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A Field of Dreams

EVERY SUMMER, THE ACCT BOARD OF Directors convenes in the chair’s home state for an annual retreat and meeting. I was thrilled to host the board this July here in Waterloo, Iowa, part of the agricultural heartland of America and home of several John Deere tractor facilities. Rural and industrial America too often go overlooked, and I am grateful that ACCT puts its money where its mouth is as a nationally representative higher education association.

During a break, the board took a short “field trip” to the site where the 1992 movie *Field of Dreams* was filmed. In the movie, Kevin Costner plays an Iowa farmer who builds a baseball diamond in his cornfield after dreaming the haunting phrase “If you build it, he will come.” He builds the field, and the ghosts of famous baseball players mysteriously materialize out of the rows of corn. Ultimately, the spirit of baseball inspires people from all over to re-experience the innocent joy of their younger lives through the game.

The concept is fantastical, but it is curiously close to our real world as leaders of community colleges. Once upon a time, every college campus was an undeveloped field, unremarkable and indiscernible from any other plot of land. As soon as an institution of higher education is built, they — the students — materialize, and with them they bring dreams that bring our colleges to life.

It’s true. Think about your first foray onto a college campus as a student. All you carried with you was your knowledge and memories

from your previous years of school, and maybe a bag of books that would help you to dream your future into reality. It’s thrilling. It’s intimidating. It’s daunting. It’s got all the open-ended possibility and potential of a dream. That’s what our colleges are to every single student, no matter their age or background.

This issue of *Trustee Quarterly* is packed with articles that relate to students. As you read them, keep in mind that your college is a field of dreams for every one of your students, and every student who walks onto your campus brings their dreams with them. Our job as trustees and college CEOs is to build an environment where those dreams have room to grow and fulfill themselves.

What dreams have been realized at your college, through your college? How have you shared them to inspire others’ dreams to take hold and flourish? Let me know when you see me in Seattle this October for the ACCT Leadership Congress, and share your stories and ideas through ACCT Connect and *Trustee Quarterly*. Everyone could use a field trip to a field of dreams for inspiration.

Jay Nardini
Hawkeye Community College, IA