

ACCJC*Connect*

December 2025



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President's Message

Gratitude, Celebration, and Looking Ahead

Dear Colleagues,

As we close out the year, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for your continued partnership and commitment to student success. The work we do together matters deeply, and I am grateful for the collaboration that strengthens our institutions and communities.

Looking ahead, we're excited to kick off our regional convenings in January in the Pacific and the three additional convenings for those on the mainland in April. These gatherings are an opportunity to share ideas, learn from one another, and continue advancing the mission of two-year institutions.

This edition of *Connect* marks a special moment of celebration: Tom Lane's retirement after 29 years of professional, thoughtful, and impactful service. Tom's contributions have shaped our work and our values, and we honor his legacy with gratitude and admiration.

Finally, we remain attentive to the changing federal landscape and will continue to engage both in Washington, D.C. and across our region to advocate for policies that support access and excellence in higher education.

From all of us at ACCJC, warm wishes for a joyful holiday season. Thank you for all you do, and here's to a productive year ahead.

Yours,

Mac Powell

Commission Announcements and Updates

Celebrating the Retirement of Tom Lane after 29 Years of Service



It is with deep appreciation and warm congratulations that we announce the retirement of our esteemed colleague Tom Lane.

For 29 years, Tom has been a cornerstone of ACCJC. His dedication, compassion, and tireless service have left a profound and lasting impact on our organization, our members, and the broader community we serve.

Tom has long demonstrated a passion for helping traditionally underserved student populations, and he has quite literally been a lifeline for incarcerated students seeking to navigate their educational opportunities as part of his work. His thoughtful, patient guidance has made a difference in countless lives.

Throughout his tenure, Tom has played a critical role in helping members of the public, students, and college personnel understand and navigate the accreditation process. His steady voice and clear counsel have guided many through the complaint process, institutional reporting, and other accreditation-related activities. He has consistently served as a bridge between the Commission and those it serves, offering both clarity and compassion.

When ACCJC had a physical office, Tom was more than just a trusted colleague, he was the “voice of ACCJC” on the phone and the first face people saw when they came to the office. Tom was always welcoming and assisted visitors with warmth and professionalism. Internally, Tom played a role in most projects and processes. He helped his colleagues navigate technology, diligently maintained ACCJC’s databases, and maintained critical institutional records. He was also the meticulous organizer of Commission meeting materials, ensuring every detail was in place for our Commissioners and staff.

Tom’s work has quietly underpinned many of ACCJC’s operations, and his legacy will be felt long after his retirement. His steadfastness, kindness, and humility have made him not only a deeply valued colleague but a true friend to so many.

Please join us in celebrating Tom’s extraordinary service and in wishing him years ahead filled with joy, relaxation, and well-deserved rest. His presence will be greatly missed and never forgotten.

Call to Action

Now Recruiting: ACCJC Appeals Hearing Panel Pool

ACCJC is seeking individuals to serve in the Commission’s Appeals Hearing Panel Pool, a group of higher education professionals and public representatives who may be called upon in the rare event of an institutional appeal to an ACCJC action.

Members of the pool serve three-year terms and reflect the diversity of ACCJC’s membership and region, with consideration for institutional size, mission, geography, and professional background. If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to this important aspect of ACCJC’s institutional accreditation process, please submit the [Appeals Hearing Panel Pool Interest Form](#). For questions, please contact communications@accjc.org. For more details, view the [Policy on Institutional Appeals](#).

Please Update Statements of Accredited Status and ACCJC Logo

ACCJC kindly requests that all member institutions review and update, as necessary, their statements of accredited status in publications and on college websites per the [ACCJC Bylaws](#) and the [Policy on Representation of Accredited Status](#). ACCJC’s [updated logo](#) and the [ACCJC Logo Use and Style Guide](#) are available to assist with these updates.

Background: Since 2024, ACCJC has been doing business as “Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges.” As such, the reference to Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) should be removed from statements of accredited status.

Upcoming Events

Transparency, Storytelling, and Value Literacy Project Regional Convenings

ACCJC will host four convenings in 2026, bringing together diverse campus teams for a workshop led by representatives from Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, winner of the 2025 Aspen Prize, showcasing how ROI data can be embedded into planning and culture to ensure students graduate into living-wage careers. Invitations and registration instructions will be sent to CEOs, ALOs, Chancellors, and Board Presidents. *We invite college administrators, faculty, staff, students, and trustees to participate in the conversations.* Space can accommodate **up to seven attendees** from each member institution at a designated regional convening. There is no charge, and the cost of attendance is subsidized. More information is available on the ACCJC website. The regional convenings are supported by a grant from the College Futures Foundation.

[Transparency, Storytelling, and Value Literacy Project...](#)

Regional Convening at Kapi’olani Community College – January 12th, 9 am – 4 pm HST

Regional Convening at Long Beach City College – April 13th, 9 am – 5 pm PDT

Regional Convening at Skyline College – April 15th, 9 am – 5 pm PDT

Regional Convening at Sacramento City College – April 16th, 9 am – 5 pm PDT

Upcoming Events *continued...*

2026 ACCJC Partners in Excellence Conference

SAVE THE DATES



ACCJC CONFERENCE

PARTNERS | 20
IN EXCELLENCE | 26

November 17-18, 2026
Riverside Convention Center
Riverside, California

Join us for a gathering of regional and national visionaries celebrating and sharing bold ideas, breakthrough gains in student success, and the powerful impact of our member institutions.

**More information will be available soon,
for now, please save the dates.**



ACCJC On The Move

Stories of Student Success and Institutional Transformation

The story of an institution is the story of the people, places, and communities that serve its students. Conversations about student success often focus solely on graduation rates or other benchmark data that can obscure the true impact institutions, programs, and people have on the human beings served. *ACCJC On The Move* is about our journey to understand the distinct missions of the 138 institutions ACCJC serves, and the promising impactful practices changing lives inside and outside the classroom. Our most recent articles feature [Honolulu Community College](#), [Merced College](#), and [Mt. San Antonio College](#). Take a look at [ACCJC On The Move](#), follow us on [Instagram @accjc_onthemove](#), and please say hello when you see President Powell on campus!

ACCJC In the Field

ACCJC Staff and Commissioners wish you well this holiday season!



2025 Commission Development Workshop

ACCJC staff and Commissioners recently participated in the Commission's 2025 Commission Development Workshop in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Pictured above, we connected with Wendy Hensel, President of the University of Hawai'i, and Carlos Peñaloza, Chancellor of Leeward Community College (LCC), and toured LCC's Wahiawā Value-Added Product Development Center. An *ACCJC On the Move* feature will be coming out soon!

Please forward *ACCJC Connect* to Your Colleagues

Please spread the word by forwarding *ACCJC Connect* to colleagues, members of the public, and students. Help ACCJC keep member institution personnel and other interested parties apprised of our news and updates. If you have any questions or comments about this communication, please email communications@accjc.org. Thank you!

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