

USE YOUR NETWORK

# Blue Book

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## CONFERENCE WORKBOOK

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: Community College Governance

CLASS: Tactful Trusteeship

SECTION: From Case Studies to Campus Solutions

LOCATION: Austin, Texas

DATE: September 11-13, 2025

8.5'x11'

60 PAGES



Community College  
Association of Texas Trustees

# Thursday, September 11

12:00 - 1:15 PM

Redbud

## PRE-CONFERENCE LUNCH

### First Time Attendees Luncheon

Join us for the First Time Attendees Luncheon, a 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.

12:30 - 6:00 PM

Hallways

## SPONSOR EXPO

Start your conference experience by visiting the Conference Sponsor tables on day one. Connect with organizations that support Texas community colleges, hear about innovative services, and collect resources to bring back to your board. Begin to complete your Sponsor Expo Passport Tour by visiting tables on Thursday, then return on Friday to continue the experience and work toward entering Saturday's drawing.

1:30 - 2:45 PM

Juniper

## 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 III**, President & CEO, Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC)

**Jacob Cottingham**, Senior Director of Government Relations, TACC

**Nicole Eversmann**, Director, Community College Association of Texas Trustees

3:00 - 5:00 PM

## PRE-CONFERENCE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session descriptions and speakers listed on the next page.

### Magnolia

#### **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

### Juniper

#### **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

### Redbud

#### **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

6:00 - 6:30 PM

Cypress  
Ballroom

DINNER

Join conference attendees and presenters for a buffet-style dinner that provides an opportunity to share first impressions and set the stage for the conversations and connections to come.

6:30 - 8:30 PM

Cypress  
Ballroom

OPENING PLENARY

Welcome

**Nicole Eversmann**, Director, Community College Association of Texas Trustees (CCATT)  
**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 III**, President & CEO, Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC)

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

SPEAKER BIOS

Dr. Mark Escamilla, President & CEO, Del Mar College

Dr. Escamilla has led Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas, since 2008, guiding its growth to three campuses and advancing academic excellence, fiscal responsibility, and strong partnerships with education, industry, and business. A Del Mar graduate himself, Dr. Escamilla is committed to raising educational attainment in the Coastal Bend, expanding access through increased credit enrollment, doubling workforce credentials in five years, and growing Dual Credit offerings to 43 school districts across three counties.

Under his leadership, the College has become a vital workforce partner, providing training for thousands annually. Appointed by the Governor to the Texas Commission on Community College Finance, Dr. Escamilla helped shape the state’s new outcomes-based funding model, positioning Del Mar at the forefront of awarding credentials of value that strengthen families and drive the regional economy.

## **SPEAKER BIOS (CONT.)**

Dr. Escamilla earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi and a PhD in educational administration from The University of Texas at Austin, where he was named a Distinguished Graduate of the Community College Leadership Program. He serves on the Legislative and Executive Committees of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, among other educational and community boards.

### **Augustin “Augie” Rivera, Jr., General Counsel, Del Mar College**

Augustin “Augie” Rivera, Jr. serves as General Counsel for the Del Mar College in Corpus Christi, Texas, and is a member of the President’s Executive Cabinet. Augie joined Del Mar College’s administration in 2015 after more than 27 years of working as a civil trial and appellate lawyer throughout South Texas. Augie’s representation of Del Mar College began in 2005, when he was engaged to serve as the external Board Counsel.

A native of Driscoll, Texas, Augie is a graduate of Yale University and Stanford Law School. He was admitted to the Texas Bar in 1988 and is licensed to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, multiple U.S. Courts of Appeals, and several U.S. District Courts. He is an elected member of the American Law Institute and a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

Augie is a frequent speaker on community college board ethics, governance, and free speech, presenting nationally for ACCT, AACC, HACU, and NACUA. A past NACUA board member, he currently serves on the board of the Texas Association of Community College Attorneys, chairs the Texas Board of Law Examiners, and is vice-chair of the Hispanic Lawyers Section of the State Bar of Texas for 2025–26.

### **Cobby A. Caputo, Partner, Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta LLP**

Cobby Caputo is a partner at Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta LLP in Austin. He provides general counsel services to college districts throughout Texas. Cobby spent the first 25 years of his career as primarily a litigator, representing colleges, cities, school districts, and counties in 1st and 14th Amendment constitutional claims, employment claims, construction claims, Title VII and Title IX suits, and other civil rights litigation. He also advises clients on policy development, open government, employee rights, personnel matters, disability rights, land use and development, construction, and public procurement.

For the past 16 years, Cobby has served as outside general counsel to the Austin Community College District and works on matters for many other community colleges in Texas. He frequently speaks on issues affecting higher education institutions and for 12 years served as an Adjunct Professor in Concordia University’s Graduate School of Education.

### **Amy Magee, Division Director, TASB Community College Services**

Amy Magee is the Division Director of the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Community College Services. As division director, Amy oversees the activities of the division as well as provides support to TASB’s 50 community college members and TASB’s other service areas that assist the colleges. Amy provides legal advice to the community colleges and develops and reviews their legal and local policies. She is a frequent presenter at local, regional, and statewide training events on a number of legal topics affecting the colleges, including governance, business, employee, student, and community issues. Prior to exclusively serving the colleges, Amy also worked with TASB’s school district members, providing legal advice and education and policy development services.

Amy received her bachelor of science in psychology with University and Foundation honors from Texas A&M University and her J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law. She is on the board of the Texas Association of Community College Attorneys and is a member of the State Bar of Texas school law section and the Texas Council of School Attorneys.

# Friday, September 12

**8:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

Hallways &  
Cypress  
Ballroom

## **SPONSOR EXPO**

Explore day two of the Sponsor Expo to connect with a diverse array of service providers and discover the valuable contributions of our sponsors. Engage directly with industry leaders, gather information on their offerings, and ask how their services can support your role and enhance your institution. We challenge you to complete the Sponsor Expo Passport Tour by visiting with at least ten organizations. **Turn in your passport at the registration table to be entered into Saturday's drawing for a special prize!**

**8:00 - 9:00 AM**

Cypress  
Ballroom

## **BREAKFAST**

Join colleagues from across the state for a buffet breakfast to get ready for a day of learning and connections.

**9:00 - 10:30 AM**

Cypress  
Ballroom

## **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

## **SPEAKER BIOS**

### **Commissioner Mike Morath, Texas Education Agency**

Appointed by Gov. Greg Abbott, Mike Morath took office as Commissioner of Education in January 2016 and was unanimously confirmed by the Texas Senate in March 2017. As Commissioner, he heads the Texas Education Agency, overseeing pre-kindergarten through high school education for more than 5.5 million students in traditional independent school districts and public charter schools.

## SPEAKER BIOS (CONT.)

Previously, Morath served on the Dallas Independent School District Board of Trustees for more than four years, focusing on academic improvements. By his final year, DISD saw gains in kindergarten readiness, math proficiency, and graduation rates.

A graduate of Garland High School, Morath earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, summa cum laude, from George Washington University in two-and-a-half years. While starting his first company, he taught an advanced computer science class at his high school alma mater and remains amazed at how difficult it is to teach.

Committed to service, Morath has volunteered in schools, juvenile justice facilities, and international missions, including work in India and Mexico. He and his wife, Dr. Laura Vondra, are the proud parents of two daughters and two sons.

### **Commissioner Wynn Rosser, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

Dr. Wynn Rosser is the Commissioner of Higher Education and CEO of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), providing statewide leadership and overseeing higher education policy and budget for the world's eighth-largest economy. He brings deep expertise in cross-sector collaboration and a strong commitment to THECB's strategic plan, Building a Talent Strong Texas.

Before joining THECB, Dr. Rosser served nearly two decades in philanthropic leadership, including as president and CEO of the T.L.L. Temple Foundation, focused on rural East Texas, and as chief executive of the Greater Texas Foundation, advancing postsecondary access and success. He previously spent 14 years at Texas A&M University in faculty, staff, and senior administrative roles, including as a lecturer at the Bush School of Government and Public Service.

A native of rural Texas, Dr. Rosser holds an associate degree from Kilgore College and bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Texas A&M University. He is also a nationally registered and Texas state-licensed EMT. He and his wife, both from multigenerational rural families, are raising three children.

### **Dr. Brenda Kays, President, Kilgore College**

Dr. Kays' career as a community college educator in Texas and the North Carolina System spans over 40 years. Before being named the 9th president of Kilgore College (KC) in 2016, Kays served as the 4th President of Stanly Community College (SCC) in North Carolina and is the first woman to have served in both capacities. She earned her Doctorate in Applied Technology, Training, and Development from the University of North Texas. She has a Master's Degree in Counseling from Midwestern State University and is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

Dr. Kays has served in numerous local, state, and national organizations, including most recently the Board of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Executive Council; Board Chair for the Texas Association of Community Colleges; and Board President for Arts!Longview. Her influence was evident when the Speaker of the Texas House appointed her to the Texas Commission on Community College Finance, whose work led to the historic House Bill 8. Kays is recognized for her skills as a career and technical educator and, in 2023, served as a special advisor to the Texas Commissioner of Higher Education to chart a roadmap for workforce development opportunities and initiatives across the state.

**10:30 - 11:00 AM**

**BREAK**

## Olive

### 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

## Redbud

### 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



### Mangolia

#### 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

### Juniper

#### 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

### Cypress Ballroom

## LUNCH

Join conference attendees and presenters for a buffet style lunch to network, catch up on notes from the morning's sessions and refuel for the rest of the day.

**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

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

Jee Hang Lee became president and CEO of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) in 2021, providing national leadership to more than 500 governing boards overseeing the majority of community colleges across the United States and internationally.

He has served ACCT for over 15 years in leadership roles, including senior vice president, vice president for public policy, and director of public policy. During this time, he led the association's advocacy efforts, including the Community College National Legislative Summit, and advanced legislative and regulatory priorities related to appropriations, student financial aid, tax policy, and higher education. He also oversaw ACCT's membership, events, and communications divisions.

Jee Hang serves on the boards of the American Council on Education (ACE), National Asian Pacific Islander Council (NAPIC), and National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE), and on advisory boards for the University of Maryland Global Campus Community College Leadership Program and the Community College Presidents Initiative-STEM. He previously served on the boards of the American Student Association of Community Colleges, the Rural Community College Alliance, and the Committee for Education Funding.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Boston University and a master's degree in political management from George Washington University.

**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

### Olive

#### **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

### Redbud

#### **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

## Magnolia

**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

## Juniper

**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

Olive

**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.

Redbud

**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**, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, & Planning, Temple College

Magnolia

## 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

Juniper

## 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

# Friday, September 12

**4:00 - 6:00 PM**

Cypress  
Ballroom &  
Courtyard

## 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.



*See y'all tomorrow!*

# Saturday, September 13

8:00 - 8:30 AM

**BREAKFAST**

Cypress  
Ballroom

Enjoy a buffet breakfast as you gear up for the final day of learning and insightful conversations.

8:30 - 10:30 AM

**CLOSING PLENARY**

Cypress  
Ballroom

**Cultivating a Culture Where Students & Employees Thrive**

Vibrant campus cultures are built through intentional leadership and a strong board/CEO partnership. In this insightful keynote, Dr. Christy Ponce will reflect on how trustees can establish environments that foster engagement, growth, and long-term strategic planning through a student success lens. She will discuss reform efforts that have shaped institutional culture and empower bold capacity building as Temple College prepares for the future. This closing conversation will inspire trustees to return home with renewed perspective and practical approaches for supporting campuswide efforts and advancing the mission of Texas community colleges.

**Dr. Christina Ponce**, President, Temple College

**SPEAKER BIO**

**Dr. Christina Ponce, President, Temple College**

Dr. Christina Ponce has been the President of Temple College since January 2019. Under her leadership, Temple College has made significant strides toward growing a modern Community College, introducing transformational efforts focused on student success and enhancing current programs with new technology. She has partnered with Temple College’s faculty and staff to develop new high demand college credentials in academic and workforce programs.

In 2021, Dr. Ponce helped lead the college through a successful \$124.9 Million Bond that has allowed Temple College to build for the future with a brand-new health science center to advance health care training programs in the region, a new University Center and Main Building, and a state of the art Workforce & Visual Arts Center.

Prior to Temple College, Dr. Ponce worked in several leadership, fundraising, and faculty roles, and had the honor of serving at Lee College, El Paso Community College, Austin Community College, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Dr. Ponce earned a Ph.D. and bachelor’s degree from The University of Texas at Austin and a master’s degree from Texas State University. In 2024, she was recognized as the Association of Community College Trustee’s national CEO of the Year.



## **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**

We wish you safe travels home! Please remember to respond to our event survey using the QR code on the back of this workbook.

# Take-Home Questions for Board Reflection

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As you return to your college, we encourage you to carry forward the insights from this conference. Use the questions below to spark conversation with your board, reflect on your governance practices, and consider how lessons shared in Austin can be applied in your local context.

- 1. Strategic Vision** – In what ways can we improve board-CEO collaboration, fiscal oversight, and data-informed decision-making to better support institutional priorities?
- 2. Workforce Alignment** – How can we position our programs and facilities to respond to emerging industries and high-demand occupations in our region?
- 3. Regional Partnerships** – How do our strategic goals align with regional workforce needs, and where can we build stronger partnerships with employers, K-12 districts, or other colleges?
- 4. Serving Our Communities** – Are we effectively meeting the needs of rural communities, adult learners, and other underrepresented student populations? What strategies can we adapt from peers?
- 5. Student Voice** – How do we ensure student perspectives meaningfully shape our policy and budget decisions?
- 6. Student Wellbeing** – What role should our board play in championing campus-wide systems that support student mental health, persistence, and completion?
- 7. Enrollment & Reengagement** – What governance actions can help us attract new students and reengage those who have stopped out?
- 8. Governance Excellence** – How can we strengthen our use of data, policy alignment, and long-term planning to improve student and institutional outcomes?
- 9. Board Culture** – How can we foster a more effective, unified board culture that supports informed, nonpartisan decision-making?
- 10. Advocacy & Storytelling** – How can our board use local data and student stories to strengthen relationships with legislators, local officials, and community stakeholders year-round?

# Texas Leaders on the National Stage

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CCATT would like to congratulate the Texas winners of the 2025 Western Regional Awards from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT)!

**Impact & Success Award:** Alamo Colleges District

**CEO Leadership Award:** Dr. Margaret Ford Fisher, Houston Community College

**Professional Board Staff Member Award:** Mandi Reiland, San Jacinto College

CCATT would also like to congratulate and thank Texans who serve on the ACCT Board of Directors, including Dr. Pretta VanDible Stallworth from Houston Community College and Carol Scott from Del Mar College.

We look forward to celebrating together in New Orleans next month!

## SAVE THE DATES

**ACCT Leadership Congress** - October 22-25, 2025 (New Orleans, LA)

- Texas Delegation Reception - October 23

**THECB Higher EDge Conference** - December 8-10, 2025 (Austin, TX)

**CCATT New Trustee Orientation** - January 30, 2026 (Virtual)

**ACCT National Legislative Summit** - February 8-11, 2026 (Washington, DC)

- Texas Delegation Breakfast & Briefing - February 10

**CCATT Annual Conference** - September 17-19, 2026 (Baytown, TX)

# A Texas-Sized Thank You to Our 2025 Conference Sponsors!

This event was made possible in part due to these committed sponsors, and we are grateful for their continued support of community colleges across our great state. As you visit their tables during the Sponsor Expos on Thursday and Friday, be sure to take part in the Passport Tour to be entered into Saturday’s drawing for a special prize.

## EMERALD



## SAPPHIRE





## Community College Association of Texas Trustees

Thank you for attending the 2025 CCATT Annual Conference!

As you reflect on the important themes and conversations from this year's event, we ask that you please take our brief survey. Your input helps us understand which aspects of our programming are most valuable and how we can serve you better.

Scan the QR code below to take the survey now!

