



National Policy Seminar March 24-27, 2019

Just four months after ACTE received confirmation of funding for its new Postsecondary Leadership Success Program sponsored by the ECMC Foundation (PLSP-ECMCF), the first cohort convened in Crystal City, Virginia. New PLSP-ECMCF Facilitator Belinda Cole had planned an action-packed three and a half days, with an agenda woven around the ACTE National Policy Summit (NPS). The twenty selected PLSP-ECMCF Fellows met with postsecondary CTE leaders from around the country who shared their experiences in developing innovative programs, leading organizational change, and meeting rapidly changing community needs. For example, Steve Partridge, Vice President of Northern Virginia Community College described NVCC's efforts to establish a data sciences program, responding to the arrival of Amazon, and extending outreach into middle schools.

The Washington location afforded the opportunity for the group to meet with important figures in the federal government, such as Dr. Casey Sacks, Deputy Assistant Secretary OCTA, US Department of Education and Kimberly Vitelli from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. The NPS setting also allowed Fellows to meet with leaders in the CTE nonprofit world, such as Kim Green, Executive Director Advance CTE; Ronald Painter, CEO National Association of Workforce Boards; and Jenn Worth, Vice President of Workforce Development CTE Business-Education Partnerships, American Association of Community Colleges.

Advocacy is one of the important dimensions of leadership in the PLSP-ECMCF curriculum, and the NPS was the perfect opportunity to gain some experience. Many of the Fellows joined with colleagues from their state and carried the ACTE legislative message to meetings with their Congressional delegation. Others pursued a more independent agenda. Among the personal contacts were Senators Tim Kaine (VA), Sherrod Brown (IN), and Maria Cantwell (WA) and Representatives Bob Gibbs (IN), Bradley Byrne (AL), and Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA).

Many of the PLSP-ECMCF Fellows are new to ACTE. Convening during NPS provided them great exposure to the work ACTE does and afforded the opportunity to meet with many ACTE leaders. They listened as Doug Major, President-Elect of the Board of Directors, shared his extensive wisdom in the areas of leadership through service and creating institutional culture. They took notes as Alisha Hyslop explained the ins and outs of Federal CTE funding and the High-Quality CTE Framework. Though not all the Participants are young, they all share the experience of being in a phase of career growth in a postsecondary CTE institution. Because of this, they were excited to realize that their 19 fellows represent the kernel of a new professional network.

As a final takeaway, Participant Torrie Costantino of Utah Valley University articulated the understanding many came to regarding the significance of being in this first cohort: "I didn't realize going in how important this program was to ACTE; I just saw an opportunity to better myself. I now realize that everything I do in the program carries some serious weight and want to make sure that I am leaving the best impression possible while learning as much as I can along the way."