



Community College
Association of Texas Trustees

New Trustee Orientation

January 17, 2025 | Speaker Biographies

Dr. Martha Ellis

Dr. Martha Ellis is the Senior Pathways Lead for the Texas Success Center, Coach for Texas Pathways and the College Excellence Program at the Aspen Institute. She is a site evaluator for the Aspen Excellence Prize, leadership development consultant, and professor in residence at the University of Texas at Austin.

Previously, Martha was Managing Director for the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin. Before joining the Dana Center, Dr. Ellis was Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for the University of Texas System. Martha has 35 years of experience in community colleges in Texas and New Mexico including two college presidencies, provost, chief information officer, undergraduate dean, and faculty member.

Dr. Ellis chaired the Appeals Committee for the Commission on Colleges for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. She was on the Board of the American Association of Community Colleges and the Executive Committee of the Texas Association of Community Colleges. She was recognized by the Texas House of Representative and U. S. Congress for outstanding leadership in community colleges. Among many other great accomplishments, Dr. Ellis has also served as interim CEO of TACC in two separate instances; including summer 2022 before Ray Martinez joined the team in August.

Susan Moore-Fontenot

Susan Moore-Fontenot retired after serving 38 years in public school administration and 15 years as an adjunct professor at two Texas community colleges. She attended Lee College prior to graduating magna cum laude from Sam Houston State University, earning a bachelor's degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology. She earned a master's degree in Educational Supervision from Lamar University.

Susan has served on the Lee College Board of Regents since 1988 and has held every board office. She chaired the 2019 Presidential Search Committee and serves on the Policy Committee. Susan is Chair of the Community College



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Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) and is past chair of CCATT's Education Committee, Resource Committee, and Strategic Planning Oversight Committee. Nationally, Susan was elected to an at-large position on the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Board of Directors in 2023. She also serves on the ACCT Public Policy and Advocacy Committee and previously served on the Member Communications and Education Committee and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Susan is a frequent presenter/panelist with ACCT on the topic of presidential search and evaluation.

Her community service includes leadership roles with the Pilot Club, International - Baytown, Baytown Chapter of Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc., the Houston Metropolitan Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation, and Houston Methodist Women's Advisory Board. A 37-year member of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church, Susan serves on the Deaconess Board, the Women's Guild, Senior Saints Ministry, the Courtesy Corps and Marriage Council. Susan volunteers with the League of Women Voters. She is married to David Rupert Smith, former GCCISD School Board President. Together, they have three sons. Her hobbies include traveling and theater.

Sarah Van Cleef

Sarah serves as the Vice President for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Chief Financial Officer at Tyler Junior College. She started at the College in 1999 and moved into her current role in 2011. Her responsibilities include Business Services, Procurement, Contract Management, Residential Life and Housing, Financial Aid, Facilities and Construction and other duties as assigned.

Sarah earned her Bachelor of Science in Accounting from the University of Houston at Clear Lake and her Master of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Tyler. She is licensed as a Certified Public Accountant in Texas.

In addition to her work at TJC, Sarah is involved with various local and state organizations including the THECB Standing Advisory Committee and serving on the Board of Directors for the Tyler Museum of Art and the Women's Fund of Smith County.