



2023 Research Report and Communications Summary (Public)



Introduction

The Association of California Community College Administrators (ACCCA) engaged Twenty-fifth Hour Communications, Inc. (25th Hour) to conduct a study of its communications, recruitment, retention and organizational structure. The following report is a abbreviated version of the full report, intended to serve as an accessible document to both laypeople and those who are more familiar with ACCCA and the California Community College system.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to ensure a depth and breadth of data. The quantitative approach included a member survey and a review of existing research data. The qualitative approach included interviews with ACCCA employees and members from all areas of the organization. All research instruments were vetted and approved by the ACCCA's Executive Director.

The qualitative research uncovered themes and meta-themes that offer deep insight into the needs of college administrators and what they look for in professional organizations. Additionally, current and former administrators and associate members shared stories about their college, professional and personal lives, providing critical information to inform recruitment, retention and communication strategies. Interview data specifically directed the recommendations in the communications plan that follows the research portion of the report.

The most significant part of the quantitative research was the member survey. More than 100 of your members participated in the study, which examined administrators' decision-making processes, barriers to entry and how to mitigate them, sense of belonging, equity strategies, media consumption, and more. Survey data collected informed the recommendations in this quantitative study and analysis section of this report.

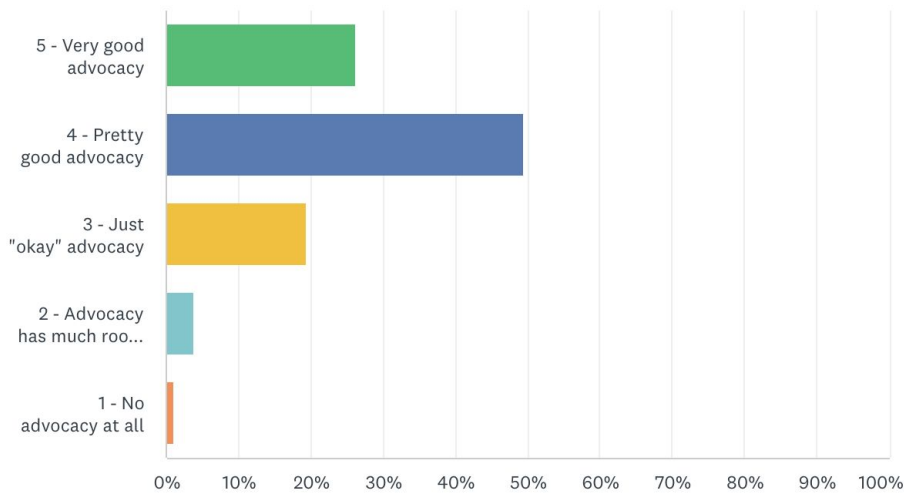
25th Hour Communications would like to express its gratitude for the opportunity to prepare the following abbreviated research report and communications and marketing plan for ACCCA.

How well would you rate ACCCA's advocacy for administrators and the community college system at the state level? (select one)

Very good advocacy	26.21%
Pretty good advocacy	49.51%
Just "okay" advocacy	19.42%
Advocacy has much room for improvement	3.88%
No advocacy at all	0.97%

How well would you rate ACCCA's advocacy for administrators and the community college system at the state level? (select one)

Answered: 103 Skipped: 2



Analysis: Overall your membership feels positively about ACCCA's advocacy. By further communicating what you are doing and ensuring members are aware, it is likely that the response will be even more positive.

Please indicate the areas you are most interested in ACCCA taking official positions on [i.e., this is your #1 advocacy priority] (Select one)

State budget, finance issues and finance policy	52.38%
Employment, working conditions and collective bargaining issues	24.76%
Retirement issues	5.71%
Curriculum and program policy issues	8.57%
Services to students and issues around meeting students' basic needs	4.76%
Facilities, bonds, and scheduled or deferred maintenance	0.95%
Other (please specify)	2.86%

- "Elimination of Calbright so its funding can be used for DE at all of the other CCCs"
- "Employment, working conditions for administrators"
- "Working Environments for Managers"

Analysis: State budget and finance issues are by far and away the most important policy to ACCCA's membership. Add regular updates into your communications (legislative or otherwise) about the work ACCCA is conducting in these areas to ensure that your members are more engaged with and informed about the organization and the value it provides to its members.

A distant second is employment, working conditions and collective bargaining issues.

What is the biggest challenge facing administrators in the community college system right now? (Short answer)

- **Enrollment:** “Successfully managing challenges to enrollment”
- **The Great Resignation:** “Enrollment, Great Resignation and Equity in the workplace as it relates to opportunities for upward mobility.”
- **Burnout/Working conditions:** “Administrators who are tasked with additional duties that extend beyond a reasonable time 24+ months”
- **Polarization:** “Changing national view of higher education.”
- **DEI:** “Trying to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion without students choosing to affiliate only with their own cultures.”
- **Resource and support offerings:** “That we are expected to be social service and educational institutions.”
- **Budget:** “SCFF - fiscal cliff and how to help our institutions (and ourselves) survive.”
- **Faculty conflict:** “Treatment of administrators by faculty (e.g., hostile, disrespectful). Is organizing the answer?”
- **Legislative disconnection:** “It varies by role, but overall the barrage of legislative mandates that have students' best interests at heart but are designed by people that have no idea how to actually implement them.”

Analysis: While ACCCA cannot solve all of California Community College administrators' problems, it can provide a safe space to share and relate with peers in similar roles and similar institutions. Administrators need a place to share with each other and seek advice about difficult issues at their colleges. Town hall-type meetings (virtual or in-person) and mixers (virtual or in-person) could offer your members these opportunities to vent and hear from their peers about how they handled difficult situations. Consider offering short webinars or asynchronous training options around the topics above.

Is there an issue or a regulation you feel is impacting administrators that is not currently on the radar that you believe ACCCA should be advocating for or against? Please describe. (Short answer)

- **50% Law:** “The 50% law is not in alignment with Vision for Success Goals.”
- **Repeatability:** “Repeatability restrictions - advocating against. It has harmed enrollment dramatically among lifelong learners, who are an important constituency among our student population!”
- **Compensation:** “Relative equalization of administrator salaries with respect to cost of living in administrators' area.”
- **Professional development:** “With the lack of strong recruitment pools and the continuation of the Great Resignation as the Baby Boomer generation continues to head toward retirement, we need the ability for CCCs to provide internal administrator promotional opportunities. Too much time is wasted on committees that select individuals who could have been promoted from a current administrator position. Please find a space to advocate for this.”
- **On-campus implications of Chancellor's Office policy:** “The transition from one initiative to the next in the CA Community College system should occur with more foresight and collaboration with the prior key talent throughout the state. The latest and greatest educational strategy shouldn't immediately supplant the prior effort without careful consideration of those in the field.”
- **CSEA partnership:** “Partnership with CSEA that would require communication to administrators at the same time as classified staff as to when meetings, votes, events are held.”

Analysis: 50% law was the most common answer (10.5%). This is an example of a policy that is supported by the Chancellor's Office but is not supported by ACCCA, and administrators feel strongly about it.

Consider the above as possible areas for engagement for ACCCA members who have not found their place in the organization. These would be excellent areas for roundtable discussions or webinars.

How familiar are you with ACCCA's services and offerings? (Select one)

Very familiar	30.69%
Familiar	35.64%
Somewhat familiar	27.72%
Not very familiar	5.94%
Not at all familiar	0.00%

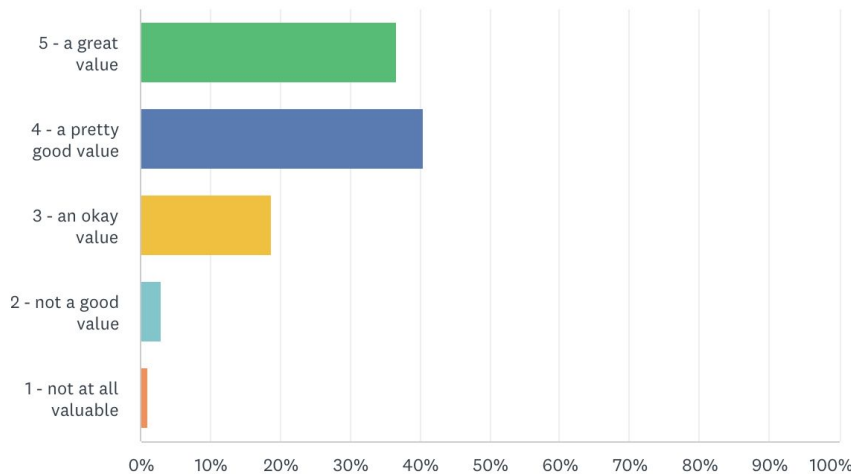
Analysis: While most of participants are well aware of your services and offerings, the above data reveal an opportunity to communicate more with those who are “somewhat familiar” or “not very familiar.” Direct outreach in the form of a personalized letter, phone call or email from another member or ACCCA representative could be an effective way to do this.

Do you consider ACCCA a good value for the required membership dues?

5 - a great value	36.63%
4 - a good value	40.59%
3 - an okay value	18.81%
2 - not a good value	2.97%
1 - not at all valuable	0.99%

Do you consider ACCCA a good value for the required membership dues?
(Select one)

Answered: 101 Skipped: 4



Analysis: The overwhelming majority consider ACCCA to be a “great” or “pretty good” value for money. Focus groups or listening sessions with those who rated it as an “okay” or “not good” value is recommended to reveal why they feel this way.

Those who selected 3 or less were asked to provide feedback on their answer. The following themes arose from that question:

- Lack of inclusivity (in-crowd and out-crowds)
- Cost
- Difficulty in accessing member benefits
- A desire for more social justice work
- A desire for more online opportunities for involvement

ACCCA provides members with an array of benefits included in your membership which you can learn about and access on ACCCA's website. Which of these benefits do you value as part of your ACCCA membership? (Check all that apply.)

Free legal services & discount legal programs	59.18%
Free AD&D insurance policy (\$10,000)	37.76%
Free professional liability insurance policy	62.24%
Optional disability and life insurance programs	17.35%
Discounted auto/home/disability insurance	18.37%
Identity theft protection insurance	16.33%
I wasn't aware these benefits existed	27.55%

Analysis: Liability insurance and legal services are the most obvious benefits to your members. This suggests an opportunity to leverage these benefits for recruitment purposes.

It is important to note the significant segment (27.55%) of participants who were unaware of these benefits. Benefits communication should not cease after onboarding, but should be regularly included in membership communications. This reminds members of the value you provide to them, a critical retention strategy.

Below is a listing of resources that ACCCA currently provides online to assist members. Which of these do you or would you consider valuable? (Select all that apply.)

Weekly bulletins and legislative updates	81.19%
Annual salary survey	75.25%
Model statement of ethics for administrators	41.58%
Model equity statement	42.57%
The Association's 5-year Strategic Plan	32.67%
Online job search feature	54.46%
Doctoral matrix	24.75%
I wasn't aware that these reports were available	15.84%

Analysis: Regular communication is seen as a key benefit by a majority of study participants (81.19%). ACCCA members want regular, consistent communication about what they are receiving for their money, what other members are up to, and how the organization is moving forward.

The Annual Salary Survey and online job search feature were also identified as valuable ACCCA resources.

Is there a service or benefit that we could incorporate in the future that would be helpful to you? (Short answer)

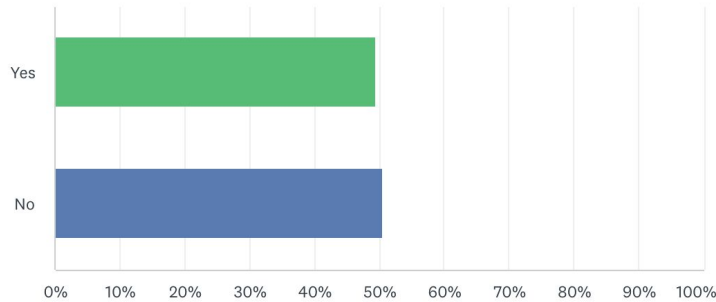
- **Free online regular gatherings/webinars:** “Monthly or quarterly webinar on various leadership or benefits discussions would be great.”
- **Free learning resources that can be accessed at any time:** “For new administrators, Modules to learn at our own pace what to expect. I don't feel supported at work and don't know how to navigate situation. “
- **More opportunities for mentorship:** “Executive mentorship”
- **Retirement planning:** “Retirement planning”
- **Segmentation of groups to foster greater connection/improved networking:** “Communication network of administrators in similar roles across the system.”

Do you know who your campus representative is? (select one)

Yes 49.48%
 No 50.52%

Do you know who your ACCCA campus representative is? (Please select one)

Answered: 97 Skipped: 8



Analysis: Half of participants do not know who their campus representative is. This is a significant area of opportunity – further research is recommended to determine why this might be the case. Are campus representatives empowered to share information about ACCCA with their colleagues? Are some campus representatives too busy or burnt out? The campus representatives are the frontline of your recruitment strategy and must be effective.

Do you feel ACCCA supports diversity, equity and inclusion?

Yes 95.74%
 No 4.26%

Does ACCCA do a good job of engaging with its members?

Very good engagement	22.68%
Pretty good engagement	49.48%
Neither good nor bad engagement	19.59%
Engagement has much room for improvement	8.25%
No engagement at all	0.0%

Analysis: Most participants feel positively about the level of engagement with ACCCA. However, there is a significant segment that feel it is just okay (19.59%) or could be much better (8.25%). Regular interaction with members and increasing touchpoints is recommended.

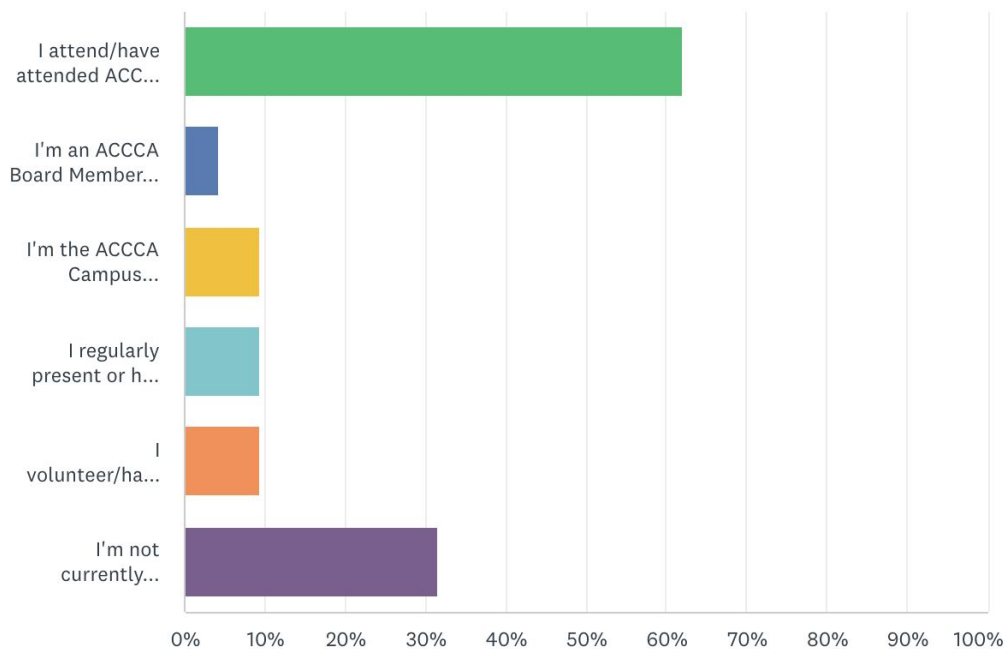
Further research is recommended to determine if specific groups (Deans, Program Directors, Vice Presidents, Presidents, etc.) are feeling more or less engagement with the organization.

How actively are you involved in ACCCA?

I attend/have attended ACCCA events and/or training programs	62.11%
I'm an ACCCA Board Member or Commission Member	4.21%
I'm the ACCCA Campus Rep at my institution or region rep for the member council	9.47%
I regularly present or have presented in some capacity	9.47%
I volunteer/have volunteered in some capacity	9.47%
I'm not currently active in ACCCA.	31.48%

How actively are you involved in ACCCA? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 95 Skipped: 10



Analysis: Nearly one-third (31.48%) of respondents indicated they are not currently active in ACCCA. Finding ways to engage this population is critical and focus groups, polling and/or listening sessions with this segment is recommended.

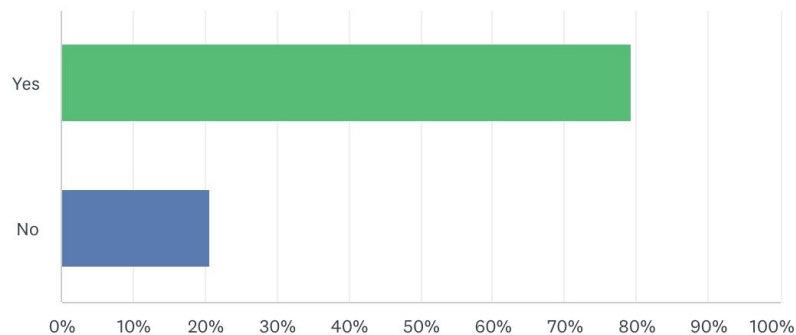
A cross tabulation analysis of those who indicated they were not currently active in ACCCA may offer some insight. Those that said they were not currently active in ACCCA said that time (46.67%) and budget (36.67%) were significant barriers to participation in professional development activities.

Are you satisfied with the current professional development opportunities offered by ACCCA? (select one)

Yes 79.31%
 No 20.69%

Are you satisfied with the current professional development opportunities offered by ACCCA? (select one)

Answered: 87 Skipped: 18



Analysis: While most are satisfied with ACCCA's professional development offerings, a full 20.69% are not. It is recommended to consider the data in the next question which offer insight into how to make your programming relevant to more of your membership.

An additional cross tabulation analysis (examining the relationship between two variables, in this case: a) length of time as an administrator and b) satisfaction with current professional development opportunities) revealed more experienced administrators (11+ years) are more likely to be unsatisfied (+/-6.6%).

Suggestions for improvement included the following themes:

- **Greater variety of training topics:** "Leadership programs across more functional areas."
- **More training opportunities:** "As a participant in the Mentor program, Admin 101, 201 and Great Deans, I have to say that ACCCA is really effective. My only suggestion would be more short 1-2 day) PD opportunities."
- **More specialized training opportunities:** "Have offerings that apply only to Program Directors"
- **More online opportunities:** "I really enjoy the in-person conference. I would enjoy more webinars. The ACCCA sponsored ones during the pandemic provided by AARLL on Friday mornings were great. Possibly something like that would be really beneficial."
- **Greater flexibility:** "Maybe run multiple sessions of Admin 101 and 201 each year?"
- **Career advancement training:** "I would like to see a program that would guide members to promote from a Director role, into the Dean role. It appears that the Great Deans program does not offer that as an option."
- **More networking:** "More time to engage, less PowerPoint"

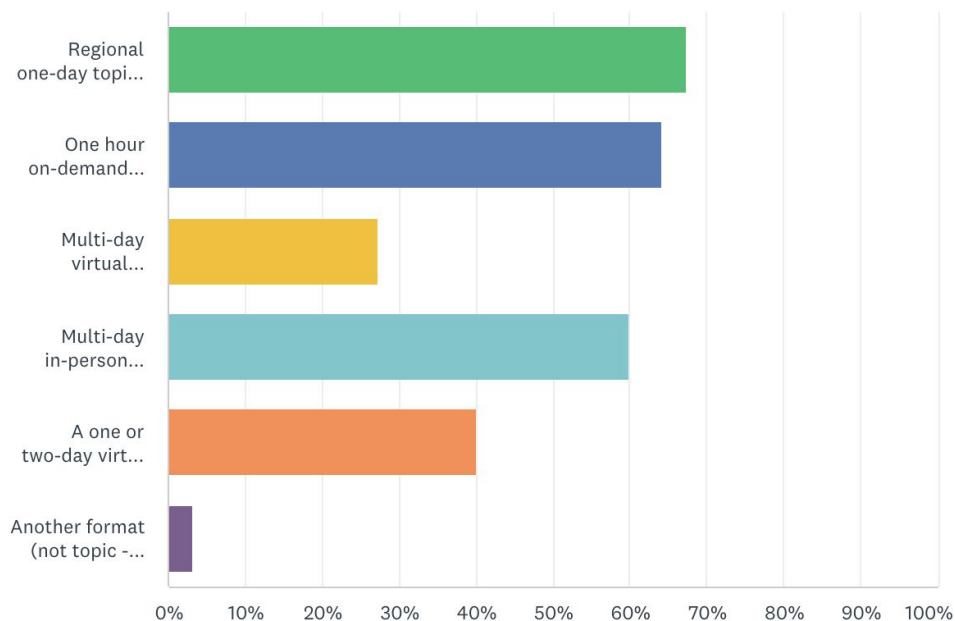
The above data offer insight into ways to optimize your programming so it is current and relevant for all of your members. If you do not already, begin offering workshop or program evaluations to your participants to track how programming is being received.

Given your recent experiences, preferences and your institution's capacity to support you, which of the following program formats are you most likely to access in 2023-24? (check all that apply)

Regional one-day topical events with both in-person and online attendance options (Hybrid)	63.37%
1 hour, on-demand webinar trainings on topics related to your role...professional development	64.21%
Multi-day virtual training program provided over several weeks	27.37%
Multi-day in-person conference	60.00%
A one or two day virtual conference with multiple presenters and panels	40.00%
Another format (not topic - please specify)	3.16%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Networking community with a topical focus (e.g., birds of a feather in an intentional online community, but only for a specific topic and limited time. I don't need hundreds more emails to read in a day.)” • “I am unlikely to attend virtual events. I am zoomed out.” • “None of the above. Retired.” 	

Given your recent experiences, preferences and your institution's capacity to support you, which of the following program formats are you most likely to access in 2023-24? (check all that apply)

Answered: 95 Skipped: 10



Analysis: One-hour on-demand webinar trainings were the most commonly selected program format (64.21%). Create a video or module bank of resources that all members can access and derive value for their membership, even if they do not require legal services and are too busy for the conference or other events.

Additionally, administrators are time-deprived, but they see the value of attending a regional one-day topical event (63.37%)

**2017 Research Data Themes to Establish Baseline and
Future Measurement**



2017 Research Data to Establish Baseline

In 2017, 25th Hour Communications, Inc. conducted a research study and wrote the first-ever ACCCA communications and market plan. Listed below are the themes from segmented groups that were interviewed and participated in a survey. This data will be used to establish a baseline and identify any changes between 2017 and 2023.

Board of Directors

- Determine role of the Board - work or policy-making?
- Clearly identify the mission of the organization - professional development or revenue generating through association management?
- Establish secession plan for staff and directors
- Train Board members on their role

Staff and Executive Director

- Match current work product to job descriptions
- Create clearly defined processes and procedures
- Establish priorities and goals
- Meet on a regular basis for direction and expectations

Marketing and Communications

- Rebrand the organization
- Market ACCCA with bold, specific messaging
- Only group for administrators
- For all administrators, not just Deans, VPs and Presidents
- For all areas, not just instruction, student services, business office and human resources
- Explain member benefits

Professional Development

- Admin 101, Great Deans and the Mentor Program are held in very high regard. Curriculum is spot on and relevant to all levels of administration.
- Networking - need opportunities in different ways - not just an annual conference - ways to engage on a regional and digital basis.

Development of Communication Strategies for Core Operational Areas

**Member Connections
Recruitment, Retention, and Campus Rep Engagement
Website
Program & Event Branding and Promotion
Social Media**



GOAL 1: Data and Message Segmentation:

Recommend a model for segmentation of member data within the database by job code and demographic data and a process for segmenting messaging at the point of distribution.

GOAL 2: Recruitment & Retention Processes:

Establish a communications outline to support the network of Regional Membership Directors in their new elevated roles as managers of the Campus Reps. A standard communication plan and a C-Rep recruitment pathway will need to be in place to support their work including frequency and nature of regular contacts to their reps and tools/templates for conveying information for campus distribution.

GOAL 3: Recruitment Collateral:

Using new branding that coordinates with the revised PD branding. Review and replace existing member recruitment and benefit collateral pieces and create new collateral for recruitment purposes. Link all recruitment tools to the website for easy access by recruiters, and final products will include both print, electronic and social media formats.

GOAL 4: Communicate DEIA Work in ACCCA:

Ensure that the Communication Plan reflects ACCCA's brand integrated into ongoing DEIA efforts as outlined in the approved Equity Statement, and that sufficient continuous oversight processes exist to maintain that standard in member/external communications.

GOAL 5: Member Enrollment/Payment Process:

Review and assess the current workflow and templates related to the intake and transition of new membership including activating a 1st year communication plan.

Areas to assess include:

- Assigning metrics at intake for segmentation and reporting purposes
- Monthly dues invoicing/payment via payroll or annual billing cycle;
- Suspension of membership [templates for reminders, re-enrollment offers]
- All standardized and embedded communications

DELIVERABLE 6: Volunteer Recruitment/Onboarding:

Review, assess and formalize the onboarding of new volunteers from the point of entry, to vetting/selection for assignments and ongoing connection. Focus on communications and templates.

DELIVERABLE 7: Annual Report to the Members:

Design a template for the Annual Report of the Association including a timeline and messaging for segmented distribution across stakeholders.



GOAL 8: Program Application/Selection Process:

Review and assess existing processes related to the application process for ACCCA programs. This includes assessing existing templates [application forms, acceptance or denial and follow up communications], as well as a standardization of vetting and selection criteria and processes.

GOAL 9: Program Evaluations:

Review and assess the current program evaluation process to track program/event engagement and effectiveness data on a year to year basis.

GOAL 10: P.D. Branding and Program Narratives:

Create original branding and revise program profile narratives for ACCCA PD and each of the core programs within the current portfolio.

GOAL 11: Promote/Market ACCCA Regional Events:

Once established by the RMC, create branding promotions for 4 campus-based events [Regional Events] in 2023-24 as member recruitment/celebration/networking and learning opportunities.

GOAL 12: Communications for ACCCA-PAC Relaunch:

Following the work of the CFLA to restructure ACCCA's PAC, and depending on that outcome, if warranted the Team will create promotions and marketing related to a relaunch of ACCCA-PAC.

GOAL 13: Calendar Alignment and Establishing/documenting a 12-month Communications Calendar:

Based on a review of the timing of key communications for events, campaigns and program promotion patterns. Compare ACCCA communications with the typical college administrators calendar [both traditional and compressed calendars] and those of other major organizations; to align ACCCA communications appropriately.



GOAL 14: Raise visibility of ACCCA on Social Media:

Develop a schedule and related processes to integrate regular ACCCA website updates with social media posts, emails and press releases to ensure online information is continuously curated. Conduct an information campaign to get ACCCA members following ACCCA on LinkedIn.

GOAL 15: Promote On-Demand Training & Info Videos:

Develop a micro-campaign focused on the launch of on-demand PD and informational content when it becomes available to members. Following the work of the MDC, CFLA and others to produce video training, informational features etc. establish space on the website for housing this content and an information campaign to ensure Members are aware of it.



When time isn't on your side, we are.
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