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## From the Chair

### Raising the Bar



IF YOU ATTENDED ANY CONFERENCE IN 2009, YOU most likely saw the effects of the economy. This is why I am so proud that October's 40th Annual ACCT Leadership Congress in San Francisco was one of ACCT's biggest and best ever, with high attendance, more than 115 educational sessions, and — best of all — overwhelmingly positive energy. The San Francisco Congress was exceptional in every way, even attracting California Governor and community college success story Arnold Schwarzenegger to welcome us and share his personal story.

If you were unable to attend, you can still benefit. Presentations and handouts from many sessions are available on the ACCT Web site ([www.acct.org](http://www.acct.org)), along

with slideshows, daily Congress highlights, and, for the first time ever, video of the outstanding keynote speakers, awards presentations, and more.

Even as most of us faced greater hardships than ever, 2009 has been a remarkable year for community colleges. Why? Because we're flexible. We know our communities, we talk to each other, and we help reduce poverty and drive the growth of our local economies. In short, community colleges know how to get it done. We get the job done because of trustees and presidents like you — people who help more than 11 million students follow their dreams to a better life.

But friends, there is more to do. Looking ahead, we see three important challenges: accountability, educating for global competence, and engaging our membership. As the new ACCT Chair, these are the three priority areas on which I will focus during the coming year. You will see this focus in the pages of this magazine, on the ACCT Web site, in new publications, and at ACCT's events, including the 2010 Community College National Legislative Summit, Governance Leadership Institutes, and the 41st Annual ACCT Leadership Congress in Toronto.

Despite the challenges, those of us dedicated to the community college mission are among the luckiest people in the world. We are finally getting the recognition we are due. More importantly, we have the opportunity to capitalize on this recognition to fulfill the promise of providing quality, accessible education to everyone who wants it — and to better this promise by ensuring success and completion.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the San Francisco ACCT Congress such a great success. America's community colleges are moving from filling a gap to enabling our students to truly fulfill their potential. Now that we have raised the bar, it is our task to reach the new heights we have set for ourselves. I look forward to seeing you at the NLS in Washington, D.C., February 8-10, and in Toronto next fall.

THOMAS M. BENNETT  
PARKLAND COLLEGE, ILLINOIS