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February 1, 2008

ACCT PRESIDENT AND CEO STATEMENT REGARDING THE COLLEGE BOARD'S ACTION AGENDA FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

J. Noah Brown, President and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) congratulates the College Board's National Commission on Community Colleges on the release of their report *Winning the Skills Race and Strengthening America's Middle Class: An Action Agenda for Community Colleges*. The report identifies America's Community Colleges as the "nation's overlooked asset," and provides a strategic vision for policymakers confronting the challenges emanating from globalization and a failure to foster appropriate links among the educational sectors to address student success and preparation for a rapidly changing labor market.

"The College Board Commission correctly identifies the challenges confronting the United States and provides a thoughtful series of recommendations for the President, Congress, Governors, Legislatures, and community college leaders for financing and further strengthening the role of America's 1,200 community, junior, and technical colleges," says ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown.

Among the important contributions made by community colleges noted in the report is the impact on annual earnings. Individuals who attain at least an associate's degree earn almost twice that of high school dropouts, or \$37,990, compared with \$19,915.

Additionally, a partnership between ACCT and Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. & CCbenefits Inc. has produced incredible knowledge about the sheer economic power of community colleges and their return on investment in public dollars invested. "The data on the depth and potential of community colleges to effect economic prosperity while also increasing access to high skill and high growth jobs are compelling," Brown notes.

Based on economic impact analysis and return on investment research from nearly 700 studies, past and present students served by America's community colleges contributed a cumulative of \$668 billion to the nation's economy in FY 2007. Community college students just entering the workforce will continue to add \$34 billion to the economy each year. Community and technical colleges have produced over 2.4 billion cumulative credit hours of instruction. "There is absolutely no question that community colleges constitute incredible economic engines of prosperity and in many ways represent America's economic future," says ACCT President Brown.

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Brown believes that this message needs to be conveyed to every policymaker in the U.S., especially the next President and 111th Congress. And who better to assist than the nation's community college trustees he adds. "Trustees represent the front line of our colleges, and are charged with working hand-in-hand with peer policymakers at all levels," Brown points out.

The economic impact of community colleges and engagement of trustees across the nation can help realize the recommendations voiced in the College Board report and could greatly facilitate decision-making over the next year that could result in significant gains for the nation and for millions of Americans. "We need to move this from a dream to a reality and I look forward to working with the College Board and others to help bring that about" says Brown.

The Association of Community College Trustees is the nonprofit educational association that represents the nation's 6,000 public elected and appointed governing officials of community, junior, and technical colleges. Together, America's trustees oversee 1,200 institutions serving more than 18 million credit and non-credit students. For more information on ACCT programs and services visit www.acct.org or 202.775.4667.

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