THE FUTURE BEGINS NOW
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DEAR ACCT MEMBERS AND PARTNERS,

As our country has experienced unprecedented changes in veritably every facet of society, one rare point of common agreement is that America’s community and technical colleges are an invaluable national resource that offers the best of traditional higher education and workforce training. Now is a great time to take a brief look back at where we once were, to examine where we are today, and to prepare for where we’ll be tomorrow.

Just about a decade ago, we were preparing for an impending economic crisis of unknown scale. What would it mean for the country, and what would it mean for our colleges? At ACCT, we saw the incoming challenge as an opportunity to deliver on our promise of accessible, high-quality education for every American. We did so, and as Americans got back onto our collective feet, we emerged from the Great Recession with newfound respect and support from the public.

Even as a Pew Research Center survey revealed this spring that a surprising number of American people today feel that “college is bad for America,” a broad-scale survey from the New America Foundation added vitally important context: as it turns out, community and technical colleges scored highest among all sectors of higher education in public opinion that they “prepare people to be successful,” “are for people in my situation,” “are worth the cost,” “contribute to a strong American workforce,” and “always put their students first.”

Please reflect on that for a moment. How many of us realized that this transformation happened—that our colleges have become the most trusted among all sectors of higher education to improve students’ lives?

For decades, community and technical colleges were stigmatized and diminished. Not only did we prove our worth, putting our diminished resources to extraordinary use during the recession and getting more people to work, but we raised the bar for our own performance during one of the most challenging times in our history to emphasize and to greatly improve student success. That’s integrity. That’s honor. That’s something for which we should all be proud. Our challenge now is to maintain that integrity and to keep making good on our promises.

These pages report on the state of our association by reporting accomplishments made by the association and by our members over the past year. As you read, we hope you’ll notice how much of our progress is planning, from the visionary leadership of our esteemed Board of Directors to laying the groundwork for smart, data-informed decision making by undertaking copious amounts of original research, to the development of curricula to better acquaint appointing authorities with the roles and responsibilities of community college trustees.

The quality of our colleges has been observed more and more in recent years, along with our truly unique nimbleness and our dedication to meeting the needs of our individual communities throughout this great nation. We’ve set a high bar for ourselves, and we’ll continue to make adjustments as times change. We’re going to keep doing great things, we know, because we do the work we do for the right reasons—not to profit from students, but to make their lives better.

Our thanks to you, all the leaders of our country’s varied and committed community colleges, are sincere and profound.
As we discussed on page one, ACCT’s original research has become an essential part of making data-informed governance and public policy decisions. Our research into student loan defaults, which began back in 2014, has helped to shape public policy. More recent research into food and housing insecurity among our students has helped leaders to understand previously unrecognized barriers that keep students from realizing their dreams of completing college. It’s worth repeating that these findings are not incidental: they’re fundamental life challenges faced by our students. With the benefit of greater data that illustrate these problems, we can help to shape policies that will help students make progress, such as our aggressive advocacy for the reinstatement of the Year-Round Pell Grants program, discussed in greater depth on page 5. Below are the white papers and reports ACCT and our strategic partners published in 2016-17.

**Lost in the Trillion: A Three-State Comparison of Community College Borrowing and Default**

Issued in April, *Lost in the Trillion: A Three-State Comparison of Community College Borrowing and Default* reveals surprising similarities, with some notable differences, in how community college students use federal debt repayment interventions. The report also expands the analyses performed in prior research by adding an examination of borrowers’ incomes.

**Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education**

*Hungry and Homeless in College*, a new research report published in March, assesses food and housing insecurity among community college students details results of a survey of more than 33,000 students at 70 community colleges in 24 states—the broadest survey of its kind—that describes the extent to which students are adversely affected by unmet basic needs while pursuing higher education.
Financial Aid 102: An Updated Guide to Understanding Federal Financial Aid Programs for Community College Leaders and Trustees

This guide, published in February, offers an update to our 2011 guide, Financial Aid 101, providing detailed explanations of a variety of aid programs, including changes to programs and information on programs that have emerged as important alternate sources of aid for community college students. We also present information that is particularly important to institutional leaders looking to advocate for their students and colleges, and offer recommendations on how they can effectively approach this important work.

Aiding Success: The Role of Federal and State Financial Aid in Supporting California’s Community Colleges

Also published in February, Aiding Success: The Role of Federal and State Financial Aid in Supporting California Community College Students documents the variation in student graduation and transfer rates by students’ financial situation. The authors of Aiding Success analyzed detailed financial aid and student success data from the CCCCO system that underlie the Student Success Scorecard, an online consumer information tool. The report includes federal, state, and college-level policy recommendations to better support community college students’ abilities to persist and complete degrees or certificates, or to transfer to four-year institutions.

Learning While Earning: How Low-Income Working Learners Differ from All Other American College Students

Researchers from the Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce, Anthony Carnevale and Nicole Smith, examine the challenges working students face and the impacts of these challenges on completion and debt. Working and paying tuition and fees “as you go” is no longer an option for the majority of America’s college students; however, community colleges and public four-year colleges may still facilitate a pay-as-you-go option. Students pursuing postsecondary credentials and/or wishing to attain the skills necessary to land a good job need support from career counselors to understand their options and the economic value of their selected major.

The Family-Friendly Campus Imperative: Supporting Success Among Community College Students with Children

Researchers Barbara Gault, Elizabeth Noll, and Lindsey Reichlin, from the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (DC), assess the unique needs of community college students who are also parents. The majority of students with children attend community college. Single parents, the majority of whom are mothers, are more likely to work fulltime and spend 35 hours a week or more on caregiving. The time demands of caregiving make child care options vital to staying in college and graduating. Attaining a higher degree or credential is critical to finding a quality job with sustaining wages. With the increasing numbers of community college student parents appearing on college campuses, policymakers should consider how best to meet the needs of these students now and for future generations.

Return on Investment: What is the Value of the Associate Degree?

Return on Investment, What is the Value of the Associate Degree? provides a checklist of high-impact practices that colleges can employ to support students on their journey to degree completion and potentially improved employment outcomes. Mark Schneider, vice president and institute fellow, American Institutes for Research (DC), compares subbaccalaureate credentials with baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate degrees. In 2014, there were 100,000 more sub-baccalaureate degrees or credentials awarded than bachelor’s degrees. Schneider shows that majors matter, and specific degrees offer the potential of high earnings, particularly in fields where graduates will “fix things or people.” Community colleges can help students achieve labor market success by developing strong pipelines from college to the workplace.

All reports are available to download free at www.acct.org/reports-white-papers

To request print copies, or to let us know what issues matter most to your college, contact us at publications@acct.org.
The Completion Agenda in Community Colleges: What It Is, Why It Matters, and Where It’s Going

The Completion Agenda in Community Colleges: What It Is, Why It Matters, and Where It’s Going by Christopher Baldwin with Richard L. Alfred and Debbie L. Sydow, book is intended to improve understanding about the complex issues surrounding the national college completion agenda. By highlighting the origins of this agenda and the dilemmas and opportunities it creates for community colleges, The Completion Agenda in Community Colleges: What It Is, Why It Matters, and Where It’s Going describes the many innovations underway nationally. The book is an effort to bridge gaps between practice, policy, and research to provide the reader with a holistic view of the community college response OR community college responses to the completion agenda.

Unrelenting Change, Innovation, and Risk: Forging the Next Generation of Community Colleges

Unrelenting Change, Innovation and Risk: Forging the Next Generation of Community Colleges by Daniel J. Phelan with Richard L. Alfred and Debbie L. Sydow, provides useful, practical examples for community college leaders as they seek to thoughtfully and strategically align their organizations with new dynamics in higher education.

Arguably, the nation’s community colleges have experienced more change in the last several years than they have over the prior 115 years of their existence. Rapid changes in technology, external pressures for accountability and student completion, aggressive competition from other higher education institutions (i.e., public, for-profit, and private), changes in enrollment demographics, as well as new economic, market, and operational models stand to completely disrupt this relatively young enterprise.
The 2017 Year-Round Pell Grants reinstatement is a case study in successfully identifying what’s most important from a sea of what-ifs and possibilities, and investing careful attention, thought, and energy in advocating on behalf of an investment today that will reap benefits for years to come.

Pell Grants are vital to the success of community college students. In 2011, the United States Congress discontinued the availability of year-round Pell Grants, interrupting many community college students’ access to the funds they need to get through college during the summer months. Since then, ACCT has advocated for the reinstatement of Year-Round Pell.

During this lengthy advocacy effort, ACCT staff and members engaged with key members of Congress and their staffs to raise the profile of Year-Round Pell Grants and to educate our stakeholders about the importance of restoring this eligibility. ACCT staff worked with various state associations and colleagues to advocate on the issue and to facilitate grassroots efforts. We also worked with congressional offices to improve on reimplementing the Year-Round Pell, instituting eligibility for students who attend less than full time to access the grants, and easing some of the prior complexity for financial aid administrators.

During the 2017 Community College National Legislative Summit in February, ACCT incorporated a “Students Excel with Year-Round Pell” campaign, handing out buttons to community college trustees, presidents, students and other advocates to wear to the offices of their members of Congress.

In May, Congress passed a spending plan to keep the government running through September that also included a provision to permanently restore Year-Round Pell Grants. The provision will provide an estimated one million students an additional Pell Grant disbursement (an additional 50% on top of the existing 100% maximum award) once they have exhausted their base eligibility for the year. This would effectively enable students who attend college year-round to receive up to $8,880 in Pell Grant aid in a single award year. Year-Round Pell is effective starting in the 2017-2018 academic year, which began on July 1, 2017.

Moody’s has forecasted that the return of Year-Round Pell Grants will accelerate degree completion and increase enrollments—significant advancements in our collective goal to improve student success while maintaining open access for all academically qualified students. We’re grateful for the advocacy efforts of our dedicated members, and particularly to those who showed up for the Community College National Legislative Summit and make their voices heard in the halls and offices of Congress. Your work will pay dividends to your students.
ACCT and Strada Education Network Have Partnered to Enhance Student Success and Focus on Community College Trustee Selection.

Presidents and boards of trustees of postsecondary institutions are charged with leading their institutions during a period of increased accountability for outcomes and completion in higher education.

“Governance by Design will result in better informed leaders, who in turn will make even better decisions that produce better outcomes for students throughout the nation.”

— Carol D’Amico, Strada Education Network Executive Vice President, National Engagement and Philanthropy

Funded with an initial $583,700 grant from Strada Education Network (formerly USA Funds), the Governance by Design initiative will include an educational curriculum on trustee appointment for elected officials and their staffs. The initiative also will support and expand ACCT’s successful work with state systems through the Governance Institute for Student Success (GISS) — a program of statewide trustee education and institutional policy analysis. By providing quality training and resources to college governing board members, and appointing authorities, institutions can have more robust discussions about critical topics, including:

• Student progress towards graduation, including progress through developmental education, gateway courses and graduates’ employment, earnings and overall well-being.

• The use of data and best practices and policies for “moving the needle” on student progress.

• Creating connections between education results and economic development.

• Applying innovative practices that reduce barriers for students improve student success rates.

Governance by Design is a major initiative to fulfill the ACCT Board’s second strategic goal of preparing trustees for the evolution of the community college. For more information about the project, visit trustee-education.org/gbd.
We call it ACCT NOW because now is when the future begins.

Did you know that community colleges are partnering with a federal agency to boost the cybersecurity workforce and give students specialized, in-demand skills that qualify them for high-level government jobs? Do you know how your peer colleges are addressing food and housing insecurity on their campuses? Have you learned about policies that support the postsecondary success of foster youth, or how going green can help to save costs at your college? If you read ACCT NOW, you do. If you haven’t been reading ACCT NOW—well, read on.

For decades, our Trustee Quarterly magazine has delivered editorial content about community college advocacy, governance and national and community-based current events to members’ mailboxes throughout the year. Our readers have told us that they look forward to receiving a printed magazine that offers educational resources as well as news about their peers and their national association.

At the same time, we know that more trustees than ever are going online for information—and we felt it was time to expand our editorial offerings to members through an ambitious new effort that we call ACCT NOW.

Exclusively online at now.acct.org, ACCT NOW is a vast resource of advocacy-related original perspectives and research for community college leaders. Topics covered include college affordability, career and technical education, college promise programs, data-based research, diversity, funding, Pell Grants, student aid, and student success. Perspectives columns are authored regularly by ACCT’s public policy staff, as well as renowned contributors from esteemed higher-education organizations including Education Commission of the States, The Institute for Student Access and Success, Institute for Women’s Policy Research, Lumina Foundation, New America Foundation, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, and many more. Supplementing our original content are important stories from major news organizations that ACCT members and stakeholders should know about.

In addition to research and public policy professionals, ACCT NOW is an opportunity for our members to showcase groundbreaking programs and to share experiences, such as Northern Virginia Community College’s partnership with the National Security Administration on a federally certified cybersecurity program and the San Diego Community College District board’s successful advocacy efforts to implement a citywide San Diego Promise program. We hope you’ll visit ACCT NOW—and again.
Governance Leadership Institutes

Governance Leadership Institutes, best known as GLIs, are foundational governance education events that countless participants have told us are invaluable to understanding their roles and responsibilities as board members. ACCT convened three GLI variations over the past year.

First, we convened a two-and-a-half-day GLI as well as a one-day academy on the fundamentals of boardmanship in Washington, D.C., described by many new (and experienced) trustees as laying an important foundation of knowledge. In March, we convened a two-and-a-half-day institute in Honolulu, Hawaii. This GLI was one of our largest to date, with 115 trustees, presidents, and board staff in attendance, and it was a rare opportunity to make governance training events convenient for our members who hail from United States territories, bringing them together with trustees from throughout the continental United States. Representatives from six American territories participated, including: Republic of Palau, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated State of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and American Samoa. The University of Hawaii hosted this landmark institute.

During the 2017 GLI, attendees read, analyzed, and discussed five of ACCT’s recently published reports including: Financial Aid 102, Too Distressed to Learn? Mental Health Among Community College Students, Return on Investment: What is the Value of the Associate Degree?, Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food and Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates, and The Family-Friendly Campus Imperative: Supporting Success Among Community College Students with Children. This was a brand-new strategy for using our publications/reports as study guides for the GLI. Other new topics that were featured during the 2017 GLI include: how to build statewide partnerships to advance college value, the new normal and what trustees need to know to lead their colleges, and economic inequality on campus.

Altogether, more than 196 trustees, presidents, and board staff benefited from the intensive GLI experience during this fiscal year.
College Promise Movement

In keeping with the newfound recognition of the importance of community and technical colleges, and of their reliable returns on investments, momentum continues to build in support of College Promise programs across the country. Over the last year alone, the growth and development of these programs has been exponential, with nearly 220 programs in development, underway, or expanding in 40 states. Six states have enacted statewide programs, and still others are under consideration. ACCT has created a College Promise sub-website to continue our efforts to track the evolution of this phenomenal educational model, and ACCT NOW continues to offer updates and new perspectives on the College Promise movement.

Governance Institute for Student Success (GISS)

The Governance Institute for Student Success is ACCT’s unique governance development model that incorporates institutional data and in-person events. Over the past year, we conducted five institutes across the country for a total of 96 trustees, 66 chancellors and college presidents at 62 colleges. Including executive administration officers, a total of 376 participants attended these five GISS institutes in 2016.

- June 2 - 3, 2016 - Casper Community College in Casper, Wyoming for 7 colleges plus Wyoming Commission
- June 28-30, 2016 - Riverhouse Hotel & Convention Center in Bend, Oregon for 13 colleges
- September 8-10, 2016 - Maricopa Corporate College, in Tempe, Arizona for 7 colleges
- October 8-9, 2016 – Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana for 26 colleges
- October 27 & 28, 2016 - Los Angeles CC District at Los Angeles Mission College in Los Angeles, California for 9 colleges

Summit on Safeguarding College Campuses

We all know the importance of campus security. Following the tragic shooting at Umpqua Community College in 2015, ACCT took the issue of security head on and developed governance-oriented events to safeguard college campuses.

In October, about 200 trustees, presidents, campus safety officials and other personnel attended our second Summit on Safeguarding College Campuses in conjunction with the 2016 ACCT Leadership Congress in New Orleans, Louisiana. This important and timely summit was designed to assist community college governing board members, presidents and their leadership teams, and others in safeguarding the college while courageously continuing toward improving student performance and completion. Some of the topics that were covered during summit included: developing a culture of preparedness and a crisis emergency plan, the nine steps to disaster recovery, the optimal crisis response, and effective communications strategies. Attendees also participated in an intensive emergency response simulation by a team from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, which gave participants a chance to examine their own institutional readiness, their emergency and mitigation plans, chain of command, and their communications and notification systems, all the while assessing their reaction to an unpredictable and unforgiving crisis. Michael Hecht, President & CEO of Greater New Orleans Inc., provided an insider’s perspective of what it took to make a comeback like New Orleans did after Hurricane Katrina.

Executive Search Services

One of a college board’s greatest responsibilities is to identify and select the best chief executive to lead their institution into the future. ACCT Search Services is the only national executive search organization dedicated exclusively to finding community college presidents and other top-tier leaders. Over the past year, ACCT assisted boards with 33 searches, recruitments, or reference checks, including one statewide system, 11 president or chancellor searches, 12 vice president searches, nine executive-level searches and one reference report. A record number of colleges contracted ACCT to undertake multiple searches over the past year.
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