

Information Item

ACCT 2021 Conference Attendance Report for the Board of Trustees

In October, I attended the 2021 ACCT Leadership Congress held in San Diego. The conference theme was Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Also in attendance were Trustee Jim Orr and Collin SVP of Campus Operations, Dr. Abe Johnson

As a member of the ACCT Public Policy and Advocacy Committee, I attended the monthly Committee meeting, held in-person on October 12, where members were provided with updates pertaining to upcoming federal legislation being debated in Washington, DC.

One of the more interesting keynote speeches was one given by Mr. Nicholas Pinchuk, an impressive Armed Services veteran, and President and CEO of Snap-On Tools Inc., an American manufacturing company. He referred to strengthening workforce skills and upskilling the workforce as important and “seminal” issues. He said, “We need to demand of our leaders that they support community colleges and the upskilling of the American workforce.”

Dr. Abe Johnson and I co-presented a paper titled: Partnering for Student Success – where we highlighted the various kinds of partnerships that have been successfully deployed at Collin College such as with: ISDs, Corporate Partners, University Partners, Non-Profit Organizations, etc. The presentation was well received.

Finally, below is a brief listing (in no particular order) of some of the interesting and noteworthy ideas presented and shared by trustees and administrators in the sessions that I attended. (Disclaimer: These are not all my opinions, nor are they recommendations, but rather a listing of some of the ideas that were expressed by others at the conference, which I found noteworthy.)

- Ideas to prioritize “real access” to various sub-groups of students, who have special challenges which may prevent them from attending or taking full advantage of community college opportunities.
 - One of the interesting talks was from a lady who is the CEO of Generation Hope, and author of book: Pregnant Girl. (One example of such a group are young (teen / adolescent) parents.
 - It is important to collect and track student-parent data on a recurring basis – because the data can keep changing.
 - Convenience is a key factor to getting students to participate in, and provide data for, various types of surveys. Surveys should be concise or even embedded in other forms of data collections. FAFSA is typically NOT a good

- mechanism. 1 in 8 students are not doing FAFSA and also DACA students are not completing the FAFSA.
- Prioritize the creation of family-friendly policies (eg: No-kids on campus does not work!)
 - Installing Wi-Fi in the parking lot is NOT going to help a student parent sitting with 2 kids in the back seat of the car in the parking lot.
 - Consider what if we said YES – instead of NO?
- One group shared experiences of the best “trustee training” for new trustees – was the one created by Trustees for Trustees!
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) being the theme of the conference was an idea embedded in many presentations and recommendations included:
 - Consider changing policies to infuse DEI concepts in various segments / chapters of board policies
 - Look at Policies and Procedures through a DEI lens...For example: when you look at Harassment or Discrimination complaints – it could be useful to break down the data by complaint type / complainant type (e.g., Student-student cases vs. Employee-student cases).
 - But also useful to break out ALL DATA by race, age, gender, religion, etc. – so that any discriminatory patterns could be better observed.
 - A key point that kept getting repeated was DISAGGREGATION of data. This could also be useful for Probation / Dismissal / Readmission statistics, Compensation data, Student Success data.
 - One session focused on improving communication and effectiveness at Board Meetings.
 - IDEA: Have a brief, 2-question evaluation form – to be filled out by each trustee at the end of each meeting – to evaluate if the meeting upheld the values and guidelines espoused by the board. Share results with the public and have a discussion of any major issues that come up in the evaluation at the start of the following meeting.
 - IDEA: It is really helpful to have a neutral external facilitator for board self-evaluation, especially if there are sensitive issues.
 - IDEA: Conduct a board retreat – right after doing the board self-evaluation.

Resource:

Dr. Raj Menon, Board of Trustee