to rephrase or apologize for their comments.

When private conversations with the difficult person have not worked, a conversation that includes a third trustee may be more effective if that does not constitute a quorum.

When informal conversations do not work, it is a good idea to review the previously mentioned prevention checklist and ask if all those activities have occurred in a meaningful way. If not, back up and start there. Sometimes, a review of a college's statement of roles and responsibilities and code of ethics as well as your board self-assessment results is all that is needed to improve the behavior, along

with reviewing the mission and core values that should be guiding every board decision.

Frequently, outside assistance in the form of a facilitated retreat can be helpful. An independent facilitator can establish guidelines that allow all participants to participate fully. Taking time to really get to know one's colleagues in a way that is not possible in a formal board meeting is often a significant step toward creating a safe environment for discussing sensitive issues. Once that happens, a facilitator can help defuse any tension or hostility, but not the emotion, so members can openly express their concerns. Once everyone feels they have spoken and been heard (even though they still disagree), it is possible to discuss techniques for successful conflict management, both then and in the future. However, do not expect a single retreat to resolve all the issues that may have been at play for months or even years. It takes time to build trust. But learning strategies for handling future conflict is doable if it includes an action plan for further communication skills development.

### Recourse

In rare situations, no intervention strategies will change a particular person's behavior. Some people will never accept that they are the outlier. They believe they are right and everyone else is wrong. They feel disrespected even when they may themselves be a bully. Or they may have a single agenda (not consistent with the college mission or best practices), and they will not let it go.

When all else has failed, a board may conclude it is necessary to take recourse to indicate their disapproval of said behavior. This is a major step and should not be taken lightly. But there are reasons when it may be advisable. One of the most common reasons boards have decided to take this step is to make it known to the public (college staff and community) and their respective accrediting commission that they do not approve of the behavior in question. While a board may be hesitant to do this, in serious situations it may be a necessary step to reassure the college's community that the institution's leadership is responsible and committed to public service.

Ideally, a board should already have a policy on recourse that spells out when and how it will act if the board finds a serious breach of legal or policy guidelines has been alleged or has occurred. Such a policy need not be long and is often included in, or follows, a college board's code of ethics or conduct. When a board is considering such an action, it is important to

Leading a successful community college is not likely to get any easier in the near future. Courageous and thoughtful leaders need to think ahead and must be ready to intervene when a member's behavior becomes disruptive to the college's progress. It is wise to consider these policies and practices before you need them — and thus perhaps avoid ever having to implement them.

### IS THIS YOU?

1. Do you sometimes share confidential information about the college, but only with your significant other or another trusted confidant?
2. Do you call other board members to share how strongly you feel about an upcoming vote?
3. Do you reach out to college staff when you need information because you do not want to bother the president?
4. When you notice something on campus that needs attention, do you contact the facilities administrator?
5. Do you receive more calls from concerned employees than other board members?
6. During board meetings, do you surprise staff or the president with questions some of your colleagues interpret as disrespectful or condescending, or questions that should have been raised ahead of time?
7. Do you find it necessary to speak about almost every item on the board agenda?
8. When a vote is taken and your opinion was in the minority, do you believe you need to explain to the campus and public why you were correct and your colleagues were wrong?
9. Do you find yourself frustrated or even angry that your colleagues do not listen to you, even though you are more experienced and knowledgeable?
10. Have you expressed your dissatisfaction with other members of the board and/or the president with employees, the public, or the press?
11. Has one or more members of the board asked you to change specific behaviors?
12. Do you feel isolated and no longer enjoy being on your college board?

Disruptive board members often do not recognize that they contribute to board dysfunction because their intentions are good and they are confident about their opinions. If you answered “yes” to several of these questions, you may want to reflect on what it means to be part of a collaborative community college governing board. Changes in your behavior could enable you to be a more successful contributor and influencer in the accomplishment of the college's mission.

follow your own policy and procedures and advisable to seek legal counsel as well.

Most states limit what a board can do as a sanction against a board colleague, whether elected or appointed. The most common response is a public letter of reprimand. Sometimes, the sanction includes removing the offender from an officer position on the board, or another appointed role the board has granted them. Sometimes, the response may be a refusal to approve travel for the member. Whatever actions are taken, the board dynamics will be changed, and the board majority should have a plan for how they will move forward.

### Preparing for the Future

Leading a successful community college is not likely to get any easier in the near future. Courageous and thoughtful leaders need to think ahead and must be ready to intervene when a member's behavior becomes disruptive to the college's progress. It is wise to consider these policies and practices before you need them — and thus perhaps avoid ever having to implement them.



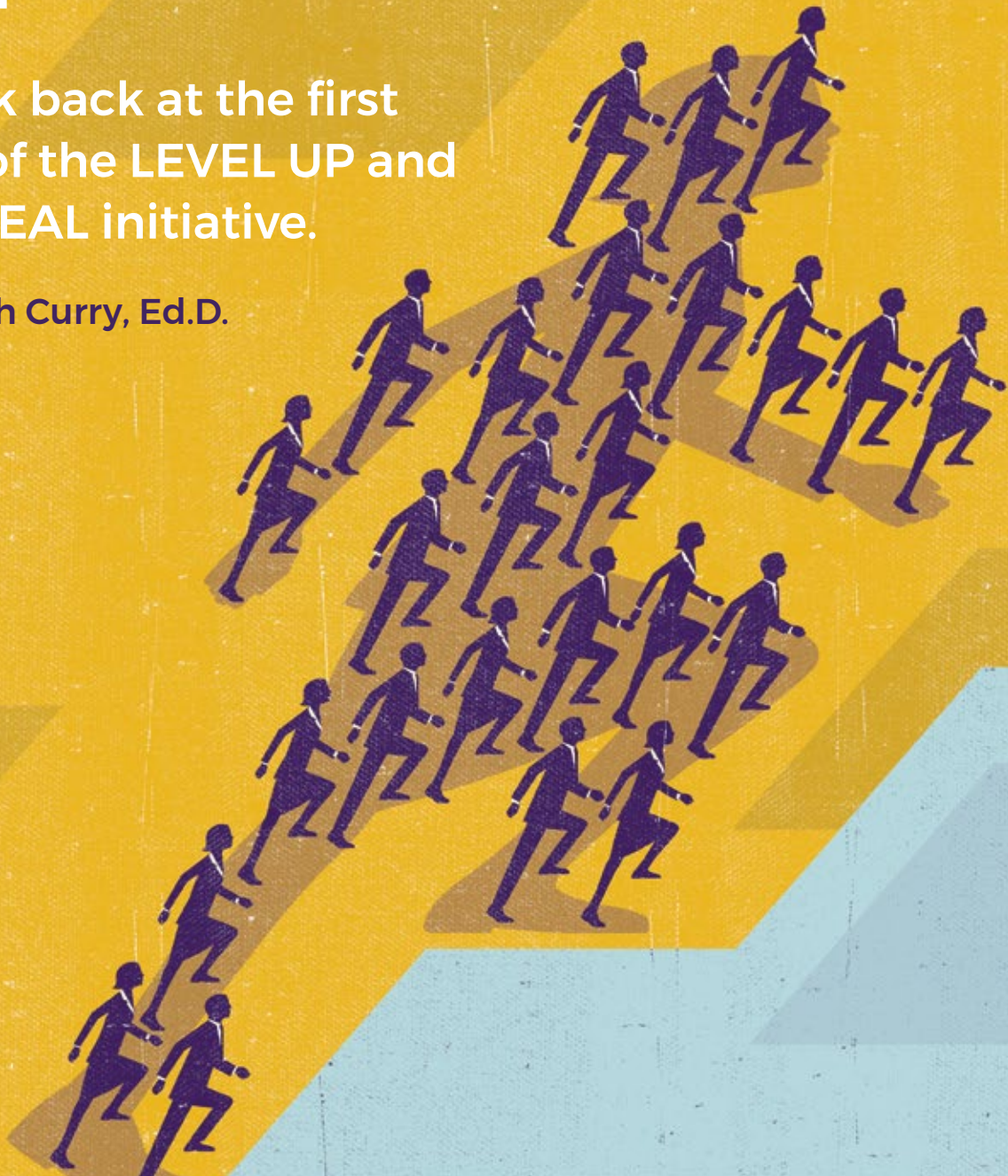
*Dr. Pamela Fisher is a graduate of Modesto Junior College, former chancellor of Yosemite Community College District, former interim chancellor of the City College of San Francisco, and she has conducted more than 60 CEO searches and over 100 governing board retreats on behalf of ACCT over the past 15 years.*

# Unapologetically Working Together for Black Learner Excellence

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A look back at the first  
year of the LEVEL UP and  
Get REAL initiative.

By Keith Curry, Ed.D.



## Grounded in data, research, and policy solutions, the impact of LEVEL UP – Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Black Learner, Unapologetically – continues to grow.

**T**HE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN AN UNAPOLOGETIC YEAR FOR Black learner excellence and success! Through intentional advocacy efforts with stakeholders at the community, institutional, state, and federal levels, we have continued to build a movement around advocating for policies that address the staggering loss of Black learners from higher education over the last 20 years. Grounded in data, research, and policy solutions, the impact of LEVEL UP – *Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Black Learner, Unapologetically* – continues to grow. Through a variety of engagements, including Black Learner Excellence Community Summits, higher education symposiums, stakeholder dinners, the formation of the Black Learner Alliance, and the LEVEL UP and Get REAL Policy Playbook, we continue to advance actionable policy solutions and improved institutional practices to create more equitable systems of learning. The onus is not on Black learners – it is on all of us to create this change.

But this work, for me, isn't new. I've been involved with educational equity efforts since I was 19, when I started a program called "Destination Higher Education" (DHE) for admitted Black and African American students at the University of California Santa Cruz. This program was designed to help us create a stronger sense of belonging on campus. Seeing the impact that I had there, I knew I had to continue this work for the rest of my life.

Those who know me know what I always say when I look at any institution or organization: Budgets are a statement of values. You put your money where your values lie. If you're really about this life, then you'll find a way to fund it. That is what we did at Compton College. Students know they can always get a meal every day they come to school. They know they can always count on our farmer's market for \$20 worth of fresh groceries and free blue books, scantrons, and pencils.

We're doing the work at both the micro and the macro levels. We need to ensure students have equitable access in these tangible ways, and we need to ensure we're getting in front of policymakers and practitioners to tell the story of the work. That's where LEVEL UP comes in.

The intention of LEVEL UP has always been to engage directly with a variety of stakeholders and Black learners to drive action. The *LEVEL UP: Leveraging Explicit Value for Every Learner, Unapologetically* case-making report was informed by both quantitative and qualitative research and included the expertise of a distinguished expert advisory committee of researchers and practitioners. This committee, chaired by

me, informed the report's recommendations, honoring ongoing efforts and validating the recommendations specified for systemic change within higher education. Again moving toward action, I then convened the National Advisory Panel to create a Call to Action, committing bipartisan support from 26 higher education, policy, and business leaders who publicly signed on to LEVEL UP and Get REAL.

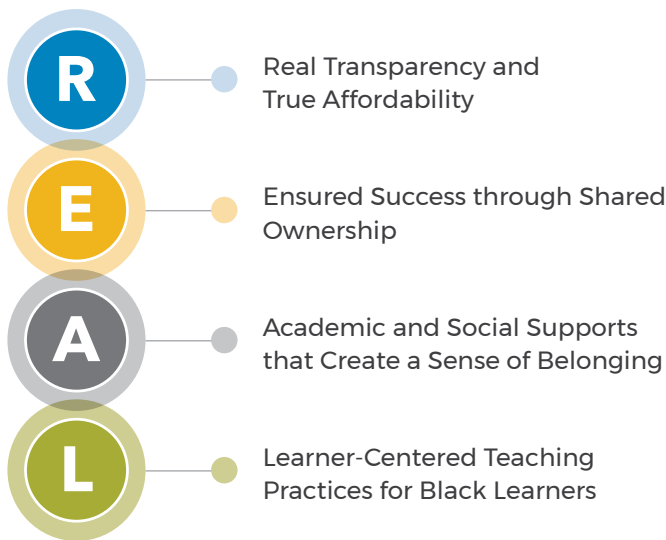
Both the LEVEL UP report and Call to Action were released in March 2023. Borne from these, in partnership with Achieving the Dream, the launch of The Alliance for Black Learner Excellence was announced at the 2023 ACCT Annual Leadership Congress. The Leveling Up: Realizing Black Learner Excellence at Community Colleges Symposium convened over 100 community college leaders and advocates to discuss the role of institutions and others in Black learner access and success. This new Alliance – led by Achieving the Dream's Dr. Karen Stout and Monica Parrish Trent, Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL), and me, with funding from the ECMC Foundation – will launch a cohort of community colleges focused on building institutional capacity, peer support, and learning for leaders in the field interested in joining the Alliance. By investigating the roots of educational inequity and identifying promising approaches for institutional transformation, the Alliance seeks to serve Black learners better. At Achieving the Dream's February 2024 DREAM conference, there was a standing-room-only session for LEVEL UP, demonstrating the demand and interest in advancing Black learner excellence. Such efforts continue to provide community colleges and policymakers with the evidence they need to make decisions that change the value proposition for minoritized learners and thus drive improvements in access and success.

Another important layer of this work is to coalesce local community leaders working on the ground every day for equity around the LEVEL UP initiative. Doing so builds momentum and support around this movement, which I continue to elevate with examples from my own experience (leadership successes and mistakes). Disseminating tools and resources for community leaders grounded in both research and lived experiences create a groundswell of momentum and support to enact systemic change for Black learners and communities.

The first of these community engagements was the Atlanta Black Learner Excellence Summit held in July 2023. Leaders from the Institute of Education Leadership and Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education convened to co-create shared commitments for Black learners in the Metro Atlanta area to enroll and persist in postsecondary

We are utilizing these continued engagements to inform additional resources, create collaborative policies, and identify other supports accessible on a continually updated, dynamic digital platform. This is just the beginning – this isn't a one-off or another initiative that we're going to forget about six months down the line.

education. The diverse stakeholders included policymakers, institutional leaders, community and business leaders. Participants discussed salient observations from a data walk of local and state data to inform their initial working groups on action plans in the R, E, A, L areas of:



A federally focused dinner was held in Washington, D.C., in October 2023 to gain insights on the national landscape to inform the LEVEL UP and Get REAL Policy Playbook. This Lumina-funded tool highlights what's working to support Black learner success and considerations to drive impact for federal and state policymakers, higher education institutions, and community and business leaders. Ongoing LEVEL UP summits and dinners, graciously funded by the ECMC Foundation, provide opportunities for direct feedback from the field, including from Black learners themselves. Higher education institutions, particularly community colleges, convened to illuminate the impact on the students they serve. I recently met with a summit of SUNY institutional leaders in New York, including Chancellor John King Jr. and Dr. Stout, discussing their commitment to advancing Black learner excellence. I also recently gave the keynote address at the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA) annual convention in November 2023. We continue to find opportunities for synergy as the momentum grows to elevate and support Black learners.

In February, Jee Hang Lee, Dr. Stout, and I joined three Black learners from California, Florida, and Maryland on Capitol Hill to discuss this work with Congressman Burgess Owens (R-Utah), chair of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education and the Workforce, and Congressional staff in conjunction with the ACCT Community College National Legislative Summit.

Additional LEVEL UP summits include convenings in Los Angeles in conjunction with the A2MEND annual conference (March 2024); Chicago with support from Chancellor Juan Salgado, City Colleges of Chicago, and Jim Reed from the Illinois Community College Trustees Association (April 2024); and Detroit in partnership with Dr. Mike Gavin, President of Delta College and the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA). Institutions and key stakeholders continue to express energy and commitment to diving into LEVEL UP data, recommendations, and, most importantly, what can be done to impact Black learner excellence in their local communities. The commitment to realizing access and success for Black learners is strong – and overdue. We continue to engage unapologetically with others in these efforts.

We are utilizing these continued engagements to inform additional resources, create collaborative policies, and identify other supports accessible on a continually updated, dynamic digital platform. This is just the beginning – this isn't a one-off or another initiative that we're going to forget about six months down the line. Join the movement here and stay connected as we realize Black learner excellence and success.



*The LEVEL UP & Get REAL initiative is a research, policy, and advocacy initiative supported by Lumina Foundation and ECMC Foundation and managed by HCM Strategists in partnership with Achieving the Dream and Equity Avengers. Dr. Keith Curry, President & CEO of Compton College and Equity Avengers, leads this work as our public-facing lead advocate for Black learner excellence and success in higher education.*



# ADVOCATING FOR A CAMPUS-WIDE SAFETY NET

Mental health resources for community college students support institutional goals and bridge care gaps.

By Becky Laman

**H**ALF OF U.S. RESIDENTS LIVE IN A FEDERALLY designated Mental Health Provider Shortage Area, according to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). With such significant gaps in mental health care across the country — particularly in rural areas where many community colleges serve as the economic engine for their region — it's imperative that ACCT member institutions continue to prioritize support for student mental health. Such efforts are crucial, considering that 80% of college students nationwide acknowledge a mental health crisis on their campuses.

An ever-evolving funding landscape requires a continuous and intentional effort to advocate at state and federal levels. At the National Legislative Summit, community college and system leaders underscored the need for policies and funding that enable student success, foster resilience, and support workforce development goals, including behavioral health services. After all, ensuring equitable access to 24/7 mental health support is no different than ensuring access to campus safety and fire department resources. You may only realize their importance when a crisis occurs, but the reality is their presence provides continual peace of mind and a campus-wide safety net that ensures help is always at the ready.

Though funding varies by state, some are leading in ways that those of us invested in the success of community college students can back in our own advocacy efforts. For example, in 2023, Ohio appropriated \$10.5 million for any public or private college or university in the state to prioritize additional behavioral health services. Allocations could be used to ensure support resources such as the expansion of telehealth options, increased awareness of mental

health initiatives, addition of certified peer educator programs, or direct aid to students who are unable to afford care. This resource is critical considering only about 30% of the state's population of mental health needs are met, according to the HRSA.

As an ACCT Corporate Council member, TimelyCare worked closely with the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) and the Ohio Department of Higher Education to build a model specifically for community colleges to cut out red tape and provide support to students faster. Now many OACC members are systematically leveraging a single master services agreement approved by the state attorney general. As a result, students in these communities are getting the access to care they need quicker, easier, and at no cost to them.

By championing policies like these, ACCT member institutions can play a pivotal role in bridging the care gap and laying the groundwork for a support system that not only addresses the immediate needs for care, but also aligns with broader societal goals of developing well-rounded, mentally healthy individuals who can drive positive change.



*Becky Laman is Chief Strategy Officer at TimelyCare, a higher education-specific virtual health and well-being provider, and an ACCT Corporate Council member.*

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 Brad W. Young  
 J. Pete Zepeda \*  
 Peter Zschiesche

\*Deceased



# IN MEMORIAM

# MILTON DALE ENSIGN

1927 – 2024



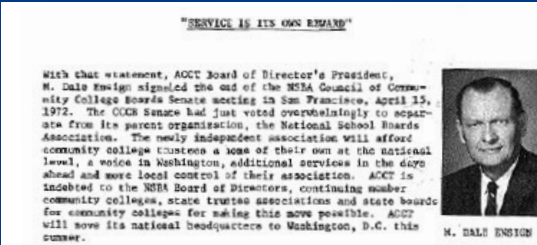
Milton Dale Ensign – known to us as Dale – passed away in April at age 97, leaving behind his wife Elaine, eight children, 43 grandchildren, 65 great-grandchildren, a great-great granddaughter, and a legacy of service rivaled by few. He served as ACCT’s founding board chair, and he was instrumental in the association’s incorporation as an independent 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization.

Born in California, Ensign grew up in Utah before enlisting in the Navy at age 17. During his Navy tenure, he was chosen to command hundreds of new recruits, as well as Navy and Marine Air Force cadets. After completing his Navy service, he served as a missionary in Stockholm Sweden, and then returned home to attend the University of Utah – eventually earning his law degree.

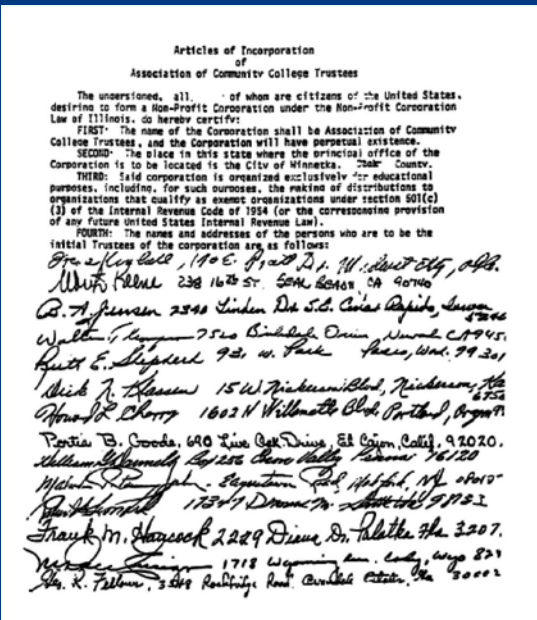
ACCT’s highest honor is named for him: The M. Dale Ensign Award for Trustee Leadership. Regular attendees of the ACCT Leadership Congress will recognize his face, as Ensign has shown up to present his namesake award several times in recent years.

*“I believe that rendering service is the common duty of mankind. And only in the purifying fire of sacrifice is the dross of selfishness consumed and the greatness of the human soul set free.”*

—John D. Rockefeller, Jr. —A quote by which M. Dale Ensign lived

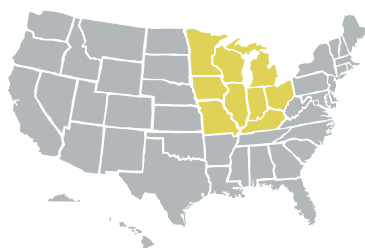


October 1972 – Statement to ACCT Senate



Ensign presented the 2023 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award to Bakari G. Lee, Esq. (second from left). Pictured with (far left) 2023 ACCT Chair Rose Benavidez and (far right) ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee.

# AROUND THE REGIONS



## CENTRAL REGION

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer has proposed expanding eligibility for **Michigan's** free community college program to all high school graduates in the state. Whitmer's plan would eliminate all age requirements for the Michigan Reconnect program, which is currently restricted to people aged 21 and over who do not have postsecondary degrees or certifications.

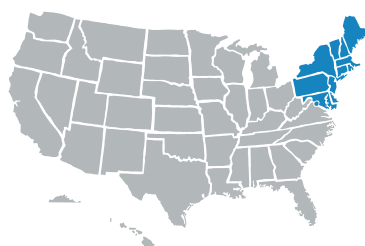
A bill changing how the formula for distributing state aid to **Iowa** community colleges passed the state house and senate. Senate File 2405 would have community college presidents and CEOs develop the formula each year, with approval from at least 10 out of the 15 leaders required for it to be implemented.

**Wisconsin** lawmakers should address the state's workforce challenges by investing more in childcare programs and providing students with more financial aid, said Morna Foy, president of the Wisconsin Technical College System since 2012. Gov. Tony Evers similarly urged legislators this year in his State of the State address to take action on childcare and education to fix workforce shortages.

The **Illinois** College Board (ICCB) announced \$3 million in state grants to community colleges to expand access to its Dual Credit Program that allows students the ability to earn college-level credits while still in high school.

For the first time in over a decade, enrollment is up at **Minnesota's** public

colleges and universities, thanks to a record year of state funding and investment in a slew of new college-access initiatives. The surge was most evident at the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System, which includes 26 community and technical colleges.



## NORTHEAST REGION

**New Hampshire's** community college system should turn its seven distinct colleges into one college with seven campuses to give students more flexibility, automatically accept New Hampshire high school graduates, and have its curriculum and academic credits better align with the state's university system, according to the recommendations of a task force convened by Gov. Chris Sununu.

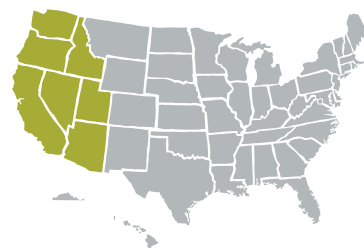
**New Jersey's** 18 community colleges say they will likely raise tuition, increase class sizes, and trim programs and services as they face a large reduction in state financial support. Collectively, the colleges will see a roughly \$20 million cut in state aid this year, a decrease in funding of about 12%, according to the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.

Howard Community College (HCC) in **Maryland** announced plans to reopen its on-campus Children's Learning Center (CLC) in partnership with the Community Action Council of Howard County. The facility closed in 2020 during the pandemic and associated budget reduction efforts. HCC was awarded a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support reopening the center.

**New York** Gov. Kathy Hochul announced a \$32 million investment to expand the Direct Support Professional microcredential program offered by the State University of New York (SUNY) in partnership with the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

The Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation has awarded a grant of \$116.2 million to LaGuardia Community College in New York to create the Cohen Career Collective, a state-of-the-art workforce training center. The gift is the largest ever to a community college.

**Pennsylvania** colleges would be "equal partners" under Gov. Josh Shapiro's plan to bring together the state's university system and its community colleges. Republican lawmakers subsequently rolled out a counterproposal to Shapiro's plan, pledging help for both in-state and out-of-state students who enroll in degree programs for high-priority disciplines, such as teaching and nursing.



## PACIFIC REGION

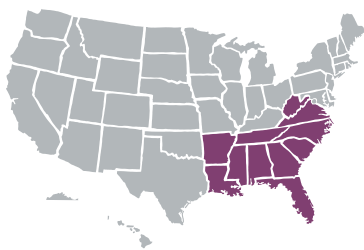
Six new bachelor's degrees programs have been approved at campuses within the **California** Community Colleges system. The system now offers, or will soon offer, 39 bachelor's degree programs.

The board of governors for California's community colleges authorized the system's chancellor to negotiate an agreement with Baja California's education secretary that would allow

students living within 45 miles of the board to attend one of nine community colleges in the region.

A recent vote by the **Utah** Board of Higher Education has placed Utah public colleges and universities on a path of offering three-year applied studies bachelor's degrees in some disciplines.

High school students in **Washington** will soon have expanded opportunities through the Running Start program, which allows 11th and 12th grade students to earn college credits by taking classes at community colleges and universities through a tuition-free dual enrollment program. A newly signed bill allows students to earn up to 10 college credits in the summer prior to their junior year.



## SOUTHERN REGION

A newly released survey reveals that **Alabama** residents see their local community college as the leader in workforce development initiatives and accessibility. Two-thirds of residents have a favorable view of their local community or technical college, 95% of residents agree programs like the Alabama Community College System's high school career roadmap positively impact the state's labor force by offering early exposure to career opportunities, and 94% support increasing funding for dual enrollment scholarships.

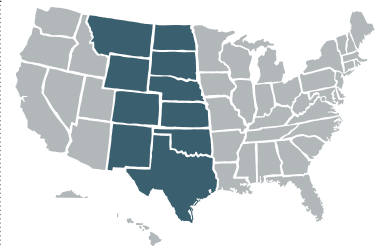
The governing board of the 58-campus

**North Carolina** community college system – the second largest in the country – wants to restructure the system's funding model to make it more responsive to workforce needs. The price tag for the first year of the Propel NC project would be about \$100 million, in addition to the \$1.5 billion already budgeted for the community college system in the 2024-25 fiscal plan.

In 2018, **Louisiana** became the first state in the nation to require all public high school students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid before they graduate, and now it has become the first state to eliminate the FASFA requirement. The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education said the course change will relieve students and parents of a burdensome and invasive requirement and counter the narrative that college is the best path for everyone.

Alumni of **Virginia's** community colleges added \$10.6 billion in personal and business income to the state economy in fiscal year 2022, while operations by the colleges themselves added another \$1 billion in economic activity, according to a study.

**West Virginia** Gov. Jim Justice temporarily suspended the requirement for students to complete the FAFSA in order to qualify for the state's largest financial aid programs. Students who qualify and apply for the Promise Scholarship by September 1, 2024, will receive an award of up to \$5,500 for the 2024-25 academic year.



## WESTERN REGION

Leaders from the **Colorado** Community College System and the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education conducted a statewide listening tour to discuss the development of a new strategic plan guiding its 13 colleges from 2025 through 2030.

Eight **New Mexico** colleges and universities are getting funding from the New Mexico Higher Education Department to address food insecurity among students, faculty, and staff. A total of \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds will be disbursed among the schools as part of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham's Food Initiative.

The Austin Community College (ACC) Board of Trustees in **Texas** approved a proposal to offer free tuition for high school graduates and GED completers starting with the class of 2024.

The University of **Wyoming's** College of Education is partnering with community college leaders across the state in an attempt to fill a sizable gap in career and technical education instructors in high school dual-enrollment programs and at two-year colleges

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

# LEADERSHIP UNLOCKED

## The Tala Alahmar Story

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A former International President of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society details the journey from her war-torn home country to one of America's most prestigious graduate schools, and how a Michigan community college became the springboard for her academic success.

By Kali Woods

“IT FELT LIKE MY LIFE WAS OVER. ELECTRICITY, FAST WI-FI, and clean water became a privilege [...] And safety was measured by how close shotguns and bombs sounded.”

A pin drop could be heard as thousands of community college trustees sat captivated in their seats, mesmerized by the story of resilience shared by such a young woman. In 2022, Tala Alahmar took to the stage at the annual ACCT Leadership Congress in New York City to share the story of her journey from the Middle East to the United States. I recently caught up with her at a Phi Theta Kappa meeting and learned that there's more to her story than she could share in 2022.

A native of Syria, Alahmar recalled the eerie sounds of explosives detonating in her hometown of Damascus. She vividly described the gunshots that rang out across her middle school campus, standing paralyzed as teachers rushed her and her sixth-grade friends back inside. A few hours later, authorities confirmed one of her teachers had been shot by opposition groups right outside of her school.

The place she called home her entire life had become nearly

unrecognizable. But this terrifying encounter would lead Alahmar and her family to a new home thousands of miles away in the States.

Uprooted from the only place she'd ever known, Alahmar understood that her parents sought a better life for her in America. And even though the scenery around her was new, their core values remained the same. Education was always a top priority in the Alahmar household. As the daughter of two college graduates, Alahmar aspired to follow in her parents' footsteps and attend Damascus University in Syria. But as a new resident of the state of Michigan, she was forced to find an alternative path.

With little to no work experience or extracurricular activities listed on her resume, Alahmar made the decision to enroll at Oakland Community College (OCC). Her transition into college was challenging, as she struggled to get acclimated to her new home. She often found herself having to defend her decision to go the community college route after high school.

“[People] didn't think that community colleges [were] a quality



institution. Everyone made jokes about how easy the classes were and how everyone got high grades because there's not much expectation," Alahmar remembered.

Stigmatized by former classmates who had chosen four-year institutions, Alahmar hoped that her new school would provide the reassurance she was looking for. Unfortunately, she struggled to find community among her peers. As a new immigrant, she felt like she didn't fit in.

"I really isolated myself a lot. I didn't talk to anyone [...] I talked to my dad, and told him how much I wanted to go to Syria because even though I saw the diversity at my college, it was hard to go up and talk to people and feel like the stranger or the outsider," she said.

With so much time to herself, Alahmar became determined to prove her naysayers wrong. She homed in on her studies, emerging as a star student. And people began to take notice of her diligent work ethic. One of her professors who served as a faculty advisor for the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society (PTK) chapter on campus pointed her out to the president of the organization. The president extended Alahmar an invitation to a chapter meeting. Little did she know that this one interaction would completely transform her college journey.

"One of the things that really changed my experience was one of my professors realizing the potential I had [...] Seeing that encouragement from a professor that had only just met me recently and had only seen me in class was very empowering and uplifting," she said.

Through PTK, Alahmar was able to work on impactful projects that addressed some of the community's biggest issues, and she also established long-lasting friendships with some of the brightest students at her school and across the globe. "I joined for the opportunities, and I ended up leaving with a family that's always there for me," Alahmar said of PTK. She grew in confidence, taking on leadership positions within her chapter. And by her senior year, she was appointed the International President of the global honor society, speaking to crowds of thousands about the same community college experience so many people told her she would grow to regret.

After three years at OCC, Alahmar's unquenchable thirst for knowledge, invaluable leadership experiences through PTK, and unwavering support from the staff and faculty inspired her to continue her academic journey beyond graduation. In 2021, Alahmar transferred to the University of Michigan, a school nearly twice as big as her old stomping grounds. And while excited about this amazing opportunity in front of her, her new reality came with a lot of changes.

"I remember it was my first class. It was statistics. I walked in, and there was this huge auditorium that could fit over 300 students. And I just missed the intimate environment [that] I had in my community college [and] the personalized attention that I could get from my professors," she said.

Overwhelmed and somewhat intimidated, Alahmar longed for the support of a close-knit community like the one she had established at OCC. But that small cohort feel she was so desperately seeking proved more difficult to find on a campus of more than 50,000 students.

"It was really nice to have a really tight group of friends... we were all going through the same process together. We understood the struggles, and we had each other to support. And I honestly really missed just walking into my administrator's office and going to say hi to my dean between classes. That's definitely something that I couldn't do in a university given the large institution."

The uneasiness that began to settle in made Alahmar question whether she truly belonged there. But she did not let that self-doubt consume her. She reflected on her journey to the university and realized all the tools OCC and PTK had equipped her with would enable her to thrive in any environment. Despite a rocky start, she began to establish roots at the university, excelling in her classes and establishing relationships through smaller study groups and clubs. And while she had finally found her footing, Alahmar made it a personal mission to help other community college graduates going through similar experiences. She became a transfer student ambassador at the University of Michigan, where she was able to help her peers navigate the student services departments and provide advice to anxious transfers. In 2023, Alahmar went on to attain her bachelor's degree in international/global studies.

Now, operating confidently in her ability to handle whatever challenges come her way, Alahmar made the move to the nation's capital, where she is currently pursuing a masters of arts in democracy and governance at Georgetown University. Alahmar says she has aspirations to work within the U.S. Department of State and is hoping to put her leadership skills to work by exploring careers in diplomacy and human rights advocacy. She has also found a way to give back to Phi Theta Kappa, the organization that changed her life, by taking on the role of a success coach. In her position, she shares her journey from Syria to grad school with students from historically underrepresented communities, guiding them through the benefits of PTK and encouraging membership.

Alahmar has achieved many accolades within the last few years, but she attributes much of her undergraduate and graduate successes to Oakland Community College, the institution that gave a timid immigrant from Syria the space to develop and grow into the global leader she was always meant to be.

"It's the degree that I'm proudest of because I know that I took those three years to not only start my education, but I was also able to gain access to so many opportunities," she said. "And I know that if I didn't have that strong foundation [...] I probably wouldn't have been able to succeed."



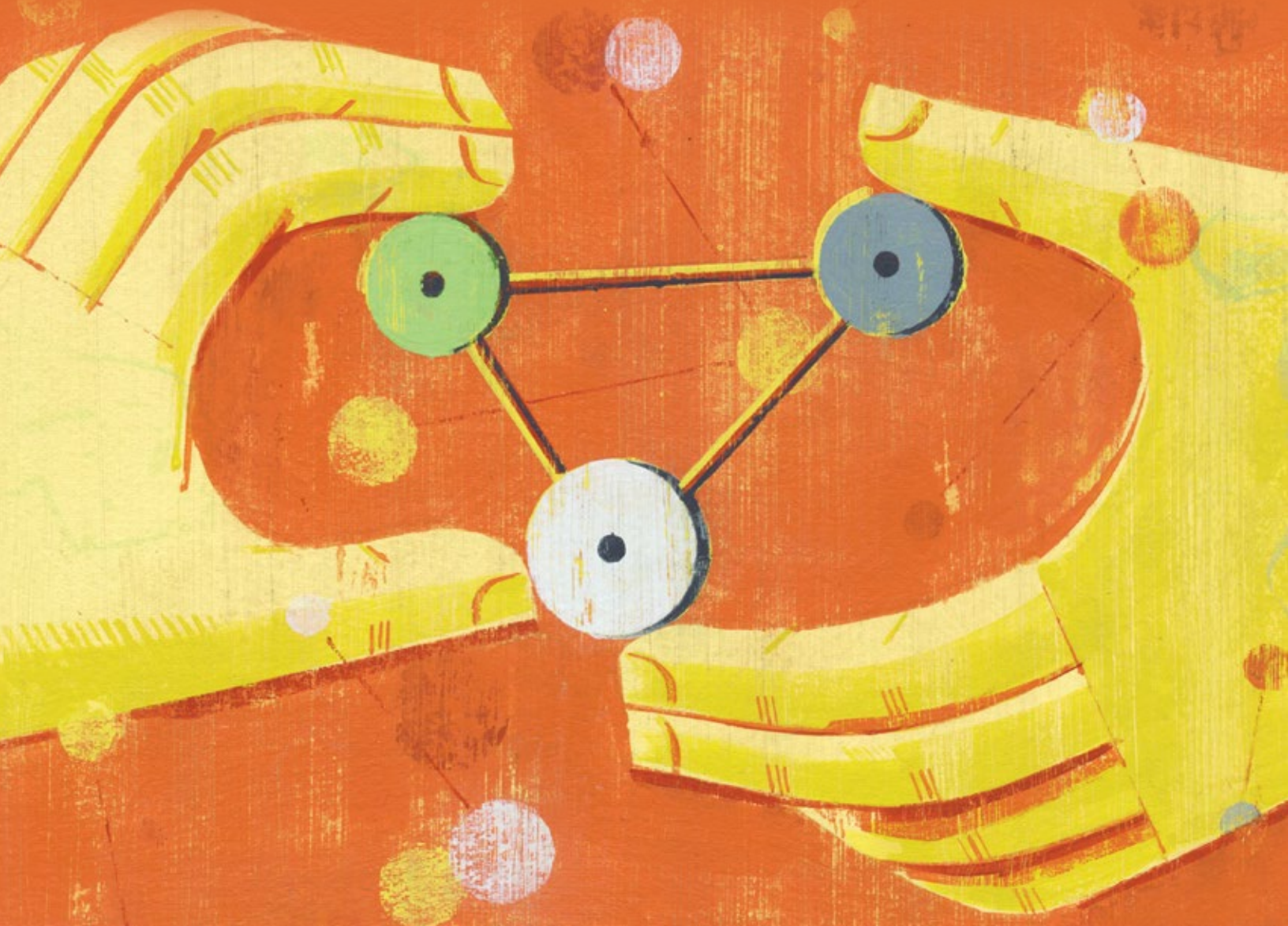
ACCT Media & Communications Specialist

Kali Woods can be reached at [kwoods@acct.org](mailto:kwoods@acct.org).

# THE MANUFACTURING IMPERATIVE

A new partnership aims to revitalize the manufacturing industry through community colleges.

By Debra Volzer, Ph.D.





The Workforce Pipeline Challenge is a three-year pilot program with a goal to attract 1,000 individuals annually at each of the initial 25 participating community and technical colleges, resulting in 75,000 or more qualified workers in pursuit of manufacturing careers.

**S**ME, THE NATIONAL NONPROFIT COMMITTED TO accelerating new manufacturing technology adoption and building North America's manufacturing talent and capabilities, announced a new initiative involving a partnership with community and technical colleges to address the urgency of revitalizing manufacturing's industrial base, growing the industry's talent pipeline, and enhancing the skills and productivity of manufacturing workers.

**The Manufacturing Imperative – Workforce Pipeline Challenge** (MI-WPC) was announced in fall 2023 and launched in January 2024. It combines the industry and workforce expertise of SME with the educational programs and innovations of a select group of U.S. community and technical colleges. The initiative builds awareness of careers in manufacturing, optimizes workforce systems, and accelerates the education and skill development needed to place individuals in jobs making family-sustaining wages.

The Workforce Pipeline Challenge is a three-year pilot program with a goal to attract 1,000 individuals annually at each of the initial 25 participating community and technical colleges, resulting in 75,000 or more qualified workers in pursuit of manufacturing careers. Doing so will help address the anticipated lack of talent needed to fill 2.7 million manufacturing roles by 2030. If the nation cannot solve this shortage, it is anticipated to have a \$4 trillion impact on the economy. Best practices identified throughout the program will be shared nationally to help other programs implement innovative solutions to grow local economies, reduce barriers to employment, and fill vacant manufacturing jobs.

Institutions participating in the Challenge include Wallace State and Calhoun Community Colleges (Ala.), Daley College and Wilbur Wright from the City Colleges of Chicago and College of Lake County (Ill.), WSU Tech (Kan.), Grand Rapids and Schoolcraft Community Colleges (Mich.), South Central College (Minn.), St. Charles Community College and St. Louis Community College (Mo.), Wake Tech Community College (N.C.), Mohawk Valley Community College (N.Y.), Columbus State and Lorain Community Colleges (Ohio), Tulsa Community College (Okla.), Greenville Technical College (S.C.), Pellissippi State Community College and Motlow State Community College (Tenn.), Dallas College System (Texas), Patrick & Henry Community College (Va.), Edmonds College (Wash.), and Gateway Technical Community College (Wisc.).

Participating colleges have committed to a specific set of requirements, demonstrating commitment to this national approach to pipeline

development and to implementing innovative solutions to address longstanding industry challenges. Their collective voices will also inform legislation, policy, and funding.

Eighty percent of the colleges participating in this initiative have launched. During each launch session, SME solicits best practices and challenges facing each college. These kickoff sessions engage key leaders at the college, community-based organizations, employers, and economic developers, which offers a holistic view of the community. Some common themes are emerging, including:

- 1. Ensuring target populations are considered and connected with manufacturing education and career opportunities.** Women, minorities, underrepresented, and low-income adults are often inadvertently left behind or not effectively engaged in training, education, or manufacturing career pathways.
- 2. Not all employers in each local community are connected to the college and the college's training programs.** There is inconsistent alignment in some of the programs delivered, expectations or understanding of what the college can provide, and validation of program content from employers.
- 3. Learners sometimes miss training opportunities because of the current modality of programs.** Learners require online, hybrid, open labs, and other flexible learning options to meet their needs. Misalignment with learners' needs is a contributing factor to low enrollments in college STEM and manufacturing programs.

These emerging trends, best practices, and a deeper dive into the progress made and resources provided by SME will be shared in June 2024.



*Dr. Debra Volzer is director of government and workforce partnerships at SME. For more information on the Workforce Pipeline Challenge, or to learn more about opportunities to engage with and support the program, contact [dvolzer@sme.org](mailto:dvolzer@sme.org).*



## Legal Issues Impacting Community Colleges

Free speech, employment, and gender discrimination among recent legal issues involving higher education.

BY IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD, ACCT GENERAL COUNSEL

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has received reports from workers and advocacy organizations representing Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities of an increase in workplace discrimination against protected groups resulting from the Israel - Hamas War. The EEOC has signaled an interest in pursuing domestic workplace discrimination that may result from “local, national, or global events.”

**S**TATE UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE HAS FIRST AMENDMENT, FREE SPEECH RIGHT to speak to press about alleged mishandling of student's sex harassment complaint. The Sixth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals (covering Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee) rejected a state university's defense of sovereign immunity and allowed a university employee's claim of First Amendment speech retaliation to proceed (*Ashford v. Univ of Michigan*, 6th Cir., No. 22-02057, 1/9/24).

The plaintiff alleged that the local campus police mishandled a student's sex harassment complaint against a professor. The plaintiff also alleged that he raised his concerns internally with his supervisor and with campus security before speaking with the press. In addition, the employee alleged that the newspaper came to him for comment and initiated the process which led to his statement.



*“I’m sick of the economy, dear. Can’t we disagree about something else?”*

The appeals court held that the employee's speaking to the press about the university's "mishandling" of the student's complaint was a matter of public concern. Further, this matter was not part of the employee's employment responsibilities or duties, and the court held that the plaintiff was not speaking to further his official duties but rather was speaking as a private citizen. The court therefore allowed the employee's claims, including that his 10-day suspension be expunged, to proceed to trial. The employee is also requesting an injunction against the university barring future retaliation for future speech he might engage in.

**Professor claims loss of "endowed chair" title is unlawful gender discrimination against males.** A federal trial court recently ruled that a professor's claim of gender discrimination resulting from his college's decision to remove his "endowed chair" designation following its initial punishment for his sex harassment transgressions can proceed to trial (*Simons v. Yale University*, 2024 BL 15344, D. Conn., No. 3:19-cv-01547, 1/17/24).

The professor alleged that only men are subject to multiple punishments for the same infraction. The court ruled that losing an honorific endowed chair title could be an adverse job action, even if pay was not reduced in that action. The court concluded that the plaintiff had already previously been punished in multiple ways concerning the incident, including losing his position as chief of the section of cardiovascular medicine and director of the university's cardiovascular research center in the college's initial action.

**EEOC on alert to act on workplace discrimination resulting from the Israel - Hamas war.** The new general counsel to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Karla Gilbride, indicated at her first press event that the EEOC has received reports from workers and advocacy organizations representing Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities of an increase in workplace discrimination against protected groups resulting from the Israel - Hamas War. The EEOC has signaled an interest in pursuing domestic workplace discrimination that may result from "local, national, or global events." The general counsel indicated that it is a "priority" in the agency's "strategic enforcement plan" to be responsive in this area.

"We are reviewing the data to get a better handle on whether we at the EEOC are recognizing an uptick in discrimination on the basis of religion

or national origin affecting Jewish, Muslim, or Arab communities or people who might be perceived as belonging to those communities, even if they did not actually belong to those communities," Gilbride said. The general counsel indicated that global events in the past, such as 9/11, led to an increase in domestic workplace discrimination.

**Appeals court revives tenured professor's claim that his termination violated his tenure contract without due process.**

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals (covering Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) reversed a lower court's dismissal of a tenured biology professor's contract violation claim stemming from his termination. The appeals court ruled that the trial court erred in concluding that his claim was barred by the statute of limitations. The professor was terminated for alleged unauthorized research, which stemmed from his use of unauthorized undergraduate students to assist in his research, as well as the use of students' urine.

The professor was suspended in 2015, and the department chair concluded in mid-2015 that he would recommend the professor's termination. In 2018, the faculty personnel committee sided with the professor, but the university president rejected the committee's reinstatement recommendation later that year. In March 2019, the board of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) terminated the professor per the university president's decision. The professor sued in 2022, and the trial court dismissed his claim on the grounds of a three-year statute of limitations. The appeals court reversed the dismissal, holding that the IHL board's decision to terminate the professor in 2019 was when the statute of limitations would start running and the lawsuit was therefore filed within the three-year limit. The appeals court noted that the professor's termination was not final until reviewed by the IHL board.



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.



CLOVIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NEW MEXICO

## DR. JONATHAN FUENTES

President

“On behalf of the board of trustees, we are excited to have Dr. Jonathan Fuentes become the sixth president of Clovis Community College. We unanimously agree that he is the enthusiastic, friendly visionary who will build on our strengths and serve us well as we transition into the future. Dr. Fuentes is already committed to our vision and mission. He is ready to strengthen and grow the service to our students, faculty, and staff. I believe he is ready to take the helm at CCC and become an integral part of our greater Clovis Community.”

— LORA HARLAN  
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, CLOVIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE, SOUTH CAROLINA

## DR. GREG LITTLE

President



“Faculty, staff, and stakeholders in the MTC community provided generous and valuable feedback to commissioners. That input was instrumental in our decision to hire Dr. Little, and we are confident that he will guide the college in future success.”

— SANDRA JACKSON  
CHAIR, COMMISSION, MIDLANDS TECHNICAL COLLEGE



PARIS JUNIOR COLLEGE,  
TEXAS

## DR. STEPHEN BENSON

President

“The community input, plus staff participation, was key in our making an excellent choice for our new president. The process is an excellent format, and our board would highly recommend ACCT in facilitating your next search for executive staff positions.”

— CURTIS FENDLEY  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF REGENTS, PARIS JUNIOR COLLEGE

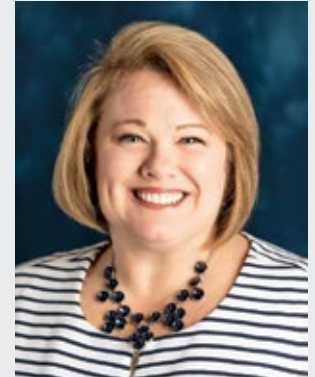
# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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.

RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

## DR. KRISTINE DI MEMMO

Vice President of Business Services



"Dr. Kristine Di Memmo's appointment as vice president of business services at Riverside City College marks a pivotal moment in our institution's journey. Her proven leadership and commitment to our values promise a bright future, driving us toward even greater success."

— DR. CLAIRE OLIVERO

PRESIDENT, RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



TRIDENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE, SOUTH CAROLINA

## DR. VICKY WOOD

President

"It has been an honor to serve as chair of the Area Commission and the search committee during this important time in the life of the college. On behalf of the Area Commission, I want to thank the college's administration, employees and students, and TTC Foundation board members, all of whom devoted a great deal of time and energy to participate in the process by meeting with the final candidates and providing valuable feedback. With the help of the entire TTC team, I feel we have chosen the best candidate to lead the college into the future."

— ANITA ZUCKER

CHAIR, AREA COMMISSION, TRIDENT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

OXNARD COLLEGE, VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

## DR. ROBERTO GONZALEZ

President



"Dr. Gonzalez's dedication to fostering a student-centric environment is truly inspiring. His passion for guiding and nurturing the next generation of leaders is not only commendable but also integral to the mission of our colleges. With his genuine commitment to educational excellence, Dr. Gonzalez embodies the essence of a collaborative, student-focused leader. We are honored to welcome him to the Community Colleges of Ventura County as president of Oxnard College. We look forward to the positive impact he will undoubtedly have in our community."

— DR. RICK MACLENNAN

CHANCELLOR, VENTURA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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



VENTURA COLLEGE, VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA  
**DR. CLAUDIA LOURIDO-HABIB**  
President

“The Community Colleges of Ventura County are thrilled to welcome Dr. Claudia Lourido-Habib as the new president of Ventura College. Her remarkable commitment to collaboration and inclusivity ensures that every voice is heard and valued. With a steadfast dedication to enriching educational experiences, Dr. Lourido-Habib embodies the spirit of transformative leadership, ensuring that every student receives the highest quality of learning in an environment that celebrates diversity and fosters success.”

— **DR. RICK MACLENNAN**  
CHANCELLOR, VENTURA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NORTH CAROLINA

**DR. MICHAEL RODGERS**  
President



“We are excited to announce Dr. Michael Rodgers as the next president of WCC. He has the education, knowledge, and experience to lead our college. We are looking forward to working with him to continue and build upon the work Wilkes Community College is doing to educate and train our students.”

— **JAY VANNOY**  
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE



# interface

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2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**PRESIDENT**

Cynthia Gruskos  
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Brookdale Community College, N.J.  
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**VICE PRESIDENT**

Shelby Foster  
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**SECRETARY**

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**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

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Special Assistant to the President for Board Operations  
Montgomery College, Md.  
michellet.scott@montgomerycollege.edu

**SOUTHERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE  
(AND MEMBER-AT-LARGE DESIGNEE)**

Dr. Sara Singleton  
Executive Director, Governance & Advancement  
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ssingleton@forsythtech.edu

**CENTRAL REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

Benita Duncan  
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**WESTERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

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**PACIFIC REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

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



## Surprise-Proofing the Boardroom: Effective Communication and Prevention Tactics

BY CYNTHIA B. GRUSKOS  
PBSN PRESIDENT

**T**HE ONLY SURPRISES I ENJOY COME IN LITTLE WRAPPED BOXES WITH a bow on top. Surprises at the board table at best can be uncomfortable, and at worst can create irreparable cracks in the foundation of the board-president relationship.

These cracks may be unseen to the casual onlooker, but the close observer can spot the slow spread of distrust, lack of confidence, and the unraveling of years of relationship building.

I have had the good fortune to serve in my position as senior assistant to the president and board of trustees at Brookdale Community College for 10 years, and if there is one thing I can say with 100% accuracy, it's that problems and challenges are going to arise while running a community college. While you will have limited control over unexpected problems, you will have the opportunity to control communication. The key element to controlling communication is well-vetted procedures and policies to help with the unexpected and the day-to-day operations.

As a board professional, you collaborate with your president, trustees, executive team, and college counsel, placing you in a key role to facilitate and encourage clear communications among all constituents. Here are my best practices that are a decade in the making.

1. **Act swiftly.** Social media and online newspapers have taken away any luxury of time to address problems. One minute, the problem is a spark, and the next it is spreading like wildfire and could be making national headlines before you even have all the background information. Your board needs to know immediately if there is an ongoing issue, and that the president is addressing it. Ideally, this communication should come from your president, but you can draft a communication and work alongside your president in a time of crisis.



# interface

2. **Loop in your college relations team** immediately, so that they can craft a statement to be shared with media. Share the message with your trustees and president's office staff to ensure everyone is delivering the same consistent message.
3. **Seek legal counsel if needed.** Our college counsel shares a monthly legal report with background information and updates highlighted in red so you can quickly see the progress from the previous month. The report is written so you do not need a law degree to understand it.
4. **See something, say something** is a popular security phrase, but it also applies in our roles. The board of trustees is responsible for caring for our institutions. The quality of our education, our reputation, and our financial stability need to be safeguarded. If you see something or hear something that is causing you angst, communicate it to the president. Encourage your president to be upfront with small and big problems so there are never surprises at the board table.
5. **Encourage trustees to ask questions** in advance of the board meeting. As a board professional, you may be a conduit for questions and concerns, since trustees may feel more comfortable talking to you, as they may not want to appear unknowledgeable with their peers and the president. If trustees have concerns, the president of your college and the board chair should be aware of them so they can be addressed, and additional information can be provided.

6. **Improve written communications.** Board books larger than a dictionary are not the answer. Clear, concise board briefs are more valuable than information overload.
7. **Presentations matter.** Visually dominant learners who are sitting at your board table need to see photos, charts, and diagrams, as complex auditory explanations are not sufficient for all individuals.
8. **The loudest voices are not the only voices.** All trustees should be encouraged to share their viewpoints and questions. Our current board chair and committee chairs make a point of specifically going around the table and asking each trustee to voice their opinion. Accomplishing this best practice requires high-functioning boards; however, as a board professional, you are positioned to encourage the professional development of your board.
9. **Consistent president messaging.** Our president, Dr. David Stout, sends out a weekly communication by email, highlighting his activities each week and how they support the strategic priorities established by the board.

In this article, I have outlined my best practices for clear communications. Now it is time to hear yours. I will begin a conversation in ACCT Connect. Please join in this important discussion. I respect your wisdom and I believe wholeheartedly that we can grow and learn from each other.



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.





## It's the Little Things

BY SHELBY FOSTER  
PBSN VICE PRESIDENT



**I**T'S 3 P.M. ON BOARD MEETING DAY. ALL THE WISHFUL THINKING IN THE WORLD WAS not going to will my comfortable shoes out of my closet and into this board room. I would just need to get through it. It was just a little thing.

As professional board staff, we are responsible for the “little things.” Sometimes it is those little things that can make the difference between a smooth board meeting day and a difficult one.

In my many years of preparing for board meetings, I have learned to adapt to a multitude of changes in the way we plan and execute a board meeting. There is a lot that we cannot predict; however, some things we can prepare for — and we should.

These are the little things in my board meeting kit:

**Tennis shoes and an extra blazer or sweater.** Being in comfortable shoes while I am preparing the board meeting sets me up for success. I also keep an extra jacket around in case I need a quick change. It took me years to realize that I didn't have to be “board meeting ready” all day long.

**Golf pencils.** Leave these out for people to use, and you'll always get them back. These are wise words provided to me by a colleague at a previous ACCT Congress. (Thank you, Wendy!)

**Duct tape or masking tape.** My best multi-tool. Something slightly askew or broken? Need a quick paperweight? You can even pick crumbs off the floor with it!

**Batteries and an extra USB charger.** One time I had to dash out of a board meeting to get some batteries for our presentation remote. Never again. I usually keep AA and AAA batteries around. Take a look at your equipment and modify accordingly.

**Room spray deodorizer.** Some districts have a multi-use board room. People may have used the room before you arrived. Others have a dedicated board room. Either way, bring room spray.

**Foldable pocket knife.** I keep one on my work key ring. It serves as scissors in a pinch, and is especially useful for opening up packaging or boxes. Consult with your campus PD about what blade length is allowed on your campus.

**Food for yourself.** *Oh My Goodness* feed yourself. It was your job to order, arrange the delivery — or be the delivery — and then set out food for your trustees. Make sure you take care of yourself, too. Eat.

**Band-Aids.** 350-page board meeting packet.

What are the little things that you do to make your board meeting day run smoothly? Feel free to share them with the PBSN group on ACCT Connect. Haven't joined ACCT Connect yet? Check it out here: <https://connect.acct.org/>.

Remember, all those little things help contribute to your peace of mind for the big task at hand — the board meeting!



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

## 2025 Candidates for the ACCT Board of Directors

### REGIONAL DIRECTOR

(1) Three-Year Term in Each Region

*The following is the slate of nominees:*

#### Central Region

**Shawn Boldt\***

*Highland Community College, IL*

#### Northeast Region

**Anthony Colón\***

*Mohawk Valley Community College, NY*

#### Pacific Region

**Richard Fukutaki\***

*Bellevue College, WA*

#### Southern Region

**H. Allen Langley\***

*Cleveland Community College, NC*

#### Western Region

**Pretta VanDible Stallworth\***

*Houston Community College System, TX*

### DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

(3) Three-Year Terms

*The following is the slate of nominees:*

**Carol Del Carlo\***

*Nevada System of Higher Education, NV*

**Vivian Malauulu\***

*Long Beach City College, CA*

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

**NOTE: Nominations will be accepted from the floor on all elections.**

## NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

**Deadline for Receipt is July 1, 2024**

You are encouraged to submit your nomination via e-mail to [nominations@acct.org](mailto:nominations@acct.org).

### Director-at-Large Nomination Process

Each member of the Board of Directors at the time of election must be a member of a Voting Member. Voting Members are defined as governing and advisory boards of accredited not-for-profit community-based postsecondary educational institutions that primarily offer programs other than baccalaureate, graduate, and professional degrees, including boards of state systems that include such institutions. According to the ACCT Bylaws, no more than one (1) member from any member board may serve as an elected member on the ACCT Board of Directors at the same time.

At the time of election, each candidate must have completed a minimum of one year of volunteer service to ACCT and have attended at least one ACCT Leadership Congress and one Community College National Legislative Summit. "Volunteer service to ACCT" is defined as service as an elected or appointed member of a Standing Committee or the Governance and Bylaws Committee, service as an elected or appointed member of a Regional Nominating Committee, or service as an appointed Coordinator in the ACCT State, Province and Territory Coordinators Network.

If you wish to run for a Director-at-Large seat during the 2024 ACCT Leadership Congress and appear in the Advisor, you are required to notify the ACCT President at the Washington, D.C., office in writing of your intent to run. Your notification must be received with a postmark date of July 1, 2024, or by electronic mail (preferred method) by close of business on July 1, 2024. The President will send candidate information received within the prescribed postmarked deadline to the ACCT membership in September.

Official notification from candidates shall consist of:

- A letter of declaration to run for office;
- A letter of support from the individual's board indicating the institution's commitment to provide financial support for the individual's service as an ACCT Board member, including participation in the ACCT Leadership Congress, Community College National Legislative Summit, and Annual Summer Board of Directors Retreat and Meeting;
- A one-page résumé that should focus on community college-related service and other civic activities and may include brief information on education and occupation;
- A narrative statement, not to exceed 150 words, on qualifications (electronically preferred), for inclusion in voting materials to be printed;
- A 5" x 7" head-and-shoulders photo, preferably color (photos will not be returned), or a color electronic version (preferred) — 300 dpi or higher; and
- An optional single letter of support from an ACCT member board. This letter of support must be limited to one page.

You are encouraged to submit your nomination online. Please e-mail your nomination to [nominations@acct.org](mailto:nominations@acct.org). ACCT will respond to your submission via e-mail within three working days. Please contact ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee at [jhlee@acct.org](mailto:jhlee@acct.org) if you do NOT receive a response within three working days. Nominations will also be accepted via standard mail (return receipt requested). Mail nominations to: ACCT President, 1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

## 2025 Candidates for the ACCT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

(1) Two-Year Term in Each Region

*The following is the slate of nominees:*

#### CENTRAL REGION

**No Nominees**

#### NORTHEAST REGION

**Trinh Nguyen\***

*Bunker Hill Community College, MA*

#### PACIFIC REGION

**Sharmila Swenson\***

*Highline College, WA*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

**Keyatta Priester\***

*Aiken Technical College, SC*

#### WESTERN REGION

**Linda Hoskins Sutton\***

*Kansas City Kansas Community College, KS*

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

**NOTE: Nominations will be accepted from the floor on all elections.**

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