

# TCCTA MESSENGER

[www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)

A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185 Austin, Texas 78735  
Toll-Free 1-800-288-6850 In Austin (512) 328-2044 Fax (512) 328-1086



VOLUME XLVI

APRIL 2010

Copyright © 2010, Texas Community College Teachers Association. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reprint articles provided they are reprinted in their entirety and appropriate credit is given to the author and to the TCCTA Messenger. Brief quotations and statistical data may be reproduced provided that the TCCTA Messenger is cited as the source.

## Historic Budget Shortfall Looms for Session

Capitol observers are feeling an uncomfortable sense of *déjà vu* from 2003, as the next Regular Session approaches in January.

The projected budget shortfall for funding the next biennium is pegged at \$11-18 billion, depending upon various media sources. In 2003 it was \$10 billion, reflecting an economic downturn that was very mild compared to the current situation. The most important source of revenue for the state is the sales tax, which has slumped dramatically in recent months. And there will not be a repeat of the 2009 federal stimulus, which provided \$17 billion to help Texas balance the books.

The state's "rainy day" fund is currently \$9 billion, but requires a two-thirds vote of both chambers for any prospective use. State leaders have instructed most agencies to prepare for five percent reductions, just to get through the current biennium.

Finally, given the current political climate, all observers agree that tax increases are unlikely.

In 2003, the Legislature enacted dramatic cuts in benefits for state and higher education employees. Contribution rates to TRS and ORP were reduced. Retirement eligibility for younger TRS employees was scaled back. Health care eligibility for those wishing to retire early was cut. Co-payments and deductibles for the Group Benefits Program increased. Premiums for dependent coverage shot upward.

And these issues don't relate directly to formula funding for instruction, which will be challenging to say the least, since enrollments are surging at virtually all two-year institutions in Texas.

TCCTA leaders are preparing for novel approaches to grass roots involvement in the months ahead. Members are urged to be on the alert for important updates. ☆

*TCCTA is preparing for an unprecedented level of grass roots involvement in the months ahead. Members are urged to be on the alert for important updates.*

## 2011 TCCTA Convention Slated Early in San Antonio

Members are strongly urged to mark their calendars now for the 2011 annual convention, which will be held at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio, on January 27-29.

Please note that the convention will be held somewhat earlier than usual. The shift in schedule is due to the extraordinary popularity of this venue for national conferences.

Details will be posted on the TCCTA Web site in the coming months. ☆

## What You Can Do

by Beaman Floyd  
TCCTA Lobbyist

I genuinely believe in the social good of your profession, and promise to continue engaging lawmakers and their staffs urgently and constructively, as what promises to be a challenging Session approaches. Naturally, when visiting with clients, I am asked, "What can I do?"—especially in the "off-season."

First, you can participate in 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 attention to the abundant information and commentary that TCCTA provides. Communication is indispensable.

Third, get to know your representative and senator now, while they are "at home." Invite these elected officials to visit your campus, ideally in a joint meeting with faculty, administration, and board members.

Finally, take part in TCCTA events. You can find more information in these pages. I look forward to seeing you all there! ☆



**Beaman Floyd**

### Also In This Issue...

State President Fred Newbury reflects on the challenges and opportunities of the coming year ..... Page 2

Read about the latest on your health benefits programs—plus legislative news of importance ..... Page 3

Phi Theta Kappa Texas Regional President Matt Oates says, "Take Pride in What You Do!" ..... Page 4

Find out about the outstanding professional development opportunities provided by The Network ..... Page 5

News Briefs and Links ..... Page 7

Make plans now to participate in the Great Teaching Round Up and Leading from the Middle Conference ..... Pages 10-11

Look for familiar faces from the 2010 annual convention at the Westin Galleria Hotel! ..... Page 12



A Publication of the  
 TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
 TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

5113 Southwest Parkway  
 Suite 185  
 Austin, Texas 78735

Toll-Free 1-800-288-6850  
 In Austin (512) 328-2044  
 Fax (512) 328-1086  
<http://www.tccta.org>

**FRED G. NEWBURY**  
 President



**RICHARD MOORE**  
 Executive Director



TCCTA *Messenger* (ISSN 1091-398X) is published four times annually, in September, December, January, and April, by the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735. Annual dues \$45, \$5 of which is for subscription to TCCTA *Messenger*. TCCTA *Messenger* is abstracted and indexed in the ERIC monthly abstract journal, Resources in Education. Periodicals Postage Paid at Austin, Texas. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to TCCTA *Messenger*, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is truly an honor to serve as your president for the coming year. Although summer is approaching, rest assured that your TCCTA leadership is working hard to make 2010-11 successful for you and your colleagues.

I have been telling my fellow teachers lately that I am somewhat afflicted with a case of "sweaty palms," regarding the next Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, which convenes in January. It's on all of our minds.

Those of us who have been around for a while realize that sessions of the House and Senate come and go. However, the recent financial crisis strikes most Capitol observers as particularly daunting. This is mainly because the state relies heavily upon the sales tax, which, during a downturn in consumer spending, fails to produce the revenue needed to adequately fund our priorities—including community and technical colleges. As an economics teacher, I gravitate reflexively toward statistics, and it is difficult to find much room for optimism.

As we try to balance growing student numbers and needs and declining State dollars it is apparent that community and technical colleges are vital to this equation. As mentioned in the higher education "Closing the Gaps" report, "Texas has profited from a diverse, vibrant and growing economy. Yet this prosperity could turn to crisis if steps are not taken quickly to ensure an educated population and workforce for the future." To put it more precisely, we need to impress upon lawmakers as never before that the community and technical college instructional formula should be funded appropriately, or the consequences will be dire—and soon.

The last time lawmakers faced such abysmal budget numbers was in 2003, when they imposed a number of severe cuts to health benefits and retirement programs for higher education employees. As you can see from the article on the next page, on May 25, the Employees Retirement System will likely make a number of "design changes" to health benefits, just to get through the current biennium. And we will have to work very hard to prevent more drastic measures in the future.

TCCTA does an amazing job addressing the vital issues that concern our profession, as a mere perusal of the *Messenger*—or our fine Web site—will confirm. We are respected in Austin for integrity, clear thinking, constructive behavior, and the accuracy of our communications. Not to mention Beaman Floyd, our great lobbyist!

We do live in interesting times, to put it mildly. In addition to all the financial problems, there is a movement nationwide and in Texas to quantify the "success" of our students. It is crucial in such a climate to make sure that policy makers understand the scope and mission of community colleges in our society. Our students come to campus with very little background in higher education, as it is increasingly the case that their parents never attended college. At many schools the majority of students need developmental instruction. It is impor-

tant for us to explain these facts of life, not only to lawmakers, but to the general public as well. Public officials often had a traditional college experience (four years, parental support, dormitory residence, etc.) themselves and may not completely comprehend how the universe is starkly different for our students today.

The best time to participate in meaningful discussions is while the lawmakers are "at home," in between Sessions. To that end, please pay attention to the suggestions offered by Mr. Floyd on the front page of this issue of the *Messenger*.

I am convinced that we can successfully get through what appears to be a rough period ahead—if we stick together and do our "homework," leading up to January.

Please don't hesitate to contact any of our officers or the state office in Austin if we can be of any assistance.

Stay in touch this summer!

### Join the Daily Discussion!

Members are urged to mark the TCCTA Web site as a "favorite" on their computers and to visit frequently.

The home page contains the latest "News and Announcements" on important and timely subjects, both in the Texas Legislature and around the country. New developments from the Coordinating Board will also be posted here as they occur, as well as any news regarding Social Security in Congress.

Also on the home page is the "Blog" feature, which covers daily developments at the Capitol, headlines on teaching techniques, news summaries, and alerts on items from a host of journalistic and professional sources.

The "Events" section is the best place to find out about upcoming TCCTA conferences, Webinars, and dates to keep in mind for planning ahead.

"Legislative Resources" has all the information community and technical college educators need to stay informed and participate in the political process, with links to find out "Who Represents Me?" and contact information for policy makers. The association has also assembled a concise and handy series of "Talking Points" on the issues most likely to affect the profession during this Regular Session of the Texas Legislature.

The "News and Publications" area contains links for all past updates, blog entries, and copies of past editions of the *Messenger*.

[www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)



## Colleges Devise Plans for Online Course Information

As the Regular Session of 2009 drew to a close, the Texas Senate inserted the following sentence in a bill designed to promote “transparency” in higher education:

*Institutions of higher education included in this section shall conduct end-of-course student evaluations of faculty and develop a plan to make evaluations available on the institution’s website.*

The language, part of amendments from the floor and approved subsequently by the House, was added during the waning days of the Session, after all hearings had been held, with no realistic opportunity for public comment. The bill is HB 2504, by Rep. Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham). Its Senate sponsor is Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano), who chairs the Senate Committee on Education.

The bill passed both chambers unanimously without debate.

As all educators know, schools routinely conduct student evaluations of all instructors. In a typical scenario, anonymous evaluations are collected (without faculty participation or potential influence) in each class, then shared with the instructor by supervisors after grades have been distributed. However, HB 2504 will mandate a new level of state uniformity. Its practical effect will likely hinge upon how the statute is interpreted. The mandate to “develop a plan” presumes participation by educational practitioners.

In fact, many colleges have begun to devise their plans. Faculty members are urged to participate in this process on campus and to report their progress to the TCCTA state office. Reports from around the state will be shared with lawmakers when the next Regular Session convenes.

An early reported concern involves cost. If one assumes an evaluation form for *every student in every class*, the number of documents to be centrally collected and posted will climb quickly into the millions statewide. One school reports that it may take as long as a year to work through the sundry technical difficulties. At larger institutions, it appears that staff must be hired for this purpose. Smaller schools will be compelled to add to the duties of staffers who are already stretched in their responsibilities. As it stands right now, student evaluations are generally conducted and evaluated at the departmental level.

Experienced faculty members have learned that, while student evaluations can be extremely useful, the results can vary arbitrarily, depending upon a host of circumstances: time of day, the number of students who registered late for newly opened classes, the educational background of students in a particular section, attendance on a given day, and other factors unrelated to the quality of instruction.

Faculty members also report that intellectual rigor, the complexity and difficulty of assignments, and whether essay exams are required can also influence student evaluations. Today, students who wish to pursue a path of least resistance can chat among themselves prior to registration, but HB 2504 could give them a more efficient tool.

Also, college faculty preparing syllabi in future semesters may wish to get accustomed to another change

under the bill. All pertinent information given to students describing each course must soon be online and available to anyone with an Internet connection. Furthermore, the *Curriculum Vitae* of each faculty member (which includes such biographical information as degrees earned, teaching experience, publications, *etc.*) will also be posted online.

Most course information of this nature is already available in one form or another by request—much is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Web publication of faculty syllabi is commonplace at many institutions, especially for distance education courses. But now it will be mandated for all undergraduate classes, and it must include information on each department’s budget “if available.”

Concerns will likely proliferate at the campus administrative level, since the final version of HB 2504 contains a number of financial reporting provisions. College officials will be required to keep the data current for all classes, each semester. This will prove expensive, since it will necessitate added staff time and documentation. As usual, the Coordinating Board is given responsibility for compliance. ☆

## Health Benefits “Design Changes” Likely

In testimony before the Senate Committee on State Affairs, on March 31, Ann Fuelberg, executive director of the Employees Retirement System, described the current status and prospective financial outlook of the Group Insurance Program for state and higher education employees and retirees.

As reported earlier, the program is facing a deficit, as the cost of the benefits will exceed the amount of appropriated revenue during the remainder of the current biennium. The shortfall is driven largely by medical inflation, with hospital costs cited as especially problematic, according to Sen. Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock), who chairs the committee.

Consequently the ERS board of trustees will meet May 25 to consider a variety of “design changes.” To make matters even more ominous, these prospective adjustments must be considered in addition to a long term problem that looms for the next (2012-13) biennium. This projected deficit will be addressed during the Regular Session that begins in January.

Ms. Fuelberg pointed out that the board’s May decision will be the result of extensive collaboration with employee and retiree groups in an online survey (shared in a previous Blog), requesting members to choose from a variety of options—none of which will be popular. She added that there were 48,000 responses to the survey. The presenter noted that ERS respondents tend to favor incremental increases in co-payments, rather than increases in deductibles, as a means to save the system revenue. She said there has been some discussion of potentially raising member co-payments by \$10 for primary care physician appointments and \$10 for specialist visits. Unfortunately, such a step would not be enough to make up the difference.

Action by the Legislature is required to make more fundamental changes in premium levels, dependent coverage, or eligibility for health insurance for prospective retirees. ☆

For the latest news or bulletins on the most urgent developments, please subscribe to the TCCTA Blog at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).

# Take Pride in What You Do!

by **Matt Oates**  
Tyler Junior College  
Texas Regional President  
Phi Theta Kappa



**Matt Oates**

*“The ideas that change  
the future and affect  
all of us are born in  
each of your classrooms.”*

[Note: Following are remarks by Matt Oates, Phi Theta Kappa Texas Regional President, at the General Session of the 2010 TCCTA Annual Convention in Houston. He is a student at Tyler Junior College.]

Hello everyone! I am going to have to ask you to pardon my nervousness in advance. Normally it is not a very big deal to speak in front of a group this size but, looking out there, I am having some scary flashbacks to my early classroom days.

You might remember that feeling in the pit of your stomach when you go up before the class to speak while the teacher gives you that stare...like they are trying to figure out what your grade is about to be, and it might not be looking too good? Well, take that feeling and multiply it by a couple of hundred teachers—I'm surrounded here—and you might get a taste of how I am feeling! All I ask is that you wait to tell me my grade until after I finish tonight's presentation.

You see, I'm going to tell it like it is tonight.

All of you are really very sneaky people! We students walk into your classrooms prepared for English, history, math, and science, or whatever your subject matter is. You ably teach us your curriculum, but somehow you also find the time to teach us so much more, and we might not even notice your extra effort. You share with us a life-long love for exploration, for research, for learning. For instance, take that group project you made us work on...you taught us teamwork and how our actions reflect and affect others' success. That presentation where you required us to dress for success and stand in front of the entire class taught us to speak up and defend our ideas and how to conduct that discussion in a professional manner.

Sneaky, sneaky professors!

Your love for the subject you teach has become our love for that subject. Before you know it, we are signing up for an advanced class just because you made it sound so interesting! We students find ourselves reaching further than we ever thought possible. You manage to calm the fears of a 17 year-old freshman who's never been farther from home than wherever their high school basketball team plays, and for non-traditional students like myself, you—yes, all of you—have inspired us to follow a dream that life talked us into forgetting years before.

So, from traditional and non-traditional students alike, let me say THANK YOU for your “sneakiness” on our behalf. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed. You can see the results in the faces of every graduating class, every new group of employees, every student who rushes to your office with their acceptance to a senior institution or a scholarship letter that you wrote the recommendation for.

Some of you know me and have seen me around different events, whether it be with Phi Theta Kappa or the Texas Junior College Student Government Association, and I definitely recognize some faces out there. For those I have not met yet feel free to come up and say hello. I have to say that one of the greatest pleasures of this year in office has been getting to know more of you as fellow

scholars and friends as well as professors. The ideas that change the future and affect all of us are born in each of your classrooms.

Because my educational history is a bit longer than most, I have attended both community colleges and big four-year universities, and I have one message for our legislature: Why? Why do community colleges—the institutions that serve a more diverse group of students, the campuses that provide the doorway for so many to better paying jobs or higher academics, with the faculty who teach servant leadership and promote community service as a way of life, WHY are these highly successful stewards of the funds allocated to them continually given less and less of that infamous funding formula?

It's a mystery to me, but one I will consider as I pursue my continued education in the legal arena. You never know, one day in the future you might see me utilizing those public speaking skills and powers of research and persuasion on behalf of community colleges in Texas!

While I do well in English, I have to say there are no words to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you and the many professors you represent. I cannot compress all the time and effort that individuals in this room have spent on students just like me. I will say that I know I would not be standing here if it were not for people like you. There are thousands of current, former, and future students who are counting on you to keep on doing what you do.

Take pride in what you do. The students in your classes right now are already thinking new thoughts and getting ready to step into a new life, because of each of you. So I leave you now with the assurance that we, your students, notice what you do for us. Thank you for your patience, intelligence, wisdom, and especially for caring enough to be professors in the community college system.

We appreciate you!



## Phi Theta Kappa Leader Publishes Acclaimed Book

*The Other Wes Moore*, a book by Phi Theta Kappa alumnus and foundation trustee Wes Moore, is available in hardcover and has received rave reviews. The book tells the story of two young men who share a name and a city, Baltimore, but whose lives followed different paths. One led to violence and incarceration.

Mr. Moore became a member of Phi Theta Kappa at Valley Forge Military College, was president of his chapter and a member of a convention Color Guard. While a student at Valley Forge, Moore completed the Phi Theta Kappa Leadership Development Studies course. He was moderator of the 2008 convention's conversation with CNN's Christiane Amanpour and former State Department official James Rubin.

According to author and NPR commentator Juan Williams, the book is “a tense, compelling story and an inspirational guide for all who care about helping young people.”



**BROADEN YOUR NETWORK. EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE.**

**[www.txpod.org](http://www.txpod.org)**



## **THE NETWORK**

The Texas Network for  
Teaching Excellence in Career  
and Technical Education

### **GET CONNECTED TO FREE, EASY-TO-USE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ONE CENTRAL LOCATION**

The Network is a powerful, free online resource created for the unique professional development needs of career and technical education faculty, counselors and administrators.

With easy-to-use search tools, you can access hundreds of on-demand, interactive training modules, as well as webinars from community colleges and private providers on topics including:

- Teaching strategies
- Technology
- Discipline specific content
- Teaching and learning styles
- Training that meets institutional mandates

### **CONNECT TO THE ULTIMATE ONLINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

You control the learning modules and accompanying tests, fitting professional development around your schedule and pace. Powerful audio and video capabilities add to the learning experience.

#### **OUR PARTNERS**

The first of its kind nationally, this Perkins-funded network was created with help from these partners: [Austin Community College](#) • [Dallas County Community College District](#) • [Lone Star College District](#) • [Del Mar College](#) • [Midland Community College](#) • [Texas Community College Teachers Association](#) • [Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College](#) • [STARLink](#) • [Northeast Texas Network \(NETnet\)](#) • [Texas Leadership Alliance](#) • [Virtual College of Texas](#)

*We hope you'll put TCCTA on your calendar!*



May 24-27, 2010  
YO Ranch Resort  
Kerrville, Texas

## Great Teaching Round-Up

TCCTA is proud to host a unique and valuable professional development experience—the **Great Teaching Round Up!**

Since 1982, the Round-Up has provided faculty from across the state an opportunity to develop their skills, share their experience, and grow in their passion for teaching. We hope you will choose to be an active participant this year, adding to the diversity and richness of this successful movement.

Reconnect with your calling to teach at the **Great Teaching Round-up**, May 24-27, 2010.

To register, please visit: [www.tccta.org/roundup](http://www.tccta.org/roundup)  
Deadline for early registration: May 1

## Leading from the Middle

TCCTA invites deans, division chairs, and other mid-level administrators—and those thinking about moving into such positions—to join us for an intensive three-day workshop. The program will include sessions on the key issues, and difficult challenges, facing people in these crucial leadership roles.

Join us in Frisco for **Leading from the Middle**, July 18-20, 2010.

*This event is co-sponsored by TCCTA and the Texas Leadership Alliance.*

To register, please visit: [www.tccta.org/leading](http://www.tccta.org/leading)



July 18-20, 2010  
Embassy Suites Dallas-Frisco Hotel  
Frisco, Texas



October 8-9, 2010  
The San Luis Reort  
Galveston, Texas

## Conference for Faculty Leaders

Focusing on issues related to the role of faculty organizations in the college decision-making process, the **Faculty Leaders Conference** addresses legal issues, the legislative process, college governance, and other issues to equip faculty to be effective leaders at their respective institutions.

To register, please visit: [www.tccta.org/events](http://www.tccta.org/events)

*...and don't miss the **annual state convention** on the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Jan. 27-29!*

# News Briefs and Links

## Gambling No Cure For Budget Woes

It is very common for Texans to express the view that expanded legalized gambling (in the form of casinos and/or slot machines) would go a long way toward solving the state's budget crisis. Texas went through this before when the lottery was enacted, which does, after all, bring in millions of dollars. Trouble is, the state budget is approaching \$200 billion.

Many educators back then believed that enough money would flow into the public schools to raise the lifeboats for all. Didn't happen. Plus, it's very hard to predict the revenue stream from gambling, so most organizations representing teachers play down the possible benefits.

As one commentator told the *Texas Tribune*, "Take 200 pennies. Throw them in a bag. Throw in one more penny. That's what you're getting."

The latest discussion involves whether an expansion of gaming opportunities would at least allow revenue to remain here that is now pouring into Oklahoma and Louisiana from the pockets of Texans who drive across the border to gamble. It is hard not to notice the Lone Star State license plates on the cars parked at these establishments, and many wish that the money could be spent here instead.

## Report on Best Practices: The Case of El Paso

El Paso Community College has implemented a number of interventions aimed at boosting student success, most of which focus on two interrelated goals. The first goal is to help prospective students improve their readiness for college so that when they do start college at EPCC, they can avoid enrollment in developmental courses and begin immediately taking credit-bearing offerings. The second goal is to help entering EPCC students who are required to take developmental courses to successfully complete that coursework in a much shorter period of time.

It is included in a new report: "Collaborating to Create Change: How El Paso Community College Improved the Readiness of Its Incoming Students Through Achieving the Dream," by Monica Reid Kerrigan and Doug Slater, in the March issue of the *Achieving the Dream's Culture of Evidence Series* (New York: Community College Research Center).

In collaboration with the University of Texas at El Paso and school districts in the El Paso area, EPCC developed and brought to scale an improved process for helping high school students prepare for entry into college. Typically, during their junior and senior years, El Paso area high school students participate in what is known as the "college readiness protocol." Before they graduate from high school, virtually all students: (1) complete a joint admissions application to EPCC and UTEP, (2) learn about and prepare for the ACCUPLACER test, (3) take the ACCUPLACER test, (4) review scores with counselors, and (5) refresh skills and take the test again if needed. Some students also enroll in a summer bridge program to strengthen their basic skills, if necessary.

## Some Institutions Prohibit Royalties

Heads up to those who receive royalties as an author, co-author, or contributor of material for a textbook, and you assign the book in class. The practice is becoming increasingly controversial.

According to a number of recent media reports, the ostensible concern is a potential conflict of interest, with added trepidation these days over the cost of textbooks to students. A number of Texas lawmakers have commented on the subject during hearings over the past several years. (As for students, they are often impressed that their instructor is a published authority in the subject they are taking.)

Some universities around the country have actually begun to prohibit faculty members from collecting royalties from books they assign.

An added complication involves the increasing popularity of "custom" publishing, by which a faculty member can combine original material with selected chapters or supplemental readings from nationally marketed textbooks. Furthermore, many instructors receive stipends from publishers to review a text, compose test questions, or create study guides.

In 2007, a bill was introduced in the Texas House of Representatives that might have made such practices a Class B misdemeanor under the criminal statutes. TCCTA Executive Director Richard Moore testified against the measure, stating that such a law would infringe upon the instructor's ability to choose the best learning materials for students. The bill failed to pass, and did not materialize during the most recent Regular Session.

An excellent introduction to the national controversy is found in the April 7 issue of *Inside Higher Ed.*, in an article by Jack Sterling. Visit [www.insidehighered.com](http://www.insidehighered.com).

## "Leading from the Middle" Conference Slated for July

TCCTA will again offer its highly popular annual "Leading from the Middle" conference, designed for mid-level administrators (and faculty members who may be interested in such positions) at Texas two-year colleges. The conference has been described as a "boot camp" for deans, division chairs, IT directors, student services directors, and any other individuals who may be interested in the program. Authorities from around the state and country will provide relevant, timely information and insights to help participants succeed in their respective positions.

The conference is scheduled for July 18-20, at the Embassy Suites Spa and Conference Center, in Frisco, Texas.

Topics this year will include "Nuts and Bolts," budgets, legislative challenges, leadership ethics, measuring outcomes, the "Power to Change Anything," and legal issues in higher education.

For details on these programs, please see the TCCTA Web site, at [www.tccta.org/leading](http://www.tccta.org/leading). A registration form with fee and deadline information is available on page 11 of this issue of the *Messenger*.

Some universities around the country have actually begun to prohibit faculty members from collecting royalties from books they assign.

# 2010 Interim Committee Charges Announced for Texas Legislature

The presiding officers of the Senate and House have released the 2010 interim charges, leading up to the next Regular Session, which convenes in January, 2011. These items represent policies or ideas that leaders believe are important for various standing and interim committees to examine. Each panel will conduct hearings during the next several months before making official recommendations. The charges are, therefore, a preview of issues that could materialize in new laws and funding priorities.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that topics frequently surface in bills that have nothing to do with any official charges, such as “guns on campus” legislation that was seriously considered in 2009 (a measure to allow licensed carriers of firearms to bring weapons to school failed to pass).

Generally speaking, the language does not contain opinions on what the leaders think should be enacted. Typically the topics fall into the realm of “unfinished business” from previous Regular and Special Sessions. Some issues, such as performance funding, have become perennial.

Below is a list of charges that are germane to Texas higher education. Members are urged to consult the TCCTA Web site frequently for updates.

## Senate Charges

### *Committee on Education:*

7. Review dual credit courses including the cost of delivery, funding mechanisms, and possibility of a statewide dual credit system. This review should also include an examination of the rigor, quality and consistency of dual credit courses. (Joint charge with Senate Higher Education Committee.)

### *Committee on Finance:*

1. Review and make recommendations regarding existing and future public debt at all levels of government in Texas, including independent school districts, cities, other local governments and the Texas Guaranteed Tuition Plan.

5. Examine the Texas Tomorrow fund and its impact on institutions of higher education. Assess current and future costs, the ability of institutions to absorb the costs, and make recommendations for ensuring a sound fiscal approach to managing the fund for the future.

7. Study and make recommendations regarding formula funding and its impact on the cost of attendance and methods of financing higher education institutions, including funding differences for pharmacy and nursing programs; research funding; performance funding; and funding for institutions that face capacity student enrollment. Specifically address the following:

- Methods of financing capital projects at higher education institutions, including the levels of deferred maintenance, the impact of deferred maintenance on the ability to offer basic instructional services, and the methods used to finance deferred maintenance projects. Recommend alternatives for providing a structured and recurring funding mechanism more suited to the state’s fiscal capacity and institutional needs

- Supplemental funding for structured programs that are essential for student success and for meeting the goals of Closing the Gaps, including those that provide concentrated student academic and personal support services for universities that enroll a high proportion of non-traditional or at-risk students. Study and make recommendations regarding quality and effectiveness of academic advising, focusing on resources, staff development, and impact on time-to-degree.

### *Committee on Higher Education:*

1. Study and make recommendations regarding more cost-effective funding of financial aid, including ways to restructure financial aid programs to promote student success and the efficacy of the current \$365 million in current exemptions and waivers offered to students at institutions of higher education. Examine the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and determine the impact on eligibility for existing Texas financial aid programs and on data availability resulting from the simplification. Include recommendations on how to expand the TEXAS Grant and B-on-Time programs.

2. Review community college service areas to ensure that student needs are being met in the most effective and efficient manner. Study and make recommendations to improve the productivity and cost-effectiveness of the community college/university model for producing baccalaureate degrees, including identifying proven best practices; analyzing success rates of similar cohorts of students by comparing those who begin at community colleges with those who begin at four-year institutions; and analyzing transfer issues including dual admissions programs and academic advising services to facilitate a seamless transfer from two-year to four-year institutions. Include an assessment of the role of technical and vocational training programs and their impact on jobs.

3. Study and make recommendations regarding improving developmental education, which costs the state over \$100 million per year, with a focus on enhancing student success in these courses.

4. Study and make recommendations regarding the current accountability system and ways to measure student progress, faculty workload, and student advising; and to improve time-to-degree. Examine the quality of academic advising services to ensure that students are taking courses relevant to their degree program and are on path for graduation. Study and make recommendations to eliminate unnecessary or duplicative reporting requirements.

5. Examine cost drivers in higher education. Recommend opportunities for achieving cost efficiencies including reporting requirements, three-year degree programs, and community college baccalaureate degree programs. Study and make recommendations regarding more effective means of using technology, including digital textbooks and online degree programs, to improve access, enhance quality, and reduce the cost of higher education while preserving excellence.

6. Review the structure and operation of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Evaluate the board’s data collection systems, including costs to higher education institutions, and make recommendations for

*These items represent policies or ideas that leaders believe are important for various standing and interim committees to examine.*

improvements. Include an assessment of higher education reporting requirements and make recommendations to eliminate duplicate requirements and streamline reporting.

9. Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Higher Education, 81st Legislature, Regular and Called Sessions, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance and/or complete implementation. Specifically, focus the following, as well as tuition legislation:

- HB 51 relating to emerging research Tier 1 universities;
- SB 175 relating to top ten percent

#### *Committee on State Affairs:*

2. Monitor the actuarial and financial conditions of the pension and health care programs administered by the Teacher Retirement System and the Employees Retirement System. Assess the effectiveness of pilot programs designed to encourage the use of clinical integration, payments for good outcomes, use of best practices, focus on wellness and prevention, and bundling of costs for episodes of care, and other health care savings initiatives. Make recommendations for expanding the pilot programs for use across all private and state sponsored health care, including the Medicaid program, as a means to improve Texans' health and provide more effective care that allows for assistance for the uninsured. (SB 7, SB 8, SB 10, 81st Legislature.)

### **House Charges**

#### *Committee on Appropriations:*

1. Monitor the performance of state agencies and institutions, including operating budgets, plans to carry out legislative initiatives, caseload projections, performance measure attainment, implementation of all rider provisions, and any other matter affecting the fiscal condition of the agencies and the state.

8. Evaluate programs designed to assist students and families in paying the costs of accessing the state's higher education system, including financial aid programs and the Texas Guaranteed Tuition Plan. Examine the impact these programs have on student achievement and the Closing the Gaps initiative.

9. Examine the state's higher education funding mechanisms, including approaches to funding capital improvement projects at public institutions of higher education. Evaluate modifications that would improve the institutions' national peer rankings and help the state to achieve its Closing the Gaps objectives, including improved community college transfer pathways and the impact of shifting the basis of the formula funding methodologies from attempted to completed hours. (Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Higher Education.)

15. Identify factors influencing health care cost trends in Texas, including practices or policies that may contribute to regional variations. Investigate medical imaging utilization and its impact on the cost and quality of health care. Recommend policy changes to promote best practices, reduce costs, and improve quality within the state Medicaid program, Employees Retirement System, and Teacher Retirement System. (Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Health.)

#### *Committee on Higher Education:*

1. Evaluate the state's continuing effort to close achievement gaps in success, participation, excellence, and research by 2015. Study how state public education institutions compare to peer institutions around the country.

2. Study current financial aid programs, tuition and fee exemption programs, loan repayment programs, and professional incentive programs. Evaluate the impact of need-based versus merit-based assistance. Recommend changes where appropriate to improve the alignment of these programs to meet state needs.

3. Review the structure and operation of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Evaluate the board's data collection systems, including costs to higher education institutions, and make recommendations for improvements.

4. Study and recommend strategies for improving community college participation and success. Examine the role of community colleges within the state higher education system. Include a review of programs, practices, and incentives to improve efficiency and productivity, such as expanding dual credit options, encouraging credit by examination, and improving student preparation in high school.

5. Study and recommend strategies for reducing the costs of instructional materials in higher education institutions, including electronic textbooks, open source materials, and other web-based resources.

6. Examine the state's higher education funding mechanisms, including approaches to funding capital improvement projects at public institutions of higher education. Evaluate modifications that would improve the institutions' national peer rankings and help the state to achieve its Closing the Gaps objectives, including improved community college transfer pathways and the impact of shifting the basis of the formula funding methodologies from attempted to completed hours. (Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations.)

7. Monitor the progress of the capital improvement plan and use of state funds at The University of Texas at Galveston involving the renovation and upgrade of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities. (Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations.)

8. Study the feasibility of offering an optional curriculum that emphasizes ethics, Western civilization, and American traditions to satisfy portions of the Texas Core Curriculum.

9. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

#### *Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services:*

1. Study the impact of the debt relief industry, including debt management and debt settlement organizations, and the implications of regulating that industry.

4. Examine the performance and accountability of the Texas public pension funds and make recommendations as needed.

5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. ☆

*Each panel will conduct hearings during the next several months before making official recommendations.*

*“The interaction and learning that occurs at these retreats offers faculty a meaningful respite from the ongoing demands of academic work, as well as a rich mine of ideas and inspiration.”*

—Terry Stewart Mouchayleh,  
Austin Community College

## Come to the Great Teaching Round Up!

*“One of the most respected professional development programs for Texas community college teachers”* The Great Teaching Round Up, founded by Don Bass at College of the Mainland in 1982, is scheduled for *May 24-27, 2010 at the YO Ranch Resort in Kerrville, Texas.*

**Expectation** The Great Teaching Round Up differs from most conferences in that, for the most part, *the program is created by the participants themselves.* The staff's major role is facilitation. The format varies but often includes: teaching clinics, panels, organized discussions, “hands on” workshops, and presentations by participants or Round Up staff. It also features choices among activities. The exchange takes place not only in scheduled sessions but also informally around the pool, in conversations at dinner, or on excursions around Kerrville.

**Focus** The goals of the seminar include: Sharing methods and techniques ... Celebrating good teaching ... Creative, realistic problem solving ... An exploration of new ideas ... Serious introspection and self-appraisal ... Professional and personal renewal.

**Process** Assemble a group of people who really care about teaching and place them in an isolated, unstructured setting in the beautiful Texas hill country. *The rewards can be astounding:* Over the years, many teachers have reported that the Round Up allowed them to believe in their chosen profession as never before.

**Facilitators** David Lydic, Austin Community College; Laurie Passmore, Lone Star College System; Tim Gill, Tyler Junior College; and Helen Jackson, Houston Community College.



*“This was an  
illuminating retreat.”*

*“I am able to  
...fill in my gaps  
and  
... feel more confident”*

*“Fabulous! Absolutely perfect—  
restful,  
relaxing,  
and renewing.”*

—Past Round Up Attendees



WWW.TCCTA.ORG/ROUNDUP



GREAT TEACHING ROUND-UP  
KERRVILLE, TEXAS  
MAY 24-27, 2010

### REGISTER TODAY FOR 2010 GREAT TEACHING ROUND UP

**EARLY REGISTRATION: \$550.00 for members or \$595.00 for non-members**

(Double occupancy. Includes room and meals, but not transportation. Additional \$135.00 for single occupancy.) **AFTER MAY 1** include an additional \$25.00.

My check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_, payable to TCCTA, is enclosed. I understand that no refunds will be made if reservations are cancelled after April 12.

SEND TO: GREAT TEACHING ROUND UP, TCCTA, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735. Fax: (512) 328-1086. For more information or to verify availability, contact Carol Fricke, at (800) 288-6850, Ext. 11. E-mail: [cfricke@tccta.org](mailto:cfricke@tccta.org).

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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

TEACHING DISCIPLINE: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST VEGETARIAN MEALS (please circle): YES or NO

# “Leading from the Middle”



Join us for this intensive three-day leadership program

Embassy Suites Convention Center & Spa  
Frisco, Texas  
July 18 - 20  
Deadline to Register: June 18

## — TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE —

To register for the “Leading from the Middle” conference, please complete the registration form and send it, by mail, email, or fax, to the TCCTA State Office by June 18, 2010. *Hotel accommodations should be arranged directly with the Embassy Suites by June 18th.*

### TCCTA State Office:

5113 Southwest Parkway  
Suite 185  
Austin, Texas 78735  
Phone Number: (800) 288-6850  
Fax Number: (512) 328-1086

### Embassy Suites Hotel:

7600 John Q Hammons Drive  
Frisco, Texas 75034  
Phone Number: (972) 712-7200  
Fax Number: (972) 712-7221

## — ESTIMATED COST —

### Payable to TCCTA:

Conference Registration: \$300.00  
Includes registration, Sunday evening dinner, two luncheons, and refreshments throughout the conference.

### Payable to Embassy Suites Hotel:

Accommodations (based on 2 nights\*): \$210.00  
This does not include any applicable taxes or incidentals, but *includes complimentary breakfast.*

Approximate Total: \$510.00

*\*Cost of hotel is approximate and should be paid directly to the hotel at time of checkout.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FAX \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR ENROLLING:  
\_\_\_\_\_

DIETARY OR DISABILITY CONSIDERATIONS:  
\_\_\_\_\_

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

CHECK  VISA  MASTER CARD

CARD NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**tccta** | texas community college  
teachers association

This event is sponsored by the Texas Community College Teachers Association, in conjunction with the Texas Leadership Alliance, a Carl Perkins Project funded through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.  
<http://www.texasleadershipalliance.com/>



# TCCTA

TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185  
Austin, Texas 78735

PERIODICAL

## 2010 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS



TCCTA PRESIDENT Andra Zabel, Midland College (left), opens the General Session, March 4, at the Westin Galleria Hotel.

Entrepreneur and best-selling author ORI BRAFMAN (right) addressed the General Session during the annual convention in Houston.



Traffic in the EXHIBIT HALL was brisk at the TCCTA convention at the Westin Galleria Hotel, especially during the popular RAFFLE, when prizes were awarded to these lucky winners.



GREAT CONVERSATION with friends and colleagues is a routine part of the TCCTA annual convention. The banquet prior to the General Session allows community and technical college educators from all over the state to relax and renew acquaintances.