

TCCTA MESSENGER

www.tccta.org

A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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Toll-Free 1-800-288-6850 In Austin (512) 328-2044 Fax (512) 328-1086



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TCCTA Offers Online Faculty Salary Survey

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

The survey includes the same important data as always, plus responses to many new questions. Most importantly, the 2010-11 survey asked colleges to report supplemental benefits such as release time, sabbatical leave, on-site child care, and paid dependent insurance coverage. College officials had requested this opportunity, allowing their schools to explain benefits that do not lend themselves to quantification and ranking.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Members are urged to view the ranking in the context of the entire survey. Factors beyond average salary, including the breakouts into ranges, should be considered in making comparisons. Please visit www.tccta.org/facultysalaries.

Also In This Issue...

State President Fred Newbury offers some thoughts on the challenges facing community colleges Page 2

Read about Faculty Senate "Best Practices"—and a special message from Beaman Floyd, TCCTA Lobbyist..... Page 3

Learn about the forthcoming "Leading from the Middle" and "Great Teaching Round Up" Page 4

News Briefs and Links Page 5

Convention Preview is ready for inspection!..... Pages 6-7

Get informed with the 2011 TCCTA "Talking Points" on issues of importance facing our profession Pages 8-9

If you have not made your hotel reservation for San Antonio, it's time to get it done! Page 11

Information on the candidates for TCCTA offices and online voting information are now available Page 12



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FRED NEWBURY President



RICHARD MOORE Executive Director



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It may seem ironic that we have chosen the theme "Celebrating Success" for this year, in light of the looming budget crisis and increasing demands for more "accountability" and "productivity."

Let me assure you that we did so after considerable deliberation and reflection. Certainly, we are facing what promises to be the most challenging Regular Session of our careers—no doubt about it. But our success is also obvious if you look at the results of Closing the Gaps after ten years of implementation, and the countless initiatives that are achieving tangible results.

Of course it is one thing to enroll students and quite another to keep them in school until graduation. This is the current challenge, and faculty members are understandably concerned about recent policies and proposals from Austin designed to move students through the higher education pipeline with more transparency and efficiency.

Part of our job is to point out the implications and likely—if unintended—consequences of the now-fashionable "business model" approach to higher education. This means getting across our point of view as practitioners. To that end, please peruse this issue of the Messenger, particularly the comments by Beaman Floyd on page three and the "Talking Points" on pages eight and nine.

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

Sometimes faculty members are seen collectively as obstacles to change and reform. But I am here to tell all who will listen that community college teachers are gushing with new ideas. In the field of developmental education alone, it is hard to keep track of all the "best practices" out there. If you want a sample from a host of disciplines, please have a look at The Network (which is administered by TCCTA's Foundation), described on page five.

As a personal example, I teach many online courses, using materials and methods that were never imagined when I began my career. And my story is typical. It is rare to find an instructor who never changes content or methodology.

Speaking of new ideas, we are making a change regarding the general session of the 2011 convention in San Antonio. Instead of a keynote address, we plan to showcase partnerships that are currently achieving demonstrable results at campuses across Texas. You'll see what we mean by "Celebrating Success" if you join us in the Alamo City, on January 27-29, at the beautiful Marriott Rivercenter Hotel. See pages 11-

12 or visit our Web site for details.

There is no single panacea or cookie-cutter framework that is suitable for higher education's challenges. Success has many colors, shapes, and shades, but it is best driven by educators. And we need increased legislative support for the celebration to be complete.

To help achieve this, TCCTA has begun an unprecedented initiative to generate grass roots communication during the forthcoming Regular Session, including a network of "first responders" on campus. These individuals will be prepared to react quickly to timely messages from the state office, in consultation with Beaman Floyd, our lobbyist. The strength of our association has always been its membership and we intend to take full advantage of this strength. Please watch for our communications in the weeks ahead.

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

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



TCCTA Committees to Meet

Most TCCTA committees will hold their customary pre-convention meetings on Thursday afternoon, January 27, in conjunction with the annual convention at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio. Details concerning each meeting will be distributed by the chairs of the committees.

The Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College board will meet at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, January 29.

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 2010 convention at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel.

Suggestions should be received soon, so the committee can give ample consideration to the proposals prior to the annual convention. In the meeting, set for January 27, priority consideration will be given to proposals submitted in advance. Proposals should be sent to:

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



Faculty Senate Dialogue Remains Popular and Vital

At the TCCTA Conference for Faculty Leaders, on October 8, attendees affirmed that “Faculty Senate Best Practices” remains an important topic for community college educators. For many years TCCTA has offered sessions on this subject, utilizing a variety of formats. Interest shows no signs of lagging, based on robust attendance and lively participation.

Experience has demonstrated repeatedly that faculty organizations on some campuses work more effectively than others. Instructors find it beneficial to engage in conversation with colleagues from around the state on approaches that appear to be constructive. One senate template doesn’t fit all circumstances and personalities, which makes focused collaboration very important.

At the most recent TCCTA gathering in Galveston, attendees submitted written questions to faculty panelists Linda Dulin, McLennan Community College, Mary Osentowski, Richland College, and Jesse Warren, Galveston College. Facilitating and coordinating were David Lydic, Austin Community College, and Essie Childers, Blinn College.

Here is a sample of questions the group discussed:

- What are your school’s requirement for faculty office hours?
- Do you represent all faculty (full-time and adjunct)? Is there a separate voice for adjunct?
- How many classes can your adjuncts teach?
- How many colleges have tenure?
- What is the best way to deal with the media when they call you as the faculty association president on a “hot button” issue?
- How do you create greater faculty involvement?
- Do you meet with your president on a monthly basis?
- Do you receive compensation for being president of the senate?
- Do you have shared governance?
- How is your senate dealing with growth and workload issues?
- Has your college’s president or chancellor changed the course load after the annual contract has begun?
- How should we deal with faculty apathy and reluctance to be a part of the faculty association?
- How do you measure faculty senate effectiveness?
- Do your administrators recognize your faculty senate as an authority on your campus?
- What recommendations would you give to establish a faculty senate?
- How many, on the average, of your (faculty) recommendations ever become policy at your college?
- Does your faculty senate have a formal, direct relationship with your governing board? How does the relationship work?

All faculty leaders are invited to a special meeting devoted to legislative issues during the annual convention, featuring TCCTA Lobbyist Beaman Floyd. Please see page six for details. ☆

“I’ve Got My Rights!” Let’s Use Them

by Beaman Floyd
TCCTA Lobbyist

This Regular Session will ultimately be about money. The situation is truly dire—much worse than most incumbent candidates revealed during the recent election season. Here’s the deal: The vast majority of elected lawmakers have promised that there will be no new taxes. There will be no federal stimulus dollars to help out this biennium. Sales tax collections are coming back, but are nowhere near what will be needed. And the so-called Rainy Day Fund contains only a fraction of the money necessary to balance the budget, which is a constitutional requirement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



See page six for information about a special meeting on legislative issues featuring Beaman Floyd.

TCCTA President Offers LBB Testimony

Great Teaching Roundup Planned for May

“Every desk we have is in a classroom and all the classrooms are full.”

TCCTA president Fred Newbury, Richland College, testified before staff members of the Legislative Budget Board on Tuesday, September 21, on the subject of prospective appropriations for community and technical colleges for the next biennium. The hearing was a component of the budgetary process leading up to the Regular Session of the Legislature, which convenes in January.

After thanking the LBB panel for the opportunity to testify, Dr. Newbury commented on the current enrollment landscape at Texas community colleges, as schools contend with another surge in the population of students. To complicate matters, many newly enrolled individuals require additional resources such as remedial education. “Our mission is one we willingly assume,” he noted. “We welcome all students.” However, he added, “There are extra responsibilities because of the tremendous diversity of the student population.”

Dr. Newbury offered to speak from his own perspective as an instructor. “At Richland College, every desk we have is in a classroom and all the classrooms are full.”

One of the LBB panelists asked Dr. Newbury about the average teaching load at community colleges. The TCCTA leader responded that, while there is a great deal of variety at two-year schools, five to six classes per semester is probably the norm, but the number of students in each section depends upon classroom space. He was asked further if this teaching load was greater than what faculty members at four-year institutions typically assume. Dr. Newbury agreed this was certainly likely, but that schools vary in their assignments and other institutional responsibilities.

Another staffer asked Dr. Newbury about the dramatic rise in the use of part-time faculty, referring to studies indicating that students are more likely to succeed in courses taught by full-time instructors. Dr. Newbury responded that, at his institution, the surrounding community contains a talented pool of qualified adjunct instructors, many of whom bring valuable work and life experiences into the classroom. He added, however, that part-time teachers do not typically have the same office facilities as full-time teachers for individual consultation and counseling. Full-time instructors are also more likely to engage with students at campus meetings and other activities, he said. ☆

TCCTA Plans Annual “Leading from the Middle”

Plans are underway for the sixth annual “Leading from the Middle” seminar, directed toward deans, division chairs, and other mid-level administrators—and faculty thinking about moving into such positions. The event will held in mid-summer. For updates, please visit “Events,” at www.tccta.org/leading.

Previous topics for the conference have included: “Ethical Leadership and Social Responsibility,” “Using Emotional Intelligence to Navigate Critical and Key Administrator Skills,” “How Texas Works,” “Legal Issues in Higher Education,” and “Student Engagement in the Age of Facebook.”

Educators from community colleges all over Texas participate in the conference, reporting that the sessions are practical and extremely relevant. ☆

Community college faculty members typically come away from the TCCTA Great Teaching Roundup saying it was one of the most rewarding experiences of their careers. Always held in a scenic, laid-back atmosphere, the Roundup is designed by teachers, for teachers. The format is lively and intentionally unstructured, to encourage an honest appraisal of what it means to be a teacher.

Modeled after the highly popular seminars by Gottshall and Garrison, the association hopes that individuals and groups from all over Texas will choose to be active participants at the 2011 Roundup, adding to the diversity and richness of this successful movement.

Many schools recognize and reward their distinguished faculty by sponsoring their participation in the event. Likewise, faculty senates may wish to use a portion of their budgets to honor a deserving colleague. The Roundup is facilitated on site totally by experienced teachers. Faculty members with all levels of experience who participate report invariably that they have been rejuvenated and refreshed by the experience.

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

Details and registration information will be available soon at www.tccta.org/roundup. ☆

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News Briefs and Links

Free Professional Development Online

TCCTA members who have not used the free online resources available through The Network are encouraged to have a look.

The Network is a powerful, online resource created for the unique professional development needs of career and technical education faculty, counselors, and administrators across Texas. By connecting individuals to people, institutions, resources, and ideas, this visionary site establishes an innovative, centrally located network of past and future professional development programs, free of charge. From live training events to on-demand training modules, The Network pulls together programs from across the country in one central, easily accessible clearinghouse for professional development coordinators and faculty. The site is administered by TCCTA's foundation.

For an overview and video, visit www.txpod.org.

The first site of its kind nationally, this Perkins-funded project was created with the help of the following partners: Austin Community College, Dallas County Community College District, Lone Star College System, Del Mar College, Midland Community College, the Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College, STARLINK, the Northeast Texas Network (NETnet), the Texas Leadership Alliance, the Texas Collaborative for Teaching Excellence, and TCCTA.

Explore "Treasures of Asia Minor" in March

TCCTA members are invited to take part in the 23rd journey to the biblical and archeological "Treasures of Asia Minor," March 4-13, 2011, led by Manoucher Khosrowshahi, professor of government at Tyler Junior College.

TJC will offer this travel and study project to the western regions of Turkey. The all-inclusive cost is \$1,490 plus airfare. For insurance purposes, TJC will purchase the airline tickets for travelers.

Because of space limitations, enrollment will be on a first come, first served basis. Any community member, student, or faculty member from any part of the U.S. may enroll for the project. Travelers may extend (by four days or more) their adventure beyond this trip in Turkey. All age groups are welcome to join the tour.

For more information, contact Manoucher Khosrowshahi at (800) 687-5680 Ext. 2279 or (903) 510-2279. Fax: (903) 510-2708. Email: mkho@tjc.edu.

STEM Education: Pass the Broccoli

The general public is confused about the acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, according to an October 4 article in the *New York Times*. Many believe the fields are "filled with flowers and broccoli," according to writer (and punster) Natalie Anger.

The author comments that she was so confused she "had to reach for my pistil."

Two Former TCCTA Presidents Pass Away

TCCTA mourns the loss of two former presidents and campus leaders who passed away this fall.

Mike Looney, president of TCCTA from 1985-86, died on September 19, in San Antonio. During his career as an educator, he served as professor of chemistry at San Antonio College, provost of Schreiner University, and president of Pikeville College, in Kentucky.

Dr. Looney was 64.

A memorial fund for scholarships in his honor has been established at Schreiner University. Those wishing to contribute can access contact information at www.schreiner.edu/giving.

Martha Ann Miller, age 82, passed away October 6. She was president of TCCTA (then the Texas Junior College Teachers Association) from 1962-63. A former administrator, Ms. Miller holds the record as Panola College's longest serving employee. During her tenure she also taught business and physical education courses, joining the faculty at PC in 1950.

Those wishing to give memorials may contribute to the Hardy Memorial United Methodist Church at www.hardyumc.org, or the charity of their choice.

Transfer Students Accumulate More Credits

The credit hour has been the basic unit of measurement in higher education for over 100 years. In these times when all assumptions are questioned, some commentators believe the standard has outlived its usefulness. The entire dimension of chronology (critics call it "seat time") is falling quickly as a way to measure what students accomplish.

In an October 17 article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* by Sara Lipka, a number of experts are consulted on the subject. The piece is definitely worth reading, and, just as importantly, contains a few nuggets that are especially pertinent to community colleges.

As the article point out, researchers who measure variables such as credit hours have discovered that community college transfer students who graduate with a baccalaureate degree end up with more credits than native students who begin and end at the same site. This will come as no surprise to two-year college educators, who are well aware that their students tend to rattle around in the system before focusing on a major field of study. Many show up at the registrar's office with an impressive collection of transcripts.

It would be interesting to determine if the reported phenomenon is also the case in Texas, especially when compared to other states. Texas, after all, has a notable core curriculum, a common course numbering system, and virtually all schools have negotiated an array of articulation agreements with universities, especially those in the immediate vicinity. As a leader in this area, Texas may out-perform other states in minimizing unnecessary credit hours.

Check out the Blog
for daily updates!
www.tccta.org

Stay informed with the

latest developments at

www.tccta.org.

— 2011 Convention Preview —

Presenter to Address “The Cost of Conflict”



Greg Stephens

The always-popular Professional Development Seminar during the 2011 TCCTA convention will feature “The Cost of Conflict: Learn How to Speak Up Quickly and Effectively,” an interactive session with presenter Greg Stephens.

Mr. Stephens says, “Ninety-five percent of an institution’s workforce struggles to speak up to their colleagues about their concerns. As a result, they engage in resource-sapping avoidance tactics including ruminating excessively about crucial issues, complaining, getting angry, doing unnecessary work and avoiding the other person altogether. In this interactive presentation, you will learn how to speak up quickly and effectively to curb the cost of conflict avoidance in your own organization.”

The speaker received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Baylor University. He is founder and president of Choice Consulting, a certified master trainer with Vital Smarts, a professional behavior analyst, and a corporate executive coach. Mr. Stephens brings more than 30 years of experience to his training and coaching, specializing in the areas of team building, conflict resolution, effective communication, and developing strong leaders. He has extensive experience introducing and teaching these skills to Fortune 500 companies and national organizations such as IBM, Dell, *Texas Monthly*, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and Valley Baptist Hospital.

Pre-Convention Training in Emotional Intelligence Slated

The Institute for Emotional Intelligence invites all TCCTA members to participate in a one-day certification forum on developing emotionally intelligent students, employees, and organizations.

Established in 2004, the annual Institute for Emotional Intelligence provides opportunities for educators, researchers, practitioners, and leaders to share research and practical applications in emotional intelligence (EI) for primary-secondary education, higher education, and business, government, or organizational settings.

The forum will be conducted on Thursday, January 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information contact Gary Lowe at Gary@EiLearningSys.com. Web site: www.eilearningsys.com. Phone: 1-888-680-7983.

Faculty Leaders Get Update on Legislature with Beaman Floyd

One of the most consistently popular sessions at TCCTA conferences has involved faculty senate leaders in direct consultation with each other on “best practices.” At the annual convention in San Antonio, the meeting will feature the association’s lobbyist, Beaman Floyd, who will update the group and respond to questions on the historic Regular Session of the Texas Legislature.

Senate officers, campus “first responders,” and all other convention attendees are invited to attend this important meeting. The meeting will be held on Friday, January 28, at 4:00 p.m.

“Lightning Talks” Return to Convention Program

The 2011 agenda will include an exciting additional feature: Lightning Talks, from 8:00–9:15, on Friday morning, during the convention in San Antonio.

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

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

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

Section Programs Details Now Online

The list grows daily for over 100 discipline-specific section programs at the TCCTA annual convention in San Antonio. These sessions are the backbone of the convention for faculty members—offering valuable professional development at a fraction of the cost of similar programs nationwide. The list of meetings finalized so far is available at www.tccta.org/convention.

Financial Seminars Include Social Security Briefing

The Financial Planning Seminars will include a presentation from the Social Security Administration on recent developments in Congress regarding the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision. These provisions of federal law can greatly affect those who plan to retire from colleges that do not participate in the Social Security system.

Presenting will be Oscar Garcia, public affairs specialist with the agency. Other aspects of Social Security law pertaining to all prospective retirees will be featured.

A separate seminar will feature “How to Build a Million Dollar Retirement,” with Jay Allen Finn, CPA, a financial planner (and former IRS agent), and Tim Webster, a financial advisor and seminar specialist. The session is designed for members of TRS and participants in ORP.

Technology Seminars Feature Latest Advances

Friday afternoon during the annual convention, new developments and strategies using instructional technology will be featured.

Details will be posted on the association’s Web site at www.tccta.org/convention.

Updates and any changes

will be posted online.

www.tccta.org/convention.

GIFTS

Great Ideas For Teaching Students

Friday, January 28, 8:00-9:15 a.m.

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

"The Syllabus is the Key: How to Get Students to Read Before Coming to Class"

Marsha Heaton, Southwest Texas Junior College

Motivating students to come to class prepared is always a challenge. Providing clear instructions in the syllabus regarding student expectations will set the tone for the entire semester.

"A New Slant on Incorporating Media"

Reagan King, Southwest Texas Junior College

This session will discuss the benefits of using media to provide background information and pique students' interest prior to reading and/or discussion. Although other sources will be discussed, the primary focus will be on the database Films on Demand.

"Twitter.Lit"

Willis Humiston, Northeast Lakeview College

"Twitter.Lit" is an attempt to help students connect to the ease that social networking sites provide in communicating with others and relating to their studies. Students will determine the meaning of words, using context clues and applying inferences. They will also apply stated and implied main ideas, supporting details, transitions, and thought patterns, using outlines and concept maps.

"Ten in One: Ten SLOs in One Document"

Donna Gordon, Houston Community College-Southwest

Efficient and purposeful pre-writing assignments help students organize and evaluate their ideas before final submission. Minimizing student tendencies to summarize rather than analyze is not a stated goal but certainly is an underlying objective. Ten goals in Student Learning Outcomes are met in one Journal.

"Grammar Gems on the Go"

Becky Almany, Blinn College

This presentation will first provide a brief, ten-minute presentation on using *Little, Brown Handbook* lessons as warm-ups to begin class and cover grammar. Students will skim the material and do a short exercise (usually five sentences) on the skill taught. We will then discuss, share, correct, etc. This is a quick way to hit those grammar skills with which students struggle the most in a freshman writing class.

"Tec-Know-Ledgy in the Classroom"

Arnulfo Alvarado, Southwest Texas Junior College

PowerPoint can add a new dimension to learning, allowing teachers to explain abstract concepts while accommodating all learning styles. Used properly, PowerPoint can be one of the most powerful tools ever known for disseminating information.

"Writing Recommendation Letters"

Linsey Oakes, Blinn College

Writing an effective letter of recommendation is a skill rather than an art. Sometimes it is the deciding factor between two equally qualified applicants when there is only one position available. Unfortunately, many academics are unfamiliar with the requirements of a recommendation letter or their rationales. This presentation will explain those rationales and pitfalls and will also teach the structural formula and successful strategies of a recommendation letter.

"A Simple Tool for Seamless Discussions"

Robin Robinson, Austin Community College

Instructors struggle with methods of recording participant credit for students while conducting an engaging class discussion. Some have tried seating charts while others utilize the class roster or grade sheet during the activity. These record-as-you-go methods cause a break in the flow of discussion and reduce effectiveness of instruction. The presentation offers a low-tech method that not only allows a seamless flow of discussion, but encourages friendly competitive participation. This tool is also applicable to other teaching goals.

"Texting and Surfing in Class: When Technology Creates Distraction in the Classroom"

Mary VanWisse, Austin Community College

Do your students text during class, creating a distraction? Or surf the Internet on their laptops instead of taking notes as we wish? Explicitly addressing the behavior in the syllabus and in a lecture on generational differences has significantly reduced these behaviors in the presenter's classes. She will share language from the syllabus and resources for discussing generational differences.

"Spice It Up: Active Learning Strategies"

Linda Welsh, Austin Community College

Adult learners can keep tuned in for about 15 or 20 minutes in a standard lecture and then their attention starts to drop dramatically. This session will offer several ways to build change-ups in class to restart the attention clock and create a more meaningful, active learning environment for your students.

"Shaping Attendance Behavior"

Sandra Snavely, St. Philip's College

Most students know the importance of classroom attendance and yet some will consistently arrive late or leave early. There are measures that can be implemented to shape more desirable student behavior and discourage this disruptive activity. Several easy techniques to manage attendance issues using variable reinforcement strategy will be presented.

"3-2-1 Class Participation Self-Assessment"

Grace Fleming, Austin Community College

The presenter's sociology classes are highly interactive, with one third of the final grade wrapped up in how students contribute. Periodically students complete a self-assessment. They describe areas of learning in the current section, applications to their real world, and one question or curiosity arising from class discussion or in the reading assignments. A final section allows disruptive students to demonstrate that they are trying to correct their behavior, and, of equal importance, allows introverted students to have a conversation with their professor. Finally, they report the number grade they believe they have earned. The instructor then assesses the entire page and tells them what grade the student actually earned, along with tips on how to maintain or increase the grade.

The TCCTA annual convention offers quality professional development at a fraction of the cost of other conferences in the United States.

2011 Talking Points Offered

In anticipation of the historic and complicated issues facing the next Regular Session of the Legislature, TCCTA has updated its collection of Talking Points.

Included are a host of constructive assertions our association makes when discussing pertinent issues with public officials. Members may find them useful in communicating with lawmakers while they are “at home” in the districts. The Talking Points are designed for individualized and selective use by educators who may also possess expertise or interest in a particular topic.

As pointed out in the TCCTA *Guide to Political Participation*, Capitol insiders have long maintained that form letters and petitions are not nearly as effective as individually written correspondence from constituents. Members are encouraged to consult the *Guide* (under “Legislative Resources” at www.tccta.org) for useful strategies. The site also contains a convenient link to find out “Who Represents Me?”

IMPORTANT: Do not use college equipment, e-mail addresses, or stationery when communicating with state policy makers. Also, it is crucial to be constructive at all times when communicating with public officials. Be sure to thank them for their hard work on behalf of the people of Texas.

On General Appropriations

- Community colleges now enroll over 70 percent of new students under the Closing the Gaps initiative. They also enroll over 75 percent of the state’s freshmen and sophomores.
- Community college faculty salaries during the last decade have consistently lagged behind the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index.
- Community college faculty teaching academic transfer courses are required to possess the same minimum credentials as university faculty in order to be certified by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Teachers in workforce disciplines must also meet the rigorous standards of accrediting agencies.
- The state is now funding 51 percent 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.
- 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.
- The average age of community college students is 25. Sixty-three percent attend part time. Fifty-eight percent are female.
- Seventy-eight percent of minority freshmen and sophomores attending public institutions of higher education are enrolled at Texas public community colleges. These students almost precisely mirror the ethnic diversity of Texas, making these schools crucial to the success of the Closing the Gaps initiative.
- Community and technical college educators are full participants in the higher education Group Benefits Program administered by the Employees Retirement System of Texas. These individuals were hired with the understanding that, while salaries may be lower than what is often offered in the private sector, health benefits would be guaranteed by the state. These benefits

must remain competitive in order to attract and retain talented faculty.

- Community and technical college employees participate in the Texas Teacher Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Program. It is important for the state’s contribution to these programs to remain consistently robust, to allow educators to plan for a secure retirement.
- Most community and technical college faculty members teach at least five classes a semester, and many are required to add extra “overloads,” without proportionate increases in pay.

On Incentive Funding

Background: Commissioner of Higher Education Raymond Paredes and the Coordinating Board have endorsed a proposal to fund higher education, based partially on “Momentum Points” achieved by students, as they complete developmental education course work, transfer successfully, or accomplish milestones of semester hours with passing grades. Ten percent of the funding formula would be devoted to such achievement by colleges, according to the most current proposal. The Coordinating Board has also proposed that funding should be determined by the number of students who finish each course, rather than based on enrollment early in the semester.

- TCCTA welcomes all valid documentation of college performance, such as the measures reported under current law to the Coordinating Board.
- Students often take workforce training courses with no intention of certification or graduation, and part-time students (who constitute the majority of two-year college enrollment) may take many years to reach a personal objective. The complete mission of community colleges should be funded without penalty.
- Community colleges are held accountable by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the regional accrediting agency for professional standards. Faculty in many workforce disciplines must report to accrediting agencies at the state or national level. Colleges are also accountable to local taxpayers through policies enacted by elected trustees. Faculty members are evaluated routinely by college administrators under local board policies. Student evaluations are an important component of this process. Colleges are now implementing HB 2504 (81st Regular Session), which mandates that schools formulate a plan to post course and faculty information online, including student evaluations.
- No one wants students to succeed more than teachers. The Coordinating Board’s proposal to reward student success assumes that a new funding mechanism will create a novel motivation. We see no empirical evidence to suggest such a correlation. If the state wishes to undertake a policy of performance or incentive funding, it should do so carefully and with ample opportunity for students, faculty, and other stakeholders to provide insights about the unintended consequences it could have.
- The Coordinating Board’s current proposals could place the interests of students at odds with the financial interests of institutions. We believe a student should never be advised to choose a particular option simply because of the way the college receives its appropriation.
- There are times when advising a student to stay in class would be unethical, since a failing grade often closes the door on a fresh start later. These decisions are highly personal and complex and should not be subjected to a

Members are urged to consult the association’s Web site for the latest news on the Legislature.

www.tccta.org

simplistic, centralized remedy.

- As open admission institutions, community colleges have no control over the academic preparedness of their students. College readiness varies greatly among Texas high schools.
- We are deeply troubled about grade inflation and threats to academic integrity under a system of performance funding. For instance, if the Momentum Points recently endorsed by the Coordinating Board become policy, we fear that instructors might be pressured to pass a higher percentage of students in order to stay employed or to receive favorable evaluations. Faculty members with high standards of rigor and excellence could start to entertain second thoughts in such an environment.
- Policy makers wishing to use revenue efficiently to enhance student success in college are encouraged to concentrate on early assessment and intervention programs while they are in high school. College readiness is crucial.

On Developmental Education

Background: Texas Higher Education Commissioner Raymond Paredes has testified repeatedly in legislative hearings that developmental education needs a “complete overhaul” because it “isn’t working.” One proposal includes shifting some “adult” students to Adult Basic Education, which would be administered by the Texas Education Agency. Pilot programs are currently being examined to determine the best funding strategy, including “non-course” approaches.

- Educators in the field report that the statistics gathered by the Coordinating Board are often confusing and difficult to interpret. Since TASP was replaced by TSI, each school has designed its own approach, making generalizations problematic if not impossible.
- Since the funding formula does not require that revenue generated by developmental education courses be spent on these courses, great variety exists statewide. Developmental education courses that receive adequate funding to hire talented faculty, and to provide necessary resources and training, are more successful.
- Legislators are urged to read published national studies on this subject carefully. Often a headline or caption can be very misleading. Furthermore, the most recent evidence may be missing.
- In the absence of authoritative statistical data, legislators are urged to listen to impressive and countless anecdotes from community college students whose academic careers were saved dramatically by effective developmental education.
- Teachers in the field are among the most creative, collaborative, and resourceful professionals in higher education. For a look at “best practices” currently being shared, please examine The Network, a resource provided by TCCTA and its partners, at www.txpod.org.

On Textbook Selection

Background: In 2007 and 2009, several bills were introduced on the subject of textbook selection, driven by understandable concerns about the cost to students. For some individuals in certain programs books cost more than tuition and fees, according to legislative testimony. Each Session produces an effort to exempt textbooks from sales taxes. Other perennial measures would place proscriptions on college faculty in making their choices. One notable effort in 2007 would have criminalized (as a Class B Misdemeanor) the acceptance of “gifts” by faculty from publishers that are intended to influence adoption decisions. A full definition

of said “gifts” was not provided. TCCTA testified against the measure, which failed to pass. An interim charge leading up to the 2011 Regular Session requires an examination of textbook pricing practices and potential remedies.

Of particular interest to lawmakers is the practice of “bundling” textbooks with supplemental material such as workbooks, CDs, and software that, according to testimony, drives up the cost and is not always required by faculty or used by students.

- TCCTA has consistently emphasized the issue of textbook costs to faculty, urging them to take advantage of all reported cost-saving strategies.
- College faculty organizations on campuses around the state engage routinely in organized efforts to help provide texts to students in need. Local school policies and procedures frequently offer assistance as well.
- State policy should not be directed toward a one-size-fits-all remedy. Texts in many scientific fields are simply better in quality than before, with supplemental features providing more comprehensive information.
- Textbook selection inevitably involves the important principle of academic freedom. College faculty should be allowed to make the best choices for students, taking cost into account in a variety of ways.
- Congress has passed a measure regulating the practice of “bundling”—a federal law intended to make certain that an entire package of material does not cost more than the sum of its component parts.
- State law (HB 2504, 81st Regular Session) now requires that course requirements be posted online, allowing students and parents to pursue purchasing or rental options before instruction begins.
- Textbook costs are, according to many authorities, currently declining. The publishing market is adjusting rapidly to competition from online booksellers, Internet materials, textbook rental programs, customized texts by faculty, and a host of other factors. This rational process should be allowed to continue without state interference. ☆

TCCTA 2011 Legislative Program

- Support the funding goals of the Texas Association of Community Colleges.
- Support approaches to incentive funding that are based upon valid measures, recognize the primary role of faculty in upholding academic standards, and do not diminish base formula appropriations or penalize workforce training.
- Support the Legislature’s historical commitment to full participation of community college educators in the Group Benefits Program for state and higher education employees under the Employees Retirement System of Texas, including adjustments for rising costs.
- Support efforts to maintain and improve benefits for community and technical college employees and retirees in TRS and ORP.
- Support institution-based developmental education while encouraging new programs derived from demonstrated best practices.
- Support efforts to address the cost of textbooks that do not restrict the professional judgment of faculty in selecting academically appropriate materials for students.

TCCTA’s list of “Tracked”

bills is available under

“Legislative Resources.”

www.tccta.org

**General Session to Feature Current
Strategies that Work—and Protect Standards**

TCCTA members are especially urged to attend the general session of the TCCTA annual convention, on Thursday, January 27, 2011, at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio.

In collaboration with key foundations providing significant support to student success programs at community colleges in Texas, TCCTA will feature presentations of programs on campuses that are achieving results today in preparing students to perform successfully in college. As the Coordinating Board and Legislature consider new approaches designed to enhance productivity and student performance, it is imperative to provide a showcase for “best practices” that are succeeding presently at the campus level. These programs show promise for other two-year colleges—without jeopardizing standards or academic integrity.

By participating in the session, faculty members will learn first hand about these impressive initiatives and will return to campuses all over Texas to share the results. To this end, TCCTA believes there is great value in bringing together representatives from the key foundations supporting such projects, to compare findings and generate discussion.

Each foundation will feature a breakthrough initiative it is currently supporting at a Texas community college, with a short video describing the program, key individuals in its development, and a summary of its impact. An award will be presented by TCCTA to representatives of the college and supporting foundation. Panel discussions will be scheduled for the next day, to explore each concept in more depth.

The program for Thursday evening includes:

**El Paso Community College
Early College Start Program
Funded by the Greater Texas Foundation and Meadows Foundation**

**Houston Community College System
Entering Students Program
Funded by the Gates Foundation**

**Brazosport College
Student Success Classes
Funded by the Houston Endowment**

“Please join us for this important session!” says TCCTA president Fred Newbury, Richland College.

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

REQUEST FOR BANQUET TICKETS

Please reserve _____ ticket(s) at \$35 each for the TCCTA banquet scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Thursday, January 27, 2011, at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio.

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

I understand that full refunds will be made if reservations are cancelled before 12:00 Noon, Friday, January 21, and that no refund will be made for reservations cancelled after that time. (Banquet tickets are transferable.)

PRINT NAME: _____

COLLEGE: _____

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

NOTE: TICKET ORDER SHOULD BE RECEIVED IN STATE OFFICE BY JAN. 21 TO ALLOW TIME FOR PROCESSING. MAIL TO: TCCTA, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735. (If paying by credit card, you may fax the form to Area Code 512, 328-1086.)

TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
 64th Annual Convention
 The Marriott Rivercenter Hotel — San Antonio, Texas — January 27-29, 2011
HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

Please check hotel preference. Make reservation directly with the hotel.

<input type="checkbox"/> Marriott Rivercenter MAIL TO: 101 Park Street San Antonio, Texas 78205 PHONE: (210) 223-1000 FAX: (210) 223-6239	<input type="checkbox"/> San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk MAIL TO: 889 East Market Street San Antonio, Texas 78205 PHONE: (210) 224-4555 FAX: (210) 224-2754
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RESERVATION CUT-OFF DATE: January 6, 2011

Please reserve _____ room(s) of the type(s) checked below:

Check accommodations desired:	Rate
____ Single Room (One person)	\$155.00
____ Double Room (Two persons)	\$155.00
____ Triple Room (Three persons)	\$175.00
____ Quad Room (Four persons)	\$175.00

Arrival Date: Jan. ____, 2011 Departure Date: Jan. ____, 2011

(Hotel check-in time is 3:00 p.m.; check-out time is 12:00 Noon.)

Reservations must be guaranteed by approved credit card or advance payment of one day's lodging. Guaranteed reservations not cancelled by 3:00 p.m. on the day prior to arrival will be subject to deposit forfeiture or first night's charge to credit card.

Hold room on a guaranteed basis with the following credit card:

Credit Card _____ Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: The hotels are unable to grant individuals direct billing for room or incidental accounts. The hotels accept all major credit cards. In the absence of an approved credit card, the hotel requests payment by cash, money order, cashier's, institutional, or traveler's checks. All checks should be made out to the hotel. Credit information will be required at time of check-in.

Confirm reservations to: Name _____ Phone A/C _____ - _____

School or Company _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

ROOM(S) WILL BE OCCUPIED BY:

Name (please print) _____ Address _____ City/State/ZIP Code _____

Hotel Reservations Can Be Made Online
www.tccta.org/convention

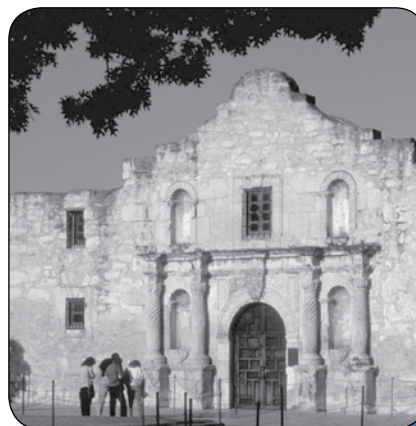
Make Hotel Reservations Now!

TCCTA members planning to attend the 2011 annual convention are encouraged to reserve hotel accommodations right away.

A block of rooms has been reserved, but it is likely that members who wait until the last minute to make reservations will be disappointed. With the exception of a few special functions, all convention activities will be held at the headquarters hotel.

Reservations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. **Reservations received after January 6 will be subject to availability.**

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



Just across the street from convention headquarters, the Marriott San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel is close to all cultural activities in the area—museums, shopping, restaurants, and nightlife.



TCCTA

TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185
Austin, Texas 78735

PERIODICAL

Candidates Announced For 2011-12

for President-Elect



B. Jane England
North Central Texas
College

for Vice President



Carol A. Lowe
McLennan Community
College

for Secretary



David J. Sorrells
Lamar State College-
Port Arthur

for Treasurer



David Lydic
Austin
Community College



Randy Jarvis
South
Texas College

Ellen Brennan, San Antonio College, chair of the TCCTA Nominating Committee, has announced the names of candidates for state office for 2011-12. Information on voting is provided below.

Nominated for the office of president-elect was B. Jane England. She has taught in the department of social sciences at North Central Texas College for 27 years.

Carol A. Lowe was nominated for the office of vice president. She has taught English at McLennan Community College for 28 years.

David J. Sorrells was nominated for the office of secretary. He has taught English at Lamar State College-Port Arthur for 15

years.

David Lydic was nominated for the office of treasurer. He has taught English at Austin Community College for 32 years. Also nominated for treasurer was Randy Jarvis. He has taught sociology at South Texas College for 11 years.

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

filed petitions.

The bylaws provide that candidates may also be nominated from the floor during the general session of the TCCTA annual convention, scheduled to begin at 7:15 p.m., Thursday, January 27, at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel in San Antonio.

Members of the Nominating Committee this year also include: Larry Allen, Panola College; Zack Coapland, Lone Star College System; Brian Dille, Odessa College; Anna Maria Mendiola, Laredo Community College; Terry Mouchayleh, Austin Community College; and Dina Neal, Vernon College. ☆

Members Urged to Vote Online

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

A computer will be provided on Friday, January 28, at the Marriott Rivercenter Hotel, from 8:00 a.m., until 5:00 p.m., for professional members who have not had the opportunity to vote.

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