

“Building a community of educators helping people achieve education and workplace success.”

This is the mission statement of the ACT State Organizations, which have been crucial to ACT’s growth as a provider of solutions that promote education and workforce readiness for individuals around the world. ACT’s management and staff have relied heavily on the network for advice both for ensuring that ACT’s programs and services remain relevant to the needs of students, schools, and colleges, and for designing new services responsive to the ever-changing challenges faced by those charged with preparing the nation’s people for education and workplace success.

The ACT State Organizations, consisting primarily of individuals in secondary and postsecondary institutions, have been in existence since ACT was founded in 1959. The network is widely credited with providing an effective communication channel for ensuring the relevance of ACT’s services.

Building a Network

The State Organizations were at the heart of ACT’s initial organizational structure. In 1959, ACT founders E.F. Lindquist and Ted McCarrel began organizing their professional colleagues—full-time employees of colleges and universities—into a network that would lay the foundation for the State Organizations.

The 16 states that joined in 1959 were Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. By the end of the school year, they were joined by Alaska, Idaho, and North Dakota.

The first ACT state coordinators were paid advisors who had direct involvement with ACT’s organization and development. Among their duties were communicating with high schools and colleges in their states; distributing materials such as announcements, publicity pieces, and registration forms to secondary and postsecondary institutions in their states; securing test facilities; handling registration forms; collecting fees; and forwarding reports to high schools and colleges. They also organized state advisory committees that eventually evolved into the State Organizations.

Upon ACT’s founding, McCarrel appointed regional directors to help State Organizations promote the ACT® test. By the time the first ACT test administration occurred in November 1959, the company had successfully recruited colleges and universities across the country to use ACT scores for college admissions.

In 1961, state coordinators became unpaid volunteers, serving as the governing body of and providing guidance to the organization. In subsequent years, steering committees were created. The role of the state coordinator evolved into that of state representative, a position that was either elected or appointed. When ACT established a 15-member Board of Trustees in 1965, state representatives filled eight of the seats,

giving State Organizations representation on the board. Also, new guidelines were created to determine how states could participate in the State Organization network.

Broadening the Scope

In July 2003, a task force was established to redefine the role of the State Organizations following changes to ACT’s governing structure. Prior to that time, many of the State Organizations worked primarily with postsecondary institutions. While ACT’s college admissions and placement exam continued to gain in popularity, ACT had expanded its scope to incorporate new audiences, including secondary educators, workforce professionals, and government administrators at the state and federal levels. As a result, ACT needed to broaden the composition and the role of its State Organizations. In 2004, the ACT Board of Directors adopted the recommendations of the task force. They included:

- Adopting a common statement of purpose for the State Organizations
- Developing and implementing an annual plan of work based on strategic objectives
- Adopting a set of principles addressing the organizational structure and membership of the State Organizations
- Updating the role of the state representative to emphasize the position’s leadership responsibilities
- Designing and implementing a State Organization leadership development program

State Organizations Today

As of ACT’s 50th anniversary in 2009, all 50 states are represented through the 44 ACT state and regional organizations across the country. These organizations have more than 8,000 members, and nearly 6,000 individuals attend the annual conferences. Generally, ACT State Organizations are led by a Council and an Executive Committee consisting of a State Representative, Chairperson, Chair-Elect, Past Chair, and Secretary.

Today, members of State Organizations provide advice and support to ACT. Their duties include:

- Serving as a communication link between educational institutions and agencies and ACT
- Coordinating and facilitating statewide professional development activities related to ACT’s mission
- Providing feedback on the utility and effectiveness of ACT programs and services
- Assisting ACT regional staff in identifying state service needs
- Providing input and advice on future ACT programs and services
- Identifying exemplary applications of ACT programs and services

ACT STATE ORGANIZATIONS

MISSION

Building a community of educators helping people achieve education and workforce success

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

ACT state organizations support and promote informed decision making by:

- Individuals engaged in education and career planning, preparation for further education and work, and lifelong learning
- Parties who are making or influencing decisions by those individuals

The Arkansas ACT State Organization

In 1959, the year of ACT's founding, McCarrel appointed Carter Short, who was then registrar and examiner at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, as the first ACT state coordinator in Arkansas. That same year, the Arkansas Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers became the designated Arkansas ACT State Organization.

Today, the Arkansas ACT State Organization sponsors an annual Southwest Region College Readiness Symposium with the other ACT Southwest State Organizations. It draws more than 500 participants from across the five ACT Southwest Region states—Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Additionally, the Arkansas ACT State Organization sponsors individual in-state conferences for school and university administrators on admission practices and enrollment management, developmental education, and school reform. The Arkansas ACT State Organization has been active in education reform initiatives with the Arkansas legislature. It has sponsored the Arkansas ACT College Readiness Awards to schools that have improved access to college by increasing the number of students participating in the ACT while also boosting their school ACT composite score by at least one full point, and it has sponsored the College Readiness Recognition Awards for Arkansas students who met or exceeded the PLAN® College Readiness Benchmarks in their high school sophomore year.

Past Arkansas ACT State Representatives

- 1959–1974 Carter Short, Registrar and Examiner, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville
- 1975–1979 Charles Downs, Registrar, University of Central Arkansas
- 1979–1988 Greta Mack, Dean of Admissions and Records, Arkansas State University
- 1988–1995 Nancy Talburt, Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, and Professor of English, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville
- 1995–1996 John Spraggins, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, Arkansas Department of Higher Education
- 1996–2004 James Carr, Executive Vice President, Harding University
- 2004–2007 Shauna Donnell, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, Arkansas Tech University
- 2007–2009 Kristine Penix, GEAR UP Coordinator/Director, Newport School District

State Representatives are elected by the members of the State Organization to serve a term of three years, serving no more than three full consecutive terms.

State Representatives' duties and responsibilities include:

- Serving as a voting member of the Executive Committee and the Council
- Representing the views and interests of members of the State Organization
- Facilitating communications between ACT staff in its regional and national office and the members of the State Organization
- Reporting to the members of the State Organization on significant developments regarding ACT programs and services



Arkansas Colleges and Universities That Have Accepted the ACT Since 1959

Arkansas State University
Arkansas Tech University
Harding University
Henderson State University
Lyon College
Ouachita Baptist University
Southern Arkansas University
University of Arkansas
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
University of Arkansas at Monticello
University of Central Arkansas
University of the Ozarks

Current Arkansas ACT State Organization Council*

ACT State Representative

Kristine Penix
GEAR UP Coordinator
Newport Special School District

Chairperson

Charity Smith
Assistant Director, Office of
Accountability
Arkansas Department of Education

Past Chair

Tony Prothro
Superintendent
Benton Public Schools

Secretary

Shauna Donnell
Director of Enrollment Management
Arkansas Tech University

ACT Liaison

Glen Gullikson
Director, Elementary/Secondary Services
ACT Southwest Region

John Davidson
Deputy Director, Career and Technical
Education
Arkansas Department of Workforce
Education

Tim Knight
J.D. Patterson Endowed Chair of Biology
Ouachita Baptist University

Dan Marzoni
President
Arkansas Education Association

Willie Morris
Associate Director and Lead Planner,
Desegregation Monitoring
Arkansas Department of Education

Kim Myrick
Vice President for Enrollment
Management
Office of Admissions
University of the Ozarks

Tony Thurman
Superintendent
Cabot Public Schools

Arthur Tucker
Assistant Superintendent for Learning
Services
Texarkana Arkansas School District

Karen Wheeler
Associate Director for Academic
Programs
Arkansas Department of Higher
Education

* As of May 2009