

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.