

TCCTA MESSENGER

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A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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TCCTA Testifies on Vital Issues

There is little doubt among community and technical college educators that the forthcoming Regular Session of the Legislature is fraught with challenges.

A Senate hearing on August 20 underscored two of the most ominous problems: proportionality in funding health benefits for community colleges, and a proposed “overhaul” of developmental education. TCCTA Lobbyist Beaman Floyd shared the association’s concerns about both these issues, in testimony before the Subcommittee on Higher Education of the Senate Finance Committee.

For details about this important hearing and Mr. Floyd’s testimony, please visit the TCCTA Blog under the “Legislative” category, at www.tccta.org.

Although the funds for community college health ben-

efits that were vetoed by Gov. Perry have been restored, the concept of proportionality remains in the official budget instructions from the Legislative Budget Board. TCCTA plans to support a legislative effort to codify the existing mechanism of appropriation to insure that health benefits are funded for all employees who are “eligible” for revenue

(continued on page 3)

Conference Planned for Faculty Leaders

The 29th annual TCCTA Conference for Faculty Leaders will be held Friday and Saturday, October 10-11, at the Doubletree Hotel Austin. A full slate of activities and programs is planned.

At 3:30 p.m. Friday, the program will feature “Faculty Senate Best Practices: A Moderated Discussion.” Leading the dialogue will be David Lydic, professor of English at Austin Community College. Previous meetings on this subject at TCCTA conferences have garnered much interest.

The conference will continue with an informal social hour and “pasta bar” at 5:00 p.m., Friday. Members may register beginning at 5:30.

(continued on page 3)

Also In This Issue...

TCCTA State President Revis Bell discusses the current trend toward public service on campus Page 2

Learn about the 2008 Piper Professors from Texas Community Colleges Page 4

News Briefs and Links..... Page 7

“Talking Points” Page 8

Make your plans now to attend the 2009 Convention at The Renaissance Austin Hotel Page 10

What You Can Do

by Beaman Floyd
TCCTA Lobbyist

The coming Regular Session of the Texas Legislature is likely to involve a number of difficult issues for us. Performance Funding. An assault upon developmental education as we know it. Textbook selection. And, of course, our old friend “Proportionality” in the funding of health benefits.

I genuinely believe in the social good of your profession, and promise to continue engaging lawmakers and their staffs urgently and constructively. Naturally, when visiting with clients, I am asked, “What can I do?”

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

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

Third, get to know your representative and senator now, while they are “at home.” Follow the *Guide to Political Participation* published by TCCTA (and available in printable form under “Legislative Resources” at www.tccta.org.) It’s the best document of its kind.

Fourth, invite your representative and senator to visit your campus, ideally in a joint meeting with faculty, administration, and board members. It’s always impressive when all stakeholders are on the same page. As someone who represents clients in public education, I can tell you that such unity is very rare.

Finally, participate in TCCTA events—especially the Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders on October 10-11 and the Annual Convention on February 19-21. Both are in Austin.

I hope to see you there!



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



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last spring in this space I commented about the grim news regarding the economy in the United States and the effects of such negativity upon community colleges here in Texas.



As I compose this, there are still plenty of pessimistic headlines and bleak forecasts. If you've been following the news on our Web site, high gasoline prices have caused painful concerns, as students (and faculty!) try to adjust in order to get to campus each day.

In this "back to school" issue of the Messenger, however, I would like to focus briefly on a trend that has a number of positive implications.

There is some evidence that we may be experiencing an increased desire for civic and social responsibility in students. Importantly, this should not be viewed as just another "flavor of the month" fashion or a mere addition to the long litany of items that we want our students to know or be able to perform.

A recent survey of students and campus professionals by the Association of American Colleges and Universities indicates broad support for an increased emphasis on social and personal responsibility in higher education. Those surveyed also believed overwhelmingly that there is not enough emphasis on these important matters currently. The survey was conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan's Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, and involved 23,000 students and 9,000 campus professionals, from all sorts of schools. It seems to be a valid "snapshot" of opinion.

In terms of pedagogy, this emphasis can take many forms. It might be as simple (and timely) as making our campuses more friendly to the environment through recycling efforts using volunteers. Classroom assignments, depending upon the discipline, could involve service to the community in the immediate neighborhood around the campus. Obviously, class assignments aren't exactly "voluntary," but there are a host of opportunities to channel this new energy into community service.

Incidentally it may be worth noting that

both major candidates for president have proposed a national service program for young people, and many commentators have detected a new idealism in the country among citizens of all political persuasions.

Volunteerism exists already on every community college campus, of course. Just take a casual glance at the activities of Phi Theta Kappa, for instance. We should use these efforts as a collective model for the rest of us. If the surveys are correct, there is a hunger in our country that represents the highest form of patriotism.

It is no accident that the association's theme for this year is "TCCTA: Building a Better Texas." The beginning of the school year is a great time to get started.

Please join TCCTA and participate in your association's programs and dialogue. You'll discover an abundance of community spirit within the ranks of our membership.

TCCTA COMMITTEES TO MEET BEFORE CONFERENCE

The TCCTA Legislative, Membership Services, Professional Development, and Publications Committees will meet at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, October 10, in conjunction with the Conference for Faculty Leaders, at the Doubletree Austin Hotel.

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

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

NOMINATING COMMITTEE SEEKS RECOMMENDATIONS

Paula Wilhite, Northeast Texas Community College, chair of the TCCTA Nominating Committee, has announced that the committee is inviting recommendations of individuals for consideration as nominees for officers for 2009-10.

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

Recommendations should be sent to:

Paula Wilhite TCCTA Nominating Committee Northeast Texas Community College P. O. Box 1307 Mount Pleasant, Texas 75456



Fall Conference to Focus on Important Issues

(continued from page one)

The evening program, at 6:45, will feature "Preparing for the 81st Regular Session of the Texas Legislature." Scheduled to speak is Beaman Floyd, a professional contract lobbyist who represents TCCTA.

Mr. Floyd specializes in legislative issues relating to insurance, including teachers' health insurance and retirement, workers' compensation, public education, and financial institutions. He has worked with the Texas Legislature since 1993, and will address the inner workings of the legislative process, and the challenges and opportunities for the 2009 Regular Session.

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

The program continues at 9:00 a.m., and features "Current Trends in Texas Higher Education." Presenting will be a state official in the Capitol who has yet to be determined.

The second session on Saturday morning, at 10:15, will feature an important program on a subject that is attracting a great deal of attention nationwide. "The Service Learning Classroom: A Panel Discussion" will feature three educators with experience in the growing field of service learning at Texas community colleges. The panelists are: Brian Shmaefsky, professor of biology and service learning coordinator at Lone Star College-Kingwood; Clark Friesen, professor of speech and faculty-service learning coordinator at Lone Star College-Tomball; and Audrey Grams, service learning coordinator at San Antonio College.

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

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

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

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

REGISTRATION FEE—\$75, payable on arrival (includes social hour Friday evening and Saturday's breakfast and lunch).

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION should be completed by October 3 through the TCCTA state office, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735 (Telephone 1-800-288-6850, ext. 11; in Austin 328-2044, ext. 11; Fax 1-512-328-1086; e-mail tccta@tccta.org).

HOTEL RESERVATIONS Reservations are available at \$85.00, plus tax for single occupancy (double occupancy \$135.00, plus tax).

Make reservations by phone, 512-454-3737 or by fax, 512-454-6915. For the group rate, reference the TCCTA Fall Conference.

Self parking is complimentary for attendees.

The Doubletree Hotel Austin is located just off the intersection of I-35 and Highway 290 East in North Austin. It is minutes from downtown Austin, the State Capitol, the University of Texas, the Sixth Street entertainment district, and the Arboretum. The hotel is 20 minutes from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. ☆

High School GPA Proposal Draws Fire

As reported previously on the TCCTA "Blog," Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes has proposed dramatic changes in the calculation of grade point averages for high school students.

Under the guidelines (to be considered at the October 23 meeting of the Coordinating Board), extra weight will be given to dual credit, international baccalaureate, and advanced placement courses. The plan also emphasizes the "recommended" academic curriculum.

Community college educators in many disciplines, including technical and occupational fields, are concerned that the new plan would discourage students from taking certain courses and from entering vital fields in a host of career areas. The proposal has caused considerable concern among school district officials.

An overview and opportunity to comment are available at the Coordinating Board's Web site at www.theccb.state.tx.us. ☆

TCCTA Testifies

(continued from page one)

under the funding formula. (If proportionality were to apply, schools would be penalized in direct proportion to their local contribution to the instructional mission of the institution.) Such a prospective statute would not end the debate over the funding of health benefits for community colleges, but would take proportionality as a budgetary philosophy off the table.

As reported earlier, Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes and the Coordinating Board have recommended a new approach to funding developmental education, which is presently funded like other academic courses under the formula. The proposal entails a prospective \$30 million fund, trustee to the board, and distributed to schools based on a comprehensive analysis of nationwide evidence and "best practices." Developmental courses would still be funded in the traditional manner during the next biennium.

TCCTA Lobbyist Beaman Floyd, testifying before the subcommittee, picked up on the discussion of "best practices." He encouraged the senators to take advantage of the local experimentation and success on community college campuses in Texas. He also recommended that panel members visit the "big collaborative" Web site resource www.txpod.org, in which TCCTA is a partner. ☆



Beaman Floyd



Frank Hill

For the latest information on issues affecting Texas two-year colleges, visit the TCCTA Blog, at www.tccta.typepad.com

Piper Professors Named for 2008



Rosemary Karr



Ruth Pitts

The Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation announced recipients of the 2008 Piper Professor awards last May. Two Texas community college educators were among those recognized. The foundation was organized in 1950, and the Piper Professor program was begun in 1958, with eight awards of \$1,000 each. Today the foundation honors 15 Texas professors each year. The stipend is \$5,000.

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

Rosemary Karr teaches developmental mathematics in the Collin College (formerly Collin County Community College) District.

"Dr. Karr has earned many statewide and national accolades, but she is most proud of the accomplishments of her students," said Collin College President Cary Israel. "It is that kind of humility combined with intellect that makes her a great professor. We are delighted to have outstanding professors of this caliber teaching our students."

Ruth Pitts is an instructor of music at McLennan Community College.

The Piper Professor has been at MCC since 1977 and has been teaching for more than 35 years. She says that what she loves most about teaching is seeing the smiles on students when they hear really beautiful music and realize that they can create it themselves.

"Receiving this award is a thrill of a lifetime," Pitts says. "I do not feel deserving, but I am truly very honored and grateful."

Prior community college Piper Professors are listed below:

- 1958 R. W. Lee, St. Philip's College
Henry B. Webb, San Antonio College
- 1960 Katharine Evans, Del Mar College
Inez Grant, South Plains College
Bertie Warren, Amarillo College
- 1961 Marjorie Morris, Odessa College
*Margaret Pannill, Navarro College
*Marjorie Walthall, San Antonio College
- 1962 *Paul McFerran, Texarkana College
- 1963 Mazella Arnold, Temple College
B. E. Schulze, Del Mar College
- 1964 S. L. Canterbury, Kilgore College
- 1965 Arthur Chesley Bowman, San Antonio College
- 1966 P. Eugene Smith, Del Mar College
- 1968 Jack R. Harvey, Weatherford College
Robert E. Hoffman, Amarillo College
- 1970 Clarence W. Norris, St. Philip's College
Barbara Warburton, Texas Southmost College
- 1971 Lucille M. Boyd, Navarro College
Aileen Creighton, Del Mar College
- 1972 *Joe F. Taylor, Amarillo College
- 1973 Hoyt J. Burnette, McLennan Community College
- 1974 Frances P. Dushek, Del Mar College
John N. Igo, Jr., San Antonio College

- Duane Chad Morrison, Grayson County College
- 1975 James A. Hankerson, El Centro College
- 1976 Theron Wilford Kirk, San Antonio College
- 1977 Annie Lou Winton Ballard, Kilgore College
David Lloyd Petrash, Grayson County College
Gary Alan Smith, Tarrant County Junior College—Northwest Campus
- 1978 Geraldine Johnston, Navarro College
Carolyn Oliver Perry, San Jacinto College
Helen Starr Roberts, South Plains College
- 1979 Dolores C. Villarreal, St. Philip's College
Mary Cecilia Wyllie, Alvin Community College
- 1980 Harley Davis, Paris Junior College
- 1981 Betty Jo Graber, Weatherford College
Anne Dean Turk, Kilgore College
- 1982 William Samelson, San Antonio College
- 1983 Rosemary Valladolid, El Paso Community College
- 1984 *David J. Clinkscale, Tarrant County Junior College—Northwest Campus
Costas Katsigris, El Centro College
Ronald J. Williams, Del Mar College
- 1985 M. Duane Gage, Tarrant County Junior College—Northeast Campus
Joseph J. Granata, San Jacinto College—South Campus
Katherine E. Staples, Austin Community College
Robert W. Wylie, Amarillo College
- 1986 H. McAfee Daniel, Navarro College
Lewis M. Fox, San Antonio College
Ray Kenneth Robbins, Western Texas College
- 1987 Ann Cartwright, San Jacinto College—Central Campus
- 1988 Diane Martin, Eastfield College
- 1989 Ida M. Blanchette, Alvin Community College
Elwyn Jeanette Bone, Kilgore College
Hazelyn D. Lewis, St. Philip's College
Wayne Hartman McAlister, The Victoria College
Richard E. Miller, Navarro College
Robert H. Schlieker, Temple College
Jerry D. Thompson, Laredo Community College
Joan Laveson Weston, Brookhaven College
- 1990 Beatrice M. Burke, Howard College (Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf)
Mark D. Hettle, Mountain View College
Marylin Sue Kelly, McLennan Community College
*Marilyn J. Lancaster, Western Texas College
Renate True, College of the Mainland
- 1991 Jane Aycock Bouterse, Texarkana College
Brian David Earle, Cedar Valley College
Gary Bruce Hodge, Collin County Community College
Tommy Kaye Kinney, Brazosport College
Ronald R. Roberts, Grayson County College
Lucy A. Scarbrough, El Paso Community College
Olive Jensen Theisen, Northeast Texas Community College
- 1992 Sam W. Hawkins, San Jacinto College—Central Campus
Thomas M. Hobbs, North Harris College
- 1993 Michael N. Donahue, Temple College

- Barbara R. McGregor, Weatherford College
 Claudia E. Neeley-Plog, El Centro College
 Robert K. Peters III, Tyler Junior College
 Charles E. P. Simmons, Midland College
 Mary Seals Thorpe, Del Mar College
- 1994 Tommy W. Stringer, Navarro College
- 1995 Dennis J. Cravens, Vernon Regional Junior College
 Sandra S. Shumate, San Antonio College
- 1996 Vivian Ruby Brown, Laredo Community College
 Norman C. Delaney, Del Mar College
 Shelley Denise Lane, Collin County Community College
 Elroy Smith, Palo Alto College
 Charles Dennis Spurlin, The Victoria College
- 1998 *Emmeline Dodd, College of the Mainland
 Bettye Craddock, Kilgore College
- 1999 Mattie J. Collins, Angelina College
 Gary D. Swaim, North Lake College
 Warren Taylor, Midland College
- 2000 Luke Barber, Richland College
 Hanhphouc (Happy) Vu Buu, North Harris College
 *Patsy W. Goss, San Jacinto College—Central Campus
 Vivian Dennis-Monzingo, Eastfield College
 Bill O’Neal, Panola College
- 2001 J. Paul Matney, Amarillo College
 Laura 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
- 2003 Elizabeth Dollie Hudspeth, St. Philip’s College
 Kenneth Lee Weatherbie, Del Mar College
- 2004 Eduardo Enrique Aguilar, Tarrant County College—Northwest Campus
 L. Alan Barnes, Tyler Junior College
 Mary Jean Osentowski, Richland College
 Lincoln C. Rolling, Jr., Cedar Valley College
- 2005 Kenneth Gerald Alfors, Mountain View College
 Jennifer Annette Black, McLennan Community College
 *Susan H. Edwards, Cy-Fair College
 Jacqueline Ann Ganschow, Del Mar College
 Sycily Ann Gregory, South Plains College
 O. Rufus Lovett, Kilgore College
 Rebecca Lynn Tate, Tomball College
 Doris Phillips Wilson, El Centro College
- 2006 Ray F. Attner, Brookhaven College
 Dalton C. DeHart, San Jacinto College—Central Campus
- 2007 Jeff D. Edwards, Cy-Fair College
 Samuel R. Germany, Cedar Valley College
 Donald R. Lucas, Northwest Vista College
 Joel D. Price, Tarrant County College—Southeast Campus
 Kathryn C. Wetzal, Amarillo College
- 2008 Rosemary Karr, Collin College
 Ruth Pitts, McLennan Community College

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

TCCTA Offers New Health and Extended Care Package

Full and part time educators at Texas community and technical colleges who are interested in supplemental coverage or long term care insurance are urged to examine a new program offered by TCCTA for members of the association.

Association Health Programs offers a wide range of insurance products at substantial savings for adjunct instructors, as well as full time faculty, administrators, and their families.

This program, which includes 150 other national, state and local associations, representing more than 2.5 million people, provides savings of up to 40 percent on all health insurance, life insurance, long term care, disability, and other insurance products.

“TCCTA has long sought a health insurance solution for our adjunct members and for our members’ dependents,” says association Executive Director Richard Moore. “We believe we’ve found a reputable partner—and a quality solution—in Association Health Benefits.”

Major benefits of the health program include substantial insurance premium discounts. Coverage will never be reduced or cancelled as long as insurance premiums are paid on time. Also, premiums cannot be increased based on individual medical history. (Normal premium increases for the total pool should be expected. Rates and availability may vary, based on medical eligibility and compared with current insurance coverage.)

For an online quote and explanation of the details visit www.tccta.org/healthbenefits.

2008 ORP and TRS Information Now Online

Newly hired two-year college educators, current TRS members, and ORP participants are strongly urged to consult the annual analysis of Texas retirement programs provided by TCCTA.

The association’s Web site provides the annual “Analysis of Possibilities,” a popular summary of legislative changes and comparison of various types of programs offered by the State of Texas for higher education employees.

Also included on the site is a narrative comparison of TRS and ORP, a list of the most popular ORP vendors in Texas, and other useful information provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. TCCTA has also provided links to the companies that are highest in ORP participation. These sites provide important information on fund performance, retirement calculators, and a convenient list of applicable statutes and rules governing participation.

www.tccta.org

“We believe we’ve found a reputable partner—and a quality solution—in Association Health Benefits.”

—Richard Moore

TCCTA Executive Director



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We invite you to submit presentation proposals for the 2009 NISOD International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence. This conference attracted more than 2,300 professionals in 2008, representing more than 450 community colleges and other institutions of higher learning worldwide.

This year's presentation strands include:

- ☆ Leadership and Organizational Development
- ☆ Economic and Workforce Development
- ☆ Educational Technology
- ☆ Teaching and Learning
- ☆ Developing Faculty
- ☆ Culture of Evidence
- ☆ Student Success
- ☆ Diversity

For conference details or to submit a proposal, go to:

[WWW.NISOD.ORG/CONFERENCE](http://www.nisod.org/conference)

Deadline to submit: December 1, 2008

NISOD Excellence Awards

In the past 20 years, the Excellence Awards tradition has allowed NISOD the distinct privilege of honoring more than 15,000 of the world's best in higher education. We invite all past recipients to join us in celebrating the 20th anniversary at this year's NISOD Conference.



The deadline for submitting names to receive the 2009 NISOD Excellence Awards is December 1, 2008.

www.nisod.org/exc_awards

News Briefs and Links

R U Really Reading 4 Sure?

A number of studies have indicated that young people aren't reading books much any more. There is debate, however, over whether reading material online provides the same intellectual benefit as books. Young people are obviously reading, gathering information, and writing on their computer screens (and even watching television less, by some indications). So what's the difference?

An article in the July 27 *New York Times* looks into this issue in depth, citing a number of sources and opinions. As college and university faculty discuss whether textbooks should be replaced with online material, (as a means of saving students money) it may be worth considering whether there is also an intellectual cost.

There are at least a couple of points of view to take into consideration.

On the positive side, some authorities say, is that surfing the Web, "whether it is looking up something on Google or even *britneyspears.org*, entails some engagement with text," according to the article. "In fact, some literacy experts say that online reading skills will help children fare better when they begin looking for digital-age jobs."

On the other hand, "Some traditionalists warn that digital reading is the intellectual equivalent of empty calories. Often, they argue, writers on the Internet employ a cryptic argot that vexes teachers and parents. Zig-zagging through a cornucopia of words, pictures, video and sounds, they say, distracts more than strengthens readers," the article reports.

Retiree Health Insurance Discussed at Hearing

At a hearing August 12 of the House Committee on Pensions and Investments, the panel discussed the effects of HB 2365, passed during the 2007 Regular Session. The law exempts Texas state and local governments from compliance with an accounting provision promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, a non-profit advisory body with great influence over bond and securities policy.

The provision, known as "GASB 45," instructs governments to include long range financial liabilities for non-pension benefits in their accounting reports. Briefly, this means governments would have to include financial commitments in their current budgets for long-range liabilities, especially health insurance.

Texas has a "pay as you go" budgetary process under its constitution, which does not, in theory, encumber future legislatures. Other states, such as Alaska, are constitutionally required to put money aside for projected liability. And many states have collective bargaining agreements that are binding prospectively.

Based on testimony during the hearing, Texas has not suffered in its rankings with bonding agencies as a result of HB 2365. However, public officials remain concerned about the coming wave of baby boomer retirees, for whom the state has no particular plan regarding health insurance.

TCCTA will monitor the situation carefully.

TCCTA Web Site Features Daily Updates

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

A Web Log—or Blog—feature contains daily updates from state and national sources. News from Austin and Washington on legislation, employee benefits, and instructional issues are posted continuously. Members can also become the association's "eyes and ears," posting comments on local campus perspectives.

The Blog also features news items on pedagogical developments and new technology.

TCCTA executive director Richard Moore says, "One of my favorite expressions is 'None of us is as smart as all of us.' Interactive media tools allow us to create an online community. This makes us a stronger, more vital organization."

Recent posts include...

- House Panel Briefed on TRS Developments
- AIG Problems Prompt VALIC Questions
- iTunes U Offers Free Lectures
- Federal Rules on Textbooks Part of New Law
- "Zombie" of Proportionality Survives

"Log on and get involved!" says TCCTA State President Revis Bell.

Forensic Science Cleared For Statewide Offering

The academic discipline of forensic science made a leap forward in receiving state approval on August 8.

Don Jacobs, chair of behavioral sciences at Weatherford College, who co-founded the first forensic science department and degree plan at a Texas community college, says, "Our almost five year wait is over; we are no longer required to apply for unique needs. Two FORS courses can now be offered in all 50 Texas community colleges—FORS 2440: Introduction to Forensic Science and FORS 2450: Introduction to Forensic Psychology can be offered as 3-hour courses or 4-hour lecture and lab courses, depending on equipment allocation."

Mr. Jacobs urges members from all disciplines to attend the forensic science section meetings at the TCCTA annual convention, and to log on to *www.forsforever.blogspot.com* for updates. Question and comments can be directed to *djacobs@wc.edu* or 817-598-6431.

Mark Your Calendars!

Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders

October 10-11, 2008

Doubletree Austin Hotel

62nd Annual Convention

Renaissance Austin Hotel

Austin, Texas

Feb. 19-21, 2009

Members are encouraged to subscribe to the TCCTA Blog, at www.tccta.typepad.com, to have the latest news on community colleges issues delivered directly to your computer.

“Talking Points” Portfolio Offered

As reported over the summer on the TCCTA Web site, the forthcoming Regular Session of the Texas Legislature will involve historic challenges for community and technical college educators. Lawmakers will face abundant controversy over the higher education needs of the state, and the method used to pay for all state programs.

Revenue will be tight, notwithstanding media reports of surpluses. The commissioner of higher education and Coordinating Board have endorsed dramatic changes to the method of funding colleges and universities and, in particular, developmental education. Proportionality in funding health benefits to community colleges is certain to return as a controversial issue. And it is likely that lawmakers will attempt to regulate the faculty role in the choice of textbooks for students.

In anticipation of these historic and complicated issues, TCCTA has expanded its collection of “Talking Points.”

While we are still months away from formulating the TCCTA Legislative Program for 2009, included are some points our association makes when discussing various salient issues with public officials. Members may find them useful in communicating with lawmakers while they are “at home” in the districts, especially when they are campaigning.

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 other 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 always be constructive when communicating with public officials. Be sure to thank them for their hard work on behalf of the people of Texas.

On General Appropriations

- TCCTA fully supports the funding goals of the Texas Association of Community Colleges in asking that the Legislature should invest sufficient base funding in community colleges through the “New Community College Compact with Texas” in the amount of \$2.29 billion.
- This amount reflects the recommendations of the Coordinating Board (\$3.67 billion, based on the formula cost study, minus tuition and fees, and minus ten percent for incentive funding).
- Funding must be increased for the TRS and ORP retirement programs to attract and retain talented faculty. TCCTA appreciates the progress made during the 2007 Regular Session and urges lawmakers to continue its commitment to increase the state’s contribution to these vital programs.
- Community colleges are expected to enroll over 70 percent of new students under the Closing the Gaps initiative.
- Community colleges now enroll 75 percent of the state’s freshmen and sophomores, and 78 percent of minority freshmen and sophomores.
- The state’s financial commitment must rise in order to prevent more local tuition increases. High tuition hampers community college enrollment, since many of these students are in precarious financial situations.

On Proportionality

Background: Proportionality would fund the health benefits for community college educators based on the state’s “share” of the cost in funding these schools. There is more than one way to calculate this percentage. Ironically, as the state’s share has decreased, the potential damage of proportionality has gone up for community colleges. TCCTA has consistently opposed proportionality and plans to support the efforts of the Texas Association of Community Colleges in passing legislation to require coverage for all eligible employees.

- If the state reduces appropriations for community college health benefits, the revenue must be replaced with local funds. Inevitably, this means increased property taxes, higher fees, and diminished instructional support for students. Proportionality would hence jeopardize the Closing the Gaps initiative, a state program that recognizes explicitly the vital role of community colleges.
- Proportionality would penalize colleges for subsidizing instructional programs with local revenue—in effect punishing them for good behavior.
- Proportionality would not be an issue for community colleges if the state fully funded the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s instructional formula, which is based on actual student enrollment and associated costs.
- For many years, community college educators have been hired under an assumption of state responsibility for health benefits. Applying proportionality would “change the rules in the middle of the game.” Any perceived loss of security could hinder recruitment of talented professionals from the private sector, other states, and universities.
- Community college educators ask to remain full participants in the Group Benefits Program (GBP) for state and higher education employees under the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS).

On Performance Funding

Background: Commissioner of Higher Education Raymond Paredes and the Coordinating Board have endorsed a proposal to fund higher education based on student “completers” rather than enrollment, as is currently practiced under the funding formula.

- TCCTA welcomes all valid documentation of community and technical college “accountability,” such as the measures reported under current law to the Coordinating Board.
- The complete mission of community colleges in workforce education should be funded without penalty. Students often take such courses with no intention of certification or graduation.
- 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 typically part of this process.
- No one wants students to succeed academically more than faculty. The Coordinating Board’s proposal to reward

TCCTA members are urged to consult the association’s Web site frequently for the latest news on the Texas Legislature.

www.tccta.org

completers 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 such a drastic course, it should do so carefully and with ample opportunity for students, faculty, and others to provide insights about the impact it will have.

- We are deeply concerned about academic integrity and grade inflation. While we are aware that a student would not have to pass a given course to count as a completer, the logic of the Coordinating Board's model would create a culture that rewards staying in school above all other options. Retention of students would increasingly become the paramount criterion for faculty evaluation.
- The Coordinating Board's incentive funding proposal could place the interests of students at odds with the interests of institutions. We believe a student should never be advised to take any course of action because of the way the college receives its appropriation. After an "F," it is particularly hard to convince a student to persist. Many will simply disappear. Is this any way to Close the Gaps?
- 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 simplistic remedy.

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." He and the Coordinating Board have endorsed a proposal to place new appropriations into a fund, with the Board serving as trustee. This revenue is to be granted to schools competitively through pilot non-course based programs, using evidence gathered from studies and best practices around the country. In the meantime, developmental courses would be funded in the traditional manner while information is gathered and pilot programs are launched and evaluated.

- 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.
- Under the current Texas regimen, a student who enrolls in a developmental course, passes a placement test subsequently, then drops the class before the end of the term, is counted as a failure. Such measurement problems must be resolved before judging the effectiveness of developmental education.
- 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.
- A perennial problem in collecting reliable and valid developmental education data is finding equivalent control groups to compare the effectiveness of remediation on student outcomes against similarly prepared students who did not receive remediation. Only recently have studies begun using more sophisticated methods. One such study (Attewell, et al., 2006) found that similarly prepared students who received developmental education

were more likely to succeed (as measured by retention and achievement) than those who did not receive developmental education.

- In the absence of valid 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.

For further elaboration and documentation provided by Gail Platt, Director of the Teaching and Learning Center and Department of Education, Title V Project Director, South Plains College, please visit the TCCTA Web site under "Legislative Resources."

On Textbook Selection

Background: In 2007, several bills were introduced, driven by understandable concerns about the cost to students of college texts. For some students books cost more than tuition and fees, according to legislative testimony. One bill sought to exempt textbooks from sales taxes. Another, HB 956 by Rep. Scott Hochberg (D-Houston), placed proscriptions and requirements on college faculty in making their choices. Some of this bill's provisions were innocuous, such as a stipulation that instructors take cost into account. Another, however, would have criminalized (with a Class B Misdemeanor) the acceptance of "gifts" by faculty from publishers that are intended to influence adoption decisions. A full definition of such "gifts" was not provided. TCCTA testified against HB 956, which failed to pass. However, an interim charge leading up to the next Regular Session mandates 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 rarely required by faculty or used by students.

- TCCTA, in its quarterly publication and on its Web site, has consistently emphasized the issue of textbook costs to faculty, urging them to take advantage of "open source" material now available on the Internet, and other cost-saving strategies.
- College faculty organizations on campuses around the state are engaged routinely in organized efforts to help provide texts to students in need. Local school policies and procedures frequently offer assistance as well.
- The most expensive texts are usually found in certain subjects such as science and nursing. 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 graphics, three-dimensional illustrations, and supplemental features providing more comprehensive and contemporary 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.
- Many teachers report that "bundling" of supplemental material saves students money, by allowing a single purchase. These faculty members say the extra material is crucial to their instructional mission. Such decisions are best conducted at the campus level.
- The publishing market is currently adjusting rapidly to competition from online booksellers, Internet materials, customized texts by faculty, and a host of other factors. This rational process should be allowed to continue without state involvement. ☆

The Guide to

Political Participation

is posted on the

TCCTA Web site.

www.tccta.org

TCCTA Legislative Workshop

State Capitol

Thursday, February 19, 2009

In conjunction with the 62nd Annual convention, TCCTA will sponsor a unique opportunity for community and technical college educators to communicate directly with lawmakers during the crucial 81st Legislative Session.

A chartered bus from the convention site to the Capitol will be provided, from approximately 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Those with their own transportation are encouraged to visit the Capitol as well on this day.

Plans are underway for TCCTA volunteers to greet colleagues in the Rotunda area, to distribute ribbons and information for educators to share with representatives, senators, and staffers while visiting their offices.

TCCTA Lobbyist Beaman Floyd will also provide practical advice to members during the event.

More information will be added to the Web site as plans are finalized.

www.tccta.org

"It's the model

for how such

events should be

conducted."

—TCCTA Lobbyist

Beaman Floyd

Come to the Convention Early!



BEAMAN FLOYD, TCCTA Lobbyist, will provide personal advice to faculty on how best to approach legislators in asking their support for community college issues.



TCCTA will provide bus transportation from the convention site at the Renaissance Austin Hotel. The Legislative Committee will provide information and "Talking Points" for distribution to lawmakers.

MAKE HOTEL RESERVATIONS EARLY

TCCTA members planning to attend the 62nd Annual Convention, February 19-21, 2009, at the Renaissance Austin Hotel, are urged to reserve accommodations early.

A block of rooms has been set aside, 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 TCCTA convention activities will be held at the headquarters hotel.

Hotel reservations may be reserved by completing the form below and mailing it to the address indicated on the form, by fax at 1-512-346-7953, or by calling the hotel directly at 1-800-468-3571. A link to the hotel for secure online reservations is also available by clicking on "Events" at www.tccta.org.

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

The Renaissance Austin Hotel



The Renaissance Austin Hotel welcomes back TCCTA! Nestled in the picturesque hills of Texas Hill Country, this Austin Arboretum Hotel provides a tranquil environment surrounded by nature trails, sophisticated boutiques, and a variety of restaurants. Enjoy close proximity to Downtown, University of Texas, Sixth Street, as well as Austin Bergstrom International Airport.

This uniquely Renaissance, distinctly Austin hotel offers a luxurious, eclectic experience.

Under One Roof!
Free parking!
No shuttles!
No downtown traffic!

Secure Hotel Reservations Online
 Click on "Events"
www.tccta.org

Texas Community College Teachers Association 62nd Annual Convention February 19-21, 2009 Renaissance Austin Hotel HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM

Reservations may be made:

Online: www.tccta.org/events
Telephone: 1-800-468-3571
Fax: 1-512-346-7953
Mail: Renaissance Austin Hotel
 9721 Arboretum Boulevard
 Austin, TX 78759

ACCOMMODATIONS DESIRED:
 (Room type requested is not guaranteed.)

_____ Single/Double (one or two beds)\$137.00
 _____ Triple/Quad (two beds)\$137.00
 _____ Handicapped Accessible

Smoking Preference: _____ Smoking _____ Non-Smoking

RATES DO NOT INCLUDE TAXES. Deposit Information: Hotels will require a deposit or a credit card number for rooms to be considered guaranteed. Check your confirmation materials very carefully to ensure compliance with hotel policies. The Renaissance offers complimentary self parking or \$14/night valet.

ARRIVAL: Feb. _____ HOUR: _____

DEPARTURE: Feb. _____

CONFIRMATION will be made by hotel.

Credit Card Type _____

For maps, directions, and other information,
 click on "Events" at www.tccta.org

Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____

College or Company _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

ROOM(S) WILL BE OCCUPIED BY:
 Name (please print) _____

Address _____



A Special Invitation

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

PROFESSIONAL REPRESENTATION

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

BENEFITS INFORMATION

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

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

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

CONFERENCE FOR FACULTY LEADERS

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

ANNUAL STATE CONVENTION

Receive the best bargain in quality professional development. The annual TCCTA convention is attended by thousands of your colleagues from across the state. The 2009 convention will be held in Austin, Feb. 19-21.

MANY OTHER USEFUL BENEFITS

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

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY COVERAGE—AN ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL BENEFIT

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

- Professional liability coverage of \$2,000,000 per member (plus cost of defense)
- 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: _____
Street Address or Post Office Box

City State ZIP Code

E-MAIL (IMPORTANT!): _____

- Instructional
(Subject taught: _____)
- Administrative/Library/Media
(Position: _____)
- Classified/Retired/Adjunct
(Specify: _____)
- Unaffiliated/Student
(Specify: _____)

CHECK HERE TO PURCHASE THE OPTIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND ADD \$50 TO THE AMOUNT OF YOUR PAYMENT. MEMBERS MUST PURCHASE INSURANCE TO RECEIVE TCCTA LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING FOUR CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP:

- PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP (Full-time educator at a Texas community or technical college)—Dues \$45
- ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP (Classified employee, retired, or adjunct (part-time) educator at a Texas community or technical college)—Dues \$35 (Retiree may join as Professional or Associate Member.)
- STUDENT MEMBERSHIP (Graduate student in community college education)—Dues \$20
- UNAFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP (Friend of the Association not eligible for one of the foregoing types of membership)—Dues \$35

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, 2008–August 31, 2009.

ENROLL ONLINE SECURELY at tccta.org

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD USING THIS FORM: Visa MasterCard

Account Number _____

Expires ____ / ____ Amount \$ _____

Check here if you wish to provide continuous renewal of your membership, until advised to cancel. We will send you a reminder before your credit card is charged.

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.

If you wish to make a tax-deductible contribution to TCCTA's foundation, please send separate check to the state office, payable to the Foundation for Professional Excellence in the Community College. \$ _____