

FALL 2025

Trustee

QUARTERLY



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Imagine New Possibilities with Wonder, Not Fear

ARE YOU FEELING A BIT OVERWHELMED?

Does it seem like the pace of change is faster and more chaotic than ever? The life experience of most human beings today would have been inconceivable to even a great science fiction author 124 years ago, when the first community college was founded. The once-radical inventions of the telephone, television, and the Internet presented profound revolutions that over time became ubiquitous enough to regard as mundane utilities. The calculator and computers provided tools to replace laborious, time-consuming processes and created new, more productive ones.

The pace of change continues to accelerate. The adoption of technologies has grown faster and faster. It took 75 years for the telephone to be adopted by 100 million users. Television reached that mark in 38 years. It took the internet eight years to hit the 100 million user mark, and Facebook reached that milestone in five. Artificial intelligence (AI) is impacting every part of our lives and every aspect of our colleges, and ChatGPT reached the 100 million user mark in just two months!

While no one can see into the future, a lot of very smart people are predicting that artificial general intelligence (AGI), which would match or surpass human capabilities across virtually all cognitive tasks, is near. The changes AGI might bring represent a sea change in our communities and our colleges. We can consider this revolution through a lens of wonder and awe even as we navigate the resulting changes with care, loyalty, and obedience — our sworn fiduciary duties.

AI is the ultimate product of the human imagination, founded in our collective knowledge. Even its so-called hallucinations are mirrors of our own minds' unwieldy imaginations. While we could succumb to

feeling overwhelmed, we can also instead — or even simultaneously — look back and realize that every technological and industrial revolution was disruptive.

As trustees of community colleges, we are responsible for leading on behalf of our students, faculty, and staff. We serve in the interests of our communities, local economies, and our colleges' immediate and long-term wellbeing. We need to embrace this opportunity and realize that productive innovation is a perspective and a value system that applies an extraordinary tool like AI to the needs of our communities. Trustees must have a long-range perspective — and this is precisely the reason colleges have volunteer governing boards whose collective wisdom and diverse perspectives must ensure stability while guiding rapidly developing progress.

This fall, over 1,500 of us will gather in New Orleans to reimagine community college in light of the extraordinary changes we are living through. I encourage trustees and CEOs to gather together with a spirit of optimism, remembering all the transitions of the past and all the seemingly overwhelming and chaotic changes that our institutions have weathered over the past century-plus, and recalibrate for the future.

Education is an unlimited resource, and it will always be needed as long as educators understand and address the needs of our students and our communities. I am excited for all of us to share our experiences. *Laissez les bons temps rouler!*

Rich Fukutaki
Bellevue College, Washington

Trustee

QUARTERLY

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MANAGING EDITOR

DAVID CONNER

*Associate Vice President,
Strategic Communications*

EDITOR

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

DIAN NAFIATUL AWALIYAH

Lecturer, Sultan Fatah University

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DESIGN & PRODUCTION

www.moiremarketing.com

Your Opinion Matters – contact:

DAVID CONNER

(866) 895-ACCT (2228)

dconner@acct.org

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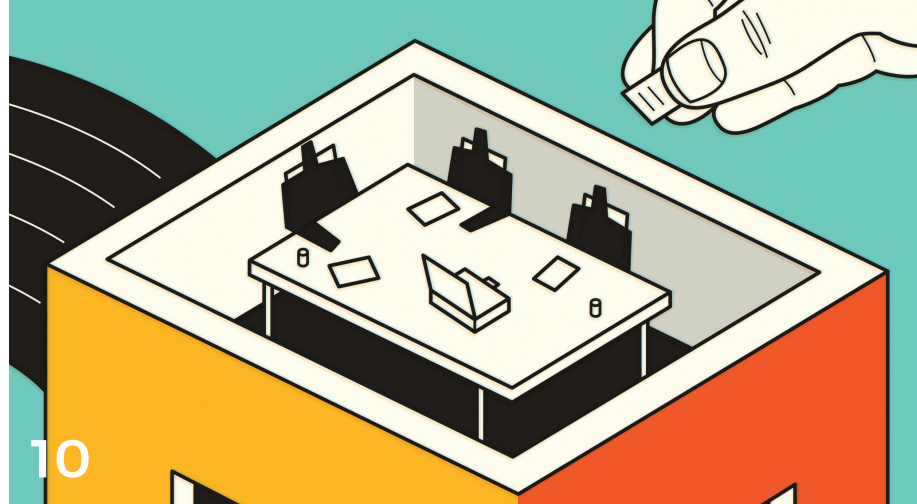


1101 17th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington DC 20036
(202) 775-4667 FAX: (202) 775-4455

acctinfo@acct.org

1-866-895-ACCT (2228)
FAX: 1-866-904-ACCT (2228)

www.acct.org



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Within each of these two priorities, the board has developed a plan to focus development on three areas: thought leadership, relationships, and communication.

Advocacy and Education That Empower Trustees To Excel

DEAR ACCT MEMBERS,

THE ACCT BOARD OF DIRECTORS convened in July to update priorities that will steer the association over the coming three years. As any trustee might be able to imagine, some discussions were broad, some were deep, some addressed current events such as AI and some were more foundational. In the end, it was clear that the association's primary reasons for being—community college advocacy and trustee education—are what it's all about.

Within each of these two priorities, the board has developed a plan to focus development on three areas: thought leadership, relationships, and communication. I encourage you to read the specifics on page 12 and to let us know how we can best serve you in these areas.

In service to these priorities, we are excited to introduce ACCT Excel—a new way to learn, to grow, and to be recognized. Through this program, trustees can earn badges that highlight essential skills and knowledge. Badges live on ACCT Connect, your hub for training and resources. Member trustees can earn these badges online or by participating in in-person events and activities—making becoming a better board member more accessible than ever.

Once a trustee earns a badge, they can showcase it on LinkedIn or beyond

as a way to share their commitment to effective governance with their peers, their institution, and their community. The badges demonstrate that trustees have taken active measures to learn and grow as a fiduciary of their institution.

Five categories of badges recognize learning across the fundamentals of trusteeship, governance best practices, legal and compliance essentials, today's key issues, and additional leadership opportunities. Some elements are required, while others are elective—just like your college, Excel balances structure with choice, empowering members to shape their own learning journeys. Read more about ACCT Excel in Robin Matross Helms's Connect column on page 10.

In addition to reading through this magazine, I encourage all members to visit ACCT Connect by going to Connect.ACCT.org on your personal computer or notepad to take advantage of in-depth educational courses on advocacy, governance, and data-informed decision making.

In the meantime, be on the lookout for ACCT Board members, staff, and me at the ACCT Leadership Congress and let us know what we can do for you.

JEE HANG LEE

ACCT President and CEO

NEWS & NOTES

ACCT Launches First Cohort in its Scaling Apprenticeship at Community Colleges Project

AS THE COST OF EDUCATION CONTINUES to rise, Americans need more opportunities to access career pathways that lead to family-sustaining careers. Apprenticeship remains a highly effective education and employment strategy, using an earn-and-learn model to provide comprehensive training. Apprenticeship programs benefit students by providing them with real-world, on-the-job training while being employed and working in their respective fields of study. These programs also benefit employers — apprentices have higher retention rates and are specifically trained in the occupations employers need.

Community colleges have traditionally provided related technical instruction (RTI) for apprenticeship programs, but because of their administrative capacity and ability to provide comprehensive student supports, they are ideally suited to serve as apprenticeship program sponsors — the operators of a full apprenticeship program. With that in mind, the ACCT Center for Policy and Practice has officially launched the first cohort of our Scaling Apprenticeship at Community Colleges Project. Thanks to funding from Ascendium Education Group, and in partnership with New America and Job Forward, we are working with ten colleges from across the country to help them develop an operational framework and scale apprenticeship programs in non-traditional occupations.

We are thrilled to announce the ten colleges:

1. Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College — Moorefield, WV
2. Hocking College — Nelsonville, OH
3. Delaware County Community College — Media, PA
4. Moraine Valley Community College — Palos Hills, IL
5. Lake Land College — Mattoon, IL
6. Northwest Shoals Community College — Muscle Shoals, AL
7. River Parishes Community College — Gonzales, LA

8. South Louisiana Community College — Lafayette, LA

9. MiraCosta College — Oceanside, CA

10. Tillamook Bay Community College — Tillamook, OR

These colleges are not yet program sponsors and are ready to build upon existing apprenticeship experience to develop new apprenticeship programs that respond to local employer needs. Our project will provide these colleges with the tools they need to serve as program sponsors in such diverse industries as specialized heavy equipment operation, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, education, healthcare, diesel technology, welding, sterile manufacturing, information technology, and agriculture. Through monthly learning modules with national experts and peer discussions over the next year, colleges will work collaboratively on such topics as navigating the apprenticeship system, working with employers, developing RTI, and creating apprenticeship standards. Colleges will not only come away knowing the basics about apprenticeships, but also will have developed sustainable systems that will enable them to expand to more occupations. By the end of the four-year project period, colleges will have developed standards for two non-traditional occupations and enrolled their first apprentices.

If your college is interested in participating but was not selected for the first cohort, we have good news: A second Scaling Apprenticeship cohort will launch next summer! Keep an eye out for an announcement from ACCT and submit your application then.

Until then, learn more about the role of community colleges in fostering apprenticeships by visiting the project website at acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/apprenticeship.



For more information, visit acct.org/center-for-policy-practice/apprenticeship.

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.*

20 ACCT Member Colleges to Receive Complimentary Board Services

ON SEPTEMBER 8, ACCT ANNOUNCED the next 20 member college boards that will be receiving complimentary board services as a way of giving back to our membership.

ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee drew the following college names in a lottery-style drawing during a live broadcast.

- Atlanta Technical College, Georgia
- Blue Mountain Community College, Oregon
- Corning Community College, New York
- Florence-Darlington Technical College, South Carolina
- Garden City Community College, Kansas
- Greenfield Community College, Massachusetts
- Harper College, Illinois
- Holyoke Community College, Massachusetts
- Howard Community College, Maryland
- Jefferson College, Missouri
- Johnston Community College, North Carolina
- Miles Community College, Montana

- Moraine Valley Community College, Illinois
- Northwest State Community College, Ohio
- Palo Verde College, California
- Pima Community College, Arizona
- South Orange Community College District, California
- Tillamook Bay Community College, Oregon
- Vance-Granville Community College, North Carolina
- Whatcom Community College, Washington

“Board retreats and workshops are an important way to cultivate and maintain a well-functioning board,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. “They are also an important way for the college board and CEO to ensure their joint priorities are aligned and to maintain harmony among board members and the CEO throughout the year. I am grateful to the ACCT Board of Directors for supporting this giveaway so that more members can benefit from these important services.”

ACCT Vice President for Membership & Educational Services Robin Matross Helms, Ph.D., hosted the event. “It’s exciting to be able to give back to the ACCT membership,” she said. “Our priority is forging stronger and deeper holistic relationships with our members to support good governance through best practices and through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.”

“Board development is considered a standard of good governance practice, and facilitated board trainings and retreats can strengthen communication and understanding among board members,” said ACCT Director of Retreats and Evaluation Services Colleen Allen. “This can lead to a stronger, more effective working group. Boards that engage in training and professional development also set a model for the rest of the institution.”

Learn more about ACCT’s Governance Services at www.acct.org/governance-services.

ACCT Hosts India-US Partnership Meeting



WITH SUPPORT FROM COGNIZANT, ACCT CONVENED THE INDIA-US WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP IN Washington, D.C., on August 20th. Higher education, industry, and government leaders from both countries came together to chart plans for bilateral collaboration to advance global workforce development in key areas. Leaders from the four colleges participating in ACCT’s India-US Partnership Lab reported on their successes. Participants also traveled to Wor-Wic Community College on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, where they visited industry partners and celebrated Wor-Wic’s partnership with Symbiosis Skills and Professional University with an official MOU signing.

2025 ACCT Regional Awards Recipients Announced

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



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 2025 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.

"We are excited to introduce a new award this year for colleges that demonstrate the impact and success of their educational programs," said ACCT Chair and Bellevue Community College Trustee Rich Fukutaki. "Every trustee, college president or chancellor, faculty member, and professional board staff member who receive awards are vital to their college's own successes, and it is ACCT's privilege to be able to recognize their dedication and accomplishments."

"As someone who travels to scores of campuses every year, I see firsthand the important work done by our member colleges," 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.

2025 ACCT Regional Awardees 2025 Trustee Leadership Award

CENTRAL REGION

David Steffens

North Iowa Area Community College, IA

NORTHEAST REGION

Victor M. Richel

*UCNJ Union College of Union County
New Jersey, NJ*

PACIFIC REGION

Ken Hector

Chemeketa Community College, OR

SOUTHERN REGION

Joe Lewis

Aiken Technical College, SC

WESTERN REGION

Thomas Swisstack

Central New Mexico Community College, NM

2025 Impact & Success Award

CENTRAL REGION

College of Lake County, IL

NORTHEAST REGION

Hudson County Community College, NJ

PACIFIC REGION

Yavapai College, AZ

SOUTHERN REGION

Santa Fe College, FL

WESTERN REGION

Alamo Colleges District, TX

2025 Chief Executive Officer Award

CENTRAL REGION

Dr. Joe Gilgour

Mineral Area College, MO

NORTHEAST REGION

Dr. DeAnna Burt-Nanna

Monroe Community College, NY

PACIFIC REGION

Dr. Amy Morrison

Lake Washington Institute of Technology, WA

SOUTHERN REGION

Dr. Janet J. Sprigg

Forsyth Technical Community College, NC

WESTERN REGION

Dr. Margaret Ford Fisher

Houston Community College, TX

2025 Faculty Member Award

CENTRAL REGION

Merri Fefles-Dunkle

Moraine Valley Community College, IL

NORTHEAST REGION

Elana Winslow

Hudson County Community College, NJ

PACIFIC REGION

Mark Wong

Contra Costa Community College District, CA

SOUTHERN REGION

Lindsay Weathers

Midlands Technical College, SC

WESTERN REGION

Brandon Keller

Northeast Community College, NE

2025 Professional Board Staff Member Award

CENTRAL REGION

Benita Duncan

Lansing Community College, MI

NORTHEAST REGION

Linda Hall

Monroe Community College, NY

PACIFIC REGION

Myra Lomahan

Southwestern Community College District, CA

SOUTHERN REGION

Stacey Sholar

Western Piedmont Community College, NC

WESTERN REGION

Mandi Reiland

San Jacinto Community College District, TX

Regional ACCT Awards were announced via ACCT's LinkedIn account 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:

- 2025 M. Dale Ensign Trustee Leadership Award;
- 2025 Impact and Success Award;
- 2025 Marie Y. Martin Chief Executive Award;
- 2025 William H. Meardy Faculty Member Award; and
- 2025 ACCT Professional Board Staff Member Award.

One outstanding award recipient in each category will be announced during the Annual ACCT Awards Gala on Friday, October 24, in New Orleans, Louisiana, in conjunction with the 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress.



STAY UPDATED ON EVENTS
www.acct.org/events



The One Big Beautiful Bill Act included the community college sector's long-sought goal to authorize a Workforce Pell program. The law also creates a first-of-its-kind accountability program for all degree programs, and it makes substantial changes to student loans. Finally, it makes eligibility changes for the Pell grant and invests much needed dollars toward the program shortfall.

Workforce Pell Is Finally Here...and So Is Accountability

The reconciliation package's higher ed section is a Higher Education Act reauthorization in all but name.

BY CARRIE WARICK-SMITH

SINCE MY LAST *TRUSTEE QUARTERLY* COLUMN, Congress has passed into law a legislative package that includes massive changes to higher education. The FY25 Budget Reconciliation bill, known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), was not focused on higher education, but it did include significant changes that impact colleges nonetheless. In fact, Title VIII of the law is being referred to around Washington as a Higher Education Act reauthorization in all but name.

Included among the changes is the community college sector's long-sought goal to authorize a Workforce Pell program. The law also creates a first-of-its-kind accountability program for all degree programs, and it makes substantial changes to student loans. Finally, it makes eligibility changes for the Pell grant and invests much needed dollars toward the program shortfall. Let's break down each one.

Workforce Pell

After over a decade of advocating for Pell grant funding for short-term programs, community college advocates finally secured the Workforce Pell grant program, which supports programs that are 150-599 clock hours or 8-15 weeks long. Students may begin receiving Pell Grant dollars for eligible programs starting July 1, 2026. To be deemed eligible, a program must receive state approval for meeting high-skill, high wage, or in-demand occupations. The program must also lead to portable, stackable credentials and be in operation for at least one year. For outcomes measures, the program must meet at least 70% completion

and job placement rates and demonstrate value-added earnings that justify program costs as measured by the earnings bump compared to the cost of the program.

Next Steps: Colleges should immediately review which of their programs could be eligible and consider a short list of the most likely to put forward in the first year. Each state must set its own list of high-demand fields, which must be taken into consideration. The turnaround time for implementation will be very fast, with negotiated rulemaking scheduled for December and January.

Accountability

The new law also includes an accountability measure to prohibit institutions from offering funds from the federal direct student loan program to students enrolled in programs deemed “low-earning outcome undergraduate programs.” The measurement for bachelor’s and associate degree programs will be to compare the median earnings of a cohort of students who completed the program to the median earnings of working adults ages 25-34 who have only a high school diploma.

Median earnings are calculated by using data from the Bureau of the Census for the state in which the institution is located. The program loses its eligibility in the student loan program if the program student cohort earns less than the high school graduate cohort over two of three years following completion. The loss of eligibility is for two years, and there will be a process to reapply after the two-year period.

Next Steps: Review your data-collection practices in relation to this measure. Also monitor the negotiated rulemaking mentioned above, as it will also address this accountability measure. ACCT has submitted comments asking to align data requirements with other measures already in use and to centralize data collection at the federal level wherever possible.

Student Loans

Significant changes are coming to the federal student loan programs. This new law overhauls borrowing limits for all categories of borrowers, puts limits on the Parent PLUS loan program, and replaces all existing loan repayment plans with one standard and one income-related plan called Repayment Assistance Plan. The details of these new borrowing categories are available on the FY25 Reconciliation fact sheet at www.acct.org/advocacy/fact-sheets.

Two additional borrower changes are of particular interest to

community colleges. First, colleges are now able to set borrowing limits for certain programs that are lower than the federal maximums. This will allow colleges greater control over borrowing in courses with lower earning outcomes. In addition to supporting responsible borrowing, this change also will help institutions concerned about their cohort default rates for certain programs. Second, part-time students will only be able to borrow loans proportional to their enrollment intensity, as is the case with Pell Grant award.

Next Steps: Consider what steps your financial aid office needs to take based on the changes mentioned above, particularly if there are programs for which your college would like to limit borrowing thresholds. Negotiated rulemaking for student loans will take place in September and November.

Pell Grant Eligibility Changes and Funding Gaps

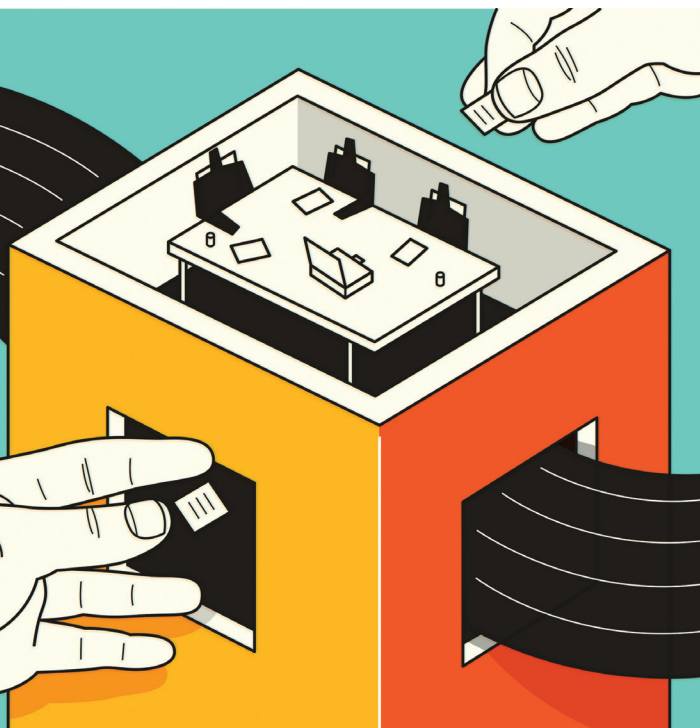
This law also makes some changes to the calculation of student eligibility for the Pell grant. They include adding foreign income to adjusted gross income, eliminating students with “full rides” covering full cost of attendance from receiving Pell, eliminating automatic Pell grants for students whose Student Aid Index is double that of the maximum Pell Grant, and excluding assets from families that have small business, family farms, or family fisheries.

Finally, this law also makes a much-needed investment into the Pell Grant program to ensure that it has enough funds to provide grants to all eligible students for the next two or three years. While a short-term band aid, it is a much needed one.

Thank you for your continued advocacy promoting federal investment in community colleges and our students and your voice to help prevent detrimental changes. The final version of this law is by far more favorable to community colleges than the initial version. Please stay tuned to updates from ACCT on implementation by joining our Latest Action in Washington email updates by signing up on our blog at now.acct.org.



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



With its focus on governance education, the new strategic plan gives us the framework to continue to build what we've started by increasing resources, creating more touchpoints with our members, and establishing pathways — for example, through our ACCT Excel Trustee Excellence Program — for members to amplify their expertise over time.

Fundamentals and Flow

ACCT's strategic plan leverages advocacy and trustee education to meet the moment in a rapidly changing landscape.

BY ROBIN MATROSS HELMS

MY 15-YEAR-OLD SON IS A MUSICIAN. SPECIFICALLY, he plays the trombone. What started as “we need an activity” virtual Zoom lessons during the pandemic has turned into a true passion for him — and it's a joy to watch him play. Even as a complete non-musician myself (that talent definitely came from the other side of the family), I can tell when he drops into what is often called a “flow” state. The music entirely consumes his attention, focus, and energy — mind and body are working in harmony (literally), and amazing music just seems to emerge. The result is beautiful.

I'm not sure how often a strategic planning exercise is described as entering a flow state, but this is what comes to mind when I think of the ACCT Board of Directors' process at its retreat in Bellevue, Washington, last July. With expert facilitation by Dr. Steve Head, our board engaged in robust discussions, considering big-picture questions about ACCT's role in facilitating good governance as a means to institutional and student success, along with individual board members' experience of, engagement with, and vision for our work.

While opinions and perspectives varied — exactly the point of having a board composed of individuals from a wide array of backgrounds — there was remarkable alignment in terms of key themes and priorities. As the group iterated and different ideas came together to create a clear and unified roadmap, the energy in the room rose and it just felt right. It was a collective sense of flow, and the resulting strategic plan, too, just feels right.

As a staff member, what I especially love about the new strategic plan is that it focuses on and leverages ACCT's fundamental superpowers — advocacy and trustee education — to meet the moment in a rapidly changing higher education, national, and global landscape. In my three years at ACCT, it has been a privilege to watch, support, and engage with our public policy team's advocacy efforts and to celebrate its successes. The emphasis on advocacy in the new strategic plan not only recognizes and enables Vice President Carrie Warick-Smith and her colleagues' notable impact on federal policy, but also underscores



As a staff member, what I especially love about the new strategic plan is that it focuses on and leverages ACCT's fundamental superpowers — advocacy and trustee education — to meet the moment in a rapidly changing higher education, national, and global landscape.

their expertise in supporting college leaders to advocate for their own institutions and our sector.

On my side of the house, the membership and educational services team will continue to focus on our core mission of trustee education, doubling down on the fundamentals of good governance and ensuring trustees have the resources they need to effectively guide their institutions. With ACCT Connect and our state-based Governance Leadership Institutes, we've broadened our foundation. With its focus on governance education, the new strategic plan gives us the framework to continue to build what we've started by increasing resources, creating more touchpoints with our members, and establishing pathways — for example, through our ACCT Excel Trustee Excellence Program — for members to amplify their expertise over time.

Just as the ACCT board found its flow in formulating the new strategic plan, given the plan's focus on the fundamentals, I'm confident that it will provide the foundation for our staff, in turn, to zero in on what's most important, align our focus and effort, and find our own flow state in its implementation. A different kind of harmony than my son's music, perhaps, but a beautiful harmony nonetheless.

To this end, there are a few particular resources and opportunities to keep an eye out for in the coming months from the membership and educational services team:

- The ACCT Excel Trustee Excellence Program will launch at the Leadership Congress in October. In line with our strategic emphasis on governance education, the Excel Level 1 certificate will focus on the fundamentals, leveraging our Governance 101 and Advocacy 101 online courses on ACCT Connect and other foundational governance education opportunities. ACCT members will be invited to apply to join the first cohort to earn trustee education badges and a certificate.
- Also on Connect, we are excited to launch our next online course: Data-Informed Decision and Policy Making. The course is a result of our collaboration with Achieving the Dream and the data-informed decision-making working group a number of ACCT member presidents and trustees participated in last year. The course highlights key data metrics and sources for trustees to consider in driving policies that enable student success. It also provides practical advice for accessing the right sources and asking the right questions about the information they provide.
- During Congress, we will release the results of our groundbreaking trustee study, conducted in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (see p. 14 for a preview). We have a better picture of who trustees are,

why they serve, and what they see as key priorities, opportunities, and challenges than we perhaps ever have had before. This data will help us better serve our members and our colleges as we build our resources and services, and more broadly, it will further the goal of thought leadership by ACCT as articulated in the new strategic plan.

- Building on the success of our US-UK Community College and Technical Exchange Program and the India-US Partnership Lab, we will expand our global education work in the coming year, inviting additional colleges to participate. Keep an eye out for announcements and information soon, and consider attending our global education-focused events at Congress in October.

ACCT is grateful to our members for your engagement and your commitment to good governance and the success of your institutions and their students. We look forward to continuing to find our flow together.



Robin Matross Helms is ACCT's vice president for membership and educational services. She can be reached at rhelms@acct.org.

ACCT STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



The ACCT Board's new three-year priorities focus on the association's foundational advocacy and governance-education work.

THE ACCT BOARD OF DIRECTORS CONVENED IN Bellevue, Washington this July to deliberate on the association's strategic goals for the next several years. Facilitator Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., former chancellor of Lone Star College in Texas, guided lively discussions about what boards across the country need and what ACCT offers.

The word "innovation" had strong currency in many of the breakout discussions — and it became clear as ACCT's staff leaders shared information that innovative programs and services are not add-ons for us; they're built into the infrastructure. Just a few notable examples are:

- The ACCT Connect online-education and peer-networking platform and its new Advocacy 101 and Data 101 online-education courses;
- Our forthcoming ACCT Excel badging program to recognize governance competencies;
- Expanded efforts to prepare community colleges and students for a globalized workforce; and
- Our groundbreaking new Community College Trusteeship

Survey, which will help the association and the higher education sector to better understand who board members and what boards are most concerned about, which will guide our work into the coming years.

A strong consensus determined that the association's core and expanded offerings under President and CEO Jee Hang Lee and his staff are on exactly the right track. The Board decided to focus on continuing to prioritize community college advocacy and trustee education with emphasis on relationship building, thought leadership, and communication.

Above all, it was useful to recognize that as ACCT continues to develop important new initiatives that are needed to support colleges and students, advocacy and trustee education are both the foundation and the glue that holds together all other work, and communicating to and engaging with members about this work is our number-one priority. Innovations — of which there are many — are made not for the sake of wanting to be innovative, but for the sake of serving members most efficiently and effectively.

2025-2028 ACCT Strategic Priorities

Advocacy

Amplify ACCT members' voices as advocates for their students and regions, enabling the fulfillment of the community college mission.

Trustee Education

Position ACCT as the epicenter of accessible, responsive, and innovative trustee resources and education to drive governance excellence.

	Advocacy	Trustee Education
Thought Leadership	Identify, prioritize and communicate emerging policy issues to members, policymakers and influencers, and the public	Advance good governance practices through ACCT Excel credentialing program and continuing to build accessible content on ACCT Connect on governance practices and campus issues
	Identify and implement strategic policy and practice initiatives to empower colleges to help more students succeed	Enrich ACCT's reputation as the authority in community college governance through specific initiatives such as CEO compensation benchmarking, trustee survey insights & longitudinal research
	Coordinate strategic nationwide messaging to drive specific advocacy goals	Empower boards to make data-informed decisions through expert-led executive searches, board retreats, and other board services

	Advocacy	Trustee Education
Relationships	Develop advocacy cadences between colleges and Washington to encourage continual and targeted engagement	Foster strong CEO/trustee partnerships to ensure institutional stability and advance institutional missions
	Create and maintain ACCT relationships across executive and legislative federal branches to advance the joint community college agenda	Develop global, industry, philanthropic, state association, and other partnerships to support and enhance trustee education
	Mobilize ACCT partnerships across state associations, organizations with aligned policy goals, and others to further policy objectives	Encourage productive connections and sharing of expertise among ACCT members and staff

	Advocacy	Trustee Education
Communication	Coordinate and organize communications for long-term advocacy education, project resources, and immediate action alerts	Continue building ACCT Connect for online access to board education & services
	Drive dialogue among ACCT staff, campus leaders and lawmakers to compel action; Celebrate major policy wins	Explore technologies to proactively engage members (e.g., push notifications, text messages, different uses of social media platforms, customized email connections)
	Support information sharing and develop resources to facilitate federal policy education at local board level	Direct trustees to the governance-education resources they need when they need them through ACCT Excel

THE RESULTS ARE IN!

Test your instincts in a preview of the largest-ever survey of community college trustees.



LAST YEAR, ACCT AND THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF Community Colleges (CSCC) conducted the most comprehensive survey of community college trustees to date. With over 2,000 responses from all five ACCT regions and 43 states and territories, the findings offer a revealing look at who trustees are, what they care about, and how they serve.

The full report will be released at the 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress in New Orleans this October. In the meantime, test your knowledge with some preview findings.

Trustees are living proof of community colleges' impact.

Q1: What percentage of trustees attended a community college?

A) 17% B) 46% C) 64% D) 83%

Q2: Among trustees who were once community college students, how many hold a bachelor's or higher degree?

A) 54% B) 71% C) 83% D) 100%

Q3: What share of these trustees earn over \$200,000 annually?

A) 31% B) 54% C) 71% D) 10%

Who are today's trustees?

Trustees come from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The most common fields include education, training, or library services; business; healthcare; and government.

Q4: Which occupational field is most common among trustees?

A) Business or Finance B) Healthcare
C) Education, Training, or Library D) Legal Services

Q5: What percentage of trustees are women in 2025?

A) 33% B) 47% C) 58% D) 70%

Q6: Which racial/ethnic group is most underrepresented among trustees compared to the U.S. population?

A) Asian B) Black C) Hispanic/Latinx D) Indigenous

Q7: What is the most common age of a trustee in 2025?

A) 52 B) 58 C) 65 D) 70

What campus community members influence boards?

Q8: What percentage of boards include a student trustee?

A) 22% B) 32% C) 45% D) 54%

Q9: Which stakeholder group's opinions are given the most weight in decision-making?

A) Faculty B) Business Leaders C) Students
D) Government Officials

Board-CEO relationships are strong—but how strong?

Q10: What percentage of trustees report a "strong" to "very strong" level of trust between their board and CEO?

A) 55% B) 76% C) 94% D) 96%

What's Next?

The full report will explore:

- How much time trustees dedicate to governance
- Differences between elected and appointed boards
- Boards' biggest challenges and opportunities
- Boards' top strategic priorities and appetites for change
- And much more.

Stay tuned for the full release in October — and see how your board compares.

42% of trustees are first-generation college students

26% worked at a community college

11% are active-duty military or veterans

5% live with disabilities

4% belong to the LGBTQIA+ community

3% are non-native English speakers

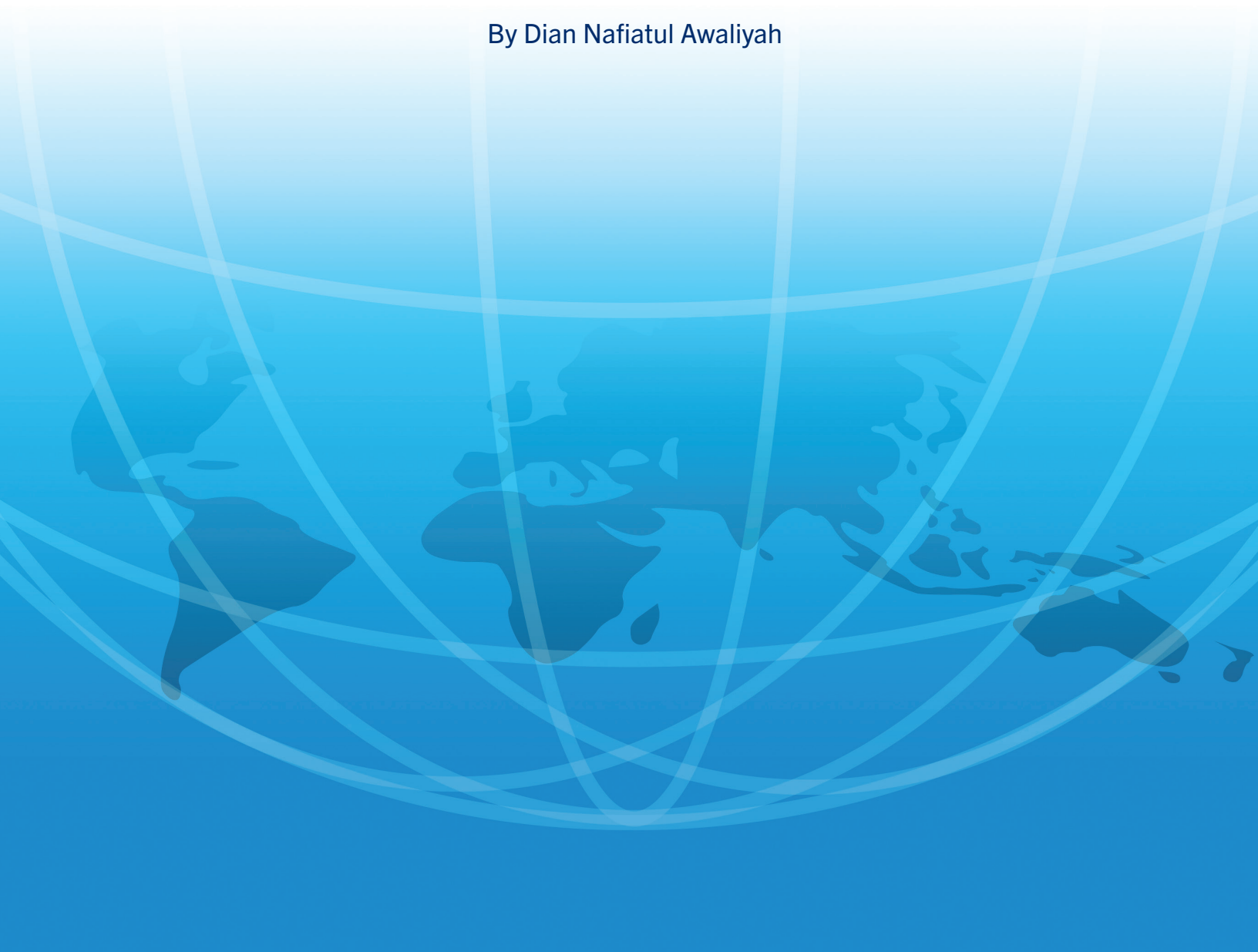
ANSWERS: Question 1: C—64%. Question 2: C—83%. Question 3: A—31%. Question 4: C—Education, Training, or Library. Question 5: B—47%. Question 6: C—Hispanic/Latinx. Question 7: D—70. Question 8: D—54%. Question 9: C—Students. Question 10: B and C—76% feel trust between the board and the CEO is very strong. 94% feel mutual trust is strong to very strong.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

The author of this excerpt from the second volume of ACCT's new *Mapping Community Colleges Around the World* series profiles the role institutional architecture plays in facilitating global collaboration, learning, and engagement.



By Dian Nafiatul Awaliyah



ACCT is excited to introduce a new series of briefs that highlights effective policies and programs that strengthen U.S. community colleges and their global counterparts; identifies models for the development of these institutions in other geographic contexts; investigates challenges and solutions; explores synergies for mutually beneficial partnerships; and celebrates the success and contributions of this unique educational sector.

The second installment, *Preparing a Global Workforce: Curriculum Design and Learning Outcomes: Issue 2*, features perspectives from India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, the United Kingdom, and community and tribal colleges within the United States. Visit www.acct.org for the full report.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE global education landscape, providing accessible and affordable pathways for a diverse range of learners. These institutions are not only centers of academic learning but also spaces that foster collaboration, innovation, and cultural exchange. The architectural design of community colleges is a crucial factor that shapes the learning environment, influencing how students, faculty, and staff interact, collaborate, and engage with their surroundings.

As education systems evolve to meet the needs of an increasingly interconnected world, understanding how the built environment supports these educational goals becomes essential. In order to explore this relationship, our research team (composed of Indonesian researchers in the fields of architecture, environmental literacy, and culture) conducted a descriptive design-based study examining the architectural diversity of community colleges across different countries and how these spaces facilitate collaborative learning and cross-cultural exchange.

A diverse sample of five community colleges from various regions, including both large and small institutions with unique or modern designs, were chosen for inclusion in the study. Data were collected from a variety of sources, including 1) a literature review to explore existing research on the relationship between architecture and learning, with a particular focus on how the design of community colleges influences collaboration, 2) online surveys sent to students, teachers, and administrators at the selected community colleges, asking them about their perceptions of how their college's architecture supports teamwork, learning, and cultural exchange, 3) photos and virtual tours of selected colleges gathered from online resources, and 4) short interviews with faculty members and students to provide further insights into how architecture impacts their learning environment. Data analysis included qualitative coding of survey responses and interviews to identify common themes, as well as basic statistical analysis of survey data.

The results of our study indicate that institutional architecture plays a critical role in both shaping the overall educational experience at

community colleges, and specifically in facilitating global collaboration, learning, and engagement.

Shaping the Educational Experience

Collaborative spaces foster inclusion and belonging. Our research found that community colleges are increasingly creating flexible and open spaces that encourage informal, outside-of-class interactions between students and faculty. Examples include open lounges, study areas, and technology hubs where students can interact freely, share ideas, and collaborate on projects, both academically and socially. Feedback gathered in our research indicates that such interactions in turn contribute substantively to an inclusive learning environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel a sense of belonging.

Integration of academic and student affairs offices helps create a holistic educational environment. Research indicates that for institutions serving diverse, often commuter-based populations, a connection between the academic and student affairs domains is crucial for student success (Ozaki & Hornak, 2014). A notable finding of our study is that the physical integration/co-location of academic and student affairs offices on campus positively impacts the overall student experience. Strategic placement of shared spaces such as lounges, study areas, and technology hubs in close proximity to these offices further contributes to an educational environment in which resources to support academic learning and student development are easily accessible and interconnected. Our data indicate that this approach enhances the overall sense of a campus community, which is essential for the social and emotional well-being of students — particularly those from underrepresented or marginalized groups.

Classroom design facilitates learning communities and intercultural competence. Recognizing that coursework is at the core of student learning, it is not surprising that the design of classrooms, in particular, plays a key role in shaping the overall learning experience. Our data indicate that the concept of learning communities is gaining traction in community colleges, and that architectural features that

support such communities — such as group work friendly classrooms and communal discussion areas — are vital for student engagement and success. Such spaces not only enhance academic collaboration but also create opportunities for intercultural exchanges through which students from various backgrounds can engage with one another, share experiences, and develop an appreciation for the value of diverse perspectives.

Dedicated spaces enable community engagement and real-world learning. In addition to fostering collaboration within the academic realm, community colleges also engage in partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and global entities to provide real-world learning opportunities. The architectural design of the institutions we studied reflects this focus on community engagement, with spaces such as conference rooms and event venues that invite industry and community partners onto campus to network and build relationships that lead to internships, shared projects, and other opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. The intentional interconnection between education and the broader community not only enhances the learning experience but also promotes community engagement and development by encouraging students to participate in initiatives that have a broader social impact (Devereux & Glenn, 2022; Watla-iad & Hartwell, 2022).

Facilitating Global Learning and Engagement

Integrating key technology into infrastructure enables global collaboration. The integration of digital platforms and social networking sites into the physical infrastructure of campuses has proven to be an effective tool for fostering global connections among students and faculty (Ahmed, 2023). Virtual campuses and online platforms allow institutions to expand their educational offerings beyond geographical constraints, enabling students and faculty to collaborate across borders and engage in real-time discussions. These technologies create an interconnected ecosystem that facilitates the exchange of knowledge and resources between institutions in different parts of the world. The blending of physical spaces with digital technology thus creates a hybrid learning environment that transcends traditional campus boundaries.

Sustainability in campus design contributes to global environmental efforts. Our findings indicate an increasing focus on sustainability by community colleges. By incorporating sustainable elements into campus design — such as energy-efficient buildings, green spaces, and renewable energy sources — colleges send a strong message about their commitment to environmental stewardship. Moreover, sustainability-focused spaces provide a tangible example for students, inspiring them to think critically about climate change, resource management, and other global sustainability challenges and their role in creating solutions. This approach not only enhances students' educational experiences but also prepares them to engage in global initiatives that require international cooperation and cultural sensitivity (Gupta & Singhal, 2017).

Experiential learning spaces equip students to solve global

challenges. Our study findings underscored the importance of innovative educational models and experiential learning environments in fostering critical thinking and collaboration among students. Examples such as “escape rooms” were highlighted as spaces that encourage students to collaborate, problem-solve, and think creatively. These environments challenge students to engage with one another, work across disciplines and cultural backgrounds, and apply their knowledge in practical, real-world, solution-focused scenarios — skills that are crucial for students to become global citizens who can navigate the interconnected world in which they live (Hamilton et al., 2021).

Conclusion

Given its impact on the educational experience, community college architecture is much more than just an aesthetic or functional consideration. The design of these institutions, particularly through open and flexible spaces that encourage interaction, plays a vital role in fostering collaborative learning and holistic development. Spaces that support both formal and informal learning create environments that engage students, enhance academic success, and promote inclusivity. The physical design of campuses is also instrumental in advancing international partnerships and bridging cultural divides. By incorporating spaces that encourage intercultural communication, integrating technology to connect students and faculty across borders, prioritizing sustainability, and supporting innovative educational models, community colleges enable global engagement and prepare students to work effectively with counterparts from an array of geographic and cultural backgrounds. The design and use of physical spaces in higher education is evolving to meet the demands of an interconnected world, fostering collaboration, innovation, and the sharing of diverse perspectives that enrich the learning process and contribute to a more inclusive and globally aware society. Our hope is that this research will provide insights that can inform future architectural designs in community colleges, ensuring that these institutions continue to serve as hubs of learning, innovation, and cultural exchange in an increasingly globalized world.



Dian Nafiatul Awaliyah, ST, MPP, is an architect, author, educator, and social advocate. A graduate of Diponegoro University (Architecture) with a master's in public policy, she has authored dozens of books and anthologies published by over 20 Indonesian publishers. A trainer and public speaker active in over 50 cities, she mentors at WomenWill by Google, serves as a lecturer at Sultan Fatah University, and leads community development through Hasfa Publishing & Institute and Muslimat NU Demak. She can be reached at dianhasfa@gmail.com.

NOW AVAILABLE

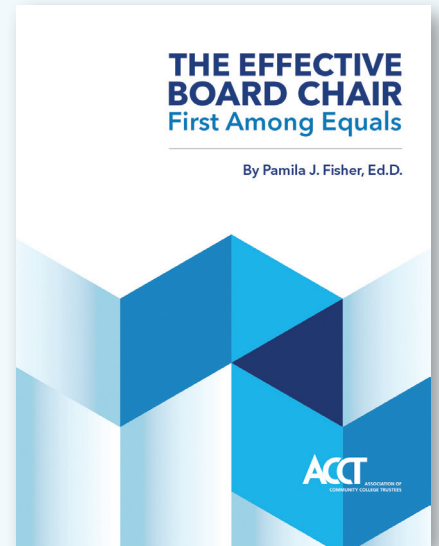
If you are a community college governing board chair, you should feel privileged and proud—and you should also feel a heavy sense of responsibility, writes Dr. Pamela Fisher in *The Effective Board Chair: First Among Equals*.

ACCT's newest publication is indispensable for any trustee who is contemplating future service as the chair of a board, and it is a vital resource for every other board member, as the full board benefits from every trustee understanding the special roles and responsibilities of the board chair—"the first among equals."

**Order from the Member Portal & Online Shop
at www.acct.org.**

Also available:

- *Trusteeship in Community Colleges: A Guide for Effective Governance*
- *The Trustee's Role in Effective Advocacy*
- *Essentials of Good Board/CEO Relations*
- And more!



ADVOCACY 101

FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

ACCT's online video series can help you make the case for your college and its students.

WHETHER YOU WERE ELECTED OR APPOINTED TO YOUR GOVERNING board, advocating for your college and its students is a primary responsibility of board service. Most of us can always use a refresher on the complexities of the federal legislative process.

As a supplement to the Community College National Legislative Summit and our staple handbook *The Trustee's Role in Effective Advocacy*, ACCT has created a new online educational video series, “*Advocacy 101 for Community College Trustees*,” designed to equip community college leaders with the knowledge and tools you need to become effective advocates at every level of government.

This comprehensive, self-paced series is designed specifically for community college trustees, and it's equally useful and available to college CEOs and professional board staff via the ACCT Connect online learning platform.

Presented by ACCT Vice President for Public Policy Carrie Warick-Smith, Director of Government Relations José Miranda, and Senior Government Relations Associate Génesis Santiago, *Advocacy 101* will help you to influence policy and funding decisions that directly impact your institution.

Through four carefully structured modules, the series demystifies the advocacy process and empowers trustees to build lasting relationships with lawmakers, craft compelling messages, and navigate the complexities of the legislative system.

ACCT strongly recommends that all community college trustees be familiar with the information contained in the Advocacy 101 modules. We will soon begin to issue badges via ACCT Connect to recognize completion of online educational modules and demonstrated competency in primary areas of governance.

Module 1: Introduction to Advocacy

What is community college advocacy, and why does it matter? You'll learn the critical role advocacy plays in securing resources, shaping policy, and ensuring that community colleges remain responsive to the needs of their students and communities.

This module also includes an overview of federal, state, and local governments, with an emphasis on why federal advocacy is crucial. You will gain insight into how decisions made in Washington, D.C., can have profound effects on funding, regulations, student access, academic persistence, completion, job training, and job placement at your college.

Module 2: Understanding the Advocacy Process

In this module, you'll learn the importance of "the ask" and how to create compelling, persuasive arguments to help secure a yes. Warick-Smith explains how your message should address the issue at hand, what background information is necessary, why a student story is crucial, what statistics are relevant, and how to communicate the action you're asking your elected officials to take.

While participation at the Community College National Legislative Summit and state advocacy days are important, effective advocacy requires year-round relationships. You'll be guided through the creation of an advocacy action calendar that will empower you to communicate strategically so that when you make "the ask," they'll have a hard time not saying "yes."

Miranda explains how to develop a data-informed narrative around your college that highlights points of pride and explains exactly how the college is leveraging federal support to benefit the community, as well as how to learn about your legislators so you can navigate your discussions strategically.

Module 3: Advocacy in Action

Through this module, ACCT's federal relations staff show you exactly what a successful meeting looks and sounds like — and how

to recognize an ineffective meeting in which individual priorities derail the intended message. *Tip: After watching this module, consider acting out similar scenarios with your fellow board members and president or chancellor to practice and hone your messaging before meeting with elected officials.*

Next, you'll be introduced to the power of effective ways to maintain contact and reinforce key messages with legislators. You'll learn what information is valuable to those on the receiving end of your messages and discover ideas you may not have considered — for example, if representatives of your college are not sending a newsletter or other regular updates that highlight enrollment trends, student achievements, upcoming events, and notable programs that support your community, then you may be overlooking ways to secure ongoing support.

Members of Congress spend about one week per month in their home districts, and there is great value in inviting elected officials to your campus. You'll learn how to get the most out of campus visits and ways to make sure your elected officials come away with something of value. A lesson on the importance of follow-up and follow-through concludes the module.

Module 4: Understanding the Basics of the Federal Legislative Process

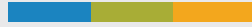
To understand how the federal legislative process works, this module provides an overview of how laws are made and how funding decisions are shaped in Washington, D.C., streamlined to what you most need to know as a trustee and advocate.

You'll receive a refresher on how bills are sponsored, co-sponsored, and introduced to Senate or House of Representatives committees. It's important to understand this process to know when advocacy actions will be most likely to influence legislation. You'll also learn about the budget and appropriations processes, including explanations of discretionary programs.

What does it mean for a bill to be "moved to the floor?" How can a bill pass through committee and never receive a "floor vote?" What are the roles of the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader? What is a filibuster? A conference committee? The module answers all these questions and more to demystify commonly heard jargon and help you further understand the legislative process and be the most effective advocate possible for your college.

Go to [Connect.ACCT.org](https://connect.acct.org) and click "Advocacy 101" from the left-hand menu to get started.

ACCT CONNECT BENEFITS



1. WELCOME

Complete your Welcome Checklist! Let's get to know each other. Share your higher education experience.



2. DISCOVER

Explore our member-exclusive learning and peer networking platform. Learn all that ACCT Connect has to offer.



3. INTERACT

Network with your peers from member colleges all over the United States and abroad.



4. GROUPS

Request and create public and private groups where you can share information and connect with other members.



5. POLICY UPDATES

Get the latest policy updates and helpful facts.



6. GOVERNANCE 101 & ADVOCACY 101

Exclusive access to learning modules for all members and governing boards led by ACCT consultants.



ARE YOU CONNECTED?

If you have not been connected, please email us at connect@acct.org

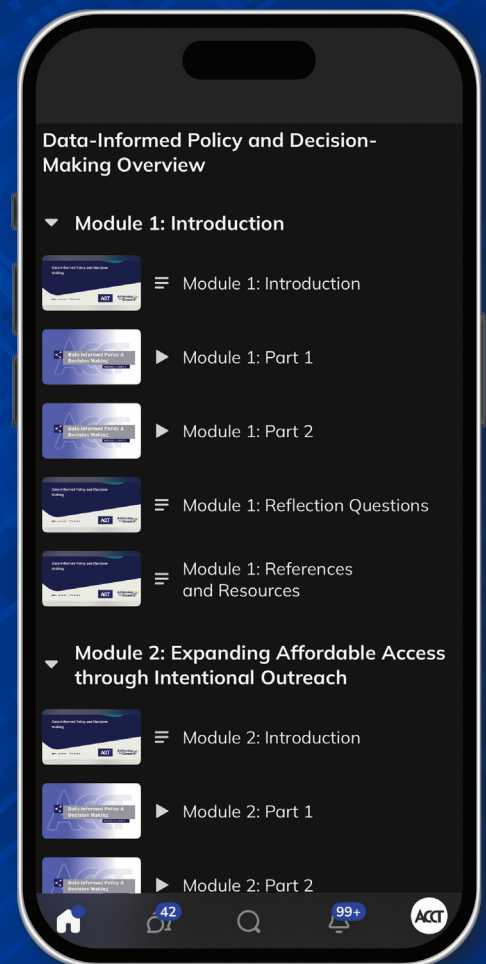
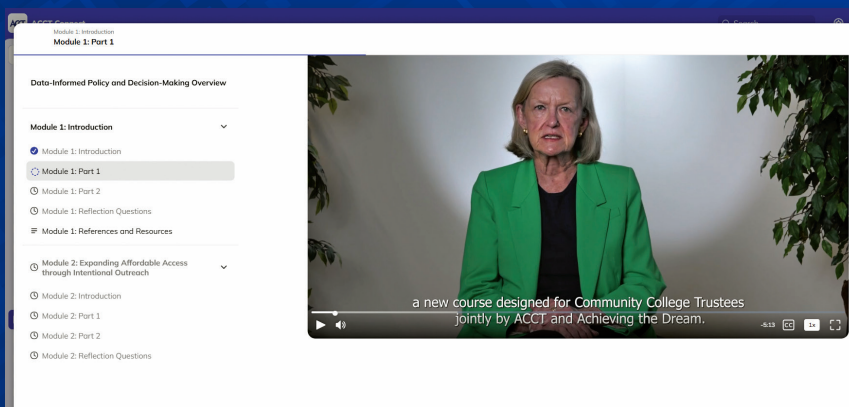
DATA-INFORMED POLICY AND DECISION MAKING

ACCT Connect's latest online course equips trustees to make informed governance decisions.

FEW CHAMPIONS ARE MORE COMMITTED AND CAPABLE OF SEEING what will have an impact on the community than trustees. ACCT Connect's new Data-Informed Policy and Decision-Making course is designed to share new and revised frameworks, research findings, key data sources and metrics, and some exciting examples of innovation for trustees to consider in the context of their local communities. The course was designed in collaboration with Achieving the Dream and is instructed by Achieving the Dream Chief Learning Officer Susan Mayer.

The course consists of five modules, each related to a specific area of data-informed policy and decision making. The instruction is designed to equip board members to develop, implement, and monitor institutional and student progress.

Included with the video course, available at no cost to ACCT members at [Connect.ACCT.org](https://connect.acct.org), are worksheets, reflection questions, and other resources to reinforce knowledge. Trustees are encouraged to discuss the course materials as a board and with their president to take best advantage of the learning.



Go to [Connect.ACCT.org](https://connect.acct.org) to start learning today.



What Every Student Trustee Needs to Know to Lead with Confidence

A new handbook helps student trustees make the most of their board service.

MANY BOARD MEMBERS — PROBABLY MOST — underestimate the many ways by which serving on the board of a public college can be challenging. Trustees new to board service may feel out of place and intimidated by the rules of parliamentary procedure. Those who think carefully about their oaths of office may realize suddenly how much personal responsibility they have accepted by joining a board. All board members must learn how local laws affect their work, understand their own roles and responsibilities and how they differ from those of the college CEO, and so much more.

Trustees typically serve multi-year terms and have some time to learn and grow in their roles. Student trustees, however, usually only have one year to accomplish everything above while simultaneously doing their coursework and meeting other obligations. It's a *lot* to expect of anyone.

About a decade ago, ACCT established the Student Trustee Advisory Committee (STAC) to encourage student members' education and development through greater engagement with the association and their peers. Under the guidance of former ACCT Board Member and Northern Virginia Community College Trustee Rosie O'Neil and ACCT Executive Coordinator to the Board of Directors Karen Lomax, the STAC has lived up to its original design and then some. Several years ago, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society CEO Lynn Tincher-Ladner became the group's primary educator and mentor, leading STAC meetings at the annual Community College National Legislative Summit and ACCT Leadership Congress.

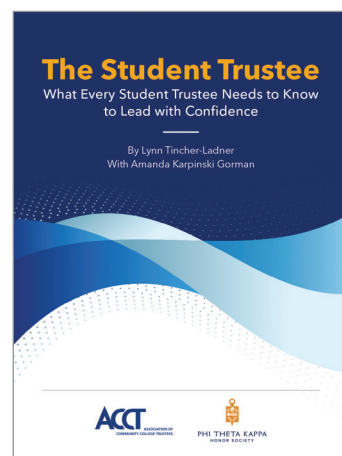
Now, Tincher-Ladner and former student trustee

Amanda Karpinski Gorman have written a new handbook for student trustees to encourage and equip them to be the best board members they can.

"This handbook is meant to supplement the guidance and training you receive from your college president and board," the authors say to student trustees in the book's foreword. "We hope it will serve as a practical resource — helping you understand the responsibilities of board service, your unique role as a student trustee, and how to make a meaningful impact through leadership and advocacy in your college and beyond."

The book is divided into four parts: the foundations of student leadership, how to serve effectively on the board, understanding issues that matter to students, and student trustees' role *beyond* the board table.

Included in the first section is information that often goes unexplained — for example, advice for student trustees about how to connect with peers and make the best of those connections, how to dress for board meetings, how to communicate like a leader, and tips for professional communications. The section also outlines what student trustees should expect during their first 30 days on the board (see next page).



SAMPLE FIRST 30-DAY CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Meet with the Board Chair and College President**
Introduce yourself and ask how you can be most helpful. These early conversations set the tone and give insights into leadership expectations. Be curious, listen more than you talk, and take notes.
- ☐ **Schedule Time with Your Board Liaison** The board liaison is typically a staff member who works in the college president's or chancellor's office and serves as the main point of contact between board members and the college. They help with logistics, scheduling, and making sure you have what you need to participate effectively. Ask them to walk you through:
 - Where and when board meetings are held.
 - How to access meeting materials and agendas.
 - Expectations for attendance, dress code, and communication.
 - How and when you'll receive information.
- ☐ **Review Recent Board Agendas and Minutes**
This will help you get a sense of what the board has been working on, what issues are ongoing, and how discussions typically unfold.
- ☐ **Learn Your College's Strategic Plan**
This document outlines the college's mission, vision, goals, and priorities. Understanding it will help you connect board discussions to student needs.
- ☐ **Observe and Learn at Your First Board Meeting**
Don't feel pressured to speak up right away. Watch how trustees interact, how motions are made and voted on, and how the board handles tough topics. Bring a notebook and jot down your observations and questions.
- ☐ **Set Personal Goals for Your Term**
Think about what you want to accomplish as a student trustee. Do you want to improve communication between students and the board? Raise awareness about an overlooked issue? Strengthen your leadership skills? Setting a few clear goals will help guide your focus throughout the year.
- ☐ **Attend Campus Events and Talk to Students**
Start connecting now. The best trustees are grounded in student realities. Introduce yourself at events, club meetings, or even in class. Ask the three student-centered questions from earlier in the manual.

Your first 30 days are all about orientation. Don't worry about having big ideas or bold initiatives right away. Focus on listening, learning how the board operates, and understanding the student experience at your college. You'll find your voice – and your impact – will grow as your confidence and context grow.

The Student Trustee Handbook concludes with an emphasis on advocacy — how student trustees can and should advocate for their colleges while serving on their boards and beyond, as well as lessons student board members can take with them once their board service has ended.

Serving Effectively on the Board

Most people who read this magazine know how deceptively complicated serving on a board can be. *The Student Trustee Handbook* begins with an explanation of the board’s role in setting policy versus college operations. The authors write, “As a student, your experience with the college is often shaped by what you see and feel on the ground — classes, services, student life, financial aid, advising. This outward-facing perspective is incredibly valuable, but it can also make it more challenging to understand your new role as a trustee. Trustees are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the college. They don’t manage staff, set class schedules, or resolve individual complaints. Instead, trustees focus on the big picture: long-term planning, institutional policies, financial oversight, and ensuring the college fulfills its mission.” They go on to explain how the board functions as a single unit, what accountability means, ways to avoid conflicts of interest, and the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

This section also helps students understand how they can build influence and relationships as a peer, how to navigate tough conversations and disagree respectfully, the significance of the college’s mission and plan, and the basics of parliamentary procedure.

Understanding Issues that Matter to Students

Most student trustees are ambitious, engaged in their communities, and motivated to succeed in college and to serve. There’s no doubt that

they understand what they know matters. In this section, the authors share information that they may not already know — for students’ own benefit as well as for the benefit of their board service. For example, while students understand that their colleges are educational institutions, they may not always conceive of community college as a business sector or understand the significance of that to their board service. In this section, the authors recommend sources of news, information, and research about community colleges that can help students understand their institutions in a broader context.

This section also discusses policies that affect students, what drives student success, and what trustees need to know about paying for college.

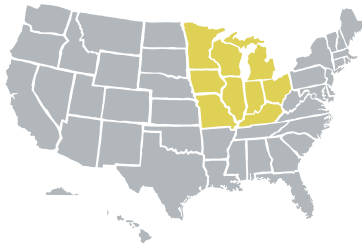
Beyond the Board Table

The Student Trustee Handbook concludes with an emphasis on advocacy — how student trustees can and should advocate for their colleges while serving on their boards and beyond, as well as lessons student board members can take with them once their board service has ended. Reminding student trustees that “serving on a board of trustees is executive-level experience — something few students have,” the authors offer ways that students can leverage these experiences to serve them in their ongoing academic, career, and life journeys.

The Student Trustee Handbook will be available through the Member Portal & Online Shop at www.acct.org this fall.

Governance (Board’s Role)	Operations (Staff’s Role)
Approves the college’s mission and strategic plan	Carries out the strategic plan day to day
Sets or approves board-level policies	Develops and implements administrative policies
Hires, evaluates, and supports the college CEO	Manages employees, departments, and programs
Oversees the college’s financial health	Manages budgets, purchasing, and expenditures
Monitors student success data and asks questions	Runs programs that support student success
Advocates for students through big-picture leadership	Resolves individual student issues on a case-by-case basis

AROUND THE REGIONS

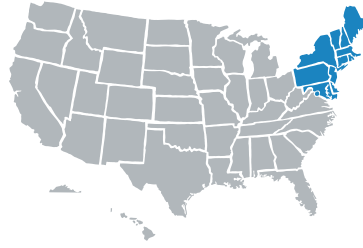


CENTRAL REGION

The **Illinois** Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee advanced a series of proposals involving agricultural and vocational education, including supporting bachelor's degrees at community colleges. During the spring legislative session, lawmakers considered legislation supported by Gov. JB Pritzker allowing colleges to offer bachelor's degrees, particularly for working adults and students in underserved or rural areas, although the bill did not advance.

Iowa could soon let its 15 community colleges award bachelor's degrees. Iowa Rep. Taylor Collins requested a feasibility study in the last legislative session, the first part of which was released this summer, while the rest will be released Oct. 31. A recommended funding model is still being determined.

Sinclair Community College in **Ohio** launched the AI Excellence Institute in 2025 to help students and faculty develop thoughtful, ethical, and practical AI competencies that prepare them for both today's opportunities and tomorrow's unknowns.



NORTHEAST REGION

Free community college is a casualty of the **Maine** state budget process. According to the Maine Community College System, high schoolers in the class of 2025 will be the last to qualify for free community college.

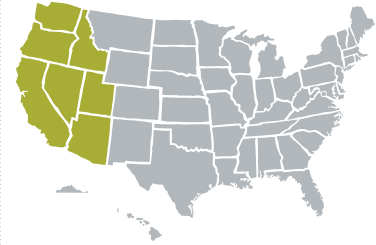
Massachusetts' experiment with free community college has seen enrollment shoot up by more than 15,000 students, as well as increased student retention and transfer. But while state funding for the programs is ensured for next year, federal cuts to higher education put the long-term feasibility of the program on shaky ground. Already, a statewide program to provide wraparound services will receive \$700,000 less for the next fiscal year.

New Hampshire House Bill 90, signed by Gov. Kelly Ayotte, allows K-12 schools to hire faculty from New Hampshire's colleges and universities to teach up to 20 hours a week of classes and empower community colleges to expand their high school dual enrollment partnerships. The bill, however, applies to all high school courses, drawing criticism.

New Jersey lawmakers restored some of Gov. Phil Murphy's proposed cuts to community colleges, but the state budget still includes cuts to financial aid, including to the Community College Opportunity Grant. Community colleges will receive the same amount of operating aid as in the last two fiscal years.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul rallied with

students, staff and faculty at LaGuardia Community College to celebrate the more than 16,500 New Yorkers statewide who have applied to the state's new free community college program for adults in high-demand fields through CUNY and SUNY Reconnect, which begin this fall.



PACIFIC REGION

Arizona's Maricopa County Community College District has partnered with Save The Family, a nonprofit that helps families who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness, to offer affordable housing to single parents pursuing postsecondary education.

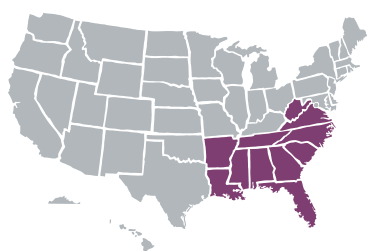
Yavapai College in Arizona announced that it will offer a three-year Bachelor of Applied Science in Business (BASB) degree. YC will be the first community college in the United States to offer a three-year bachelor's degree.

A study conducted by Lightcast found that **California's** 116 community colleges contribute over \$173 billion to the state economy each year. The study found that the system's activities and graduates make up 5 percent of California's gross state product.

An early stage proposal by a consortium of **Oregon** community colleges currently under review by the state's Higher Education Coordinating Commission would equip prospective teachers with bachelor's degrees and allow them to sit for licensing exams after four years of study at a community college in Salem, Ontario, The Dalles, the Rogue Valley, or

the Corvallis-Albany area. Its backers hope the programs can be up and running by fall 2027.

Oregon Clackamas Community College President Tim Cook crossed the finish line of a 1,400-mile running route that took him to all 17 of the state's community colleges. The 57-year-old essentially ran a marathon nearly every day for over seven weeks, raising awareness and more than \$127,000 to support students' basic needs.



SOUTHERN REGION

Indian River State College in **Florida** could become the first community college in the United States with an attached medical school. The medical school would be part of a dramatically expanded focus on health care at the college's Pruitt Campus in Port St. Lucie, which already includes health science and nursing programs.

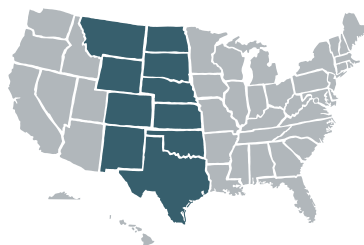
North Carolina's Boost is the first statewide replication of the CUNY ASAP model, a nationally acclaimed and evidence-based program that has proven its ability to increase three-year community college graduation rates. Eight community colleges are participating in the program's first cohort.

North Carolina is expanding its NC College Connect program, which will offer direct admission to more than 62,000 public high school seniors this fall. By eliminating the application process, NC College Connect removes financial and procedural obstacles that disproportionately affect first-generation

college students and those from underrepresented communities.

South Carolina's technical schools received \$3 million more in this year's budget to hire faculty and offer new classes as the state seeks to grow the number of high school juniors and seniors simultaneously enrolled in college courses. Dual enrollment has grown to some 19,000 South Carolina high school students in the state since it started 20 years ago.

The **Tennessee** Higher Education Commission (THEC) announced the launch of TN Direct Admissions, a new pilot program that automatically accepts eligible high school seniors into in-state public and private universities, as well as the state's community and technical colleges (TCAT). Tennessee's Direct Admissions Pilot is the first in the nation to directly connect automatic college admissions with state-supported and merit-based financial aid.



WESTERN REGION

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signed an executive order this week that sets in motion a comprehensive overhaul of the state's postsecondary education and workforce systems. The order calls for a more integrated, adaptable education

and training framework that responds to the rapidly evolving demands of Colorado's economy.

Hundreds of people attended the ribbon cutting for **Nebraska's** Southeast Community College's new Welding Technology Center. Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird called it the largest community college welding training facility in the U.S.

Undocumented students at public universities and community colleges in **Texas** are facing uncertainty and higher bills this fall after the Trump administration and state officials struck a deal to deny them in-state tuition. The Justice Department is similarly seeking to end tuition breaks in several other states for students who are residents there but do not have legal status.

Several employers are in talks with Alamo Colleges as it expands its support for Texas students with criminal backgrounds. The effort is part of a larger push to broaden the colleges' role in lifting up their cities and regions.

The **Wyoming** Business Alliance (WBA), the Wyoming Community College Commission (WCCC), and the University of Wyoming have formed a new partnership aimed at enhancing opportunities for student internships and other forms of hands-on learning with Wyoming businesses and industry partners. The partnership aims to build networks and establish lasting and meaningful relationships between Wyoming businesses and students that can increase the likelihood of keeping skilled graduates in Wyoming to meet critical workforce needs.

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.

New Trustees Governance Leadership Institute in Pittsburgh

In a display of commitment to continuing education and dedication to their colleges, trustees from across the country met at the Community College of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, this August for the 2025 New Trustees Governance Leadership Institute. The event kicked off with a welcome reception for all attendees with the beautiful backdrop of the Allegheny River and PNC Park, where trustees and presidents could settle in and get to know one another in a relaxed setting.

This year's New Trustees Governance Leadership Institute was spearheaded by ACCT consultant and proven leader Charlene Mickens-Dukes. Dr. Dukes employed her 25 years of experience in higher education, including her tenure as president of Prince George's Community College in Maryland, to guide newer trustees through a challenging curriculum that included a deep dive on parliamentary procedures, the board/CEO relationship, board ethics, and more. Participants also had the opportunity to get a first glimpse of upcoming ACCT Connect programming from Achieving the Dream's Chief Learning Officer Susan Mayer, who presented on the importance of data-informed policy and decision making.

Attendees wrapped up the second day of the institute with an in-depth tour of the host Community College of Allegheny County's newest building, the Center for Education, Innovation & Training. Trustees received an up-close look at some of the newest equipment being used to instruct CCAC engineering students. ACCT extends our sincerest gratitude to CCAC President Quintin Bullock, Chief of Staff Bonita Richardson, and the entire CCAC team for their warm welcome and collaboration on this event.



To learn more about upcoming Governance Leadership Institutes for new and seasoned trustees alike, please reach out to Maggie Owens, educational programs and events specialist, at mowens@acct.org.



2026 Governance Leadership Institute

Strengthening the Leadership Team of the Board

March 18-20

Hosted by Miami Dade College—Wolfson Campus, Miami, Florida

Register at acct.org/events/2026GLI

ACCT recommends that the board chair, vice chair, and college CEO attend this Institute as a team. Additional members of the board and professional board staff are welcome to attend, as well.

Topics Include:

- Best Practices of Highly Effective Boards
- The Role of the Board Chair
- How to Build a Strong Relationship Between the CEO and the Board
- The Chair's Role During a Crisis
- Succession Planning for the Board – Choosing Your Next Chair
- And More!



Legal Issues Impacting Community Colleges

Supreme Court rulings and Trump Administration orders impact discrimination lawsuits, wage and overtime violation cases, and criminal enforcement of federal agency rules.

BY IRA MICHAEL SHEPARD, ACCT GENERAL COUNSEL

U.S. Supreme Court unanimously rules that “reverse” discrimination plaintiffs should be held to the same standard that applies to minority plaintiffs.

THE FOLLOWING RECENT LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS ARE IMPORTANT TO the day-to-day administration of community colleges throughout America. All developments were current as of the publication date but are subject to change. This article does not provide legal advice; all readers are advised to seek legal guidance from their institution’s legal advisors before acting on any of the topics discussed herein.

U.S. Supreme Court unanimously rules that “reverse” discrimination plaintiffs should be held to the same standard that applies to minority plaintiffs. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled in June that reverse discrimination cases brought by non-minority white, male, and/or heterosexual people should not be held to a higher standard to prove discrimination than the standard applied to minority plaintiffs. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote the court’s decision, which held that the standard for providing what is job discrimination under federal law does not vary whether the plaintiff is a member



“This seems like the sort of art project we can foist off an A.I.”

of a minority or majority group (*Ames v. Ohio Department of Youth Services*, U.S. 23-1039, 6/5/25). The decision reversed a lower court of appeals decision which affirmed the dismissal of the case, holding that non-minority plaintiffs must meet a higher standard to prove reverse discrimination than minority plaintiffs.

U.S. Supreme Court rules that retirees lack standing to sue for disability discrimination that occurs after retirement. The Supreme Court resolved a split in the courts of appeals as to whether retirees have standing under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to sue their former employers for disability discrimination that occurs after they leave their job. The court ruled that retirees have lost their standing to sue, as the ADA only applies to and protects qualified disabled workers who currently hold or seek a job.

In this case, the plaintiff was forced to take disability retirement at age 47 in 2018 as a result of Parkinson's disease after serving almost two decades as a firefighter. At the time the plaintiff first joined the fire department, disability retirees would receive free health insurance until they reached age 65. However, the benefits plan was changed in 2003, before the plaintiff's retirement, to limit the healthcare subsidies to 24 months after retirement. The plaintiff was set to become responsible for her healthcare benefits in December of 2020, and she sued in April of that year, claiming disability discrimination. The Supreme Court agreed with her former employer, which argued that former employees lack standing to sue under the ADA (*Stanley v. City of Sanford*, U.S. No. 23-997, 6/20/25).

U.S. Labor Department ends practice of seeking "liquidated damages" in settlements of wage and overtime violation cases. The Labor Department's acting wage and hour administrator issued a Field Assistance Bulletin to Labor Department employees on June 27, 2025, ending the practice of seeking "liquidated damages" (sometimes referred to as "double damages") in settlement negotiations of alleged wage and overtime violations. The Labor Department may instead seek liquidated damages in judicial proceedings if settlement negotiations fail.

The Bulletin states that "Congress made it clear" that such damages are restricted to judicial proceedings and that responsibility falls to the courts to make such a determination, not the Department of Labor. It reverses the practice of DOL representatives routinely seeking liquidated damages as part of the settlement negotiation process, which began during the Obama Administration.

Presidential executive order disfavors criminal enforcement of federal agency rules. An executive order signed by President Donald J. Trump on May 9, 2025, advised all federal agencies that they should consider civil rather than criminal enforcement of their regulations. This could have a significant impact on the enforcement of federal laws and regulations in the HR and employment areas.

The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) all have an optional criminal enforcement capability in addition to the standard civil enforcement typically pursued by the Department of Labor. The executive order also stated that agencies should avoid imposing a "strict liability" standard to their rules, which allows the government to pursue a person or entity regardless of intent. It also requires all agencies to provide the Department of Justice a list of criminal regulatory offenses they are enforcing and the range of criminal penalties for violation within one year.

Federal court allows a nationwide class-action lawsuit alleging artificial intelligence (AI) age discrimination to proceed. A federal court recently ruled that Workday Inc.'s AI-scoring algorithm for screening job applicants may violate the Age Discrimination in Employment Act by discriminating against older job applicants. The court also ruled that the nationwide class-action suit may proceed (*Mobley v. Workday*, N.D. Cal. 3:23-cv-00770, 5/16/25).

While the court has not yet ruled on other allegations, the lawsuit also alleged that the algorithm has an unlawful disparate impact based on race and disability. While President Trump has instructed the EEOC and DOJ not to prosecute disparate-impact cases, his executive order does not impact private lawsuits or state equal employment opportunity laws.



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.



TRUCKEE MEADOWS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

DR. JEFFREY ALEXANDER

President

"We are proud to welcome Dr. Jeffrey Alexander as the next president of TMCC. As a current leader within our Nevada System of Higher Education, his experience, passion for student success, and collaborative approach to leadership stood out throughout the search process. TMCC plays a vital role in Northern Nevada, and we believe Dr. Alexander is the right person to lead the college into its next chapter."

- AMY J. CARVALHO

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR, BOARD OF REGENTS, NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MORENO VALLEY COLLEGE, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

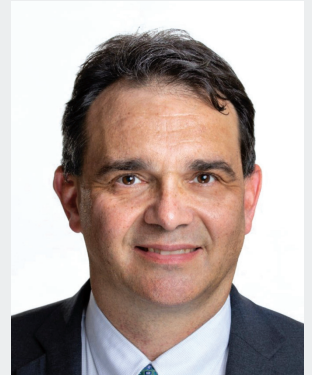
DR. RUDY BESIKOF

President

"Dr. Rudy Besikof is a proven leader who is deeply committed to the mission of California's community colleges. His strategic vision, collaborative approach, and dedication to inclusive student success make him the right choice for Moreno Valley College. I look forward to working with him as he builds on the strong foundation already in place."

- DR. WOLDE-AB ISAAC

CHANCELLOR, RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



COLLEGE OF THE MAINLAND, TEXAS

DR. HELEN CASTELLANOS BREWER

President

"We are proud to welcome Dr. Brewer as the next president of College of the Mainland. She has earned the respect of our campus and community through her vision, strategic focus, and unwavering commitment to student success. We are confident she will build on the incredible momentum COM has achieved under Dr. Nichols' leadership."

- DONALD G. GARTMAN

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, COLLEGE OF THE MAINLAND



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.

LOUISIANA DELTA COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

DR. JUSTIN HOGGARD

President



"On behalf of the LCTCS Board of Supervisors, I want to congratulate and welcome Dr. Hoggard as the next chancellor of Louisiana Delta Community College. He brings a thoughtful, student-focused approach to leadership, and we are confident that under his guidance, LDCC will continue to grow and serve the region with excellence. He is well positioned to lead the college into the future, and we're excited to see all that he will accomplish."

- TIMOTHY W. HARDY

*CHAIR, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM*



ROSE STATE COLLEGE, OKLAHOMA

MR. TRAVIS HURST

President

"Mr. Hurst excelled during the robust, merit-based national search. His innovation, commitment to students, experience in K-12 and workforce education, curriculum development, and deep understanding of Oklahoma made him the clear choice."

- BRANDON CLABES

*CHAIR, PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE AND TREASURER, BOARD OF REGENTS,
ROSE STATE COLLEGE*



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.



LAKE SUPERIOR COLLEGE, MINNESOTA STATE

DR. LINDA KINGSTON

President

"I am very impressed by Dr. Kingston's leadership skills and her ability to innovate. Linda knows Lake Superior College so well. She makes a point to talk with and listen to the students, faculty, staff, and the Duluth community on a regular basis, and I can't think of anyone better to lead LSC to the next level."

- DR. SCOTT OLSON

CHANCELLOR, MINNESOTA STATE

NORTHLAND COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE, MINNESOTA STATE

DR. SHARI OLSON

President

"With her deep knowledge of Minnesota State, including her previous leadership role with Northland, I am confident Dr. Olson is the right person to provide leadership during this transition. She will make tremendous contributions to the well-being of Northland Community & Technical College — promoting a culture of collaboration and continuous innovation and improvement. I'm grateful that Shari is willing to take on this challenge, and I look forward to working closely with her as she positions Northland for success well into the future."

- DR. SCOTT OLSON

CHANCELLOR, MINNESOTA STATE



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.

GREENVILLE TECHNICAL COLLEGE, SOUTH CAROLINA

DR. LARRY MILLER

President



"With the interest and support of the entire college community, the Area Commission has conducted a thorough national search resulting in a decision that ensures the future success of the college and its students. Under its first two presidents, Greenville Technical College has built a reputation as a national pacesetter, and I feel confident that with Dr. Larry Miller as the institution's next leader, we can achieve the ambitious goals that will only accelerate our strong momentum.."

- RAY LATTIMORE

CHAIR, GREENVILLE TECHNICAL COLLEGE AREA COMMISSION



LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

DR. ALBERTO ROMÁN

Chancellor

"We are excited Dr. Román will serve as the next Chancellor. We believe he will do remarkable things to continue to build on the District's mission of access, excellence, and student success. The challenges we face in higher education made it imperative to work swiftly and decisively to hire a permanent chancellor for the District. The Board is confident that Dr. Román is the right leader for LACCD. Dr. Román has demonstrated visionary leadership, collaborative spirit, and an unwavering commitment to LACCD."

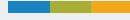
- DR. KELSEY IINO

BOARD PRESIDENT, LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



www.ACCTSearches.org

RETREATS & WORKSHOPS



Thank you to the following colleges who used ACCT Services between July and September 2025.*



Aims Community College, Colo.	Joliet Junior College, Ill.
Atlantic Cape Community College, N.J.	Lane Community College, Ore.
Bellingham Technical College, Wash.	Mohave Community College, Ariz.
Cecil College, Md.	Montgomery County Community College, Pa.
College of Micronesia, Federated States of Micronesia	Montgomery College, Md.
Community College of Beaver County, Pa.	Moraine Valley Community College, Ill.
Delaware County Community College, Pa.	Mott Community College, Mich.
Florence-Darlington Technical College, S.C.	North Idaho College, Idaho
Gateway Technical College, Wis.	Ohlone College, Calif.
Glendale Community College, Calif.	Palomar College, Calif.
Greenfield Community College, Mass.	San José Evergreen Community College District, Calif.
Harper College, Ill.	Southwestern College, Calif.
Houston Community College, Texas	Tarrant County College, Texas
Illinois Eastern Community College, Ill.	Virginia Community College System
	Western Iowa Tech Community College, Iowa



Find out more about board retreats and workshops
at www.acct.org/governance-services



interface

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Shelby Foster
Assistant to the President/Board of Trustees
Ohlone College, California
sfoster@ohlone.edu

VICE PRESIDENT

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

SECRETARY

Andrea Wittig
Director, Office of the President, Government Relations,
Trustee Services, and Strategic Initiatives, Cerritos College,
California
awittig@cerritos.edu

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

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

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Caitlin Murphy
Special Assistant to the President
Johnson County Community College, Kansas
Cmurph57@jccc.edu

NORTHEAST REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Evelyn Cordova
Board of Trustees Operations and Services Specialist
Montgomery College, Maryland
Evelyn.cordova@montgomerycollege.edu

SOUTHERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Dr. Sara Singleton
Associate Vice President, Governance & Strategic
Innovation
Forsyth Tech Community College, N.C.
ssingleton@forsythtech.edu

CENTRAL REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Benita Duncan
Executive Assistant and Liaison to the Board of Trustees
Lansing Community College, Michigan
duncanb@lcc.edu

WESTERN REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE

David Mohlman
Coordinator of Board Relations
Lee College, Texas
dmohlman@lee.edu

PACIFIC REGION MEMBER-AT-LARGE (AND MEMBER-AT-LARGE DESIGNEE)

GRACIELA MOLINA
Senior Executive Assistant, Office of the Chancellor
Yosemite Community College District, California
molinag@yosemite.edu

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

ACCT Professional Board Staff Network

PBSN WEBSITE

www.acct.org/membership/PBSN



The Future Is Us: Building on Strength, Embracing Change

BY SHELBY FOSTER
PBSN PRESIDENT

MY COLLEGE RECENTLY DEVELOPED A CAMPAIGN BASED ON “strong foundations, bright futures.” I reflected on how this would apply in our roles as professional board staff.

We have incredibly strong foundations, many of us weathering significant changes — technology updates, shifts in how education is administered, transitions in our leadership, budgetary changes. We are great problem-solvers.

So, what does our bright future look like?

There is no crystal ball — it’s just us.

It’s us, our colleges, and the understanding that we will need to use our strong foundations in administrative support to prepare ourselves for our bright future.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Assess your role’s needs and when technology can potentially assist. Is there a daily task that is using too much of your time? Do you feel like writing minutes takes, well, hours? Technology can help streamline some of your more mundane tasks, freeing up time for bigger projects. Not sure where to begin? Start with identifying which platforms your college uses for email and other administrative functions (i.e., Microsoft, Google). These platforms often have a wealth of additional programs that are worth exploring.

Choose the path of innovation rather than simply reacting to new technology. Artificial intelligence (AI), scheduling tools, project management platforms — there is an ever-changing world of technology available to us in our roles. Work with



your administration and information technology departments to consider investing in licenses or subscriptions that will enhance your productivity.

In addition to what your college offers, consider investing in your own professional development through training or an individual account with an AI platform. Don't be afraid to experiment to find the tools and platforms that are right for you. What you use for your minutes may not be the same technology you'd like to use to develop agendas.

Part of staying on the path of innovation is being mindful of your college's policies on the use of AI and technology, and the restrictions on personal or confidential information being shared. Perhaps your college still needs to create or review its policy; this would be a great time to do so.

Know that some of our role will never be filled by technology. At the end of the day, there will always be personal elements of our roles that can never be replaced by technology. Embrace the parts of your role that allow you to express your individuality, connect with others, and provide our students and communities with access to education.

It's finding the balance — acknowledging and taking control of the technology available to us, while still connecting on a personal level. Using ChatGPT to help draft meeting minutes, and yet still making the time to listen to a student's concerns to find them the help they need.

Our upcoming sessions at the ACCT Leadership Congress in New Orleans will provide opportunities to innovate and grow in our roles as professional board staff. We will feature customized sessions on artificial intelligence and building professional relationships with your trustees. PBSN will also be presenting a concurrent session on crisis communication. We will continue our tradition of holding roundtables, both on current topics of interest (Thursday) and by geographical regions (Friday).

In addition to our professional development session and business meeting, there will be a chance to network and enjoy time with one another at our annual meet-and-greet. These sessions will all be listed in the ACCT Leadership Congress program.

Looking to stay involved but not currently able to travel? PBSN holds virtual roundtables via Zoom and posts relevant information on ACCT Connect and our PBSN Facebook group. Collaborating virtually with one another is an excellent way to stay connected, seek advice, and grow professionally. Please consider joining the Professional Board Staff Network page on ACCT Connect (<https://connect.acct.org>.)

It's been a true honor to serve as your president this year. Professional Board Staff Network members share a passion, devotion, and dedication to educational service. We will continue to inspire, to lead, and to innovate the changing world ahead. Hope to see you in New Orleans this October!





Goals and Objectives for the Next Leader of the Professional Board Support Network

BY REATHA BELL, PBSN VICE PRESIDENT



AS WE CLOSE OUT THIS YEAR at the ACCT Professional Board Support Network (PBSN) sessions in New Orleans, Louisiana, I look forward to connecting with dedicated and resilient professionals who serve their boards and communities with excellence.

I extend my sincere appreciation to current Chair Shelby Foster, whose leadership has guided the network over the past year. Serving as Vice Chair alongside her has been both an honor and a valuable opportunity for growth. I look forward to stepping into the role of Chair with anticipation. I am committed to advancing our mission by creating meaningful development opportunities that highlight the vital role board professionals play in strengthening governance.

My vision is to expand engagement within PBSN — ensuring every voice is heard, every connection matters, and our network continues to grow stronger than ever. By fostering deeper collaboration between trustees and board professionals, we can strengthen institutional effectiveness and elevate the recognition of our expertise across the ACCT community.

PBSN is, at its heart, a community built on sharing best practices, exchanging resources, and supporting one another through lived experiences. My goal is to expand PBSN's impact as a national hub for collaboration, equipping members with tools and insights to raise the standard of board support nationwide.

Your involvement is essential. Together, we must ensure

PBSN has a more substantial and more visible presence at ACCT events. Through active participation, we will uplift our voice in unity and demonstrate the value of board professionals.

As I assume this new role, I am deeply grateful to the leaders who have served before me. They each served with dignity and contributed much to the network by way of their voice, excellence, and commitment. We will work as a collaborative team to ensure that the contributions of board professionals are recognized, esteemed, and celebrated throughout the ACCT community.

Thank you!

The Professional Board Staff Network recognizes our inaugural

Legacy sponsors:

**Reatha Bell
Benita Duncan
Shelby Foster
Kimberly Gibbs
Terri Grimes
Cynthia Gruskos
Diane Kerruish**

**Margaret Lamb
Kirsten Mead
Graciela Molina
Caitlin Murphy
Michelle Scott
Jaime Segal
Andrea Wittig**

Thank you for supporting the future of PBSN!



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

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- 1 Giving outstanding and retiring board members a Lifetime Membership to ACCT is a way to thank them for their service, recognize them among their peers, and ensure their ongoing interest in your college.
- 2 Lifetime Members receive complimentary registration to all ACCT meetings, including the Annual Leadership Congress and the National Legislative Summit, after retiring from their local boards.
- 3 Lifetime Members receive all of ACCT's award-winning publications, including *Trustee Quarterly* magazine and *Advisor*.
- 4 Lifetime Members are recognized publicly in *Trustee Quarterly*, on the ACCT Web site, and elsewhere.
- 5 The Lifetime Membership program supports and promotes ACCT's continuing trustee education and professional development.
- 6 Colleges that purchase Lifetime Memberships can deduct the expense from taxes to the fullest extent allowed by law.
- 7 It's just a nice thing to do — and haven't your most exceptional trustees earned it?

For more information and to submit an application, go to www.acct.org/membership/lifetime or contact ACCT's Member Services at 202.775.4667 or acctinfo@acct.org.



Election of Board Committee Members

2026 Candidates for the ACCT Board of Directors

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

(1) Three-Year Term in Each Region

(1) One-Year Partial Term in the Central Region

Following is the slate of nominees as of July 1, 2025.

CENTRAL REGION

Jermaine Reed*

Metropolitan Community College, MO

CENTRAL REGION ONE-YEAR PARTIAL TERM

Kathleen Bruinsma*

Grand Rapids Community College, MI

NORTHEAST REGION

Deborah Briggs*

SUNY Ulster, NY

PACIFIC REGION

Nan Gomez-Heitzeberg*

Kern Community College District, CA

SOUTHERN REGION

Yvonne Barnes*

Trident Technical College, SC

WESTERN REGION

Pat Wojcik*

Northeast Community College, NE

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

(3) Three-Year Terms

(1) One-Year Partial Term

Following is the slate of nominees as of July 1, 2025.

Donald D. Dantzer, Jr.*

Madison Area Technical College, WI

Manny Gonzalez

Austin Community College District, TX

Andra Hoffman*

Los Angeles Community College District, CA

Robert Proctor*

Lansing Community College, MI

** 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 2025 ACCT Leadership Congress Regional Caucuses and Meetings on Thursday, October 23, 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 2026 - 2027 term:

CENTRAL REGION

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

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio.

Dawn Erlandson (MN) and Vernon Jung, Jr. (WI) will continue to serve in 2026.

NORTHEAST REGION

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

District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Betti Singh (NJ) and J. D. Urbach (MD) will continue to serve in 2026.

PACIFIC REGION

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

Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Republic of Palau.

Evelyn Casuga (AZ) and Anna Franklin (WA) will continue to serve in 2026.

SOUTHERN REGION

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

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

Rod Harrelson (NC) and Ismare Monreal (FL) will continue to serve in 2026.

WESTERN REGION

Zero (0) seats will be available to members.

Nancy Baca (NM), Eric Scott Killough (KS), Gerald Lopez (TX), Arlyn Uhrmacher (NE), and Carlton Underwood (WY) will continue to serve in 2026.

CURRENT STATE, PROVINCE AND TERRITORY COORDINATOR VACANCIES

ACCT is seeking one member from each of the following states to serve as their respective state coordinator. If you are interested, contact ksavilaakso@acct.org.

Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, Arkansas, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, California (Northern), Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

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