

Tactful Trusteeship: From Case Studies to Campus Solutions

[Register here by August 29](#)

Thursday, September 11

Please register in advance to participate in pre-conference sessions! These can be added to an existing registration at no cost.

12:00 - 1:15 PM | Pre-Conference Lunch

First Time Attendees Luncheon

Join us for this valuable networking opportunity offered specifically for Texas community college trustees, regents, and staff who are attending the CCATT Annual Conference for the first time. Network with peers, engage with seasoned leaders, and gain insights to navigate the role of trusteeship effectively.

1:30 - 2:45 PM | Pre-Conference Session

State & Local Advocacy

This interactive pre-conference session will help trustees strengthen their year-round advocacy efforts using CCATT's new Community College Data Advocacy Toolkit. Participants will explore strategies for applying data-informed storytelling to engage legislators, local officials, and community stakeholders. Discussion will focus on practical approaches for building relationships, shaping policy messages, and highlighting institutional achievements in ways that resonate with decision-makers. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas to advance their college's mission and impact through coordinated advocacy at both the state and local levels.

Ray Martinez, President & CEO, Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC)

Jacob Cottingham, Senior Director, Government Relations, TACC

Nicole Eversmann, Director, Community College Association of Texas Trustees

Please register in advance to participate in pre-conference sessions.

3:00 - 5:00 PM | Pre-Conference Breakout Sessions

New Trustee Orientation

Community college trustees play a vital role in governance, providing oversight that supports institutional effectiveness and student success. This orientation will cover essential topics such as the board-CEO relationship, fiscal responsibilities, and the fundamentals of Data-Informed Governance. Participants will gain a clear understanding of trustee roles and responsibilities while connecting with peers from across the state. The session is designed to build a strong foundation for effective service and informed decision-making on community college governing boards.

Dr. Martha Ellis, Senior Consultant, Community College Association of Texas Trustees

Hometown Highlights: Austin Community College District

This pre-conference session will explore one of the most ambitious redevelopment projects in Texas community college history: the transformation of Highland Mall into the Highland Learning Center. ACC leaders will present about the board-level decisions that shaped this iconic project, from acquiring a declining shopping mall to financing the multi-phase development through the strategic use of ACC's Public Facilities Corporation. Speakers will also highlight the board roles related to community engagement, bond financing, different phases of real estate development, and long-term facilities planning.

Dr. Nan McRaven, Board of Trustees Place 3, Austin Community College District (ACC)
Neil Vickers, Executive Vice Chancellor of Finance & Administration, ACC
Dr. Chris Cervini, Vice Chancellor of Community & Government Affairs, ACC

Board Liaison Session: Strategies for Effective & Professional Communication

Strong communication is essential to the board liaison role, especially when navigating political dynamics, differing trustee personalities, and complex governance structures. This interactive session will cover practical strategies for communicating effectively across channels, including email, phone, and in-person meetings. Participants will also explore body language cues, professional boundaries, and how to uphold nonpartisanship while supporting a diverse board. Through role play and real-world scenarios, attendees will practice adapting their approach to meet the moment and strengthen board engagement.

Perla Molina, Board Relations Executive, Dallas College

All conference attendees are invited to join us for dinner before the opening plenary!

6:00 - 6:30 PM | Dinner

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM | Opening Plenary

Welcome

Nicole Eversmann, Director, Community College Association of Texas Trustees
Paul R. Rodriguez, Vice Chair, South Texas College Board of Trustees
Dr. Manny Gonzalez, Vice Chair, Austin Community College District Board of Trustees
Ray Martinez, President & CEO, Texas Association of Community Colleges

Attorney Roundtable: Governance, Compliance, & Risk

This high-impact session will feature legal experts discussing today's most pressing issues facing Texas community colleges. Panelists will offer insights into evolving state and federal actions, new compliance expectations, and governance challenges that require informed board oversight. Designed to support local decision-making, the roundtable will highlight practical strategies to help boards navigate shifting legal terrain while maintaining institutional integrity and effectiveness.

Dr. Mark Escamilla, President & CEO, Del Mar College
Augustin "Augie" Rivera, Jr., General Counsel, Del Mar College
Cobby A. Caputo, Partner, Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta LLP
Moderator: Amy Magee, Division Director, TASB Community College Services

Friday, September 12

8:00 - 9:00 AM | Breakfast

9:00 - 10:30 AM | Plenary

Collaborating for Texas' Future: The Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative

This plenary session will explore the Tri-Agency's shared strategic vision and examine how recent policy developments from the 89th Texas Legislature will shape the future of education and workforce alignment in Texas. Commissioners will share insights on statewide priorities, collaborative initiatives, and strategies to strengthen the talent pipeline. The conversation will also highlight the role of community colleges in advancing these goals and preparing Texans for success in high-demand industries.

Commissioner Mike Morath, Texas Education Agency

Commissioner Wynn Rosser, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Moderator: Dr. Brenda Kays, President, Kilgore College

10:30 - 11:00 AM | Break

11:00 - 11:45 AM | Breakout Sessions

Policy Considerations for Board Liaisons

Staff who serve as board liaisons must navigate a complex landscape of legal requirements and policy expectations while supporting the work of their trustees. This session will offer clear guidance on staying compliant with the Texas Open Meetings Act, helping trustees meet professional development obligations, and understanding local versus state requirements. Legal experts will also address considerations related to emerging technologies, such as the use of artificial intelligence in board operations. Participants will leave better equipped to support effective governance and avoid common legal missteps.

Heather Allison, Staff Attorney, Texas Association of School Boards

Colette Billings, Staff Attorney, Texas Association of School Boards

Rural Career Pathways: Partnering With ISDs for Postsecondary Success

The College & Career Connections (C3) program cultivates interest in dual credit, postsecondary, and career opportunities for students and families. In partnership with our local ISD, 10 C3 coaches support 13,000+ 6th-12th grade students, guiding students

through career exploration, academic planning, and dual-credit and post-secondary opportunities. The goals for this program are to boost college enrollment, outcomes, and create a smooth transition from high school to college or career. Join us to learn how we have implemented the C3 program, how C3 can be replicated in other communities through collaborative partnerships, and what the future of the program will look like at Midland College.

Dr. Damon Kennedy, President, Midland College

Dr. Will Torres, Associate Vice President of Organizational Learning & Engagement, Midland College

Lori Haltom, Executive Director of College & Career Connections, Midland College

Staci Duncan, Coordinator of College & Career Connections, Midland ISD

Board-Driven Excellence: Case Study of San Jacinto College

What does effective board leadership look like at a nationally recognized institution? This session will examine how the San Jacinto College Board of Trustees has supported the college's numerous recognitions from the Aspen Institute, including its selection as a 2025 Aspen Award Finalist with Distinction. The conversation will explore how the Board has guided efforts to expand access to credentials of value. Through this case study, participants will consider how governance practices such as strategic planning, policy alignment, and data oversight contribute to long-term student and institutional success.

Dan Mims, Chair, San Jacinto College Board of Trustees

Dr. Michelle Cantú-Wilson, Vice Chair, San Jacinto College Board of Trustees

Dr. Brenda Hellyer, Chancellor, San Jacinto College

From Advising to Impact: Governing for Scalable Student Success

Advising reform is more than an operational upgrade—it's a strategic investment in student achievement. This session highlights South Texas College's system-wide advising redesign as a case study in institutional transformation. Board members will examine the governance decisions that enabled STC to scale holistic, student-centered advising while increasing completion and improving outcomes. The conversation will offer a practical lens for evaluating student support strategies and ensuring board-level alignment with long-term student success goals.

Dr. Matthew Hebbard, Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, South Texas College

Melissa Peña-Montes, Director of Promise Program & Enrollment Management, South Texas College

11:45 AM - 12:15 PM | Lunch

12:15 - 1:30 PM | Plenary Session

Executive Storytelling: Leading With Purpose & Persuasion

As public ambassadors for their institutions, community college trustees play a vital role in shaping narratives that resonate with institutional leaders, legislators, and regional partners. This keynote will explore how board members can deliver persuasive and consistent messages that build trust, strengthen policy partnerships, and drive support for student success. Attendees will gain insights on aligning messaging with mission-driven goals and adapting their stories to engage diverse audiences and shifting political landscapes.

Jee Hang Lee, President & CEO, Association of Community College Trustees

CCATT Annual Business Meeting

Members of the CCATT Board of Directors will facilitate the election process and review key accomplishments from the past year, as well as a preview of the brand new Data-Informed Governance learning modules.

Paul R. Rodriguez, Vice Chair, South Texas College Board of Trustees

Susan Moore-Fontenot, Immediate Past Chair, CCATT Board of Directors

1:30 - 2:00 PM | Break

2:00 - 2:45 PM | Breakout Sessions

Supporting the Board: Tools, Timelines, & Tech

Board liaisons play a vital role in coordinating meetings, managing compliance, and supporting trustees. This session will offer practical strategies to expand your toolbox, including demonstrations of resources such as a meeting preparation checklist and minutes template. Participants are encouraged to bring copies of their own tools—whether related to agenda preparation, project management, or daily organization—to exchange with peers. By sharing and comparing approaches, attendees will leave with at least one or two new ideas to enhance efficiency and impact.

David Mohlman, Coordinator of Board Relations, Lee College

Building Community Support for Tax District Expansion

In 2017, Frank Phillips College partnered with local stakeholders to pass a branch campus maintenance tax district (BCMD), expanding access to higher education across the Texas Panhandle. This session will explore how the board aligned the effort with long-range planning, engaged rural communities, and supported the campaign while honoring legal and ethical boundaries. Trustees will consider how governance practices shaped the college's success and what lessons can guide future tax district efforts across the state.

Dr. Jud Hicks, Regent & Retired President, Frank Phillips College

Dr. Ilene Walton, Dean of Grayson College South Campus

Minding College Minds: From Framework to Campus-Wide Change

The link between student success and mental health is clear, yet meeting these needs campus-wide can be challenging. This session introduces the Minding College Minds Framework and Learning Community, offered at no cost to Texas community colleges by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) and the Texas Success Center. Through case studies from large urban to small rural institutions, presenters will share effective implementation strategies, lessons learned, and sustainable approaches for supporting student wellbeing. Trustees will gain practical insights to champion comprehensive solutions that enhance persistence, completion, and academic success.

Leilani Lamb, Director of Higher Education & Workforce Strategy, MMHPI

Jenna Parro, Director for Cross System Strategy & Practice, MMHPI

Montoya Thomas, Alum, Lone Star College

Elevating Employer Voice: Leadership Lessons from the BILT Model

This session will explore how Alamo Colleges District uses the Business and Industry Leadership Team (BILT) model to strengthen workforce program alignment with employer needs. Trustees will learn how the model engages industry partners in co-leading curriculum development, identifies in-demand competencies, and informs program outcomes. The conversation will highlight the board's role in supporting structured employer engagement and ensuring alignment with regional labor market demands and student success goals.

Dr. Christopher Metsgar, Dean for Academic Success, Health Sciences, St. Philip's College

Dr. Sammi Morrill, Associate Vice Chancellor for Economic & Workforce Development, Alamo Colleges District

2:45 - 3:00 PM | Break

3:00 - 4:00 PM | Breakout Sessions

Institutional Strategies for Emerging Occupations & High-Demand Fields

As Texas diversifies its economy and attracts new industries, community colleges are central to preparing the workforce for emerging occupations in advanced manufacturing, engineering technology, AI, and other high-demand sectors. This panel will feature college CEOs who have overseen major investments in workforce development, supported by state and federal initiatives like the CHIPS and Science Act. Panelists will share how governance, partnerships, and strategic planning positioned their institutions to respond to industry needs while strengthening regional resilience and student opportunity.

Dr. Jennifer Kent, President, Victoria College

Dr. Jason Morrison, President, Trinity Valley Community College

Dr. Brent Wallace, Chancellor, North Central Texas College

Moderator: Elizabeth Chivers, Senior Director of Strategy & Policy Analysis, TACC

Reaching Back, Looking Ahead: Strategies for Enrollment & Student Reengagement

Community colleges across Texas continue to face challenges related to enrollment and reconnecting with students who stop-out. As stewards of institutional vision and student access, trustees play a vital role in guiding strategic enrollment efforts that are data-informed and responsive to community needs. This session will explore the reasons students do and do not matriculate, why they stop-out, and what it takes to help them graduate. With successful completion and transfer as part of the state's outcomes-based funding model, it's important for institutions to invest in initiatives that bring students back and keep them on a path to success.

Bryan Ashton, Managing Director, Trellis Strategies

Dr. Jenna Cullinane Hege, Vice Chancellor of Institutional Research & Analytics, Austin Community College District

Steve Smith, Director of Higher Education Services, Trellis Strategies

Hear to Lead: Centering Students in Governance Conversations

This interactive panel session will feature students sharing real experiences with advising, financial barriers, belonging, and persistence. Moderated by the leader of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, the conversation will draw on both personal

stories and national data trends to help trustees better understand student needs. By listening directly to those we serve, trustees can more effectively align institutional policies and priorities with the lived realities of today's learners.

Dane Adams, Alum, Tyler Junior College

Courtney Paige, Alum, Dallas College

Chrischen Thompson, Alum, Lone Star College

Moderator: Dr. Linda Garcia, Executive Director, Center for Community College Student Engagement

Chairs Council Meeting (Invitation Only)

The Chairs Council brings together board chairs and their designees for focused conversations on governance, leadership, and advocacy priorities. This meeting offers a confidential setting to exchange perspectives on challenges and opportunities facing Texas community colleges, from navigating political polarization to strengthening board effectiveness. Participants will discuss strategies for fostering constructive board culture, improving responsiveness to state policy changes, and advancing institutional priorities. The session also provides an opportunity to build peer connections and share insights that strengthen trustee leadership across the state.

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM | Reception

Connect with fellow attendees to share trustee takeaways, promising practices, and ideas to bring back to your college over light refreshments. Enjoy violin duets by community college students under the direction of Alexander Corbett, Director of Orchestral Studies at Temple College.

Temple College Violinists:

Karli Dawson

Svetlana Golovin

Erick Lemus

Dylan Nance

6:00 PM | Dinner on Your Own

Gather with your board or leadership team for dinner, either at a local restaurant or right here at the Hotel Viata. Afterward, unwind with live music at the hotel bar and continue the conversation.

Saturday, September 13

8:00 - 8:30 AM | Breakfast

8:30 - 10:30 AM | Closing Plenary

From the Boardroom to the House Floor: Policy, Progress, & Public Service

Representative Oscar Longoria brings a rare dual perspective as both a former South Texas College trustee and a current leader in the Texas Legislature. In this keynote address, he will reflect on how his experience in local governance shaped his approach to statewide policymaking and why trustee leadership remains essential to the future of Texas community colleges. Drawing from his service on the Texas Commission on Community College Finance and work during recent legislative sessions, Representative Longoria will share insights into the policies that are reshaping community college funding, workforce pathways, and institutional accountability. He will also offer guidance on how trustees can engage effectively with lawmakers, advocate for their institutions, and help translate complex policy into actionable campus solutions. His remarks will highlight the importance of tactful, informed trusteeship, emphasizing how boards can lead with integrity, collaboration, and a deep commitment to student success.

Representative Oscar Longoria, Texas House District 35

Closing & Awards

Join us as we wrap up the conference with a celebration of trustee leadership and impact. We will present the Outstanding Leadership Award to honor a trustee whose service has left a lasting mark on Texas community colleges. There will also be a drawing for additional prizes for those who completed the Sponsor Expo Passport Tour. This is a time to reflect on shared accomplishments and look ahead to the continued work that strengthens our institutions.

10:30 AM | Conference Adjourned

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