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# Trustee

THE VOICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS

QUARTERLY

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**It's time to get out the vote & advocate for better support for our students & institutions.**

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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

# 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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Students are at the center of everything our institutions do, and while they may not be present in every boardroom, they should be on every trustee's mind during every board gathering.

## Sharing Our Collective Knowledge

DEAR ACCT MEMBERS,

IN LAST WINTER'S ISSUE OF *TRUSTEE Quarterly*, we published an article by George Boggs and Maria Sheehan about the importance of protecting the well-being of your CEO. Lawrence Nespoli and Deborah Preston were inspired by that article to write in this issue about the importance of onboarding and development for new college CEOs — getting them off to a strong start by establishing holistic well-being from the beginning.

This issue also features another great article from Boggs and Michael Gavin on the role of governing boards in promoting student engagement and responsibility — namely, ensuring that community college students vote this November. The timing couldn't be better, and the message couldn't be more important.

A survey of ACCT's members conducted last fall showed that *Trustee Quarterly* is one of the most important resources we offer our members. I am especially excited to see articles by our members and colleagues inspire other authors — and to see this magazine serve as a forum for thoughtful dialogue and shared knowledge among our membership and into the greater community college and higher education policy fields.

In this issue, you will notice an emphasis on students — from a profile of an outstanding Northern Virginia Community College student by ACCT's own Kali Woods and a discussion of how community colleges are uniquely positioned to support Latino students by Deborah Santiago to Randall J. VanWagoner's and Tony Colón's experiences with an exciting new screening tool to

support student well-being. Students are at the center of everything our institutions do, and while they may not be present in every boardroom, they should be on every trustee's mind during every board gathering.

AI and emerging technologies also are on all our minds today, and this issue features a related discussion by New America's Shalin Jyotishi about the role of trustees in innovation and pathways to the future of work, as well as an important framework for how to modernize campus facilities in the era of smart technologies by college chancellor Lee Lambert and industry leader Michael Hines.

We can only fit so much content into any given issue of *Trustee Quarterly*, so I hope you are taking advantage of ACCT's other means of educating our members — especially ACCT Connect and our events, including the ACCT Leadership Congress, the Community College National Legislative Summit, and Governance Leadership Institutes. Each of these events is designed to fortify your knowledge, and the collective knowledge of our sector.

Thank you for all you do for your colleges and your students. I look forward to seeing you in Seattle this fall at the ACCT Leadership Congress.

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

# NEWS & NOTES

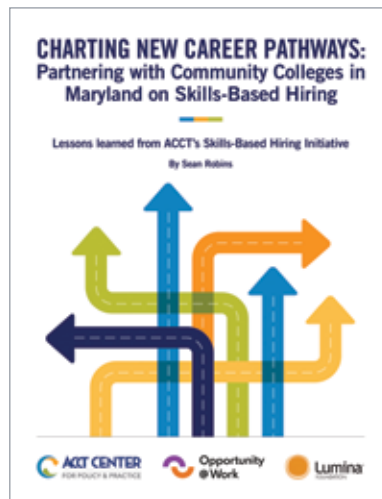
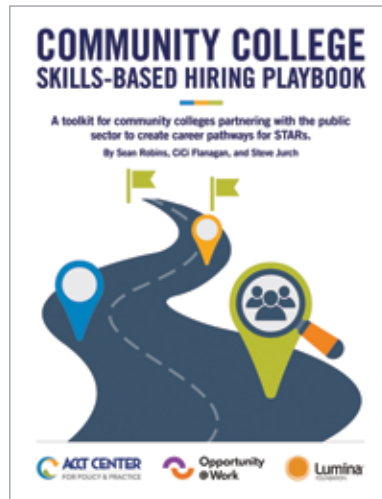
## Two New Publications from ACCT, Opportunity@Work

IN AUGUST, ACCT ISSUED TWO NEW publications resulting from a two-year partnership with Opportunity@Work, the State of Maryland, select employers, and four pilot Maryland community colleges. The goal of the project was to demonstrate the effectiveness of skills-based hiring by designing and/or enhancing existing training programs around the essential skills most needed for specific occupations, creating a pipeline of skilled and career-ready job candidates for open roles. The project was supported by Lumina Foundation.

The *Community College Skills-Based Hiring Playbook* is “a toolkit for community colleges partnering with the public sector to create career pathways for” individuals Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs). The purpose of the guide is to enable community college leaders to more easily ensure that pathways for STARs are clear, remunerative, and navigable. Although this resource was created to support community colleges in partnering with the public sector to create career pathways for STARs (see p. 9), it can also be leveraged in establishing partnerships with the private sector because much of the process is consistent with partnering with the public sector.

The playbook includes sections on building foundational knowledge, relationship building, discovery, current community college and employer partnerships, planning for a new hiring process, success stories from Carroll Community College and Frederick Community College, and a call to action.

*Charting New Career Pathways: Partnering with Community Colleges in Maryland on Skills Based Hiring* is a case study of lessons learned from a partnership between the Maryland Policy and Corrections Training Commissions and the Community College of Baltimore County, including preparations, challenges, and progress toward the goal of getting new recruits through their first year as corrections professionals.



➤ Visit [www.acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/skills-based-hiring](http://www.acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/skills-based-hiring) looking to learn more about ACCT's Skills-Based Hiring Initiative.

## 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.

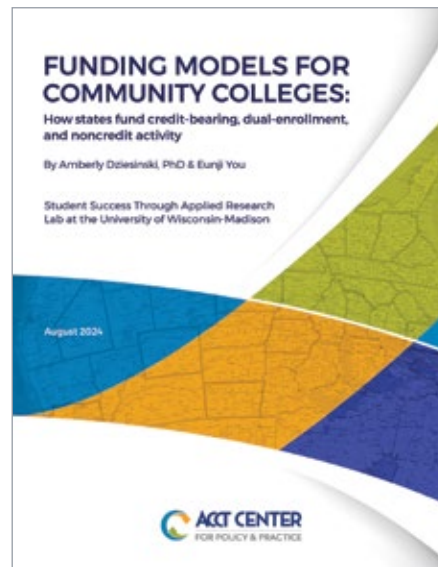
ACCT's Latest Action in Washington (LAW) Alerts do the work for you.

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).

## Funding Models for Community Colleges



IN AUGUST, ACCT RELEASED A MUCH-anticipated new report that explores how states fund community colleges based on the enrollment of their students, including those pursuing credit-bearing degrees and certificates, those participating in non-credit workforce programs, and those enrolled via dual enrollment programs. State funding approaches vary for these three community college priorities, and *Funding Models for Community Colleges: How states fund credit-bearing, dual-enrollment, and noncredit activity* aims to increase awareness about funding inequalities across student enrollment groups. The report is authored by Dr. Amberly Dzieszinski, a researcher in the Student Success Through Applied Research Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and

Eunji You, a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a graduate assistant in the Student Success Through Applied Research (SSTAR) Lab.

In the report, the authors identify the prevalence of state funding for credit-bearing, dual-enrollment, and noncredit activities across the U.S. They then identify policy mechanisms states use to fund these activities by reviewing state documents, including statutes, policy manuals, and budgets.

The report describes differences in enrollment-based funding, performance-based funding, institutional requests, special purpose funding, and tuition reimbursement in various states.

"This exploratory work is intended to give an initial overview of how states fund each student enrollment group," the authors state. "This brief accompanies a data dashboard that describes specific funding policies and funding levels for each state."



For more information, visit [acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/state-funding-models](http://acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/state-funding-models).



# 2024 ACCT Regional Awards Recipients Announced

Regional awardees to compete for national-level recognition in October.



THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY College Trustees (ACCT) is pleased to announce the recipients of its annual Regional Awards for community college trustees, equity programs, chief executive officers, faculty members, and professional board staff members. The 2024 ACCT Awards program is sponsored by Edamerica.

ACCT's Regional Awards recognize the tremendous contributions made by community colleges and their leaders to meet the needs of their communities.

"The roles and responsibilities of community colleges have increased considerably in recent years," said ACCT Chair and Hawkeye Community College Board of Trustees Chair Jay Nardini. "The individuals who have been selected to receive this important recognition are truly vital to their communities and regions."

"ACCT's member colleges and the individuals who serve them work tirelessly, often with little recognition," said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. "We are proud to shine a spotlight on some of the nation's best public servants and professionals through our regional awards program." The full list of awardees follows.

## 2024 ACCT Regional Awardees

### 2024 Trustee Leadership Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Joseph P. Murphy  
*Moraine Valley Community College, Ill.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Mary M. Zimmermann  
*Union College of Union County New Jersey, N.J.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Judy Chen Haggerty, Esq.  
*Mt. San Antonio College, Calif.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Caridad "Carrie" Lee  
*Santa Fe College, Fla.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Dirk Petersen  
*Northeast Community College, Neb.*

### 2024 Equity Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Joliet Junior College, Ill.

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Dutchess Community College, N.Y.

#### PACIFIC REGION

Pierce College, Wash.

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Forsyth Technical Community College, N.C.

### 2024 Chief Executive Officer Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Dr. Shelly Mondeik  
*Mid-State Technical College, Wisc.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Dr. Randall J. VanWagoner  
*Mohawk Valley Community College, N.Y.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Dr. James Dale (J.D.) Rottweiler  
*Cochise College, Ariz.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Dr. Anne M. Kress  
*Northern Virginia Community College, Va.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Dr. Christy Ponce  
*Temple College, Texas*

### 2024 Faculty Member Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Dr. John Sands  
*Moraine Valley Community College, Ill.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Michele L. Rotunda  
*Union College of Union County New Jersey, N.J.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Tyler Wallace  
*Big Bend Community College, Wash.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Lynn Rickabaugh  
*Aiken Technical College, S.C.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Bryan Edward Stone  
*Del Mar College, Texas*

### 2024 Professional Board Staff Member Award

#### CENTRAL REGION

Diane Kerruish  
*Elgin Community College, Ill.*

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Maria Ferrara  
*Bergen Community College, N.J.*

#### PACIFIC REGION

Renée Gallegos  
*Rio Hondo College, Calif.*

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Elle Perkins King  
*Davidson-Davie Community College, N.C.*

#### WESTERN REGION

Perla Molina  
*Dallas College, Texas*

Regional ACCT Awards were announced via ACCT's Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and ACCT Connect accounts.

Individuals and colleges recognized at the regional level will contend for the national-level recognition of the following ACCT Association Awards:

- 2024 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award;
- 2024 Charles Kennedy Equity Award;
- 2024 Marie Y. Martin Chief Executive Award;
- 2024 William H. Meardy Faculty Member Award; and
- 2024 ACCT Professional Board Staff Member Award.

One outstanding award recipient in each category will be announced during the Annual ACCT Awards Gala on Wednesday, October 25, in Seattle, Washington, in conjunction with the 2024 ACCT Leadership Congress.



STAY UPDATED ON EVENTS  
[www.acct.org/events](http://www.acct.org/events)

# ACCT NOW

## Navigating Recovery

Despite recent gains, community college enrollment trends reveal the impact of the Better FAFSA rollout and other post-pandemic challenges.

BY ROSARIO DURÁN

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT has struggled to recover to pre-pandemic levels, significantly impacting community colleges, which saw a steep decline of over 772,592 students — a 16% drop in enrollment from fall 2019 to fall 2022. This decline underscores the impact economic fluctuations can have on our students, many of whom are juggling work, family obligations, and academic pursuits. Community college students are typically non-traditional learners, with an average age of 27. Approximately 43% of full-time community college students are employed full-time, and over a third are first-generation college students.

Despite these challenges, community college enrollment saw an increase in fall 2023 as students returned to classrooms, marking the first growth in undergraduate enrollment since the pandemic began. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported that community colleges drove 60% of the overall enrollment increase. Notably, enrollment among Black, Latino, and Asian students rose by 4%. Short-term credentials also gained popularity, with a 9.9% rise compared to a 3.6% increase in associate degrees.

This positive momentum continued into spring 2024, where community colleges led an overall increase in undergraduate enrollment, contributing 55.7% of the gains. However, community college enrollment remains 12.4% lower than spring 2020 levels, highlighting the ongoing recovery challenges our institutions face.

### Impact of the Better FAFSA

The turbulent rollout of the Better FAFSA has raised concerns for colleges nationwide. According to a recent report from the National College Attainment Network (NCAN), FAFSA completion

among graduating seniors declined by 11.6% compared to this time last year. This decline highlights the challenges students currently face while attempting to navigate the federal financial aid process.

While this data specifically focuses on graduating seniors and does not capture returning students or adult learners, FAFSA completion rates are typically strong indicators of overall enrollment trends. For instance, during the significant declines in community college enrollment from 2019 to 2021, FAFSA completion dropped by 3.9%. Uncertainty with financial aid could potentially deter students from pursuing or returning to postsecondary education altogether.

Community colleges maintain a slight advantage due to their flexibility, allowing students to fill out their FAFSA and enroll close to the start of classes. Students impacted by FAFSA challenges may opt for community colleges, which offer more affordable, high-quality alternatives to traditional four-year institutions.

While we cannot turn back the clock to undo the damage caused by FAFSA delays this cycle, community college leaders, government officials, elected representatives, and other stakeholders should continue supporting students navigating these challenges. Students who may be on the fence about starting or continuing their postsecondary journeys would greatly benefit from the value and flexibility that community colleges can provide during this uncertain time in the financial aid space. We should also focus our advocacy efforts on ensuring FAFSA is back to its October 1 launch date with minimal challenges for students and families to mitigate future enrollment challenges.



Rosario Durán is the Senior Government Relations Associate at ACCT.



# ACCT NOW

## Tearing the ‘Paper Ceiling’

ACCT and Opportunity@Work showcase how community colleges can serve as a talent pipeline for the public sector.

BY CICI FLANAGAN AND AUDREY MICKAHAIL

**A** GAINST THE BACKDROP OF a rapidly changing economy, the United States is facing a major workforce challenge on both the supply and demand sides of the labor market. As organizations struggle to recruit and hire skilled talent for in-demand roles, many skilled workers are prevented from accessing jobs that are proven to promote economic mobility – often because of unnecessary four-year degree requirements in job descriptions.

Over the past several decades, employers’ reliance on four-year degrees has had a massive effect on the upward mobility of about half of the workforce – the approximately 70 million individuals who have a high school diploma or equivalent but do not have a four-year college degree. A growing body of research demonstrates that these workers who are Skilled Through Alternative Routes (STARs) – such as community college, military service, or on-the-job training rather than a bachelor’s degree – possess in-demand skills that qualify them for higher-paying jobs, but are locked out from accessing them by a variety of systemic barriers. But there’s reason for optimism. Thanks to new research, as well as national campaigns like “Tear the Paper Ceiling,” employers and education providers are both beginning to recognize the importance of hiring and supporting STARs to not just create new pathways to economic opportunity, but also build a stronger and more resilient labor force.

Community colleges have a uniquely powerful role to play in helping STARs achieve economic mobility. In the words of the Harvard Project on Workforce, community colleges often serve as “economic engines” for regional growth, helping employers in their region fill talent

*Community colleges have a uniquely powerful role to play in helping STARs achieve economic mobility. In the words of the Harvard Project on Workforce, community colleges often serve as “economic engines” for regional growth, helping employers in their region fill talent gaps while also enabling their community members to access on-ramps to higher-wage jobs.*

gaps while also enabling their community members to access on-ramps to higher-wage jobs. Crucially, our nation’s community colleges can also serve as a faster, more affordable alternative for STARs to develop their skill sets compared to the often arduous process of taking on loans and temporarily leaving the workforce to earn a four-year degree.

With these factors in mind, community colleges, which are typically deeply integrated in their local labor markets, have the potential to be an effective partner to hiring managers across one particular sector of the labor market – the federal, state, and local governments that continue to struggle to fill open roles. A growing number of government officials are taking action to close labor market gaps by tearing the paper ceiling – removing four-year degree requirements for roles in the public sector. Since 2022, 22 states and the federal

government have opened an estimated 467,000 state jobs to STARs through executive orders and legislation that codify the removal of degree requirements from job postings. While these decisions are a crucial first step, the sector must now make good on the promise of removing degree requirements by actually hiring STARs and supporting their advancement.

What does that work look like in practice, and how can community colleges join forces with government leaders to enable STARs to access careers in the federal, state, and local workforce? In the coming months, ACCT and Opportunity@Work will collaborate to share a suite of resources on how community college administrators and faculty can build clear pathways into the public sector, informed by insights from the State of Maryland and four Maryland community colleges – Carroll Community College, Community College of Baltimore County, Frederick Community College, and Howard Community College. To learn more and gain access to the resources, visit ACCT and Opportunity@Work.



Cici Flanagan is the Senior Customer Success Manager at Opportunity@Work. Audrey Mickahail is the Senior Vice President of Delivery at Opportunity@Work.





One way to educate policy makers on the importance of workforce programs and the impact they have on the local economy and community is to invite elected officials – at the local, state, and federal levels – to tour your campus to see the facilities.

## A Firsthand Understanding of Hands-On Skills

**It's prime time for community colleges to demonstrate the value of and needed public support for skills-based education.**

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH

**T**HIS JULY, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN OUR ACCT Board and fellow staff members to visit Chair Jay Nardini's home institution, Hawkeye Community College. Located in Waterloo, Iowa, Hawkeye's facilities include a main campus and several training centers, one of which is the Automation and Robotics Center.

Upon its opening in September 2023, Dr. Todd Holcomb, president of Hawkeye Community College, said, "Automation will impact every business sector and will be the way for small and medium-sized businesses to survive the workforce crisis." The workforce crisis is outlined in the *College News* article highlighting the new building: "nearly one-third of all job openings in Iowa go unfilled due to lack of skilled workers."

Hawkeye's Automation and Robotics Center, located in a former John Deere building known as the TechWorks Campus, is next to the John Deere Museum — also housed in a former John Deere manufacturing building. While touring the museum, we were able to see the complex hydraulics systems of the modern farming tractors used today. For someone whose skill involves a computer monitor, seeing the sample hydraulics training station and then comparing it with a tractor whose tires are taller than I am was a stark "in real life" example of why what our colleges provide is so crucial to both students and communities.

While Hawkeye Community College is working to address the labor shortage, Iowa is not alone in this challenge. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce released a new series in July called "Understanding America's



Labor Shortage” ([www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-americas-labor-shortage](http://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-americas-labor-shortage)). It includes profiles of the most-impacted industries, including durable goods manufacturing, and an interactive map of the most impacted states. By the U.S. Chamber’s measure, comparing job seekers with openings, Iowa has a severe shortage, but other states are ranked as more and most severe. In all, the U.S. Chamber finds that as of July 24, 2024, only 6.8 million unemployed workers are available to fill 8.1 million job openings. And that’s before you take into account the geographic location and skill sets of those unemployed workers, meaning the gap is likely even larger.

Given the worker shortages and growth in skilled jobs, it is not a surprise that many community colleges nationwide see growing interest in their skilled training and workforce development programs. These programs, frequently called “noncredit,” do not receive the same types of support as their academic counterparts for students on a pathway to an associate degree or transfer — in fact, Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana has renamed them “Skills Training” courses to better represent their value.

Given the growing importance of skill training to our institutions and the economies of our communities, ACCT in August launched the Funding Models for Community Colleges project. This project explores to what extent states fund credit-bearing, dual enrollment, and noncredit activity. Researchers Amberly Dzieszinski, Ph.D., and Eunji You of the Student Success Through Applied Research (SSTAR) Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that while all states fund courses for credit, only 35 fund dual enrollment and just over half, or 27, fund noncredit education. Only 22 states fund all three forms of education offered by community colleges.

These findings are outlined in a research brief and policy table but are also presented in an interactive dashboard on the Center for Policy and Practice section of the ACCT website. ([www.acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/state-funding-models](http://www.acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/state-funding-models)). I encourage trustees, presidents, and

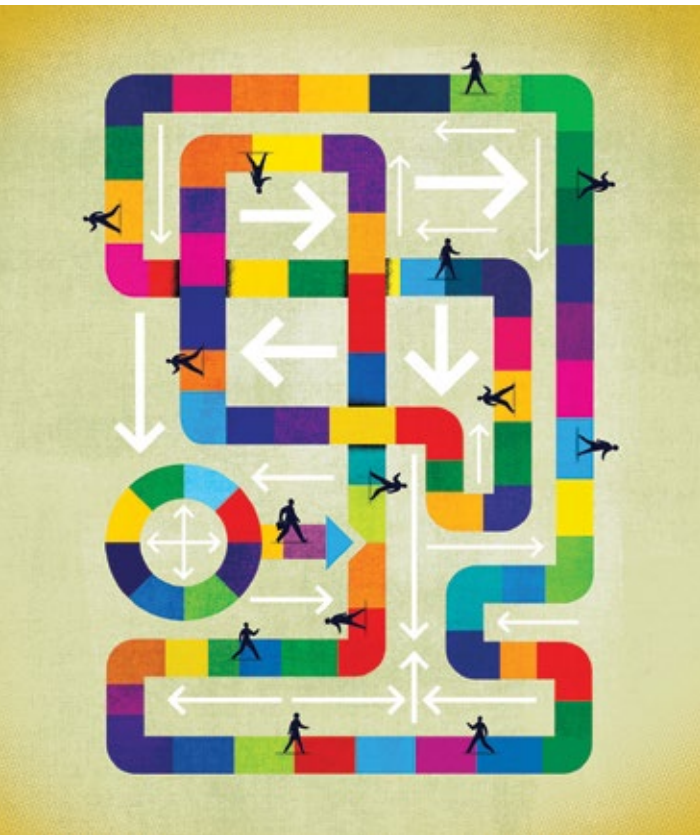
other community college leaders and champions to examine the funding dynamics in your state — and neighboring states — using the tool. This newly released compendium can be a starting point for conversations in your state about how various streams of your work are funded, and how those relate to fulfilling the worker shortage.

One way to educate policy makers on the importance of workforce programs and the impact they have on the local economy and community is to invite elected officials — at the local, state, and federal levels — to tour your campus to see the facilities. Another is coordinating visits to nearby employers to see alumni in action. Just as I gained a better appreciation for reality when facing a tractor twice my height, seeing hands-on classrooms paired with the practical application of skills could spur supportive action in your elected officials.

The outcome of the upcoming election is uncertain. But the continued need for our colleges to support learners and workers in skilled training programs to fulfill in-demand jobs has only been increasing since the COVID-19 pandemic caused “the Great Reshuffle” in the labor market. This need is certain to continue. Investment at all levels for high-demand fields, particularly in the middle-skills fields, will support individuals in moving into better paying and more stable jobs and have greater impacts on our economy and society. Now is a prime time for colleges to work together, and with their states, to ensure they have adequate funding to support skilled training.



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Going forward, ACCT is creating more opportunities for our members to experience the power of place and gain this gut-level understanding of our unique colleges and their contexts.

# You're Going *Where*?

BY ROBIN MATROSS HELMS

AS I WRITE THIS IN MID-AUGUST, SUMMER TRAVEL season is just wrapping up, so everyone's comings and goings have been a primary topic of chit-chat before yoga class, at the pool, and during Zoom meetings. Amid the usual refrains from Washingtonians, such as "I'm going to the Delaware beaches," or "I'm spending the weekend in NYC," and "I have a work trip to LA," my contributions were, "I'm going to Waterloo, Iowa, and Jackson, Mississippi."

*Say what?* Frankly, I was a little surprised by what a conversation stopper this was, as all heads turned in my direction. "You're going *where*?" "Why are you going *there*?" Each time I explained that I would be attending ACCT's annual board retreat in Waterloo, home of Hawkeye Community College and our board chair, and going to Jackson for our annual summer Governance Leadership Institute, hosted this year by Hinds Community College. People's interest was piqued, and initial chit-chat often turned into longer conversations about my work with community colleges and governance. As the





Of course, this deep connection between our colleges and their communities, industry, and the local economic ecosystem is a core component of the community college value proposition and narrative... But it's when we embed ourselves in a place – even briefly – to see these interconnections in action and feel how they play out in very different ways in Waterloo and Jackson and around the country, that we truly feel these deep ties and their power.

summer progressed, I came to feel a sense of pride in these conversations, and reveled in saying, “That’s right! Waterloo and Jackson — and how cool is it that I get to go there?”

The trips themselves reinforced this sense of pride and highlighted what a privilege it is to be able to spend time in communities that are off the beaten track of typical travel destinations. In Waterloo, I saw firsthand how deeply interconnected Hawkeye Community College is to the local community and economy; with teaching sites throughout the city along with its main campus, the college is quite literally interwoven throughout the gorgeous landscape of rolling hills and lush corn and soybean fields. ACCT board members and staff toured a robotics teaching facility across the street from the John Deere factory, an anchor of the local economy, which underscored the responsiveness of our colleges to rapidly evolving local industry needs and the pathways they create for our students to enter and advance in the local workforce. We also spent an evening at the Cedar Valley Arboretum and Botanic Gardens, operated on land owned by the college, which showcases local flora and fauna, and serves as a community nature and event hub — another illustration of how the college engages with and serves the community in such a localized and meaningful way.

Similarly, at Hinds Community College, we were welcomed by President Dr. Stephen Vacik and learned about Hinds’s key role in building the healthcare workforce in Jackson and new efforts and programs designed to fulfill this critical mission. Like Hawkeye does in Iowa, Hinds has facilities throughout

the Jackson area, designed to meet students where they are and illustrating the depth and breadth of our colleges’ community roots.

Of course, this deep connection between our colleges and their communities, industry, and the local economic ecosystem is a core component of the community college value proposition and narrative; my colleagues on ACCT’s public policy team eloquently and effectively articulate data on economic and workforce development to our legislators, as evidenced by policy wins and an overall favorable view of our sector among the public. But it’s when we embed ourselves in a place — even briefly — to see these interconnections in action and feel how they play out in very different ways in Waterloo and Jackson and around the country, that we truly feel these deep ties and their power.

In my last *Trustee Quarterly* column, I wrote about taking a delegation from the Indian Embassy in Washington to visit Wor-Wic Community College in Maryland. Delegation members had the opportunity to hear about how Wor-Wic works with the local electrical collaborative, to see training equipment, and to discuss credentials, credit hours, and other nuts and bolts from an intellectual perspective. But in my follow up conversations with them, it became clear that even more impactful for their understanding of the work and role of our colleges was being able to walk the campus, meet students, and really feel the community and the college’s presence within it. They were impressed, and more enthusiastic than ever about the possibility of creating ties between our institutions and Indian counterparts.

Going forward, ACCT is creating more opportunities for our members to experience

the power of place and gain this gut-level understanding of our unique colleges and their contexts. This column will be published in conjunction with our 2024 ACCT Leadership Congress in Seattle; in addition to visiting the deservedly popular local landmarks, I encourage you to connect with colleagues from local colleges and learn about their interconnectedness with the city, and the smaller communities within it.

And in 2025, we’re taking our national Governance Leadership Institutes on the road once again — to Hawaii in the spring, and to a location yet to be determined in August. Perhaps your college would like to host us? Keep an eye out for the request for proposals. You might also consider a visit to a neighbor college in your area — ACCT State, Province, and Territory Coordinators can help make connections with fellow trustees nearby. And finally, you’ll be hearing shortly about opportunities for partnerships with colleges outside the U.S., and ways to both showcase our institutions on a global stage and give our students the chance to experience the power of place in other parts of the world.

Hope to see you soon — on or off the beaten track!



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# Trustees, Innovation, and Pathways to the Future of Work

Amid a surge in scientific and technological innovation, the community college sector is needed more than ever.

By Shalin Jyotishi





**T**HERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT TIME for community college trustees to understand and support their institutions' contributions to science and technology-based economic development, emerging technology sectors, and regional innovation ecosystems. Industrial policy is back in the United States, and the community college sector is needed more than ever before.

Scientific and technological innovation spurred by federal and private investments in R&D and economic development efforts is catalyzing a sea of job creation, elimination, and augmentation nationwide. Community colleges will be critical to reskilling and upskilling incumbent workers, expanding pathways for young people beginning their careers, and meeting labor market needs in ways that also diversify the workforce and the jobs that will comprise the future of work.

Community colleges have always been pivotal in providing accessible, affordable, and workforce-oriented career preparation in healthcare, skilled trades, manufacturing, and transportation industries. But all across the country, community colleges are also evolving to meet the workforce needs of the future of work — jobs and industries catalyzed and shaped by emerging technologies.

Today, community colleges have expanded customized training, certificates, associate degrees, apprenticeships, and even applied baccalaureates (available in 24 states) tailored to opening doors to jobs in industries incubated and shaped by artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, biotechnology, green energy, and advanced manufacturing — and, as a result, creating inclusive pathways to careers that define the skilled technical workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

The role of community colleges in the innovation economy will only grow due to a massive influx of federal investments from the bipartisan CHIPS & Science Act, alongside the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. These bills have catalyzed new funding opportunities and the need for community college partnerships, job training, and sector strategy around emerging technology fields.

Notably, CHIPS created the first new arm at the U.S. National Science Foundation in over thirty years — the Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships Directorate. Under the new division, NSF has significantly expanded funding for community colleges in emerging technology fields, building on the successes of NSF's Advanced Technological Education program, which has been in operation since 1994.

The more trustees understand these industrial policy investments and how their states and economies can leverage their funds, the better positioned they will be to help realize the promise of the innovation economy for students. New America provides an overview of these new programs in a recent ACCT in the Know podcast episode.

## Why trustees are critical for the community college in the innovation economy

While presidents, deans, workforce leaders, and faculty all have critical roles in unlocking equitable pathways to good jobs resulting from R&D investments, trustees have an especially important role to play.

First, as stewards of an institution, trustees can partner with a president and leadership to take a “forest view” of the college's offerings and their alignment with the region's economic development goals. Depending on state and local policies for college governance, trustees might be elected political appointees or otherwise have political, business, and community ties that could help reinforce their colleges' tether to the needs of their local economy.

Second, trustees offer colleges stability in a time of turbulence. Presidential turnover and retention are becoming a growing problem for all higher education institutions, including community colleges. The latest analysis of the state of higher education presidents conducted by the American Council on Education in 2023 found the lowest tenure length since the association began tracking such data in 2006. The study found that a majority of presidents don't think they will be in their current role in five years — they eye exit opportunities in consulting, non-profits, or returning to faculty ranks.

Generational transitions will also impact college leadership. According to a recent survey from the American Association of Community Colleges, more than half of sitting community college leaders indicate they plan to transition out of their position within the next five years, and one-third expect to retire in that timeframe.

Faculty and staff, too, are in a period of transition. A 2022 survey from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources found that more than half of surveyed higher ed workers plan to leave their roles. An EAB analysis has found that community colleges have faced a 13% staff decline from 2020-2022, resulting in failed searches, difficulty filling part-time positions, and shortages in student services positions.

That leaves trustees among the last lines of defense to help a college take a long-term perspective and ground itself in times of turnover and change. That viewpoint is especially valuable when considering technology-based economic development predicated on investments in emerging technology sectors and the innovation economy. Silicon Valley wasn't built in a day, nor will new innovation hubs be catalyzed solely by federal investments, the AI revolution, or other future technology-driven paradigm shifts.

Trustees have a critical role to play in understanding, supporting, and advocating for their institutions' roles in job training relating to emerging technologies and to excel as partners in regional innovation ecosystems and technology-based economic development to grow and retain high-paying jobs.

## Trustees are among the last lines of defense to help a college take a long-term perspective and ground itself in times of turnover and change.

### What trustees and colleges can do: Three case studies

New America's Future of Work and Innovation Economy is dedicated to the study and support of community colleges in technology-based economic development and for job training in evolving and advanced technology sectors. We built on an earlier ACCT In the Know podcast episode and undertook a series of interviews of trustees of three community colleges on the leading edge as workforce partners for the innovation economy — MiraCosta College in California, Miami Dade College in Florida, and Harper College in Illinois. Our conversations focused on the colleges' work and what trustees could do to support their college's role in regional innovation ecosystems.

First, I spoke with Frank Merchant, a MiraCosta trustee since 2015, to learn about a capacity-building effort MiraCosta undertook to better prepare the college for the future of work.

Situated in the southern California biotechnology hub, MiraCosta College is a recognized leader in education in emerging sectors. For example, in 2022, MiraCosta launched the nation's first community college baccalaureate in biomanufacturing to meet the workforce needs of Fortune 500 biotechnology giants like Pfizer, Abbott Laboratories, and Thermo Fisher Scientific. MiraCosta was one of the first grantees of NSF's CHIPS-enabled new Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (ExLENT) program, which it is using to scale internships and apprenticeships in the biomanufacturing and microelectronics sector. But MiraCosta's foresight has less to do with chance and more to do with strategy.

In 2019, MiraCosta College partnered with the Institute for the Future, a Palo Alto-based non-profit, to undertake an institution-wide training in "futurist thinking" methods. The president, members of its board of trustees, top administrators, students, faculty, and staff took part in a series of trainings meant to help them foresee long-term trends and assess the possible implications for the institution, students, and neighboring communities. The college used institutional immersion to take an entirely new long-view approach to its strategic planning and operating process.

Not everyone at the institution bought into the trendy-sounding training. "You have to convince people that the futures process thinking is not the flavor of the day but your savior. It was key that I and other trustees go through this entire training process to let everyone in the institution know that this is important," Merchant told me.

Merchant recommended trustees explore similar training approaches that help institutionalize a proactive approach to the innovation economy — emphasizing the value of data to drive decision-making. "Proactive expansion of offerings across these emerging technology areas is something that board members can support," he said.

Next, I spoke with Roberto Alonso, a trustee of Miami Dade College. Miami Dade is one of the nation's leading community colleges in AI education, becoming one of the only institutions to offer credit and non-credit certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees in applied AI. In 2021, the college named Antonio Delgado its first vice president of innovation and technology partnerships, and he has since gone on to serve as the first two-year representative on NSF's Computer and Information Sciences Directorate Advisory Committee.

In 2024, Miami Dade was awarded a \$2.8 million grant from the NSF to partner with Houston Community College and Maricopa Community College District to launch a consortium dedicated to scaling and improving AI education at two-year institutions.

Alonso emphasized the importance of trustees ensuring that their institutions not only meet employer demands but also include ethics across emerging technology training. "We are democracy's colleges. We are an institution that gives access to all students. If we don't give students the knowledge they need to use AI in a positive way, we won't be tackling the biggest need," Alonso told me. Alonso encouraged trustees to consider how their institutions can foster technologists in the public interest. Miami Dade is a member of New America's Public Interest Technology Network, which cultivates tech professionals who are ethics-savvy.

Alonso, who also serves on the Miami-Dade County School

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Board, also encouraged fellow trustees to tether their institutions' work in regional innovation ecosystems to their local communities through their own relationships. While 70% of Miami Dade's booming AI enrollment is above 26 and 30% above 41, Miami Dade offers an AI summer camp for high school students to immerse in the college's applied AI curriculum at no cost. Additionally, Delgado, in his role as the college's tech workforce leader, serves as a senior advisor for tech talent development to the Mayor of the City of Miami to foster town-gown relationships.

Lastly, I spoke with William "Bill" Kelley, board chair of William Rainey Harper College, located just outside Chicago. Buoyed by a recent half-billion dollar investment in quantum technology, Illinois governor J.B. Pritzker envisions Illinois as a "global quantum capital." Nestled in the heart of a booming quantum science and technology hub, Harper is well-aligned with the future of its region's economic development strategy.

In fall 2022, Harper launched the Innovation Accelerator, a new collaborative unit designed to focus specifically on emerging technology workforce training. Writing for the American Association of Community Colleges, Harper President Avis Proctor described how the accelerator is developing accelerated career pathways in cybersecurity, quantum computing, and cloud-computing.

"Under Dr. Proctor's leadership, we set aside \$900,000 from our HEERF [Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund] funding to create the Innovation Accelerator," Kelley told me. "We complemented that funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, NSF, and other agencies."

Harper was one of the first grantees of NSF's new CHIPS-enabled Enabling Partnerships to Increase Innovation Capacity (EPIIC) grant funding program, which it is using to work with a consortia of two- and four-year institutions to improve employer partnerships in quantum fields. Kelley recommends trustees look at how the entire institution can support its technology goals. For example, Harper engaged its philosophy program to support its ethics course in AI. "We had to reach out to different departments

to work better together, as well as the college's foundation," Kelley told me.

### Policy to Empower Community Colleges

Trustees Kelley, Alonso, and Merchant aren't alone as college leaders who support their institution's evolutions to address the future of work, but they are among the early adopters. All three trustees emphasized the need for federal and state governments to better recognize the need and value of community colleges in the innovation economy. Policy innovations such as allowing community college baccalaureates, funding apprenticeship and quality short-term training, and funding startup costs all arose as needs.

On the federal level, Congress has only appropriated a portion of the funding of the CHIPS & Science Act authorizations. In July 2024, four community college presidents, including the presidents of MiraCosta and Harper College, joined New America to publicly call on Congress to fully appropriate funding for NSF. NSF experienced budget cuts in March, hamstringing its support of community colleges. "Getting the other half of the loaf would be huge for the next wave," Kelley said.

As the U.S. government advances the vision of CHIPS and a bipartisan approach to industrial policy, community colleges will be critical to a successful and equitable innovation economy.



Shalin Jyotishi is founder and managing director of the Future of Work & Innovation Economy initiative at New America.

# An Image-Based Method for Assessing Student Emotional Well-Being

Mohawk Valley Community College uses a new screening tool to support the complex realities of student needs.

By Randall J. VanWagoner and Tony Colón



**T**HE CURRENT MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ON COLLEGE campuses has reached alarming levels, with recent statistics highlighting the severity of the situation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the proportion of adults experiencing recent symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorders increased from 36.4% to 41.5% between August 2020 and February 2021, with the most significant increases among adults aged 18 to 29 years (Vahratian et al., 2021). This surge in mental health issues is mirrored in college populations, where the pressures of academic performance, social integration, and the transition to adulthood exacerbate these challenges. This situation necessitates the development of more engaging and less intrusive assessment methods that can effectively measure student emotional well-being.

Trustees can no longer ignore the magnitude of these issues. While the policy implications may vary, the allocation of resources and the need to support administration in prioritizing student well-being is paramount. Fundamental supports like on-campus mental health professional staff and telehealth solutions are necessary and useful strategies, but more intentional and creative solutions are needed to meet the moment of this complex reality our students face.

Despite the growing recognition of this crisis, effectively assessing and addressing emotional well-being on campuses remains a significant challenge. Traditional tools like the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) are widely used but often perceived as intrusive and awkward by students, leading to low response rates and incomplete data.

### Challenges in Assessing Emotional Well-Being

The primary challenge in assessing emotional well-being lies in the reluctance of students to engage with traditional assessment tools. The PHQ-9 and GAD-7, while clinically validated, require students to reflect on and report their symptoms explicitly, which can be uncomfortable and stigmatizing. These tools also are not designed to capture the nuanced and dynamic nature of emotional well-being, leading to potential oversights in identifying students who need support.

In response to these challenges, there is a growing need for innovative assessment methods that students are more likely to engage with. A promising approach involves the use of an online, TikTok-like interface that presents assessments in a manner familiar and appealing to students. This approach leverages the principles of gamification — engineering assessments to feel fun like a game — to increase engagement and completion rates, providing more accurate and comprehensive data on student well-being.

### The Promise of AgileBrain (AB)

AgileBrain (AB) represents a novel approach to assessing emotional well-being that addresses many of the limitations of traditional tools. AB has a solid foundation in neuroscience, using rapid image selection to elicit affective responses, bypassing cognitive barriers, and reducing the influence of social desirability bias. This method is designed to be

brief, taking only about three minutes to complete, and is gamified to enhance user engagement.

Evidence from multiple studies demonstrates the validity of AB as a screening tool for general distress. In a series of large-scale studies involving over 3,500 participants, AB showed strong convergent validity with established measures of well-being, including the PHQ-9, CESD-10, GAD-7, and others (Pincus, 2024). These findings suggest that AB can effectively identify individuals experiencing compromised well-being, making it a valuable tool for campus mental health initiatives. Specifically, AB's ability to capture emotional activation (the intensity of emotion) and valence (the positivity / negativity of those emotions) provides a more nuanced picture of well-being, allowing for the identification of both high-risk individuals and those experiencing more subtle forms of distress.

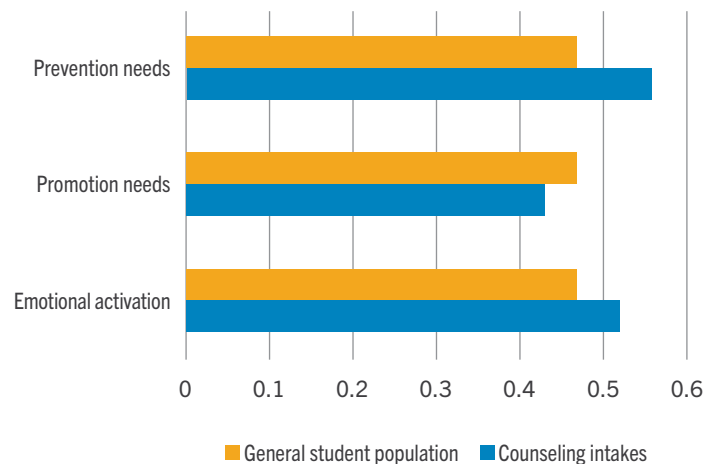
### Case Study: AB at Mohawk Valley Community College

Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) has implemented a multiple touchpoint strategy using AB to assess and improve student emotional well-being. This strategy involves integrating AB assessments into various student services to differentiate levels of distress, detect changes in distress over time, and characterize distinct sets of needs across different contexts. Providing students with a useful framework to better understand their emotions also gives them a greater sense of agency to manage their emotions and increase their overall well-being.

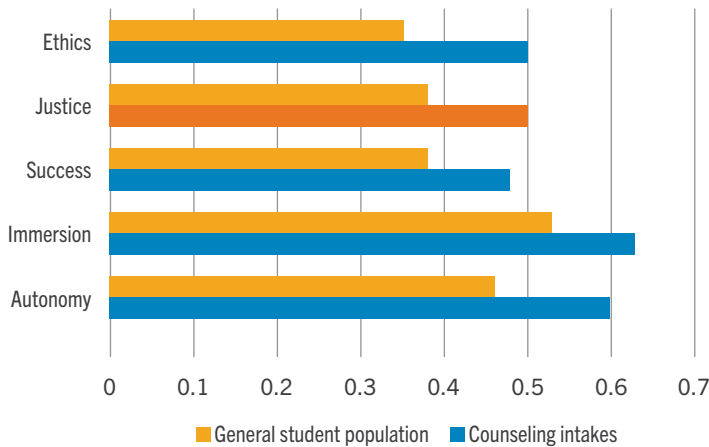
### Health Center Intakes

Health center intakes for new students at MVCC exhibited the highest level of emotional intensity among all groups. As Figure 1 below shows, these students had higher activation with significant negative emotional valence (prevention needs exceeded promotion needs). Specifically, 65% of these students reported feeling unsafe or anxious, 63% felt bored or unable to focus, and 72% felt scorned.

Figure 1: AgileBrain Metrics: Intake vs. General



**Figure 2: Largest Need Gaps: Intake vs. General**



And, as Figure 2 above illustrates, AB points to the specific needs to focus on: autonomy, immersion, success, caring, and justice for this population.

### Wellness Day Sample

The Wellness Day sample, serving as a proxy for the general student population, also showed high levels of emotional activation, albeit less distressed and more positive than the health center intakes. The primary needs identified in this group were potential, inclusion, immersion, and caring, reflecting a desire for personal growth, community inclusion, and emotional support. This group's emotional profile underscores the importance of fostering an inclusive and supportive campus environment.

### Career Counseling

Students engaged in career counseling exhibited a pragmatic focus, with high needs for safety and success but lower needs for autonomy and ethics. This profile aligns with the practical considerations of job searching and employment, where the tradeoff between autonomy and financial security is a common theme.

### Graduation

Graduating students at MVCC displayed a different emotional profile, with reduced needs for immersion, inclusion, and caring, likely reflecting the completion of their academic journey and the celebratory nature of graduation. Their relative positivity fit the moment. However, their needs for potential and recognition remained significant, indicating a focus on future achievements and professional recognition.

### Change Over Time Results

The effectiveness of AB in detecting changes in well-being over time was further supported by findings from MVCC. Preliminary data suggest that AB can sensitively detect changes in student well-being following interventions, such as counseling sessions or participation in stress-reduction programs. This capability is crucial for monitoring the effectiveness of mental health initiatives and ensuring that students receive timely and appropriate support.

### Conclusion

The mental health crisis on college campuses demands innovative solutions. AgileBrain (AB) presents a promising approach with its engaging, gamified assessment method and personalized feedback. Both students and clinicians have reported positive experiences with AB, appreciating its quick and insightful evaluations. Evidence supports AB's effectiveness, as seen in its initial launch and implementation at MVCC. As more institutions adopt AB, we can anticipate improved detection and management of student distress, fostering more effective solutions and healthier and more supportive campus environments.

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# The Role of the Governing Board in Promoting Student Engagement and Responsibility

How community colleges can prepare our students to meet their obligations to society and be responsible stewards of our democracy.

By George R. Boggs and Michael H. Gavin



For our form of government to be effective, citizens must participate, including our community college students. They must become informed about issues and where policymakers and political candidates stand on them – and most importantly, they must vote.

**T**HE INCREASED FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS HAS expanded the role of community college trustees beyond the traditional functions of being stewards of balanced budgets, the construction and maintenance of buildings and grounds, and student enrollment trends. Today's trustees are active in setting goals for increasing student completion and transfer rates, closing achievement gaps, and monitoring the progression of their students. Of course, trustees must be careful to stay at the policy level, the “**what**” of what the college does. They leave the procedures, the “**how**” of implementation, to the administration, faculty, and staff. Trustees monitor progress through the questions they ask and the data they request.

Mission statements are developed and approved in response to the “**why**” of what we do. In addition to preparing students for careers or transfer to four-year institutions, students learn to think critically, appreciate the arts, understand the impact of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and learn about different cultures and the history that has shaped our civilization. However, there is an area that needs more attention. We must better prepare our students to meet their obligations to society and to be responsible stewards of our democracy.

The government of the United States is the oldest of the current world democracies. For most policy decisions, our government is a democratic republic in that eligible citizens vote for representatives to make government appointments and to determine the laws and regulations that govern us. For our form of government to be effective, citizens must participate, including our community college students. They must become informed about issues and where policymakers and political candidates stand on them – and most importantly, *they must vote*. The author of our Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, believed that

a successful democracy was dependent upon the education of the general populace. Understanding how our government works and how important individual participation is should be outcomes of learning for every student at our institutions.

Most Americans do not understand just how fragile our democracy is and why it requires broad and continual participation from citizens. According to the Baker Center at Georgetown University, 32% of Americans ages 18-29 believe non-democracies can be preferable to democracies (Ladd, Tucker, & Kates, 2018). The partisan divide has become so extreme that policymakers are often unable to work together for the good of our country and our people. Some Americans do not believe that their vote will make any difference or state that they are too busy to learn about the issues or the beliefs and values of policymakers and political candidates. While two-thirds of college students voted in the 2020 election, the community college student voting rate was ten percentage points lower (Fersh, D., 2024). Students of color voted at a significantly lower percentage than white students (National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement, 2024). It is time for community colleges to double down on our efforts.

Many individuals do not appreciate or understand the struggles and sacrifices that those who came before us faced to obtain the right to vote. In the early history of our country, voting rights were based on property ownership, granting the sole power of government to white males over the age of 21 and of the Protestant religion. After the Civil War, African American men were given the right to vote by the 15th Amendment to the Constitution. It wasn't until 1920 that the 19th Amendment was approved, giving women the right to vote. Then, in 1947, Native Americans were granted the right to vote. In 1965, Congress banned the use of literacy tests, poll taxes, and other obstacles



While two-thirds of college students voted in the 2020 election, the community college student voting rate was ten percentage points lower. Students of color voted at a significantly lower percentage than white students. It is time for community colleges to double down on our efforts.

designed to keep people from voting. In 1971, recognizing that young Americans were serving in the military and risking their lives for our freedoms, the voting age was lowered to 18. The right to vote in America did not come easily. People fought and died for a voice in the decisions that affect them; we shouldn't risk losing what they fought so hard for by not supporting our democracy and not voting. Learning about the issues and voting are civic obligations for a well-functioning democracy.

Some of our students enroll in political science classes where issues are studied and debated. However, we are advocating for colleges to do more. Colleges can create other ways to engage students through campus organizations and events. Speakers can be invited to share their views on issues or to participate in debates or forums. Issues that are important to students include the economy, tuition costs, inflation, student indebtedness, abortion and reproductive rights, climate change, health care, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and gun violence and Second Amendment rights. Students can also participate in service learning or civic engagement projects focused on encouraging all eligible citizens in our communities to register and to vote. Although colleges can provide venues for discussion of important local, state, and national issues, ***we truly understand these discussions must remain nonpartisan.***

Colleges must, ***unapologetically***, be proactive in encouraging students to register to vote and actually to vote.

***Education for All*** and more than 40 community college-related associations and state systems have endorsed a nonpartisan campaign to encourage student voting. Our campaign brief, available at <https://efastudentvote.org/>, provides a wealth of information to assist college leaders in promoting student civic

engagement and participation in our democracy. We stand ready to help with this important effort.

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# SERVING LATINO STUDENTS

Community colleges are uniquely positioned to support Latino students on their way to and through higher education.

By Deborah Santiago

**W**HAT DOES IT TAKE TO INTENTIONALLY SERVE Latino students on their way to and through higher education? Community colleges are uniquely positioned to answer this question for Latinos with action.

*Excelencia* in Education has served our mission to accelerate Latino student success in higher education for 20 years. Since our founding, trendsetting community colleges committed to becoming places where Latino students — and all students — thrive. These colleges have engaged as leaders and partners in *Excelencia*'s national efforts to advance what works for Latino students and ensure America's future with the talents of the Latino community.

Latinos are among the fastest growing college-age populations in the U.S., and they represent a post-traditional student majority. They are also more likely to enroll at community colleges than peers — in the fall of 2021, 34% of Latinos in college were enrolled at a two-year institution compared to 23% of their white peers. Further, close to 40% of Latinos who either earned a degree or who were still enrolled had first enrolled at a two-year institution.

As the number of Latinos enrolling at community colleges has increased, so too has the number of community colleges that meet the

enrollment definition of a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). HSIs are defined in federal legislation as having 25% or more undergraduate Hispanic student full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. These institutions are eligible for competitive grants from the U.S. Department of Education. Of the 600 HSIs in the country in 2022-23, 39% are community colleges. Further, all of the top 25 institutions where Latinos earned associate degrees in 2019-20 are HSIs.

Enrolling Latino students is necessary to become an HSI, but community colleges have opportunities to go beyond enrollment and deconstruct the "S" in HSI to become more intentional in supporting student success. This includes developing and implementing programs anchored in knowing the strengths and opportunities of the Latino students they serve.

Since 2005, *Excelencia* has worked with, and learned from, programs through Examples of *Excelencia* — the only national, data-driven effort to identify and promote evidence-based practices at colleges, universities, and community-based organizations increasing Latino student success. We have recognized hundreds of programs that emphasize cultural responsiveness and take asset-based approaches to intentionally serve Latino, and other post-traditional students.

## Enrolling Latino students is necessary to become an HSI, but community colleges have opportunities to go beyond enrollment and deconstruct the “S” in HSI to become more intentional in supporting student success.

*Excelencia* profiles about 230 of these programs in the free online Growing What Works (GWW) Database. Over 60 programs in the GWW Database are at the associate degree level, and each serves as an example of the power of community colleges to make a positive difference in the lives of Latino students.

The Engineering Program at Wright (EPW) at Wilbur Wright College is one such program. Recognized as the 2023 Example of *Excelencia* at the associate level, EPW expands diversity in engineering by increasing enrollment, transfer, bachelor’s degree completion, and job placement of underrepresented students, especially Latinos. The ability to articulate impact with data is integral to intentionality in serving students. Since inception, EPW has served 909 students, 68% of whom are Latino. In the last three years, EPW’s fall-to-fall retention has ranged from 93% to 96%, and its transfer rate is 75% within two years and up to 85% within three years of admission.

Examples of *Excelencia* is predicated on the understanding that what works for EPW’s Latino students may work for Latino students in other community college programs. Together with other recognized programs, EPW contributes to a community of practice that advances what works for Latinos in higher education and proves there is no excuse for inaction.

In the same spirit, community colleges and their leaders engage with *Excelencia* through our network of Presidents for Latino Student Success (P4LSS) to listen, learn, and share as they amplify student-centered efforts at the campus and national levels. Among the more than 200 institutions in the network, over 50 are community colleges that have committed to their own journeys to more intentionally serve Latino, and all, students.

Over 30 community colleges in our network — and others outside of our network — have elevated that commitment by participating in *Excelencia* Technical Assistance Institutes. Institutes are collaborative, cohort-based learning opportunities that assemble institutional teams for asset-based discussions focused on building capacity to serve Latino students with intentionality and impact. Wherever they are on their journeys, participating community colleges benefit from ongoing engagement over the course of a year as they develop tactical action plans and measure progress alongside peer institutions.

Some of these community colleges are also actively working to earn the Seal of *Excelencia* — a national certification for institutions that

strive to go beyond enrollment to intentionally serve Latino students across key areas of data, practice, and leadership. Of 39 Seal-certified institutions nationwide, five are public two-year institutions that lead the nation in enrolling and graduating Latino students — El Paso Community College, Long Beach City College, Phoenix College, Richard J. Daley College, and Wilbur Wright College.

In addition to intentionally working to accelerate Latino student success, four Seal-certified community colleges are taking a high-touch approach to share lessons learned on their journeys and enhance efforts on other community college campuses. For example, the multi-year Community Colleges Transforming by Engaging Latino Students project sees *Excelencia* and Seal-certified coach institutions provide technical assistance to eight institutions as they coordinate campus-wide efforts and implement data-informed strategies to engage Latino students. The mentor-mentee institutional relationships fostered through the project promulgate a cycle by which Seal-certified community colleges empower more community colleges to intentionally serve Latinos, expanding opportunities for post-traditional, and all, students.

Community colleges are at the forefront of evolving to improve higher education access and achievement for Latinos. We continue to celebrate and look to the leadership of these vital institutions building momentum for higher education transformation that intentionally serves and empowers Latino students to contribute their talents to our country’s civic leadership and workforce.

Given these opportunities and resources for community colleges ready to commit to accelerating Latino student success, how will your institution take action to more intentionally serve Latino — and all — students?



Deborah Santiago is cofounder and CEO of *Excelencia in Education*. Learn more at [www.EdExcelencia.org](http://www.EdExcelencia.org).

# DEFINING A LEGACY: FIRST GENERATION FUENTES

Northern Virginia Community College student Henry Fuentes unearths his fullest potential while working to become the first person in his family to earn a college degree.

By Kali Woods

**D**ID YOU KNOW THAT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF ALL undergraduates are classified as “first generation” students, according to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)? “First generation,” a term popularized in the early 2000s, describes students who are the first in their families to attend college. Venturing into new territory will undoubtedly come with barriers along the way, but students like Henry Fuentes say they are welcoming the challenge with open arms.

ACCT was first introduced to Fuentes during a staff retreat visit to the Loudoun County campus of Northern Virginia Community College, commonly referred to as NOVA. Fuentes, the current Student Government Association (SGA) president, took part in a panel featuring five other students at different stages of their academic journeys. In an intimate table mixer with a group of ACCT staff members, Fuentes shared how his ascension to the college’s highest seat of student leadership began with a heavy heart of apprehension and uncertainty.

As a 17-year-old high school senior in Loudoun County, Fuentes wasn’t sure if college was ever a realistic option for him. As his senior year quickly wound down, it seemed as though most of his classmates were already making decisions about what universities they were planning to attend in the fall. But despite all the buzz about admissions, Fuentes couldn’t understand what all the commotion was about. “I didn’t even know why people considered college to be so important. My friends were like, ‘Oh I got into this school!’ or ‘I got into that school!’, and I was like...so what?” he recalled.

In the Fuentes family, college was not the natural segue into adulthood. Entering the workforce was seen as the true rite of passage for a teenage boy. Fuentes, the son of two immigrant parents, explained that higher education was nowhere nearly as accessible for his mother and father as it is for him today.

“My dad actually never even went to high school. He grew up in a very poor environment in his home country. And my mom [...] was actually very gifted. She had the opportunity to go to one of the best schools in her country, but unfortunately could not do it because of funds,” Fuentes said.

While his parents may have missed out on the memories of picking out classes for their first semester or hanging out in the student union, Fuentes made it clear that their labor was not in vain. After years of working in the restaurant industry, Fuentes’s mom and dad met and fell in love at the very restaurant they now own together, La Chocita Grill. The local eatery that serves up South and Central American fare in Leesburg, Virginia, is now cemented in the Fuentes family legacy. But even with all the restaurant’s successes, Henry’s parents were adamant about him not following in their footsteps.

“They implored me to go to college. My father, especially, told me [that] the way that he works is rough. I mean, the restaurant business is not kind... It’s heavy hours. You burn yourself. You’re cooking; you’re sweating,” he said.

While Fuentes’s father is proud of the legacy he and his wife have been able to create without college degrees, he knew higher education could open up doors for his son that they would never be able to through.

“He told me that he [works] because he has to... He’s got bills to pay. He said that it’s no life for me [...] he would much rather have me go into school, get myself a comfortable job, [and] not have to worry about hard labor for the rest of my life,” Fuentes recalled.

Although a little anxious, Fuentes was always intrigued by the idea of community college. However, his high school classmates with plans to attend four-year universities were not always the most supportive. They often mocked community college, calling two-year institutions “high school 2.0.” Nonetheless, after weighing his options, Fuentes heeded the words of his parents and made the decision to ignore the

‘College is not easy. At the end of the day, wherever you go, college is college. It’s difficult. It’s long. It’s rigorous. I really do think that NOVA has been able to prepare me for my transition...It was an eye opener.’

stigma and experience NOVA for himself. His excitement began to grow as the fall semester neared. But it didn’t last long, as thoughts of doubt began to swirl in his head.

“I had absolutely no idea what I was doing, to the point where I thought that I was going to have so much trouble that I considered not even going to college. It was really rough for me,” he remembered.

Fuentes struggled with enrollment, feeling lost as he tried to understand what felt like a foreign language — the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). His frustrations began to consume him, but with the assistance of a friendly staff member named Kevin who worked in the student services department on NOVA’s Loudoun campus, Fuentes was able to get everything situated before the start of the semester. In fact, his interaction with Kevin was so impactful that Fuentes later went on to become a student services ambassador to assist other first-year students in navigating the enrollment process.

Fuentes quickly learned the ropes at NOVA, excelling in his classes, joining different clubs, and taking on multiple student leadership positions. While pursuing his associate degree in business administration, he was tapped to become a senator for the college’s student government association. And after a semester of serving, he was emboldened by peers and staff to run for SGA president.

Henry will serve his first full year as president during his final year at the college. He said he recognizes the weight of the position he holds. This semester, he will be working to enhance the college’s food pantry so that students in need have access to reliable resources. Additionally, he will meet with the provost and administrators on a regular basis to advocate for student interests and give students an opportunity to make real change on their campus.

Fuentes said his parents could not be any prouder of all that he’s been able to achieve in such a short amount of time at NOVA. Like many first-generation students, he admitted that sometimes the

pressure of becoming the family’s first college success story can be a heavy load to bear. But ultimately, that pressure produces passion. “I’m like, ‘I’ve got to do better. I’ve got to be bigger.’ At some points, I think that that’s unhealthy, but at other points, it’s drive. It’s motivation,” he said.

Once he obtains his associate degree, Fuentes plans to transfer to the highly selective “public Ivy” University of Virginia and work toward a bachelor’s degree in quantitative finance. Fuentes’ goal is to become an investment banker, and he plans to use his business acumen to invest in and expand the family business.

Enrolling at Northern Virginia Community College has proven to be one of the best decisions Fuentes could have made. He said the college has laid the foundation for a bigger and brighter future, while maturing him in ways he never could have imagined.

“College is not easy. At the end of the day, wherever you go, college is college. It’s difficult. It’s long. It’s rigorous,” he says. “I really do think that NOVA has been able to prepare me for my transition...It was an eye opener.”



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# Trane and Workforce Development: Preparing for the AI Revolution

A chancellor and an industry leader offer a framework to modernize campus facilities in the era of smart technologies.

By Lee Lambert and Michael Hines

**B**UILDINGS ARE POWERFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, ALTHOUGH MOST PEOPLE DON'T THINK of them as much more than bricks and mortar. Buildings empower digital skills like AI, Internet of Things (IoT, a network of devices that communicate via the Internet), and data analytics. In the United States, buildings account for approximately 40% of energy use and carbon emissions. Boards of trustees and administrative leadership who strategically invest in the modernization of buildings will help benefit the institution by providing long-term energy savings, helping reduce environmental impact, and enhancing learning opportunities for the institution, stakeholders, and community.



Modernization can be supplemented by historic levels of federal, state, and local funding. In addition, by leveraging modernized buildings as real and relevant spaces, educators can create engaging, efficient learning experiences that prepare students for the digital world. Modernized facilities, energy-efficient designs, and collaborative spaces foster innovation and hands-on learning.

### Smart Tech Makes the Most of Resources

Smart building technologies like IoT sensors and Building Management Systems (BMS) optimize building systems in real time. AI and machine learning predict equipment failures, improve energy consumption, and adjust lighting and temperature for comfort and efficiency. Data analytics help identify inefficiencies and best practices through continuous energy audits, performance dashboards, and benchmarking.

Integrating building data into curriculum, research projects, and hands-on learning with building management systems empowers students with practical experience. Sustainability initiatives, like improving renewable energy integration, further enhance the learning environment. Showcasing these initiatives attracts environmentally conscious students and faculty.

### Federal Support for Modernization

Unprecedented federal and state funding allows for modernization and digital learning. Combining incentives created or expanded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) with Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) helps pay for upgrades with future energy savings, providing a budget-neutral approach. The Section 48 Investment Tax Credit (ITC) incentivizes investment in renewable energy and energy-efficiency projects for schools. Combining ESPCs with ITC maximizes savings and funding, helping enable comprehensive energy-saving measures with long-term benefits.

### The Role of Trustees

Trustees play a pivotal role in helping drive sustainability and energy efficiency initiatives. Their strategic vision, financial oversight, risk management, and stakeholder engagement aid in successful implementation and long-term benefits for the institution and community.

### A Framework for Transforming College Infrastructures with AI

Trane, a leading innovator in the energy services industry, recognizes the transformative impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the technician workforce. We have collaborated on a comprehensive workforce development framework designed to equip technicians with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate this evolving landscape.

Our framework emphasizes:

- **Enduring Soft Skills:** Strong communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, adaptability, teamwork, and collaboration skills

are essential as AI handles routine tasks, leaving humans to focus on complex interactions and decision-making.

- **Foundation in Technical Skills:** A solid foundation in electrical, mechanical, and computer applications remains crucial for interpreting AI-generated insights.
- **Advanced AI Skills:** Data entry, extraction, prompt engineering, and analytics will bridge the gap between humans and AI.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Continuous learning is vital due to the rapid pace of AI and other advanced technologies. Micro-learning modules, on-the-job training, coaching, mentoring, and professional development programs will foster a learning culture within organizations.
- **Customized and Personalized Education:** Technician roles require different skill sets, necessitating tailored training programs. AI-enabled tools will be crucial for personalization.
- **Collaboration with AI Experts:** Partnering with experts ensures education and training programs are up-to-date and incorporate best practices.
- **Change Management:** Robust change management strategies address disruption and employee resistance, leveraging transparency and open communication.
- **Measuring Impact:** Clear metrics track performance improvements, employee engagement, and adoption of AI tools, demonstrating the framework's value.

Additional considerations include addressing ethical concerns related to AI, establishing workplace learning communities, and incentivizing participation in upskilling programs.

This collaborative framework prepares the energy workforce for the AI revolution, driving enhanced efficiency, innovation, and customer satisfaction. By investing in employees' skill sets and fostering a culture of lifelong learning, employers can continually strive to have their workforce remain at the forefront of the industry, propelling it into a future defined by seamless human-AI collaboration.

Integrating digital learning with building upgrades, leveraging available funding, and embracing AI-driven workforce development are key strategies for educational institutions and industries alike. These approaches not only prepare the workforce for the future, but also create sustainable, efficient, and engaging environments that benefit everyone.



Lee Lambert, J.D. is chancellor of Foothill-De Anza Community College District.

Michael Hines is North America education energy services leader for Trane Technologies, a member of the ACCT Corporate Council.

# What Trustees Can – and Should – Do to Support New Presidents

A board leader and college president share how onboarding and development set the stage for long-term success.

By Lawrence A. Nespoli and Deborah E. Preston

**I**N THE WINTER ISSUE OF *TRUSTEE QUARTERLY*, GEORGE Boggs and Maria Sheehan delivered an important message to trustees about protecting the physical and mental health of their presidents. In their words, “hiring a president is the most significant investment a board can make for its college. Trustees need to ensure they are supported.”

These observations are especially true for new presidents. It seems to us that there are things that boards of trustees can and should do to support the professional development and onboarding of their new presidents while at the same time supporting and nurturing their personal health.

We believe this special focus on new presidents is important for several reasons. We agree wholeheartedly with those who have observed that the president’s first year often sets the stage for the president’s long-term success. And it’s also important to note that in any given five-year period, about half of current community college presidents anticipate retiring or moving on to their next presidency. Both reinforce the point that supporting new presidents is especially important.

## At Mercer County Community College, Two Views of Supporting New Leaders

Mercer County Community College (MCCC) in New Jersey hired a new president in the summer of 2022. One of the co-authors of this article is vice chair of the board of trustees and also served on the presidential search committee; the other is the president who is now entering the third year of her first presidency.

We offer two different but complimentary perspectives on ways to support new presidents — the trustee lens and the president’s point of view.

We should also note that when MCCC was finding its new president, several new trustees were appointed, and new officers were elected. Relatedly, state legislation was enacted requiring new trustees to complete a trustee orientation program.

## The Trustee Lens: Resetting the Commitment to Being a Policy-Driven Board

Bringing on a new president and many new trustees at the same time presented an important opportunity to reset and reinforce the board’s commitment to serving as a policy-driven board while empowering the president to run the day-to-day operations of the college in the ways that CEOs are expected to do. We did this in several important ways.

- **President’s Contract** – The initial employment contract is a good place to show strong support for the president from day one. To that end, we included contract language on coaching services for the president, attendance at professional meetings and seminars, and a strong annual evaluation process based on clearly stated goals each year. And with a nod to the increasing political activism on some college campuses, we also included language to preserve the nonpartisan nature of the president’s office by making clear that the president would neither make political contributions nor attend political fundraising events.
- **Code of Ethics** – With the appointment of so many new trustees, it was also a good time to strengthen our trustee code of ethics. We reviewed many similar codes of ethics from other community colleges plus national models provided by ACCT and others. Perhaps most importantly, we added new enforcement language that requires all trustees to annually sign and return a statement to the board secretary affirming their intention to comply with the code of ethics. And if violations of the code occur, the board will consider removing a trustee as an officer of the board, as chair of a committee, or from committee assignments altogether — or even recommend to the appointing authority that the trustee be removed from the board.
- **Trustee Bylaws** – One of the most important policies that a board of trustees has is its own bylaws. A full review of our trustee bylaws, which had not been done in years, is now underway.
- **Policy on Policies** – We also recently approved another key board





policy, a new “policy on policies” that outlines how policies are developed and brought to the board for approval.

- Policy Manual – Finally, a full review of the board’s policy manual where all board policies (and related procedures) are compiled is similarly underway.

### The President’s Lens: Working with the Board to Build a Strong Team

With the new president’s arrival, the board and the president immediately began to collaborate on building a strong relationship — between the president and the board, as well as strengthening the relationships among trustees. We did this in several important ways.

- Board Retreat(s) – In her first official act as MCCC’s new president (even before she began her employment at the college), our new president worked with board officers to plan a board retreat to take place soon after her arrival. Working with a consultant from ACCT, we were able to design a retreat that allowed the board and the president to begin our relationship with common goals and expectations. Board retreats have been held annually since then.
- President’s Evaluation – With a first-time president, a new board chair, and many new trustees, we started with a clean slate for the president’s evaluation and agreed on a collaborative approach. The chair of the board’s human resources committee researched best practices (including materials published by ACCT), the board chair drew on past experiences with other organizations, and our new president reached out to fellow presidents who shared evaluation approaches that had worked for them. Throughout this process, open communication ensured that all parties were comfortable with an evaluation process that resulted in a meaningful review.
- Preparation for Successful Reaccreditation – Having taken the helm as president in July knowing that MCCC’s reaccreditation visit was scheduled for the following April, our new president made preparations for a successful reaccreditation a high priority for the college community and the board. For the board, this meant

educating members on the process, reviewing key findings from the self-study, and explaining the high stakes involved. We were able to accomplish all of these objectives, primarily through a series of small-group sessions for all board members.

### Concluding Observations

The actions taken by the Mercer County Community College board of trustees and its new president are shared here as a menu of possibilities that other boards and their new presidents might consider during the president’s first year.

Hiring a new president is one of the most important responsibilities a board of trustees will ever have. It can be a challenging time for the board and the college, but it is a moment of great opportunity as well.

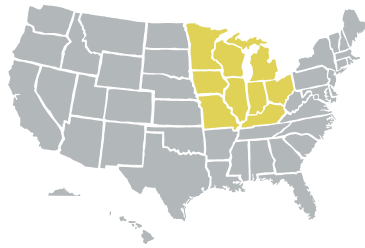
Specifically, it is an opportunity for the board to revisit its governance structures and processes to better ensure that it is a policy-driven board that supports the president’s role in leading and managing the college. At the same time, the board should reexamine best practices like board retreats, the president’s evaluation, and its role in the college’s reaccreditation as ways to nurture strong relationships with the president and among trustees.

In the end, good governance structures and strong relationships both matter — and the hiring of a new president is an important opportunity to recommit to both.



*Dr. Lawrence A. Nespoli is vice chair of the Board of Trustees at Mercer County Community College and former president of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. Dr. Deborah E. Preston is president of Mercer County Community College.*

# AROUND THE REGIONS

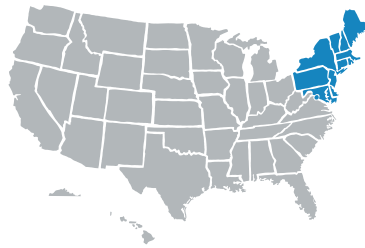


## CENTRAL REGION

**Illinois** Gov. JB Pritzker signed a fiscal year 2025 state budget that includes a general funds appropriation of \$2.6 billion for higher education, an increase of nearly 3 percent from previous fiscal year. Investments include operating funds increases of \$5.9 million (2 percent) for community colleges and \$575 million for the construction, repair and renovation of infrastructure on campuses across the state.

**Michigan** will guarantee free community college, continue free school lunches for all, and expand access to free preschool under a budget deal approved by the Democratic-led Legislature. The budget deal includes what Gov. Whitmer is calling the Community College Guarantee, which combines state and federal aid to make community college tuition-free. The program builds off the existing Michigan Achievement Scholarship, which currently pays up to \$2,750 a year for community college, \$4,000 a year for independent nonprofit college, or \$5,500 a year for public university.

Whitmer also announced the launch of a \$50 million partnership focused on workforce training for defense manufacturing. The Michigan Maritime Manufacturing Initiative, also known as M3, will train workers at local community colleges in skills for maritime construction, particularly welding and machining, to address the Navy's manufacturing supplier chain's need for workers.



## NORTHEAST REGION

**Connecticut** State Community College closed a \$33.6 million deficit as it controversially consolidated 12 campuses statewide in its first year under the new moniker. CT State now has a consolidated student information system that maintains student data for the schools, which previously had been done individually by the schools, as well as a statewide course catalog and aligned statewide curriculum.

**Maine** Community College students are now guaranteed admission to at least one of the state's public universities after they finish their associate degree. In a new partnership between the Maine Community College and University of Maine systems, Maine's community colleges will proactively notify their students about transfer opportunities to public universities after they finish 30 credits at the community college.

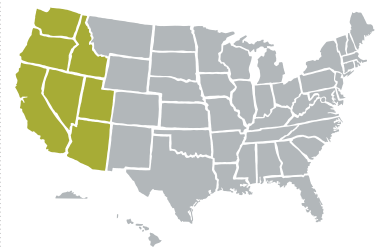
**Massachusetts** Gov. Maura Healey signed a nearly \$58 billion state budget bill that includes free community college. The budget sets aside more than \$117 million for a free community college program across the state, covering tuition and fees for students. The 15 community colleges in Massachusetts serve more than 90,000 students, about 70% of whom attend school part time while juggling work and family commitments.

The Community College System of **New Hampshire** (CCSNH) is freezing tuition for the upcoming academic year at last year's rate, which has been unchanged

since 2018. This makes the 2024-25 academic year the seventh consecutive year with flat in-state tuition of \$215 per credit.

**New Jersey** lawmakers restored a proposed \$20 million cut to community colleges in the final version of the state budget Gov. Phil Murphy signed into law. The final budget agreement means community colleges will be flat-funded compared to the fiscal year that ended in June.

**New York** Gov. Kathy Hochul announced \$8 million in recurring annual funding for the State University of New York's 30 community colleges — the first increase in nearly a decade — to advance health care and mental health goals for New York State and the SUNY system.

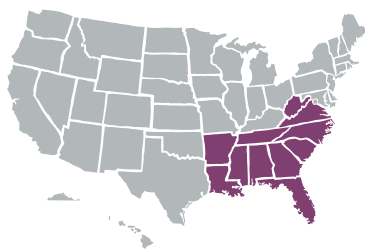


## PACIFIC REGION

**California** is partnering with NVIDIA on a new initiative to collaborate on AI efforts and bring new AI resources into community colleges — including curriculum and certifications, hardware and software, AI labs and workshops, and more.

The University of **Hawai'i** and the State of Hawai'i have committed \$5 million this year for the Hawai'i Promise Scholarship, the most ever. Enrolled community college students who are Hawai'i residents are eligible for consideration. The funds will help to cover direct education costs not met by other forms of financial aid, including tuition, fees and an allowance for books and supplies.

The **Utah** Board of Higher Education approved roughly \$8.5 million in funding to support students affected by delays and other issues related to this year's rendition of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The approved spending policy was made available from the approximately \$300 million Higher Education Student Success Endowment.



## SOUTHERN REGION

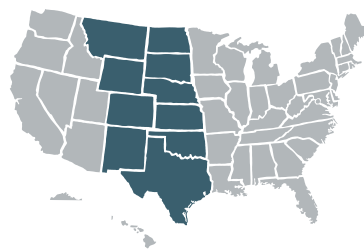
The **Alabama** Community College System has signed a contract to provide more mental health services to students, including a 24/7 crisis hotline that will be answered by a licensed counselor and free scheduled mental health telehealth counseling services.

A new online calculator released by the **Kentucky** Community and Technical College System estimates expenses and financial assistance for attending one of the state's community colleges, including the cost for a specific number of academic units, benefits and financial aid, and the amount they can expect to pay for indirect costs such as books, housing and food.

The number of people pursuing a two-year degree or career and technical education path in **Louisiana** has nearly tripled in the last decade. The growth in career education in Louisiana was because of an intentional shift in the relationship between the Louisiana Career and Technical Colleges and businesses and industries, LCTCS leaders said.

The **Mississippi** Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN) launched as a groundbreaking collaboration encompassing all 15 community colleges and numerous state universities. Fueled by AccelerateMS funding, this visionary collaboration empowers community colleges to assume a central role in establishing AI labs.

**Tennessee** celebrated the 10-year anniversary of implementing its college promise program. Since 2014, \$207 million in funding has supported the enrollment of more than 150,000 students in pursuing their dreams of college. Following the implementation of Tennessee Promise for the high school class of 2015, the college-going rate climbed nearly six percentage points over the prior year to 64.4%.



## WESTERN REGION

Elevate Quantum, a consortium of organizations based in **Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming**, announced it received a \$127 million Tech Hub Phase 2 Implementation award from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Central New Mexico Community College and University of Colorado-Boulder are designated as the workforce development leads.

**Colorado** passed a slate of bills that will integrate workforce and education systems and expand pathways through K-12, postsecondary, and into the workforce. The bills will fund the development of a statewide longitudinal data system, develop a framework for evaluating the quality of non-degree credentials, and require Colorado's state apprenticeship agency and the Colorado Community College System to work together to build CTE programs in high school and community college that lead into registered apprenticeship programs.

One year after **Texas** community colleges underwent a radical shift as the state ditched its old funding structure in favor of a new, ambitious performance-based model, their leaders say that, so far, the change seems to be paying off. Signed into law last summer, the new structure earned unanimous support from leaders of the state's 50 community colleges. While much about the model's effects are still unfolding and unknown, a year later, campus leaders and higher ed experts are hopeful about its impact going forward.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) will add new apprenticeship opportunities with \$8,812,636 million in grant funding awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). In each round of DOL Apprenticeship Expansion funding since 2017, TWC has successfully pursued grant awards to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships in Texas. Workforce partners include employers, local workforce development boards, and community 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).*



# Legal Issues Impacting Community Colleges

Harassment, DEI training, and job transfers among recent legal issues involving higher education.

BY IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD, ACCT GENERAL COUNSEL

The Supreme Court reversed the holdings of some circuit courts of appeal that “significant harm” must be proven in order to state a claim of job discrimination resulting from a job transfer.

THE FOLLOWING RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO the day-to-day administration of community colleges throughout America.

**College prevails in Title IX lawsuit alleging co-student sex harassment, off campus, at a private party unrelated to the college.** A federal judge recently ruled that a student plaintiff failed to provide evidence that their college had substantial control over the context in which an assault or sex harassment occurred to make the college liable under Title IX. The judge concluded that even though the college had control over the alleged harasser because of an alleged student code violation, this was not enough to substantiate jurisdiction under Title IX. (*Roe v. Marshall University Board of Governors*, 2024 BL 215044, S.D. W. Va. No. 3:22-cv-00532, 6/24/24).

When harassment occurs off campus, the judge ruled that the court must find some nexus between the “out of school conduct and the school.” The court concluded that the incident in



“I’m just wondering why you only say ‘no bad ideas’ after my suggestions, Janice!”

question took place at a private party at a private residence and the party was not sanctioned, hosted, or sponsored by the college or an entity affiliated with the college. Moreover, permission for the party was not sought by the college, and the college was unaware of the party until it was over.

The college's Title IX office determined four days after the incident that the matter should be handled by the college's office of student conduct, which the judge concluded was consistent with Title IX regulations at the time. The student office immediately issued an no contact order between the student and the alleged harasser and conducted a six-week investigation.

The alleged harasser, a male student, was ultimately placed on probation, required to participate in an alcohol education program, perform 20 hours of community service, and accept responsibility for violation of the student code. The plaintiff, the alleged victim, was also put on probation, required to participate in an alcohol education program, and complete 10 hours of community service after admitting to underage drinking. In dismissing the case against the college, the judge also concluded that the alleged harasser also faced possible independent criminal penalties.

**Appeals court to review whether discharge for refusal to take mandatory DEI training is itself discriminatory.** The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (covering Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin) will decide whether to affirm a federal trial court's dismissal of a discrimination claim brought by a white employee who claimed he was discharged in violation of federal and state anti-discrimination laws for his refusal to take the employer's mandatory DEI training, which he claimed was discriminatory.

The appeals court will hear oral arguments over the appeal of the dismissal of the case on summary judgement, holding that the plaintiff was discharged for refusing to take mandatory online DEI training, which he claimed was inherently biased against white employees, after admitting he had no knowledge of the contents of the DEI training (*Vavra v. Honeywell International Inc.*, case No. 23-02823, oral arg. sched 5/21/24).

The trial court concluded that the plaintiff's internal emails to the company's president which accused the company of "race baiting" were protected communications. The court further concluded that the plaintiff was not terminated for the communications but rather because of his refusal to take mandatory DEI training, which was not itself discriminatory. The employer's DEI and legal departments had properly vetted the training and concluded it was intended to foster an inclusive work environment.

**U.S. Supreme Court to determine employer burden of proof to obtain an exemption to application of FLSA minimum wage exemptions.** The Supreme Court has granted certiorari to resolve a split on the precise evidentiary burden applicable to employers attempting to justify an exemption to the application of the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime provision. Several appellate circuit courts are split over whether an employer must

prove an exemption by "clear and convincing evidence" rather than the lesser standard of "preponderance of the evidence." The Supreme Court will resolve this split and decide which standard is applicable to employers going forward. (*E.M.D. Sales Inc. v. Carrera*, U.S. No. 23-217, petition granted 6/17/24).

The issue involves whether the defendant firm's sales personnel fall within the "outside sales exemption." The company lost the case at trial when the federal court held that it did not meet the "clear and convincing" standard, while other circuit courts of appeals have applied the less stringent "preponderance of the evidence" standard.

**Texas sues EEOC over guidance protecting LGBTQ+ employees from sex harassment relating to their choice of pronouns and bathrooms consistent with their gender identity.** The Texas Attorney General has filed suit in federal court seeking to block enforcement of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's recent guidance on workplace harassment aimed at shielding LGBTQ+ employees who seek to use pronouns and bathrooms consistent with their gender identity. The Texas suit alleges that the most recent EEOC guidance goes beyond the statutory limits of Title VII, as did prior EEOC workplace guidance which was vacated in Texas Federal Court (*The State of Texas v. EEOC*, N/D. Tex., 2:21-CV- 194-Z, complaint, filed 5/21/24). Separately, a coalition of 18 Republican attorney generals have also filed suit alleging the same legal overreach by the EEOC, seeking to block its guidance.

**Supreme Court rules that job transfers can violate Title VII even in the absence of "significant harm."** In a unanimous ruling, the Supreme Court resolved a split among appellate circuit courts on the issue of whether a plaintiff must prove "significant harm" in order to state a claim of discrimination under the applicable anti-discrimination statutes as a result of a job transfer.

The Supreme Court reversed the holdings of some circuit courts of appeal that "significant harm" must be proven in order to state a claim of job discrimination resulting from a job transfer. However, the court stopped short of eliminating the "harm" requirement entirely, holding that a discrimination plaintiff must show that the transfer resulted in some level of injury or harm despite concluding that the statute does not require by its terms the high bar of "significant" harm (*Muldrow v. St. Louis*, US Case No. 22-193,4/17/24). The concurring justices, who did not dissent, argued that the change from "significant" harm to some other lower level of harm was confusing and would lead to further inconsistent litigation.



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.



BERMUDA COLLEGE, BERMUDA

**DR. DAVID SAM**

President

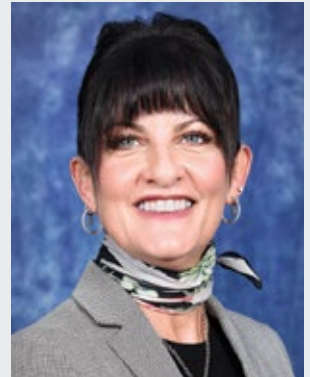
“This appointment, following a rigorous and thorough second search process, brings a leader of exceptional caliber to the helm. Having had the opportunity to engage with all the candidates, I was truly impressed by their vision and capabilities. Dr. Sam’s experience and leadership will be invaluable as we continue to build on Bermuda College’s legacy and execute our strategic plan.”

**- MR. DIALLO RABAIN**  
*BERMUDA EDUCATION MINISTER*

COLLEGE OF EASTERN IDAHO, IDAHO

**DR. LORI BARBER**

President



“I would like to express appreciation to the Presidential Search Committee for their time, dedication, and thoughtful work on behalf of CEI. President Rick Aman has built a strong leadership team at CEI, and Dr. Barber has been a key member of that team. The trustees are confident that Dr. Barber will build upon the success that CEI has enjoyed thus far.”

**- MR. PARK PRICE**  
*CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, COLLEGE OF EASTERN IDAHO*



GLEN OAKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MICHIGAN

**DR. BRYAN NEWTON**

President

“The caliber of candidates was outstanding, and the search process went exceedingly well. We are delighted that Dr. Newton has accepted our offer, and we are ready to get to work.”

**- MR. BRUCE GOSLING**  
*CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, GLEN OAKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE*



[www.ACCTSearches.org](http://www.ACCTSearches.org)

# 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.

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

## DR. PAULA LIVINGSTON

Vice President of Academic Affairs



"Dr. Livingston has been serving as the Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs, and I am confident she will provide the stability and leadership Academic Affairs needs to continue advancing our mission. Dr. Livingston provides collaborative visionary leadership and support to all academic and occupational/CTE divisions and programs."

- DR. REY RIVERA

PRESIDENT, ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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

## MS. LEDA JOHNSON

Vice President of Administrative Services

"Ms. Johnson began her tenure at EMCC over twenty-two years ago and has served in administrative services-related higher education roles, including interim Vice President of Administrative Services, for eight months. As a first-generation college graduate, Ms. Johnson understands the importance of access and success for community college students. I am confident in her ability to advance Administrative Services in support of our college's vision and mission."

- DR. REY RIVERA

PRESIDENT, ESTRELLA MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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



—  
GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MARICOPA COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, ARIZONA

## **DR. LORELEI KONOPKA**

Vice President of Academic Affairs

“Dr. Konopka is well suited to lead GCC’s academic division as we continue to grow and evolve to meet the needs of our workforce and prepare students for success at transfer universities.”

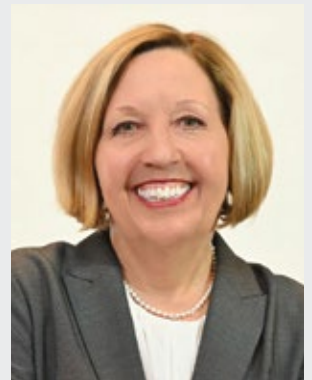
—**DR. TIFFANY HERNANDEZ**

*PRESIDENT, GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE*

—  
MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MARICOPA COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, ARIZONA

## **DR. JOANNE RUSSELL**

Vice President of Academic Affairs



“Dr. Russell has served in multiple senior academic administrative roles in both the City University of New York (CUNY) and the State University of New York (SUNY) system in a career that has spanned more than twenty-five years. She will bring to Mesa Community College (MCC) a vast amount of experience in leading large academic departments and providing leadership for curricular development and assessment, research, faculty development, and a wide range of student support services. Her experience in collaborating with institutions to enhance access, success, completion, and workforce development will be a tremendous asset for MCC. I am excited to have Dr. Russell on the leadership team.”

—**DR. RICHARD DANIEL**

*PRESIDENT, MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE*



# EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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

PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NC

## DR. REGGIE BROWNING

Vice President of Administrative Services/Chief Financial Officer



"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Browning to the PCC family. His financial expertise and prior community college experience make him an invaluable addition to our team."

- DR. PAMELA SENEGAL  
PRESIDENT, PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE



SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS COLLEGE, AR

## DR. TYRONE JACKSON

President

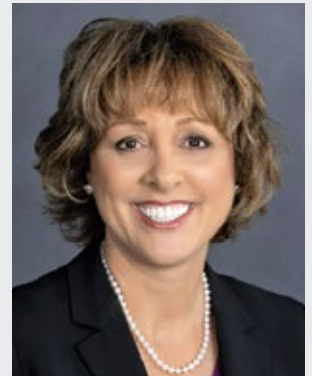
"With Dr. Jackson's thirty years in education and extensive experience in community college leadership and accreditation, the board of trustees is confident in the future success of Southeast Arkansas College. He fully understands the importance of working with key stakeholders to accomplish the college mission of building a community of lifelong learners committed to becoming the leaders of tomorrow."

- MS. REBECCA PITILLO  
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SOUTHEAST ARKANSAS COLLEGE

PITT COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NC

## DR. MARIA PHARR

President



"Through the assistance of Kennon Briggs and the Association of Community College Trustees organization he serves, the Pitt Community College Board of Trustees conducted an equitable, inclusive, and transparent national search for Dr. Lawrence Rouse's successor. After reviewing numerous applications, conducting many interviews, and going through the results of surveys submitted by employees and members of the community, it became abundantly clear to PCC Trustees that Dr. Maria Pharr was the ideal candidate to lead Pitt Community College."

- MR. CHARLES ELLIS  
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PITT COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# RETREATS & WORKSHOPS

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

Arizona Community College  
Coordinating Council &  
Arizona Association of  
Community College Trustees

Atlantic Cape Community College,  
New Jersey

Clovis Community College,  
New Mexico

Coastal Bend College, Texas

College of Southern Maryland,  
Maryland

Gateway Technical College,  
Wisconsin

Hartnell College, California

Houston Community College  
District, Texas

Howard Community College,  
Maryland

Joliet Junior College, Illinois

Metropolitan Community College,  
Kansas

Middlesex Community College,  
Massachusetts

Montgomery County Community  
College, Pennsylvania

North Central Michigan College

North Idaho College

Northwest College, Wyoming

Pierce College, Washington

Quinsigamond Community  
College, Massachusetts

Santa Fe Community College,  
New Mexico

SUNY Ulster County Community  
College, New York

Turtle Mountain Community  
College, North Dakota

Ventura County Community College  
District, California

Western Dakota Technical College,  
South Dakota



Find out more about board retreats and workshops  
at [www.acct.org/governance-services](http://www.acct.org/governance-services)



# interface

**PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF NETWORK  
2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**PRESIDENT**

Cynthia Gruskos  
Senior Assistant to the President and  
the Board of Trustees  
Brookdale Community College, N.J.  
cgruskos@brookdalecc.edu

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Shelby Foster  
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**SECRETARY**

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Executive Assistant, Board Services Office  
Houston Community College, Texas  
Reatha.bell@hccs.edu

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**

Dr. Larisa Pfeiffer  
Chief of Staff, College of Southern Maryland  
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Executive Assistant to the President  
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lhazel@worwic.edu

**NORTHEAST REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

Dr. Michelle Scott  
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**

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**WESTERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

Caitlin Murphy  
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Cmurph57@jccc.edu

**PACIFIC REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE**

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Executive Assistant to the President and  
District Governing Board  
Yavapai College, Ariz.  
Yvonne.sandoval@yc.edu

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ACCT Professional Board Staff Network

**PBSN WEBSITE**

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



## Catalysts for Change Converging on the Emerald City

BY CYNTHIA B. GRUSKOS  
PBSN PRESIDENT

I AM THRILLED TO JOIN MY COLLEAGUES FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY in Seattle for what promises to be one of the best ACCT Leadership Congresses to date. This year's theme, "Catalysts: Cultivating Skills for the Future," deeply resonates with me. As professionals supporting college boards of trustees and presidents, we should embrace our potential as catalysts for positive change within our institutions and the broader community college landscape. The Professional Board Staff Network (PBSN) Executive Committee has worked diligently to create conference sessions designed to inspire attendees to realize their potential as catalysts for positive change. These sessions will equip you with the essential knowledge and skills for effective board governance.

We can be catalysts for change by developing connections with our peers, enabling collaboration and mentorship. I encourage you to take the first step in building stronger relationships by attending any of the PBSN sessions planned for the conference. Consider taking on a leadership role on the board or using ACCT Connect to communicate with fellow members. If you support your board of trustees in any capacity, you are automatically a member of PBSN. Attending these sessions guarantees that you will leave with new connections and essential skills.

In today's fast-paced professional environment, staying ahead demands the adoption of innovative technologies. Our plenary session at the PBSN Conference on Thursday, October 24, will focus on leveraging technology and generative AI to enhance board efficiency, streamline operations, and facilitate strategic decision-making. Having explored generative AI myself, I am convinced that to be catalysts for change, we must develop forward-looking skills to prepare for future technological advancements. Join us for this session and come ready to learn best practices and insights on innovative technology.



For the first time, ACCT has invited PBSN to hold a concurrent session. Our session, titled "Catalysts of Collaboration: The Strategic Roles of Trustees, College Presidents, and Board Professionals," will delve into the increasingly vital role of board professionals in today's rapidly evolving higher education landscape. This session will highlight how board professionals act as essential connectors between boards of trustees and college presidents, facilitating effective governance, strategic alignment, and seamless communication. A panel featuring the leadership teams of Lansing Community College and Cerritos College will share best practices that have shaped their leadership journeys. We encourage you to bring your college president and trustees to join this robust discussion, which will emphasize the critical contributions of board professionals.

On my list of strategies for being a Catalyst for Change is embracing continuous learning. Shelby Foster has written an insightful article entitled "Lifelong Learning" (see p. 43), and I hope you take the time to implement her suggestions in your daily lives.

One of my favorite professional development opportunities has been to serve on the PBSN Board. I have served as a member-at-large, and most recently as vice president and now president. There is great potential in PBSN, and I encourage you to consider getting involved by running for an executive committee position. We will hold our annual business meeting on the morning of Friday, October 25, during which

elections will take place, followed by regional roundtable discussions. All PBSN members who have attended or participated in a PBSN business meeting or workshop within the last two years may run for office and vote. The positions are outlined in the PBSN Charter located in ACCT Connect under the PBSN Group and in our Resource Center. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [cgruskos@brookdalecc.edu](mailto:cgruskos@brookdalecc.edu) or by phone at 732-224-2204.

Serving as your president over the past year has been a true honor. I have had the privilege of working with an exceptional executive board, and I deeply value their contributions and friendship. I am especially grateful for the support of my college president, Dr. David M. Stout, who consistently encourages me to grow in my role and take on new challenges. I am proud to serve the best community college board of trustees, who are my heroes. They serve selflessly, giving their time, efforts, expertise, energy, and wisdom to advance the work of Brookdale Community College. A special thanks goes to my mom and dad, who instilled in me the values of higher education, hard work, curiosity, perseverance, and gratitude — all essential qualities for a Board Professional. At our annual meeting, I will pass the gavel to the capable hands of Shelby Foster, our incoming PBSN President. I look forward to supporting her in my new role as past president.

We look forward to seeing you soon, and to an inspiring and transformative conference in Seattle!



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.



## Lifelong Learning

BY SHELBY FOSTER  
PBSN VICE PRESIDENT



**W**HEN I STARTED WORKING AT OHLONE COLLEGE, I STARTED TAKING COLLEGE classes again — archaeology, photography, yoga... it had been a while, and everything looked interesting. Our college offers opportunities for employees to take classes tuition-free, and I realized just how much I missed going to school.

As my own mini-renaissance, these classes allowed me to learn new skills and embrace newfound interests. Taking classes where I worked also allowed me to see firsthand what it was like to be a student at my college, providing me with valuable insights into the student experience. Hopefully you've had the chance to take a course at your college, and hopefully it inspired and enlightened you.

But while all of our respective college courses are amazing, there are so many things we can learn outside of class. I challenge you to continue your lifelong learning in other ways. Here are a few suggestions:

**Learning to Disconnect** — Perhaps your average workday sails by in a blur. You leave for the day and realize you are stepping outside for the first time since the morning. Try taking five minutes a day out in nature or away from your screens and your phone. Allow yourself time to take a few deep breaths and re-energize yourself before returning to the office. Try making it a daily habit! You can learn a new way to approach the day. You might as well... the way you already know kept you inside.

**Learning a New Skill** — If you finally got really good at your job five years ago but started coasting on those skills, then you are only really good at what your college or district needed five years ago. Get in the habit of learning new things by making learning fun. Not all new skills will be fun, but developing that muscle can be. Recently, I had the opportunity to take tap dance classes. I was not good at all — my coordination left much to be desired! I had fun, though, and made new friends. I even participated in a recital at the end of the year. Taking tap dance didn't make me better at my job, but I learned that there is freedom in trying out something with no expectations... and that does make me better at my job. What's something you've always wanted to try?

**Learning to Get Outside Your Comfort Zone** — Sometimes we get to a point where our workday routines turn into a rut. We know our jobs inside and out, and there's nothing new on the horizon. Well, what if there was more we could do? Challenge ourselves? Perhaps give back to others?

Two years ago, an opportunity to run for Professional Board Staff Network Pacific Region Member-at-Large came up. I had been in my board support role for 15 years and was looking for an opportunity for professional development. I was nervous, but I decided to go for it. Doing so was one of the best decisions of my career. I have watched myself grow professionally and learn about my leadership style. I also made phenomenal friends across the country.

I encourage you to get involved with PBSN. It is an amazing group of your peers, and a chance to connect and be inspired. It is also a reminder that others are doing the same good work that you are and that they are willing to share their experiences and best practices. I hope that we will see you at the ACCT Congress this October. Let's continue on this journey of lifelong learning together!



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

## Election of Board and Diversity Committee Members

### 2025 Candidates for the ACCT Board of Directors

#### REGIONAL DIRECTOR

(1) Three-Year Term in Each Region

Following is the slate of nominees as of July 1, 2024.

#### 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

Following is the slate of nominees as of July 1, 2024.

**Carol Del Carlo\***

Nevada System of Higher Education, NV

**Tim Hardy**

Louisiana Community & Technical College System, LA

**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 for all elections.

### Elections of Regional Nominating Committee Members

Regional nominating committee elections will take place during the 2024 ACCT Leadership Congress Regional Caucuses and Meetings on Friday, October 25, from 2-3:30 p.m. Based on the ACCT Regional Nominating Committee structure, each committee consists of five members elected for two-year staggered terms. No more than one member shall be from the same state. The following seats need to be filled for the 2025 – 2026 term:

#### CENTRAL REGION

Two (2) seats are available to members from the following states/territories:

Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Esther Combs (MI), Pennie Groezinger (IL), and Bridget Saffold (IA) will continue to serve in 2025.

#### NORTHEAST REGION

Three (3) seats are available to members from the following states/territories:

District of Columbia, Maryland, New Hampshire, and New Jersey.

David Grossman (PA), David Mathis (NY), and Barur Rajeshkumar (MA) will continue to serve in 2025.

#### PACIFIC REGION

Three (3) seats will be available to members from the following states/territories: Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Washington, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Republic of Palau.

Adrienne Grey (CA) and Andrew Speer (OR) will continue to serve in 2025.

#### SOUTHERN REGION

Two (2) seats will be available to members from the following states/territories:

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, West Virginia, Bermuda, and British Virgin Islands.

Dan Bozard (SC) and Joseph Huggins (VA) will continue to serve in 2025.

#### WESTERN REGION

Five (5) seats will be available to members from the following states: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

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

(1) Two-Year Term in Each Region

Following is the slate of nominees:

#### CENTRAL REGION

**Florence Appel**

College of DuPage, IL

**Deborah Tappendorf**

Eastern Iowa Community Colleges, IA

#### 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.

# Engage Your Board. Advance Your College.

**ACCT Board Services** provide opportunities to strengthen the unique role of board members and to develop an effective board.

## Services Include

- Retreats
- Board self-assessment
- Presidential evaluations
- Succession planning
- Institutional leadership analysis
- Board policy review
- Mediation and conflict resolution

**Call to learn more about ways to engage your board and make use of each trustee's skills and expertise.**

## Contact:

Colleen Allen  
*Director of Retreats and Evaluation Services*  
callen@acct.org

202-775-6490 | [www.acct.org/governance-services](http://www.acct.org/governance-services)



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 866.895.2228



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# Community College

DATE  
**FEBRUARY**  
**9-12**

LOCATION  
**Marriott Marquis**  
 WASHINGTON, DC

2025

**EARLY BIRD  
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 DEADLINE**  
**12.18.24**  
 REGISTRATION OPENS  
 IN NOVEMBER

# NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

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