ACCT ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES

STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION REPORT
July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011

Delivered at the 42nd Annual ACCT Congress
Hyatt Regency Dallas
Dallas, Texas
October 14, 2011

The ACCT Board of Directors and management are pleased to report that the State of the Association remains strong. ACCT's advocacy and education departments continue to develop greater capacities and offer increased breadth and depth of services for member trustees and colleges. This State of the Association Report lists a number of activities and developments that have taken place over the past fiscal year, though the report cannot detail every initiative that the Association has conducted.

Given the current economic difficulties facing colleges throughout the country, the need to ensure strong support for our members has never been more important. The Association has achieved exceptional success working with the Obama Administration and continuing the national focus on and recognition of community college trustees. As a result, ACCT acquired 23 new member boards in FY 2011 and 24 new member boards in FY 2012. These new additions have increased ACCT membership to represent the greatest number of member boards in the history of the Association, which has given ACCT the unprecedented opportunity to meet members' needs through strategic new programs and services.

Serving the Membership Efficiently

Focus on the persistently slow national, state, and local economies has continued to be on the forefront of the Association's activities. ACCT has responded to the needs of the membership by adopting such initiatives as increasing advocacy for state assistance from the federal government and reducing and streamlining costs related to the Annual ACCT Leadership Congress and Community College National Legislative Summit (NLS).

The State, Province, and Territory Coordinators Network continues to serve as ACCT's link to its membership. In 2010, ACCT Chair Peter E. Sercer, Sr. announced his goal to acquire at least one new member board and new State Coordinator for each of the five regions, and nearly every region has achieved success in both components of the goal. This year, the Network has a roster of 39 State Coordinators.

As the only national community college trustee association, ACCT dedicates all its resources to serving its membership efficiently. The Association continues to honor its objective to balance dues with direct member-service expenditures and ensure that fee-for-services programs are both self-supporting and revenue-neutral. ACCT has taken steps to ensure that all services and products are available to the membership at the lowest possible cost. Base registration fees for the Annual ACCT Leadership Congress have increased modestly, and fees for the Community College National Legislative Summit (NLS) remain frozen at 2006 levels—a commitment made to ensure that members have the greatest opportunity to attend their national meetings. Further, the ACCT Trust Fund Board allocated funding to enable the ACCT office to establish a sophisticated Internet-based videoconferencing system, which will facilitate the development of webinars and other virtual events that will empower members with continuing governance education without incurring travel expenses.

In preparation for these virtual events for trustees, ACCT has piloted a series of Virtual Leadership Academies over the past year. ACCT's Virtual Leadership Academies are designed for senior community college administrators and university administrators who have a serious interest in advancing to a presidential position at a community college. Based on the positive feedback, ACCT will continue to offer these webinars on an ongoing basis. Topics include "Developing a Competitive Application Package" and "How to Impress at the Interview." Feedback and demand will guide ACCT as the Association adds additional topics throughout the coming year. ACCT's initial experience with this webinar series will help guide future efforts as the Association works to implement the ACCT Trust Fund Board- and ACCT Board-approved national webinar series, expanding services to member trustees throughout the country. ACCT's focus on its core mission remains paramount to its initiatives.

Providing National Representation

ACCT, in partnership with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), launched the "Stand up for Pell Grants" Campaign with a Pell Grant Action Center online. Kicked off with a free webinar led by J. Noah Brown, President & CEO of ACCT, and Walter Bumphus, President & CEO of AACC, the campaign engaged community college trustees, presidents, and students to generate hundreds of e-mails and phone calls to their federal legislators to maintain the maximum Pell Grant award at $5,550. The campaign also inspired numerous board resolutions and op-eds dedicated to saving the Pell Grant.

ACCT has worked diligently to build upon and promote federal resources and opportunities for community colleges to lessen the impact of state and local funding cuts. This year, ACCT aggressively campaigned for and secured continued Pell Grant program funding during the debt-ceiling budget negotiations, keeping members informed and mobilized throughout the process. The Association has worked in partnership with the Administration to institute the Community College and Career-Training Grant Program, with the first solicitation for proposals for the $500 million underway. Additionally, ACCT staff has consulted with the Aspen Institute Skills for America's Future, as well as the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, which will award $1 million for the first time to a community college this autumn.

Following the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges convened in 2010, ACCT worked with the Administration and the Department of Education to coordinate the four regional summits and virtual summit titled "Challenges, Solutions, and Commitments." The four summits covered areas of opportunity for community colleges across the nation, in Philadelphia, PA; Houston, TX; Indianapolis, IN; and San Diego, CA. Each of the summits brought together over 150 individuals from the community college sector, business, and government.

ACCT's partnership to create a greater system of accountability, in partnership with AACC and the College Board, and supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education, continues to progress. Currently, some 70 community colleges are beta-testing the first data elements of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA). This unique community college accountability initiative stands to revolutionize how community and technical colleges demonstrate their effectiveness, ensuring greater and more accurate accountability measures and placing a new emphasis on student success while continuing to promote access to higher education.

Strengthening Leadership, Education, and Research

ACCT continues to respond to member-education needs. Efforts to support the most influential and relevant presentations at the Annual ACCT Leadership Congress remains a high priority, including identifying cutting-edge sessions and roundtables in order to maintain the Annual ACCT Leadership Congress's reputation as one of the premier national leadership events of the year. The Annual ACCT Leadership Congress, NLS, and Governance Leadership Institute (GLI) evaluation forms and analyses continue to be refined in order to assess the impact of programming on the membership and measure satisfaction with our education services.

ACCT's Board Leadership Services (BLS), which are continuously evaluated and consistently receive high marks by members, offer the highest-quality services and targeted resources available for community college trustees, conveying vital information on effective governance and exemplary trusteeship. The Association's direct services to member boards in CEO Searches, Retreats, Board and Presidential evaluations, and interim executive placements are informed by its long history of working with boards and CEOs. BLS enjoyed unprecedented success this year, completing 31 president/chancellor searches, seven vice-presidential searches, 33 retreats, nine board self-assessments and presidential evaluations, and one interim CEO placement.

In response to member requests, ACCT is now conducting searches for senior-level community college officials, including vice presidents, provosts, and deans. This is part of ACCT's response to the significant staff turnovers at many colleges due to an increasing number of president and chancellor retirements throughout the country. ACCT has successfully maintained its track record of recruiting among the most diverse and qualified candidates in the nation for all of its presidential searches. The Association practices its commitment to diversity as well, by employing perhaps the most diverse and nationally representative staff in its more than 40-year history.

BLS is being used increasingly to build a knowledge-based approach to effective trusteeship. An example of how knowledge is transferred is the Governance Leadership Institute (GLI), instituted in 2006. The November GLI in Las Vegas and the Washington, D.C., New Trustees GLI were attended by nearly 100 individuals drawn from states and countries including: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Canada, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Micronesia, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Palau, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

Communications, Website, and Publications

ACCT is committed to providing the most up-to-date information to help inform decision making and support effective governance. ACCT's electronic public policy updates— Latest Action in Washington (LAW) E-Alerts— disseminate information about developments in Washington to members as they occur to give members the opportunity to take immediate actions that will positively affect their colleges. The traditional member publications also continue to provide invaluable advocacy information, such as the article providing insights from officials at the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor on the Community College and Career Training Grant Program published in the fall 2010 issue of *Trustee Quarterly* magazine, which was recognized with a 2010 APEX Award for Publication Excellence, the second such honor for the magazine.

ACCT also continuously seeks communications from its members through timely information and feedback made possible by the ACCT State, Province, and Territory Coordinator's Network, or directly through the ACCT offices in Washington, D.C. Progress toward meeting the Chair's Challenge to boost Network coverage in member states, and to focus on recruiting non-member states, continues. Recent State Coordinator additions include Hawaii, Indiana, and Nevada.

ACCT website traffic has increased over the past year, showing increased interest from both members and the public at large. Additionally, ACCT has developed two "microsites" over the past year: one for the Governance Institute for Student Success project (www.governance-institute.org) and one for ACCT Board Leadership Services Presidential and Executive Searches (www.acctsearches.org). Both sites are linked to the main navigation of the ACCT website. By all accounts, ACCT.org remains the primary destination for active members; however, the Association is currently redesigning ACCT.org not only to update the appearance and streamline the content of the website, but also to allow for greater expansion of online content and capabilities for vital ACCT programs and services, including public policy, board leadership services, and events.

ACCT's media representation has been both national in scale and community-specific when needed. Newsworthy ACCT developments continue to receive coverage in higher education press, including *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Community College Week*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, and others. In addition, ACCT President and CEO J. Noah Brown represented the nation's community college trustees in a number of broadcast media stories, including National Public Radio, *USA Today*, and a string of strategic radio and television interviews in Arizona to urge the state legislature to continue supporting community colleges. ACCT also has worked closely with its sister association, AACC, resulting in a cover story about community college trustees in the February/March issue of *Community College Journal* authored by ACCT staff and featuring three trustees.

The Association also has made a strategic foray into social media, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Flickr. While the use of all these platforms is relatively new, ACCT has found Twitter to be an excellent outlet for news and legislative alerts, both to members and the general public. Already, ACCT's Twitter account (www.twitter.com/CCTrustees) has over 550 followers, including many member colleges and individuals, prominent foundations, federal officials, and journalists, many of which have "re-tweeted" ACCT information. All Twitter information is cross-posted to ACCT's Facebook account, which also hosts a number of photos from ACCT and other events, including the Department of Education Regional Community College Summits. All of these outlets have proven valuable, and ACCT will continue to develop them through the coming year.

Focus on the Future: Access FOR Success and Completion

The ACCT Board of Directors' "Access FOR Success" initiative, which focuses ACCT's strategic priorities from 2010 through 2015, continues to inform and guide Association efforts to focus on student success and completion. This new vision places a major emphasis on advocacy, education efforts, and partnerships with relevant stakeholder organizations to facilitate shifting from primarily enrollment-driven policies to a balance of traditional policies with student success and completion-oriented policies.

ACCT has created new partnerships and programs with the Access FOR Success mission in mind, and the Association is well on the way to strengthening accountability and student success through governance, including ACCT's first-ever pre-Congress Summit on Completion held at the start of the 2010 ACCT Leadership Congress in Toronto. Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education, and with assistance from The College Board, the Summit brought together key stakeholders from state and national governmental and policy organizations to focus on the role of community college boards in strengthening student success and completion. A follow-up Symposium on Completion was held immediately prior to this year's Congress in Dallas to continue the conversation and, more importantly, to continue the action. Other strategic partnerships include:

- Single Stop USA – combating poverty and boosting success for low-income and disadvantaged students;
- Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses – empowering entrepreneurs and small businesses through community college programs;
- National Governors Association's "Complete to Compete" project – focusing on engaging governors in improving student success and completion in higher education; and, most recently,
- The Common Core State Standards initiative – aiming to increase K-12 student performance and alignment with higher education, an initiative supported by 44 governors across the country.

Most significant, however, is the Association's first-ever major foundation grant. ACCT, in partnership with the Community College Leadership Program (CCLP), The University of Texas at Austin College of Education, and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is in the midst of a three-year initiative to design, develop, and implement the *Governance Institute for Student Success*. The goal of the new institute is to develop a process through which governing boards and CEOs can foster the institutional agenda and skills necessary to accelerate and achieve the needed increases in student attainment and completion.

The new *Governance Institute for Student Success* initiative blends ACCT's esteemed Governance Leadership Institute (GLI) and CCLP's highly-rated Board of Trustees Institute to provide the foundation for transformational work with governing boards of community and technical colleges to increase student success and attainment as governance priorities. In September, 2010, ACCT convened the first GISS, which engaged the participation of nearly every community college in Ohio. This past June, every college in Washington state was represented at the second GISS event, and in August, 64 leaders from 18 Texas community and technical colleges convened for the third Governance Institute for Student Success. Next year, the project will return to Ohio and Washington at the request of each state's colleges and the Gates Foundation to continue the momentum.

In Summary

In short, ACCT continues to work tirelessly in support of trustees and to ensure that membership in ACCT remains among the best overall investments community college boards can make in their future and that of the communities they serve. In the past year, the Association has been able to add 9.5 full-time staff positions, expanding from 13 full-time positions a year ago to 22.5. With these additional human resources, ACCT is better equipped than ever to meet the needs of members. We appreciate the privilege of serving you and the community college mission.

J. Noah Brown

J. Noah Brown
ACCT President and Chief Executive Officer
Washington, D.C.