



Texas Association of
Community Colleges

T A C C S U M M E R M E E T I N G

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

Navigating Change and Achieving Results

JULY 15-17, 2026 | SAN ANTONIO, TX

WELCOME TO SAN ANTONIO!

Thank you for joining us at the 2026 TACC Summer Meeting,

Strategic Alignment: Navigating Change and Achieving Results!

This year's meeting will focus on aligning institutional strategy with evolving state and federal policy, funding priorities, and workforce needs as Texas community colleges prepare for the 90th Texas Legislative Session. Sessions will feature timely discussions on legislative developments, national trends, and leadership strategies for navigating change.

We hope this event fosters peer learning and offers valuable insights for navigating the future of higher education.



WIFI

Network: TX Assoc of Comm Colleges

Password: TACC2026

JULY 15, 2026*The following sessions, unless otherwise noted, will take place in Palo Duro.***4:00 - 5:30 PM****REGISTRATION OPENS***Pick up your nametags and program***5:30 - 6:30 PM**

Palo Duro Patio

WELCOME DRINKS*Sponsored by Educate Texas***EDUCATE TEXAS**
of COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS**6:30 - 7:30 PM****DINNER & STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION****Ray Martinez III, J.D.**, President & CEO, Texas Association of Community Colleges*Sponsored by
Western Governors University***7:30 - 8:30 PM****CELEBRATING A CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
MR. WOODY HUNT**

This tribute session honors the remarkable leadership and service of Woody Hunt, whose vision helped shape a new era of support for Texas community colleges. Through personal reflections and shared experiences, colleagues, partners, and leaders from across Texas will reflect on his role in advancing community college finance reform, his stewardship of the Business Advisory Council, and the enduring impact of his work on students and communities across Texas.

Harrison Keller, Ph.D., President, University of North Texas**Brenda Kays, Ed.D.**, President Emeritus, Kilgore College**Mark Escamilla, Ph.D.**, President, Del Mar College**Brenda Hellyer, Ed.D.**, Chancellor, San Jacinto College**William Serrata, Ph.D.**, President, El Paso Community College**Gary VanDeaver, Ph.D.**, Texas State Representative, District 1**Brent Wallace, Ph.D.**, Chancellor, North Central Texas College**8:30 PM - 12:00 AM**

Third Floor

HOSPITALITY SUITE*Sponsored by Great Western Dining Service*

JULY 16, 2026*The following sessions, unless otherwise noted, will take place in Palo Duro.***7:00 - 8:00 AM****BREAKFAST****8:00 - 11:00 AM****QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING****11:00 - 11:30 AM****EXECUTIVE SESSION****11:30 AM - 12:00 PM****COFFEE BREAK****12:00 - 12:30 PM****LUNCH BUFFET****12:30 - 1:30 PM****CAPITOL TO CAMPUS: FEDERAL DECISIONS SHAPING HIGHER ED**

Join this plenary session from federal government relations leaders to hear the latest on the President's proposals for higher education, Congressional action that affects our community colleges and students, how the federal courts are playing an increasing role in higher ed, and the latest on the regulatory front.

Carrie Warick-Smith, Vice President, Public Policy, Association of Community College Trustees

David Baime, Senior Vice President, Government Relations, American Association of Community Colleges

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1:30 - 2:15 PM**REMARKS FROM TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONER**

Wynn Rosser, Ph.D., Commissioner, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

CONCURRENT SESSIONS LISTED ON NEXT PAGE

2:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Please refer to the colored dot on the back of your nametag to determine your first concurrent session. All attendees will rotate through both concurrent sessions.

San Antonio I

LEANING INTO THE LEGISLATURE: UTILIZING THE LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR FOR MORE EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

Advocacy reaches its peak during the Legislative Session, but the most successful approach lays that groundwork throughout the year. As the state shifts into its biennial proceedings, there are opportunities to take advantage of the political and policy calendar that will provide your messaging with the context and opportunity to make sure it lands when it matters most.

Taylor Aycock, Partner, Ancira Strategic Partners, LLP

Christian Bionat, Vice Chancellor, External Relations, San Jacinto College

Priscilla Camacho, J.D., Chief Legislative, Industry & External Relations Officer, Alamo Colleges

Jacob Cottingham, Senior Director, Government Relations, Texas Association of Community Colleges

San Antonio H

OWNING THE NARRATIVE: STRATEGIC MEDIA ENGAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERS

In today's evolving media landscape, community college leaders must be prepared not only to respond to media inquiries, but also to proactively shape and elevate the stories emerging from their institutions. This interactive media training session will provide presidents and chancellors with practical strategies for engaging with reporters, delivering effective interviews, and positioning their colleges as trusted voices on workforce development, student success, and higher education innovation.

Led by Gary Susswein and Jenifer Sarver, the session will focus on media best practices, message development, interview preparation, and approaches for pitching compelling institutional stories to local, statewide, and national media outlets. It will also include a brief, mock interview to demonstrate how these tips can be put into action.

Jenifer Sarver, Principal, Sarver Strategies

Gary Susswein, Principal, BandOne

4:30 - 6:30 PM

BREAK

6:30 - 8:30 PM

DINNER & WASHERS TOURNAMENT

Sponsored by EDUPolaris



8:30 PM - 12:00 AM

HOSPITALITY SUITE

Third Floor

Sponsored by Great Western Dining Service



JULY 17, 2026*The following sessions, unless otherwise noted, will take place in Palo Duro.***7:30 - 8:30 AM**

San Augustine

NEW PRESIDENT ORIENTATION BREAKFAST

Designed for newly appointed presidents and chancellors, this orientation provides an introduction to TACC and the critical role the association plays in advancing Texas community colleges. The session will explore the importance of policy engagement and advocacy as core responsibilities of community college leadership, highlighting how decisions made in Austin directly impact institutions, students, and local communities. Participants will learn how to effectively engage in the policymaking process and discuss the value of building strong relationships with state leaders and peers across the sector.

Brenda Kays, Ed.D., President Emeritus, Kilgore College**Myles Shelton, Ed.D.**, President, Galveston College**7:30 - 8:30 AM****GENERAL BREAKFAST****8:30 - 9:00 AM****TRANSITION BREAK****9:00 - 10:00 AM****PIVOT POINT: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON AI, JOBS, AND EDUCATION**

Baby Boomer retirements, declining immigration, and the enrollment cliff are converging to produce labor shortages that are reshaping regional economies and policy debates. Meanwhile, AI is scrambling that outlook and fueling anxiety about jobs. The community college sector is at the center of much of this uncertainty, with a moment that brings both challenges and opportunities.

Paul Fain, editor of The Job newsletter, brings a reporter's lens to the stew of competing claims. Drawing from the latest research, he'll try to cut through the noise on AI and the job market, and on federal and state workforce policy. The presentation will include a focus on genuine innovation, including regional public-private partnerships, sectoral training models, and employer-led talent pipelines.

This will be as much a discussion as a presentation, aiming to relate developments across the country to the evolving picture in Texas, which touts a best-in-the-nation investment in community colleges with HB 8. The session will offer an unsentimental look at where the country is headed, what the evidence actually shows, and what it all means for institutions that sit at the center of the workforce challenge.

Paul Fain, Co-Founder, Work Shift**10:00 - 10:30 AM****AWARDS CEREMONY**

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GUEST SPEAKERS



TAYLOR AYCOCK

Taylor Aycock is a Partner at Ancira Strategic Partners, LLP, a government relations and public affairs firm based in Austin, Texas. She represents clients before the Texas Legislature and state agencies on issues spanning public education, workforce development, public health, criminal justice, and economic development.

Over the course of her career, Aycock has successfully advanced legislation and secured state funding for initiatives that expand educational opportunity, improve public health outcomes, strengthen workforce pathways, and increase access to community-based services for underserved Texans. In addition to legislative advocacy, she advises clients on strategic communications, coalition building, crisis management, and navigating Texas' evolving political landscape.

Before returning to Texas, Aycock worked in Washington, D.C., managing public affairs campaigns for corporate and political clients. She is a native of Houston and a proud graduate of Texas A&M University.



DAVID S. BAIME

David Baime serves as Senior Vice President for Government Relations for the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). In this role, he directs the national advocacy efforts for the nation's more than 1,000 community colleges and their students. Prior to that time, he served as Director of Education Funding for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. Mr. Baime has also worked as Assistant Director of Government Relations for the Association

of American Medical Colleges. Mr. Baime holds a bachelor's degree from Haverford College and a master's degree in Economics from the London School of Economics.

Mr. Baime has made a number of radio, television, and Web appearances, including on CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, C-SPAN's "Washington Journal," and National Public Radio, and is frequently quoted in The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, Politico, and other education publications. He is the author of several published articles and essays and has co-written a book on community college finance. He is also a Trustee of Excelsior University. In his spare time he swims, plays Beatles covers, and tries to see as many Old Master paintings as possible.



CHRISTIAN BIONAT

Christian Bionat serves as Vice Chancellor of External Relations at San Jacinto College, where he leads the institution's government relations, public affairs, and foundation advancement efforts under Chancellor Brenda Hellyer. In this role, he directs local, state, and federal government affairs, builds strategic partnerships, and oversees foundation fundraising in support of the College's mission.

Prior to joining San Jacinto College, Christian served as Vice President of Advocacy at the Greater Houston Partnership, the region's principal business organization, where he led state and federal advocacy on behalf of the Houston business community. He directed the Partnership's legislative engagement

in Austin, advancing priorities critical to the region's economic growth and competitiveness before the Texas Legislature and state agencies. Earlier in his career, he spent nine years on Capitol Hill serving Members of Congress, including as a senior aide and Deputy Chief of Staff, gaining extensive expertise in the federal legislative process and public policy.

A proud graduate of the Texas community college system, Christian earned his Associate of Arts from San Jacinto College before completing a Bachelor of Science in Political Science at Sam Houston State University and a Master of Public Administration from Pennsylvania State University. He is also a graduate of the Governor's Executive Development Program at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Christian serves on the boards of the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region and the Texas Association of Business, where he chairs the Education and Workforce Committee. He is also a commissioned Military Intelligence officer in the United States Army Reserve with more than fifteen years of service.



PRISCILLA D. CAMACHO, J.D.

Priscilla joined the Alamo Colleges District in April 2020, where she leads legislative policy efforts at the local, state, and federal levels, builds industry partnerships, and collaborates with community organizations that support the district's mission. Before joining Alamo Colleges, she spent seven years with two of Texas' largest chambers of commerce. At the Dallas Regional Chamber, she directed advocacy efforts advancing policies that strengthened North Texas' business climate.

Previously, as Vice President of Education and Workforce Development for the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, she developed public policy strategies focused on education and workforce issues. Earlier in her career, she practiced family law in San Antonio and later operated her own law practice.

A native of Laredo, Texas, Priscilla earned a bachelor's degree in English and Communication Arts from St. Mary's University and a law degree from Texas Tech University School of Law. She has served on numerous nonprofit and public boards, including the Texas Young Lawyers Association, Bexar County Child Welfare Board, City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Board, and Texans Care for Children. Her honors include recognition as a San Antonio Business Journal 40 Under 40 leader, a Texas Tech G.O.L.D. Award recipient, Outstanding Young Lawyer by the Bexar County Women's Bar Association, and a Texas Super Lawyers Rising Star.



PAUL FAIN

Paul Fain, a longtime higher education reporter, is perhaps the nation's top journalist focused on the nexus of education and work. He writes and runs the must-read newsletter, *The Job*, and is co-founder of *Work Shift*, a news site focused on whether education and training are delivering the skilled talent and economic opportunity that society needs. He also hosts *The Cusp*, a podcast about how artificial intelligence is reshaping work and education. Fain is a member of the advisory board of the Georgia Institute of Technology's College of Lifetime Learning.

Previously, Paul was the news editor at Inside Higher Ed, where he led the outlet's coverage of low-income and first-generation students, college completion, community colleges, federal policy, and emerging models of higher education. He was also the founding host of the successful podcast, *The Key with Inside Higher Ed*. Earlier in his career, Paul was a senior reporter at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.



WYNN ROSSER, PH.D.

Dr. Wynn Rosser is the Commissioner of Higher Education and CEO of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), where he provides statewide leadership and oversees higher education budget and policy for the world's eighth-largest economy.

Before joining the THECB, Dr. Rosser worked in philanthropy and higher education administration. With a background in cultivating cross-sector collaboration, he has extensive experience partnering with others to advance shared goals for education across Texas. Through these experiences, he brings deep knowledge and commitment to advancing Texas higher education and the goals of the state's strategic plan for higher education, Building a Talent Strong Texas. His educational background includes a level one certificate, an associate degree, and a research doctorate.



JENIFER SARVER

Jenifer Sarver is a communications strategist, speaker, and educator with more than 25 years of experience helping leaders find and effectively use their voice. As principal of Sarver Strategies, she works at the intersection of business, policy, and purpose, guiding clients through media training, crisis communication, and message development. She is a sought-after corporate coach, working with executives and their teams to build and refine their communication skills. She leads classes, workshops and one-on-one sessions on media training, advocacy and engagement, public speaking and executive presence. She completed her undergraduate work at The University of Texas at Austin and graduate work at American University in Washington, D.C. She is passionate about civic engagement, promoting civil discourse and helping more women get elected to public office. In 2023 she joined the faculty at her alma mater, teaching at the Moody College of Communication.



GARY SUSSWEIN

Gary Susswein, Principal at BandOne, has worked in communications, the media, and organizational leadership for nearly three decades and has supported TACC for the past three years. He provides clients with strategic guidance and crisis support so they can tell their stories powerfully and elevate their reputations.

Drawing on his decade as Director of Media Relations and Chief Communications Officer at The University of Texas at Austin, Gary supports clients across industries, including colleges and universities, to develop communications strategies and manage pressing issues.

Gary worked for 15 years as a journalist, including as State and Metro Editor at the Austin American-Statesman. He has a BA in History from Penn and an MA in Communications from Stanford, and has served on various non-profit boards around Austin.



CARRIE WARICK-SMITH

Carrie Warick-Smith serves as Vice President, Public Policy for the Association of Community College Trustees, a position she assumed in January of 2022. In this role, she leads the advocacy efforts of the nation's community college trustees and oversees ACCT's thought leadership work adjoining policy and practice in the community college space.

Prior to joining ACCT, Warick-Smith spent over a decade at the National College Attainment Network where she built and expanded its policy and advocacy program, with a particular focus on access to federal financial aid. In this role, she led the creation of the organization's advocacy agenda, oversaw the development of a simplified FAFSA prototype, was regularly quoted in the education trade press, and published a piece on effective non-profit advocacy in *Foundation Review*.

Warick-Smith holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs and History and a Master of Public Policy, both from The George Washington University. While at GW, she served as a Presidential Fellow working in university administration.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE CHAMPION



WOODY L. HUNT

Mr. Woody L. Hunt is Controlling Shareholder and Chairman Emeritus of the Board of Directors of Hunt Companies, Inc., and its affiliated companies. Mr. Hunt also serves as Chairman of the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation, a private family foundation he and his wife Gayle, established in 1987.

Mr. Hunt is foundation trustee of the Texas Higher Education Foundation; member of the Board of Visitors of The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center-Houston; Vice-Chair for the Council for Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development in El Paso; former Chairman of the Texas Commission on Community College Finance; former Co-Chair for the Texas Association of Community Colleges Business Advisory Council; and former Chairman of the Texas Business Leadership Council.

Mr. Hunt was previously Chairman of the Texas Higher Education Strategic Planning Committee, which was charged with developing the Higher Education Plan for the State of Texas for 2015 to 2030; Vice-Chairman of The University of Texas System Board of Regents; served seven years, three as Chairman, on the Board of Directors of The University of Texas Investment Management Company (UTIMCO); was chairman of the Texas Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competitiveness; was a member of the Texas Economic Development Corporation (TxEDC); served as a Board Member for Complete College America; was founding chairman and a board member of the Medical Centers of the Americas Foundation in El Paso; a member of the Western Governors University (WGU) Texas Advisory Board; was a member of the Commission for College Ready Texas and the Texas Tax Reform Commission; was a member of the National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE); was a member of the Texas Advisory Committee on Higher Education Cost Efficiencies; was a member of the Task Force on Higher Education Incentive Funding; was a member of the Council for Continuous Improvement and Innovation in Texas Higher Education. In addition, Mr. Hunt has served on numerous other civic, non-profit, and professional boards.

Mr. Hunt graduated with honors from The University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor's Degree in Finance, and he subsequently received his MBA in Finance from UT. Mr. Hunt also earned an MA Degree in Management from the Drucker School of Management at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California.

HOTEL MAP



1. Lobby / Front Desk

2. Sire Bar & Bocado

3. Plaza San Saba

4. Meeting Rooms (3rd Floor)

5. Emily's Rose Court

6. San Antonio Grand Ballroom

7. La Cantera Ballroom

8. Esparza Lawn

9. SweetFire Kitchen

10. Primero Cantina

11. Primero Terrace

12. Pool Towel Bar

13. Fitness Center

14. Topaz

16. Bocce Court

17. Resort Pool

18. Resort Hot Tub

19. Adult Pool

20. Adult Pool Cabanas

21. Adult Hot Tub

22. El Fortin Lawn

23. Vista Grille

24. Kids Pool & Slides

25. Recreation Court

26. Shuttle to Rim / Six Flags / Shops*

27. City View Terrace

28. Loma de Vida Spa & Quenche

29. Henrietta's Market

30. Snack Shack at the Turn

31. Resort Course Pro Shop

**32. Grille 254 & Armour/
Weiskopf Meeting Rooms**

33. Palo Duro

34. The Villas

35. Signature Restaurant

36. The Calera

37. La Sierra at SweetFire Kitchen

38. Pool Shop & Kids Club

39. Nature Trail

.... Walking Path to Nature Trail

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LA CANTERA RESORT & SPA

**16641 La Cantera Parkway,
San Antonio, TX 78256**

*Daily Shuttle Service to The Shops at La Cantera, The Rim, and Six Flags • 6:30am-11pm upon availability • Allow 10-15 minutes in-between stops

The background is a solid blue color. In the four corners, there are decorative patterns of white dots of varying sizes, arranged in a way that suggests a corner or a corner crop of a larger image.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US
& SAFE TRAVELS HOME!**



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