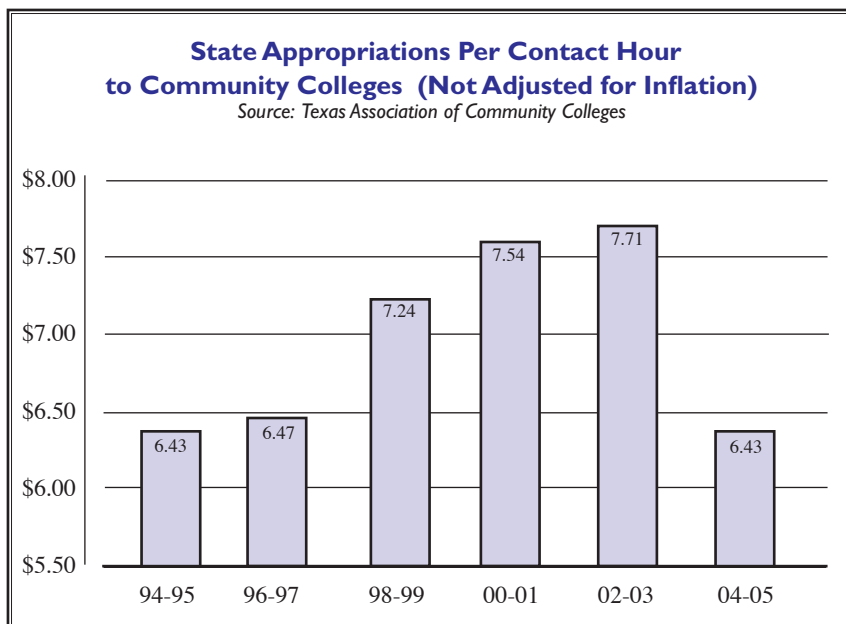


COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACT SHEET

Reminders to Legislators

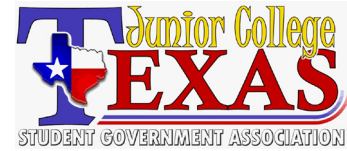
Sources: Texas Association of Community Colleges, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and Texas Community College Teachers Association

- There are 50 community college districts in Texas.
- Community colleges enroll 74% of the freshmen and sophomores in Texas public higher education.
- For 2004-05, community colleges received a cut of 16.6% in per contact hour appropriations, compared to the previous biennium. This does not include inflation or other budget cuts mandated in 2003.
- The gap between the cost of instruction and the funds provided by the state results in deferred maintenance of infrastructure, increased local taxes, and increased tuition and fees.
- 59% of community college students are female. The average age is 25.
- 76% of minority freshmen and sophomores attending public institutions of higher education are attending Texas public community colleges. Community college students almost exactly mirror the ethnic diversity of Texas, making these schools crucial to the success of the “Closing the Gaps” initiative.
- For every dollar a student invests in community college education, he or she will receive \$9.05 in higher future earnings over the next 30 years. The state benefits from improved health and reduced welfare, unemployment, and crime, saving the public \$276 million per year.
- A Coordinating Board study confirms that transfer students from community colleges are as successful as those who begin their studies at universities.
- The state is now paying 52% of the instructional “formula,” despite principles in the Coordinating Board’s Master Plan of 1969, which projected local funds and tuition to be reserved for construction and maintenance of facilities.
- Out of pocket health insurance expenses have increased an average of \$900 annually for faculty and staff.





tccta | texas community college
teachers association



Community College Day at the Capitol “Community Colleges Are Essential”

February 17, 2005

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR MEETING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

- Know your legislator. Be familiar with pertinent background information, the district’s composition, committee assignments, and his or her voting record on community and technical college issues in current or previous sessions.
- Schedule an appointment, if possible.
- Dress for the occasion.
- Introduce the issues and concerns clearly. Do not assume that your legislator is well-informed about your college. In initial meetings, provide a brief, clear overview.
- Be brief and don’t overstay your welcome. Introduce yourself, present your case, answer any questions, say you are available for further discussion, and leave.
- Be realistic and constructive.
- Be friendly.
- Be courteous.
- Follow your meeting with a letter thanking the legislator and succinctly restating your position on the issues of interest. Include any requested information in this letter.
- Coordinate your efforts with your local administration and the TCCTA state office.

TCCTA 2005 Legislative Program

1. Support restoring community and technical college formula funding as requested by the Texas Association of Community Colleges.
2. Support restoring ERS funding to improve health insurance benefits for all covered community and technical college employees.
3. Support efforts to ensure adequate funding and benefits for community and technical college employees and retirees in TRS and ORP.

Approved by TCCTA Executive Committee, October 15, 2004.

Important: Upon arriving at the Capitol, stop at the Information Desk or visit with TCCTA volunteers in the Rotunda area, for help in locating the offices of your Senator and Representative.

TCCTA Opposes “Proportionality” of Health Insurance Funds

Committees of the Legislature are now considering a reduction in funding for group health insurance programs for community colleges. The current manifestation involves reducing funds for health care “proportionately” (presumably reflecting the state’s share of community college funding) by \$106 million. The new plan—*theoretically*—redirects the lost revenue into formula appropriations for the schools. A proposal on the same subject put forth by Governor Perry was defeated during the last session.

Some policy makers have touted the concept as a new way to distribute money rather than a net funding reduction. Nevertheless, TCCTA, along with the Texas Association of Community Colleges, have objected strenuously to the entire approach.

Strikingly, the state’s declining share in formula funding is used in the current appropriation bill pattern to justify proportionately lower amounts for health in-

surance funding for community colleges under the Employees Retirement System of Texas.

As TCCTA President Gail Platt, South Plains College, said in a letter personally delivered on February 10 to the Education Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee by TCCTA Lobbyist Beaman Floyd, “Applying such logic, our schools would be punished for good behavior—using local funds and local efficiency to make up the difference.”

At this point in the Regular Session, it is difficult to imagine a more devastating prospect for community college educators and their families than “proportionality” for group health insurance. Dr. Platt noted, “As with state employees and public university faculty, community college educators entered their profession under the assumption that, while their salaries often fall below what they could earn in the private sector, the State of Texas would abide by its historic obligation to provide

full benefits.”

It is one thing to pay more for the rising cost of health insurance, but quite another to “change the rules in the middle of the game,” one community college official noted at the Capitol.

What You Can Do

Members are urged to stress the importance of funding health insurance—keeping community college educators and their dependents under the same plan and under the same rules as university and state employees.

The entire concept of “Proportionality” should be rejected. First, it violates, the historic understanding between community college educators and the State of Texas. Second, it punishes schools for using local funds. Third, it treats community colleges differently from universities, which also receive much of their funding from sources other than General Revenue.