America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.

- Harry S. Truman
DEAR ACCT MEMBERS AND PARTNERS,

Determination is a process through which an informed decision is made, and it’s also the driving force that brings that decision to fruition. As we at ACCT work toward the final year of our 2020 Vision, the association has been making determinations about what matters most and we’re determined to make progress in those areas.

Over and above everything else, what matters is upholding the community college mission over the long term: access to high-quality higher education for all people, regardless of any obstacles, socioeconomic or otherwise. At the foundation of this mission is meeting students’ educational needs, which in our sector means helping students to meet their live needs while they pursue their educations. And in order to do that, community colleges need to be sustainable through being both responsive to ever-changing demands and visionary, able to anticipate major changes even before they occur.

Overcoming these challenges is a daunting proposition; however, you’ll see in the following pages that our determination is paying off.
I urge you, instead of taking just the student message to the Hill, take a student. Your representatives know you and know what you want. Besides, who wants to hear a list of priorities ‘through a lens’ when they can hear it from the source?
engaged students

The foundation of any college is its students, and the students who attend community colleges stand apart for many reasons.

This year, ACCT’s focus on students expanded in new and exciting ways. We formed a new Student Trustee Advisory Committee to gain greater insights into students’ needs by engaging those who also have a practical understanding of community college governance. As a result, more students—trustees and otherwise—than ever came to Washington to advocate on behalf of their interests during the 2019 Community College National Legislative Summit. One of these students, Alicia Moreno, discovered the importance of her voice at the Summit.

In the summer 2018 issue of Trustee Quarterly magazine, she writes about her experience meeting a member of Congress, whom she describes as visibly ‘weary’ after shaking hands with countless advocates.

“As I introduced myself as the student trustee on the board and a student at Palo Alto College, he perked up

and the handshake turned into a hand on my elbow leading me to be seated while he continued to ask probing questions about my position, my college experience, and how I had found myself in this place in my life. There was nobody else in the room. He was as engaged in finding out what we were there for from the student perspective as we were to give that information.

“I urge you,” she writes, “instead of taking just the student message to the Hill, take a student. Your representatives know you and know what you want. Besides, who wants to hear a list of priorities ‘through a lens’ when they can hear it from the source?”

Her enthusiasm is reflected in the record numbers of student advocates who attended the Summit this year—thanks to increased student engagement.
We are determined to spotlight students as never before, and so we dedicated a space in every issue of *Trustee Quarterly* magazine for students’ voices to be heard.
We are determined to spotlight students as never before, and so we dedicated a space in every issue of *Trustee Quarterly* magazine for students’ voices to be heard.

Moreno, a student trustee at Alamo Colleges in Texas, is a one-person profile of what makes community college students so special and “nontraditional.” Nearly 50 years old, a retired United States Army Veteran, and a mother of four college students, Moreno agonized on her first year of college whether she was college material. “Would I fit in?” she wrote. “Could I even do the college thing? I mean, I hadn’t had a math class in almost 30 years! And then I had an epiphany… I am the new traditional college student.” Moreno participated in ACCT’s Governance Leadership Institute and advocated on behalf of herself and all Texas students at the Community College National Legislative Summit.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society’s 2018 Dr. David Pierce Scholar Michael Aguilar wrote about his “transformative” community college experience. Raised by a struggling single father, Aguilar wrote that he “sound myself attending a disciplinary school… angry at a society that seemed to push me there. The facts of my story strongly suggested that I would become another young man of color trapped in the school-to-prison pipeline.” Through the intervention of Lone Star College-CyFair and Phi Theta Kappa, he “discovered a new world of opportunity.” He transferred to Washington University in St. Louis as a Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholar.

And Nune Garapian wrote about her journey from serving as a student, and then a student trustee, at Pasadena City College, to interning at the national College Promise Campaign headquarters in Washington, D.C., to her newest adventure—at an Ivy-League university. “I will carry these experiences and the spirit of my transformative time at community college with me as I move ahead in life. My present adventure will be at Yale University, thanks in great part to what I learned in both the classrooms and the board room at a community college.”

Moreno and Aguilar served as the closing keynote speakers at the 2018 ACCT Leadership Congress in New York, along with Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society International President Elda Pere, a mathematics major at Bergen Community College who transferred to Cal Poly.

Our partnership with Phi Theta Kappa also brought new opportunities directly to students with the presentation of the PTK New Century Workforce Pathway Scholarship, presented during the 2018 ACCT Leadership Congress. The scholarship is the first of its kind, supporting community college students who plan to enter the workforce upon the completion of a degree or certificate. Forty-six (46) students nationwide were selected for the $1,250 awards, sponsored by the Coca-Cola Foundation.

All of these are shining examples of community college successes—and of the best current and future advocates for why it is so important to invest in community colleges.
DETERMINED TO ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF STUDENTS

ACCT’s direct engagement with students is paramount—but as the national voice of community college leaders, we know we can’t stop there. Our original research has resulted in reports, white papers and movements to get to the roots of students’ challenges and to determine solutions to meet those needs. In the past, our close looks into what’s behind community college student loan defaults, food and housing insecurity and more have resulted in groundbreaking findings that have influence public policy.

This year, a number of partnerships have enabled us to look into other often-overlooked segments of the community college student population, and to determine ways by which to improve their successes. Economic conditions in both rural and urban environments, for example, have created unique barriers that have resulted in reduced enrollment of males at community colleges. Our papers The Rural Male in Higher Education: How Community Colleges Can Improve Educational and Economic Outcomes for Rural Men and Continuing Progress: How Urban Community Colleges Are Improving Outcomes for Minority Men, supported by the Strada Education Network, investigate the roots of this phenomenon and offer solutions to bridge the gender gap.

Under the leadership of Chair Connie Hornbeck, ACCT has been a bold advocate for the reinstatement of Pell Grant eligibility for incarcerated individuals pursuing a secondary degree or certificate. In partnership with the Vera Institute for Justice, ACCT briefed 2019 Community College National Legislative Summit participants on Second Chance Pell, followed by a briefing to a standing-room-only group of congressional staff on Capitol Hill.

We’ve also looked at workforce needs in our papers partnerships for a Future-Ready Workforce, sponsored by Guardian Life Insurance, and Apprenticeships: An Emerging Community College Strategy for Workforce Development, supported by Strada, which take into consideration the special needs and interests of community college students, and profile practical models for addressing them.
More than ever, high school students are enrolling in community colleges to get a head start on college-level coursework, to secure college credits before they graduate from high school, and in some cases even to receive a college credential by the time they receive their high school diplomas. This dual-enrollment strategy can be an extraordinary benefit to students and their families, saving them both time and money—potentially tens of thousands of dollars—by accelerating their higher learning. Our report, Aligning for Student Success: How Community Colleges Work with K-12 to Improve College and Career Outcomes, in partnership with Education Strategy Group and AACC, calls on community college presidents and trustees to implement strategies to accelerate academic transitions, to extend navigational supports, and to serve as career bridges from high school to the workforce. It also identifies successful practices and offers high-level strategies to dramatically improve student outcomes.

THE TRUSTEE’S ROLE IN EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Updated monograph guides community college board members through every step of the advocacy process

The newly revised and expanded monograph explains:

- The Fundamentals of Effective Advocacy:
  - What is advocacy?
  - Why advocate?
  - What is the role of the board in advocacy?
  - What are the federal, state, and local roles?
  - Why build relationships with legislators?

- The Advocacy Process
  - How to set priorities
  - How to craft messages and materials
  - How to connect with policymakers

- Advocacy Activities
  - General guidelines for building relationships with policymakers
  - Meeting with members of Congress or state legislators
  - Writing, emailing, and calling policymakers
  - Using social media
  - Hosting a campus visit
  - Advocating to the executive branch

- Elements of state and local advocacy
- ACCT’s Federal Advocacy and Resources
  - How we advocate for community colleges & how we can help you advocate

Also included:

- Legislative Process Overview
- Glossary of Congressional Terms
- Congressional Committees
- The Federal Budget & Appropriations Process
- Key Federal Programs
- Know Your Legislator
- Know Your College
- Federal Funds Worksheet
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DETERMINING LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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.

Over the past year, the association's federal advocacy, with the support of trustees and CEOs throughout the country, recorded the following legislative victories.

- **Pell Grants** - The Pell Grant maximum award increased by $100 for the 2019 - 2020 academic year. This would bring the overall maximum award level to $6,195.

- **Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE)** - CTE received a 5.9 percent increase of $70 million to the state grant portion of the program.

- **Adult Basic Education** - State grants under adult education saw a 4 percent increase of $25 million.

- **Federal TRIO Programs and GEAR UP** - TRIO received a 5 percent increase of $50 million. GEAR UP saw a 2.9 percent increase of $10 million.

- **Institutional Aid** - The bill included a 1 percent increase for the following programs: Strengthening Institutions; Aid for Hispanic-Serving Institutions; Strengthening HBCUs; Strengthening Predominately Black Institutions; Strengthening Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities; Strengthening Native American-Serving Nontribal Institutions; Strengthening Asian American & Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions; and Strengthening Alaskan Native & Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions. These increases ranged from $40,000 to $3 million depending on the size of the program.

- **Apprenticeship Grants** - The Department of Labor grant program saw a $15 million increase.

“Education is the great lifter and the great leveler.”

- Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Virginia), co-recipient of the 2019 National Education Service Award
From 2017 to 2018, we disseminated the decennial Citizen Trustee survey to community college trustees and presidents throughout the country.

The survey details trustees’ backgrounds, roles, and challenges in serving community colleges and their students. From 2017 to 2018, the survey was disseminated to trustees across the country including members and non-members of ACCT. The association received approximately 1,100 unique responses, providing the field’s most current and comprehensive data of individuals serving on community college boards.

“Trustees are elected by their communities or appointed by local leaders to serve as voluntary public servants, entrusted with ensuring that colleges meet the educational and workforce demands of their communities,” ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown said. “Just as it’s important to understand our students, it’s important to understand the public servants who govern our institutions.”

A major finding from the survey highlights the disparity in demographic backgrounds of trustees, particularly with regard to gender and race and ethnicity, compared with the backgrounds of community college students. Trustees are predominately male (55%), and white (76%), yet community college students are mostly female (56%), and racially diverse, with African American (15%) and Hispanic or Latino (24%) students comprising more than one-third of all students.

“In light of this finding,” Brown said, “it is incumbent upon trustees to focus on the value of diversity and how demographic differences between leadership and students can impact institutional decision-making. Community colleges must work to promote diversity and inclusivity on their own boards and advocate for equity-minded policies and practices to support their students.”

The survey also reveals trustees’ strong commitments to service: 83% of respondents said improving programs for students was a motivating factor for serving as a trustee. These trustees seek to develop strategies to address many of the challenges currently facing postsecondary education such as securing funding for their colleges, improving affordability for students, and strengthening their local economies.

We expect these data to lead to greater dialogue about diversity and equity in community college leadership and how this ultimately impacts students.
DETERMINED TO FIND AND SUPPORT THE BEST LEADERS

Last year, ACCT co-published *Executive Leadership Transitioning at Community Colleges*, a monograph that outlines crucial factors, variables and issues concerning transitioning from one college CEO to another. At the same time, ACCT Searches initiated an ongoing evolution of its services to help member community colleges identify and cultivate the best possible CEOs to meet the high demands of a higher education model. To support a successful tenure, the Searches team now reaches out to the board chair for three-month and six-month check-ups after placement to assess how the new CEO is meeting the expectations of the board and the college. ACCT Searches placed 30 new community college executives over the past year.

We provided additional member services to 39 colleges, including facilitated board retreats, self-evaluations and CEO evaluations, are being revitalized, and members are finding great value in these services, with significant increases in all of these.

Whether we are helping boards to find the best possible CEO for their college or facilitating a retreat, all of our board services are tailored specifically to meet the needs of community colleges.

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30
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