

TCCTA MESSENGER

A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

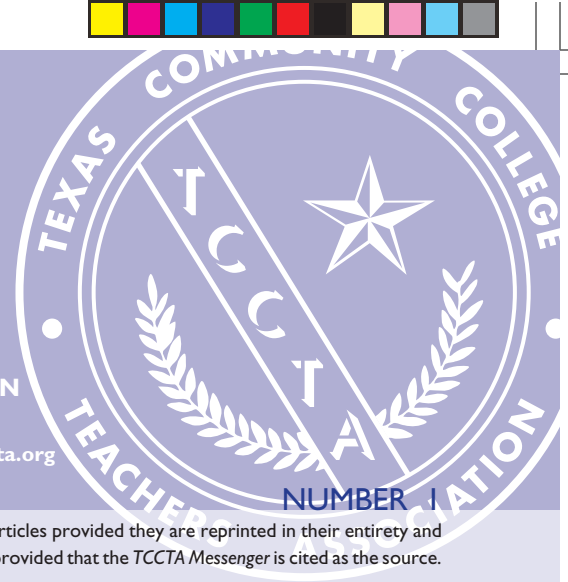
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Legislature Faces Projected Shortfall

Ominous conditions are colliding to make the next legislative session, according to many observers, the most difficult in recent memory. Even before September 11, which had an immediate effect upon sales tax revenues nationwide, the state's economy was cooling considerably from the rapid growth of the '90s. Some analysts are predicting a shortfall of \$5-\$10 billion in state coffers.

Couple this trend with the tax cut of the last session, burgeoning Medicaid rolls, and a prior commitment to further subsidize health insurance for public school teachers, and it will be rough going for all proposals that involve additional spending. Finally, redistricting (which is required every ten years) has driven off many experienced incumbents,

who will be replaced to a large degree by freshmen promising "no new taxes," and with less understanding of the state budget.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's ambitious "Closing the Gaps" plan to add 500,000 students to college and university rolls by 2015 must contend with these realities. Legislators will also be forced to balance proposals for enhancing retirement contributions or health insurance benefits against the budgetary impact of even "minor" adjustments to these particular programs.

So far, most discussion of raising new revenues has centered upon closing "loopholes" in the franchise tax, and raising a host of fees in the service sector. There is little sentiment among the leadership for drastic changes in the tax system.

Candidates Offer Programs

The grim prognosis has not prevented candidates from advancing new initiatives for higher education. Most are proposals to encourage first generation students to pursue degrees and certificates. Each pro-

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"Scrubbing the budget

produces pennies"

—Lieutenant Governor

Bill Ratliff

Conference Planned for Faculty Leaders

The 23rd annual TCCTA Conference for Faculty Leaders will be held Friday and Saturday, October 11-12, at the Austin Airport Marriott South at 4415 South Interstate 35, in south Austin.

The conference will begin with an informal social hour and Mexican "fajita bar" at 6:00 p.m., Friday. The evening program, beginning at 7:15 p.m., will feature Don Brown and Glenda Barron, who will discuss major policy issues affecting Texas two-year colleges.

Dr. Brown is the Texas Commissioner of Higher Education. He received the bachelor's degree in government from the University of Texas at Austin and the Ph.D. in political science from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Dr. Barron serves as assistant commissioner for the Community and Technical Colleges Division of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, a position she has held since February 1997. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Houston, a Master of Education degree from McNeese State University, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

Conference activities on Saturday will begin at 8:30 a.m., with registration and refreshments. Adjournalment is scheduled for 2:30 p.m., Saturday.

"How to Get the Legislature to Do What You Want (or at Least Listen)" will be the focus of Saturday's opening session. Scheduled to speak is Beaman Floyd, a professional contract lobbyist based in Austin.

(Continued on Page 3)

Gary D. Turner 1938-2002

Former TCCTA President-Elect Gary Turner died of heart failure on June 5, following several hospitalizations. He is survived by his wife, Judy, and numerous friends, colleagues, students, and former students at Central Texas College, where he had taught developmental writing and English since 1991.



Prior to his teaching career at Central Texas College, Mr. Turner served 22 years in the United States Army, retiring as a Colonel. He held a Bachelor of Arts degree from Auburn University and a Master of Arts degree from the College of William and Mary. From 1979 to 1983, he was an assistant professor in the English department at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have been thinking a lot about change, perhaps because there has been so much of it in my life lately. As our new academic year begins, I find myself teaching at Cy-Fair College, the only new community college currently being built in the country. It is the ultimate place to "Dare, Dream



and Discover," which is the theme for our annual convention in Austin. Built on the great tradition of the North Harris Montgomery Community College District, Cy-Fair is creating its community around core values of integrity, trust, dignity, and respect. I feel exhilarated each day I walk onto

campus at the Fairbanks Center and work with extraordinary colleagues whose passion for learning, service, and collaboration make being part of our team interesting and fun and a real privilege.

I feel the same exhilaration working with TCCTA. I had not planned to be president this year, nor would I have chosen such a sad route to the office. Gary Turner was a lovely man whose passion and hard work for our association inspired me. His efforts on our behalf helped start our new foundation to serve the largest association of its kind in the country.

Our association is daring this year to dream big, to discover ways to embrace and lead change in our college communities. In a legislative year that does not promise huge financial rewards for community colleges, our Legislative and Executive Committees are prioritizing our goals and strategies and preparing to bring your message to state leaders. To incorporate your input and feedback into our planning, our standing committees are hosting bulletin boards on our website (www.tccta.org). Our foundation board has begun work on strategic planning and writing initial grants to provide professional development opportunities to our members, and our Ad Hoc Committee on Election Reform is meeting to explore possible changes in the way we select our Executive Committee. We ask that you join us this year in Austin to Dare, Dream, and Discover at our Conference for Faculty Leaders (Oct. 11-12, 2002) and our annual convention (Feb. 20-22, 2003).

Change can be bittersweet. Along with the sadness of Gary's death, I begin the new year leaving the Houston Community College System and colleagues with whom I have loved working for the past fourteen years. When I turned in my final grades as a full time HCCS faculty member, I found a letter from our chancellor, who had written a congratulatory note for something I had done this past spring. Dr. Leslie had written a warm, gracious letter that meant a lot to me as I left to begin a new chapter in my life. I thank him and my friends and colleagues at HCCS who helped me build the foundation of my professional life that has led to my opportunities at Cy-Fair College and in TCCTA to Dare, Dream, and Discover.

Susan Hult Edwards

TCCTA COMMITTEES TO MEET BEFORE CONFERENCE

The TCCTA Legislative, Membership Services, Professional Development, and Publications Committees will meet at 1:00 p.m. on Friday, October 11, in conjunction with the Conference for Faculty Leaders at the Austin Airport Marriott South.

Members of these committees are urged to make their travel plans now, and 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

Patricia C. Knight, Amarillo 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 2003-2004.

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

Recommendations should be sent to:

Patricia C. Knight
TCCTA Nominating Committee
Amarillo College
P.O. Box 447
Amarillo, Texas 79178

EDITORIAL POLICY

1. The TCCTA Messenger provides a forum for TCCTA members to address professional issues and subjects of interest to educators in the two-year college. Prospective authors are invited to submit articles dealing with the theory, practice, history, and politics of two-year colleges in Texas. Topics should be of general interest to members and not limited to a single teaching discipline. Articles normally should be six to ten typed, double-spaced pages.
2. Longer articles may be published when their substance and likely reader-interest justify greater length. Shorter pieces of one to two pages intended as guest editorials, letters to the editor, or personal perspectives on problems, issues, or concepts related to the two-year college are also accepted. No excerpts from grant proposals, dissertations, theses, or research papers written for course work should be submitted.
3. Submissions should be original (not previously published or being considered for publication). Authors should limit the use of specialized terminology. Authors' names and titles of key sources should be included within the text, with page numbers in parentheses. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions so that their usage conforms with the editorial practices of the Messenger. Publicity accorded to a particular point of view does not imply endorsement by TCCTA, except in announcement of policy, when such endorsement is specified clearly.
4. Submissions are reviewed by an editorial review board, though the editor maintains responsibility for final selection. An author should send a high-contrast original of the manuscript with the author's name only on a separate cover sheet.
5. Articles published in the Messenger may be reproduced provided they are reprinted in their entirety and that appropriate credit is given to the author and to the TCCTA Messenger. Brief quotations and statistical data may be reproduced provided that the TCCTA Messenger is cited as the source.
6. Manuscripts should be sent to: Chair, TCCTA Publications Committee, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735. Authors should retain copies of their manuscripts for their files.



Conference Planned for Faculty Leaders



Don Brown



Glenda Barron



Beaman Floyd



Frank Hill

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Mr. Floyd specializes in legislative issues relating to insurance, including teachers' health insurance and retirement, workers' compensation, public education, and financial institutions. His work involves research, consultation, and lobbying on a wide range of issues. A former staff member with the Louisiana Legislature, he has worked with the Texas Legislature since 1993. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and Russian studies from Louisiana State University and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts degree in theological studies at the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

At 10:30 a.m., a panel discussion will focus on "Three Campus Controversies Affecting Faculty."

Evelyn Ballard, instructor of government at Houston Community College-Southeast, will give a presentation on "Academic Dishonesty." Peggy Lambert, professor of history at Kingwood College, will speak on issues surrounding "Intellectual Property." Kay Rhoads, campus dean of student services at Austin Community College-Rio Grande Campus, will discuss the "Americans With Disabilities Act." Time will be set aside for comments and questions from the audience, in what is hoped will be a lively and interactive session.

During the afternoon session, long-time TCCTA attorney Frank Hill will discuss "Current Legal Issues in Higher Education."

Mr. Hill holds the Bachelor of Arts degree in English, with honors, from the University of Texas at Arlington. He received his law degree, also with honors, 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 from Mr. Hill will also be allowed.

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. In addition to the information gathered from the program, the conference provides an opportunity for participants to share ideas and ask questions of colleagues from community colleges all over Texas.

Hotel accommodations, at a rate of \$80 for a single, \$110 for a double, may be reserved by contacting the Austin Airport Marriott South at 1-512-441-7900. Reservations should be made by September 20. In making the reservations, callers must indicate plans to attend the TCCTA conference.

The hotel is located at 4415 South IH-35, south of the intersection of Interstate 35 and Ben White Boulevard (Highway 71). For precise driving directions or a map, visit the hotel's Web site at www.marriott-hotels.com/dpp/Map.asp?marshabcode=AUSAP.

Reservations made after September 20 are subject to room and rate availability.

Conference registration should be completed by October 4 through the TCCTA state office by calling, toll-free, 1-800-288-6850, Ext. 11, or in Austin, 328-2044.

Registrants may also contact the state office by e-mail at stateoffice@tccta.org, or by "fax," at Area Code 512, 328-1086.

A \$50 registration fee, payable on arrival at the conference, will cover the Friday evening social hour and the lunch and refreshment breaks on Saturday. ☆

Budget Outlook Grim for 2003 Legislative Session

(Continued from Page 1)

gram has a formidable price tag, with little or no mention of new taxes to pay for it. Indeed, Lieutenant Governor Bill Ratliff recently criticized candidates who assert that new programs can be funded by increased efficiency. "Scrubbing the budget produces pennies," he told the Associated Press, predicting "draconian" cuts if new sources of revenue are not found.

At least four candidates have published specific proposals that could have significant ramifications for community and technical colleges.

Governor Rick Perry favors competitive grants to assist first generation students. Money would be directed to colleges to recruit, counsel, and prepare the new enrollees. Funding would be provided through the Coordinating Board using \$20 million in federal Workforce Investment Act funds. Governor Perry would also revamp the Hinson-Hazlewood college loan program, using \$150 million in "currently unused" general obligation bond authority to make loans of up to \$5,000 per year at no interest. He would also expand the use of "middle colleges," which enable students to get a high school diploma and associate degree while attending a two-year college.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Tony Sanchez recommends developing a network of "laboratory schools" linked to all university and community college systems. He would "redirect to these laboratory schools some of the \$150 million spent on remediation of incoming freshmen each year by our colleges and universities."

John Sharp, the former Comptroller of Public Accounts and Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor, would permit any Texas student who earns a "B" average in high school to receive a scholarship for tuition, fees, and books. The scholarship would last as long as he or she maintains a "B" average in college.

Republican Comptroller of Public Accounts, and candidate for re-election, Carole Keeton Rylander would provide every Texas high school graduate with an opportunity to attend a public community or technical college for two years free of charge. She estimates that the implementation of this plan would cost approximately \$150 million, and proposes using lottery proceeds as revenue that would be earmarked by law for the program.

Prospects for these proposals—and others requiring additional state dollars—have been severely diminished by the financial straits the Legislature will face in January. ☆

The TCCTA fall

Conference for

Faculty Leaders

will be held

at the Austin Airport

Marriott South



Piper Professors Named for 2002

"We stand in humility and gratitude in viewing the dedicated teaching talent in Texas higher education."

Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation

The Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation announced recipients of the 2002 Piper Professor awards last May. Three Texas two-year college educators were among those recognized: Peggy Lambert, professor of history at Kingwood College; Andrew Preslar, instructor of English at Lamar State College–Orange; and Linda Ridgway, professor of art at Cedar Valley College.

The Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation was organized in 1950, and the Piper Professor program was begun in 1958, with eight awards of \$1,000 each. Beginning in 1959, ten awards have been made each year, and the stipend has been increased to \$2,500. 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. According to foundation officials, the committee seeks well-rounded, outgoing teachers who are devoted to the profession and have made a special impact on their students and their communities.



Peggy Lambert
Kingwood College

Peggy Lambert has taught history at Kingwood College in the North Harris Community College District for ten years. Born in Memphis, Tennessee, she grew up in Houston. "I always liked school and books," Ms. Lambert remembers. As a young girl she decided to become a nurse thanks to novels about a student nurse named Cherry Ames. After spending one year at Texas Woman's University in Denton to study nursing, "My first real patient begged me to leave him alone." It was time for a change in plans.

Majoring in political science, she later pursued a graduate degree in history at the University of Houston. "As the first female teaching fellow of childbearing age, I became something of a trailblazer in the history department when I managed to deliver four children without missing a single class."

Ms. Lambert teaches both traditional and online courses, and has created special offerings on women's history and the Holocaust, among other subjects. She is the advisor of Kingwood College's award-winning Phi

Theta Kappa chapter, winning Top Texas Advisor in 2000 and 2001. She currently serves as vice chair of the TCCTA Professional Development Committee.

Ms. Lambert says, "I believe that my job is to enable students to reach their fullest potential: to find out who they are, to discover who they can be, and to prepare themselves for their futures." Plus, "It is great fun to teach. I love the magic that occurs in both conventional and distance classes. There is no doubt that I receive more from my profession than I ever give."

Andrew Preslar teaches English at Lamar State College–Orange. A native of Asheville, North Carolina, he later resided in Port Arthur. He was educated at the University of Texas at Austin and Lamar University in Beaumont.



Andrew Preslar
Lamar State College–Orange

As is often the case with college teachers, Mr. Preslar brings a variety of experiences into the classroom. "Before becoming a teacher, I had several different types of jobs," he recalls. "I have been an electrician's helper, an office manager, a librarian, an advertising salesperson, and (believe it or not) a sausage stuffer."

"I have also written poems, short stories, a bad novel, and various articles," he continues, and "served proudly as an associate editor for *Review of Texas Books*. I have also done consulting work for such disparate clients as the United States Navy and National Evaluation Systems. For the last five years, my wife and I have spent our free time restoring our small Victorian home and shamelessly spoiling our precious son."

"Teaching is my salvation," Mr. Preslar reflects, "my fountain of youth, and my daily reminder to be humble in the presence of life-changing forces. The classroom is a place—for the teacher at least—where vitality may be well spent toward some meaningful end."

Linda Ridgway has been an art coordinator and professor at Cedar Valley College since 1987. She was educated at the Louisville School of Art and in the graduate program at Tulane University. In 1999, she received the Art League of Houston's "Artist of the Year" award and, in 2001, the Dallas Visual Art Center's "Legend"



award. Her work has been the subject of frequent exhibits, and is often reviewed favorably by magazines, newspapers and art publications.

“Although I knew from the time I was thirteen years old that I wanted to be an artist,” Mrs. Ridgway remembers, “it wasn’t until I was in graduate school that I wanted to be a teacher.”



Linda Ridgway
Cedar Valley College

She adds, “In the community college system, I find that many of my students come from backgrounds with academic, financial, or emotional challenges. For most of them, this is the first step in pursuing their long-term goals, and success at this level is critical to their futures. Regardless of their ability or talent, my goal as an educator is to facilitate an exchange of ideas that will challenge my students—in their thinking, in their creativity, in their vision—providing them with the foundation to pursue their goals not only with skill, but with confidence.”

Ms. Ridgway sees art as part of a larger world. “For those who do not pursue art, I strive to foster an appreciation of art. As a teacher in a community college, I witness many take-offs, and few landings. But regardless of where my students land, I hope that I will have helped them become more confident in themselves; that I will have helped broaden their vision, not only of art, but of the world; and that I will have helped them see all of life from different perspectives.”

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
- Marilyn 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
- Betty 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 Matysek 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

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

“Regardless of their ability or talent, my goal as an educator is to facilitate an exchange of ideas that will challenge my students.”

Linda Ridgway,
Cedar Valley College



Congress Reconsiders Social Security Provisions

Several bills have been introduced in Congress to at least partially remedy a growing concern for many present and future community college retirees. Under laws and provisions enacted in the 1980s, those who retire from public institutions that do not participate in the Social Security system may not be eligible for full Social Security benefits, even if they have previously qualified elsewhere.

Considerable uncertainty has persisted concerning whether participants in the Optional Retirement Program are as vulnerable to the provisions as those under the Teacher Retirement System. Since ORP is a “defined contributions” program and TRS is a “defined benefits” pension plan, the two should be treated differently to some observers.

TCCTA recently received an official statement from the Social Security Administration regarding the status of ORP. According to a May 24 letter from SSA Regional Commissioner Horace L. Dickerson, Jr., “Since ORP is basically an alternative to TRS, any teacher not covered under Social Security will be impacted the same as a teacher under TRS who is not covered by Social Security.” (Members who wish to obtain a copy of the SSA letter may contact the TCCTA state office.)

It is important to note that the law does not apply to retirees from schools participating in Social Security, nor does the law affect Medicare benefits. Furthermore, there are exceptions for people in particular situations, including those who have thirty or more years of “substantial earnings” under Social Security. Other factors may include residency, age, and employment history.

Two provisions are attracting the most attention.

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) affects how an individual’s retirement or disability benefits are calculated. The letter from Mr. Dickerson states, “It primarily affects people who earn a pension from working for a non-covered government agency and also work at other jobs where Social Security taxes were paid. A modified formula is used to figure the Social Security benefit beginning with the first month the individual receives both a Social Security benefit and the pension based on non-covered employment.”

The Government Pension Offset (GPO) has also created controversy because it eliminates or reduces *spousal* Social Security benefits for many government employees. The letter from Commissioner Dickerson states, “To be exempt from GPO the work must be covered both by the pension plan and for Social Security on the last day of employment. If the work performed is covered by Social Security and TRS or ORP on the last day of employment, GPO will not apply. If the work performed is not covered by Social Security on the last day of employment, then GPO applies.”

According to a June 10 article in the *Dallas Morning News*, some public school teachers are avoiding the GPO by resigning and going to work for at

least one day for an independent school district that pays into Social Security, prior to retiring. However, Raul Garduño, spokesman for the Social Security Administration in Dallas, stated in the article, “The intent was never to have individuals go over to another position to go ahead and claim Social Security.”

Efforts are mounting to modify or repeal both provisions, along with a variety of proposals to adjust the formula to benefit those of lower incomes. The law affects not only teachers, but other public employees in many states. According to Kiplinger’s Financial Report (www.kiplinger.com), “Total elimination (of GPO) would cost about \$5 billion over five years.” Other estimates regarding outright abolishment of one or both of the provisions are much higher.

In response to a question from the TCCTA state office, U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Austin), who serves on the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, stated:

“There are several proposals before the Ways and Means Committee to address the pension offset and windfall elimination provision. One amendment, offered by my friend Rep. Bill Jefferson, would have addressed the issue; however, the Chairman refused to allow Members to consider it or vote on it.”

Some public employee organizations stress caution in urging repeal. One group, the Coalition to Preserve Retirement Security, says, “Overly strong advocacy of GPO relief could lead to increased pressure for mandatory coverage” on all public employees. Most observers believe that Congress is unlikely to act on these measures until next year.

There are so many variables affecting the potential impact of these two provisions upon individuals that TCCTA is unable to answer specific questions regarding personal eligibility. As a beginning, those who may be affected are urged to visit the official Web site of the Social Security Administration, which contains specific “Question and Answer” provisions on the two laws, at www.ssa.gov/pubs/10007.html and www.ssa.gov/pubs/10045.html. The toll free number is 1-800-772-1213, at which confidential questions can be answered from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on business days.

Personal financial advice and retirement planning often merit professional consultation as well.

At its meeting on October 11, the TCCTA Membership Services Committee will consider plans to invite a representative of the Social Security Administration to speak and answer questions during the annual convention at the Austin Convention Center, February 20-22.

The Legislative Committee also intends to examine the impact of the WEP and GPO and any appropriate strategies for congressional action.

The law does not apply to retirees from schools participating in Social Security, nor does the law affect Medicare benefits



News Briefs and Links

Rural College Focus Group Organizes

A new organization, the Rural College Focus Group, held meetings on May 14 and July 30 at the headquarters of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The group's formation is a project of the Community and Technical Colleges Division, with funds from a Carl D. Perkins grant.

The grant seeks to provide a forum for rural colleges to collaborate and identify unique needs and barriers that inhibit full participation in program offerings in Texas. There are nineteen "rural" colleges, as defined by location in non-metropolitan counties. Contrary to stereotype, a "rural" school is not necessarily small. The group will focus on a variety of issues and also hopes to find ways to share resources efficiently.

"24-hour Professor" Profile Examines Online Teaching

A cover story in the May 31 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* provides an in-depth portrait of several teachers (some in community and technical colleges) who teach courses online. Not unexpectedly, their experiences vary enormously, depending upon the location and individual. The consensus of the group, however, verifies that online instruction is more time consuming than traditional teaching.

The article gives several practical suggestions, such as equipping e-mail messages with an automatic response, giving students a time frame within which to expect a reply. The faculty members profiled agree that online instruction can be harrowing. "E-mails are like Hitchcock's birds," one teacher noted. "They pursue you relentlessly, hover in flocks, and leave you running for cover."

Online Instruction Measured

As reported in the July 19 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a study by two Texas Tech psychologists has found that students with good comprehension skills, as measured by an examination, learned more from online courses than those with less academic ability.

"The rich get richer," one of the authors of the study noted.

Students who did poorly in a pre-course comprehension exam learned essentially the same amount regardless of format. But students who did well in the comprehension exam performed ten percent better online than in a traditional classroom. Professor William S. Maki summarized the implication: "The students with high comprehension skills are the ones who benefit from the Web-based courses."

However, the article cites another study by Byron W. Brown of Michigan State University. He found that online engineering students performed at a lower level than students in a lecture format.

The Texas Tech study can be accessed at www.apa.org/journals/xap.html, site of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*.

Department Issues Report On Teacher Education

Community college leaders wishing to enter the domain of teacher education may wish to examine a new report from the U.S. Department of Education calling for new standards.

The report recommends the elimination of "cumbersome requirements not based on scientific evidence," and endorses training in subject areas rather than pedagogy. "There is little evidence that education-school course work leads to improved achievement," the report states. Recommendations also include expansion of "alternative certification" programs.

The entire report can be accessed from the Department of Education's Web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/News/teacherprep/index.html.

Foundation Wins Approval

On June 14 the Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College received official approval from the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Foundation board members have begun formulating plans to apply for private and government grants to enhance and supplement TCCTA activities, particularly in the areas of professional development and access to technology.

Under the foundation's bylaws, the governing board consists of the president and president-elect of TCCTA, the chair of the Professional Development Committee, and two individuals appointed by the president of TCCTA, serving two-year staggered terms.

Current board members are: Susan Hult Edwards, Cy-Fair College; Lola A. King, Trinity Valley Community College-Terrell Campus; Anamaria Diaz Shaw, Tarrant County College-Southeast Campus; Joanna L. Kile, College of the Mainland; and Patsy C. Lemaster, Amarillo College.

Committee on Transfer Issues Continues Work

The Coordinating Board's Transfer Issues Advisory Committee met on June 26, continuing its work to reduce unwarranted obstacles to students wishing to transfer course credit to Texas institutions of higher education. Because research has indicated that difficulties in course transfers are not pervasive since the "core curriculum" was adopted, the group has begun to focus on specific areas, such as the distinction between "academic" and "technical" courses.

The committee also endorsed a Web-based "Core Curriculum Information Center," to be hosted by Southwest Texas State University, and linked to the Coordinating Board, using a standard format.

The committee's activities were presented to the Coordinating Board on July 18. Community college faculty members on the committee include Anna Maria Mendiola, Laredo Community College, and Joan Kennedy, Collin County Community College-Spring Creek Campus.



Economic Impact Study Released

For a copy
of the entire study,
visit the
Publications section
of the
TCCTA Web site
at www.tccta.org

Community colleges are working for Texas, producing significant returns for the state's economy, students, and taxpayers, according to a study released June 18 by the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC).

The study reached three major conclusions:

Community colleges stimulate the state's economy, generate a return on the government's investment, and increase the earnings potential of their students.

Those conclusions were reached from a new statewide economic impact study, titled "The Socioeconomic Benefits Generated by 50 Community College Districts in Texas," conducted by CCBenefits, Inc.

The study was funded by Houston Endowment Inc. and the 50 community college districts. Economists Kjell Christophersen and Henry Robison collected information for Fall 2000 from all 50 public community college districts in Texas.

"Community colleges are stimulating the state's economy by \$13.5 billion. This is explained by two activities," according to Rey García, TACC's executive director. "The colleges' payrolls and the multiplier effect of those payrolls account for \$1.9 billion in the state's economy. Additionally, the value of past college students working in the state, using their enhanced skills to get higher paying jobs, adds an additional impact of \$11.6 billion." According to Christophersen and Robison, "The earnings explained by the colleges are equal to that of roughly 351,530 jobs."

"Both state and local government invest a significant sum of money in community colleges, and they receive a significant return on their investment," explained TACC president Bill Crowe. "Community colleges return the investment in the form of higher wages for their students and through avoided costs—improved health, reduction in crime, and reduced welfare and unemployment. Measured broadly, taking into account all of the earnings of community college students and the avoided costs, state and local governments are getting a return of \$3 for every dollar invested over the next 30 years."

"Even if measured from a narrow perspective, taking into account only the increased tax revenue attributable to community college students and the avoided costs, state and local governments receive a return of \$3 for every dollar invested," concluded Dr. Crowe.

According to Christophersen and Robison, "the rate of return is 15.9 percent and the payback period is 8.2 years." The added further, "the State of Texas will benefit from \$276.3 million worth of avoided costs per year, broken down as follows:

- \$31.0 million in annual dollar savings from a reduction in health related absenteeism.
- \$52.3 million in annual dollar savings from fewer smokers.
- \$33.8 million in annual dollar savings from fewer alcohol abusers.
- \$72.1 million in annual dollar savings from reduced crime.
- \$15.2 million in annual dollar savings from reduced victim costs.
- \$21.4 million in dollar earnings from people employed rather than incarcerated.
- \$14.1 million in annual dollar savings from fewer people on welfare.
- \$36.4 million in annual dollar savings from fewer people drawing unemployment benefits.

"Community college students in Texas invest money in their education. They receive excellent returns on their money, and they recover and surpass their costs in a relatively short period of time," explained Dr. García.

"From an investment standpoint, the community college students will, on average, enjoy a 26.1 percent rate of return on their investments of time and money, which compares favorably with the returns on other investments like stocks and bonds. For every dollar the student invests in community college education, the student will receive \$9.05 in higher future earnings over the next 30 years or so," explained Christophersen and Robison. The payback period, the time needed to recover all costs, is 5.8 years.

CCBenefits has conducted field tests at more than 160 community colleges throughout the United States; the organization uses economic theories, functional relationships, and national and local education-related data for its analyses and conclusions. "We take data collected from individual community colleges and translate the information into common-sense, cost-benefit, and investment terms," said Christophersen. "Our model provides relief from the all-too common 'advocacy analyses' that inflate benefits, underestimate costs and, as a result, discredit the process of assessing the impact of higher education and community colleges."

Dr. García summarized: "The results demonstrate that investing in Texas community colleges is sound, based on a number of perspectives. These schools enrich the lives of students and reduce the demand for taxpayer supported services. And finally, community colleges contribute to the vitality of both local and state economies and to the education of all citizens."



TCCTA Loses Leader, Colleague, and Friend

(Continued from Page 1)

As reported in the April *Messenger*, Mr. Turner resigned due to ill health from the TCCTA Executive Committee on March 14, stating in a letter to his fellow officers, the general membership, and executive director Richard Moore: "I cannot thank you enough for all your support. I wish all success for TCCTA."

TCCTA president Susan Hult Edwards noted, "I'll remember how Gary spoke with love about Judy, teaching at Central Texas College, and TCCTA. Most of all, I'll miss his wonderful grin and the energy he brought to our Executive Committee."

"It was a privilege to work with Gary," said Mr. Moore. "He was a natural leader, with a combination of intelligence, warmth, humor and modesty that made us look forward to each meeting. He was respected and admired by everyone lucky enough to know him."



*Life's truest happiness
is found in friendships
we make
along the way.*

Colleagues Remember Gary

He is missed in so many ways on campus. These words by Ralph Waldo Emerson sum up my thoughts about Gary Turner:

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.

—Anna Holston



Gary and Judy Turner and I graduated from Abilene High School and therefore faithfully proclaimed that we were Abilene High Eagles ("Champion School of all the West"). Gary graduated with my sister and I graduated four years later. Many AHS graduates remember fondly that, while Gary was there, we were State Champions three years in a row. Abilene was wild over its invincible football team and its head coach, Chuck Moser.

I did not know Gary in Abilene, but met him years later when he came to work at Central Texas College. He impressed me when we met, and after I learned that he was an AHS Eagle, well, that was the icing on the cake for me!

Besides having an appreciation of his rearing, I learned to respect Gary for the man he had become. Gary possessed many admirable traits, any one of which would improve us all.

He was an especially humble man. Though Gary had obvious intellectual strengths and great teaching talents, he always understated them. He

never seemed to recognize the stature his colleagues accorded him, as he was always too busy trying to encourage, promote, and strengthen others to realize his own standing. I shall always remember his humble nature.

He was a man with a great disposition. I am sure Gary could be cross and unpleasant; at least I certainly hope others are like this, since I so often find myself demonstrating these unenviable characteristics. Gary always seemed positive and displayed an uplifting mood; it was just his nature. He remained this way while in the hospital facing a difficult and ultimately fatal future.

Gary was a man who deeply enjoyed teaching. Over the years that we taught at Central Texas College, he would on occasion drop by my office after a class and we would talk a few moments. He never stayed long, as he was too solicitous of my time to tarry as long as I would have loved for him to stay; however, he normally had a funny classroom incident to relay. He took great pride in teaching, and he did a superb job at it, too.

He was a man devoted to his friends. Gary was a loyal and faithful friend, the type of friend everyone wants to have. I sure am glad that I counted him as one of my friends and that he counted me as one of his.

I am sure that others saw other traits in him, but these are a few thoughts that come to my mind when I recall the jovial face and gentle though scholarly manner of Gary Turner. It is regrettably true that Gary's body played out on him long before we were ready to lose him; even so, I am ever so thankful that our paths crossed and that we were friends over an extended period of time. I benefited from knowing him and so did others.

—David Yeilding

*Gary was a man who
deeply enjoyed teaching.
He took great pride
in teaching,
and he did a superb job
at it, too.*



2003 Convention Preview

Session for New Faculty Planned

Veteran faculty as well as novices to Texas community colleges are invited to attend and participate in a lively interactive session called "Passing the Torch." The session will be offered on Friday afternoon, February 21, at the 2003 annual TCCTA convention at the Austin Convention Center.

A similar session at last year's convention in Houston was well attended by teachers from all over the state at virtually all stages of their careers. The event offers a chance for sharing experiences and asking questions about the community college environment.

Technology Pre-Conference Leads into Annual Convention

The highly popular Technology Seminars, sponsored jointly by the TCCTA Professional Development Committee and the Virtual College of Texas, will take place on February 20, 2003, in connection with the annual convention in Austin.

The seminars, which cover many aspects of the use of technology in the classroom, are designed to provide practical, hands-on instruction in the use of new computer applications.

Registration procedures will be posted on the TCCTA Web site (www.tccta.org) as programs are developed.

GIFTS Sessions to Return

The Professional Development Committee will offer TCCTA conventioners a reprise of the Great Ideas For Teaching Students (GIFTS) sessions at the 2003 annual convention in Austin.

These brief programs offer specific ideas for teaching and are designed to be of immediate practical use to educators. Each session lasts approximately 15 minutes, allowing participants to sample a variety of useful teaching techniques quickly and conveniently.

Programs will be announced on the TCCTA Web site (www.tccta.org). Chair of the Professional Development Committee is Anamaria Diaz Shaw, Tarrant County College-Southeast.

Faculty Teaching in Prison Units to Meet Again

Faculty at 14 community and technical colleges who also teach in units of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice will get another chance to share information and concerns with colleagues at the TCCTA annual convention at the Austin Convention Center on February 20-22, 2003.

Last year's convention in Houston was the site of the first such meeting, which received many favorable comments. TCCTA leaders hope the meeting will become an annual event for these particular teachers, who face unique challenges and opportunities.

All interested educators are invited to attend.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 2003 convention at the Austin Convention Center.

Suggestions should be received by Feb. 1, 2003, so the committee can give ample consideration to the proposals prior to the annual convention. In the meeting, set for February 20, 2003, priority consideration will be given to proposals submitted in advance. Proposals should be sent to:

Cristina Cardenas
TCCTA Resolutions Committee Chair
Galveston College
4015 Avenue Q
Galveston, Texas 77550

Call For Papers. The TCCTA Publications Committee is soliciting articles for possible publication in the *Messenger*. Articles should be of general interest to educators in Texas two-year colleges.

For further information, refer to the Editorial Policy of TCCTA on page 2. Articles should be submitted to:

Dan Mendoza
TCCTA Publications Committee Chair
Lee College
P.O. Box 818
Baytown, Texas 77522

Members Speak. TCCTA members are invited to send in comments, suggestions, and opinions for potential publication in the *Messenger*. Letters (or e-mails) should be under 200 words, and may be edited for space and content. Topics should be of general interest and sample letters may be chosen to avoid repetition. Submissions must be accompanied by the author's name, college, and telephone number or e-mail address, and sent to publications@tccta.org, or by regular mail to:

"Members Speak," TCCTA *Messenger*
5113 Southwest Parkway
Suite 185
Austin, Texas 78735

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www.tccta.org

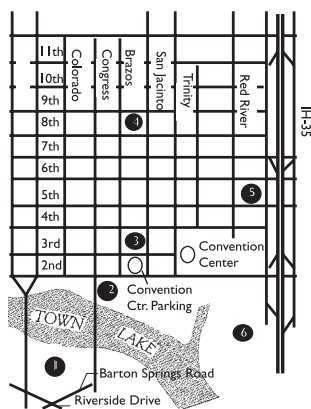
Watch for the latest information about the annual convention on the new TCCTA Web site at www.tccta.org



MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS EARLY

TCCTA members planning to attend the 56th annual convention, February 20-22, 2003, in Austin, are encouraged to reserve hotel accommodations early—members who wait until the last minute to make reservations will be disappointed.

With the exception of a few special functions arranged for some of the section meetings, all convention activities will be held at the Austin Convention Center. Hotel accommodations may be reserved online, from the TCCTA Web site at www.tccta.org by clicking on "Convention" or by completing the form below and mailing or faxing it to the *Austin Convention Housing Bureau*. Reservations will be processed as they are received, on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations received after Feb. 8 will be subject to availability. **Reservations may NOT be made directly with the convention hotels.**



CONVENTION HOTEL FACILITIES AND RATES

The Austin Convention Center is located at 500 East Cesar Chavez Street. TCCTA has arranged for shuttle service between the Convention Center and the hotels listed below.

| HOTEL / ADDRESS | Single Occupancy | Double Occupancy |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Hyatt Regency Hotel 208 Barton Springs Road | \$129 | \$129* |
| 2 Radisson Hotel on Town Lake 111 E. Cesar Chavez | \$129 | \$129 |
| 3 Hampton Inn and Suites 200 San Jacinto | \$99 | \$99 |
| 4 Omni Austin at Downtown 700 San Jacinto | \$127 | \$127 |
| 5 Crowne Plaza (formerly Sheraton) 500 North Interstate 35 | \$119 | \$119 |
| 6 Holiday Inn on Town Lake 20 North Interstate 35 | \$105 | \$105 |

Convention hotels accept all major credit cards. Hotels are unable to grant direct billing for room or incidental accounts. In the absence of an approved credit card, hotels request payment be by cash or traveler's checks. Credit information will be required at time of check-in. Hotels will not accept personal or institutional checks unless definite arrangements are made with the Credit Department at time of check-in.

* There is a \$15 fee for each additional occupant.

SPECIAL OFFER FROM SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

Southwest Airlines offers a ten percent discount off most fares for air travel to and from the event. Call Southwest Airlines Group and Meetings Reservations at 1-800-433-5368 and reference I.D. Code **J7775**. Reservations sales agents are

available 7:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, or 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Central Standard Time. Make reservations five or more days before you want to travel to take advantage of this offer.

TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION 56th Annual Convention — Austin, Texas — February 20-22, 2003 HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

MAIL TO: Convention Housing Bureau
201 East 2nd Street
Austin, Texas 78701

OR FAX: (512) 583-7283

OR REGISTER ONLINE: www.tccta.org (click on "Convention")

ACCOMMODATIONS DESIRED:

(Room type requested is not guaranteed.)

- Single Room(s) (1 room, 1 person, 1 bed)
- Double Room(s) (1 room, 2 persons, 1 bed)
- Double/Double Room(s) (1 room, 2 persons, 2 beds)
- Triple Room(s) (1 room, 3 persons, 2 beds)
- Quad Room(s) (1 room, 4 persons, 2 beds)

HOTEL CHOICES:

1st Choice: _____

2nd Choice: _____

3rd Choice: _____

ARRIVAL DATE: Feb. _____ HOUR: _____ M.

DEPARTURE DATE: Feb. _____

CONFIRMATION will be made by hotel. **CANCELLATION:** Notify Convention Bureau of changes and cancellations up to one day prior to arrival date. To cancel or change reservations, fax to (512) 583-7283, or call 1-800-926-2282. All reservations subject to availability.

CONFIRM RESERVATIONS TO: Name _____

College or Company Name _____ Phone: A/C _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: A/C _____

ROOM(S) WILL BE OCCUPIED BY:

Name (please print)

Address





A Special Invitation

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

REPRESENTATION

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

INFORMATION

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

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

In difficult and sensitive cases, TCCTA provides valuable information on academic defense issues facing educators in two-year colleges.

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

The annual TCCTA convention is attended by thousands of your colleagues from across the state. The 2003 convention will be held in Austin, Feb. 20-22.

MANY OTHER USEFUL BENEFITS

- A viable job placement/referral service;
- A detailed analysis of programs available under the Optional Retirement Program;
- A Web site, featuring timely information of interest to two-year college educators;
- A Financial Planning Seminar, 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 cost of the program is \$40. Major provisions of the policy include:

- Professional liability coverage of \$2,000,000 per member (plus cost of defense)
- Reimbursement of attorney's fees of up to \$10,000
- Reimbursement of bail bond premium of up to \$1,000
- Coverage for punitive damages up to \$5,000

TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION Membership Enrollment Form

Dr.
 Mr.
 Mrs.
 Miss
 Ms.

First Name Middle Name or Initial Last Name

College _____
 (If more than one campus, indicate your campus.)

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

City State ZIP Code

E-MAIL: _____

Instructional
 (Subject taught: _____)

Student Services
 (Position: _____)

Learning Resources/Library/Media
 (Position: _____)

Administrative
 (Position: _____)

Other (Specify: _____)

Retired (Previous Position: _____)

- CHECK HERE IF YOU DESIRE COVERAGE UNDER THE OPTIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND ADD \$40 TO THE AMOUNT OF YOUR CHECK.
- CHECK ONE:**
- PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP (Full-time educator at a Texas community or technical college)—Dues \$35
- ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (Classified employee or retired or adjunct (part-time) educator at a Texas community or technical college)—Dues \$25 (Retiree may join as Professional or Associate Member.)
- STUDENT MEMBERSHIP (Enrolled for graduate credit in community college education)—Dues \$20
- UNAFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP (Friend of the Association not eligible for one of the foregoing types of membership)—Dues \$25
- CHECK HERE if you wish to receive the TCCTA Messenger. Annual dues include \$5 for subscription; there is no additional charge for the Messenger.
- Membership Period: September 1, 2002–August 31, 2003.

If paying by credit card: Visa MasterCard

Account Number _____

Expires ____/____

You may renew or activate your membership and enroll in the liability insurance program using your VISA or MasterCard. No need to write a check. No bothersome bank drafts. Simply provide your credit card number and expiration date at the places indicated above.




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