Meet Us In San Francisco!

By Pamela Payne
El Paso Community College

TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE WE LAST LEFT OUR HEARTS in San Francisco. With its breathtaking views and Victorian architecture, the city once known as “The Paris of the West” beckons us back for the 50th Annual ACCT Congress, beginning October 16, 2019.

The Professional Board Staff Network (PBSN) executive committee will kick off this year’s event with a pre-conference reception beginning at 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, at Jasper’s Tap and Kitchen, located within the Hotel Spero at the corner of O’Farrell Street and Taylor Street, just across from the Hilton Union Square. Hosted by El Paso Community College, the reception will give everyone an opportunity to catch up with old friends and welcome our newest members while enjoying appetizers, a baked potato bar, and beverages.

The annual PBSN Workshop will take place at 2 p.m. on Thursday, October 17, in Plaza B, Lobby Level at the Hilton Union Square. This year’s agenda will feature the presentation Five Decades in the Workplace by Dr. Linda Brown, director of the El Paso Community College Leadership Academy. Following this presentation, there will be roundtable discussions on several topics affecting today’s board professional: new trustee orientation, leadership transition, board meeting minutes tips and tricks, how to deal with difficult people, and board retreats.

The PBSN Workshop continues on Friday, October 18 at 9 a.m. in the Franciscan A & B Rooms, Ballroom Level, with a presentation by Cobby A. Caputo, attorney for Austin Community College from the firm of Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta LLP, on the appropriate board staff response to requests for information. We will have some exciting door prizes, but you must be present to win.

The business meeting and election of the PBSN’s executive committee members will take place immediately following the workshop. If you are interested in becoming a delegate or officer, please be prepared to introduce yourself and provide a brief overview of your experience and why you would like to join the committee.

Special thanks to our generous sponsors, Lansing Community College and Austin Community College. Their sponsorship will allow us to have a few special surprises during the workshop.

Like ACCT, we here at El Paso Community College spent the summer preparing for and celebrating our 50th Anniversary. Think about it – 50 years! From chalkboards to smartboards, technological advancements have made...
getting a college education more accessible than ever before. Distance learning has opened up the classroom to those in rural areas hoping to further their education. And dual enrollment, relatively unheard of in 1969, now allows students to begin their college education early, with some earning degrees before they even receive their high school diploma. We’ve watched the demographics of the student body change from predominately younger high school graduates to an older and more diverse population that includes both working and single mothers, soldiers and veterans, and international and undocumented students, all looking for a better and brighter future. With so much change behind us and even more ahead, we can hardly wait to see what the next 50 years will bring.

During ACCT’s 50th anniversary celebration in San Francisco, the PBSN will also be celebrating its 25th anniversary. So many board professionals have been part of this history and shared their stories and expertise over the years. It is now our turn to continue the legacy that they established 25 years ago and continue to promote learning opportunities for our profession!

If you are planning to attend the Congress and you’ve never been or haven’t yet had a chance to explore San Francisco, we encourage you to take a minute, relax, and explore. Whether you want to watch seals sunbathing at Fisherman’s Wharf, ride on a cable car, explore Lombard — the Crookedest Street in the World — or just enjoy a quiet bowl of clam chowder at Boudins, there is something for everyone. We look forward to seeing everyone there!

Please feel free to reach out to me via email if you have any questions about PBSN or about the upcoming Congress at ppayne1@epcc.edu or by phone at (915) 831-6511. This year’s event is sure to be exciting, and I can’t wait to reconnect with everyone!
Where Will You Go? What Will You See?

By Jeannie Moton, Portland Community College

WITH SO MANY THINGS TO DO AND SEE IN THE HISTORIC city of San Francisco, I wanted to provide an introduction to the neighborhoods surrounding the conference hotel. The areas worth a visit surrounding The Hilton Union Square are Nob Hill, Polk Gulch, the Tenderloin, and Chinatown.

Nob Hill is at the intersection of Jones and Sacramento Streets. The name was changed from California Hill to Nob Hill after the famous and influential builders of the Central Pacific Railroad built their mansions on the hill. One of these mansions still stands, located at California and Mason Streets. Several companies offer walking tours of the mansions in the area. A few must-dos if you plan to visit the Nob Hill area include riding the cable cars (installed by the homeowners at the time due to the steep grade and the fact that horses weren’t able to transverse it) and visiting the Cable Car Museum. A trip to Grace Cathedral is also on the top of most lists, as it is a beautiful sight. If you like photography, a morning trip to the cathedral is advised, as the rising sun hitting various doors and windows is top notch. An upscale restaurant to visit in this neighborhood would be The Big Four. It was named after the famed railroad tycoons Collis P. Huntington, Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, and Mark Hopkins. The restaurant offers an impressive collection of memorabilia, photos, and artifacts to peruse.

Polk Gulch is the neighborhood around a section of Polk Street, which was named after James Knox Polk, the 11th president of the United States. The “gulch” comes from where the street crosses an old stream. The street used to be the main commercial street for German immigrants and is still referred to by its German name Polksstrasse. In 1972, the first official San Francisco Gay Pride Parade was held on Polk Street. Another historic landmark in the area is California Hall. On January 1, 1965, an LGBTQ event was held in the hall, where police harassment prevailed. The next morning, for the first time in U.S. history, religious leaders called for an end to the harassment of the LGBTQ communities. California Hall now houses the Academy of Art University-School of Fashion. McTeague’s Saloon is a great place to visit for a casual meal. It has a sports vibe, while still connecting with the history of the community.

Named after a neighborhood in New York City with the same characteristics, the Tenderloin is located in downtown San Francisco. As the area was being developed for a subway station, evidence was found that a community had resided there thousands of years ago. Most of the buildings in the area were destroyed by an earthquake and the subsequent fires in 1906. The area has a few art galleries that should be visited if you are afforded the time, including the White Walls Gallery and the Shooting Gallery. Learn about the history of the neighborhood with a visit to the Tenderloin Museum. If you’re up for something a bit different, try Brenda’s French Soul Food. While it is a cozy place and there is usually a wait, it is well worth it.

Chinatown is centered on Grant Avenue and Stockton Street. This is likely the most iconic neighborhood of San Francisco. I have great memories of wonderful meals while on family vacations. This is the oldest Chinatown in North America. This neighborhood, too, was completely destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. A visit to the Dragon Gate is a must for visitors. The gate came about from an essay contest sponsored by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1953, and after many attempts the gate was finally dedicated in 1970. The Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Company makes over 10,000 fortune cookies each day. Along with tours, this is a great location to find souvenirs for those “hard to buy for” family and friends. As you can guess, there are too many delicious Chinese restaurants in the area to suggest one. A quick Google search can help narrow down your preferences.

A few other visit-worthy neighborhoods with rich history and great food but a little further out from the conference are Haight-Ashbury, Fisherman’s Wharf, Telegraph Hill, SoMa, and Japantown.

While there is so much great history and amazing food, there is also so much to do and see in San Francisco. Hopefully you will have some downtime to get out and enjoy all the city has to offer. The highlighted neighborhoods are within walking distance of the conference hotel and offer something for everyone.

Have fun and happy exploring (and conferencing)!