OUR POTENTIAL

IMAGINING

OUR POTENTIAL

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION 2021-2022

ACCT
ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES
“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

—Leo Tolstoy
DEAR ACCT MEMBERS AND PARTNERS,

Ask anyone and they’ll tell you we’ve all been through a lot in recent years. That’s a given. The more interesting conversation now isn’t reflecting on the things that have happened to us but reflecting on what we have learned and how we have changed ourselves as a result.

Many of us were slow to take to remote working and learning prior to the pandemic. We’ve changed. We have learned, thanks to circumstances beyond our control, that what once seemed daunting technologically and what once seemed like it had a high potential for failure has created new opportunities. It’s not an all-or-nothing proposition, either: whether in person or online, we can choose what works best for any given scenario. We’re more versatile, more flexible, and we know that the most flexible trees are the ones that weather storms for centuries without breaking.

We have had a reckoning with our broader cultural history and our present systems that identify certain people as ‘other’ and equate ‘other’ to ‘less than,’ and we’ve recognized that violent and discriminatory events will continue if we don’t change ourselves—our ways of observing the world around us and interacting with it.

And just as fundamentally, community colleges throughout the country have learned in recent years—thanks in part to original research from ACCT—that countless students have tremendous academic potential that is hampered by socioeconomic barriers beyond their control. In other words, their present societal statuses, not limited potential, gets in the way of better futures. As a sector, we’re changing how we work with students to remove those barriers and help every student realize their potential.

You’ll see these changes reflected in this annual report as ACCT heads into a new era, not only changed by self-determination, but reinvented to meet the needs of community colleges and their students today and in the future. One thing that will not change is our commitment to our mission: to foster the principles and practices of exemplary governance while promoting high-quality and affordable higher education, cutting-edge workforce and development training, student success, and the opportunity for all individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency and security. It’s a mission that has weathered many changes and one which remains as relevant and vital as ever.
RE
IMAGINING
MEETINGS
ACCT was founded on bringing people together. In fact, our annual conference, the ACCT Leadership Congress, is two years older than the association itself! ACCT was the natural outgrowth of community college trustees coming together. Bringing community college trustees and CEOs together every year revealed a need for ongoing, in-depth advocacy and education at the national level. By doing this, our founders knew, we could make the community college sector even greater.

For the first time in our history, the ACCT Leadership Congress couldn’t bring people together in person last fall. So, like all colleges throughout the country adapted their learning and working models to accommodate remote availability, we adapted the ACCT Leadership Congress to become an online event. While the highlight of our year is seeing the faces of the people we work with throughout the year, we were thrilled to see over 1,000 community college leaders show up for the first-ever Virtual ACCT Leadership Congress in October. We were able to provide our attendees 80 educational sessions in addition to networking events and, for the first time ever, participants were able to watch every single session of the conference, in the weeks and months following the online conference.

By the time the 2021 Community College National Legislative Summit came in February, we were able to apply lessons learned from the October ACCT Congress and offer improved interactive networking, and we featured one of the most extensive and impressive rosters of congressional speakers in our history, kicked off by First Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

For many years, we’ve thought about ways to reinvent our meetings. The events of the past year drove us to take new approaches to hosting conferences and, in the process, to think about new and different ways to meet our members’ needs. Our Virtual Governance Leadership Institutes have been so successful that ACCT likely will continue to offer virtual institutes in the future. However, whenever possible, we will still bring together community college leaders in person because boardmanship is all about collaboration and relationships, and there’s no better way to learn and grow than together.
INNOVATIVE ADVOCACY

POLICY AND RESEARCH
ACCT’s research division continues to address current needs of the community college sector while looking toward the future with a visionary eye. In 2013, ACCT began to look into barriers to college access and success with partners such as Single Stop, The Institute for College Access and Success and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab. That research has fundamentally transformed how many colleges throughout the country approach student-success efforts, with emphasis on meeting basic needs such as food and housing insecurity, childcare and others.

This year, ACCT has looked into a number of other barriers to success, including the digital divide that impacts both rural and urban community college students. We’ve also expanded our research into the needs of rural community college students with support from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—chief among which is the digital divide—and the value of short-term postsecondary credentials with support from the ECMC Foundation.

The findings of this research have yielded policy reform needs that have become part of our legislative advocacy priorities.

LEGAL ADVOCACY
Advocacy for community colleges and their students is foundational to ACCT’s work. Each year, ACCT, in consultation with our members and with AACC, determines federal legislative priorities—public policy matters that are on the table for this legislative session, and which stand the greatest chances of being passed and securing greater support for our institutions and their students.

From July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, the association’s federal advocacy, with the support of trustees and CEOs throughout the country, recorded the following legislative victories.

Supported H.R. 2486, the Fostering Undergraduate Talent by Unlocking Resources for Education (FUTURE) Act - This bicameral bipartisan bill would extend mandatory funding through fiscal year 2021 for grants that support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs offered at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

Additional Pandemic Relief Funding for Colleges – Since the passage of the CARES Act in March 2020, two additional pandemic-relief measures have been signed into law, each containing targeted funding for colleges. Both measures contained a funding formula that accounted for both full-time enrollment (FTE) and total student headcount.

Coronavirus Relief and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) – CRRSAA, which was signed into law on December 27, 2020, contained $22.7 billion in targeted pandemic-relief funding for colleges and students.

American Rescue Plan (ARP) – The American Rescue Plan, which was signed into law on March 11, 2021, included $39.6 billion in targeted pandemic-relief funding for colleges and students.

Second Chance Pell - CRRSAA permanently restored Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals.

FAFSA Simplification – CRRSAA simplified the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by reducing the number of questions from 108 to 36 and creating a Student Aid Index (SAI) to replace Expected Family Contribution (EFC). These changes are estimated to make an additional 500,000 students eligible for Pell Grants each year and qualify another 1.7 million students for the maximum award.

Increases in FY2021 Funding for Higher Education and Labor Programs – CRRSAA contained higher education and labor funding for FY2021, including:

• Pell Grants – The Pell Grant maximum award increased to $6,495 ($150 higher than FY20).
• Campus Aid – The Federal Work Study (FWS) program received a $10 million increase and Federal Supplemental Opportunity Grants (SEOG) received a $15 million increase.
• Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) – CTE state grants received a $52 million increase.
• Adult Basic Education – Adult Education state grants were increased by $18 million.
• Institutional Aid – The following institutional aid programs were increased by a total of $67 million: Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP); Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs); Strengthening Alaska Native & Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions; Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Strengthening Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), Strengthening Asian American & Native Pacific Islander-serving Institutions; Strengthening Native American-serving Nontribal Institutions; Aid for Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs); Fund for the Improvement of Higher Education (FIPSE).
• Strengthening Community College Training Grants (SCCTG) – The SCCTG program received a $5 million increase.
NEW MEDIA OFFERINGS

PODCASTS & WEBINARS
Several years ago, in response to member requests for new and different ways to receive information, we launched our In the Know with ACCT podcast series. We’ll be honest: the podcast was an experiment. We experimented with both the technical and conversational aspects of podcast production over the first couple of seasons, and we were thrilled by the success of the series. Today, we have successfully cycled through four seasons of podcasts, building a library of over 100 episodes made to inform and educate community college leaders about community college advocacy, governance and leadership as well as student success and workforce development.

New episodes this season interviews with leaders from partner organizations about noncredit workforce programs, understanding student loan default rates, reskilling for the pandemic recession and recovery, rural community colleges, and more. This season also featured a governance-education series that addressed the board’s governing functions, best practices for governing boards, board accountability and advocacy, board and CEO relations, board planning and monitoring, trusteeship and student success, and governing with an eye toward diversity, equity and inclusion.

For these and more, visit https://acct.org/podcast.

WEBINARS
When the pandemic hit, we needed a way to communicate vitally important information to members—and our new webinar series was born. Throughout the year, we partnered with leading organizations including member colleges to address the most pressing issues confronting community colleges and our students today, as well as some fundamental topics.

BOARDSMANSHIP AND LEADERSHIP WEBINARS
- Road to Recovery: A Solutions-based Community College Event Series Hosted by the ACCT Corporate Council
- Planning for a Changing Labor Market
- Bridging K-12 to College Transitions
- Contingency Planning for the Fall
- Navigating Enrollment Shifts
- Improving Online Education
- Parliamentary Procedures for Board Chairs
- Community College Legal Issues
- Conducting an Effective CEO Search
- The Real Price of College

ADVOCACY WEBINARS
- Reskilling Displaced Workers
- Latest Action in Washington Live
- Skills to Recover: A Capitol Hill Update and Forum for Postsecondary Advocates
- Increasing the Pell Maximum Award—An Imperative to Meet Students’ True College Costs
- Improving Access and Affordability of Workforce Training with Short-Term Pell
- Expanding Educational Opportunity for Incarcerated Students through Second-Chance Pell
- Preparing for the 2021 Virtual Community College National Legislative Summit—A Three-Part Webinar Series
- Institutional Implementation of Stimulus Legislation (CRRSAA)
- Strengthening Rural Community Colleges
- The Real Price of College
- American Rescue Plan Implementation
- Leveraging Stimulus Funds to Support Adult Learners

Visit www.acct.org/webinars to watch these and to sign up for upcoming webinars.
HIGHLIGHTING THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

ACCT’s third year leading the annual Community College Month movement saw truly unprecedented success. This campaign does not explicitly appeal to federal agencies and Congress, but rather serves as a grassroots awareness initiative to promote the value and importance of community and technical colleges to our local, statewide, regional and national communities and economies.

This year, the ACCT Member Communications and Education Committee led an effort to develop a toolkit for community college leaders to get the word out about why community colleges matter. The toolkit included everything needed for colleges to advocate in their communities, including a #CCMonth logo, a Zoom background, talking points for community college advocates, suggested social media posts and tips, a sample press release and sample op-eds, and sample board resolutions. We’ve never seen so much online activity among our members, as well as by leaders including Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and a number of governors and higher education officials.

By the end of April, an estimated 5,000 individual posts on Twitter, Instagram, and blogs had been posted that were seen by an estimated 4 million sets of eyes throughout the month, according to Keyhole social media analytics. A Google social media search engine showed more than 10,000 Facebook posts and another 700 LinkedIn posts that carry the #CCMonth campaign hashtag.

Messages varied throughout the month, but a couple of primary messages were delivered consistently: Community colleges are exceptional, valuable institutions of higher education that contribute to their communities’ economies and wellness, and community colleges deserve more public support. We also saw many community college trustees, presidents, faculty, and students post video testimonials to Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube as well as many op-ed articles in support of community colleges published in local newspapers throughout the country.

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DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is tied directly to the community college mission of providing equal access to high-quality higher education for all people, regardless of socioeconomic standing or any other defining characteristic. While community colleges are open to all students who want to enroll, all students do not enroll, persist or complete at the same rates.

In addition to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Checklist and Implementation Guide for Community College Boards released last year, we’ve introduced new interactive services to help boards work toward their equity and equality goals.

This winter, we introduced board workshops dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion. These workshops help boards and their presidents take necessary steps to move toward their goals by reinforcing a culture that values and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion and put into place policies that support an equity agenda. The workshops also help boards develop plans to monitor and evaluate the college’s progress on equity goals using case studies, exercises, policy examples, policy review and facilitated discussions.

This spring, we also hosted a Virtual Diversity Institute designed to help governing boards and other college leaders create a diversity, equity and inclusion mindset for their colleges. The event explored developing an equity mindset, missing minority enrollments, board policies and practices that work, the role of boards and CEOs, how to use benchmarks and metrics effectively, creating actionable steps for forward momentum and more.

“I found the sessions to be rich in information, details, explanations and data! I will use all that I learned about equity mindedness and the equity-consciousness approach to make changes with our student organizations and honor societies, and most importantly, diverse and inclusive programming.”
DIGITAL DIVIDE: HOW TECHNOLOGY ACCESS IMPACTS COMMUNITY COLLEGES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES DURING A PANDEMIC

The paper, released in May of 2021, looks at the current state of the digital divide in the United States and how it has affected community college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders at community colleges in Spokane, Washington, Los Angeles, California, and on the Navajo Reservation were interviewed to show what the digital divide looks like in an urban, a suburban, and a rural community and how it is affecting each college’s students.

STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES: INNOVATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This groundbreaking report details the needs and challenges of rural community colleges throughout the United States, the culmination of over a year of intensively interviewing rural community leaders. Strengthening Rural Community Colleges was released in March 2021 as part of a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This research project continues, as ACCT recently expanded the initiative to establish a nationwide network and offer technical support for federal funding opportunities. Visit rural.acct.org for more information.

RESKILLING FOR THE PANDEMIC RECESSION AND RECOVERY

Reskilling for the Pandemic Recession and Recovery focuses on the U.S. economic downturn since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a disproportionate impact on Black and Hispanic individuals, women, and people without a postsecondary degree. Considering these challenges, the brief details policy proposals for large-scale workforce development initiatives and strategies that community colleges can implement to support unemployed and adult learners.
WHAT WORKS: COLLEGE STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING STUDENT LOAN DEFAULT
In 2014, ACCT and The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) partnered to examine student loan default at nine community colleges and explore administrative practices aimed at addressing students’ default risks. At each college, we analyzed cohort default rate data and uncovered notable trends and populations at higher risk, identified default-reduction strategies the college was already using, and suggested additional strategies to consider. In October of 2020, ACCT and TICAS followed up with these colleges to understand how their strategies had evolved since our analysis.

FAULT LINES IN BORROWING: ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF STUDENTS IN DEFAULT
Fault Lines in Borrowing: Academic Outcomes of Students in Default examines factors influencing and influenced by loan defaults among students at Valencia College in Orlando, Florida. The findings demonstrate that loan defaults and their harsh penalties are strongly associated with poorer academic persistence and completion. The paper offers recommended changes to the student debt system to alleviate unnecessary hardships currently placed on student borrowers.

UPDATING & EXPANDING TRUSTED GOVERNANCE RESOURCES

TRUSTEESHIP IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, REVISED & EXPANDED SECOND EDITION
ACCT’s cornerstone governance handbook has been thoroughly revised, updated, and expanded. The new second edition gives a comprehensive overview of foundational concepts of community college governance, more advanced considerations for navigating challenging situations, and information to help community college trustees understand the higher education landscape and, in particular, the community college sector, including the values of educational access and student success.

Chapters include:
• The Evolution of Community Colleges and Governance
• The Board and Its Governing Functions
• The Board’s Role in Setting and Using Policy
• Board Accountability and Advocacy
• The Board and the Chief Executive
• Best Practices for Governing Boards
• The Board’s Role in Planning and Monitoring
• The Board’s Role in Student Success

Visit the ACCT Bookstore at www.acct.org/publications.
ACCT SEARCHES
For over 40 years, ACCT has remained the only national not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing services to community college governing boards. ACCT Searches have placed over 500 community college CEOs, ranging from campus presidents to state system presidents. Drawing from this extensive experience and uniquely honed expertise, ACCT issued a white paper detailing *Five Keys to a Successful Transition* Year for newly hired community college chief executive officers.

ACCT Searches has continued to provide exemplary search support and assistance to our member institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, working with institutions throughout 2020 and 2021 to successfully shift services to fully or partially virtual formats in response to state and college restrictions on in-person meetings.

ACCT Searches remains engaged with our member institutions on developing highly diverse candidate pools and identifying exceptional candidates ready to lead during these challenging times. The association continues to expand its slate of nationally recognized search consultants, who can be viewed at acctsearches.org/consultants/.

BOARD RETREAT, BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT, CEO EVALUATION, AND OTHER SERVICES
ACCT provides important board development services to member colleges and institutions. During FY21, ACCT facilitated 33 board retreats, conducted 16 board self-assessments, 12 CEO evaluations, one policy review, and technical assistance to four colleges. We also conducted seven new mini-trainings online at the request of member boards.

As COVID-19 restrictions eased, consultants were able to return to in-person retreats; however, some colleges continued to opt for virtual or a hybrid model. ACCT consultants facilitated 23 retreats virtually.

To learn more about how services can help your college leadership, visit www.acct.org/services.

Last fiscal year, ACCT Searches provided support for 19 member colleges.

Chancellor and president searches include:
- Baton Rouge Community College, Louisiana Community and Technical College System
- Brazosport College, Texas
- Chippewa Valley Technical College, Wisconsin
- Delta College, Michigan
- Dutchess Community College, State University of New York
- Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College
- Essex County College, New Jersey
- Maysville Community & Technical College, Kentucky Community & Technical College System, Kentucky
- Northland Pioneer College, Arizona
- Rio Salado College, Maricopa County Community College System, Arizona
- River Parishes Community College, Louisiana Community & Technical College System
- Roanoke-Chowan Community College, North Carolina
- Saint Paul College, Minnesota
- San Bernardino Community College District, California
- San Diego Community College District, California
- Santa Ana College, Rancho Santiago Community College District, California
- Santiago Canyon College, Rancho Santiago Community College District, California
- South Texas College, Texas
- York Technical College, South Carolina

For more information about ACCT Searches, visit www.acctsearches.org.
6,200 Followers on Twitter, including member trustees, presidents, colleges, federal officials and educational thought leaders.

www.twitter.com/CCTrustees

3,000+ Participants in ACCT events, including the ACCT Leadership Congress, Community College National Legislative Summit, and Governance Leadership Institutes

BY THE NUMBERS

1,900 Facebook fans. “Like” us on Facebook to keep up with the latest news, and find yourself in ACCT’s photo albums.

www.facebook.com/CCTrustees

89,000 ACCT website sessions

19 Community college executive placements

75 Member board retreats, self-assessments & CEO evaluations
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