

# TCCTA MESSENGER

[www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)

A Publication of the TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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## 2009 Regular Session Delivers Mixed Results

The 2009 Regular Session of the Texas Legislature adjourned on June 1. As usual, funding was a key priority for two-year schools.

Formula funding for community and technical colleges for the next biennium rose significantly to \$1.84 billion. Not surprisingly, the relative and aggregate results can be interpreted using at least two valid measurement tools. For instance, the appropriation *per contact hour* for 2010-11 is \$7.11. In 2008-09 (funding for the current biennium) the rate was \$7.05. However, the new instructional formula amount represents 48 percent of the “full formula.” In 2008-09 it was 51 percent.

The state budget was helped considerably this year by the infusion of federal stimulus funds to all states. Although Congress enacted restrictions on how the money can be used, the boost relieved financial stress in all areas of the budget.

Presumably this “cushion” will not be available in subsequent Sessions, causing concern among Capitol observers about the outlook for 2011.

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## What You Can Do

by Beaman Floyd  
TCCTA Lobbyist

The recent Regular Session of the Texas Legislature involved 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.

Some of these issues “died” in bills that failed to pass, but all of them are likely to return.

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?”—especially in the “off-season.”

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 information and commentary TCCTA provides. Read the *Messenger*. Visit the Web site and contribute to the 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 TCCTA *Guide to Political Participation* (available in printable form under “Legislative Resources” at [www.tccta.org](http://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 16-17 in Austin and the Annual Convention on March 4-6 in Houston.

I hope to see you there!



Beaman Floyd

## Conference Planned for Faculty Leaders

The 30th Annual TCCTA Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders will be held on October 16-17, at the Omni Southpark Hotel in Austin.

At 3:30 p.m., on Friday, the program will feature “Faculty Senate Best Practices.” Leading the dialogue

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome!

I am honored to serve as your president for the coming year. Although the fall semester is just getting started, rest assured that your TCCTA leadership is working hard to make 2009-10 successful for you and your colleagues.

Our theme for this year is "*Inspiring Minds, Transforming Lives.*"

As a psychology instructor I am naturally interested in the mind and how it works.

Much of what we do as teachers is directed toward inspiration and the realization that students can learn how to achieve their personal goals, in addition to mastering the content of the courses in the curriculum. The two are bound together, particularly for the abundance of students who come from families in which college attendance has not been the norm. We are often the first ones who say to them in an academic setting: *You Can Do This!*

We hope to emphasize this important component of our mission during the coming year.

If you have not already done so, please join TCCTA. Participation in our association has been extremely rewarding for me over the years, and I know it will be for you, too. You can learn about the tangible benefits of joining from our Web site or from the printed material provided by your campus representative. I guarantee that you will not find a better bargain anywhere on membership dues and professional liability insurance.

But joining is just the beginning. In order to fully appreciate TCCTA, I urge you to attend our conferences. First up is the 30th Annual Fall Conference for Faculty Leaders, to be held on October 16-17, at the beautiful Omni Southpark Hotel in Austin. Please read all about it in these pages and consult our Web site for details and updates. Those who attend this meeting always return to campus with a wealth of information to share with colleagues.

And make plans now to attend our annual convention, on March 4-6, at the Westin Galleria Hotel in Houston. Whatever your teaching field or area of expertise, you'll find plenty of amazing opportunities for professional development. The meeting also features an outstanding exhibit area, with displays from all the major publishers and technology companies. I might also add that the conference is great fun, and provides you with a chance to mix and mingle with your peers across the entire state, from large colleges and small.

We have just completed a tumultuous Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, as a perusal of this

issue of the *Messenger* can attest. TCCTA provides a host of ways to participate in the legislative process, beginning with an array of opportunities to stay informed on vital issues.

Just because the Session has concluded does not mean we can relax. On the contrary, there will be important matters arising in legislative interim committees, and from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. One of our most important resources is our outstanding lobbyist, Beaman Floyd. I hope you'll pay attention to his regular columns and get a chance to hear him speak at our conferences. Finally, our Web site is THE place to find out about the latest developments, not only in Austin, but around the country as well. Just look under the "News" and "Blog" features.

We have many challenges to face as community and technical college educators. But I believe that, for each challenge, there is an opportunity for growth and progress. In order for this to happen, however, we must be united as a profession.

And please don't hesitate to contact any of our officers or the state office in Austin if we can be of any assistance.

TCCTA is there for you. Join us!

*Andrea Collins Zabel*

### 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 16, in conjunction with the Conference for Faculty Leaders, at the Omni Southpark Hotel, in Austin.

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

Terry S. Mouchayleh, Austin 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 2010-11.

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

Recommendations should be sent to:

Terry Mouchayleh  
TCCTA Nominating Committee  
Austin Community College  
5930 Middle Fiskville Road  
Austin, Texas 78752



## Fall Conference to Focus on Important Issues

*(continued from page one)*

will be David Lydic, professor of English at Austin Community College. Previous meetings on this subject at TCCTA conferences have garnered much interest.

Registration begins at 5:00 on Friday. The program will continue, at 5:30, with an informal social hour and appetizers.

The evening program, at 6:45, will feature “The Impact of 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 next Regular Session.

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

The program continues Saturday with an important program on “Achieving the Dream: Promising Practices in Developmental Education.”

Cynthia Ferrell, a program director at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, will share the basics of a national initiative involving over 100 community colleges and 22 states and will facilitate a panel discussion on the Texas efforts to “Close the Developmental Gaps.”

“Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count” is a multiyear national initiative to help more community college students succeed. The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that traditionally have faced significant barriers to success, including students of color and low-income students. Achieving the Dream works on multiple fronts, including efforts at community colleges and in research, public engagement and public policy. It emphasizes the use of data to drive change.

Panelists will include faculty leaders from two colleges that have been experimenting with interventions to improve underprepared student success. Mathematics instructors Lucy Michal, from El Paso Community College, and Bobbie Hill, from Coastal Bend College, will share innovations that are making double-digit differences and offer practical advice on what participants can implement at their campuses. Ms. Ferrell will also serve on the panel.

During the luncheon session, longtime TCCTA attorney Frank Hill will discuss “Current Legal Issues in Higher Education.” The speaker is often retained by the association, representing clients who find themselves in legal difficulty in connection with their employment at community college educators.

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.

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

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION should be completed by October 7 through the TCCTA state office, 5113 Southwest Parkway, Suite 185, Austin, Texas 78735 (1-800-288-6850, ext. 11; in Austin 1-512-328-2044, ext. 11; Fax 1-512-328-1086; e-mail [cfricke@tccta.org](mailto:cfricke@tccta.org)).

HOTEL RESERVATIONS Reservations are available at \$99.00 for a single, \$120 for double occupancy, plus tax). The deadline for hotel registration at this rate is September 25. Self parking is complimentary for conference attendees. Make reservations directly to the Omni Southpark Hotel, 4140 Governor’s Row, Austin, Texas 78744, 1-512-448-2222 .

DIRECTIONS FROM AUSTIN-BERGSTROM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Exit airport following Presidential Blvd. 1.8 miles to the intersection of Texas Route 71 (Ben White Blvd.). Turn left merging on to Route 71 West (Ben White Blvd. West) and continue for 5.3 miles to Woodward Street and turn left at the stop light. Follow for 0.2 miles and turn right onto Freidrich Lane. Continue for 0.2 miles and turn right onto Directors Blvd. and continue for 0.1 miles. Turn right onto Governor’s Row and the Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark’s entrance is 0.1 mile on the left.

SHUTTLE SERVICE Complimentary airport shuttle to and from Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Shuttle service available from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. For pick up, please call from the courtesy phone in the baggage claim area or call the hotel directly at 512-448-2222.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE NORTH – VIA I-35 SOUTH Traveling on I-35 South, follow past Austin center city to Exit 231 Woodward. Take the parallel frontage road to the third stop light (Ben White Blvd.) Turn left at the stop light and follow for 0.1 miles and turn right on Governor’s Row. The Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark’s entrance will be on the right.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE SOUTH – VIA I-35 NORTH Traveling on I-35 North, follow to exit 230 toward (290W / TX 71/ Johnson City/ Bastrop.) Take the parallel frontage road for 0.3 miles and turn right onto Director’s Blvd. Continue for 0.1 of a mile, then turn left onto Governor’s Row. The Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark’s entrance is located on the left.

DIRECTIONS FROM THE EAST – VIA HWY 71 WEST Traveling West on Texas route-71 proceed past Austin- Bergstrom International Airport for approximately 5.3 miles. Follow to Woodward Street intersection and turn left at the stop light. Follow for 0.2 miles and turn right onto Freidrich Lane. Continue for 0.2 miles then turn right onto Directors Blvd. Continue for 0.1 of a mile and turn right onto Governor’s Row. The Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark’s entrance will be on the left. ☆



**Beaman Floyd**



**Frank Hill**

*For the latest information on issues affecting Texas two-year colleges, visit the TCCTA Blog, at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).*

# Piper Professors Named for 2009



**Peggy Brown**



**Nancy Masterson  
(Center)**



**Julia Jay**



**Richard Pullen, Jr.**



**Susan Wyatt (right)**

The Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation, in May, announced recipients of the 2009 Piper Professor awards. 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](http://www.tccta.org)) under "Links."

Peggy Brown is a professor of English and the humanities and has taught at Collin College for 22 years. She earned her bachelor and master of arts degrees from the University of Texas at Dallas. In 1990, she completed her doctorate in the arts and humanities with a focus in translation, also from UT-Dallas.

"Dr. Brown's finest qualities are exhibited in the classroom where she applauds the inquiring mind and takes time to listen and provide individual attention to the student," said Collin College president Cary Israel.

Nancy Masterson is a professor of psychology at Southwest Texas Junior College. She is also the advisor for the Alpha Omega Iota chapter of Phi Theta Kappa honor society.

"This is an extremely prestigious award and I can think of no one more deserving than Dr. Masterson," SWTJC dean of instructional services Hector Gonzales said.

Julia Jay is a professor of English at San Jacinto College—Central Campus.

"I am honored to receive this distinction, and I always admire the teachers who earn the state award," she commented. "To me, it seems the pinnacle of achievement in the profession. I am also humbled. I know many of my colleagues deserve the award, also. In fact, I think a lot of them are more creative and scholarly than I am."

Richard Lee Pullen, Jr. is a professor of nursing at Amarillo College. He received his vocational nursing certificate at 1978, and completed his associate degree in nursing, both at AC, in 1981. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from West Texas State University and a doctor of education degree in 1995 at Nova Southeastern University.

Dr. Pullen spent approximately 15 years as a full time nurse in general medical and intensive care units before joining the faculty at AC. "I know that God predestined me to have nursing and teaching as my chosen professions," he said. "I love to teach."

Susan Wyatt is professor of child development and teacher preparation at Eastfield College.

In addition to the Piper award, Dr. Wyatt also received Eastfield's 2009 Excellence in Teaching—Miles Production Award in recognition for her many years of teaching in her school's child development program. She is also involved as a leader in many local, state, and national child development organizations, and is a co-winner of the Early Childhood Advocate Award in Dallas.

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 Wylie, 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. Wetzel, Amarillo College
- 2008 Rosemary Karr, Collin College  
Ruth Pitts, McLennan Community College
- 2009 Peggy Chittenden Brown, Collin County Community College District  
Nancy Ellen Cole-Masterson, Southwest Texas Junior College  
Julia De Foor Jay, San Jacinto College—Central Campus  
Richard Lee Pullen, Jr., Amarillo College  
Susan Skinner Wyatt, Eastfield College
- \* Asterisk denotes past president of the Texas Community College Teachers Association

*Nominations for awards are requested annually from all accredited public and private institutions of higher education in the state.*

### Join the Daily Discussion!

Members are urged to bookmark the TCCTA Web site as a favorite on their computers and to visit frequently.

The home page contains the latest “News and Announcements” on timely subjects. New developments from the Coordinating Board will also be posted here as they occur, as well as any news regarding Social Security in Congress.

Also on the home page is the “Blog” feature, which covers daily developments at the Capitol, headlines on teaching techniques and technology, news summaries, and alerts on items from a host of journalistic and professional sources.

The “Events” section is the best place to find out about TCCTA conferences, Webinars, and dates to keep in mind for planning ahead.

[www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org)

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### **October 2009**

*Enhancing Instruction and Engagement with Second Life*

### **November 2009**

*Service Learning: Taking Education Beyond the Classroom*

### **December 2009**

*Making Connections: Every Interaction Is an Opportunity for Engagement!*

### **February 2010**

*Closing the Gaps Between High School and College: College Connection at Austin Community College*

### **March 2010**

*They Can't Succeed if They Don't Come Back: Design Principles for Entering Student Success*

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# News Briefs and Links

## Board Targets Developmental Education

Those in the field of developmental education are urged to pay close attention to some potential shifts in policy over the next few years. On July 30, the Coordinating Board approved a plan to systematically examine different approaches, reportedly based on valid research and best practices.

As reported frequently in TCCTA communications, Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes has often called for a “complete overhaul” of developmental education.

The plan will utilize a recent appropriation of \$5 million to fund grants for “demonstration projects that focus on broad systemic reform of developmental education in community colleges.” Two-year schools will be invited to submit proposals. Also participating are Texas State University-San Marcos and the Gates Foundation.

Speaking to the Coordinating Board was staffer Tamara Clunis, who said the focus will also concentrate on faculty development, since instructors are sometimes unaware of new techniques that are currently producing results around the country. In order to qualify for funds, schools must focus on the board’s stated goals. Curriculum “redesign” and a “module” approach to instruction tend to be more effective with the targeted population, Ms. Clunis stated.

## Study Links Facebook to Low GPA

It was probably just a matter of time until someone, somewhere, found a statistical correlation between the highly popular social networking tool, Facebook, and lower grades in college. A pair of Ohio researchers found just such a link, based on a survey. The two presented their research April 16 in San Diego at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association. They surveyed 219 students at Ohio State University, including 102 undergraduate students and 117 graduate students. Of the participants, 148 said they had a Facebook account.

The findings: College students who use Facebook spend less time studying and have lower grade point averages than students who have not signed up for the social networking Web site. However, more than three-quarters of Facebook users claimed that their use of the site didn’t interfere with their studies.

“We can’t say that use of Facebook leads to lower grades and less studying—but we did find a relationship there,” said Aryn Karpinski, co-author of the study and a doctoral student in education at Ohio State.

The report underscores the often confusing distinction between correlation and causation: “There may be other factors involved, such as personality traits, that link Facebook use and lower grades,” she said. “It may be that if it wasn’t for Facebook, some students would still find other ways to avoid studying, and would still get lower grades. But perhaps the lower GPAs could actually be because students are spending too much time socializing online.”

## On Blaming Students: Get Over It

Gather a group of experienced college instructors around the campfire and it’s probably inevitable that the conversation will turn to today’s students, particularly their presumed lack of preparation and/or motivation.

Larry D. Spence, a professor at Penn State University, has submitted a thoughtful post on the subject to the “Views” section of *Inside Higher Ed*. The author says that good teachers inevitably reach a point where they quit lamenting the shortcomings of students, and get on with doing what they can to improve their teaching in new circumstances. An important moment for the professor occurred while visiting with a carpenter in his neighborhood, during a walk. The carpenter said:

“I build houses. The studs are never quite straight; the nails are imperfect and the plans mistaken. Contractors screw up schedules, suppliers deliver late, clients change their plans. I could complain about these blunders every day but I’d never build anything.”

## Federal Stimulus Revenue Aimed at Two-Year Schools

Community colleges are in the forefront of economic recovery, as reflected in an infusion of funds intended to stimulate the economy and create jobs, according to a number of media reports. The funds are geared toward several key objectives, particularly in workforce training. The largest share of the money will go to pilot programs.

According an article by reporter Matthew Haag of the *Dallas Morning News* (August 15), Texas schools are moving ahead, and looking forward to some much-needed help. While some college leaders express concern that the federal criteria may prove cumbersome, most are celebrating the fact that two-year schools have been placed on the “front burner.” The article includes a concise summary of the program, listed below.

**SOURCE:** The \$12 billion in federal stimulus money for community colleges would supply funds over the next decade. The money would come from eliminating subsidies given to private banks for student loans. The grants would be distributed in three categories.

**BREAKDOWN:** About \$9 billion would fund pilot programs; \$2.5 billion would help colleges renovate and maintain buildings, and construct new ones; and \$500 million would aid community colleges in creating high school and college-level online courses available to the public for free.

**APPLYING:** Community colleges seeking funds must submit a plan for meeting certain accountability measurements. Colleges would then have to submit annual reports on whether they met those goals, which some area college leaders say don’t accurately measure the success of a two-year college.

**BENCHMARKS:** Colleges would be required to close gaps in enrollment and completion rates for underrepresented student groups. Programs that use the funds would need to address area workforce demands. Colleges would need to increase the number of students moving on to four-year universities.

*Those in the field of developmental education are urged to pay close attention to some potential shifts in policy over the next few years.*

## 2009 Regular Session

(Continued from Page One)

### Mixed Results on Proportionality

The 2009 appropriations bill, which covers state spending for the 2010-11 biennium, provides for unreduced coverage of health benefits for community college educators, with no provision for proportionality.

By way of background, the concept of proportionality rests upon an assumption that the state is obligated to provide benefits based only on its relative “share” in funding community colleges generally. If the concept were implemented, the result would cost these schools millions of dollars, since local funds would be needed to replace the lost revenue. It would inevitably damage the instructional mission of these institutions.

TCCTA has consistently opposed proportionality.

Fortunately, as the appropriations bill worked its way through the House and Senate, college leaders reached a novel understanding with the governor’s office. This constitutes a remarkable milestone, since Gov. Perry, in 2007, vetoed funds for such benefits (money that was restored subsequently by legislative leadership). Furthermore, the driving force for proportionality came originally from the governor’s office, along with the Legislative Budget Board staff.

In basic terms, the governor agreed in principle to accept full budgetary inclusion in the state benefits system for community college educators, provided that any growth in dedicated appropriations for these benefits (due to new hiring) is linked to equivalent enrollment growth. In other words, colleges must grow in enrollment to qualify for added state support regarding benefits for new hires.

Community college officials viewed this approach as a reasonable solution and are relieved that the issue can be put aside—at least for the next two years.

Now, the other side of the story.

As TCCTA members are aware from numerous communications on this subject, key bills were introduced this Session that would have precluded the use of proportionality by law. In principle the passage of such a statute would have eliminated the concept as a matter of policy (with the understanding that no current Session of the Legislature can obligate a future Session under the Texas Constitution). TCCTA and the Texas Association of Community Colleges urged passage of HB 2083, by Rep. Burt Solomons (R-Carrollton), which passed the House with no opposition.

The Senate, however, proved more problematic, as HB 2083 was held pending in the Finance Committee. This is where the issue remained (a frequent graveyard for bills) until the final evening of the Session, when Sen. Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo), the author of a companion measure, attempted to resurrect HB 2083 within the framework of a different bill. Unfortunately, the Senate adjourned *sine die* without taking up the matter.

TCCTA members are grateful to Rep. Solomons and Sen. Zaffirini for their efforts, and for their untiring support for the community colleges of Texas.

Some senators remain convinced that proportionality should prevail. Therefore, the issue could surface again. Absent unforeseen developments, the concept will not come up until preparations are underway for the 2011 Regular Session.

### TRS and ORP: It’s Complicated

The 2009 Regular Session enacted changes in the rates paid by the state for the two retirement programs serving higher education employees, reflecting a tight budget driven by the recent financial crisis.

#### TRS

The state’s contribution is set to decrease from 6.58 percent to 6.4 percent for active employees in TRS. However, it is possible that the System board will adjust it upward, based on an expected ruling by the Attorney General regarding a “13th check” of up to \$500 for retirees. In the 2007 Session the Legislature had raised the rate from the constitutional minimum of six percent to 6.58 percent. TRS members are urged to pay attention to official communications from the System in the weeks ahead.

The TRS fund suffered historic losses of almost a third during the recent financial downturn. The goal of the fund is to consistently achieve the statistical objective of “actuarial soundness,” a calculation extrapolating forward for decades regarding long term solvency. Some authorities have testified that, in order to reach such a goal presently, the Legislature would have to raise the state contribution to over 11 percent. Due to the fund’s massive size and diversity, if the market returns to “normal” behavior, its health should be restored, according to TRS witnesses. However, it will be a while before benefits enhancements (such as increasing the multiplier or lowering the early retirement age) can be discussed seriously.

#### ORP

The Optional Retirement Program has always resisted generalization because local supplements affect the actual rate of contribution. Depending upon decisions made at the institutional level, the rate of employer contribution will remain at the current maximum of 8.5 percent, even though the state rate will be reduced to 6.4 percent, mirroring TRS.

To illustrate the complexity, please examine the following statement from a Coordinating Board official, sent to TCCTA on June 3, two days after the Regular Session adjourned. (The Coordinating Board has legal jurisdiction over ORP):

*The state base rate for ORP is changing from 6.58 to 6.4 percent (same as TRS). The colleges are still authorized to supplement that up to 8.5 percent, so the maximum supplemental rate will be 2.1 rather than the current 1.92 percent. ORP participants who do not receive a supplement will see their match go down by 0.18 percent (e.g., \$90 less annually for a \$50,000 salary). Colleges that have been providing a full supplement during the current biennium may continue to do so in the new biennium by bumping their local amount from 1.92 to 2.1 percent. However, the ORP statute and the GAA allow colleges to provide any supplemental rate up to a total employer rate of 8.5 (i.e., any supplemental rate from 0 to 2.1 percent), so it’s possible that some colleges will choose to continue to provide a 1.92 supplement, which would also be a reduction of 0.18 percent for those participants.*

### “Dead” Bills—and Likely “Zombies”

A number of bills of particular interest to two-year colleges failed to pass in 2009. Most deal with subjects that will likely return in 2011.

**Incentive Funding:** The most significant effort in this area

For more information on important events at the State Capitol, please visit the “News” Section of the TCCTA Web site.

was sponsored by Rep. Geanie Morrison (R-Victoria) and Sen. Florence Shaprio (R-Plano). The bill put forward a complex matrix for rewarding student “success” in a variety of forms: transfers, “at risk” student completion, degrees and certificates awarded, and enrollment in high priority fields such as the sciences and nursing.

**Developmental Education:** Commissioner of Higher Education Raymund Paredes has argued repeatedly that developmental education needs a complete overhaul. Changes are still likely via the Coordinating Board, but a bill to formulate a plan died in committee.

**Guns on Campus:** A bill to allow licensed carriers of weapons to bring them to school failed to get enough votes this Session. The measure was motivated in part by the Virginia Tech shootings of 2007.

**Criminal Background Checks:** This bill, sponsored by Sen. Tommy Williams (R-The Woodlands) set up a system of criminal background checks on anyone who applies for a job or promotion at institutions of higher education. It passed the Senate and died in the House. ☆

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## Plan for Online Student Evaluations Mandated

The Coordinating Board is requesting input on proposed rules to implement a new law, HB 2504, requiring online publication of course information by institutions of higher education. The proposed rules are open for public comment. Contact information is provided below.

Under the statute, colleges will be required to post course syllabi, the *curriculum vitae* of faculty members (listing schools attended, publications, and teaching experience, *e.g.*), cost information, and other pertinent facts about each course. These items are often found online presently, or at least in the official catalogs of each institution. In fact some publication is required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

However, controversy may result from the following passage in HB 2504: “Institutions of higher education included in this section shall conduct end-of-course student evaluations of faculty and develop a plan to make evaluations available on the institution’s website.”

As reported earlier, this sentence, one of several Senate floor amendments also approved by the House, two days before adjournment, was inserted after all hearings on the bill had been held, precluding any realistic opportunity for comment or testimony from educators. The bill passed both chambers unanimously. The author of the law is Rep. Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham). The Senate sponsor is Sen. Florence Shaprio (R-Plano).

As practitioners are aware, schools now routinely conduct student evaluations of all instructors. In a typical scenario, anonymous evaluations are collected (without faculty participation or potential influence) in each class, then shared with the instructor by supervisors after grades have been distributed. However, HB 2504 will result inevitably in a new level of state uniformity. Its practical effect may also hinge upon how the statute is interpreted via Coordinating Board rules.

Experienced faculty members have learned that, while student evaluations are extremely useful, the results can vary arbitrarily, depending upon a host of circumstances: time of day, the number of students who registered late for newly opened classes, the educational background of students in a particular section, attendance, and other

factors unrelated to the quality of instruction. Faculty members also report that intellectual rigor, the complexity and difficulty of assignments, and whether essay exams are required can also influence student evaluations. Not surprisingly, it is commonplace to observe that students who receive high grades give better evaluations of faculty. Today, students who wish to pursue the path of least resistance often chat among themselves about prospective teachers prior to registration, but HB 2504 will invoke the state as a partner in this practice.

TCCTA, with the help of association lobbyist Beaman Floyd, has begun to share the perspective of community and technical college educators with policy makers, paying careful attention to (1) the potential effect of using student evaluations to inform educational choices by students and parents, (2) whether intellectual rigor could be placed in jeopardy by publishing such evaluations, and (3) concerns about the privacy of students and teachers.

New rules will be considered by the Coordinating Board on October 29. Members are invited to send comments on proposed policies to MacGregor Stephenson at [macgregor.stephenson@theccb.state.tx.us](mailto:macgregor.stephenson@theccb.state.tx.us) and to Kevin Lemoine at [kevin.lemoine@theccb.state.tx.us](mailto:kevin.lemoine@theccb.state.tx.us). [IMPORTANT: In communicating with Coordinating Board officials, participants are urged to be constructive and to keep in mind that written comments will become part of the public record.] ☆

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## Repeal of Social Security Provisions Proving Difficult

There is perennial frustration among those wishing to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset—provisions of federal law potentially affecting TCCTA members who plan to retire from schools that do not participate in the Social Security system. Efforts to change the statutes have been unproductive during the last several sessions of Congress.

Bills have been introduced again this Session to repeal both provisions. They are HR 235 in the House of Representatives, by Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) and S 484, by Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-CA).

[IMPORTANT: It is difficult to generalize about the potential impact of these provisions, as it depends upon individual work history. Background information is available on the TCCTA Web site. Please visit [www.tccta.org/legis/social-security.html](http://www.tccta.org/legis/social-security.html).]

There are serious obstacles to change. Many observers have labeled total repeal a “budget buster,” precisely when the federal treasury is hemorrhaging revenue in the wake of the current recession. Then there is the political reality that the WEP and GPO affect government employees primarily in a minority of states where “non-participation” was allowed many years ago. (Of course, there are retirees in all states.)

But the most frustrating source of concern lately involves the frequent observation that the number of co-sponsors of repeal legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives is greater than the number needed for passage. A plausible (if less than satisfying) explanation comes from commentators nationwide who state frequently that members of Congress find it much easier politically to sign on to an introduced bill rather than cast a record vote for the final result.

Contact information for members of the House and Senate is included at the link provided above. ☆

*These are among the many concerns that TCCTA plans to share with policy makers as the law is interpreted and implemented.*

# Come to the Houston Galleria!

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ICE SKATING

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...and more!

The 2010 TCCTA convention, March 4-6, in Houston, will be held at the Galleria! Those who have never been to the Galleria are in for a treat.

Located west of downtown Houston at Westheimer Boulevard and Loop 610, the Galleria is a four-story, air-conditioned mall containing just about every kind of food and fun available. The convention will be held in the Westin Galleria and Westin Oaks hotels, part of the Galleria complex. So never mind uncertain weather: Unless you wish, you'll never have to go outside!



Visit "Events" at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org) for [maps](#), a complete list of [restaurants](#), [stores](#), and valuable [Galleria coupons](#).

## Corporate Group Rates Available from Enterprise Rent-A-Car

TCCTA and Enterprise Rent-A-Car have joined together to offer discounted rates and great service to all TCCTA Members.

With over 500 offices in Texas, and a location at every Texas airport, we are confident we will be able to service your needs. Simply visit [www.enterprise.com](http://www.enterprise.com) and type your corporate account number 65A1867 in the designated box. When prompted for your 3 digit pin, simply type "TCC" and you will have access to your discounts.



Come to the convention in a rental car!  
These discounts also apply to colleges that are Institutional Members of TCCTA.  
Parking is free at the Galleria.



## Make Hotel Reservations Early!

TCCTA members planning to attend the 2010 annual convention are encouraged to reserve hotel accommodations early. 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.

In addition to secure online reservations on the TCCTA Web site, accommodations may be reserved by completing the form below and mailing it to the hotel, by fax, at 713-960-6551, or by phone, at 713-960-8100. Reservations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations received after January 29 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 Westin Galleria Hotel.

## Tentative Convention Schedule Released

(Program details will be posted as they become available under "Events" at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).)

### THURSDAY—MARCH 4, 2010

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

11:15–12:45 p.m.  
 1:00– 2:15 p.m.  
 1:00– 2:15 p.m.  
 2:30– 5:15 p.m.  
 5:30 p.m.

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

### FRIDAY—MARCH 5, 2010

8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Convention Registration  
 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Exhibits Open  
 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Election of Officers  
 8:00– 9:15 a.m. "Lightening Talks" Session  
 8:00– 9:15 a.m. Great Ideas For Teaching Students (GIFTS)  
 9:30– 11:00 a.m. Section Meetings for

8:00–11:30 a.m.  
 8:00–11:30 a.m.  
 8:00–9:15  
 9:00–10:15 a.m.  
 10:30–11:45 a.m.  
 11:45 a.m.  
 12:00 Noon–3:00 p.m.

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

### SATURDAY—MARCH 6, 2010

**Use the form below or make secure hotel reservations online.  
 Click on "Events" at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).**

## TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

63rd Annual Convention  
 The Westin Galleria Hotel — Houston, Texas — March 4-6, 2010

### HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

**MAIL TO: The Westin Galleria Hotel—5060 West Alabama—Houston, Texas 77056  
 OR PHONE: (713) 960-8100 OR FAX: (713) 960-6551  
 RESERVATION CUT-OFF DATE: January 29, 2006**

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

Check accommodations desired:	Rate
___ Single Room (One person) .....	\$125
___ Double Room (Two persons) .....	\$135
___ Triple Room (Three persons) .....	\$150
___ Quad Room (Four persons) .....	\$165

Arrival Date: March \_\_\_\_, 2010

Departure Date: March \_\_\_\_, 2010

(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 Westin Galleria Hotel is unable to grant individuals direct billing for room or incidental accounts. The hotel accepts 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 Westin Galleria 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 \_\_\_\_\_



# A Special Invitation

Please send in the completed form below, or give to your Campus Representative. You may also join online securely at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).

## TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION Membership Enrollment Form

Dr.  
 Mr.  
 Mrs.  
 Miss  
 Ms.

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 \$30
- 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*. There is **no additional charge** for the *Messenger*.

**ENROLL ONLINE SECURELY at [www.tccta.org](http://www.tccta.org).**

**IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD USING THIS FORM:**  Visa  MasterCard  
Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expires \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Period: September 1, 2009–August 31, 2010.

**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. \$ \_\_\_\_\_