



# Council to Advance Two-Year Colleges Conference Agenda

## Sunday, October 5, 2025

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

**Registration**

6:00 pm

**Transportation provided to Grant's Farm**

6:30 pm - 9:30 pm

**Welcome Event – Grant's Farm  
Dinner, Libations, and Conversations**

## Monday, October 6, 2025

7:30 am - 8:30 am

**Registration/Breakfast**

8:30 am - 8:45 am

**Welcome and Introductions, CATYC President**

Dr. Paul Watson III, President, Kellogg Community College

8:45 am - 9:45 am

**Tell Your Community College Story: Amplifying the Impact of the 2-Year College Experience through Personal Storytelling**

Dr. Steve Robinson, President, Lansing Community College

Keynote  
Address

*In this keynote address, community college veteran Steve Robinson will speak on the importance of encouraging all community college stakeholders to "tell their community college story." A longstanding tagline for Robinson's commencement addresses, the invitation to tell the world about the impact of community college is important now more than ever. Describing his own social media campaign, #EndCCStigma, along with coordinating efforts by Phi Theta Kappa's CCSmart initiative, his own college radio program "Alumni Stories" and others, Robinson argues that our own person-to-person storytelling is vital to the success of the 2-year college movement.*

9:55 am - 10:35 am

**Investing in Tomorrow: Connecting Campus & Community through Early Learning**

Jennifer Sikes, Ellen Miller, and Leslie Evans, Mineral Area College

Criterion 1

*Opened in January 2023, the Mineral Area College Early Learning Academy (MACELA) is a significant initiative that boosts educational excellence, workforce development, and community engagement. This session will cover the process of establishing and maintaining MACELA, its support for MAC academic programs, and its positive effects on both the campus and the wider community.*

10:45 am - 11:25 am

Criteria 3 & 4

### **It Takes a Village: Building Institutional Systems to Scale Student Completion**

Dr. Christine Davis and Dr. Jeff Pittman, St. Louis Community College

*Learn how STLCC reimagined its infrastructure to scale student success across four campuses. This session offers a roadmap to designing sustainable, student-centered systems that drive retention and completion outcomes aligned with HLC expectations.*

11:25 am – 11:30 am

### **Sponsor Highlight: Great Western Dining**

11:30 am -12:30 pm

### **Lunch – Provided by Great Western**

12:30 am - 1:10 pm

### **Trailblazer Teaching Academy: Helping New Faculty Succeed in their First Year**

Dr. Sarah Alderfer, Vincennes University

*Explore the evolution of Vincennes University's Trailblazer Teaching Academy, a year-long development program for first-year faculty. Now in its sixth year, the program introduces new faculty to research-based best practices, builds campus connections, and fosters belonging. The Trailblazer Teaching Academy offers a model to support new faculty by creating community, encouraging innovation, and nurturing success.*

Criterion 3

1:20 pm – 2:00 pm

### **Administrative Capability- Does your institution pass the test?**

John Hansen, Eastern Wyoming College

Susan Kannenwischer, Ferrilli

*Follow Eastern Wyoming College's successful journey toward regaining full compliance with Federal Title IV financial aid regulations. This presentation details a case study on how EWC addressed federal compliance gaps, implemented sustainable process improvements, and restored its ability to draw federal funds without restriction.*

Criterion 2 &  
HLC Processes  
and Pathways

2:10 pm – 2:50 pm

### **The Role of Benchmarking in Promoting Student Success and Accreditation**

Edward Hummingbird, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

Dr. Jacquelyn Eidsen and Michelle Taylor, National Higher Education Benchmarking Institute

*How can a college demonstrate accreditation compliance with a wide range of performance benchmarks? How can a college demonstrate commitment to data-informed student success planning and programming using benchmarks? This presentation integrates both questions and provides a simple approach with clear metrics, mapped to Higher Learning Commission expectations.*

Special Topic

2:50 pm – 4:00 pm

### **Afternoon Break**

*Catch up on email, relax, or visit the magnificent Gateway Arch*

4:00 pm – 4:15 pm

### **Business Meeting & George Knox Research Grant Award**

4:15 pm - 4:55 pm

Criterion 4 &  
HLC Processes  
and Pathways

### **Advancing with Data: Mapping Benchmarking to HLC Criteria for Two-Year College Success**

Debbie Phelps, Crowley College

Dr. Jacquelyn Eidsen and Michelle Taylor, NHEBI

*Join IE experts and AIR Board leaders to explore how NCCBP benchmarks map directly to HLC criteria and support two-year colleges in accreditation, planning, and improvement. Featuring lessons from Crowley College's successful HLC review.*

5:05 pm - 5:45 pm

Criteria 3 & 4

### **Beyond the Report: Integrating Evidence-Based Processes and Institutional Budgeting**

Dr. Jay Falkner, Carl Albert State College

*Carl Albert State College shares how it integrates the assessment of student learning with institutional budgeting to improve academic programs. President Jay Falkner highlights the use of supplemental funding, program reports, and endowed professorships to link planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.*

**Tuesday, October 7, 2025**

8:30 am – 9:10 am

Criteria 1, 3 & 4

### **Academic Program Review for Continuous Improvement**

Jennifer Holscher and Matt Groneman, Vincennes University

*This presentation provides guidance on a collaborative approach to designing and implementing an academic program review process that aligns with student outcomes, strategic planning, and budgeting. The presentation discusses how Vincennes University developed program review, the expectations of participating programs, the feedback process, and how it informs improvements at VU.*

9:20 am

Featured  
Speaker

### **Trends and Updates Through the HLC Lens**

Dr. Karen Solomon, Vice President & Chief Transformation Officer  
Higher Learning Commission

*Followed by*

### **Accreditation Roundtable Discussion**

11:05 am – 11:45 am

HLC Processes  
and Pathways

### **How a Small, Underfunded, Understaffed College Won Back Lost Accreditation**

Edward Hummingbird, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

*How did a college that lost accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission win it back? We look at how a college went from operating out of compliance with almost all components of three of the four criteria to full compliance within 3.5 years.*

11:45 am – 12:00 pm

### **Closing**

Darci McFail, CATYC Executive Director

Jeffrey Hawes, President, Eastern Wyoming College

CATYC President 2025-26