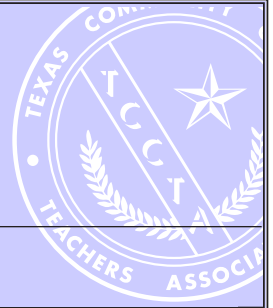


# Legislative Update



A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
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## COLLEGES BRACE FOR 79th LEGISLATURE

Virtually all Capitol observers predict another difficult session, particularly on budgetary matters, when the Legislature convenes in January.

After a tumultuous and bitterly partisan spectacle that attracted nationwide attention in 2003, there is no indication that 2005 will be any kinder to state human services, including formula appropriations for community and technical colleges.

"If ever there were a time to com-

municate as effectively as possible with our senators and representatives," said TCCTA president Gail Platt, South Plains College, "the time is now."

Health insurance, retirement funding, and a whole range of instructional issues will likely be "on the table."

TCCTA plans a number of special events and activities, including "Community College Day" at the Capitol, on Feb. 17, in conjunction with the annual convention in Austin.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

by Beaman Floyd  
TCCTA Lobbyist



It is a privilege to represent the interests of community and technical college educators, as we approach another difficult session in the Texas Legislature. I genuinely believe in the social good

of your profession, and promise to continue engaging lawmakers and their staffs urgently and constructively. Together we can "tell our story," (as your theme for this year indicates).

When visiting with clients, I am often asked, "What can I do?"

First, you can join TCCTA. Your association is respected in Austin, and policy makers pay attention when your professional voices speak in unison, from every campus—and legislative district!—in Texas.

Next, get informed. Pay close attention to the TCCTA *Legislative Updates* that will be distributed by e-mail in the coming weeks. These important messages are indispensable for timely, detailed, and precise information—including strategic instructions on how to contact elected officials.

Third, get to know your representative and senator now, while they are "at home." Follow the guidelines in the outstanding *Guide to Political Participation* published by TCCTA (and available in printable form under "Publications" at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).) It's the best document of its kind, anywhere.

And finally, participate in TCCTA events—especially the annual convention in Austin this year. On Feb. 17, the association will host the second "Community College Day" at the Capitol, when you will have the opportunity to communicate "in person" with policy makers. I hope to see you there.

Let's "tell our story" together!

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACTS (Reminders to Legislators)

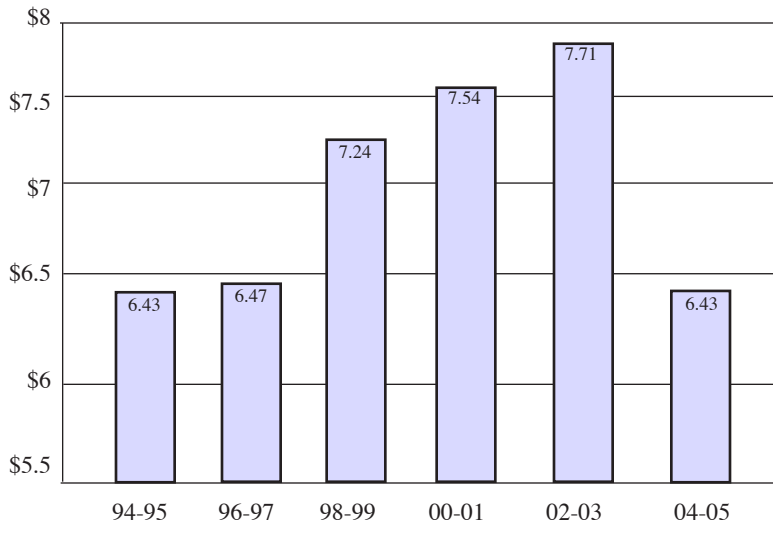
Sources: Texas Association of Community Colleges,  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board,  
and Texas Community College Teachers Association

- There are 50 community college districts in Texas.
- 35 percent of the state's taxable property is located outside of a community college taxing district.
- Tuition rates have more than doubled in the last ten years.
- Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education in Texas.
- Contact hours grew 13.6 percent during the last base year.
- Cuts by the 78th Legislature translate into a 16.6 percent decrease in per full time student equivalent (FTSE) appropriations since the last biennium. (This does not include health insurance reductions, or the seven percent across the board cuts mandated in 2003.) The appropriation per contact hour for the 2004-05 biennium is equivalent to the 1994-95 appropriation community colleges received (see chart on back page).
- The average age for a community college student is 25.
- 73 percent of the freshmen and sophomores in Texas public higher education enroll in community colleges; 76 percent of the minority freshmen and sophomores attend a Texas public community college.
- Community college students almost exactly mirror the ethnic diversity of Texas, making these schools crucial to the success of the "Closing the Gaps" initiative.
- For every dollar a student invests in community college education, he or she will receive \$9.05 in higher future earnings over the next 30 years. The State of Texas benefits from improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment and crime, saving the public \$276 million per year.
- A Coordinating Board study confirms that transfer students from community colleges are as successful as those who begin their studies at universities.
- The state is now paying approximately 50 percent of the instructional "formula," despite principles in the Coordinating Board's Master Plan of 1969, which envisioned local funds and tuition to be reserved for construction and maintenance of facilities.
- 72 percent of community college students work while attending college.
- 63 percent of Texas community college students attend part time.

ENROLL ONLINE!  
[www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)

## Legislative Appropriations Per Contact Hour to Texas Community Colleges

Source: Texas Association of Community Colleges



The appropriation per contact hour for the 2004-05 biennium is equivalent to the 1994-95 amount that community colleges received.

## ONLINE DISCUSSIONS AVAILABLE ON TCCTA FORUM

Your colleagues all over Texas are discussing important issues online now!

Legislative developments and other topics can be discussed “virtually” via the “Forum” feature on the TCCTA Web site (at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)).

From this site members can also access *Texas Legislature Online*, by far the most comprehensive free source of valuable material regarding the legislative process, statutory language, and constituency profiles—even during the interim. A convenient “Who Represents Me?” link is provided.

A printable copy of the association’s “Guide to Political Participation” is also available from the TCCTA Web site. It contains helpful tips on political involvement “between sessions.”

## Recommended Guidelines for Writing to Your Legislator

- Write as an individual. Remember, you do not and cannot speak for TCCTA or your college. Do not use college stationery, e-mail address, or postage meter.
- Know your legislator’s committee assignments and areas of expertise.
- Include your full name and return address on the letter.
- Be brief.
- Mention bills by number if possible.
- Stick to a single issue.
- Explain exactly what you want your legislator to do.
- Be reasonable.
- Be constructive. Do not threaten.
- Use your own words and your own stationery. Use personal pronouns like “I” and “you.” Your letter should not read like a newspaper editorial.
- Do not use form letters, forwarded messages, or form postcards. Petitions generally have minimal impact.
- Type your message. Check for errors.
- A note of sincere appreciation is always appropriate.
- Allow a reasonable time for a reply.
- Please send a copy of your legislator’s response to the TCCTA state office.
- Always use the proper address.

## Plan Now to Attend

**TCCTA Conference for Faculty Leaders**  
**October 15-16**  
**Austin**

\* \* \*

**Annual Convention**  
**February 17-19, 2005**  
**Renaissance Austin Hotel**

## TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

### Membership Enrollment Form

Dr.  
 Mr.  
 Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miss \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If more than one campus, indicate your campus.)*

Preferred Mailing Address for TCCTA publications (if other than to college): \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address or Post Office Box*

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK HERE IF YOU DESIRE COVERAGE UNDER THE OPTIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND ADD \$50 TO THE AMOUNT OF YOUR CHECK. MEMBERS MUST PURCHASE INSURANCE TO RECEIVE TCCTA LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

- CHECK ONE:**
- PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP (Full-time educator at a Texas community or technical college)—Dues \$35
  - ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (Classified employee or retired or adjunct (part-time) educator at a Texas community or technical college)—Dues \$25 (Retiree may join as Professional or Associate Member)
  - STUDENT MEMBERSHIP (Enrolled for graduate credit in community college education)—Dues \$20
  - UNAFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP (Friend of the Association not eligible for one of the foregoing types of membership)—Dues \$25
  - CHECK HERE if you wish to receive the *TCCTA Messenger*. Annual dues include \$5 for subscription; there is **no additional charge** for the *Messenger*.

Membership Period: September 1, 2004–August 31, 2005.

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

- Instructional (Subject taught: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Student Services (Position: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Learning Resources/Library/Media (Position: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Administrative (Position: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Other (Specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Retired (Previous Position: \_\_\_\_\_)

**If paying by credit card:**  Visa  MasterCard

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Expires \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

You may renew or activate your membership and enroll in the liability insurance program using your VISA or MasterCard using this form, **OR ENROLL ONLINE SECURELY at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)**.

**If paying by check:** Make checks payable to TCCTA. Give enrollment form and check to your campus membership representative or mail to: TCCTA, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735.

**If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution** to TCCTA’s foundation, please send separate check to the TCCTA state office, payable to the Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College. \$ \_\_\_\_\_