



Community College  
Association of Texas Trustees

## South Texas Trustee Leadership Seminar

June 23, 2023 | Speaker Biographies

### Andres Alcantar

Andres Alcantar, Principal at Alcantar PPC, provides a full range of public affairs, management, and consulting services. Andres Alcantar served with great distinction as a public servant, building a career that allowed him to be at the forefront of public policy development and implementation in Texas for over two decades. During his career, he was honored to work on issues impacting every function of state government. Andres recently served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer at the Texas Association of Business (TAB), the state chamber of commerce, working to advance policies to support a strong business climate and job creation. Alcantar previously served as Chairman and Commissioner Representing the Public at the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). He was appointed by Governor Rick Perry in 2008 and designated Chairman May 2012. At TWC, Andres helped build and lead the premier workforce development system in the country for a decade.

Alcantar worked with leaders across the state to implement customized solutions to meet the needs of Texas' vast array of industries, strengthen regional public-private partnerships, and build education partnerships to advance the development of a skilled, strong, and competitive workforce. Prior to this appointment, he served as Deputy Director of Governor Rick Perry's Budget, Planning, and Policy Division, advising the governor on federal, state, and local issues, and providing executive oversight to state boards and commissions. His focus included appropriations, health care, workforce, business, economic development, education, and competitiveness issues. Alcantar also served as an advisor to former Governor George W. Bush in the Office of Budget and Planning working with state boards, commissions, and the Texas Legislature. He advised on business regulation, health and human services, child welfare, workforce, and economic development issues. Alcantar previously served as a Director for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission where he worked with the Commissioner and other agency heads on strategy development and enterprise reforms. Alcantar has strong, lasting partnerships with leaders across the state and has worked to solve complex issues through his focus on innovation and competitiveness. Alcantar has served on several state and national advisory councils, boards, and commissions.



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## **Bob Anderson**

Bob Anderson is the VP of Purchasing and Supply Chain at Alps Alpine North America and board of director member for Alcom Electronics De Mexico. Before his appointment to Vice President, Bob served in Operations as Sr Manager responsible for Customer Service, Planning, Trade Compliance, New Launch Programs, and Office Manager. Bob started with Alps Alpine in Michigan in 1995 as a Product Engineer, later transferring into positions of Sales Account Manager, and Program Manager, before moving in 2011 to Operations in Texas. At Alps Alpine, Bob has been fortunate to collaborate with Multinational Executives while traveling for business worldwide.

Prior to joining Alps Alpine, Bob worked for companies within the Automotive and Department of Defense Industry as an Account Manager, Product Engineer, and Program Manager. He earned a Bachelor of Applied Science degree, *magna cum laude*, and has continuing studies in areas of Supply Chain, Project Management, Lean Manufacturing, and Shainin Red X, with the utmost pleasure of supporting local organizations like McAllen EDC, TMAC, UTRGV, STC and more recently Texas A&M.

## **Jay Barrett**

Jay has 39 years' experience in public education. He has been a principal in Amarillo ISD for a total of 29 years, with stops at Forest Hill Elementary, Travis Middle School, and Amarillo Area Center for Advanced Learning. He has also served as assistant principal at Tascosa High School and associate principal at Palo Duro High School. Before that, Jay taught English and coached tennis at Pampa after doing his student teaching in Rota, Spain. In June 2021, Jay became the principal of the nationally recognized AmTech Career Academy.

Jay has been recognized for numerous awards including being named the "Citizen on the Move" for the City of Amarillo in 2023, winning the 2022 First Tech Challenge Robotics Compass Award, the 2022 Tech & Learning Magazine's Leadership Award, the 2019 HEB North Texas Secondary Principal of the Year, and the 2019 Elbert K Fretwell Outstanding Educator of the year by the Golden Spread Council of Boy Scouts.

In May, Jay won re-election to the national award-winning Amarillo College Board of Regents for the 2nd consecutive time, now beginning his 9th year of service to the Board. He is currently Vice-Chair of the Board of Regents for Amarillo College. Jay is also beginning his 2nd year as Chair of the Community College Association of



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Texas Trustees Board of Directors. His other work includes serving on the Chamber of Commerce Governmental Advisory Council and the Executive Committee of the Panhandle Workforce Development Board of Directors. He is also the Vice-President of Maverick Boys' and Girls' Clubs in Amarillo and Co-Founder of Gateway to Health Careers, as well as being a Deacon of First Baptist Church in Amarillo.

## **Rose Benavidez**

Rose Benavidez is committed to improving the economic standing and quality of life for her region, continues to find innovative ways to solve issues affecting her community, and leads by example through volunteerism and service to countless local, regional, state, and national non-profit and civic organizations and charities.

Benavidez currently serves as the President of the Starr County Industrial Foundation, a non-profit organization founded and supported by local government and business leaders committed to developing the local economy. She also serves as the Board Chair of South Texas College, as well as the Board Chair for the Association of Community College Trustees.

For her contributions, she has been inducted into the Rio Grande Valley Walk of Fame, received the "State of Texas Women of Distinction Award" from the Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC), and was most recently honored as a Woman of Distinction by the Rio Grande Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

## **Elizabeth Chivers**

Elizabeth Chivers serves as the Senior Director of Strategy & Policy Analysis at TACC. Ms. Chivers works to help advance the mission of our colleges and association through data insight and analyses. As a key member of TACC's policy team, she supports data-informed policy advocacy and strategy for our public community colleges.

Before joining TACC, Elizabeth spent almost four years with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, where she served in several roles, including program director as part of the data team and most recently as the Senior Director of Strategy & Major Projects. She was involved in helping execute strategic priority planning and engaged in several key agency projects, including the 60x30TX Regional Advisory Groups, SB 25 Recommend Course Sequences, New Texas Transfer Framework, and metric development for the newly adopted Building a Talent Strong Texas strategic plan. She also served as District Director of



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Institutional Research and a member of the college leadership team at Navarro College.

Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Arts from Central College, a Master's in Sociology, with a focus on criminology and quantitative and qualitative methodologies from the University of Northern Iowa, and additional doctoral-level coursework related to furthering her expertise in qualitative methods, work & organizations, and social psychology from North Carolina State University.

## **Dr. Mark Escamilla**

Dr. Mark Escamilla joined Del Mar College as president and chief executive officer in October 2008. Since then, the College has consistently reached new milestones in instructional delivery, academic excellence, fiscal responsibility, administrative performance, and collaboration with other educational institutions, businesses, and industries.

During Dr. Escamilla's tenure, Del Mar College has experienced robust enrollment, with peak enrollment at more than 16,500 individual academic students and 10,000 workforce and continuing education students per year. The College has expanded its high school dual credit courses to over 25 independent school districts throughout its service area. The College also works closely with businesses and industries in the region, providing workforce training for thousands of Coastal Bend residents annually.

The College's capital improvement programs from 2014 and 2016 encompass nearly \$300 million in voter-approved bonds for new campus construction and renovation. The results are modern, state-of-the-art facilities on three campuses. The Oso Creek Campus at Yorktown Boulevard and Rodd Field Road is the College's first new campus in over 60 years.

Dr. Escamilla successfully led the College's reaffirmation of national accreditation in 2011, five-year accreditation review in 2016 and 10-year reaffirmation again in 2021. Also, in fiscal year 2021, the Del Mar College Foundation reached \$32 million in total assets, raising approximately \$3.1 million per year during the previous 10 years.

A Del Mar College graduate with bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Dr. Escamilla holds a Ph.D. in educational administration from The University of Texas at Austin.



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In 2021, he was appointed by Governor Abbott to serve on the Texas Commission on Community College Finance (TXCCCF), and he was lead member of the Workforce Education workgroup within that Commission. He also serves on the Legislative and Executive committees of the Texas Association of Community Colleges.

## **Nicole Eversmann**

As the Director of the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT), Nicole builds trustee and regent capacity through professional development, board engagement, and connecting CCATT members to ongoing legislative issues and strategies coordinated by TACC.

Prior to this role, Nicole served on the Austin Community College District Board of Trustees and CCATT Board of Directors. She participated in the CCATT Legislative Committee and the Joint Legislative Committee between TACC, CCATT, and TCCTA for the 2021 legislative session. Additionally, Nicole served on the Austin Community College Foundation Board.

Nicole spent over five years as a Trustee for Austin Community College (ACC), after getting elected in 2016. ACC is classified as a Very Large College, with annual enrollment of over 70,000 students and more than 5,000 employees. In 2021, the ACC Board was honored with the Equity Award from the Association of Community College Trustees, recognizing exemplary commitment by a governing board to achieve equity in the college's education programs and services and in the administration and delivery of those programs and services. Nicole was the first, and remains the only, ACC student to be elected to the college's Board of Trustees.

Eversmann graduated from Austin Community College with an Associate of Arts Degree in General Studies and transferred to the University of Texas at Austin (UT) to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Government with a minor in Educational Psychology. In May 2022, Nicole graduated from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at UT with a Master's in Public Affairs and earned the Dean's Certificate in State & Local Finance.

## **Tejas Gadhia**

Tejas Gadhia joined Zoho in 2012, based out of Austin, TX. Over the course of a decade, he's held various roles such as Sales Engineering, Strategic Partnerships, Developer Relations, and Product Management. Currently, he focuses on Zoho's Developer Platform, made up of a variety of tools that empower users of all skill levels to easily build powerful applications, integrations, and analytics, all while



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leveraging Zoho's deep tech stack. He also oversees Zoho's rapid growth McAllen office. Tejas holds a degree from the University of Texas at Austin (Hook 'Em Horns!) in Economics and a minor in Petroleum Engineering.

### Dr. Linda Garcia

Linda García is the Executive Director of the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) at The University of Texas at Austin (UT). Prior to this role, she served as the Assistant Director of College Relations at CCCSE. Previously, Linda was Vice President of Community College Relations at the Roueche Graduate Center at National American University, and she has worked at Lone Star College, Maricopa Community Colleges, and The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College.

Linda's experience includes student development, instructional support, grant writing, and teaching. She served as a coach for the American Association of Community Colleges Pathways 2.0 and continues in this same role for the Texas Pathways Project. Linda earned a Bachelor of Journalism with a concentration in broadcast and a doctorate in higher education administration with a specialization in community college leadership from The University of Texas at Austin. Her Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree is from The University of Texas at Brownsville.

### Jee Hang Lee

Jee Hang Lee became president and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) in 2021. Jee Hang provides national leadership to the over 500 governing boards who oversee the majority of community colleges throughout the United States and internationally. His deep personal passion for education equity and access led him to ACCT in 2006.

Prior to becoming president and CEO, Jee Hang served ACCT for over 15 years in the capacities of senior vice president, vice president for public policy and director of public policy. He has led the association's public policy and advocacy efforts, including the Community College National Legislative Summit and legislative and regulatory issues such as appropriations, student financial aid, tax policy, and higher education policy, since he first joined the association. He also oversaw ACCT's membership, events, and communications divisions for many years.

Jee Hang serves on the board of the National Asian Pacific Islander Council (NAPIC), National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE), the advisory board of the University of Maryland Global Campus Community





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College Leadership Program, and the advisory board of the Community College Presidents Initiative-STEM (CCPI-STEM). Previously, Jee Hang served on the board of trustees of the American Student Association of Community Colleges, the Rural Community College Alliance, and the executive committee of the Committee for Education Funding. Jee Hang holds a bachelor's degree from Boston University and a master's degree in political management from George Washington University.

## **Ray Martinez**

Ray Martinez serves as the President & Chief Executive Officer of the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC), a comprehensive membership association comprised of a diverse mix of 48 community colleges from across Texas. Public community colleges in Texas play a critical role in supporting the continued growth of our state's economy by expanding access to high-quality and affordable academic programs, workforce education training, and continuing education instruction. As President and CEO of TACC, Martinez provides leadership to advance state policy, institutional practice, and research – as well as developing meaningful multisector partnerships – in support of Texas community colleges.

Before joining TACC, Ray served as Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Workforce Education for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, where he led the agency's critical functions in academic programs, workforce education, and postsecondary readiness and success. Martinez brings a deep understanding of higher education to TACC. He previously served as President of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas, and Chancellor of Western Governors University (WGU) Texas, and he has held senior government affairs positions at Rice University and Texas A&M International University. Ray has also served as the director of the Committee on Higher Education in the Texas Senate.

In addition, Ray has substantial federal policy experience, having served in the Clinton Administration as regional director for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and on the White House staff as deputy assistant to the president for Intergovernmental Affairs. Ray returned to federal service in 2003 after being nominated by President George W. Bush – and confirmed by the United States Senate – to serve as a commissioner on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, a bipartisan federal agency responsible for assisting state and local governments to improve the process of election administration.

Beginning in 2007, Ray served as an adjunct professor of public policy at The University of Texas School of Law and the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, where, over a seven-year period, he taught a course on election



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administration, redistricting, and campaign finance. Ray has also served on the Board of Trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), which implements the accreditation process for public and private institutions of higher education in an eleven-state region that includes Texas. Ray currently serves as a member of the Board of Governors for the Austin Community Foundation and as a member of the Board of Directors for Austin PBS.

A native of Alice, Texas, Ray received his bachelor's degree from Southwestern University, his law degree from the University of Houston Law Center, and he recently completed postgraduate studies at the Institute for Educational Management at Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## **Carol Scott**

Carol Scott was elected to the Del Mar College Board of Regents in 2014 and is serving her third term as Board Chair. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas A&M University-Kingsville and is a Distinguished Alumni of the university.

She works as a Public Relations Consultant, holding Accreditation in Public Relations by the Public Relations Society of America and is a member of the PRSA College of Fellows.

She serves as the Immediate Past Chair of the Community College Association of Texas Trustees, where she played a pivotal role in advocating for the interests of community colleges statewide. She also served on the Texas Commission on Community College Finance.

Throughout her career, Carol has been actively involved in various community organizations. Her previous public service includes serving on the Corpus Christi ISD Board of Trustees, the Javelina Alumni Association, and the Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce. She is a graduate of Leadership Corpus Christi and Leadership Texas.

## **Dr. Manish Singh**

Dr. Manish Singh is an experienced Chief Executive Officer at DHR Health, responsible for all 500+ acute beds yielding \$600 million in net revenue and 5,000+ FTEs with expanding developments in research, education, and ambulatory care. He is a strategic thinker, visionary & entrepreneurial. He is known for his organizational leadership, transformation, and deep understanding of healthcare





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business drivers. He has expertise in conceptualizing and delivering healthcare administration strategies that synergize multi-disciplinary areas of hospital and clinical management, business growth, and matrixed teams around management objectives.

## **Dr. Ricardo Solis**

Ricardo Solis, Ph.D., is President of South Texas College and previously served as President of Laredo College and Executive Dean for Academic, Professional, and Technical Education at Gateway Community College and at Maricopa Community Colleges, in Arizona.

Dr. Solis earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education Administration – Community College Leadership from The University of Texas at Austin; a Master of Business Administration in International Management from Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, CA; and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Economics from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX.