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## LEADERSHIP THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

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There is a unique bond between a community college and the people it serves that even the most prestigious university cannot match.

It is that bond, derived from the very nature of the community college -- with its "open door" admissions policy, affordable tuition, and programs tailored to local occupational interests -- that makes dedicated and "in-touch-with-the-people" college leadership absolutely essential.

Because a community college must address an array of interests as diverse as the district itself, the best leadership often arises not from those with in-depth knowledge of educational policy, but rather from those who have the pulse of their community and are willing to act tirelessly on its behalf.

These people are the 273 community college trustees serving the people of Illinois. True public servants, their diligent yet often unrecognized work helps build better schools, better communities, and a better quality of life for all of us.

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## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEE?

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Each one of Illinois' 39 community college districts is represented by its own seven-member board of trustees, helping shape the activities of the one or more community colleges within its jurisdiction.

In 38 of the districts, a locally elected board of trustees provides college governance. In the city of Chicago, trustees are appointed by the mayor of Chicago and govern all seven community colleges

within that district. In addition, a non-voting student trustee is selected every spring to serve a one-year term on each local board.

Overall, it is the duty of the board to make sure that the priorities and spending of its district meshes with those of the community as a whole. It is therefore incumbent upon each trustee to do his or her part in accomplishing this daunting task.

This entails remaining neutral and balanced in looking at issues, avoiding the tendency to focus solely on one topic, and always keeping the overall interests of the community in mind.

In addition, trustees are required to work cooperatively with other board members, college administrators, and community leaders. It is easy to see how demanding being a trustee truly is. It is a position that requires dedication, diplomacy, integrity, and an open mind.

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## WHAT DOES A TRUSTEE DO?

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Trustees are charged with several tasks essential to the operation of their institution, including:

- Approving the annual college budget
- Hiring and evaluating the college president
- Setting the college mission
- Participating in legislative advocacy
- Mentoring new trustees
- Helping shape a positive image of the college within the community



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## WHAT ARE MY COMMITMENTS?

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While the job is rewarding, it does require a significant amount of time, interest, dedication and energy on the part of each trustee. More specifically, all trustees are expected to:

- Attend monthly board and committee meetings
- Participate in special college activities
- Stay informed on educational trends and issues at the state and federal levels
- Be involved in state and national trustee associations

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## WHY ME?

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Perhaps a better question to ask yourself is "Why not me?"

Many Americans are making positive changes in their communities as members of religious groups or societies aimed at helping youth or the poor. Just as important, however, is the need for able members of the community to contribute skills, knowledge and perspectives in charting the course of their local community college.

Excellence in any community begins with teaching and learning, and on the community college level, that begins with a strong board.

In addition to the sense of pride that trustees feel in helping build their communities, their work enables them to strengthen their communication skills and gain a broader perspective of the events and institutions shaping their district.

Serving as a trustee is an excellent experience for all community-minded persons, regardless of age, sex, racial, or socioeconomic background. Anyone can benefit from serving on a board, and more importantly, all can contribute by sharing their own unique experiences and perspectives.

A board that most closely represents the demographic composition of the region it serves is not only desirable, but often essential for true representation of the district.

So don't let a feeling of inexperience keep you from seeking trusteeship. If it seems right for you, it's probably right for your community.

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## HOW DO I BECOME A TRUSTEE?

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If you are 18 or older, a citizen of the United States, and have lived in your community college district for at least one year, then you can seek a board seat in your home district. The only other qualification is an honest commitment to the community college mission: that is, a belief in the value of the services and educational opportunities granted to more than 1 million Illinois citizens each year. Outside Chicago, elections are held in April of odd-numbered years, with trustees serving staggered six-year terms.

If you are interested in becoming a trustee and would like more information, call your local community college. Attending a board meeting and talking with current trustees is a great way to get a feel for the office.

You may also contact the Illinois Community College Trustees Association at 1-800-454-2282 or [www.communitycolleges.org](http://www.communitycolleges.org). ICCTA is a statewide organization providing legislative advocacy and educational programs for trustees.

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## WHAT ARE THE DEADLINES FOR THE 2009 TRUSTEE ELECTIONS?

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| <b>October 28, 2008</b>    | First day to circulate nominating petitions (a petition must be signed by at least 50 voters or 10 percent of the voters residing within the college district, whichever is less) |
| <b>January 19-26, 2009</b> | Period for filing nominating petitions with the board secretary   |
| <b>February 5, 2009</b>    | Last day for board secretary to certify candidates to the election authority  |
| <b>April 7, 2009</b>       | Election of community college trustees at the consolidated election   |
| <b>May 5, 2009</b>         | Last day for community college boards to conduct organizational meetings and seat trustees elected on April 7   |



**For more information, contact the  
Illinois Community College Trustees  
Association at 1-800-454-2282 or  
[iccta@communitycolleges.org](mailto:iccta@communitycolleges.org).**

# TRUSTEESHIP



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a difference*



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