

“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 Louisiana ACT State Organization

Promotion of ACT services among Louisiana education leaders began in 1959, the year of ACT's founding. Many leaders discussed the test's merits, trying to determine who should be tested statewide. In 1964, Louisiana State University became the first Louisiana postsecondary institution to require the ACT for admission. The Louisiana ACT State Organization was formed in 1968 with the appointment of Tandy McElwee of Northwestern State University as the first Louisiana state representative.

Today, the Louisiana 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. It also holds an annual Louisiana educator conference on state-specific education issues and sponsors the annual Louisiana Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers workshops for high school counselors across the state. Additionally, the Louisiana ACT State Organization has been active in education reform initiatives with the Louisiana legislature. It has sponsored the Louisiana ACT College Readiness Awards for 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 Louisiana students who met or exceeded the PLAN® College Readiness Benchmarks in their high school sophomore year.

Past Louisiana ACT State Representatives

1968–1975	Tandy McElwee, Head, Department of Testing, Northwestern State University of Louisiana
1976–1983	Jack Kimball, Institutional Research Director, Northeast Louisiana University
1983–1995	Charnia Cheatwood, Jr., A+ Consultants, Inc.
1995–2001	Wade Tyler, Assistant Professor of Social Work, Northwestern State University
2001–2007	Kathleen Plante, University Registrar, University of New Orleans
2007–2009	Theresa Hay, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

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



Current Louisiana ACT State Organization Council*

ACT State Representative

Theresa Hay
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment
Management
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Chairperson

Alice Sibley
Career and Technical Education
Coordinator
Livingston Parish School Board

Chair-Elect

Edwin Litolff
Associate Vice President for Enrollment
Management and Institutional
Research
University of Louisiana System

Past Chair

Andy Benoit
Director of Admissions
University of New Orleans

Secretary

Kathy Plante
University Registrar
University of New Orleans

ACT Liaison

Sue Wheeler
Director, Postsecondary Services
ACT Southwest Region

Glenn Beer
Director, NASA Educator Resource
Center
Louisiana Tech University

Wayne Brumfield
Vice President for Student Affairs
University of Louisiana at Monroe

P. Edward Cancienne, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools
Iberville Parish School District

Ralynn Castete
Director, Scholarships and Testing
McNeese State University

Heather Devall Poole
Assistant Commissioner of Assessment
and Economic Development
Louisiana Board of Regents

Tia Edwards
Deputy Executive Director
Louisiana Workforce Commission

Pamela R. Ford
Dean of Enrollment Management
Louisiana Tech University

Bette Harris
Director, Junior Division
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Chad Jones
Institutional Liaison Officer
Louisiana State University–Eunice

Lisa Miller
Associate Provost for Enrollment
Management
University of Louisiana at Monroe

Robin Olivier
Coordinator, Early College Academy
South Louisiana Community College

Mary Parker
Executive Director, Student Aid
Louisiana State University

Sam Pernici
Deputy Director, Strategic Research and
Analysis
Louisiana Department of Education

Jerry Pinsel
Vice President for Academic and Student
Affairs
Louisiana Community and Technical
College System

* As of May 2009

