

Ten Takeaways (and some quick 'hits')

3/8/19 ICCTA Trustees Roundtable
Compiled by ICCTA vice president Bob Thompson

Q. How are community colleges appealing to a broader student base to address students leaving the state for other educational opportunities?

1. Some colleges are appealing to international students by waiving out-of-state, out-of-country fees. (They are not waiving out-of-district fees). Caution was suggested here in terms of those whom we represent: Are we a local community college or a global community college?
2. Community colleges bordering other states are reaching more and more agreements with neighboring out-of-state community college districts and even with nearby universities.
3. Double down efforts to work with community high schools attracting the traditional students. Have your team work more closely with high school counselors, considering offering activities more appealing to the traditional student, such as heavy-participation sports activities like track or soccer. Consider offering an e-sports program (organized, multi-player video game competitions gaining large popularity with younger students).

Q. How will community colleges adjust to the scheduled increase in the minimum wage?

4. Many colleges are already paying \$13 or more per hour, and the proposed increase may already be met by the time it goes into effect with normal rates of raises over the years. Work-study programs, however, could be impacted by reducing hours for students in those programs as not affordable in their present state.
5. Other community colleges are predicting a large impact, upwards of \$1.5 million over the course of the five-year wage increase.
6. Beware of the State Universities Retirement System penalty cap, which will come into play for some community colleges if the \$15 minimum wage takes place and is greater than a 3% increase in the years leading up to an employee's retirement. We definitely need more information, and as not-for-profits we need help in addressing this hardship.

Q. Should we have a separate President's Council, or should we fold them into our own organization, so we have one voice?

7. By large consensus, some separation is good. It promotes free expression and permits trustees and presidents freedom of ideas and then a comparison of those ideas.
8. We could utilize working more together toward common goals, perhaps getting together for "sharing point" meetings, like the Trustees Roundtable. Trustees were reminded to bear in mind that the presidents work for us. It is also important to know that our lobbyists do collaborate and talk and work together in Springfield.

Q. Does ICCTA want to take a stand on the marijuana bill? How will community colleges be affected by the proposed legislation?

9. The general agreement at the Roundtable was that because of our community college agriculture programs, we owe it to our students to adapt to changing laws to better meet the needs and demands of our students.

10. There are concerns, however, about whether this impacts federal grants when federal laws prohibit many activities that Illinois is thinking of legalizing. We should also be careful to consider what our foundation donors may think of it.

And a Bonus Takeaway (levity intentional)

Before this whole issue goes up in smoke, let me just pass around some quick "hits": To be blunt, don't get too philosophical that you run deep in the weeds on this very edible issue. Rolling into this joint effort could be a great trip for all community colleges to make. Whether we're serving Farmer John or Mary Jane, this could be just the enrollment high we've been looking for. Don't become paranoid debating medical use versus educational use . . . simply agree to the hybrid "meditational" use. If we want higher education for community colleges on this homegrown issue, it may be important to implement something as early as 4/20, or later, whichever comes first. Get a kind bud you can work with and your community college will be all the buzz. Now, I'm hungry! Who's got the munchies?