PBSN Members Answer the Call
to ‘Meet Me in Las Vegas’

By Margaret Lamb
San Diego Community College District, California

PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF MEMBERS FROM AROUND THE

country came together in September to attend the Professional Board
Staff Network (PBSN) workshop and activities, as part of the ACCT
Leadership Congress in Las Vegas, Nevada. This afforded a wonderful opportunity to meet new
board staff members who attended the PBSN workshops for the first time, to reunite with familiar
colleagues and friends, and to say farewell to a few who will be leaving us due to retirement.

Our activities began with a fun-filled meet-and-greet at Planet Hollywood on Monday, which
provided time to network with colleagues in a relaxed setting. Due to popular demand for more
sessions, a three-hour workshop was scheduled on Tuesday, followed by a one-and-one-half-hour
workshop on Wednesday. Tuesday’s workshop began with three rotating roundtable discussions,
which provided an opportunity for participants to share best practices on requested topics
including board portal software, board retreats, leadership transition, emergency preparedness
and response, new trustee orientation/board training, and board travel. Additional workshop
sessions included a demonstration of the new ACCT Member Portal and excellent information for
both the body and the mind — a session on ergonomics, which delivered professional tips on
proper sitting and standing, and a session on mindfulness, which provided valuable information
on how to maintain a healthy mental balance in the workplace. The second day featured a
presentation on the effective use of social media and a professional panel on preparing for
meetings with local, state, and national legislators.

The PBSN annual business meeting featured the accession of officers and the election of
new and returning Executive Committee members. During the meeting, Heather Lanham was
recognized for her excellent service as PBSN President during 2016-17. I would like to take
this opportunity to thank Heather and the other members of the Executive Committee for their
willingness to give of their precious time and energy to serve in these voluntary positions.

According to the PBSN bylaws, “the duties and functions of the PBSN Executive Committee will
consist of, but are not limited to: guiding the affairs of the organization, coordinating proposals
and presentations for the annual ACCT Leadership Congress, … and other initiatives deemed
appropriate for further advancement of the Professional Board Staff Network.” To that end, the
Executive Committee will be meeting in conjunction with the ACCT National Legislative Summit
in Washington, D.C., in February in order to begin planning for the PBSN fall workshop, which
will be held in October in New York City. If you have suggestions for workshop topics or are
interested in presenting, please feel free to contact myself or any member of the Executive
Committee listed on this page.

Again, we thank all those who were able to attend the 2017 PBSN workshop and meetings.
While it is true that “what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas,” we hope that what you learned in
Vegas doesn’t stay there — be sure to share your knowledge and best practices with others.

We look forward to another great year of activity and hope to see you in New York this fall!
“HIGHEST DEGREE OF PROFESSIONALISM,” “EXEMPLARY SERVICE,” “ROBUST WORK ETHIC,” “STRIVES FOR PERFECTION,” “institutional change agent and champion,” “ability to think outside the box,” “unparalleled commitment,” “professional problem-solver.” These are just a few of the qualities that are used to describe the 2017 ACCT Professional Board Staff Member regional award recipients.

Since 2001, the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) has recognized the key role and extraordinary contributions of professional board staff members. Five regional awardees were recognized at the ACCT Leadership Congress in Las Vegas, Nevada, in September 2017.
This year’s honorees are:

**CENTRAL REGION**

Mellanie Toles  
*Clark State Community College, Ohio*  
Mellanie has served with distinction for 19 years as assistant to the president at Clark State Community College. She is well-known and respected for her excellent technical and organizational skills and is the “go-to” source for college information. She is a passionate advocate for students and leaves no stone unturned to find solutions to problems.

**NORTHEAST REGION**

Alonia Sharps  
*Prince George’s Community College, Maryland*  
Alonia has served in various positions at Prince George’s Community College for over forty years. She has provided support for three presidents and more than 50 board members since 1999. Her commitment to the board, administration, students, faculty, and staff is unparalleled. Alonia has also served on the PBSN Executive Committee. She will soon be retiring and we wish her the best in her retirement!

**PACIFIC REGION**

Janet Reaume  
*Centralia College, Washington*  
Janet has served in various roles at Centralia College since 2008. Her strong work ethic, exceptional writing ability, and wonderful people skills have served her well in her role as executive assistant to the president and board of trustees. She is well-known and respected for her ability to “think outside the box” and is sought after for help and advice.

**SOUTHERN REGION**

Kimberly Mack  
*Halifax Community College, North Carolina*  
As executive assistant to the president and board of trustees for the past five years, Kimberly is recognized for being “an institutional change agent and champion for the president, board, students, administrators, faculty, staff, and community partners.” She unselfishly gives of her time and talents to improve efficiency and enhance collaborations at her institution.

**WESTERN REGION**

Sandra Mora  
*Alamo Colleges, Texas*  
Sandra has provided over 22 years of outstanding service to the Alamo Colleges District. She is described as a “student leader at heart,” and her innovative and creative spirit lends well to her work as board liaison. Sandra strives for perfection in her work, yet she embraces change and works collaboratively and patiently with all stakeholders.

In addition, one of the regional awardees is recognized as the national recipient of the Professional Board Staff Member ACCT Association Award.

We congratulate Mellanie Toles, from Clark State Community College in Ohio, for being the recipient of this very prestigious honor. We extend our warmest congratulations to all of the professional board staff award recipients for their exemplary service to their boards, districts, colleges, and the communities that they serve.