



2026 ACCT Leadership Congress sessions featuring speakers from Texas community colleges

Thursday, October 22

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Beyond the AI Conversation: A Leadership Framework for Community College Transformation

Grand Hall H, Ballroom Level, East tower

Artificial intelligence is reshaping higher education, workforce development, and student success. This session examines AI's impact on teaching, learning, ethics, and workforce preparation, then presents a community college case study demonstrating how strategic leadership, governance, and employer partnerships enabled rapid development of AI degree programs with scalable institutional practices.

Allison Benke, Chair, Board of Trustees, Blinn College, TX

Jay Anderson, Vice Chancellor of Applied Sciences, Workforce and Economic Development, Blinn College, TX

Victoria Fowler, Dean of Mathematics, Business, Engineering, and Technology, Blinn College, TX

Cheryl Sellers, Trustee, Brazosport College, TX

Monique Baucham, Provost, Brazosport College, TX

Amy Sisman, Associate Professor, Brazosport College, TX

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Conducting an Effective CEO Search

Plaza Ballroom AB, Lobby Level, East Tower

With nearly one in four community colleges experiencing a presidential transition, boards must be prepared to navigate today's evolving leadership landscape. Is your board preparing to launch a CEO search? This session will explore how boards and colleges can successfully prepare for executive leadership transitions. Learn best practices for planning an open, equitable, and nationwide search, attracting a strong and diverse candidate pool, engaging stakeholders throughout the process, and avoiding the common pitfalls that can derail a successful search.

Sandy Caldwell, Consultant, ACCT

Charlene Dukes, Consultant, ACCT

Marie Gnage, Consultant, ACCT

Luke Robins, Consultant, ACCT

Jackie Ramos, Trustee & Board Officer, Laredo College, TX

Julie Golder, Vice President of Search Services, ACCT



10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

PBSN Concurrent Session & Presentations Driving Change Through Compassionate Leadership: Systems, Advocacy, and Student Impact

Grand Hall K, Ballroom Level, East Tower

This session explores how compassionate leadership drives systems change by embedding compassion into organizational structures, culture, and practice. Presenters share strategies for designing people-centered institutions and for a statewide initiative advancing advocacy and basic-needs awareness across community colleges, strengthening collaboration, belonging, well-being, equity, and student success.

Eric Castillo, Associate Vice Chancellor for Arts, Culture, and Community Impact, Alamo Colleges District, TX

Gloria Ray, Trustee, Alamo Colleges District, TX

Denise Wilson, Board Liaison/Elections Administrator, Alamo Colleges District, TX

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

One College, Many Pathways: Creating a Seamless Career Ready Student Experience

Randolph 1AB, Concourse Level, East Tower

Community colleges often unintentionally create fragmented student experiences through separate workforce, transfer, and student services systems. This session explores how Grayson College's "One College" philosophy aligned Career Ready, workforce, and academic pathways through governance, organizational redesign, advising, communications, and student-centered processes to reduce barriers and create seamless learner experiences.

Jeremy McMillen, President, Grayson College, TX

John Spies, Board Chair, Grayson College, TX

Chase Machen, Dean of Academic and Workforce Instruction, Grayson College, TX

Logan Maxwell, Vice President of Student Services, Grayson College, TX

Dava Washburn, Vice President of Instruction, Grayson College, TX

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

ACCT WESTERN REGIONAL CAUCUS AND MEETING

Voting Delegates to Attend

Grand Hall L, Ballroom Level, East Tower

Teller: Raymond Lewis, Jr., Trustee: Galveston College, TX

Assistant Teller: Kathy Boellstorff, Trustee: Southeast Community College, KS

Sergeant-At-Arms: Arlen Leiker, Trustee: Colby Community College, KS



2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Work Session for the Professional Board Staff Network (PBSN)

Plaza Ballroom, Lobby Level, East Tower

Friday, October 23

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

Apples and Pears: “Theory of Change” versus “A Strategic Plan” in Board Governance

Grand Hall J, Ballroom Level, East Tower

Amid drastic economic, social, and technological changes, traditional planning may not nimbly meet the moment. Austin Community College Trustees adopted a “Theory of Change” as a strategic directional apparatus. Participants will interactively evaluate traditional and new planning approaches with specific ways Trustees lead and engage the Theory of Change.

Russell Lowery-Hart, Chancellor, Austin Community College District, TX

Barbara Mink, Former Trustee, Austin Community College District, TX

Gigi Edwards Bryant, Trustee, Austin Community College District, TX

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

The Courage to Care: Advancing Student Success through a Holistic Student Wellness Ecosystem and Wraparound Services

Grand Hall I, Ballroom Level, East Tower

This session explores a holistic student wellness model integrating counseling, crisis response, basic needs, financial wellness, legal aid, and community partnerships to improve student success. Participants will learn strategies for scaling wraparound services, implementing hub-based care, managing organizational change, and aligning wellness initiatives with institutional goals, retention, and completion outcomes.

Shantha Stokes, Senior Associate Vice Chancellor/Chief Mental Health Officer, Lone Star College System, TX

Iesheia Wilson, Trustee, Lone Star College System, TX

Kristy Vienne, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration/Chief Financial Officer, Lone Star College System, TX



8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

From Data to Action: Leveraging the Student Financial Wellness Survey for Student Success

Grand Hall K, Ballroom Level, East Tower

The Student Financial Wellness Survey (SFWS) from Trellis Strategies provides institutions with free, actionable data on student financial wellness, basic needs security, mental health, work obligations, caregiving responsibilities, and other factors that influence student success. This session will highlight findings from the most recent survey administration, including responses from students attending more than 100 community colleges, and demonstrate how participating institutions can use the results to support planning, resource allocation, program development, and institutional effectiveness efforts.

Attendees will also hear from institutional leaders who have leveraged SFWS findings to inform student support efforts on their campuses and gain insights into how these data can inform policy discussions around student access, persistence, and completion.

Carlos Cruz, Associate Vice Chancellor of Well Being and Social Support, Dallas College, TX

Avi Zaffini, President & CEO, Ohio Association of Community Colleges, OH

Allyson Cornett, Director of Research, Trellis Strategies

Genesis Santiago, Senior Government Relations Associate, ACCT

8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

ACCT SENATE MEETING

Voting Delegates to Attend

Crystal Ballroom AB, Lobby Level, West Tower

The ACCT Senate meeting is the official annual meeting of the association. As defined by the association Bylaws, the ACCT Senate has the full authority of the membership and is composed of the delegates of the Voting Members of the association. All Voting Delegates should plan to attend this meeting. During the ACCT Senate meeting, the Voting Delegates will elect Directors-at-Large to the ACCT Board of Directors and vote on any proposed resolutions and amendments to the ACCT Bylaws. A state-of-the-association report and financial report will also be shared during the meeting.



9:15 AM – 10:15 AM

AlamoPROMISE and the Advancement of College Enrollment through Tuition-Free College: Removing Barriers to Access, Strengthening Systems, and Deepening Partnerships

Randolph 1AB, Concourse Level, East Tower

Explore how the Alamo College District's AlamoPROMISE drives college access through a tuition-free model aligned with a regional moonshot to end poverty. Learn how cross-sector partnerships and strategic outreach helped enroll 30,000 students, increasing program participation and county college-going rates beyond pre-launch levels.

Stephanie Vasquez, Chief Program Officer, AlamoPROMISE, Alamo Colleges District, TX

Joe Alderete, Vice Board Chair, Alamo Colleges District, TX

9:15 AM – 10:15 AM

New America-ACCT Report Launch: How Trustees Can Build Capacity to Advance Economic Development and the American Dream

Grand Hall K, Ballroom Level, East Tower

Community college trustees play a critical role in influencing decision-making at their institutions and aligning regional socioeconomic goals with college direction-setting. However, little is understood about the nature of trustee-presidential partnerships as it relates to strengthening a college's institutional policies and practices to be more successful in workforce and economic development initiatives. To address this gap, New America and ACCT conducted a first-of-its-kind survey of community college trustees and presidents, as an expansion of the Accelerator for the Community Colleges in the Innovation Economy. The goals of this survey were to: 1) identify promising practices in community college governance related to economic and workforce development, and 2) assess trustees' needs for leadership development for future programming within ACCT. In this session, hear New America and college leaders discuss key findings from the national study, and preview how New America and ACCT are planning to support institutions in meeting evolving workforce needs in 2027.

Steve Jurch, Associate VP, ACCT

Shalin Jyotishi, Director, New America

Steve Anderson, Trustee, Northeast Community College

Manny Gonzales, Trustee, Austin Community College District, TX

Walt Mundt, Trustee, Harper College, IL

Tiffany Thai, Policy Analyst, New America



10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

From Innovation to Impact: Scaling Bellwether Award-Winning Strategies for Student and Career Success

Grand Hall J, Ballroom Level, East Tower

Engage with Bellwether Award-winning colleges that will showcase evidence-based innovations advancing student success, workforce readiness, and strategy. SUNY Orange highlights guided math placement reforms; Merced College presents a workforce ecosystem; Marion Technical College features a strategic partnership driving scalable, measurable outcomes and career pathways.

Kristine Young, President, SUNY Orange, NY

Chris Vitelli, President/Superintendent, Merced College, CA

Amy Adams, Executive Vice President, Marion Technical College, SC

Clint Kingsbery, Trustee, Alamo College District, TX

Rose Martinez, Director, Bellwether College Consortium, Alamo Colleges District, TX

10:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Beyond Dashboards: Building a Board-Level Data Culture

Plaza Ballroom B, Lobby Level, East Tower

Community college boards need more than dashboards to govern effectively with data. This session explores how trustees can build a board-level data culture through shared learning, strategic questioning, ethical data use, and sense-making with the CEO, using CCATT's Data-Informed Governance Modules as practical tools for board development.

Paul R. Rodriguez, Board Chair, South Texas College, TX

Tara Deaver, Vice Board Chair, Odessa College, TX

Nicole Eversmann, Senior Director, Community College Association of Texas Trustees, TX

Ryan Knight, Associate Director, Community College Association of Texas Trustees, TX



Community College
Association of Texas Trustees

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM

Beyond Tradition: Evolving Shared Governance with Faculty and Staff Leadership

Michigan 1AB, Concourse Level, East Tower

Leading with care requires trustees to affirm and engage the voices that contribute to student success. This session highlights how Houston City College's Board partnered with the Faculty Senate to sustain effective shared governance in a complex environment, and the new Staff Senate to elevate staff voices in institutional decision-making.

Andrea Burrige, Vice Chancellor, Strategy, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness, Houston City College, TX

Nathan Smith, Faculty Senate President, Houston City College, TX

Iszella Fowers, Staff Senate President, Houston City College, TX

Pretta VanDible Stallworth, Trustee, Houston City College, TX

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

ACCT Incoming Chair Reception

Crystal Ballroom C, Lobby Level, West Tower

Join us for this reception honoring Dr. Pretta VanDible Stallworth, a board member at Houston City College and the Incoming Chair of the ACCT Board of Directors.

Saturday, October 24

8:15 AM – 9:15 AM

Supporting Student Success: Policies That Make a Difference

Grand Hall I, Ballroom Level, East Tower

El Paso Community College's Trustees are known for their laser-focus on student success. Together, they influence policies affecting retention, completion, and post-graduate outcomes. During this panel discussion trustees will share examples of how they advanced student success initiatives. Participants will learn how trustees can use policy to support these outcomes.

William Serrata, President, El Paso Community College, TX

Keri Moe, Associate Vice President of External Relations, Communication & Development, El Paso Community College, TX

Brian Haggerty, Board Chair, El Paso Community College, TX

Diana Mooy, Trustee, El Paso Community College, TX

Bonnie Soria Najera, Vice Board Chair, El Paso Community College, TX