

10-28-2021

TO: CCC Board of Directors  
FROM: John A. Novotny  
RE: 2021 National ACCT Conference in San Diego October 13-16

Matt Gotschall and I attended the conference, which was the same one that many of our board members attended last year virtually, due to the COVID pandemic. There were over 1,200 attendees' representing many of the 900+ public community colleges over the USA.

The take home message from the conference was that compared to many community colleges, CCC is doing very well comparatively, however, we need to continue the great work going forward, there are many challenges as you know. The new post-COVID normal will not be the same as the pre-COVID normal, and the rate of change will continue to increase with more and more electronics being introduced into the education system.

Of note, some of the sessions I attended were as follows:

**Partnerships between industry and colleges.** Many colleges are struggling with student retention and placement, and some are just starting the process of partnering with industry in their area. CCC on the other hand, has had partnerships (either formal or informal) for many years, and new ones are being developed. Focus needs to be maintained on the current and developing relationships.

**4-Year degrees.** Some colleges are looking at trying to offer 4-year degrees, due to declining enrollments and budget struggles. Some have succeeded. Although this may be something CCC could consider, it is not in a vacuum, as this would require the Nebraska state legislators to change the laws governing this, it would most likely require the endorsement of the NCCA, and would probably be fought by state senators that already have 4-year colleges in their area. Having said that, CCC is probably in a good position compared to other Nebraska community colleges to consider this. This would probably be a long-term strategic plan consideration if at all.

**Build Back Better Agenda.** Joe Biden's efforts for free tuition for community colleges is currently under consideration by our national lawmakers. Experts in the field seem to have the consensus that some aspect of free tuition will most likely happen, and there will be many ramifications if it is implemented. We will simply need to see what legislation is passed and address it accordingly.

**Board Retreat.** It was shocking to see the number of courses offered on developing a good relationship between board members themselves, and the board and CEO. I feel we are very fortunate to have an excellent relationship on both counts. Many items that are normally covered in a board retreat, we already cover in our routine work sessions. Some community colleges have built into their policies an annual board retreat. There are roughly 22 states that have community college trustees appointed rather than elected. It seems that those colleges that have annual or frequent retreats come from those states with appointments. In the case of CCC, perhaps a 1 in 4 year routine board retreat might be something to consider, as all board members go through the election process over that period of time. Our possible upcoming board retreat next year would most likely include members of other Nebraska community colleges, which is a good way to network with our state peers. We could also have a break-out session so that at some point in a statewide retreat, there would be time for each college to have a brief session of their own as well. It was also pointed out that board retreats fall under the open meetings act, but, executive sessions are allowed, just like at regular meetings.

Something I thought would be helpful for the board, would be to know what our board responsibilities are from a legislative standpoint. This would be likened to our board policies in some ways, which may one in the same. I have asked Matt to provide the board with a summary of our legislative responsibilities.

**DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) language in our policies, procedures and communications.** Many colleges are having to modify their language to comply with DEI. Matt has assured me that we have been and continue to modify our CCC language to comply.