

TCCTA MESSENGER

A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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TCCTA President Testifies on Benefits Veto

TCCTA State President Terry Mouchayleh, on August 14, told a Senate committee that the Governor's veto of health benefits revenue for community colleges has placed the burden squarely "on the backs of students and taxpayers through tuition hikes and tax increases."

Ms. Mouchayleh testified and provided a written companion statement to the Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education, in a special hearing devoted entirely to the impact of Governor Perry's veto of \$154 million in directed appropriations for next year's health benefits—and to suggestions on how to fix the problem. The hearing was called by the chair of the subcommittee, Sen. Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo), with witnesses including the governor's top legislative assistants, college officials and

trustees, industry leaders, and concerned citizens.

"When college faculty and administrators are hired," Ms. Mouchayleh said to the panel, "we have always felt comfortable that the state would do its duty to provide benefits." She pointed out that many educators accept positions with lower compensation than what they could earn in the private sector, under the assumption of security within the state system. Any reduction of this security could jeopardize the ability of schools to recruit

(continued on page 6)

Conference Planned for Faculty Leaders

The 28th annual TCCTA Conference for Faculty Leaders will be held Friday and Saturday, October 5-6, at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel. A full slate of activities and programs is planned.

At 3:30 p.m. on Friday, attendees will have a choice of two programs.

TCCTA State President Terry Mouchayleh, Austin Community College, will lead a discussion on the latest development with the Texas Professional and Organizational Development Network (TXPOD).

This discussion will focus on an exciting new Perkins-funded TXPOD project: The Texas Network for Teaching Excellence in Career and Technical Education.

(continued on page 3)

Also In This Issue...

TCCTA State President Terry Mouchayleh discusses the reaction of TCCTA to Gov. Perry's veto Page 2

Learn about the 2007 Piper Professors from Texas Community Colleges Page 4

News Briefs and Links Page 7

Should Your Course Be Redesigned? Page 8

The TCCTA Annual Convention will be in Dallas this year! Find hotel, car rental, and program information Page 10

What You Can Do

by Beaman Floyd
TCCTA Lobbyist

Gov. Perry's veto was a shocker—one of the most startling developments I have seen around the Capitol in a long time. Ironically, however, surprise can work in our favor—if we act wisely.

Important elected officials were every bit as shocked as we were at the governor's action. Their collective reaction will keep the focus on a major effort to undo the damage before it becomes a permanent fixture of public policy. Make no mistake, this will be a major fight. We should all be prepared for the long haul.

Naturally, when visiting with clients, I am asked, "What can I do?"

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

Next, get informed. Pay attention to the abundant information and commentary TCCTA provides. Read the *Messenger*. Visit the Web site and contribute to the online discussion on the new "TCCTA Blog" feature. Communication is indispensable.

Third, get to know your representative and senator now, while they are "at home."

This is very important: Please keep in mind that legislators passed a good budget on health insurance and should not be criticized.

Finally, participate in TCCTA events—especially the Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders on October 5-6 in Austin, and the Annual Convention on February 21-23 in Dallas.

I hope to see you there!

☆



"Please keep in mind that legislators passed a good budget on health insurance and should not be criticized."



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TERRY MOUCHAYLEH President



RICHARD MOORE Executive Director



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In early June, I intended to write on a vastly different topic than the one I write on now. Then, there had not yet been the Governor's veto of the community college health benefits portion of the 2008-09 state budget. Even now, I don't know what will have happened with the issue as you read



this in September. However, let me assure you of one thing: TCCTA has represented you well on this issue.

We have sent letters to the governor's office and to each key Texas legislator, respectfully but emphatically registering our intense disappointment in both the veto and the governor's accusation of fraud in community college calculations of employee insurance eligibility.

We have met face-to-face with legislators, who have assured us that they support our concerns. And, we have testified before the Higher Education Subcommittee of the Senate, reiterating that this issue must be resolved and that we do not wish to see our health benefits carried on the backs of our students through tuition increases and local tax increases.

The final results of our efforts may not be known completely for a while, but we could not have represented you without your help. It is with deep appreciation that I, the TCCTA Executive Committee, and the association staff thank you for the letters you wrote to legislators, the calls you made, the e-mails you sent, and the letters you wrote to newspaper editors.

None of this effort is possible without strength in numbers. It is time for TCCTA membership to soar beyond our current membership: we must greatly exceed our goal of 6,000 members; indeed, recent events have driven this need home. To do so, we must reach out to colleagues who, because they are of different generations than we are, may see their work world

differently than we do. But those differences are, in the big picture, minor.

We who are "Veteran-Era" and "Baby Boomer" faculty must reach out to "Generation X" and future "Millennial Generation" teachers to assure that our profession remains strong and that our vital organization flourishes.

Whether we are those who pass the torch or those who grasp it to continue the race, we must keep in mind that We Are TCCTA: Spanning the Generations.

Please, urge your colleagues to join TCCTA and attend the convention in Dallas in 2008. We have very important work to do and we need all hands on deck!

Terry Mouchayleh

TCCTA COMMITTEES TO MEET BEFORE CONFERENCE

The TCCTA Legislative, Membership Services, Professional Development, and Publications Committees will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, October 5, in conjunction with the Conference for Faculty Leaders, at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel.

Members of these committees are also urged to stay for the conference, which is arranged by the Professional Development Committee.

Agendas and other information will be distributed by the chairs of the four committees.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS RECOMMENDATIONS

Brian Dille, Odessa College, chair of the TCCTA Nominating Committee, has announced that the committee is inviting recommendations of individuals for consideration as nominees for officers of the association for 2008-09.

Recommendations should be submitted soon in order to be considered by the Nominating Committee in its November meeting.

Recommendations should be sent to:

Brian Dille TCCTA Nominating Committee Odessa College 201 West University Boulevard Odessa, Texas 79764



Fall Conference to Focus on Important Issues

(continued from page one)

The other program at this time will be “Faculty Senate Best Practices: A Moderated Discussion.” Previous meetings on this subject at TCCTA conferences have garnered much interest. Moderating will be TCCTA State Secretary Fred Newbury, Richland College.

“We have learned that there is a great deal of variety in the way faculty senates conduct business around the state,” said Richard Moore, TCCTA executive director. “Each has its own set of challenges. We hope that sharing information during the conference will lead to the most effective and constructive organizations possible.” TCCTA planners also hope the group will stay in touch throughout the year by using the new “blog” feature of the TCCTA Web site, at www.tccta.org.

The conference will continue with an informal social hour and Mexican “fajita bar” at 5:30 p.m., Friday. Members may register at this time.

The evening program, beginning at 6:45 p.m., will feature “Current Trends in Texas Higher Education,” with three key professional staffers at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: Glenda Barron, associate commissioner for participation and success; David Gardner, deputy commissioner for academic planning and policy; and Joe Stafford, assistant commissioner for academic affairs and research.

Each has spoken previously at TCCTA conferences. Together, they will provide an update on recent laws enacted by the Texas Legislature, the current status of the Closing the Gaps initiative, and the prospects for Course Redesign in Texas.

Saturday morning, at 8:00, registration will continue and breakfast will be served for all participants.

At 9:00, “How the Texas Legislature Works” will be the focus of Saturday’s first session. Scheduled to speak is Beaman Floyd, a professional contract lobbyist who represents TCCTA.

Mr. Floyd specializes in legislative issues relating to insurance, including teachers’ health insurance and retirement, workers’ compensation, public education, and financial institutions. He has worked with the Texas Legislature since 1993, and will address the impact and prospects surrounding Gov. Perry’s veto of health insurance funds.

The second session on Saturday morning, at 10:15, will feature an important program on a subject that deserves more attention at the campus level.

“Who Are These People and What Do They Want? Recruiting and Retaining New Generations of Future Faculty” will be presented by TCCTA president Terry Mouchayleh, director of HR professional development and evaluation programs at Austin Community College.

Ms. Mouchayleh observes, “Much generational research has focused on the new student, but what about the new faculty member? Research shows that for the first time in history, four generations will work side by side. This discussion will address how our schools and our association can create a successful generational blend of current and future faculty.”

During the luncheon session, longtime TCCTA attorney Frank Hill will discuss “Current Legal Issues in Higher Education.”

Mr. Hill received his law degree from Southern Methodist University. Founded in 1972, the firm of which he is the senior partner now includes 30 practicing attorneys, several of whom are recognized as specialists in legal matters involving rights of teachers. Time for questions and answers with Mr. Hill will also be allowed.

The conference will adjourn at 1:30 p.m.

While designed primarily for leaders of local faculty organizations, the conference is open to all interested TCCTA members and faculty leaders. College presidents and other administrators are also encouraged to attend and participate. The conference provides a unique opportunity to share ideas and ask questions of professional colleagues.

REGISTRATION FEE—\$75, payable on arrival (includes social hour, breakfast, and lunch).

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION should be completed by September 28 through the TCCTA state office, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735 (Telephone 1-800-288-6850, ext. 11; in Austin 328-2044, ext. 11; Fax 1-512-328-1086; e-mail tccta@tccta.org).

HOTEL RESERVATIONS should be made by September 18 with the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel to insure the group rate and availability. Rate: \$85 single, \$125 double, plus tax.

Self parking is \$10 per night.

Reservations can also be made online at www.hilton.com, by telephone at 1-800-445-8667 (8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m), or fax at 1-512-385-6763. In making phone or fax reservations, be sure to indicate plans to attend the TCCTA conference.

The hotel is two minutes away from the passenger terminal of Austin Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) with complimentary airport shuttle service. ☆



Glenda Barron



David Gardner



Joe Stafford



Beaman Floyd



Terry Mouchayleh

TCCTA Adds Staff Position



Carole Hawkins has been added to the state office staff as assistant to the executive director.

Miss Hawkins was formerly director of student activities at Vernon College, where she also served as president of the

Texas Junior College Student Government Association Advisors Association. She has an Associate of Applied Science degree from North Central Texas College, a Bachelor of Science degree in systems management and leadership communication from Texas A&M University, and a Master of Arts degree in organizational management from Wayland Baptist University.

In addition to other responsibilities, Miss Hawkins will focus on event planning and managing the TCCTA Web site.

Piper Professors Named for 2007



Jeff Edwards

The Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation announced recipients of the 2007 Piper Professor awards last May. Five Texas community college educators were among those recognized. The foundation was organized in 1950, and the Piper Professor program was begun in 1958, with eight awards of \$1,000 each. Today the foundation honors 15 Texas professors each year. The stipend is \$5,000.

Nominations for awards are requested annually from all accredited public and private institutions of higher education in the state. A selection committee from the academic community reviews the nominations to choose the professors to be honored. More information about the program is available at the TCCTA Web site (www.tccta.org) under "Links."



Sam Germany

Jeff Edwards won the Piper award based on his teaching at Cy-Fair College, where he joined the economics faculty in 2003. In January he moved on to teach at Holmes Community College in Mississippi. Mr. Edwards also taught at Collin County Community College.

"Teaching is communication at its best," he says. "You try one way, and if you don't succeed, you try another way; there's nothing magical about it. The challenging part is staying relevant as you age. What I try to do is use real world illustrations to help students understand economic principles, such as supply and demand."

Mr. Edwards is a former member of the TCCTA Executive Committee and long time Phi Theta Kappa Advisor.



Don Lucas

Sam Germany is a professor of music at Cedar Valley College, where he began teaching as an adjunct instructor in 1981. He has a doctorate in vocal performance from the University of North Texas. "Music is my second language," he says. "It is how I express things that often extend beyond words or mere emotions."

Dr. Germany founded and directs at the Family Music Theatre. He says, "I wanted a place where excellent musical theatre could be produced without compromising whole-some values or mutual support among cast members."

He adds, "Equipping and inspiring all my students to reach for their greatness is the truly great thing I get to do. I was created to have an impacting force on this world and through my students I believe it will be so."



David Price

Don Lucas is assistant professor of psychology at Northwest Vista College in the Alamo Community College District. He is the first professor in the history of his school to receive a Piper award. Dr. Lucas holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Northern Illinois University.

"My teaching philosophy is simply to create learning environments that encourage students to become aware of their existing knowledge," he says. "Students find this knowledge only through questioning. The best teachers ask the best questions. And that is how I conduct my classes—if not my life—by asking questions."

Dr. Lucas has published extensively and was a regular guest on the radio show "Prime Plus" on KLUP AM, in San Antonio.



Kathryn Wetzel

David Price is associate professor of mathematics at Tarrant County College—Southeast Campus.

Mr. Price has taught for 35 years, 30 of them at TCC, where he won the Chancellor's Award for Exemplary Teaching in 1989. He received the Teaching Excellence

Award from the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges in 2002. He is co-director of TCC's Cornerstone Honors Program, which he helped develop, and he teaches an honors course that traces the development of mathematics and science from their roots in philosophy.

"Because of his never-ending search for mathematical truths in everyday life and his ability and willingness to share those truths with others, he makes a positive difference in the lives of his students every semester," said TCC Southeast Campus Assistant Professor of Mathematics Jo Tucker.

Mr. Price earned his B.S. in education from Southwestern University and his M.S. in mathematics from the University of North Texas.

Kathryn Chestnut Wetzel is professor and department chair in mathematics and engineering at Amarillo College. She earned a B.S. degree in nuclear engineering from Texas A&M University and Ph.D. in engineering from Texas Tech University.

"I believe teaching is a calling" she says. "It is not the job that holds you there; it is the feeding of your soul as you see a difference in the students, as they become stronger and begin to pursue their education with determination and dedication."

"The life of a teacher is my dream come true! It is everything I could have asked for and more."

Prior community college Piper Professors are listed below:

- 1958 R. W. Lee, St. Philip's College
- Henry B. Webb, San Antonio College
- 1960 Katharine Evans, Del Mar College
- Inez Grant, South Plains College
- Bertie Warren, Amarillo College
- 1961 Marjorie Morris, Odessa College
- *Margaret Pannill, Navarro College
- *Marjorie Walthall, San Antonio College
- 1962 *Paul McFerran, Texarkana College
- 1963 Mazella Arnold, Temple College
- B. E. Schulze, Del Mar College
- 1964 S. L. Canterbury, Kilgore College
- 1965 Arthur Chesley Bowman, San Antonio College
- 1966 P. Eugene Smith, Del Mar College
- 1968 Jack R. Harvey, Weatherford College
- Robert E. Hoffman, Amarillo College
- 1970 Clarence W. Norris, St. Philip's College
- Barbara Warburton, Texas Southmost College
- 1971 Lucille M. Boyd, Navarro College
- Aileen Creighton, Del Mar College
- 1972 *Joe F. Taylor, Amarillo College
- 1973 Hoyt J. Burnette, McLennan Community College
- 1974 Frances P. Dushek, Del Mar College
- John N. Igo, Jr., San Antonio College
- Duane Chad Morrison, Grayson County College
- 1975 James A. Hankerson, El Centro College
- 1976 Theron Wilford Kirk, San Antonio College
- 1977 Annie Lou Winton Ballard, Kilgore College
- David Lloyd Petrash, Grayson County College
- Gary Alan Smith, Tarrant County Junior College—Northwest Campus
- 1978 Geraldine Johnston, Navarro College
- Carolyn Oliver Perry, San Jacinto College
- Helen Starr Roberts, South Plains College
- 1979 Dolores C. Villarreal, St. Philip's College
- Mary Cecilia Wyllie, Alvin Community College
- 1980 Harley Davis, Paris Junior College
- 1981 Betty Jo Graber, Weatherford College
- Anne Dean Turk, Kilgore College
- 1982 William Samelson, San Antonio College
- 1983 Rosemary Valladolid, El Paso Community College
- 1984 *David J. Clinkscale, Tarrant County Junior College—Northwest Campus
- Costas Katsigris, El Centro College
- Ronald J. Williams, Del Mar College

- 1985 M. Duane Gage, Tarrant County Junior College–Northeast Campus
Joseph J. Granata, San Jacinto College–South Campus
Katherine E. Staples, Austin Community College
Robert W. Wylie, Amarillo College
- 1986 H. McAfee Daniel, Navarro College
Lewis M. Fox, San Antonio College
Ray Kenneth Robbins, Western Texas College
- 1987 Ann Cartwright, San Jacinto College–Central Campus
- 1988 Diane Martin, Eastfield College
- 1989 Ida M. Blanchette, Alvin Community College
Elwyn Jeanette Bone, Kilgore College
Hazelyn D. Lewis, St. Philip's College
Wayne Hartman McAlister, The Victoria College
Richard E. Miller, Navarro College
Robert H. Schlieker, Temple College
Jerry D. Thompson, Laredo Community College
Joan Laveson Weston, Brookhaven College
- 1990 Beatrice M. Burke, Howard College (Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf)
Mark D. Hettle, Mountain View College
Marylin Sue Kelly, McLennan Community College
*Marilyn J. Lancaster, Western Texas College
Renate True, College of the Mainland
- 1991 Jane Aycock Bouterse, Texarkana College
Brian David Earle, Cedar Valley College
Gary Bruce Hodge, Collin County Community College
Tommy Kaye Kinney, Brazosport College
Ronald R. Roberts, Grayson County College
Lucy A. Scarbrough, El Paso Community College
Olive Jensen Theisen, Northeast Texas Community College
- 1992 Sam W. Hawkins, San Jacinto College–Central Campus
Thomas M. Hobbs, North Harris College
- 1993 Michael N. Donahue, Temple College
Barbara R. McGregor, Weatherford College
Claudia E. Neeley-Plog, El Centro College
Robert K. Peters III, Tyler Junior College
Charles E. P. Simmons, Midland College
Mary Seals Thorpe, Del Mar College
- 1994 Tommy W. Stringer, Navarro College
- 1995 Dennis J. Cravens, Vernon Regional Junior College
Sandra S. Shumate, San Antonio College
- 1996 Vivian Ruby Brown, Laredo Community College
Norman C. Delaney, Del Mar College
Shelley Denise Lane, Collin County Community College
Elroy Smith, Palo Alto College
Charles Dennis Spurlin, The Victoria College
- 1998 *Emmeline Dodd, College of the Mainland
Bettye Craddock, Kilgore College
- 1999 Mattie J. Collins, Angelina College
Gary D. Swaim, North Lake College
Warren Taylor, Midland College
- 2000 Luke Barber, Richland College
Hanhphouc (Happy) Vu Buu, North Harris College
*Patsy W. Goss, San Jacinto College–Central Campus
Vivian Dennis-Monzingo, Eastfield College
Bill O'Neal, Panola College
- 2001 J. Paul Matney, Amarillo College
Laura Matyssek Wood, Tarrant County Community College–Northwest Campus
Randal Scott Yarbrough, Collin County Community College–Spring Creek Campus
- 2002 Peggy Lambert, Kingwood College
Andrew Preslar, Lamar State College–Orange
Linda Ridgway, Cedar Valley College
- 2003 Elizabeth Dollie Hudspeth, St. Philip's College
Kenneth Lee Weatherbie, Del Mar College
- 2004 Eduardo Enrique Aguilar, Tarrant County College–Northwest Campus
L. Alan Barnes, Tyler Junior College
Mary Jean Osentowski, Richland College
Lincoln C. Rolling, Jr., Cedar Valley College
- 2005 Kenneth Gerald Alfors, Mountain View College
Jennifer Annette Black, McLennan Community College
*Susan H. Edwards, Cy-Fair College
Jacqueline Ann Ganschow, Del Mar College
Sycily Ann Gregory, South Plains College
O. Rufus Lovett, Kilgore College
Rebecca Lynn Tate, Tomball College
Doris Phillips Wilson, El Centro College
- 2006 Ray F. Attner, Brookhaven College
Dalton C. DeHart, San Jacinto College–Central Campus
- 2007 Jeff D. Edwards, Cy-Fair College
Samuel R. Germany, Cedar Valley College
Donald R. Lucas, Northwest Vista College
Joel D. Price, Tarrant County College–Southeast Campus
Kathryn C. Wetzel, Amarillo College

* Asterisk denotes past president of the Texas Community College Teachers Association

Letter from TCCTA President to Gov. Perry

June 28, 2007

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of Texas
P. O. Box 12428—Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Perry:

The Texas Community College Teachers Association is a professional association, consisting of approximately 6,000 faculty, administrators, counselors, librarians, and other educators on every community college campus in Texas. We are by far the largest organization of two-year college educators in the state.

We strongly take issue with the June 15 veto of the appropriations for employee health benefits for FY 2009. On this matter we are in full agreement with the Texas Association of Community Colleges.

The veto proclamation states that college leaders “falsified” their appropriation request. TCCTA members or staffers were present for all revenue hearings and we must respond emphatically that no falsification—or any sort of distortion—occurred. Certainly, there were differences regarding the issue of “proportionality,” but college leaders were consistently straightforward and factual in their presentations—and members of the House and Senate ultimately accepted our point of view. I urge you to review the official record of the hearings of October 2 (the initial LAR request presented to the combined hearing of the LBB and Governor’s staff), the hearing of the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Education on February 7, and the Senate Finance Committee hearing on February 8. You will discern readily that the position of community college leaders has not changed on proportionality since the concept first arose.

Our other point of contention, of course, is the veto itself, which will cause massive financial disruption on every campus in Texas. Precious revenue must now be diverted from instructional programs to comply with the statutory requirement (not to mention the moral obligation) to provide these benefits to educators. Furthermore, it is impossible to fathom how the goal of Closing the Gaps can now escape jeopardy. Most tragically, colleges will be compelled to raise tuition, slamming the door on the very cohort of students who are the vanguard of economic development in Texas.

Perhaps these are among the reasons your own original budget proposal included appropriations to fully fund health insurance benefits for community college employees.

Our reaction to the veto goes beyond disappointment. It is no exaggeration to state flatly that a sense of betrayal is spreading among the teachers and administrators charged with the most vital educational project of the next generation.

We are aware that policy options are limited at this point. Even if the next Regular Session enacts supplemental legislation correcting the situation by September 2009, colleges will have implemented their budget cuts in educational programs. It is our understanding, however, that the LBB possesses the authority to reinstate the funds. If this is correct, we strongly urge immediate action to do so. We urge you further to explore any other remedies that may be available.

Governor, we feel this controversy could have been avoided with better communication. TCCTA will continue to represent the interests of its members in a constructive fashion. Please contact our state office if you wish to have further information.

Sincerely,
Terry S. Mouchayleh
State President

“Our reaction to the veto goes beyond disappointment. It is no exaggeration to state flatly that a sense of betrayal is spreading among the teachers and administrators charged with the most vital educational project of the next generation.”

Veto Stuns, Mobilizes College Educators

(continued from page one)

talented employees.

"We are in full accord with the position of the Texas Association of Community Colleges," Ms. Mouchayleh stated.

During the hearing it was apparent that the governor does not intend to change his view that state dollars should not cover the benefits of those who receive their salaries from local funds. Ironically, this theory of "proportionality" is only germane since the state's share of funding the instructional formula has withered dramatically in recent years. The original compact from the late '60s stipulated that the state would cover all instructional costs, while local funds would pay for facilities and equipment.

Senators said they were anxious to know the immediate impact of the veto at the campus level. A long list of college officials and board members testified of impending tuition and tax increases to come up with revenue for health benefits, which colleges must provide under current law. Some witnesses stated that their schools would be forced to cancel programs targeted specifically for the Closing the Gaps initiative and work force training.

Governor Perry has stated that he is willing to provide enough revenue to cover the loss, but it must be directed to the instructional formula, incentive funding programs, and grants for students. As much as \$200 million may be available, assuming the funds can be redirected by an action of the Legislative Budget Board, with the consent of the governor.

Much of the hearing was devoted to a breakdown in communication over competing definitions of proportionality. The governor's veto message asserted shockingly that college officials "falsified" their budget requests, but witnesses from the Texas Association of Community Colleges countered that the Legislature accepted the college view, allowing funds for all "eligible" employees. Senators stated sharply that they were not informed of the governor's concerns during key budget hearings, including negotiations of the joint House-Senate Conference Committee on the general appropriations bill—a panel including members at the Senate hearing.

"We don't understand why you didn't communicate with us directly," Sen. Zaffirini told the governor's representatives.

"We've got a hell of a problem," added Sen. John Whitmire, (D-Houston), who said the hearing demonstrated clearly that action is important soon.

The latest information on the veto is available under "News and Publications" at www.tccta.org.

Veto Mutes Modest Gains in Funding

The 80th Regular Session appropriated slightly over \$1.7 billion for Texas community colleges for the 2008-09 biennium, a 5.5 percent increase over the current level of funding. The appropriation per contact hour grew from \$6.60 to \$7.03, a 6.5 percent increase. The new appropriation level represents 51.4 percent of "full formula" funding—a slight reduction from the current allotment, which stands at 52 percent. The Coordinating Board asked originally for the "full formula," minus an equivalent amount for tuition and fees.

Complicating matters this session was a decline in contact hours during the previous base year. Thirty-two of the 50 Texas colleges suffered enrollment drops, proportionately affecting their share of state revenue. The Legislature did provide a vital "hold harmless" provision to ensure that no school must endure a reduction from the current level, but 16 colleges will receive no formula increase at all.

State Boosts Commitment to TRS

According to most authorities, the Texas Teacher Retirement System pension fund is relatively healthy, but in need of financial fortification. State law requires TRS to be "actuarially sound" (which involves a long-range statistical projection) in order to grant retirees any increase or to improve prospective benefits. The state's contribution rate has been frozen at the constitutional minimum of six percent since 1995. Retirees have not received a cost-of-living supplement since 2001.

Late in the session, the chosen vehicle for TRS reform became SB 1846, sponsored by Sen. Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock).

The new law boosts the state's TRS contribution to 6.58 percent. It also authorizes an increase in the employee contribution from 6.4 percent to a maximum of 6.58 percent—if an extra infusion is needed for a one-time "13th check" for retirees. Any supplemental check is capped at \$2,400 and will be issued if there is enough projected revenue to meet the fund's actuarial goals. Significantly, SB 1846 also requires the state contribution to be at least as much as the rate for active employees. This is an important new statutory principle.

Precise levels will not be known until the official assessment of the fund is completed by the TRS Board.

ORP Rates Set to Improve

Since 1995 the state contribution rate for the Optional Retirement Program has been fixed at six percent for newly hired individuals, creating a gap that treats employees differently based on work history. In fact, some schools have three separate rates, based on college choices on how to spend state supplements and local funds for various classifications of employees.

The 80th Legislature took a significant step in closing part of this gap, by increasing the state's contribution to 6.58 percent for those hired since September 1, 1995. This increase will help the retirement prospects of many educators who chose ORP at the start of their careers. The new rate takes effect September 1.

Those hired before 1995 will still be eligible for supplements, depending upon college policies. Colleges are permitted, but not required, to raise the contribution rate to as high as 8.5 percent for all ORP participants. The employee contribution will remain at 6.65 percent.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has released its 2007 overview of ORP, which also includes background information about TRS. The information is extremely useful in evaluating recent changes made by the Texas Legislature, and especially instructive for newly hired educators contemplating which program is most suitable for their needs.

A link to this information is available on the TCCTA Blog, posted on August 17. Visit www.tccta.org. ☆

"We don't understand why you didn't communicate with us directly."

—Sen. Judith Zaffirini to Gov. Perry's Legislative Assistants

News Briefs and Links

Closing the Gaps is “Within Reach,” Commissioner Says

At the quarterly meeting of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, on July 19, officials expressed guarded optimism that the ambitious goals of the Closing the Gaps initiative can be reached by 2015. The board’s objective is to add 200,000 new college students by that year.

After receiving an update by board staffers, Commissioner Raymund Paredes said the state must improve its rate of Hispanic enrollment, which met initial targets but still lags behind population growth for that category. He also said extra effort should be made with African-American males—another statistical cohort needing improvement.

However, “Closing the Gaps is within reach,” the commissioner told the board.

One other encouraging note in the report was that 81 percent of community college students have taken the “recommended” curriculum in high school, compared with 40 percent six years ago. This slate of required courses is more rigorous than the previous “default” curriculum. The commissioner stated that this improvement should reduce the need for developmental instruction at colleges and universities.

“America’s Best Community Colleges?”

The ranking system for universities published each year by *U.S. News and World Report* has always been controversial.

University officials whose schools are slighted by the methodology used by *U.S. News* complain that their institutions rank better when different data is factored in. And, of course, community college officials have always wondered why the category of school with the most enrollments are ignored entirely.

Kevin Carey, writing in the June 2007 issue of *Washington Monthly* says there are many reasons for this bias. “Part of this is pure snobbery,” he says. “Many of those who create and cover the mainstream college guides attended prestigious four-year schools—which helps to explain the annual preoccupation with whether Harvard or Princeton made the top of the list.”

The publication uses a different methodology to rank community colleges. Variables include results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, or CCSSE (available at www.ccsse.org). The survey tests colleges on how well they use teaching techniques that have been proven to lead to better learning, such as how often students collaborate with other students and interact with faculty.

Perhaps inevitably, this methodology has also attracted controversy. In fact, CCSSE, has issued a statement disputing the use of its survey. “CCSSE does not support the use of student engagement survey results for the purpose of ranking community and technical colleges. Such uses would obscure complex dimensions of institutional performance and student behavior,” the statement says.

New TCCTA Web Site Features Blog, Multi-Media

All community college educators are urged to list the new TCCTA Web site among their favorites for frequent reference and online participation.

A new Web log—or blog—feature contains updates from state and national sources. News from Austin and Washington on legislation, employee benefits, and instructional issues will be posted continuously. Members can also become the association’s “eyes and ears,” posting comments on local campus perspectives.

The blog will also feature discussions of pedagogical developments and new technology. For example, members are urged to react to the article on Course Redesign found on page eight of this issue of the *Messenger*.

TCCTA executive director Richard says, “One of my favorite expressions is ‘None of us is as smart as all of us.’ The new interactive media tools allow us to create an online community. This will make us a stronger, more vital organization.”

Recent posts include...

- [TAKS and TSI Still Lack Coordination](#)
- [First Semester is Crucial for Retention](#)
- [TCCTA Lobbyist Beaman Floyd to Address Veto](#)
- [IRS Postpones, Clarifies Rules on Annualized Pay](#)
- [New Law Limits Student Drops to Six](#)
- [New ORP/TRS Information Released](#)
- [Sen. Zaffirini Optimistic About Veto Restoration](#)
- [TRS Provides Update on Rates and Investments](#)
- [Beyond PowerPoint?](#)
- [Campus Safety Added to Orientation Sessions](#)
- [Course Redesign Site Available](#)

The new site also features video clips from TCCTA conferences and will offer visitors the chance to listen and subscribe to podcasts on important subjects.

Not everything about the site is new. It still offers the same reliable job announcements, conference information, and links of all descriptions that may be of interest to community and technical college educators.

“Log on and get involved!” says TCCTA State President Terry Mouchayleh.

“None of us is as smart
as all of us.”

—Richard Moore
TCCTA executive director

Mark Your Calendars!

Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders

October 5-6, 2007

Hilton Austin Airport

61st Annual Convention

The Fairmont Dallas Hotel

Dallas, Texas

Feb. 21-23, 2008

Should Your Course Be “Redesigned”?

As reported previously in the *Messenger*, course redesign is official state policy. A law passed in the third Special Session of the 79th Legislature last year mandates selective redesign projects, to be funded with competitive grants from a variety of sources.

Simply put, course redesign is a movement to change fundamentally the way college and university courses are taught.

For updates on specific pilots, grants, time lines, phases, and conferences related to redesign policy, members are urged to consult the Web site of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board at *thech.state.tx.us*. Only some community colleges and universities are currently participating, with expansion of the program dependent upon “best practices” reported back to the Legislature by the Coordinating Board in 2011.

At this point there is no single model for faculty members to evaluate and no precise template as to what exactly a redesigned course should look like. However, it is clearly time for educators to understand the concept and its implications. Another important source of information is the National Center for Academic Transformation (Web site: *www.ncat.org*).

NCAT, a non-profit organization based in New York, is the principal leader in the course redesign movement nationwide.

Carol A. Twigg is president and CEO of the organization and has testified before the Coordinating Board. Her specialty involves using information technology to transform teaching and learning in higher education. Dr. Twigg is also former vice president of Educom (now EDUCAUSE), where she advanced the need for new models of student-centered, online teaching and learning.

NCAT’s stated purpose is to advance the use of information technology in (1) improving student learning and (2) reducing instructional costs. The organization’s chief target is lecture as a teaching methodology, particularly in large-enrollment, entry-level courses. Most large lecture halls are found at universities, of course, but it is clear from pilot programs and the enthusiasm for grants among two-year schools that community colleges are also prominent in the movement.

Course redesign can take many forms, but one example given frequently by proponents is in the field of mathematics. Instead of an instructor “explaining” problems and their solutions, for instance, the teacher would design a set of math tasks for students to accomplish. The students would work individually and in groups in an “emporium” using instructional software. Tutors would be available at periodic meetings, working individually with students. Grading would also be accomplished more efficiently with technology, as students advance at their own pace.

In another example, one history professor at the University of North Texas has placed all her lectures online. Class meetings are then devoted to activities such as debates and role-playing exercises.

Does it work?

A few years ago, Dr. Twigg created a project called the Program in Course Redesign, with the support of an \$8.8 million grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts.

From 1999 to 2004, NCAT worked with 30 diverse two and four-year colleges (50,000 students annually) to examine whether it is possible to improve quality and reduce cost in higher education.

In the study, twenty-five of thirty course redesign projects showed significant increases in student learning; the other five showed learning equivalent to traditional formats. Of the twenty-four projects that measured retention, eighteen reported a decrease in drop-failure-withdrawal rates, ranging from ten to 20 percent. Dramatically, all 30 institutions reduced their costs by 37 percent on average, ranging from 20 percent to 77 percent, and produced a collective annual savings of about \$3 million. Other reported outcomes included better student attitudes toward the subject matter and increased student and faculty satisfaction with the new mode of instruction.

Media attention has been scarce. On May 6, the San Antonio *Express-News* reported on a controversy at the Alamo Community College District, where Northwest Vista College backed out of participation in a course redesign grant, while three other schools, St. Philip’s College, Palo Alto College, and Northeast Lakeview College, chose to participate.

“It is low-quality education,” Northwest Vista College professor Bill Colangelo stated. “The students need person-to-person contact and motivation.” Course redesign typically involves classes with a larger faculty-to-student ratio, thereby reducing the cost per student.

In the article, Dr. Twigg responded, “You can be skeptical that it won’t work, but we can prove to you it works.” She urged all interested educators to visit the NCAT Web site for documentation.

At recent TCCTA conferences, faculty members expressed mixed opinions on the concept of course redesign. Some see it as an exciting opportunity to focus on course content as “architects” rather than lecturers and graders. Others express concern that technology companies will benefit financially if their products are used. Many such companies are sponsors of NCAT, though Dr. Twigg points out that campus educators choose which products to use, as with most current practices of textbook selection.

Inevitably, plenty of other questions persist as well.

There is underlying concern with many teachers about the “cookie-cutter” approach that seems implicit in redesign—a shift that some say precludes individual excellence, not to mention idiosyncrasy. Would a brilliant lecturer be compelled to change? Some supervisors report anecdotally that the instructors with the best retention and student evaluation scores tend to be traditional lecturers. Is this true generally? Is testing and grading software superior to direct evaluation of each student by a faculty member? For community colleges especially, students often come from families with no college experience. Would they get the same personal touch with a redesigned curriculum? Would redesign be discussed seriously if funding were adequate?

TCCTA hopes to utilize its new blog feature on the association’s Web site to begin an ongoing conversation on this issue. Readers are urged to post comments and questions in a special effort to stimulate thought and discussion. ☆



Image on the Web site of the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT)

TCCTA hopes to utilize its new blog feature on the association’s Web site to launch an ongoing conversation on this issue. Readers are urged to post comments and ask questions of each other.

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Visit “Events” at www.tccta.org for a complete list of area attractions, maps, and travel information.



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Come to the convention in a rental car!

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Make Hotel Reservations Early!

TCCTA members planning to attend the 61st annual convention are encouraged to reserve hotel accommodations early. A block of rooms has been reserved, but it is likely that members who wait a long time to make reservations will be disappointed. With the exception of a few special functions, all convention activities will be held at The Fairmont Dallas hotel.

In addition to secure online reservations on the TCCTA Web site, accommodations may be reserved by completing the form below and mailing it to the hotel, by fax, at 214-720-5269, or by phone, at 214-720-5290. Reservations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations received after January 29 will be subject to availability for the group rate.

Forms and inquiries regarding reservations should *not* be directed to the TCCTA state office, as all housing arrangements are under the control of The Fairmont Dallas.

Tentative Convention Schedule Released

(Program details will be posted as they become available under "Convention" at www.tccta.org.)

THURSDAY—FEBRUARY 21, 2008

7:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Special Meetings (to be announced)
 12:00 Noon–7:00 p.m. Convention Registration
 1:30– 3:30 p.m. Committee Meetings, as called by Chairs
 4:00– 5:00 p.m. Meeting of Executive Committee and Chairs
 6:30 p.m. Banquet
 7:15 p.m. General Session

9:30– 11:00 a.m.

11:15–12:45 p.m.

1:00– 2:15 p.m.

1:00– 2:15 p.m.

2:30– 5:15 p.m.

5:30 p.m.

Section Meetings for Some Sections
 Remaining Section Meetings
 Professional Development Seminar
 Financial Planning Seminar
 Technology Seminars
 Refreshments, Entertainment, and Raffle

SATURDAY—FEBRUARY 23, 2008

FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 22, 2008

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Convention Registration
 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Exhibits Open
 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Election of Officers
 8:00– 9:15 a.m. Financial Planning Seminar
 8:00– 9:15 a.m. Great Ideas For Teaching Students (GIFTS)

8:00–11:30 a.m.

8:00–11:30 a.m.

9:00–10:15 a.m.

10:30–11:45 a.m.

11:45 a.m.

12:00 Noon–3:00 p.m.

Convention Registration
 Exhibits Open
 Section Meetings for Some Sections
 Remaining Section Meetings
 Adjournment
 Special Meetings (to be announced)

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TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

61st Annual Convention
 The Fairmont Dallas — Dallas, Texas — February 21-23, 2008

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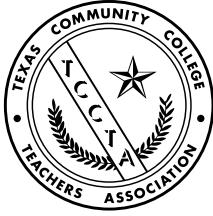
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A Special Invitation

Here are some of the ways TCCTA benefits its members...

PROFESSIONAL REPRESENTATION

As the only organization dedicated to serving community and technical college educators, TCCTA provides a positive legislative program, using a professional lobbyist to represent **your** interests.

BENEFITS INFORMATION

TCCTA compiles and publishes annually a comprehensive statewide analysis of faculty salaries and retirement programs.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Receive frequent, accurate, and precise bulletins on the latest developments in the Capitol.

CONFERENCE FOR FACULTY LEADERS

The annual TCCTA Conference for Faculty Leaders features sessions and speakers who address the issues facing educators in two-year colleges.

ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION

Receive the best bargain in quality professional development. The annual TCCTA convention is attended by thousands of your colleagues from across the state. The 2008 convention will be held in Dallas, Feb. 21-23.

MANY OTHER USEFUL BENEFITS

- A viable job placement/referral service;
- A Web site featuring online dialogue on important issues facing two-year college educators;
- Financial Planning Seminars—including one on Health Benefits—at the annual convention.

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY COVERAGE—AN ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL BENEFIT

Again this year, members may enroll in an optional \$2,000,000 educator's professional liability insurance program. **The insurance is required for TCCTA legal advice.** The cost of the program is \$50. Major provisions of the policy include:

- Professional liability coverage of \$2,000,000 per member (plus cost of defense)
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- Reimbursement of bail bond premium of up to \$1,000
- Coverage for punitive damages up to \$5,000

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