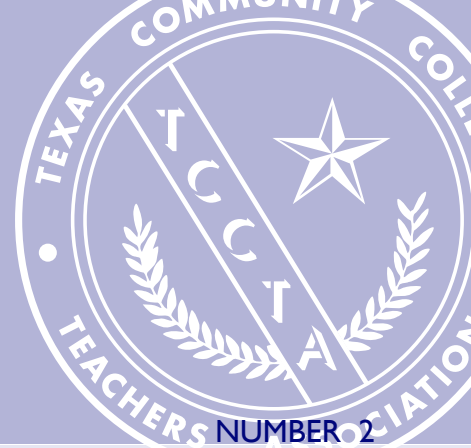


TCCTA MESSENGER

www.tccta.org

A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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TCCTA Offers Online Faculty Salary Survey

For the fifth consecutive year, the annual TCCTA Survey of Faculty Salaries is offered totally online, allowing more features and information than printed previously in the *Messenger*.

The survey includes the same important data as always, plus responses to many new questions. Most importantly, the 2011-12 survey asked colleges to report supplemental benefits such as release time, sabbatical leave, on-site child care, and paid dependent insurance coverage. College officials had requested this opportunity, allowing their schools to explain benefits that do not lend themselves to quantification and ranking.

The components of the survey can be downloaded and printed conveniently.

TCCTA began conducting the annual Survey of Faculty Salaries in 1976. Since 2002, the association has collected and tabulated salary figures from Texas community colleges using four distinct "ranges," from "lowest quarter" to "highest quarter" paid. The lowest and highest actual salaries for bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees are presented for each range.

Ranges were based on the total salary range for each degree, subtracting the lowest salary from the highest, then dividing the result into four equal monetary quarters.

In addition, each school's average salaries are reported and ranked with other colleges in Texas. Significantly, the TCCTA study of full time faculty salaries measures actual salaries paid instead of a sample or hypothetical model.

The study assumes a nine-month contract, with 12-month contracted salaries adjusted accordingly, at 75 percent. Colleges were asked not to include teaching overloads, administrative stipends, or grant-funded positions in their calculations.

The association has been increasingly challenged to report valid salary data, since colleges have adopted widely divergent methods of awarding salaries. Comparisons are difficult, since many schools have abandoned schedules showing "steps" at precise educational levels. An unfortunate result of these local changes is that it became impossible to collect accurately the salaries paid to faculty at exact levels of chronological experience holding specific professional degrees or credentials.

In recent years, another problem surfaced as colleges with salary schedules, or tables, showing years of service and educational achievements, failed to provide for advancement on the schedules. Therefore, in practices followed today at many colleges, a faculty member's step placement is no longer equivalent to consecutive years of service.

Members are urged to view the ranking in the context of the entire survey. Factors beyond average salary, including the breakouts into ranges, should be considered in making comparisons. Readers should weigh a host of other factors, such as the additional benefits reported by the schools in narrative form. Many of these benefits cannot be measured in dollars and cents. A link providing a cost-of-living calculator is also offered at the site.

Faculty salary studies commonly calculate mean or "average" salaries. Such analyses tend inadvertently to give an advantage to older colleges over schools formed more recently, since large numbers of veteran faculty members are found at the higher end of reported earnings. Although the TCCTA study also employs the mean as a measurement tool, it is hoped that, when segregated into four internal ranges, with designations for academic degrees, the result enables a more valid interpretation than what is otherwise available.

"No study will be perfect for everyone," said TCCTA Executive Director Richard Moore. "But we think this method of calculating and reporting faculty salaries and supplemental benefits allows comparisons to be made with more authority." ☆

Members are urged to view the ranking in the context of the entire survey.

Factors beyond average salary, including the breakouts into ranges, should be considered in making comparisons.

Please visit

www.tccta.org/

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It may seem a bit peculiar that I remain optimistic in light of the present budget crisis and increasing official demands for more "accountability" and "productivity."

Certainly, we have just endured the most challenging Regular Session of our careers, no doubt about it.

It wasn't so long ago when there was a serious discussion in the Capitol over whether to shut down four community colleges, in a misguided effort to save money. It didn't happen, but the controversy illustrates how sobering it can become during the current financial meltdown—the most severe economic event since the majority of our two-year colleges in Texas were created.

But our success is also remarkable if you look at the results of Closing the Gaps after ten years of implementation, and the countless initiatives around the state that are achieving tangible results.

Of course it is one thing to enroll students and quite another to keep them in school until graduation. This is the present challenge, and faculty members are understandably concerned about recent policies and proposals from Austin designed to move students through the higher education pipeline with more speed and efficiency. Not to mention the fact that a new law sets up a process to reward schools with revenue for producing more graduates and successful transfers. TCCTA opposed the bill, which passed unanimously, with support from a juggernaut of business-oriented groups and the concerted efforts by the governor and legislative leadership in both chambers.

But it's not a done deal yet, and much will depend upon the appropriations process in the next Regular Session. We'll be there every step of the way, articulating our position, assertively and constructively.

TCCTA does not oppose accountability, transparency, or valid measurement of what we do. We do draw a line, however, when such efforts potentially jeopardize the ability of faculty members to maintain academic integrity in their classes. We will work very hard to convey this message in the months ahead, and we need your help while lawmakers are "at home" in the community.

Part of our job is to point out the implications and likely—if unintended—consequences of the now-fashionable "business model" approach to higher education. This means getting across our point of view as practitioners. And this means you.

The graduates of our colleges must possess the skills and knowledge that will be necessary in the future society and economy. In order for this to happen, we must uphold rigorous academic standards. The alternative is disaster, for all of us. Such a message ought to be an easy sell, but getting it across is difficult in the fog of apprehension over all levels of education these days.

Sometimes faculty members are seen collectively from the outside as obstacles to change and reform. But I am here to tell all who will listen that community college teachers are gushing with new ideas. In the field of developmental education alone, it is hard to keep track

of all the "best practices" out there.

There is no single panacea or cookie-cutter framework that is suitable for higher education's challenges. Success has many colors, shapes, and shades, but it is best driven by educators. We chose this profession for a reason and I wholeheartedly believe that teachers, counselors, and administrators working as a team will continue to come up with the right ideas to move Texas forward.

This is definitely not the time to lose ground. And yes, we desperately need legislative support for the task.

The strength of our association has always been its membership, and we intend to take full advantage of this resource. We will need all hands on deck. Please watch for our communications in the months ahead, so we can work constructively and effectively in unison.

I have been a community college faculty member for many years and, while our challenges our formidable, I know that the future health and prosperity of our society hinges upon our success. Failure is not an option. That is why I remain optimistic.

Join us. Stay informed. Get involved. And please contact our state office if we can be of any assistance.

Annie Johnson Benifield

TCCTA Committees to Meet

Most TCCTA committees will hold their customary pre-convention meetings on Thursday afternoon, March 1, in conjunction with the annual convention at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center in Frisco. Details concerning each meeting will be distributed by the chairs of the committees.

The Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College board will meet at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, March 3.

Resolutions Committee Invites Suggestions

The TCCTA Resolutions Committee invites individual members and campus faculty organizations to submit ideas and suggestions for proposed resolutions to be considered at the 2012 convention at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center in Frisco.

Suggestions should be received soon, so the committee can give ample consideration to the proposals prior to the annual convention. In the meeting, set for March 1, priority consideration will be given to proposals submitted in advance. Proposals should be sent to:

TCCTA Resolutions Committee 5113 Southwest Parkway Suite 185 Austin, Texas 78735



Amarillo College Teacher Named Professor of Year

Kathryn C. Wetzel, professor of mathematics and engineering and department chair of mathematics, sciences, and engineering at Amarillo College has been named one of four national Professors of the Year for 2011.

She is the only community college educator among the national winners.

Sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and administered by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, the awards recognize professors for their influence on teaching and commitment to undergraduate students. The winners were honored at a luncheon and awards ceremony on November 17, in Washington, D.C.

Judges said they were impressed by Dr. Wetzel's approach to teaching math and engineering to students using real-world applications. They also cited her efforts at program building, including reestablishing her college's engineering program and creating an award-winning math outreach center, which each year provides more than 22,000 hour-long tutoring sessions for students, according to a press release from the organization.

Here is an excerpt from Dr. Wetzel's "Passion for Teaching" Statement:

My teaching career began 26 years ago as a means to an end. Unexpectedly, it became a lifelong passion. Having been an engineer for seven years, I resigned my job to take care of my baby girl but took a part-time job teaching to "make ends meet." To my great surprise, teaching took me out of myself and my worries and propelled me into the world of mentoring and focusing on the needs of others. Nothing I had ever done gave me the same sense of satisfaction and pure joy as when the "light bulbs" of understanding started to turn on in my students. I had found my niche.

It was not unusual for me to leave an engineering class to go teach a developmental math class and then move on to trigonometry or calculus. I found all the classes fascinating. Incorporating the methods I learned while pursuing my Ph. D into all my classes, I listen to and watch the students carefully and adapt my presentation "on the fly" to be a better fit. I use toys and commonplace objects, like staplers, to provide visual cues and demonstrate theory. Often, I serve as the presentation visual as I allow students to "tell me where to go" as we graph.

... It is my personal belief that a fundamental need of mankind is to make a difference, to know that if you disappeared from the earth tomorrow, you would be missed and you would be remembered by someone you helped. I am passionate about helping students, and yet when I am asked to speak to new teachers, my conclusion is this: "You will never teach your students as much as they can teach you. I will never make as positive a difference in their lives as they have made in mine." ☆

"I've Got My Rights!" Let's Use Them

by Beaman Floyd
TCCTA Lobbyist

This last Regular Session was ultimately about money. The next one will be, too.

The situation is truly dire—much worse than most incumbent candidates are likely to discuss. Here's the deal: The vast majority of elected lawmakers have promised that there will be no new taxes. Sales tax collections are coming back, but are nowhere near what will be needed. And, as with last time, the so-called Rainy Day Fund contains only a fraction of the money necessary to balance the budget, which is a constitutional requirement.

At the Capitol, I have personally and repeatedly discussed our particular situation (more students, less money) with state officials. They all know that an historic Regular Session is just around the corner, providing a genuine necessity for urgent input from educators. They are expecting to hear from us, and let's not disappoint them!

It's not all about the formula appropriations, but money will certainly be a recurring theme with other issues: the future of developmental education, course transfer issues, health and retirement benefits, textbook costs, and various incentive and efficiency measures.

Even though the issues are many and serious, they are seldom the first thing I discuss with legislators and staff. Instead, when I walk into a legislative office on behalf of TCCTA, the first thing I do is describe the association and its members. I talk about more than sixty years of hard work, proudly representing the community college faculty of Texas. I talk about 6,000 voluntary members spread across every legislative district in the state. I talk about our constructive activities, positions on legislation, and our fine communications network.

In discussing TCCTA with legislators, I describe an outstanding grass-roots structure with real experience and expertise in the challenges and opportunities encountered by community colleges on a daily basis. By being a member of TCCTA, you are exercising both your freedom of speech and freedom of assembly in a very real way.

Our visits to the Capitol on your behalf are only a small part of TCCTA's potential. The real power comes when you represent the organization as its constituent members by discussing important issues with your legislators. My best visits start with me mentioning a subject, and a legislator replying that he or she has already learned of the issue from a constituent.

One of the best values of TCCTA is in informing you of the issues in real time and helping you make positive contact with policy makers. Please be on the alert for messages from the TCCTA state office, which will include precise suggestions on the most effective strategy of communication. Finally, pay daily attention to the Web site, especially the "News" and Blog.

Once informed, you can transform into TCCTA's most valuable resource by becoming part of the assembled voice of community colleges. When done well, we get to see democracy at its best, and can say with confidence that not only do we have our rights, we are using them. ☆



It's not all about the formula appropriations, but money will certainly be a recurring theme with other issues.

Budget Cuts and the Arts

A Biology Professor's Perspective

by William J. Simcik

Lone Star College–Tomball



As community colleges and other institutions of higher education in Texas still continue to assess the damage inflicted by the disastrous funding results of the 82nd Regular Texas Legislative Session of 2011, I fear for what the future holds in Texas and the nation—particularly in the arts.

Each year as the funding shortfalls in institutions of higher education keep repeating themselves, the pressures increase on the boards of trustees and the upper administration of colleges and universities to slash their budgets to the marrow. As a result, they are repeatedly forced into making hard choices, ones that must reflect logical, emotional, analytical, and ethical balances. And in many cases, their choices often boil down to choosing between the value of the limited number of available dollars and the almost limitless value of an education involving the arts. These decision-makers walk a difficult tightrope, and if they do not keep the values carefully balanced, we will all suffer for it.

The problem in maintaining that fine balance occurs when dollars are strictly tied to measurable outcomes. Of course, no one is surprised that in today's current economic climate that the cost, the benefit, the value, the efficiency, the accountability, or the quality of most things, including education, is often boiled down to a number, a dollar, a coefficient of production, or some other metric device. Yet academicians often argue against the use—or at least the overuse—of metrics, not because we fear that we are unable to achieve the predetermined measure that supposedly demonstrates success, but because the accuracy of the benchmark measure of success can, at times, be dubious.

I would like to explain my point by saying that I have spent many years being trained to respect measurable data. I have an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, and a master's degree in the science of biology as well as a Ph.D in biomedicine from The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Additionally, as a research fellow, I enjoyed several years of cancer research at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. And in all cases, my coursework and research were based on measurable data.

Then in 1989, I was asked to teach a course in biology as an adjunct instructor at Lone Star College–Tomball. Within weeks, I knew I had found my calling. I left M.D. Anderson and cancer research to become a full-time community college professor because I discovered a simple but profound truth: numbers are only one way of measuring value.

True, I was trained to trust the quantifiable, but I've learned while at Lone Star College–Tomball to value the immeasurable. And I hope that Lone Star College System

and other Texas community colleges do not follow the lead of institutions such as the State University of New York–Albany (SUNY) which in the last year attempted to reduce budgets by capping, limiting, or in some way siphoning budgets from the less profitable departments and funneling those dollars to the more profitable departments. In fact, the president of SUNY–Albany, Dr. George Phillips, proposed eliminating the departments of French, Italian, classics and theater arts, in order to more fully fund the sciences. He asserted that the arts simply cost too much, but the sciences could pay for themselves. He argued that the sciences, through research, would bring in money to the university, and he argued that technology and health care discoveries of those science departments would provide the university much needed economic stimulus.

In the uproar that ensued after his announcement, President Phillips changed the language of his suggestion from "elimination" to "consolidation", but his message was clear. When faced with a budget choice, his decision was all about the number of dollars that a program would bring in versus what the program would cost the institution. But I posit this: the ability to discern profit in all of its varied forms is a quality few can claim.

Yes, numbers can be intoxicating because they create the sense of understanding and control. But those numbers can be misleading. Who knows what percentage of scientific or technical discovery has had its genesis in the creation of a painting, the musings of an idle afternoon, the struggle to put feeling into the words of a poem, or the teasing of rhythm and harmony out of a musical instrument? Yet even when we give lip-service to the importance of creativity, such as when we talk about thinking outside the box, soon we find ourselves trying to identify the dimensions of the box, name the box, list the contents of the box, quantify how far outside of the box we should be thinking, but, most of all, we want to know just how much that box will cost the college.

So as a science trained faculty member, I want to articulate the importance of the arts because they nurture the creativity that is central to many important scientific discoveries. Indeed, it has long been established that there are two sides of the human brain which treat the two different aspects of information and understanding: the qualitative and the quantitative. As students of scientific thought and its history are well aware, most accomplished scientists harbor an interest or an active involvement in some form of art, probably because they are actively engaged with both the scientific and the artistic halves of their brain. In fact a study of Nobel laureates in chemistry revealed that many of the Nobel winners were musicians, artists, poets, and writers. In fact, in this same study, Dr. Root-Bernstein noted that Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin while preparing the materials for one of his microbe paintings.

"...you may find it worthwhile to put your analytic nature on hold and revitalize your creative side because the creative side is the place where compassion, sensitivity, discovery, and original thought often reside."

Educator Pushes Back on Training for Careers Only

As the article on this page indicates, there is another point of view when it comes to the current focus by policy makers on career training in higher education.

Brian Rosenberg, president of Macalester College in Minnesota, recently published an article in the *Huffington Post* (Nov. 9), illuminating a number of points often made by college faculty members in all disciplines, as he comments on the late Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, Inc., on the importance of the liberal arts and humanities.

Here is a key excerpt:

“Yes, we need more people with the high-level vocational skills required for a knowledge economy. But we also need some meaningful number of people who are liberally educated, that is, who are educated broadly and deeply in areas of the arts, humanities, and social sciences that are too often considered impractical.

...It is a mistake to believe that one can reliably imagine the future without studying the past, as one does through the discipline of history. It is a mistake to believe that one can create beautiful and useful products without some engagement with fields such as art and music, where the human capacity for creativity is so spectacularly on display. It is a mistake to believe that one can form the empathy necessary to engage fully with the world’s problems without developing what the poet John Keats called ‘negative capability,’ or the ability to step out of oneself that comes with the reading and study of literature.” ☆

So one could reasonably ask, would Leonardo De Vinci have been such an amazing scientist had he not been able to draw and paint? Would Einstein, the consummate scientist, have discovered the theory of relativity if he never played his beloved violin? Perhaps, but consider what Einstein himself said: “After a certain high level of technical skill is achieved, science and art tend to coalesce in esthetics, plasticity, and form. The greatest scientists are artists as well.” And when Einstein spoke to the essence of the best practices in teaching, he said, “The supreme art of the teacher [is] to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

Clearly, I am in good company when I assert that the arts foster the kind of original thought that is crucial to scientific discovery. In fact, in a bid to show how integral the arts are to the sciences, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has recently provided start-up money to fund a Commission on the Humanities and Social Sciences which is charged with the task of putting the humanities and social sciences on equal footing with science, technology, engineering and mathematics in the public framework. The formation of this commission highlights the increasing awareness of the importance of the arts for those who want to become global leaders in science and technology, a connection long suspected but only recently embraced.

So, if you find yourself on a committee that is given the task of cutting your college’s budget, you may find it worthwhile to put your analytic nature on hold and revitalize your creative side because the creative side is the place where compassion, sensitivity, discovery, and original thought often reside.

I hope you take the time to read a novel or book of poetry, visit an art exhibit, watch a play, and listen to a choral concert—hopefully all available on your college campus, but I hope when you do so that you refrain from analysis and any associated metrics. In other words, try not to notice the weight of the book, the number of paintings, the length of the play, or count the number of altos and sopranos—nor should you spend any time wondering what that artistic endeavor is costing you or the college budget. If anything, consider the intangible profit of participating in the arts.

If more administrators, trustees, and legislators would do the same, and find joy in the immeasurable arts and simply be awash in experiencing them, then they would have a better feel for the difficult task of managing higher education in Texas. They would be better prepared to find the delicate balance between the arts and the sciences, and they would see the difference between money and value, between the measurable and the immeasurable. In short, as long as those making decisions in higher education have an appreciation for the arts, the methods they devise for measuring the productivity of our daily lives will be balanced.

There you have it: my two cents worth as a scientist and a community college biology professor for over 20 years. So, if you have any measurable commentary that will not cost me too much time and energy, I will happily consider at least 60 percent of it. Otherwise, you can find me at the Lone Star College–Tomball Performing Arts Center watching the drama students perform their latest production while I muse over the latest treatments for pancreatic cancer. ☆

Stay informed with the latest developments at www.tcccta.org.

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News Briefs and Links

Affluent Students Choosing Two-Year Colleges

A recent national survey by Sallie Mae, the student loan agency, has found that 22 percent of students from households earning \$100,000 or more attended community colleges in the 2010-11 academic year, up from 12 percent in the previous period. It was the highest rate reported in four consecutive surveys.

The survey was discussed in a recent article (Nov. 2) by Daniel de Vise in the *Washington Post*. The apparent trend is driven by a number of factors, primarily the rising costs of selective schools. As the article points out, many community colleges also offer enticing honors programs and smaller classes in certain fields. Two-year schools are increasingly attractive to relatively affluent parents who still don't want their freshmen and sophomores to incur a lot of debt in student loans.

If the trend is real, it could have an incidental effect upon graduation rates at community colleges. Obviously if more strong students enroll in two-year schools, it would boost overall rates, all other things being equal. The article also indicates that students are not as reluctant to attend their local community college, as the reputations of these institutions are now more favorable with the middle and upper class.

Pension Plans Targeted

Traditional "defined benefits" pension programs such as the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) will likely face organized efforts to convert them to "defined contribution" plans in the next Regular Session of the Texas Legislature. (Unlike TRS, the Optional Retirement Program, chosen by many college and university educators, is a defined contribution plan—similar to 401(k) plans that private companies typically provide for employees.)

Some lawmakers prefer such plans because they entail less long-term liability by the state.

The Texas Public Policy Foundation, an influential small-government think tank, recently sponsored a forum during which commentators argued that programs such as TRS are unsustainable. According to media reports, the move to alter the state's approach will likely include municipal employees—at least the ones with traditional pensions.

Last Session of the Legislature, a bill was introduced by Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa) that would have gradually eliminated TRS, by "grandfathering" current members, but requiring new employees to enroll in a defined contribution plan. TCCTA lobbyist Beaman Floyd testified in opposition to the bill, which failed to garner support and died in the House.

Defenders of TRS argue that the fund is managed well and presently robust compared to many state programs around the country. True, it has not achieved "actuarial soundness," allowing policy makers to consider enhancing benefits for retirees, who have not had a cost-of-living increase in many years. But its investments have performed well in the wake of the recent financial crisis, and the portfolio is headed in a positive direction, according to testimony.

TCCTA Summer Programs Planned

TCCTA members are urged to be on the alert for the announcement of two highly popular programs the association offers every summer. As programs are finalized they will be posted at www.tccta.org.

In May, the Great Teaching Roundup will offer faculty members the opportunity to experience renowned professional development, designed by teachers, for teachers. Faculty members invariably leave this seminar invigorated and inspired.

In July the association will sponsor the Leading from the Middle conference for mid-level administrators and those who may be contemplating a move to such a position. Presenters include notable authorities on ethics, state policy, and college governance.

NEH Seminars Announced

Community college faculty members are encouraged to apply for the 2012 Summer Seminars and Institutes sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Each year the NEH's Division of Education Programs offers teachers opportunities to study a variety of humanities topics in Summer Seminars and Institutes. NEH Summer Scholars are awarded fixed stipends to help cover travel costs, books and other research expenses, and living expenses. Stipend amounts are based on the length of the NEH Summer Seminar or Institute: \$2,100 (2 weeks), \$2,700 (3 weeks), \$3,300 (4 weeks), or \$3,900 (5 weeks).

The application deadline is March 1, 2012. Visit www.neh.gov for more information.

Undocumented Students May Face New Obstacles

Because of the presidential election campaign, a great deal of media attention has been focused on the Texas policy allowing the children of undocumented residents to pay in-state tuition. Reports from around the state indicate that several candidates for the Texas Legislature have promised to abolish the program.

These students are also currently eligible for TEXAS Grants, according to an article (Oct. 25) in the *Texas Tribune* by Reeve Hamilton and Thanh Tan.

TEXAS Grants, a need-based grant program that covers tuition and fees at most institutions, is only available to Texas residents. Students unable to prove U.S. citizenship may establish residency if they graduated from a Texas high school, have lived in the state for three years before applying, and sign an affidavit indicating their intent to apply for permanent residency status as soon as possible, the article reports.

In today's political environment, it is hard to imagine many candidates embracing the program as currently constituted. In fact we can likely expect proposed bills to eliminate the practice, as all students and their parents cope with higher tuition and reductions in financial aid.

— 2012 Convention Preview —

“Lightning Talks” Return to Convention Program

The 2012 agenda will include an exciting additional feature: Lightning Talks, from 8:00–9:15, on Friday morning, during the convention in Frisco.

To be conducted simultaneously with GIFTS Sessions (see page nine of this issue of the *Messenger*), the Lightning Talks will emphasize quick discussion and group interaction on a wide range of topics that are each revealed prior to consideration by turning over a card. Lightning Talks occur while standing at group “tall boy” tables, to enhance the speed of conversation before moving on to the next topic.

TCCTA members have often commented that many of their best convention experiences occur informally while in the hallways between sessions. “The idea of Lightning Talks,” says Essie Childers, Blinn College, chair of the TCCTA Professional Development Committee, “is to bring these hallway conversations into the conference program and provide broader access.”

Members wishing to offer topics for consideration in the Lightning Talks are encouraged to send them to Carole Hawkins at chawkins@tccta.org.

Section Program Details Now Online

The list grows daily for over 100 discipline-specific section programs at the TCCTA annual convention in Frisco. These sessions are the backbone of the convention for faculty members—offering valuable professional development at a fraction of the cost of similar programs nationwide.

The list of meetings finalized so far is available at www.tccta.org/convention.

Financial Seminars Include Social Security Briefing

The highly popular TCCTA Financial Planning Seminars will include a presentation from the Social Security Administration on recent developments in Congress regarding the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), during the annual convention in Frisco. These aspects of federal law can greatly affect those who plan to retire from colleges that do not participate in the Social Security system.

System representatives will present an overview of the two policies and respond to questions. Nationwide those who have been urging Congress to repeal one or both provisions have been disappointed in recent years, as the current budget deficit and partisan gridlock have completely frozen such efforts in House and Senate committees.

Other aspects of Social Security law pertaining to all prospective retirees will be featured in the presentation.

A separate seminar will feature “Personal Finance,” with Lloyd Lowe Sr., founder and owner of LD Lowe Sr. Wealth Advisory. The session is designed for members of the Texas Teacher Retirement System and participants in the Optional Retirement Program.

Seminar to Focus on on the Art of Teaching

The always-popular Professional Development Seminar during the 2012 TCCTA convention will be held on Friday, March 2, 2012, at 1:00 p.m.

The speaker will be Patrick Allitt, addressing a different topic from his remarks on the convention theme at the General Session Thursday evening. (More information on Dr. Allitt can be found on page ten of this issue of the *Messenger*.)

The speaker is affiliated with The Great Courses (www.greatcourses.com), which brings engaging professors into your home or car on DVD, audio CD, and other formats. Since 1990, great teachers from the Ivy League, Stanford, Georgetown, and other leading colleges and universities have crafted over 350 courses.

“The Art of Teaching: Best Practices from a Master Educator” will help you develop and enhance your teaching style; provide you with invaluable methods, tools, and advice for handling all manner of teaching scenarios; and open your eyes to how other teachers—and their students—think about and approach this life-changing profession.



Patrick Allitt

Updates and any changes will be posted online.

www.tccta.org/convention.

Groups Plan Special Meetings

Many educational organizations conduct meetings in conjunction with the TCCTA annual convention. The following is a list of meetings planned so far.

Please consult the leaders of the organization for any details or possible changes. The list will also be updated on the association’s Web site at www.tccta.org/convention. Meeting locations will be published in the convention program, available at registration.

- Texas Organization for Associate Degree Nursing (TOADN) Board Meeting, Wednesday, February 29, 1:00–5:00 p.m., Deborah Yancy, President
- Junior/Community College Student Personnel Association of Texas (J/CCSPAT) Executive Committee Meeting, Thursday, March 1, 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., Mary Page, President
- Texas Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (TexMATYXC) Board Meeting, Thursday, March 1, 4:00–6:00 p.m., Raja Khoury, President
- West Texas Community College Consortium for Teacher Education Programs (wtc3tep) Meeting, Friday, March 2, 7:00–9:00 a.m., Mary Braselton, Director
- Texas Community College Association, Annual Luncheon Meeting, Friday, March 2, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. (*by invitation*)
- Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College Board Meeting, Saturday, March 3, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
- Two-Year College English Association-Southwest Board Meeting, Saturday, March 3, 10:30–11:45 a.m., Michael Berberich, Chair

— 2012 Convention Preview —

Success and Technology Seminars



The TCCTA Professional Development Committee will sponsor these Success and Technology Seminars in conjunction with the annual convention in Frisco.

All meetings will be held on Friday afternoon, March 2, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center. Attendees who have laptop computers may wish to bring them for any “hands on” training or software that may be available at some sessions.

“Great Minds Working Together: Dual Credit Modules on the Texas Network”

Presenters: Renee Hernandez, Project Coordinator, The Texas Network, and Terry Mouchayleh, Director of Professional Development and Evaluation, Austin Community College, and Project Director, The Texas Network

More and more community colleges are working on increasing and improving their high school dual credit programs. This important issue is now a special focus of the Texas Network. Attend this session to learn how to access free professional development modules and webinars that address the “how to”s of Dual Credit programs.

“Online Science and SoftChalk”

Presenter: Grace Ruherford, Course Developer and Instructional Designer, Dallas TeleLearning–LeCroy Center, Dallas County Community College District

This session offers an overview of SoftChalk (online course builder), how to get started with it, and a preview of a new state-of-the-art STEM course from Dallas TeleLearning: Biology 1408 Online, which uses SoftChalk as the development platform. Both Biology 1408 and SoftChalk are available to colleges at no cost through statewide licenses provided through the Virtual College of Texas. Instructors in *all disciplines* will be attracted to the easily used power of SoftChalk and the example applications in Biology 1408 Online. Biology instructors will take away information on when and how they can get access to the course—and how they can use SoftChalk to modify it.

“Identity Theft: How Common Is It? How Do I Protect Myself?”

Presenter: Ira Wilsker, Deputy Sheriff and Associate Professor of Management, Lamar Institute of Technology

This session will explore one of the greatest apprehensions associated with using the Internet, presented by an educator with unique experience and expertise.

“Adobe Acrobat Professional: Student ePortfolios, 3D, Student Careers”

Presenter: Tom Dent, Adobe Education Sales

Learn how this world standard is not only for secure, document delivery on any device, but also how the industry often requires knowledge of this product for their job openings. Adding Acrobat to your student’s skills learned in college makes all the difference for landing that first job. We’ll cover everything from how to create an Acrobat PDF document from electronic files, but also how to embed 3D file sets from engineering or health-care systems, to include video and audio from smart phones, and how to assemble it all into a streamlined, digital presentation.

“Enriching Your Courses with Video and Interactive Exercises”

Presenter: Alishia Nelson Spriggins, Manager of Academic Partnerships, Dallas TeleLearning–LeCroy Center, Dallas County Community College District

Learn how to enrich your courses with video clips and interactive exercises from the Dallas TeleLearning Digital Resource Repository—at no cost! All Texas community colleges are licensed to use this repository of more than 2,500 learning objects through a statewide license provided by the Virtual College of Texas. The clips and exercises may be used in classroom and hybrid instruction as well as online, and they cover a wide range of disciplines.

“Reach the Students of Today: Help them Help Themselves with Innovative Digital Learning Tools”

Presenter: Julia Flohr Larkin, Executive Marketing Manager, McGraw-Hill Higher Education

This session will highlight the newest, cutting-edge digital tools from McGraw-Hill. We will discuss the innovative research and development methods behind these tools and the latest studies that demonstrate their power. We will also explore implementation strategies for a variety of course models and hear directly from instructors who are successfully integrating these digital tools into their teaching methods so that you can learn from your peers and begin using these strategies immediately.

“Improving Student Engagement and Performance by Fully Integrating Service Learning in Your Course”

Presenter: Michelle Wilder, Instructor of English and Director, Center for Service Learning, Kilgore College

Research shows that student performance can improve when students are engaged (Eyler and Giles, 1999, and others). This presentation identifies practical ways to improve student engagement in any course as well as tips for successfully integrating service learning in a course.

“Take a LEAP with the New Core”

Presenter: Rex C Peebles, Vice President of Instruction and Vice Chair, LEAP Texas, Midland College

The new Texas Core Curriculum has been designed around the mastery of six Core Objectives: Communication, Critical Thinking, Empirical and Quantitative, Teamwork, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility. Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) is an initiative of the American Association of Colleges and Universities to facilitate and promote general education and the “authentic” assessment of its objectives. The Coordinating Board will require the assessment. Come hear about this critical initiative.

“Emergency Preparedness at Home and In Class”

Presenter: Scott Donaldson, Assistant Coordinator, Tarrant County College Criminal Justice Training Center

The presentation will include information about the Community College Citizen Preparedness Program (3CP2). 3CP2 has a goal of training a minimum 500,000 individuals through the nation’s community colleges on protective actions before the arrival of first responders.

GIFTS

Great Ideas For Teaching Students

Friday, March 2, 8:00-9:15 a.m.

The Professional Development Committee has arranged for a number of the highly popular “GIFTS” sessions to be held at the TCCTA convention. These brief programs offer specific ideas for teaching and are designed to be of practical use to educators in all disciplines. Each session will last approximately ten minutes, allowing participants to sample a variety of useful teaching techniques. Chair of the committee is Essie Childers, Blinn College.

“Learning Activity Menus: Motivating, Engaging, and Meaningful Learning at a Deeper Level Through Choice”

Sheree Hilliard Talkington, Amarillo College

Come experience a chocolate-rich, hands-on, mouth-pleasing event! This active learning session demonstrates the value of conducting brief online assessment of adults and offering these students a menu of learning activities. Our project outcome when involving OTA students at Amarillo College included participant statements on motivation, engagement, and more meaningful, deeper learning.

“The Graphic Syllabus: Course Organization and Outcome Mappings”

Amanda Chau, Blinn College

Concept mapping is a powerful tool that can be used to map out course organization and progression of learning outcomes in your syllabus. This GIFTS session will help you visually communicate the structure and connections of your course content and outcomes to your students. In addition, handouts and “free” technologies will be provided to help you create these maps.

“Tools for Building an Effective Essay”

Marjorie Carol Gibson, Kilgore College

By wearing a carpenter’s tool belt filled with highlighters and different colored pens, the teacher facilitates by modeling for each student how to follow the directives for checking the blueprint/essay. The goal is to have students read for important information as they check the content draft and to visually see the structure come together as if they were building a house.

“Walk a Mile in Their Shoes: Sensitivity Training”

Pamela George, Amarillo College

“...be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant with the weak and erring. Sometime in your life, you will have been all of these.”

— Siddhārtha Gautama

Have you ever honked at that elderly driver in front of you on the freeway? Have you ever had an impatient moment waiting for that physically handicapped person walking in front of you at the mall? Have you had to repeat what you were saying to that hearing impaired relative and got a bit irritated? Have you ever thought about what it might be like to BE elderly? Physically handicapped? Hearing impaired? This sensitivity training helps to move you from sympathy to empathy and how it can be accomplished with the software.

“Test Prep in Lit”

Dessie Davis, Odessa College

A strategy I have adopted in my literature classes is to let students debate and choose test formats (all essay vs. objective, the number of essays, the type of objective questions, how many, etc.) and write the essay questions themselves. I warn students that “lazy” questions will lead to hard tests, and they have consistently submitted quality essay questions. The format is based on a majority vote of the students in class the day of the review, and the discussion includes time limit, how it affects the number of questions, points per question, etc.

“Using Visuals for Writing: How Pictures Can Help Students Write about Current Events”

Reagan King, Southwest Texas Junior College

Participants will learn how to utilize pictures to teach the beginning stages of a writing assignment via a hands-on process of viewing selected pictures, answering critical thinking questions in writing, and participating in a group discussion.

“Power-Up Your PowerPoints”

Diane Underwood, Southwest Texas Junior College

The presentation will help participants make PowerPoint presentations more interesting and interactive for students, without the use of Clickers. An alternative way to maintain student interest is the heart of this approach. The presenter will share options of interactivity and how they can be accomplished with the software.

“Linked Learning Through LibGuides”

Landra Fowler, Southwest Texas Junior College

LibGuides are Web-based, mini Web pages, organizational tools, controlled settings, and linked resources. Attendees will learn about a tool that can aid students in developing skills for success. Joint efforts from across disciplines can utilize LibGuides by linking instruction, library resources, departments, and classroom assignments to student engagement, faculty engagement, and campus involvement.

“Know-Learn-Connect: How to Push Students to Read, Reflect, and Connect to Course Content”

Chad Mueller, Weatherford College

Do you find it difficult to get your students to read their assigned course readings? If so, come to this session and I will introduce you to a refreshing strategy, which encourages students to complete their assigned readings, reflect upon what they have learned, and identify how they personally relate to the course content.

“Get Out of Jail Free”

Pam Sawyer, Collin College

Giving students the power to determine when/if they need a break from an assignment, turns their work into an opportunity to use a “Get Out of Jail Free” card. This idea is linked to teaching students that they have the power to complete their own course work. It teaches students to think, “I must be in control of my successes.”

“Understanding the Limitations for Careers Requiring State Licensing”

Scott Donaldson and Malcolm Jackson, Tarrant County College—Northwest

Frequently, we see ineligible students enrolled in technical programs who are not eligible for employment in the field. Often the student has been guided by professors, counselors, advising staff, or other college employees who are not familiar with the programs’ state requirements. This presentation will provide helpful information about properly advising students in technical programs.

“A Fair to Remember: Student Presentations That Won’t Be Forgotten in Six Months”

Tiffany Harper, Collin College

How many “deer in the headlights” student presentations have you sat through? How many times have you seen a student read every single last word they are going to say right off the screen? It’s painful to watch, and it can make such presentations an agonizing assignment. By changing the format, we can encourage learning through a less formal and more conversational approach. This session will show how an old fashioned fair can make presentations a useful and worthwhile assignment again.

Additional details about

these GIFTS presentations,

as well as any additions or

changes, are available

on the TCCTA Web site.

Please visit www.tccta.org/

[convention](#) and click on

“Convention Programs.”

**General Session to Feature Noted
Scholar and Educator on Convention Theme**

TCCTA members are urged to attend the general session of the TCCTA annual convention, on Thursday, March 1, 2012, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Frisco.

Speaking on the convention theme of “Community Colleges: Foundations for Success” will be Patrick Allitt, Cahoon Family Professor of American History at Emory University.

Dr. Allitt was born and raised in England and graduated in 1977 from Oxford University. An Americanist specializing in religious, intellectual, and environmental history, Dr. Allitt earned his Ph.D. in American history in 1986 from the University of California, Berkeley. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Divinity School and has been at Emory since 1988. Author of six books, he is also the presenter of six lecture series with The Teaching Company (www.teach12.com) on aspects of American and British history. His current research and writing project is a history of the intellectual and political opponents of environmentalism, from the 1960s to the early twenty-first century.

He was the Director of Emory College’s Center for Teaching and Curriculum from 2004 to 2009, where he looked for ways to improve teaching. In this critical administrative position, he led workshops on a wide variety of teaching-related problems, visited dozens of other professors’ classes, and provided one-on-one consultation to teachers to help them overcome particular pedagogical problems.

A widely published and award-winning author, Professor Allitt has written several books, including *The Conservatives: Ideas and Personalities throughout American History*; *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950–1985*; *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome*; and *Religion in America since 1945: A History*. He is also author of *I’m the Teacher, You’re the Student: A Semester in the University Classroom*, a memoir about one semester in his life as a university professor. In addition, he is the editor of *Major Problems in American Religious History*. He has written numerous articles and reviews for academic and popular journals, including *The New York Times Book Review*.

The banquet begins at 6:30 p.m.
The General Session begins at 7:15.
See ticket information below for deadlines and prices for the banquet.

REQUEST FOR BANQUET TICKETS

Please reserve _____ ticket(s) at \$35 each for the TCCTA banquet scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, March 1, 2012, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Frisco.

- My check in the amount of \$_____, payable to TCCTA, is enclosed.
- Please charge my credit card in the amount of \$_____.
- MasterCard Visa Account Number _____ Expires ____/____
CVV Code: _____

Credit Card Billing Address: _____

I understand that full refunds will be made if reservations are cancelled before 12:00 Noon, Friday, February 17, and that no refund will be made for reservations cancelled after that time. (Banquet tickets are transferable.)

PRINT NAME: _____

COLLEGE: _____

Ticket(s) will be held at the convention registration desk under your name.

NOTE: TICKET ORDER SHOULD BE RECEIVED IN STATE OFFICE BY FEB. 17 TO ALLOW TIME FOR PROCESSING. MAIL TO: TCCTA, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735. (If paying by credit card, you may fax the form to Area Code 512, 328-1086.)

Join Us in Frisco!

**65th Annual TCCTA Convention
March 1-3, 2012**

HOTEL UPDATE

The block of rooms reserved for the annual convention at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Frisco has been filled. TCCTA has arranged for quality hotel space nearby at favorable group rates. These hotels can be contacted from the association's Web site.

tccta.org/convention

Convention headquarters is the Embassy Suites Dallas-Frisco Hotel, Convention Center, and Spa.

Just North of Dallas, and convenient to Love Field and DFW airports, the convention site attracts national conferences and is a perfect fit for the TCCTA convention.

Whether you stay there or elsewhere in the area, you will find an abundance of free parking, reasonable prices, and wonderful shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities.

Area Restaurants:

Ruth's Chris Steak House
Texas Land and Cattle
Blue Mesa Grill
Buca di Beppo
Dave and Buster's
La Hacienda Ranch
Ill Forks
Randy's Steak House

Shopping and Entertainment Sites Nearby:

Stonebriar Mall
Allen Premium Outlets
The Shops at Willow Bend
Historic Downtown McKinney
Texas Sculpture Garden
Dr. Pepper Ballpark
Dr. Pepper StarCenter
Plantation Golf Club



"Don't get me started!

The TCCTA Annual Convention

provides

the **best**

professional

development,

the **best**

information on

legislative issues,

the **best**

fellowship with

peers, and the

best updates

on the latest

technology and

educational

trends."

—Annie J. Benfield
TCCTA President

Visit **tccta.org/convention** for maps and program updates.



TCCTA

TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185
Austin, Texas 78735

PERIODICAL

Candidates Announced For 2012-13

for President-Elect



Carol Lowe
McLennan Community College

for Vice President



David Sorrells
Lamar State College-Port Arthur

for Secretary



David Lydic
Austin Community College

for Treasurer



Essie Childers
Blinn College



Randy Jarvis
South Texas College

Paula Wilhite, Northeast Texas Community College, chair of the TCCTA Nominating Committee, has announced the names of candidates for state office for 2012-13. Information on voting is provided below.

Nominated for the office of president-elect was Carol A. Lowe. She has taught English at McLennan Community College for 25 years.

David J. Sorrells was nominated for the office of vice president. He has taught English at Lamar State College-Port Arthur for 16 years.

David Lydic was nominated for the office of secretary. He has taught English at Austin Community College for 31 years.

Essie B. Childers was nominated for the office of treasurer. She has taught developmental education at Blinn College for four years. Also nominated for treasurer was Randy Jarvis. He has taught sociology at South Texas College for 12 years.

Detailed background information and platform statements from the candidates will appear in the convention issue of the *Messenger* and are now available on the TCCTA Web site at www.tccta.org. Under provisions of the TCCTA bylaws, candidates could have been nominated by petitions. The December 1 deadline for "nominations-by-petition" passed with no filed petitions.

The bylaws provide that candidates may also be nominated from the floor during the general session of the TCCTA annual convention, scheduled to begin at 7:15 p.m., Thursday, March 1, 2012, at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center in Frisco.

Members of the Nominating Committee this year also include: Larry C. Allen, Panola College; Dwayne G. Barber, Grayson County College; Carol A. Eppright, Weatherford College; Lola A. King, Trinity Valley Community College; Gail Malone, South Plains College; and Andrea Collins Zabel, Midland College. ☆

Members Urged to Vote Online

Pursuant to 2004 amendments to the TCCTA bylaws, Executive Committee elections will be conducted online. No paper absentee ballots or mailing will be necessary.

A computer will be provided on Friday, March 2, at the convention registration area, from 8:00 a.m., until 5:00 p.m., for professional members who have not had the opportunity to vote.

To vote at the secure site, visit www.tccta.org, under "News/Announcements" and follow the instructions. Background information, photographs, and platform statements are provided at the site.