



Community College
Association of Texas Trustees

Community College Data Advocacy Toolkit

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Welcome to the Community College Data Advocacy Toolkit, designed specifically for public community college trustees in Texas. In an era where data drives decision-making, prioritizing accurate information is essential for crafting messages that resonate with stakeholders. This toolkit provides effective strategies for utilizing data to support your advocacy efforts, ensuring that your message is poignant and credible. Additionally, here you will find resources to organize and implement advocacy strategies that will help advance your policy goals. Together, we can strengthen our community colleges and champion the educational opportunities they provide.

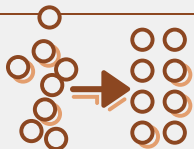
Disclaimer: This toolkit is intended solely for nonpartisan, educational advocacy purposes. Activities supported by this resource focus on providing factual, data-driven information to stakeholders and policymakers. This toolkit does not support, encourage, or endorse lobbying activities, prohibited political engagement, or attempts to influence specific legislation or elections.

Build Your Plan & Move Forward

The core tenets for supporting community college priorities are to organize, inform, and engage. This toolkit will cover each of these elements and provide the resources you need to navigate the process.

Organize

- Refine your goal**
- Plan your approach**
- Know your targets**
- Know your allies/opponents**



Inform

- Develop your message**
- Maintain a uniform, consistent message**
- Utilize recent, relevant data**
- Use existing channels where possible**
- Keep it simple**



Engage

- Be intentional about relationship cultivation**
- Participate in the complete process**
- Capitalize on existing opportunities**



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Policy & Process – A Brief Overview

Understanding the policymaking and budget process is essential for effective advocacy. Trustees can engage at key stages with all levels of government to ensure community colleges receive appropriate funding and policy support.

This toolkit primarily focuses on the Texas Legislature, but the principles for engagement can be utilized at all levels of government. The State Legislature in particular plays a pivotal role in determining the allocation of resources and enacting laws that may significantly impact public community colleges.

A Quick Guide to the Texas Legislature

The Texas legislative process plays a crucial role in shaping policies and funding for community colleges. For trustees, understanding how bills become law and how the state budget is crafted is essential for effective advocacy.

A Brief Overview:

- **Biennial Legislative Sessions:** The Texas Legislature meets every two years for 140 days, with the session taking place from January to June in odd-numbered years.
- **Bill Filing & Committee Hearings:** Bills may be filed as early as November preceding the legislative session. After filing, bills are assigned to committees for hearings where testimony is taken, and amendments are made.
- **Debate & Voting:** Once a bill passes a committee vote, it must be scheduled to go to the floor of either the House or Senate. After it passes one chamber, the bill then moves to be passed through committee votes and floor votes in the other chamber.
- **Governor's Role:** After passing both chambers, the bill is sent to the governor for signature, veto, or passive approval by taking no action.

Emphasis on the Budgeting Process:

- **Budget Development:** The budget is a primary focus during each legislative session and determines state funding for community colleges.
- **Communicate Appropriations Requests:** Trustees can engage in the process by presenting their funding priorities to lawmakers before session or very early in the session.

Special Notes:

Outcomes-Based Funding - Under reforms introduced by House Bill 8 (88R), community college funding is aligned with measurable student outcomes, such as credential attainment, successful transfer, and dual credit completion. This transformative model encourages institutions to deliver value by meeting a wide range of student and workforce needs while ensuring that state appropriations are informed by meaningful outcomes and more timely data.

More information on the Texas Legislature can be found at www.capitol.texas.gov – legislative tracking tools, legislator information, important dates, and committee activity are just some of the resources available there.



Opportunities for Advocacy Engagement: State Legislative Session



Before the Legislative Session:

Engage early by meeting with legislators or their staff before the session begins in January to discuss your priorities and present data explaining community college needs.

On Community College Day:

Join hundreds of students who travel to Austin to share their stories on a special advocacy day organized by TACC each session.

During Committee Hearings:

In partnership with your college's CEO, provide testimony or written statements, especially for bills impacting education funding or policy.

At Key Voting Stages:

Before bills move to the House and Senate floors for debate, trustees can engage with lawmakers to educate them about potential impacts.

Partnership & Support from TACC & CCATT

The Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) and the Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT) equip trustees with tools and resources to enhance their advocacy efforts. By providing legislative updates, policy analysis, and guidance on engaging with lawmakers, these organizations assist trustees in advancing policies—developed in coordination with institutional leadership—that strengthen community colleges and benefit the students and communities they serve.

Key Ways TACC & CCATT Support Trustees



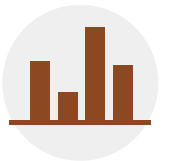
Legislative Strategy:

TACC and CCATT develop coordinated, sector-wide strategies to advocate for community college funding and policies with statewide impacts.



Testimony & Engagement:

TACC and CCATT provide talking points and assist trustees in preparing for committee hearings and meetings with policymakers.



Communication Collateral:

They provide advocacy tools like leave-behinds, talking points, data, and stories to support trustees in their meetings with legislators.



Regular Updates:

Trustees receive timely updates and briefings on legislative developments, often through Zoom meetings and other digital platforms.



Bill Tracking:

TACC and CCATT track legislation relevant to community colleges, ensuring trustees are informed about bills that may affect their institutions.



Stakeholder Coordination:

They work with key stakeholders, including other education associations and advocacy groups, to improve policy outcomes.



Community College Day:

They organize statewide events, elevating student voices to bring attention to community colleges and their priorities at the Capitol.



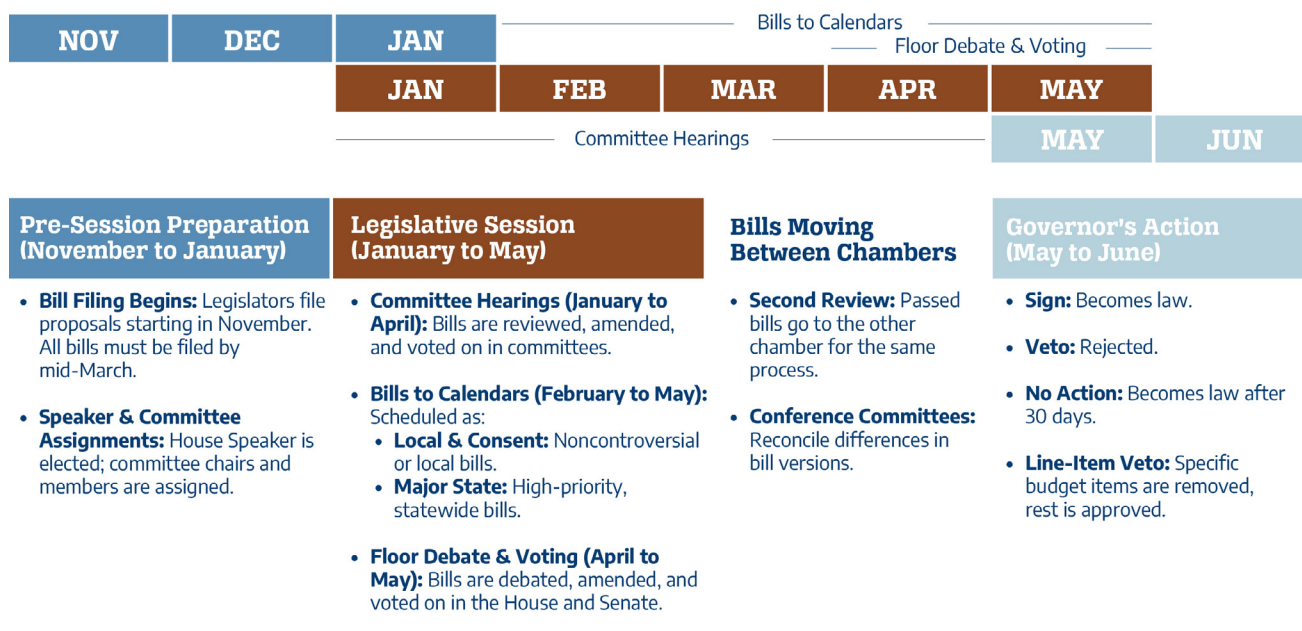
Responsive to Feedback:

TACC and CCATT host conferences and meetings where collaborative discussions and panels with members inform strategy, communications, and future policy interests.

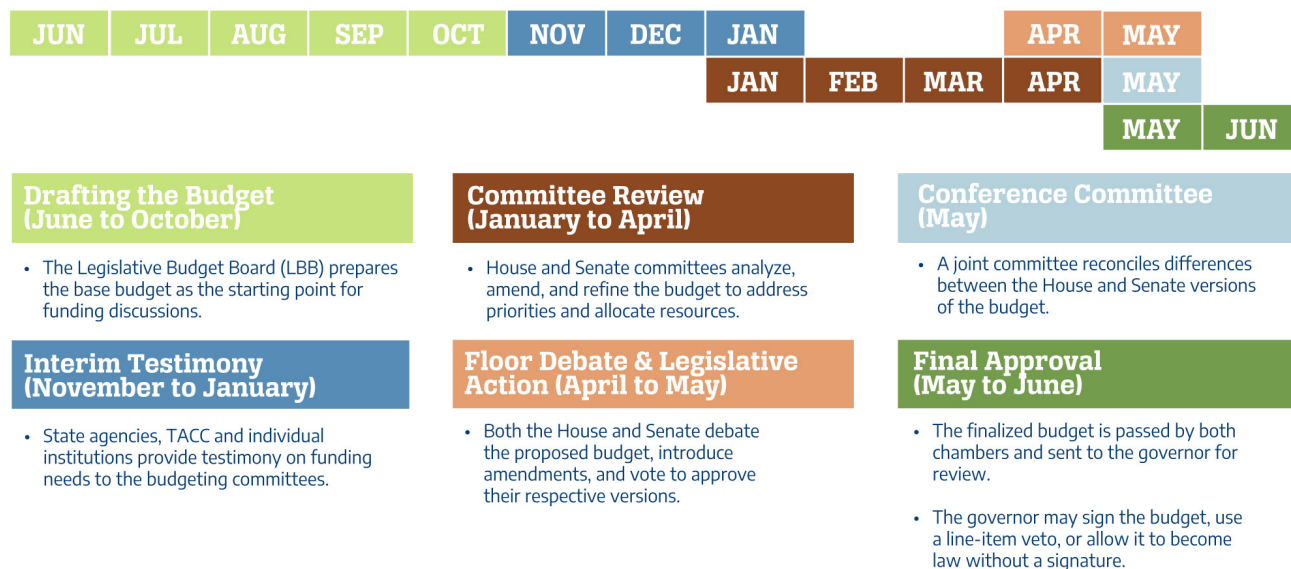
Visit the link below to find more information about the policy priorities shared by TACC and CCATT.

<https://tacc.org/tacc/policy-priorities>

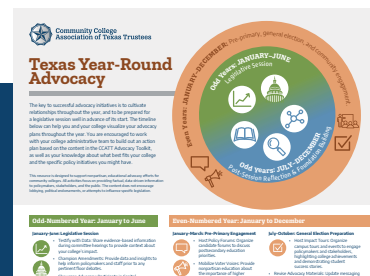
Key Milestones in the Texas Legislative Process



The Budgeting Process (General Timeline)



Click here to access
Texas Year-Round Advocacy



Section 2

Data Resources & Building Your Message

Today, the best advocacy relies on data. Access to relevant information is crucial for community college trustees; the ability to understand and utilize these resources allows trustees to craft effective messaging that accurately conveys their needs, successes, and challenges. This section will guide trustees on how to access available data resources and develop compelling, evidence-based messages that align with their policy priorities.

Remember the importance of collaboration in advocacy!

Effective advocacy by trustees is essential for elevating the visibility and priorities of community colleges. However, it is equally important to recognize the distinction between governance and operations. Trustees play a vital role in setting policy and advocating for institutional priorities, while institutional leadership is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of college operations. To ensure successful advocacy efforts, trustees should collaborate closely with their college's leadership, aligning messaging and priorities to reflect a unified voice that advances the mission of the institution.

Accessing Data for Advocacy

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB): Provides funding projections, enrollment data, and performance metrics for community colleges. Resources on their website include the Financial Simulation Tool and Performance Visualization Tool, along with details for projected high-demand fields.

<https://www.highered.texas.gov/community-college-finance/formula-funding/>
<https://www.highered.texas.gov/community-college-finance/high-demand-fields/>

TACC Data Resources: Access valuable tools provided by TACC, including the Texas Community College Fact Sheet and the Pathways Data Dashboards developed by the Texas Success Center. These resources offer insights into institutional performance and comparisons across key metrics, helping trustees make informed decisions and support effective advocacy efforts.

<https://tacc.org/tacc/college-data>
<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/tx.success/vizzes>

Statewide & Regional Data: Explore data on high-demand jobs and workforce alignment, provided through the Texas Comptroller's office and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projections.

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/data-reports/labor-market-data>
<https://texaslmi.com>
<https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.tx.htm>

Creating Evidence-Based Messages & Telling Your Story

By leveraging data, trustees can advocate more effectively for their colleges, whether in conversations with policymakers, community leaders, or stakeholders. Here you'll find practical insights on defining goals, identifying the right audience, and incorporating both data and personal stories to create impactful messages. The key is to build messages that not only highlight challenges but also present solutions, allowing trustees to educate stakeholders confidently and effectively on behalf of their institutions.

Special Notes:

Don't reinvent the wheel – take advantage of talking points and messages from TACC and CCATT and add your own anecdotal material to them.

Maintain a uniform and coordinated message with your college administrators and other key partners – your message can become confusing or get lost if it's not aligned with partners.



Key Insights for Data-Informed Advocacy

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Define Your Goals:
Keep it simple and real. Be clear about what you want to achieve. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tell the Truth:
If you don't know an answer, find out and get back to them. Don't guess or dodge. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify Your Audience:
Tailor your message specifically to your target audience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Consider Counterarguments:
Be prepared to handle opposing viewpoints effectively. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Include Data:
Incorporate recent, relevant information to back up your claims. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create Messaging in Advance:
Don't wait until the last minute—prepare your talking points early. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use Real-People Stories:
Personalize your message with stories that make data relatable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide a Problem & Solution:
Always include both in your messaging for clarity and impact. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dispel Myths:
Address misconceptions directly with facts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate & Test Your Message:
Review your talking points with peers or community members to refine and improve them. |

Utilize the links above and the tools below to explore the data available to you and develop your college specific data-based messaging. The core talking points developed here are for your use in many different scenarios, including simply having conversations in your communities about the values and needs of community colleges. Evidence-based messaging helps your audience understand the tangible impacts of your institution's efforts to build the next generation workforce.

Click here to access
Step-by-Step Guide: Building Data-Informed Policy Messages

Step-by-Step Guide: Building Data-Informed Policy Messages



To ensure successful advocacy efforts, trustees should collaborate closely with their college's leadership, aligning messages and priorities to reflect a unified vision that advances the interests of the institution. Creating effective, data-informed policy messages is essential for trustees to advocate for community college priorities. This guide provides a step-by-step method to help take relevant data and craft compelling messages tailored to unique advocacy goals.

Step 1: Identify the Priority

- Define the specific policy issue or priority you want to address (e.g., increased funding, workforce development, or student success initiatives).
- Ensure the priority aligns with your college's mission and broader state or local goals.

Step 2: Gather Relevant Data

- Access key data from trusted sources such as:
 - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB): Enrollment trends, funding allocations, and student success outcomes.
 - TACC/CCATT: Data visualization tools, legislative updates, and local economic reports.
 - Regional Data: Workforce projections from the Texas Comptroller's Office or U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for high-demand occupations.
- Focus on quantitative data (e.g., graduation rates, economic impact) and qualitative data (e.g., student stories, faculty achievements).

Section 3

Effective Strategies for Engagement & Relationship Cultivation

Establishing and maintaining the right relationships is critical to advancing your community college policy goals. Texas Trustees are uniquely positioned to build and maintain strategic connections with other elected officials and key decision-makers at all levels of government. These relationships are not only about access but about fostering a long-term commitment to the success of community colleges. Focusing on the individuals, including staff, who have the power to influence policy outcomes can be the difference between success and missed opportunities. Consistent and meaningful engagement ensures that trustees can advocate effectively for their institutions.

In this section, you will explore various opportunities to engage in the policy process, from hosting elected officials on campus to participating in town hall meetings. Each engagement tactic will help build rapport, deepen relationships, and strengthen advocacy efforts to ensure that the voice of community colleges remains strong and influential in moving policy priorities forward.

Elected Official Engagement

There is no better way to educate than through in-person interaction. Campus visits are an essential element in building long-term relationships with elected officials. Engaging them through various activities fosters understanding and support for your educational priorities. Below, you will find examples of several opportunities to interact face-to-face with elected officials and resources for hosting successful visits on your campus.



On-Campus Visits & Tours:

Extend an invitation to elected officials to experience firsthand the impact of community colleges by touring campuses, meeting students, and engaging with faculty. This connection with members who represent your institution's service area can help bridge gaps in understanding and promote funding and policies beneficial to your college.

Tactic Key

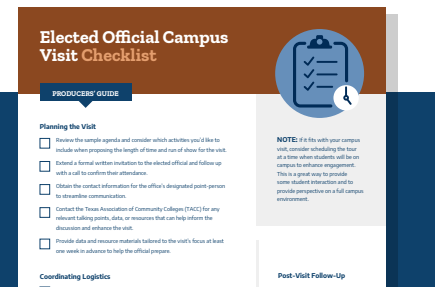
Look for special opportunities to invite elected officials to campus, such as **student or faculty events, groundbreakings, program kickoffs, ribbon cuttings, awards, commencement, etc.**

Seek to invite elected officials to campus **in off-times for their policy and engagement work, and during non-election seasons.**

Provide clear objectives and information about what they can expect to gain from their visit, and **prepare data resources** to give them ahead of time.

Look to **include students and other experts** that might provide additional insights and perspectives in your discussions during the visit.

[Click here to access Elected Official Campus Visit Checklist](#)



Candidate Forum:

The Texas community college candidate forum provides a vital platform for community engagement and civic participation. Hosted by the college in collaboration with the board of trustees, a forum could invite all local, state, or federal candidates to discuss their visions, policies, and commitment to education and community development.

All candidate forums should be conducted in a nonpartisan manner. Invitations should be extended to all candidates running for the same office, and the discussion focused solely on issues impacting community colleges without endorsing any candidate or party. Attendees have the opportunity to hear directly from candidates, ask questions, and gain insights into their platforms, fostering a well-informed electorate. This event underscores the importance of civic responsibility and empowers students and community members to actively participate in the democratic process, while also providing an opportunity for specific discussion on topics related to your community college.

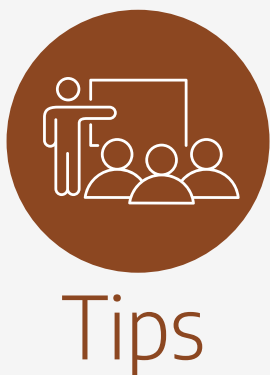
[Click here to access Candidate Forum Sample Agenda](#)



Town Hall Attendance & Participation:

Taking advantage of opportunities to get your college interests in front of elected officials and community members is a critical component for developing a consistent message that gets the attention you need it to. Make plans to attend local town hall meetings to represent community college interests, ask questions, and engage with constituents on educational issues. For an informational town hall, and not a campaign event, consider offering to host it at a campus facility. Also, encourage other key stakeholders on campus to attend these town hall meetings and bring up the topical policy issues important to your students and community.

See the Town Hall Example Questions for ideas on how to ask the elected official to share their perspective on topics of importance to community colleges.



Town halls take place at all levels of government, so sign up for the email lists of local elected officials, follow them on social media and **keep a lookout for opportunities to engage with them at events they are already planning to be at.**

Call their local office or campaign line and let them know who you are, and that you plan to be in attendance.

Prep your questions ahead of time. Share talking points and questions relevant to the issues you want to hear about with other key stakeholders.

Click here to access
Town Hall Example Questions



Awards & Recognitions:

Recognizing the contributions of elected officials to community colleges fosters goodwill and encourages continued support. Hosting award ceremonies or bestowing an award at a board of trustees meeting or college commencement can highlight achievements while strengthening relationships. Awards should be granted based on nonpartisan, documented contributions to community colleges, such as advancing workforce development initiatives, improving student access, or supporting educational funding in an unbiased manner. Additionally, to maintain neutrality, no awards or recognitions should be presented within 60 days of an election.

Inviting elected officials to serve as **keynote speakers** at graduation ceremonies can elevate the profile of the institution and raise awareness about the transformational impact of accessible postsecondary education. Such events provide an ideal platform for officials to connect with the college community, share their excitement and commitment to education, and publicly endorse community college values.

If you choose this approach, include educational information about the institution's recent accomplishments and advocacy priorities in the invitation or planning communications to help align the speaker's message with the college's goals.

Bestowing **honorary degrees** on officials who have shown exceptional support for community colleges is a meaningful gesture of gratitude. This symbolic recognition highlights the contributions of these individuals to the college's mission and underscores the institution's appreciation of their advocacy for policies benefiting community colleges.

Finally, extending an invitation to a legislator or other elected official to give the **oath of office** for a trustee's swearing-in can be an excellent way to foster a relationship right from the beginning.

Here are some award types that community colleges in Texas might give to local, state, or federal elected officials to recognize their support for higher education and community colleges:

- **Champion for Education Award:** Recognizing elected officials who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to advancing educational initiatives and policies.
- **Community Partnership Award:** Given to officials who foster strong partnerships between community colleges and local businesses or organizations to enhance workforce development.
- **Legislative Leadership Award:** Recognizing elected officials whose legislative initiatives significantly benefit community colleges and promote educational growth.
- **Visionary in Higher Education Award:** Awarded to those who demonstrate innovative thinking and strategies for enhancing the role of community colleges in the educational landscape.
- **Outstanding Community Service Award:** Given to officials who actively engage and serve the local community in ways that support and enhance community college initiatives.
- **Advancement of Workforce Development Award:** Awarded to those who prioritize and support programs that align higher education with labor market needs.
- **Lifetime Achievement in Education Advocacy Award:** Recognizing long-term commitment and contributions to the advancement of higher education policies and community college initiatives.
- **Excellence in Public Service Award:** Given to elected officials who exemplify outstanding service and support for educational institutions and community needs.
- **Sustainability in Education Award:** Awarded to officials advocating for policies that promote sustainable practices and initiatives within community colleges.

Community Engagement

The significance of engaging community stakeholders to align priorities and enhance support for community colleges cannot be overstated. Stakeholders need a fundamental understanding of how your college fits into, is supported by, and provides support for the larger community to ensure long-term influence. Leading opportunities for collaborative community conversations to take place can amplify advocacy initiatives and foster a shared vision for education in your region amongst a vast array of stakeholders.

One way to create these valuable opportunities is through hosting events in a round table format. Utilize the tools below to explore this powerful way to cultivate relationships and drive policy conversations.

With intentional coordination, these events can be a very helpful way to have structured conversation that allows for education and consensus development on policy and priority issues for each group involved.

Round Table Format:

Your college hosts a structured conversation with pertinent stakeholders from your institution and the pertinent stakeholders of another community partner. Convene a small to mid-size group with a learning or presentation component, structured conversation and dialogue, and time for future planning and new ideas. The core structure of a round table event allows you to set the location, the attendees and to structure the conversation.

Who to Invite:

Think outside the box! Do you need to improve communication and coordination with K-12 partners in your community? Perhaps you need to develop joint policy priorities with the local chamber of commerce or university partners? Or, does your college need to think through proactive solutions and generate new ideas for how to address issues shared with criminal justice partners?

Here's a quick list of potential attendees for round table discussions with your college, based on the various topics and policy priorities you want to highlight:

- K-12 administrators & ISD trustees
- Area business leaders, both small & large employers
- Relevant community organizations & nonprofits
- Regional university partners or technical colleges
- Local criminal justice stakeholders & organizations

Tactic Key



Start small and short, with known stakeholder groups.



Avoid mixing stakeholder groups and various issues – often it's best to keep your round table to one issue with various stakeholders or several focused issues with one stakeholder group.



Build time into your agenda for open discussion and new ideas.

[Click here to access
Round Table Example Agenda](#)

Round Table Example Agenda

AGENDA

I. 9:00 AM - 9:10 AM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Overview of the round table's purpose and goals.

II. 9:10 AM - 9:30 AM | Data Presentation & Insights

- Keynote presentation featuring data analysis and insights to lay out the context for the round table discussion.

III. 9:30 AM - 9:50 AM | Stakeholder Introductions

- Quick introductions from each participant (name, organization, and role).

IV. 9:50 AM - 10:30 AM | Breakout Group Discussions

- Participants split into smaller groups to discuss specific topics with a facilitator and note taker.

V. 10:30 AM - 10:50 AM | Report Back to Full Group

- Each group shares key insights and action items (2-3 minutes).



EVENT INFO

Event Title:
Collaborating for
Educational Success &
Community Growth

Date & Time:

[Click here to access
Round Table Facilitator Guide](#)

Round Table Facilitator Guide

PRE-EVENT PREPARATION

I. Define Objectives:

- The round table should focus on sharing insights, fostering collaboration, and identifying community solutions grounded in data and evidence-based practices.
- You may want to highlight how the event supports community college goals like lifelong learning, workforce development, and community advocacy.


II. Select Participants:

- Identify and invite key stakeholders, including community college trustees, other elected officials, K-12 partners, community organizations, business leaders, local university representatives, or criminal justice partners.
- Aim for balanced representation to encourage diverse perspectives and ensure regional stakeholders who serve similar populations or share workforce development goals are included.
- Consider including faculty, program staff, and students who can provide firsthand insights into institutional impacts.

III. Secure Venue:

- Schedule the event with consideration for desired participants, avoiding conflicts with annual events or the academic calendar.
- Book a welcoming and accessible location with adequate space and resources (audio and visual equipment, collaborative seating arrangements).

IV. Develop Agenda:



EVENT INFO

Event Title:
Collaborating for
Educational Success &
Community Growth

Date & Time:

Public Awareness & Enhancing Your Profile

Public awareness and raising the institution's profile are crucial components of effective advocacy for community colleges. This section will guide you through strategies to enhance visibility and influence by leveraging key opportunities such as initiating resolutions and proclamations at various levels of government to honor significant achievements like retirements or awards. Additionally, it covers writing impactful op-eds, engaging with social media, and capitalizing on earned media opportunities. These actions help ensure your advocacy efforts align with the policy priorities that matter most to your college community, while building strong, public-facing relationships with decision-makers and stakeholders. In addition to the tactics below, make sure to add elected officials and their staff to the college's press release list.

Community Reports & Economic Impact Studies

College reports, including economic impact studies, are essential tools for data-informed advocacy. These reports provide meaningful insights into the college's contributions to the regional economy, workforce development, and community well-being. By showcasing key metrics such as graduation rates, job placement, and the broader economic impact of the college on local businesses and tax revenues, these reports equip college leaders, trustees, and local stakeholders with compelling evidence to advocate for continued support and investment. They also enhance transparency and build stronger connections between the college and the community it serves.

Examples from Texas Community Colleges:

Galveston College – 2023 Annual Report

https://issuu.com/galvestoncollege/docs/2023_gc_annual_report

Tarrant County College – Summary of Economic Impact Study

<https://www.tccd.edu/outreach/impact/>

Temple College – Report to the Community, Spring 2024

<https://www.templecollege.edu/docs/about-docs/report-to-the-community.pdf>

Resolutions & Proclamations

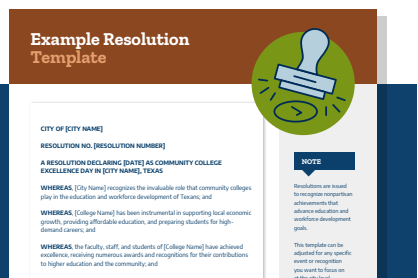
Resolutions and proclamations are formal statements issued by local or state governing bodies to recognize achievements, milestones, or contribution. They can be a tool to celebrate people and programs through public endorsements that highlight the value of your institution and its impact on the community. These can be adopted by city councils, county commissioners, or state legislators, elevating the profile of your college and its initiatives.

By spotlighting accomplishments, partnerships, or special occasions, resolutions build goodwill with decision-makers and the community while fostering support for future initiatives. They also create opportunities for engagement with policymakers, providing a platform to showcase your college's priorities and successes.

Examples of Recognitions:

- **Significant Retirements:** Recognize long-serving faculty, administrators, or trustees who are retiring after impactful careers.
- **People & Programs Receiving Awards/Recognitions:** Celebrate community college leaders or programs receiving state, national, or industry awards.
- **Named Community College Days:** Establish annual days celebrating community college contributions, such as "Community College Excellence Day" or "Local Workforce Partnership Day," recognized by local government.
- **Community College Anniversaries:** Recognize milestone anniversaries, such as the college's founding or the launch of key programs.
- **New Facility Openings:** Proclaim the opening of new campuses, learning centers, or student services.
- **Student Achievement:** Honor students who receive academic, leadership, or athletic awards at regional or national levels.
- **Community Partnership Projects:** Highlight partnerships between the college and local businesses or nonprofits that significantly benefit the community.

[Click here to access
Example Resolution Template](#)



Op-Eds

Op-eds can be a powerful platform to elevate the profile of community college priorities, shape public opinion and inform policymakers and stakeholders. By presenting clear and compelling arguments, trustees and college leaders initiate discussion, education, and productive thought on issues that matter to Texas community colleges, such as funding reforms and workforce development.

Op-eds should focus on providing factual, data-driven insights into the value and needs of community colleges. Messaging should remain nonpartisan and avoid urging specific legislative actions, endorsements, or election-related statements.

Content Considerations:

- Address a timely issue, such as proposed legislative changes, funding reforms, or workforce development initiatives.
- Recognize key milestones, events, or achievements that underscore the value of community colleges.
- Contribute to significant policy conversations where your perspective can drive change or inspire action.

Messaging & Structure:

- **Start Strong:** Capture the reader's attention with a compelling hook or a clear statement of purpose.
- **Keep it Clear and Concise:** Focus on one central message, avoiding jargon or overly complex arguments.
- **Support Your Claims:** Use relevant data, personal stories, or examples that resonate with your audience.
- **Propose a Solution:** Highlight actionable recommendations tied to community college priorities.
- **Coordinate Your Messaging:** Leverage talking points and resources from TACC and your college leadership to present a unified, well-informed voice.

Publication:

Each local periodical has specific submission guidelines for how to submit an op-ed. Remember to discuss any submission with your college leadership and communications team.

[Click here to access
Example Op-Ed](#)

Example Op-Ed



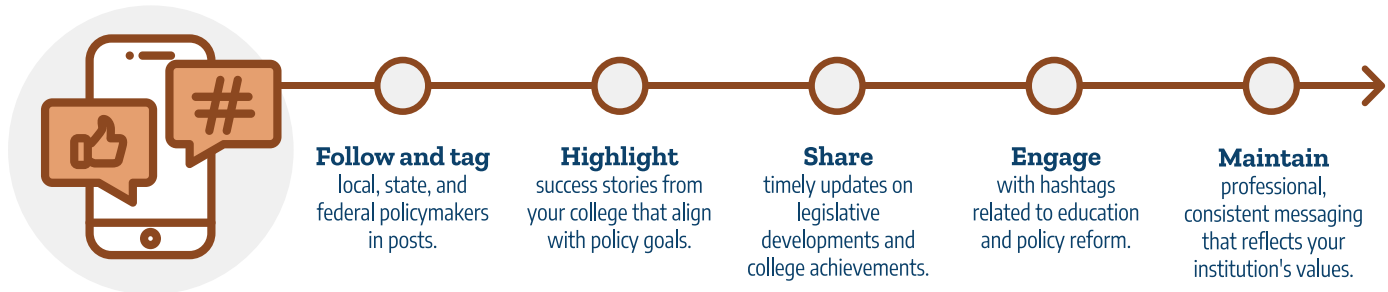
Title:
Community Colleges Are the Key to
Texas' Future Workforce

As a trustee of [College Name], I've seen firsthand how community colleges change lives and fuel Texas' economy. In our region, we serve a diverse population, offering opportunities for education and workforce training that uplift individuals and strengthen our local economy. House Bill 8 is a game-changer, allowing community colleges to prioritize outcomes-based funding. This bill aligns with our mission to provide education that matches the needs of Texas employers, particularly in high-demand fields like healthcare, technology, and manufacturing. But our work is far from over.

Texas's population surpassed 30.5 million in 2023, reflecting a steady increase in recent years. Over 22% of job growth in Texas requires education beyond high school, creating an urgent need for skilled workers. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to deliver that workforce, offering accessible, affordable pathways for all Texans. Supporting institutions like [College Name] means more than just funding education—it's an investment in Texas families and businesses alike. For example, specific

Social Media

Community college trustees can leverage social media as a strategic tool for advocating policies and building relationships with decision-makers and strategic partners. Platforms like X, LinkedIn, and Facebook allow trustees to amplify their voices, engage with other policymakers, and mobilize community support in real-time. Trustees using social media to discuss community college priorities should focus on sharing factual, nonpartisan information and avoid language that could be interpreted as lobbying or electioneering.



Earned Media

Community college trustees can encourage institutional leaders to proactively utilize earned media to inform public opinion and shape policy. Earned media provides a platform for colleges to showcase their achievements and priorities, garnering attention from decision-makers and the public.



Quick Tips

Issue press releases highlighting significant awards, grants, or student success stories.

Host media-friendly events (e.g., college visits by legislators, community outreach projects).

Offer interviews to local news outlets on education policies affecting the college.

Connect media with issue experts at the college who can provide expertise for stories on other subjects.

Feature stories on workforce development programs, partnerships with local businesses, new programs or buildings on campus and legislative advocacy events.

Expanding Advocacy Through Civic Involvement

Broader civic engagement is critical for community college leaders to build relationships with policymakers at all levels of government—local, state, and federal. Participating in the whole process allows for the best opportunity for successful policy initiatives – this means looking for ways to get your message across and interact with decision makers and community members that aren't directly related to what's going on in City Hall or the State Capitol.

- By engaging in civic activities, trustees can amplify their institution's voice and advocate for the needs of students, faculty, and the community. Look for opportunities to align your philanthropic activities with your policy priority areas and help other organizations understand how community college efforts intersect with their own priorities.
- By staying actively involved in civic activities, trustees can cultivate strong relationships that will help shape policy decisions and strengthen their college's presence in the community.



Key Points to Remember

Be Consistent

Regular engagement builds relationships with key stakeholders and strengthens advocacy efforts.



Tailor Your Message

Adapt your message based on the audience, whether it's local officials, community members, or legislators.



Follow Up

After meetings or events, ensure that you follow up to maintain momentum and reinforce the message.

Click here to access
Texas Year-Round Advocacy

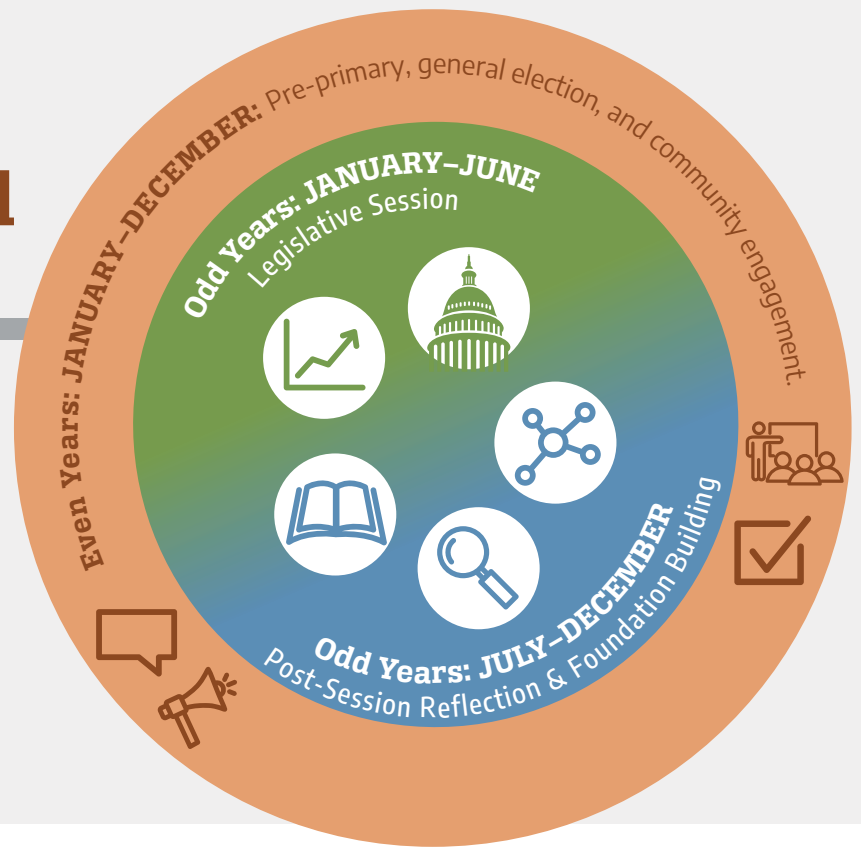




Texas Year-Round Advocacy

The key to successful advocacy initiatives is to cultivate relationships throughout the year, and to be prepared for a legislative session well in advance of its start. The timeline below can help you and your college visualize your advocacy plans throughout the year. You are encouraged to work with your college administrative team to build out an action plan based on the content in the CCATT Advocacy Toolkit, as well as your knowledge about what best fits your college and the specific policy initiatives you might have.

This resource is designed to support nonpartisan, educational advocacy efforts for community colleges. All activities focus on providing factual, data-driven information to policymakers, stakeholders, and the public. The content does not encourage lobbying, political endorsements, or attempts to influence specific legislation.



Odd-Numbered Year: January to June

January–June: Legislative Session



- **Testify with Data:** Share evidence-based information during committee hearings to provide context about your college's impact.



- **Champion Amendments:** Provide data and insights to help inform policymakers and staff prior to any pertinent floor debates.
- **Showcase Advocacy:** Participate in Capitol visits and CCATT events to highlight priorities.

Odd-Numbered Year: July to December

July–August: Post-Session Reflection

- **Debrief with Legislators:** Discuss the impact of passed laws on your college.
- **Prepare for the Next Cycle:** Evaluate outcomes and set priorities for the next advocacy year.

August–December: Foundation Building



- **Set Policy Focus:** Collaborate with CCATT, TACC, and college administrators to identify legislative priorities, and utilize interim committee hearing engagement to be a part of the policy conversation.



- **Form Strategic Alliances:** Engage with industry partners, legislators, and community leaders to align goals in settings like round table discussions.



- **Craft Data-Driven Stories:** Use regional data to develop compelling advocacy messages. Analyze and prepare workforce impact and student success stories for messaging.

- **Conduct Local Visits:** Schedule meetings with legislators in the district to discuss community college value to the area and regional talent development needs.

Even-Numbered Year: January to December

January–March: Pre-Primary Engagement



- **Host Policy Forums:** Organize candidate forums to discuss postsecondary education priorities.



- **Mobilize Voter Voices:** Provide nonpartisan education about the importance of higher education in local elections.

- **Publish Community Messages:** Release op-eds, social media posts, articles and newsletters highlighting workforce development and funding needs among other policy priorities.

April–June: Community Engagement



- **Organize Town Halls & Round Tables:** Hold public discussions to educate stakeholders on legislative priorities.

- **Showcase Workforce Impact:** Share data-driven stories tied to local needs and student success.
- **Harmonize Stakeholder Messaging:** Align regional partners and administrators for cohesive advocacy.

July–October: General Election Preparation



- **Host Impact Tours:** Organize campus tours and events to engage policymakers and stakeholders, highlighting college achievements and demonstrating student success stories.

- **Revise Advocacy Materials:** Update messaging and tools for legislative outreach.
- **Strengthen Candidate Relationships:** Meet with candidates to reinforce education priorities.

November: General Elections

- **Welcome New Legislators:** Provide them with introductory information about your college and its impact.

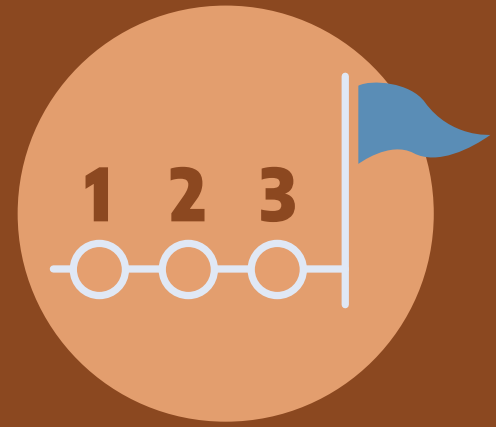
December: Pre-Session Planning

- **Plan Legislative Visits:** In coordination with TACC and CCATT, develop targeted strategies for advocacy during session.
- **Prepare Talking Points & Written Material:** Make sure you are ready with talking points and specific examples from your college that align and emphasize shared policy priorities.
- **Share Priorities:** With local strategic partners, pass a local resolution or make a joint statement with shared policy priorities.
- **Track Legislative Submissions:** Stay updated with CCATT and TACC to track filed bills relevant to community colleges.
- **Finalize Advocacy Tools:** Refine op-eds, infographics, and briefing materials for upcoming engagement opportunities.

Evergreen Opportunity: An excellent way to continue cultivating relationships is to invite elected officials and their staff to special events, such as trustee swearing-in ceremonies, ground breaking or ribbon cutting events, and graduations.

Step-by-Step Guide: Building Data-Informed Policy Messages

To ensure successful advocacy efforts, trustees should collaborate closely with their college's leadership, aligning messaging and priorities to reflect a unified voice that advances the mission of the institution. Creating effective, data-informed policy messages is essential for trustees to advocate for community college priorities. This guide provides a step-by-step method to help take relevant data and craft compelling messages tailored to unique advocacy goals.



Step 1: Identify the Priority

- Define the specific policy issue or priority you want to address (e.g., increased funding, workforce development, or student success initiatives).
- Ensure the priority aligns with your college's mission and broader state or local goals.

Step 2: Gather Relevant Data

- Access key data from trusted sources such as:
 - **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB):** Enrollment trends, funding allocations, and student success outcomes.
 - **TACC/CCATT:** Data visualization tools, legislative updates, and local revenue reports.
 - **Regional Data:** Workforce projections from the Texas Comptroller's Office or U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for high-demand occupations.
- Focus on quantitative data (e.g., graduation rates, economic impact) and qualitative data (e.g., student stories, faculty achievements, alumni leaders, community partners).

Step 3: Analyze the Data

- **Spot Key Trends:** Identify growth areas, challenges, or gaps in resources or funding.
- **Benchmark Performance:** Compare your institution's data to state or regional averages and consider factors behind differences.
- **Focus on Priorities:** Highlight data points that directly support your advocacy goals, like economic growth or program improvements.

Step 4: Develop Core Messages

- **Key Message:** Build a clear, concise statement that outlines the problem and your proposed solution.
 - Example: "Our community college needs increased funding to meet the growing need for workforce training in high-demand industries like healthcare and technology."
- **Supporting Data:** Use key data points to back up your message.
 - Example: "Over the past three years, our enrollment in health-related programs has grown by 20%, but funding has not kept pace, limiting our ability to expand these critical programs."
- **Qualitative Examples:** Add real-life stories from students or local employers to humanize the data.
 - Example: "Elena, a manufacturing student, was excited to learn hands-on skills but found that outdated lab equipment didn't fully prepare her for industry expectations. With increased state funding, our college can invest in modern equipment, ensuring students like Elena graduate with the skills employers require."

Step 5: Tailor the Message to Your Audience

- **Legislators:** Focus on data that shows the economic or workforce impact of the college on their district.
- **Business Leaders:** Highlight partnerships with local industries and how increased funding can support these collaborations.
- **Community Members:** Emphasize how the college serves as a vital resource for education and job training in the community.

Step 6: Simplify Complex Data

- Break down complex statistics into digestible formats:
 - Use percentages, charts, or simple comparisons (e.g., “A 5% increase in student enrollment over three years”).
 - Focus on actionable insights rather than overwhelming your audience with too many numbers.

Step 7: Create a Call to Action

- Make sure your message includes a clear request.
 - Example: “Additional investment in workforce programs can significantly impact our region’s economy and meet local job demands, as demonstrated by [specific example of measurable workforce need].”

Step 8: Test & Refine Your Message

- Practice delivering your message to a small group to gauge their response.
- Adjust based on feedback to ensure clarity and meaningful takeaways.
- Coordinate your message with internal stakeholders and key allies.

Step 9: Deliver the Message

- Present your message in meetings with policymakers, during public hearings, or through media outlets like op-eds and press releases.
- Ensure your messaging remains consistent across various communication platforms (e.g., social media, op-eds, meetings).
- Utilize sections 3 and 4 of the CCATT Advocacy Toolkit to help guide your approach.

Step 10: Follow Up

- After presenting your message, follow up with the necessary stakeholders to ensure continued engagement – this work is best done year around, not only during a legislative session.
- Maintain a focus on cultivating relationships that will help move your priorities forward.
- Provide additional data or clarification if requested, and keep your audience updated on progress.



Elected Official Campus Visit Checklist

PRODUCERS' GUIDE



Planning the Visit

- ☐ Review the sample agenda and consider which activities you'd like to include when proposing the length of time and run of show for the visit.
- ☐ Extend a formal written invitation to the elected official and follow up with a call to confirm their attendance.
- ☐ Obtain the contact information for the office's designated point-person to streamline communication.
- ☐ Contact the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) for any relevant talking points, data, or resources that can help inform the discussion and enhance the visit.
- ☐ Provide data and resource materials tailored to the visit's focus at least one week in advance to help the official prepare.

Coordinating Logistics

- ☐ Confirm accessibility requirements for facilities and ensure any special needs of the guests are accommodated.
- ☐ Arrange for a photographer to capture key moments during the visit to use in future outreach and media releases.
- ☐ Assign a point-of-contact from the institution to assist the official and their team throughout the visit.
- ☐ Provide the elected official, their staff, and other stakeholders involved in the visit with an electronic and hard copy of a pre-visit briefing packet that includes:
 - The full itinerary
 - A list of participants, individual roles/titles
 - A list of expected outcomes
 - Any additional campus, program or policy material that you would like participants to review ahead of the visit

NOTE: If it fits with your campus visit, consider scheduling the tour at a time when students will be on campus to enhance engagement. This is a great way to provide some student interaction and to provide perspective on a full campus environment.

Post-Visit Follow-Up

- ☐ Send a handwritten thank-you note to the official and their office.
- ☐ Share high-quality photos and summaries of the visit on your institution's communication channels, tagging the official where appropriate.
- ☐ Provide any additional information or materials requested during the visit promptly, along with a summary of actionable follow-up items.

SAMPLE AGENDA

I. Pre-visit team meeting

- a. Campus administration and leadership meet with staff and others who will be on the visit to discuss roles and responsibilities.
- b. This internal briefing should describe your goals for the visit and review the agenda for the day.

II. Elected official arrival

- a. Begin with greetings from selected trustees, campus administrators, and key stakeholders.
- b. Conduct a brief overview of the visit itinerary with the guests, letting them know what to expect from their time on campus.

III. Walking tour of key sites

- a. Showcase facilities, programs, or initiatives that align with institutional priorities and highlight areas that demonstrate the college's impact on students and the community.

IV. Drop-in visits with staff or administrators

- a. Facilitate informal interactions with teams working on relevant projects and provide an opportunity for the official to see specific initiatives in action.

V. Fireside chat with students

- a. Arrange a casual conversation where students can share their experiences.

NOTE:

Remember to take photos and tag the elected official in social media posts.

VI. Facilitated discussion on priorities

- a. Limit participation to a few key leaders to ensure focused dialogue.
- b. Discuss community college priorities by sharing data, student success stories, and the impact of programs, while identifying opportunities for collaboration without advocating for specific legislative actions or funding.

VII. Wrap up & return the guests to the designated location on time

- a. Thank the visitor for their time and participation.
- b. Set a time for your debrief with the internal team to get a checklist of items to follow-up on, and get a thank you note in the mail!

This resource is designed to support nonpartisan, educational advocacy efforts. It focuses on sharing factual, data-driven information about community colleges with stakeholders. Activities outlined in this toolkit do not involve lobbying, political endorsements, or attempts to influence specific legislation.



Candidate Forum

Sample Agenda



I. Welcome & Introductions

- a. Moderator delivers opening remarks highlighting key data about the community college and its impact on the region, then provides an overview of the forum format and ground rules.

II. Introduction of Candidates

- a. Moderator introduces each candidate in a brief and uniform way, making special note of any colleges they attended to emphasize the value of higher education.

III. Candidate Presentations

- a. Candidates present their platforms and key issues, with each allotted the same amount of time.

IV. Panel Discussion

- a. Moderator facilitates discussion among candidates on pre-selected topics; Focus areas may include education and higher education, healthcare, workforce needs and community development.

V. Audience Q&A Session

- a. Moderator turns to questions from the audience.
- b. Questions can be collected in advance, reviewed for relevance, and prioritized to ensure broad topic coverage.

VI. Closing Statements

- a. Candidates provide final remarks, with each allotted the same amount of time.
- b. Moderator thanks participants, reinforces the value of civic engagement, and reminds attendees about upcoming election dates.

VII. Networking Opportunity

- a. Attendees may stay to connect informally with candidates and ask additional questions.

SPECIAL NOTES

This format may be used for one or more candidates. All candidates for the same office will be invited, and the forum will focus solely on issues relevant to community colleges. The event will not endorse, support, or oppose any candidate. The number of candidates will impact the time allotted to each for responding, but all candidates must be given equal time to speak at the event.

The community college serves as a public space for dialogue and engagement. These forums should be open to everyone in the region, creating an opportunity for diverse participation. The audience might primarily include students, faculty, and staff, but all community members are encouraged to attend and engage in the conversation.

Clear ground rules should be established to ensure the event maintains order, fosters respect, and supports a comfortable environment for healthy dialogue among all participants.

Consider providing refreshments, handouts with event details, and paper and pens for attendees to submit questions in writing.



Town Hall Example Questions

Here are several example questions you might consider bringing up at a town hall or similar event that may assist in starting productive dialogue related to community colleges in Texas.



Legislative Priorities:

Can you please share your legislative priorities for higher education in Texas and discuss how do you plan to address the needs of community colleges and students specifically?



Community Partnerships:

What strategies do you propose to enhance partnerships between community colleges and local businesses to ensure that graduates are prepared for the workforce?



Workforce Development:

What role do you see community colleges playing in workforce development, and how could you support programs that align with local job market demands?



Technology & Innovation:

With the rise of artificial intelligence and technological advancements, what is your vision for the future of higher education and workforce development?



Funding for Education:

What role do you see community colleges playing in state funding priorities, and how can we better inform policymakers about our impact?



Cross-Sector Collaboration:

How can the state support better alignment between different sectors of higher education and our K-12 systems?



Student Support Services:

How can state and federal policies better support student success initiatives, such as mental health services, academic advising, and tutoring programs?



Support for Faculty & Staff:

What ideas do you have to ensure community colleges can attract and retain high quality staff and instructors, particularly for programs in high demand fields?



Access & Affordability:

What measures will you advocate for to increase access to higher education, especially for underrepresented and low-income students in our communities?



Transparency & Communication:

How do you plan to ensure transparency and communication with constituents about the decision-making processes affecting education policy at the state/federal level?



Round Table

Example Agenda

AGENDA

I. 9:00 AM - 9:10 AM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

- Overview of the round table's purpose and goals.

II. 9:10 AM - 9:30 AM | Data Presentation & Insights

- Keynote presentation featuring data analysis and insights to lay out the context for the round table discussion.

III. 9:30 AM - 9:50 AM | Stakeholder Introductions

- Quick introductions from each participant (name, organization, and role).

IV. 9:50 AM - 10:30 AM | Breakout Group Discussions

- Participants split into smaller groups to discuss specific topics with a facilitator and note-taker.

V. 10:30 AM - 10:50 AM | Report Back to Full Group

- Each group shares key insights and action items (2-3 minutes per group).

VI. 10:50 AM - 11:00 AM | Closing Remarks & Next Steps

- Invitation for attendees to propose additional topics for future meetings or address any short-term needs that emerged during the discussion.

VII. 11:00 AM | Adjournment

- Informal networking and light refreshments or optional campus tour.



EVENT INFO

Event Title:

**Collaborating for
Educational Success &
Community Growth**

Date & Time:

[Insert date]

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Location:

**[Insert name of the
college, meeting room,
street address, and
parking information]**



Round Table Facilitator Guide

PRE-EVENT PREPARATION



I. Define Objectives:

- a. The round table should focus on sharing insights, fostering collaboration, and identifying community solutions grounded in data and evidence-based practices.
- b. You may want to highlight how the event supports community college goals like lifelong learning, workforce development, and community vibrancy.

II. Select Participants:

- a. Identify and invite key stakeholders, including community college trustees, other elected officials, K-12 partners, community organizations, business leaders, local university representatives, or criminal justice partners.
- b. Aim for balanced representation to encourage diverse perspectives and ensure regional stakeholders who serve similar populations or share workforce development goals are included.
- c. Consider including faculty, program staff, and students who can provide firsthand insights into institutional impacts.

III. Secure Venue:

- a. Schedule the event with consideration for desired participants, avoiding conflicts with annual events or the academic calendar.
- b. Book a welcoming and accessible location with adequate space and resources (audio and visual equipment, collaborative seating arrangements).

IV. Develop Agenda:

- a. Create and distribute a clear agenda with timelines, incorporating insightful data presentations where possible to frame discussions.
- b. Consider including the option to tour the college before or after the round table discussion, highlighting campus facilities or programs relevant to stakeholders' interests.

V. Prepare Materials:

- a. Print and distribute materials such as the agenda, participant list, data reports, and feedback forms.
- b. Test audio and visual equipment to ensure smooth delivery of presentations and discussions.

VI. Facilitator Preparation:

- a. Review the content, objectives, and agenda thoroughly.
- b. Prepare discussion prompts that integrate college and community data, focusing on shared challenges and opportunities.
- c. Plan strategies to manage participation and foster engagement among diverse participants.

DAY OF THE EVENT

I. Set Up the Space:

- a. Arrange seating in a collaborative style to encourage dialogue.
- b. Display a welcome sign and make materials easily accessible.
- c. Check audio and visual equipment and ensure microphones are functional.

II. Welcome Participants:

- a. Greet attendees, including trustees and other key stakeholders, and distribute materials.
- b. Direct participants to their seats and ensure they feel welcomed.

III. Opening Session:

- a. Start on time with a warm welcome and an introduction to the purpose and agenda.
- b. Present data in keynote remarks to frame the importance of the discussion, emphasizing shared challenges and goals.

IV. Facilitate Group Discussions:

- a. Encourage discussions around shared priorities such as economic development, workforce alignment, and opportunities for lifelong learning.
- b. Provide clear instructions for breakout groups, if applicable, and move between groups to offer support and answer questions.

V. Closing:

- a. If breakout groups occurred, reconvene as a whole group to facilitate presentations on key findings and shared action items.
- b. Summarize insights, highlight opportunities for continued collaboration, and outline the next steps.
- c. Thank participants for contributing to the discussion and advancing regional goals.

POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP

I. Gather Feedback:

- a. Use feedback forms to evaluate the event's impact and identify areas for improvement.

II. Document Outcomes:

- a. Compile notes, including key data points and action steps, to share with participants.

III. Send Thank You Notes:

- a. Acknowledge attendees for their involvement and emphasize future collaboration.

IV. Plan Next Steps:

- a. Develop a timeline for follow-up actions, leveraging insights from the event to drive meaningful progress in shared initiatives.

CHECKLIST

Pre-Event Preparation

- ☐ Define objectives and desired participants for the round table discussion.
- ☐ Identify relevant qualitative and quantitative data to support the conversation.
- ☐ Confirm attendance of trustees and other key stakeholders.
- ☐ Book and prepare the venue with the necessary resources.
- ☐ Distribute an agenda with objectives for the conversation.
- ☐ Set up campus tour logistics for interested attendees.
- ☐ Prepare presentations and talking points.
- ☐ Design and print materials.
- ☐ Test AV equipment.

Event Execution

- ☐ Arrange seating in a collaborative style.
- ☐ Greet participants and distribute materials upon arrival.
- ☐ Start sessions on time with a focus on shared challenges and goals.
- ☐ Facilitate focused discussions, with clear instructions for breakout groups if applicable.
- ☐ In closing, summarize key findings and action items.

Post-Event Follow-Up

- ☐ Collect and review feedback forms to assess the event's impact.
- ☐ Compile a summary of outcomes, including key data points and next steps.
- ☐ Send thank-you notes to all participants, emphasizing future collaboration.
- ☐ Plan follow-up actions and schedule future meetings to maintain momentum.



Example Resolution Template



CITY OF [CITY NAME]

RESOLUTION NO. [RESOLUTION NUMBER]

A RESOLUTION DECLARING [DATE] AS COMMUNITY COLLEGE EXCELLENCE DAY IN [CITY NAME], TEXAS

WHEREAS, [City Name] recognizes the invaluable role that community colleges play in the education and workforce development of Texans; and

WHEREAS, [College Name] has been instrumental in supporting local economic growth, providing affordable education, and preparing students for high-demand careers; and

WHEREAS, the faculty, staff, and students of [College Name] have achieved excellence, receiving numerous awards and recognitions for their contributions to higher education and the community; and

WHEREAS, the [City Council/Mayor] wishes to highlight the significant impact of community colleges on our city and state by declaring [Date] as **Community College Excellence Day**;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the [City Council/Mayor] of [City Name], Texas, hereby declares [Date] as **Community College Excellence Day**, encouraging citizens to recognize the contributions of [College Name] in our region and support the continued success of community colleges across the state.

Passed and Approved this [Day] of [Month], [Year].

NOTE

Resolutions are issued to recognize nonpartisan achievements that advance education and workforce development goals.

This template can be adjusted for any specific event or recognition you want to focus on at the city level.

Be sure to include any information on strategic priorities that may be relevant at the time.





Title: Community Colleges Are the Key to Texas' Future Workforce

As a trustee of [College Name], I've seen firsthand how community colleges change lives and fuel Texas' economy. In our [region], we serve a diverse population, offering opportunities for education and workforce training that uplift individuals and strengthen our local economy. House Bill 8 is a game-changer, allowing community colleges to prioritize outcomes-based funding. This bill aligns with our mission to provide education that matches the needs of Texas employers, particularly in high-demand fields like healthcare, technology, and manufacturing. But our work is far from over.

Texas's population surpassed 30.5 million in 2023, reflecting a steady increase in recent years. Over 72% of job growth in Texas requires education beyond high school, creating an urgent need for skilled workers. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to deliver that workforce, offering accessible, affordable pathways for all Texans. Supporting institutions like [College Name] means more than just funding education—it's an investment in Texas families and businesses alike. For example, [specific student success story] demonstrates how our programs bridge the gap to good-paying jobs, lifting entire families while strengthening local economies.

In [region], our college has seen a [specific % or number] increase in enrollment in workforce programs over the past three years. State investments must keep pace with the growing demand for postsecondary education. As the economy evolves, our institutions require modern equipment to fully prepare students for the jobs that Texas businesses urgently need to fill. Community colleges like [College Name] are integral to preparing students for a competitive workforce while driving regional economic development.

To ensure our success, we need continued investment in community colleges. Policymakers, business leaders, and citizens must come together to promote policies that enhance workforce development and ensure long-term economic stability. For instance, targeted funding for our [specific workforce program] could allow us to train an additional [specific number] students annually, directly addressing shortages in [local sector or industry]. This isn't just about the success of individual students; it's about the future of our community and its ability to thrive in an increasingly competitive market.

Texas community colleges, backed by reforms like HB 8, are the driving force behind our future prosperity. By aligning public policy with the needs of our colleges, we can prepare students to thrive in an increasingly competitive global market. We invite our community to engage, advocate, and invest in this essential mission. Together, we can keep Texas—and [region]—strong.

Additional Example Data Points for Consideration:

- In 2023, Texas's 50 community college districts enrolled over 700,000 students, providing vital pathways to higher education and workforce training. Collectively, these institutions contribute nearly \$10 billion annually to the state's economy and support approximately 78,000 jobs. ([Texas Comptroller](#))
- Community colleges are also recognized for their affordability. In the 2023-2024 academic year, the average tuition and fees for in-state students at Texas community colleges were \$4,475 per year, compared to the national average of \$4,989. ([College Tuition Compare](#))
- In our [region], [College Name] is a leader in workforce development. For example, our [specific program] partners with [local company or industry], resulting in [specific outcome, such as job placements or internships]. These collaborations not only enhance individual lives but also drive economic growth in our community.



Thank you for utilizing the Community College Data Advocacy Toolkit published in March 2025.
For the most up-to-date resources, please visit: tacc.org/ccatt/advocacy