

Academic Planning and Policy E-News

Academic Quality and Workforce | College Readiness and Success | Strategic Planning and Funding



Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Office of Academic Planning and Policy, David W. Gardner, Deputy Commissioner

Volume 8, Number 1, January 2016

AT&T Seeds Expansion of Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program

At the Texas State Capitol on Jan. 20, AT&T Texas President Dave Nichols, Texas State Comptroller Glenn Hegar, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Chair Bobby Jenkins announced the expansion of the state's [Texas Affordable Baccalaureate](#) (TAB) program with a \$400,000 contribution from AT&T to the Coordinating Board's College for All Texans Foundation. The contribution is part of the AT&T Aspire program.

The TAB program aims to decrease both the cost and time required to earn a degree by leveraging competency-based education, online and hybrid instruction models, and alternative tuition structures. Currently, the TAB program is available on two campuses in Texas – [Texas A&M University-Commerce](#) and [South Texas College](#). AT&T's latest contribution to Texas higher education will help expand the TAB program from two to 10 campuses, reaching additional students across the state as institutions compete for seed funding.

Kelly Carper Polden | Assistant Director, Communications | External Relations

TAB•Lab: Launching Affordable Baccalaureates Convenes Feb. 17-19 in Austin

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, [Western Governors University Texas](#), and the new Institute for Competency-Based Education at Texas A&M University-Commerce will co-convene "TAB•Lab: Launching Affordable Baccalaureates" in Austin on Feb. 17-19. With support from the [College for All Texans Foundation](#), the TAB•Lab convening is an opportunity for leaders of Texas public and independent institutions of higher education to learn directly from institutions that have built, or are building, the foundation to launch affordable baccalaureates. Sessions will be led by experts from a wide range of national organizations and institutions.

Raymund Paredes, Commissioner of Higher Education, has invited an "implementation team" of three leaders from each Texas public and independent institution of higher education to attend. Participating institutions currently authorized to offer baccalaureates, and institutions that partner with them, will be invited to submit proposals for seed funding provided by philanthropic partners to assist in developing affordable baccalaureate degrees. Registration for TAB•Lab and additional information

Calendar

Next Board Meeting

April 28, 2016
8:30 a.m.

Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on B-On-Time for Renewal Students (Public Universities and HRIs)

February 2, 9:30 a.m.

Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on Autism Program

February 3, 9:30 a.m.

Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on Educational Aide Exemption Program

February 4, 9:30 a.m.

TAB•Lab: Launching Affordable Baccalaureates

February 17-19

GenTX FAFSA Month

February 1-29

are available at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/TAB.Lab>.

Mary Smith | Deputy Assistant Commissioner | Academic Planning and Policy

Generation Texas Partners with High Schools, Offers Free FAFSA Workshops

College Readiness and Success staff at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) are working with 181 high school campuses and 41 college and university Work-Study Mentorship programs to advertise and track [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\) workshops](#) in February. The workshops are open to all Texas high school students, parents, current college students, and returning adult students. The goal is for every participating student to complete the FAFSA during February and take the first step toward applying for financial aid.

The THECB invites financial aid professionals from all Texas institutions of higher education to participate and offer their expertise to Texas students and parents. Having these professionals on hand gives parents and students the opportunity to sit down with a trained volunteer and ask any FAFSA-related questions.

During the 2013-14 FAFSA application cycle, students filed 1,639,688 FAFSAs in Texas, and in the 2014-15 cycle, 1,626,134 FAFSAs. So far, through quarter three of the current 2015-16 cycle, students have filed 1,361,045 FAFSAs. More results will be reported later.

Currently, the THECB is tracking the following locations, which are hosting multiple events (80 confirmed) with more to be added in the coming weeks:

- [Rio Grande Valley](#) (RGV) - FAFSA Super Saturday (7 sites)
- [Houston/Gulf Coast FAFSA](#) (3 sites)
- [Tyler/East Texas](#) - FAFSA Super Saturday (7 sites)
- [Dallas County](#) - You Can Afford College (7 sites)
- [Central TX/Cedar Creek](#) - FAFSA Night
- [El Paso FAFSA Nights](#) (50 sites, 17 nights)
- [Austin ISD](#)

For those who need to attend workshops on weekends, Financial Aid Saturdays run from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at many area high schools, and filings typically take no longer than 30 minutes.

Natalie Coffey | Director of Recruitment and Retention | College Readiness and Success

Report Cites 83 New Programs Approved by Coordinating Board in 2014

A report, "New Doctoral Programs and Annual Progress Reports," written by Academic Quality and Workforce (AQW) staff at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) at the end of 2015 highlights the number of doctoral and other programs approved by the THECB from 2005-2014. The report, which discusses the review and approval process for proposed

60x30TX in the News

[Community Impact - Dallas/Fort Worth](#)

[Fox News - Lubbock](#)

[Kilgore News Herald](#)

[KXAN Austin](#)

[Lubbock Avalanche-Journal](#)

[Rockwall ISD](#)

[San Marcos Corridor News](#)

[The Dallas Morning News](#)

[Time Warner Cable News - Austin](#)

APP Links

[Higher Ed Data](#)

[Higher Ed Strategic Plan](#)

[Higher Education Almanac](#)

[Accountability System](#)

[College Readiness and Success](#)

[Academic Quality and Workforce](#)

[Compare College TX](#)

The APP E-NEWS is written and produced by the staff of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). For newsletter questions or comments, contact Ramona Reeves, Editor, at ramona.reeves@thecb.state.tx.us or (512) 427-6434.

doctoral programs and the monitoring of approved programs, will be released later this year.

Although the report focuses on one aspect of the THECB's work, AQW staff sees a strong connection to the new higher education strategic plan, *60X30TX*, which calls for a significant increase in the number of graduates from Texas public institutions by 2030. The Coordinating Board's Rex Peebles, Assistant Commissioner of AQW, stated, "We have an obligation to ensure that students have access to the degree programs they want, but also an obligation to ensure that students have a reasonable chance of securing a job in a field they have been prepared for. Therefore, the kinds and locations of degree plans offered over the next 15 years are important and should be the results of a thoughtful process."

While the report focuses almost entirely on doctoral programs, it describes an important function of the THECB: to prevent the unnecessary duplication of programs. Currently, the THECB can ensure that end only through the approval process for courses and programs. Statutory authority for approving courses and programs, especially courses and programs offered at locations other than an institution's main campus, is found in [TEC §61.0512\(g\)](#). Rules are found in [TAC Chapter 4, Subchapter Q, 4.270-4.279](#); [TAC Chapter 5, Subchapter D, 5.71-5.78](#); and [TAC Chapter 9, Subchapter I, 9.161-9.163](#). Essentially, any location owned or operated by a college or university away from the main campus and utilized for instructional and/or research purposes is subject to course and program approval by the THECB.

Part of the process includes notifying any institution of higher education within a 50-mile radius about a site where a proposed course(s) or program(s) will be offered. If any of the colleges or universities within the proposed area object, the expectation is for involved institutions to reach an agreement. If they fail to do so, the dispute comes to the office of the Assistant Commissioner for Academic Quality and Workforce for adjudication. Decisions are based on two of the THECB's most important charges: to ensure the efficient use of state resources and to avoid the unnecessary duplication of programs.

Ramona Reeves (with AQW staff) | Writer/Editor | Academic Planning and Policy

Weeklong Campaign Generates 52,000+ College Applications

Generation Texas (GenTX) held [College Application Campaign Week](#) on November 16-21, 2015. Texas has participated since 2013 in the American College Application Campaign (ACAC), led by the [American Council on Education](#) (ACE). The weeklong campaign is a national initiative to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. Its purpose is to help high school seniors navigate college admissions processes and ensure participating students submit at least one college application.

After submitting applications at an event in Texas, volunteers ask students to register for their [Federal Student Aid ID](#). At the end of the events, students also receive information about GenTX FAFSA Month (held the following February) to help them apply for financial aid. A student in the [Brownsville ISD](#) said, "[The] week gave me the push I needed to submit more than five applications."

Texas high schools that implemented a successful College Application Campaign event committed to these activities:

- Hosting a program during the school day open to any student interested in applying to college, with a focus on engaging first-generation students, students from low-income families, and students who may otherwise not apply to college
- Identifying and convening a school team comprised of staff and community members
- Leveraging support of the school's entire staff to ensure students are prepared to participate in the event (e.g., college essays are completed, students have researched the institutions where they want to apply, etc.)
- Engaging the local community, families, and others through volunteer opportunities and information letters and through advertising
- Creating a college-going culture within the school using varied approaches
- Collecting data, as requested by the state coordinator, that includes but is not limited to the number of students participating and the number of applications submitted
- Following up with students after the event to make sure their submitted applications are complete (e.g., applications include transcripts, college entrance exam scores, letters of recommendation, a complete FAFSA, etc.)

At the close of the 2015 GenTX College Application Campaign Week, 10,398 seniors had participated at 181 high schools in Texas. Alex Adam, a second year adviser at [Davis High School in the Houston ISD](#), summed up the week when he said, "It was incredibly inspiring to see teachers, staff, and students working side by side toward a common goal. When someone takes the time to truly invest in a student and have intentional conversations about their future, it can lead to incredible results."

Natalie Coffey | Director of Retention and Recruitment | College
Readiness and Success
Ramona Reeves | Writer/Editor | Academic Planning and Policy

Focus on 60x30TX

Each APP newsletter includes a Q&A about 60x30TX with a staff member at the Coordinating Board. This month's Q&A is with Julie Eklund, Assistant Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Funding, and focuses on the following [paragraph from the Completion Goal's text](#) (p. 17):

Since 2000, Texas has made measurable progress in improving graduation rates, but it must strengthen these efforts to compete successfully with other states and countries. As of 2014, the state's six-year graduation rate was 60.5 percent for public four-year institutions, but removing the data for the two most selective public universities in the state drops the overall graduation rate to around 53 percent. For two-year institutions, the current six-year graduation rate for associate degrees is about 28 percent.

This paragraph mentions percentages statewide for the six-year graduation rates at two- and four-year institutions. What percentages will be expected of individual two- and four-year

institutions to meet the first statewide target ("Increase the number of students completing a certificate, associate, bachelor's, or master's from an institution of higher education in Texas to at least 376,000 by 2020, 455,000 by 2025, and 550,000 by 2030") under the Completion Goal?

JE: The plan is focused on completions. We don't have specific graduation rate expectations for the state or for institutions in the plan, but we do expect graduation rates to continue to improve over time. To reach the Completion Goal and ensure that students are able to use their time and financial resources efficiently and gain the advantages that come with earning a degree or certificate, institutions will need to embrace student success strategies that work for their students, and the state must do its part as well. Successful efforts will be reflected not only in overall completion counts, but also in improved institutional and state graduation rates. We understand student populations differ, and that many students do not fit a traditional mold, but we hope all students can be successful.

Will the THECB continue to track six-year graduation rates in 60x30TX? Will it also track four-year graduation rates? How will individual institutions report this information for the new plan?

JE: Though not a goal or target of the plan, as I mentioned before, graduation rates are a measure in the state's Higher Education Accountability System. We currently look at three-, four-, and six-year graduation rates for community colleges and four- five- and six-year rates for public universities. Rates will continue to be calculated in that system, and we will continue to report on all students we find in Texas higher education and include rates for students who start at one institution and move to another. Because we collect data from Texas independent and private institutions, as well as publics, we are able to include students who start at a public institution and complete at a private, independent institution in our calculations. The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) [a federal collection system] reports graduation rates for students who start and finish at the same institution, so we are able to track more data. You might be interested to know that IPEDS has just added outcome metrics that track nontraditional students. In fact, my area recently supplied data to help institutions report the new metrics.

In terms of the Completion Goal in the 60x30TX plan, we already collect a variety of data related to student success, including degrees awarded, so we don't expect institutions will need to report any additional data to us for this goal. We will be disaggregating data about student completions related to plan targets. For example, we have a target for economically disadvantaged students and will be looking carefully at completions in that group of students. The target is a number and not a rate.

Tracking completions captures every student, e.g., nontraditional students, and not just those who are first-time, full-time students. So while graduation rates and completion counts are both important, looking at completions is more inclusive than looking at graduation rates.

New Staff in Academic Planning and Policy

Beginning this month, we will introduce new Academic Planning and Policy (APP) staff in each newsletter. In this issue, we've included new staff hired since February 1, 2015, within the divisions that comprise APP: Academic Quality and Workforce, College Readiness and Success, Innovation and Policy

Development, and Strategic Planning and Funding.

Bill Abasolo (Director, Strategic Planning, Strategic Planning and Funding) -

Prior to joining the THECB, Bill was at the Texas Education Agency for seven years, where he managed data collection, analysis, and reporting efforts related to program implementation and fiscal compliance under large federal programs. He received his bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research and his J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley.

Marissa Garza (Educational Data Center Analyst, Strategic Planning and Funding) - A native Texan, Marissa lived in New York for several years prior to joining the THECB and was an operations specialist for New York University (NYU) in Knowledge Access & Resource Management Services (KARMS). She holds a B.A. in Graphic Design from the International Academy of Design and Technology, and last May, she received an M.S. from NYU in Information Systems and Management.

Melissa Humphries (Program Director, Research and Evaluation, Strategic Planning and Funding) - Prior to joining the THECB, Melissa was a research assistant at the Population Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin focusing on quantitative research methods, and she taught the Sociology of Education to undergraduates. Her prior research focused on disparities in access to and completion of postsecondary education, and on college readiness, immigrant students, and health. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin in Sociology and her bachelor's from Rice University in Sociology and Policy Studies.

Holly Kosiewicz (Director of Policy Development, Innovation and Policy Development) - An Austin native, Holly has a Ph.D. in Urban Education Policy with a concentration in Higher Education from the University of Southern California (USC). As a researcher, she centered on evaluating the effectiveness of developmental education policies and practices to improve persistence and achievement among community college students. She received support from the Spencer Foundation and Provost's Office at USC. Before pursuing her Ph.D., she analyzed education policy for Editorial Projects in Education, Education Week's publisher, and did education research in Colombia and Peru.

Fu-An Lin (Program Director, Academic Quality and Workforce) - Prior to the THECB, Fu-An managed research projects and coordinated data collection efforts for almost eight years, working closely with collaborators at the K-12 and postsecondary levels. Her research experience has been informative in her work at the Coordinating Board so far, particularly in grant management. She received her bachelor's degree from the National Taiwan University and completed her master's and doctoral degrees at The University of Texas at Austin in Foreign Language Education, specializing in teaching English as a second language.

Shana Shaw (Senior Research Specialist/Project Coordinator, RAND-THECB Research Partnership, College Readiness and Success) - Before joining the THECB, Shana worked at two Austin-based organizations, Gibson Consulting Group and SEDL, where she applied research and technical assistance expertise to issues affecting all levels of education. She's also served as a Data Fellow with Harvard's Strategic Data Project, working in the Fort Worth ISD. Shana holds an M.A. in Program Evaluation and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology, both from The University of Texas at Austin.

Paul Shuler (Program Director, Academic Quality and Workforce) - Before joining the THECB, Paul taught for Dallas Baptist University, Phillips University, University of Phoenix, City University of Seattle, and Oklahoma

State University (OSU). His first experience in administration began at OSU, and later, he became Campus Director of Vatterott College. He earned his Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University and holds bachelor's and master's degrees from The University of Texas at Arlington.

David Young (Senior Director, Special Projects, Strategic Planning and Funding) - David joined the THECB after serving 10 years as an advisor to Governor Rick Perry. He developed many of the governor's higher education initiatives, including his low-cost degree initiative, which challenged universities to offer degrees that cost \$10,000. David also developed the governor's higher education incentive funding initiative, which awarded \$160 million to general academic institutions for fiscal years 2009-2011. He has a bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of Arkansas and an M.B.A. from The University of Texas at Austin.



Questions? [Contact us](#)



GET UPDATES:

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Subscriber Help](#) |

This email was sent to Email Address using GovDelivery, on behalf of: The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board · 1200 E. Anderson Lane, Austin, TX 78752

